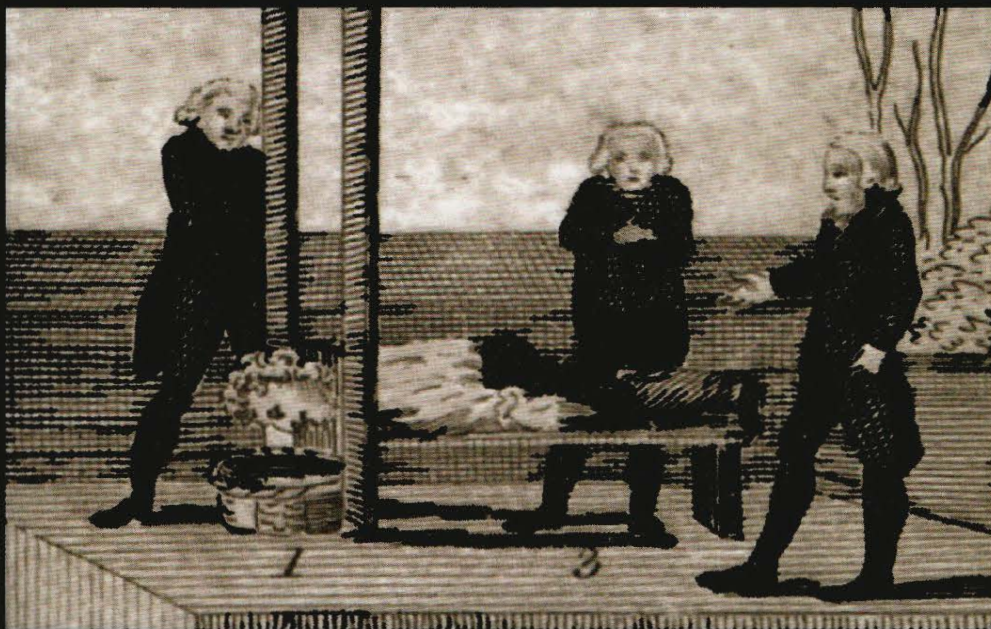


THE POLITICAL WRITINGS OF WILLIAM FOX



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OF WILLIAM FOX

Abolitionist, Tory, and Friend to the
French Revolution

Edited by
John Barrell and Timothy Whelan

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Typeset and designed by Callum Lewis & Rebecca Kirby
Printed by Antony Rowe Limited, Bumper's Farm Industrial Estate,
Chippenham, Wiltshire SN14 6LH

ISBN: 9781842331422

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Acknowledgements

For the answers to numerous queries that have arisen in our attempts to annotate these pamphlets, and for attempts to answer them even when unsuccessful, we would like to thank our colleagues David Attwell, Jack Donovan, Emma Major, David McAllister, Alison O'Byrne, Richard Rowland, Erica Sheen, Judith Woolf, at the University of York, and Murray Pittock and Nigel Leask at the University of Glasgow, Peter de Bolla and Simon Goldhill at King's College Cambridge, Geraint H. Jenkins of the University of Wales, Donna Landry of the University of Kent at Canterbury, P.B. Munsche of the University of Toronto, Mark Nesbitt of the library Kew Gardens, John Briggs, at the Centre for Baptist History and Heritage, Regent's Park College, Oxford, and Roger Blench of the Kay Williamson Educational Foundation, Cambridge. We would also like to thank Jon Mee of Warwick University and Harriet Guest of York for reading the draft introduction and commenting on it most helpfully.

We thank the staffs of the Guildhall Library, the Institute for Historical Research, the Genealogical Library, the University of York library, the British Library, for access to their collections of poll books; the National Archives at Kew; the Friends House Library; and the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford, for access to church books and biographical materials on Martha Gurney, and Dr. Williams's Library, London, for information on dissenters and dissenting history. We owe thanks also to the Department of Special Collections, University of Michigan Library, for granting permission to photograph the contents of their volume of William Fox; and Dr. John Scott, London, for allowing access to his collection of materials that included biographical information on William Fox.

Abbreviations

- CWP* Philip S. Foner, ed., *The Complete Writings of Thomas Paine*, 2 vols (New York: Citadel Press, 1945).
- PH* *The Parliamentary History of England*, 36 vols (London: R. Bagshaw, T. Longman, 1806-20).
- WEB* *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, new edn, 14 vols (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1815-22).

Introduction

William Fox was one of the most brilliant writers of political pamphlets in the 1790s, and for a short time the most prolific. That decade saw the most fundamental debate about politics – about sovereignty, political justice, and the right of the people to participate in government - since the English civil war. He began his career in 1791 by writing what became probably the most widely read pamphlet in British history, *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Propriety of Abstaining from West India Sugar and Rum*, in which he proposed a boycott on sugar as a means of bringing to an end not only the slave-trade, the target of almost all ‘abolitionists’ of the time, but the system of slavery itself. In 1793 and 1794 he published on average a new pamphlet every month, and won a high reputation among the liberal periodicals such as the *Analytical Review*, the *Monthly*, and the *Critical*, as an unusually sharp satirist and commentator on political issues. Since his death, however, his writings have been almost entirely ignored by scholars of late eighteenth-century history, literature and politics.

There are two reasons for this neglect. First, Fox was so independent a thinker that, as will appear later in this introduction, it was very difficult to slot him into the pattern constructed by historians of the political conflicts and debates of the 1790s. He seems to belong on all sides and on no side. Secondly, until very recently, almost nothing was known about Fox, and when he was referred to - usually only as the author of the *Address* - he was misidentified. Historians and librarians have attributed all of his pamphlets to one or the other of several *wrong* William Foxes. The most common beneficiary has been ‘William Fox, Attorney-at-Law’, to whom the British Library attributes all thirteen of its William Fox pamphlets. This William Fox, originally from Gloucester, published four works between 1796 and 1813, and even a cursory reading of them reveals that this William Fox was a devout Anglican and an outspoken opponent of religious dissent, the very opposite of ‘our’ Fox. Also sometimes confused with the pamphleteer is William Fox the well-known merchant and philanthropist (1736-1826), for many years a deacon in the Baptist congregation in Little Prescott Street, Goodman’s Fields, and founder in 1785 of the Sunday School Society. His son, William Fox, Jr. (1758-1821) (listed in the catalogue of the British Library as ‘William Fox, the Younger, of Hackney’), was an author as well, publishing five books between 1796 and 1821, and in some cases he too has been confused with our Fox. This misidentification has defrauded a remarkable writer of his proper place in the

abolitionist movement, in the wider political debates of the 1790s, and in the history of political satire. It has also led to the neglect of a remarkable and resourceful woman, his publisher and business partner Martha Gurney (1733-1816).¹ This introduction will begin by giving some information about these two and their role in the abolition movement, before turning to discuss Fox as a satirist and a controversialist, and his writings on the British constitution, the British presence in India, and the revolution in France and the war with the French republic.

Fox, his publisher, and their circle

The 1790s was an especially divisive decade for dissenters. Those who actively engaged in the political issues of the day, primarily the slave trade debate, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, parliamentary reform, and opposition to the war against France, faced criticism, not only from Anglicans but also from many within their own denominations. Some were determined, ‘regardless of events ... taking place on the theatre of the world’, to pursue their Christian course in relative isolation. Others, however, felt ‘themselves bound, because they [were] Christians and citizens of the great republic of human nature, to take an interest in the welfare of all mankind, and promote their highest happiness’, believing ‘that the laws of God applied to social bodies as well as to individuals’.² The latter view was especially true of two London dissenters, Fox and Gurney.

Between 1773 and 1794, William Fox ran a bookshop at 128 Holborn Hill, adjacent to Leather Lane and just opposite Fetter Lane, between Gray’s Inn Road and Hatton Garden. His imprint appeared on more than 60 titles, generally as part of a consortium, or ‘conger’ of booksellers. The only year when his name appeared alone on title pages was 1774, when he published single versions of five plays by William Congreve and two by Nicholas Rowe, most of which appeared as well in a volume titled *Plays*, published by Fox that same year. He specialised in literary works, selling editions of Shakespeare, Cervantes, Fénelon, Dryden, Congreve, Rowe, Beaumont and Fletcher, Fielding, Richardson, and Thomson, as well as such popular works as Edward Wortley Montagu’s *Reflections on the Rise and Fall of the Ancient Republicks* (1778), Samuel Johnson’s *Lives of the Most Eminent English Poets* (1781), Andrew Kippis’s *Biographica Britannica* (1778) and the *Universal History from the Earliest Accounts to the Present Time* (1779-81).³

In 1782 Fox began to share his premises in Holborn Hill with Martha Gurney, who had run a bookshop at 34 Bell Yard, Temple Bar, since 1772.

She was the only daughter of Thomas Gurney (1705-70), a High Calvinist Baptist who served for many years as a shorthand writer at the Old Bailey. She probably learned the printing and bookselling trade from her brother, Joseph Gurney (1744-1815), the leading court stenographer of the latter part of the eighteenth century, who also was a printer and bookseller from 1766 to 1780, first at 39 Bread Street and then at 54 Holborn Hill.⁴ Fox and Martha Gurney operated as booksellers from the same address in Holborn Hill until 1794, after which Fox's name appears on no more title pages. He seems to have gone into a semi-retirement as early as 1788, however, for after that date he appears on only ten titles. Little is known of Fox's personal life. He may have been a bachelor all his life, or he may have become a widower about the time Gurney moved to his place in Holborn Hill. Evidence suggests that they were both about the same age so that Fox would have been around fifty in 1782.⁵ He owned property in two parishes in Middlesex: St Martin's, and St Andrew, Holborn.⁶

As the book trade expanded in the eighteenth century, so did the number of women involved, increasing by as much as fifty per cent in the last quarter of the century in London.⁷ Martha Gurney's career is indicative of this phenomenon. She appears as publisher, printer, or bookseller (sometimes as all three in the 1790s, but almost exclusively as 'M. Gurney') on slightly more than 100 titles. She never married, earning a 'comfortable subsistence, and, ultimately, a small independence' from her bookshop and printing business.⁸ Besides nine literary works, of which several were by the controversial Baptist poet and polemicist, Maria de Fleury, Gurney's name appears on more than fifty religious titles, including sermons by James Dore, Benjamin Kingsbury, Samuel Bradburn, Joseph Swain, Samuel Fisher, and Abraham Booth, representing a spectrum of dissenting sects. She collaborated with her brother in printing and selling his transcriptions of thirty-one state trials between 1774 and 1806, including those of Thomas Paine, Thomas Hardy, John Horne Tooke, William Stone, Edward Despard, and Lord Melville.⁹ More importantly, between 1788 and 1802 she published or sold thirty-six political pamphlets, of which fourteen vehemently opposed the slave trade. Besides being the leading woman publisher/bookseller in London during the last quarter of the eighteenth century,¹⁰ between 1787 and 1794 Gurney was second only to the Quaker printer James Phillips (1745-99) in the number of abolitionist works published or sold in London. Her publishing expertise and opposition to the slave trade provided Fox with the necessary impetus for his distinctive transformation from a minor bookseller and loyal Tory into one of the most distinctive and independent voices in the public debate over the slave trade and the war with France in the early 1790s.

Fox probably came to know Martha Gurney through her brother, for the two men, besides being booksellers only a short distance from each other in Holborn Hill, were also subscribing members to the Humane Society, founded in 1774 by Dr. William Hawes (1736-1808) of Spital Square, Fox's brother-in-law and a close friend of Joseph Gurney, whose eldest son would marry one of Hawes's daughters. Fox sold Hawes's *An Examination of the Rev. Mr. John Wesley's Primitive Physic* (1776) as well as sermons printed on behalf of the Humane Society.¹¹ All three families were deeply religious, yet diverse in their beliefs. In the mid-1780s, the Gurneys moved from Stamford Hill across the river to Keene's Row, Walworth, joining the Particular Baptist (Calvinist) congregation at Maze Pond, where James Dore (1763/64-1825) served as minister from 1783-1815. The Haweses were Anglicans but in the 1780s began to worship among the dissenters, primarily the Unitarians, either at Essex Street Unitarian Chapel, under the ministry of Theophilus Lindsey, or with the General Baptist congregation at Worship Street, led by John Evans.¹²

Fox's religious persuasion, on the other hand, is more difficult to determine. He may have been, like Hawes, an Anglican who at some point decided to affiliate with dissenters, without ever officially leaving the church. Hawes married Fox's sister, Sarah (1739-1815), sometime around 1760. Since Hawes was an Anglican at the time, it would seem likely that Sarah and William Fox were Anglicans as well. However, the authors of a history of the Russell Scott family (Scott, a Unitarian minister, would marry Hawes's daughter, Sophia) identify William Fox not only as the brother of Sarah Hawes but also as a Quaker. These authors even had in their possession 'a small volume of "Tracts" on political subjects', all written by Fox, which they describe rather astutely as not representing 'the views of any political party, but are interesting as expressing the opinions of an advanced reformer at the time that the French Revolution was in progress'.¹³ Identifying Fox as a Quaker, however, presents several problems. He does not appear in any of the marriage, burial, or members' lists of London Quakers during the last half of the eighteenth century. It seems unlikely that he would be in business in London for more than twenty years and never join a Quaker meeting; or that he would become a prolific and controversial pamphleteer and never be recognised for his work by the Quaker community of his day or by Quaker historians thereafter. More importantly, neither the tone nor substance of his political pamphlets reflect typical Quaker discourse, which required the writer or speaker to avoid giving any 'offence ... to those in outward government' or to reflect any form of a 'hostile nature' towards those 'providentially placed, either in sovereign or subordinate authority'.¹⁴ On the other hand, Fox's compelling abolitionist arguments, as well as his consistent anti-war position, would easily have met with Quaker approval. If Fox had been a Quaker, it would add weight to W.

B. Gurney's claim that his aunt, during the slave trade debate, became acquainted with 'some of the most intelligent Quakers, who valued her as a co-adjutor, engaging as she did in the circulation of these pamphlets, not so much as objects of trade as means of promoting the benevolent design', even though her abolitionist activities had led her into connections with Quakers prior to Fox's pamphleteering.¹⁵ Of the various dissenting sects, the Quakers were certainly admired by Fox, as demonstrated in a passage near the end of *An Address to the People of Great Britain*. But even in that instance, Fox still distances himself from the Quakers by referring to them as 'they', never as 'we'.¹⁶

The tenor of Fox's remarks in his pamphlets about the Church of England clearly reflect someone associated with religious dissent, but even more significantly, his situation with Martha Gurney in his house in Holborn further places Fox among the dissenters, for rarely, if ever, would a single Baptist woman have engaged a business partner and moved into his premises unless he was a dissenter, and most likely of the same sect. However, we have yet to find Fox's name in the church records of the Baptists and Independents in London, nor does his name appear in the burial records of dissenters at Bunhill Fields. The fact that Fox sold only two religious works during his career, and both were by the popular Independent divine, Philip Doddridge, might suggest Fox worshiped among the Independents, but that is circumstantial at best.¹⁷ We do know, however, that Fox was known at Maze Pond, for his manuscript of *An Address to the People of Great Britain* circulated among the congregation in the summer of 1791.¹⁸ Our best assumption about Fox's religious background, which in the turbulent years between 1787 and 1794 is not without significance, is that he became, like Hawes, a 'hearer' in a dissenting congregation, but never a member, and his attendance as a 'hearer' could have embraced any of the various dissenting sects—Quakers, Methodists, Baptists, Independents, and Unitarians—but given his relationship with Gurney, most likely among the Baptists.

The Hawes, Gurney, and Fox families were also connected by their active opposition to the slave trade in the West Indies and their support for the revolution in France.¹⁹ Joseph Gurney had been a subscriber to Granville Sharp's Society for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade from its inception in 1787.²⁰ Through his role as shorthand writer for parliament, he had immediate access to the proceedings on the slave trade debate in parliament in 1791 and 1792, giving his sister a distinct advantage over every other dissenting printer and bookseller in London except James Phillips. Salter, the family historian, remarks that the Gurneys, because of their reputation for transcribing and printing accurate records of court proceedings, 'were engaged to take discussions for private parties at the Bar of the two

Houses of Parliament, by permission, e.g. on the Slave Trade, and also in some of the Committees'. Consequently, Joseph attended the six Committees in the House in 1791 when they were conducting interviews on the slave trade; he also served as shorthand writer during the debate on the slave trade in the House of Lords in 1792,²¹ all of which earned the appreciation of Sharp's Abolition Committee, a select group of abolitionists (mostly Quakers) that included Clarkson and Wilberforce. Though never a member of the Abolition Society, Fox would nevertheless appropriate the testimony printed by the Committee to spark a national movement against the consumption of West India produce. The abolitionist activities of Dore, Gurney, and Fox would soon become known in America, and by 1795 all three, as well as Joseph Gurney's eldest son, John (1768-1845), had become members of the Pennsylvania Society for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery.²² In 1793 John Gurney had successfully defended the radical bookseller Daniel Isaac Eaton, charged with seditious libel for publishing a political satire by John Thelwall, and was soon afterwards invited to join Thomas Erskine and Vicary Gibbs in defending Thelwall, Thomas Hardy and John Horne Tooke, in the notorious treason trials of 1794.²³

Martha Gurney was as committed to ending the slave trade as her brother, nephew, and business partner. The first political pamphlet she sold (and her first collaboration with James Phillips) was James Dore's *Sermon on the African Slave Trade*, a sermon preached in November 1788 on behalf of the congregation at Maze Pond in conjunction with Granville Sharp's Abolition Society. Gurney soon began displaying 'openly in her shop the section of a slave ship, with its living cargo stowed for the voyage....' This was the large foldout drawing of the slave ship *Brookes* which had been commissioned by the Abolition Committee in March 1789 and published the next month.²⁴ The abolitionists put tremendous pressure on parliament between 1789 and 1791, bringing a cloud of witnesses, many of them sought out by Thomas Clarkson on his tours of England and Scotland, before the Privy Council and the Select Committee in the House of Commons. They described the horrors of the slave trade in Africa, the dreaded 'middle passage,' and the degrading life of slaves on the West Indian plantations. The efforts of Phillips in propagating the vision of the Abolition Committee through the printed word, coupled with William Wilberforce's persuasive rhetorical skills, led many to think that the bill for the abolition of the slave trade would finally pass in the spring of 1791. Despite the overwhelming evidence accumulated by the abolitionists, Wilberforce's motion was defeated on April 19 by a vote of 163 to 88.

Fox and the Abolition Movement

Before the spring of 1791, Fox had been a loyal but silent Tory, apparently content to allow events to take their course, regardless of his opinion in the matter. However, after nearly four years of debate, testimonials, and evidence-gathering in parliament about the slave trade, Fox had heard enough. He was now ready to join those 'Christian philanthropists' David Bogue and James Bennett would later praise so highly, those dissenters who viewed the Pitt administration and the confederated powers of Europe as engaged in 'a conspiracy against the liberties of mankind' with the aim of 'bind[ing] the consciences of mankind in adamantine fetters' and 'prevent[ing] the propagation of divine truth'.²⁵ With the defeat of Wilberforce's bill, Fox decided to bypass parliament and take his message directly to the people in the form of sharply worded, inexpensive pamphlets advocating a boycott of West India produce.

By late July 1791 Fox had composed what would become his most famous work, *An Address to the People of Great Britain*. The pamphlet appeared anonymously, the first four editions printed and sold by Phillips and Gurney. The Abolition Committee did not commission the pamphlet, for no references to it appear in the minute books, but the joint effort by Phillips and Gurney in producing and distributing the initial editions of the *Address* reveals that Gurney (helped no doubt by her brother's role as shorthand writer during the House proceedings) and Fox had achieved a certain level of respect within the abolitionist community, enough to gain Phillips's approval and cooperation. Reviewers regarded the pamphlet as eccentric and the boycott it proposed as quite 'impracticable'.²⁶ It was 'the effusion of some fond zealot, who, on the refusal of parliament to abolish the slave trade, hopes to destroy it by a serious dissuasion of our wives and daughters from the use of sugar!'²⁷ gasped the *Monthly Review* with cheerful incredulity, perfectly sure that wives and daughters were far too addicted to sweet things to be persuaded to abstain from them. But in less than a year, the *Address* went through twenty-six editions and became the most widely distributed pamphlet of the eighteenth century, with well over 100,000 copies sold or given away.²⁸

Early in 1792, Fox and Gurney collaborated on another successful pamphlet, *A Summary View of the Evidence delivered before a Committee of the House of Commons, Relating to the Slave Trade*, which went through six editions that year. The *Summary View* drew heavily upon the *Abridgment of the Minutes of the Evidence, taken before a Committee of the Whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of the Slave-Trade*, a one-volume abridgment of the four-volume *Minutes of the Evidence*, which appeared in early March 1791 (the *Abridgment* was printed one month later).²⁹ That March, as Wilberforce and the Abolition Committee prepared for another vote in the House of Commons, Gurney sold *Cruelty the Natural and Inseparable Consequence of Slavery* (1792) by the Baptist minister John

Liddon of Hemel Hempstead. Liddon (1746/47-1825) had London connections, having been a former member of the congregation at Maze Pond in the 1770s prior to Martha Gurney's arrival.³⁰ As with Dore's sermon four years earlier, Liddon argued that the slave trade was a 'violation of all the rules of justice', and any attempt to 'regulate' it, as its proponents argued before parliament, was indefensible.³¹ Liddon was clearly aware of the effect Fox's pamphlet was having among the opponents of the slave trade. Great numbers, he wrote, were disusing sugar from principle. 'The increase is astonishing'.³² Along with Liddon's *Sermon*, Gurney was also selling Samuel Bradburn's *Address to the People called Methodists, concerning the Criminality of Encouraging Slavery*. Bradburn, a popular Methodist preacher, quoted extensively from Fox's *Summary of the Evidence*, and in his conclusion advised his followers to read Fox's *Address*, a work 'which does peculiar honour to the principles and abilities of the writer'.³³ Andrew Burn, in *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain; Containing a New and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West India Sugar* (also sold by Gurney), offered a similar tribute to Fox: 'What the Wisdom of a British Senate could not effect, the worthy Author of a late Address to the Public, is likely to accomplish, by rousing to powerful exertions, those sentiments of humanity, which it is to be hoped, are more or less implanted in every breast'.³⁴

Support for a boycott of West Indian produce reached a turning point in the spring of 1792, as popular opinion began to turn against the French Revolution and political reform in England. Despite the fact that the Prime Minister himself appeared to be a convinced abolitionist, those like Fox and Clarkson, who had supported the revolution in France as well as the abolition of the slave trade, now began to be characterised as dangerous to social and political stability. Conservatives used the slave revolt in St Domingue in 1791 to strengthen this depiction of abolitionists as radicals. Samuel Hoare, a member of the Abolition Committee, wrote to Wilberforce in February 1792, relating that many Church and King advocates were spreading the notion that dissenters, both political and religious, were not seeking reform but rather revolution, 'and that the Abolition of the Slave Trade is somewhat connected with it'. Such allegations appeared in pro-government pamphlets, like the anonymous *A Very New Pamphlet Indeed!* (1792), and in the London papers. In a series of letters that appeared in the *Morning Chronicle*, March 1792, Clarkson, the Abolition Committee, and 'the author of another of the pamphlets circulated by the Members' of the Committee (which a footnote identifies as Fox's *Address*) were accused of being Jacobins. Members of the Committee, stung by these accusations, grew increasingly nervous about the linkage of abolitionism and Jacobinism. If the political opinions of Clarkson, and especially Fox, were to

be viewed as those of the Committee, Hoare complained to Wilberforce, then 'our cause will be essentially injured'.³⁵

Tensions only increased during the next year, and by the summer of 1793 Wilberforce and other members of the Abolition Committee, such as Richard Phillips (brother of James, the printer), found themselves at odds with a powerful legion of devoted abolitionists in London and throughout the provinces who had been inspired by the pamphlets of Fox and Clarkson. Though not intending their national boycott of West Indian produce to threaten the political authority of the government (its *moral* authority they had no problem questioning), these abolitionists were unable to separate themselves from the Pitt administration's efforts to paint them all as Jacobins. On August 13 Wilberforce persuaded the Committee to suspend its previous directive 'respecting the expediency of recommending the disuse of West India Sugar and Rum'.³⁶ The Clarkson-Fox-Gurney wing of the movement were now being asked to avoid any inflammatory rhetoric and allow Wilberforce and parliament to do their business—a business that, by the end of 1793, ardent abolitionists like Fox were convinced was more concerned with defeating France than abolishing the slave trade.

Fox as a Political Satirist

In 1793 and 1794, his most prolific years, Fox produced, now under his own name, a stream of pamphlets on political issues other than abolition,³⁷ and these writings were regularly noticed in the most positive terms by the liberal reviews, *The Analytical*, the *Critical* and the *Monthly*. The reviewers admired two aspects of these pamphlets in particular: first, their satirical edge, a mordant 'irony', a 'bold sarcasm', a 'great keenness' of ridicule,³⁸ delivered with a teasing, 'sprightly' wit;³⁹ and, second, an independence of thought and judgment which showed up in the freedom and directness with which Fox looked through political questions to the plain moral truths that other writers and politicians left obscure. 'He laid the Scourge with a powerful arm on the brawny shoulders of kings, statesmen and all Other Abettors of War', wrote the Welsh poet and political activist Iolo Morganwyg.⁴⁰ The unusually bold and direct manner which Fox adopted earned him a high reputation for plain-speaking;⁴¹ for 'the clear and forcible representation of plain truths',⁴² and above all for 'shrewdness' and wisdom, a great 'acuteness', a 'political sagacity' which saw and understood issues concealed from other contemporary commentators on public affairs.⁴³

Fox was a satirist with an unusually wide register, but as a man with a reputation for plain-speaking one of his main preoccupations is with the language of politics. His pamphlets repeatedly protest at what he regards as the cynical abuse of language by the government and its loyalist supporters, and in a decade in which political conflict repeatedly involved disputes about the meaning and misuse of words he is probably more alert than anyone to the way politicians attempt to win assent to their policies by misdescribing them.⁴⁴ At the opening of the pamphlet in which he offers to define ‘Jacobinism’, he suggests, in the ‘sprightly’ manner the reviewers particularly admired in him, that a degree of lexical imprecision is a commercial necessity if the trade of pamphleteering is to prosper. ‘By carefully avoiding definitions and explanations,’ he argues,

the seeds of controversy are carefully preserved to engender future ones, as *Bug-Doctors* and *Ratcatchers* suffer some vermin to escape, that they and their brethren may find future employment: And why should not *Authors* ... be entitled to praise, for preserving the fields of controversy and transmitting them unimpaired for the benefit of future Authors, instead of dilapidating and destroying the inheritance by bringing controversies to a termination by the fatal expedient of explanation and definition?⁴⁵

But there are some words, he argues, which ‘instead of merely wasting ink, deluge the world with blood; they not only light up the fire of controversy, but produce real conflagrations: instead of amusing the speculative and the idle, they agitate the mass of people, and spread horror, confusion, and desolation through the earth.’ These words ‘are invented to deceive’, by governors who ‘have found themselves necessitated, in some degree, to resort to *artifice* to obtain or maintain dominion, no longer deeming it expedient to rely totally on *force*.’⁴⁶ He protests against the use of such words – ‘jacobinism’ is one example – wherever he comes across them, and takes great relish in holding them up to contempt and ridicule. ‘Why must our language be distorted?’ he asks in a pamphlet on the conduct of the East India Company,

If it be deemed expedient to *murder* half the inhabitants of India, and *rob* the remainder, surely it is not requisite to call it *governing* them. If we choose to seize, and carry off the inhabitants of Africa, what is the use of terming it a *trade*? And if we convert our West India islands into jails to confine them, why, in the name of common sense, must they be called *colonies*?⁴⁷

He was both appalled and delighted by the ‘heroic fortitude’ of Henry Dundas, the unofficial president of the Board of Control which oversaw the government of India, reassuring the House of Commons that, however much the administration of the Company was ‘attended with abuses’ (or was corrupt and murderous, as Fox would have put it), still he, Dundas, ‘should have preferred enduring these abuses, if they admitted no other remedy’ than one which would have involved curtailing the Company’s power in India. Perhaps, however, Fox suggested, it did not require ‘any prodigious portion of *stoicism*,’ for a man in the House of Commons ‘to *endure* the calamities of fifty millions of people in a distant regions of the earth, especially if he should happen to derive revenue and patronage from their miseries.’⁴⁸ He was no less struck by ‘*Young Jenkinson*’, the future Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, who, in a debate on the British defeat at the hands of the French, was moved ‘to thump the table’ and declare ‘*he has no difficulty in saying* that our object must be ... to march to Paris, and destroy the Jacobin Club.’ The difficulty that the soldiers engaged in this invasion might experience was apparently of no concern to Jenkinson, and Fox professed that, for his part, he had ‘*no difficulty in saying*’ that such a mission would be quite impossible to complete.⁴⁹

As a satirist, Fox owes a good deal to the example of Swift, as did every prose satirist in eighteenth-century England: ‘Mr. W.F. is not a Swift,’ judged the *Monthly Review*,⁵⁰ reasonably enough, but in a complimentary review the comparison was clearly forced upon the writer by the style and acuteness of Fox’s satire. Fox was much influenced too by Benjamin Franklin, some of whose writings were being published by Martha Gurney at the same time as Fox was writing his satirical pamphlets. He probably became aware of Franklin’s political writings rather earlier, however, while Franklin was in London as official agent to parliament for the American colonies. Two of his best satires – ‘Rules by which a Great Empire may be Reduced’ and ‘Edict by the King of Prussia’ – appeared in the *Public Advertiser* in September 1773 and bear striking similarities to Fox’s satiric style.⁵¹ Some of Fox’s satire is cheerfully playful, some angrily bitter, but it is always driven by a deeply ethical approach to politics which exposes the convenient myths and fictions which allow enormities spoken or performed to pass as acceptable, even as too commonplace to be worth noticing.

In what is probably his last pamphlet, *On Peace*, Fox plays with Pitt’s boast that Britain will continue to wage war with France until the last Briton has fallen. Does he mean this literally? Fox asks – that ‘the world shall at length enjoy peace, when the last Englishman shall be no more. The world may then console itself with the hopes of seeing our island possessed by a less noxious race of *beings*, and its native Wolves again range through its dreary wilds.’⁵²

But here he pulls himself up short – the outlook for Britain is not as bleak as he had at first thought.

Mr. Pitt tells us, The last *Man* only must fall. The *Women* then, it seems, are not included in the bloody proscription, and ... surely, when the last *Man* has fallen, on *them* the Government must devolve, and *Mr. Pitt* will hardly insist on their pursuing the crusade against French principles. It does not follow that they will look on French Republicans with *his* malignity. ... Should an embassy be then sent to Paris, the French will hardly have so far forgot their ancient politeness as not to receive it with open arms, bestow the fraternal embrace, and old animosities forgotten, a union as firm as a family compact, may then take place, not founded on the fragile basis of *diplomatique* arrangements, but built on the firm foundations of nature, and our Women may entertain sentiments very opposite to the horrible exterminating ideas of *Mr. Burke* and *Mr. Pitt*. They may venerate the great first command given to Man, and, when the last Englishman shall have fallen, may consider it as a duty devolved on them to look around for means to support the tottering fabric of society. The Thames and the Seine may entwine their branches, and even without a rape the *Romans* and the *Sabines* may become united.⁵³

A more horrific vision could hardly be imagined by those who regarded the Jacobins of France as savage anarchists, or who like Burke pretended to believe that (so he told the Commons) if ‘French principles’ were introduced into Britain, we should lose not only ‘king, lords and commons, but our property, our wives’.⁵⁴ Fox cannot wait to see his vision fulfilled: ‘Thus at length, may I behold—No, alas! I am one of the proscribed. *Mr. Pitt* has sentenced me never to behold it, unless, indeed, I can hide myself in a corner, and like *Tom of Coventry* endeavour to get a peep.’⁵⁵

Much of Fox’s satire is directed against the involvement, at once cynical and oddly superstitious, of the Church of England in the propaganda against the revolution in France – especially against the annual fast days, proclaimed in order to persuade God to sign up to the coalition of kings attempting to destroy the French Republic. This attempt ‘to claim him as a partner in their guilt, and demand his assistance in perpetrating their crimes’,⁵⁶ leaves Fox at once outraged by its impiety and astonished at its naivety. The Church, he suggests, treats the deity as if he were as whimsical, capricious and limited in his powers as the gods of the Romans – and perhaps, after all, we would stand more chance of success, and involve ourselves less in impiety, if we did pray to the heathen gods:

Whatever may be our projects, or our motives, there could be no great impropriety in supplicating *Mars* to patronize our cause. Under the auspices of *Mercury* might we have conducted our enterprise against Toulon; and our Ministers, by means of an intrigue with *Juno*, might possibly have obtained possession of the thunderbolts of *Jupiter*, to hurl upon the French at Dunkirk. ... Why, when we let loose the Demon of war, must we assume that religion which points out the divine being as *The God of Peace*?⁵⁷

But perhaps Fox's single most impressive achievement as a satirist is in a darker register than these examples. In his brilliant *Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast, February 28, 1794*, he turns to consider one of the most revered elements of Tory ideology which, though himself a Tory, he finds particularly hypocritical: the notion, deriving in the English tradition from Sir Robert Filmer, of the nation as a family, owing filial obedience to its father the king. This notion had enjoyed a new currency during the American war, allowing the rebellious colonists to be portrayed as wayward prodigal sons turning wickedly away from George III their loving paterfamilias.⁵⁸ It was re-used similarly to describe the revolution in France, and to ward off rebellion in Britain by reminding the people of their filial duty to return the love supposedly directed at them by their affectionate king. Here for example is Sir Archibald MacDonal, prosecuting Thomas Paine in 1792 in his official capacity as Attorney General, and commenting on a letter he had received from Paine which insultingly referred to the king by his surname, 'Mr. Guelph'. A kingdom, MacDonal told the jury, 'is a large family. Suppose this to have happened in private life, judge of the good heart of this man, who thrusts into my hands, the grateful servant of a kind and beneficent master ... slander upon that master.'⁵⁹ He advised the jury to judge of political conflicts by treating them as if they were dissensions within private families, as if only when we see them that way do we discover the true degree of their enormity.

Fox professes himself more than willing to adopt this standard, and only regrets that the government is not prepared to carry it through to its logical conclusion. Why does it seem to apply only in the domestic affairs of the kingdom? Why are not the relations between sovereign states conducted as are the relations between individual families? This question opens the way to a denunciation of virtually every aspect of Britain in its relation with foreign nations, from Ireland to India: 'Then let us change the term *nation* to *family*;' Fox proposes, 'let us suppose one family to reside in this Island, another in *Africa*, another in the *West Indies*, one in the *East Indies*, another in *France*, and another in *Ireland*.'

Will it be said, that the parent, the Head of this family, residing in this Island, has any right as such, to send one of his sons to extirpate the family in a West India Island?—To furnish the Head of the African family with fire-arms, and chains, to subdue and bind his family; and so subdued, convey them in chains to the West India Island, that this African family and their offspring should be kept in chains for ever, forcibly to supply the English family with the rich products which their own cold climate had refused them?—Will it be said, that he has a right to send another of his sons to the East Indies, under pretence of trading with the Asiatic family for the produce of their industry, and ... not only ... possessing their houses and their lands, but spreading famine and death among them, by seizing their very food; and shall the English parent grant a charter to his son, authorising him *thus* to govern the Asiatic family, on condition of his sending part of the money to England, which has been so obtained in Asia, to enable him to pay his debts: and lastly, suppose he were to send another of his sons to the Irish family, harrassing them from age to age, without the shadow of a pretext, but that they had the misfortune to be neighbours, and therefore exposed to their inroads; and less powerful, consequently unable to retaliate the injury; should he compel them to contribute a tenth of the produce of their labour to support an English clergy, whose religion they abhorred, and the greater part of the rents of their land to aggrandise and enrich their neighbour?

‘Let us ask,’ Fox continues, ‘whether there be any principle which could justify this conduct? would any one presume to apologise for it? would not the voice of reason and justice, call on mankind to abhor it? If so, let it then be asked, whether that conduct can be justifiable in a number of individuals, or families, which would be deemed the extreme of profligate wickedness in one?’⁶⁰

In short, those in government who demand that the subjects of the king should venerate and obey him as a loving father, and that we should judge political actions by the morality observed in domestic life, do precisely the opposite themselves in their own conduct. They have invented a supposed theory of ‘political morality’ which, when it suits them, they observe in place of the morality they enjoin upon those they govern. Fox himself has no time at all for ‘political morality’, and regards it as the first refuge of scoundrels.

As we pointed out at the beginning of this introduction, however highly Fox was valued as a pamphleteer in the few brief years that he was active as a writer, the writings he produced after his first pamphlets on slavery have been almost entirely ignored by scholars of late eighteenth-century history, literature and politics. From one point of view, this is very puzzling, for Fox is certainly one of the most original, acute, and amusing commentators on a wide range of the events and issues of the 1790s, not only on slavery but on the British appropriation of India, the French revolution, and the war of the monarchies of Europe against the French republic. As his denunciation of 'political morality' demonstrates, he was an inventive and endlessly amusing satirist, but one who approached political issues with an impressive conviction that politics was above all a matter of ethics, not of self-interest, however supposedly enlightened.

From another point of view, however, the neglect of Fox is not surprising at all. He simply doesn't fit into our understanding of political conflict in 1790s Britain. His political opinions could seem to contradict each other, and though he was in fact a careful and coherent thinker about politics, it would be easy, too easy, to dismiss him as confused. His horror of Burke is matched by his contempt for Paine. He is a monarchist and a supporter of the French republic; a jacobite and (by his own definition) a Jacobin – one who believed both economic and intellectual progress depended on rooting out the remnants of the feudal system wherever they remained, in Britain, in France, in Poland, throughout Europe. Though identifying with dissenters whether he was one or not, he believed a Catholic king would be good for Britain; though a determined abolitionist he came to be regarded by the abolition movement as their adversary; though a supporter – indeed a member – of the landed interest, he had very little respect for the landed aristocracy. Believing that the majority of men in Britain were as yet unfit to participate in government,⁶¹ he was an opponent of the movement for universal manhood suffrage – he tells us, at the time of the 1794 treason trials, that he had never been a member of a 'Constitutional, or a Corresponding Society, or enlisted under the banners of Parliamentary Reform'.⁶² He saw no purpose in modernising a House of Commons that he regarded as unreformable. The majority of the parliamentary reforms proposed between 1780 and 1792 resembled, he wrote, 'the vile-ness, and corruption, of the assemblies they harangued'; as a result, it was 'preferable to leave them in possession of the powers they possessed, than risk the peace of the community by attempting to rescue it from their hands'.⁶³ In terms of the practical politics of parties and political societies, Fox had nowhere to go, nothing to belong to. But though he was as bad a fit in his own time as he is in our understanding of that time, the radical independence

of his political opinions meant that among the host of pamphleteers of his day he came to be recognised as speaking with a remarkable and distinctive voice.

The key to Fox's originality is not hard to identify. He was probably the only political commentator of his day whose political opinions were formed by a frank disgust at what Britain had done, at what Britain had become in the eighteenth century. He believed that he was a member of the most evil nation on earth: one which, while proclaiming its belief in liberty, had developed a foreign policy entirely devoted to withholding liberty from other nations and peoples. The British – 'the Desolators and Oppressors of Ireland, the plunderers of Asia, the Kidnappers of Africa, and the base Slave-holders of the West'⁶⁴ – had committed crimes, he believed, on a scale hitherto unknown to history, had killed more people than any other nation, and not just in Africa, India, Ireland, the West Indies, but in the almost unbroken sequence of wars, mainly against European rivals, in which Britain had been engaged for over a century.⁶⁵ Wars were invariably defended by the government as 'just and necessary', but for Fox they were always unjust and demonstrably unnecessary, since they were almost always unsuccessful in achieving their 'necessary' objectives and yet Britain still prospered.⁶⁶ In particular he was disgusted at Britain's involvement in the atrocities of the slave trade and of slavery, and at the robberies and murders committed, on a scale, he believed, unheard of before, by the East India Company through its policy of extracting, at the cost of millions of deaths by starvation, vast revenues from the people of India to service the British national debt. It was in this light that he looked upon the horror evinced by so many in Britain at what was happening in France, and at the determination of the British government to restore the Bourbons to the French throne as if to do so was a pious moral duty. How could a nation as monumentally evil as Britain possibly claim to be occupying the moral high ground?

Though the English in Ireland, under Elizabeth I and Cromwell, had become practised, Fox believed, at mass murder, whether achieved by famine or the sword, it was at the accession of William III in 1688 that violence against other nations became the habitual and almost invariable means of conducting foreign relations, and that Britain became, as a French writer had described them, the 'savages of Europe' – virtually, Fox believes, a pirate nation.⁶⁷ For since 1688, the nation, determined never again to have a Catholic monarch, had been content to be ruled by foreign monarchs whose foreign policy was determined by the fact that they were also rulers of smaller continental states.⁶⁸ For William III, Britain, rich in resources as it was, and secure from invasion by its insularity,⁶⁹ was chiefly of value as providing him with the means to wage wars against Louis XIV, to the benefit not of his adopted

country but of Holland. From the accession of George I in 1714, the Hanoverian monarchs that had subsequently ruled Britain for the rest of the century conducted a foreign policy dedicated to protecting the independence of Hanover from real or imaginary threats, and if possible to enlarging their tiny German realm. The history of Europe in the eighteenth century, Fox argued, would have been far more peaceful under a Stuart monarchy, whether Catholic or not. Indeed, Fox suggested, the Catholicism of James II would have been, had he been able to reign in security, a positive advantage to England, and much less dangerous to the liberty and peace of England than an Anglican monarch: the power of the Catholic king of a Protestant nation would always necessarily have been checked and balanced by the compromises he would have been obliged to make with his people and with the other institutions of government. In particular, in order to practise his own religion in security, he would probably be forced to repeal the acts of parliament which denied civil rights to dissenters as well as to Catholics. Under a Stuart monarchy, in short, 'British Liberty', the freedom that Britons had been taught to believe was their special inheritance and birthright, might have been enjoyed by all Britons. At it was, it was the privilege reserved for members of the Church of England; and of those, only for the men – for 'no partizan of liberty and equality has ever yet condescended to consider Woman as a part of the Human Race'.⁷⁰

How seriously we should take Fox's jacobitism is not clear. Certainly he gives us no hint that it was anything less than deeply felt and deeply meditated. But in the absence of any conceivable possibility that the surviving Stuart claimant, Henry IX of Britain, as he styled itself, would ever occupy the throne, it is probably best thought of as a declaration on Fox's part of his political independence, and as a thought experiment, a position from which to interrogate exactly what was supposed to have been gained by the throne passing to the protestant houses of Orange and Hanover. The deposition of James II, he claimed, was a part of the continuing process whereby the House of Commons had steadily appropriated power to itself from the king, the House of Lords, and the people itself. For Fox, that process was not, as Whig ideology would have it, the very process by which British liberty was being given institutional form, against the threat of rule by absolutist kings. It was a power-grab by a self-interested class fraction, rich Anglican men whose income was primarily derived from government stocks and from shares in trading companies and industrial concerns. In struggles therefore between the king and parliament he calculated, with whatever misgivings, that the king was closer to the cause of true liberty than were the Commons. In the showdown of 1784, the general election fought between William Pitt and Charles James Fox on the issue of the king's intervention in the processes of legislation and his prerogative to choose his ministers against the wishes of the majority of

MPs, William Fox had voted, as he tells us in *On Trials for Treason*, for Pitt and the prerogative.⁷¹ The corruption of parliament about which reformers complained – the rotten boroughs, the constituencies so entirely influenced by local grandees that only their nominees could be elected to parliament, the system of pensions, sinecures and other bribes by which prime ministers attempted to secure their majorities in the Commons – all this for Fox was of less significance than the corruption by which the supposed British house of representatives had come to represent, he claimed, moneyed Anglican men to the effective exclusion of all others.

He believed this fervently, and was entirely convinced by the Tory argument that those whose property was in stocks and shares could not claim to represent the national interest because at any moment they could liquidate their assets and move to another country. The landed interest, on the other hand, whose property was fixed, not moveable, and who, when they attempted to improve their property, were obliged to make investments which often brought profit only to later generations, were necessarily committed to the long-term interests and stability of the nation, and were therefore far more to be trusted with government. By the 1790s landed property was so inextricably involved with finance and the credit economy that this characterisation of the landed interest looked surprisingly anachronistic, especially in the mouth of one who repeatedly represented himself as a moderniser. Hence, while he consistently mocked Burke for being ridiculously attached to the last remnants of feudal government in Europe, his attack on Paine's *Rights of Man* was made almost entirely on the grounds that in order to pay for the welfare programme he was advocating, Paine wanted to tax landed property more heavily, and wanted to limit the size of landed estates.

Revolution and the War with France

Fox's belief that nations could prosper only by destroying the remains of feudalism meant that he was a strong supporter of the revolution in France, without believing that any similar revolution in Britain was necessary, likely, or possible. The enthusiasm with which he believed the French rallied to the tricolour when France was attacked in 1792, and the ease with which the revolutionary armies defeated the armies of the anti-French coalition, convinced him that the revolution was thoroughly popular, and he remained convinced

both of this, and of the absolute necessity of the revolution for the future of France, even during Robespierre's 'terror'. Whatever horrors the rulers of France were visiting on their own people were as nothing, he thought, compared with what the British were doing to their subject peoples.⁷² He could not join in the outpouring of grief and rage with which the British people were invited to respond to the execution of Louis XVI; as far as Fox was concerned, it had been amply proved that Louis was conspiring with the enemies of France to destroy the revolution, and he was justly sentenced to suffer the punishment of traitors. And though he had no wish to see either the monarchy extinguished or universal suffrage instituted in Britain, he was perfectly willing to entertain the notion that, in time, Britain would complete its own long revolution by becoming a fully democratic republic.⁷³

If the institution of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade was the first crucial moment in Fox's development as a political thinker, the execution of Louis XVI was the second. For many in Britain it was the event which made it impossible for them to continue to support the revolution; for the government it was the event that ensured that the British people would willingly be led to join the coalition of monarchies ranged against the republic. For Fox, the reaction of the government to the death of Louis made it impossible for him to continue supporting Pitt, whom he had admired ever since he first became Prime Minister. A few weeks before the French declared war on Britain – a declaration that Fox would insist had been deliberately provoked by Britain – he was still a warm admirer of Pitt.⁷⁴ The abolition movement depended for whatever success it was likely to have on the Prime Minister's support, and so far he had done nothing on that score to disappoint Fox's expectations of him. The slave trade, Pitt had told the Commons in April 1792, was 'the greatest practical evil that ever afflicted the human race', and a 'stigma on our national character'.⁷⁵ ... 'I know of no evil that ever existed, nor can imagine any evil to exist, worse than by the tearing of seventy or eighty thousands persons annually from their native land, by a combination of the most civilized nations, inhabiting the most enlightened part of the globe'.⁷⁶ And though the French and the Dutch were involved in this combination, he continued, 'there is no nation in Europe that has ... plunged so deeply into this guilt as Great Britain.'⁷⁷ Only ten months later, however, in February 1793, Pitt's imagination had indeed discovered an evil even worse than the slave trade, a crime worse than any other crime ever committed! The execution of Louis, Pitt now told the Commons, 'is the foulest and most atrocious deed which the history of the world has yet had occasion to attest'.⁷⁸

Fox was appalled. The killing of one man, justly executed for a grave crime he had certainly committed, was now to be considered an atrocity greater than the killing of tens if not hundreds of thousands of Africans, the

enslavement and brutal treatment of those who survived, the separation of parents from children and husbands from wives, simply so that British consumers could sweeten their tea with sugar in preference to honey. How many hundreds of thousands more Africans would have had to be heaped on to the scales to weigh more heavily with Pitt than the death of a single European? How many lives of ordinary people would weigh more than the life of one king? And why in any case did a British government believe it had an obligation to deplore in such extravagant terms the death of a foreign king? Did the British not have sufficient terrible crimes of their own to atone for, without searching abroad for the crimes of others to bemoan? Fox deplored the sight of a nation indulging the luxury of basing our actions on our feelings without engaging our reason and judgment.⁷⁹ And then again, were not the British themselves culpable for the death of Louis? Wasn't Burke guilty of grossly misrepresenting the revolution and thus of providing the absolute monarchs of Europe with a moral pretext for intervention? And could the British government not have intervened to arrest the chain of events that had led inexorably to the death of Louis? In the summer of 1792, with the armies of the coalition massing on the borders of France, threatening to invade in order to restore Louis to all the 'legitimate authority' he had exercised before the revolution, the French government appealed to Britain to mediate between them and the allies. Britain loftily refused, whereupon France was invaded, and from that moment the life of Louis, who was rightly suspected of colluding with the enemy, was bound to be forfeit.

What were the government's reasons for provoking France, as Fox believed it had done, into declaring war on Britain? The answer to this question was implicated in the difficult question of Britain's war aims, which, as Fox and others repeatedly complained, the government had refused to set out, or else, reacting differently at different times to the pressure from the other members of the coalition, had spelled out in statements which clearly contradicted each other. The pretext, which soon came to be acknowledged as a pretext, was that the French had broken a treaty concerning the navigation of the river Scheldt, an infraction which hardly justified the claim that the war with France was a 'necessary' one. The aim of Britain's allies was to restore Louis to his former powers, but before entering the war the British government had repeatedly declared that it had no intention of interfering with the internal affairs of France. However, the existence of a republic in France which it claimed was in a state of anarchy, and the highly debatable claim that in 1793 France was fighting a war of aggression, not of self-defence, enabled the government to modify its position, and to claim that the security of Europe could be safeguarded only by the restoration of the French monarchy. At one time this was explained as involving a return to the pre-revolutionary

status quo; at another, a return to the constitutional monarchy of 1791. Fox believed that Britain was prevaricating in this way because it had no intention of making peace with France, or of providing any basis for peace negotiations, until its true and secret aims had been accomplished. Of these, the more important was to assure that, by whatever constitutional settlement, France became once more the semi-feudal state it had been before the revolution, incapable therefore of developing a modern, efficient economy which could compete in world markets with Britain. In the meantime, Britain's aim was to grab the more profitable of France's overseas territories, her sugar islands in the Caribbean: both Martinique and Guadeloupe were captured in the spring of 1794.

In February of that year, however, the French Convention, responding or reacting to the slave revolts in its Caribbean possessions, had passed a decree emancipating all the slaves in territories under the jurisdiction of France, and establishing a committee to determine how the emancipation should be managed. Pitt's reaction to this news outraged Fox, and seems to have led to his final disillusionment with the Abolition Society. Pitt described the decree as 'wild and improvident', and declared that it would not be put into effect in any islands that Britain might succeed in capturing from the French. Pitt had always argued that the slave-trade was not only inhumane and criminal, but also unnecessary, for there were now enough slaves in the Caribbean to keep up the supply necessary for the cultivation of the sugar islands – or, as Fox put it, the well-stocked islands could be run as 'breeding pens' to produce slaves for export to those where labour was in short supply.⁸⁰ Perhaps Fox had earlier been clinging to the hope that Pitt was, like Fox himself, an opponent not just of the slave-trade but of slavery itself, and that he had been advocating the abolition only of the trade for strategic reasons, not wishing to alarm those who believed that without slaves the cultivation of the sugar islands would be impossible, or that emancipation would endanger their security. But now, realising that Pitt had meant what he said all along, he was ready to denounce him and all supporters of the abolition of the trade who were not also supporters of the abolition of slavery itself. 'The Abolitionists and Anti-abolitionists,' he declared, were largely in agreement:

both talked, and with equal propriety, about justice and humanity, but it was merely to lengthen, diversify and ornament their speeches. The most eligible mode of increasing the Slaves was the sole question, and so far was the Abolition of Slavery from being intended, that Mr. Pitt's principal argument in favour of his plan was, that, it secured Slavery from impending dangers.⁸¹

In order to write *A Defence of the Decree of the National Convention of France, for Emancipating the Slaves in the West Indies*, he asked Richard Phillips, his old abolitionist associate, and a member of the Abolition committee, to lend him the full transcript of the minutes of evidence of the parliamentary committee that had investigated the trade. 'I was informed that he would furnish no materials to an *Adversary*.'⁸²

Fox's political isolation was now complete. He stood with the government on constitutional issues but was bitterly opposed to it on the questions of war and the revolution. He was with the parliamentary opposition, led by Charles James Fox, in advocating no interference in the internal affairs of France, on where responsibility lay for starting the war, and on the need to end it,⁸³ but was deeply hostile to every aspect of Whig constitutional doctrine. But there was not a person in parliament with whom he could make common cause on the matter closest to his heart and conscience, the abolition of slavery itself. None, as he put it, 'was so far contaminated with French Principles, as to propose restoring the Slaves in our Islands to the benefits of civil society, and the protection of its laws'.⁸⁴ If on this issue he had no support at Westminster, he could find allies only among those as alienated as he was from the extra-parliamentary associations through which respectable campaigners attempted to put pressure on their 'virtual' representatives in the Commons: among those too supposedly extreme for the Abolition Society, or among the radical societies whose reformist and in some cases republican objectives he deplored.

For some loyalists, Fox clearly belonged alongside the members of those radical societies who were attempting, as he believed, to hand the supreme authority to 'a licentious mob'.⁸⁵ On May 21 1794, a James Johnson wrote to Henry Dundas, in his capacity as Home Secretary, enclosing two of Fox's pamphlets, complaining that he was 'a violent Republican, and a Seditious man', and his writings rife with 'Treasonous Matter ... of a very alarming nature'. Johnson assured Dundas that he could provide 'such necessary Information relative to this man as may by him be deemed necessary' to bring Fox 'to Justice'. One of the pamphlets he found particularly dangerous was the third number of *Poor Richard's Scraps*, a staunchly Jacobite defence of James II and the powers of the monarchy which is closer to the high-prerogative Toryism of the arch sedition-finder John Reeves than to the republicanism of Thomas Paine. It could probably have been prosecuted, as Reeves's *Thoughts on the English Government* would be in 1796, as a libel on the constitution; it could certainly have been charged, as *Rights of Man* had been in 1792, as a libel on the English revolution. Johnson describes Fox as 'a man of considerable Property both Landed and Funded', someone beyond Johnson's social but

not his political reach – certainly not at a time when accusatory information on suspected radicals was welcome at the Home Office.

The letter is in a file of Home Office papers where Fox keeps company with the kind of ‘licentious mob’ he despised: in the same month as Fox was denounced, letters containing accusations of sedition and treason were received at the Home Office naming Thomas Hardy, Secretary of the London Corresponding Society, John Thelwall, the society’s great orator, Jeremiah Joyce of the Society for Constitutional Information, a former glazier, now tutor to Earl Stanhope’s children, and the radical journalist Joseph Gales of the Sheffield SCI, and many others.⁸⁶ By the time Johnson wrote his letter, Hardy, Thelwall and Joyce had all been arrested and would soon be charged with high treason; to avoid a similar fate, Gales would shortly escape to Philadelphia. Fox was never arrested, but by the end of 1794 he had ceased his pamphleteering, whether from fear of the authorities or disgust with the whole environment of contemporary politics – or he may even have died. We have found no trace of him following his last publications in the late autumn of 1794.

Though Fox’s pamphlets grow directly out of the tense early years of the French revolution and the republican wars, in editing this collection we have been repeatedly struck by how relevant they are to the politics of the early twenty-first century. As the first proponent of the political mobilisation of consumers, he is the original progenitor of the present fair trade movement and other consumer campaigns against the use of cheap and sometimes slave labour in the production of goods for western markets. His denunciation of pre-emptive war – ‘to go abroad in quest of blood and slaughter, under pretence of guarding against *future* and *supposed* dangers, is certainly incompatible with every moral principle even as recognized by the common practice of civil life’⁸⁷ – was as apposite as ever it had been at that stage in the second Iraq war when it was still being pretended that the aim of the war was to locate hidden weapons of mass destruction. And in that and other conflicts in the Middle East, if others had taken as seriously as Fox his insistence that the lives of non-Christians are every bit as valuable as those of Christians, the body-count – not that the bodies were actually counted – would have been far far lower.

Note on the Texts

The following pamphlets are all the surviving writings of William Fox which appear to have survived. He may have published one more of which, if it was indeed printed, no copy survives: see p. 87. The pamphlets have been presented in chronological order as far as that can be ascertained, and we have noted in the headnotes our reasons for dating them as we do. Where multiple editions of a pamphlet have survived, we have reprinted the edition that we regard, on grounds partly literary, partly historical, as the most interesting. Substantial variations among the editions have been recorded in the notes to each pamphlet, except in the case of *The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War*, where the variations are so considerable that we have presented them in an appendix. Our editorial practice has been to keep to the original language and punctuation as much as possible, even where Fox has made small grammatical errors, usually in the form of a failure of agreement between subject and verb or noun and pronoun. A few changes in punctuation and capitalization have been necessary to clarify the meaning of a sentence or to maintain consistency; nearly all of these changes have been made silently. Some spellings have been changed silently where they are obviously typographical errors (several of the pamphlets appear to have been printed in considerable haste and show evidence of sloppy compositing) or where we have found no authority for them in the OED. In at least one case, ‘principal’ has been changed to ‘principle’. Most variant spellings we have left as they are, such as ‘ballance’, ‘antient’, ‘detered’, ‘refered’, ‘confered’, ‘infered’ (though in one instance it appears as ‘inferred’), ‘incured’, ‘crouded’, ‘uncontroled’, ‘compleated’, ‘smoaking’, ‘occured’, ‘quarrelled’, ‘negociation’, ‘sheild’, ‘analize’, ‘waggons’, ‘steril’, ‘Regecide’, ‘fragil’, ‘occurences’, ‘acknowleged’, ‘subvertion’, ‘alleging’, and ‘Whigg Clubb’. In some cases Fox uses variant spellings of the same word in a single pamphlet, e.g. ‘stigmatise’ and ‘stigmatize’, ‘favourite’ and ‘favourit’, ‘partizan’ and ‘partisan’, and we have let these inconsistencies stand.

*An Address to the People of Great Britain,
on the Propriety of Abstaining from
West India Sugar and Rum.**

Why did all-creating Nature,
 Make the plant for which we toil!
Sighs must fan it, Tears must water
 Sweat of ours must dress the Soil.
Think ye Masters, iron-hearted,
 Lolling at your jovial Boards,
Think how many Backs have smarted
 For the sweets your Cane affords?
 COWPER'S Negro's Complaint⁸⁸

Fox's Address, published anonymously in July 1791, became the most widely distributed pamphlet in the eighteenth century. After Wilberforce's motion for abolishing the slave trade was defeated on 19 April 1791 by a vote of 163 to 88, abolitionists like Fox took their message directly to the people, galvanizing their forces in Great Britain and America around a boycott of West Indian produce. Fox begins his Address by noting how ironic it is that England, which claims to stand for freedom and benevolence, should be traversing the globe enslaving other peoples. To Fox, the wealth and power produced by the slave trade can only

* AN ADDRESS / TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT BRITAIN, / ON THE PROPRIETY OF
ABSTAINING FROM / West India Sugar and Rum. // [quotation from Cowper's 'Ne-
gro's Complaint' (see above)] // The Eleventh Edition. // Sold by M. GURNEY, No.
128, Holborn-Hill, T. Knott, / No. 47, Lombard-Street, and C. Forster, No. 41, Poul-
try. / 1791. // Price 1d. or four for 3d. nine for 6d. nineteen for 1s. or fifty / for
2s.6d. // In a short Time will be published, by the same Author, / A REVIEW of the
EVIDENCE relating to the SLAVE / TRADE, and COLONIAL SLAVERY—Price 2d. and
/ a larger number cheaper.

be reduced by boycotting the produce of slavery, an action he hopes will lead to the abolition of slavery itself. In what would be one of his most controversial statements, Fox accused every user of West Indian sugar of 'participat[ing] in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and slave-driver are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity'. Thus the consumer becomes an accessory, not only to robbery, but, in a figurative sense, to cannibalism as well, for Fox believed that 'every pound of sugar used' was the equivalent of 'consuming two ounces of human flesh'. To Fox, the very character of Englishmen--as benevolent Christians, humanitarians, and lovers of freedom--was at stake. Since Parliament was 'unwilling' to abolish the trade, Fox urged the English people to 'abstain' from sugar and rum until they could obtain it 'unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood'.

The Address was reviewed by the Analytical Review and the Critical Review (both August 1791), and by the Monthly Review (October 1791).

Notwithstanding the late determination of the House of Commons on the Slave-Trade,⁸⁹ we may hope that the discussion it has received will not be useless; and that the public attention has not been excited in vain, to a system of cruelty which it is painful even to recite. It may be hoped that, claiming for ourselves the most perfect freedom, we shall no longer impose upon others a slavery the most oppressive; and that, enjoying a degree of felicity unequalled in any age or country, we shall no longer range the world to increase the misery of mankind.

The lust of power, and the pride of conquest, have doubtless produced instances far too numerous, of man enslaved by man. But we, in an enlightened age, have greatly surpassed, in brutality and injustice, the most ignorant and barbarous ages: and while we are pretending to the finest feelings of humanity, are exercising unprecedented cruelty. We have planted slavery in the rank soil of sordid avarice; and the produce has been misery in the extreme. We have ascertained, by a course of experiments in cruelty, the least portion of nourishment requisite to enable man to linger a few years in misery; the greatest quantity of labour, which in such a situation, the extreme of punishment can extort; and the utmost degree of pain, labour, and hunger united, that the human frame can endure.

In vain have such scenes been developed. The wealth derived from the horrid traffic, has created an influence that secures its continuance; unless the people at large shall refuse to receive the produce of robbery and murder. The Legislature having refused to interpose, the people are now necessarily called on, either to reprobate or approve the measure; for West-India Slavery

must depend upon their support for its existence, and it is in the power of every individual to increase, or to diminish its extent. The laws of our country may indeed prohibit us the sugar-cane, unless we will receive it through the medium of slavery.⁹⁰ They may hold it to our lips, steeped in the blood of our fellow-creatures; but they cannot compel us to accept the loathsome potion. With us it rests, either to receive it and be partners in the crime, or to exonerate ourselves from guilt, by spurning from us the temptation. For let us not think, that the crime rests alone with those who conduct the traffic, or the legislature by whom it is protected. If we purchase the commodity we participate in the crime. The slave-dealer, the slave-holder, and the slave-driver, are virtually the agents of the consumer, and may be considered as employed and hired by him to procure the commodity. For, by holding out the temptation, he is the original cause, the first mover in the horrid process; and every distinction is done away by the moral maxim, That whatever we do by another, we do ourselves.

Nor are we by any means warranted to consider our individual share in producing these evils in a trivial point of view. The consumption of sugar in this country is so immense, that the quantity commonly used by individuals will have an important effect.⁹¹ A family that uses 5 lb. of sugar per week, with the proportion of rum, will, by abstaining from the consumption 21 months, prevent the slavery or murder of one fellow-creature; eight such families in 19½ years, prevent the slavery or murder of 100, and 38,000 would totally prevent the Slave Trade to supply our islands.⁹² Nay, so necessarily connected are our consumption of the commodity, and the misery resulting from it, that in every pound of sugar used, (the produce of slaves imported from Africa) we may be considered as consuming two ounces of human flesh,⁹³ besides destroying an alarming number of seamen by the Slave-Trade, and spreading inconceivable anguish, terror, and dismay, through an immense continent, by the burning of their villages, tearing parents from their families, and children from their parents; breaking every bond of society, and destroying every source of human happiness. A French writer observes, “That he cannot look on a piece of sugar without conceiving it stained with spots of human blood:” and Dr. Franklin adds, that had he taken in all the consequences, “he might have seen the sugar not merely spotted, but thoroughly dyed scarlet in grain.”⁹⁴

Dreadful consideration, that our increasing happiness and prosperity⁹⁵ has spread desolation and misery over a country as large as all Europe! For it is an indisputable fact, that it is British luxury, the African Slave Trade depends on for support: they have increased, and they would fall together. For our consumption of sugar is now so immense, that it nearly equals that of all

Europe besides; and Jamaica now supplies more than all our West-India Islands did at any period prior to 1755.⁹⁶

But amazingly extensive as is the increase of the culture, so far is it from keeping pace with our luxury, that (before the disturbances in the French Islands, within these two or three years)⁹⁷ sugars have ever sold in the British market 20 or 30, sometimes 50 per cent. dearer than in any other part of the world. Nor is it to support the old plantations, as is pretended, but to form new ones, for the supply of this our increasing luxury, that the wretched Africans are torn from their native land.

Let us then imagine our immense consumption wholly, or in great part to cease, and our sugars to be thrown on the foreign markets; would additional slaves be wanted to supply an overflowing market at a falling price? No: the African Slave Trade, by whomsoever conducted, to supply sugar colonies, by whatever nation possessed, must totally cease. Horror and dismay would give place to peace and civilization, through a coast of above three thousand miles extent, and above a thousand miles inland: for so extensive are our depredations, and so extensive are the benefits which it is in our power to confer. Nor would the beneficial effects cease, even here. The West-India islands, finding less demand for sugar, must appropriate less ground to the sugar-cane, and leave more for provisions: the slaves would be less worked, better fed, and in a few years consist intirely of native Creoles.⁹⁸ Or if the planters appropriate the land to the other productions of the islands, the same beneficial effects must ensue. For Mr. Cooke tells us, “the cultivation of cotton, pimento, and coffee, is easier than sugar: the Slaves look better, and increase faster;” and instead of requiring additional slaves, they would be able to increase their plantations with those already in the Islands.⁹⁹ For Governor Parry says, “one acre of sugar requires as much labour as three of cotton.”¹⁰⁰ Thus our refraining from the consumption of the sugar-cane, even for a few years, would destroy the Slave Trade to the West-India Islands, bring fresh land into culture, and place the slaves in such a situation, that they must rapidly increase.

The diminution of the consumption of West-India produce, would also have a powerful effect by sinking the price of the commodity; and thereby take away the temptation to import additional slaves. The effect a small variation in the supply or demand has on the price, we have recently experienced. The disturbances in the French sugar islands, has suddenly raised some of the markets, which were 20 or 30 per cent, lower than the British, much above it; and thereby occasioned an exportation from this country to supply the deficiency: and our exportation, though only amounting to a 10th of our importation, has raised our sugars 50 per cent.¹⁰¹ And as a fall in the price would obstruct the Slave Trade, and meliorate the condition of the slaves; so this rise will produce effects the most baneful. The planter, tempted by the high price

to get sugar and rum to market while that high price continues, will deprive his slaves of their provision grounds, to plant them with canes; and by the energy of the whip, they will be forced to the most extreme exertions. The murder, or, in the technical language of the West-Indies, the *loss* of his slaves, will be to him but a secondary consideration. The large crop, and the high price, will amply compensate him: and the question now is, not merely whether we shall hold out to him an inducement to purchase additional slaves; but whether we shall tempt him to murder those he already has. We can hardly doubt, but that West India packets¹⁰² have already borne the murderous dispatches, expressed in language too dreadfully explicit, and to the following effect. "The price of sugar and rum still continues high. You must adopt every mode to forward as large a cargo as possible. A fortunate crisis now offers itself for extricating my estate from the difficulties in which it is involved. We must avail ourselves of it: another may never occur. Consequences, though disagreeable, must at the present moment be overlooked. The slave market is still open for a supply. *New-fangled humanity is no more.*" The day hardly dawns when the whip resounds through those regions of horror; nor ceases, till darkness closes the scene, which day after day is renewed. The miserable victims, destitute of every source of comfort to body or to mind, and sinking under the three endemic diseases of our islands, hunger, torture, and extreme labour; and urged to exertions they are unable to sustain, at length expire beneath the lash, which in vain endeavours to rouse them to a renewal of their labour.

As neither the slave-dealer, nor the planter, can have any moral right to the person of him they stile their slave, to his labour, or to the produce of it; so they can convey no right in that produce to us: and whatever number of hands it may pass through, if the criminal circumstances appertaining to it be known to them at the time of the transfer, they can only have a criminal possession: and the money paid, either for the slave, or for the produce of his labour, is paid to obtain that criminal possession; and can confer no moral right whatever. So, if the death of the person called a slave, be occasioned by the criminal possession, that criminal possessor is guilty of murder; and we, who have knowingly done any act which might occasion his being in that situation, are accessories to the murder before the fact, as by receiving the produce of his labour, we are accessories to the robbery, after the fact.¹⁰³

If we, as individuals concerned in the Slave Trade (either by procuring the slaves, compelling them to labour, or receiving the produce) imagine that our share in the transaction is so minute that it cannot perceptibly increase the injury; let us recollect that, though numbers partaking of a crime may diminish the shame, they cannot diminish its turpitude. Can we suppose, that an injury of enormous magnitude can take place, and the criminality be destroyed merely by the criminals becoming so numerous as to render their

respective shares indistinguishable? Were an hundred assassins to plunge their daggers into their victim, though each might plead, that without his assistance the crime would have been compleated, and that his poniard neither occasioned nor accelerated the murder, yet every one of them would be guilty of the intire crime. For into how many parts soever a criminal action may be divided, the crime itself rests intire and compleat on every perpetrator.¹⁰⁴

But waving this latter consideration, and even supposing for a moment, that the evil has an existence from causes totally independent of us. Yet it exists, and as we have it in our power jointly with others, to remedy it; it is undoubtedly our duty to contribute our share, in hope that others will theirs; and to act that part from conscience, which we should from inclination in similar cases, that interested our feelings.¹⁰⁵

For instance; let us suppose the Algerines¹⁰⁶ to establish sugar plantations, and resort to the banks of the Thames for slaves, as the only place to be insulted with impunity. Suppose our wives, our husbands, our children, our parents, our brethren, swept away, and the fruit of their labour, produced with agonizing hearts and trembling limbs, landed at the port of London. What would be our conduct? Should we say, Sugar is a necessary of life: I cannot do without it. Besides, the quantity I use is but a small proportion: and though it is very criminal of the Algerines to enslave others, yet I am not bound to look to the nature or consequences of the transaction; and paying for the sugar, I have a right to consume it, however it may have been obtained. If such would be our language in that case, be it so on the present occasion. For let us recollect, that the only difference is, that in one case our relation to the enslaved is rather more remote, but that in both cases they are our brethren.

But it is hardly requisite to state so strong a case as that supposed. For were only one Englishman to receive injuries, that bore but the slightest resemblance to those daily committed in our islands, the nation would be inflamed with resentment, and clamorous to avenge the injury. And can our pride suggest to us, that the rights of men are limited to any nation, or to any colour? Or, were any one to treat a fellow creature in this country as we do the unhappy Africans in the West-Indies; struck with horror, we should be zealous to deliver the oppressed, and punish the oppressor. Are then the offices of humanity and functions of justice to be circumscribed by geographical boundaries? Can reason, can conscience justify this contrast in our conduct, between our promptitude, in the one case, and our torpor in the other?—Mr. Addison justly observes, that "humanity to become estimable must be combined with justice!"¹⁰⁷ But we seem to act as if we thought that the relief of our fellow-creatures, protection from injuries, communication of benefits,

were works of supererogation,¹⁰⁸ to be granted or with-held, as caprice, or custom, or inclination may suggest.

After the important considerations adduced, it might be reckoned a degradation of the subject to mention the national dignity; or even that might induce us to counteract a powerful body of men, who are trampling under foot, the dictates of humanity, and the interest of the nation: men, who have in 50 years received for sugar alone, above 70 millions more than it would have cost at any other market. And from Mr. Botham's evidence it appears, that in Batavia, where labour is as high as in England, sugar, equal to the best West-India, is sold at 1d ½ per pound.¹⁰⁹ These are the men,¹¹⁰ who are endeavouring to overthrow a plan for supplying us with sugars, by means of free labour; and have the audacity to tell the British legislature, "That they cannot abolish the slave trade; for that if England refuses to furnish them with slaves, they will obtain a supply through other channels."¹¹¹ And a governor of Barbadoes admonishes us, "From policy, to leave the Islands to the quiet management of their own affairs."¹¹² These nominal colonies have, it seems, been taught, that we have no right to controul them; that the acts of their Assemblies alone are obligatory; and that those of British legislators, are binding only on those whom they represent.¹¹³ The right of enslaving others, they contend for, as the most valuable of their privileges.

Thus it appears, that the legislature is not only unwilling, but perhaps unable, to grant redress; and therefore it is more peculiarly incumbent on us; *To abstain from the use of sugar and rum, until our West India Planters themselves have prohibited the importation of additional slaves, and commenced as speedy and effectual a subversion of slavery in their islands, as the circumstances and situation of the slaves will admit: or till we can obtain the produce of the sugar cane in some other mode, unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood.*

For surely it may be hoped that we shall not limit our views merely to the abolition of the African slave trade, as the colonial slavery formed on it, is in its principle equally unjust. For if it be iniquitous to force the Africans from their native land; equally iniquitous must it be, to retain them and their posterity in perpetual bondage. And though the African slave trade be the most prominent feature in this wickedness, yet it is but a feature: and were it abolished, the West India slavery would still exist. Our planters would breed, instead of importing slaves; and shall we suffer half a million of fellow subjects, and their posterity, to be held in slavery for ever? I say, fellow subjects, for undoubtedly, every person born in the dominions of Great Britain is a subject, bound to obey and entitled to the protection of the common law of England; and in opposition to which, the acts of assemblies, existing merely by grant from the crown, can be of no authority.¹¹⁴

In demanding liberty then for the persons called slaves in our Islands, we demand no more than they are entitled to by the common law of the land. The most eligible mode of putting them in possession of their legal and natural right, may be a question of difficulty; but it is a question that ought to be considered with no other view, but to their happiness. The plan to be adopted, ought to be certain and speedy in its operation, without any consideration of the supposed, or even real interest, of their oppressors: and let it be remembered, that it is in the power of a small proportion of the people of England to effect it, by refusing to receive the produce. For the planters themselves would adopt the plan, were that the only condition on which we would consume the produce of their islands: nor would the Legislature be then harrassed with preposterous claims for compensation;¹¹⁵ which, however unfounded in justice or reason, will be supported by influence, and enforced with clamour.

The case now fully lies before us; and we have to make our choice, either to join ourselves with these manufacturers of human woe, or to renounce the horrid association. If we adopt the former, let us at least have the candour to avow our conduct in its real deformity. Let us no longer affect to deplore the calamities attendant on the Slave Trade, of which we are the primary cause: nor let us pretend to execrate the conduct of the slave-dealer, the slave-holder, or the slave-driver; but apologize for them as our partners in iniquity: and be assured, that if we now take *our* share in the transaction, we should, were we placed in a similar situation with them, with as little compunction take *theirs*; unless we can suppose the order of nature would be so far inverted, as that we should become virtuous, in proportion as the temptation to vice increased. Nor should we then, any more than now, be destitute of subterfuges to destroy the feelings of our minds, and the convictions of our consciences.

If ignorance and inattention may be pleaded as our excuse hitherto, yet that can be the case no longer. The subject has been four years before the public.¹¹⁶ Its dreadful wickedness has been fully proved. Every falshood, every deception with which it has been disguised, has been compleatly done away; and it stands before us in all its native horrors. No longer can it be pretended, that Africa is a barbarous, uncultivated land, inhabited by a race of savages inferior to the rest of the human species. Mr. How, who was employed by government to go up the country, deposes, that inland it is every where well cultivated, abounding with rice, millet, potatoes, cotton and indigo plantations; and that the inhabitants are quick in learning languages, and remarkably industrious, hospitable and obliging.¹¹⁷ It appears that they possess noble and heroic minds, disdaining slavery, and frequently seeking refuge from it in the arms of death. Nor shall we be again told, of the superior happiness they enjoy under the benevolent care of the planters; Mr. Coor having deposed, that “setting slaves to work in the morning, is attended with loud

peals of whipping;"¹¹⁸—and General Tottenham, “that there is no comparison between regimental flogging, which only cuts the skin, and the plantation, which cuts out the flesh;"¹¹⁹—Capt. Hall, “that the punishments are very shocking, much more so than in men of war;"¹²⁰ Capt. Smith, "that at every stroke of the whip a piece of flesh is cut out,"¹²¹—and Mr. Ross, "that he considers a comparison between West-India slaves, and the British peasantry, as an insult to common sense."¹²²

We are now called on to redress evils, in comparison with which, all that exist in this nation sink beneath our notice; and the only sacrifice we are required to make in order to effect it, is the abandoning of a luxury, which habit alone can have rendered of importance.¹²³ If we refuse, can we form the least pretence to a moral character?¹²⁴ May it not be justly inferred, that those numerous displays of humanity, of which this kingdom boasts, have not their foundation in any virtuous or valuable principle; but that to custom and ostentation they owe their origin? And if our execration of the slave trade be any more than mere declamation against crimes we are not in a situation to commit, we shall, instead of being solicitous to find despicable distinctions to justify our conduct, abhor the idea of contributing, in the least degree, to such scenes of misery.

If these be the deductions from the most obvious principles of reason, justice, and humanity; what must be the result if we extend our views to religious considerations? It will hardly be said, that we assume a religious profession to diminish the extent of our moral duties, or to weaken the force of our obligation to observe them.

We will therefore ask, if it be meant to insult the God we pretend to worship, by supplicating him to “have mercy upon all prisoners and captives,” and to “defend and provide for the fatherless, widows, and children, and all that are desolate and oppressed.”¹²⁵ But, if the national religion, be a mere matter of form, yet surely we may expect that the various denominations of dissenters, will think it at the least,¹²⁶ as requisite to dissent from the national crimes, as the national religion; unless they mean to exhibit consciences of so peculiar a texture, as to take offence at the religion of their country, while they can conform without scruple, to its most criminal practices. If indeed they are satisfied, after an impartial examination, that the traffic alluded to is fair and honest, and that the produce ought to be considered as the result of lawful commerce, it will become them to encourage it; it will become them to reprobate this work as an attempt to slander honest men, and to injure their property, by holding it out to the public, as the produce of robbery and murder. But, if the arguments be valid, will they presume to treat the subject with cool indifference, and continue a criminal practice. May we not also hope that

the Methodists, who appear to feel forcibly their principles, will seriously consider it? They are so numerous, as to be able of themselves to destroy that dreadful traffic, which is the sole obstacle to their ministers spreading the gospel in the extensive continent of Africa; and, however others may affect to degrade the Negroes, they are bound to consider the thousands of them as their brethren in Christ.¹²⁷

But there is one class of dissenters who justly stand high in the public estimation,¹²⁸ for their steady, manly and uniform opposition to our colonial slavery. And can it be supposed that, after having awakened the public attention, they can refuse to contribute what is in their own power to remedy the evil? The plan proposed, is a plain and obvious deduction from their uniform principle, of having no concern in what they disapprove. Thus, considering war as unlawful, they consider goods obtained through the medium as criminally obtained; and will not suffer any of their members to purchase prize-goods: and surely they must consider the seizure of a man's goods, as a crime far inferior to the seizing his person.¹²⁹

However obvious the duty, yet the mind hardened by habit, admits with difficulty the conviction of guilt; and sanctioned by a common practice, we may commit the grossest violations of duty without remorse. It is therefore more peculiarly incumbent on us in such situations, to examine our conduct with the utmost suspicion, and to fortify our minds with moral principles, or the sanctions of religion. In proportion as we are under their influence, we shall exert ourselves to remedy these evils, knowing that our example, our admonitions, our influence, may produce remote effects, of which we can form no estimate; and which, after having done our duty, must be left *to Him who governs all things after the counsel of his own will.*¹³⁰ FINIS.

*A Summary View of the Evidence, produced before a
Committee of the House of Commons relating to the Slave Trade**

She knows and she persists---Still Afric bleeds,
Uncheck'd, the human traffic still proceeds;
She stamps her infamy to future time,
And on her harden'd forehead seals the crime.*

* ENGLAND

MRS. BARBAULD¹³¹

While the Address was circulating in massive numbers throughout England, Wales, and America in the fall of 1791, Fox collaborated with Martha Gurney on another abolitionist pamphlet, A Summary View, which appeared in January 1792, the first of six editions that year. The Summary, inexpensive and highly condensed, was widely distributed and quickly digested among the people at large. Fox begins with a discussion of the natural resources and products of Africa (of significant commercial value to Europe and America) and the nature and capabilities of the African people. Due to their intercourse with

* A / SUMMARY VIEW / OF THE / EVIDENCE / DELIVERED BEFORE A / Committee of the House of Commons, / RELATING TO THE / SLAVE TRADE, // [quoted lines from Mrs. Barbauld (see above)] // *By the Author of the Address to the People of Great Britain.* / London, sold by M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn Hill. / 1792. // Price One Penny, or Seven for 6d. 50 for 3s. 3d. and 6s. 4d. / per Hundred. // Persons in the Country, ordering 1000, may have an Edi- / tion worked off, with their Names and Residence / in the Title Page. // *Of the above Booksellers may be had, An Address to the People of / Great Britain on the Propriety of abstaining from West In- / dia Sugar and Rum, Price a Halfpenny, or 25 for 1s. or / 3s. 9d. per Hundred.* // *The Address to the People of Great Britain having met with / such an uncommon reception, as to have called for the printing, / 50,000 in about four months, with a demand still greatly on the increase; the Author has been encouraged to publish this little piece with a view of making more generally known that dreadful traffic which has recently much engaged the public attention. To promote the circulation of both these pieces, they are published in a compendious form, and at a trivial price; notwithstanding which, editions, he understands, have been printed at Sheffield, Hull, Newcastle, Sunderland, Leeds, and other places; a circumstance rather disagreeable to an author, who, even though he may have abandoned any lucrative view in publishing, would, notwithstanding, wish to have the control over his work, and not have editions circulated subject to interpolation or mutilation, and which, at least must be destitute of those improvements, which are ever suggesting themselves to an author's mind.*

Europeans, many Africans have unfortunately become 'adepts in roguery', learning 'to plunder, and pick up one another to sell'. The slave trade has created a constant state of war along the West African coast, with various African kings collaborating with European traders in 'a piratical expedition for making slaves'. To Fox, the arguments of those who support the slave trade are disgusting, self-serving, and unworthy of serious consideration. Now that the evidence from the parliamentary hearings is before the public, Fox trusts that the day will come when the English will once again restore 'the rights of humanity' to the slaves, no longer allowing them 'to be stolen, degraded, insulted, and murdered by us'. If not, Fox fears that the slave will one day, with justification, lay his injuries before his British 'oppressors', and his blood, and that of all his posterity, 'will be required at our hands'.

The middle-regions of Africa which have been generally represented as barbarous and uncultivated, destitute of every source of happiness to its inhabitants; and affording to other countries scarce any subject of commerce but the people themselves; appear by the testimony of the witnesses lately examined by the House of Commons, to abound in millet, pulse, Indian corn, wax, honey, palm oil, plantanes, yams, eddoes, potatoes, cocoa-nuts, cascada,¹³² pine-apples, oranges, limes, grapes, the sugar-cane, which grows wild, tobacco, peppers, ginger, cardamums, cinnamon, equal to that of the East Indies; and some brought from thence sold at a better price; rice, superior to that of Carolina; indigo of the very best sort, and a number of vegetable dyes; particularly the Foden,¹³³ which dyes a scarlet, and its stalks a beautiful yellow. Also a number of drugs belonging to the *materia medica*, and useful in manufactures; ebony, and a variety of beautiful woods for cabinet-work: and Sir George Young, mentions a wood, the best in the world for ship-building, as the worm does not touch, nor iron corrode it.¹³⁴

The inhabitants have been represented by one of the first adventurers to that country, in 1554, as "a people of beastly living who dwelt in caves, and the flesh of serpents their meat."¹³⁵ He says, "They have no speech, but rather a grinning and chattering: there are also a people without heads, having their eyes and mouth in their breast; and satyrs also, which have nothing of men but their shape." But neither Mr. How, who was employed by this government, to explore the country, nor any of the other witnesses were able to discover these singular beings: on the contrary, the Rev. Mr. Newton tells us, that with equal advantages, their capacities would equal ours. Mr. Wadstrom thinks them equally capable of improvement with the whites; and is convinced they surpass in affection, such of the Europeans as he has known, that they are honest, and hospitable. He has been amongst them without fear, though

alone, and was always treated by them with civility, and kindness. Captain Wilson says they are grateful and affectionate; that when he was many miles up the country alone and unprotected, they treated him most kindly, vying with each other in entertaining him, and shedding tears at his departure. And Thompson, Storey, Dalrymple, How, Towne, and Hall, concur in describing them as harmless, friendly, hospitable, just, and punctual in their dealings, and as capable of virtue as the rest of mankind. Mr. Bowman found them good and honest: he resided amongst them, and found them friendly and hospitable, industrious, disposed to trade, raising rice for sale, and said, they should like to trade with good white men, and would soon raise more plantations of rice. Capt. Hills had seen them raising provisions, dressing their corn, and working their cloth in looms. Mr. Wadstrom says, they are particularly skilful in manufacturing gold and iron, equaling any European goldsmith in filagree, and trinket work: making cloth and leather with uncommon neatness, dying the former, and tanning the latter. They also make indigo, salt, soap, and pottery, with considerable skill; and he offered to produce specimens of their manufactures.

But we find this to be a description of the inland country only; as along the coast, for full 3,000 miles, an intercourse with European savages has totally changed the scene. Lieutenant Storey tells us, they are more honest inland than upon the coast. Mr. Towne, who was 3 or 400 miles up the country, says the natives are hospitable, kind, ready at learning languages; that inland they are innocent, but on the coast, their intercourse with Europeans has made them adepts in roguery, and taught them to plunder, and pick up one another to sell. Dr. Trotter says, that they are susceptible of all the social virtues: has known instances of feelings, equal to those of any civilized people whatever; and has seen no bad habits, but among those engaged in trade with white men. Captain Hall, found cultivation in the highest state at Fernast-di-po,¹³⁶ where they had no trade in slaves. Mr. How had been almost upon every British settlement, and always found the culture in a higher degree where there was but little of the Slave Trade; and just the reverse where it prevailed. The Rev. Mr. Newton says, The best people were those who had the least intercourse with Europeans; and they are worse, in proportion to their acquaintance with us; and when charged with a crime, would say, do you think I am a white man? He lived alone among the Sherbro people¹³⁷ in safety, who are friendly and civilized; had no slave trade, and he has heard them speak against it. Mr. Dalrymple states, that in natural capacity the negroes equal any people whatever: they are humane, hospitable, and well-disposed; cultivating their country well, and from their general disposition to labour, he apprehends, that had they a proper market for their product, they would be as industrious as any Europeans: for, where there was no Slave Trade, they were very

industrious; manufacturing cotton-cloth, almost equal to Europeans; working in gold, silver, and iron remarkably well; also in wood, making saddles, bow-cases, scabbards, &c. very neatly. Mr. Newton says, they are not naturally indolent, and Mr. Wadstrom, that they have a genius for commerce; and have industry proportioned to their demand, never being indolent when they could work to advantage; or, as Mr. Morley expresses it, when they had a prospect of being paid. Sir George Young employed numbers of them, and might have had thousands, at a very low price.

But, notwithstanding this disposition of the natives, and the commercial advantages Africa possesses, the trade we carry on, must in the present state of things, be trivial. For, Mr. Wadstrom says, the Slave Trade must effectually destroy every other trade on the coast, as the inhabitants dare not go into the fields unless well armed. Capt. Wilson, that they will not, for a temporary gratification, risk the being kidnapped, and carried into perpetual slavery; as it was a first principle on the coast, not to go unarmed.

The alternation that would result from the Europeans abandoning the slave trade, appears from the evidence of Lieut. Simpson, Mr. Falconbridge, and Sir George Young, who were informed by the black traders, that in such case, they would quickly find out another; and that when the Slave Trade was interrupted by the late war, they cultivated the earth for support. And notwithstanding the confident assertions that had been made to the contrary, the letters from our consuls at Alexandria, Tunis, and Algiers,¹³⁸ fully prove, that nearly the whole of the African Slave Trade, is in the hands of the Europeans; and that the number of slaves carried off in any other channel is very trifling, and even that number very much on the decline.

On considering the nature of this trade, it will not appear extraordinary that it should produce the most baneful effects. Lieut. Simpson understood, that on the windward coast, the villages were always at war; and the reason given was, that the kings wanted slaves. And he was told by the Rev. Mr. Quakoo, wars were made for the sole purpose of making slaves. He also informed Mr. Falconbridge, that the greater part of the slaves were kidnapped. Dr. Trotter says, by prisoners of war, the traders mean, such as are carried off by marauders, who ravage the country for that purpose; the bush-men making war to make trade, (that is slaves) being a common way of speaking among them: and in a large cargo of slaves, he could recollect only three that had not been so obtained. Mr. Falconbridge defines the term war, when used by the slave dealers, to mean a piratical expedition for making slaves. Mr. Morley says, what they call war, is putting the villages in confusion, and catching the inhabitants. Mr. Dalrymple says, "It was common for European traders to advance goods to chiefs to induce them to seize their subjects or their neighbours, and defines the grand pillage to be the attacking and setting fire to a

village, and seizing the inhabitants—the lesser pillage to be smaller parties, lying in wait about villages, and taking all they can surprize; they then bringing their prey to the coast, and selling them, where it is well known no questions are asked, how they had been obtained. Indeed, a Slave Captain acknowledged to the house, that he believed any captain would be reckoned a fool by any trading man to whom he put such a question: and Mr. Marsh, the resident at Cape-Coast Castle, told Mr. How, that he did not care how the slaves he purchased had been obtained; and shewed him instruments to be put in the Slaves mouths to prevent their crying out for assistance, as conveyed through the country. Mr. Wadstrom states it to be the custom of the Slave Merchants, when they want Slaves, to go to the kings and excite them to pillage; and that king Barbesin being unwilling, was excited to it by a constant intoxication, and he has heard him, when sober, refuse, and express reluctance. Individuals also procure Slaves by robbery, stratagem, and deceit. He often saw negroes so taken brought to Goree.¹³⁹ Mr. Wadstrom accompanied an embassy, which was sent yearly with presents to a black king to keep up the Slave Trade: the parties went out generally in an evening: he saw 27 Slaves, who were taken by the pillagers, 23 of whom were women and children. Capt. Hills often saw the natives go out armed on an evening to obtain Slaves for king Damel to sell; because the king was poor, not having received his dues from our Slave-ships. Mr. Douglas says, when a Slave-ship arrives, the king sends his war canoes up the river, where they surprize and seize all they can. Mr. Parker went up the country with two of these expeditions; they lay in the bushes till night; then fell on the village, and seizing every one they could, men, women, and children, disposed of them to our ships. The king was certainly not at war with these people, nor had they attacked him; but he then wanted Slaves to supply our ships: indeed, so far is it from being true, that the Slaves really consist of prisoners of war, that (Knox) a Slave Captain, acknowledges that war on the coast always destroys the Slave Trade. Mr. Morley says, that on the windward coast Slaves are generally made by marauding parties going from village to village in the night; and he knew of a man being made drunk, in order to obtain his wife; and though, when sober, he wanted to redeem her, he was refused. Lieut. Storey mentions a Liverpool Captain, who set two villages at variance, and to shew his impartiality, bought the prisoners on both sides. Sir George Younge also mentions a great Slave Merchant having hostages from two kings, whom he supplied with arms and ammunition, and received the captives from each to supply seven ships then on the coast. Sir George also says, Slaves are procured by the inhabitants of one village seizing those of a weaker; and that kidnapping was frequently practiced. Mr. Towne says, that the Mundingoes¹⁴⁰ went to war for Slaves, and boasted they should soon have a fine parcel. He was also told by the king of Barra,¹⁴¹ that, on the arrival of a

Slave-ship, he has gone 300 miles in the country for slaves; and he has understood it was common to bring on palavers or accusations for crimes, on purpose to make Slaves. Capt. Wilson, that free persons are sold for real or imputed crimes, for the benefit of their judges: and, on asking king Damel's officer, whether a man was really guilty of the crime imputed to him? He was answered, that it was of no consequence. General Rooke was applied to by three English Slave Captains, to kidnap a parcel of men, women, and children, who had come down in confidence of his protection. The Captains expressed much surprize at his refusal, telling him a former governor had done such things. Mr. Newton says, depredations and reprisals were so frequent, that the Europeans and Africans on the coast had a mutual distrust. Mr. Towne was present, when an English crew, who had received no offence from the natives, went up the country armed, and seized the inhabitants, whose mouths they stopped with oakum to prevent alarm. Mr. Bowman says, he had orders to encourage the natives to go to war, and to supply them with powder and ball from the factory; which, when he had let them have, they would make the war whoop, and set off: he once accompanied them: when they approached a village, they stopped till dark: in the middle of the night he heard the war-cry; and he soon saw the village in flames. The party returned, bringing about 30 men, women, and children, some at the breast. He has seen villages on fire in the night, and seen them when burnt and deserted. Near one of them he saw two fine plantations of rice, ready for cutting down; and he never saw any slaves who had been convicted of crimes.

The witnesses having described the country, the amiable manners of the inhabitants of the inland parts, and their villainous disposition, where corrupted by us on the coast; and the nature of the depredations carried on by us and our emissaries, we are brought to the period when these unfortunate people are stowed on board our vessels, which are to be considered as floating jails, and are hovering sometimes near a year upon the coast, while the inhabitants are procured in the various ways before described. Mr. Newton, indeed, tells us he was restricted by his employers from staying above four months on the coast; but in consequence he was obliged to sail with less than half the usual number. But we do not find such restrictions common: and Capt. Knox acknowledges he was seven months, and Capt. Fraser was nine months, on the coast, procuring their human, or rather inhuman, cargoes. What that cargo shall be has been ascertained by the legislature of this country; who, having, with great propriety, entered into an enquiry, what number of Africans ought to be conveyed to America in the vessels of Europeans; and having consulted some inhabitants of Liverpool and Bristol on the subject, his Most Gracious Majesty, by and with the advice of the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, and Commons in Parliament assembled, enacted, That three times the number of

innocent Africans should be stowed on board the Liverpool and Bristol ships, that were allowed by this government, in case the said vessels were employed to convey those miscreants, whom this country is continually vomiting forth, to Botany Bay.

The room these unhappy beings are allowed by our legislature, appears on a pretty accurate calculation to be about the proportion of 400 persons in a space of nineteen feet each way: and is for a grown person, sixteen inches each in width; two feet seven inches in height, and five feet eleven inches in length, or as Mr. Falconbridge properly describes it, not so much room as a man has in his coffin: and Capt. Knox admits, that they sometimes had not room to lie on their backs.¹⁴² It also appears, that if they are the least dilatory or reluctant in thus packing themselves, they are expedited by the application of the cat.¹⁴³ In this situation and space, they are confined (the men fettered in pairs) excepting about eight hours in the day when the weather is fine, when they are brought on deck; and, chains being run through their fetters, they are fastened to the deck. In this state Mr. Falconbridge tells us they are flogged with a cat to make them jump for exercise. This the slave captains choose to term dancing; and Mr. Claxton informs us, the parts to which the shackles are fastened, are often so excoriated as to produce many dreadful complaints. Dr. Trotter tells us, he has seen them when confined below, drawing their breath like animals expiring in the exhausted receiver of an air pump, and heard them cry out, We are dying, we are dying! He has seen many of them in a dying state from suffocation, and has recovered some by instantly bringing them on deck, but others have been irrecoverably lost. Mr. Falconbridge has known them to go down apparently in health, and found them dead next morning: he opened one of them to know with certainty the cause of his death; and from the appearance of the parts, he was satisfied that it was from suffocation. He says, that once, on going down, he found twenty had fainted, or were fainting: he got them instantly hauled on deck, but notwithstanding, two or three of them died: and though he was down only fifteen minutes, he became so ill, that he could not get up without help, and never was below many minutes together, but his shirt was as wet, as if dipt in water: he also says, that as the slaves, whether well or ill, always lie on the bare planks, the motion of the ship rubs the flesh from the prominent parts of the body, and leaves the bones bare: and when the slaves have the flux, which is frequently the case, from the treatment they receive; the whole place becomes covered with blood, and mucus, like a slaughter-house: and as they are fettered and wedged close together, the utmost disorder arises from their endeavours to get to the three or four tubs placed among them to relieve nature; and this disorder is still further increased, by the healthy being not unfrequently chained to the diseased, the dying, and the dead. We shall then find little difficulty in crediting his

assertion, that no situation can be conceived so dreadfully disgusting: or Mr. Ellison's, that the steam from their confined bodies below, comes up through the gratings like a furnace. Mr. Morley has seen them wallowing in their blood and excrement; and Frazer, a slave captain, acknowledged to the House, that it was a disputed point amongst their respectable fraternity, whether it was most injurious to the health of the slaves thus be to left wallowing in their filth, or to render it damp between decks by washing the filth away.

In such a situation, and in the torrid zone, insatiable must be the thirst. But, as water is a bulky stowage, the hold is inadequate to the purpose of containing the most moderate quantity for such numerous cargoes of slaves. Hence, though the convicts for Botany Bay were watered at the rate of two quarts per day; yet Capt. Knox admits the allowance for the slaves to be only two, or perhaps occasionally three half pints per day. Their food, Mr. Falconbridge tells us, is chiefly yams, horse beans, and rice; and that compulsion was resorted to in all the vessels he was in, to force them to take their food.

We shall then hardly be surprised when told by Dr. Trotter that they shew signs of extreme distress and despair, as well from a feeling of their situation as their regret at being torn from their friends, their relations, and their native land: that they make a melancholy noise, expressive of extreme anguish; and, once enquiring into the cause, when it appeared to be extremely poignant, he found that a female had been dreaming she was happy in the midst of her family and friends; but, awaking, found herself in this dreadful situation: and it appears, that tho' every precaution be taken to prevent their throwing themselves overboard, yet they sometimes effect it. Mr. Morley has known the food held in their mouths till they were almost strangled; and Mr. Falconbridge mentions many instances of their refusing both food and medicine, because they wished to die; and a female being asked what she wanted, replied with a firm tone, "Only to die." Capt. Wilson says, that as death approaches, they smile at their tormentors, and exult that the period arrives when they shall be no longer in our power. Dr. Trotter, Mr. Claxton, Mr. Ellison, and Capt. Hall, describe them as resolutely refusing sustenance, and starving themselves to death to avoid our tortures.

In addition to these circumstances, this voyage is not only subject to the uncertainty of winds and waves, but the additional uncertainty of finding a market: and these unhappy victims of our avarice, have scarce any limitation to the term of their imprisonment on board our ships, as they are not only procured, but frequently disposed of with great difficulty; and Capt. Frazer owns, that after traversing the Atlantic, from Angola to Carolina, disappointed of a market, he was forced to return to the West Indies in a distressed condition, and with the negroes on board. In such situations a circumstance sometimes occurs, which, from its having obtained a cant appellation, we presume

not to be very unfrequent. It is called “walking the plank,” that is, when the miserable pittance of water allotted to the slaves is nearly exhausted, or supposed to be so, the negroes are called on deck, and ordered or requested to jump overboard: and, indeed, no order given them by us is ever obeyed with less reluctance, for they rejoice even thus to escape the accursed hands of the Europeans.

The loss of lives from voyages thus circumstanced, can be fully known to those only who conduct them: and as those, who alone are in possession of compleat evidence on the subject, persist in with-holding it from us, it must be infered, that the real loss exceeds those estimates which have been given to the public; for if it fell short, they would not fail to prove it. Capt. Wilson averaged the four vessels in which he sailed, and found the loss to be 586 out of 2064 during the voyage; besides 220 who died soon after landing. These refuse slaves Mr. Falconbridge has known to be sold for five dollars each. Mr. Towne, for a guinea, and Mr. Ross, as low as a single dollar. A human being not only sold, but sold for a single dollar! General Tottenham has seen the worst of the refuse slaves when landed, left in the yard to die; and some of them living three days in that condition, nobody giving them any thing to eat or drink. Mr. Ross has known them carried to the vendue master from the ships in a very wretched state; many in the agonies of death; and has known instances of their expiring in his piazza. The healthy slaves, and those whose disorders can be concealed by mercurial ointment, or whose fluxes can be stopped for the day of sale, by restringent medicines, are generally sold by scramble: when, the decks being darkened by sails on a signal being given, the purchasers rush in, seizing and marking their purchases with a disorder and impetuosity so terrific, that the negroes, if not well secured, have been known to jump into the sea. Mr. Newton says, that in none of the sales he saw were there any care taken to prevent relations being parted: they were separated, he adds, as sheep and lambs are by butchers.

The nature of the African Slave Trade having been ascertained by the evidence adduced, the cause on the part of the application for its abolition is now fully closed: for though it be impossible to suppose any real friend to that application but must reprobate the dreadful system of slavery, resulting from the African Slave Trade. As it cannot be possible to suggest an apology or defence of the one, but must be equally applicable to the other: yet in an evil of such magnitude, supported by a powerful interest, it was thought most expedient first to apply for a remedy of one branch of the mischief, leaving the other for further consideration. But, strange to tell, the West India Slavery, with all its unexampled enormities, have been voluntarily brought forward by the perpetrators: claimed as a merit, and pleaded as a kind of set-off, against the iniquity of that traffic, of which they scarcely attempted a defence; and we

may consider this branch of the question, as totally irrelative to the subject. For even had the inhabitants of Africa been forced from their native land, to partake of the luxuries instead of the tortures of the West Indies, yet the question recurs, on what principle of the law of nature, or of nations, we compel them to partake, either of the one or of the other, any more than they have a right to carry us by force to Africa, to be regaled with the pine-apples, grapes, or oranges of that beautiful country. Perfectly unnecessary is it to wander with lords and admirals, and governors and planters, into the desultory enquiries with which they would bewilder us. But surely we shall not ask them whether the loss of 2,000 seamen yearly, in the African Trade, be an injury or benefit to the English nation; or take their opinions as to the advantage resulting to us, from converting our wheat into a poisonous spirit, to be poured out on the coast of Africa, in exchange for the blood of its inhabitants, merely for the pleasure of glutting our savage minds, by murdering a part of them ourselves, and delivering over the residue to be murdered by others.¹⁴⁴ Shall we deign to listen to men who have the effrontery to tell us of the nation being enriched by paying them four millions per annum, for a luxury we might purchase for one! and, in addition to this monopoly, are insisting on the nation drawing her sword, and spending her wealth, not to defend the authority of the state, but to support those bye-laws they have made, in defiance of every principle of the common law of this kingdom.

But surely the legislature and government of this country may very properly reply, "When you call on us to draw the British sword, let us thoroughly understand before it leaves the scabbard, the nature and justice of the cause in which it is to be engaged. You call on us to send the British troops to Jamaica, and Dominica; let us know if they are to be landed as on a hostile shore, to conquer and to subjugate?¹⁴⁵ Or, if those islands are already subjugated, and form a part of the British empire? But in either case, must they not be subject to that general supreme authority which it is incumbent on us to maintain. Inform us then, who are the persons that dispute it, and against them let our vengeance be hurled. The extent of the empire must be commensurate with that of its laws, where the one ceases to operate, the other cannot be said to extend, but in every part of the empire we will maintain them. The kings of England may have been dukes of Normandy, or lords of Guienne;¹⁴⁶ they may be electors of Hanover, or kings of Jamaica, or they may become kings of Barra or Dahomy;¹⁴⁷ but it is in the first character alone we can submit to his authority, and it is the only one we can be called on to support. His assent to acts of the British legislature, alone we can admit to be valid. Tell us in what part of the British empire an individual has been injured in his person, or his property, and the courts of law shall give him redress. If those laws in the distant parts of the empire are weak in their operation, we

will invigorate and enforce them, tell us if there be a spot to be found within the verge of our authority, where any subjects of the state have usurped a jurisdiction over their fellow subjects, have attempted to form an *imperium in imperio*,¹⁴⁸ and we will give redress. For to enforce universal obedience, to dispense uniform justice, and give general protection, are essential to government. The exercise of any other authority, is tyranny.”

But whatever may have been the determination of the House of Commons, happily the evidence, on which that determination was formed, is now before the public; and it is for them to say, whether this unexampled system of profligate wickedness, be still to continue: whether we are determined still to use a luxury, which is such an inexhaustible source of calamity and iniquity. The question we are called on to determine, is so plain, that the simplest mind can understand it, and the most subtle cannot confound. And surely we may hope, that the numbers amongst us are not few, who duly regarding the claims, of reason, and of justice, will consider the natives of Africa, as entitled to the rights of humanity; and as formed for a more important purpose, than to be stolen, degraded, insulted, and murdered by us. They will consider the African in his native land, enjoying that happiness, which the beneficent hand of heaven has shed around him; and demanding by what right, we disturb him in the possession. By what right we purchase the unwary traveller, and peaceful villager, when torn by the hands of pirates and robbers, from his family and his country. Demanding by what right, he and his innocent offspring are detained in the most cruel and oppressive slavery: merely that the Europeans may be supplied with a luxury. And may he not also ask; on what principle, we can purchase, and receive, that luxury; and thereby abet, authorize, encourage, and reward such a system, of outrageous wickedness. May he not tell us, that if we purchase the sugar cane, for the cultivation of which, he has been forced from his native land; we become the real cause of all his wrongs. May he not justly say, that the injuries he receives at the hands of his murderous oppressors; must be placed to our account; and that the blood of him, and his unhappy posterity, will be required at our hands. FINIS.¹⁴⁹

*The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War**

The French declaration of war on Britain in February 1793 had been, in the opinion of Fox and of other liberal commentators, deliberately provoked by Pitt's government; but the reasons why Britain should have chosen to enter the war were unclear to them, especially as Britain's war aims had not been explained. In this pamphlet, written before the declaration of war, Fox reviews a range of possible explanations, but, granted the government has denied that it intends to interfere in the internal affairs of France or to restore the Bourbon monarchy – evidently the aim of most other members of the coalition – there appears to be no good reason why Britain should join with the absolute monarchies of Europe in suppressing the revolution. To the notion that the war was being waged in order to prevent the spread of 'French principles', Fox replies that a political philosophy cannot be defeated by military means, and warns that, as the principles of liberty are British in origin, the despotic monarchs of Europe, if they succeed in defeating France, may next turn their attention to Britain. He concludes that there are no just grounds for involving the nation in what he regards not as a defensive war but as a war of aggression, and insists that Britain, whose foreign policy has spread destruction throughout the world, has no moral mandate to fight a war of principle.

The first edition of this pamphlet was reviewed by the Critical Review in January 1793, by the Analytical the following month, and by the Monthly Review in April. It was extensively revised for the 4th edition, which is considerably longer than previous versions.

* THE / INTEREST / OF / GREAT BRITAIN, / RESPECTING THE / FRENCH WAR. / By WILLIAM FOX. / AUTHOR OF AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF GREAT / BRITAIN, ON THE PROPRIETY OF ABSTAINING / FROM WEST-INDIA SUGAR AND RUM. // THE THIRD EDITION, CORRECTED. // LONDON: / SOLD BY T. WHEILDON AND BUTTERWORTH, FLEET / STREET; W. RICHARDSON, OPPOSITE THE ROYAL / EXCHANGE; AND M. GURNEY, NO. 128, / HOLBORN HILL. / MDCCXCIII. // (PRICE THREEPENCE, OR FIVE FOR A SHILLING.) / Where may be had, just published, by the same Author, / An Examination of Mr. Paine's Writings. / A Summary View of Evidence relating to the Slave Trade; and, / An Address to the People of Great Britain, 26th Edition.

Amongst the peculiar circumstances which characterise the French Revolution, is the great abhorrence with which it has been beheld by the European Monarchs, and the almost universal disposition which has appeared amongst them to suppress it;¹⁵⁰ an investigation whence this disposition originates may not be altogether useless. Revolutions in nations are not very rare occurrences; the King of Great Britain has lost the far greater part of his dominions, by a recent revolt,¹⁵¹ without exciting any great concern among his fellow monarchs; or any very powerful combination of them in his support. A renunciation and abhorrence of monarchy could not, one would have thought, have excited this alarm. *America, Holland, Switzerland*, and even *England* formerly, renounced the authority of their sovereigns, and formed republics: yet neighbouring monarchs, sought their alliance, and abetted their revolt. The recent cruelties in France can hardly be the real cause of the rancour which has appeared against their antecedent revolution, as Mr. *Burke's* clamour was raised against it at a time when all his art was requisite to dress out a tale of woe:¹⁵² when far less blood had been shed, than in any revolt of equal difficulty, and importance: when instead of dethroning their monarch, they had left him so considerable a share of power, as to enable him to endanger the new government; and bestowed on him a civil list to the utmost of his desires, and far beyond what our King enjoys.¹⁵³ Had the French King appeared cordially disposed to support the new order of things; and had the sovereigns of Europe, manifested the same disposition; there is no ground to suppose, the recent events would have taken place. All these events, and the situation of the King and Queen of France are the effects, and not the cause, of the royal association against the French Nation; and may far more justly be attributed to Mr. *Burke* than to the people of France. They were naturally led to look to us, rather as allies, than as enemies; they considered us as the nation in Europe; whose government approximated the nearest to that which they had recently established: and when they saw the continent of Europe arming against them, they threw themselves on our justice, and offered us the office of mediator: when this was declined,¹⁵⁴ when Mr. *Burke* was allowed to stigmatize them with impunity; when the French Princes were inciting all Europe against them;¹⁵⁵ when almost every King in Europe appeared disposed to attack them, and their King was employing the immense revenue they had granted him, in supporting these measures;¹⁵⁶ we cannot much wonder at the rage of the French populace, or its consequences;¹⁵⁷ nor will any man believe it to be the real reason, of any measures which may be adopted against them. Indeed whatever may be the catastrophe, of the Royal Family of France; or whatever may have been its origin; it can hardly be deemed a sufficient cause, for deluging Europe in blood. Transitions from the throne to an untimely grave, occur in almost every page of history; they enforce the arguments of

the moralist, embellish the works of the poet, and form the principal pathos of the drama. In the space of about half a century the blood of four Queens, as beautiful and accomplished as the Queen of France, streamed on an English scaffold;¹⁵⁸ and altho' it was an age of chivalry, not a sword started from its scabbard to avenge them.¹⁵⁹ Even sovereigns themselves do not in general seem to possess very sympathetic feelings; they rarely concern themselves in the fate of those fellow monarchs with whom their own interests are not interwoven. The present age has seen a King precipitated from his Throne to a Prison, and from thence to his Tomb; not by injured subjects, but by her whom he had raised to empire; and who now sways the bloody scepter, without having excited any exclamations of horror, which seem all to have been reserved for the present occasion.¹⁶⁰

If a regard for the French Monarch be not the real motive for this confederacy far less can we suppose it to be a concern for the people of that nation; tho' Mr. *Burke* and his associates are extremely pathetic in lamenting the misery which they have brought upon themselves. It is certainly a somewhat remarkable circumstance that *thirty* millions of people, should so universally, and so pertinaciously, persist in being miserable; and that it should require such very extraordinary means to compel them to be happy. But were this misery real, it might rather be surmised, they would have been left undisturbed, to be as miserable as they pleased, as a terrible example, to deter surrounding nations, from rebelling against their sovereigns.

Is it then the peculiar principles on which the French Revolution is founded, which have rendered them dangerous to surrounding nations, whose peace and safety call for their extirpation?¹⁶¹ These principles do not seem to be very hostile to human happiness. To renounce foreign conquest and aggressive war:¹⁶² To confine themselves to the arts of peace, content with cultivating the soil, and improving the natural advantages heaven has allotted them: To improve the human species by national education, thus attaching man to society by enabling him to partake of its benefits, and apportioning human happiness as equally as possible amongst human kind. These, if errors, do not seem to be of a very atrocious nature, and should they fail of being realised it ought rather to excite our sorrow and commiseration, than our contempt, our indignation, or our vengeance.

But it is said, that in the seeming excellence of these principles, consists their danger; that by these reveries of literary enthusiasts, mankind are induced to abandon a present and practicable state of happiness, in pursuit of a visionary system which never can be realized.¹⁶³ If so, it became more peculiarly necessary that the French Government should have been left undisturbed; that its impracticability, and inutility, might have been clearly manifested. The Russian peasant, and the German boor, might have been more content, under

their present despotism, had it appeared that the principles of the French revolution, naturally led to a state of anarchy, or a state of despotism, more oppressive than their own: whereas the anarchy and disorders of France, may now be ascribed to the obstruction it has met with, and disturbance it has received from foreign powers. Its advocates may now fairly contend—Had the French Government been left to its natural course, it would have produced a state of human happiness superior to what the world ever beheld. The despots knew it, they knew the contrast it would form to the misery they spread around them. They resolved to prevent its maturity; they combined to strangle it in its birth. They attempted it, but in vain.—And tho' defeated, and defeated in a manner that must destroy every hope of effecting its overthrow,¹⁶⁴ yet they threaten renewed hostilities, and keep them in perpetual alarm; in hope their deluded subjects may believe, that the miseries and calamities France induces from their machinations, are the consequences of the government they have adopted.

Much is it to be lamented, that in this country, there are many, who, fraught with national pride, cast a jaundiced eye around, and say, If the nations of Europe enjoy the sweets of liberty; and their commerce ceases to be exposed to arbitrary laws administered by venal judges;—if their land, no longer lies uncultivated, that their nobles may enjoy the pleasures of the chace; if myriads of clergy, spread not over the countries, and draw away their wealth from the channels of industry.—If arbitrary and rapacious exactions, no longer rob the artisan and the peasant of the fruit of their industry; or violence force them from their families, to fill up the ravages of death, in the armies of contending despots: then those nations, possessed of superior natural advantages to ourselves, will rear their heads around us. No longer shall we retain our proud pre-eminence; or hold the equilibrium of empire. Confined to the natural advantages our Island possesses; we shall cease to carry on half the commerce of Europe. No more will the British name carry terror through the world, or its terrors resound from pole to pole. But let such recollect,—that if patriotism be a virtue, it cannot be founded on such malignant propensities. It will not lead us to wish human happiness to be circumscribed by Albion's Cliffs:¹⁶⁵ or that the genius of Liberty should cast her mantle only o'er our Isle. What let us ask, can be more unjustifiable, than to disturb or overthrow a government, merely because it will be productive of happiness.

But admitting the overthrow of the old Government in France, may by increasing its trade, agriculture, and manufactures, be at some distant period, prejudicial to our own: admitting also, that on this malignant principle we did not scruple to act: yet on the mere impolicy of it we may safely rest the question; even under any circumstances, which can possibly take place.

To re-establish the old Government, we may now certainly reckon amongst the impossibilities. Had that been in contemplation, we should have attempted it earlier: when the Austrian and Prussian armies were in full strength; undiminished by sickness, and slaughter; and undismayed by defeat: when their exchequers, were not exhausted, and when they would not have rested solely on us for their supply. Even then, no man can imagine that our weight thrown into the scale would have turned the ballance; our importance as a military power, is certainly not great, and where the combined armies of Austria and Prussia have met with so shameful a repulse, ours would hardly have made much impression. We might, to be sure, have sent a few regiments to be cut off at *St. Cas*, to be slaughtered in the fields of *Fontenoy*, or to sign a capitulation at *Closter-Seven*;¹⁶⁶ and we may now replenish the exhausted coffers of the German Princes, to enable them to obstruct the progress of republicanism in *Germany*; for to overthrow it in France they can have now no hope. But may it not be asked, what interest can we have in this? what concern have we whether republicanism exist on the east, or the west of the *Rhine*, whether it be bounded by the Alps, or the Pyrennees? If the change of the government of France will be advantageous to its trade and manufactures, and thereby become injurious to ours, it is an evil we must prepare to meet, it cannot be prevented. *France* and *Flanders* are now established republics,¹⁶⁷ and there, if any were, we must expect to see rising and flourishing manufactories: But from *Germany*, remote indeed must be any such danger; to improve her uncultivated ground will afford employment for an increasing population, and long prevent her engaging in extensive manufactures to our prejudice, and in the mean time they will be taken of us, in an increasing proportion. *Germany* is even now the best market we have for our manufactures, will she become a worse, when rich, populous, free, and happy? when the extensive German forests now reserved for their Princes to range over in pursuit of the wild boar, shall be converted into cultivated villages, full of inhabitants, enjoying the comforts, perhaps the superfluities of life, shall we not find an additional vent for our manufactures? If there be an event to be wished for by us, of more peculiar importance than any other, it is that *Germany be free*, and in connection with it that the Scheldt be opened. The British vessels will then unload our manufactures on the quays of *Antwerp*, from whence they will be conveyed, by the Flemish canals, by the Rhine, and in a thousand ramifications, to the interior parts of Europe.¹⁶⁸ If there be a nation to whom the opening the port of Antwerp must be highly advantageous, it is *England*; if there be a nation to whom (except Holland) it will be injurious, it is France; they are giving to *Flanders* a port far superior to any one they themselves possess in the channel: yet even to Flanders is it unimportant, in comparison of us; for of English manufactures chiefly, *Antwerp* will become the depot.

France, in opening the port of Antwerp, cannot have any national advantage in view. She may be actuated by the pure motive of benefiting a neighbouring republic, but it may rather be surmised, that the views are political.

It is remarkable, notwithstanding the countenance Mr. *Burke* has received, in vomiting forth his abuse of the French Nation, which certainly must have excited amongst them no little resentment against our *Court*, yet have they, with the most guarded circumspection, avoided every thing which could interest, or necessitate us as a nation, to interfere in the war. Tho' in full force on the borders of the defenceless *Dutch*, they have taken a circuitous march to *Ruremonde*,¹⁶⁹ that they might avoid infringing on their territories. Even Flanders they avowedly hold only till peace shall be restored, and they leave the navigation to the Scheldt, to be then determined by the Austrians and Dutch, in the mean time navigating it merely for access to a fortress [they] are in possession of, so that the security and advantage of Holland is not in dispute.¹⁷⁰

That this caution did not proceed from fear is evident, as well from the consideration of the trivial hurt we can do them, as from the extreme indifference, with which they seem to consider our threatened interference. That Mr. *Paine* should wish to precipitate the two nations into a war, is very natural.¹⁷¹ No measure can be so conducive to advance *America* as a maritime power. Her forests would then cover the ocean, and carry on the commerce of the Belligerent powers; while her privateers, under a French flag, might enrich themselves by plundering our commerce. But however anxious he may be for this, yet equally so will he be, that England should not be compelled into this war, or that she should not commence it, on any national ground. His writings evidence his object to be, to foment discord between the government and the people of this country: to make them hostile to each other; and no way can this be so effectually produced, as by the nation being precipitated into a war, and much more into a war on false principles, and without any national object in view.

Nothing can be more opposite to these views of Mr. *Paine*, than the present state of this nation. A high satisfaction in the government, and confidence in its administration, universally prevail: even most of those, who with the most microscopic eyes, explore its defects; yet persuaded of the general good it produces, are amongst the most anxious to give it their support: they look to gradual melioration and dread any great and violent change, more than the continuance of the system they disapprove. To destroy their universal confidence, this general good opinion, nothing can be so conducive as the war in contemplation.¹⁷² Wars, when commenced, even on popular ground, and originating in the public voice, have usually a different termination. Ideal benefits are in general held out, but they always vanish, when the real and

certain evils of war come to be experienced! But in this war, not only every reflecting man will know its impolicy, and absurdity; but what is of much more importance, no object can possibly be held out to deceive the ignorant multitude. No story of the danger of our poor colonists from incroachment. No panic to be raised of the danger of our commerce, from *Spanish guarda costas*. No men without ears to be brought to the Bar of the House of Commons. We shall hardly be treated with a sight of Spanish Dollars, dragged through the streets of *London*.¹⁷³ When our funds are sunk, our commerce loaded with an heavy insurance, and the millions to be raised, call for additional taxes; we shall scarcely have the pleasure of being told of *America* being conquered in *Germany*. The events of this war will hardly occasion an *illumination*.¹⁷⁴ In this case conquest and defeat will be pretty similar. The people will hardly be very anxious, for an extraordinary Gazette¹⁷⁵ informing them, that we have effectually succeeded, in preventing the British manufactures going up the Scheldt. That we have amply secured the trade of Amsterdam, by obliging all the nations of Europe to guarantee to *Holland*, the right of firing on and sinking any English vessel that shall dare to carry the manufactures of *Sheffield*, of *Birmingham*, and *Manchester*, to the market of Antwerp.¹⁷⁶ It may be doubted, whether an English mob will much relish being informed, that we have succeeded in restoring the antient French monarchy to its former lustre, and that the National Convention have been sent to a new *Bastile*, which had been erected on purpose to receive them: nay, should we even be told, that the British Arms had turned the scale, and determined the war in favor of the allied monarchs: that they had determined no longer to quarrel about the boundaries of their territories, but, from a sense of common danger, had associated together against their subjects, as their common enemy: I know not but some inquisitive persons amongst us might be apt to enquire the names of the allied Kings: and probably might be foolish enough to imagine, that if ever we should have an enterprising monarch on the throne, our liberties might be in rather more danger, from the nations of Europe being governed by despotic monarchs, who had effectually subjugated their subjects, and had large standing armies at their absolute disposal, than if these nations were all democratic republics.—And it is not undeserving notice, that should the French Revolution be suppressed, the European Monarchs will have learnt a lesson from it they will not soon forget: Mr. *Burke* justly observes that Kings will be deterred from granting their subjects any degree of liberty, they will from policy be cruel.¹⁷⁷ Should the continental monarchs succeed in suppressing the French Revolution, they will hardly make Mr. *Burke* a lying prophet. Tyrants are cruel in proportion to their fears.

The mad and boundless ambition of the court of France has been sounded in our ears for above a century: it has been represented as

endangering the peace and liberties of mankind; to it we have attributed our wars, our taxes, our national debt, our standing army, and expensive navy. This power, Mr. *Burke* tells us, now no longer exists as a nation; its army without discipline, its finances ruined, he can now only see a vast chasm, which once was France.¹⁷⁸ And is our commerce to be ruined, our taxes and national debt increased; are we to be involved in all the calamities of war, to fill up this chasm, to restore this dreadful and dangerous power, to give discipline to its armies, and order and energy to its government? will it not be said, Do you regret that this dangerous government lies before you, an object of commiseration and contempt; or was the danger only ideal, and you regret that there no longer exists a pretence for perpetual war, accumulated taxes, and a standing army?¹⁷⁹

Perhaps it will be said, we do not mean to restore the old government of France. Indeed it is not easy to surmise what is really meant by the farrago of incoherent complaints against France with which we are deafened: but certainly as most of them are *philippicks*¹⁸⁰ against the new government, the only plain inference is, that this abominable government is to be destroyed; and as we should reasonably suppose, the old one to be restored; certainly it appears to be intended, to compel them to have a King. Mr. *Burke's* most vehement complaint is, that they hate Kings. The measures which have been pursued against them, do not seem indeed to have been extremely well calculated to remove their antipathy; and should the King of England join the confederacy against them,¹⁸¹ it is not quite certain, that it will totally eradicate their strange prejudices against Kings. To make them love Kings, will certainly be rather a difficult task, the utmost we shall be able to effect, will be to compel them to swallow a King, which they will again disgorge, as soon as it is in their power.

But it is the danger threatens us from the French principles that is mostly sounded in our ears. Mr. *Dundas* tells us, it is their principles which have rendered that nation obnoxious and dangerous to Europe.¹⁸² It is their principles Mr. *Burke* so vehemently calls on us to eradicate, and destroy:¹⁸³ it will not therefore be amiss to discriminate what they are, and separate them, from what they are not. Mr. *Burke* instead of doing this, talks for hours, about *blood* and *atheism*, and then to produce *stage effect* throws daggers about the house:¹⁸⁴ but after he has finished his *theatric rant*, he must be told, that the circumstances attending a revolution are not its principles, and frequently not the result of the principles; the massacre of Glencoe, or King William's bloody wars, our national debt, the septennial, or riot act, were never called the principles of the English Revolution.¹⁸⁵ Blood and atheism have certainly been charged on both the French and English Revolutions; but never till now were they deemed its principles. The events of *August* and *September* are from foreign causes,¹⁸⁶ had those causes not existed, the effects would not have

followed; yet the principles of the revolution would have been the same. So the hatred to Kings constitutes no part of those principles, it sprang from the hatred Kings have manifested to their government. The offer of confraternity¹⁸⁷ was adopted, to counteract the universal confederation they saw formed against them; or at least to retaliate it: and had the confederation never been formed, there is not the least evidence to prove, that either hatred to Kings, or the offer of confraternity, would have resulted from their principles; any more than from the principles of any other republic, or even than from the principles of our revolution.

Having stated what are not their principles, let us examine what they are. "Men being all *free, equal, and independent*, no one can be put out of his estate without his own consent, by agreeing with other men, to join and unite in a community.—Thus that which begins, and actually concludes any political Society, is nothing but the consent of a number of free men, capable of a majority to unite, and incorporate into such society; and this is *that* and that only, which did, or could give beginning to any lawful government. The supreme power cannot lawfully or rightly take from man any part of his property without his own consent.—There remains inherent in the people a power to remove or alter the legislative, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them; for when such trust is abused, it is thereby forfeited, and devolves to those who gave it."¹⁸⁸

Are these the principles of the French Revolution? they are: but you are mistaken if you think they are extracted from the paltry, blurred, scraps of the *Rights of Man*.¹⁸⁹ They are taken from the celebrated Mr. *Locke's* Treatise on Government, written avowedly for the purpose of defending the English Revolution; and for writing which, he was rewarded with a *thousand* a year, from the British government.¹⁹⁰ Is the war to be undertaken then, to support, or to destroy these principles?

That we are to assist the Austrian and Prussian monarchs to force upon France the English Constitution; or indeed any kind of free government, is too absurd to be supposed: it is not even pretended, by those who have projected this war. To see Britain's Arms so employed, would indeed be a remarkable circumstance: the effects of her power, and influence, are indeed to be very visibly traced, both in the numerous Isles of the western world, and along the vast extensive range of Africa's coast: but alas! it only presents to our view, one unvaried scene, of slavery, desolation, and blood. Liberty and happiness, it seems, we deem so estimable, that we keep them to ourselves: even when Poland had formed a government, similar to our own, we formed no confederacy to support it; we suffered it to be subverted by a neighbouring power, without interposing even a memorial in its favor: and Mr. *Burke*, that passionate admirer of the British Constitution, after due consideration

resolved, neither to draw his purse, his sword, nor his pen, in behalf of the Polish copy of it.¹⁹¹ But probably, he had exhausted his whole fund of invective, in inciting the powers of Europe, to defend the old French Government; and therefore was necessitated to abandon the new Anglo-Polish to its fate.

That the continental monarchs should be anxious to destroy the new Polish, and French governments, is extremely natural. Revolution principles, whether French, English, or Polish, are certainly dangerous to them, in proportion as they are beneficial to their subjects.¹⁹²

Is the war then intended to subvert these principles? Dismissing for a moment the enquiry, whether they be true, or false, dangerous, or beneficial, let us ask a plain question, *How a war with the French republic, is to destroy them?* *England* is their native land, here they may be deemed indigenious, in France only exotic, and whether suffered to remain; or whether the hand of violence tears up the new planted offset, the mother plant still remains. *Here* if any where, *that* must be destroyed. Not only Mr. *Burke's* speeches, and the Duke of *Richmond's* letters,¹⁹³ but Mr. *Locke's* writings, must be consigned to oblivion, before the principles of the French revolution can be annihilated. They are not merely the principles of *that* revolution, but of all our modern revolutions. Mr. *Locke* reduced them into form, for the English revolution: Mr. *Molyneaux* resorted to them as a proper foundation for an Irish revolution. Mr. *Burke's* coadjutor, Dr. *Price*, brought them forward for the American, and the National Assembly adopted them for the French revolution.¹⁹⁴ They are still very little the worse for wear, and may serve for twenty revolutions more. It is true those who have used them to effect a revolution, have usually wished, as soon as the end has been answered, to consign them to oblivion: yet they still survive. Admitting then these principles to be dangerous in the extreme: admitting also that their progress in this nation be rapid and alarming: nay, that all the exertions of government will be inadequate to preserve the public peace from the disorders these principles will occasion; still we must request Mr. *Dundas*, Mr. *Burke*, or Mr. *Jenkinson*,¹⁹⁵ to inform us, how a war will eradicate these principles, or prevent their further progress amongst us? Supposing, the Austrian and Prussian Grenadiers, with the assistance of the English Guards, were to eat up Thirty Millions of French, and bring away the eighty-three Departments in their knap-sacks; would these principles be lost? would the murder of thirty millions of people prove them to be false, or would any calamities the French may endure from the hand of violence, make these principles be less admired? If it be intended to root them out, measures very different indeed from those avowed must be adopted.

If indeed it were to be supposed possible, that the Royal Association should totally subvert the new government of France, we might justly entertain the most dreadful apprehensions. The continental monarchs of Europe,

no longer engaged in endless quarrels about the boundaries of their dominions, but combined together, in one horrid confederacy, to maintain their power against their subjects; these principles, and all other principles, of benefit and importance to mankind, would be eradicated. Europe would present to our view, a new, and a monstrous system of Government indeed, far more detestable than the old. One stagnant and putrid mass of despotism, would hang over the whole continent: and it is possible that we might not escape the contagion. Then indeed the plan would present to our view, a grand unity or design; it would not appear, as it now does, in unconnected and disjointed parts. If this be a part of the plan it is carefully and prudently kept out of sight. We are told nothing of reciprocity. The King of England is to engage in this contest from pure motives of regard to his fellow monarchs, to preserve *their* dignity and power; as King of England, at least, he asks nothing for himself.

But as there is little chance that these principles, whether French or English, will ever be rooted out, it may be some comfort therefore to those who are alarmed about them, to be informed, that however dangerous, or however beneficial, they may be in Germany; yet in England they are unimportant. As principles, they have long existed in this country. They have been appealed to, in defence of both the English, and the American revolutions: but that they had any tendency to produce these events, may be doubted. If the English, the Irish, the Scotch, or the Welsh, should ever feel apprehensions sufficient to induce them to revolt: and should have it in their power to effect it; they may possibly resort to these principles, if they are to be found; but were they to be lost, that circumstance certainly would not restrain them from revolt. They would do as we did at the revolution, first effect it; and then find some *Mr. Locke*, to form a set of principles, to defend it. In the mean time there is little danger of our resorting to them, but as themes for literary discussion. Perhaps the Duke of *Richmond* and a few whimsical men, may wish to see these principles more obviously realised in our government: but to go to war with the French for that reason, is as absurd, as if we were to commence a crusade against the Turks, because a few individuals amongst us, may admire the Koran; or against the idolatrous Chinese, because an extravagant author, has lately expressed his approbation of the Heathen Theology.¹⁹⁶

The people of this country, in a situation of increasing prosperity, surrounded with comparative misery, will not be easily induced to hazard this happiness. They will not scrutinize accurately into our form of government; nor hazard a public convulsion, by attempting such speculative, or even real improvements, as may endanger the public peace. Some few always have been, and always will be, endeavouring to draw the public notice by their speculations, but the bulk of the nation will give but little heed to them. If ever there be the least danger of their interrupting the public happiness, we shall

stop our business and our pleasures for a moment, and convince them of their insignificance. That the public peace was in any danger from these principles, could hardly be believed; and cannot be now even pretended. The public have manifested such an universal approbation of the government, and its administration; and such a determination to support it, as was never before witnessed. All parties, all religions, all ranks, merely on being informed by authority, that the public peace was in danger, have with unexampled zeal, pressed forward to express their attachment, without even stopping to enquire whether the danger be real, or imaginary.¹⁹⁷ Is this a time to tell us of danger from public commotions? If any man really thought so, he must now be convinced of his mistake; and it is certainly a little inconsistent in Mr. *Burke*, that tho' he represents us as cleaving to our antient prejudices, because they are prejudices,¹⁹⁸ yet considers us as ready to run mad after the most extravagant innovation, the baneful and mischievous effects of which, he says, we have an example of, in the misery they have brought on the French nation.¹⁹⁹ But admitting there were some ground to apprehend danger from republicans and levellers, the measures which have been taken appear to have been fully adequate to the purpose: if libellers write, juries will convict, and courts will punish: if riots should happen, constables or soldiers, will suppress them. These seem to be the proper, we have experienced them to be adequate, and they certainly are cheaper remedies for the evil, than a war against France.

It appears then, that this war cannot have been projected for any of the avowed purposes; certainly not to keep principles out of this kingdom, which were in it before the French revolution took place, and will still exist, whether the French government stand or fail. The war cannot be intended to restore the old government of France, for that, even if practicable, would be exposing ourselves to a known evil. It cannot be intended to give France a good government, for that would be injurious to our trade, and manufactures; nor a bad one, for that we are told she has already. It is hardly intended to engage in a war, to block up Antwerp from our own shipping; nor to prevent Germany, Italy, Russia, or China, from being republics; which can certainly do us no hurt. And a war can hardly be intended, for securing the liberty of the Genevese, the snowy Alps to Sardinia, or the castle of St. Angelo to the Pope.²⁰⁰ We are hardly going to mount our *Rozinante*, to redress all the wrongs, and engage all the windmills in the world.²⁰¹

If these then be only the ostensible reasons, what are the real ones? These who have projected this war, are not likely to have done it without an adequate motive; when such men talk absurdly and obscurely, it is because they do not think it expedient to be plain and explicit. If their plans appear weak and inconsistent, it is because we see them but in part; when they are developed and understood, though we may not always perceive any very evident marks of

the innocence of the Dove, yet in other respects they will certainly not be found deficient. In investigating the causes of political events, we oftener miscarry by looking too high, than too low. Projects which have been supposed to have had in view the fate of nations, have afterwards appeared to arise from the private views of courtiers. When then we cannot find an adequate cause for a political event, in the wisdom of the cabinet, it may not be amiss to retort to the intrigues of the court.

Wars in England, have frequently originated in a plan to destroy the minister; and they have usually effected the purpose. The wars of 1739, 55, and the American war, all did.²⁰² The present minister²⁰³ has obtained, and justly obtained, the confidence, and esteem of his country. It is to the prosperous situation of the nation, resulting from the peace, he owes his popularity: and when the calamities of war are experienced, it will cease. His merit will not in such a case be fairly appretiated.—There is a man, whose influence is supposed to be great, and though through every administration, he has held posts not inconsiderable, he has never ventured to assume the helm. But he may think his son may be a less exceptionable character with the public. Hence is it not improbable, that while rooting out French principles and daggers is held out to the people, and Hanover to the sovereign, as the reason of a war, the true one may only be, that Mr. — may be Chancellor of the Exchequer.²⁰⁴ If a war can be accounted for on this ground, and if it can consistently be accounted for on no other, we have ground to infer, that this is the true, and important reason.

We will now admit, That this reason; or securing Hanover; or restoring the French King; or guaranteeing to Fort Lillo the right of firing on our shipping;²⁰⁵ or rooting out French principles; or any other of the curious reasons which have been assigned for this war, be sufficient to counterbalance the ordinary, and unavoidable evils of war—The stagnation of our commerce—The destruction of our navigation—The depretiation of our funds—The injury of our manufactures—The accumulation of our taxes, and the increase of our debts —Yet is there one circumstance, peculiar to this war, which will demand some attention.

Let it be recollected, we are now playing a royal game. Our adversary has cried check; let us take care that our King be not in danger. This war will hardly be terminated by surrendering a few Islands to the victor.²⁰⁶ If it be commenced, with the purpose of subverting the adverse government, will it be ended without that purpose being effected? Should we engage in this war against France, to enthrone their King, if it prove unfavourable, they may possibly insist on dethroning ours. We have then to compare, the benefit which will result to us, from subverting the French Government, with the

injury we may receive in case of a defeat, from the subversion of our own. If involved in the calamities of a war, we should have to chuse, between our Trade, and our King; I tremble lest in such a dreadful alternative our loyalty should be shaken. Our attachment to the government results from the happiness and prosperity we experience; and we shall as naturally attribute their decline to its defects, as an increasing prosperity to the excellence of a well ballanced constitution. Peace will produce the most efficacious reply to Mr. *Paine*. If our trade and prosperity increase, his works may be read, but we need be under no apprehensions of their producing any mischievous effect. We shall have little occasion to fear any offer of confraternity. Our sovereign will be perfectly safe, however much the French may hate Kings. And I do not think the public peace would be much endangered, should we even suffer the Revolution Society to drink the Rights of Man, and send the most splendid embassy to their friends the Jacobins.²⁰⁷

Such are the benefits of peace, that though the short one we enjoy be the longest (except one) we have had for upwards of a century, the public prosperity has increased so rapidly, that some writers have been absurd enough to attribute it to our wars. The fact only is, that the intervals of peace have given such an impetus to our trade and manufactures, that even six foreign, and two domestic wars, within that period, have only checked, but not prevented their increase.²⁰⁸ The effects of a long continuance of peace, would far exceed the bounds of common imagination. I have no doubt but it might be proved (as clearly as the nature of the case would admit of) that twenty additional years of peace, would enable us to discharge the whole national debt, without any additional taxes; and that afterwards, even the taxes which it would be incumbent on us to impose, merely as regulations and restrictions, would be far more than sufficient to pay all the national expences, though we included therein that dreadful civil list, and those pensions, and places, of which Messrs. *Burke and Paine*, have both so loudly clamoured.²⁰⁹

We will now consider the question of a war with France, under a distinct head—*The Law of Nations*.²¹⁰ This extraordinary Code has very peculiar properties. It is extremely penal. It never writes a sentence but in characters of blood; and what is still more unfortunate, it is usually the blood of the innocent. We deem it to be essential to justice, that in proportion as a law be penal, it should be strictly, literally, and clearly interpreted, but unfortunately the code of which we speak, is totally deficient in these respects. It is extremely uncertain in its construction, loosely and equivocally interpreted, and rigorously executed. The Spanish Court, within this few years, sentenced many thousands to death at the rock of Gibraltar, on a hundred charges, not one of which were good.²¹¹ We are now about to pass sentence of death, on

thousands and tens of thousands of our fellow creatures. Our pleas like the Spaniards, are numerous; let us be sure that they be valid.

Obscure, and uncertain, as the Law of Nations may be, it is not therefore to be slighted, or trampled under foot. Its obscurity and uncertainty, are not necessary concomitants. Its principles are derived from the same origin as the Law of Nature, and are equally certain. The obscurities and uncertainties result from these principles being contravened and injured, by the conduct of nations, which however inconsistent with the true principles, is frequently confounded with them. The sanctity and importance of the law of nations, is great in the extreme. The contravention of municipal Laws,²¹² is of a local and of a temporary nature: but when the law of nations is contravened, the effects are unlimited in extent, and in consequences. Nations are as to each other in a state of nature; no sanctions exist to enforce reciprocal justice, but that which never can be supposed to influence bodies of men, the fear of the most high. An observance of the law of nations, can only result from a need of that reciprocal protection they afford, or the fear of retaliation, or a sense of national honor. Our Insular situation prevents a reciprocity of danger, and consequently we need not reciprocal protection with the other nations of Europe. We can engage in wars, secure from all its dangers, we have only to speculate on its imaginary advantages; if a loss accrues, it is only a pecuniary one, unattended with those calamities of war, experienced on the continent. Hence we have hardly any thing to restrain us from unjust wars, unless it be a sense of national honor. How far that has operated, let every quarter of the globe witness! By our peculiarly advantageous situation, it is scarcely possible we can be exposed to danger, or receive any material injury: yet have we been involved in almost perpetual foreign wars;²¹³ and from the conquest to the present hour, not one can be considered as just, nor as having even a colourable pretext. When we talk of war, the law of nations is never thought of. It is deemed so nugatory in this country, that scarce any of our writers have thought it worth discussing; we have despised it in theory, as we have trampled on it in practice. France demanded of the European powers on what footing they chose to stand with her: War, Neutrality, or Alliance? We declined war, or alliance, and chose Neutrality; with this special declaration, that we would not interfere in her domestic concerns.²¹⁴ Such declarations are always considered, as of a very solemn and decisive import: they are the most binding recognitions of the law of nations, and no engagements between nations, are more universally adhered to, it is requisite they should be: otherwise nations must always be armed for war.

If war be commenced, the simple question will be, which party has broken this Neutrality? and in this view of it, we cannot possibly take cognizance, of any thing which has occurred in France: every thing which has happened,

or can possibly happen there, is evidently irrelevant, even on the general principles of the law of nations: which in its nature, has no relation but to the intercourse of nation and nation. The injury France has done to any other nation, we have no concern in, unless it be one, with whom we are in alliance; and even then no farther than the terms of alliance bind us; for in that case, we act only as auxiliaries, the nations still continue at peace; and if we go a single step beyond what we are obliged by the terms of the alliance, we become the aggressors.

Hence it appears, that the only question is, has France transgressed against us? Nothing but that, can possibly justify us in making war against her. We are told she contemplates war.²¹⁵ To *contemplate* an offence was hardly ever I believe deemed to be punishable, by any law that ever existed. But if she has *made* war, as well as *contemplated* it, she is not accountable to us, unless it be against us, or our allies; against us no hostility is pretended; she declares she will not attack us, or our ally Holland.²¹⁶ She has even been assiduously careful to avoid it. She has not even attacked Prussia; tho' avowedly the aggressor. But France does not observe treaties.²¹⁷ This is very strange, she offered alliance to all Europe,²¹⁸ they have refused. There consequently can be no treaties subsisting: treaties cannot be binding on one party only, they must be reciprocal. But the objection from us is still more remarkable: we deny her existence as a nation, yet she suffers the commerce of the countries to subsist, according to the terms of a treaty, extremely unpopular in France, certainly very advantageous to England.²¹⁹ If this treaty be broken by a war, it certainly will never be renewed. France seems to be so far from aggressing against us, that she sacrifices her interest, to conciliate our friendship.

To deny that France exists as a nation, is absurd in the extreme. The existence of nations or of individuals does not depend on recognition. We may decline any intercourse with France, but all intercourse with her must be as a nation: her existence is as much recognized by a war, as by a treaty. We do not make war with individuals, we punish them as pirates or robbers, for their respective crimes.

Supposing the government of France to be tyrannical, and their conduct to have been as atrocious, as Mr. *Burke* represents: suppose them to be a band of Atheists, who have combined all sorts of follies with all sorts of crimes; yet is it no reason for a war; nor even for declining any intercourse with them, which our commerce, our interest, or our safety may require. We do not mean by sending our Ambassador to Turkey, or to Barbary, to recognize their religion, or to approve their government, or their laws. But admitting the disorderly state of France renders a diplomatique intercourse with her inexpedient;²²⁰ yet must that intercourse we have with her be regulated by the law of nations. If we have received injuries, they must be in some mode stated; the

proper reparation demanded; and the reparation refused; before we can be authorised to draw the sword.

Indeed if we commence hostilities against her, without these previous steps; and without some other cause for war than has yet been brought to light; it should seem that we are not only producing the usual calamities of war, and endangering the existence of our government; but tearing up those principles, which are requisite to preserve the intercourse of nations. FINIS.

*An Examination of Mr. Paine's Writings**

This is an attack on the second part of Paine's Rights of Man, published in February 1792, in which Paine announced his plans for the reform of taxation and the introduction of a system of welfare designed to provide the poor with education, sickness benefits and old-age pensions. The pamphlet shows the Tory Fox as he was before Britain entered the war against France: a more determined enemy of popular participation in politics than he later became, and above all a fervent supporter of the landed interest. Sometimes he writes – in the first paragraph – in the tone of a cynical saloon-bar Tory of more recent vintage attacking the idle poor and welfare scroungers; sometimes he offers a defence of landed property so doctrinally extreme as to be almost incredible, as when he announces that the laws of property exist primarily to protect the poor. He focuses particularly on Paine's attacks on landed proprietors as a class, and with his design for land to 'descend again to the community'. He represents Paine as ignorant of the history and principles of taxation, mainly by misrepresenting his proposals, and by pretending to a greater command of historical sources than he could fairly claim. Fox denies at the start that he intends his pamphlet as an answer to Paine's, on the grounds that that is what Paine would want him to write; and by the end, however impressive the energy and dash of his writing, it is difficult to feel that he has seriously engaged with the full reach of Paine's arguments.

Though not published until 1793, probably in February (the Critical reviewed it in March), after The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War, the pamphlet may have been written earlier, before the beginning of August 1792, when Sir Richard Arkwright, whom Fox refers to as though still alive, died.

* AN EXAMINATION / OF / *Mr. Paine's Writings* / By WILLIAM FOX / AUTHOR OF AN ADDRESS TO THE PEOPLE OF / GREAT BRITAIN, ON THE PROPRIETY OF ABSTAINING / FROM WEST-INDIA SUGAR AND RUM. // LONDON: / SOLD BY T. WHIELDON AND BUTTERWORTH, FLEET-STREET; / W. RICHARDSON, OPPOSITE THE ROYAL EXCHANGE; / AND M. GURNEY, NO. 128, HOLBORN HILL. / M DCC XCII. // (*Price Threepence, or Five for a Shilling.*) / Where may be had, just published, by the same Author, / *The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War*, Price. 3d. / *A Summary View of Evidence relating to the Slave Trade*. / *An Address to the People of Great Britain*, 26th Edition.

I presume not to denominate this little tract an answer to Mr. *Paine*, because I do not mean to undertake what that gentleman seems to expect from his opponents:²²¹ I certainly shall not attempt to convince the soldiers and sailors that to have their discharge, and their pay continued for life, will not be preferable to the present system.²²² Labouring men will certainly approve his plan of having their families supported by the public,²²³ as thereby they may be enabled to spend two days more in the week at the alehouse; and, when fifty years of age, receive an additional pension from the public,²²⁴ which may still diminish the necessity they may be under of continuing their labour. That these plans should be received with avidity is not very extraordinary, and that Mr. *Paine* should select them from his work, and circulate them in the public prints, as a specimen of his book, and as the ground on which he challenges his opponents to meet him, is very natural.²²⁵ I shall certainly concede to Mr. *Paine*, these important points: I shall not attempt to prove that *ten pounds a year is not a very good thing*;²²⁶ I shall merely content myself with shewing, that money raised and applied in the manner he proposes, would be a very bad thing indeed for the public: and, as it is his financial arrangements which he seems to consider as his strong hold, I shall venture to take this bull by the horns, and consider Mr. *Paine*'s merit as a financier.

But properly to appreciate his merit in this line, it is certainly requisite to ascertain in what light he is to be considered, for on that, in a great measure, will the merit or demerit of his work depend. As an English financier, his plan is profligate and absurd in the extreme; but if he be considered merely as an American partizan,²²⁷ promulgating an illusory plan to destroy the peace, trade, and happiness of this country, that the trade and navigation of his beloved America may prosper on our ruin, then indeed is there meaning and consistency in it. The wisdom of his speculations depends on the probability of our having the folly to adopt them, but their absurdity is so extreme that it may be doubtful whether his proposing them evince most his hatred or his contempt, for this country.

Every author who had before written on the finances of the nation, every individual who had made them the subject of his consideration, have uniformly considered our national debt, as threatening the greatest mischiefs to this country.²²⁸ Judge *Blackstone* considered it as even endangering our liberties:²²⁹ it is true we have not yet experienced those fatal effects, but they are not therefore less inevitable however uncertain may be the period in which they may take place. The difficulties and disadvantages under which the commerce of other countries has hitherto laboured, prevented our own, from

being affected by the weight of taxes arising from our national debt, as it is comparative incumbrances which operate on the commerce of nations.

America presents to our view a country whose commerce is totally free from incumbrances. Want of population, and capital are its sole obstacles; but these obstacles are continually diminishing. An Englishman would, therefore, naturally have said (possessed of a flourishing and extensive commerce) it is incumbent on us, assiduously to guard it against every danger, to render it secure that it may be transmitted as a permanent blessing to succeeding generations: we have hitherto enjoyed it almost unrivaled, the nations of Europe, possessed of natural advantages for trade and manufacture, have been hitherto oppressed by governments, which by rendering property insecure, necessitated manufactures and commerce to fly to us for refuge; and Holland, the only country in Europe where property could be deemed secure, laboured under such natural disadvantages, and a load of taxes, even greater than our own, that we had little to fear from her, as a commercial rival. But however flourishing, however advantageous, our present situation may be, we are not warranted to look on it as permanent. Commerce and manufactures are of a transient nature, and it is incumbent on us to guard against those circumstances which may endanger our possession. However deranged the present state of France, and however long that derangement may continue; yet it doubtless will be succeeded by a state more favourable to commerce than the antient system: and however injurious their system of finance may be, yet it can be but temporary, as their national debt is converted into a mass of paper, of which the state is obligated to discharge neither principal nor interest.²³⁰ America, almost incumbered with naval stores, wants only a capital²³¹ to render her a formidable commercial rival; it is true, considerable may be the lapse of time, before either America or any of the European nations will be in a situation to rival our trade and manufactures: but to that period it is incumbent on us to look: till then we are secure of a pre-eminence. It is necessary to avail ourselves of our present situation, that the prosperity we enjoy may be secured to our posterity.

To effect this, it is absolutely necessary we should in some mode discharge our national debt; otherwise the payment of the interest must inevitably sink our trade and manufactures. Whenever France or America shall possess a large commercial capital; when France shall become so settled in its government, as to afford a temptation to our monied men to transfer their capitals and vest them in the commerce, manufactures or agriculture of that nation, the incumbrances under which we labour must have a strong tendency to produce this effect. Hitherto, and especially lately, such has been the state of Europe as to occasion a great influx of the floating cash of the continent to be vested in our funds:²³² this has more than counterbalanced the portion

of the interest due to foreigners; the payment of that interest has not therefore been felt: but when the continent of Europe and America, shall open a temptation to employ this capital, England will be as a bank to be drawn on for that purpose; and even the payment of the interest of the national debt to foreigners, and much more the withdrawing their capital, will produce the most fatal consequences, exclusive of the consideration of that capital being withdrawn from us, to be employed in swelling the commerce of rival states.

On the contrary, were we to avail ourselves of the present increasing state of our commerce to discharge the national incumbrances, we should then be enabled to enter into a fair competition with either America or France, however favourable for commerce their circumstances may prove; and being in prior possession, there could be no temptation for withdrawing those capitals already vested in our trade and manufactures, which will then be unincumbered. The common expences of our government, would be supported by those internal impositions which the public good would require us to continue, and England would in fact become a mere free port,²³³ whose trade and manufactures would in such case be rather increased than diminished, by the increasing prosperity of other states.

Such would be the reasoning of an Englishman, anxious for the prosperity of his country. What is the proposal of this American partizan, Mr. *Paine*? as might be expected from such a character, exactly the reverse. He proposes, *continuing our national debt, our excises, our customs, and all our taxes, to be hung as a dead weight on our commerce and manufactures for ever.*²³⁴ extremely modest to be sure! by continuing our taxes our navigation will be burdened, and thereby give an immediate encouragement to the American shipping; and our national debt will form a standing fund, to be drawn on gradually, as America shall hold out an inducement to Englishmen to fix their residence in that country; this at present operates but slowly, we are not yet quite certain of the pre-eminence of that country over this; many of us require better evidence of it than Mr. *Paine*'s; but certainly many persons of property may in time be induced to exchange countries, and in that case money in our funds is the best adapted for that purpose, and therefore Mr. *Paine* very properly advises us for that purpose to reserve it.

Upon the same principle he wishes us to contemn, and trample on a landed interest. To improve the land of England he knows must be a permanent advantage, no emigration can carry that away to America, he therefore tells us the landed interest needs no care to be taken of it, and proposes that all land should pay an additional tax, and in case any person possessed of an estate of £500 per annum, should by draining, manuring, inclosing, building, embanking, or other expensive improvements, presume to improve it, the said offender should as a penalty pay a double tax for such improvement, the tax

or penalty to increase with the improvement; thus if a gentleman has an estate of twelve thousand pounds, if he improves it to thirteen thousand, half the improved, or additional thousand is to be paid to the public; and, if he should dare to extend his improvements above a given standard, the whole of it is to be forfeited to the state.²³⁵ Mr. *Paine* was an exciseman in *Sussex*, he saw there a great deal of poor waste land, of very trifling value to the community,²³⁶ he saw also land which had been equally useless, converted into valuable farms, producing both food and labour for an immense number of people, he knew also that important as these improvements might be to the public, yet were they so expensive to the individuals who effected them, as frequently to injure their fortunes, and rarely to return an interest for the money so employed. It is peculiar to agricultural improvements, that to the public they must be beneficial, whatever they may be to the undertaker: with great propriety Mr. *Paine* therefore levels, not only his arguments, but his wit also, against them. He says, *we talk of taxing luxuries, surely a large estate is a luxury.*²³⁷ very witty to be sure! and it will certainly be expedient to prohibit the luxury, a large estate, when Mr. *Paine* will prove the prohibition to be beneficial to the community, or even to the poor. The barriers of property are secured for their benefit, and were these barriers trampled under foot, the millions of the poor would be the principal sufferers; was Sir *Richard Arkenwright's* luxury of fifty thousand *per annum*, beneficial to him alone, or to the thousands and tens of thousands, who were thereby provided with labour and with food; and were he deprived of it, would the public be benefited?²³⁸ Is the Duke of *Bridgewater's* canal a luxury, which justice and the national good call on us to seize as a forfeiture to the state, to deter others from similar improvements?²³⁹ When Mr. *Paine's* national convention shall be assembled, when the illiterate, and the profligate shall be assembled to make our laws, when those who are destitute of property shall be called on to control and regulate the property of others, these plans might probably take place. Mr. *Paine's* sarcasm on a landed interest, would not be lost, he tells them it is *the only interest that needs no particular protection*. He says, "*It is the only one for which the common prayer of mankind is put up; and the only one that can never fail for want of means.*"²⁴⁰ That when the farmer wants rain, people may wish for it, we will admit; but something more is requisite to render the earth productive; had Mr. *Paine* lived all his life in America, his observations on this head might have been the mere result of ignorance; there indeed the farmer or occupier needs little protection or encouragement from law; law or government can scarcely injure him.

In that country where only three or four millions of people have to range along a coast two thousand miles long, and can extend their possession inland, without limits, there indeed the farmer has only to select the richest of the land, he can neglect the sterile soil, and leave it in the state it came from the

hand of nature: if additional plantations be wanted, still the other is neglected, he has only to inquire in what part of the immense continent, the hand of Heaven has scattered the richest mold; of that he takes possession, and has only to expel and murder the original inhabitants. But in England, where we have eight millions of people on a spot of ground inferior in size, even to one of the thirteen states, the case is totally different; here I have seen a moss,²⁴¹ which had lain useless probably from the flood, converted into fields, and yielding crops equal to the richest soil; yet thousands of acres of similar land still lay round it in its original state, because the owners were deterred from engaging in the expensive process: many of these undertakings originate in a laudable ambition of our landed proprietors to improve their estates, as no pecuniary returns can possibly compensate them. Is then the landed interest, the only permanent, the most important interest of the state, to be trampled on, degraded, and insulted? Are we to be told it needs no peculiar protection, it has the prayers and wishes of the community, and it will therefore bear taxes, penalties, and forfeitures?

On this subject Mr. *Paine* spends many pages, he commences it at page 100, by commenting on Mr. *Burke's* nonsense, "*That the House of Lords is the great ground and pillar of the landed interest.*"²⁴² But Mr. *Burke's* text and Mr. *Paine's* comment are equally absurd. The Feudal Barons indeed sat in Parliament in right of their baronies, so did the Bishops and Abbots in right of their temporalities; the Bishops do so still; but the temporal Lords bear no resemblance to the Feudal Barons, they now sit by authority of the King's writ, it is not requisite for them to have an inch of land, many of them have none. Their influence and weight they derive from their landed interest, not from their privilege as Lords. The possession of land in this country, by giving influence in the House of Commons, frequently procures them seats in the House of Lords,²⁴³ but if no such House existed, their influence in the Commons, which gives them their real importance would be the same; and as in that case they would sit in the House of Commons themselves, the landed interest would acquire additional weight, in that House, where ever since the revolution it has much needed it. It is the House of Commons, which by its constitution, should be the pillar of the landed interest, as every member is required to have a landed estate; but that is so trifling, and frequently nominal, that since the increased weight of the monied interest, the landed interest has been oppressed by it.²⁴⁴

Mr. *Paine* to establish the position of the weight of the landed interest, says, "*the only use to be made of this power (and which it always has made) is to ward off taxes from itself.*"²⁴⁵ And to support this proposition, he fabricates such a monstrous collection of false statements as to our taxes, as might surprize those who have not read his "*Common Sense.*" where to induce congress to build a

fleet, he calculates the expence of building the English navy at less than half the real cost, and to support this estimate he quotes a book printed in 1758, thereby conveying an idea that the estimates were of that date; but he carefully kept concealed what was stated in the book itself, that the estimates were of the last century, when the materials and labour of ship-building, were at half the present price. Such is the celebrated Mr. Paine, who boasts he possesses an heart that knows no guile.²⁴⁶

As we are now coming to a statement of facts, which considerably affect the veracity of this great man, we will be somewhat particular. In page 109 he states that our annual taxes in 1066 was £400,000. In 1166 £200,000. In 1266, £150,000. In 1366, £130,000. In 1466, £100,000. He then pronounces an eulogium on our ancestors for their republican economy in taxes. "*That the people would not be imposed upon, but kept the government in awe as to taxation.*"²⁴⁷ For my own part I am not much inclined to accept this compliment of Mr. Paine's on our ancestors, till he points out those taxes, or at least some one of them, which were repealed during those centuries. I have read all the statutes of that period, but I do not recollect any shop-tax, or commutation being set aside. Many complaints are to be found of taxes being levied, and promises that only the old ones should be extorted but their abolition, nobody except Mr. Paine ever discovered. But is Mr. Paine, who talks so familiarly about the feudal system, so totally ignorant of it as not to know that it was from that system, and not from taxation, that the Conqueror and his successors derived their revenue. He held 1422 manors, which, according to Sir R. Cotton, had belonged to Edward the Confessor.²⁴⁸ The revenue of these demesne lands, according to Ordericus Vitalis, came to the immense sum of £387,265 pounds per annum,²⁴⁹ only £12,735 pounds short of what Mr. Paine states to be the whole of his revenue.

Will he now be so obliging as to inform us what were those heavy taxes at the conquest, which by the virtuous struggles of the people during four centuries were reduced to a fourth part. The fact is exactly the reverse of Mr. Paine's statement. This revenue of the crown arising from the demesne lands rapidly decreased, because they were continually granted away by the successive monarchs to their favourites; thus the revenue of the crown decreased as he has stated, but it had nothing to do with taxation, except to increase it, for as the grant of these lands impoverished the crown, it became necessary to levy taxes, and to call Parliaments for that purpose. Could Mr. Paine be ignorant of this? Certainly not, if he ever read a history of England. But we have not yet done with his Scale of Taxation, for as he found by his former series, that the virtuous resistance of the people to taxation increased for four centuries, he tells us the three last centuries prove that the national character of the English has changed.²⁵⁰ We did indeed suppose that since the time of Richard the third, we had changed, and we presumed for the better: but this it

seems is a mistake; and it is rather remarkable, that both Mr. *Burke* and Mr. *Paine* should concur in a desire to make us look back with regret to the happiness enjoyed by our ancestors in the 14th and 15th centuries. Mr. *Burke* tells us, that *since the 14th century we have scarce made any improvements in our government*;²⁵¹ and Mr. *Paine* asserts that “*it would have been impossible to have dragooned the former English into the excess of taxation which now exists.*”²⁵² Indeed it gives me great pleasure that I can heartily concur with him in this sentiment: firmly am I persuaded that at the period of which he speaks (1466) it would not have been in the power of bloody King *Richard*, to have dragooned the people of this country into the payment of seventeen million of money, even had he stripped them of all their property; it may even be doubted whether the fee simple²⁵³ of this Island would then have sold for that sum. The nation, as Mr. *Paine* justly observes, has since that time undergone a great change; we are now unfortunately in such a situation, that government can dragoon us into the payment of this immense sum.

It must be observed that Mr. *Paine* has very easy and compendious rules for forming a judgment on subjects, which some people suppose to be of some difficulty. Thus to judge of a government and its administration we are to look at the amount of taxes. Mr. *Pitt*, he says, *boasts of how much revenue, whereas the boast ought to be how little*.²⁵⁴ judging by this rule certainly our government deserves all the rancour Mr. *Paine* has expressed. It certainly is the worst government, and Mr. *Pitt* is the worst minister that ever existed; and what is still worse, he does not seem disposed to mend and notwithstanding Mr. *Paine*'s advice, he still continues plundering us of more and more every year. When Mr. *Paine* published his book, he stated the revenue at seventeen millions, this year it is said to be eighteen.²⁵⁵ If so it is extremely obvious, that in the course of a single year, our government is grown exactly a seventeenth part worse, and the minister in precisely the same proportion, more boyish and profligate. As the gross amount of our taxes thus appears to be the proper scale by which the defects of our government are to be estimated, it will follow, not only, that our government is the worst that ever existed, and that it has been gradually growing worse for above three centuries, but that if, in case of a war, the produce of our permanent taxes should decrease from fourteen millions, their present amount, to half that sum, which is extremely probable, it will then be equally evident, that our government is improved, and that its administration is only half as bad as at present. Such is the nature of the reasoning of this profound logician.

It is remarkable that notwithstanding these exclamations as to the amount of our taxes, yet there is one of them Mr. *Paine* seems much to regret to find so low; and so extremely anxious is he to convince us of it, that he hazards assertions, which not only every person the least acquainted with the subject

knows to be false, but which are so extravagantly absurd, that the most ignorant must suspect their falsehood. In page 100, he says, "*notwithstanding taxes have increased and multiplied upon every article of common consumption the land-tax has diminished. In 1788 it was £1,900,000 pounds which is half a million less than it produced, almost an hundred years since.*" And he gives us a reference to Sir John Sinclair in a note.²⁵⁶ This reference is perhaps the most extraordinary instance of literary effrontery existing. He does not give us the amount of the land-tax at the time mentioned in the text. He does not produce a single year in any King's reign, from the conquest to this time. He does not do this, because there is not one can be referred to, but what would directly falsify his assertion. An appearance of evidence was all he wanted, and presuming the bulk of readers, would read his text without troubling themselves to compare it with his note, he gives, for the amount of the land-tax at the revolution, the sum which in the time of the civil war, was levied on all property, and every species of income, by the republican army.²⁵⁷ Had the assertion in the note been true that the republic in 1646 raised two millions and a half on the land, what would it prove, but the tyranny, oppression, and injustice of a republican government? Would it serve Mr. Paine's argument to shew that the republic in one year assessed on the land, more than was levied on it during the whole reign of any one of the *Stuarts*? But the fact is not so. Mr. Paine to induce us to plunder the landed proprietors, does not scruple to slander even republicanism itself. The republic in the last century was certainly tolerably disposed to punish the landed men for their adherence to monarchy: but they never thought of doing it to the extent Mr. Paine alledges. I have the assessment for 1657 now before me, it is a general tax on every species of property, land included, at sixty thousand pounds per month:²⁵⁸ not a third part of our present land-tax; and instead of the land having been favored since the revolution, it appears that prior thereto there existed no such thing as a regular land-tax.²⁵⁹ Lord *Coke* in his 2d. Inst. page 77, gives an account of the antient subsidies and fifteenths:²⁶⁰ they were assessments on all property, real and personal, and till the revolution were levied only occasionally. This mode was followed for some time even after the revolution. That in 1697 is called "*an Act as well by a land-tax as by several subsidies and other duties.*"²⁶¹ It included a capitation of four shillings on all but paupers. This is about the period Mr. Paine alludes to, when the amount of the levy on all property, land included, was only about half of what Mr. Paine asserts was raised on the land only. The mode of assessing the land only was by degrees adopted soon after. The land proprietors were deemed enemies to the Hanover Succession, and as such they were treated. *Addison's Fox-hunter*, and *Fielding's Squire Western* were intended to depict and ridicule them.²⁶² The object of government, while revolution politics prevailed, was to raise a monied interest and depress the landed.

The artifice with which this plan was conducted is somewhat curious. After the revolution, though the acts were formed in the antient manner as an assessment on personal as well as real property yet Dr. *Davenant* tells us, as people were suffered to give in what accounts they pleased of their personal effects and incomes,²⁶³ and government adopting no mode to render the assessment effectual, it by degrees became trivial: thus tho' by the first of Queen Anne, a *subsidy was granted on all personal effects, as well as land, and even the practitioners of the law were assessed at four shillings in the pound of their net income*, yet was it so levied, that tho' it ought in the increased state of personal property at that time, to have raised some millions, yet it produced only £300,524.²⁶⁴ The assessment on personal property and income being become²⁶⁵ so inconsiderable, the levy was soon after discontinued, and the whole raised on the land. Yet is the old form still continued in framing the land-tax acts, they contain a general assessment on every species of property, except money in the funds.²⁶⁶ The commissioners are vested with extraordinary power, their decisions cannot be appealed from. The oath they formerly took was, "*you shall cause the rates and duties to be charged on stock in trade, debts at interest, pensions, annuities, stipends, professions, offices, and the personal duty of four shilling to be duly levied according to your skill and judgment.*"²⁶⁷ This oath has been discontinued, that they might not perjure themselves, and they now only take the oath of allegiance. The act called a *Land-tax Act* is now trampled under foot, and totally disregarded by those who ought to execute it, and a tax is raised every year on the land, to the amount of two millions, in direct opposition to the very act, under which it is pretended to be levied.²⁶⁸ On what principle this act is thus uniformly dispensed with might call for inquiry, as much as those numerous abuses, of the existence of which Mr. *Paine* labours so much to convince us: it is now adduced merely to illustrate Mr. *Paine's* wonderful position, of the landed interest having been favored in respect to taxation since the revolution, and if he can spare a few moments of his valuable time, we might beg him to support his assertion, in page 101, "*That before the coming of the Hanoverians, the taxes were divided in nearly equal proportions between the land and articles of consumption, the land bearing rather the largest share.*"²⁶⁹ Or rather will he shew that prior to within a few years of the Hanover Succession, there was any regular tax at all levied solely on the land. And it may also be asked, if a portion of any particular species of property can [be] seized on by the state, on any other principle than that, on which Mr. *Paine* would instigate a national convention to seize upon the whole.

The landed interest, or as he chuses to call it "*the Aristocracy, he says, are not the farmers who work the land, and raise the produce, but are the mere consumers of the rent; and when compared with the active world, are the drones, a seraglio of males, who neither collect the honey nor form the hive, but exist only for lazy enjoyment.*" And in

page 103, "*It is difficult to discover what is meant by a landed interest, if it does not mean a combination of aristocratical land-holders, opposing their own pecuniary interest, to that of the farmer, and every branch of trade, commerce, and manufacture.*"²⁷⁰ Notwithstanding the difficulty Mr. Paine is under of discovering the meaning of a landed interest, most people will imagine it to be very obvious; they will suppose it to mean, the interest of those whose property is vested in land; as a commercial interest means, the interest of those whose property is vested in commerce, or a monied interest, that of those whose property is vested in money, and its various securities, and they will be apt to ask Mr. Paine what necessary relation aristocracy or combination, has to a landed, more than a commercial or monied interest. Those who attend to our legislative proceedings will not easily discover this aristocratical "*combination of persons in a common interest.*"²⁷¹

The monied interest since it has acquired weight in the legislature, has indeed given evidence, if not of a combination, yet of an active powerful attention to its peculiar interest. When at the close of the last war, they possessed twenty millions of navy bills,²⁷² they were not content with having bought them at a great discount, and with government fulfilling the only compact it was under, the payment of the interest: they by their clamour and weight in parliament, compelled government to fund them, and in so doing to give them three millions more than the bills were worth, and more than upon any principle of justice or common sense they ought to have received: and this they effected in spite of the opposition of the minister himself.²⁷³ The landed interest may indeed in one sense deserve the epithet of drones, which Mr. Paine bestows on them. It will not be easy to discover any traces of their activity to guard themselves from injustice: possessed of a property of six hundred millions, they might be supposed to have some weight in the legislature; but little solicitous have they been to avail themselves of it. Theirs is the only species of property, on which an annual depredation is made, under the denomination of a tax. On them is quartered the whole body of the national clergy, though the original claim to tythe had no particular relation to land: the speculation of the stock-jobber, and the winnings of the gambler, are by the law of tythes equally subject to clerical claims, though for several centuries the clergy have fastened themselves solely on landed property.²⁷⁴ The rate to maintain the poor is really levied on them, for tho' it be levied on the tenant, the landlord's property is depreciated by every incumbrance with which it is loaded: hence it is evident that he maintains the appendages of the national religion; the roads, prisons, bridges, and almost all important public expences and tho' the possession of landed property be naturally of the simplest nature, yet the lawyers derive their principal support from its being involved in such a labyrinth, that they themselves are frequently lost in its mazes. And lastly the whole of this vast property, is for near half the year

converted into a vast common, to be laid waste and trodden under foot, by every individual who can call himself esquire,²⁷⁵ or who, by renting a shop in 'Change-alley, or a warehouse in Thames-street, to a given amount, can break the inclosures and spoil the crop of the best estate in the kingdom:²⁷⁶ and the law has been so careful to protect him in the trespass, that in case it does not exceed a given sum, the greater part of the expense of the action falls on the landed proprietor who presumes to seek redress for the injury. Mr. *Paine* attributes the game laws to the undue influence of the landed interest, and tells us "if there were a house of farmers they would not exist."²⁷⁷ It has been calculated that the damage resulting to one single county by the game laws, amounts to £40,000 *per annum*. Will Mr. *Paine* inform us whether the county is not worth so much the less to its proprietors, and whether the rentals would not be increased if the game were not protected by law, for the amusement of the country attorney, the sporting parson, or the rusticated cit.²⁷⁸ Let us no longer complain of uncultivated land, of deserted villages,²⁷⁹ or of the slow progress of agricultural improvements; that they take place in a property so circumstanced, must be attributed to the patriotism, or the ignorance of the proprietor, who, after all these incumbrances and restrictions on his estate, is still farther controled by capricious laws in the sale of the produce of his land.

It is somewhat extraordinary that Mr. *Paine's* partizans should be remarkably solicitous to disclaim the leading principle of their master. An equalization of *rights*, not of *property*, they pretend he contends for:²⁸⁰ but if there be any meaning in his work, it is, that all the most important boundaries of property should be trodden under foot, for if the most considerable branch of property, that of land and its improvement, is to be thus stigmatized, surely no other can be deemed inviolable.

That the earth in its natural state is equally the property of every individual born on it, we will readily admit; all men have an equal right to the use of it, and no man could be entitled to more, if the good of society did not require it. But the earth in a state of nature affords a miserable support to a small number of inhabitants: in the imperfect state resulting from mere occupancy, its benefit to man is inconsiderable, in comparison of the improved state of which it is capable. As then a transferable and permanent property in land is necessary for the support of an increased number of inhabitants, and as the increase of its inhabitants is the will of Heaven,²⁸¹ it thence necessarily follows that that state of the earth should exist, which is necessary to adapt it to an increasing state of man; that is a permanent and transferable property. Hence this state of a landed property which Mr. *Paine* stigmatizes, appears to be of the most sacred nature, it must have a collateral existence with the increase of man, and to shake²⁸² it, is to terminate that increase. The fecundity of the earth, under the cultivating hand of man, has scarce any limits from that

savage state in which hundreds of acres are requisite to support an individual, to the support of many on a single acre: thus the earth appears to be wisely fitted by its maker to the increasing state of man: the earth in this improved state may be deemed almost a new creation; it bears no more resemblance to its original state, than the oak growing in the forest, to the oak when converted into a ship, and floating on the waves: it becomes as much a property, and it is a property which the good of society calls on us to sanction and protect, far indeed beyond any other. A capital vested in any other species of property, can be transferred from one part of the earth to another, the proprietor is a citizen of the world: but agricultural improvement must take place in confidence of the permanency and stability of those laws on the faith of which they were made, and if society innovate on²⁸³ this species of property, it violates that confidence which was reposed in it, and a confidence from whence it derives the most essential benefits. A capital vested in any other pursuit, requires not an equal confidence in the good faith of society, because the expectation of a reimbursement is far less remote: the compass of a few years limits our views, and circumscribes our hopes; and a disappointment will not result from any remote changes in the laws, or convulsions in the state: but the more operose improvements of the earth, must result from views far more distant, to build, plant, inclose, embank, and drain; to render the earth fruitful by combining its various soils, an inducement must be held forth, far beyond the fragil tenure of human life; the prospect of transmitting them to a succession of heirs, and if that succession be violated, or the property dilapidated, that implied compact is broken, on the faith of which the improvements were made.

With this obvious view of landed property before us, let us consider Mr. *Paine* stigmatising as useless drones, the proprietors of the most improved portion of this habitable globe. Men whose labour or whose property has converted this island into a residence for ten millions of men in all the various classes of civilized life; which originally would not have preserved a tenth part of the number, in a state of mere savage existence.

But these men it seems, are, "*mere drones, they are not the farmers who work the land and raise the produce, but are the mere consumers of the rent.*" This will deserve some consideration. The idea of a drone is that of a useless intruder into a well ordered society who lives on the spoil of it, and whom it is incumbent on the society to expel from amongst them. This certainly is the idea Mr. *Paine* means to convey to his national convention when it shall assemble, and as the labouring part of the nation will compose a great majority, perhaps ten to one, what can be a more natural step for them first to adopt, than to expel from the hive, these mere drones, who do not raise the produce, but only consume the rent; and the idea must be extended still farther, for by a parity of reason,

all are to be considered as drones, who do not labour themselves, but derive their support from the labour of others: that they pay the labourer his hire cannot be deemed sufficient, the land proprietor himself, or the person from whom he derives his title has done that, he has inclosed the ground to secure the crop, and the barn to receive it, but as he neither sows nor reaps it, he can from thence it seems derive no title to any part of it: thus the farmer himself, if he hires the labourers and derives a living from their labour and not his own, must be equally destitute of a title to the crop; the landlord's large capital and the farmer's small one are indeed both employed, and tho' without them the crop could never have been raised, yet is the labourer who sows and reaps intitled to the whole, all but him are mere drones, living on the labour of others.

Every other great class of property stands in the same predicament: the owners of shipping, are "*mere drones, they are not the mariners who navigate the vessel, they are the mere consumers of the freight.*" The heirs of Sir R. *Arkwright* will possess a luxurious property equal to most landed estates in the kingdom,²⁸⁴ they may like the land-holders let it, and become the mere consumers of a rent, and tho' Mr. *Paine* in his 141 page only proposes depriving them of a part,²⁸⁵ yet surely if he be consistent the whole ought to be forfeited. If a national convention adopt his principles they will consider as a luxury every estate from whence an income is derived without labour, and will convert the mere drones into useful bees, that is, into active citizens, or labouring men. Yet have Mr. *Paine's* partizans the assurance to tell us that Mr. *Paine's* principles, equalise rights only, and not property.

Mr. *Paine* in the same page, in which he says "*it is difficult to discover what is meant by a landed interest, if it does not mean a combination of aristocratical land-holders,*" immediately proceeds to admit its superior importance, "*it is the interest (he says) not of the policy, but of the existence of man, and when it ceases he must cease to be,*" and from thence infers, with that perversity of intellect which characterises his work, that it needs no particular protection.²⁸⁶ Most people would have drawn a different inference, they would have supposed that in proportion as it was important, it should be powerfully supported and sedulously guarded. Mr. *Paine*, indeed chooses to suppose that mankind possess a sufficient portion of wisdom to discern the public good, and virtue and fortitude enough to pursue it: but the history of mankind will hardly support his position. Turn-pike roads, broad-wheel waggons, saw-mills, and cotton-mills, however beneficial to the public, have not always received the countenance, even of that part of the community for whose benefit they were particularly adopted, until use had rendered them familiar, and experience proved their utility.²⁸⁷ This observation applies more particularly to landed property, as the benefit the public derive from securing it, though the most important is not the most

obvious: an act to seize on all the shipping of the kingdom, and divide it among the sailors, would be easily seen to be dangerous, because every one must know the very rumour of it would deprive us of our shipping: but Mr. *Paine* may suggest to a national convention, that no such danger can result from seizing on landed property; the improvements of the land exist, the barns are built, the inclosures made, and the soil improved. These cannot be conveyed away to another nation: to divide it among those who have hitherto laboured on it for a miserable existence, is a plan plausible at least.

If legal sanctions and all the energy of the state be scarcely sufficient to preserve property, little veneration can we expect to be paid to it, when, as Mr. *Paine* proposes, all government and all law shall be dissolved, and the whole property in the nation shall be thrown into one mass to be disposed of at the will of the majority; when even plunder may assume the forms of law. It will then be in vain to urge, that the land, by having been secured to the proprietors for a series of years, has received improvements, by which it renders tenfold more than if the *usufruct* only had been enjoyed;²⁸⁸ —That those improvements had been made under an implied compact, that a permanent property in them was established; and that a violation of this property was an infraction of that implied compact, from whence resulted those improvements by which the earth was fitted to support ten times the number of inhabitants it would sustain if mere occupancy only had been enjoyed. It would probably be in vain to urge, that by seizing the improvements already made, all future improvements would be obstructed, for that in proportion as the property in land was insecure and limited, in that proportion would the motive to improve it be diminished.

As the increase of mankind is only limited by the means of their support, so is the earth capable of yielding that support to man in an almost unlimited degree.²⁸⁹ This island is perhaps in the most perfect state of cultivation of any part of the globe, yet it is probably as inferior to the state of cultivation to which it may be carried, as its present state is superior, to even that of America itself. As therefore a permanent and exclusive property in land is that which will render the earth fit to sustain the greatest number of inhabitants, it follows that to preserve that permanent and exclusive property must be a principal object of laws and government, and in proportion as any system of government tends to weaken the possession of land, in that proportion it is unfit to be adopted in that advance stage of civil society where the increase of man calls for an increasing means of support.

Mr. *Paine*, to stigmatize the landed interest, reproaches them with the restraints under which their property labours from the continuance of barbarous laws. The antient military tenures, to which the land of the various countries of Europe was subjected, arose not from a disposition to benefit land-

holders or the public, but merely to create a power that might defend the new made conquests: hence the holders of the lands were not suffered to alienate them, and they were limited in their descent to a single individual, that the strength of the military chief might not be weakened by dividing the estate, and for the same purpose during a minority they were seized into the King's hands. Mr. *Paine* seems to reproach the landed interest that it was delivered from the last of these restrictions, by the statute of *Charles* the second, for abolishing the Court of Wards,²⁹⁰ and then, to shew how perfectly absurd and inconsistent it was possible to be, he also insults them, in page 107 of the first edition of his second part (from whence all the quotations have been taken) because the law of entails²⁹¹ and primogeniture still continues. I will admit those restraints to form what Mr. *Paine* terms, "*a law of brutal injustice.*"²⁹² The interest of the land-holder and the community, both suggest that his property should be secure, and his authority and control over it as unlimited as over any other species of property: that he should be allowed to alienate and to devise it to whom he pleases. But whatever hardships the landed interest may labour under from our present system of laws, they will hardly thank Mr. *Paine* for his interference, they will certainly prefer paying a fine to the crown for alienation, to being deprived of it altogether; and I believe most men, though they might wish for the liberty of disposing of landed, like other property, to whom they please, yet they will certainly prefer its descending to their eldest son, to its being, as Mr. *Paine* proposes, forfeited to the state, or disposed of by those who have no property of their own, and consequently whose interest in the state, can be but of a subordinate nature:²⁹³ for contrary to Mr. *Paine's* assertion, no part of the community can have an interest in the laws and government of the country equal to the landed proprietors; none can have an interest so perfectly connected with its general interest: none who are so incapable of pursuing a partial, in opposition to that general interest. The landed proprietors not only possess the largest portion of national property, that on which the principal portion of wealth has been expended, but they are the only persons who have any material interest in the future state of this country.

When every individual can be supposed to have an equal interest in the state, and every class of mankind are equally concerned in the future and permanent prosperity of the country, then let every individual assume an equal share in its government: but ere we call the coal-heaver from his labour, and the coachman from his box to legislate, we have at least a right to some evidence that our laws will be thereby improved.—FINIS.

*Thoughts on the Death of the King of France**

The execution of Louis XVI on January 21 1793 was greeted with shock and revulsion by many in Britain, feelings in part orchestrated by Pitt's government as they manoeuvred to procure a declaration of war from France. On January 24th, George III signed the order requiring Chauvelin, the French Ambassador, to leave Britain, and a few days later the king sent a message to parliament requesting an augmentation of the armed forces in anticipation of the now apparently inevitable war. On February 1, opening the debate that followed the receipt of the king's message, Pitt described the execution of Louis XVI as 'the foulest and most atrocious deed which the history of the world has yet had occasion to attest', and in the corresponding debate in the Lords, the speech of Lord Grenville, the Foreign Secretary, was similarly hyperbolic. Fox found it extraordinary that the leaders of a nation whose hands were stained with the blood of thousands of African slaves could describe the death of a single individual in such exaggerated terms; he found it all the more hypocritical, in that he believed that the death of Louis was the foreseeable result of Burke's campaign to raise resistance to the revolution in France, and of the British government's refusal to accept the French request, made in the summer of 1792, to mediate between France and the allies who were preparing to invade it. He ends the pamphlet provocatively, by asking whether kings were still necessary to guarantee good government and the public safety. The pamphlet is an extended commentary of the debates of February 1, and appears to have been written between that date and before the receipt of the French declaration of war ten days later. Notices of it appeared in the Critical Review in March 1793 and in the Monthly the following June.

* THOUGHTS / ON THE / DEATH / OF THE / KING OF FRANCE. / By WILLIAM FOX. // LONDON: / SOLD BY J. RIDGWAY, YORK STREET, ST. JAMES'S / SQUARE; W. RICHARDSON, OPPOSITE THE ROYAL / EXCHANGE; T. WHIELDON AND BUTTERWORTH, / FLEET STREET; AND M. GURNEY, NO. 128, / HOLBORN HILL. / 1793. // Where may be had, just published, by the same Author, / The Interest of Great Britain, respecting the French War, 4th Edition. / An Examination of Mr. Paine's Writings. / Address to the People of Great Britain, 26th Edition. / Summary View of Evidence relating to the Slave Trade, 6th Edition.

The melancholy catastrophe of the king of France, and the horror it has excited in this country, call for investigation; because consequences of great importance seem likely to result from it, and, in proportion as these consequences may be important, it is requisite that the investigation should be cool and unimpassioned. Even in the ordinary situations, and common occurrences of human life, great is the risk and danger of giving up our conduct to the guidance, even of those passions, which, when under the guidance and control of reason, are valuable and amiable. The human passions may properly give energy to our actions, when reason has marked out their course, and fixed their boundaries; but, without these precautions, they are dangerous in the extreme; nor can any action, resulting merely from our passions, be denominated virtuous or moral, any more than the fidelity of a dog, the harmlessness of a sheep, or the attachment of a dove.

If we extend our views from common life, to the more enlarged sphere of human action, which history presents to our view, we shall find the most enormous evils, arose from the dictates of reason being overborn by the fervor of the passions, under whose fallacious colouring men have supposed themselves to be in the path of duty, while they have been outraging every moral principle, and trampling on every duty of social life. Under the impression of heroism and patriotism, what dreadful mischiefs have pervaded every age of the world! and an imagination inflamed with an idea of advancing God's glory, has been productive of no less dreadful consequences; not much inferior have been those which have resulted from a desire of avenging the real or imaginary wrongs of individuals: Nor is this principle confined to the annals of chivalry; it disgraces the page of history. For upwards of a century this nation was deluged in blood, by the partizans of the claimants of the crown; and in the present century we have had two civil wars, to avenge the injuries, and redress the wrongs of the house of Stuart.²⁹⁴

Thus have we experienced the mischiefs of this principle, of which the danger is the greater, as it assumes the guise of justice and humanity. Were we merely to accompany with a look of pity, and the sigh of commiseration, the unfortunate Bourbons, or the still more unfortunate Stuarts; it might not be necessary accurately to investigate the foundation of our pity, or to be very solicitous exactly to apportion it. If it tends to meliorate our minds by contemplating human woe, or, to improve them by reflection on the uncertainty of human felicity, no harm would result, though our sorrow should border on excess: nor may it be requisite in such case, to be very anxious to bring our feelings to the bar of reason. But if the profligate and designing attempt to take advantage of human frailty; if they excite our pity that they may work

it into rage; if they attempt to suffuse our eyes in tears, that they may lead us blindly, to perpetrate greater mischiefs than those they affect to deplore; it will then become us to give firmness to our nerves, to repress our feelings, and to call upon reason to resume her throne. She will tell us, that the continuance both of moral and physical evil in the world, is the will of him who made it; and that the cognizance of human actions, as to their moral nature, belongs to him who will in due time render to every man according to his works; that man can have no authority to punish his fellow mortals, but what is derived from the will, either express, or implied of their common parent. Hence it appears that *that* degree and species of authority is to be exercised among men united in social compact, which the preservation of that compact requires; and in the several relations of life that which those special relations call for. But in none of those cases cognizance is taken of the action abstractedly, as to its moral turpitude, but merely in reference to the relation between man and man; if we presume to go beyond this, we are trampling on the authority of him, who, speaking of the good and evil in this world, decreed, "let them grow together till the harvest."²⁹⁵

This principle is actually recognized by the general structure of our criminal code, which forbears to take notice of many offences, though of a very criminal nature. A man may suffer even his parent to perish for want; and though, in this and a variety of instances, he might be guilty of an atrocious murder, the law will take no notice of it. Perjury, if unaccompanied with any injury to society; and even adultery and seduction, though attended with circumstances which might constitute the climax of human guilt, are totally unnoticed by our criminal law. As thus the most enormous crimes are suffered to go unpunished; so actions not merely of trivial guilt, but which result from good and amiable dispositions, if deemed injurious to society, are punished with severity. The *Grecian Daughter*, for obstructing the execution of a legal sentence, must have been deemed guilty of a crime, by every well constituted system of law.²⁹⁶ And it is not only in annexing punishment to crime, but in conducting the legal process that we lose sight of the moral turpitude of the offence. Thus we acquit the most notorious and well-known criminals, rather than violate those rules of evidence which we deem the good of society to require; nor is an individual suffered to inflict those punishments which the laws have annexed to crimes, however certain he may be of the criminal's guilt.

If then a state of civil compact, where mankind are connected by a recognized system of laws, enforced by the sanctions of government; where the crimes can be accurately defined, and the criminals discriminated and punished; the moral nature of human actions is thus disregarded, and they are not punished on the mere abstract principle of their moral turpitude; surely we

are not on any such principle, to enter forcibly into other societies, to punish its members, either collectively or individually? Such a proceeding must necessarily be destitute of every proper principle, on which man can be authorised to take cognizance of the actions of his fellow creatures. There is no acknowledged system or laws to govern the conduct of nations in thus punishing each others crimes. The dissonance in the laws and customs of different nations, renders them very inadequate judges of each others proceedings; nor are there any means by which the nature of the offence can be properly estimated. The accused nation will not submit to plead to any foreign jurisdiction, they must therefore be condemned unheard. The French national convention will be as little disposed to submit the justice of their revolution to the adjudication of the British court, as the English convention would in 1688 have been to have submitted that of the English revolution to the court of France. Such proceedings must be destitute of the semblance of justice; and those who have the government of nations so avowedly act on political motives, that, when others are pretended, it may reasonably be imagined that the view is to perpetrate crimes, under the pretence of punishing them. But, admitting the British court to be actuated by the purest motives;—admitting that Africa, the West-indies, the East-indies, and our Sister Kingdom were to bear a united testimony to the rectitude and beneficence of our conduct, that we never interfere in the concerns of other countries, but to promote their happiness, and secure their rights;—that our sword is the sword of justice, and not of outrage; and, that it never was unsheathed but to protect the innocent, and to punish the aggressor: yet, still might the propriety of our avenging the death of the king of France be doubted, because we have hardly the means of discriminating the guilty, or ascertaining their proportionate share in the guilt.

Political events are of so complicated a nature, and arise frequently from such contingencies, that to distinguish the respective shares of merit or demerit in the actors is usually very difficult, even to those who are actors in the scene, and most intimately acquainted with its conduct; and it must be peculiarly so, respecting the French revolution, from the various forms it has assumed, the variety of circumstances with which it has been attended, and the numerous actors who have taken part in it. Are we to punish the municipal officers who conducted the execution, or the individual members of the convention who voted it? Admitting the king to have committed no offence that deserved punishment; admitting our judgment on this head to be infallible; and admitting also that the majority of the national convention saw it in the same point of view; yet still we are inadequate judges how far they were voluntary actors in the scene, or how far they were impelled by circumstances; whether they were actuated by malice or revenge, or whether, in a critical moment, and threatened with destruction by

surrounding enemies, they might think it expedient to unite the nation, by removing the only source of discord that existed amongst them. If it be said that they ought to have rendered justice uninfluenced by popular clamour, let it be asked if the British parliament have always manifested such laudable firmness? Did they not avowedly to appease a popular clamour, repeal the Jew bill,²⁹⁷ and deprive of their acknowledged right, thousands of peaceable subjects? If it be said the French convention were not justified in punishing an individual, on the mere political principle, that the peace, the safety, and the good of the community called for it; may it not be demanded, for what offence the houses of Stuart and of Savoy were set aside by a British parliament?²⁹⁸ If attachment to the Romish see was their crime; of that crime was Louis equally guilty, and if the security of this island justified *us* in considering it as such, surely the national convention of France are equally justifiable in paying the same attention to the security, the peace, and the happiness of the first nation in the universe.

It is customary in this kingdom, to speak contemptuously of the national convention. I will so far comply with the fashion, as to acknowledge them to have been perfectly insignificant on this occasion. The municipal officers, who executed the sentence, and the national convention who decreed it, may be considered as the mere instruments, the accidental terminators of an event which resulted from a train of circumstances: and, in investigating those circumstances, we shall be far more likely to find the real criminals, than among the national convention, or the municipal officers. Mr. Burke, even in the early stages of the French revolution, confidently predicted a fatal catastrophe; this was certainly not very difficult for him to do with some degree of certainty. Jonathan Wild seldom failed in his predictions.²⁹⁹ Those who were not in the secret of the hostile measures, intended to be pursued, respecting the French revolution, could not, indeed, perceive any thing of a very king-killing aspect: not a single circumstance attending the establishment of the new government could be referred to, as containing the seeds of danger to the royal person. To impose this on the public mind, the establishment of the new government, and the attempt to subvert it, must be confounded. The measures taken to effect the restoration of the old government, whether they succeeded, or whether they miscarried, not merely threatened, but insured destruction to the unfortunate monarch. The hostile armies gathering round, were the sure presages of his fate.³⁰⁰

At that important and critical moment, the national assembly invoked our interference, and offered to submit to our mediation; an offer honorable to themselves!—honorable to us! They reposed a confidence in us, that, possessing a free government, we would not impose on them their antient despotism. And will not some be apt to imagine that this was the real reason that

we refused our mediation?³⁰¹ They will perhaps say that subverting the infant liberty of France and Poland,³⁰² and establishing antient slavery, was an office more becoming German and Russian despots, than a British nation, and that it was more convenient that we should stand aloof, at least for the present. The Prussian, the Austrian, and the Russian armies might undertake the business, they possibly might effect it, as they have that of Poland, without our interference; if not, the contest might produce some event which would afford us a more colourable pretext for interfering, than the subversion of the liberties of France or Poland, or securing the despotism of Germany. Among these events, the most certain and the most desirable, must be the death of the king of France, by the hands of his enraged subjects. It is not easy to see how the hostile armies could enter France, with threatened destruction, but in the expectation of that event. The emigrant princes, the *cidevant* nobles, and the nonjuring clergy³⁰³ of France might say, The whole body of our countrymen are united in one firm phalanx, to resist those exclusive privileges we have so long enjoyed;³⁰⁴ and, however zealous the illustrious potentates of Russia, Prussia, and Austria may be to replace us in the possession of them, yet alas! it is an arduous undertaking, which it is possible our countrymen, united as one man against us, may successfully resist. In this situation, what can be more important to our cause? What could enliven our hopes so much, as the court of Britain adopting our cause? If her armies are not considerable, her resources are great. She can supply the sinews of war.³⁰⁵ Her national credit, and her system of finance are of so peculiar a structure, that, were she to join cordially in our support, the war might be protracted to an extent, that would exhaust the resources of our countrymen, and they may at length, be necessitated to exchange the calamities of war for those we mean to impose upon them. But though the reception of our friend Calonne, at the British court,³⁰⁶ and tho' Mr. Burke's abuse of our adversaries, having there obliterated the remembrance of his panegyrics on republicanism, and his insults on royalty,³⁰⁷ are circumstances which may well warrant us to conclude that our friends are not limited to Germany and Russia; yet alas, in Britain liberty rears her head! There a swinish multitude³⁰⁸ influences public proceedings, and however cordially some personages may be inclined to support us, yet may they be fearful of doing it in opposition to the public voice. But could our countrymen be induced to destroy the king or queen, then indeed a sudden furor might be raised in the English nation, under cover of which our friends there might adopt our cause. The minister might be then persuaded to come down to the house, and tell them that the death of the king was "*The natural effect of the principles maintained in France,*" and that these principles "*Had brought to a fatal catastrophe a lawful sovereign.*" That "*they had shed the blood of their unfortunate monarch lest the world should be at a loss to know the nature of their system,*" and he

may then possibly be induced to call on the nation “*to arrest the progress of such principles, and prevent their contagion.*”³⁰⁹ Shall we then quietly submit to the limited monarchy now established? Shall we suffer the king, like the English monarchs, to obtain the love of the people, by willingly abandoning the antient prerogatives of the crown, cheerfully acquiescing in the limited power assigned him, and exercising his *veto* in subservience to the public voice, content with the influence and importance he will derive from the immense civil list they have allotted him?³¹⁰ Shall we suffer him, like the English queen Mary, to concur in the seizure of the temporalities of the clergy, of that religion, to which, like her, he is attached?³¹¹ Or, shall we tempt him to unite his interest with ours, and, by holding out to him the hope of powerful foreign assistance, induce him to use the power still left in his hands? Our countrymen will suppose that the hostile armies invading and desolating France in his name, have his concurrence. The people will be enraged, a convention will take place, and thus the king must inevitably fall. This may induce the friends of a limited monarchy to strengthen our party; but, at all events, if the nation should still be united against us, and the invading armies should be repulsed, still the king being destroyed, and a democratic republic established, Mr. Burke and our other friends in England will thence be enabled to render our countrymen more generally odious to the English nation, than is possible while France continues a limited monarchy. Thus the death of the king will become the means of inducing the English, to engage in a war, to restore us to those riches and privileges, of which they have long since deprived their own nobility and clergy. The riches of England and Holland will then give energy to the operations of the great and illustrious monarchs of Russia, Prussia, and Austria. Shall we then hesitate to provoke our adversaries to embroil their hands in the blood of the king, and thus abandon for ever the only hope that now remains to us of restoring that antient, that venerable government, which, however odious it might be to the people, we contend, as we have good reason to contend, was most excellent and perfect?

Thus probably, on an accurate examination of the whole train of circumstances attending this event, we shall find a new order of criminals appear to our view, of a very different description from the national convention, the municipal officers, or the mob of Paris. And it will not be easy to procure the acquittal of those criminals before an impartial judicature, unless it can be shewn that the invasion of France, and the duke of Brunswick's manifesto³¹² were not such proceedings, as, in the common order of human events, might reasonably be expected to produce the death of the king.

But before we sit in judgment on the murderers of the king of France, whoever they may be, it is absolutely requisite, for preserving the semblance of justice, that we should be certain that we ourselves are perfectly free from

guilt. Here methinks a burst of indignation spreads around me and all with one voice, exclaim, Do you charge us with the guilt of a deed which appears to have excited universal horror? And when our court has been cloathed in the ensigns of sorrow, and the semblance of woe.—But are not these proofs of innocence equivocal?—What vile slanderer! Can'st thou pretend that the British nation has taken any concern in these measures, which have brought the unhappy monarch to the scaffold? Did we interfere in the affairs of France, till that melancholy event took place? Did we not stand by, calm spectators of all these circumstances which produced the tremendous scene? It is true! And on this exculpatory defence I found my charge!—If a crime be about to be perpetrated, and we use not those endeavours in our power, and which we lawfully may, to prevent its commission, we become partners in the guilt. If we stand by while the deadly ingredients are preparing, and dash them not to the ground. If we see the Assassin uplift his poniard, and, though it be in our power, wrest it not from his hand, we become equally guilty, as if we administered the empoisoned draught, or plunged the murderous weapon.

With this indisputable position in our mind, let us review the circumstances. In doing this it will not be necessary to defend the French revolution in any respect. Admitting we perceived the government as formed by the constituting assembly, to contain in it the latent seeds of danger to the king.—That the embryo principles, which have since produced such deadly fruit, lay then open to our discriminating eye.—Let it then be considered, that this dangerous government was voluntarily submitted to our revisal. When the French nation proffered us the office of mediator, we could without violating the law of nations, without insulting the independency of a great nation, have then pointed out the defects in the new established government. We might then have advised the rooting out any germinating seeds of danger to the king, and the new formed government; our recommendation would have come with propriety, for it was requested, our interference would then have had weight, for it was in a critical moment, when the limited monarchy was threatened from adverse quarters. On the one hand it was threatened with destruction by the invading armies in support of the antient despotism, and on the other by the powerful republican party, in opposition to whom the limited monarchy had been established. The friends of the then existing government would, doubtless, have been desirous to have listened to our friendly council, and then have guarded the state from those threatened dangers, and themselves from Prussian prisons. Enemies as they were to the antient despotism, yet were they anxious to support that limited authority of the monarch, which the constituting assembly had deemed expedient. But Mr. Pitt contends, that “by the law of nations, we have a right to interfere in the concerns of other countries, so far as to

oblige them to establish a form of government and terminate anarchy."³¹³ How stands the fact even compared with his own principle? France when threatened with invasion by the combined armies, was possessed of a government, which Mr. Pitt acknowledges to have had apparently the concurrence of the people. This government was threatened by a foreign force, and a domestic faction; the one would naturally operate to increase the other. At this critical period we are called on to mediate, to endeavour by accommodating the pretensions of the adverse parties to give permanency to this government, and prevent that anarchy which threatened to arise from this hostile attack, and, the necessary result of anarchy, the destruction of the king: we refuse to interfere; we decline, though solicited, to take any measure to prevent this anarchy, and we suffer it to take place, with its unavoidable consequence, the death of the king; and then make this anarchy, which we refused to prevent, a pretence for joining in the hostile attack, and thereby perpetuate the evils we ought to have prevented; and now avenge the death of the king of France, though we declined taking any measures for his preservation. If to interfere in the government of neighbouring states be a right, it is also a duty; because it must be incumbent on us to exercise it on proper occasions, and not merely as caprice or interest may suggest. *Grotius* in 20th cap. of his 2d book, where, on the authority of *Hercules*, he *lays* down the dangerous doctrine of one state interfering with another, seems to doubt his principle, for he observes, "*It is to be noted that those wars, which are undertaken for exacting punishment, unless the injuries be very great, very manifest, or backed with some other cause, are always suspected to be unjust.*"³¹⁴ How much more than suspected, must it be, when, though requested, we have declined to prevent the evils we now pretend to punish?

So far then as it was evident that the death of the king of France would result from the government formed by the constituting assembly being subverted, and one more democratical rising in its place, so far our declining any lawful measures, which promised to give permanency to that government, constitutes us guilty of his death. And if his death resulted from errors in the limited monarchy, then, as far as our mediation might have corrected those errors, so far are we in that case accountable for the consequences.

We have not ground to say, that our acceptance of the mediation would have produced no effect; for, as the attack on France was to effect a change in their government, the submitting the dispute to mediation implied a disposition to admit of some change for the sake of peace, and we know not what concession might have been made to obtain our alliance and friendship. When all the nations of Europe armed against them, it might be wise and prudent to adopt a more democratic form of government than otherwise might have been expedient, and thus risk a temporary anarchy, in order to give an energy

to the people against their foreign enemies. And though it is not to be supposed that any change which the French might have adopted, even had it been an exact copy of the English constitution, would have much reconciled the Austrian, Prussian, or Russian monarchs; yet had they found that the government of France had our cordial approbation, and they had no hopes of our assistance in subverting it, we may reasonably imagine they would not have been very ready to disturb.

As in endeavouring to prevent the late convulsions in France, we should have had the greatest prospect of success, so it is equally evident that to avenge them is totally impracticable. Supposing us to meet with success equal to our most sanguine wishes; admitting, that according to Mr. Burke's directions, we wage eternal war, desolate France, and lay Paris in ruins;³¹⁵ will our sword in this wide devastation discriminate the innocent from the guilty? Alas! it must be the innocent, chiefly, on whom our vengeance will fall. Was the death of the king perpetrated by a faction who have usurped the authority?³¹⁶ or, have certain miserable philosophers, by their speculations, produced this melancholy scene?³¹⁷ Will our vengeance select this faction, or these philosophers for punishment? Before our armies shall have entered France, the national assembly that voted the death of the king will be dissolved, and we shall be carrying on a war against another government, which may possibly deplore that event equally with ourselves. The impossibility of punishing the real criminals, manifests the absurdity of attempting to punish crimes by a war, and proves that such a war must in its nature be unjust.

Conscious of this, many contend that the death of the king is not the cause of the war, but that it results solely from the national aggressions of France. But this cannot be admitted, when we consider that it constitutes the principal part of those invectives which have been delivered in the Senate to prompt us to a war; that it was brought before it by the king himself; and that immediately on the news of the fact being perpetrated, the French minister was forbid the kingdom, and the royal message for a war armament delivered.³¹⁸ From these circumstances we may rather infer that it is this event which has actually precipitated us into a war, not that we are to imagine it to be the real motive; Lord Aukland's memorial, states, that the French government had given us umbrage from the beginning,³¹⁹ but it was not till this event took place, that the war appears to have been resolved on, however much it might by some have been desired.

As punishing nations by war is unjust from the consideration of its confounding the innocent with the guilty, it is no less so from its being totally destitute of the essential property of punishment, *the prevention of future crimes*; because, there is no system of laws by which the punishment is regulated, nor any jurisdiction whose authority is recognized. The Prince of Orange did not

undertake his expedition, because it was consonant to any law which had been sanctioned by the monarchs of Europe, nor was he deterred from it because Monmouth and his adherents had been severely punished for similar attempts.³²⁰ Those, who, in governing nations, or commanding armies, perpetrate crimes;—those who assume, or subvert dominion, do so in consequence of the power they possess; and those who are concerned in any revolt, will govern themselves merely on the circumstances of that, in which they are engaged, and not of any prior one. The national convention were not deterred from executing the king, because the murderers of Charles the first were brought to the scaffold;³²¹ and should we be able to select the persons concerned in the death of the French king, and punish them, it does not follow, that those who in future may have the disposal of kings, will treat them with greater lenity. The severity with which James the second treated his nephew, Monmouth, did not occasion his daughters to manifest any great tenderness to the deposed monarch;³²² nor did the severe punishment inflicted on the murderers of some of the Scottish kings, prevent twelve of them from being killed in succession.³²³

If, however we be determined to take cognizance of this crime, notwithstanding we can be authorized by no principle whatever, and though our threatened vengeance can be productive of no future good, even to kings themselves.—If we do assume the judgment seat, it behoves us to conduct ourselves, becoming the important situation in which we have placed ourselves; and more peculiarly so, as our conduct bears a most suspicious aspect. Why, it may be asked, is this single, solitary crime, particularly selected as the sole object of our indignation?—Attend—Lord Grenville replies—“*The recent transaction at Paris has filled all Europe with amazement and horror, and has been received in this country with a degree of feeling and emotion that makes me glory in being an Englishman.*”³²⁴—Indeed! happy news, that there is such a paucity of crimes in the world, that the attention of all Europe should be so totally engrossed by one. Happy, happy nations of Europe! whose diversified forms of government and multifarious systems of laws are all so admirably adapted to secure human felicity, insure the safety of mankind, and prevent the commission of crimes, that they are thus so universally struck with *horror and amazement* at this single offence, perpetrated in a foreign jurisdiction. The empress of Russia, who, I presume stands foremost, almost petrified with astonishment at the murder of a king, cannot, I dare say, find through all her wide extended territories, one act of injustice, one scene of misery, that can be produced as a counterpart.³²⁵

Not in the least meaning to dispute this universal justice, this exemption from crime, which pervades the empires of Russia and Germany, and which

has made it requisite for the happy subjects of those empires to extend their views to Paris for an object to excite their *amazement* and their *horror*, yet may the propriety of the people of this country joining in it admit of some consideration.

It might indeed possibly be doubted whether our own virtue were not rather a more rational ground of glory, than any *emotion* or any *feeling* respecting the crimes of others. It must indeed be acknowledged, that to express the warmest emotions, and the most indignant feelings against *them*, is a far easier task than to pursue the thorny path of virtue, and steadily resist the temptations to which we are exposed. Thus we execrate an Inkle, and we sob and sigh at the tragedy of Oroonoko;³²⁶ yet we could not only perpetrate the facts themselves, but, through every revolving hour from age to age, we can realize the scenes, and re-act them on the wide theatre of the world, for the sake of gratifying our appetite with a despicable luxury.³²⁷ Let it then be asked, if we have no other, no clearer evidence of our purity, than our amazement and our horror, our feeling and our emotion, on the death of the king of France.

The extent of our conquests surpass those of Cæzar and of Alexander; and cannot those wide extended dominions be appealed to, as proofs of the moderation with which we exercise power, the firmness with which we resist every temptation of oppression and injustice, the sacredness with which we regard the lives and property of those who are at our mercy, and the vigilance with which we protect the innocent? If not, "*our most marked and animated indignation at a late transaction at Paris*,"³²⁸ instead of being our glory, will prove us to be mean, as we are vile, base as we are criminal. It will prove we possess the despicable art of a prostitute, who attempts to conceal her deviations from the path of virtue, by invectives on the unchastity of others. Is there then, through these vast dominions, no evil to be found of equal magnitude to the murder of the king of France? Has no crime been perpetrated that calls for our swift vengeance, that we are thus necessitated to go into other jurisdictions, to traverse foreign countries, in search of criminals? Are there none equal to the national convention, and the mob of Paris to be found among those who are under our protection, and subject to our authority? Alas! were the French to seize all the kings and queens, and emperors and empresses, and clergy, and nobles of the continent of Europe, and involve them all in one general carnage, dreadfully, monstrous, as might be the deed, it would sink beneath our notice, were it compared with those scenes which the West-india islands present to our view. Lord Grenville, perhaps, will glory in being an Englishman,³²⁹ when he compares the slow, the solemn, the cautious deliberation, with which that body,³³⁰ who now possesses Mr. Burke's hyperbolic praises, conduct the proceedings respecting those enormities of which we ourselves are guilty, with the promptitude and ardor with which they can

express their *marked and animated indignation* at the crimes of others.³³¹ Infinite is the difference, it seems, between forming a judgment of other peoples conduct and our own. No sooner are they told of the death of the king of France, than instantly they can resolve, “*that it was an atrocious act which must be viewed by every nation of Europe as an outrage of religion, justice, and humanity.*” And can as instantly resolve to assure his majesty, “*That impressed with these sentiments, they will enable his majesty to augment his forces, to act as circumstances may require at such an important juncture.*”³³² But it seems they have not leisure to prosecute the inquiry any farther on the Slave Trade, because they are so extremely busy in pouring out vengeance on the murderers of the king of France.

Well! but I am told, the crimes to which I allude are common ordinary offences, but at Paris a *King* has been murdered. “*An innocent monarch has been sacrificed in violation of every principle of justice.*”³³³—When I see a man unjustly deprived by his fellow mortals, of that life which his Creator gave, and which he alone has a right to take away, I indeed see a tremendous sight, and it were to be wished that it were an event as uncommon as it is awful. But if we be called on to pronounce the murder of the king of France, “*to be an atrocious scene, unparalleled in the annals of the world.*”³³⁴—We must then demand, what are the peculiar circumstances attending it? *The being deprived of life unjustly* is a general definition of murder. But I am again reminded that it is a *King*, and not an African, but a *European* monarch, whose loss we deplore. True, but I know not that impartial justice will much consider that the human form is wrapped in purple, or that the brow is encircled with a diadem. I am indeed ready to admit, that in addition to the crime of murder, which every unjust privation of life implies, there may attach circumstances of additional criminality, and that additional criminality may arise among other circumstances, from the situation in which the murdered person was placed. But merely his being an *innocent King*, will not raise it above the ordinary level of those murders which occur every hour of the day in our West-india islands, and in the holds of our Corsairs.³³⁵ The former government of France, in which Mr. Burke says they might glory,³³⁶ perpetrated thousands of murders far more atrocious than the murder of the king of France, supposing him to have been innocent. But it may be remarked that from the nature of royalty the crimes of kings must be extremely equivocal. Actions may be deemed innocent by them, merely because they are such as other monarchs have committed, or because the laws of the country had not recognized the crimes of kings, yet may their subjects justly deem them criminal.

When Lord Grenville tells us that “*this innocent monarch has been cruelly murdered by a self-constituted power, without having violated any existing law, contrary to every principle of justice, for that his judges were parties in the cause, they were legislators, accusers, judges, and jurors.*”³³⁷ He says no more than must necessarily be true of every

suffering monarch. *In this kingdom, in the space of about 800 years, upwards of thirty kings and queens have been killed, besides dethronements, banishments, proscriptions, sentences of bastardy, &c.* Now will Lord Grenville give us an account of the regular processes against them? Will he favor us with an account of the parties, the accusers, the judges, and the jurors? Will he shew that the BRAVE, MAGNANIMOUS, JUST, LIBERAL, and HUMANE people of this island have proceeded in any *one* case, more consonantly to existing laws, and the principles of justice, than the people of *France* have against the deceased king?

When calamities fall on *monarchs*; so far from its exciting our *amazement* and *astonishment*, we might rather consider them as being from their situation, most peculiarly exposed to *violence* and *injustice*. If seated on their thrones by power, when that power fails them, they must necessarily become the most forlorn, and most helpless of the human race: no laws to which they can appeal: no judicature to grant them redress: no sanctuary they can depend upon for refuge. If they have the misfortune to escape a speedy termination of their woes by death, they become the sport of fortune, a wandering or a degraded spectacle, insulted and trampled on in their misery.

If then those experiments in government, which are going forward in the world, should at length prove that the government of nations, the preservation of property, the benefit of society, do not absolutely require *a regal order*. If no great injury would result to mankind from its abolition, it might then possibly become a question, not unworthy consideration; *whether it be compatible with humanity, to dress out the gaudy trappings of a throne, to ensnare our fellow creatures; thus tempting them to ascend a dangerous eminence, from whence to be precipitated,*³³⁸ *must be calamitous, in proportion to the extent of the power they possessed, and the splendor and the adulation with which they had been surrounded.*—FINIS.

*A Discourse on National Fasts,
Particularly in reference to that of April 19, 1793,
on occasion of the War against France**

On March 1 1793, a few weeks after the declaration of war, George III issued a proclamation which called for a 'General Fast', a day of 'public fast and humiliation, in which the nation would collectively ask forgiveness for its sins and pray for God's help in assisting the forces of the king in fighting the war. The fast was to be held on April 19, and by the command of the king a 'form of prayer' to be used on that day was sent out to all parishes under the auspices of the Archbishop of Canterbury. Such fast days had from time to time been proclaimed since the sixteenth century onwards; originally, they were appeals for forgiveness following epidemics or natural disasters, supposed to have been sent as a judgment on the nation; they called on the people to set aside their employment for the day, to attend the fast day church service, and to eat a restricted diet. In the eighteenth century fast days came to be held only in time of war, and became more and more controversial. To many it was not clear that God could be expected to side with Britain during the American war; and the early fast days proclaimed in the war against the French Republic became still more controversial, especially among dissenters, many of whom saw the war against the French Republic as a self-interested war of monarchies confederated to crush the ideals of popular sovereignty and universal rights, and some of whom believed that the French were doing God's work in curtailing, and then extinguishing, the power of the Catholic church in France. William Fox's discourse is one of the sharpest critiques of the General Fast of 1793. Similarly critical is Anna Laetitia Barbauld's Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation; or, a Discourse for the Fast, appointed on April 19, 1793 (London: J. Johnson, 1793). For a brief history of general fasts, see Roland Bartel, 'The Story of Public Fast Days in England', Anglican Theological Review 37(1955), pp. 190-200.

* A DISCOURSE / ON / NATIONAL FASTS, / Particularly in reference to that of / APRIL 19, 1793, / ON OCCASION OF THE / WAR against FRANCE. / By W. FOX. / THE THIRD EDITION. // LONDON: / Sold by J. Ridgway, York Street, St. James's Square; / T. Wheildon and Butterworth, Fleet Street; / W. Richardson, Royal Exchange; and M. Gurney, / No. 128, Holborn Hill. / 1793. // [Price Threepence, or Five for a Shilling.]

The pamphlet must have been written following publication on March 12 of the Commons' debate on the budget, to which Fox alludes, but before the fast itself, as in the course of the pamphlet Fox says that it has not yet taken place. A review appeared in the Critical in May, in the Analytical and the Monthly the following June, and in the British Critic in October.

Of all the wonderful absurdities which the history of man presents to our view, perhaps, there is none so extraordinary as the associating of religious rites with those criminal purposes to which we should imagine the rudest and simplest ideas of religion must be inimical. *Adam*, when he first transgressed against his maker, very naturally hid himself amongst the trees of the garden: but his more profligate posterity, hardened in guilt, when associated together to commit any crime of peculiar enormity, and extensive mischief, boldly rush into his presence, claim him as a partner in their guilt, and demand his assistance in perpetrating their crimes.

One would naturally imagine that, when men were determined to give a loose to their criminal passions, they might be satisfied with immolating their fellow-creatures, by thousands, and by millions, at the shrine of their ambition, their cruelty, or their avarice. And we may surely ask why they should wantonly and unnecessarily insult their maker?—but we will have the candour to suppose, that they do not believe there exists any supreme being, whom they can insult by thus profaning his name. We will admit that they consider religion as mere political engine. Yet may we not ask, whether it be not degrading the State to dress it out in the tattered remnants of a religion which we despise? we may give to our crimes a factitious glare. *Captain Macheath* is not so despicable a character as *Mother Cole*.³³⁹ Let it then be considered whether it be not more becoming the character of men to give to our crimes the manly boldness of the former character, than, with the latter, to form an unnatural compound of vice and religion.

The history of this degradation of the human character might not be unamusing, were not its wickedness too extreme, and its impiety too shocking. It must be observed that, though this association of religion and vice is to be too extensively traced in the history of man, yet in some cases, something may be offered in its extenuation. That in a rude state of society, the druids should, by their religious orgies, maintain an authority and influence over mankind was not very extraordinary; and the fraud might possibly not be injurious, at a period when there existed nothing that bore any resemblance to civil government, and when kings were merely leaders of armies. Nor need we much

wonder that the Roman emperors combined the priesthood with the imperial dignity; *they* might with great propriety be considered as the representatives of the deities *they* acknowledged: plunder and carnage might properly be conducted under *their* auspices.

It is in assuming the religion of *Christ* for such a purpose, that human depravity becomes peculiarly manifested; for, were it deemed expedient to associate the black catalogue of human crimes with religion, one would have thought that the Christian religion would hardly have been selected for such a purpose. *Mahomed* had the good sense to perceive its unfitness for a national religion, and therefore he altered and adapted it for that purpose. The church of Rome have adopted a plan nearly similar, by concealing the nature and import of the scripture from the people, and thereby have avoided shocking the feelings of mankind, by promulgating a religion totally incompatible with their avowed principles of conduct. Bishop *Burnet* observes, “*That the reformed churches have added new abuses to the old ones,*” and adds, “*That growing atheism and impiety is daily gaining ground, not only among us, but indeed all Europe over.*”³⁴⁰ Certainly measures have been adopted since the reformation, which seem extremely well adapted to such an end.

To promulgate amongst the people a religion against which every national act militates; to be continually at war, yet profess the gospel of peace; to be ranging round the world to spread misery, desolation, famine and war; yet to place before us for an example him who went about doing good;³⁴¹ to have the same government and legislature, who are perpetrating those deeds, enacting penal laws³⁴² to compel us to profess a belief in the very religion that condemns them, are certainly admirable contrivances to destroy every religious, and every moral principle. Nor, is it less observable that, because *Jesus* declared that his kingdom is not of this world, it is determined that it shall be of this world; because he has told us, that his disciples shall be hated for his name sake, they therefore enact penalties to compel them to profess their belief in him; as we are informed by him, that his church shall consist of a remnant, chosen out of all nations, and tongues, and people, with infinite propriety, it is made to consist of whole nations; and, to finish the picture, because *Jesus* has proclaimed himself to be the head over all things to his church, the *king* is proclaimed to be the head of it.

If it is in this character his *majesty* has issued a proclamation,³⁴³ and if as such we obey it, certainly then it will not be easy to discover a more effectual mode of manifesting that we obey him, not as an earthly monarch but as seated on the throne of *Jehovah*, than by a national fast: because, (except circumcision) national fasts constitute the most prominent feature in that economy wherein *God* condescended to become the head of a national church. When that institution was dissolved, by the authority that formed it, no

method could be contrived more conveniently to prove our contempt of that authority, than by continuing the observances of that institution. This method of trampling on the divine authority was very early resorted to; the mystery of iniquity began to work even in the apostles time; it was then contended that the *Gentiles* should be circumcised, and keep the law. *Paul's* judgment on this subject was indeed something different, for he tells the *Galatians* “*If they were circumcised Christ should profit them nothing*” yet had circumcision divine sanction, and *Paul* himself circumcised *Timothy*.³⁴⁴ but to observe divine institutions otherwise than as *God* has appointed is as criminal as introducing human inventions. To add to or to diminish his commands are equally rebellion against him. Hence to observe any fast otherwise than as we are authorised by *Christ*, or his apostles is to trample under foot that gospel which has been promulgated to man, as the source of his eternal hope.³⁴⁵

A *Christian* must not merely decline joining in a fast, but even start with horror at the thought, from the consideration that amidst all the corruptions with which the national professions of Christianity abound, fasting is that subject which has been peculiarly selected by them to be placed in the most farcical point of view, and to degrade, and to insult not only religion and morality but the common sense and language of mankind. When the nations of *Europe* became what is called *Christian*, the conductors of the business had some difficulties to combat. To adopt intire a religion they did not believe, and which they only resorted to for interested purposes, could hardly be expected. And as the religion already existed, they were not at liberty to frame it *de novo*, they were therefore necessitated to re-organize it: but as the original was not extremely well adapted to the purposes to which it was to be applied, the transmutation was not very easy.

Fasting was a remarkable instance of the adroitness with which the affair was conducted. It was a term of very obvious import, even to the most illiterate; it could not possibly mean any thing but abstinence from food: so it has invariably been understood by mahommedans, and by every people who practice it, and who believe the religion they profess. To change this obvious meaning, one would have thought, would have been impossible; yet was this indispensably necessary. Abstinence from food could hardly be expected, from Kings, and Emperors, Popes and Cardinals, it was therefore boldly resolved, that fasting should mean feasting on the most delicate viands, in distinction from common and ordinary food; and thus fasting was by this notable expedient rendered perfectly palatable even to an epicure; and when we recollect that this curious definition of fasting has, like the English constitution, been framed by the deliberative wisdom of our ancestors, transmitted through a succession of ages, and sanctioned by happy experience;³⁴⁶ if any bold innovator should dare to intimate, that oysters, eels, dories, and cray fish, are

not peculiarly adapted to fasting and mortification; it may be hoped that we shall still preserve our reverence for antiquity, and carefully guard our minds from being corrupted, by the detestable innovations of reason and philosophy.

Despicably extravagant as this mummary may be, yet such is the influence of bad principles, that modes of fasting not much inferior in absurdity have been adopted, by persons who appear to have some reverence for the gospel of *Christ*. Thus, some call it a fast day to delay their breakfast a few hours, some omit a meal, others eat nothing till dinner, while others have only a slight repast in the day, delaying their principal meal to the evening. As such modes of fasting are the result of whim and caprice, it is no wonder they are so diversified; and, if they are deemed fasting, it can only be because the usual mode of feeding is gluttony. The most abstemious of these methods of fasting correspond with the regular manner of living in other countries; the Romans, and many other nations, partook not of any substantial meal until the evening.

As the methods of fasting are thus diversified, so some have an ingenious method of keeping the national fast without fasting at all. They will, indeed, go to church, or meeting, and thus the ceremony ends. But Dr. *Price's* mode of keeping the royal fasts, during the *American* war, was still more curious. The Doctor punctually kept them, but used to make a small mistake, for, instead of praying for the success of his majesty's arms, he used to deprecate and deplore it as an impending calamity.³⁴⁷ Viewing it in that light, it would certainly have been highly criminal in him to have observed it in any other manner: but why observe it at all?

Obedience to the government under which we live is a duty strongly inculcated in the scriptures, and it ever justly claims our regard, except when it trenches on the superior duty we owe to God, rather than to Man. Hence, as it is not the proper office of the civil magistrate to determine when, or how, man should worship his maker, and he cannot assume such an office without invading the prerogatives of the Lord of the whole earth, so it should seem that we cannot, in any shape, or in any degree, obey such commands without recognizing that assumed authority, and thereby rebelling against heaven.

The peculiar nature of Christianity is totally repugnant to a combination of religion with national contests. As men, living in the world, we cannot but have our political opinions, and by those opinions we must be governed when our duty calls on us to take a part in the affairs of this world. But the minds of Christians will be far otherwise employed whenever they approach the awful presence of *Jehovah*. It is true, since praying has become an art, and practised as a trade, much ingenuity has been discovered in inventing topics for prayer. Yet numerous as are the passages, in the epistles of the apostles, where prayer is mentioned; they uniformly refer to spiritual blessings, or to those

miraculous and peculiar circumstances appropriate to those times. Christians were commanded to pray for kings, and all in authority:³⁴⁸ but it was that they might live quiet and peaceable lives, in godliness and honesty. And if they asked for food, it was only as daily bread, which, by supporting that life which had been forfeited by their transgressions, was a continual manifestation of the divine long suffering towards them. And when *Paul* prayed, night and day for the *Thessalonians*, it was that they might increase and abound in love, and might be unblameable in holiness before God.³⁴⁹ If then *Christian* prayer be thus limited, prophane in the extreme must it be for us to apply to heaven that our favorite army may destroy the adverse one. It must, even supposing we were thoroughly acquainted with the merits of the dispute, and the purpose meant to be effected, and were satisfied that those disputes, and that purpose, was perfectly consonant to the commonly received law of nations, which certainly bears no great resemblance to the law of *Christ*. To return good for evil; forgive injuries; do good to all men; form no very prominent feature in it. The New Testament is extremely defective in respect that it gives us no idea of a *just* war; it even speaks of all war, as arising from our lusts; yet the principal object of *Grotius*, is to shew from whence wars may lawfully originate.³⁵⁰ But it is remarkable, that in the present war we are perfect strangers to its purpose. In former wars, though the people were never in the secret of their real object, and consequently while they were telling God it was just and necessary for one purpose, which was avowed, government was prosecuting it for one totally different. Yet, this must be admitted, that a specific object was always held out. A nation was to be weakened, because it was strong; or it was to be destroyed because it was weak. Another was to be divided, and another was to have a barrier. One to be attacked, because they had the assurance to say they had not injured us; and another, because we imagined they would resent the injuries we had done them. Some nations we attacked, because they made treaties we did not like; and others, because the treaties we made for them they did not choose to adopt. Sometimes we were informed, a country would be of use to us, and therefore we must seize it; and then we must seize another, because without it the first would be useless. Some wars were engaged in to protect our piracies, and our smugglers; one to aggrandise our colonies, and then another to weaken them. But in the present war, we are perfect strangers to the object it is to obtain. Mr. *Burke* says, we ought to be so.³⁵¹ Admit it. Yet surely then we ought not to be called on to pray for success on his majesty's arms, without knowing how they are to be employed; and to assure God that their object is perfectly just and necessary, while we are ignorant of what that object is. All we can possibly know is, that two thousand men, from *England*, are to be joined to sixteen thousand more, which the king of *England* has hired of the elector of *Hanover*;³⁵² and that these men are

to be employed somewhere in killing their fellow-creatures. This is the sum total of our knowledge on this business. But this circumstance certainly possesses one advantage; for, as nobody knows how his majesty's arms are to be employed, every body may suppose they are to be employed to his own mind, and every body is left at liberty to assert, as it suits his purpose at the time to contend they ought to be employed. Hence, any man might have asserted, that they were only to have been employed in protecting *Holland*, and the *Scheldt*; and two months since he could not have been contradicted.³⁵³ Then, it might have been asserted, they were to secure *Flanders*, as a barrier for *Holland*.³⁵⁴ When that was effected, it might be pretended, we were only to deprive them of their other conquests, as Mr. *Pitt* had declared that it was not intended to meddle with the internal affairs of *France*. But as she will probably have abandoned her remaining trifling acquisitions, before the fast shall have taken place,³⁵⁵ it will then evidently follow that the success we pray for, and the object of that war which we shall then tell God, is both just and necessary; is, not that which Mr. *Pitt* declared to be the object, but that which he expressly disclaimed, an interference with the internal affairs of *France*. In such case, it must be inferred that Mr. *Pitt* is not in the secret of the present measures, and that he has not their conduct and control; or, that he said the thing that was not.³⁵⁶ In the first moment in which the foreign armies enter the territories of *France*, it will be for him to come forward, and explain his tremendously ambiguous expression of “*pushing France at all points*.”³⁵⁷ but, alas! Nothing will be explained but by the event. The authors of this tragedy know how to conduct the plot too well, to suffer the *denouement* to be discovered till towards the conclusion of the piece. Is *France* and *Poland*, and every country where principles of liberty may dawn, and which may endanger surrounding despotisms, to be dismembered?³⁵⁸ If so, *England* must be included: from her have emanated those principles, and never can the despotism of *Europe* be secure while there they are suffered to remain. It will not be sufficient even to restore the antient despotism of *France*. Governments must be formed both there and here, in comparison of which the former despotism of *France* was liberty itself. For, let it be recollected, that from the art of printing, all the evils which are now deplored have resulted; and if that art be not totally annihilated, if it be suffered to exist even in that limited state which it did in *France*, all those consequences which have already resulted from it will again recur. But, if the continental princes should be able, with our assistance, effectually to subjugate *France*, the whole plan may be easily executed. Conceited indeed, must be that *Englishman*, who imagines that this country would, in such case, be able to resist the confederacy.

If then printing be totally and effectually put a stop to—If by a general alliance amongst the sovereigns of Europe, which this war, if successful,

seems well-adapted to produce, they agree to have large, well paid, and well trained armies, not to be stationed in their native lands, but in those to the language of which they are strangers; and those armies to be mutually removed from country to country, to prevent their being connected with the natives; then, and only then, can this plan be effected. Thus, and thus only, can the despotism of *Europe* be rendered permanent. If a trait of liberty, if even *semi-despotism* be suffered to exist in any one country, that country will become a germinating seed, from whence will again spring up all these mischiefs which we now deplore; and all our laudable exertions will terminate, in producing only these subordinate and trivial evils, the loss of millions of lives, and the spreading misery and desolation around us. The power and limits of *France* are trivial circumstances; and Mr. *Burke*, with great propriety, urges us to *wage eternal war*, or to *extirpate*.³⁵⁹ But war cannot be *eternal*; it must then terminate in extirpation, and that extirpation must be extended as far as the slenderest fibre of liberty can be traced. If this be not the plan, it is childish in the extreme—if it be—But I am silent—because my knowledge of language is inadequate to the task of combining appropriate expressions to convey my feelings. If indeed it were to be supposed possible, that the confederacy against *France* should finally and fatally prevail, and if it were lawful to approach the Divine Being respecting the events of a transitory world: In contemplation of the threatened horrors we should throw ourselves at his feet, trembling in every limb, and bleeding at every pore, and pour out our requests, not in those monstrous and tautological forms which insult God, and degrade Man, but in those words which flow from the energetic feelings of the mind, or in those far more expressive modes, flowing from the fulness of the soul, in comparison with which all words are weak and puerile. Thus it should seem that there ought to be some specific and appropriate meaning annexed to the words “*success to his majesty’s arms*,”³⁶⁰ before we presume to make it a subject of address to the Deity.—One man means by it, securing the *Scheldt* to *Holland*, another *Flanders* for her barrier, a third supposes it includes *Hanover*, some mean by it distressing and weakening *France*, some dismembering and partitioning her, some imposing on her one kind of government, and some another, while others mean depriving her of all government, and annihilating her as a nation, and some include in the idea of “*success to his majesty’s arms*” the eradicating certain principles wherever they are to be found, or wherever they can be traced. To approach the Deity in a form of words, to which such diversified ideas are annexed by the worshippers, they must have a strange taste for religious worship indeed who can approve. Did we worship *Jupiter*, it might be amusing to imagine, how merry the god would make himself with the discordant ideas of his votaries, and that he might humourously dismiss them, with assurances that he would grant their requests, when he could understand

what they meant, and when they could agree amongst themselves on the subject.

We will admit, with Mr. *Burke*, that it is not fit, nor becoming the dignity of government, to let the people into the secret of what is the real object of the war;³⁶¹ or, what is to be the result of success attending his majesty's arms; that it is sufficient for them to be told stories about atheists, republicans, and levellers; *French* principles and daggers;³⁶² to be one moment told that the *French* are an object of our pity and contempt, and the next of terror and alarm. We will admit also with the *English Solomon*, *James Ist*. That "*It does not become subjects to pry into affairs of state.*"³⁶³ Yet surely, something may be urged, if not in defence, yet in extenuation of our presumption; if, when his majesty orders us to pray to God for *success* on his arms, we humbly ask how they are to be employed, and what consequences are to result from the success we are to ask. For, as mischievous consequences have sometimes resulted from the success of a conquering army, we ought to ask what object is to be attained? and what consequences are to result from the *success* we are ordered to ask for? And, before we presume to tell God the war is just and necessary, we ought to have satisfaction as to the specific nature of the war, and that such is its proper description. For, though it is alledged to be so by high authority,³⁶⁴ yet that authority is human, and consequently fallible. Under such circumstances, the question assumes a more serious form than even an affair of state. The king must now be considered, not as being *hurled* from his throne,³⁶⁵ but voluntarily descending from it, and leading his subjects into a presence where he and the meanest of them are on a perfect level. Under such circumstances, surely, we may be permitted to pause at the threshold, and respectfully ask for some evidence that the war be really of that description which we are required to affirm it to be in the presence of *Jehovah*. If, on enquiry, it appears to us not so to be, it then becomes our duty, not only to decline affirming it ourselves, but to urge others to make a similar inquiry, that they may thereby avoid the guilt of asserting a falsehood to God.

To assure God that his majesty's arms will be employed in just and necessary pursuits, may appear rather rash; because it is not quite certain that either intellectual or moral perfection necessarily appertains to royalty. The *glorious* and *immortal William* as readily told us, that it was just and necessary to dismember and partition the Spanish monarchy,³⁶⁶ as that *most excellent* prince *George 1st* that it was just and necessary to make war with *Charles XII*. because *Charles* did not like to be deprived of *Bremen* and *Verden*.³⁶⁷

We may be considered as having been engaged in one continual war ever since the revolution; the intervals of peace may be considered, merely as pauses to recover a little strength;³⁶⁸ and it is also observable that these peaces have generally been much execrated, and there has always been much clamour

and discontent till we have again been suffered to embrue our hands in blood. In other nations the wars originate in the ambition of the prince, in this country the people have uniformly manifested a cannibal ferocity to sit down to the bloody banquet. These bloody banquets we have uniformly accompanied with fasts and thanksgivings, on all these occasions we have solemnly assured God that they were just: that any one of them was so, no one will now be hardy enough to undertake to prove. We have also as constantly besought God to give success to his majesty's arms, for that the cause in which we were engaged was not only *just* but *necessary*. If by necessary was meant that these wars were necessary for producing death, slavery, misery, and desolation, the assertion was true, but if it imported that they were necessary for our safety, or, even for our prosperity, it was demonstrably false, because we have constantly miscarried in the avowed objects for which every one of those wars was undertaken. For, if those wars were necessary for our safety, having miscarried in the objects of them, it follows, that we are now in a ruined situation; on the contrary; if we are now happy and glorious, it also follows, that we lied before God in affirming that those wars were necessary.

But here I am told that, in all I have said, I have proved nothing but my own ignorance. I am told that these things called fasts have no relation to religion; that nobody ever supposed so but a few old women, who were too blind to see, too deaf to hear, and too stupid to understand, what was passing in the world. I shall be told that calling on God is a mere pretext; that the prayers are meant for *Man* not for *God*. A political contrivance to inflame the minds of the people for particular purposes, and to give the clergy an opportunity of disseminating political mischief from their pulpits.—Be it so—Admitting that a Swift might tell me that a *Fast* was a *Farce*,³⁶⁹ yet still I must contend that my objection is valid, because a *Farce* when it becomes prophane ought to excite our horror. A fast certainly is a most convenient mode of disseminating opinions among the people. To call the weaver from his loom, and the husbandman from his plough;³⁷⁰ to command the hand of industry to stand still, and all business to be suspended through the nation; is of it self sufficient to alarm and to astonish. The fast necessarily becomes the topic of discourse, and the obscurest and remotest village in the kingdom becomes the scene of political inquiry. The smith lays aside his hammer, and the taylor his goose;³⁷¹ in vain they inquire of each other the cause of the alarm; obscure danger is the most terrific; and to the alehouse they adjourn, to drown their terror, in drinking church and king; there the curate and the excise man instruct the gaping multitude, and while pouring down their throats muddy ale, and poisonous gin, they are told, of the excellence of the constitution in church and state; of its danger from republicans and levellers, from French daggers and French principles, of king-killing, and atheism:³⁷² paragraphs are

read from Burke's Speeches, and from Horsley's Sermon:³⁷³ then all roaring out Rule Britannia, and God save the King, the night passes in praising the constitution, damning dissenters and execrating the French, interlarded with cursing, swearing, quarrelling, and obscenity.

Thus prepared for the fast day, they go to church, and their terrors are confirmed by royal authority. The curate from the desk reads what he had before retailed at the ale-house, and if able to tack together a few paragraphs from newspapers and 30th of January sermons,³⁷⁴ he ascends the pulpit, and ingratiates himself with the squire and rector, by making a flaming sermon against the *French*, and then finishes the fast-day with the jovial fare at the manor house.

If then fast days are attended with such extensive, such important consequences, they certainly will be resorted to—I mean not to contend, statesmen ought not to observe them. I only ask, on what principle a Christian can observe or countenance them in any shape or in any manner. Should he, while reading the gospel, and rejoicing in it as his present consolation, and his future hope, be told, that this was the only considerable country in Europe where that blessing could be freely enjoyed—that even here, the full enjoyment of his religion was only by sufferance, for that tremendous penal laws hung over him if he refused to conform to a particular religious cult,³⁷⁵ and though not now executed, yet that the clergy strenuously contended for their continuance, in hope that the period might arrive in which the state might suffer them to be enforced—should he then be told that a revolution had taken place in a neighbouring nation, which not only must secure us effectually from any danger of returning persecution, but insured the free circulation of the gospel through Europe, that in this, the most important country in Europe, where the gospel had not been suffered to be printed for a century, liberty was now proclaimed to print, and to circulate it; and that Christians were allowed freely to meet together, and to defend and to propagate their faith without restraint³⁷⁶—should he be told, that this revolution had led another considerable nation³⁷⁷ to follow the example, and that from the universality of the French language, it might be expected that similar effects would be produced through Europe, How would he rejoice in this joyful news? How! he only can tell, who knows the gospel of Christ to be the power of God unto salvation; nor would his joy be repressed on being told, that at the same time as Christians were permitted freely to defend the gospel, there existed no pains nor penalties to prevent others from opposing it. Again, let us suppose, that he was told that the sovereigns of Europe had combined together to subvert these governments, and that they had effectually succeeded as to one of them, but having failed as to the other, his majesty had thought proper to join in

attacking it, at all points, and had called on the people to pray for success to his arms in this attempt—Can it be thought that he would join with bishops and statesmen in supplicating for success?

But many tell us, that they do not mean to supplicate for success on the war, but that surely there can be no harm in meeting together, and confessing the crying sins of the nation, and supplicating God to avert his judgments from a sinful people. But, I should apprehend it to be criminal, to perform any religious act but from a conviction that *God* has commanded it. If we are Christians, we shall live under a continual sense of our sinful state, and be continually looking to him for pardon; but to do this once in ten or twenty years, because the king commands it, and because he chooses to exercise the royal prerogative of going to war, seems a very strange fancy. But it seems we are not only to confess our own sins, but the crying sins of the nation, but what sort of confession that is, I am at a loss to understand. Of what use could it be of for us to confess, if the fact be so, that our laws are framed to produce a wicked and licentious populace, and to protect and foster such amazing systems of wickedness in all quarters of the globe, as the world never before witnessed!³⁷⁸

That this nation is guilty of very great and very crying sins³⁷⁹ we will readily admit; and if, as the proclamation imports, his majesty is at last convinced of it,³⁸⁰ every quarter of the globe will have reason to rejoice, because at his hands the reformation must be looked for. Indeed it must be acknowledged that the evidences of the abandonment of the great and crying sins of the nation are not very flattering, and a recent event seems to indicate that our crying crimes are rather on the increase. The people of India had been by a charter from the kings of England assigned over as a property; and in consequence of this very modest, just, and reasonable assignment it has been said that as great a number of the inhabitants of India have been destroyed (I must not say murdered) as the whole population of England equals:³⁸¹ at this very moment famine rages through the most fertile country in the world, and it is said a million of the inhabitants will fall a sacrifice to it, because we chose to take the cattle from the plough in the countries we had already conquered, to drag our artillery and army baggage to engage in new conquests.³⁸² With these events before our eyes, this charter is just expired; and his majesty's minister now proposes its renewal; by which, in consideration of 500,000*l. per. annum*, part and portion of the money which is forcibly to be taken from the said people of *India*, which is to be paid into his majesty's Exchequer, the said people of *India* are to be assigned over by his majesty for the further term of twenty years; and the right of ————, and ————,³⁸³ twenty millions of people is to be retailed in *Change-alley*³⁸⁴ to the best bidders. If this be not deemed a crying sin, it might be necessary for the bishops to compose a

Homily, to accompany the form of prayer, instructing us a little in the nature of sin and of repentance. A great mathematician of old, said, that there was no royal way to geometry;³⁸⁵ so I should imagine that even bishops have not been able to discover a royal way to repentance.

But it seems, we are to beseech heaven to avert some impending calamity, which we are told hangs over us in consequence of these crying sins.³⁸⁶ What! are we to beseech heaven to avert its judgment, while we persist and glory in our crimes, and while we daily increase them in number and enormity? The housebreaker and footpad, certainly *wish* to escape punishment, but surely there never existed one so daringly impious, as to put up such a petition to heaven, while he grasped the fruits of his iniquity, and persisted in the continuance of his criminal pursuits. But what are these impending calamities and threatened judgments? I perceive them not, we seem to be gloriously triumphant in our pursuits: did ever any nation spread such wide, such uniform misery and desolation through the globe, did ever any people reap such rich reward?

But, perhaps, I shall be told that, when his majesty and his ministers tell us to bewail the sins of the nations, they do not mean that they have committed any themselves; that, though *national* sins may seem to imply, sins committed by public authority, yet that good subjects should take it for granted, that the supreme head of the state is perfectly pure, and that all its acts are as pure as the source from whence they flow. It might indeed seem rather unreasonable that those who admonish us of our sins, should claim an exemption as to their own: but then it ought to be considered, that, as it may be proposed making a considerable addition to our foreign crimes, it may be requisite to balance the *foreign* by calling on us to diminish the *home* consumption of our guilt.

But let it be considered that, whatever importance our pride may stimulate us to assume, yet if we continue to be a curse to mankind, what aspiration can more properly arise from the heart, than that this island might be shaken to its center, and overwhelmed with the surrounding waves. FINIS.

*Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 1**

On October 29 1793, the British government issued a declaration of its war objectives, aimed at the French people; in this pamphlet, most probably written in November, Fox imagines the reaction of the 'genius of France' to this declaration. The declaration claimed that Britain had actually supported the revolution in France in its early years, when it sought to exchange the absolute monarchy of the ancien régime for a constitutional monarchy of the kind established in Britain. If France agreed to restore a the system of hereditary monarchy, the only sure defence against confusion and anarchy, Britain would be willing to end the war, subject to a satisfactory negotiation about the indemnity France should pay for its war of aggression. The declaration did not quite repeat the promise the British had made to the inhabitants of Toulon, in British hands at the time Fox was writing, that a return to the constitution of 1791 would be acceptable to Britain, but the declaration appears to invite itself to be read as implying as much. As the genius of France points out, however, this declaration was directly contrary to the other main statement of Britain's war aims, or of what would be Britain's aims in the event of its entering the war, issued by Lord Auckland, British Ambassador to the Hague, in January 1793. In this, Auckland made it plain that the British government had been entirely opposed to the revolution from its very beginning. What is more, when in April the Austrian general the Prince of Coburg had issued a manifesto to the French people acknowledging that Louis XVI had freely agreed to the constitution of 1791 – again with the implication that a return to that constitution would be acceptable to the coalition - it was immediately cancelled by the allies. Faced with these contradictory statements by a nation not known for its trustworthiness in its relations with other states, what was France to believe? Has the government of Britain therefore now modified its war aims in the light of its lack of success in the war, or might this new declaration be as short-lived as others had been?

In the original printed version the pamphlet breaks off, in mid-sentence, at the foot of p. 16. By analogy with Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 3, which does the same, the sentence being continued into Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 4, it is clear that no. 2, which, if it was ever published, is missing, was a continuation of No. 1.

* Poor Richard's Scraps. No. 1. / London: Sold by M. Gurney, No. 128, Holborn-Hill, / Price 3d. or four for d9.

Poor Richard³⁸⁷ blushes not to own, that after having performed with alacrity that task which the duty to his numerous family day by day imposes on him, he suffers his mind to range beyond that subordinate and limited sphere, to which the hand of providence seems more immediately to have confined it. And he then feels himself not merely the parent of a numerous offspring, justly looking to him for support, but as a citizen of the world, a member of the great commonwealth of mankind, and cannot but attend with some anxiety to the occurrences of an *eventful* period. With this disposition he lately perused a celebrated manifesto;³⁸⁸ and, as the facts did not exactly correspond with the views he had hitherto entertained, nor the explanations appear to be extremely obvious or satisfactory, he began to revolve in his mind, what reply the French people might naturally adopt, in case they were to exchange the manufacture of *muskets* and *pikes* for that of *manifestos*.³⁸⁹ Retiring to rest, that undisturbed repose, the result of a peaceful mind and a laborious occupation, was disturbed by a *vision*, the obvious result of a previous train of thought. He imagined he beheld *Britannia* very busily employed, distributing these manifestos; when suddenly the *genius* of *France* was unveiled to view, and holding in her left hand one of the manifestos which she appeared to have just perused, with her right she stilled the clamors of war which had spread around, and with firm and dignified aspect she advanced to address *Britannia*; nor did *Timotheus's* lyre³⁹⁰ range through the grand scale of Harmony with greater effect than her voice and manner produced in adapting themselves to the sentiments which she delivered. A faint trait of sprightly satire first played upon her features, when the simplicity becoming plain narration was quickly changed to that dignity becoming empasioned reasoning, from whence it passed to mild expostulation, and rose, with gradual dignity, to stern reproach, and bold defiance. Conscious as he is of his inability to detail her captivating harangue, and that the waking relation of a dream can but convey an extremely faint idea of the impression made on the visionary fancy, yet cannot he resist the inclination he feels to convey that faint idea.

The *extreme condescension* of the ministers of his *Britannic Majesty* in promulgating a manifesto addressed to the people of *France*, ought to excite in them the liveliest sentiments of gratitude, and justly might they be charged with having lost sight of their ancient character for politeness, were they for a moment to neglect making a suitable acknowledgement.

The people of *France*, unfortunately, deprived of those radiant beams of royalty they so long enjoyed, must feel inexpressible satisfaction on the extension of the refulgent rays from the surrounding thrones to their miserable country.

That the Kings of *Sardinia*, *Naples*, or *Prussia*, or the *Princes of Germany*,³⁹¹ who possess but limited dominions, should thus extend their genial influence to other countries may possibly be accounted for from that spirit of beneficence which so universally resides in royal breasts, but that Her *Imperial Majesty* of all the *Russias*, or the ministers of his *Britannic Majesty*, whose dominions set geographical description at defiance, should thus condescend, is a work of supererogation³⁹² which calls for the most prompt and fervent acknowledgments.

This *attention*, from the British Court, is more peculiarly pleasing from an apprehension entertained that we were deemed unworthy of its notice; its oracle, *Mr. Burke*, having loudly proclaimed that our country was not to be found:—“*That he could only see a vast chasm which once was France.*”³⁹³ As mankind are apt to feel contempt more forcibly than even injury, we were mortified to the extreme, at being thus unnoticed among nations. Apprehensive that thirty millions of people were to be lost to mankind, and necessitated to become solitary recluses, we were at length pleasingly gratified by having our national existence recognised, by the invasion of our country, if not by a confederacy to starve our women, and our children; and the British Court is, at last, so fully satisfied of our existence, as to address us in most pathetic exhortations, and avowed explanations of its motives and its views.

But, however we may be gratified by this gracious condescension, yet we cannot forbear to ask, whether this proceeding be not a little *mal a propos*?³⁹⁴ were the people of *France* *before* acquainted with the motives and views of the British Court? then was this manifesto not merely nugatory, but derogatory to its dignity, by *reiterating* those gracious offers which we had *before* despised. On the contrary, if these gracious offers *never* have been before made us, if we have been *hitherto* strangers to them, surely it might have been as proper to have reversed the order of proceeding, and have suffered these exhortations, these explanations of motives, to have *preceded* the operations of the armies.

Does this manifesto breathe a spirit of *reason* and *moderation*? If it be supposed that it may “*accelerate the return of peace,*”³⁹⁵ would it not have operated as powerfully to have *prevented the commencement of hostilities*? We surely should have been more disposed to receive beneficent advice, or candid expostulation, from a *friendly* than from an *hostile* hand. In the early stages of our revolution, we were naturally led to look on *England* with a *fraternal* eye; even the Hall of the Jacobins³⁹⁶ was ornamented with the *royal flag of England*. With pain we saw this disposition received, by the British Court, with *marked contempt*: yet

still would not we abandon the hope that the *people*, nay a part of the *Cabinet of England*, was *friendly* to our cause; and the *concern* was at the least equal to the *indignation* with which we beheld the various gradations regularly take place, from *cool indifference* to *marked contempt*, to *malignant hatred*, to *insult*, to *menace*, to *hostile aspect*, and at last to *avowed aggression*. Endeavours to conciliate were returned with lofty tones of complaint, and offers of satisfaction sternly rejected, in words of ambiguity; or demands made with which it was known to be impossible we could comply.³⁹⁷

Our extensive country could, from *conquest*, derive no advantage; she certainly supposed (whether true or falsely is not the question) that our newly acquired liberty would open to us sources of happiness, superior to our former government, or to the surrounding despotisms. *Interest*, then, would rather suggest to us the *exclusive possession*, than a *participation* of this happiness. Policy would prompt us rather to *rivet the fetters*, than to *break the chains*, of the slaves of surrounding despots. We held out to the surrounding nations the *banner of universal peace*,³⁹⁸ and they saw a *political*, as well as *moral*, *obligation* calling on us to venerate it.

But, strongly as policy might call on us to adopt *pacific* measures,³⁹⁹ equally strong did it prompt some of the sovereigns of Europe to pursue *hostile* ones; for violently as they vociferated amongst their subject[s] that we were introducing disorder and misery⁴⁰⁰ into our unhappy country, yet well did they know that we had not injured any essential part of the political fabric; that, though we had levelled its gothic ornament with the dust, yet had we left even the Corinthian capital of polished society⁴⁰¹ unimpaired. Why else should they have been so anxious to disturb, and introduce anarchy and disorder amongst us? If they saw the germinating seeds of misery in our government they might have left them to have matured; *such* a government, and *such* a nation, would have operated as a *warning* rather than an *example*.⁴⁰² Had France exhibited the dreadful spectacle that in grasping liberty, anarchy only was to be embraced; had the people of Europe beheld our lands lie uncultivated, because he who planted the crop could not reap, or enjoy it; that the merchant no longer brought his rich cargo to our ports, because our laws could not protect him in its disposal; or if the manufacturer declined to put his piece into the loom, from the apprehension of its being torn from it, by a licentious rabble; then would the surrounding slaves have mocked at our new fangled liberty, and have embraced their chains with pleasure; the people of *France* would not then have lavished their blood to resist the invaders of their land, but with pleasure have submitted to any yoke; well knowing none to be so dreadful as that from which they were delivered. The measures the despots have pursued, to bring misery on our land, is proof that they were convinced that their efforts were requisite to produce it. They knew that the rich harvest

would proclaim, to surrounding nations, that our agriculture was emancipated from feudal and clerical claims.⁴⁰³ They knew that an equal system of law would pervade the nation, protecting and cherishing our manufactures and our commerce; and that discord, removed by intire religious freedom, we should present a spectacle to the world as favorable to religion and morality, as the alliance between church and state had proved inimical. Hence the most powerful monarchs assembled their armies, and, with hostile aspect, hovered on our borders. With a monarch on the throne, and strangers to that *detestation* of *Kings* which we have since had good cause to cherish, we turned our eyes to his *Britannic Majesty*; and, though we had no reason for supposing him peculiarly favorable to us, yet we solicited him to accept the office of mediator.⁴⁰⁴ If our proceedings were injurious to foreign nations, or dangerous to society, as is now asserted, why not then come forward to warn and to admonish? Is it essential to regal dignity that advice must be obtruded and not solicited? or must the manifestos of the British court be found only in the fields of war? If as is now insinuated, the King of England was *friendly* to the constitution of 1789,⁴⁰⁵ let it be recollected *that* constitution then existed, and its friends who were predominant in the councils of France, would certainly have *coalesced* with the British court for its support. *They* at least did not wish the opposite parties the *mountain*, or the *violent* republicans to prevail; nor did *they* wish to lose their lives at the guillotine, or waste them in Prussian prisons.⁴⁰⁶ But, if the British court, thus obstinately refused to interpose its mediation to prevent the *commencement* of hostilities, will they tell us on what principle, the moment the fate of war had put some of the enemies' towns in our possession,⁴⁰⁷ they *then* came forward, complained that we had dared to beat our enemies, and demanded that we should relinquish our conquests, without even engaging that they should become the *price* of peace; and if their representations had any meaning, it was that in the midst of war we were to surrender up towns on the borders of our territories, that they might again become hostile posts, from whence the enemy might again pour out an armed banditti on our country. We do not ask whether such a proposition was ever acceded to? We demand if such an one was ever before made?

If the British ministers supposed that we did not *perfectly comprehend* the *extensive beneficence* of their designs, and it was deemed requisite to publish a manifesto to *explain* them, some might deem it an unpleasant circumstance, that the horrors of war should have been let loose upon us, without these explanations having *previously* taken place. Such has formerly been the practice of the nations of Europe, but the English have, ever since 1755,⁴⁰⁸ been charged with practising a new system, and to shew their courage, it is said, that, like an Italian bravo,⁴⁰⁹ they strike first and explain afterwards. Shall we suppose that, like the *heroes* of the *buskin*,⁴¹⁰ they cannot open their mouths

without a prelude of trumpets? or, that, like some of the Gods of our ancestors, they are only to be approached, and their will discovered, through the medium of *human* sacrifices? for it seems to be deemed requisite, that hundreds of thousands must lie gasping in the fields of death, ere the Court of London will condescend to explain itself, and villages filled with widows and orphans is the cheap price at which we are to purchase, from them, a manifesto, making known their sovereign will and pleasure. And it may be noticed that, fully as their motives are explained in this manifesto, yet the principal one remains unexplained, viz. the motive for now, and not till now, publishing them.

Do they, after being defeated in their views of conquering our fleets, obtain possession of them in the name of Louis XVII.⁴¹¹ because they know that such a being will never exist, and that, therefore, what is thus obtained will remain with them for ever? Possibly this manifesto, though it bears a foreign superscription, may be merely intended for the “good people of England?” Do they begin to feel the effects of war? Does John Bull begin to grumble, for want of plunder, processions and illuminations? Does the clamour of republicanism, and levelling begin to lose its effect? and is it become again requisite to invent something new to amuse the ignorant populace, and hold out to them the idea that France spurns the moderate and unambitious views of the British court? Or, perhaps, the curious manifesto results from the ill success of their fleets and armies, and from their now having no hope of dismembering our country and annihilating our existence as a people? To cover their disgrace, it may be desirable to intimate that the idea was never entertained. But we know that Valenciennes and Condé were seized in the name of the Emperor, and Dunkirk and Martinico summoned to surrender to the king of England. We also know, whether it be owing to French courage, or to English honour, that they are not now dissevered from our empire.⁴¹² And, however forward the English ministers may now be to proclaim, to the whole world, their objects in prosecuting this war, yet we cannot but recollect that, it is but a few months since they refused to avow and explain them, even to the very assembly who were to provide the means of carrying them into effect.⁴¹³

If this manifesto be a mere temporary expedient, for some political purpose, we shall naturally be induced to ask, “How long it is to be in force?” nearly a similar one of the Prince of Coburg’s was in force four days.⁴¹⁴ Whether this is to have a longer or a shorter operation those who issued it may possibly be ignorant. If it originated in the rout of the Duke of York before Dunkirk, it may already be terminated, by a recent success; and we may be even now employed in a task as nugatory and despicable, as refuting the memorials on the limits of Acadia.⁴¹⁵

But we do not apprehend that the British court will ever retract any promise contained in this manifesto, because we do not perceive that it contains any. The openhearted soldier, the Prince of Coburg, a stranger to the art of conducting a war of words, unfortunately, in his short manifesto, conveyed some meaning: it, therefore, became requisite to cancel it, and publish a new edition, matured in the English cabinet, amplified in words but destitute of meaning; and so admirably constructed is this excellent piece, that no event can possibly take place which can be deemed a violation. For instance, suppose “the well disposed inhabitants of France” should, like the Toulonese, “place confidence” in the British court,⁴¹⁶ and deposit all our maritime provinces, our fleets, and our arsenals, in their hands; suppose that, when our nation is thus weakened, the Austrian, Prussian, and Russian armies should possess themselves of the remainder, rout the National Assembly, and guillotine the murderers of the King of France; is there any obligation that those who happen to be in possession of Rheims shall crown the little king?⁴¹⁷ The Jacobins may have wickedly greased their boots with the holy oil,⁴¹⁸ or some other weighty reason may occur for deferring the ceremony, and we may, possibly, be disappointed if we expect the allied powers to make us a king, and then march off to the respective places from whence they came, and leave the sceptre unimpaired in his hands. The king of England may say that he never engaged for others. He only expressed a “hope of finding in the other powers, engaged with him in the common cause, sentiments and views perfectly conformable to his own.”⁴¹⁹ That he cannot dictate to them, but that whenever they have restored the monarchy he is ready, with punctuality and good faith, to restore, even to an ounce of gunpowder, every thing in his possession; and, in the mean while, he only keeps them as a sacred deposit, until such a desirable event shall take place. Again, suppose that in pursuance of the kind admonitions, in this manifesto, we were to set about framing a government, and endeavour to adapt it to the taste of the British court: pray is there no danger of its becoming a little fastidious, when the approving our government is to be followed by refunding our ports, our fleets, and our arsenals? certainly such conduct would not be quite in the newest English fashion. St. Stephens chapel⁴²⁰ has resounded full as much with complaints of the injustice, and cruelty, exercised towards the princes, and other great personages of Indostan, as towards the king, queen, nobles and clergy of France; and has been for twenty years [squeezing]⁴²¹ the culprits, but we have never yet heard that any reparation was ever proposed to be made to the injured.⁴²² On the contrary, the countries, and revenues which had been voted to have been unjustly seized, from the native sovereigns, instead of being restored, were all partitioned between the company and the [state], and the very money which had been resolved to have been infamously extorted, instead of being

restored, is applied, without scruple, to the important purpose of hiring German [soldiers] to restore the French [monarchy].⁴²³ Supposing then this valuable purpose should be effected, and we should place little Capet⁴²⁴ upon the throne, may not the British court say, that though in the manifesto they insisted on our having a king, yet they had also insisted on our having a “stable” government,⁴²⁵ and, at present, it was possible we might change it? If a lapse of years should prove its “stability,” we might then be told, it must also be a “legitimate” government;⁴²⁶ and, on an accurate investigation, they may possibly find some flaw; they may tell us they have heard that young Capet was introduced in a warming-pan,⁴²⁷ and they cannot think of restoring us our fleets until they see a Dutch Sooterkin placed on the throne, by fourteen thousand foreign troops.⁴²⁸ And should we comply with this, we may then be informed, that they wondered at our assurance, in forming such unreasonable expectations, for that it had been particularly specified in the manifesto, that our government must be formed on “principles of universal justice,”⁴²⁹ whereas our principles of government were so far from being universal, that they were dissonant to those of Japan, of Otaheite,⁴³⁰ and of Abyssinia.

The manifesto exults in the *confidance* which has been placed in the British government, by the people of *Toulon*.⁴³¹ What sentiments of honour can prevail in a nation which can exult in such a —— ?⁴³² Is it a cause of exultation that you have obtained possession of a fleet, at the expence of the blood of the wretched *Toulonnese*, who must inevitably fall a sacrifice to their enraged countrymen, and thus supply you with fresh sources of exclamation against that cruelty which some of us say you have incessantly laboured to excite! Is it a cause of exultation, that you have obtained possession of their town, by holding out to them an idea that the British Court approved the limited monarchy of 1789? that very system which, even so late as January last, was, in Lord Auckland's memorial,⁴³³ stigmatised as “a *system of atrocity, surpassing all that ever sullied the page of history*,” and that our “*folly and wickedness have, for four years, been introducing this system, from whence has flowed, in quick succession, the events which have since happened*.”⁴³⁴ So accurate is your chronology, that you carefully stigmatize us as adopting a regular system of atrocity, from the first moment we deviated from our ancient despotism. *That* is the detested goal to which we are called upon to hasten. In vain we have looked to England for a kind, a fraternal hand, to lead us onward to *peace*, to *liberty*, to *happiness*. In the language of a *Burke*, and a *Calonne*,⁴³⁵ she strongly told us to tread back the steps we had taken; and again kiss our chains. She told us this, because she abhors the thought that any other nation should taste the sweets of freedom; and if a younger brother dares but to glance a look at the throne of liberty, behold, she prepares the bowstring.

However diversified may have been the malign aspects of the British ministry, yet their true import never was equivocal; they have uniformly pointed towards us with deadly portent. They have indeed ventured to declare, in the face of Europe, that “*From the first period, when Louis XVI. called his people around him, for their common happiness, the king has uniformly shewn, by his conduct, the sincerity of his wishes, for the success of so difficult, but at the same time, so interesting an undertaking.*” But they have forgot to inform us what was that conduct which proved the “*sincerity of the wishes, for the success of the difficult and interesting undertaking;*”⁴³⁶ and they also forget that it is only within their own territories that they have a right to be believed without evidence, or in opposition to indubitable testimony. But we will not call for the proof of *wishes* for the *success* of our difficult undertaking. We will be content with the least shadow of evidence, that the *wishes* were not uniformly *adverse*. We demand proof that the ballance ever hung for a single moment in *equilibrio*. The disposition of the British court was manifest, from the first dawn of the French revolution, from the first meeting of the National Assembly, when the principal, and most corrupt, member of the antient despotism fled from the justice, loaded with the spoils, of the country, and was received with open arms, caressed at the British court, and was supposed, in no small degree, to assist its counsels.⁴³⁷ It was manifest, when a wretch, who taken from among the swinish multitude,⁴³⁸ and placed in the legislative body, by aristocratic power, to assist it in seizing the helm of state, had been employed for a series of years in pouring out, on every branch of the legislature, every member of the executive power, and every act of state, torrents of insult, incompatible with good government, and the slenderest ideas of social order; and when the sovereign was in a situation which moved every heart to pity, and excited even in those who were inimical to his government, momentary effusions of loyalty and affection, he treated him with such base and degrading insult as by some it might have been imagined, no gentleman would have borne, and to which no good government ought to have suffered even a subordinate magistrate to have been exposed;⁴³⁹ yet no sooner did this wretch begin to throw out his foul and slanderous abuse on the National Assembly, on its very formation, though the act of the sovereign, on every measure it had adopted, and on the constitution it had formed, that it proved so acceptable to the English court, so consonant to the ideas, that it instantly cancelled all his crimes, and he was received, caressed, and applauded, in a manner so remarkable as if not to degrade the character of the sovereign, yet, at least, to prove decidedly the disposition of the court.⁴⁴⁰

Lord *Auckland's* memorial asserts that for *four* years they “*saw a new system of civil society forming in a great and neighbouring nation, overthrowing and destroying all the received notions of subordination, of manners, of religion. That property, liberty, safety, life itself, had been the sport of rage, of the spirit of rapine, of hatred, of ambition the most*

cruel, and the most unnatural."⁴⁴¹ Is it to be believed, that the British court, for three years, were perfectly unconcerned? must we not infer, that from the first dawn of this nefarious system they took measures to prevent its effect; and that the open avowal of them did not originate in a French ship sailing up the Scheldt, or in the decapitation of the French King? In the early stages of the French revolution, it certainly did not appear to be necessary to adopt such vigorous measures as sending British fleets round Europe, to compel every nation (except Russia) to unite for the destruction of this system. It might then be deemed necessary merely for England to hold out to Europe, clear and unequivocal proofs of its real disposition, inspiring a confidence that a firm reliance might be made on her utmost exertions when they should become necessary. It was long before any of the other powers discovered that even *their* interference was necessary to subvert the new system. It was first hoped that the king, nobles, and clergy of France, aided by the private co-operation of the surrounding powers, might effect it. The next step was to assemble armies with hostile aspect on their borders, while the king of France, with his remaining prerogatives, was obstructing the new government, and (as was fully proved on his trial) employing the immense revenue they had assigned him, in spreading corruption through the new system, even from the leaders of the National Assembly to the lowest scribbling journalist.⁴⁴² But at length, when the energy of the people justly deprived him of a power he had so grossly abused,⁴⁴³ and drove the nobility and clergy, from a country which they were, in conjunction with foreign powers, endeavouring to disturb; there then remained no hope of any effectual counter-revolutionary power existing in France, and, as Mr. *Burke* justly observed, it then became requisite that the power to effect this important change should be from *without*.⁴⁴⁴ But it did not even then appear to have become necessary that England should *openly* join the confederation of *Pilnitz*.⁴⁴⁵ Mr. *Burke* had depicted France as without resources, and her army without discipline;⁴⁴⁶ it was therefore confidently expected that the Duke of Brunswick, with a sword in one hand, and a manifesto in the other,⁴⁴⁷ would have been able, with ease, to effect the views of the august sovereigns. It then seemed to be as unnecessary for *England* to assist openly in the dismemberment of *France*, as in that of *Poland*; and *Hanover* seemed to have a fair prospect of being secured from their dangerous contagion.⁴⁴⁸ But the unexpected termination of that campaign⁴⁴⁹ rendered the active and open co-operation of England indispensable. Or alas! the quiet establishment of a stable government might unfortunately have taken place, notwithstanding the laudable endeavour which had been made to prevent it; and, as *France* had offered to coalesce with any other free people, for mutual support, there was danger of *Poland's* confederating with them, for so detestable a purpose; and, dreadful to think of, what must then have become of

Hanover, and the three hundred other sovereignties of Germany,⁴⁵⁰ when thus placed between two free republicks! a cry of daggers and king-killing was now become necessary, and republicanism and levelling, was echoed through your land.⁴⁵¹ You launched into the war *a la mode Angloise*,⁴⁵² and now hold forth to us an idea that you are invading and desolating our country, to restore that very constitution of 1789, which such indefatigable pains have been taken to subvert.

But we have taken unnecessary pains, to prove the share you have taken in the calamities of France: those who are acquainted with the history of Europe, since your revolution; those who are acquainted with your constant interference, in every event, in every country, from the partitions of the Spanish monarchy⁴⁵³ to the dispute about a Turkish fortress,⁴⁵⁴ will not easily believe that these busy meddlers took no part in our affairs, and stood by, for three years, idle spectators of such an important event. No; they will say, prove the dispositions, the wishes of the English court, and you, at the same time, prove, that “it exerted itself, as far as was in its power, or as the apparent exigencies at the time called for, to effectuate those wishes, and to act consonantly to that disposition.”⁴⁵⁵ Nay, had the British court professed to this moment a strict neutrality, had the most piercing eye been unable to discover the least traces of its interference in our affairs, we should only have inferred that they had been conducted in profound secrecy, and that they were of a nature becoming the darkness in which they were enveloped.

The share which a cabinet takes in any transaction, is not to be judged of by the open and avowed part it may adopt, under the cover of neutrality, effectual measures may be pursued, when hostile ones may not be expedient. So England stood by with affected unconcern, for almost four years, a calm spectator of the important events which have taken place in France; so, with a similar neutrality, has she beheld the dismemberment of Poland, and the extirpation of liberty from that country, and had the Duke of Brunswick been as successful in the one country as the Russian armies were in the other, it might still have been asserted that England had been perfectly neuter; they might even have denied ever having acceded to the confederation of Pilnitz. The share England has latterly had in the dismemberment of Poland, it may be difficult to ascertain. That it originated in the English cabinet, might, perhaps never have been surmised, had not a little fracas taken place between two and three years since. The first project respecting Poland was to dismember it of its sea-ports, and thereby render it dependent on those who possessed them. Poland successfully resisted the demand, as the powers who made it were inadequate to the task of enforcing a compliance. As every unsuccessful attempt on the rights of others is attended with odium, even as successful ones are generally accompanied with eclat; so the court of Prussia,

desirous of removing the odium from itself, published a manifesto “contradicting the reports as false as they are industriously circulated with equal impudence and artfulness, relating to the acquisition of Dantzic, and other views in regard to Poland. On the contrary it is certain Mr. Hailes, the British envoy at Warsaw, has employed every means in his power to bring about a treaty, the basis of which was to be a cession of Dantzic. But the court of Berlin has been entirely passive in this transaction.”⁴⁵⁶ The dismemberment of Poland may not have taken place exactly according to the mode projected by the British ministry; they may have proved unable to ride in the tempest and direct the storm.⁴⁵⁷ Such a power as England may assist in forming plans, giving an impetus to political operations, while more powerful nations will assume the reins and convert them to their own ends. The Polish canvas may have been prepared by England: but the masterly hand of Russia finishes the design.

However successful England may have been in partitioning the Mysore,⁴⁵⁸ yet her success in dismembering European nations has not been remarkable; the glorious and immortal King William did not perfectly succeed in his admirable plans for partitioning and disposing of the Spanish monarchy; the event proved his wisdom to be almost equal to his virtue.⁴⁵⁹ Let England then be comforted by the reflection, that even had the design of dismembering France succeeded, it might have terminated as dissonantly to any plan she might have projected as the dismemberment of Poland. English manifestos, and declarations, might have but little weight with the great powers engaged in the present contest, and the hope his Britannic majesty now expresses “of finding in the other powers sentiments and views perfectly conformable to his own,”⁴⁶⁰ may happen to be delusive. His majesty has communicated to Holland his declaration, and, notwithstanding the strict connection between them, the sentiments do not seem exactly to correspond. The Dutch do not seem, like the king of England, to insist on the establishment of an “hereditary monarchy,”⁴⁶¹ as absolutely indispensable; but they declare they engaged in the war for the purpose of obtaining indemnity, and satisfaction, though the king of England proposes only “equitable and moderate conditions, not such as the expences, the risques, and the sacrifices of war might justify.”⁴⁶² The people of France, not to be behind hand in generous offers, will engage that whenever they establish an “hereditary monarchical government,” to oblige the king of England, they will gratify their high mightinesses,⁴⁶³ the Dutch, by giving them a full indemnity for all their expences. After the decided proof of the disposition of the British court, as adverse to the reform of the French government, manifested by every act, nay confirmed and acknowledged by themselves, in Lord Auckland’s memorial, can it be believed, that the constitution of 1789 is meant to be restored? Can we believe they really lament that “the designs which had been professed, of reforming the abuses of the

government of France, of establishing personal liberty, and the rights of property, on a solid foundation, of securing to an extensive and populous country, the benefit of a wise legislation, and an equitable and mild administration of its laws, all these salutary views have unfortunately perished.”⁴⁶⁴ Are we to believe that they deem it unfortunate, that these views have vanished, who, though in strict alliance with the old government, yet from the first formation of the new, not only refused all alliance to give it support, all mediation with its enemies to protect it from overthrow, and have since stigmatized [...] ⁴⁶⁵

*A Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast,
February 28, 1794**

This pamphlet, written in advance of the Fast Day of February 28 1794, is one of Fox's most powerful and eloquent attacks on the war with France and on the principles of the politicians who were conducting it. He argues witheringly against the notion that there is such a thing as 'political' morality which justifies a government in departing from the morality of the gospel in pursuit of its objectives in foreign policy. He examines the loyalist notion that the nation is a family and the king its father, arguing that, if this is the case, other nations must be regarded as families also, and the conduct of Britain towards them must be regulated by the same principles as govern the relations between families. As it develops, what began as a closely argued exercise in political theory becomes a fast day sermon, offered as an antidote to the sermons soon to be preached across the land by the clergy of the Church of England. The pamphlet was reviewed by the Analytical Review in February 1794, by the British Critic in April, and by the Monthly Review in June.

Considering the state of mankind as it really exists, and not according to any utopian ideas of perfection; and, supposing the conduct of those who govern nations, to bear some resemblance to that which the page of history presents to our view, we are certainly not warranted in very high expectations, nor indeed, is it to be imagined from the nature and source of human actions, that any peculiar eminence in virtue will be their distinguishing characteristic.

That, those who govern their fellow-men are amenable only to heaven, being their favourit axiom, an axiom which is the basis of the British Constitution, it does not appear very rational, that their conduct should be exemplary in proportion as the means of committing crimes are in their power, as the temptation, to commit them becomes powerful, and in proportion as the fear of punishment is removed to a period which mankind are apt to consider as uncertain and remote, and in which we do not seem to repose any great

* A DISCOURSE, / *Occasioned by the National Fast*, / February 28, 1794. // By W. FOX. // Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, *Holborn-Hill*. / Price Threepence, or Five for a Shilling.

confidence, as to restraining the other classes of society from violating its rights, and if found sufficient to awe and restrain those who *govern* mankind, it can only be, because the sanctions of a future state more powerfully operate on *their* minds, and are more uniformly and constantly in *them* an influencing principle of human action; or else, because they possess some innate principle of virtue, which needs no sanction, and fears no temptation.

But, as this is not always the case, and as the dignity of government requires, that those who administer it, should be contemplated as enthroned in *wisdom* and *virtue* as well as in *power*, and as nothing can be more libellous than to suppose that those who govern us, are *weak* and *wicked* like ourselves, it has become expedient, not merely that the moral principle of human action should be relaxed in their favour, but that its very nature should be so absolutely changed, that the very line of conduct which is deemed essentially requisite for obtaining the slenderest decency of character amongst other men, may not merely be trampled on by them with impunity; but the very idea that they conduct themselves on such vulgar principles, is deemed a reproach to the sublimity of their character. And we see a system of Ethics framed for their use, called *Political* Morality,⁴⁶⁶ and this prefix has such a wonderful effect, that evil is instantly changed into good, and good into evil: nay, that conduct, which if pursued by any other member of society shall bring on him infamy and punishment, may be adopted by this elevated order of men with *eclat*, add splendor to their characters and be resounded through the world as the foundation of their fame.

It may possibly be lamented that this new Ethics has not been reduced into a system; but this, from its very nature, is impracticable, its leading feature being the lawfulness of violating all principle; and were propriety of language regarded, *contra* morality might be its appellation. To deprive our fellow creature of that life which was the gift of his Creator, seems on common principles an offence of a most tremendous nature: when an instance of it occurs in civil life, it awakens our attention, excites our horror, and draws down on the culprit the vengeance of society; but let those who govern nations, order their bands of ruffians upon the bloody work, it is then, it seems, no longer *murder*, it assumes the appellation of *war*, and becomes honourable in proportion to the extent of the misery it occasions; we then receive with exultation, the news of tens of thousands killed and mangled in one dreadful heap; and whatever sentiment may be excited by the violent death of an individual, yet, by extending the idea to thousands and to millions, all our horror instantly vanishes, our minds become reconciled to their dying agonies, and to the still more dreadful circumstance of the tortures of the wounded, condemned to drag a mangled and mutilated body through the miserable remnant of life, while the wretched inhabitants of the seat of war are involved in calamities, so dreadful,

that the human mind is scarcely capable of conceiving their extent and diversity.

To bring such enormous misery on our fellow-creatures, one would imagine no circumstances could justify, no cause could be adequate, yet it is perpetually done, on pretexts so frivolous, and often so false, as to excite our mirth were it not suppressed by our horror and indignation.

That a community, as well as an individual, ought to defend themselves when *actually* attacked, will not be disputed; but to go abroad in quest of blood and slaughter, under pretence of guarding against *future* and *supposed* dangers, is certainly incompatible with every moral principle even as recognized by the common practice of civil life. Do we stab every man from whom we imagine it possible that we may receive an injury? Or, do we burn his house and murder his family in order to secure ourselves by disabling him from effecting his wicked purposes? But, in fact, few wars have even such flimsy pretences; they are usually undertaken by powerful nations, who have nothing to fear, against weak and defenceless ones; or else, between powerful rival nations, contending which shall extend most widely its oppressive tyranny over harmless people; nay, to found a commerce on violence; and to compel other countries to sell their commodities, or buy ours, on terms dictated by the sword; and which seems as justifiable as murdering a man that we may obtain his customers, or destroying his estate, that we may benefit our own.

But even interest is often out of the question, and we see all the horrors of war take place contrary to interest, in defence of some imaginary point of honour; nobody ever pretended that either Falkland Island,⁴⁶⁷ or Nootka Sound,⁴⁶⁸ was an object adequate to the expence of a war. National honour was the pretext; yet, what a drawcansir⁴⁶⁹ should we deem the man who desolated a parish, and murdered the inhabitants, because the Squire or the Parson had affronted him! In the House of Commons is avowed, a thorough abhorrence of all the parties who have prevailed during the revolution; yet, have we obtained possession of Toulon, by holding out to them an approbation of the constitution recently subverted;⁴⁷⁰ and Mr. Pitt avows, that Political Morality authorises us to avail ourselves of the parties and divisions of France, to distress them, and benefit ourselves:⁴⁷¹ yet some may ask, what would be thought of a lawyer, who held out hopes of supporting a claimant to an estate in order to obtain possession for himself? Or, a man who, under the guise of Friendship, entered a house, and availed himself of the discord of the inhabitants to burn and plunder it? Hence, it seems, that Political Morality establishes as a principle, and source of conduct, pride, ambition, avarice, and all those passions, which ordinary morality calls on us to curb, and to suppress. It is not that thorny path, which moralists have depicted.—The summit is to be attained by giving a loose to the passions; and there its votaries

may sit enthroned, indulging every crime, and spreading horror and desolation around them, while they are emblazoned with resplendent glory, and receiving adulation and applause.

Thus seducing is this political morality; nor is it surprising, that the contest should be violent for situations, where the gratifying of the predominant passions of the human mind receive the most splendid rewards, which the severest virtue can alone merit, and when principles and motives of conduct, which would debase to infamy in private life, shall, when adopted by public men, on the great theatre of the world,⁴⁷² be dignified with the splendid epithets of patriotism and love of our country. That to love our country may be a duty, we will not dispute: so is the love of our families. It is the most powerful, the most laudable, the most natural, and the most essentially necessary. It is a bond of union which existed prior to governments, and has been supposed, by some, to have been their origin.⁴⁷³ If any superior energy of action can be called for, it must be in favour of a beloved woman, who has attached herself to an individual, with a reliance on his protection and support, abandoning the world in confidence that, in uniting herself with his fate, she shall receive an ample reward. If it were to be supposed possible, that there could exist in nature such a monster as this political morality, if we could for a moment imagine that circumstances and relations in life might warrant a deviation from the strict and general rules of moral principle, it must surely be in behalf of the helpless infants whom we have brought into existence, and the continuance of whose existence depends every moment on our exertions: yet, is it universally admitted, that those exertions must be circumscribed by the general rights of man, that however these relative connections may call on us to put forth every energy, and to sacrifice our ease, our passions, and our desires, in the performance of such important duties, yet never was it pretended, that they authorised us to violate the property, or infringe, in the smallest degree, the sacred and inviolable rights of our fellow creatures.—The eye of pity may, indeed, contemplate the melancholy situation of the wretch who, impelled by such powerful temptation, seizes the property of his neighbour to preserve the wife he loves, or the infant which it is his duty to support; yet no one supposes that even such a strong case as that is a defence. Within the bounds of moral duty are our exertions for their relief to be limited, and the result is to be left in the hands of the Supreme. But, do those who govern mankind, and who stile themselves Fathers of their people, pretend to adopt such a line of conduct? Is it by sacrifices made by *themselves* that they benefit their people? Or, do they seek to aggrandize, and enrich them, by bringing misery and desolation on others? While they themselves expect to be rewarded for the deed by the applause and adulation of mankind; and, instead

of making any sacrifice themselves, they claim such splendor and power as deluges the world in blood, to attain the envied eminence.

As the duty of submission to civil government is strongly inculcated by the gospel of Christ,⁴⁷⁴ it may be deemed an unfortunate circumstance when the conduct of those who administer it tempts us to deviate from that respect to it, which the principles of moral duty, drawn from the nature of civil society, call for, and which Christianity, with great propriety, still more forcibly presses on its votaries. That this duty may have its limits, when attended with circumstances which connect it with other duties, will hardly be denied, because, however strongly and broadly the New Testament lays down the duty of submission of wives to their husbands, children to their parents, and servants to their masters,⁴⁷⁵ yet we cannot but acknowledge that other duties frequently circumscribe them. None will contend that these are duties unlimited in their operation; and it does not appear that submission to civil government is laid down in more unqualified terms, or can claim a more unqualified observance.

But however qualified may be this duty, yet the gospel, in its general tenor, certainly inculcates very strongly submission to injury, returning good for evil,⁴⁷⁶ &c. and it is probably this circumstance which has rendered christianity a favourite with those who govern, or those who oppress mankind. We are necessitated to resort to this supposition, because there does not appear, that they can have any other motive for adopting a religion so hostile to worldly power and grandeur, and so inimical to that conduct which is necessary to attain them. Thus it is possible, that a Monarch on his throne, or a Slave-owner with his whip, may condescend to hold the gospel in his hands, and tell his subjects, or his slaves, "Let every soul be subject to the higher powers," and "He that resists shall receive to himself damnation!"⁴⁷⁷ and if the subjects of the one become more passive under oppression, and the slaves of the other be increased in value twenty per cent, it will not be deemed extraordinary if they become strenuous advocates for an alliance between Church and State: If bloody wars be adopted to prevent the State's being deprived of so important an ally, a clergy marshaled for its defence,⁴⁷⁸ and penal laws enacted to enforce and extend it.⁴⁷⁹ But, as every good is said to have its alloy of evil, so, even this great and important support, which worldly domination receives from christianity, may be accompanied with a danger not undeserving notice. Had the wise and venerable practice of former ages been still adhered to,—Had the records of christianity been still locked up in an almost unknown tongue, to be dealt out to the community in such scraps as the caution of the clergy might suggest, accompanied with such glosses, and restricted to such an import, as their policy would suggest; then, indeed, might christianity, so restricted, have still contributed its support to human

dominion, without endangering those who resorted to its alliance. But, alas! this is no longer the case, they have, unfortunately, been suffered to lie open to the Swinish Multitude⁴⁸⁰ in their vernacular tongues, while the art of printing has too diffusely circulated among them a knowledge of the contents.

Thus they find that Christians are exhorted to put away all wrath and strife, to be kind, patient and long suffering to all men, return good for evil, to avenge not themselves, but leave vengeance to him to whom vengeance belongs; to love their enemies, and do them good, if their enemies hunger to feed them, and if they thirst, to give them drink, &c.⁴⁸¹—And as these precepts seem to be of unlimited obligation, as it does not appear that Wetstein, Bengelius, or Griesbach,⁴⁸² have been able to discover a single reading which will warrant a supposition that christians, should they become Kings or Ministers, are discharged from the obligation of obeying the precepts of their religion, when we see them (as sometimes happens) trampling on these duties, we are apt, in proportion as we really believe and reverence our religion, to look with horror on their conduct; and, however, much we may endeavour to reverence the King and all in authority, yet, at the most, will it only be with that degree and species of reverence with which the child beholds his criminal parent when violating the laws of society, and all the civil relations of life. It will not restrain him from remonstrating on his criminal conduct, nor, in some cases, even from endeavouring to obstruct him in the perpetration of his crimes, and in guarding society from their baneful effects.

We will, therefore, allow the advocates of monarchical authority to assume their strongest ground, admit them to the possession of that important post which they long triumphantly maintained, and which, when, at length, necessitated to abandon, they have never since dared boldly to assume any other. Let us admit *Sir Robert Filmer* to invest his heroes with *patriarchal* authority.⁴⁸³ Suppose them to possess all the rights, and all the power of the *Patres Familiae*, and, then let us ask, what are these rights, and what is that authority? But we will not derive an answer to this question from the corrupt practice of barbarous ages, whether recorded in Profane or in Sacred History, nor will we derive it from that special authority which God, himself, for wise, though to us unknown purposes, gave to particular nations, or families.⁴⁸⁴ Let us rather enquire what are the duties, and what the rights of the heads of families, on that true foundation of moral principle, the implied will of our common parent, deducing that implied will from a consideration of the relation we stand in to him and to each other.

Then let us change the term *nation* to *family*; let us suppose one family to reside in this Island, another in *Africa*, another in the *West Indies*, one in the *East Indies*, another in *France*, and another in *Ireland*.—Will it be said, that the parent, the Head of this family, residing in this Island, has any right as such,

to send one of his sons to extirpate the family in a West India Island?—To furnish the Head of the African family with fire-arms, and chains, to subdue and bind his family; and so subdued, convey them in chains to the West India Island, that this African family and their offspring should be kept in chains for ever, forcibly to supply the English family with the rich products which their own cold climate had refused them?—Will it be said, that he has a right to send another of his sons to the East Indies, under pretence of trading with the Asiatic family for the produce of their industry, and quarrelling with another foreigner⁴⁸⁵ who had come there under the same pretext, make that quarrel a foundation not only for possessing their houses and their lands, but spreading famine and death among them, by seizing their very food;⁴⁸⁶ and shall the English parent grant a charter to his son, authorising him *thus* to govern the Asiatic family, on condition of his sending part of the money to England, which has been so obtained in Asia, to enable him to pay his debts:⁴⁸⁷ and lastly, suppose he were to send another of his sons to the Irish family, harrassing them from age to age, without the shadow of a pretext, but that they had the misfortune to be neighbours, and therefore exposed to their inroads; and less powerful, consequently unable to retaliate the injury; should he compel them to contribute a tenth of the produce of their labour to support an English clergy, whose religion they abhorred,⁴⁸⁸ and the greater part of the rents of their land to aggrandise and enrich their neighbour?⁴⁸⁹ Let us ask, whether there be any principle which could justify this conduct? would any one presume to apologise for it? would not the voice of reason and justice, call on mankind to abhor it? If so, let it then be asked, whether that conduct can be justifiable in a number of individuals, or families, which would be deemed the extreme of profligate wickedness in one? Bodies of men may countenance each other in crimes which the most shameless individual would blush to perpetrate. Removed from the fear of punishment, by the power they possess, they may set all moral duty at defiance, and invent a jargon of their own, tell us of *political* morality, and *political* necessity, and, under this flimsy veil, they may carry human crimes to their *apex*. They may punish with harsh severity subordinate ones, which, in comparison with their own, are but as dust in the balance. Nay, perhaps, the severest chastisements may be reserved for those who dare to arraign their crimes, and against whom they may have nothing to alledge, but that they are more virtuous than themselves. Have such a sense of the dignity of virtue, as to express their abhorrence of their deeds, and disdain to profess veneration and respect for the perpetrators?

Mr. *Pitt* has arraigned with great and just severity, *one* part of our diversified enormities. Perhaps it is not very easy to discover any principle, on which it can be selected from the dreadful mass, unless it be on the mere ground of

impolicy, on the ground that murdering and stealing the inhabitants of Africa prevent a more profitable trade to that country. But as he urges the injustice of the practice, may it not be asked, whether forcibly continuing the Africans, and their posterity, in a state of slavery, be not equally incompatible with morality, as the original seizure;⁴⁹⁰ and is not the destroying of twenty millions of Asiatics, and bringing their property to England to discharge our national debt, equally a violation of our duty? Or is it much inferior, in the order of crimes, to harrass and impoverish, for our aggrandisement, a country superior in natural advantages to our own,⁴⁹¹ compel them to dance after us in all our whimsical changes of religion and government, provoke them to insurrections, by compelling them to support the clergy of a foreign country, and the nobility of a foreign court. There may be shades of difference in these enormities, but they are all equally defensible, or equally unjustifiable. Will the advocates of government come forward, and give us an intelligible defence? will they give us any other than that these acts are the basis of our riches and our splendor, as the Highwayman will tell us that it is indispensibly necessary for him to pursue his vocation, because without it he has not the means of obtaining his bottle and his girl.

But if these deeds be enormous, If the vilest sycophant of power cannot mutter a defence, If they perpetrate them merely because they dare, If we are to understand that they are perpetrated because there exists no earthly power to whom the actors are amenable, and because the just vengeance of Heaven is despised; will not some be apt to ask, whether it be not rather extraordinary that those should expect our obedience to their laws, who are trampling on the eternal laws of justice; that they should look for our subjection to their authority, while they themselves are spurning that of the most high?

A mind untutored in this species of knowledge, might be apt to imagine that, so far from the conduct of those who govern nations being unrestrained by those moral principles which are obligatory on individuals, on them they ought to be deemed peculiarly binding; because to no other control are they subject but conscience and honour; no power, no laws to which they are amenable. Those circumstances in social life are deemed the criterion of the human character; and a criminal conduct under them constitutes its lowest degradation. Debts of Honour, where no laws interpose to enforce them, are supposed to be peculiarly binding. To injure those who are helpless, who have no protector, and can hope no redress, constitute the utmost infamy of human character. To strike the vanquished, to trample on him who lies prostrate at our feet, becomes only the lowest and the basest miscreant whom the meanest peasant would despise. And is it possible that those who govern nations can pursue the same line of conduct, and yet look for honour and respect? Do they expect that the glare resulting from wealth and power can

dazzle the eyes of the ignorant and vulgar? and do they disregard those who are capable of judging of their conduct, because they are but few? If so, they must be destitute of those feelings essential to true dignity of mind, which will ever lead a man to esteem the approbation of his fellow citizen, in proportion as they are acquainted with his conduct, and capable of appreciating its intrinsic worth.

Admitting that nations have a right to violate all the ordinary principles of human action, then should this extraordinary right, this *unique* code, be explained. Or if it consists in the trite and terrible apophthegm that nations are subject to no law, acknowledge no principle of action, and are let loose on mankind free from all restraint; then let this be avowed, and if possible defended, and apologized for: so far from this, they are perpetually talking of justice, reason, moderation, nay, religion: are they then afraid lest we should possess too great a respect and veneration for those who govern us, that they thus bring before us the records of their own condemnation?

Does the assassin, while perpetrating his deeds, proclaim aloud the command of heaven, "Thou shalt not murder?" If not, why, when the bloodhounds of war are about to be let loose, on pretexts which cannot furnish the slenderest veil to the true motives, on pretexts which possess not ingenuity sufficient to excite a smile, why must we bring in array to our own condemnation the principles of eternal and immutable justice? Why, if we resolve to desolate a country of the Antipodes and strip a prince of his dominions and revenues for our emolument, under pretence that he has quarrelled with somebody about a fortress?⁴⁹² Or, if we think it our interest to avail ourselves of the discord among the first nation in the universe, that we may suppress their rising greatness, founded on the superior natural advantages they possess; and to effect this, hecatombs of human victims are to be sacrificed, because we say a ship has sailed up a river;⁴⁹³ why must we in such cases talk of the *justice* of the war? Is it not to provoke inquiry, and to call to the minds of the people principles which policy and decency ought to suppress? The conduct is certainly not without precedent. Prostitutes will sometimes vociferate against unchastity; but it rarely disguises, and still more rarely elevates their character. But, what is still more extraordinary, in those cases, even heaven is brought in array before us. If those who govern possess any vantage ground, if they have peculiar privileges, to this world and to this life must they be limited. Here the doctrine of *political* morality originated. This is the sole theatre of its existence, and with this world must it terminate. Why then, it may be asked, do princes term their bloody contests appeals to heaven? Why are they so extremely willing to adopt them? Why do they manifest as much readiness to submit their cause to that judicature, as they do aversion to submit to any other ordeal? It certainly is a judicature that can hardly be deemed

peculiarly favourable to their cause; but, to be sure, they have the advantage of obtaining a distant day of trial, which, it may be supposed, is an advantage that is prized in proportion to the badness of a cause. So willing they are to be accountable to heaven for their conduct on earth, that while some infer the purity of their motives, others may imagine that they await its decrees with tranquility, because they disbelieve its existence; that they suppose it to be a cunningly devised fable; that they imagine the court to which they appeal will never be opened, and will never arraign its culprits.

That religion, which seems to be so adverse to worldly views, should be so intimately and universally combined with the most criminal, is not so extraordinary a circumstance as might be imagined. As the gods men have worshipped have been usually the works of their hands, or of their imaginations, little could they have to fear from such deities; and, amongst the number originating from the rich source of human fancy, we might have gratified our most fastidious taste. Whatever may be our projects, or our motives, there could be no great impropriety in supplicating *Mars* to patronize our cause. Under the auspices of *Mercury* might we have conducted our enterprize against Toulon;⁴⁹⁴ and our Ministers, by means of an intrigue with *Juno*, might possibly have obtained possession of the thunderbolts of *Jupiter*, to hurl upon the French at Dunkirk.⁴⁹⁵ Or, if the exploits were too sanguinary, might not some *Belial* be invoked to whom hecatombs of human sacrifices might yield a sweet savor, or a *Moloch*⁴⁹⁶ to whom torrents of human blood might prove an acceptable oblation? But, let us ask, what motive could exist for turning from this rich variety, which the wisdom of former ages has spread before us? Why, when we let loose the Demon of war, must we assume that religion which points out the divine being as *The God of Peace*? The author and finisher of that faith takes on him no higher character than the *Prince of Peace*,⁴⁹⁷ whose mission on earth was to proclaim *Peace* and good will to man, and who, though possessed of all power, yet yielded his back to be smitten, and hid not his face from shame and insult; and so far from admitting any of his disciples to adopt a contrary conduct, held himself forth as their example, declared they must be as their master, and his servants as their Lord; and when they inclined to adopt a different conduct poured on them the sternest reproof, even when it appeared to arise from a love of his person, and a zeal for his cause; when those, whom he most eminently loved, proposed to him to avenge himself on some who rejected his doctrine, and insulted his person, “*He rebuked them, saying ye know not what manner of Spirit ye are of.*”⁴⁹⁸ Nay, when he who has been deemed the chief of his apostles expressed a repugnance to his submitting to suffer injury, from those whom his power could destroy, the bitterest reproach he ever uttered came from his lips, “*Get thee behind me, Satan, thou art an offence unto me; for thou savorest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.*”

If any man will come after me let him take up his cross, and follow me."⁴⁹⁹ Nor was this state of suffering and submission spoken of by him as a temporary suspension of a worldly power, which was afterwards to break out with splendor: He states it as resulting from the nature of his kingdom, which he characterises as not being of this world, and with great propriety, observes, "*If my Kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight.*"⁵⁰⁰ And he places that worldly domination which is so universally sought, and so highly applauded, as a perfect contrast to the future conduct of his disciples, "*Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise authority over them: But it shall not be so among you: But whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant.*"⁵⁰¹

Some may perhaps ask, whether the Princes of the Gentiles patronize this religion, from mere perversity of mind, because it is peculiarly hostile to their conduct? Does it add to their dignity to recognize the validity of a revelation which so tremendously denounces the vengeance of Heaven against them? Is it to prove their heroism that they hold themselves out as braving its terrors? Or, is it to prove the sublimity of their character, that, while perpetually at war, they hold out as a divine truth, "*Whence come Wars and Fightings amongst you, come they not hence even of your lusts?*"⁵⁰²

Be it so; admit that the profligate vulgar will be disposed to venerate those who have the courage to defy the most High. That they will, indeed, esteem them to be great who can boldly glory in trampling on his authority. Yet, surely, they must then be content to be abhorred by those whose mean and dastardly minds lead them to reverence the God of Heaven, and to tremble before his throne. In proportion as we believe his gospel, we shall certainly abhor those who assume his name to disgrace it, and to trample on his authority.

In contemplating our fellow-men in possession of supreme authority, and their actions unfettered by the restraint of human laws, we are certainly prepared to behold the depravity of the human mind operating in no very moderate degree, we need not be greatly surprised at acts of considerable atrocity taking place; nor ought we to be over ready to cast off our allegiance on such grounds, but when the christian character is assumed we have a right to form different expectations, and adopt a different line of conduct. The apostle inculcating the duty of separation from the world, tells us it does not follow, that we are to break off the connections and civil relations of life, on account of our seeing a conduct incompatible with purity of manners, for then, says he, we might go out of the world. But, says he, If any one who is called a brother (a christian brother) be a notorious violater of the laws of Christ, with such an one ye shall not preserve that social intercourse which is incumbent on us, as to other sinners; nay, he carries the prohibition so far, as even to forbid our eating with them.⁵⁰³ If, then, those forms of social respect which

it is our duty to practice in the common intercourse of civil society, are to be forborn in respect to those who connect with a profession of the christian name a disregard to its precepts; must not that reverence, which christians were taught to manifest towards sovereign power, even in the hands of a Nero⁵⁰⁴ be materially affected by the assumption of the christian name? Had the Roman emperor taken on him that profession, would not Paul, who withstood a brother apostle, because he was to be blamed, have then insisted on a becoming conduct, even from the emperor? nor does it seem to be extremely probable, that he, who so vehemently called on his fellow-christians *to have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but reprove them,*⁵⁰⁵ *to come out from among them, and touch not the unclean thing, and God would receive them,*⁵⁰⁶ would have recognised the monstrous spectacle of a union of worldly domination and pride with the christian name.

Whatever subjection we may deem to be due to civil governors, yet can we respect them, when we see them associate their crimes with christianity? and, unless we mean to manifest that, like them, we assume it as a form, we shall resist the thought of recognising the criminal union, recollecting, that whatever rule of conduct our governors may adopt, we must be guilty if we take in any which are not conformable to that law by which *we* at the least must be judged at the last day.—FINIS.

*Thoughts on the Impending Invasion of England**

In January 1794 the government, which had until then regarded French threats to invade England as mere bluster, began to take much more seriously the possibility of an invasion. Increased shipping had appeared in the French channel ports, and intelligence reports suggested an army would be embarked in the Netherlands. The government began moving troops to defend the south coast and the coasts of East Anglia and the west country, and in March drew up a bill to enrol thousands of volunteers for home defence. In this pamphlet, written at the height of this first invasion scare, Fox suggests that Britain has every reason to fear. The French army was massively superior to the British, and after the campaign of 1793 France knew that Britain could easily be beaten. Once they had landed, the French were unlikely to meet any very formidable resistance, for the British had grown accustomed to hiring foreign mercenaries to fight on her behalf. The conduct of the government had given France particular provocation. France saw itself as treading a path towards liberty that had been marked out for it by the revolution in Britain, but when it appealed for friendship it had been rebuffed with insults. Partly for this reason, and partly because the British mode of waging offensive war was especially savage and inhumane, the French had developed a hatred for Britain far in excess of what it felt for the other nations in coalition against her. But Britain had brought the horrors of war to so many nations that it could hardly be pretended that she did not deserve to suffer invasion in her turn.

The pamphlet is undated, but must have been written in February 1794: see below, n. 45.

Modern Europe, is supposed to have been the theatre of the most subtle speculations, as well from her statesmen possessing extensive and refined political knowledge, as from her peculiar structure, rendering her a fit subject for the most extensive and intricate diplomatic arrangements.

If this be the case, certainly, her History presents a mortifying spectacle to human pride, and ought to humble in the dust the most presumptuous part

* THOUGHTS / ON THE / *Impending Invasion of England.* // By W. FOX. // London: Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, *Holborn- / Hill*; Price *Threepence* or *Five* for a *Shilling.* / Where may be had, *just published,* A DISCOURSE / on the FAST, by the same Author.

of the human species. It appears, that when the most splendid projects have been formed, nay, apparently effected, they have uniformly failed to produce the expected effects; and not uncommonly have produced disastrous ones. On the contrary, when nations have been clamorously aroused to guard against some impending mischief, which the keen sighted Politician has been able to trace amidst a labyrinth of contingent circumstances; at length the statesman is foiled, the terrific train of circumstances actually take place, and behold, no mischief ensues, and, even unforeseen advantages arise. We are perpetually called on to attack and disarm some power, whom we are told is tremendously formidable, when our attention is as suddenly excited towards another which arises to our view, and whom we are informed presents an aspect still more terrific. These Guardian Angels, these Benefactors of Mankind, who, influenced by the milk of human kindness, are so benevolent as to take nations under their fostering care, are perpetually forming plans which they tell us must be adopted, or ruin will ensue; they are not adopted, and yet we find ourselves perfectly safe; or, they are adopted, and bring on the very mischiefs against which they were proposed to defend us.

It is not requisite to quote the History of the last hundred years; it is not necessary to refer to K. *William's* wise plans for partitioning the Spanish Monarchy, or forming a Dutch Barrier. To *Alberoni's* projects, the events of the no search war, or those in defence of the pragmatic sanction, or the Prussian power;⁵⁰⁷ a mere reference to facts in every ones recollection; events which, even a few passing years, have brought in review before us, will afford an ample illustration.

Not many years since, the nation was giddy with exultation and triumph, we had concluded a war which exceeded our most sanguine expectations, and though the Minister was, of course, execrated for not trampling more effectually in the dust our prostrate foe, yet we obtained much more than the utmost object of the war.⁵⁰⁸ Our poor Colonists were secured from the dreadful Plots of the perfidious French, ample room was secured for them to increase and multiply through successive ages, during which their trade, confined to this country, was to raise us to most wonderful splendor and power, amply rewarding us for the millions spent in the glorious enterprize; but it happened a little oddly, that the event turned out exactly the reverse, and we totally lost our Colonies through the success of the very measures we had taken to secure them. The scenes then shifted, and England was to become an object of commiseration, or contempt. "*Her sun was to set for ever.*"⁵⁰⁹ but this, proved another mistake, and England, after defeat and disgrace, and losing a hundred millions to secure her Colonies, and a hundred millions in losing them, possessed a splendor and power she had never before equalled; and the Court of France, who had produced these effects, expected to rise on the ruins of England, to

wrest from her the dominion of the East and West Indies; and through the riches derived from thence hoped to obtain the controul of all the petty Courts of Europe. Similar disappointments awaited her also; the success of her projects involved her in the most calamitous ruin, and reduced the nation itself to such a state, that Mr. *Burke* assures us, “*He could only see a vast chasm, which once was France.*”⁵¹⁰

This change naturally produced a new project; we joined the other powers of Europe in invading her, and it is avowed, in a respectable Publication, that while assisting them to seize her Provinces, we are to dispossess her of her Sugar Plantations: all Europe is to purchase its sugar of us, paying not only the price to our Colonists, but even a tax on it to us; and thus they are to reward us for the assistance we give them in subjugating France.⁵¹¹ But, alas! this admirable plan, as wise and as just as any of the preceding, seems to be in danger of becoming as futile. She has driven us from her land, overcome the intestine commotions which she says we had fomented; and now she threatens to retaliate the attack.⁵¹² Her tremendous armies⁵¹³ which, even German discipline, have in vain attempted to resist, are ready to pour into a nation, which has long had no experience of war, but what has arisen from petty civil contention. The fuel of war, she with lavish hand has been for above a century, incessantly spreading through the world, and for the first time, she seems destined to partake of the effects.

In this new and perilous situation, surely, it cannot be very improper to solicit the attention of that community who are so highly interested in the result. It, certainly, is not intended, to dispute his Majesty’s prerogative of involving us in war,⁵¹⁴ yet, surely, it cannot be deemed an infringement to discuss the effects we are likely to experience, and more especially if among those effects may possibly be the dreadful one, of his never having it again in his power of involving us in another. It is not even intended to interfere with the ordinary conduct of those, to whom with great propriety the management of our wars is intrusted; but if, with great ingenuity, they contrive to bring the war home to us, it seems to be excusable if we give it some little attention, and if in some small degree, it becomes the subject of discussion.

When the High Priests of *Mars* open with oracular ambiguity their tremendous mysteries, we attend with awful reverence; when Mr. *Dundas* tells us of the justice and necessity of going to the Antipodes to deprive Tippoo Saib of his revenues and dominions:⁵¹⁵ When *Lord Hawksbury* informs us, that our very existence depends on fitting out Corsairs, seizing the inhabitants of Africa, and carrying them to the West Indies;⁵¹⁶ and when Mr. *Burke* tells us that our religion, our laws, our government, every thing that is dear and valuable to us, depend on our waging eternal war with the French, and extirpating them, and their principles;⁵¹⁷ we listen with silent astonishment, for who can

controvert what none can understand? But when a powerful army, &c. appears to be ready to land upon this Island, the danger seems to come within the limits of a common understanding. Whether Flanders belonging to one or the other of the great powers of Europe, would involve the ruin of England, may possibly, by some, be deemed a disputable position: but that an army of a Hundred Thousand Men, landed in our Island, would be rather hurtful, no man will dispute. That the French being in possession of the Alps, or their sailing on the Scheldt would be a tremendous evil,⁵¹⁸ which it became us to risk every thing to avert, however obvious it may appear to the microscopic eye of an adept in politics, yet some may possibly not be able to perceive it. But were London to be laid in ruins, even a Chimney Sweeper's Boy must know that it would, at the least, be an inconvenience. In discussing this subject, we are in no danger of being charged with resorting to imaginary evils, or magnifying trivial ones, to alarm the timid and the ignorant; it is admitted to be imminent and great, and it therefore seems to be a cause which with no great impropriety may be brought before a jury of the country.

Indeed, it appears more peculiarly proper, as it is a question not materially affected by any of those disputable points which divide the public mind; which ever side we adopt, whatever premises we assume, the deduction must be the same. If with the adversaries of the war, we say, that the French were singularly desirous of peace, and had no motive for violating it, yet their intention, and their motives are now avowed, and clearly understood: If with the friends of the war, we contend, that their pacific pretensions were insidious, that they would swallow the Continent, and only do us the favour of reserving us for the last mouthful; then the obvious inference is, that the danger which they depicted as terrific, even when uncertain and remote, is become still more so, by being immediate and probable. If it be said, that the Ministers are weak, negligent and abandoned, how dreadful must be the danger from such an Administration at such an exigency?—If on the contrary, it be alledged, that they are wise, vigilant and conscientious, what reason must we have to dread an enemy, whom, even such Ministers have not been able to keep from our shores, and how much must our terror be increased by the dire apprehension, lest at such a momentous crisis the convulsions of death, or the convulsions of Government should remove them. If on the one hand, it be affirmed, that the resources of the country have been shamefully neglected, is there not reason to fear the same negligence may precipitate our ruin, or on the other hand, have they been fully called forth, then is it evident, that they are inadequate to an effectual prosecution of the war against so powerful an enemy.

Indeed, the dreadful power of the enemy is now universally admitted. Mr. *Burke's* jargon of their disorder and imbecility has long since been

abandoned,⁵¹⁹ although they were the circumstances which were held out to us as an inducement to commence the war. The hope of its speedy termination, and of our crushing the enemy in a single campaign, was held out by Mr. *Pitt* as a reason for borrowing the whole of the six millions, though at a great disadvantage;⁵²⁰ but now he admits the power of the enemy to be so tremendous, that the ambitious views of *Levis XIV*, and his power to effect those views, however terrific to Europe they might have been deemed, were weak and insignificant in comparison of the present power of the French Republic.⁵²¹ Indeed, so tremendous is this power, that it is the very circumstance which is now held out as a reason for prosecuting the war. We must never, it seems, sheath the sword while a power exists so much greater than ourselves. Be it so, yet, surely, if we have not merely entered into, but been foiled in the contest, it must be a reasonable ground for increasing our apprehensions. If we have entered the enemies territories to weaken and dismember them. If they have repelled us, and in return, are ready to invade us, surely, the idea of danger resulting from a mere contemplation of the power of the enemy, must be highly aggravated from the circumstance of its being now an enemy that has tried our strength, and in a conviction of our inferiority are preparing to return our assault. Mr. *Pitt* so far from disguising the power of the enemy, or the magnitude of their designs, admits them in the fullest extent; he considers it as a forlorn hope in which our only reliance is, that the power of the enemy is too enormous to be permanent.⁵²²—It is, it seems, a preternatural strength, the strong convulsive agonies of death, and must precipitate the termination of existence. Admit it, yet from this very circumstance seems to arise our most serious ground of alarm.—We will suppose the French Jacobins to have exerted every nerve for a momentary effort, that they have collected into a focus, every scattered portion of strength which the French Republic affords them; that by a forced loan,⁵²³ they have obtained all the specie of the nation, that by the terror of the *Guillotine*, they have raised an immense temporary force, which they will be unable long to keep together. That, to maintain even this temporary force, they have violated all property. That it must quickly fail, and then the whole fabric will be soon annihilated by the very means which have brought it into existence.—If so, what will naturally be the plan adopted by the French Government? Knowing the temporary nature of the resources they possess, feeling the unstable nature of the power they enjoy, will they not be induced to undertake a bold and desperate attempt suitable to the nature of the power and resources they possess? Protracted, defensive war, will, in such case, be ruinous to them, and the most desperate measures will become the most prudent. Suppose their situation to be desperate, desperate measures it will then become them to pursue; and their irresistible bands, when they can no longer be kept together in *France*, may be poured into our Island. If then,

our Country be desolated by becoming the seat of war, our Capital burned, and our Arsenals destroyed; will it be any consolation to be told, that the grasp which has crushed us, the stroke which has destroyed our very vitals, was nothing but the preternatural efforts of the madness of expiring power? Shall we be happy when told, that, though this *Sampson* has brought on us dire and irreparable ruin, yet he participates with us, that we both lie groveling in the dust, while Russia, Austria, America, or some other power rises from our ashes? We are, indeed, told that as we have every thing at stake, every thing must be risked, and that our constitution being in danger, it becomes us to make every sacrifice to preserve it. But, are we sure, that when our Country becomes the Theatre of War, and misery, and desolation are spread through the land, we shall contemplate our glorious Constitution in Church and State, with that rapturous pleasure we felt in the moment of National prosperity?

Hence, it appears that our apprehensions from the enormous power of the enemy can scarcely be carried beyond the extent of the real danger, and that the only alleviating circumstance held out by those who have the direction of the power of the nation, and can compare it with that of the enemy, is, the miserable hope, that, in case we can resist a confessedly almost irresistible enemy, we shall at length have the consolation of seeing him exhausted at our feet.

But the probable expectation of *France* becoming the assailant results, not merely from the allegations of Mr. *Pitt*, that her power is both enormous and temporary. She must necessarily be stimulated to it by every circumstance which has occurred, by every motive of interest and safety; and be prompted by every passion which can be supposed to influence her public councils. A contemptuous slight of proffered friendship naturally produces the strongest and most permanent resentment; hence it is, that *France* seems to possess peculiar animosity against this country.⁵²⁴ That the arbitrary Monarchs of Europe should have manifested enmity to the rising liberties of France could excite no surprise; it was an example which threatened the subversion of their power, in proportion as it proved to be beneficial to the *French*; and the hostility of the despotic Sovereigns of Europe could produce no resentment in *France*, except what naturally resulted from such a state. But as to England, the case was different; from *her* originated those principles on which *France* had acted, and even are the basis of the Monarch's throne. England had set her the example of trampling on the Royal Authority. The degraded spectacle of the *House of Stuart*, and the prosperous state of England, had impressed on them the idea that the happiness of nations was not always commensurate with the power of the Sovereign. To England, therefore, they looked with a fraternal eye, far from considering its Monarch as a Tyrant and a Despot. The Hall of the *Jacobins* was ornamented with the Royal Flag of England, even,

after the antient standard of the French Monarchs had been consigned to oblivion.⁵²⁵ It is true, as *Elector of Hanover*, the English Monarch might be supposed to have an adverse interest; but they appeared to have such confidence that it would be lost in the superior splendor of the *British Crown*, that they even solicited his mediation to settle their differences with the other powers of Europe, and to prevent the commencement of the threatened hostilities. The marked contempt with which their proffer was received,⁵²⁶ naturally gave rise to that disgust which quickly became hatred, when they imagined, that under an insidious neutrality, we were fomenting their discords, and plotting their destruction. The open and avowed hostility of Austria, and of Prussia, seems not to have produced in France such animosity as did the supposed conduct of the British Court.

Our insular situation impressing an idea of security, has emboldened us to adopt a peculiar language and conduct. Russia from her distance, has been induced to imitate us. No other nation has ventured to pour out such torrents of low scurrility as some amongst us have uttered. Hatred and contempt must necessarily have been excited, even had we before possessed their esteem; but, our claim of the flag, of the dominion at sea, our contradictory and extraordinary claims of colonization, of no search on the Spanish coast⁵²⁷ while we confiscated those who approached our own; the spreading the flames of war, through every part of the world, notwithstanding the just and humane treaty of 1686,⁵²⁸ our preserving on the sea (because there we were most powerful) the antient horrors of war, by seizing private property, while hostility by land had, by degrees, been meliorated so far, as almost universally to respect it; our even detaining neutral vessels, but, above all, our seizing the French shipping in 1755, previous to any declaration of war,⁵²⁹ had given an idea of us very unfavourable to our national character. Books had long circulated in France, stigmatizing us, as the *Savages of Europe*,⁵³⁰ and it is possible, that the idea of us, was not much improved by the changes which have taken place, in the mode of conducting the war, since we took part in it. They, possibly, attributed to us, exclusively, the idea of considering *thirty millions* of people, as having no national existence, and not to be treated according to the universally received law of nations.—They, possibly, suppose that we invented the strange fiction, that a nation with a thousand miles of sea coast, of which not a single port was actually blockaded, was to be considered as being wholly and constantly besieged, that every neutral vessel bound for it might be liable to seizure; and they may, perhaps, allege, that we formed the plan of cutting off their customary supply of corn, to raise discontent in the country, by starving the women and the children, as we must know that the armies would certainly be at all events supplied; and, lastly, they say, that the moment we abandoned our neutrality, all the defenceless nations of Europe were ordered to join us

in the war,—a practice, which they say, was never before resorted to, by any people.⁵³¹ Nor can it be deemed extraordinary, if such a concurrence of circumstances should have produced very powerful effects on a people who may be supposed to consider themselves as the first nation in the universe, as to population, power, literature, and civilization; and especially when they consider themselves as having been thus treated by a nation whom they, probably, consider as infinitely beneath them.—As every powerful passion may have thus excited them to turn their arms particularly against us, so their interest, as to the general conduct of the war, may have suggested the same measure. However, inconsiderable may be our actual accession of force to the combined powers, yet, the peculiarity of our situation enables us to give a considerable impetus to their operations. Surrounded by the sea, we are more removed from the effects of war; and our commerce and national credit, however diminished, enable us to replenish the exhausted coffers of the Allied Powers;⁵³² may they not then be tempted to endeavour to transfer the seat of war to this country, as an effectual means of cutting off those resources which enable the Continental Powers to perpetuate the war?

But not merely passion may prompt, and expediency suggest this measure, but is it not possible, that they may consider themselves as even *necessitated* to adopt it? May they not say, “*Powerfully attacked, for dark, ambiguous, unexplained purposes; England at length, breaks the gloomy silence. She tells us, that she will not even treat of peace.*”⁵³³ *Behold the dreadful crisis, when in drawing the sword they threw away the scabbard—they have pronounced the dreadful sentence. —Delenda est Carthago—Delenda est Carthago*⁵³⁴ *are we not then necessitated to reply. They seem to have left us no alternative, but the subversion of their government, or the abandonment of our own.*”

Thus it should seem probable, that their threatened Invasion, may be more than mere gasconade;⁵³⁵ and it may be worth our while, seriously, to inquire, whether it be really intended as a formidable, effectual attack, or whether it be only intended as a feint to alarm us, and divert our attention, while they are really carrying on some other plan? If they have sufficient motives for undertaking the expedition, then for the solution of this important question, it will be next requisite to inquire, what degree of probability exists of their being able to effect their purpose? because, however strong may be their disposition, yet, if their means be totally inadequate, it is not probable, they will undertake it; at least, if they do, we may, in such case, be more easy as to the result. However loud, the dog may bark at the moon, she still keeps on her way, regardless of his noise.

But, at the same time, as it becomes us not to give way to causeless alarm, it behoves us carefully to examine the subject; heedless confidence, founded

in pride and ignorance, is to the full, as dangerous as causeless timidity. Though not the most *pleasing*, yet, is he the most *useful* Friend, who, instead of flattering us, that nothing but flowery paths lie before us, calls on us, carefully to examine the deceptive appearance, to see that no dark abyss open under our unwary step; examine how we may pursue in safety the dangerous path; or if, on careful examination, the danger appears to be unavoidable, exhorts us to return, and abandon the fruitless task.

If we in attempting to subvert other governments, should be in danger of producing the destruction of our own. If in spreading the flames of war through the world, they should be on the point of reverberating on ourselves, we may then possibly contemplate the present war through a less pleasing medium, and may possibly be willing to return into the bosom of peace with less reluctance.

Melancholy is the reflection, that the security of our situation derived from the surrounding waves, instead of becoming as it might be supposed a source of peace, and of that melioration of the human mind, which is the natural result of peace, has, in fact, produced effects exactly the reverse; and from this very circumstance may be traced every detestable trait of the British character. From hence, some say, has arisen intolerable pride, and insolence towards other nations. From hence, they say, we have been able to oppress other nations in a degree far beyond our proportionate degree of strength.

Other nations when contemplating objects of ambition have been necessitated to retain a considerable portion of their strength, for home defence; we, on the contrary, have been accustomed to pour out our whole strength for offensive war. To such a degree have we carried this system, that in 1745, we had not retained sufficient force to suppress a despicable insurrection, and even resorted to foreign troops for a defence.⁵³⁶ Hence we have derived such confidence in our own safety, such a persuasion, that we are exempt from the calamities of war, that to intimate the possibility of it, is almost deemed disaffection to the State, or, at least, will be received with as marked contempt as the admonitions of a Laputan, on the danger resulting from the cometary orbs,⁵³⁷ or the howlings of an Indian on the eclipses of the luminaries.⁵³⁸

Fearful of hurting the high-toned feelings of the *True born Englishman*,⁵³⁹ we tremble to suppose it possible for the French to pass the twenty mile ditch which separates us; we must not presume to imagine the possibility of their beating our fleet, nor ask, whether, if while the fleets are engaged, troops may not effect the passage; we will not even ask whether, in detached portions they may not take unknown tracts through the boundless ocean, and center upon our coasts; nor will we suggest a surmise, whether *Thuriot's* landing a thousand men and taking *Carrickfergus*, at a time when the French Navy was almost annihilated, be not something like a proof of its being possible.⁵⁴⁰

But, here, British Heroism boldly exclaims, Ah! Ah! Let the *Atheists*, the *Regicides*, the *Sans Culottes* come, I warrant *Britons* will give them a drubbing. Indeed! And is it an invariable fixed law of Nature, that *Englishmen must always conquer!* Is it an axiom to be assumed, or is it a proposition to be examined? Will not Spain prove that we may be beaten,⁵⁴¹ and America that we may be beaten, by those whom we have despised. But this notable point, we mean not to dispute. We will take it for granted, that the French will be defeated, and that we preserve our constitution, our religion and our laws.

Let us suppose, our *Game Laws*, and our *Ecclesiastical Courts* to remain intire; that neither a doxology or a creed, be innovated on; that the thrones of the Bishops stand firm as a rock, and their lawn sleeves be unsinged; let the Corinthian capital of society still remain, with the beautiful ranks, and subordinations, which distinguish our *excellent* Constitution in *Church* and *State*.⁵⁴²

Let us merely review the calamities which will befall the Swinish Multitude,⁵⁴³ and this may, in some degree, be requisite, even though the alarm of an *Invasion* be totally unfounded. Admitting it to be an artifice of our enemies to effect some other design, or an ingenious device of the Ministry to enlist alarmists: yet, as Ministers have declared, that the war was absolutely necessary to prevent the French coming to attack us, and therefore was defensive, may it not be inferred that, if we miscarry, in effecting the object, we shall finally be exposed to these dangers which the war was undertaken to avert, and as, notwithstanding the prodigious and unexpected success we have experienced, yet, as it is not quite certain that we shall succeed in destroying the *Jacobin Government* of France, as some people are so incredulous as to think, that we shall never succeed in placing little *Capet* upon the throne; a measure which our Ministers have declared to be absolutely necessary for our security;⁵⁴⁴ may it not be inferred, from the allegations of the Ministers themselves, that the French Invasion is an event to which we may be exposed, should the war prove finally unsuccessful.

Notwithstanding the great piety which so universally pervades the nation, and more particularly the higher orders of the State, and, notwithstanding the *Atheism* and *Impiety* of the French, yet, in case of an *Invasion*, it will hardly be deemed quite prudent to rely on supernatural assistance; it will certainly be reckoned rather more satisfactory to have some visible human mode of defence, something more than the armies of the Kings of *Brentford*, or *Falstaff's* men in *buckram*.⁵⁴⁵ Let those who know the military force in this kingdom say, whether it be equal to the contest. The military force, indeed! Perhaps some will exclaim, Is the military force only to be reckoned on? If the French have risen in an immense body, if they have manifested unexampled energy in defence of Poverty, Misery, and the Guillotine, with what energy, with what unanimity, will Englishmen rise in defence of a Constitution, which is the

wonder and admiration of the universe? of a Religion which is the purest and the most excellent that ever did or ever will exist! and of those admirable laws which some few people may, possibly, be rich enough to indulge themselves in the luxury of appealing to? but, however excellent these excellent things may be in themselves, or how much soever we may admire them, while smoaking our pipes, yet, I do not remember that we have manifested any wonderful alacrity in fighting for them. That is a task which has usually been undertaken by *Gentlemen*, who are willing to run the risk of being knocked on the head, for *sixpence* per day.—We have been told, that our religion and liberties were in horrible danger in 1688, 1715, 1745, and 1755,⁵⁴⁶ yet I do not recollect, that the people armed *a la mode Francoise*,⁵⁴⁷ nay, I never heard that our *excellent* Government was ever so contaminated with French principles, as to think of putting the people in a state of requisition. Even, in 1780, when a few people bought muskets to defend their houses from the rabble, the measure was animadverted on in some remarkable letters; and the *Irish Volunteers* have been supposed to have produced effects, not very recommendatory of arming the people.⁵⁴⁸ Indeed it is a measure that might be attended with some inconvenience, for, however loudly they might vociferate *Church* and *King*, when first armed, yet, as the Swinish Multitude are rather unstable, if they should take a fancy to change the cry to *Liberty* and *Equality*, the Attorney General might not be able to find parchment to draw the informations, as they might demur to giving up their *drum heads* for that purpose.⁵⁴⁹

Hence, it may be surmised, that the people will not feel themselves disposed to rise in a body to fight, nor is it probable, that the measure will be insisted on by those who govern us. They will rather be disposed to follow the established mode, which has been practiced since the Revolution, of protecting the Religion and Liberty of England with foreign troops; a method which may have arisen from the repugnance which is felt to shedding *English blood!* and by which a very beneficial commercial intercourse is preserved between *Germany* and *England*.

Should the French attempt, at any time, to invade England, with a powerful armament, we suppose the force to repel them will be such regular forces as have been carefully preserved in Barracks and the Militia, if it be deemed proper.⁵⁵⁰ The deficiency will be supplied by troops to be drawn from Germany, for that purpose. And in proportion as we draw the troops from Germany to England, the French will, in like case, be enabled to draw theirs and the whole change may then consist in a movement of the armies from Germany to England.

What would be the final issue of such a war, I will not imagine. The existence of it, and its unavoidable effects are the great and important evils. In all political events, the apprehended effects are rarely realized. Those which

are experienced in the contest, are the real and important ones. On the event of the American contest, we were told, by the respective partizans, depended the very existence of the respective countries: we miscarried in the event, and the miscarriage was unimportant. Had America miscarried, she also would, probably, have found the effects as insignificant. The mischiefs, and calamities, of the contest were the only certain and calculable evils. If, then, the Allied Army, fighting on English ground, be crowned with conquest, still those who inhabit the Country, will scarcely experience the difference between victory and defeat. In war, the distinction of *Friend* and *Foe*, of the conquered, or the conquering, are scarcely to be perceived; wherever an army comes, it will be supplied, though famine overspread the land; wherever the conquering army comes, all property vanishes, wherever the conquered flies, desolation is left behind it. A Conqueror has just returned amongst us to receive the laurel at our hands, let him tell how many thousands died of famine, because the cattle were taken from the ploughs to convey his artillery.⁵⁵¹

If we have brought such horrors and desolation on other countries, can we complain if at length, we have to partake of the bitter cup, under such circumstances rage and indignation against the accidental instruments of the vengeance we experience, will seize our haughty spirits: but dispositions of a different nature, it will better behove us to encourage. If a powerful enemy should invade our land, and banish from it happiness and peace, let us recollect how many nations we have involved in those calamities of war, which we are at length destined to experience. FINIS.

*A Defence of the Decree of the National Convention of France,
for Emancipating the Slaves in the West Indies**

On February 4 1794, the French Convention decreed the abolition of slavery throughout the French colonies. All the inhabitants of the colonies, the decree announced, 'of whatever colour, are French citizens, and from this day forward shall enjoy those rights which are secured to them by the Declaration of Rights, and by the Constitution.' A longer than usual delay on the circuitous route by which French newspapers found their way to England meant that the English papers did not carry this decree until February 19, less than a week before the Commons was scheduled to stage yet another of its debates on the abolition of the slave trade. The House had already agreed, in 1792, that the trade would be abolished by 1796, and this new debate was on a bill by Wilberforce specifically to forbid the importation of slaves on British ships into the possessions of foreign powers. The news from France however dampened the moral ardour of the abolitionists. According to one Tory newspaper, Danton told the Convention 'this decree would kill PITT', and it does seem at least to have wrong-footed him. Unable to concede either wisdom or morality to any of the republic's policies, he told the Commons that the decree was 'wild and improvident'. Fox, who could not have anticipated that the decree would never be fully implemented and would be annulled by Napoleon, was outraged. Most of the pamphlet is a rehearsal of the moral arguments against slavery, but its main purpose is to insist that the abolitionist movement is as guilty as the pro-slavery lobby in its willingness to preserve the institution of slavery itself. Relations between Fox and the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade seem to have broken down entirely, and Fox is appalled by what he sees as the immoral opportunism of Pitt, who at the same time as he is pushing for abolition is planning to capture the French sugar islands and to cultivate them with slave labour.

The pamphlet must have been written after February 25 1794, for it refers to a Commons debate of that date, and probably before May, for it is advertised in Poor Richard's Scraps no. 3, which in that month was the subject of a complaint to the Home Office.

* A / DEFENCE / OF THE / DECREE OF THE NATIONAL CONVENTION / OF FRANCE, / For emancipating the SLAVES in the WEST INDIES. // BY W. FOX. // London: Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, Holborn- / Hill; and D. I. EATON, No. 74, Newgate Street. / Price Threepence, or Five for a Shilling. / Where may be had, just published, by the same Author, / THOUGHTS on the IMPENDING INVASION / OF ENGLAND; / and / A DISCOURSE occasioned by the FAST.

Whatever may be the final issue of the French Revolution, or with whatever circumstances it may be accompanied, yet will one important consequence necessarily result. Every important principle of Government, of Morals, and of the Social Order will be brought in review before the public, and subjected to minute investigation, and in whatever obscurity the discussion may for a while be involved, yet, is there but little doubt, of its finally terminating in just and accurate views being extensively disseminated. As the endeavour to suppress the *French Republic* seems not to promise much success; we have the hope of seeing its effects brought to the fair test of actual experiment, which, like experiments in all other branches of knowledge, will tend to elucidate what theoretical disputants have involved in confusion.

The West India slavery is one of the most interesting of those subjects, as well from its importance, as from its supposed difficulty. For a series of years it has engaged the unremitting attention of the several branches of our well balanced constitution;⁵⁵² and to them, at least, it appears so extremely difficult to determine whether we shall still continue to murder and enslave the inhabitants of *Africa*, that like the inquiry of the antient Philosopher into the nature of God; the difficulty seems to increase in proportion as we proceed in the inquiry.⁵⁵³

Under such circumstances it might have been imagined, that we should have rejoiced to have seen a neighbouring nation bring a question which had so much puzzled us to an issue, and prove the comparative value of Slavery and Freedom as principles in actual operation, while we awaited the event to avail ourselves of the knowledge to be derived from their adventurous experiment.

If, as is generally supposed, the West India colonies be the foundation of the wealth and naval power both of France and England, and the emancipation of the Slaves would be the destruction of those colonies, then, surely it might be imagined we should exult, that those whom we choose to consider as our natural enemies have adopted a measure attended with such ruin to themselves; leaving this great source of wealth and power almost solely in our hands. If, as is supposed, emancipation would be injurious to the Negroes themselves, and that our Negroes are happy and contented in the state of Slavery, as is asserted, then, what a glorious triumph have the French Jacobins afforded us; destitute of cultivation or order, we should then see Freedom in the French Colonies, producing the predicted baneful effects: the Negroes must decrease from year to year, whilst in our Colonies they would increase in numbers and in happiness, under the kind protection of their owners: the dreadful mischief of Freedom could not then have been deemed imaginary,

its fatal effects might have been then appealed to, and have effectually silenced the despicable advocates of the Rights of Man.

How then shall we explain the abhorrence and contempt with which this Decree is viewed in the British Senate, where not one individual appears to defend it. Mr. *Pitt* who has been declaiming for years, that “*This Slavery was the most extensive calamity recorded in the History of the World, and was only another name for fraud, robbery and murder!*”⁵⁵⁴ now boldly comes forward, and not only declares, that this determination of the French to terminate this system of fraud, robbery and murder, is weak, absurd and improvident;⁵⁵⁵ but proposes sending an Armament to bind those chains which have been broken, to enslave those who have been just made free.⁵⁵⁶ He will not even wait to see whether freedom will be attended with those baneful effects which have been predicted; with such abhorrence he contemplates the measure, that he will not even suffer the experiment to take place, though its injurious effects, if any, must be experienced by our enemies.

However extraordinary this may appear, yet can it excite no surprise in those who are acquainted with the nature and motives of the different parties, who have agitated this question amongst us. The long and desultory harangues upon cruelty and injustice, the volumes of evidence, by which those charges have been brought home to our Colonists, have, indeed, occasioned many to suppose that some few individuals in the British Senate reprobated our Colonial Slavery, and were anxious to remove it; but, alas! no such French principle was ever for a single moment entertained. To secure, perpetuate and extend the Slavery have been their sole objects, and the difference between the Abolitionists and their Adversaries have merely been, how these valuable ends might be best obtained. Mr. *Pitt* and the other Abolitionists contended that our Colonial Slavery was endangered by introducing Negroes from *Africa*, who, bred in the enjoyment of Freedom, disdained the yoke of Slavery, would be ever attempting to subvert the venerable fabric, and wickedly endeavouring to obtain their freedom; he therefore proposed, that the importation of such dangerous Negroes should be prohibited, and that the Colonist, should be confined to the home manufacture of Slaves, and these being born and bred Slaves would more patiently submit to chains and whips, to incessant labour and extreme hunger.⁵⁵⁷

Mr. *Dundas* admitted the propriety and policy of this regulation, and hoped the proprietors of Slaves might at length see it in the same light; when it might be adopted, but that it would be an invasion of the rights and privileges of the Slave-holder to compel him to rear instead of purchase Slaves.⁵⁵⁸ Mr. *Pitt* then proved, that only four of our Islands needed supplies, that some were saturated with Slaves; consequently those latter might be converted into breeding pens for supplying those gentlemen in the other Islands, who might

not choose to be at the trouble of rearing Slaves to supply the place of those whom they had murdered.⁵⁵⁹ To set this very troublesome question at rest, it was resolved, by one branch of our *well* ballanced Government, that some time or other it might be expedient to adopt this *notable* regulation.⁵⁶⁰ But the Slave-holders, alarmed at this innovation on their liberties, appeared at the bar of the House of Lords, denied their right and power to circumscribe the *Slave-market*, and on this remonstrance, it has been deemed convenient to hang up this despicable question, peace be to its manes.⁵⁶¹

Thus, it appears, that the question so long agitated amongst us on the Slave Trade, was a mere Commercial Regulation for encouraging the home manufacture of Slaves, for opening a New Trade to *Africa*, which the former was supposed to prevent, and for giving permanence and security to a system of Slavery in our Colonies. The Abolitionists and Anti-abolitionists, indeed, both talked, and with equal propriety, about justice and humanity, but it was merely to lengthen, diversify and ornament their speeches. The most eligible mode of increasing the Slaves was the sole question, and so far was the Abolition of Slavery from being intended, that Mr. Pitt's principal argument in favour of his plan was, that, it secured Slavery from impending dangers.

Hence it appears, that the Abolition of Slavery either gradual or immediate is a measure intirely *French*, to them belong all the Infamy, or all the Honour.—Calumny itself cannot charge a single Member of the British Legislature with being so far contaminated with French Principles, as to propose restoring the Slaves in our Islands to the benefits of civil society, and the protection of its laws.⁵⁶² An offer of confraternity, so opposite to our whole system of conduct, that the remotest idea of it strikes us with horror.⁵⁶³ Nor can any Whig Politician, from Mr. *Locke* to the present time, be justly charged with adopting such a detestable principle.⁵⁶⁴ That liberty and happiness are to be confined to his foggy Island, is an Englishman's favourite idea, to spread mischief and desolation through the earth, is his most luxurious enjoyment.

The proceedings of the French and English governments, on this, and on all other subjects, are so perfectly dissimilar, that they may be excusable in avowing mutual abhorrence. Mr. *Burke* justly observes, in his preface to *Brisot*, That, "*such is the nature of French principles, that they cannot be viewed with indifference; that it is a system which must be regarded with enthusiastic admiration, or with the highest degree of detestation, horror and resentment.*"⁵⁶⁵ On this question, at least, the two governments are fairly at issue; and he must, indeed, be an ideot who can admire both.

If the *British* government be just, then, indeed, do the French deserve the epithets of robbers, and plunderers. They have at one blow annihilated a property of at least *sixty millions sterling*. But on the contrary, if these Slaves were not a property, and the French Decree has rescued a million of fellow-

creatures from the hands of violence, placed them under the protection of the law, and restored them to the benefit of civil society; then have they raised an immortal monument to their Fame. If we on the contrary, not merely strengthen the hands of violence, within our own jurisdiction, but engage in a crusade to bind a million of men, women and children, with an adamant yoke of slavery, in the very moment when it was broken; then let it be asked, whether any curse can await us, if any calamity can befall us, which we do not deserve?

Mr. *Pitt*, in reprobating this emancipating Decree, appears not to be at all desirous of censuring it as an insulated act. He tells us this *weak, absurd, improvident* proceeding flowed naturally from their general system, and was perfectly congenial with it. He considers it as a sample of their whole system; the whole then must be judged of by this selected portion: and we cannot defend this Decree, without being understood to have defended the whole system of French principles; and if any acts of the French government should be indefensible, such acts, and not this Decree, must be deemed anomalous.

As the French have only Decreed the general principle, that the Slaves should be emancipated, and have referred it to the Committee of Safety “to take prudent measures to carry it into effect,”⁵⁶⁶ so it must be understood that it is the general principle, that the Slaves should be emancipated, which Mr. *Pitt* stigmatizes, as *weak, absurd* and *improvident*. These terms cannot be applied to the mode of effecting this important purpose, as the mode has not as yet been determined on. *Danton* justly observes, “*This day you have done justice to humanity, but let us be the moderators of this wise Decree. Let us reflect that this passage so sudden from Slavery to Freedom, may be unfortunate, while we ought to be desirous of making it useful. Let us, therefore, refer it to the Committee of General Safety, to adopt prudent measures to carry the Decree into execution.*”⁵⁶⁷ This conduct is, it seems, *absurd, weak* and *improvident*. Let us contrast it with *our* conduct, which is, to be sure, as *laudable* as that of the French is *detestable*. The French have resolved, that a million of fellow-creatures shall be restored to the benefit of society, and the protection of the laws. This is it seems, *weak* and *foolish*. We say they shall be considered as chattels, remain out of the protection of the law, subject to the will of their fellow subjects, to be treated as brutes; this is it seems quite *wise* and *laudable*. The French, having obtained liberty for themselves, are desirous of communicating its happiness to others; this is *absurd*. We make use of the power we derive from the liberty we enjoy to enslave others; this is perfectly *rational*. The French refer the subject to a Committee, to adopt *prudent* measures; this is *improvident*. We are for years agitating the subject of the West India Slavery, bringing the enormities of it before the public, without having the least intention of interfering in it; and even suffer the Planters to insult the Legislature, by declaring that it had no right to interfere between them and

their Slaves, and that, if even it presumes to endeavour to prevent additional importations, they will set our laws at defiance, and the Colonial Judicatures shall trample them under foot.⁵⁶⁸ All this is perfectly *prudent*.

Presumptuous as it may be deemed to attempt a defence of this weak, absurd, improvident Decree, yet, alas! I am implicated in their crime, and consequently necessitated to undertake its defence.—Long since did I presume to disseminate the detestable positions, That it was incumbent on us to endeavour “As speedy and effectual subversion of Slavery in our Islands, as the circumstances and situation of the Slaves would admit”; That “We should not limit our views to the abolition of the African Slave Trade, as the Slavery formed on it was equally unjust”; and “That the persons called Slaves in our Islands were intitled to liberty, by the common law of the land; that the mode of putting them in possession of their legal and natural right ought⁵⁶⁹ to be speedy and effectual, and ought to be considered with no other view but their happiness, however it might militate against the interest of their oppressors.”⁵⁷⁰

Had the French been left in the undisturbed possession of that Freedom they had so gloriously obtained; had they been suffered quietly to pursue their wise and benevolent principles, little would this, or any of their other measures, have needed a defence from me. Their best and effectual defence, would have been the beneficial effects they would have produced. This was well known, and dreaded by those whose interest it was that those effects never should take place. To impede and obstruct their operation was the obvious policy to be adopted. France must be attacked, and filled with blood; and then the exclamation was to be bellowed forth, see the effects of French principles! so we may fill now the French West India Islands with carnage, and then possibly, we may have the audacity to exclaim, behold the effects of emancipation!

In defending this Decree, of the National Convention, I mean not to be guided by any supposed effects, either beneficial, or adverse, which may possibly result; for, notwithstanding the unmeaning clamour which Mr. *Burke* has raised against abstract principles, I mean to contend, That “No circumstances, or situation, in society, can justify the subjecting a human being, as a property, to his fellow-creature; or the continuance of such a state, where it already exists;” and, in discussing this question, I mean not to be entangled with any particular principles of government, because, so far as the question of government is concerned, Slavery is equally inimical to all government. In whatever hands, or under whatever form, governments exists, it behoves to be Supreme over every individual; to that Supreme Authority he is to yield obedience, and to that he is to look for protection. Whenever one member of the community claims another as a property, this Supreme Authority, which is

essential to government, is, in such case, so far subverted; both the Slave, and the Slave-holder, as far as the relation exists between them cease to be amenable to the Supreme Authority. Hence, in proportion as we deem government to be beneficial to society, we must consider Slavery to be injurious; and if a state of government be natural to man, a state of personal Slavery must be unnatural and subversive of social order.

Personal Slavery is as incompatible with a state of nature, as with a state of government. No circumstances can possibly exist, in such a state, from whence it can originate. *Locke* and many other writers, have, indeed, endeavoured to support it: but it was on principles so absurd as to be now universally abandoned; and *Blackstone* has justly reprobated them.⁵⁷¹

But however indefensible the old principles of Slavery may be considered, yet is it now attempted to be supported on grounds far more absurd. *Mr. Pitt* says, "In that unhappy situation in which our baneful conduct had brought both ourselves and them, it would not be justice on either side to give them liberty."⁵⁷² *Mr. Pitt*, with a view to persuade us to abandon a particular species of the Slave Trade, has stigmatized the original seizure of the African as an atrocious robbery;⁵⁷³ but the Slave-holder in the Islands can perpetuate the robbery, retain the stolen goods without any crime; nay, he says, it would be injustice in him to relinquish them; an enormous crime is, it seems, cured by its continuance.

The unhappy African is seized in his native land, dragged hundreds of miles to the coast, carried to our islands, where he is condemned, under chains, and whips, to wear out the miserable remainder of his life. *Mr. Pitt* garbles this mass of enormity; some of the gang concerned in this transaction are, it seems, robbers, but others are honourable men. The wretched victim is transmitted from hand to hand: will *Mr. Pitt* inform us where, and at which transit, the criminality vanishes? is only the original seizure criminal? are all the purchasers in the different markets of Africa innocent? Is it a defence of the Planter that the injury is already perpetrated, and cannot be fully repaired, as the Slave cannot be returned to his family, from whence he was torn! the same defence will apply to the Slave-dealer in Africa, who frequently is ignorant whence the Slave came, and equally unable to restore him.

It seems, then, that we have committed an injury, which we cannot fully repair, we have torn a fellow-creature from a country to which he never can return, murdered his wife who never can again solace his cares; deprived him of his children whom he never can again embrace; and, then, we make these irreparable injuries a plea for perpetrating and extending to his offspring, injuries which we can remedy. We deprive them of those enjoyments which tend to make liberty and life desirable, and thence we infer that we have a right to deprive them of liberty and life also. *Mr. Pitt* talks of the *unhappy*

situation into which we have brought *them* and ourselves.⁵⁷⁴ The unhappy situation into which we have brought *them*, is, to be sure, pretty evident: but in the name of common sense, what can he mean by the unhappy situation into which *we* are brought? Is the Slave-holder *unhappy*, while his chariot rolls on sugar hogsheads and rum puncheons? or are the numerous classes, who derive wealth and splendor from the Colonial Slavery, unhappy? The people at large do not seem to be unhappy, while enjoying the produce of robbery and murder; nor does Mr. *Pitt* appear to be very miserable, while, by swelling the revenue, trade, and navigation, of the nation, it enables him to carry on the war for exterminating French principles. Indeed, so extremely well satisfied are we with the unhappy situation, into which our *baneful conduct* has brought both *them* and *ourselves*, that we are anxious to add to the half million, whom we have already brought into that unhappy situation, the million in the French Islands, whom the National Convention have resolved to extricate from it.

But it is pretended that we have so debased so brutalized them, by Slavery, that they are incapable of enjoying a state of freedom; and we continue to hold them in Slavery, from pure benevolence; and, from similar principles of benevolence, the Slave-dealer brings them from Africa, where he tells us, they are in a brutal state. It is a remarkable feature in the conduct of this inquiry, that both the Abolitionists, and Anti-abolitionists, have scarcely ad-duced any evidence but what, like Hudibras' arguments

————— directly tend,
Against the cause they would defend.⁵⁷⁵

Thus the Slave-dealers themselves prove every circumstance, with which their adversaries had charged them: and they, in their turn, while contending for abolishing the African Slave Trade, and setting up a new manufacture of Slaves in our own Islands, prove decidedly the absurdity and futility of their plan, and that an Abolition of the Slavery in the islands is both practicable and absolutely indispensable. Fully satisfied of this, from the slender extracts which, from the voluminous evidence, has been laid before the public, by the society for abolishing the Slave Trade, I long since, wished to examine the evidence at large, with a view to elucidate this important point; but in vain have I endeavoured to obtain it. Too precious for the public eye, it is sedulously preserved among the parties who conduct this business.

Understanding that Mr. *Richard Phillips*,⁵⁷⁶ one of the Committee for abolishing the Slave Trade, had two copies, I presumed to solicit the loan of one of them for the purpose, but I was informed that he would furnish no materials to an *Adversary*.

Under these circumstances, I must be content with appealing to their own abstract,⁵⁷⁷ and even from thence appears the fitness of the Slaves for a state of freedom. In their own country, it appears, from the evidence of *Wadstrom*, *Storey*, *Towne*, *Dalrymple*, *Hall*, *Howe*, *Falconbridge*, and *Trotter*,⁵⁷⁸ that they are punctual, honest, hospitable, susceptible of all the social virtues, friendly, grateful, affectionate, skilful in manufactures, their capacities equal to the Europeans.—Mr. *Wadstrom* contends they surpass Europeans in affection; and Mr. *Newton* says, he found there the best people he ever met with.—That when they are brought among Europeans they are corrupted by their example, will not be disputed; and the alleging this corruption, as a plea for perpetuating their Slavery is a tolerable degree of effrontery. Yet even after we have brutalized them, as is pretended, they seem to possess a character to which the lower classes of the English can scarcely have a claim.⁵⁷⁹ *Giles* says, “Their capacity is good, and their disposition better than might be expected from persons so untutored.”⁵⁸⁰ The Rev. Mr. *Rees* says, “They are as reasonable as any other beings, considering their education.”⁵⁸¹ Doctor *Harrison*, of Jamaica, thinks the abilities of the Negroes equal to our own, and their disposition much the same; that the Free Negroes are as industrious as the Whites, and that it is the Slavery which causes the unwillingness of the others.⁵⁸² Doctor *Jackson*, of Jamaica, says, that after much knowledge of them, he could not perceive them at all inferior in capacity to unlettered White Men; that they possess many amiable qualities, charitable to all in distress, parents strongly attached to their children, and have given strong proofs of gratitude and attachment; often complain that they are an oppressed people, that they suffer in this world, but shall be happy in the next, and denounce the judgment of God on the White Men, their oppressors.⁵⁸³ *Coor*, of Jamaica, says, he always observed Negroes, who had grounds in good order, work with great pleasure.⁵⁸⁴ *Terry* says, that Free Negroes are as well behaved as others in the same rank of society.⁵⁸⁵ Capt. *Smith* always considered the Negroes as a keen, sensible, well disposed people; when their habits were not vitiated by cruel usage; has seen good usage produce a good effect.⁵⁸⁶ *Duncan*, of Antigua, says, that the capacities and dispositions of Negroes are much the same as the Whites; that those instructed by the Methodists were improved in their morals and behaviour.⁵⁸⁷ Captain *Lloyd* believed that Negroes might be induced to work without severity; and that a Mr. *Greenland* never punished his Slaves.⁵⁸⁸ Captain *Davison* says, Free Negroes are very industrious.⁵⁸⁹ Rev. Mr. *Stuart* says, the Blacks are not inferior to the Whites in abilities, and disposition; have as much generosity, fidelity, gratitude, understanding and ingenuity.⁵⁹⁰—Rev. Mr. *Davies* says, that their feelings are much the same as Europeans.⁵⁹¹ *Cook* says, the capacity of some Negroes are very great.⁵⁹² *Clappeson* that the Free Negroes, in general behaved well.⁵⁹³ The *Dean of Middleham* says, their disposition is in general

affectionate, where well treated.⁵⁹⁴ *Woolrich* says, the young Negroes learn trades as readily as the Whites; knows of no exceptions to their possessing the social affections as strongly as Whites, particularly the Creoles, their natural affections are as great as elsewhere.⁵⁹⁵

Is it meant to insult the common sense of mankind, that such evidence as this is brought forward, by the very persons who insist that such a people as they are to be deemed as brutes, unworthy of the protection of the law, or of partaking of the benefits of civil society? Will Mr. *Pitt* favour us with a scale of intellectual powers, and intellectual cultivation, and by that scale let the West India Negroes, and our English *Church and King Mob* be judged;⁵⁹⁶ let those who rise to the given standard be deemed Free, and let those who are beneath it be adjudged Slaves?

After all the absurdity which has been circulated on this subject; will any one condescend to shew that any degree of intellectual cultivation is essential to place a man under the protection of the law, and constitute him a member of civil society? so far from it that, in proportion as he is deficient in both, it becomes more peculiarly necessary that he should receive the protection and be subject to the controul of civil society. Less capable of governing and protecting themselves, the laws of society should peculiarly be extended to protect them from injury; to suffer such to become subject to the arbitrary will of an individual is peculiarly criminal.

Is it the ordinary conduct of society to put out of the protection of the law, and subject to the arbitrary will of another, the ignorant and helpless? Is the infant, or the idiot abandoned to the arbitrary will of an individual? Let it be explained, how a state of personal Slavery can result from any particular portion of intellects, or degree of cultivation. Were a man to rescue an abandoned infant from destruction, nourish and rear it, would it become his property? If, then, a life saved, and benefits conferred, cannot constitute a property in man, shall it be deduced from injury? Shall we emasculate, or blind a fellow creature, and thence claim dominion over him, because we have degraded and sunk him in the scale of human being?⁵⁹⁷ Will not the maxim of law be applied, that “*No man shall profit of his own wrong?*”⁵⁹⁸ instead of the vengeance of society being averted, it shall be poured out on the culprit, and the injured shall claim reparation for the wrong, as far as it is reparable.

Indeed, no circumstances, whatever, can possibly authorise the making man a property of his fellow-man. From the special relation of the Father to the Child, and Husband to the Wife, peculiar authority results: but the law of society still preserves the supreme control, and limits the special authority within its necessary bounds, and in no well ordered society is it pretended, that even, the parental authority constitutes the child a property.

If, then, a property in man can result from no analogy in civil society, shall it be derived from the most wanton, and absurd pretexts? If it arises not from those high and special authorities, which are essential to society, shall it be suffered to exist where no relation subsists, but what is formed by violence and injustice? If the greatest of benefits cannot be a just foundation, shall it be derived from the grossest of injuries?

As this question has been agitated in a manner peculiarly adapted to perplex, and mislead, it is not surprising, that many confound an emancipation from Slavery with a dissolution of government; hence, they exclaim, what would the Negroes do, if left to themselves? True, but do the French mean to abandon them, to leave them to themselves? Does any one who proposes emancipation, mean emancipation from government? on the contrary, by destroying the arbitrary dominion of the Slave holder, the Slaves would be brought immediately under the subjection as well as the protection of the law.

From their debased, their ignorant, their depraved state, results the strongest reason for their emancipation from the dominion of the Slaveholder, because such a dominion is the farthest removed from a state of regular, well administered government, and such a government becomes necessary in proportion as the governed are ignorant and debased. When the mind of man is improved by cultivation, principles of action arise, which in some degree, supply the place of government; a sense of honour, of shame, a regard for the good opinion of others, knowledge of the various relations of civil society, all come powerfully in aid of moral principle; and even that principle itself is so far improved in the cultivated mind, as greatly to aid, and in some degree perhaps to supersede the necessity, and obviate the imperfections of government; but, where the governed are base and ignorant, the moral principle is so far destroyed, and no spring of action remains but human laws; which, it then becomes more peculiarly necessary, should be uniform in their operations, constant in their application, strong in their administration, wise and just in their formation. The great defect in the system of Slavery is, that it is totally deficient in all these respects; the will of each Planter, or Overseer becomes varied and unstable law, arising not merely from the weakness and wickedness of the human mind, but from accident, caprice, removals, and anarchy: the control of the Planter, or Overseer is rarely exerted over the Slave, except as to those special circumstances and times in which his own interest is concerned; as to every other action of their lives, and their intercourses between each other, in which the master has no interest; he gives himself no concern. The Planters in their evidence, absurdly boast how much they leave the Slaves to their own management; nay, they tell us, that crimes which we deem capital, are suffered to pass with trivial or with no punishment. But they ought to know that a weak, relaxed administration of Justice

is the most detestable, and peculiarly so, when the governed are such as they describe their Slaves to be.

Mr. *Pitt* says, that a *Black* government is an idea sufficient to excite our horror.⁵⁹⁹ Why a *Black* government should not be as good as a *White* one, he does not condescend to inform us. If he means that persons in the state in which the Slaves are in our islands, are but ill qualified to form a government; he says, truly, and he may say the same, of the lowest classes amongst ourselves; but that no more proves, that the Negroes ought to be left in a state of Slavery, because they are not philosophers and politicians enough to form a government, than it does that our peasants ought to be made Slaves of, because they are not adequate to the task.—After having by our *baneful* conduct brought them to the unhappy situation in which they now are, it no more becomes us to abandon them without government, to anarchy and confusion among themselves, than it does to leave them without the protection of law to the wanton and lawless will of their oppressors. The French Decree does what it became us to do; deliver them from their oppressors, restore them to the protection of the law, and subject them to its control.

That there exists powerful motives for our not adopting a similar mode of conduct, cannot be doubted by those who know the nature of our excellent constitution, and the powerful and extensive Colonial influence in the British Legislature.

Though Mr. *Pitt*, and even Mr. *Dundas* has admitted that the state of Slavery is injurious to the community, by diminishing the product of labour,⁶⁰⁰ yet is it not to be expected, that they should have the courage to pursue the public good, any more than the path of justice, in opposition to such a terrific power; but still, surely, it was not too much to expect that they should suffer that nation to adopt a different line of conduct, where no powerful, partial interest is suffered to obstruct the public good.—FINIS.

*Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 3-4**

On the Excellence of the British Government

In his most thoroughgoing Jacobite pamphlet, Fox challenges the Whig narrative of the 1688 revolution and the supposed perfection of the constitution then established, wonderfully well-balanced between the aristocracy and the people, the Lords and Commons. Fox argues that both before and after the revolution the Commons had been progressively appropriating power to itself from both the king and the Lords; and that this process, far from enhancing the liberties of the people as a whole, had been one which had greatly favoured, as it was designed to do, the interests of enfranchised moneyed Anglicans at the expense of everyone else. He reviews the history of the last two Stuart monarchs, and imagines two futures other than the one which eventuated, one under the oligarchic rule of the Whig martyr Algernon Sidney and his collaborators, the other under a surviving Stuart monarchy. In the first, the people are progressively enslaved by a military aristocracy with its power base in the unrepresentative Commons; in the second, characterised by peace and religious toleration, the power of the executive is more easily held in check, and 'the people becoming more enlightened would at length have assumed the power, and formed a government on a popular principle'.

Like Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 1-2 (the second part of which is missing), this is a two-part pamphlet, number 3 breaking off in mid-sentence at the end of p. 16, number 4 resuming where the former had left off. Number 3 must have been published after February 26 1794, the earliest possible publication date for A Defence of the Decree, advertised below the title, and before May 21, when a letter was sent to the Home Office complaining of it as the production of 'a violent Republican', though it is the very last of Fox's pamphlets of which that could be claimed. Perhaps Number 4 was published a short time later, and perhaps Fox had been made aware of this complaint, because in that part he writes about the danger of committing to print an account of the events of 1688 which differs from the version sanctioned by the Bill of Rights.

* *Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 3. / Price Threepence, or Five for a Shilling. / Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, Holborn-Hill. // Where may be had, A DEFENCE of the FRENCH / DECREE for emancipating the NEGROES. / THOUGHTS on the IMPENDING INVASION / of ENGLAND. / A DISCOURSE occasioned by the GENERAL FAST. / The above by W. FOX. // On the Excellence of the BRITISH GOVERNMENT.*

Amongst the numerous positions which we transmit from age to age as indubitable truths, the excellence of the British Constitution is the most memorable, and it is supposed as little to require proof or illustration, as that the Sun warms, or that cold freezes. It will hardly be imagined that I mean to shock my Readers by disputing what is so universally admitted, yet I must own, that I have no better reason for admitting its truth, than the common adage, that “What every body says must be true.”—Greatly mortified that I should possess such an inferiority of intellect as to be incapable of obtaining the slenderest idea on a subject which was said to be so extremely obvious, still more did I feel my degradation when, on a recent alarm, the whole nation were impanelled as a Jury, by Royal Proclamation, to give their verdict on *our excellent* Constitution; and to complete my mortification, a West India *Negro*, in my neighbourhood, signed his attestation to the excellence of our *well* balanced Constitution, and his resolution to defend it against Republicans and Levellers, whilst, alas! I was unable to discover what this Constitution was, or wherein its excellence consisted.⁶⁰¹

If by the term British Constitution were merely meant the mode in which the existing British Government was constituted, or what were its constituent parts, that certainly might be easily ascertained by an examination of the Government itself; but the sense in which the term British Constitution is generously used, certainly implies something very different from the frame or Constitution of the existing Government; because nothing is more common than to consider the existing Government as having departed from the Constitution, even as being constituted in a manner hostile to the *spirit* of the Constitution; and our patriots are continually calling on us to carry back our Constitution to its first principles, to rub off the few specks and blemishes which the lapse of time has produced, and *thus* to restore the Constitution to its original perfection.

This custom of speaking of the Constitution as the foundation and origin of Government, has authorised Mr. *Paine* to call on us to produce it, to tell us where it was to be found, and when, and by whom, it was framed; and, as this is impossible, he advises us to dissolve our Government, and then form a Constitution on which a Government may be reared.⁶⁰²

However naturally these inferences of Mr. *Paine's* may result from the premises we have furnished him, yet neither the one nor the other am I disposed to admit. Of a constitution I neither know, nor am anxious to know any thing. If, on examining the existing Government, it appears to be so constituted as to answer, in a tolerable degree, its proper purposes, it becomes intitled to our support; and even though it may possess great and essential defects, yet may it be suffered to remain undisturbed, if the remedy threatens

greater evils than those which already exist, and if a licentious populace be induced to submit to the restraints of Government by tales of a *well balanced Constitution*, the wonder and the envy of the universe, in such case let us view the despicable delusion with silent contempt: but if ever it should be employed for the purpose of inflaming an haughty people, prompting them to insult, and to injure other nations, it then becomes us to draw aside the veil, and point out the dangerous deception. While Don Quixote is content to wander in the woods, let him with impunity indulge his frantic fancy with the imaginary charms of his peerless Dulcinea; but when he comes forth and intrudes his vagaries on mankind, rendering them a source of outrage and of insult, it then becomes necessary to notice his error, strip his dowdy of her imaginary charms, and point out her filth and her deformity.⁶⁰³

The whimsical imagination of the Knight of La Mancha never depicted his homely mistress in more superlative, and more numerous perfections, than the Englishman does the Constitution of his country. He tells us, that it was formed by the deliberative wisdom of his ancestors, who bled in the field and died on the scaffold to preserve the inestimable gem pure and unsullied; and, transmitted through a succession of ages, it is bequeathed to us as a precious trust to be handed down unimpaired to posterity. Of this pompous detail never have I yet been able to discover the least trait. In reviewing the annals of our country, we have to review a succession of barbarous ages, distinguished by manners, and abounding with events correspondently savage. Could we have discovered that a Government, even of a tolerable nature, had ever been formed by such barbarians, it would, indeed, have been a remarkable circumstance, worthy of discussion and elucidation. To what period of our history are we to look, to what historian are we to resort, to discover our wise ancestors assembled to exercise their deliberative wisdom, by framing a Constitution which was to remain hundreds, or thousands of years, the wonder, and the envy, of the universe.⁶⁰⁴ As genuine history is totally silent as to this memorable event, shall we resort to fabulous ages? Shall we suppose that Brutus made us the invaluable present? Or, shall we consult GEOFFREY, or NINNIUS, whether ARTHUR, and his Knights of the Round Table, framed this monument of human wisdom! We may, indeed, imagine that CÆSAR'S envy induced him to leave unnoticed this excellent Constitution, or policy might prompt the omission, lest the splendid spectacle should spread discontent amongst the Roman people.⁶⁰⁵

If it had no existence when Cæsar invaded the island, was it brought amongst us by Danish, or Saxon pirates? Did they plunder and conquer us, and then generously present us with a free Constitution? These savage plunderers, wherever they inundated, certainly possessed, in so small degree, that species of liberty which consists in an exemption from the restraints of law,

and government; but this liberty they kept to themselves. The subjugated people became slaves, or vassals, to the conquerors, and were parcelled out among their chiefs. These chiefs were so lawless that we find one of their Dukes, after having for years disturbed the nation with his piracies and robberies, sat down quietly to enjoy the spoils; and so destitute was the nation of government that none dared to call him to account.⁶⁰⁶ And a vassal's running away, or betraying his Lord, was the only capital offence in all the diversified codes of the Saxon princes. Pompous accounts have been given of *Alfred's* body of laws. As not a single vestige of them remains, we may certainly ascribe to it every imaginary excellence. To *Charlemagne's* laws have the old chronicles equally ascribed perfection; they, however, exist, to falsify the ascription. *Mr. Gibbon* has carefully examined them; he describes them as chiefly local, and petty regulations, totally undeserving the character of a general system of law, or government.⁶⁰⁷ *Alfred* and *Charlemagne* may have deserved praise from their contemporaries, and they, in transmitting praise, may with it have combined fiction: but, even admitting the most exaggerated accounts, it does not appear that the laws of *Alfred* have a claim to a superior degree of merit than *Mr. Gibbon* has ascribed to those of *Charlemagne*. One of the best of our historians observes, that nothing has been discovered which proves them to deserve the title of a complete body of laws;⁶⁰⁸ that, so far from bearing any resemblance to a system of government, those of which we have accounts seem to relate merely to private injuries, punished chiefly by fine, and regulated not merely by the nature of the injury but by the *rank* of the parties. Some of the most severe punishments we find to be amputation of the right hand for sacrilege, cutting out the tongue for spreading false rumors, and castration if a vassal ravished a fellow vassal; but if it was done by the Lord it seems to have been deemed as insignificant an offence as it is now in our West India Islands. Like them, offences against the Lord was put on a level with those against the King, and punished as rebellion, with loss of life and goods. Most offences were punished with fines, which, if the offender was unable to pay, himself, wife, and children, were condemned to slavery.⁶⁰⁹ So far from the Government bearing the least resemblance to any modern form, none but those who composed the *Wettenagemot* possessed the least share in the Government; and so late as the year 1045, one of the blood royal could not be admitted to a seat in the Great Council of the nation, because he had not 40 hides of land, and when possessed of them, he was entitled to take his seat.⁶¹⁰ For many centuries afterwards the term *freeman* was applied only to those who held lands immediately from the King;⁶¹¹ and, both before and after the Conquest, the revenues and authority of the sovereign were derived chiefly from the crown lands, and the nature of the tenures under which they were held. It appears from *Doomsday Book* that the Conqueror held 1400

manors, which had been possessed by Edward the Confessor. The addition made to them by the forfeitures of Harold's adherents, and probably the change from allodial to military tenures,⁶¹² occasioned the great increase of the royal power after the Conquest, and as the succeeding monarchs parted with their lands, their power decreased, until at last the Barons extorted from *John*, and afterwards purchased of *Henry*, the celebrated *Magna Charta*.⁶¹³ but, however celebrated it may have been, it will not be easy to trace in it the least feature of the present Government of England; it contains merely concessions and regulations concerning a system which succeeding events have totally destroyed, and which those events would have equally destroyed, had *Magna Charta* never existed. There does not even appear any ground to suppose that this charter had the most accidental effect in producing the present Government, which may evidently be traced to causes even of an opposite nature. The object of this charter was to increase, and secure, the authority of the Clergy, and Barons; hardly a syllable is to be found which improved the liberty of any other class of the community. The former immunities of privileged cities are indeed mentioned, and the Lords villains are protected from the King on the same principle as the West India slaves are protected by their owners. However much we may boast of this palladium of our liberties,⁶¹⁴ there is only one passage in it which is ever mentioned. We are frequently told of the 29th chapter, that "No *freeman* shall be taken, imprisoned, &c. but by lawful judgment of his peers."⁶¹⁵ But let us recollect that this was a special grant to a privileged order of men; for the term *freemen* then meant merely the greater landholders. So much were, what we term, the *people*, then out of the contemplation of law and government, that the word *people* is used by the historians of those times to describe an assembly of the great lay landholders, and are so called to distinguish them from the Bishops and Abbots. So extremely few were those who were intitled to the appellation of *freemen*, or were frequently described by the term *people*, that we often read of their all meeting together in one place, and personally giving their consent. Above all, it must be recollected that this charter has not a syllable respecting *parliaments*, *standing armies*, *rights of taxation*, or any of those important points which are now supposed to constitute the most material branches of the Constitution.

So far is *Magna Charta* from ascertaining, or securing, our liberties, that our present freedom could never have taken place, or the Government have existed in its present state, had this law been inviolably preserved; its subversion, not its preservation, is the foundation of that degree of happiness which we enjoy. Had the Clergy, and the Barons, still preserved those immunities, and those privileges, which it was the sole object of *Magna Charta* to secure to them, little reason should we have had to boast of liberty. The oppression and misery of most of the nations of Europe result from those privileges

having been retained; and the superior happiness England enjoys is because here they have been trampled under foot. And it is to the circumstances which effected this, that we are to look for the origin of the modern British Government. The Barons were in some degree weakened by the crusades, but still more by their bloody domestic feuds. Possessed of that property, and of that power, which they had obtained from the sovereigns; to make and unmake Kings, was, for a series of years, the sole occupation of these barbarians, one of whom obtained the nickname of the *King maker*.⁶¹⁶ In the revolutions which these adventures produced, proscriptions and forfeitures weakened the Barons, and increased the power of the Crown, which enabled Richard III, Henry VII and VIII, totally to subjugate them, and annihilate their power. The last monarch having also, fortunately, quarrelled with the Court of Rome, seized the property of the Clergy, thus uniting in himself all those different sources of power, ecclesiastical and civil, which had hitherto oppressed and distracted the kingdom: and these three sovereigns, but particularly the last, possessed the most unlimited, uncontrolled power, which had ever been enjoyed in this nation, and this power was possessed almost unimpaired by his tyrannic daughter *Elizabeth*: but great and unlimited as was this power, the means by which it had been obtained insured its speedy subversion.

However terrible, and however odious, the uncontrolled despotism of an individual may appear, yet will the injury resulting to the community be far short of what arises from divided, contending authority, and diversified, numerous, subordinate despotisms. In the first case, the effects may be dreadful on particular individuals; but the great body of the people will be farther removed from, and less exposed to, material oppression, than when numbers of despots are dispersed over a land, each exercising his tyrannic power on a particular spot, and spreading misery and desolation all around him. Such were formerly the nobility and clergy of this, and of all the other nations of Europe; and such are they in many of them at the present day.

The increasing prosperity of England, under the tyrannic Tudors, illustrates this position; and the event proved, that as their power was not extremely baneful, so neither could such a domination be permanent. No sooner had it attained its summit, than it naturally fell into ruins. The people, delivered from the tyrannic power of the Nobles and Clergy, quickly rose in wealth and importance: but from the situation in which they had hitherto been, they do not appear to have had any idea of assuming, or claiming, any share in the Government. They seem to have been content to give their weight to a body which was but of modern origin, and hitherto of inconsiderable, but, in consequence of the changes which had taken place, of increasing importance. This body, though it owed its existence to the Crown, yet, by calling itself the *Representative of the People*, speedily acquired such strength as to

substitute their own authority in the place of that of the Crown; and it is only in tracing the rise and progress of this innovating authority, that the nature of the British Government can be understood.

Whatever may be alleged of the balance of our Government, yet no one can pretend but that the House of Commons is now the principal branch of legislative authority, and that its control over the executive is so supreme as to render it little more than the administrator of its will. Whatever real power the King and Lords possess, is generally attributed to their influence in the Commons. The necessity of resorting to such a support, proves their inferiority, and the antient Prerogatives of the Crown being either dormant, or exercised under the awe, or control, of the House of Commons, proves this change of the Government from the increased authority of that House, however much, or improperly, its conduct may be under influence.

That we should talk of the antiquity of the British Government, when the essential, principal, and controlling branch of it is of modern origin; of its stability, when in every successive age it assumes a varied aspect; and that we should boast of a balance, between parts which have been perpetually changing, is not extraordinary, as the advocate of every party, and of every opinion, can never be at a loss, in such an heterogenous mass, to find something to colour the most extravagant positions. In one sense, at least, may the British Constitution be termed excellent, as, in its varied changes, it presents admirable sources of disputation, and to them can the champions of the most discordant opinions equally appeal. If those who wish to force themselves into place, by disturbing Government, call on the people to assume the reins, and if, when the outcry has effected its object, they wish to suppress their former declarations, and introduce foreign troops to maintain their authority, they can allege that both the one and the other of these measures are equally conformable to our excellent Constitution.⁶¹⁷

It is something amusing to see with what dexterity the Whigs can discover the traces of a modern House of Commons, nay, of equal representation, in antient periods, when the whole body of the People were trodden under foot by the King, Barons, and Clergy; and, as the history of the period from the Conquest to Magna Charta is extremely destitute of information, as to the nature of the Government, there is the greater scope for our imagination; and some have ventured to suppose that, however silent history may be on the subject, yet popular representative assemblies then held a share in the Government. That when imagination is let loose any thing may be supposed, and where history is defective, we should supply the chasm to our respective tastes, is not unnatural; yet if, when the House of Commons is first to be traced in our records of legislation, it was neither powerful nor popular, it might have been rather inferred, that when it was not noticed it was because

it either had no existence, or was so inconsiderable in its nature, and functions, as to be beneath the pen of the historian.

When *Magna Charta* originated, it was on the claim of the Barons, and the Clergy, and on the grant of the King; no House of Commons is then stated to have had any share in the transaction, nor is there any provision concerning it. The statutes of Henry the III^d, are merely acts of royal authority. Those of Edward 1st sometimes mention the assent of the Prelates, and Barons, sometimes in the presence of them. The statute of *Quo Warranto* is stated to be of his special grace,⁶¹⁸ and for the affection he beareth unto his Prelates, Earls, and Barons, and other of his realm; and, though there exist lists of Members returned the 23^d, 25th, and 26th years of his reign, yet are they totally unnoticed in the statutes, as giving any assent. Indeed, it seems to have been customary for persons to attend national councils merely to know what was transacted. *Hincmar*⁶¹⁹ mentions that, "At one of the general councils of the Chief Nobility of France, the Lesser Nobility also attended to receive their instructions, and to give their advice, but not to decide." In Edward 1st's numerous laws, the *advice*, rather than *assent*, even of the Barons, seems to be stated; the 35th says, "By the council of his Earls, Barons, great Men, and other Nobles of his Kingdom." The 1st Edward III is stated to be "At the *request* of the Commonalty of his Realm, by their petition, made before him and his Council in the Parliament, and by the assent of the Prelates, Earls, Barons, and other Great Men;" and in the 9th, "The said Knights, Citizens, and Burgesses, desired for them, and the Commons desired our said Lord the King, in his said Parliament, by their petition." In the 10th, "By the assent of the said Prelates, Earls, Barons, and other Nobles of this Realm, and at the *request* of the said Knights and Commons." In the reigns of Henry IV, V, and VI, and as late as 1482, the Acts of Parliament are stated to be "with the *assent* of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and at the *request* of his Commons;" and the statutes of Richard III, in 1483, state, that "the King hath ordained, by the advice and assent of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and at the *request* of the Commons, summoned to the said Parliament." It was in the reign of Henry VII, that we first find the modern form of enacting, "by the *assent* of the Lords Spiritual, and Temporal, and *Commons*, in the said Parliament, and by authority of the same."⁶²⁰ Probably, this innovation arose from the desire of Henry to strengthen his defective title; and to this circumstance may we attribute the origin of that very authority of the House of Commons, which, within a century afterwards, began to contend with the power of the sovereign, and, in another half century, totally subverted it.

As the regular legislative power of the House of Commons is thus founded on modern innovation, so, also is its present nature, and formation. Until the time of Henry VIIIth, it consisted only of about 300 members, who

were returned by such places as the King, by his writ, ordered; and in a list extant, London is not included. Even when the Members were returned, they were always liable to be excluded by the King, as the returns were judged of, not by the House of Commons, but by the Chancery, Exchequer, or Privy Council; and *Prynne* admits, that the King alone, or the King and the House of Lords, were originally the proper judges of the election of the Members of the House of Commons.⁶²¹ In the reign of Henry IV, the Commons prayed the King, and Lords in Parliament, that a false return for Rutland might be examined in Parliament; whereupon the King commanded the Lords in Parliament to examine the matter—which seems to imply, both that the House of Commons did not then consider themselves even as a part of the Parliament, and proves that they did not presume to judge of the returns of their own Members; and, arbitrary as the Tudors may have been deemed, it was under them that the House of Commons first possessed regular legislative authority, and rose to importance in the state.

Whatever temporary power Henry VII and VIII obtained, by the havoc they made with the Nobles and Clergy, yet they thereby laid the foundation for that subversion of the regal power, which their successors fatally experienced. Delivered from the dangerous power of the Barons, and Clergy, they were equally deprived of the benefit of their support, and their immense property, dispersed amongst the people, invigorated that commerce which soon after produced very visible effects. A landed interest existed independent of the Barons and Clergy; and a wealthy commercial body of men arose in consequence of recent events; and those new classes of men, obtaining admission into the House of Commons, became troublesome even to Henry's own children. We find *Mary* under some difficulty in managing the rising power, and, she and her brother and sister *Elizabeth* introduced 130 new Members.⁶²² This proved a temporary expedient, aggravating the evil, by introducing a greater number of opulent, and able men, into the House of Commons, increased its importance, enabled it, under the weak reign of *James*, to obtain such privileges, and power, as proved, in the succeeding reign, the destruction of the monarchy. That a body of men whose existence, and formation, were entirely dependent on the Crown, should, in the course of little more than a century, possess the Government, and trample under foot the antient authorities of the kingdom, may be easily accounted for under these circumstances. The House of Commons obtained, and have ever since retained their power, not from any antient or natural right to the Government, but because, from the nature of its constitution, men of wealth, influence, and ability, obtained seats in it, and when thus congregated together, were enabled to wrest from the King, Nobles, and Clergy, the small remnant of their power, and were equally enabled to assume it themselves. No scruples did they entertain as to the

lawfulness of thus assuming power; nor do they appear to have entertained a thought of forming any rational system of Government, but grasped the whole of it themselves.

At what is called the Restoration, though antient names were retained, yet neither the King nor Parliament bore the least resemblance to those of former periods. The feudal rights of the Crown, from whence was derived the power and the revenues of our antient monarchs, had long been mouldering away, and the last vestige of it [sic] was annihilated immediately on the Restoration, and left the King dependent on the House of Commons, destitute of any acknowledged rights which he dared to exercise, and equally abject may he be deemed, whether we consider him as attempting to retain a little temporary power by dealing out his largesses amongst them, or, when those largesses failed, we view Ministers impeached,⁶²³ Government disorganized, and the detestable leaders of that detestable assembly plunging into such an abyss of crimes, that we can hardly surmise their purpose, unless it were the mere gratification of perpetrating them, while the astonished monarch was necessitated to follow them through perjury and murder, until emboldened by success, madness at length induced them to insist on the proscription and exclusion of his brother. The King was stimulated to resist the outrage by attempting to govern without a House of Commons, but reducing it to its former insignificance or original nothingness, was an attempt desperate and difficult. The Crown had lost its antient resources and support, the House of Lords, instead of being a body of powerful Barons, possessed of almost the whole property of the kingdom, and vested with legislative authority in consequence of that possession, bore a much greater resemblance to Cromwell's *Other House*.⁶²⁴ The King, like Cromwell, could by his writ place whom he pleased among the Lords; but as then they had not found out the modern mode of preserving their influence by purchasing seats in the House of Commons, and placing in them their dependants, the House of Lords became perfectly insignificant, bullied and insulted by the Commons. To what period then of the British history do the advocates for the antiquity of our Government wish to refer us? In what age are we to find the pattern with which they wish us to compare it, and to which they will be content to look back, as the standard of perfection, for any one of the branches of our excellent Government? Do they wish the monarch to possess a large, independent, land revenue, with a numerous train of armed Barons, bound by their tenures to attend him in his wars? Do they wish him to be possessed of the rights of purveyance, and of wardship, with the valuable restriction of *Magna Charta*, as to the first, that "no demesne cart of any spiritual person, or Knight, or any Lord, shall be taken by our bailiffs;" or as to the latter, the no less notable privilege of the sixth chapter, that "heirs shall be married without disparagement;" or

of the seventh, that widows “shall find surety that she shall not marry without our licence and assent, if she hold of us, nor without the assent of the Lord, if she hold of another?” Do we wish to see our House of Lords changed into Prelates, Abbots, and armed Barons, possessed of almost the whole property of the kingdom, holding the people on their estates in a state of vassalage, and possessing petty jurisdictions in their several domains? Or lastly, are we desirous of seeing our House of Commons changed into a handful of representatives of petty Barons and Landholders, lost in the great herd of powerful Barons? Or, when turned out of their company, formed into a Lower House without legislative authority, and attending on the Upper House merely to receive the law at their hands, and to present their humble petitions?

As the least resemblance to our present Government cannot be traced in our antient annals, so the idea of a balanced, mixed Government, consisting of three distinct parts, equally possessing legislative authority, is as fabulous. No antiquarian has yet discovered the existence of a separate House of Commons in the early periods of our history. So short was the period of their possessing a distinct portion of regular authority to their usurpation of the whole, that though it was the father of Henry VIII who first admitted them to this acknowledged regular share of legislative power, yet was his daughter necessitated to struggle against their increasing authority, and the son of her successor, overwhelmed by the torrent, was deprived by it both of his crown and his life.

As thus fabulous is the story of our glorious constitution being framed by the deliberative wisdom of our ancestors, it is no less so, that it was cemented by their blood: that they bled in the field, and died on the scaffold, to transmit to us unimpaired the invaluable blessing.—That our fields, and our scaffolds, have been deluged with blood, our annals too fatally prove; but, alas! it was all shed in the most detestable pursuits, or for the most frivolous objects, contests for power, capricious changes of government, and theological wrangles, were the admirable causes for which our wise and virtuous ancestors were anxious to bleed. They died in the field to deprive the monarch of the power of levying a trifling tax,⁶²⁵ and to place that power in a body who used it when possessed of it, to six times the extent. And whence did they derive the right of taxing and legislating, for themselves, and all the rest of the nation? How could the 130 members, who had been recently summoned to parliament by the children of Henry VIII, to answer their purposes, thence derive a right to tax, and to legislate? Could they possess an authority superior to that from which their own was derived? Or what pretence could they have for assuming the whole of that authority, a fourth share only of which they so recently possessed? For in Queen Elizabeth’s time, the clergy, in convocation, taxed themselves. Admitting then the people to have a right to change the

government, and that they could not be taxed without their own consent, then may it be asked what pretence the Commons had for calling themselves the People of England, any more than any other corporate body had, who, like them, derived its powers, and constitution, from the Grant of the Crown? Will it be said, that the House of Commons represented the *people* of England? when even now, as is alleged, a few thousands return a majority of the members,⁶²⁶ and *Lord North* justly observed that in every former age elections were far less popular, as well because the original number of members had been nearly doubled, as that the division of property, and increase of wealth, had introduced a great increase of voters.⁶²⁷ Will it be affirmed that they represented the *property* of the kingdom? Almost the whole property of the nation was formerly in the hands of the Clergy and Barons; and if subsequent events had greatly diminished it, yet probably the property of the House of Commons, or that of the small number who returned the majority of them, was far less considerable. Did they represent the land of the kingdom? That was formerly intirely in the hands of the Lords and Clergy; a great part is so still, and a great part of the remainder of the landed property is totally unrepresented. All copyhold interest, which is nearly equivalent to the value of the sole property, all leasehold and mortgage interest, which in many cases is far superior to that of the freehold, the whole city of London, both land and houses, is unrepresented, as well as all lands in the hands of corporate bodies, females, minors, and trustees.⁶²⁸

If thus unfounded were the claims of those who usurped the power of the Crown in the last century, so were their purposes frequently indefinite. Who can tell what was the object for which Russel and Sydney contended?⁶²⁹ To exclude James, we shall be told. Admirably just to be sure; to deprive him of⁶³⁰ his crown, because he did not implicitly adopt the new fangled creed of the two or three preceeding monarchs, or because he was guilty of believing in the religion of his great Grandmother, and a long line of Ancestors! Did the persecuting wretches mean to hold it out, as a principle of Government, that to possess the rights to which we are born, conformity to a national religion is an indispensable condition? Or, was the monarch peculiarly to be marked out, to be deprived of the most important, and inherent right, a right which is equally important to the king, and to the peasant, that of worshipping God according to the dictates of his conscience? The assent, or dissent of the mind, is an involuntary act. The human intellect, in pursuit of truth, is liable to take an infinite diversity of paths. The lure of a crown may, indeed, induce the abandoned to falsify the convictions of the mind, but never can control them. And to make the profession of a particular religion the condition of enjoying an hereditary crown, perhaps, may, by some, be deemed something like saying that we wish to be governed by those who are so destitute of all

religion as, for the sake of worldly advantage, to be willing to profess any. But, with respect to JAMES, such a conduct seems very extraordinary, he was the Monarch of three kingdoms: his Irish subjects (except the English and Scotch settlers) were firmly attached to the religion of the sovereign, so were the Highlands of Scotland; and in the Lowlands, as well as in England, the numbers were not inconsiderable. Admitting, then, that the religion of a monarch ought to conform to that of the majority of his subjects, yet will it be much easier to shew that his present majesty ought to become a Gentoo, or a Mahomedan,⁶³¹ than that JAMES ought to have been of the Church of England. Was it incumbent on him to be of the religion of his more considerable kingdom, England? The natural inference seems to be exactly the reverse. The weaker kingdoms was most exposed to the danger of having the religion of the more powerful one imposed on them; and, to guard against that danger, justice seemed rather to dictate that the common sovereign should not be of it. That Popery was a dangerous, bloody, persecuting religion, was no otherwise true, than as the assimilating religion with worldly power, and converting it into an engine of state, naturally renders it bloody, and persecuting. The Romish clergy possessed greater power, and existed during a period in which they were enabled, by the ignorance and superstition of mankind, to extend most widely that baneful power, which, in proportion to the existing circumstances, as conspicuously characterized the English Hierarchy, and the Scottish Presbytery.

Whatever panick may have been spread by fraud, or by folly, perhaps, it may not be easy to prove, that any danger to the community could possibly have resulted from the religion of *James*; perhaps, some may surmise that it was a circumstance peculiarly favorable. It was to the power of sovereigns that the claims of the court of Rome were peculiarly hostile.⁶³² Those claims all the monarchs of Europe had, when in their power, uniformly opposed. *Louis XIV.* was, at that very period, in a state of hostility with the Holy See,⁶³³ and, however strongly *James* might be attached to the dogmas of the Romish church, there was no ground to suppose that he was so destitute of the sentiments of a sovereign as voluntarily to subjugate himself to her domineering claims. And as the assumption of the Tiara, with the Imperial Crown,⁶³⁴ had increased the power of *Henry* and *Elizabeth*, so the separation was a weakening of the royal power, and favorable to the liberties of the people. Still more was it, also, in another point of view. It afforded the opponents of the court an opportunity of restricting, if they needed restriction, the prerogative of the crown. A *Carte Blanche* was offered them if they would have abandoned the Exclusion Bill,⁶³⁵ and they had it in their power to have framed a constitution favourable to the people, which, under those circumstances, would have been

gladly accepted by the crown, together with all the guards, which they could have possibly devised, to secure it against incroachments.

A militia might have been established, standing armies been annihilated, Place, Pension and Peerage Bills, might have been obtained, nay, annual Parliaments, and the *Duke of Richmond's* equal representation, would have been conceded.⁶³⁶ Shall we be told that *James* was so bad a prince that no restrictions could have protected us from the threatened mischief—No laws have been framed but what he would have trampled under foot—If the monarchical power was of such a nature, that the safe exercise of it could not be rendered secure, by any constitutional guards, by any legal restrictions; if all such must give way, and prove like *Sampson's* cords to a wicked prince, if the happiness and liberty of the people could not be secured by law, but must ultimately depend on the virtue of the monarch, that, indeed, would have been a powerful reason for abrogating the office, or for rendering it elective, but none for changing the Hereditary succession.

The most wicked, and the most dangerous, monarchs will be the most difficult to dispossess. Is it prudent, then, to subject the community to the certain evils of such a convulsion; to dispossess one monarch whose thread of life may be nearly run, and who might be succeeded by one of an opposite description, and to do this merely to introduce a new monarch, who if he appear to possess superior virtue, the appearances might be as deceitful as those of *Sixtus V.*⁶³⁷ or, if real, might be quickly terminated by his life, and the throne might then, possibly, descend to a worse monarch, and a worse line, that that which had been expelled?

But, in fact, the epithets of despotic, lawless, and cruel, were far from applicable to *Charles II*, and his brother. Had such been their character they had more quietly possessed the throne. It was when *Charles II* was necessitated to trample on the domination of the Lower House of Parliament, that he best deserved, and, probably, most possessed, the law of his subjects; and in too readily giving way, in the early part of his reign, to such assemblies, his conduct seems most reprehensible.⁶³⁸ Gratitude and necessity might prompt him to submit to the claims of that assembly which had restored him, but all foreign conquests were solely subject to the Royal Will. *Lord Hardwicke* in 1722, and *Lord Mansfield* in 1774,⁶³⁹ declared that unless there are special treaties such conquered lands are, by law, the sole property of the crown, and the inhabitants, and their property, are all at the king's disposal. Had Charles, like some monarchs, been disposed to extend and avail himself of the prerogative of the crown, what an ample field was opened for securing, and extending its powers, and its influence?⁶⁴⁰ From hence might have been derived revenues. Here might have been maintained an army of foreign mercenaries, to keep the colonies in subjection, to awe the mother country, to secure an influence

in her legislature, and to undertake new conquests in India, which would have rendered still more secure his domestic authority. But no sooner had he taken possession of his crown than he permitted, nay, sent orders to his governors to form provincial assemblies, which, mimicking the English House of Commons, reduced his authority to as despicable a state in the colonies as it was in England.⁶⁴¹ Thus inattentive to preserve the authority, and prerogatives of the crown, no less so were these royal brothers to preserve the crown itself. Had *James* procured foreign territories, as depots for foreign troops, ready to be poured into England to suppress domestic rebellion, or foreign invasion; Had he formed treaties, and entered into confederacies, for foreign troops to defend him at home, while he sent his English troops abroad; Had he built barracks to prevent his soldiers from catching any popular contagion; Had he, in order to discover and get rid of those who were adverse to his government, suffer his ministers to disseminate opinions to captivate the populace, and then imprison and transport those who adopted them; Had he known of, or chose to exercise those various prerogatives, which have since the Revolution, been fortunately discovered:⁶⁴² Under these circumstances his throne would have been more permanent, nor would the courage, or the fatalism of the Prince of Orange have emboldened him to assail it, with fourteen thousand Dutch troops, even, though half a score [of] factious Revolutionists had skulked into a Derbyshire hovel to invite him to the enterprize.⁶⁴³

Sydney admits, that “*a just, wise, and valiant king is only a momentary help, his virtues end with him.*”⁶⁴⁴—Could such men be justified in attempting to exclude the reigning family merely to introduce a new line, even had they supposed that some individual of it possessed superior virtue? Had they so much made revolutions the order of the day,⁶⁴⁵ as to project them for what they themselves considered as, a mere *momentary help*? The danger which must have threatened us from introducing a Prince who possessed foreign territories and troops ought to have been weighed, and that the power of such a Prince threatened danger to the state. May it not be infered, that if they meant by the exclusion to change the succession, it was because they wished for foreign assistance to enable themselves to maintain their aristocratic power, equally against the authority of the sovereign, and the rights of the people; or that they hoped such foreign Prince neither loving nor being beloved by the people, they themselves might possess, and exercise in the Royal Name, that power which they had wrested from their native monarchs? Stigmatising the people as a Democracy, applauding the vilest and most oppressive military aristocracies, speaking even of Poland and Germany as enviable systems of liberty; it is evident that these men had no intention of forming any improved or rational system of government, and that possessed of influence and power

in the lower House of Parliament, they meant in that Assembly to exercise all the functions of government.

In this view, it is evident, that the sole contest, both in the reigns of *Charles I.* and *II.* was, whether the lower House of Parliament should exercise the whole authority of the state? Imitating the stile of the ancient Barons, and our piratical invaders, they dared to call *themselves* the people of England; and, under the *guise* of that appellation, artfully advanced their own power, and undermined that of the crown; and, amidst all the disputes to which these contests have given rise, it is extraordinary that no one has ever yet condescended to undertake to prove, either that this body of men had a right to wrest from the crown the government of the country, or that such a transfer of it would have been beneficial to the people.

From the nature of such an Assembly it must, when in possession of the government, have possessed greater power than Kings could; and there does not appear any reason why they should be less disposed to abuse it. The experiment was tried: they did wrest the scepter from the crown. Did they then, or did they not, exercise it more to the benefit of the people? Levying taxes is the most important and most delicate part of the administration of government,—the part which we peculiarly exult to have wrested from the crown, and which it is supposed to be so extremely important to keep peculiarly under the cognizance of the House of Commons. Well, this very House succeeded. They had the purse of the public totally at their disposal, for a series of years, without kings, bishops, or courtiers, to waste, to plunder, dilapidate it. What was the result? The extravagant, despotic monarch, *James I.*, paid all the expences of government, kept a splendid court, maintained an expensive war in Ireland, and laid the foundation of our navy, at the expence of half a million per annum; nor were all the levies of *Charles I.* much larger, though he greatly raised the navy, kept a magnificent court, had splendid palaces, encouraged learning, and those elegant arts which adorn society, and which, under his auspices, distinguished this kingdom, yet under the authority of the Commonwealth was 83 millions levied in 19 years, a larger sum than the four *Stuarts* received in almost a century. *Sir John Sinclair* states, that “a considerable part of this immense treasure was either lavished by Parliament on its members, or was fraudulently embezzled,”—that “committees of the House appropriated whatever sum they thought proper to their own use;” and that “by these frauds, the Parliament were disabled from paying the army, which was the principle source of *Cromwell’s* exaltation.”⁶⁴⁶ May not, then, the enormous power claimed, and exercised, by the House of Commons in the reigns of *Charles I.* and *II.* be deemed not merely an innovation, but an innovation dangerous and injurious, not only to the crown, but still more so to the people?

If a Democracy be so dangerous, and so detestable as is supposed: If the great body of the people were not to be admitted to any share in the government, If no new system of government was to be resorted to which, in its constitution, might be adapted to secure and regard the interests of the several parts of the community, and the public happiness, if any part or member of the old government was to assume the whole, or a predominant share, of power, or a controlling domination over the others, then is it proper to inquire whether the House of Commons had any pre-eminence claim? This point has been rather assumed, than proved.

Their power appeared to be greater than that of either of the other branches of the legislature, and they do not seem to have been less disposed to abuse it.—Besides their power seemed to be an increasing one, while that both of the Sovereign and the Lords was evidently decreasing. Surely the Monarchs, whose predecessors had possessed considerable power, could hardly be blamed that they beheld with reluctance the attempts made to wrest it from them, by a body whose authority was but of recent origin, and who, within less than a century, had addressed their ancestors under the form of “*Your Majesty’s poor and obedient Subjects and Commons.*” Had this Assembly confined their views within moderate bounds, they might have been useful to the community; and within such bounds the *Stuarts* seemed disposed to admit it. But if they dispensed to them with such parsimony that property of the public which when it was at their own disposal, they lavished with such shameful prodigality, is it extraordinary, that our kings should have attempted to govern without them? They might, possibly, think that they had, at least, as good a right to the whole Government.

Under their reigns the agriculture of the country had rapidly increased, and commerce swelled to such a comparative extent, that the customs, under them, were risen to near ten times the amount as at any former period; a navy was formed which may excite our astonishment, when we consider the trifling taxes they received, and compare them with modern expenditures.

Charles and his brother, considering how much their government was disturbed, appeared to pay great attention to the manufactures and prosperity of the kingdom; the reception they gave to the French Protestants proves this,⁶⁴⁷ as well as the liberality of their minds, and their disposition towards universal liberty of conscience.

May not then some think, that it might have been beneficial to the nation had they been less disturbed by the factious claims of the violent leaders in Parliament? May it not be said, that the increasing wealth and prosperity of the People would have formed a sufficient check to the feeble power of the crown, until the people becoming more enlightened would have at length assumed the power, and formed a government on a popular principle, in a

degree, proportionate to the knowledge and improved state of mankind? at least they may say, the power of such a King would have been much easier checked and controlled by the people than either, a House of Commons possessed of independent power, or if, under colour of a mixed government, it should virtually exercise the prerogatives of the crown, or if, under pretence of controlling it they should really sanction, and give uncontrolled power to a King. Such a coalesced power they will say, may be far more terrific than the sceptre of a *Stuart*.—That the levying taxes may be more safely trusted to a House of Commons because in taxing the people they must tax themselves may not appear perfectly satisfactory to some; they may ask, if it be not possible to reimburse to themselves that share of the taxes which they pay in common with the people.

If it be supposed that *Sydney*, &c. meant to adopt some kind of mixed government, yet, may it be asked, whether past experience had not proved its impracticability? had not the contests of the King, Barons, Clergy, and Lower House of Parliament uniformly been for the purpose of grasping the whole power, and to repress their rivals: could any period be referred to wherein they appeared disposed to acquiesce in an equal partition of power, and it may be asked, if in the nature of things, such a disposition is to be expected; though the weakest may, indeed, contend for such a partition, with a view to depress others. Could it reasonably be expected that those who have attained power will impartially divide and distribute it? Will they separate the legislative, executive, and judicial branches, and leave them independently and uncontrolled to exercise their respective functions? Is it practicable for the legislative functions to be divided into parts, to be exercised by different bodies, each possessing equally distinct legislative power, independent and secure from each other's control. I say secure from each other's control, because, unless they act independently, and uncontrolled, the mixed authority becomes merely nominal, the real power is in the controlling body, and if the others are more than nominal, it must be liable to convulse and disturb the government.

That these men had an intention of forming an improved system of national representation is not pretended, they were of ancient families, the *esprit du corps* actuated them; and *Sydney's* hatred of Kings and contempt of modern Lords were as conspicuous as his attachment to ancient aristocracy; such, he says, were not such Lords as *Hyde*, *Arlington*, &c. but the families of ancient descent, such as the *Hamdens*, *Pelhams*, &c. such, says he, “were termed the people, from whom all power originated, and from amongst whom Kings were chosen.”⁶⁴⁸ A Democratic government, he says, “never was, except in such a place as *Marino*, where a hundred clowns govern a barbarous rock that no man invades.”⁶⁴⁹ — “That those governments, in which Democracy prevail, do not more frequently err in the means of preserving purity of manners,

I confess.”⁶⁵⁰ “The best, and wisest men, amongst the Greeks, and Romans, did incline to Aristocracy.”⁶⁵¹ — “In all the legal governments of the North, the strength of the government has always been placed in the Nobility; and no better defence has been found against the encroachments of ill Kings, than by setting up an order of men who by holding large territories, and having great numbers of *Tenants* and *Dependants*, might be able to restrain the exorbitancies of either the King, or the Commons.”⁶⁵² (By Commons he means common people, not the House of Commons.)—But it was not merely *Aristocracy*, but a *Military Aristocracy* for which he contended. He reprobates the Venetian Aristocracy for relying on *Trade*; and asserts that “The best judges have always given the preference to those Constitutions that principally intend *War*, and make use of *Trade* as assisting to *that end*, and think it better to aim at *conquest* rather than simply stand on their *defence*.”⁶⁵³ *Tyrrell* admits that the common people never had any concern in the government.⁶⁵⁴ —*Fletcher*, a contemporary Whigg, has so strong a predeliction for the antient aristocratic government, as modestly to propose that the common people should be sold as slaves, as a convenient mode of providing for them, and to increase the wealth and power of the Aristocracy;⁶⁵⁵ and *Mr. Locke*, in his celebrated treatise on Government, attempts to defend the lawfulness of holding a whole body of People in Slavery! or, as he chooses to call it, *Servitude*;⁶⁵⁶ and actually drew up a code of Laws designed for an infant colony of which slavery formed a considerable part.⁶⁵⁷

Such being the principles of those *old Whiggs*, whom *Mr. Burke*, with great propriety, claims as his Allies,⁶⁵⁸ we may concur with the Whigg Clubb in celebrating the circumstance that they bled upon the scaffold;⁶⁵⁹ and had their opinions perished with them we should not have been inconsolable for the loss. Had these men, instead of perishing on the scaffold, been successful in their projects, What would have been the result we have no documents to prove. Deep, ambiguous designs of dark ambition, have, indeed, been discovered, and these celebrated discourses, drawn from the recesses of the closet,⁶⁶⁰ may in some degree, tend to elucidate their nature; and lead us to think it was intended to fill up the design which the bold pen of their leader had sketched out.

To preserve the form of the existing government was, probably, their intention, as it was not ill suited to be moulded to their purpose. To exclude the Heir to the Crown,⁶⁶¹ if not the reigning Monarch, was essential to their plan, in proportion as he was beloved by the people, and attached to their interest.—A foreign Prince, remotely allied to the Crown, who could have no hope but through them of ever possessing it, was the *King* best suited to their purpose; such an one might become a tool in their hands, or an accomplice in their designs. If destitute of the love of the people he must become the

more dependent on them. If he hated the people, whom he nominally governed, then would he not scruple assisting in their purposes. His foreign troops, and foreign alliances, might aid them against the people, while ignorant of the nature of our Government, and engaged in foreign concerns, he must have been disposed to leave the management of English affairs in their hands; and they, by involving the Nation in perpetual foreign wars, would be effecting the various ends, of establishing such a military aristocracy as they appeared to have in view, of gratifying the Monarch, by enabling him to enlarge and strengthen his foreign dominions, which would always be a source from whence troops might be poured into the nation, to support their power, and quell discontent, enabling them (as *Sydney* expresses it) “*To aim at foreign conquest rather than simply stand on their defence;*” and these foreign conquests might have opened a trade exactly of such a nature as he describes, “*A Trade assisting to the end of War.*” The genius of this military aristocracy was not, it seems, to be contaminated by fair and lawful commerce: but *Locke’s* slavery, and *Sydney’s* War and Conquest were to have constituted its essence, and so combined, might have become a powerful and complicated machinery for enabling them to govern the whole empire.

The infant colonies, which the unambitious *Stuarts* possessed, might, by the conquests of this military aristocracy, have been widely extended through both Indies, until the plundered millions were poured into England, still strengthening the aristocratic power, by raising powerful bodies, and descriptions of men, who would have been necessitated to support that system of Government which was the source of their unjust power, and criminal wealth. From the contempt with which *Sydney* speaks of the House of Lords, it may be imagined that the House of Commons was intended to have been the focus of this power; for though *Sydney* speaks of an aristocracy aweing both the King and Commons,⁶⁶² yet it was evidently the Common People he meant, as the House of Commons was their favourite scene of action.—The House of Lords might have been continued to preserve an appearance of the former Government, and as a sort of dignified retreat for the political champions when they retired from the fierce contests in St. Stephen’s Chapel, but there might have centered, in reality, the whole legislative, executive, and even, judicial power of the State.

The King might have continued, as a matter of form, to assent to Bills; but it might have been stigmatized as an obsolete prerogative; they might have dared him to exercise it, and we might have heard it avowed, that the House of Lords would hardly venture repeatedly to refuse a Bill which the Commons persisted in presenting to them.

So far from keeping the executive, and legislative powers distinct, they might have claimed a controlling power, by which every act of the executive

power might have been subjected to their will. We might have seen Ministers made, and unmade, on the mere intimation of their pleasure, and claiming the right of holding the public purse; they might have threatened to stop the wheels of Government, and disorder the fabric of the State, unless every measure of government was conducted in conformity to their wishes. Nor might the judicial power have escaped their grasp. By Impeachments, or Bills of pains and penalties,⁶⁶³ every individual might have been dragged before them, deprived of the right of trial by Jury; they might have trampled on all the rules of evidence, charged as crimes actions which no law had pronounced to be criminal, and, unrestrained by decency, as well as law, these processes might have been instituted for temporary, political, nay, interested purposes, and no man could, in such case, have been deemed safe who had incurred their displeasure.

Shall we reflect with satisfaction that such designs were stifled in embryo, and that we have never seen a body of men possessed of such power! for who can surmise to what extent it might have been carried? might not the most dangerous and mischievous prerogatives of the Crown have been revived, and enforced? and whether we suppose that, in such case, such an assembly were to be considered as the creatures of the Crown, giving its sanction, and authorising the Crown to assume such alarming prerogatives, as without such sanction it would not have ventured to claim; or whether the Monarch was to be considered as the tool by means of which the assembly, through, its instruments, exercised those prerogatives; yet the danger to the people must have been the same, as, in either case, such prerogatives would have been possessed by their united and concentered powers as had been deemed dangerous when exercised only by one.

In this extended range of our history, from its earliest period until the Revolution in 1688, it does not, then, appear that any particular form, or principle, of Government can be stated as its characteristic.—We see nothing but a series of events, producing a vast variety of changes in the Government, so important, so sudden, as, so far from suggesting the shadow of a pretext of there existing a regular permanent, well formed Government, it does not appear that such an one had ever even a momentary existence, as to which we can look back with regret, as having passed away, which can be referred to for our imitation, or as to which we can boast of our ancestors forming by their wisdom, or transmitting to us by their heroism.

If such a Government, now, exists, no higher origin can it claim than the passing century; and that period is alone entitled to claim all that wisdom, that virtue, and that heroism, which, with a lavish hand, we attribute to our ancestors. Whether the last 100 years is more intitled to this praise, than was its predecessors, is a question which, if at all, must be cautiously discussed. At

1688, the limitation of free inquiry terminates; from that happy period the pen of the Historian must move according to Acts of Parliament; and he who presumes to analyze subsequent events is appalled by the terror of the law!—⁶⁶⁴ The Government of our country, excellent as it is, dares not, it seems, to trust that excellence to examination; nor is it even thought prudent to suffer events, even after the intervention of a revolving century, to be abandoned to free inquiry, lest inferences might be drawn unfavorable to the existing Government. Its own conduct, its own merits, is thought too narrow a foundation on which to rest its safety—Be it so—we submit to the indispensable condition: but, then, let them not vaunt in their triumph. Mr. Dymock, who throws down a gauntlet which no man dares take up, may exult in his safety, but has no ground to boast of his prowess.⁶⁶⁵ In obedience to law, then, we declare, we believe in the glorious Revolution, and in the immortal *William*; and, in discussing this *glorious* Revolution, we shall only venture to suggest a few doubts, and ask a few questions; at the same time, solemnly protesting that nothing which has been said extends, or shall be construed to extend to this *glorious* Revolution, or to any person, matter, or thing, subsequent to the date thereof.

As to this Revolution, let us first inquire as to the propriety of the term. We certainly do not apply it merely to the dethronement of one Monarch, and placing another on his vacant throne; nor even to the introduction of a new line of Kings. These are events to be traced in the history of every country, and frequently unconnected with any Revolution in its Government. The changes of the throne between the houses of *York* and *Lancaster*, even though they produced some accidental effects on the Government of the country, were, notwithstanding, never deemed Revolutions.

That a great Revolution has taken place in our Government since the reign of *Q. Elizabeth* cannot be disputed, but it was not in 1688 particularly. In that year we only discover one of those numerous events, which marked the progress of a Revolution, whose springs may be traced to an earlier origin, but which from the beginning of the last century was more distinguishable in its effects. *Mr. Burke* has reprobated those who would confound the Revolution in 1688 with what he calls a Revolution near half a century earlier.⁶⁶⁶ He must indeed be a despicable politician who can separate them in their nature and principles. He who considers the occurrences of 1688 as mere insulated facts, underived from, and anomalous to, the series of preceding events, must trample on our history, or disregard the nature and consequences of human action. Motives may, indeed, exist for wishing to mark with abhorrence important events in the progress of a Revolution, while we load with applause concluding ones, though composing a part of the same series, and participating in one general nature.

When the French shall have gone through their revolutionary progress, those who may then be in possession of power, may wish to consign to oblivion, or involve in censure, those acts of their predecessors, to which they themselves may be indebted for the power they possess, and the happiness they enjoy. In *England* our conduct is peculiarly whimsical. We have, for above a century, been branding as execrable regicides those who deprived one of our Monarchs of his Crown and life,⁶⁶⁷ while we load with the most extravagant applause those who possessed the throne of his successors accompanied with circumstances which would have rendered *regecidism* a mercy. Have those who are so loud in their execration of the cruelties exercised towards *Charles I.* and *Louis XVI.* by their enraged subjects, none to bestow on those endured by *James II.* from his own *Children*? Were his wounds less painful because inflicted not merely by *Children*, but by Children whom he had *loved* and *indulged* with a tenderness which rarely finds place in a royal breast.

He not merely abandoned his palace, and flew from kingdom to kingdom under the terror of him, on whom he had bestowed a beloved daughter; but he beheld his Queen, who had left a soft and genial climate to share his throne in an inclement island, necessitated to escape from his palace under the terror of assassination, and shrouded in the darkness of the night, with the new born infant at her breast, exposed to a tempestuous winter sky, the pityless storm beating on their devoted heads, until means were obtained for their safety, in flight from our barbarous land.

*On the Renewal of the East India Charter**

In 1794 the charter of the Honourable East India Company, which gave it exclusive rights to trade in India and placed the government of the country largely in the Company's hands, was due for renewal; and in April 1793 Henry Dundas brought to parliament a series of propositions as the basis of a new deal between the government and the Company. Fox's pamphlet discusses that deal, and the debate it gave rise to, in the light of the Company's record in the administration of India. In particular he found it extraordinary that Dundas did not address the question of whether the activities of the Company were of any benefit to the Indians themselves, speaking as if the benefit to the Company itself, and to Britain, were the only issues to be considered. He was disgusted too by Dundas's attempt to discredit those who might wish to question the Company's monopoly, in the language which Burke had used to attack the speculative theories of revolutionary intellectuals who had no respect for experience and tradition. As Sir Philip Francis, one of the Company's severest critics, put it in the Commons, Dundas 'does not think it beneath him to avail himself of the artificial cry and real panic, which have lately prevailed in this country to reprobate every thing to which the name of innovation, of theory, of experiment, could be truly or falsely applied.'† Fox insists that the lives of the inhabitants of India are of equal value with the lives of Europeans, and that the 'terror', therefore, presided over in France by Robespierre, and deplored in Britain, is almost insignificant compared with the millions of lives lost in India as a result of the actions of the Company. He ends by inviting his readers to imagine themselves in the position of the inhabitants of India, as they would be if Catherine the Great, for example, took over the government, trade and revenue administration of Britain.

*The composition of the pamphlet is apparently easy to date. It was written after the debate in the Lords on the renewal of the charter on June 3 1793, from which it quotes, but before July 20, when the news reached London of the death of Marat, to whom it several times refers as if he was still alive. It was first published in 1793, probably in the autumn, with the title *The East-India Charter Considered; a review of the pamphlet under that title appeared in the Analytical Review for November 1793. No copy of this edition is known to survive. It was republished under the present title probably to coincide with the**

* ON THE / RENEWAL / OF THE / EAST INDIA CHARTER. / BY / WILLIAM FOX. // LONDON: / Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, HOLBORN HILL. / 1794. // (PRICE THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A SHILLING.)

† PH30: 688.

Commons' debate on the East India budget in April 1794. It was reviewed in that month by the Critical.

Were the real dignity and value of the human character to be estimated merely by the importance of the situation which is assumed; and were we to take it for granted that those who exercise authority always possess talents adequate to the difficulty, and integrity proportioned to the importance, of their stations; it might then naturally be inferred that those who now exercise the British government are the wisest and the most virtuous of the human race: or as the authority they have assumed seems to be of such a nature, as is hardly fit to be intrusted to frail mortals; it might be imagined, that some beings of more than human origin had condescended to visit this happy island, and assume the seat of legislation, and the reins of government.

To exercise dominion even over this island, amidst the discordant interests of the various parts of the community, might call for no common share of human wisdom: nor would a less portion of integrity and virtuous fortitude be requisite to guide, with impartiality, the public councils, to guard the general interests of the state, from being sacrificed to interested combinations; and the rights of the weaker and more defenceless parts of the community from the oppression of the powerful.

But we will admit that mere mortals may be adequate to the task of governing ten millions of people, amongst whom they live, and with whose manners they are intimately acquainted; and, diversified as the various interests amongst us are, yet possibly they may be so balanced and combined, that the government may be conducted with tolerable impartiality, even though those who govern us should not possess perfect angelic purity.

But, to engage in a more enlarged sphere than this, the human powers seem not to be adapted; for, whatever dignified titles kings, ministers, or parliaments may assume, I do not remember that it has ever been fully proved that they are either omnipotent, or omniscient; and, if so, it should seem to follow that, being limited in their faculties and powers, they exceed the bounds of legitimate authority when they exercise that species, or extent of dominion, to which human nature seems to be inadequate. When the exercise of power is extended beyond these limits, it may be denominated outrage, plunder, and oppression; but it cannot be deemed government.

These sentiments, obvious as they appear, do not seem to prevail very forcibly in the British cabinet. The government of this nation, arduous as might be the task properly to conduct it, they deem to be far from equal to

the extent of their genius; and it almost sinks into insignificance amidst their vast and diversified plans. They can sit in the council-chamber at St. James's, or in St. Stephen's Chapel,⁶⁶⁸ and give laws to the most distant regions, while the governors and governed are mutually ignorant of each others existence, and thousands and millions perish beneath this yoke, in countries our best maps describe to us as unknown.

With great facility they can govern both this, and her sister kingdom;⁶⁶⁹ take due care of a German electorate,⁶⁷⁰ and give laws and government to the undefined regions of Canada.⁶⁷¹ They can dispose of thirty millions of French, determine what government they shall adopt, what principles they shall possess, and what religion they shall believe. They know perfectly well how the inhabitants of the immense continent of Africa ought to be disposed of, and can correct the error of the great author of nature, by transplanting them to those happy regions where they experience the inexpressible happiness of becoming his majesty's subjects, or rather the subjects of those persons to whom his majesty has, by his royal charters, been graciously pleased to transfer that dominion and authority, which he most rightfully possesses, over the black inhabitants of Africa, and their posterity for ever and ever.⁶⁷²

With no less princely munificence, by another royal charter, more than half the remainder of the world and its inhabitants are conveyed to certain men, women, and children, of various nations, called the *honourable* the East-India Company:⁶⁷³ but, as these *honourable* ladies and gentlemen have been informed that there exists in this nation an *honourable* House of Commons, who have sometimes taken very great liberties, not only with royal grants, but with the royal grantors' themselves, they have thought it most prudent to have two strings to their bow, and have persuaded the *Right Honourable Henry Dundas* to inform the *honourable* House of Commons, that if they would confirm this royal munificent grant for twenty years, they would pay to the disposal of the *honourable* House ten millions, not of their own money, but part and parcel of that money which the said *honourable* gentlemen and ladies mean forcibly to take from the inhabitants of Asia.⁶⁷⁴

This very *honourable* transaction, between these very *honourable* parties, may appear a little *odd* to those who are not acquainted with the perfection and excellence of the British government; they may think it a little extraordinary that a British house of commons should hold the purse not only of this nation, but the purses of the innumerable nations of Asia; and possibly, this system of munificence may remind them of the generosity of Hudibras's saints

*who could be,
Of gifts that cost them nothing, free.*⁶⁷⁵

Perhaps, it may be said, that royal gifts are usually distinguished by their magnitude and munificence, and that their splendor prevents an enquiry into their justice: but the munificence of George the Third far surpasses that of any of his compeers. It was never equalled by a king, nor scarcely exceeded by a pope. Alexander could bestow the kingdoms he had conquered amongst the generals who assisted him in the conquest; but, by this charter, there is bestowed to a parcel of men, women, and children, for the trifling ground rent of 500,000 per annum,⁶⁷⁶ countries almost equalling both in riches and extent, the conquests of Alexander himself; in consequence of which, monarchs have been hurled from their thrones, whose magnificence and splendor so far surpasses that of European monarchs that, in comparison therewith, they can be deemed but of the swinish multitude.⁶⁷⁷

After the extent of absurdity which we have witnessed, who shall pretend to define its limits? should the Aerostatic art⁶⁷⁸ be improved, may we not have the happiness to see his majesty's ministers range the planetary system, dispose of the moon by a royal charter, catch Mercury in the budget, and share out the *Georgium Sidus* in Change Alley.⁶⁷⁹

Most of those enormities which have disgraced the history of nations have been obscure in their origin, and have risen through an almost imperceptible gradation. Our horror is, in some degree, diminished by the veil of antiquity; and mankind are apt to imagine, that they are guilty only of a venial crime, when they continue to practice the mortal sins of their ancestors: but our domination over Asia cannot be viewed through any such palliating medium; though its features may have all the deformity of age, yet, like most of the fungus tribe, its growth has been as rapid, as its appearance is loathsome, and its effects noxious. When the duke of Hanover entered into the important compact with the glorious and immortal William, when he agreed to desert the cause of Lewis XIVth. in consideration of the electoral dignity, and the succession to the English crown,⁶⁸⁰ little did he think that the domains of the great Mogul⁶⁸¹ was the splendid *appanage*.⁶⁸² Even George II. would have stared to have been told that his next successor would grant the dominions of the great Mogul to a parcel of men, women, and children, natives and foreigners;⁶⁸³ and, notwithstanding the docility into which the honourable house of commons had been trained, under the fostering care of the illustrious house of Hanover, he would hardly have believed that, when Mr. Burke acknowledged that under this grant more than 20 millions had been destroyed;⁶⁸⁴ a bill, confirming such a charter, would pass with less ceremony than a canal or a divorce bill.⁶⁸⁵ It may be deemed extraordinary that, amongst all the loud clamourers who contended that the British parliament had no right to take the money of the Americans without their own consent,⁶⁸⁶ not one solitary

individual should be found to ask by what authority British miscreants spread desolation and horror through a country, which, until it had the misfortune to be visited by the English, was stiled, with peculiar propriety, the paradise of nations!⁶⁸⁷ and on what principle we sanction these miscreants, returning with the rich harvest of their plunder, and receive them with open arms, on condition of their paying a tythe of it into the national treasury! as to Mr. Burke, vociferous as he was in favour of American rights, he certainly may be excused, he cannot be expected to defend and avow principles of justice and humanity, as he *honestly* owns that he hated *all principles* when he was young, and abhors them now his head grows grey; but it was rather too much to expect that this adroit master in ethics should so efficaciously and extensively inculcate his precious doctrines; it indicates that he has manifested great skill in selecting the soil in which to deposit the seed he has imported from the rich hot bed of St. Omer's;⁶⁸⁸ in such a soil it seems to find a quick growth, and promises a rich harvest. All that escaped from our most precious patriots was, a faint doubt, an hesitating murmur, lest the rich plunder of the happiest regions of the earth should endanger the fabric of the British constitution, by increasing the influence of the crown. Oh! Marat, Oh! Robespierre⁶⁸⁹ ye now rise before me, almost the exemplars of perfect innocence. Wash not your hands from blood; sheath not your poniard; plunge, plunge them deep in the hearts of your enemies; day by day add massacre to massacre; still shall I consider you as overflowing with the milk of human kindness, when I compare your deeds with the horrors which have overspread the plains of Indostan: *your* apologists may find something to say in your defence; *they*, at least, will not be necessitated to preserve a dead silence, nor to urge the horrors you have already perpetrated as the sole reason for their repetition. It cannot be said, that you have traversed oceans in search of resistless victims of slaughter. You may affirm that, robbery and murder is not your *sole object*, but merely a means to an end which you deem valuable; that in your shop of horrors you balance good and evil, and not compound solely deadly poisons, and spread nothing through the world but firebrands and death.

This claim to the *British* territories in *India*, and to those *valuable possessions*, which has now found a place in his majesty's speech,⁶⁹⁰ surely needed, on that account, some little preface, some trifling explanation on what this claim is founded. It would have been bestowing a favour on future historians, as I know not where they will find the records to prove the foundation of our claim; and it is rather unkind in us to leave future Vatel's and Puffendorfs⁶⁹¹ destitute of all information on this subject, as they may be anxious to refer to the proceedings of the British government, in assuming the empire of Asia, as a memorable event illustrative of the law of nations.

But, as secret articles and private compacts frequently come to light in distant periods, so, it is possible, future historians may possess precious documents to which we are strangers, and the obscurities of the present period may be elucidated to them by the events. While we are supposing the present magnificent arrangement to be confined to Europe, we are necessarily involved in astonishment. For though the disgust with which the first gleams of liberty in France was viewed in this country be now avowed,⁶⁹² yet is no motive visible to us which could have occasioned it. No man could have surmised a motive which could possibly have induced a mere king of *Great Britain* to wish the subversion of the limited monarchy of France; there does not appear a motive adequate to induce even the empress of Russia to exterminate the principles of liberty out of France, unless she has some hope of eradicating them from Britain also. But future historians may possibly know how far Asia may be comprehended in the views of this royal confederacy.

The mention his majesty makes, in this speech, of measures having been taken to secure the benefits we derive from these valuable possessions, ought to excite our warmest gratitude for his princely care.⁶⁹³ To *secure* so extraordinary a dominion, over such distant and extensive countries, might, indeed, call for the utmost exertions of his majesty's wisdom, as the history of the world proves, what his majesty has experienced, that distant dominion stands on a very slippery foundation. Indeed, till I read his majesty's most excellent speech, I never imagined that the exercise of any permanent and efficacious authority over the antipodes was pretended to be in view; I considered our Asiatic adventures merely as marauding expeditions, to gain a temporary possession of distant defenceless countries, which, after stripping and plundering, were to be abandoned in pursuit of new sources of plundering. I had been taught by Mr. *Burke* to consider even "3000 miles of ocean as a powerful principle, in the natural constitution of things, for weakening government, and of which no contrivance could weaken the effect, that a power steps on which limits the arrogance of the raging passions, and says, hitherto shalt thou go and no farther. Who are you that you should fret and rage, and bite the chains of nature? Nothing worse happens to you, than does to all nations which have extensive empires: and it happens in all the forms into which empire can be thrown. In large bodies, the circulation of power must be less vigorous at the extremities. Nature has said it. The Turk has not the same dominion in Algiers, as in Turkey. Despotism itself is obliged to truck and huckster. Spain, in her American Provinces, submits to this immutable condition, the eternal law of extensive and detached empire."⁶⁹⁴

If weakness, disorder, disunion, and dissolution, be the general laws of extensive and detached empire, laws which result from the natural

constitution of things, laws legible in every page of history, still more do these consequences result from the peculiar nature of our Asiatic territories.

All those powerful and extensive dominations, which in various ages have astonished the world, have arisen from some great and adequate cause, some one single great and splendid power. In the *Roman* legions, *Alexander's* armies, and the irresistible bands of *Saladin*,⁶⁹⁵ we see causes adequate to the important effects produced; we see a great concentrated power spreading its domination, over countries which presented no barrier to the torrent. They manifest a strength well proportioned to their extent, and it is merely from the natural operation of time, in undermining that strength, the danger results; but in our Asiatic adventures, the causes which have produced such extensive and baneful effects, appear to have been of as accidental and transitory a nature, as that which may occasion its overthrow; it is an empire not merely terminating, but commencing in weakness and disunion. No *Alexander*, *Cesar*, or *Saladin*, appears to our view. Mr. *Dundas* cannot unveil to us the conquerors of Hindostan: he is forced to amuse us with the unintelligible jargon of "The King, being the Sovereign; the Parliament the great superintending authority; and the company, the instrument through which that authority is to be administered."⁶⁹⁶ The source and nature of that power, which has produced these baneful effects, is thus unknown. It is involved in darkness. It works in obscurity. Such power, however well calculated for spreading desolation and ruin, is certainly very ill fitted for rearing a mighty empire. Rats and moles can undermine and destroy, but I never heard that they could rear or build.

The arrangement Mr. *Dundas* has made of this mighty power seems to be less clear, than that to which some think it bears the nearest resemblance; the Grand Signor, the Janissaries, and the Pacha.⁶⁹⁷ In this latter arrangement, the Sovereign, the great superintending authority, and the instrument of that authority, are very obvious; but in Mr. *Dundas's* the mighty instruments, who have governed, and are to govern, India, are perfectly unnoticed, though they ought to have constituted the fourth, or rather the first, order in his classification. In a former speech, his majesty lamented, how inadequate this Instrument, the Company, was to the task of governing the *real* Instruments of authority in India;⁶⁹⁸ but, now it seems, those instruments in India are perfectly unnoticed, and men, women, and children,⁶⁹⁹ under the denomination of an honourable East India Company, are themselves become the Instruments. That such an heterogenous mass may possess sovereign dignity, I mean not to dispute, because, it is not easy to discover human beings more unfitting to exercise authority, than those in whom sovereignty is frequently placed, but then the real authority is usually exercised by *instruments*, and it was a discovery worthy of Mr. *Dundas*, that these men, women, and children, could possibly become the *instruments* of government themselves.

Should this speech of Mr. *Dundas's* as an ancient manuscript, fall into the hands of some Dr. *Bentley*⁷⁰⁰ he may venture a conjectural emendation: he may observe that as *tool* and *instrument* frequently have the same import, some blundering transcriber had substituted one term for the other, and their having in this passage a very different meaning, was a circumstance to which the transcriber had not adverted. He might observe that there was evidently an omission also in the manuscript, and that the instruments of this government had been omitted by latter transcribers, in consequence of the former error of the company being termed such: consequently that the true reading was, The King, the Sovereign; the Parliament, the superintending authority; the Company, the tool for conveniently conducting this government, and that the *real instruments* who conducted this government, were, owing to the careless[ness] of the transcribers, unfortunately omitted in the manuscript. He might support this criticism by observing, that though the sovereign or superintending authority, might not, yet, it was impossible, but that the *instruments* of government must be in the country governed: And, as the learned sometimes write in the vulgar tongue, he might exclaim, that he was astonished that any person who pretended to learning, could prove himself such a stupid dolt as to suppose, that, the inhabitants of a northern island not the most considerable in the world, an island which had but recently emerged from a state of barbarism, should dream of governing the most extensive and fertile countries in an opposite region of the earth. That to govern a people so opposite to themselves, in manners, and situation, was a task which even the most enlightened people would never have thought of; and that these European Islanders ever governed Asia was too extravagant to be imagined; that the manuscript in question could not possibly refer to any other than piratical adventures, to which Islanders were ever peculiarly prone as they naturally apply to maritime affairs. Secure from the aggressions of their neighbors, they have nothing to restrain them from violating the peace and happiness of others, but a sense of moral principle, or national honour, which rarely existed in that early stage of civilization to which these islanders had arrived. That the first and barbarous stages of society were associations, rather for the purposes of aggression than defence; the spirit of rapine long continuing, even after some degree of civilization appeared in the world, and that this spirit of rapine was, in that stage of society, rendered most dangerous, by the strength it derived from the improvements and discoveries the people possessed beyond their more ignorant predecessors. They had not then learned that important truth, which peculiarly distinguishes the civilized from barbarous ages, that the value of the earth depends on its quiet enjoyment, and is destroyed by violence and outrage. Secure, by their situation, from all fear of retaliation, they occupied themselves in ranging the world to insult, and to plunder; and, having not attained any

respect for government, as a mere civil institution, their Kings were tempted to encourage this system of rapine, considering very properly that it was the support of their power, as it had been its origin.

Such, he might say, was the state of these barbarous Islanders, in the eighteenth century; and, as the magnet had been then recently discovered, they might engage in extensive and piratical expeditions to Asia and Africa; which, being of more considerable importance than those of preceding pirates, they might dignify them with the terms *conquest, government, territories, and possessions*. They might make partial settlements on coasts, or temporary excursions into countries; they might, under fraudulent pretences, obtain admission into nations, and then, by intriguing with profligate natives, disturb peaceable governments; and might avail themselves of the disturbance they had excited to plunder and murder the inhabitants. He might observe that, as Asia had for many ages been in a state of civilization, it was peculiarly liable to the outrage of these northern Islanders; as a long and settled state of high civilization, by introducing peace, order, tranquillity, and the milder dispositions of the mind, equally qualified men to partake of the most perfect enjoyments of civil life, and unfitted them to defend that enjoyment from the outrages of more barbarous and savage nations. But still, he might say, that it was impossible that the extensive civilized countries of Asia could ever have been governed by any persons resident in a northern Island; their enterprises must either have been of a predatory nature, or, if any of them by intrigue, or artifice, had obtained any kind of establishment, they must have been absorbed amongst the natives, or become members of an Asiatic government.

Such may be the erroneous reasoning into which future ages may be misled, unless we transmit them some little intimation of the nature and origin of our claim to the government of Asia, and the means by which it is to be conducted. In these respects the speeches of Mr. *Dundas* and the *King*, or the *King* and Mr. *Dundas*, for I know not the proper order of precedency, appear to me to afford no light. The distinction of the *sovereign, controlling, and instrumental* authorities, to me, conveys no idea; and as little could I understand Mr. *Fox's* meaning of governing India by a strong government at home.⁷⁰¹ I can easily understand making government strong at home, by governing India; which certainly is a subject worthy the violent contest it has occasioned: but still the affairs of India must be conducted by persons in India, and all the dispute must terminate in whom the appointment of these India sovereigns shall be vested, whether in the *Ministers, the Parliament, or the Company*; or, whether it shall be shared amongst them all. But if government be, as Mr. *Burke* defines it, a contrivance of human wisdom, to supply human wants,⁷⁰² let it be asked, whose wants are to be supplied by this contrivance of human wisdom? The wants of Asia will be very oddly supplied, by forcing them to send three

millions per annum to England;⁷⁰³ and this treatment of India must certainly claim a very different epithet to that of government.

In an age, when the small glimmering of reason, which the art of printing had opened to us, is so universally reprobated; and Mr. *Burke* is so kindly leading us back to the ignorance of the 14th Century, I hope it will not be imagined that I object to any measures merely on the ground of their being hostile to *justice, humanity, reason, liberty, the rights of man*, or any other French principles. I only mean to ask why must our language be distorted, and involved in all the confusion of Babel? If it be deemed expedient to *murder* half the inhabitants of India, and *rob* the remainder, surely it is not requisite to call it *governing* them. If we choose to seize, and carry off the inhabitants of Africa, what is the use of terming it a *trade*? And if we convert our West India Islands into jails to confine them, why, in the name of common sense, must they be called *colonies*? But the confusion of language respecting India is still more curious; for, as nobody knows what is the government, or to whom it appertains, so it is not attempted to define what is its relation to this country. Mr. *Dundas* contents himself with saying that they are not *colonies*.⁷⁰⁴ His Majesty in his speech calls them *territories* and *possessions*;⁷⁰⁵ to whom do they belong? not to the people of England; for, strange to tell, they are the only people on the face of the earth who are forbid to *haunt*, or *visit* them. The Americans, when they composed a part of the British empire, were forbid to *haunt*, or *visit* them: but the moment they became independent they might resort to them without controul. An *Englishman* is forbid even to pass the Cape of Good-Hope.⁷⁰⁶ Is the King the Sovereign? so he is of Hanover: but it has not therefore any relation to this country. Are they the possessions of the India Company? who are the India Company? a non descript *assemblage*! many of whom are foreigners; all may be; it is not requisite there should be a score of Englishmen amongst them. The present proprietors may sell their shares to the national convention of France, and *Marat, Robespierre, T. Paine* and Co.⁷⁰⁷ may become the East India Company. But whether we trade with, or whether we plunder the Indies, the use of continuing such a company no one can imagine. But in this age of wonders, this is the very circumstance which Mr. *Dundas* presses on the house to recommend it to their notice. He says, “*The propositions he had to recommend were inconsistent with the opinions generally received. No political writer, as far as he knew, had recommended a mercantile company as the organ of government for a great country, and that, for reaping the full advantage of commercial intercourse, all the most esteemed writers had said a free trade was best.*”⁷⁰⁸ Lord *Grenville* follows the same line, still more clearly, in the House of Lords; and his short speech illustrates most forcibly the taste, and manners, of the present æra. He tells them, “*He should not enter into any detail on the subject of our India possessions, or any speculative discussion of the mode in which India ought to be governed. The ground he had to go on was a just and well*

founded experience, a guide which was at all times, perhaps, the best, but peculiarly so under such circumstances as existed at present.” Well then, it might be supposed he would have shewn, from this experience, the consequences which have resulted from our government of India; by no means! his lordship very pithily tells them “*The present system has continued nine Years: therefore he could see no just reason why it should be altered. The present Bill, of course, assumed for its principle the continuance of the present system.*” Here, then, its passing *sub-silentio* is accounted for: it is, it seems, *a bill of course*; it has existed nine years, *ergo* it is to exist twenty longer.⁷⁰⁹ The word *experience* is, it seems, condemned to change with the times, and, instead of meaning the deduction of wisdom, from a careful and deliberate investigation, of the great chain of past events, it now means only a continuance of a nine years system, without any investigation, or any discussion whatever. Nay, when the universal and unqualified condemnation of Dr. *Smith*, Dean *Tucker*,⁷¹⁰ and every other author whose opinion is worth attending to, and who had professedly drawn their opinions from the deduction of experience, shall be urged even as a recommendation of the measure, under the idea that *philosophers* and *reasoners* are to be contemned.

All that is now deemed requisite in investigating a subject, is to shew that it is not contaminated with French principles: and on this strong ground the India Bill is brought forward, and indeed I do not hear that it has been accused of being the least tinctured with *reason, justice, humanity, confraternity, liberty, equality, or rights of man*. But still, may it not be asked, If every thing that has existed is therefore to be continued, and its effects, and consequences, are not to be investigated under pain of being charged with introducing innovations; have not *Marat* and *Robespierre*, as much right to avail themselves of the doctrine, as Mr. *Dundas* and Lord *Grenville*? May it not be urged in the *national assembly*⁷¹¹ as well as in *St. Stephen’s chapel*? If the proceedings of the one are to be open to the exaggerations of falsehood, shall the other claim an exemption even from the investigation of truth? If the murders, the desolation, or the confusion, which the measures of the one may have introduced, are to be censured, shall the others boast of them as a merit, and urge them as a plea for their continuance? on the contrary, if the proceedings of the one assembly, or the other, are to be judged of, it must be through the medium of our reason; and to this judicature they must both be subject, or both have equally a right to demur. In one respect both Lord *Grenville* and Mr. *Dundas* have certainly very carefully avoided French principles: for, while they talk of governing India, the effects of it on the people governed, or the benefits *they* are to derive from it, are intirely and properly unnoticed. That would, indeed, be wandering into the regions of vain theory. That is a subject on which an appeal to *reason*, or to *experience*, would be equally futile. All that is attempted is “*To remind*

Gentlemen of the advantages in possession, and which it must naturally be their first object to secure."⁷¹²

About eleven years since there was an extraordinary passage in his majesty's speech,—“*The diligence and ardour with which you have entered upon the consideration of the British interests in the East Indies, are worthy of your wisdom, justice and humanity. To protect the persons, and fortunes, of millions in these distant regions, and to combine our prosperity with their happiness, are objects which will amply repay the utmost labor and exertion*”⁷¹³—To engage with diligence and ardour in *protecting* persons and property, in the distant regions of the earth, is a work which the term *Justice* almost degrades. I do not think that the mere call of *Justice* can compel us to abandon our Island and repair to *Asia, Africa, or the West Indies*, for such *generous* purposes. It ought to be classed among the *heroic* virtues. It is an offer of *confraternity*⁷¹⁴ of the most stupendous nature; and, when we engage in it, will amply repay our utmost labour and exertion, as “*the combining our prosperity with their happiness,*” is a task which, when we effect it, will illustrate our *wisdom*.

But there seems to be a great dissonance in the speeches of 1782 and 1793, though probably it may be not worth noticing; for, however unity of *place* may be most rigorously adhered to in this species of composition, yet unity of *design* may not be deemed so essential.⁷¹⁵ A great change in our phraseology has since 1782 taken place. Mr. *Dundas's* plan is far more intelligible; it seems to consist merely in sending some persons to India, to bring away three millions *per annum*,⁷¹⁶ or as much more as they can possibly procure; and in dividing this (shall I call it plunder?) among the various expectants seems to consist the whole difficulty of the plan. But he does not pretend to talk about *Justice, Wisdom, Humanity, Protection, Prosperity, and Happiness*; they now smell too strongly of French principles to be admitted as the ornaments of a speech; they are not deemed requisite even as the paper and packthread, to tie up the parliamentary manufacture.

When Mr. *Dundas* tritely states that the country governed had advanced in prosperity, he must be supposed to mean that the country had been prosperous for those who governed it, for surely he cannot mean to insinuate that any part of India has advanced in prosperity since it has been seized by us, because there exists too evident proof to the contrary. If it be true, let the important fact be clearly and explicitly stated; that, indeed, would be an appeal to experience, and bringing the dispute to a fair issue. Strong and clear is the evidence of the happiness of Asia at various periods, and under various governments. It was not materially affected though conquered by the Mahometans.⁷¹⁷ The harshest despotism they have ever experienced is mild and beneficent, compared with what they have undergone since under the domination of Englishmen. Mr. *Dundas* says “*Lord Clive, the great founder of our territorial power, was greater in the arrangements he made for peace than even in the victory of*

Plaisy.”⁷¹⁸ Arrangements great indeed! The moment we possessed the sovereignty the whole property of the land was seized on, every proprietor dispossessed, and the whole nation put up to auction to the best bidder by the English. Not content with the whole possession of the country, it was contrived, at one stroke, to drain it of all its specie, by monopolizing its principle articles of consumption. These were dealt out to the people till all their effects were extorted; when these failed, the land became spread with the dying bodies of the inhabitants, and twice the number of inhabitants of Great Britain fell by pestilence and famine, a sacrifice to these great arrangements, which were made by five members of the British legislature. But the calamities of India terminated not with extorting the whole property of the inhabitants, for the taxes were increased and exacted when the means of paying them had ceased. The manufacturers even cut off their thumbs, that they might not be compelled to work without hire, to supply the company’s investments.⁷¹⁹

But probably Mr. *Dundas*, by advanced prosperity, means only diminished horror, and that the plains of Bengal have never since produced such a rich harvest of death.—Granted.—To destroy twenty million *per annum* of the inhabitants of a country containing fifty, was a *ratio* of desolation that must necessarily decrease. The continuance of a violent disease destroys the violence of its symptoms. The vital stream which, flows rapidly when first opened, must naturally decrease, till it only falls in drops from the expiring victims. I will grant that it is possible that measures less violent may have been since adopted, because their continuance would have defeated their object. The richest country in the world, without inhabitants, without circulation, and without some degree of security, would become as worthless to the possessors as the Lybian sands. But indeed, Mr. *Dundas*, to do him justice, considers the happiness or misery of Asia, as so perfectly beneath consideration in this affair, that he owns he should persist in his present plan, “*Even though the administration of the company were still attended with all the abuses that had been formerly charged upon it, and that he should have preferred enduring these abuses, if they admitted no other remedy.*”⁷²⁰ Indeed, the merit of this heroic fortitude with which Mr. *Dundas* could *endure* the calamities of India, when placed in opposition to any advantages resulting to this country, may possibly admit of some abatement when we recollect, that it does not appear to require any prodigious portion of *stoicism*, for a man in St. Stephen’s chapel to *endure* the calamities of fifty millions of people in a distant regions of the earth, especially if he should happen to derive revenue and patronage from their miseries. Indeed, this great philosopher can *endure* with equal fortitude all the calamities which we spread over Africa and the West Indies, as well as those of France.

But I must now beg pardon of my readers for attempting to ridicule or reprobate our pretences to govern India, as it is done by Mr. *Dundas* himself,

with a point and force which I will not pretend to equal. When he talked of “*the advantages we derived from the present system,*” when he “*reminded the house of the advantages actually in possession,*” his address was serious and solemn, becoming the importance of the subject.⁷²¹ He considered it as *interesting their feelings*, and concluded very properly, and very emphatically, “*That those advantages it would naturally be their FIRST object to secure.*”⁷²² Having drawn their attention to this important point, he, with great earnestness, labours there to confine it, anxiously cautions them against being drawn aside to any other enquiry, than the important one, the advantages we derived from the present system; all beyond he treated as vain speculation; and the ridiculous idea of our *governing* India, rushes so forcibly on his mind, that the grave, elaborate, sententious statesman, becomes instantly metamorphosed into perfect *Rabelais*, and he entertains the house with the following amusing and instructive fact, “*soon after the acquisition of the dewanee (that is our assuming the government of India) a new set of gentlemen were sent out to superintend the government, and the court of judicature was established. By these gentlemen, as well as by the old servants of the company in India, many able reports were sent home; and the noble lord, then at the head of administration, submitted them to the consideration of ingenious men, in order to form a digest for the government of Bengal, the administration of justice, the mode of letting land, &c. On no one of the points submitted to them could any two of these able men agree.*”⁷²³

Had not *common sense, common justice, and common humanity*, been stigmatized as *French principles*, surely the deduction from this fact was plain and obvious. I mean not to dispute that prodigious anxiety his majesty feels “*to protect the persons and fortunes of millions in distant (as well as neighbouring) regions;*”⁷²⁴ but when his majesty’s wisdom, and the wisdom of his ministers, assisted by the wisdom of all the experienced servants of the company, and of that noble lord who, Mr. *Dundas* tells us, was greater for the arrangements he made for the government of the country, than even in founding our territorial power; nay, when all this wisdom, with the experience and wisdom of the set of gentlemen who were sent out by the wisdom of government, for the express purpose of investigating and superintending, on the spot, the government and jurisprudence of the country; and when this bundle of wisdom was combined with new wisdom of all the ingenious men at home, to whom the importation of wisdom from the east was submitted; I do think, that when this climax of wisdom appeared to be so inadequate to the task, as that no two of them could agree on the subject, his majesty might, consistently with the sublimest ideas of justice and humanity, have declined the task of “*protecting the persons of millions in distant regions.*” I would submit it to the bench of bishops,⁷²⁵ whether it could have been deemed criminal in his majesty, under such circumstances, to have left the inhabitants of distant regions to their fate; nay, I would submit it as a case of conscience, to our new friend the pope,⁷²⁶

whether it would have been any more than a venial sin, to have left *Hyder Ally* and *Tippoo Saib* the undisturbed possession of the Mysore;⁷²⁷ at least till there existed more clear and decisive evidence, than I have ever yet met with, of the advantage the persons and property of the inhabitants of distant regions, derive from being taken under the protection of his majesty's Christian scepter.

Possibly I may entertain erroneous ideas on this subject, owing to unfortunately having never met with any document, ancient, or modern, that proves the necessity of his majesty's taking the persons and property of millions in distant regions under his protection, or the benefits they have derived from it: though my information has been derived from Europeans, and not immediately from the natives themselves. Even in the reports of the committee of the House of Commons, I find painted, in the strongest colours, the iniquity of every measure respecting our pretended government of India.⁷²⁸ "*The great arrangements of lord Clive, the great founder of our territorial power,*"⁷²⁹ I find described in these reports, as being of the blackest dye. I find charges of rapacity, treachery, and cruelty. Such was the origin of our power in Bengal. In another report, conducted under the auspices of Mr. *Dundas*, the origin of our quarrel with *Hyder Ally*, which has now terminated, in stripping his son of a great part of his dominions, is very clearly traced; our conduct is portrayed as wicked in the extreme, and that of *Hyder's* as magnanimous, just, wise and prudent; nor does the unfortunate termination of the war derogate at all from the qualities of his successor.⁷³⁰ Let Europe, (I mean the continent) if it can, produce an equal to either of them. The happiness of his dominions, nay even of the Canare,⁷³¹ a conquered country, is as strongly contrasted with the misery and desolation of the English domination, as the love and attachment which the inhabitants, even of the countries he had conquered, bore to *Hyder* and his successor, are contrasted with the horror and detestation with which the English are viewed in Asia. This detestation, which every fact, and every testimony, proves, is transmuted by Mr. *Dundas* into the *reverence* the natives have for the *Europeans*, and which, he says, extends to their very *dogs*,⁷³² this *reverence* he cautions us carefully to preserve, and there seems to be little danger of our disregarding his admonition.

Forcibly to take three millions *per annum* from any people, and carry it to a distant country, will certainly secure this kind of reverence from any nation on earth, because it will insure their misery. Whether the persons sent from England to conduct this business, which we choose to call government, are sent by the King, or the company, by Mr. *Dundas*, or by Jack Ketch,⁷³³ by a board of control, or by parliamentary commissioners,⁷³⁴ is perfectly indifferent to the people of Asia; nor, indeed, are the various shades of cruelty which may be discriminated in conducting the process of extracting the property of Asia for the emolument of England, a matter of any more importance, than

whether an English corsaire⁷³⁵ shall murder 9 or 10 in the hundred of his cargo; whether the survivors shall be burned with an iron or a silver brand; or be starved, on an allowance of 10 or 12 pints of horse-beans *per week*.⁷³⁶ The mere drawing three millions *per annum* from her, that insure misery to Asia,⁷³⁷ and clearly as Mr. *Dundas* has described the insatiable gulph into which the riches of Asia is to be poured, he has as carefully avoided any inquiry into the amplitude of the source.

Instead of amusing us with ideas of the immense annual income to be drawn from Asia, and instead of idle discussions as to remote arrangements of its disposition in England, there was a line of argument he might have taken, in which he might have proceeded on sure ground. Had he made an enquiry into the circulating or hoarded treasures of those countries of which he had the possession; that treasure he might certainly reckon on as our own, and we might take such measures as to our wisdom might seem expedient, for transporting it to this country; but there our depredations must necessarily terminate, for, as the circulating medium is withdrawn from country, the real riches, the industry of the inhabitants, and the riches of its soil, become inutile. The people must abandon it, or fall a sacrifice to pestilence and famine. The land we may then abandon to tigers and serpents, our revenue must cease, and we have no resource, but to seek out fresh sources of plunder in new conquests.

That a large permanent revenue can ever be drawn from India is impossible, even admitting every precaution be adopted; let us suppose that the antient taxes of Bengal had been adhered to, instead of being quadrupled;⁷³⁸ admitting no monopolies had been formed; that property had been secured; that the persons whom we sent to India had clear heads and clean hands; in short, let us suppose our conduct respecting India to be exactly the reverse to what it has been, and that we merely confine ourselves to remitting to Europe, that antient, moderate, revenue, which had ever been levied by the native princes. It might then be said, has not the country ever flourished under these taxes, these laws, and these regulations? true—and still would it have flourished, because the assessments levied by the sovereigns again returned among the people, and constituted the circulating medium of the country; but you have withdrawn it never to return.⁷³⁹ No analogy can be drawn between the effects of levies returned into the circulation of a country, and when withdrawn from it. For instance, let us suppose the empress of Russia should take a fancy to eradicate French principles from this island, and should take possession of it for that purpose, and some Russian Mr. *Dundas* should open a British budget at St. *Petersburgh*: but stay, I will not suppose him a Mr. *Dundas*; because I will not suppose, what I cannot believe, that her imperial majesty of all the Russias will treat us, or any other people, as we treat those over whom

we exercise dominion, or as we have treated our sister kingdom. I will not suppose that she will grant a charter to authorise some, and prohibit all the rest of her subjects from trading to the richest and most considerable nations of the earth;—that when these wretches, under her authority, shall have been treated kindly, and enjoyed great advantages and privileges, from the mildness and beneficence of the sovereigns, they should fortify their factories,⁷⁴⁰ and garrison them with troops from Russia;—that, when these fortifications, and their hostile aspect, should at length give umbrage to the sovereigns of the country, and they should forbid them to increase their fortifications, or military enterprizes, those very measures and precautions, which the duty the sovereigns of the countries owed their subjects, should be deemed a sufficient plea for attempting to usurp the dominion; that destitute of force to effect this purpose, they should resort to the most villainous artifices, intriguing with the servants to betray the sovereign, and weakening the government by repeated scenes of revolt, should at length usurp it to themselves, dissolving not merely all the bonds of government, but all the property in the land, and range the country till it was one scene of desolation, covered with the dead bodies of the inhabitants; that she should suffer this series of outrage, yet make such a despicable mockery of justice, as to wrangle for a division of the spoil, while she pretended to censure a few particular facts, in this assemblage of crimes, from whence was derived the plunder at which she was grasping. That she should dress out a court of justice, with all the frippery of a theatre,⁷⁴¹ to squeeze returning pachas,⁷⁴² and dispence an heterogenous mixture of censure and honour for the same species of crime; and then, to conclude the scene, that it should be considered amongst her ministers as a very good joke, that no two persons could agree in the means of restoring some species of order and government into the chaotic desolation they had occasioned, and that this should be alledged as a reason for selling them to jews and jobbers⁷⁴³ for 500,000 *per annum*. I say, I will not suppose she will ever be thus guilty, because I believe some sense of honour, some dignified pride, generally accompanies the possession of *supreme unlimited* authority, and that the lowest degradation of the human character will ever be found, where power is divided and contested, like the Grand Seignor overawed by his Janissaries, or a Monarch controlled by popular assemblies,⁷⁴⁴ or other kinds of mixed or confused governments. I will then suppose that she treats us with that species of dignified oppression which becomes a great sovereign; that she suffers us to retain our laws and our customs; preserves all the foundations of property, nay, remits us half our customary taxes, either to pay the nation's creditors,⁷⁴⁵ or to be disposed of by Mr. *Payne* in national bounties,⁷⁴⁶ and requires only half our usual taxes to be remitted to Russia. Here is a plan, *mild* and *beneficent*, when compared to Mr. *Dundas's*; now will Mr. *Jenkinson*,⁷⁴⁷ before he begins

his operations upon India, ask his father how many years, he apprehends, the *great*, the *rich*, the *inexhaustible* England could bear this drain.

When Mr. *Dundas* contends that a plan is warranted by *experience*, against which the experience of every age and nation militates, he pours sovereign contempt on his audience. He presumes they are ignorant of the history of this, and of every other country; or he would not have dared to assert that a distant dependent dominion is permanent or valuable. The Portuguese have preceded us in our enterprise; can she bear witness—will Spain bear testimony to the value of a colony, which though yielding an inexhaustible revenue, yet is it a source of misery and weakness to the parent state.⁷⁴⁸ Mr. *Dundas* well knows that experience will warrant no intercourse between nations, but the intercourse of fair and legitimate commerce; *experience* testifies that all other is ruinous as it is wicked; yet he seems to treat with contempt the idea of increasing our exports to India, and boldly tells us, not to risk the solid advantages we possess, in pursuit of commercial speculations; ridicules the idea of finding customers for our *principal manufactures* in that half of the world between the *Cape of Good Hope* and *Cape Horn*,⁷⁴⁹ though the records of parliament prove the eagerness with which the trade was pursued, even in times far less qualified for such enterprizes than the present. He knows that private adventurers offered to *treble* the *exports* of the company, and to supply government with saltpetre much under the company's price. He knows that India presents such a source of commercial enterprize, that all our severe laws cannot prevent English capitals being employed, in foreign bottoms, to a much greater extent than the whole commerce of the company; yet he has the boldness to say that the hopes, formed of *the limited experiment he has introduced into his plan, will fail*,⁷⁵⁰ which indeed may probably be the case, as himself and the company have, certainly, sufficient *power* in India to *secure* a miscarriage. Thus contrary to all *experience* is this plan formed, though on the very ground of experience he pretends to recommend it.

Contemptible as Mr. *Dundas* may treat our *India* Commerce, and all attempts at increasing it, when compared with the *solid* and *important* advantages we now derive from *India*; he yet thinks it worth while to dress it out with some pomp, and strange to tell, he even boasts of the company employing 81,000 tons of shipping.⁷⁵¹ Surely it was unnecessary to remind us of the company hiring twice the quantity of shipping that was necessary, paying twice the value, and breaking up the ships without wearing them out that new ones might be built; but why did he not inform the House, that, *these 81,000 tons of shipping had been employed in defiance of an act of the legislature, passed at the very time when Mr. Dundas himself held an high office in the navy department*, that the act states this very fact which Mr. *Dundas* brings forward with applause to his ignorant auditors, to be “*an unnecessary consumption of Oak Timber fit for the royal navy.*”⁷⁵²

Mr. Dundas then tells us of the immense *imports* of the company, and trembles lest a concern of such magnitude should be deranged by *innovation*.⁷⁵³ I suppose he must mean, that is, if he has any meaning, that we should leave off drinking tea, or at least that we should have no tea to drink, if it were not for an *Honourable East India Company*; but really if this evil were certain, I cannot see it to be so very terrific: nay, should the ladies throw away their shawls and the gentlemen their wangees,⁷⁵⁴ I do not think it would quite ruin poor old *England*, even though the duties on them amount to a million *per annum*. At length he comes a little more to the point, and tells us, this commerce is a vent for English manufactures to the value of a *million per annum*. That those who are just come from counting the rollos⁷⁵⁵ at a gaming table, or casting up their private accounts, and have no ideas beyond them, should stare at being told of a whole *million* of money is probable, but they ought to have been told, that, *the exclusive trade of the company comprises that of almost half the globe, including the richest and most populous countries; that yet this MILLION is not near a tythe of our exports, that does not equal even that to Holland or Germany: and they ought to have recollected the contempt with which the sale of our manufactures to France, to the amount of a MILLION, was lately treated, when it was brought in competition with the inexpressible pleasure of cutting the throats of its inhabitants.*⁷⁵⁶

Admitting that we subdue all the native princes of India, admitting that Lord Macartney⁷⁵⁷ may enable us to usurp the dominion of China, that the Empress of Russia guarantees them, and that all the powers in Europe and *America* suffer their commerce to lie at the mercy of our India Company, yet still will the security of our India possessions insure the loss of them to this country. The English in India will then no longer remit three millions per annum. No acknowledgement can be then expected from them beyond a *burse*, or a *state-bed*, or a present to the *India* Minister.⁷⁵⁸ FINIS.

*On Jacobinism**

In this pamphlet Fox considers the role of language in political controversy, or rather of labels, which, deliberately left undefined, become the causes and occasions of conflict. He dismisses the loyalist accusation against 'jacobins', that they seek the destruction of all government, and argues that, properly understood, jacobinism is no more than a name for enlightened modernity, which threatens the established governments only of states still organised on feudal principles. Britain, where, with the exception of the French republic, less of the feudal system has survived than in other states of Europe, has little or nothing to fear from jacobinism, and a jacobin 'revolution' would have little material effect on the constitution. His argument that such a revolution would not cause anarchy in Britain is provocatively reminiscent of Burke's argument, in his speech on the army estimates in 1790 (see below, n. 28), that the events of 1688-9 did not amount to a revolution because the forms of government and civil society remained unchanged. More generally, Fox argues against the loyalist belief that revolutions produce anarchy, by claiming that 'Man ... has an uniform disposition, an apparently inherent principle leading him to coalesce into some kind of order or government,' and that there is therefore a 'universal tendency of order from confusion to arise'.

The earliest possible date of the pamphlet is the second half of June 1794, for it twice refers to Burke's peroration, delivered on June 16, to his final speech in the impeachment of Warren Hastings before the House of Lords. In that peroration Burke warned the Lords that, in the words of the ODNB, 'Failing to convict Hastings was to invite the Jacobins in England to slaughter the aristocracy of England as they had already slaughtered the aristocracy of France'. Probably in response to this, Fox imagines a future in which, whether by a jacobin revolution or simply by the steady, unstoppable shift in power towards the people at large, the House of Lords would be abolished and the titles of nobility extinguished. He concludes that little difference would be made thereby, either to the government of the country or to the aristocracy itself. The upper house was simply an obstinate but unimportant remnant of the feudal system. The pamphlet was reviewed by the Monthly Review in September 1794, by the Analytical in October, and by the Critical in November.

* ON / JACOBINISM, / BY / WILLIAM FOX. // LONDON: / Sold by M. GURNEY,
No. 128, HOLBORN HILL / 1794. // THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A / SHILLING.

It has frequently been objected to controversial writers, that by using words without defining their import, the subjects which they bring before the public are involved in great obscurity, and their discussion frequently extended to almost infinity. However certain the fact, yet the propriety of its being brought as a charge against our fraternity I never could admit. By carefully avoiding definitions and explanations, the seeds of controversy are carefully preserved to engender future ones, as *Bug-Doctors* and *Ratcatchers* suffer some vermin to escape, that they and their brethren may find future employment: And why should not *Authors* as well as *Ratcatchers*, *Clergy*, *Lanymers*, *Nobles*, and other orders of men, be influenced by the *Esprit du Corps*: Why should not they be entitled to praise, for preserving the fields of controversy and transmitting them unimpaired for the benefit of future Authors, instead of dilapidating and destroying the inheritance by bringing controversies to a termination by the fatal expedient of explanation and definition? But though this be true as to those ordinary controversies, whose principal end is finding employment and food for authors, yet are there a certain order of words, and a certain species of controversy, of so very different a nature as might induce one to wish they might be excepted. These words instead of merely wasting ink, deluge the world with blood; they not only light up the fire of controversy, but produce real conflagrations: instead of amusing the speculative and the idle, they agitate the mass of people, and spread horror, confusion, and desolation through the earth.

That words of such importance should be accurately defined, that controversies productive of such effects, should be fully explained, seems not to be unreasonable; yet, alas! it is such words that remain peculiarly undefined, and it is such controversies that are more especially involved in obscurity; we see them generate in quick succession: like meteors they rise and take their course through the political hemisphere, terrifying and confounding the ignorant multitude.

As these words are invented to deceive, they have been peculiarly resorted to in that state of this country, in which those who govern have found themselves necessitated, in some degree, to resort to *artifice* to obtain or maintain dominion, no longer deeming it expedient to rely totally on *force*. From the commencement of the last century, a few cant words have been the powerful means of producing all the revolutions and events we have experienced. It commenced with *Puritan*,⁷⁵⁹ was succeeded by *Malignant*,⁷⁶⁰ and was terminated by *Papist*.⁷⁶¹ this last word produced our *glorious* Revolution, and in connection with *Pretender*, generated the Hanover succession; which being endangered by the word *Church*, by calling to its assistance the words *Liberty*, *Property*, and *Balance of Power*,⁷⁶² it became triumphant until the present moment, when threatened, with danger by the dreadful words *Rights of Man*, it has been

deemed expedient to resort to the word *Jacobin*⁷⁶³ for support. Our domestic factions have indeed in the interim adopted *Court*, and *Country*,⁷⁶⁴ for the subordinate purpose of electioneering, riots, and murders, and North America obtained independence under the auspices of the word *Tory*.⁷⁶⁵

It might be imagined that words of such importance, and productive of such extensive effects, should have a clear and definite import; and that when applied to discriminate the characters and principles of men, it should be with the most accurate precision: but unfortunately this is the very reverse of the fact. *Puritan* equally characterized *Archbishop Abbot*,⁷⁶⁶ and the wildest and most illiterate enthusiast of the age, and *Malignant* was indiscriminately applied to an infinite variety of dissimilar characters. *Papist* we apply to *Father Paul*, and to *St. Dominic*,⁷⁶⁷ to *Berrington*, and *Bellarmino*.⁷⁶⁸ *Pretender* was a nick name assigned to an individual by an Act of Parliament,⁷⁶⁹ and as to *Church* it never was understood whether it meant, Articles of Faith, which scarce any man believes,⁷⁷⁰ ceremonies and forms which every man of sense despises, or an order of men who claim a right to a tenth of every man's labour,⁷⁷¹ in consideration of their wearing black coats, white surplices, and lawn sleeves.⁷⁷² The word *Liberty* imported a foreign Prince, coming with a foreign army, and possessing the throne of his wife's father;⁷⁷³ and *Property*, some say, meant the depriving a *King*, *Clergy*, and *Nobles* of a neighbouring island of their property,⁷⁷⁴ and bestowing it on foreigners: if we conquer American islands, for the purpose of enslaving the Africans, we are told the war is undertaken in defence of *Liberty*,⁷⁷⁵ and if we plunder and desolate Asia, the undertaking is absolutely necessary in defence of our *Rights* and *Property*.⁷⁷⁶ As to *Whig* and *Tory*, they were terms of abuse,⁷⁷⁷ as indefinite in their meaning, as those which the ladies of St. Giles's and Billingsgate bestow on each other:⁷⁷⁸ the author of this has been ever deemed a *Tory*, yet does his Toryism bear as little resemblance to that of *Filmer's* or *Sacheverell's*,⁷⁷⁹ as the Whiggism of *Mr. Burke* to *Dr. Price's*.⁷⁸⁰ Lastly, the *Balance of Power* means perpetual war,⁷⁸¹ on a series of the most extravagant and incongruous pretexts: It meant *King William's* ambitious project of conquering France,⁷⁸² it meant carrying on a bloody expensive war, for the emolument of the *Duke of Marlborough*,⁷⁸³ and it meant annexing Bremen and Verden to Hanover.⁷⁸⁴

If then these words have been successively adopted without any definite import, merely to enable the ambitious and the crafty to carry on their designs; it will become us to be cautious and suspicious when new terms and additional cant phrases are introduced into our political vocabulary: it will behove us at least carefully to analyse their import, and inquire whether they be introduced as the watch words of faction, to disguise unexplained projects of dark ambition, or as the signals to stimulate a licentious rabble to conflagration and to murder: our just suspicion may be excited, if like preceding words they bear

no definite sense, and thereby appear to be well adapted to enable a party to stigmatise their adversaries; for in such proportion as these terms are equivocal and destitute of meaning, are they adapted to this purpose. It will become us to endeavour to analyse them, as many objects of terror lose their effect, in proportion as they are explored; it is undefined danger which operates most powerfully, and the mind can meet even real danger with greater firmness, when we thoroughly comprehend its nature and extent.

In this moment when *Jacobinism* is first founded in our ears, it becomes peculiarly proper for us to explain its rise for the benefit of future generations; for however terrible this word may now appear, yet to posterity it may excite no other feeling than contempt for our folly, and curiosity to inquire into its cause: the origin and history of Whig and Tory have occasioned elaborate discussion, and as a subject of discussion, *Jacobin* may be transmitted to posterity.

Loudly as *Jacobin* is resounded through the land, yet have none condescended to explain its meaning; that must be gleaned from desultory harangues on its terrible nature, and effects; from thence we learn that it is a principle which is rapidly spreading through Europe, threatening its general order, the subversion of its Governments, the annihilation of its Property, the destruction of its Laws, and its religion; introducing in their place Atheism, Anarchy, Poverty, and Misery. In this delineation however highly coloured, perhaps, it must be admitted that there is so near a resemblance to fact in some of its parts as to deserve accurate investigation, and is certainly of importance sufficient to demand our serious attention: it relates to the most important subjects which can interest our feelings, for without social order, without Government, without Laws, alas! what is Man, and what is the earth which he inhabits. Some indeed will laugh at this statement; they will ask what is that general order which exists in Europe? What is there but an heterogenous mass of Republicanism, of Monarchy, of Despotism, of Popery, of Protestantism, of Oppression, and of Liberty, in all their diversified forms? What relation can they have to each other? What common principles can they possess, deserving the name of system? Shall Britons be told of any analogy she bears to the vassalage of Hungary⁷⁸⁵ or to Neapolitan Despotism?—I will make no such objection—I will consider most of the nations of Europe as derived from one common or similar origin. I will consider it as a bed of flowers, which when first planted presented to the eye nothing but dull uniformity, but which from accident, from diversity of culture, and of soil, opens to our view an immense variety, a striking dissimilarity, which banishes from the imagination of a cursory spectator the slenderest idea of system; though the accurate and careful observer will readily distinguish the *varieties* of the same *species*, as readily as the different *species* in the same *genus*. I will then readily admit that there is a general

order, a similarity, among the nations of Europe, deserving the name of system; and I will even admit that *Jacobinism* threatens this system with destruction: but here my concessions terminate. If I am told that Anarchy must ensue, that social order and government will be banished from the earth, and that property will be annihilated, for laws no longer will exist to foster and protect it;—if I am told this, I pause. I will not easily suppose that the author of the universe will admit so foul a blot in the creation. I see indeed a vast mass of moral and physical evil which neither reason nor revelation explains to my limited imperfect comprehension; but I look around me and trace the analogy of nature, and I see a universal tendency of order from confusion to arise, and improved existence to spring from apparent dissolution; my hope is then enlivened, nor can I with Mr. Burke sit down in despair and imagine that the fair face of the creation is about to be involved in “A MASS OF RUINS.”⁷⁸⁶ I cannot believe that the dark cloud, which overhangs our hemisphere, will involve us in eternal night. I consider the nature of man; I open the page of history, and examine his recorded annals; I here trace human kind through every gradation of improvement, from the untutored savage running wild in his native woods, to man in the highest state of polished society which has hitherto appeared in the world; I then examine the present face of the earth, as presented to our view with the accuracy of modern disquisition, I find a wonderful concurrence, both the historian and the traveller bear one united and important testimony, that Man, whatever may be his degree of civilization, however opposite the nature of the climate he enjoys, or the soil he possesses, however diversified his manners, or abundant or deficient are his advantages; whatever may have been his original situation, or however varied the circumstances which through a succession of ages have befallen him, has an uniform disposition, an apparently inherent principle leading him to coalesce into some kind of order or government, though that order and that government necessarily partake of an infinite variety, resulting from the diversity of the circumstances above enumerated. It appears that this mental attraction is as universal a law of his nature, as that attraction which pervades inanimate existence appears to be a universal law of matter; and as little ground is there to expect that any partial convulsions, however they may astonish and afflict us, will dissolve this principle in the one case more than in the other. There is no foundation for expecting such a dissolution of the bonds of society any more than the principle of material existence, until He, on whose will all things depend, shall dissolve these laws of nature which from him originated, reducing this system to the original chaos, or producing those changes of which we can have no idea. If then it should seem that order and government were coeval with man, and that with man only they can terminate; If it appears that anarchy is so abhorrent to our nature, as that the political

body has as an invariable tendency to counteract it, as the natural body has to discharge the morbid matter with which it may be loaded, shall any one dare to tell us that *Jacobinism* will break up civil society, destroy social order, and introduce perpetual anarchy and ruin? Yes, there are those who will dare to tell us this; because there is no falshood so palpable, no absurdity so gross, but what the wicked will endeavour to impose upon the weak. If there have been those who could summon the public to see a man in a QUART BOTTLE,⁷⁸⁷ and if among the public there were those who crouded to behold it, why may there not be those who will tell us, that unless we take Paris, and guillotine ROBERSPIERRE,⁷⁸⁸ the French will kill one another, dissolve all government, introduce anarchy, and destroy all property, and why may there not be amongst us those who will believe them?

In repelling the clamors against *Jacobinism*, it is not necessary accurately to appreciate its merits, or the effects it may produce. The charge against it is not merely that it will destroy the general order of Europe, but that no other system of social order will arise; not only that it will subvert the existing governments, but ALL government; not only shake property, but *annihilate* it; not merely *impair* the fabric of our laws, but dissolve ALL law, leave nothing but anarchy behind, seating us “*in the midst of ruins.*”⁷⁸⁹ This is a charge not merely against Jacobinism, but against the order of nature, against the constitution of human kind, against universal experience. The charge is so absurd that those who frame it are perpetually confuting themselves; see, say they, what a horrible government Jacobinism has produced in France, a government worse than *Caligula’s*.⁷⁹⁰ And was not *Caligula’s* a government? is not a worse than *Caligula’s* a government? What you assert, and what we call on you to prove, is that Jacobinism will dissolve ALL government. So violating all propriety of language, they confound *confiscation* with *dissolution* of property.⁷⁹¹ How far the confiscations of property in *Ireland*, in *England*, or in *France* may have been cruel, respecting individuals; whether harsh or unjust in their nature, injurious or beneficial to the community, are separate considerations. What we call on them to prove is, that property either in *Ireland*, in *England*, or in *France*, has thereby been *annihilated*.

Having fully proved that however extensive the progress of Jacobinism may be, yet that she will leave government, social order, property and law behind her. We will next enter on what may be deemed a rather more difficult inquiry, we will endeavour to discover whether the effects of this progress will be injurious, or beneficial: to predict, with any degree of precision, the effects which will be produced, or the exact nature of the governments which will subsist, would be folly in the extreme; leading traits, and general tendencies only, we will undertake to discuss. We will not look into the declaration of the Rights of Man,⁷⁹² nor will we take for our guide this or that plan of a

constitution; we may indeed rejoice to see principles and systems of benevolence, and justice, disseminated among mankind, because the effects must be beneficial; much more must we exult when they are disseminated by those who govern, even though by themselves they are disregarded, because thereby those principles become more operative. When those who govern France lay down systems of morality, and benevolence, as the avowed rules of their conduct, or Mr. PITT pours out his eloquence against our colonial slavery, we are not to imagine that they will restrain themselves in their ambitious pursuits, by such systems, or such declamations, which they may have adopted, for temporary, and particular purposes; but we will exult in this, that in trampling them under foot, they will not be able to destroy their effects.

In ascertaining the future state of Europe, we are rather to look to general tendencies, than to particular events, which however calamitous can prove but partial. Order, and Governments, must necessarily arise, which may reasonably be expected to be superior to prior governments, in proportion to the improved state of knowledge, and society. If in a barbarous age, a savage banditti quickly formed into order, and government; if, though the foundations were laid in rape, and robbery, the superstructure has become the admiration of successive ages, can we imagine that any situation, to which Europe may be reduced, by temporary convulsions, will become a bar to splendid improvements? Suppose, then Jacobinism, or the confederacy to destroy Jacobinism, were to produce an anarchy, as deplorable as that in which Europe was involved when over-run by savage plunderers, and that governments, or tyrannies, as uncouth were to be obtruded on us, yet may it naturally be inferred that the present improved state of human knowledge will operate powerfully, and that governments will gradually arise, as superior to the existing ones as the present state of the human mind is superior to what its state was at the period in which the existing governments of Europe originated. As the convulsions occasioned by Jacobinism can be but temporary, so it may be hoped they may be but partial. If it be a principle operating to the subversion of the general system of Europe, convulsions might reasonably be expected, as violent as those we witness; but as that which is denominated the system of Europe exists in very different degrees, and circumstances, different consequences may result. Where the ancient system of Europe has mouldered under the hand of time, Jacobinism may coalesce without necessarily producing much disorder. Let us then, examine the nature of this system of order, and government, which, we are told, pervades Europe, and which Jacobinism threatens with destruction; from whence we may possibly learn more precisely the effects to be expected.

The system of European governments originated in bands of ferocious and barbarous conquerors, issuing from the wildest and most uncultivated

parts of Europe, and overspreading those nations of it, which had in some small degree been civilized by the roman conquests. The countries were divided among the conquerors; the inhabitants were enslaved, and attached to the land for its cultivation; the leaders of these bands became Dukes, and Counts, of their respective portions of the conquered lands; those titles importing a subordinate sovereignty, the Supreme being little more than nominal. The General or Chief Commander, became, indeed, King: but being chosen from among his fellow soldiers, he possessed little authority. His principal importance was derived from the share of the spoil he possessed. Of the possessions, then obtained by the sword, the possessors were soon after deprived of a considerable portion by the Clergy, who, availing themselves of the ignorance of the age, held forth to others the prospect of another world, as the means of obtaining a considerable portion of the present. They obtained grants from the conquerors, to such an extent as to enable the clergy to contend for a domination, founded on mental terror, as powerful as that which had been derived from the sword. Such was the origin of the sovereigns, the nobles, and the clergy of Europe.

To trace the origin of power, or of property, with a view to shake their present existence, would be absurd in the extreme. What power, and what property, could bear such a scrutiny? But this system of which we speak was not merely in its origin unjust, but in its nature injurious to the property it had usurped, and to any government which could possibly take place. The earth, the source of our existence, and labour, was possessed by bodies of men of so peculiar a structure as to destroy, in a great degree, its value to society. To them the property was limited. No persons, no connections, no circumstances, could, while the system existed, circulate it again among the people. It was a gulph continually swallowing, but never giving up. The individual possessors had only a life interest; the property descended by the nature of the tenure, in the one case to successive bodies of men, in the other to single individuals; while the present possessors were disabled from transmitting the inheritance as motives of consanguinity, or friendship, might prompt; placing the earth in the possession of a succession of individuals, all of them, deprived of the most powerful incentives for its improvement. It is unnecessary to detail at length this system. Its mischievous nature has been brought to the test of experience. It has uniformly appeared that in every country, in proportion as it operated, the country suffered. Wherever a single city, or a despicable and worthless district, became emancipated from the yoke, it flourished. When Philip of Spain, to terminate a rebellion, cast off the most inconsiderable part of his dominions, it instantly rose to wealth and splendour, though a spot peculiarly destitute of natural value.⁷⁹³ And with respect to England, though by no means distinguishable for its intrinsic value, or natural

advantages, yet, from a concurrence of circumstances, this system having been much more innovated on than in any other considerable country in Europe, it appears that her agriculture, her wealth, and her prosperity, have increased in proportion; and it is observable that to the small remnant of this system, yet existing among us, the principal impediments to our further improvement are to be attributed and the principal defects in our laws and civil policy, are to be traced. No less hostile is this system to government than to property. The privileged orders have uniformly exerted the power, derived from the property they possess, to overawe and control the existing government, whatever may be its form; to obtain privileges, and exemptions incompatible with every idea of good government; and to throw the burden of the state upon those who are destitute of the means of supporting it. And it has been only in proportion to the subversion of this system, that the governments of any of the countries of Europe have been able to exercise their proper functions.

As, then, we are told that Jacobinism is a principle operating to the subversion of the general order of Europe, of its property, its religion, its governments, and its laws, it necessarily follows, that it is the system above described which must be alluded to; because there is no other general order which pervades the nations of Europe. Nothing but this that can be denominated its system. No other principle which appertains indiscriminately to their laws, their religion, their governments, and their property. And if so, it must be inferred that whatever principles prevail in Europe, subverting this system, must be Jacobinism. And if this system be hostile to social order, to good government, to just ideas of property, then the prevalence of correct ideas on property; on government, and on social order, must be Jacobinism; and in proportion as knowledge is disused, and ignorance is dispelled, Jacobinism must prevail. It has no relation to forms of government, any further than as forms are connected with and derived from the ancient system. Under various forms the present system of Europe subsists; and under various forms of them may Jacobinism prevail. It does not necessarily follow that it must subvert the existing governments, any farther than as those governments partake of the general system. In France, and Germany, where revolving centuries had, but in a small degree, affected it, Jacobinism might naturally be expected to produce strong convulsions. Affecting extensive possessions, and numerous privileges and rights, the contest could not be trifling, or the wounds slight: but in England, and the other nations of Europe, where the reformation had, in a great degree, subverted a principal branch of the ancient system and, by its effects, materially sapped the whole fabric, it does not necessarily follow that Jacobinism must produce a subversion of existing governments or changes in the general system of laws: no branch of property need

be materially affected: no bodies or description of men need be exposed to any considerable change in their situation in society, nor even an individual suffer any inconvenience beyond those to which the most common vicissitudes of human affairs subject them. Let us suppose the adoption of all the projects of the DUKE of RICHMOND, the maddest and most violent Jacobine which this country ever has produced; projects which in him originated, which no mad projector, no speculative politician, ever before him thought of;⁷⁹⁴ and, which, though he may have been succeeded by a train of distant followers and faint imitators,⁷⁹⁵ yet, perhaps, but for him might have remained despised, or unknown: projects which excited the disapprobation of every rational and well informed mind, a disapprobation approximating to disgust, when they saw crude and untried experiments suggested to agitate a licentious populace, in the most critical moment, which a succession of ages could possibly have produced.⁷⁹⁶ That at such a crisis they were rash and dangerous few can doubt, yet is there no foundation for supposing that, had they been peaceably and generally adopted any inconvenience could have resulted: for instance it is said he suggested in the House of Lords, the idea of seizing the Church Lands; but is it to be imagined that he, or any other man, would have had the assurance to propose a confiscation of all the impropriations, and advowsons,⁷⁹⁷ comprehending a considerable portion of the landed property of the kingdom, which had been transmitted through a succession of purchasers, for full and valuable considerations. Has France done it, France could not do it, for no such property had she to confiscate;⁷⁹⁸ but suppose he had such a design, fortunately the only regulation which is proposed respecting it, must have effectually defeated it. This property is derived from the labour and property of man, employed in the cultivation of the soil; it now possesses distinctive marks; if it be in danger from the hands of the plunderer, that danger must be more imminent because, in its present state, it is by those distinctive marks obtruded on his notice, and is there an individual to be found who proposes any other reform respecting this property, than commuting it for an equivalent share of land; the very measure which must effectually secure it, by combining it in one general interest with the landed property of the kingdom. As to the dignitaries of our church, they cannot be affected by any reform which relates to their successors, and the church has already been plundered⁷⁹⁹ to such an extent as to render the remainder of its property secure to its present possessors, from the insignificance of its value as a life inheritance. As to the House of Lords, let us suppose, the insignificance to which they are reduced, and the contempt with which, for above a century, they have been treated by the House of Commons, should induce an idea that they are useless; what material detriment can they, as individuals, receive by an abolition of their order, and the faint shadow of its ancient power. All the seigniorial

rights and territorial privileges which distinguished the ancient Barons of England have been long since abolished: estates are of the same nature, and of equal value, whether in possession of a Lord or a Commoner; and it is from their property, not their titles, their present importance results: so unimportant are titles in this country that when unaccompanied by estates they have remained unclaimed as not worth acceptance.

It does not even follow that the progress of Jacobinism will produce greater changes in the nature of the monarchical power than what has resulted from past events, or may result from future ones: the name and form of monarchy may subsist, though Jacobinism prevail, and it is only the name and form which can be permanent; its real nature must necessarily be subject to imperceptible changes, his present Majesty bears no more resemblance to a *Tudor*, a *Plantagenet*, or an *Alfred*,⁸⁰⁰ than a modern Doge of Venice does to the ancient ones.⁸⁰¹

But though it does not follow, that, Jacobinism from its nature will materially affect any great existing interest amongst us, yet does it not follow but it *may*. It is possible, nay probable, that it may produce calamities similar to those which have befallen France, and inferior in degree only in proportion to the inferiority of the several interests concerned in the contest. A straw, or a feather, may be contended for with as much violence, and as much obstinacy, as the most important right, and the most essential interest. The Clergy may be tenacious of litigated tithes, and ecclesiastical courts: the privilege of imprisoning a Quaker during life for his Easter Offering, may to them appear an object beyond all price.⁸⁰² So our Peers may deluge the nation in blood, to preserve the important privilege of assembling in an old barn,⁸⁰³ dressed in red cloaks, to have culprits dragged before them, and then be insulted with the threat, that if they acquit the criminal they shall be stigmatized as partners in his guilt.⁸⁰⁴

If Jacobinism be the progress of human knowledge subverting ancient systems, founded on ignorance and superstition, can it be destroyed by imprisoning or hanging a few noisy demagogues, or, even by Mr. JENKINSON'S conducting our army to Paris, and guillotining *Robespierre*.⁸⁰⁵ No! The English, the American, and the French Revolutions, are merely the channels in which Jacobinism has flowed: had they never taken place, had those countries never had existence, the mighty torrent would have rolled, its course only would have been varied. Originating in the art of Printing, having disseminated knowledge, the annihilation of the knowledge it has spread, nay, of the art itself is indispensably necessary to destroy it. It is not Mr. BURKE'S execration of reason and philosophy; it is not his admonishing us to cherish our prejudices because they are prejudices; nor is it the applause he bestows on the happy ignorance of the middle ages, and his lamentation on modern

innovation, which will stop the progress of Jacobinism.⁸⁰⁶ No! you must look to a far more adequate means: have you any hope that a new inundation of Goths and Vandals will annihilate all traces of existing knowledge from Europe and America? this and this only, can give any well founded hope.

As the interests and motives must be extremely trivial and partial, which can excite an opposition to Jacobinism, so its friends can have as little pretence for endangering the public peace, to promote and secure it. The progress of Jacobinism is amply secure, without the aid of the Duke of Richmond or Thomas Paine inciting the body of the people to assume the government: the progress of knowledge had given them importance in the state, and in proportion to its future progress will their importance increase: fitted to assume an important rank in society, they will need no incitement, they will assume it of course, with safety to the public.

With no important interest of the community in dispute, yet, is it not improbable, that the public may be convulsed with fierce, if not bloody contests: a licentious mob may rise; "No Jacobin," may become the successor to "No Papists":⁸⁰⁷ murder and conflagration may spread around. Of a conduct founded in ignorance no estimate can be formed, and those who let loose the mischief may be themselves the victims; the safety of a King or Bishops may prove but insecure, if dependent on the piety, or loyalty, even, of a Church and King mob, should they believe the dearness of porter resulted from monarchy, or that the destruction of episcopacy would raise the price of wages.

If moderation and reason be not terms bordering on sedition, it may become us to listen to their dictates: those who possess earthly power may recollect that they are not omnipotent; that they cannot interrupt the course of nature; they tell us a mighty torrent has burst forth; it rests with them either to guide it through the land, that it may fertilise, and enrich; or by vainly attempting forcibly to confine it in the bowels of the earth, convulse the land, and spread horror around them.

If the DUKE of RICHMOND has endangered the public peace, by inciting the mass of the people to claim a share in the Government, before the progress of civilization and knowledge has qualified them for the important situation; let it be recollected, that, the danger results from our laws and police being adapted to render them profligate and corrupt; and to revise and reform them, is the appropriate remedy to the threatened danger.—FINIS.

*Defence of the War against France**

A puzzling pamphlet, here and there as powerful, and as biting in its satire, as Fox's best writing, but difficult to summarise, because it never seems to be quite sure what its main argument is and where it is digressing. Fox begins by remarking that the war in France is very popular with the British people, because, if France was allowed to remain free and to enjoy the prosperity that liberty brings, this would put in question all that the British have come to believe and admire about themselves as contradistinguished from their 'natural enemies'. And whatever pretexts the government originally used to justify the war, Fox has no doubt that its real motives were economic, and that Pitt and his ministers were mainly concerned to ensure that the French economy should be returned to the semi-feudal state in which it had languished before the revolution. A long digression on the propriety of British subjects even considering the causes of a war, which by his prerogative only the king could decide to start or to end, develops into what at first appears to be another digression on whether it is legitimate to fight a war of extermination. This issue eventually becomes the main theme of the pamphlet, and Fox recommends that, if the century-old dispute with France is to be finally resolved, there should be no talk of peace until the French are exterminated, or until the British are.

The pamphlet is not easy to date. It cannot have been written before mid April 1794, for Fox makes several references to the speeches in the Commons' debate of April 17 on a bill to enable French subjects to enlist in the British army. But he may refer also to a debate of May 30, on Charles James Fox's motion for putting an end to the war with France, and it is possible to read the pamphlet as referring also to the treason trials in Edinburgh in early September. It was reviewed by the Monthly Review in September 1794, by the Analytical in October, and by the Critical in November.

* DEFENCE / OF THE / WAR AGAINST FRANCE. / BY / WILLIAM FOX. // LONDON: / Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128 Holborn Hill. / 1794. // PRICE THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A SHILLING.

In viewing the opposite opinions of mankind, it will generally be found, that those variances usually result from the difference of the original principles we adopt, or on which we act, rather than from any error in the deductions from those principles. In contemplating the wonderful adventures in which, for a Century past, we have been engaged, some are apt to suspect an universal derangement of intellect, considering our island as one vast hospital of incurable lunatics. And, perhaps, appearances might warrant the conclusion. But I believe, on investigation it will be found, that suppositions so derogatory to our national character can result only from the ignorance of the principles on which we act. Let those principles be assumed, and the whole of our conduct respecting Africa, the West Indies, the East Indies, and France, will present to our view a wonderful uniformity.

To the honour of the nation it may be recorded, that, perhaps, no measure was ever adopted with a more universal approbation than the war against France. Indeed, it would have been strange if it had not. It naturally resulted from principles so strongly and universally inculcated; as to become almost as if they had been innate. A hatred of the French we all imbibed in our earliest infancy. Every source of our ideas was impregnated with the laudable principle. It was the only subject on which all parties, all religions, all classes amongst us, agreed. To be an Englishman was to be an Antigallican. The Whig *Dr. Price*, taught us from the pulpit, that “the French were our natural enemies;” and the Tory *Dr. Johnson*, with an accuracy becoming his character, asks “what can you expect from a people that eat frogs?”⁸⁰⁸ All our writers tell us how despicable and superficial are their authors, and every cobbler can inform us, that one Englishman is as good as three Frenchmen.

These just and accurate sentiments very fortunately combining with recent events, it needed not the eloquence of *Mr. Burke* to excite a universal wish for the extirpation of a people equally the objects of our hatred and contempt. The despicable wretches dared to wish for freedom. Impudent presumption! Slavery and wooden shoes were their just portion!⁸⁰⁹ It became them to have known that Liberty was the *Englishman's* birth-right, and a song would have informed them, that it was *Britons* who “never would be Slaves.”⁸¹⁰ But the monsters had the profligate wickedness to put their King to death, for the trifling offences of conspiring with foreign powers against his country, and ordering his guards to fire on and massacre ten thousand of his unarmed subjects!⁸¹¹ This was, undoubtedly, a gross insult on the British nation. She had hitherto stood solely and peculiarly distinguished for bringing a Monarch to the scaffold, proscribing his successor, and pronouncing a sentence of bastardy on ————⁸¹² Here then the French daringly insulted us, by

presuming, in some degree, to imitate our deeds; and, with matchless impudence, ventured to purloin a small portion of our crimes.

However properly, and however universally, the desire of extirpating these monsters might prevail amongst us, yet the fact, however disgraceful, is too notorious to be concealed, that there were some amongst us who were so lost to those sentiments becoming Englishmen, as to be averse to starving, or extirpating, the French; nay, they even scrupled not to express their wish that they should be left undisturbed in the possession of the liberty they had obtained. It is true, indeed, that the number of these despicable wretches was very inconsiderable, and they were looked on with becoming contempt, by those amongst us who possessed elevated minds, becoming the people of a great nation. And, I trust I shall not be deemed censorious, when I declare that I do not believe that there was a single individual amongst us who was averse to the war against France, but might justly be deemed an enemy to our excellent constitution in Church and State, because I know of no principle on which the war against France can be reprobated, but will equally apply to the whole system of our conduct.

Political leaders labour under disadvantages peculiar to their situation. On all but political subjects the disputants are at full liberty to bring forward their whole store of arguments: Statesmen, on the contrary, are in, general, necessitated to conceal their true motives; and, when called on for explanations and defence, it is only fictitious ones, adapted to temporary purposes, which we have any reason to expect. The true motives and reasons always lie hidden deep in the recesses of the cabinet; and they may be solid and consistent, however weak, puerile, and inconsistent, those may be with which they are necessitated to fill their speeches, their declarations, and their memorials. Is it any impeachment of the understandings of the great characters who adorn the Treasury bench in St. Stephen's Chapel,⁸¹³ for them to tell their audience that misery, anarchy, and ruin, have overspread the unhappy country of France, that there is no such thing as property existing, and that, unless we restore the Clergy, and Nobles, to their ancient rights, the land and property of England will become of no value? Is it derogatory to the splendid abilities of *Lord Hawkesbury*, for him to order his son to tell the House of Commons, that it is both practicable, and indispensably necessary, for us to march to Paris, and destroy the Jacobin Club?⁸¹⁴ No! These men despise the nonsense they deem it expedient to adopt, and all that it proves is—the ideas they entertain of the audience they thus address: as the Clergy deem it no disgrace to submit to all the mummery of a religion they despise, for the valuable end of preserving the authority and dignity of their order.⁸¹⁵

Hence, in defending the war against France, I am not, by any means, bound to adopt any of those motives or arguments, which have in the course

of it been thrown out to amuse the ignorant, and which have regularly been disclaimed, as soon as they have effected the temporary purpose for which they were intended. No longer is it requisite to suppose our Ministers to have been so frantic as to plunge us in a war, because we were permitted to send our manufactures up the Scheldt,⁸¹⁶ for however loudly it might have been vociferated, and however strongly insisted on as the ostensible and justifiable ground of war, we are now told, in the sublime and beautiful language of *Mr. Burke*, that it was as despicable as a dispute about a *piss-pot*.⁸¹⁷ And we now consider the death of the King of France merely as a fortunate circumstance, which happily produced a more perfect zeal and unanimity amongst us in prosecuting a war which had been long ardently sought for, from motives which would have been equally powerful though Louis XVI. never had existed. It is now avowed, that the real motives for our war against France, originated in the French presuming to change their former government. “*The sincerity of our wishes for the success of so difficult and so interesting an undertaking,*” is no longer alledged. We treat with contempt every distinction relating to the different parties, and events, which have taken place. The cause of the war, the danger to this country, existed “*from the first period, when his most Christian Majesty had called his people around him, to join in concerting measures for their common happiness.*”⁸¹⁸ The *apparent* neutrality, which for four years we observed, is now considered with regret; and *Mr. Dundas* takes shame to himself and his colleagues, that they were not so quick sighted as *Mr. Burke*, in perceiving the danger, which resulted to this country, from the first dawn of freedom in France.⁸¹⁹ It is now deemed expedient to apologize to that illustrious Senator, for any timidity (not reluctance) which may have appeared in adopting his early, and earnest, advice—of *extermination*, or *eternal War*.⁸²⁰

As the obscurity, in which it has been deemed expedient to involve this subject, has in some degree been done away; as the view, in which I ever considered it, begins to be unveiled to the public, I have presumed to present myself as a champion in its defence. And I mean to contend, That it is highly becoming this nation, to exert all the energy of the state, to prevent France, Poland, or any other considerable nation in Europe, from adopting any alteration in their Government, or Laws,⁸²¹ which may meliorate and improve the circumstances of the people, or remove those defects in their Governments, which impede their Manufactures, Trade, Agriculture, and General Happiness—That on our preventing the removal of those defects in their Governments, and our subverting their rising happiness, depends the very existence of every thing which peculiarly distinguishes us amongst Nations.—That it becomes us to persevere, with a zeal proportioned to the importance of the cause, assured that in abandoning it we expose our religion, the administration

of our laws, the great system of our commerce, nay our well balanced government, the wonder and the admiration of the world! to certain and irreparable ruin. So far from wanting success, I mean to contend that we have been eminently successful in our design, if not equal to our wishes, yet fully adequate to any reasonable expectation we could have formed—That our success, so far from furnishing a motive for peace, ought only to incite us to a further prosecution of the war; as whether successful, or unsuccessful, it never can be abandoned, without abandoning every thing which is the pride and boast of Englishmen.

But, previous to the discussion of these propositions, I must beg leave to submit a preliminary one of the first importance, that is, what shadow of right have we to discuss them at all? The right of making war the wisdom of our ancestors has lodged solely in the crown; and is it not to be inferred that the crown is the sole and proper judge, and that every subject, in presuming to judge of it, and in consequence of such judgment, attempting to control, impede, or in any shape prevent, the crown engaging in, or prosecuting any war, is guilty of an attempt against the prerogatives of his majesty? and, if treason be not limited to attempts against the person of the sovereign, but extends to the regal rights, it follows, that to arraign those rights, or attempt to incite the people to impede the sovereign in the free and undisturbed exercise of those rights, must be far more indisputably treason, than any attempt against the novel and undefined right of an assembly called a House of Commons.⁸²² No true friend to the principles of our glorious Revolution can wish to entrench on this prerogative. It was particularly secured to the crown by the Bill of Rights.⁸²³ The prerogative of leading us to slaughter, seems, according to Bishop Burnet, to have been the principal motive that induced our *glorious Deliverer* to rescue us from Popery, Slavery, and Wooden Shoes; for it seems that on our proving somewhat restive, he was with difficulty persuaded from abandoning us to the Pope, the Devil, and the Pretender.⁸²⁴ Indeed the vesting this prerogative intirely, and unrestrained, in the Monarch became peculiarly proper, when a Sovereign with foreign possessions was placed on the throne. The particular interest of those foreign possessions might call for a war injurious to this country, and ought not the Prince to be left to his free uncontrolled choice?⁸²⁵ would it not be a violation of the first principles of justice, were we to expect him to attend to *our* sentiments on the subject, who must necessarily be liable to be biassed by our particular interest? His present Majesty is the common Father of all his subjects, Hanoverian, and English, Protestants, Irish Catholics, Mungrel Canadians, African Negroes, Mussulmen, Gentoos, and the people of the South Sea Islands, which Captain Cook took possession of in his Majesty's name; and shall we, from among this motley group, expect to have our opinions attended to, merely because his Majesty

does us the honour of residing amongst us in preference to his other dominions?—It is indeed alledged that the prerogative of making war is but nominally in the Crown, as the House of Commons possess the means which are requisite to conduct it.⁸²⁶ This might, possibly, have been the case formerly, as we find a Parliament desiring *Charles I.* to declare war, and then laughing at him, and refusing to furnish money to carry it on.⁸²⁷ But this was too great a solecism to be suffered to continue at the Revolution. From that period the Crown has possessed all the means of war, a regular military force, enlisted for life, sworn to submit to articles of war framed by the Crown. On declaring war, the English troops may be sent abroad, and foreign introduced in their room to preserve order, and to pay these troops the whole surplus revenue, amounting to several millions, is at the disposal of the crown; besides raising money by Tallies, Debentures, Navy Bills to any extent, which the government ever since the revolution have regularly practiced.⁸²⁸ When *Mr. Pitt* came into power he found twenty millions of unfunded debt,⁸²⁹ raised without any authority of Parliament whatever; and this very sessions a bill has been passed binding Parliament to discharge Navy Bills, although issued without their previous authority.⁸³⁰ But were we to admit *Mr. Wyndham's* doctrine, that the Royal prerogatives are to be exercised under the sanction of the House of Commons,⁸³¹ supposing this right of making war to be banded about between the Council Chamber and St. Stephen's Chapel, or suppose it to be divided between them, yet still it may be asked, what right can the people have to interfere? whether power shifts from the Barons and Clergy to the Monarch, or from the Monarch to the lower House of Parliament, yet no portion of it ever devolved upon the people; and it approximates to Treason to contend that it ever ought. What impertinence then must it be, for any individual to interfere in any part of the government of a country, as to which the whole body of them have not the least concern. The glorious Queen Elizabeth, and Solomon her successor, very properly, therefore, checked this presumption, by telling us that it did not become subjects to take upon them to judge of affairs of State,⁸³² or presume to talk of what Sovereigns might do in the plenitude of their power.

As this war is so completely defensible on Aristocratic, it is no less so on Democratic principles. Let us suppose Citizens RICHMOND⁸³³ and PAINE ransacked all the Gin-shops to form a National Convention, can it be doubted, but that a proposal for extirpating the French would be clamourously adopted; and if there be any meaning in these Whig principles, it must be, that the minority are bound to concur in, and support, the resolutions of the majority, how profligate soever they may be, and even though they may possess the means of preventing the profligate measures of the majority being carried into effect. Hence, were the war ever so absurd, and indefensible in

itself, yet can no Tory object to it, as it evidently flowed from Royalty, the proper source of war; nor can any Whig object to it, as it has been sanctioned by the majority of the people, and if *Vox Populi Vox Dei*⁸³⁴ be true, and I never heard its truth denied, it then also follows, that this war has in a peculiar manner received still superior sanction to that either of the King or the people.

Having fully proved the rightful origin of this war, on principles which all parties amongst us must admit, I might here lay down my pen with triumph; and I must insist that proceeding a single step further in my argument, must be considered as being perfectly *ex Gratia*. Nay, I must acknowledge, that I scarcely know how to apologize for the daring presumption of discussing the merits of a question, which the constitution has wisely assigned to be solely judged of by one individual, doubtless on the principle that he alone is the fit proper and competent judge of it. I even doubt whether even a zealous defence may not be a crime. If the purity of my intentions be pleadable in my defence, more than *Gulliver's* was, when, with an ignominious stream, he extinguished the flames which threatened destruction to the superb palace of the illustrious emperor of Lilliput,⁸³⁵ it can only be owing to the superior mildness of our laws, and the peculiar tenderness with which they are, at the present period, administered.⁸³⁶ Some have pretended to dispute the right of our interfering in the internal affairs of France, but *Mr. Pitt* very truly tells us, that it is practice justified by the greatest writers, and by the conduct of the best of Princes, in the best of times.⁸³⁷ Indeed, the authorities are so numerous that I am puzzled to select them. The celebrated *Grotius* is clear on the subject. Did not (says he) *Hercules* go about the world to destroy Monsters?⁸³⁸ and he might have added so did *Don Quixote*. If then, *Hercules*, the Demi-God, went about the world to destroy Monsters, surely the Kings of Europe, who are deemed God's Vicegerents on Earth, have a right to destroy the Jacobin Monsters at Paris. But, certainly, no friend to our glorious Revolution can object to the interference of one country with the internal concerns of another. Did not the *immortal* William come over with 16,000 Dutch troops to interfere in our internal concerns? Did he not go over to Ireland, and interfere with her concerns? Did he not interfere with the internal affairs of Germany, and procure a ninth Electorate to be created, but which for him could never have been thought of? And did he not plot the partition and disposition of the whole Spanish Monarchy?⁸³⁹ Did not that great Prince George I. send a fleet to Sweden, and Russia, and compel them to sign the quadruple Alliance?⁸⁴⁰ And does not his present Majesty interfere with the internal affairs of Indostan, and of Africa? All these instances relate, merely to the right of interfering in the affairs of countries with whom you are at peace, solely on the ground that it is your interest to interfere: but with respect to France we are in a state of war. Some ignorantly suppose, that even a state of war only

authorises a reparation of the injury for which the war was commenced, but *Mr. Pitt* very properly asks us, whether in any war we ever regarded the cause of quarrel as the ground of peace?⁸⁴¹ The right of war clearly includes a right of adopting every measure which interest, which ambition, or which cruelty, can suggest. *Mr. Burke* very justly observes, that no Tyrant, no savage Conqueror, ever filled up the measure of cruelty which every writer on the Law of Nations has allowed them.⁸⁴² Certainly not. Let us, for instance, examine the mild Whig philosopher *Mr. Locke*. He defines a state of war to be “*a state of enmity and destruction;*” that it is “*a state of enmity, malice, violence, and mutual destruction;*” and says he, you may treat your enemies “*as a beast of prey;*”⁸⁴³ That we had a just cause of war against France even *Mr. Fox* admits, and *Mr. Locke* then grants that you may treat them as beasts of prey, you may treat them with enmity and malice. Everything short of extermination and destruction is kindness, favour, and abandonment of your just right. It is absurd for *Mr. Fox* to say, that we *had* a just ground of war, but the ground done away we now pursue it on unjustifiable principles, or for a criminal purpose.⁸⁴⁴ This is impossible, for, once commenced, it is according to *Mr. Locke*, to be pursued and conducted with *malice, violence, and destruction;* for he defines such to be its very nature. It is certainly something extraordinary, that any should venture to promulgate a single scruple as to the lawfulness of extirpating our natural enemies, the French. It is too fatal a proof of the prevalence of French principles amongst us. Why are we so fastidious on a sudden? are we startled at the idea of extermination? has not the extermination of the Rohillas, after full investigation, been sanctioned by the British Parliament?⁸⁴⁵ and have not more fell in the East Indies, during his present Majesty’s reign, than is proposed to be massacred in France?⁸⁴⁶ Nay, have not more millions been exterminated from Africa than the whole population of France amounts to? Yet both the people of Africa and Indostan were so far from being our natural enemies, that the most frantic imagination could not suggest the idea. But if the French partizans insist on our treating them with greater tenderness than we have Africa or Indostan, will it be pretended that they are intitled to better treatment than our sister Kingdom, Ireland? Under the glorious Queen Elizabeth, the Poet Spenser proposes, “That a Proclamation be made for the Irish to submit themselves in twenty days. If they did not come in on this first summons, I would have none received, but left to their miserable end, being kept from manurance, by hard restraint, they would quickly consume themselves and devour one another.” He states the proceedings in Munster, as an example, “Notwithstanding that the same was a most rich and plentiful country, full of corn and cattle, yet, ere one year and a half, they were brought to such wretchedness as that out of every corner of the woods and glens they came forth creeping on their hands, for their legs would not bear them; they

looked like anatomies of death, they spoke like ghosts, crying out of their graves, they did eat the dead carrions, happy were they could find them, yea, and one another soon after, insomuch as the very carcasses they spared not to scrape out of their graves—in a short space there were none almost left and a most populous and plentiful country suddenly left void of man and beast.”⁸⁴⁷ Comparing these laudable proceedings with our recent transactions in Bengal will prove the uniformity of our national character, and surely remove any squeamish scruples as to the vigorous measures which it may be expedient for us to pursue respecting France. When we talk of exterminating the people of that unhappy country, some are apt to ask, whether we can spare hands to cut all their throats? for taking the population at twenty seven millions, and supposing we kill a thousand a day, it will take 86 years and 3 months to destroy them; unless, as it is a work of necessity, the Bishops may allow it to be done on the Sabbath, in which case it may be completed in seventy four years, but let us not estimate the progress of the work of death by the inartificial modes adopted by the petty dealers in this traffic. When on an extensive scale, it, like all other large manufactures, is capable of great improvements. As easily as a *Sarah Malcolm* could murder three of four, we can destroy as many thousands; and in as small a space of time as a *Brownrigg* could starve half a dozen children, a whole country may be destroyed by famine.⁸⁴⁸ Indeed, famine seems to be the most expeditious and eligible mode of destruction, and it seems to be a mode peculiarly British. In the total desolation of Munster, *Spenser* says, “All perished by the extremity of famine.”⁸⁴⁹ In the year 1749, it was a matter of universal lamentation, that the danger to which Holland and Hanover were exposed, necessitated us to make peace at the critical moment, when the failure of the French harvest would have produced a famine, and destroyed our *natural* enemies. And no sooner had we possession of Bengal than, in the course of a few months, it is said, three Members of the British Legislature, with a few assistants, seized the crop of the country, and, by an artificial famine, destroyed, it is said, a greater number of the inhabitants than the whole population of England amounts to:⁸⁵⁰ much then is it to be lamented that our laudable exertions to starve the French have not hitherto been crowned with success; but, surely, we may now entertain the most sanguine hopes. The advocates for *extermination* and *eternal war* have, at length, assumed the direction. *Mr. Pitt* always faltered, and hesitated, as to the object and mode of conducting the war: but a *Burke*, a *Wyndham*, and a *Mansfield*, never could be misunderstood.⁸⁵¹ *Fielding* tells us, that it is a slander on the devil to say he leaves his friends in the lurch; his half, his doubtful friends, only he abandons;⁸⁵² may we not hope then, that, with more than human assistance, the new triumvirate will prove successful? When the Lilliputian Statesmen resolved to starve their natural enemy *Gulliver*, they issued a

declaration proving how infinitely the sentence fell short of his offence, and hoping he would submit without a murmur to the mild decree.⁸⁵³ And may not Mr. BURKE'S Rhetoric, which operated so powerfully in convincing the French it was better to be loyal than to be free, be now displayed, with equal zeal, and equal success, in persuading that *miserable unhappy* people, that, in starving them, we kindly propose, a deliverance from all their misery, a cure for all their sorrows? May not the logic of *Mr. Wyndham* prove, that, had the French as many lives as a Cat, they have forfeited them all, and that in taking them only once we abandon a large portion of our rights? He will prove, from *Grotius* that we may destroy them as *Monsters*; from *Locke* that being enemies we may destroy them as *wild beasts*; from the Canonists that they may be put to death for *sacrilege*;⁸⁵⁴ from *Lord Auckland's* Memorial that they may be killed as *Regeicides*;⁸⁵⁵ and from *Milton, Locke, Furneaux*, and all our Whig writers on toleration, that they ought to be exterminated from society as *Atheists* or *Papists*.⁸⁵⁶

In destroying them by famine we adopt the *neatest* and most *elegant* mode, we do not, like *Lady Macbeth* soil our fingers with blood. Nay we may deny having killed them at all; thus we do not say that we *massacred* so many millions in India but that so many millions died of famine; by which notable contrivance we have not only the pleasure of destroying our fellow creatures, but the additional satisfaction of imputing our deeds to heaven, or, if it suits our purpose, to those whom we destroy; as *Spenser* tells us that the famine by which the people of Munster perished, "They themselves had wrought," because they were "Stout and obstinate rebels, such as will never be made dutiful and obedient."⁸⁵⁷ Indeed it is observable that where ever the English have gone, whether into Ireland, Asia, or the West Indies, famine constantly follows their footsteps: but it is a famine in which no Englishman ever suffered, the natives only are the victims. I will not then relinquish the hope that, under the auspices of our new Ministers, we shall succeed in destroying the French by famine and pestilence. If we can maintain the dominion of the Sea, which, we are told, is our *natural* dominion, may we not prevent foreign supplies? and, by continued descents on their coasts, destroy their villages and their crops? appearances seem to indicate such to be the plan of our new Ministers, and will not every true born Englishman wish them success?—One only objection occurs to me, as pestilence naturally accompanies famine, can the former like the latter, be limited to France? will not twenty seven millions of putrid carcases spread a general contagion through Europe? Certainly I mean it; for, as the object of the war is to eradicate French principles, to exterminate the people of France only will prove extremely inadequate to this important end. The gangrene of Jacobinism, we are told, is spreading rapidly and widely through Europe; and, surely, our state Surgeons are not so ignorant, or so negligent,

as to confine their operation to France. The proceedings in Poland, and in Scotland,⁸⁵⁸ prove that they are not; and afford the pleasing hope that the vigour of their exertions will be commensurate to the extent of the danger—a danger from which famine and pestilence can alone give us any well founded expectation of deliverance. The sword, however successful, is but little adapted to root out Jacobinism. Its progress, in destruction, is too slow. It rouses to resistance, inflames the passions, promotes disquisition, and invigorates the mind. Pestilence and famine produce the contrary effects. Their havoc is not only more rapid, and extensive, than the most destructive war, but the survivors naturally sink into an abject state, well fitted to receive any yoke which may be imposed. Under such circumstances, the combined Monarchs, if they can but agree amongst themselves, may arrange Europe, nay the world itself, according to their wills. For, when Jacobinism shall be effectually eradicated from Europe, it will certainly not be difficult to root it out from amongst three or four millions of people in North America. The terror and distress of an universal pestilence, may produce effects as powerful, and as favourable, as an irruption of Goths and Vandals: Arts, Commerce and Literature, may be involved in common ruin; and Mr. BURKE'S wishes may be gratified, in carrying us back to the state of those past ages, whose ignorance and whose barbarism we are now called to look on with envy.

Taught by past experience, those who govern us will carefully guard against those circumstances which have produced the threatened danger. Mr. *Burke* justly observes, that, Kings will in future be careful not to grant their subjects any degree of liberty⁸⁵⁹—they will look with as much abhorrence on the ancient mild despotism of France, as on the limited monarchy of England. It may be hoped that they will grant no privileges to the most despicable village, knowing that when exempt from their domination, when become a refuge from their tyranny, it will rise to power and to splendor. That they will restrict commerce and manufactures within the narrowest bounds, and subject Agriculture to the most barbarous system; recollecting, that, man to be servile, must be rendered miserable. The small portion of remaining knowledge must be carefully confined among those orders of men, which have been instituted for the purpose, of availing themselves of the ignorance of their fellow creatures, to maintain a dominion over them;⁸⁶⁰ and for this purpose it will become indispensably necessary, not merely to regulate, but to annihilate the press; obliterating from the knowledge of mankind the Art of Printing, as effectually as preceding events have the perpetual lamp and the embalming art.

If then, we believe it to be incumbent on us to repress that spirit of Jacobinism which threatens the subversion of the antient systems of Europe, it will become us to adopt these measures, as the only ones adequate to the end

proposed; as it will become us carefully to avoid being deluded by the adoption of inefficient remedies. To partition France among the neighbouring powers would only spread her principles more widely. To diminish her territories by conquests would be of no avail, as however limited in extent, it would still illustrate and disseminate her principles of government. No change in the persons who exercise her government, or in the forms in which it is administered, can be material; various changes have we already witnessed, and, Mr. PITT acknowledges, that they have been all inimical, and every successive change, more and more, hostile to our views.⁸⁶¹ Whatever differences may exist in France, whether *Girondists* or *Maratists*, *Jacobins* or *Feuillants*, *Mountain* or *Moderates*,⁸⁶² the Partisans of the one Constitution or the other, it is admitted, that they all hold principles adverse to the antient system of Europe, and equally incompatible with any object for which we prosecute this war. So universally are the noxious principles prevalent in France, that, in all its wide extended coast, we cannot insinuate ourselves for a moment into a single port, without recognizing the very constitution which the war was undertaken to destroy; nor can we obtain admission among the woods of Corsica,⁸⁶³ without proclaiming through Europe our sanction to principles which we avowedly hold in abhorrence, and which all the terrors of the law are exerted to eradicate from amongst us, as subversive to all order and government.⁸⁶⁴

As, then, the object for which this war was undertaken cannot possibly be attained without extirpating the French, and as we have been uniformly told, that on the attainment of the object of the war, depended every thing that was dear to us, nay our very existence; it then follows, that to sign a peace with France on any terms whatever, must be signing nothing less than our own destruction, and annihilation, nor can any man propose peace with them without acknowledging the falsehood of those reasons which have been assigned for the prosecution of the war, which must be pursued on the magnificent plan of Mr. BURKE, that if we fail to extirpate the French the war must be continued until they extirpate us.—FINIS.

*On Trials for Treason**

Between late October and early December 1794, three members of societies campaigning for a reform of parliament, chiefly by the introduction of universal manhood suffrage and annual parliaments, were tried, and eventually acquitted, of high treason. They were Thomas Hardy (1752-1832) and John Thelwall (1764-1834) of the London Corresponding Society, and John Horne Tooke (1736-1812) of the Society for Constitutional Information. They had been involved in summoning a convention of delegates from reform societies throughout Britain to discuss how to advance their cause. The defendants had been indicted by a grand jury on October 2 1794, and on that occasion Lord Chief Justice Eyre (1734-99) had addressed the jury in a speech which became immediately controversial, and provoked a number of trenchant replies, most published anonymously, by William Godwin (1756-1836), by the liberal barrister Alexander Luders (d. 1819), and by Fox, among others.‡ The principal clause of the 1351 statute of treasons, under which Hardy and the others were charged, stated that it was high treason ‘when a man does compass or imagine’ (in the sense of intend or design) ‘the death of the king’. Almost all controversies about the statute came down to arguing about how figuratively this clause was to be interpreted: how literal a ‘death’ it envisaged, and whether, in the word ‘king’, the whole executive government was included, or simply the real, physical body of the king himself. Among the arguments employed by the law officers of the Crown in drawing up the indictment, and in their speeches for the prosecution, was that the intended convention would have sought to ‘overawe’ parliament, to put pressure on it to grant a reform; this disempowering of government, it was claimed, amounted to an intention to put the king to a figurative death. It is on this issue – that a statute manifestly intended to protect the life of the king should be being used by the government to protect the authority of the corrupt House of Commons – that Fox concentrates in his reply to Eyre.

The pamphlet was written sometime after the publication of Eyre’s charge in the first week of October and the start of Hardy’s trial on October 25.

* The only copy of this pamphlet is in Eliza Gurney’s volume, now at the University of Michigan. The copy is without a title page, but in Gurney’s MS. Table of Contents in the front of the volume, she titled the pamphlet “On Trials for Treason.”

‡ For a detailed discussion of Eyre’s charge, and of many of the replies to it, see Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, ch. 10.

Of all the peculiar circumstances which characterize the present æra, it is not the least remarkable, that Charges of *High Treason* should be brought forward at a period which seems to be so unappropriate, that it is become requisite to dress up this branch of our *Law* in a mode so novel, that its most prominent features can scarcely be recognized.

At every former period, when *Trials for Treason* have engaged the attention of our Courts, the occasion had been obvious. Some *rebellion* had convulsed the Land; a competitor had claimed the *Throne*; or a belief of serious attempts against the *life* of the *Sovereign*, had occasioned a general alarm that it was in *danger*.⁸⁶⁵ But we now see *Britons* dragged before the Bar of Justice *en masse* as *Traitors*,⁸⁶⁶ at a time when no War exists but a *foreign one*, which has been sedulously, if not wantonly, sought for; and in which it must have been madness in the extreme to have engaged us, had it been believed that there existed amongst us the seeds of a dangerous conspiracy against the State. It was a firm persuasion that the people were attached not only to the *King*, but even to his *Ministers*, in an unexampled degree, which emboldened us to engage in projects of wild ambition; and if their failure has excited discontent it was a natural effect. It was the discontents, arising from the ill success of a former War, which raised the *Minister* to his present situation;⁸⁶⁷ and absurd, in the extreme, must it be to stigmatize as *Traitorous* those discontents which *Mr. Pitt*, and his Coadjutors, excited in a former War, or those which may now exist.⁸⁶⁸ To whatever extent our discontents may prevail, yet never was there a period in which they had so little relation to *Treason*. No one disputes the *King's Title to the Crown*; and so far are we from wishing for a diminution of *His Prerogative*, that, when it was apprehended a former *House of Commons* was attempting an incroachment the Nation arose almost to a Man, joined *Mr. Pitt* as the avowed *Champion* of *Prerogative*, and thus enabled him to crush the most formidable *Parliamentary Coalition* that ever had existence.⁸⁶⁹ Some, there are, indeed, who believe that “The *influence* of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished;”⁸⁷⁰ and *Mr. Pitt*, having, it is said, loudly proclaimed through the nation that an *East India Nabob* had eight Members in our *House of Commons*, and that it is so constituted that foreign Powers may purchase seats, and, by putting in their Agents, control our Government, some are apt to imagine that such a body, possessing so large a share in the Government, is dangerous to the Community, and ought to be reformed.⁸⁷¹ From the nature of the late American contest it is not extraordinary if the *Duke of Richmond*, *Mr. Burke*, and the other Partizans of *America*, should have disseminated *Republican Principles*, and if there be some who, like *Mr. Burke*, “admire a Republic,” who exclaim “That the Americans could not bear the smell of *Monarchy*, even at

3000 miles distance;”⁸⁷² yet is there no reason to suppose that even such men wish the death of the *King*, because they know the only effect would be that the *throne* would be instantly filled by another; and whatever contempt for the King *Mr. Burke* may have disseminated, yet is there not an individual who wishes to see him “*hurled from his throne,*” unless he be among those who look for a *place* from his successor.⁸⁷³ Does the conduct of the Sovereign manifest any idea of his danger? has he doubled his guards? or does he wear a coat of mail? No! he walks and rides about, justly unconscious of fear; and if his *Ministers* think that there is one individual who is plotting his destruction, they are *traitors* to their Sovereign in suffering him to go so exposed. But they know he is in no danger; and it may be surmised that they resort to the *Law of Treason* to protect *themselves, not him*. So far are they from fearing any civil commotion, that they scatter the national force through distant regions; and, instead of apprehending it to be needed for the purpose of quelling domestic rebellion, they can spare it to protect *Holland* and *Hanover*, to guard the *Pope*, and to ——— *India*.⁸⁷⁴ Of domestic insurrection we have, indeed, had some instances: but, far from being treasonable, they were merely Church and King Mobs, incited by some of the zealous friends of the Ministers to plunder and murder a few individuals, who were pointed out as being inimical to their measures.⁸⁷⁵ Through the whole range of our history, not a period can be discovered which seems to have so little reference to the Law of Treason, and some may be apt to ask, whether our Ministers now resort to it on any other principle than that on which a drunken carman, when he gets well drubbed in an affray abroad, comes home and wreaks his vengeance on his wife and children.

However extraordinary it may be deemed that the cry of Treason should be heard at such a period, yet it cannot be deemed extraordinary that, if it be heard, it should be heard to babble the gibberish of the times. If it be exhibited to the public view we must expect to see it dressed *a-la-mode*, and shaped to the fashion of the day;⁸⁷⁶ and it is a fortunate opportunity for those who attend the toilet of *Treason* to manifest their adroitness and ingenuity, in fitting her to their purpose. If this be too difficult a task they must then throw dust in our eyes; or, while they are calling on us to behold the work they place before us, it must be enveloped in a mist, that we may be unable to detect its imperfections. A *Blackstone* may have told us that “*Treason is a crime which ought to be most precisely ascertained; for if it be indeterminate, this alone is sufficient to make any government degenerate into arbitrary power;*”⁸⁷⁷ yet we need not be surprized if a judge should now say to a jury “*it is impossible that any certain rule should be laid down for your government,*”⁸⁷⁸ that treasonable acts “*must remain for ever infinitely various*”⁸⁷⁹—that “*men assembled peaceably may finally and suddenly involve themselves*

in the crime of High Treason”—and “*that the process is very simple*” whereby, even “*honest men, lovers of their country, nay, loyal to their prince, if eagerly bent on speculative improvement,*”⁸⁸⁰ may be subjected to the most horrible sentence which the law has devised to punish the “*greatest crime against faith, duty, and human society.*”⁸⁸¹ If a judge should thus pronounce that *honest men, lovers of their country, and loyal to their prince, peaceably assembled,* may be dragged before a Revolutionary Tribunal, *which has no certain rule laid down for its government,*⁸⁸² and if a jury should return humble thanks to the judge, that honest men, and lovers of their country, are thus liable to be dragged before them for offences into which *they may be suddenly involved, if they happen to be bent on speculative improvements,*⁸⁸³ may we not be permitted to ask whether this alarming doctrine be an excrescence from existing circumstances,⁸⁸⁴ intended to make “terror the order of the day,”⁸⁸⁵ for the suppression of speculation on improvements in Government, which our Ministers suppose to be peculiarly dangerous because from themselves they originated, because but for them they would never have engaged the public attention, and because the Societies, which they themselves formed for their dissemination, have persevered in the conduct marked out for them, and have refused to “face about” at the command of their drill serjeants, with the adroitness which a rigid disciplinarian might expect.⁸⁸⁶

As I never had the honour of belonging to a Constitutional, or a Corresponding Society, or enlisted under the banners of Parliamentary Reform—As the celebrated letter to Colonel Sharman failed to convince me of the necessity, or wisdom, of calling on a licentious mob to assume the legislative Authority, who had just attempted to lay the capital in ruins, and murder the Chief Justice of England.⁸⁸⁷ As I was silly enough to laugh at *Mr. Pitt’s* plan of regenerating the House of Commons, by a revolutionary process of 100 years⁸⁸⁸—As even *Mr. Dundas’s* speech in favour of Parliamentary Reform produced no very powerful conviction on my mind—As, however fully the speeches of *Citizens Pitt, Burke, Wyndham, and Richmond, &c.* might prove the vileness, and corruption, of the assemblies they harangued,⁸⁸⁹ yet I rather thought it preferable to leave them in possession of the powers they possessed, than risk the peace of the community by attempting to rescue it from their hands; as having had invariably these views it will be hardly imagined that I mean to defend the disorderly recruits whom *Serjeant Richmond* and *Corporal Pitt* have enlisted in the cause of *Parliamentary Reform*. To “advance” when they should “face about,” to “march” when ordered to “halt,” were circumstances sufficiently provoking to any leader, whether strutting at the head of his corps in *St. James’s Park*⁸⁹⁰ or in *St. Stephen’s Chapel*. But let the offence be properly charged, and let the punishment be appropriate; let them be tied up to the halbert⁸⁹¹ or whipped out of the regiment; but do not shoot them for

desertion. If, in 1782, *Citizen Pitt*, or in 1792, *Citizen Tooke*, clamour for a reform of the House of Commons, what, in the name of common sense, can it have to do with a branch of our law founded solely on a statute made centuries before any thing which had a resemblance to our House of Commons existed? If *Queen Elizabeth* vouchsafed to order some despicable Boroughs in Cornwall to send up 16 members to attend in the lower House of Parliament, where they were ordered to interfere in no political concerns without her permission;⁸⁹² if in the next century they conspired to murder her successor, exclude his son from the throne, and establish a Revolutionary Government;⁸⁹³ and, suppose a century afterwards some persons should insist that these Cornish Burgesses should be reduced to their original nothingness, I do not say but laws may be made inflicting specific pains and penalties on those who shall dispute the right of these Cornish Burgesses to the share they possess in the Legislature; but it is not easy to discover how they can derive protection from laws made to protect the lives of monarchs, whom they have murdered, or to fortify that regal power which they have encroached on, if not subverted. If the biscuit bakers, and all the other rabble, who fill the seats in St. Stephen's Chapel, wish to protect their sacred persons, by those awful sanctions with which the ancient laws of the kingdom guarded the sovereign, his consort, and the heir to the throne; if it be requisite to deem an attack upon them to be equivalent to a rebellion against the monarch's authority, why cannot those things be effected by an enacting law? such was the mode adopted by their worthy predecessors, in the middle of the last century, adroit as they were in adopting the fiction of taking up arms by his authority against the life and person of the sovereign, yet it never entered their heads that conspiracies against the House of Commons were overt acts of compassing the death of the King! If they had, their proceedings might have assumed a more legal form; and, instead of charging the King with the strange fiction of Treason against the People of England, he might have been indicted on the Statute of Edward III. for compassing and imagining his own death;⁸⁹⁴ and seizing the five members⁸⁹⁵ and conspiring against the House of Commons laid as the overt acts⁸⁹⁶ of the Treason; as a Judge has solemnly delivered it as Law, that "a force upon the Parliament *must be* immediately directed against the King."⁸⁹⁷ But it seems that Parliament, though anxious to intrench themselves deep in the Law of Treason, had no idea of this subtilty, and were therefore necessitated to take the plain road; and, in the course of seven years, passed no less than eleven acts on Treason, whereby "whoever shall contrive, or endeavour to stir up, or raise force against the present Government, or for the subversion, or *alteration* (that is Parliamentary Reform) of the same, and shall declare the same by any open deed, shall be deemed and adjudged to be guilty of High Treason."⁸⁹⁸ Thus these ignorant men were at the trouble of making

eleven acts to constitute attempts to obtain a Parliamentary Reform Treason, although, as is now discovered, it was then already Treason, by the existing laws, of which even a *Hale*,⁸⁹⁹ then on the Bench, was ignorant.

We are told “that a project for a Convention, which has for its object the obtaining a Parliamentary Reform, and that object only, but the obtaining it without the authority of Parliament, and steps taken upon it would be High Treason in all the actors in it!”⁹⁰⁰ Now, I must acknowledge that, from the first moment in which I could spell a page in the English History, I have uniformly beheld the *House of Commons* with the utmost loathing, whether I considered their vile servility to all the capricious and diversified cruelties of the Tudors, their cunning cajoling conduct to the silly *James*, their deep and infernal policy in murdering his Successor, and usurping the regal power, and their despicable imbecility when trampled on by *Cromwell*; when I trace the dreadful labyrinths of *perjury* which characterize their Journals in the reign of *Charles II.* or their inertness under the important circumstances which distinguished the time of *James II.* let it be supposed then, that with these views, I had lived in the year 1688, I might then possibly have joined a body of conspirators at *Chalk Farm*,⁹⁰¹ all “Honest Men, Loyal to their King, and Lovers of their Country,” and “an Impetuous Man might have precipitated us into crimes of unforeseen danger, and magnitude,” by thus addressing us, “Citizens a foreign army has landed in the Kingdom, and has been suffered, to march to London, under colour of a Declaration that the General only meant to deliver us from some grievance under which, he says, we groan, and to remedy which he promised to call a free Parliament, instead of fulfilling his promise he has seized on the King’s Palace, ordered Him by a *Lettre de cachet*,⁹⁰² to retire to *Rochester*,⁹⁰³ and thus rendered it impossible that any Parliament, on the principles of our constitution, can ever exist, as of such parliament the King is an ‘*integral part*,’⁹⁰⁴ having dissolved the old Government, they tell us the Government devolves upon the people: but, instead of assembling a *Convention of the People* to form a new Government, or to reorganise the old, we see this wretch assemble the *Common Council* of *London*, and the *old* corrupt *House of Commons*, who are so far from being chosen by the People of *England*, that, it is said, 162 persons can command a majority,⁹⁰⁵ with this majority the *House of Lords* has been terrified, and necessitated to comply with ‘*existing circumstances*’⁹⁰⁶ and under this sanction this foreign General is about to be placed on the throne. Will you suffer this *traitorous design* against your lawful Sovereign to take place? No! let us take our Pikes, enter *St. Stephen’s Chapel*, and dye the *silver Thames* with the blood of the Monsters.”⁹⁰⁷ Suppose, deluded by such a Speech, we had issued forth to execute the design, and had been seized, and brought to trial for Treason, and a Judge had told the Jury that “a force upon the Parliament *must be* immediately directed against the King,”⁹⁰⁸ and,

consequently, that a conspiracy and intention to attack the Members of the House of Commons, to prevent their dethroning the Sovereign, was an overt act of compassing and imagining his death. But, perhaps, it may be deemed counter-revolutionary to treat so disrespectfully the *immortal William*, I will, therefore, suppose the *National Convention* of France to send over *Tom Paine*, with 16,000 troops; that the King's Ministers and Children should conspire with the 162 Persons, who, we are told, can command a majority in the *House of Commons*, and that they should attempt to place *Tom Paine* upon the Throne; suppose some Persons, who might object to the King's being thus "hurled from his Throne," were to meet at Chalk Farm, provide pikes, and take measures for attacking the *House of Commons*; this would, it seems, be Treason, even though we thereby preserved the *King on his throne*, for we are told, "*a force upon the Parliament must be directed against the King.*"

But, here, I may be told that I am wandering amongst the absurdest of imaginations, to suppose it to be possible that the *House of Commons* can ever, for a moment, fail of entertaining the *profoundest veneration, the warmest attachment, and the most inviolable fidelity*, to the *Sovereign*.⁹⁰⁹ Our political Trinitarians will tell us that though *King, Lords, and Commons*, are *three*, yet that these three are *one*;⁹¹⁰ and that, therefore, it is perfectly safe to consider a conspiracy against the *Cornish Boroughs*⁹¹¹ as the outward and visible sign of an inward and treasonable design against the life of the Sovereign. Whether this fine spun theory of mixed Government be warranted by nature, and experience, may possibly be doubted. The Government of nations *is too rich a booty* to be cordially, and peaceably, divided: nor does the union seem to be of such a permanent nature as to warrant its becoming a principle of Law.—The Law of Treason was framed to give a special protection to the Sovereign; nor does it seem any more consistent with *Loyalty* than with *Law* to share it among those who have wrested a portion of the sovereign Power from the hands of the Monarch. In what age would our Kings have considered conspiracies against the *lower* House of Parliament as on a footing with Treason against themselves? even though the House of Commons generously gave the Crown to the *immortal William*, yet it is not very certain that even *he* would have considered it as Treason had they been blown up into the air, by a new Gunpowder Plot. Oh! but, we shall be told that, the case is prodigiously altered; that, however scurvily this *lower* House of Parliament may have used our former Monarchs, yet they have chosen the House of Hanover as their peculiar favourite; and, therefore, the least that the Crown, and the Crown Lawyers, can do in return is to dignify it with all the sanctions, and all the prerogatives, which our *laws* gave to our ancient Sovereigns. Were the fact true, the interference might be deemed natural: but I think Historians tell us that, before *George I.* had been two years on the throne, he feared to trust the 162 persons

who, we are told, enjoy the right of nominating a majority of the House of Commons, to send him a new one; and he was necessitated actually to change the Constitution of Parliament, to attempt which, I think, is now laid down to be Treason though indeed it is the *shortening* of Parliaments, which is alluded to as a criminal attempt.⁹¹² Whether a conspiracy to *lengthen* them be as criminal, we are left in the dark; though the distinction seems to be rather arbitrary, for it does not seem to be any more treasonable to conspire to *shorten* Parliament, from 7 to 3 years, than to conspire to *lengthen* them from 3 to 7. The same great authority lays down, as “*a principle never to be departed from, that alterations in the Law of holding Parliaments can only be effected by the King, Lords and Commons.*”⁹¹³ supposing then the House of Commons to possess a *Divine* right (I say *Divine* right, because I know of no other they can claim) to a third share of the Government, yet it, certainly, can be only for the limited time for which they are chosen.—At its expiration they return among the “*Swinish Multitude,*” from whence they were taken; the persons who chose them may be dead, the burgage tenure,⁹¹⁴ or the borough which communicates this *Divine* right of governing may, by descent, or purchase, have gone into other hands; the *old* Representatives can be deemed but *leaseholders*, and, at the expiration of their terms, could no more possess any right to govern than the Scotch Convention,⁹¹⁵ or any other body of men; whence it, perhaps, seems to follow that the Members of the House of Commons, who met in 1717,⁹¹⁶ may by some, be deemed to have come within the description of “*People met together in Convention in order to usurp the Government of the Country;*”⁹¹⁷ any one step towards which, we are told, would be the clearest High Treason.⁹¹⁸ And it may be worthy consideration whether this construction of the Law of Treason might not implicate the then King, and House of Lords.

If such consequences follow, from considering a Convocation of the People to change the frame and constitution of the House of Commons as Treason against the Sovereign, we shall be involved in still greater difficulties, when we consider that this strangely constituted body, which *Mr. Pitt* tells us, consists, in part of the Representatives of *East India Nabobs* and is liable even to be subjected to *foreign influence*,⁹¹⁹ have sometimes made great efforts to awe the Monarch, and control him in the exercise of his undoubted prerogatives, nay, even since they have placed their favourite House of Hanover on the Throne. Some, indeed, have imagined that the policy of our Revolutionists was to introduce a *foreign* family, on purpose that it might become abjectly dependent upon the lower House of Parliament. If, in such a juncture, “*Honest men, loyal to their Prince,*” were to meet in Convocation to overawe *such* a House of Commons, nay, even to endeavour to change its Constitution, when they saw it attempting to encroach on the prerogatives of the Crown, and, possibly, under the influence of foreign Powers, it surely seems to be not merely a

constructive,⁹²⁰ but a *strangely constructive*, Treason, to deem such attempts, to control the *lower* House of Parliament, to be overt acts of conspiring the death of the King, though actually intended to guard his Life and Prerogatives from the incroachments of the House of Commons.

Those who imagine these cases to be imaginary, who suppose the House of Commons and the Sovereign to be always in unison, ought to look a little farther than speeches from the Throne, and addresses to it.⁹²¹ They will do well, if they wish to understand the true nature of the British Government, not to trust solely to forms and customs, let them read *Bishop Newton's* Life, prefixed to his Works, and they will see in how degraded a situation a King of England may appear.⁹²² They may see a triumphant part in this *lower* House of Parliament, not merely *treating* with the Sovereign, but *imposing terms* on him which in some measure to avert he was necessitated to resort to something so much like artifice as to excite our pity if not our contempt: but perhaps it is not requisite to refer to Books or Events, which the lapse of half a Century has consigned to oblivion. No, scarcely *ten years have elapsed* since the most discordant sounds were heard, from among the several branches of our *well balanced* Government, a discord so harsh, and resounded so loudly through the land, that I heard it in my garret. I was told "*That the House of Commons had overawed the Sovereign, forced themselves into the Cabinet, necessitated the King to bestow all the great offices of the executive Government on men whom he abhorred, who had, for years, opposed all his measures, and some of whom had treated him with the most degrading insult; that he was necessitated to submit to be dragged to his throne, to have the hateful words La Roy le veult*⁹²³ *grated in his ears, without daring to express a murmur at Bills which he loathed, and which were leveled at despoiling him of his influence, as his Predecessors had been despoiled of their authority. I was told that this House of Commons had crammed the Royal Stomach, with PORTLANDS, and BURKES, and WYNDHAMS,*⁹²⁴ *until it heaved with the loathsome potions, when at length Pitt and Co. got access to the Sovereign, and exhorted him to discharge the noisome mess, in confidence that the People would overawe the House of Commons, and support the Monarch.*"⁹²⁵ Having ever uniformly abhorred the House of Commons, having ever considered the power of which they had, in the last Century, bereaved the Monarch, as far more dangerous and injurious to the People when in their hands, than in the hands of even the *worst* of our Kings. I exulted, therefore, in the event. I walked 30 miles to give an unsolicited vote to a perfect Stranger,⁹²⁶ in opposition to applications which it was painful to resist. We succeeded. The 162 persons, who, we are told, return a majority of the House of Commons, would not, or could not, resist the general voice.⁹²⁷ But, suppose the reverse, suppose these 162 had persisted in obtruding the PORTLANDS, WYNDHAMS, BURKES, and ELLIOTS,⁹²⁸ on the Sovereign; suppose then I had conspired with others having the same views, suppose Mr. PITT or some other person had said,

—“Shall 162 individuals not only give law to ten millions of People, but shall they equally control their Will, and trample on the Prerogatives of the Crown, and the Privileges of the Peers of the realm? Shall these 162 be permitted to claim the exclusive right of holding the Public Purse, of dispensing it, with wanton prodigality, when permitted to divide amongst themselves the great Offices of the State: but threatening to withhold the most necessary supplies, threatening to disorganize the State, by refusing to meet the most pressing public exigencies, unless the Sovereign abandons his ancient and undoubted Prerogatives, and suffers them to fill all the great Offices of the executive Government with their creatures, and passes every Bill they may chuse to manufacture? And shall the King, and his People, be thus set at defiance by an inconsiderable body of men unknown to our Ancestors, but who being suffered, by some of our Sovereigns, to attend upon him in Parliament, and lay their humble Petitions at the foot of the throne, have, by degrees not merely possessed themselves of a share of legislative power, but, assuming the character of Representatives of the People, can thus set both the People and the Sovereign at defiance; say, will you suffer 162 individuals to seize the Helm of State, compelling the King to give it to the DUKE OF PORTLAND; or, will you rise in support of the Royal Right, to bestow it upon Mr. PITT—Shall we enter into St. Stephen’s Chapel, dash out the speaker’s brains, with his mace, and bear away the Heads of the Whole Body on our pikes?—Shall we any longer suffer the Cornish Boroughs to send Nabobs and Slave-holders to give Laws to us and our king? Or shall he enjoy his Prerogatives, uncontrolled, unless, when we have destroyed the present lower House of Parliament, he shall deem it expedient to form one on a plan more consistent with the public happiness, and with his Prerogatives”⁹²⁹—Whether such a speech would have been *illegal, absurd and wicked*, I will not inquire; nor will I dispute but, had the purpose been carried into effect, we might have been executed as *murderers and rioters*, but I wish to ask Mr. ANSTRUTHER,⁹³⁰ Whether he would have advised his Party to indict us for compassing and imagining the death of the King, and have laid, as the overt act, a conspiracy not indictable of itself, and which could no way support a charge of Treason, but on a supposition of its being intended against the Life of the King, when the sole intention of the conspirators was precisely the reverse, and (whether mistakenly or otherwise is not the question) to *defend* the King, and to *rescue* him from a dependence on a body of men who had murdered one of his Ancestors.

It must be recollected that no conspiracy or preparation to levy War, is of itself Treason.—The War must be actually levied, and against the King, to make it so.⁹³¹ If, then, circumstances occur in almost every period of our History, ancient and modern, wherein a conspiracy against the *lower* House of Parliament might exist, and yet be so far from implicating a design against the *Life of the King*, that it might spring from motives and principles not only *unconnected*, but even adverse to it, one would hardly have imagined, unless we

had it from very high authority, that “It seems to follow, as a necessary consequence, that a project of a Convention, which should have for its object the obtaining a *Parliamentary Reform*, and that object only, but the obtaining it without the authority of Parliament, and steps taken upon it, would be High Treason in all the actors in it.”⁹³²

Nay, if a project to reform the *lower* House of Parliament be of such a formidable nature, as that attempts to obtain an exclusion of Cornish Burgesses, or an East India Squad, must be construed as “*a conspiracy to overturn the Government;*”⁹³³ it may, possibly, seem to imply that this *lower* House of Parliament has acquired a greater importance, and a larger share, in the Government, than it formerly enjoyed, or, than, as some may think, it ought to possess. That an actual insurrection to destroy the *lower* House of Parliament may be an offence amenable to our Laws, on the same principle as an Insurrection to destroy *Meeting Houses* has been deemed so,⁹³⁴ I mean not to dispute; because, though the object and intention of the insurgents were laudable, yet, as the means they take to effect the purpose is dangerous to the State, as it is impossible to limit the effects of a popular Commotion, as it may ever endanger the safety of the Sovereign, the *Law* very properly interposes its sanction, to secure the Peace and Safety of the State. But, however dangerous such commotions may be deemed, though a fertile imagination may fancy that they are, “in effect to introduce Anarchy, and that which Anarchy MAY CHANCE to settle down into after the King *may have been* brought to the scaffold, and after the country has suffered all the miseries which discord and Civil War MAY produce,”⁹³⁵ yet, as it does not follow that the intention of the insurgents must necessarily be the Destruction of the *King*, such insurrections never yet have been deemed *overt acts* of compassing or imagining his *Death*;⁹³⁶ far less have *conspiracies* for such Purposes been considered as such. They have, like other criminal purposes, been left unnoticed by our Laws, until they actually ripened into action.⁹³⁷

If, owing to *existing circumstances* it may even afford a temporary security to the Monarch, to deem a conspiracy against the *lower* House of parliament as on a footing with a conspiracy against his Life, yet may there be danger in establishing it as a principle of Law: *existing circumstances* may take place in which the principle may be considered as approximating to Treason, because it seems to imply that the Government vests in *them* as well as in Him, which is not the language of our Law. Our ancient Monarchs, certainly, would not have been very much gratified with such a description of their Government, and, if our Kings have, of late years, suffered the *lower* House of Parliament to possess the Government of the Country, it does not seem very natural that we are to become the sufferers, and be implicated in crimes unknown to our Ancestors: for neither amongst all the adjudged cases, from the *Year books* to

Burrows, nor in all our *cart loads* of Law Books, from *Bracton* to *Blackstone*,⁹³⁸ will Treason against the *House of Commons* be found. Our *modern* Lawyers have set out on a Voyage of Discovery, a circum-navigation of Treason; and though their industry seems to be great and their nautical skill no less considerable, their success appears not to be adequate; or, at least, their *new* discovered Land is enveloped in a mist, impervious to common eyes. Thus we are told that, “*This case, which I state to you, is a NEW and a DOUBTFUL case;*”⁹³⁹ though, indeed, we are told, “*Thus far is clear;*” and what is it that is so clear? Why, “*That a force upon the Parliament must be immediately directed against the King, who is an integral part of it; it must reach the King, or it can have no effect at all;*”⁹⁴⁰ whether this be clear, whether it be true, we may, perhaps, more particularly examine, when we come to investigate the Law upon the Question. At present, the absurdity of the new Law of Treason, on principles of common sense, is all which it is meant to discuss.

*On Peace**

By now, Fox is seeing himself more and more as a satirist, his chief models apparently Swift and Franklin. In this pamphlet, written when the French armies were pushing the invaders from Austria and Spain well back beyond her borders, Fox considers the terms of the peace that it might now be possible for Britain to negotiate with France. First, however, he must consider whether there will ever be an end to a war that Burke has vowed will be eternal, and that Pitt has said would be continued so long as an Englishman was left to fight. Perhaps in Pitt's remark, Fox suggests, lies the best hope of peace, for no doubt when all English men are dead, English women will be more than eager to embrace the French on peaceful terms. If peace were to be negotiated before that, however, the English could not expect to be offered favourable terms by the victorious French. Ultimately, Britain's fate would depend on whether France, choosing to take a final revenge on the nation that had been disturbing the peace of Europe for over a century, decided to treat Britain as Britain customarily treated its own defeated enemies, or proceeded instead on the French principles which Britons had been taught to abhor, but which were a good deal more humane than their own.

On Peace was written in the autumn of 1794, certainly after September 6, when the news reached London of the French recapture of Valenciennes, referred to in the text, probably after the Austrian and British armies fled the French on their progress through Flanders later that month, and possibly not until November. It was reviewed by the Monthly and Analytical Reviews in November 1794, and by the Critical Review in December.

Conscious of the disgust which must be excited in the breast of every true born Englishman at the idea of peace in so early a stage of the War, it becomes me to treat so delicate a subject with the utmost caution; nor will it, I trust, be imagined, that I have assumed the Pen with the seditious view of persuading my countrymen to sheath the sword, or that I dare to insinuate, that the enormity of devastation which has characterized this war, should be pleaded in diminution of its duration. That five hundred thousand mangled

* ON / PEACE. / BY / WILLIAM FOX. // LONDON: / Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, HOLBORN HILL. / 1794. // (PRICE THREE-PENCE, OR FIVE FOR A SHILLING.)

corse overspread the fields of death, is a scanty portion of human misery which can scarcely be expected to induce us to close the bloody scene, and reviewing past occurrences, we are bound to expect that during successive years, instead of successive months, the full tide of the purple stream must flow, ere with sullen and discontented minds we are willing to sit down under the shade of Peace; for however diversified may have been the motives or the pretexts for War, yet Peace never yet sprang from any other source than a failure of the means of carrying on War. Were the objects for which it was commenced fully obtained, it was still to be pursued for new objects of ambition or of interest: was the pretended danger which engaged us in War removed, new dangers still terrified us from the thoughts of Peace: Was our adversary defeated, the war was still to be pursued until he was destroyed: were we defeated ourselves, still the thoughts of Peace were abhorrent to our nature, and War must be pursued without hope and without object. If such has ever been our conduct, little ground can we have to look for Peace in the early stages of a War, avowedly termed by its great projector an *eternal* War, to be undertaken for the express purpose of extermination.⁹⁴¹

Mr. Burke labours with ardour to impress on us the laudable purpose of exterminating our enemies; *Mr. Pitt*, indeed, seems to doubt the possibility of exterminating an armed nation, of extensive population and possessed of immense resources; but then he holds out to us the consolatory idea, that if we cannot exterminate the French, we may be at length exterminated ourselves. No situation to which we can be reduced, he says, can justify us in making Peace with the Jacobin Government of France, and he insists on our continuing the War until our last guinea be spent, and the last man of us has fallen.⁹⁴²

Absurd in the extreme, therefore, is it to say, that the object of this War is unexplained: surely nothing can be more clear and more definite, than that you are to exterminate your enemies, or be yourselves exterminated in the attempt: it is a clear it is a plain and obvious alternative; the first and greatest good they place before you is the destruction of your enemies, the secondary and subordinate one is the destruction of yourselves; and there is one advantage peculiar to this War, the object of it is certainly and infallibly attainable; for though even the powerful may fail in destroying their enemies, yet self destruction is certainly within the grasp of the weakest.—The most despicable wretch on earth may provoke a powerful adversary, and, without the least prospect of success, may obstinately persist in the combat; tease him with thrust after thrust, until he becomes necessitated to lay in the dust an assailant he despises, merely to get rid of the trouble of parrying his imbecile assaults.

As doubts may possibly be entertained of our ever enjoying that great and supreme good so temptingly placed before us, the extermination of the

French, our attention becomes naturally turned to the secondary one,—the extermination of ourselves, and this may possibly be deemed, by some, an event sufficiently interesting, to demand a rather more accurate investigation than it has hitherto experienced. That the War is to be continued until the last guinea is spent and the last man has fallen, seems to be a text sufficiently important, to deserve illustration; and much is it to be lamented that the same great man who favoured us with the one, has neglected to furnish us with the other: He might have informed us whether the last Guinea and the last Man were to be taken in a literal or in a figurative sense.—If only the latter, they were certainly undeserving the emphasis of his expression and the energy with which it was delivered. In that sense they must be equally applicable to most Wars; for if any ambitious project or partial interest be the object of any War, it is not to be imagined that it will be abandoned, so long as those who engaged us in the War can obtain Men or Money, by any expedient which they can adopt with safety to themselves. Let *Lord Hawkesbury* be asked, whether the American War would not have been continued to the present moment if Men and Money could have been obtained for carrying it on?⁹⁴³ The people of this country have ever plunged into War with cruel and sanguinary alacrity, but, alas! they always recoil long before the *last* Guinea or the *last* Man is exhausted. However fond of desolation and slaughter, they still imagine they may be purchased too dear. The Minister however popular, or however firmly seated in power, at the commencement of a War, is always unhorsed, when, after successive campaigns, he comes to demand the price at which the blood is to be purchased: some new faction then rises into power who make peace, which some trivial circumstance soon interrupts and the same routine takes place.⁹⁴⁴

When *Mr. Pitt* tells us that the War is perfectly *unique*, that *all* is at stake, and *all* must be risked in its defence, he certainly means something more than the ordinary results of War. The millions of *consols* which *Mr. Pitt* has sold have been purchased on the speculation,⁹⁴⁵ that it is a commodity which will rise when peace shall take place. The moment the Money Jobbers⁹⁴⁶ really believe that no peace will ever be made with France this resource must fail. What mode must be then adopted? When no lure remains to obtain a voluntary loan, will a forced one be resorted to? In what order will the remaining Guineas be put in a state of requisition?⁹⁴⁷ Will those which are derived from Places and Pensions be amongst the earliest or the most remote classes?⁹⁴⁸—Surely it might also be excusable were we to wish to be informed in what mode the *last* Man is to be obtained: What expedients are to be adopted to compel us to defend the *Bogs of Holland* and the *Woods of Hanover*, beyond the usual gradations of lures held out to the weak; relief to the wretched; indemnity to guilt; or the more dreadful one of fraud and force spread over the land

to seize every unhappy individual towards whom it may be imagined that fraud and force may be exercised with impunity.⁹⁴⁹ As the Jacobin Government of France has hitherto withstood those notable expedients to overthrow it, what additional ones are to be adopted?—When no hope shall remain of success in carrying on the War and defeat shall follow upon defeat; If under such circumstances we ask for Peace, will it be deemed a sufficient answer to say, that a Man is yet to be seen walking in our streets, or that there is a solitary Guinea which has not fled our land. Be it so. Harsh as this sentence of universal Death may be deemed, it falls short of *Mr. Burke's* malediction of *Eternal War*.⁹⁵⁰ *Mr. Pitt*, on the contrary, tells us, 'The world shall at length enjoy peace, when the last Englishman shall be no more. The world may then console itself with the hopes of seeing our island possessed by a less noxious race of *beings*, and its native Wolves again range through its dreary wilds. But stay. I had forgot. A more pleasing prospect opens to my view. Our well cultivated island shall not be abandoned to Wolves and Serpents. *Mr. Pitt* tells us, The last *Man* only must fall. The *Women* then, it seems, are not included in the bloody proscription, and though no partizan of liberty and equality has ever yet condescended to consider Woman as a part of the Human Race, although all their principles and systems of government, founded on the Rights of *Man*, have left the *Women* unnoticed,⁹⁵¹ as though they had no existence, yet surely, when the last *Man* has fallen, on *them* the Government must devolve, and *Mr. Pitt* will hardly insist on their pursuing the crusade against French principles. It does not follow that they will look on French Republicans with *his* malignity. Should Citizen *Chauvelin* then visit our island he may not find the unaccommodating Buckram of *Lord Grenville*.⁹⁵² Should an embassy be then sent to Paris, the French will hardly have so far forgot their ancient politeness as not to receive it with open arms, bestow the fraternal embrace, and old animosities forgotten, a union as firm as a family compact, may then take place, not founded on the fragile basis of *diplomatique* arrangements, but built on the firm foundations of nature, and our Women may entertain sentiments very opposite to the horrible exterminating ideas of *Mr. Burke* and *Mr. Pitt*. They may venerate the great first command given to Man,⁹⁵³ and, when the last Englishman shall have fallen, may consider it as a duty devolved on them to look around for means to support the tottering fabric of society. The Thames and the Seine may entwine their branches, and even without a rape the *Romans* and the *Sabines* may become united.⁹⁵⁴ Thus at length, may I behold—No, alas! I am one of the proscribed. *Mr. Pitt* has sentenced me never to behold it, unless, indeed, I can hide myself in a corner, and like *Tom of Coventry* endeavour to get a peep.⁹⁵⁵

But alas! vain are the views and projects of men, and more especially of politicians! It is not merely the rich colouring of fancy, with which Hope gilds

the horizon, and illumines the path of life, which proves evanescent. No! happily for mankind, the wild and malignant projects which are perpetually originating from mad ambition, are as often crumbled in the dust, and *Mr. Burke's* eternal and exterminating War may be recorded to future ages, merely as a peculiar instance of desperate and profligate malignancy; for whatever temporary calamities may result, no apprehension need be entertained of its leaving any more trace behind, than have the mad projects of universal empire formed by a *Lewis XIV.* a *William III.* or an *Alberoni*.⁹⁵⁶

Assuming then with confidence, that this War will not be eternal, but that, like other Wars, it must, at length, be terminated by Peace; and, whether we consider this as an evil to be deplored, or a good to be desired, it may not be improper to consider the various circumstances under which such an event may take place, and its probable nature, and consequences.

Not in the least meaning, by speculating on Peace, to arrest the career of War; admitting the propriety of *Mr. Jenkinson's* exhortations to commence our career as a military nation, considering manufactures and commerce as subservient, if not injurious to its spirit; I do not mean to insinuate that we shall fail in finally attaining all the explained and unexplained objects for which this War is prosecuted.—When I see *Young Jenkinson* abandon chuck-farthing⁹⁵⁷ to thump the table in St. Stephen's Chapel, telling us that *he has no difficulty in saying* that our object must be to break the crust of France, march to Paris, and destroy the Jacobin Club. I for my part, have *no difficulty in saying* that I am as confident that this plan will be effected, as *Henry Fielding* was that his Captain at *Rye* would perform his magnanimous Oath, of proceeding on his voyage to Lisbon in spite of the *Winds*, the *Waves*, and the *Devil*.⁹⁵⁸ After this solemn declaration of the orthodoxy of my faith in the success of this War, I must, however, admit that I may possibly be mistaken. It is *possible* that the present temporary reverse,⁹⁵⁹ as it is called, instead of being the mere fungus of a day, may prove to be an *annual*, a *biennial*, nay a *perennial*. It is possible that we may pursue this War as a desperate stake, abandoned by *Hope*, supported by *Despair*, and surrounded with *Disgrace*; and, if such should be the case, let us employ a few moments in examining the probable result.

There are some amongst us who, disheartened by our abandonment of *Flanders* and loss of *Valenciennes*,⁹⁶⁰ express their wish, for a safe and *honourable* Peace.—Absurd in the extreme. If when this War commenced we were exposed to the most imminent danger, a hundred fold must that danger be increased were Peace to take place under the present circumstances. Is it to be imagined that we should be now suffered to withdraw from the combat, crowned with honour? If in pursuing the War successive years had added to our conquests and our triumphs, we certainly should have expected our reward in a glorious Peace. If, on the contrary, defeat and disgrace have taken

place it will become us, with fortitude, to expect the effects in any ensuing Treaty. No circumstance has tended more to protract our Wars than our uniform discontents as to the terms on which they have been concluded. It cannot, therefore, be deemed a useless speculation, to enquire what are the terms which may be expected, under respective given circumstances.

When we first thought proper to abandon a *dark, ambiguous, offensive* neutrality, and ring the changes on the *Scheldt, Savoy, and Avignon*;⁹⁶¹ had we, instead of making the then state of things a pretence for war, been really desirous of restoring and securing the peace of Europe; had we, instead of being, as *Lord Grenville* properly calls it, unaccommodating to *Citizen Chauvelin*,⁹⁶² condescended to enter into a real negotiation with him, fully explaining the nature of the dangers we apprehended, and the terms we deemed requisite to secure us from them; and, on a compliance with those terms, had proposed an alliance for securing the peace of Europe; had such been our conduct, there is little doubt but that advantageous terms, fully adequate to such views, might have been attained. Peace and security were all that France could wish for: war could only be rendered palatable by being considered as the means of obtaining them; and the party then in power, even considered as a party, must have been interested in preserving a real and permanent peace; as the war threatened, and actually produced their destruction. Thus might peace have doubtless been obtained, on the footing of national *security*, had such been our real object; but alas! the prospect of dividing or dismembering France was too tempting a bait to be abandoned for mere *security*. The Maritime part of France, the West India Islands, the uncontroled domination of the East,⁹⁶³ however injurious the possession might have proved to the *people* of England, yet certainly to its ministers they must have appeared as prizes, for the obtaining of which every thing ought to be risked. If then we sat down to play for so rich a stake, surely, if the dye turns up against us, we must be content not only to lose the stake for which we played, but an adequate one of our own which we pledged against it. If, indeed, in an early period of the game, we had carefully calculated the chances, and found the odds against us, we might have manifested our dexterity by getting rid of a losing game by inducing our adversary to draw the stakes.⁹⁶⁴ If, when at the commencement of the war, we had, by various means, obtained possession of *Toulon, Valenciennes, &c.*⁹⁶⁵ instead of holding them out as eminent successes, sufficiently warranting a continuance of the war, we had calmly considered them as resulting from the impetus of the first efforts of an extensive alliance acting in perfect unison and in full vigour; had we considered how inconsiderable, in this respect they ought to have been viewed, that it was not probable that the same uniform vigour would continue to pervade such incongruous bodies as the courts which composed the grand alliance; that a proportionate degree of success,

even had it continued, would have exhausted every source from whence such efforts could have been supported, long before any material object of the war could have been obtained; but that, on the contrary, the increasing energy of the French people rather portended the arresting our progress, and tearing the laurels from our brow: Had we carefully attended to these circumstances, we might, by surrendering conquests which could be of no use if retained, and which there was no probability we should be able to retain, have made a parade of disinterestedness, procured the restoration of conquests in Savoy, have made a peace on the ground of the *statu quo*; and, perhaps have obtained some trifling advantages for ourselves. Nay, even when we had suffered this period to elapse, when the increasing energy of the French had destroyed our illusory prospects, when their myriads had expelled us from *Toulon*, forced the lines of *Weissembourg*, and overwhelmed us with defeat and disgrace before *Dunkirk*,⁹⁶⁶ even then the French might have wished to have been delivered from the necessity of making such terrible exertions, or, doubting of the certainty of their continuance, might have been willing to retire into the arms of peace, on the ground of the *statu quo*. But no period has since occurred in which such terms could reasonably have been expected. If, since that period, the union of the high allies has been broken, their measures deranged, their councils disordered, their armies mouldering away, and their finances ruined; if all the original assailants have abandoned the contest, and *England*, who had recently entered the field as an auxiliary, is become the sole principal; if her *Aucklands*, her *Spencers*, and her *Wyndhams*, are seen running up and down to whip in the stray crusaders, and enlist a few thousand troops to be captured in fortress after fortress, or to rot in the bogs of Holland;⁹⁶⁷ and in this enterprize are become the dupes of Europe, cheated and laughed at from court to court; on the contrary, if France be seen with increasing strength and resources, trampling on all the barriers with which she is surrounded; the passes of the stupendous Alps and Pyrennees forced;⁹⁶⁸ the frontier fortresses subdued; pouring her armed myriads all around her; nay, what is more, if the commerce of England falls before her in an increasing proportion, threatening an annihilation of the only source which feeds and supports the war; then let us ask, what are the equitable terms under such circumstances? If we possessed such advantages, would any minister dare to propose to abandon our conquests, or even to arrest their progress?

If Government, at a calamitous period, were to favour us with the blessings of Peace, ungrateful, in the extreme, would it be were we to murmur at those concessions being made to which the enemy, by the fair chance of War, had become entitled. If we, at the commencement of the War, with no foundation for our demand but delusive hope, insisted on *Indemnity* and *Security*,⁹⁶⁹ surely France, standing on her present eminence, has, at least, as good a claim.

May she not reasonably insist on annexing to her empire such of her conquests as may tend to her security and advantage? May she not say, that experiencing the power of coalesced Monarchs, it is requisite, for her security, that a republican counterpoise should exist? That *Poland*, disposed to a republic shall be left undisturbed to form one, comprehending her ancient and most extensive limits,⁹⁷⁰ that France may at least have one Ally in Europe, standing on the same basis and united in the same common interest? and may she not also say, that England shall no longer disturb the peace of Europe with the wealth of Indostan: that she shall in future cease to possess the riches of *Asia*, unless her industry, her wealth, and her natural resources, will procure it her, through the medium of lawful commerce? If it be resolved to support the War beyond this crisis, it must be in confidence of a very great and extraordinary change in the aspect of affairs; whether there exists any visible cause adequate to such an effect some may doubt. If France attacked by all the great military powers of Europe, with a vigour and perseverance which was never equalled, has not only repelled their attacks, but by her energy, broken and dismayed the confederacy—exhausted their resources—weakened and dismayed with repeated defeats their numerous armies—if her efforts have appeared to be, not as was predicted, a sudden and preternatural exertion,⁹⁷¹ but that her resources have regularly increased, and manifested a stability unshaken amidst all the convulsions her Government has experienced—if, indeed, England, standing alone and abandoned by her Allies, can stem this mighty torrent, take Spain, Italy, Germany, and Holland, under her protection, drive their enemies at all points back into his own territories, pursue him with her all conquering arm, and overwhelm him with her terrible vengeance; make France to its utmost limits tremble before her, lick the dust at her feet, and bend the neck to her yoke; then indeed may we justly claim *Mr. Jenkinson's* epithet of a military nation:⁹⁷² *Almanza* and *Briuegua* shall be forgotten: *Fontenoy*, *St. Cas*, and *Closter Seven*, shall be consigned to oblivion: *Braddock* and *Burgoyne* shall be no more remembered:⁹⁷³ Then may we prepare to gather our well earned laurels, we shall descend to future ages, not merely as the Desolators and Oppressors of Ireland, the plunderers of Asia, the Kidnappers of Africa, and the base Slave-holders of the West: but crowned with Glory, eclipsing the triumphs of ancient Rome, and should our new ministers by buying men abroad, and ——⁹⁷⁴ them at home, effect this mighty project, then the most sceptical amongst us will surely admit that miracles have not ceased. On the contrary, suppose all the puny efforts of a *Wyndham* to fail, in stemming this mighty torrent; suppose defeat and retreat to become the order of the day, and yet that we persist in playing a desperate game, and venturing a deeper stake; then let us for a moment deliberate on the probable result.

Whatever degrading and opprobrious language contending governments may pour on each other, with a view to inflame and stimulate their respective subjects to aid them in effecting their ambitious projects, yet, does it not follow that villifying epithets and insulting recriminations must necessarily become an obstacle to a treaty of peace. When the parties become exhausted by War, they at length prove to be as unmeaning as those protestations of perpetual friendship and eternal amity, with which treaties of peace are always prefaced. But though words are no obstacle to treating for peace, yet actions may become such. If those who govern, or who may hereafter govern France, shall perceive that when all the great powers of the continent are disposed to abandon their projects against France (whatever they might be) as useless or as hopeless, and they see England stand forth alone to uphold the banners of war—if her emissaries are seen spreading over Europe to gather its scattered remnants, and fan the dying embers—if sustaining the war to the last shilling and the last man, appears to be not merely the tropes of oratory, but as bearing a real and unequivocal import, it then seems to follow, that every principle on which negotiation can ever take place is totally done away. No motive for France ever listening to terms of accommodation can then possibly exist.

Whatever disparity there may be between contending nations, however the events of war may have depressed the one or exalted the other; yet any negotiation for peace must proceed on the principle, that the triumphant has some ground yet remaining for fear, and the depressed for hope. The conqueror can have no motive for assenting to a treaty securing his conquests, unless those with whom he treats possess some degree of power, which may disturb him in the possession; nor will he enter into any compact which can circumscribe their extent, unless it be with those whom he supposes are in some degree able to stop their progress. The nation who has totally exhausted all means of offence and defence can therefore have no pretence to treat: she can only claim it on the ground that she has something which she can defend, or that there is something which she can guarantee. If then we persist in this war, not on the ground of there being a *possibility* of success, but merely because we *can* continue it—if, weaker and weaker, we present a hostile front to our adversary until at last we can no longer even aim the imbecile stroke, and we lie breathless and unnerved before him; it will then be only for us to wait and see whether he will spare us from pity or contempt, or crush us from indignation or vengeance.

To those who shall survive the present conflict, so terminated, it may become an interesting circumstance to see what will be the conduct of France, in so new and important a situation. Will she say, behold the nation, who has long looked on us with unabating and implacable animosity; who has

uniformly arraigned the order of Providence by stigmatizing us as her natural enemy; who, for above a century, had intrigued with all the powers of Europe to distress and to destroy us; who secure from the ravages of war, by her insular situation, had involved Europe in perpetual and bloody contests,⁹⁷⁵ that, while it was convulsed, she might seize all the commerce of the world: See the nation who, while the riches of our merchants were on the ocean, in confidence of the law of nations, swept the whole into her ports, and then dared to exult in the superiority thereby obtained:⁹⁷⁶ but, above all, see her who had long derived advantage from the ancient authority of her Kings being diminished, the oppressive jurisdiction of her Nobles annihilated, and the accumulated wealth of her clergy dispersed, yet were so dead to all the feelings of humanity as to insult us as slaves, because subject to the yoke; and yet when, with unprecedented energy, we had shaken off our despotism, were so far from encouraging us with her countenance, aiding us with her support, or assisting us with her advice, that when we looked anxiously around and solicited universal peace, she spurned our alliance, refused the office of mediator to shield us from the horrors of war,⁹⁷⁷ looked on while the Despots gathered round us, and at last headed the blood hounds of war, while her Senate, her Pulpits, and her Press, overflowed with such torrents of diversified base malignity as to excite a doubt whether the wickedness or the folly were predominant. See her now lie helpless before us. Shall we terminate her existence as a nation? shall Asia, shall Africa, shall America, rejoice in her destruction? shall she no longer contaminate the page of history, and disgrace the human species?

Whatever line of conduct the French may adopt under such circumstances, it is to be feared we have given them, by our conduct, too just a plea, and too strong a sanction. If we carried on the war to give them the blessings of our constitution, they may, if they chuse it, give us theirs. If we intended to give them a King, Lords, and Clergy, they may imagine they have as good a right to take ours away. If their interest prompts them to interfere in our internal Concerns, to arrange our Laws, our Government, and our Property, the speeches of Mr. *Pitt*, *Lord Mansfield*, &c. will be authorities to the point.⁹⁷⁸ If they wish to parcel out the nation amongst their friends, they may refer to our Treaties with our Allies;⁹⁷⁹ and should they wish for good Ports in the Channel, they may, to save the expence of making one at *Cherbourg*, keep possession of *Portsmouth* and *Plymouth*, and insist on choaking up the *Thames*, and refer us to *Dunkirk*, *Calais*, and *Gibraltar*. Perhaps, they may wish to make the fertile part of our island a potatoe garden; or they may think our pastures are fit to breed sheep, to supply with wool the French manufactures, and beef and pork to victual their navies; they may then drive us, like a herd of goats, into the mountains of Scotland, and Wales; call the rest of the island the

French pale, shoot us like wolves and pole-cats, if we dare to enter it, parcel it out amongst the friends of the Committee of Safety, give the tythes to some French Atheists, on condition of their subscribing creeds which every body know they laugh at; then they may send *Tom Paine* to govern us, and, if we murmur, they may point to *Ireland*.⁹⁸⁰ Should they happen to see our East-India charter, it may suggest the thought of selling the island and inhabitants to him, for half a million *per annum*,⁹⁸¹ or perhaps, they may deem it more profitable were they to employ our Liverpool ships to convey all the young men, women, and children, and sell them to the people of France; the sale would diminish their debts, and furnish labourers to cultivate the vineyards, while their inhabitants, instead of working, might dance the *carmagnol*, and sing *ca ira*.⁹⁸² In such case, they might find plenty of evidence, produced before a committee of the House of Commons by Lords, and Knights, and Squires, proving the miserable situation of the people of England, and how much they would be benefited by being made slaves.⁹⁸³

But it is possible that some sublime and beautiful Orator, or some subtle Logician, may rise in the National Convention, and contend, with violence, for absolute extermination.⁹⁸⁴ He may contend that English principles are detestable, and incompatible with all order and government. He may contend that to suffer a nation to exist, whose government, and whose laws, are derived from barbarous ages, and savage nations, is an example dangerous to civil society. Should he hear that an inclement season had destroyed our harvest, and that, without a large foreign supply, famine and pestilence must desolate the land, he might urge them to seize the happy moment, and, at one stroke, destroy those enemies to order and government. The advice might be adopted; our island might be declared in a state of starvation; and, as if infested with the plague, we might be cut off from the world, and all mankind prohibited from relieving our distress, and even this they may ignorantly suppose even a Royal Proclamation to have sanctioned.⁹⁸⁵

If then we suppose that *French power*, combined with *English principles*, may produce such effects, it may possibly be doubted whether it would be more calamitous if *French power*, if it becomes predominant, were to act on *French principles*. They, perhaps, may not prove so calamitous and so mischievous as some apprehend. Confraternity does not seem to be much worse than extirpation.⁹⁸⁶ Let half a million of fellow creatures in the *West Indies* tell us if there be not greater evils than even Fraternization. Cannot *Indostan* tell us that conquerors can overwhelm a country with more dire calamities than melting Church bells and seizing Church plate; and *Ireland* may, probably, imagine that the abolition of Tythes is not the most disastrous law which a powerful nation may impose on a weaker.

Should we at length fall into the hands of our enraged adversaries, after having for years poured out every degrading and insulting epithet on them, we may, perhaps, at length happily experience their falsehood; their conduct may even fall short of our present conduct in Indostan, they may not dissolve all the landed property of the kingdom, they may not dispose of the rent of every acre of our land among the miscreants whom France may vomit forth. It is possible, that we may find, that the principal evils we shall have to experience, may be those which the War produced, not those, against which it was to guard us. We may find, that like the American Contest, we have involved ourselves in the calamities of War, to avoid ideal danger, nay that even unexpected benefits may result. Should the War terminate in depriving us of all our foreign dependencies, should the plunder of India no longer deluge our land, should our mart of slavery no longer exist, and should our Ministers be delivered from the thraldom of governing a neighbouring Island, should we behold in our Sovereign merely a King of Great Britain, and our House of Commons cease to be crouded with the representatives of West India Slavery or an East India Squad, it is possible that the change produced on our Government, our Laws, and general Polity may not prove extremely calamitous.—
FINIS.

Appendix

The fourth edition of The Interest of Great Britain

The 4th edition of *The Interest of Great Britain* contains considerable alterations, additions, and deletions from the 3rd edition. It is about three pages longer than the earlier editions, with many paragraphs not only expanded but also relocated.

Paragraph 1 in the 3rd edition has been enlarged into two paragraphs in the 4th edition, with the addition of three sentences, one of which incorporates a new reference to the Pope: ‘The terror [produced by the French Revolution among the nations of Europe] has even driven the Pope to seek refuge in a nation, which has for more than two centuries had the misfortune to lie under his *interdict*, and to that monarch whose subjects he has most solemnly discharged from their allegiance to him.’

Paragraph 2 of the 3rd edition is altered considerably in the 4th, with references restricted now solely to the French Revolution; topical references to the King and Queen of France in the 3rd edition have been removed except for the final sentence: ‘All the calamities which have since appeared, and the perilous situation of the royal family of France, may therefore be far more properly attributed to Messrs. *Burke* and *Calonne*, who have been indefatigable in inciting the present clamour, than to the people of France’ (*Calonne* is not mentioned in the earlier editions).

Paragraph 4 of the 4th edition begins in the same manner as the third paragraph in the 3rd edition, but in the 4th Fox replaces ‘French Monarch’ with ‘Bourbons’. He then enlarges considerably on Russia and Austria: ‘It must be presumed that the illustrious and beneficent monarchs of Russia, of Prussia, and of Austria have placed their own subjects at the summit of happiness, that they are thus so perfectly at leisure to give happiness to the people of another country. And that the luminous geniuses of Russia, of Brandenburg, and of Austria, have set out with swords in their hands to convince the French that they have mistaken the road to felicity, and that the true principles of government, of social order, and national prosperity, are not to be judged of by human reason, but to be adopted from the banks of the Wolga, the Don, and the Oder, where antient and venerable systems of government are established, which were framed by the wisdom of antient times, improved through a succession of ages and sanctioned by happy experience.’

Paragraph 5 of the 4th edition introduces quotations from Locke that appear much later in the 3rd edition. Fox then inserts a discussion of French

writers who were acclaimed throughout Europe ‘but when these writers adopted the principles of Mr. *Locke*, when these principles began to operate, when the state of France threatened an extensive circulation of them. Then the alarm commenced; then it was discovered that the only writers in *Europe*, who were universally read, were a set of unhappy, miserable philosophers. That the only literary nation on the continent, were inadequate judges of their own happiness, and that it was requisite to send them *Russian and Prussian* soldiers to teach it them.’

Paragraphs 11 and 12 of the 4th edition inserts a new discussion of the principles of ‘liberty’, especially in relation to Poland, and contrasts it with the actions and aims of the Confederacy and England:

The continental potentates have confederated against *France*, not from any thing peculiar to her, either as to *principles, government, or conduct*; and whether we stand by a calm spectator of the destruction of *Polish* liberty, or join the continental powers in subverting the *French*; in either case, it is the *general* principles of liberty, and not any *particular modification* of them we are assisting to destroy; and it is the *general* system of tyranny which we in such case necessarily support.

That the *Austrian, Russian, and Prussian* monarchs are to confederate with us to force upon *France*, the *English* Constitution, or any kind of free government, is too absurd to be supposed. It is even not pretended by those who have promoted this war. To our confederates, the *English* principles of government are as obnoxious as the *French*. *Poland* had formed a government similar to our own; the neighbouring monarchs beheld it with abhorrence, conspired to destroy it; and his majesty of *Prussia*, after due deliberation, pronounced that *Poland* was contaminated with *French* principles, which he was determined to destroy. These sentiments we also apparently adopt, for with every diversified system of tyranny, with every species of arbitrary power, we can cordially coalesce; we can confederate for mutual defence. But let *any* system of liberty appear among the nations of *Europe*; let a form of government arise approximating to our own, with them we disdain treaty or alliance: we look on them with *abhorrence*, or turn from them with *contempt*; we suffer them to be destroyed by the surrounding tyrants; and if their power proves insufficient for the purpose, we at last join the confederacy to subvert them. *We* at least cannot be accused of offering *confraternity*. We ally ourselves with *any* government, provided it be hostile to freedom, but *liberty* and *happiness*, it seems, we deem so estimable, that we keep them to ourselves. To see the British arms otherwise employed, would indeed be an

uncommon circumstance. The effects of our power and influence, are indeed to be very visibly traced throughout every quarter of the globe, but alas! it is in one unvaried scene of *slavery, desolation, and blood!* No wonder we look with abhorrence on the French principle of communicating to others that liberty they have themselves obtained. It is a principle they certainly cannot be accused of having learned of us.

Paragraph 11 in the 3rd edition, beginning with “Nothing can be more opposite to these views of Mr. *Paine*” has been altered in the 4th edition as follows:

Should we indeed ever be informed that we have succeeded in restoring the antient French monarchy to its former luster, and that the national convention have been all sent to a new *Bastile*, erected on purpose to receive them. Should we be told that the British arms had turned the scale, and determined the war in favor of the allied monarchs, that they had determined no longer to quarrel about the boundaries of their territories; but, from a sense of common danger had associated together against their subjects as their common enemy; I know not but some inquisitive persons amongst us might be apt to enquire the names of the allied kings; and probably might be foolish enough to imagine, that if ever we should have an enterprising monarch on the throne, our liberties might be in rather more danger from the nations of *Europe* being governed by despotic monarchs, who had effectually subjugated their *subjects*, and had large standing armies at their absolute disposal, than if these nations were all democratic republics.—And it is not undeserving notice, that should the French revolution be suppressed, the *European monarchs* will have learnt a lesson from it they will not soon forget. Mr. *Burke* justly observes that *kings* will be deterred from granting their subjects any degree of liberty; they will from policy be cruel. Should the continental monarchs succeed in suppressing the French revolution, they will hardly make Mr. *Burke* a lying prophet. Tyrants are cruel in proportion to their fears. (pp. 11-12, 4th ed.)

The paragraph that follows in the 3rd edition (“The mad and boundless ambition ...”) has been deleted in the 4th edition.

The next paragraph in the 4th edition picks up paragraph 20 from the 3rd edition, which begins ‘If indeed it were to be supposed possible’, and continues almost verbatim. However, he opens the paragraph with these lines: ‘It is

peculiar to this war, that our most imminent danger may possibly result from *success*. Can we believe it possible, that the monarchs of Europe, after we have assisted them to eradicate these principles out of *France*, will suffer them to exist in *England*? Must not this country have the benefit of their *kind* attention? The English language is becoming common on the continent, and they will hardly overlook the danger which may result from it, nor is it to be imagined that if the continent be thoroughly subjugated, *England* can insure her exemption from the yoke' (p. 12, 4th ed.).

The 4th edition now reverts back to paragraph 14 of the 3rd edition with an altered opening sentence: 'As none of the principles of the French revolution can be referred to as being either new or dangerous, Mr. *Burke* to stigmatize it, talks for hours, about *blood* and *atheism*, and then to produce *stage effect* throws daggers about the house; but after he has finished his *theatric rant*, he must be told, that the circumstances attending a revolution, are not its *principles*, and frequently not the *result* of the principles.' The next sentence is the same in both editions, but then Fox alters his text considerably. The phrase 'Blood and atheism have, certainly been charged on both the French and English Revolutions; but never till now were they deemed its principles' from the 3rd edition has been deleted in the 4th, but the remainder of the sentence is the same. He then adds in the 4th edition the following section:

The offer of *confederation* they saw formed against them, or at least to retaliate it; and had the *confederation* never been formed, there is not the least evidence to prove, that either *hatred to kings*, or the offer of *confraternity* would have resulted from their principles, any more than from the principles of any other republic, or than from the principles of *our* revolution, for even *that* has been disgraced with *blood*, and stigmatized with *atheism*. The resistance of our ancestors to the *antient* authority of the crown, during the reigns of the *Stuarts*, was attended with much *blood-shed*, and produced some *ridiculous*, and some *disgraceful* circumstances. In preserving the *new* line of kings, and the *new* species of monarchy, since 1688, we have shed no small quantity of *blood*, both in *Ireland* and in *Scotland*; and under circumstances, which, Mr. *Burke*, should he ever be disposed to undertake the task, might possibly be able to place in as *odious* a point of view, as he has the *French massacres*. (p. 15)

The next paragraph in the 4th edition is not in the 3rd edition. Here Fox adds a new reference to Burke:

As to both *atheism* and *murder* they are not new charges against revolution principles. Mr. *Burke* is only a *copyist*; he merely

echos the decrees of the university of Oxford just prior to *our* revolution. When having carefully examined the principles of those very revolutionists, whose conduct and whose writings, even Mr. *Burke* affects to revere; that celebrated seat of piety and learning, solemnly decreed, that ‘the said propositions were *false, seditious, impious, heretical, and blasphemous*, injurious to *Christianity*, and destructive of all government in *church* and *state*, fitted to deprave good manners, corrupt the minds of uneasy men, stir up *seditions and tumults*, and lead to *rebellions, murder of princes, and atheism* itself. And about the same time one of the most learned and respectable of our bishops had sagacity enough to discover *atheism* in Mr. *Locke’s* writings. (pp. 15-16)

He then reverts back to paragraph 11 in the 3rd edition which begins ‘Nothing can be more opposite to these views ...’ He deletes the opening sentences of that paragraph and commences with ‘Wars, when commenced, even on popular ground ...’ and continues through the phrase ‘the ignorant multitude’. Then Fox significantly alters his contemporary references in his next sentences: ‘... should they be even told that the large subsidies sent by us to the continent had been so well employed by our *illustrious* allies, that the armies of the German potentates, and the Russian empress had been crowned with the most complete success, that French principles had been effectually eradicated out of *France* and *Poland*, and their *antient* and *venerable* governments *restored, established, and secured*, from the detestable innovations of *reason* and *philosophy*: yet perhaps some may say ...’ (p. 18, 4th ed.), after which the paragraph continues with the remaining portion of paragraph 12 from the 3rd edition, beginning with ‘the mad and boundless *ambition* of the court of France ...’ and continuing thereafter almost verbatim.

The final paragraph in the 4th edition is much altered from the 3rd edition:

The motives for this war may be various—While *the true born Englishmen* are frantic with *hatred of the French*, and the *king* terrified with the danger of *Hanover*; the intrigues of a divided cabinet may have produced the present ferment for private purposes, and the minister may at length be propelled (as other ministers have been) into a war, which threatens to be as destructive to his popularity, as to the prosperity of the nation; and as no minister, who commenced a war, ever yet terminated it, we shall probably have to innumerate amongst the evils of this war, the loss of a minister, who has justly obtained the confidence and esteem of his country.—*FINIS*.

Notes

Introduction

¹ The attorney's works are *The Friend: A Weekly Essay* (1796), *Remarks on Various Agricultural Reports ... in the Year 1794* (1796), *A Sailor's Manual of Prayer* (1812), and *Protestant Thoughts on Catholic Claims* (1813). William Fox, Sr., authored only one brief pamphlet, *Address to the Friends of Evangelical Truth in General; and to the Calvinistic Baptist Churches in Particular*, which appeared in 1797 on behalf of the Baptist Society for the Encouragement and Support of Itinerant Preaching, and was printed in John Rippon's *Baptist Annual Register*, vol. 2 [1794-97], pp. 465-70. William Fox, Jr., authored *Original Pieces; in Verse and Prose* (1796), *Sketches and Observations Made on a Tour through Various Parts of Europe, in the Years 1792, 1793, and 1794* (1799), *Cursory Remarks on a Work entitled Apeleutherus* (1800), *La Bagatella; or, Delineations of Home Scenery, a Descriptive Poem* (1801), and *The Grecian, Roman, and Gothic Architecture, Considered as Applicable to Public and Private Buildings, in this Country* (1821). For further discussion of the other three William Foxes, see Timothy Whelan, 'William Fox, Martha Gurney, and Radical Discourse of the 1790s', *Eighteenth Century Studies* 42 (2009): 397-411.

² David Bogue and James Bennett, *History of Dissenters, from the Revolution in 1688, to the year 1808* 4 vols (London: Printed for the Authors, 1808-12), vol. 4, pp. 189-90, 191.

³ Few original materials exist on Fox. The British Library has a receipt from either William or Thomas Lowndes, booksellers and printers, to Fox, March 19 1778, paying Fox £5.6s. for a 1/128 share in selling an edition of *Biographia Britannica*; the receipt is also signed by W^m Fox. He also received from Lowndes on that same day £3.2s.6d. for a 'call in the said share'. In the same bound volume of receipts kept by the Lowndes firm, another one, dated July 10 1786, reads:

Agreed between Mr W. Fox & Mess.^{rs} Scatcherd & Whitaker on one part & W. Lowndes on the other that Registers for Banns, Marriages &c shall hereafter be sold to the Public at five shillings [per] Quire & to the trade three shillings & ninepence, single sheets at 2 1/2 to the Public & 2^d to the trade, the said advance to take place this day For self and C.^o

J Scatchard

(Add. MSS. 38730, ff. 79, 171, British Library)

⁴ Martha Gurney does not appear, either as a printer or bookseller, in the early directories compiled by John Pendred (1785) or Plomer (1922). She does appear in Maxted (*London Book Trades*, p. 97), but only as 'M. Gurney' operating as a bookseller at 128 Holborn from 1790-1805. For more on Martha Gurney and the Gurney family, see William H. Gurney Salter (ed), *Some Particulars of the Lives of William Brodie Gurney and his Immediate Ancestors* (London: Unwin, 1902).

⁵ See below, n. 13.

⁶ *Copy of the Poll for the Election of Two Knights of the Shire ... for the County of Middlesex* (London: n.p. [1784]), pp. 52-53. William Fox was one of several Foxes who operated as booksellers between 1679 and 1819. Thomas Fox sold in Westminster Hall from 1679 to 1692. He was followed by Joseph Fox (most likely his son), from the same location, 1691-1736. Between 1736 and 1747 Joseph Fox was joined by his son, also named Joseph, selling in the same location. The younger Fox then sold

alone until 1776; however, for three years (1736-38) several imprints of 'J. and J. Fox' reveal that they sold both 'at the Half Moon and Seven Stars, in Westminster-Hall' and 'at their Shop at Tunbridge Wells, during the Summer Season'. In 1776 James Fox (most likely the son of the second Joseph) begins selling, but the shop has now moved to Dartmouth Street, Westminster, where he will continue his business until 1819. It is possible that William Fox, since he owned property in Westminster (where all the other Foxes kept bookshops), was the brother of James and the son of the second Joseph Fox. In a letter to the Home Secretary in May 1794, James Johnson, an informer (see below, n. 85), noted that Fox was 'a man of considerable Property both Landed and Funded'. If William Fox was the son of Joseph Fox, part of that property might have been in Tunbridge Wells.

- ⁷ Hannah Barker, 'Women, Work and the Industrial Revolution: Female Involvement in the English Printing Trades, c.1700-1840', in *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representation and Responsibilities*, ed. Hannah Barker and Elaine Chalus (London and New York: Longman, 1997), p. 85.
- ⁸ Salter, *Some Particulars*, p. 34.
- ⁹ About 1791 she appears to have acquired her brother's press after his retirement as a printer c. 1790. This may also explain the cheap price and massive quantities of some of the imprints she published after that date, especially those related to the sugar boycott, such as Fox's *Address to the People of Great Britain*.
- ¹⁰ Hannah Humphrey appeared on more imprints than Gurney, but these were almost exclusively pictorial prints, primarily James Gillray's popular caricatures. Like Fox and Gurney, Humphrey and Gillray also had both a business and domestic relationship, sharing the same quarters in London from 1791 to 1815. Second to Martha Gurney was Mary Lewis, another dissenting woman who collaborated at times with both Joseph and Martha Gurney, operating her printshop at 1 Paternoster Row from 1756 to 1779.
- ¹¹ See Colin Milne, *A Sermon Preached at St. Sepulchre, London* (London: Printed for the [Humane] Society, and sold by ... W. Fox, 1778), pp. 6, 7; Thomas Francklin, *A Sermon Preached at St. George's Bloomsbury, on Sunday, March 28, for the Benefit of the Humane Society* (London: printed for the Society, and sold by T. Cadell ..., W. Fox, Holborn ..., 1779).
- ¹² For the Gurneys and the history at Maze Pond, see Salter, *Some Particulars*, p. 45; Maze Pond Church Book, vol. 2 (1784-1821), Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford. For the Unitarian connections of the Hawes family and their relations with the Gurneys, see Timothy Whelan, *Politics, Religion, and Romance: The Letters of Benjamin Flower and Eliza Gould Flower, 1794-1808* (Aberystwyth: National Library of Wales, 2008), pp. xxxiv-xxxv.
- ¹³ Isabella and Catherine Scott, *A Family Biography 1662 to 1908: Drawn chiefly from Old Letters* (London: James Nisbet, 1908), p. 103.
- ¹⁴ See *Extracts from the Minutes and Advices of the Yearly Meeting of Friends held in London, from its First Institution* (London: James Phillips, 1783), pp. 19, 21.
- ¹⁵ Qtd. in Salter, *Some Particulars*, p. 34. Martha Gurney also sold *The Duty of Abstaining from the Use of West India Produce; a Speech, delivered at Coach-Maker's-Hall, Jan. 12, 1792*, by the Quaker William Allen (1770-1843).

- ¹⁶ See below, *Address*, p. 10. He repeats this when he addresses the Methodists in the same passage.
- ¹⁷ Fox sold Doddridge's *Hymns founded on Various Texts in the Holy Scriptures* (1779) and *The Rise and Progress of Religion in the Soul* (1789).
- ¹⁸ See Richard Hillier, *A Vindication of the Address to the People of Great-Britain, on the Use of West India Produce*, 2nd ed. (London: M. Gurney [and others], [1791]), p. 3. Hillier joined Maze Pond on July 3 1791, shortly before the publication of Fox's *Address* as late July or early August 1791: see Maze Pond Church Book, vol. 2, ff. 16. 77-78.
- ¹⁹ All three families were deeply involved in radical politics in the 1790s. Besides the volume of William Fox pamphlets owned by Martha Gurney's niece, Elizabeth Gurney (1770-1840) and now at the University of Michigan (see below, n. 37), another volume from her library, consisting of eight political pamphlets by such figures as Anna Letitia Barbauld, Benjamin Flower, and Thomas Erskine, resides now in the Angus Library, Regent's Park College, Oxford (shelfmark 19.d.2). A volume of political pamphlets from the library of John Gurney also resides in the Angus Library (shelfmark 42.e.15) and includes works by Daniel Isaac Eaton, Jeremiah Joyce, and Benjamin Flower. Benjamin Hawes (1770-1860), in language reminiscent of William Fox, complained to his brother-in-law Russell Scott, Unitarian minister in Portsmouth (he married Sophia Hawes in 1790), on January 6 1796 of 'the present damnable & ruinous politics pursued by our Heaven-Born minister (another time let us prefer a Hell-Born)': see Scott, *Family Biography*, pp. 89, 83.
- ²⁰ 'List of Subscriptions reported to the 11th of September, 1787', in *Society Instituted in 1787, for the Purpose of Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade* (London, [1787]).
- ²¹ Salter, *Some Particulars*, pp. 34-35; W. H. G. Salter, *A History of the Gurney System of Shorthand* (Oxford: Blackwell, [1924]), pp. 11, 13.
- ²² See *Act of Incorporation and Constitution of the Pennsylvania Society, for Promoting the Abolition of Slavery ... Also, a List of Those who have been Elected Members of the Society* (Philadelphia: Merrihew & Thompson, 1860), pp. 22-24.
- ²³ John Gurney's future sister-in-law, Sarah Hawes, "remained with Mrs. Thelwall in the Old Bailey, awaiting the verdict of the jury" in her husband's trial: see Scott, *Family Biography*, p. 83.
- ²⁴ See Salter, *Some Particulars*, p. 34; Fair Minute Books, ADD. MS. 21255, f. 91r.
- ²⁵ *History of Dissenters*, vol. 4, pp. 193, 200-01.
- ²⁶ *Analytical Review*, vol. 10 (August 1791), p. 456.
- ²⁷ *Monthly Review*, vol. 6 (October 1791), p. 226.
- ²⁸ W. B. Gurney estimated the total distribution of the *Address* at 250,000. William St. Clair offers a more conservative estimate of Fox's *Address* at 100,000 copies. Martha Gurney attached a note to the tenth edition stating that 50,000 copies of the pamphlet had been printed in the first four months of circulation. If 5000 copies were printed for each edition (a higher than normal amount for a printing run at that time, but the number implied in her note), then twenty-six London editions would have exceeded 100,000 copies. She also noted that she was printing private editions for individuals for distribution (not for sale) throughout the provinces (one for 2000 copies was paid for by Thomas Clarkson's wealthy friend, Josiah Wedgwood). Though W. B. Gurney's claims that 250,000 copies of the *Address* were sold or given away may be somewhat exaggerated, when the various authorized printings in

London along with the unauthorized printings that occurred in numerous places in England, Scotland, Wales, and America, are tallied together, an estimate of more than 100,000 copies of the *Address* in print is not unreasonable. St. Clair estimates sales of Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* at more than 20,000, but the evidence does not suggest that sales of Paine's pamphlet ever equalled the 50,000 produced by Gurney in the first ten printings of Fox's *Address*. See Salter, *Some Particulars*, 35; St. Clair, *The Reading Nation in the Romantic Period* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), pp. 561, 583, 623-4; *Correspondence of Josiah Wedgwood 1781-1794*, ed. Katherine Eufemia Farrer (London: Women's Printing Society, 1906), pp. 187-8; Whelan, "William Fox, Martha Gurney, and Radical Discourse of the 1790s," p. 402.

²⁹ The *Abridgment* was printed at the expense of the Committee with an initial distribution restricted to members of parliament, not the general public (which may explain Fox's comment in *A Defence of the Decree* that copies of these publications were "Too precious for the public eye, [being] sedulously preserved among the parties who conduct this business" [see below, p. 133]): see Fair Minute Book, Abolition Committee, Add. MS. 21256, ff. 13-23.

³⁰ See Maze Pond Church Book, vol. 2, f. 9.

³¹ John Liddon, *Cruelty the Natural and Inseparable Consequence of Slavery, and both Diametrically Opposite to the Doctrine and Spirit of the Christian Religion* (London: Sold by C. Dilly, M. Gurney, T. Knott, 1792), pp. 4, 8.

³² Liddon, *Cruelty*, p. 30.

³³ Samuel Bradburn, *An Address to the People called Methodists, Concerning the Criminality of Encouraging Slavery*, 5th ed. with additions (London: M. Gurney, 1792), p. 15.

³⁴ Andrew Burn, *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain; Containing a New and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West India Sugar* (London: M. Gurney, 1792), p. 3.

³⁵ Clarkson had given his enemies plenty to talk about, spending much of August and September 1789 in Paris where he made many friends among the French radicals. Even more relevant, on January 23 1792, Clarkson linked support for abolition with the French Revolution in a note attached to a printed notice from the London Abolition Committee to Thomas Wilkinson near Penrith, Cumberland. Clarkson wrote, 'Have you any Friends to the French Revolution in your town and Neighbourhood and what may be their Names—Direct to me at Mr. James Phillips, George Yard, London'. Wilberforce would agree with Hoare, contending that 'People connect democratical principles with the Abolition of the Slave Trade and will not hear mention of it': see *Morning Chronicle*, March 12, 23, and 27 1792; Thompson/Clarkson MSS, f. 53, Friends Library; *The Life of William Wilberforce*, 5 vols., ed. Robert Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce (London: J. Murray, 1838), vol. 2, p. 18.

³⁶ Fair Minute Books, ADD. MS. 21256, f. 84v.

³⁷ Copies of Fox's pamphlets, except *A Summary View* and *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 2, are bound in a volume at the University of Michigan (shelfmark DA520.F79) once owned by Elizabeth Gurney. Included in this volume are copies of three pamphlets

by Fox that appeared in 1794 and are largely unknown to scholars, including the only copies of *On Trials for Treason* and *Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 1*.

³⁸ *Analytical Review*, vol. 17 (November 1793), p. 334.

³⁹ *Monthly Review*, vol.14 (May 1794), p. 115.

⁴⁰ National Library of Wales MS 13120B, p. 368. Our thanks to Geraint Jenkins for sending us this quotation.

⁴¹ *Analytical Review*, vol. 20 (October 1794), pp. 204-5.

⁴² *Monthly Review*, vol 10. (April 1793) pp. 469-70.

⁴³ *Critical Review*, vol. 7 (March 1793, p. 464-67, *Monthly Review*, vol 11. (June 1793), p. 211; vol. 15 (September 1794), p. 88.

⁴⁴ See below, especially pp. 181-4.

⁴⁵ See below, p.182.

⁴⁶ See below, p.182.

⁴⁷ See below, p.170.

⁴⁸ See below, p.174.

⁴⁹ See below, p. 223.

⁵⁰ *Monthly Review*, vol. 15 (September 1794), p. 89.

⁵¹ See below, p. 272, n. 1.

⁵² See below, p.222.

⁵³ See below, p. 222.

⁵⁴ PH 30: 53.

⁵⁵ See below, p. 223.

⁵⁶ See below, p. 74.

⁵⁷ See below, p. 110.

⁵⁸ Jay Fliegelman, *Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution against Patriarchal Authority 1750-1800* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982).

⁵⁹ See John Barrell and Jon Mee (eds), *Trials for Treason and Sediton, 1792-1794*, 8 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006-7), vol. 1, p. 80.

⁶⁰ See below, p. 107.

⁶¹ See below, p. 210.

⁶² See below, p. 210.

⁶³ See below, p. 210.

⁶⁴ See below, pp. 226-7.

⁶⁵ The Nine Years War (1688-97); the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13); the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20); the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748); the Seven Years War (1755-63), the American War of Independence (1775-83), the two Jacobite rebellions (1715-16, 1745-6), and various wars in India, against the Mahrattas (1775-82), Hyder Ali (1766-9, 1779-82) and Tipu Sultan (1782-4, 1789-92, with another to come in 1798-9).

⁶⁶ See below, *A Discourse on National Fasts*.

⁶⁷ See below, pp. 119, 169.

⁶⁸ See below, *Defense of the War against France*.

⁶⁹ See below, p. 168.

⁷⁰ See below, p. 222.

⁷¹ See below, *On Trials for Treason*. In the parliamentary election of April 1784, Fox, though he lived in the parish of St Andrew,

Holborn, voted in the parish of St Martin, where he owned a freehold. He voted for Wilkes and Mainwaring, both supporters of Pitt at that time: see *Copy of the Poll ... for the County of Middlesex*, pp. 52-53.

⁷² Among many instance, see in particular *On the Renewal of the East India Chart*.

⁷³ See below, pp. 127, 189-91.

⁷⁴ See below, p. 35.

⁷⁵ PH 29: 1134.

⁷⁶ PH 29: 1149.

⁷⁷ PH 29: 1152.

⁷⁸ PH 30: 271.

⁷⁹ See below, *Thoughts on the Death of the King of France*.

⁸⁰ See below, p. 127.

⁸¹ See below, p. 128.

⁸² See below, pp. 133. This Richard Phillips should not be confused with the author and publishing entrepreneur Sir Richard Phillips, founder of the *Monthly Magazine*, who at this time was imprisoned in Leicester Gaol for having sold Paine's *Rights of Man*.

⁸³ The Foxite position on the war, prior to the invasion-scare of 1798, was set out most fully by Thomas Erskine in *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the Present War with France* (London: J. Debrett, 1797).

⁸⁴ See below, p. 128.

⁸⁵ See below, p. 210.

⁸⁶ HO42/30/171. Johnson requested any response to his letter to be addressed to a 'Mr Moor' at the Red Lion, off Great Russell Street, where he apparently boarded. This was most likely John Moore, 'Chemist to his Majesty', in Great Russell Street, Covent Garden: see *Universal British Directory*, vol. 1, part 1, p. 233. For letters on Hardy, et. al, see HO42/30/31, 39, 78, 92, 152.

⁸⁷ See below, p. **103**.

1. *Address to the People of Great Britain*

⁸⁸ 'The Negro's Complaint' by William Cowper (1731-1800), at this time, with Burns, one of the two most famous poets in Britain, was written by April 1788 and first published a year later in *Stuart's Star* and the *Public Advertiser*, in both cases on April 2 1789. It had appeared in various pro-abolitionist publications by the time Fox published this pamphlet. By the 18th edition, Fox was including all seven stanzas of the poem on the title page. Included on the title page to the 12th edition is the following note, written either by Fox or Gurney: '40,000 of this Pamphlet having been printed in about 4 months affords the most flattering hopes of the plan proposed being extensively adopted and producing very important effects: to further them a trivial price is affixed, that those who approve the Pamphlet may be more generally enabled to promote its circulation; this may be done in the most inconsiderable town or village in the kingdom if there be in it only one friend to the Cause, who will send a letter to *M. Gurney*, No. 128, Holborn, directing to whom

the parcel is to be delivered, and ordering the Coachman, Waggoner, or other person to pay the money on delivery; the deduction abovementioned will in most cases enable the person to dispose of them at a halfpenny, without any loss.’ For the 13th edition, Gurney changed the amount to ‘50,000’ and added the following phrase to the final sentence: ‘and any person ordering 1000 may have an edition printed off with their name and residence, instead of the London Booksellers’.

The *Address* experienced several variations in its title during its publishing history. We are using the title as it appeared on the 7th-26th editions, which is the title generally affixed to the pamphlet. The 1st edition appeared as *An Address to the People of Great Britain on the Consumption of West-India Produce*; other early editions appeared as *An Address to the People of Great Britain, on the Utility of Refraining from the Use of West India Sugar and Rum* and *An Address to the People of Great Britain, Proving the Necessity of Refraining from Sugar and Rum, in order to Abolish the African Slave Trade*. After working with James Philips on the first four editions, Gurney, for the 5th and 6th editions, appeared on the title page with the Quaker printer and bookseller, William Darton; for the 7th-13th editions, Gurney appeared as first seller, along with Thomas Knott and Charles Forster; on the 14th-26th editions, she appeared alone on the title page. Unauthorized editions of the *Address* were printed in Seven Oaks, Chester, Sheffield, Newcastle, Sunderland, Birmingham, and Leeds, as well as in Ireland, Scotland, America, and Wales, the latter being a translation into Welsh. Considerable variations exist among the twenty-six editions of the *Address*. The 1st-5th editions differ noticeably, both in the arrangement of the pamphlet and its language and illustrations, from all the later editions. The first three editions contain numerous typographical errors, suggesting considerable haste in their production. Those errors were largely corrected in the 4th and 5th editions. With the 6th edition, the pamphlet assumed the paragraph order it would follow thereafter, incorporating significant changes in word choices and phrasings from the earlier editions. A new round of additions and alterations occurred in the 12th edition, most of which remain thereafter (most are noted in the notes below), although a few more changes were made in the 18th edition (one of which is noted below).

Two versions of the *Address* have been recently republished, both in multi-volume collections of writings on slavery and the slave trade published by Pickering and Chatto. Peter J. Kitson has reprinted the 4th edition in volume 2 of his eight-volume *Slavery, Abolition and Emancipation: Writings in the British Romantic Period* (London, 1999). John Oldfield has reprinted the 5th edition, in *The Abolitionist Struggle*, vol. 3 of the four-volume collection *The British Transatlantic Slave Trade* (London, 2003). In producing these notes we are indebted to Oldfield’s edition.

⁸⁹ Fox is referring to the heavy defeat, by 163 votes to 88, of the motion of William Wilberforce (1759-1833) for the abolition of the slave trade on April 19 1791; see PH29: 250-359.

⁹⁰ Oldfield points out that this is not strictly true, for although West India sugar was protected by a tariff-wall which made it by far the cheapest, it was possible to purchase at a premium ‘free sugar’ from the East Indies; but Fox would have regarded this too as the product of an informal kind of slave labour.

⁹¹ This sentence was enlarged in the 12th edition: ‘The consumption of sugar in tea, wines, pastry and punch by many families in this country is so considerable, that a

few such families by abstaining, will have an important effect on the Slave Trade, the colonial slavery, and even on the other European markets, where the consumption of sugar is comparatively inconsiderable, because those articles which occasion the consumption of sugar in this Country, are on the Continent very little used' (p. 3).

⁹² In the 1st edition, Fox places this discussion in a footnote about the production of sugar in Barbados, but his figures are considerably different. 'If 1000 slaves are exported from Africa, an equal number are supposed to be there killed in procuring them, and half the exported die in the voyage and seasoning. Consequently, of 2000 killed or enslaved, only 500 live to work in the island: and even these, according to Long, are of little use for the first 3 years: reckoning therefore half labour for that time, and supposing them to live ten years on an average, the produce in consequence of 2000 Africans, being enslaved and murdered to work for us in Barbadoes, will be 816,000 pounds of sugar, with the proportion of rum, or the consumption of 314 families in ten years, at 5l. per week, consequently they every ten years will occasion the murder or slavery of 2000 of their fellow creatures: and so in proportion' (p. 8). In the 13th edition, after the phrase "prevent the slavery or murder of 100", Fox adds, 'and when the sugar trade shall have returned to its former channel by the French Colonies supplying the other European markets, 38,000 such families will have it in their power totally to prevent the Slave Trade to supply our islands' (p. 3).

⁹³ This reference to 'ounces of human flesh' first appears in the 4th edition, where Fox estimated the amount at six ounces. In one copy, 'six ounces' is marked through and replaced in an unknown hand with 'an ounce'. Apparently Fox had a change of mind as well, for in the 5th edition (which exhibits almost no other changes from the 4th edition), the amount was changed to 'two ounces', which is how it would remain until the 18th edition, when this passage disappears from the text.

⁹⁴ The word 'scarlet' was omitted in the 12th edition, but the word appears in the 11th edition. The remark that 'every cup of coffee contains some drops of black blood' ('chaque tasse de café sucré contient quelques gouttes de sang noir') is attributed to Bernardin de Saint-Pierre (1737-1814), author of *Paul et Virginie*, on a number of French websites, but we have not found it in his writings, though the sentiment is typical of him – see, for example, the last sentences of Letter 12 in his *Voyage à l'Île de France* (1773). Fox's source for the quotation is Benjamin Franklin (1705/6-1790), *Letter to Alphonse le Roy*, published in *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society, Held at Philadelphia, for Promoting Useful Knowledge*, 2 vols (Philadelphia: Robert Aitken, 1786), vol. 2, p. 323, where the additional remark Fox attributes to Franklin also appears. The letter had been published in Britain in *Philosophical and Miscellaneous Papers. Lately written by B. Franklin* (London: C. Dilly, 1787). For more on Fox's use of Franklin, see below, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, n. 1.

⁹⁵ 12th edition has 'our increasing prosperity'.

⁹⁶ Oldfield (see above, n. 1), quoting information compiled by J.R. Ward in P.J. Marshall (ed.), *The Oxford History of the British Empire: Volume II, the Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998) notes here that 'sugar imports from Jamaica rose from approximately 17,500 tons in 1748 to 74,000 tons in 1815. Total

sugar imports from the British West Indies to Britain were approximately 41,000 tons in 1748.⁹⁷

⁹⁷ San Domingo, where the slave revolt of 1791 had been preceded by several years of unrest.

⁹⁸ That is, of Afro-Caribbeans born in the West Indies, not brought over from Africa.

⁹⁹ See the evidence of the former Jamaica planter Mark Cook (Fox incorrectly identifies him as 'Mr. Fitz-maurice' in the 1st ed.) in *Abridgment of the Minutes of the Evidence, taken before a Committee of the Whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of the Slave-Trade, No. I-IV* ([London]: [n.d.] [1791]), No. IV, p. 108. The *Abridgment* was a shortened version of *Minutes of the Evidence taken before a Committee of the House of Commons, being a Committee of the Whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of the Circumstances of the Slave Trade, complained of in Several Petitions which were presented to the House in the Last Session of Parliament, Relative to the State of the African Slave Trade*, 4 vols, 1789-1791 ([London]: [n.d.], [1791]). Both publications were originally intended only for members of parliament and were printed in the spring of 1791 just prior to the vote that April on Wilberforce's slave trade bill.

¹⁰⁰ See the evidence of David Parry, former Governor of Barbados, in *Abridgment, No. II*, p. 189.

¹⁰¹ The 12th edition uses a different sentence: 'The reverse we have recently experienced, by the disturbances in the French sugar islands, having suddenly raised some of the markets, which were 20 or 30 per cent. lower than the British, much above it; and thereby occasioned an exportation from this country to supply the deficiency: and our exportation, though only amounting to a 10th of our importation, has raised our sugars 50 per cent.' Oldfield notes that 'For much of the eighteenth century sugar prices were between one-third and one-quarter higher than those of the French.' In the 20th edition, this paragraph was removed.

¹⁰² A 'packet' is 'a boat or ship travelling at regular intervals between two ports, originally for the conveyance of mail, later also of goods and passengers' (OED).

¹⁰³ This paragraph is the 4th paragraph in the first five editions. This paragraph reads as follows in the 12th edition: 'If such be the dreadful situation of the West-India slaves, may it not be asked, on what principle we can receive that produce which occasions it, for as neither the slave-dealer, nor the planter, can have any moral right to the person of him they stile their slave, to his labour, or to the produce of it; so they can convey no right in that produce to us: and whatever number of hands it may pass through, if the criminal circumstances appertaining to it be known at the time of the transfer, they can only have a criminal possession; and can confer no moral right whatever. So, if the death of the person called a slave, be occasioned by the criminal possession, the criminal possessor is guilty of murder; and we, who have knowingly done any act which might occasion his being in that situation, are accessaries to the murder, as by receiving the produce of his labour, we are accessories to the robbery' (p. 6).

¹⁰⁴ In the 1st edition, Fox's analogy was not as effective: 'Thus if a single turnip be taken from a field, the injury done being too small to be perceptible, it may perhaps be said, that no real crime is committed. But no one wil pretend that to be the case, if the whole, or a great part of the crop be taken, although even then, each turnip be taken by a distinct individual, and every one of them may say, his share of the

crime is so minute that it cannot perceptibly increase the injury; for though numbers partaking of the crime may diminish the shame, they cannot diminish the turpitude' (p. 4).

¹⁰⁵ This paragraph reads as follows in the 12th edition: 'But waving these considerations, and even supposing for a moment, that the evil has an existence from causes totally independent of us: yet surely it will not be said, that we are to bind up no wounds but those we have inflicted, nor relieve any distress but what we have occasioned; if dreadful misery exists, and we have it in our power jointly with others, to remedy it; it is undoubtedly our duty to contribute our share, in hopes that others will theirs; and to act from conscience, as we should from inclination in similar cases that interested our feelings' (pp. 6-7).

¹⁰⁶ Algerians.

¹⁰⁷ Joseph Addison (1672-1719); possibly a paraphrase of the last paragraph of *The Freeholder*, no. 31.

¹⁰⁸ In Catholic theology, supererogation is 'the performance of good works beyond what God commands or requires, which are held to constitute a store of merit which the Church may dispense to others to make up for their deficiencies'. Hence, the 'performance of more than duty or circumstances require; doing more than is needed' (OED).

¹⁰⁹ Batavia was then in the Dutch East Indies; now Jakarta in Indonesia. Henry Botham had been a planter in Sumatra as well as in the West Indies: see his evidence in *Abridgment*, No. IV, pp. 133-8.

¹¹⁰ The 12th edition inserts the following at this point: 'These are the men, who are at this moment summoning meetings to compel the minister to aid the operation of their whips by the terrors of our bayonets; and to pervert the public treasure for the purpose of supporting a few individuals in violating every principle of law and justice, and of defending them in the exercise of the most dreadful tyranny over half a million of persons, born in islands, which, when it serves their purpose they pretend to be ours, but of which they have in fact usurped the absolute sovereignty' (p. 8). On March 18 a meeting of West India Merchants at the London Tavern discussed the slave revolt that had broken out two months earlier in Dominica and had been put down by the military. They agreed to prepare a letter to be sent to the Foreign Secretary requesting that an armed force should be sent to each of the British sugar islands 'as might protect the Whites, and keep the Blacks in subjection, during the present very critical stage of the Slave Trade Bill': *Evening Mail*, March 18 1791 (see also the *World* of the following day). They met again at the London Tavern on November 3 and agreed to send a delegation to Pitt requesting that 'a reinforcement of troops be immediately sent to Jamaica, to prevent the alarming insurrection in St Domingo from spreading to the English islands. See also the speech by Colonel Tarleton, opposing Wilberforce's motion for the abolition of the slave trade, and demanding military protection for planters in the expectation of a slave revolt, April 18 1791, PH29: 280.

¹¹¹ See for example the speeches by Tarleton (PH29: 282), Sir William Young (1749-1815, PH29: 296-8) and Lord John Russell (1766-1839, PH29: 314-15), and the evidence of numerous anti-abolition witnesses in part II of the *Abridgment*.

¹¹² See Parry's evidence, *Abridgment*, No. II, p. 189.

- ¹¹³ Fox implies that the West India islands have learned from the former colonies in America to behave independently of Britain: for an example, see the refusal of the council of Antigua to comply with instructions from the British government over the building of fortifications in the island, *Lloyd's Evening Post*, March 11 1791. The reason why the colonies are only 'nominal' is not only that the plantation-owners have 'usurped the absolute sovereignty', but, as Fox puts it below in *On the Renewal of the East India Charter*, 'if we convert our West India Islands into jails to confine them, why, in the name of common sense, must they be called *colonies*?'
- ¹¹⁴ Fox is stretching the ruling obtained in 1772 by Granville Sharp (1735-1813) from Lord Chief Justice Mansfield (1705-93) in the case of James Somerset. Mansfield had ruled that "no master was ever allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad because he deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever". Abolitionists attempted to represent this as tantamount to a ruling that slavery was illegal in England, though it fell short of being that. Fox is attempting to argue that if this was true in England, it must be true throughout the British Empire; and his point is directed also against the speech of Wilberforce himself in which he had proposed his motion for abolition on April 18 1791. He had warned the Commons against informing the West India slaves about civil rights, or giving them 'a power of appealing to the laws'. This, he said, would 'awaken in them a sense of the dignity of their nature ... a feeling it would be dangerous to impart ... To be under the protection of law, was, in fact, to be a freeman; and to unite slavery and freedom in one condition was a vain attempt' which he 'condemned' (PH29: 274). In this difference of views we see why Fox regarded those like Wilberforce arguing only for the abolition of the slave-trade as in effect complicit with the slave-traders and slave-owners: see below, *Defence of the Decree*.
- ¹¹⁵ See for example the speeches of Tarleton (PH29: 279) and John Stanley (315), and see the 'Extracts from the Minutes of the Joint Committee of Assembly and Council of Jamaica, 3d December 1789', II, pp. 200n.-201n..
- ¹¹⁶ That is, since 1787, when the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the African Slave Trade was founded.
- ¹¹⁷ See the evidence of Anthony How (botanist, formerly in government service in Africa), in *Abridgment*, No. III, pp. 87-90.
- ¹¹⁸ See the evidence of Henry Coor (former millwright, Jamaica), in *Abridgment*, No. IV, p. 38.
- ¹¹⁹ See the evidence of General Tottenham, in *Abridgment*, No. IV, p. 69.
- ¹²⁰ See the evidence of Captain Hall (Royal Navy), in *Abridgment*, No. IV, p. 55.
- ¹²¹ See the evidence of Captain J.S. Smith (Royal Navy), in *Abridgment*, No. IV, p. 75.
- ¹²² See the evidence of Hercules Ross (formerly resident of Jamaica), in *Abridgment*, No. IV, p. 144. The claim that slaves in the West Indies had a better and easier life than labourers in Britain and Ireland was made by a number of pro-slave-trade witnesses whose testimony appears in the *Abridgment*; see their evidence summarized in 'Extracts from the Minutes', II, pp. 201n.-202n.
- ¹²³ 12th edition adds to this sentence, 'a luxury to which the industrious bee labours to supply an excellent succedaneum'. A 'succedaneum' is a substitute.
- ¹²⁴ 12th edition reads, 'If we refuse to listen to the admonitions of conscience on this occasion. May it not be justly inferred ...?'

- ¹²⁵ Prayers from the Litany in the 1662 Book of Common Prayer.
- ¹²⁶ 12th edition reads, ‘But, if the dissenters suppose a national religion to be only matter of form, we may expect that they will think it at the least ...’
- ¹²⁷ 12th edition reads, ‘they are bound to consider thousands of them, not merely as their fellow creatures, but as their brethren in Christ’.
- ¹²⁸ Quakers. Within a year of the appearance of the *Address*, a number of Dissenters would answer Fox’s call for a sugar boycott among their constituents. Responses included *An Address to the People called Methodists, Concerning the Criminality of Encouraging Slavery* (1792), by the Methodist minister Samuel Bradburn (1751-1816); *A Second Address to the People of Great Britain; Containing a New and Most Powerful Argument to Abstain from the Use of West India Sugar* (1792), by Andrew Burn (1742-1814), a Baptist layman; *The Duty of Abstaining from the Use of West India Produce, a Speech, Delivered at Coach-Maker’s-Hall, Jan. 12, 1792* (1792), by William Allen (1770-1843), a Quaker; and *Cruelty the Natural and Inseparable Consequence of Slavery, and Both Diametrically Opposite to the Doctrine and Spirit of the Christian Religion: Represented in a Sermon, Preached on Sunday, March 11th, 1792, at Hemel-Hempstead, Herts.* (1792), by the Baptist minister John Liddon (1746/47-1825). All four works were sold by Martha Gurney.
- ¹²⁹ In the 20th edition and thereafter, Fox dropped both sections referring to the Methodists and the Quakers. They also did not appear in the first five editions. The early editions of the *Address* differ significantly from later editions in the length of the conclusion. After the statement that appears in italics and closes with the phrase ‘*till we can obtain the produce of the sugar cane in some other mode, unconnected with slavery, and unpolluted with blood*’, only three paragraphs follow in the first three editions; in the 4th and 5th editions, seven paragraphs follow; with the 6th edition, nine paragraphs follow that phrase; by the 20th edition and thereafter, eight paragraphs follow.
- ¹³⁰ Ephesians 1. 11. The conclusion reads as follows in the 12th edition: ‘In proportion as we are under their influence, we shall rejoice that it is in our power to diminish those dreadful calamities, recollecting that their removal rests not with the exertions of wealth, of rank, or of power: even in the peaceful hamlet, and sequestered cot we may find the source of Afric’s wrongs, and to them we look for their redress. And surely we may look with hope, that the standard of the oppressed being raised, the wise and the good will form a phalanx round it that shall make the abettors of oppression tremble: and let us exert ourselves to the utmost in our respective situations, to rescue from oppression and misery the injured Africans and their unhappy offspring in our islands, considering that our exertions are not to be judged of merely by their immediate effects, but that they may produce remote ones of which we can form no estimate; but which, after having done our duty, we must leave to *Him who governs all things after the counsel of his own will*’ (p. 12).

2. *Summary of the Evidence*

- ¹³¹ Anna Laetitia Barbauld (1743-1825), ‘Epistle to William Wilberforce, Esq., on the Rejection of the Bill for Abolishing the Slave Trade’, *Poems by Anna Laetitia Barbauld* (London: Joseph Johnson, 1792), p. 146. Also on the title page to the first edition

(this does not appear on the 6th edition) is another note, whether by Gurney or Fox is unclear:

The Address to the People of Great Britain having met with such an uncommon reception, as to have called for the printing, 50,000 in about four months, with a demand still greatly on the increase; the Author has been encouraged to publish this little piece with a view of making more generally known that dreadful traffic which has recently much engaged the public attention. To promote the circulation of both these pieces, they are published in a compendious form, and at a trivial price; notwithstanding which, editions, he understands, have been printed at Sheffield, Hull, Newcastle, Sunderland, Leeds, and other places; a circumstance rather disagreeable to an author, who, even though he may have abandoned any lucrative view in publishing, would, notwithstanding, wish to have the control over his work, and not have editions circulated subject to interpolation or mutilation, and which, at least must be destitute of those improvements, which are ever suggesting themselves to an author's mind.

Gurney later added the following notices beneath the title of the 6th edition: '*By the Author of the Address to the People of Great Britain; the 17th edition of which may be had of M. Gurney.*' 'Persons in the Country, ordering 1000, may have an Edition worked off, with their Names and Residence in the Title.' By the 6th edition, the price had been reduced to 13 for 6d. or 50 for 1s. 9d. Few differences exist among the six editions of the pamphlet; however, in the final edition, the closing three paragraphs have been condensed into one (see below, n. 19).

¹³² A variant spelling of 'cassava', or manioc.

¹³³ Apart from an internet reference to 'foden' as 'the ancient plant Fodenus ... used in the early 1980's in England and parts of Ireland as a sex drug', we have been unable to discover a plant named 'foden', even in *Abridgment of the Minutes of Evidence* which appears to be Fox's source. Judith Woolf, of the University of York, has drawn our attention to red sorghum and sorghum bicolor – a variety of millet the pulverised stalks of which provide a red dye, or, mixed with lemon, a yellow dye: see Michel Bellemare, 'Local Colour on a Traditional Plant – Extracting Dye from Red Sorghum' (*IDRC: Resources: Books: Reports*, vol. 21, no. 3). It was imported into Europe from sub-Saharan Africa in the eighteenth century. That 'foden' was probably sorghum has been tentatively endorsed by our correspondents Dominique Cardon and Polycarpe Kayode, but so far we have not managed to link sorghum with the name 'foden'. Roger Blench has proposed *cochlospermum tinctorium*, the root of which yields a yellowish-brown dye; and see P.C.M. Jansen and Dominique Cardon, *Plant Resources of Tropical Africa Part 3: Dyes and Tannins* (Wageningen: Prota Foundation/Backhuys, 2005), pp. 56-7, who point out that several colours, though not apparently red, can be produced from this plant by adding mordants or indigo to the yellow dye. In the Pulaar language of the Fula people of Senegal *cochlospermum tinctorium* is known as fadu rãdé, the closest relevant plant name to 'foden' we have yet come across. Thanks too to Mark Nesbitt of Kew for signposting us on this trail.

¹³⁴ To footnote separately every reference to the *Abridgment of the Minutes of Evidence* would produce a rash of superscript numbers on nearly every page. Instead we have provided an alphabetical list of the witnesses referred to by Fox, with the part-number and page-range where their evidence is to be found:

John Bowman, former slaver, IV, pp. 62-6
Mr. Claxton, former surgeon's mate on a slave-ship, IV, pp. 17-21
Henry Hew Dalrymple, army officer, III, pp. 116-29
John Douglas, former boatswain on slave ship, IV, pp. 66-8
Henry Ellison, naval gunner, III, pp. 143-51
Alexander Falconbridge (c. 1760-1792), former ship's surgeon, II, pp. 225-44
James Frazer, former commander of a slave ship, II, pp. 1-28
Captain John Ashley Hall, former slaver, II, pp. 205-19
Captain John Hills, Royal Navy, III, pp. 70-2
Anthony Pantaleo Howe, botanist. formerly on government employment in Africa, III, pp. III, pp. 88-90
Knox, former commander of a slave ship, I, pp. 19-28
James Morley, former slaver, now naval gunner, III, pp. 60-7
Rev. John Newton (1725-1807), former captain of slave ship, now Church of England clergyman, III, pp. 56-9
Isaac Parker, former slaver, III, pp. 52-5
George Rooke, former slaver, III, pp. 14-15
Captain Robert Ross, former Jamaica landowner, IV, pp. 24-38
John Simpson, lieutenant of marines, IV, pp. 22-5
Richard Storey, naval lieutenant, IV, pp. 1-6
Captain Thomas Thompson, Royal Navy, III, pp. 67-70
Major-General Tottenham, IV, pp. 68-70
James Towne, naval carpenter, IV, pp. 6-17
Dr Thomas Trotter (1760-1832), surgeon, Royal Navy, III, pp. 34-41
Mr Wadstrom, native of Sweden, former explorer in Africa, III, pp. 5-14
Captain Wilson, former slaver, III, p. 1-5
Captain Sir George Young (1732-1810), Royal Navy, III, 80-8.

¹³⁵ Fox has put together several phrases extracted from 'The Second Voyage to Guinea, set out by Sir George Barne, Sir John Yorke, Thomas Lok, Anthonie Hickman and Edward Castelin, in the Yere 1554', in Richard Hakluyt (ed.), *The Principal Voyages, Navigations, Traffiques, and Discoveries of the English Nation*, reprinted in Peter Mancall (ed.), *Travel Narratives from the Age of Discovery* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 67-9.

¹³⁶ Fernast-di-po was later known as Fernando Po, an island off the coast of West Africa at the mouth of the Niger River.

¹³⁷ The natives of Sierra Leone.

¹³⁸ See for example George Baldwin (1744-1826), British Consul at Alexandria, *Extract of a letter from Consul General Baldwin to the Duke of Leeds, dated Alexandria, 21 June 1789*, and *Memorial relating to the Slave Trade in Egypt*, both published by order of the government in 1790.

¹³⁹ Gorée is an island off the city of Dakar, once infamous as a base for slave-traders.

¹⁴⁰ That is, ‘mandingoes’, people of West Africa ‘speaking closely related dialects of the largest language (now usually called *Manding*) of the Mande subfamily’ (OED).

¹⁴¹ In the modern Gambia.

¹⁴² Fox has in mind the famous print of the slave ship *Brookes*, originally created by Thomas Clarkson in 1788, produced by the Plymouth Chapter of the Society for Effecting the Abolition of the Slave Trade, and distributed widely by the London Abolition Society. The *Brookes* became a part of the testimony before the select committee in parliament that led to the bill instigated by Sir William Dolben that regulated the number of slaves that could be carried on a British ship. Clarkson included the drawing and some of the testimony in his *Abstract of the Evidence delivered before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in the years 1790, and 1791; on the part of the petitioners for the Abolition of the Slave-Trade* (Edinburgh: Glasgow and Edinburgh Abolition Societies, 1791; London: James Phillips, 1791), pp. 37-39. The drawing depicted 454 slaves arranged flat on their backs in rows on two decks, with their allotted spaces (as allowed under the Dolben Bill) exactly as Fox describes them. Martha Gurney began displaying the print in her shop in 1788; by 1792, Fox would have had the disturbing images burned into his mind.

¹⁴³ Cat o’ nine tails.

¹⁴⁴ See the evidence from six naval officers, including four admirals, that the slave-trade was ‘a nursery for seamen’, in *Abridgment* II, pp. 158-65. For spirits as a useful article to exchange for slaves, see for example the evidence of Knox, commander of a slave ship, and John Fountain, merchant in Africa, in *Abridgment*, I, pp. 23, 51, 54.

¹⁴⁵ For these requests to send troops to Jamaica and Dominica: see above, *An Address*, n. 23.

¹⁴⁶ Richard I, his brother John, and their successors.

¹⁴⁷ Now the Republic of Benin, West Africa.

¹⁴⁸ ‘A state within a state’, the actions or mere existence of which threatens to subvert or usurp the sovereign power.

¹⁴⁹ The six editions of the *Summary View* are essentially identical until the conclusion; in the 6th edition, the final three paragraphs was reduced to one:

The nature of the African Slave Trade being now ascertained, the evidence on the question of its Abolition is fully closed. For had the inhabitants of Africa been forced from their native land, to partake of the luxuries instead of the tortures of the West Indies; yet the question recurs, On what principle of the law of nature, or of nations, we compel them to partake of either? Let us not be diverted from an investigation of a simple question, by a desultory enquiry. The West India Slavery is a continuation and aggravation of an original offence; in defence of which so far from anything having been proved, nothing has been alledged. Dare the villain who has stolen and murdered the parent, insult us by deriving from thence a property in the children? Dare we throw aside all semblance of common justice, by occasioning the seizure of the parent and the slavery of the offspring, for supplying us with a luxury? And let a question be repeated, which no one has attempted

to answer. *By what right can we purchase that sugar, to which the seller can have no right, and thereby encourage him to continue the injury and aggravate his crimes? FINIS.*

3. *The Interest of Great Britain*

¹⁵⁰ The first coalition of monarchs allied against France was between the Holy Roman Emperor, Leopold II (succeeded in 1792 by his son Francis II), Frederick William II of Prussia, and Victor-Amadeus III of Sardinia; by the time Fox was writing this pamphlet, they had been joined by Charles IV of Spain, Pope Pius VI, Ferdinand of Naples, William V the stadtholder of the Dutch United Provinces, and George III. Later in 1793 Catherine II of Russia would join the coalition.

¹⁵¹ America, lost in the War of Independence, 1775-83.

¹⁵² That is in 1790, when Edmund Burke (1729/30-1797) published his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*.

¹⁵³ By a decree of May 1791 the civil list, at the disposal of Louis XVI, was fixed at 25,000,000 francs.

¹⁵⁴ See the correspondence between Barnard-François Chauvelin (1766-1832), the French ambassador to Britain, and Lord Grenville (1759-1834), Foreign Secretary, especially Chauvelin's letter of June 18 1792, and Grenville's reply, July 8 (PH30: 247-9). Some of this correspondence had been made public in 1792; the remainder was released on January 28 1793, a few days after news of the execution of Louis XVI reached London, and a few days before the announcement in London of the French declaration of war, on February 11.

¹⁵⁵ Of Louis XVI's brothers, the Comte d'Artois (later Charles X) left France in July 1789 and established his court at Turin and later at Coblenz, where he was soon joined by his elder brother the Comte de Provence, later Louis XVIII, and where, with Louis XVI's cousin, the Prince de Condé, they coordinated plans for the counter-revolutionary invasion of France, subsidized by Prussia, Spain and Russia.

¹⁵⁶ As was shown at his trial, at least since 1791 Louis XVI had been colluding with the foreign monarchs anxious to restore to the Bourbon monarchy the powers it had enjoyed prior to 1789.

¹⁵⁷ A reference to the events in Paris of August and September 1792. On August 10, apparently in response to the Brunswick manifesto' (see below, n. 12), the Tuileries, then the residence of the royal family, was stormed and some 600 of the king's Swiss Guards were killed, together with close to 300 of the besiegers. During the first week of September, the rumour of the imminent arrival of Prussian troops in Paris led to some 1,200 people, half the prison population of Paris (priest, aristocrats, and common criminals), being murdered by panicking crowds, supposedly as collaborators with the enemies of France. The 'consequences' Fox refers to are the imprisonment of the royal family, the declaration of the republic, and the trial and execution of Louis.

¹⁵⁸ Anne Boleyn, executed in 1536, Katherine Howard (1542), Lady Jane Grey (1554), Mary Queen of Scots (1587).

- ¹⁵⁹ A reference to one of the most famous passages in Burke's *Reflections*, in which, writing of the invasion of Versailles by the people of Paris on October 6 1789, and the disrespect shown to Marie Antoinette on that occasion - amounting, he claimed, to the threat of rape and murder - Burke exclaimed: 'I thought ten thousand swords must have leapt from their scabbards to avenge even a look that threatened her with insult. - But the age of chivalry is gone.' See *The Works of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke*, new edition, 14 vols (London: F.C. and J. Rivington, 1815-22), vol. 5, p. 149. This edition is henceforth cited as *WEB*.
- ¹⁶⁰ In the space of three days in 1762, Peter III of Russia was deposed in a coup d'état led by his wife Catherine, imprisoned, and murdered; Catherine succeeded him, reigning as Catherine II ('the Great').
- ¹⁶¹ The extirpation of all who resisted the allied invasion of France in 1792 was threatened in the Brunswick Manifesto, written by the Prince of Condé and signed by the Duke of Brunswick on July 25 1792: 'they threatened to punish as rebels all National Guards who resisted and to burn or demolish the homes of all civilians who dared to defend themselves. ... If the mob again invaded the Tuileries palace, or if the slightest violence was offered to the royal family, the allies promised to exact an exemplary and ever memorable vengeance by handing over the city of Paris to a military execution and total destruction' (Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty* [Cambridge MA: Harvard University Press, 1979], p. 240). On December 28 Burke endorsed in part the manifesto and was taken by his opponents to be endorsing a war of extermination.
- ¹⁶² A claim repeatedly made in Chauvelin's letters to Grenville, PH30: 240, 243, 246.
- ¹⁶³ A common theme of Burke's *Reflections*: see in particular *WEB*, vol. 5, pp. 168-70, 310ff.
- ¹⁶⁴ The advance of the allies had been checked at Valmy on September 20 1792, and decisively thrown into retreat at Jemmapes on November 6, following which France occupied the whole of the Austrian Netherlands.
- ¹⁶⁵ The White Cliffs of Dover, as standing for Britain in general.
- ¹⁶⁶ Memorable defeats of the British at St Cas Bay (1758) and Fontenoy (1745), and the humiliating convention of Closter-Zeven (1757).
- ¹⁶⁷ Flanders comprised the Austrian Netherlands and an area of northern France. Though the Austrian Netherlands were not formally annexed by the French Republic until 1795, they became a *de facto* republic following the battle of Jemappes and the French invasion led by Charles François Dumouriez (1739-1823).
- ¹⁶⁸ The Scheldt is a river flowing into the North Sea between Holland and what is now Belgium, but in 1793 was the Austrian Netherlands. To divert international trade from Antwerp to Amsterdam, in the seventeenth century the Dutch Republic had closed the Scheldt to shipping, and its closure had been recognised in 1713 by international treaty. Following the Austrian invasion of north-eastern France and the French victory at Jemmapes, the French Republic captured Antwerp and declared the Scheldt open to shipping. This was seen in Holland and in Britain as a threat both to their security and their trade.
- ¹⁶⁹ Ruremonde in the Austrian Netherlands (now Roermond in the Netherlands), taken by the French in 1792.

- ¹⁷⁰ Fox is anticipating the assurances offered by Chauvelin to Grenville in his letter of January 13 1793, PH30: 264-6.
- ¹⁷¹ We cannot find any evidence that Paine was anxious to promote a war between France and Britain; perhaps Fox, hostile as ever to Paine, simply presumed that he did.
- ¹⁷² That the war with France is still ‘in contemplation’ indicates that this edition of the pamphlet was written as if prior to the announcement on February 11 1793 of the French declaration of war; the phrase is missing from the fifth edition.
- ¹⁷³ In 1731 the British ship *Rebecca*, captained by Robert Jenkins, was boarded by Spanish coastguard (*guarda costas*), who cut off one of Jenkins’s ears. Jenkins exhibited himself and his severed ear in parliament in 1738 and there followed the ‘War of Jenkins’s Ear’, an early phase of the War of Austrian Succession. The Spanish dollars may be those driven from London to Portsmouth in 1749, and shipped thence to Boston, to repay the government of Massachusetts for expenses incurred in the capture of Cape Breton from the French in 1745.
- ¹⁷⁴ It was customary to salute military and naval victories by a general illumination, by candles placed in each window of every house.
- ¹⁷⁵ A special number of the *London Gazette*, the official government newsheet, was sometimes produced to disseminate news of British victories.
- ¹⁷⁶ See above, n. 19.
- ¹⁷⁷ Probably a reference to Burke’s *Reflections*, *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 86, or possibly to one of Burke’s speeches on the Quebec Government Bill, May 6 1792, PH29: 396.
- ¹⁷⁸ A reference to Burke’s *Substance of the Speech of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, in the Debate on the Army Estimates, in the House of Commons, on Tuesday, the 9th day of February* (1790), *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 5 (‘France was, at this time, in a political light, to be considered, as expunged out of the system of Europe’), as paraphrased by Paine, *Rights of Man. Part the First* (1791), in *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 336. Except where noted, all Fox’s quotations from Paine are taken from *Rights of Man, Part the First* (1791) or *Part the Second* (1792), and are referenced to Foner’s edition (*CWP*).
- ¹⁷⁹ ‘perpetual war’: it is probably impossible to count the number of wars, in Europe, India, North America and elsewhere, in which England (subsequently Britain) was involved between 1688 and 1793, because the wars overlap and merge into each other. There appear to have been at least nineteen such wars to which individual names were assigned, and in 105 years there were fewer than 40 years of peace.
- ¹⁸⁰ Speeches of bitter denunciation, originally so-called after the ‘philippic’ orations of Demosthenes against Philip of Macedon.
- ¹⁸¹ Another indication that this edition of the pamphlet was written prior to, or *as if* prior to, the declaration of war: see above, n. 23.
- ¹⁸² See the speech of Henry Dundas (1742-1811), then Home Secretary, on the Alien Bill, January 28 1792, PH30: 174-5.
- ¹⁸³ See above, n. 12.
- ¹⁸⁴ Burke’s speech on the Alien Bill, in which he denounced the principles of the revolution in France and the revolutionaries as atheists, ended with the famous ‘dagger scene’. Denouncing a plan by Dr William Maxwell to supply the French with 3,000 daggers made in Birmingham, Burke produced a dagger and threw it ‘with much vehemence’ on to the floor of the Commons: see PH30: 180-9.

- ¹⁸⁵ Various events which the Jacobite Fox sees as consequences of the revolution of 1688-9. At the massacre of Glencoe, 38 members of the clan MacDonald were murdered for the failure of their clan chief to take the oath of allegiance to William III by the due date; others, driven from their homes, died of exposure or starvation. William III was involved in foreign wars, regarded by Fox as aggressive and unnecessary, for most of his reign: the Nine Years War (1688-97) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13). It was to pay for the first of these wars that the national debt originated in Britain; by the end of that war the total debt, funded and unfunded, stood at over £21m. The Septennial Act (1715) increased the length of time between elections from three to seven years, ensuring an extended term of office for the then Whig government. The Riot Act (1714) was passed in the wake of the riots protesting against the trial of the Tory churchman Henry Sacheverell (see below, *On Jacobinism*, n. 21).
- ¹⁸⁶ See above, n. 8.
- ¹⁸⁷ On November 19 1792 the National Convention promulgated a Decree of Fraternity, which offered the fraternity assistance of France to all nations wishing to recover their liberty.
- ¹⁸⁸ The principles set out in this paragraph are in part quoted, in part paraphrased from Locke's *Two Treatises of Government*, Book II, ch. 11-13.
- ¹⁸⁹ Judging by the tone of Fox's reference to the Rights of Man, he has in mind here the pamphlet by Thomas Paine (1737-1809) and not the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen*, approved by the French National Assembly in 1789, from which it would be perfectly possible to derive the principles set out in the previous paragraph.
- ¹⁹⁰ The salary of the philosopher John Locke (1632-1704) from the Board of Trade from 1696-1700.
- ¹⁹¹ In 1791 the liberal government of Poland, led by King Stanislaw August, produced Europe's first written constitution in Europe, based partly on that of the United States. It instituted the separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judiciary, and vested sovereignty in the people, defined however very narrowly. Encouraged by the Polish nobility, in January 1793 Russia and Prussia invaded Poland, annulled the constitution, and annexed large areas of the country. This would provoke, in 1794, the revolt of the Polish patriot Kosciuszko, and the final partition and erasure of Poland as a country, by Russia, Prussia, and Austria. In 1791 Burke had heaped high praise on the Polish king for his reform of the constitution (*An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* [1791], *WEB*, vol. 6, pp. 243-7); but on December 24 1792, in the Commons' debate on the army estimates, he made the remark on Poland that Fox alludes to here (PH30: 173-4), and he would amplify it on February 18 1793 (see PH30: 433-4).
- ¹⁹² This argument was later adopted by the Whig leader Charles James Fox (1749-1806): see his speech on his own motion for putting an end to the war with France, May 30 1794, PH31: 625.
- ¹⁹³ Fox has in mind Burke's speeches in support of the American colonists, and the Duke of Richmond's *Letter to Colonel Sharman* (1783), in which he advocates universal manhood suffrage and annual parliaments. For Richmond, see below, n. 47.

- ¹⁹⁴ Fox refers to William Molyneux (1656-98), *The Case of Ireland's being Bound by Acts of Parliament in England* (1698); Richard Price (1723-91) *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* (1776), and the *Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen* (1789).
- ¹⁹⁵ In the House of Commons on December 15 1792, Robert Jenkinson (1770-1828), the future Prime Minister Lord Liverpool, urged 'the necessity of arresting the career of the French', who were 'planting principles subversive of order, morality, and religion' (PH30: 90).
- ¹⁹⁶ In June 1780 Charles Lennox, third duke of Richmond (1735–1806), then a member of the Society for Constitutional Information, sought leave to introduce a reform bill into parliament which would have established universal manhood suffrage, annual parliaments, and constitutions equal by population. Leave was refused. By 1794, when Fox was writing, Richmond had turned his back on parliamentary reform, was a member of Pitt's cabinet, a Knight of the Garter, and Master-General of the Ordnance. He would be dropped from the cabinet the following year. The 'extravagant author' is perhaps Ely Bates, whose *A Chinese Fragment, Containing an Inquiry into the Present State of Religion in England* had been published in 1786 by, among others, Joseph Johnson. For Bates, the religion of Confucius, whom he equated with Jesus, was the essence of Christianity with its 'corruptions' removed, such as the terrors of an afterlife in hell. Confucius was the true follower of Tien, which to Bates is the one true God.
- ¹⁹⁷ In November 1792 the magistrate John Reeves (1752-1829) founded the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, intended to collect evidence to support prosecutions of those issuing seditious publications and making seditious speeches, and also to circulate loyalist propaganda. Following the royal proclamation of December 1, in which it was announced 'by authority' that the internal peace of Britain was threatened by a coalition of 'evil-disposed' persons and foreign agents, several hundred provincial associations were quickly established on the lines of Reeves's prototype, all dedicated to supporting the government line on the revolution in France and parliamentary reform.
- ¹⁹⁸ Paraphrasing Burke's *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 168.
- ¹⁹⁹ Probably a general summary of Burke's attitude toward the revolution and its British supporters rather than a reference to any particular speech or written text.
- ²⁰⁰ In 1792 a revolution in Geneva had brought down the aristocratic government and proclaimed political equality, so that, Fox believes, the Genevese have already secured their liberty. The French invasion in 1792 of Savoy and Nice, then under the rule of Sardinia and allied to Austria, was greeted by many savoyards as a liberation. 'St Angelo', the name of the famous papal stronghold in Rome, appears to be an error for 'Avignon', where a series of popular revolts against the papacy eventually led to the city's reintegration with France in 1791.
- ²⁰¹ Rosinante, the broken-down mount of Don Quixote, who of course famously tilted at windmills in the belief that they were giants. Since his lament for the passing of the age of chivalry (see above, n. 10), Burke had repeatedly been satirised as Don Quixote. In 1792 Fox had been one of a large conger of booksellers, including the Rivingtons, Longman, the Robinsons, Johnson, Cadell, Murray, and Debrett who together published a new edition of Cervantes's novel: *The History and Adventures of the Renowned Don Quixote*, 6th ed., 4 vols (London: 1792).

- ²⁰² Sir Robert Walpole was brought down in 1742, in part due to Britain's lack of success in the War of the Austrian Succession. The Duke of Newcastle was forced to resign in 1756, at the beginning of the Seven Years War. Lord North was brought down in 1782 by Britain's defeat in the American War of Independence.
- ²⁰³ William Pitt, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Prime Minister. In its notice of this pamphlet the *Critical Review* remarked that 'The author appears to be a staunch friend to Mr. Pitt' (vol. 7, January 1793, p. 113); this would cease to be the case from February 1793.
- ²⁰⁴ George III was also the Elector of the small German state of Hanover, and an invasion of north-west Germany by the French republic threatened him with the loss of his state and throne. When Burke retired from the House of Commons, his seat was taken by his son Richard, of whose political career Burke had the highest ambitions. Richard died, however, a few weeks after taking his seat.
- ²⁰⁵ Fort Lillo, a fort on the Scheldt guarding Antwerp, captured by the French in November 1792.
- ²⁰⁶ Fox probably has in mind the Treaty of Paris (1763) at the close of the Seven Years War, in which a number of islands, from Minorca to Guadeloupe, were exchanged.
- ²⁰⁷ The Revolution Society had indeed welcomed the French Revolution, but Fox was probably confusing it here with the Society for Constitutional Information, which had made strenuous efforts to ensure the wide circulation of Paine's *Rights of Man*, and in November 1792 had sent a delegation to Paris to congratulate the National Convention on the declaration of the Republic.
- ²⁰⁸ These were the Nine Years War (1688-97); the War of the Spanish Succession (1701-13); the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20); the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748); the Seven Years War (1755-63), the American War of Independence (1775-83), and the two Jacobite rebellions of 1715-16 and 1745-6.
- ²⁰⁹ Fox enjoys reuniting these two former allies, now bitter enemies. Burke had strenuously opposed the use of pensions by the government as a mode of political bribery: see in particular the *Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq. Member of Parliament for the City of Bristol, on ... the Oeconomical Reformation of the Civil and other Establishments* (1780). Paine had similarly attacked the huge cost of government pensions in *Rights of Man*.
- ²¹⁰ A body of laws, the forerunner of International Law, governing the relations between states, based on the Roman *ius gentium*, and the writings of various Islamic and Christian jurists.
- ²¹¹ Source unlocated.
- ²¹² The laws of particular states, as opposed to the Law of Nations.
- ²¹³ See above, n. 30.
- ²¹⁴ See Grenville's letter to Chauvelin, July 8 1792, PH30: 249.
- ²¹⁵ See above, n. 23.
- ²¹⁶ See Chauvelin to Grenville, December 27 1792, PH30: 251.
- ²¹⁷ According to Burke, speaking in the debate on the Alien Bill, PH30: 186, and see Grenville to Chauvelin, December 31 1792, PH30: 255. France had broken the Treaty of 1713 closing the Scheldt: see above, n. 19.
- ²¹⁸ A reference to the Decree of the National Assembly declaring peace to the world, May 28 1790.

- ²¹⁹ The Treaty of Navigation and Commerce, 1786, the terms of which would be broken by the passing of the Alien Bill, or so Chauvelin argued in his letter of January 7 1792, which Grenville returned to him: see PH30: 256-9.
- ²²⁰ Earl Gower (1758-1833), the British Ambassador in Paris, had been recalled in August 1792, in response to the events of August 10.

4. *Examination of the Writings of Mr. Paine*

- ²²¹ See the 'Preface' to Paine, *Rights of Man. Part the Second. Combining Principle and Practice* (1792), *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 349-50, where Paine regrets that Burke and others have not attempted a serious reply to the first part of *Rights of Man*.
- ²²² *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 449. Paine's welfare plan involved paying disbanded veterans 3s. per week for life.
- ²²³ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 424-5.
- ²²⁴ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 440, 450.
- ²²⁵ Apparently a reference to the resolutions of the Manchester Constitutional Society meeting of March 13 1792, which thanked Paine for publishing *Rights of Man. Part the Second*, in particular singling out and briefly summarizing his welfare plans. These resolutions were printed in the *Morning Chronicle* on March 19; meanwhile they had been sent to the Society for Constitutional Information in London which adopted them at its meeting of March 16, and quoted them in the proceedings of that meeting published in the *Morning Chronicle* on March 21 and 23. Fox's claim that Paine himself was responsible for these announcements is untrue.
- ²²⁶ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 450.
- ²²⁷ Paine had lived in America from 1774-1787, taking the side of the colonists during the American war, writing his two great pro-American pamphlets, *Common Sense* (1775) and *The American Crisis* (1776), and working for an American victory in various official and semi-official capacities.
- ²²⁸ The national debt increased steadily during the eighteenth century, from £12m in 1700 to many hundreds of millions at the time Fox was writing. At the outbreak of the French Revolution it stood at £240m. By the end of the war with France, in 1815, it would amount to £850m.
- ²²⁹ William Blackstone (1723-80) gives a history and critique of the national debt in his *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-1769), Book I, ch. 8. He believed that it had thrown a huge 'weight of power' into 'the executive scale of government'.
- ²³⁰ Fox was writing before the catastrophic decline in value and eventual collapse of the *assignats*, a hybrid of government bonds and paper money, by which the revolutionary government had sought to finance the vast national debt inherited from the ancient regime.
- ²³¹ A point Fox may have gleaned from Paine himself: 'No country on the globe is ... so internally capable of raising a fleet as America. Tar, timber, iron, and cordage are her natural produce': *Common Sense*, in *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 33.

- ²³² The stability of the British economy and system of finance meant that the Bank of England could issue bonds at very low rates of interest in the certainty that issues would be fully subscribed.
- ²³³ An area where trade is especially facilitated by low customs duties.
- ²³⁴ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 417-18, 432, 442-3, etc.
- ²³⁵ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 434-6.
- ²³⁶ Paine had been an excise officer in Lewes from 1768 until he was dismissed in 1774, on which he went to America. The poor waste land Fox refers to is no doubt the heathland of the Ashdown Forest.
- ²³⁷ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 434.
- ²³⁸ Sir Richard Arkwright (1732-92) patented various inventions to facilitate the spinning of cotton, and established cotton mills in Derbyshire run by water-power.
- ²³⁹ The Duke of Bridgewater (1736-1803), promoter and sole financier of the Bridgewater Canal in Lancashire, completed in 1776. It connected his coal mines at Worsley with Manchester, and led to a considerable reduction in the price of coal and therefore in the expenses of cotton manufactures.
- ²⁴⁰ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 412. The 'Prayers and Thanksgivings, upon Several Occasions' in the Church of England *Book of Common Prayer* began with a prayer for rain and another for fair weather, to ensure an adequate supply of 'the fruits of the earth'.
- ²⁴¹ A bog or swamp.
- ²⁴² Burke, *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, *WEB*, vol. 6, p. 188, p. 86; Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 410.
- ²⁴³ 'Influence' was a euphemism for the power of members of the House of Lords over the membership of the House of Commons; many regarded themselves as the effectual owners of parliamentary constituencies ('rotten boroughs' and 'pocket boroughs'), where the electorates were so tiny that they could be bribed or intimidated into returning the 'owners' nominees. Fox probably did not realise quite how extensive this influence was until the publication of *The State of the Representation of England and Wales* (London: for the Friends of the People, 1793), to which he will refer on several occasions in later pamphlets. He may also have in mind the huge number of new peerages or peerage promotions, a total of forty-five, created by Pitt between December 1783 and the summer of 1790. Of these the ODNB says, in the article on Pitt, that the 'rapid growth' of the House of Lords, 'which eventually produced an unmanageably large assembly, was the result more of failure to resist pressing applications from ambitious men than a clear desire to use them for political ends'; but at the time there was no shortage of people who took the opposite view.
- ²⁴⁴ By an act of 1710, MPs sitting for county and borough constituencies were required to have an annual income of at least £600 and £300 respectively, derived from a freehold estate, but this qualification was often ignored or evaded.
- ²⁴⁵ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 410.
- ²⁴⁶ Paine, *Common Sense*, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 32, where Paine, apparently responding to critics of his estimate of the cost to America of building a navy as given in first and second editions of *Common Sense*, refers to John Entick's *A New Naval History, or, Compleat View of the British Marine* (London: R. Manby, 1757 [not 1758]). Both Fox

(‘the last century’) and Paine (‘1757’) appear mistaken about the dates to which these costs apply. Entick quotes them from Josiah Burchett’s unpaginated preface to his *A Complete History of the most Remarkable Transactions at Sea* (London: J. Walthoe, and J. Walthoe junior, 1720), where they are represented as current costs.

²⁴⁷ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 415-16.

²⁴⁸ Sir Robert Cotton (c. 1571-1631) politician and antiquary, courtier and administrator. We are not sure what source Fox is using. He was clearly working with the first or second edition of Sir John Sinclair (1754-1835), *The History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire* (London: T. Cadell, 1785, 1790) on his desk, on p. 23 (2nd ed., Part I, p. 17) of which this number of manors is attributed to Edward the Confessor, but though Sinclair acknowledges Cotton several times as his source, he does not do so here.

²⁴⁹ Orderic (Ordericus) Vitalis (1075-c.1142), English chronicler, author of *Historia Ecclesia*, a lengthy account of his own times. Fox apparently borrows this figure from Sinclair’s *History of the Public Revenue* (p. 60/Part I, 43-4). Sinclair however, rounds the figure up to ‘about’ £400,000 a year, with a footnote quoting Vitalis as giving a figure of £1061. 10s. 0³/4d. It rather looks as though Fox, determined to show himself a better scholar than Paine, has multiplied Vitalis’s figure by 365, come up with a different figure from Sinclair’s, and invited the reader to believe that he had actually consulted not Sinclair but Vitalis’s vast Latin history.

²⁵⁰ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 416.

²⁵¹ Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, *WEB*, vol. 5, pp. 166, 189-90.

²⁵² Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 416.

²⁵³ ‘An estate in land, etc. belonging to the owner and his heirs for ever, without limitation to any particular class of heirs; *in fee-simple*: in absolute possession’ (OED).

²⁵⁴ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 363.

²⁵⁵ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 418. It is not clear which years Fox has in mind. However, in February 1792 the total of the revenue for 1791-2 was said by Pitt to have amounted to £16,730,000 (PH29: 817), and in his budget statement of March 1793 (PH30: 563) he revealed that a surplus had arisen over the last four years of £900,000, but this would not have been known to Fox when he was writing this pamphlet.

²⁵⁶ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 410 and n. The figure given by Paine is actually £1,950,000.

²⁵⁷ Fox at his most intemperately error-prone. The figure of £1,950,000 as the produce of the land-tax in 1788 is given by Sinclair in *The History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire. Part III* (London: T. Cadell, 1790), p. 110. Paine does not assert that this sum was half a million less than the produce of the tax ‘at the revolution’ (1688-9), as Fox suggests, but with that of ‘*almost a hundred years since*’ (my italics). On p. 7 of the same work, Sinclair had given the sum of the produce of the land tax in 1696 at £2,473,449, i.e. half a million more, just as Paine had said. All that follows in Fox’s argument, about the civil war, the republican army, and the injustice of republican government is therefore nothing to the purpose. It may be that Fox did not know of the third part of Sinclair’s work, or, if he did know, did not have access to it.

²⁵⁸ Almost certainly Fox was looking at the 1656 assessment for this amount in Henry Scobell, *A Collection of Acts and Ordinances* (London: Henry Hills and John Field,

dated 1658 but published 1657), pp. 400-1, to which Fox would have been directed by the footnote in Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, p. 265/Part I, 190-1.

²⁵⁹ Sinclair, *History of the Public Revenue*, p. 240/Part I, 172.

²⁶⁰ A fifteenth is 'a tax of one-fifteenth formerly imposed on personal property' (OED). Fox has misremembered his sources: at the page he cites is an annotated text of Magna Charta. Coke sets out the subsidies Fox refers to in 4 *Inst. (The Fourth Part of the Institutes of the Laws of England)*, pp. 33-4, which is where Davenant locates it in a text Fox is about to cite, Sir Charles Whitworth (ed.), *The Political and Commercial Works of that Celebrated Writer Charles D'Avenant*, 5 vols (London: R. Horsfield et al., 1771), vol. 1, p. 32.

²⁶¹ Fox has misremembered the title of this 'Act for granting an Aid to his Majesty, as well by a Land-Tax as by several Subsidies and other Duties, payable for One Year'.

²⁶² The amiable old fogey Sir Roger de Coverley, in Joseph Addison (1672-1719) and Richard Steele (1672-1729), *The Spectator* (1711-12), had been in his youth a fervent hunter of foxes; Squire Western is a boisterous fox-hunting squire in the novel by Henry Fielding (1707-54), *The History of Tom Jones* (1749).

²⁶³ Probably Fox is referring to Davenant's account of the low yield of the monthly assessment in his *Political and Commercial Works*, vol. 1, pp. 52-4.

²⁶⁴ 'An Act for granting Her Majesty a Land-Tax for carrying on the War against France and Spain'.

²⁶⁵ An obsolete eighteenth-century participial phrase; we would now say 'having become'.

²⁶⁶ That is, in the stock of the national debt.

²⁶⁷ Formerly collectors of taxes were placed on oath as an assurance of their probity.

²⁶⁸ By 1733 the attempt to collect taxes on personal income as provided for in the 1697 act had proved too difficult, and the tax was collected on land only.

²⁶⁹ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 410.

²⁷⁰ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 412.

²⁷¹ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 410.

²⁷² Navy bills were interest-bearing promissory notes issued in lieu of cash by the Navy Board in payment for supplies, etc. They could be sold for cash or traded like any government security.

²⁷³ For Pitt's original proposal, see his budget speech of June 30 1784, PH24: 1024-5; for the revised proposal he was obliged by the Commons to bring forward, see his speech of July 28, PH24: 1273-4. For an account of this transaction, see John Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt: the Years of Acclaim* (London: Constable, 1969), pp. 258-60, and J. J. Grellier, *The Terms of all the Loans which have been raised for Public Service* (London: J. and J.M. Richardson, 1812), pp. 76-7.

²⁷⁴ Originally, tithes consisted not only of 'praedial' and 'mixed' tithes, levied on the produce of crop and animal husbandry respectively, but also of 'personal tithes', levied on the profits of a person's labour. Difficult to assess or to collect, personal tithes had become insignificant by the second half of the sixteenth century.

²⁷⁵ There were various disputed legal definitions of 'esquire' but Fox means the term to be understood as 'landed proprietor', especially one with a relatively small estate.

²⁷⁶ A network of alleyways between Cornhill and Lombard Street, in which were a number of coffee houses where stocks and other instruments had been traded in

the early eighteenth century; by 1793 the phrase was shorthand for the London stock market in general. Upper and Lower Thames Street ran the length of the City of London next to the river, and were lined on the south side with the warehouses of merchants involved in importing and exporting. Fox is making the point that to be qualified under the game laws (see next note) it was no longer necessary to own a freehold country estate; stockbrokers and city merchants often owned or rented a sufficient property to intrude on the country sports of the rural gentry.

²⁷⁷ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 415-16. The game laws were a body of law defining a vast number of offences and the punishments for them, and prohibiting the taking of game except by those with freehold property worth £100 per annum. They prohibited also the ownership of firearms by those who did not meet the property qualification, and prevented many of the smaller farmers from protecting their crops from depredation by game. As far as we can understand him, however, Fox is confusing shooting and fox-hunting. He writes as if there was a property qualification for fox-hunting, which before 1831 there was not. Those who shot looked upon foxes as vermin which preyed upon pheasant and partridge eggs and young birds; tracking them down was not a privilege, but rather a social good; and since shooters, rather than hunters, controlled the commons, it would have been impossible to impose a property qualification for hunting. There were, in the 18th century, some complaints by farmers about sportsmen trampling fields, but in reference to hare-coursing, which by 1792 had faded if not entirely disappeared. Our thanks to Donna Landry and Peter Munsche, on the basis of information from whom this note was written.

²⁷⁸ A city broker or merchant who retreats to the country at weekends, in the summer or after retirement, of a type famously satirised in the poem by Robert Lloyd (1733-64), 'The Cit's Country Box, 1757' in *Poems by Robert Lloyd* (London: T. Davies, 1762).

²⁷⁹ With a glance at Oliver Goldsmith (1728?-74), *The Deserted Village* (1770), which complains of a village depopulated when a rich merchant retiring from India buys a mansion, drives away the tenants, and converts the farmland to an ornamental park.

²⁸⁰ 'Equality of Property': loyalists insisted that as well as seeking equality of representation by universal suffrage, the radicals were seeking equality of property, or that moves to equalise property would be the inevitable result of a parliament in which the poor were fully represented. The radicals continually denied this; see for example [Thomas Cooper?] (1759-1839), *Equality* (1792?).

²⁸¹ 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth', Genesis 1.22.

²⁸² Destabilise.

²⁸³ 'to innovate *on*' is 'to make changes *in* something established' (OED).

²⁸⁴ When Arkwright died, a few weeks or months after this pamphlet was published, he was rumoured to have been worth £500,000.

²⁸⁵ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 434.

²⁸⁶ Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 412.

²⁸⁷ Turnpike roads were unpopular with the poor, as imposing a tax on travelling, even around their home parish if such a road ran through it. Broadwheel wagons, introduced following the Highways Act of 1753, were intended to do less damage to

road-surfaces than wagons with narrow wheels, and therefore incurred a lower toll, but required a large capital outlay to build and equip; mills (factories) increased industrial production but were objected to as taking work from small producers.

²⁸⁸ That is, if it had been enjoyed as the temporary possession of a tenant who therefore had no interest in making long-term improvements.

²⁸⁹ Fox is writing six years before this belief was challenged by T.R. Malthus (1766-1834) in his *Essay on the Principle of Population* (1798).

²⁹⁰ The Court of Wards and Dues was established by Henry VIII to collect feudal dues, among other functions. It lost its function with the abolition of feudal tenures in 1646, and was formally abolished by the Tenures Abolition Act of 1660.

²⁹¹ 'Entailed' estates descended from generation to generation, the succession usually determined by male primogeniture, and could not be bequeathed at pleasure by any one possessor. As Fox explains below, it was possible for the possessor (the 'tenant in tail') of an estate to frustrate the entail and bequeath it out of the settled line of succession by paying a fine to the Crown. See Blackstone, *Commentaries*, vol. 2, pp. 112-19.

²⁹² Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 413-14, and p. 439.

²⁹³ Fox deliberately overlooks the fact that Paine's plan for land 'descending again to the community' was to be achieved by what he called 'quiet means'; it involved breaking up large landed estates by apportioning them, not among all those 'who have no property of their own', but among all the 'heirs and heiresses' of a family: see Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, pp. 437-9.

5. *Thoughts on the Death of the King of France*

²⁹⁴ Fox has in mind the century stretching from the revolt of the Lords Appellant against Richard II in 1387, or perhaps from the invasion of Henry Bolingbroke (later Henry IV) and the deposition of Richard in 1399, to the end of the wars of the Roses in 1487. The two civil wars are the Jacobite rebellions of 1715-16 and 1745-6.

²⁹⁵ Matthew 13.30.

²⁹⁶ *The Grecian Daughter* (1772) was a tragedy by Arthur Murphy (1727-1805). Evander, king of Syracuse, is dethroned and sentenced to death by starvation in prison, whereupon his daughter Euphrasia keeps him alive by feeding him with her own milk.

²⁹⁷ The Jewish Naturalization Act, or 'Jew Bill', was passed by parliament in 1753, in the teeth of Tory opposition, but was repealed the next year following popular demonstrations against it and a campaign led by the Lord Mayor of London.

²⁹⁸ Fox was writing in the final years of 'Henry IX', Cardinal York, the last Stuart claimant of the British throne. As Henry was a catholic cardinal, bound to die without legitimate issue, Fox is anticipating the passing of the headship of the House of Stuart to the House of Savoy, which took place on Henry's death in 1807. The right of the House of Savoy was based on its descent from Henrietta-Anne (1644-1670), daughter of King Charles I, and her husband Philippe, Duke of Orléans.

- ²⁹⁹ Jonathan Wild (1683-1725) was a London ‘thief-taker’ who made a living partly by betraying thieves, for a fee, to the authorities. He could thus predict which thieves would be hanged with some certainty. Fox’s point is that Burke’s predictions about the direction that would be taken by the revolution and the fate of the king were similarly very likely to come true, for the actions he prompted the monarchs of Europe to take in order to restore the Bourbons were almost bound to lead to the bloody events of August and September 1792 (see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 8), and the deposition and death of Louis.
- ³⁰⁰ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 15.
- ³⁰¹ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 5.
- ³⁰² See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 42.
- ³⁰³ For the emigrant princes, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 6; ‘ci-devant nobles’ are persons who had borne titles of nobility before their abolition in June 1790; ‘nonjuring clergy’ are catholic priests who had refused to swear the oath of loyalty to the civil constitution of the clergy, a measure passed in July 1790 which subordinated the catholic church in France to the French government and made various other reforms in the organisation of the church.
- ³⁰⁴ A reference mainly to the abolition of the feudal privileges of the nobility in August 1789, and perhaps also to the abolition of tithes and the confiscation of church lands in the same year.
- ³⁰⁵ A reference to Cicero’s aphorism, ‘nervos belli, pecuniam infinitam’ (the sinews of war are an infinite supply of money): Fifth Philippic, § 5.
- ³⁰⁶ Charles-Alexandre, Vicomte de Calonne (1734-1802) had been Louis XVI’s minister of finance, and had unsuccessfully attempted a large-scale fiscal reform which, had it been accepted, might have staved off the revolution. He was in England when the French revolution began, and threw in his lot with the exiled princes, serving as their plenipotentiary at the court of St James.
- ³⁰⁷ Fox refers to Burke’s support for the American Declaration of Independence, and to his claim that George III, in his illness of 1788-9 when he appeared to have become insane, had been ‘hurled from his throne’ by God. Burke said this while arguing in favour of a motion that would have installed the Prince of Wales, the future George IV, as regent, and brought Pitt’s government to an end: see *An Impartial Report of all the Proceedings in Parliament, on the late Important Subject of a Regency* (London: J. Bew, 1789, p. 526). Burke’s words caused uproar in the Commons, and were a source of great embarrassment to him when the king made a full recovery. From then on until the end of his life, Burke’s critics and enemies missed few opportunities to ensure that his gaffe was remembered, but his opposition to the French revolution appeared to have persuaded the king to forget it.
- ³⁰⁸ Burke’s phrase for the people considered in the lump, as ignorant and destructive: see *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 154.
- ³⁰⁹ Paraphrasing portions of Pitt’s speech in the Commons on February 1 1793 in the debate on the king’s message for an augmentation of the forces, especially PH30: 271-2.
- ³¹⁰ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 4.

- ³¹¹ Queen Mary Tudor, in her attempt to heal the breach with Rome and to repeal the religious laws passed by her father Henry VIII, was unable to persuade parliament to return the monastery lands he had confiscated and sold.
- ³¹² See *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 12.
- ³¹³ Not apparently a quotation from Pitt, but a summary of the position he took in the debate of February 1 1793 (see above, n. 16).
- ³¹⁴ Hugo Grotius (1583-1645), the Dutch jurist, in his work *On the Law of War and Peace* (1625), proposed a theory of 'just war', arguing that war was justifiable when waged for any of three reasons, self-defence, punishment, or the reparation of injuries. This quotation comes from Book 2, ch. 20, ¶xlīii, §3. For Grotius and Hercules, see below, *Defence of the War*, n. 31.
- ³¹⁵ On December 28 1792, in a debate on the Alien Bill, Burke told the House of Commons that 'for his part, he was determined to wage eternal war' on the principles of the French revolution and the French Republic (PH30: 188).
- ³¹⁶ That is, 'the mountain', the Jacobin grouping that commended a majority in the National Convention.
- ³¹⁷ The theory that the French Revolution had been instigated by 'miserable philosophers' had just been given official expression in the memorial of January 25 1793 from Lord Auckland (1744-1814), British Ambassador at the Hague, to the Dutch States General, where he speaks of 'certain unhappy and deluded persons, assuming the name of philosophers': see PH30: 342.
- ³¹⁸ The king's message on the death of Louis XVI, calling for an augmentation of the forces, was dated January 28 1793 (PH30: 238-9); the order to Chauvelin to leave Britain had been issued four days earlier (PH30: 269).
- ³¹⁹ See PH30: 342-4.
- ³²⁰ The Stadtholder William of Orange, landed in Devon with a Dutch army in November 1688, and became William III shortly after the escape of James II in December of that year. The Duke of Monmouth, illegitimate son of Charles II, had led a revolt against James II in 1685. Many of his followers were also executed, the majority sentenced to death by Judge Jeffreys in the notorious 'Bloody Asizes'.
- ³²¹ In 1660, on the 'restoration' of Charles II, ten of the men who had participated in the trial of Charles I were hanged, drawn and quartered; in the following year, the bodies of three who had died before 1660, including Cromwell himself, were exhumed and hanged at Tyburn.
- ³²² Of James II's daughters, Mary (later Mary II) was brought up as a protestant and supported the beliefs and policies of her husband William of Orange in her dealings with her estranged father; his daughter Anne, also a protestant, was similarly estranged from her father for reasons of religion.
- ³²³ That is from Dubh (962-66) to Duncan II (May-November 1094).
- ³²⁴ Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary, speaking in the Lords' debate on the king's message for the augmentation of the forces, February 1 1793, PH30: 316.
- ³²⁵ A waspish irony on Fox's part: Catherine the Great had been responsible for the murder of her husband, Peter III: see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 11.
- ³²⁶ Inkle is a character in a romantic comedy by George Colman the younger (1762-1836), first performed in 1787 and derived from Joseph Addison's *Spectator*, no. 11. *Oroonoko*, first staged in 1695, is a play by the Irish-born dramatist Thomas

Southerne (1660-1746), closely based on the novel of the same name by Aphra Behn (1640-89). The eponymous hero, an African prince and the noblest of noble savages, is sold as a slave in Surinam, where he meets his lost wife, herself also now a slave. He leads a revolt against the oppressive governor of the island, is tricked into surrendering and cruelly tortured. His wife kills herself to escape violation by the governor, and Oroonoko too finally commits suicide, after killing his oppressor. *Oroonoko* was one of the most popular tragedies in eighteenth-century Britain, especially admired for the extreme pathos of its final scenes. In 1785 Fox had been one of a conger, with C. Bathurst, W. Lowndes, W. Nicoll, and T. Whieldon, who published an edition of the play.

³²⁷ Sugar.

³²⁸ Grenville, PH30: 316.

³²⁹ Ibid.

³³⁰ The House of Commons.

³³¹ Grenville, PH30: 316.

³³² These are the terms of the motion passed by the Commons in reply to the king's message, PH30: 287-8.

³³³ Grenville, PH30: 317.

³³⁴ A close paraphrase of Pitt, opening the debate on the augmentation of the forces, PH30: 271.

³³⁵ Fox means the ships employed in transporting Africans to the slave-markets of the West Indies; because he regards the trade as illegal, he describes them as 'corsairs' or pirate-ships.

³³⁶ Perhaps a conflation in Fox's mind of Burke's claim that the system of chivalry, extinguished at the revolution, had been 'the glory of Europe' (*WEB*, vol. 5, p. 149), with his qualified praise of the ancient government of France (pp. 234ff.).

³³⁷ Grenville, PH30: 317.

³³⁸ Fox's terms recall, and may be intended to recall, speeches by Richard Brinsley Sheridan (1751-1816) and, more notoriously, by Burke, in the debate referred to above, n. 14: see *An Impartial Report*, pp. 524, 526.

6. *A Discourse on National Fasts, April 19, 1793*

³³⁹ Fox contrasts the frankly unrepentant Captain Macheath in John Gay (1685-1732), *The Beggar's Opera* (1728), with the hypocritical brothel-keeper Mother Cole, in the comedy by Samuel Foote (1721-1777), *The Minor* (1760), who continues pursuing her profession despite her conversion to Methodism.

³⁴⁰ Gilbert Burnet, *A Discourse of the Pastoral Care written by ... Gilbert, Lord Bishop of Sarum* (London: Chiswell, 1692), pp. xv, xxii (adapted).

³⁴¹ The punctuation here is misleading: the sense becomes clear if a semi-colon is substituted for the full-stop.

³⁴² Fox has chiefly in mind the Corporation Act (1661) and the Test Act (1673), which imposed various religious 'tests' on those seeking public office, with the effect that dissenters, catholics and Jews could not hold civil or military offices.

- ³⁴³ The king's proclamation explained that the fast was proclaimed 'so both we and our people may humble ourselves before Almighty God in order to obtain pardon of our sins; and may, in the most devout and solemn manner, send up our prayers and supplications to the Divine Majesty, for averting those heavy judgements, which our manifold sins and provocations have most justly deserved, and imploring his blessing and assistance on our arms, and for restoring and perpetuating peace, safety, and prosperity to us and our kingdoms' (*London Gazette*, March 2 1793).
- ³⁴⁴ Galatians 5.2, and for Paul and Timothy, see Acts 16.3.
- ³⁴⁵ For the impious uses of fasting, see Isaiah 58.1-7.
- ³⁴⁶ A number of fast day satires suggest that the Anglican hierarchy and members of Pitt's Cabinet saw the wartime fasts as occasions for feasting rather than fasting: see for example the broadside *Grand Exhibition at Wimbledon!!!* (no place: no publisher, 1795), which imagines a 'Grand Eating Match' taking place on the 1795 fast day at the Wimbledon house of Henry Dundas, now Secretary of War, and attended by Pitt and many of his colleagues; and the graphic satire by Isaac Cruikshank (1764-1811), *A General Fast in Consequence of the War* (London: S.W. Fores, 1794) in which a starving Spitalfields weaver, his trade ruined by the war, has no alternative but to fast, while the Archbishop of Canterbury and his family tuck greedily into a huge dinner.
- ³⁴⁷ See Richard Price, *A Sermon, delivered to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters, at Hackney, on the 10th of February last, being the Day appointed for a General Fast* (London: T. Cadell, 1799).
- ³⁴⁸ 1 Timothy 1.1-2.
- ³⁴⁹ 1 Thessalonians 1.10-12.
- ³⁵⁰ For Grotius, see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 21. In George III's message to parliament of February 11 1793, responding to the French declaration of war, it is declared that the war with France will be 'just and necessary' (PH30: 344); in his reply to the king's message Pitt repeated the claim (PH 30: 360); and it was made again by the king in the proclamation of the general fast, beginning 'We, taking into our most serious consideration the just and necessary war in which we are engaged with France'. As Fox points out below, however, Britain's wars in the eighteenth century were always declared 'just and necessary', as they were too no doubt on the part of Britain's enemies.
- ³⁵¹ See Burke's contribution to the debate on the French declaration of war, PH30: 380-1.
- ³⁵² The king of England and the Elector of Hanover were one and the same person, George III, who could earn revenue in Hanover by leasing his subjects as mercenaries in foreign wars.
- ³⁵³ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 19.
- ³⁵⁴ Though Flanders comprised the Austrian Netherlands and an area of northern France, it is the former that Fox has in mind, suggesting that the British Government thought that the possession of Flanders by the Hapsburg Empire must be defended in order to protect Holland from attack by the French.
- ³⁵⁵ In late 1792 the French Republic, in addition to occupying the Austrian Netherlands, had annexed Savoy, captured Nice, and had pushed far enough into Germany to occupy a few towns along the Rhine. 'Before the fast': see headnote, above.

- ³⁵⁶ ‘said the thing that was not’: a reference to chapter 3 of Book IV of *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* [*Gulliver’s Travels*] (1726) by Jonathan Swift (1667-1745), in which the Houyhnhnms are obliged to use this circumlocution because they have ‘no word in their language to express lying or falsehood’.
- ³⁵⁷ In Pitt’s speech on the opening of the budget on March 11 1793 he is quoted by the *Morning Chronicle*, March 12, saying that an opportunity might occur ‘of pressing on the common enemy on all sides’. In the same newspaper two days later ‘sides’ became ‘points’, and probably this later article is Fox’s source.
- ³⁵⁸ On February 18 1793 in the House of Commons Charles James Fox had asked whether the government was being consistent in waging war to defend the integrity of Holland and the Austrian Netherlands when it had made no military effort to arrest the dismemberment of Poland; see PH30: 432.
- ³⁵⁹ For ‘eternal war’, see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 22. ‘Extirpation’ is a term much used in the debates in parliament about the war with France. Burke himself does not appear to propose in terms a war of extirpation; Fox is probably suggesting that it is implied in the resolution to wage eternal war and in Burke’s approval (in part) of the Brunswick Manifesto: see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 12.
- ³⁶⁰ This phrase, no doubt used in many toasts to the armed forces, does not in fact appear in the proclamation of the fast, which implores God’s ‘blessing and assistance on our arms’.
- ³⁶¹ See above, n. 13.
- ³⁶² See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 35.
- ³⁶³ Paraphrasing James I’s *A Proclamation against Excess of Lavish and Licentious Speech of Matters of State*, December 24 1620. James liked to be regarded as the English Solomon.
- ³⁶⁴ See above, n. 12.
- ³⁶⁵ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 14.
- ³⁶⁶ The two partition treaties, signed by William III and Louis XIV in 1698 and 1699, dividing the Spanish Empire, the first mainly to the benefit of the Electoral Prince of Bavaria, the second to the advantage of France and the Holy Roman Empire. William was ‘glorious and immortal’ in Whig legend, as the saviour of Britain from the Stuart monarchy and from Catholicism, and as the king in whose reign some of the chief elements of the English constitution were established. To Fox, a Jacobite who does not believe in the existence of an English or British constitution, he was a usurper and a war-mongering absolute monarch.
- ³⁶⁷ Bremen-Verden in north-west Germany had been claimed by Sweden since 1648, and Charles XII of Sweden was Duke of Bremen and Prince of Verden from 1697. In 1712, in the course of the war with Denmark, Bremen-Verden was occupied by the Danish, who sold it to George I when in 1715 Britain entered the coalition against Sweden.
- ³⁶⁸ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 30.
- ³⁶⁹ Possibly a reference to Swift’s objection to the clipping of words in fashionable pronunciation, which would turn the word ‘fast’ into ‘fas’ (pronounced ‘fast’). See Swift (1667-1745), *A Proposal for Correcting, Improving, and Ascertaining the English Tongue* (1712).

- ³⁷⁰ Such lists of workers who neglect their work, or are called away from it, in order to engage in some religious or political activity, are common in eighteenth-century literature. See especially the first page of Anna Barbauld's *Sins of Government, Sins of the Nation*, published within a week or so of this pamphlet: 'The shops are shut; the artisan is summoned from his loom; and the husbandman from his plough' (in order to participate in the thanksgiving and act of humiliation on the Fast Day). With the help of colleagues at the University of York we have traced the topos back to Thomas Cranmer in the sixteenth century, but have found no original source for it.
- ³⁷¹ A 'goose' is a tailor's smoothing-iron, 'so called from the resemblance of the handle to the shape of a goose's neck' (OED).
- ³⁷² A list of popular loyalist charges levelled against the revolutionaries in France: they were supposed to be 'levellers', by virtue of their abolition of titles and some aspects of their economic programme; for French daggers see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 35, and Pitt's remark (PH30: 356) that the passing of the Alien Bill had given Britain some security from 'the dagger of the [French] assassin', PH30: 356; Burke was especially associated with the claim that the revolutionaries were atheists: see PH30: 188 and 386.
- ³⁷³ Every January 30, the anniversary of the 'martyrdom' of Charles I, sermons were preached throughout the churches of Britain deploring the event. On January 30 1793, Samuel Horsley (1733-1806), Bishop of St David's, preached to the House of Lords an impassioned sermon on the execution of Louis XVI, news of which had arrived in Britain only a few days earlier: see Horsley, *A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal, in the Abbey Church of St Peter, Westminster* (London: J. Robson, 1793).
- ³⁷⁴ See previous note.
- ³⁷⁵ 'Penal laws': see above, n. 4. It is difficult to exaggerate the degree of deliberate provocation in Fox's description of the Church of England as a mere 'religious cult'.
- ³⁷⁶ A misunderstanding by Fox, who probably interpreted the tenth article of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, (guaranteeing freedom of religious belief), and the eleventh (freedom of printing), as countermanding the papal interdiction on the circulation of bibles translated into vernacular languages except for the use of the Catholic priesthood. In fact that interdiction did not apply in France, where translations of the bible had been available throughout the previous century.
- ³⁷⁷ Poland.
- ³⁷⁸ Fox has in mind in particular the behaviour of the East India Company, as endorsed by successive British governments; Britain's involvement in the slave trade; and the system of chattel slavery in the West Indies.
- ³⁷⁹ 'Crying sins' are sins that cry out for punishment: see Genesis 18.20-1.
- ³⁸⁰ The king's proclamation (see above, n. 5) had ritually asked for pardon and a suspension of the judgment that the ' manifold sins and provocations' of the British people had 'richly deserved', before asking him to grant success to the arms of Britain in its just and necessary war.
- ³⁸¹ Fox no doubt has mainly in mind the famine in Bengal from 1769-73, in which an estimated 10-15 million people died. For this event, and the responsibility of the East India Company in causing and/or failing to mitigate the famine, and for the

‘charter’ Fox refers to, see Fox’s pamphlet below, *On the Renewal of the East India Charter*.

³⁸² A reference to the famine of 1791-92 which caused the death of an estimated 11,000,000 people, following the failure of the monsoon from 1789-92. The famine was probably worst in areas under Indian rule, but in some areas of Madras, governed by the East India Company, up to half the population starved to death.

³⁸³ It is not clear quite how these blanks should be filled: probably Fox had in mind such words as ‘taxing’, ‘enslaving’, or ‘starving’. For the £500,000, see below, *On the Renewal*, n. 7.

³⁸⁴ See above, *An Examination of Mr. Paine’s Writings*, n. 56.

³⁸⁵ The celebrated remark of Euclid to King Ptolemy of Egypt, in answer to the king’s request for an easy route to the knowledge of geometry.

³⁸⁶ Fox refers again to the text of proclamation of the fast.

7. *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*

³⁸⁷ Fox is drawing upon the popularity of Benjamin Franklin’s famous creation, Richard Saunders, whose witty aphorisms and at times, irreverent earthiness, made Franklin’s *Poor Richard’s Almanac* a best seller from 1733-58. Versions of the *Almanac*, some of which were merely republications of the immensely popular *The Way to Wealth*, also known as *Poor Richard Improved*, continued to appear in print into the 1790s in both America and England. Numerous writings by Franklin were reprinted in London in the early 1790s, granting Franklin in the years immediately after his death (1790) a pervasive presence in London’s bookshops. Martha Gurney’s shop was no exception: she printed and sold Franklin’s *A Parable against Persecution* in 1793 and *Information for Those who would Remove to America* in 1794. Franklin was also well known in France, and in Paris in 1793 appeared *La Science du Bonhomme Richard, de Benjamin Franklin*. Besides these publications, Fox most likely became aware of Franklin’s political writings during Franklin’s tenure in London as official agent to parliament for the American colonies. Two of his best satires—‘Rules by which a Great Empire may be Reduced’ and ‘Edict by the King of Prussia’—appeared in the *Public Advertiser* in September 1773 and bear striking similarities to Fox’s satiric style.

³⁸⁸ The ‘Declaration, published by His Majesty’s Order, 29th October, 1793’, PH30: 1057-60.

³⁸⁹ Pikes were a favourite weapon of the Brissotins during 1792 and 1793. ‘Pikes began the revolution,’ wrote Jacques Pierre Brissot (1754-93), referring to the capture of the Bastille, ‘and pikes will finish it’ (referring to the looked-for defeat of the internal enemies of the revolution in the west of France).

³⁹⁰ Timotheus of Miletus in Asia Minor was a poet and musician who controversially added one or more strings to the traditional Greek lyre.

³⁹¹ Sovereigns of the smaller states allied against the French republic.

³⁹² See above, *Address to the People*, n. 21.

³⁹³ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 29.

- ³⁹⁴ Inopportune; done at an inconvenient or unhelpful time.
- ³⁹⁵ ‘Declaration’, PH30: 1057.
- ³⁹⁶ The hall was in the former Dominican (or ‘Jacobin’) convent in Paris.
- ³⁹⁷ Fox is referring to the correspondence between Chauvelin and Lord Grenville, originally discussed in *The Interest of Great Britain*.
- ³⁹⁸ Presumably a reference to the French Decree of Fraternity, November 19 1792, in which the National Convention offered fraternity and aid to all peoples desiring to recover their liberty.
- ³⁹⁹ ‘Declaration’, PH30: 1058.
- ⁴⁰⁰ ‘Declaration’, PH30: 1058, 1060.
- ⁴⁰¹ See *WEB*, vol. 5, pp. 244-5: ‘Nobility is a graceful ornament to the civil order. It is the Corinthian capital of polished society’.
- ⁴⁰² Alluding to the pamphlet by the loyalist Arthur Young (1741-1820), *The Example of France, a Warning to Britain* (London: W. Richardson, 1793).
- ⁴⁰³ Referring to the abolition of tithes and of feudal privileges by the National Assembly in August 1789.
- ⁴⁰⁴ As we have seen in a number of preceding pamphlets, the British government’s rejection of France’s request that it should mediate between France and her enemies in the summer of 1792 was effectively the moment when it abandoned the posture of ‘strict neutrality’; from then on, Fox believed, it bore a heavy share of responsibility for the war against France and the events it precipitated – the September massacres, the execution of Louis XVI, and the French declaration of war.
- ⁴⁰⁵ ‘Declaration’, PH30: 1058.
- ⁴⁰⁶ Fox’s meaning is that the anti-Jacobin wing in France desired neither the triumph of the ‘Violent republicans’ of the ‘mountain’ (see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 23), which threatened their lives, nor war with the armies of the first coalition, which threatened them with incarceration as prisoners of war,
- ⁴⁰⁷ Notably Brussels, Liège, Antwerp and Namur, captured by the French following the battle of Jemmapes.
- ⁴⁰⁸ i.e. since the outbreak of the Seven Years War.
- ⁴⁰⁹ ‘A daring villain, a hired soldier or assassin; ... a reckless desperado’ (OED).
- ⁴¹⁰ A buskin was a high-soled boot worn by the actors in Athenian tragedies to increase their height, and by extension had come to stand for tragedy in general, often of a grandiloquent and swaggering style.
- ⁴¹¹ The eldest son of Louis XVI was known as Louis XVII to those who did not recognise the French republic. To republicans he was known by the insulting surname ‘Capet’. Following the execution of his father he was imprisoned separately from the rest of his family, apprenticed to a cobbler, and died of illness in the summer of 1795.
- ⁴¹² Valenciennes and Condé, towns in north-west France, were both besieged by allied armies in May 1793. They fell in July within three weeks of each other, and were briefly occupied by Austrian armies before being recovered by France. In the summer of 1793 the allies were successfully advancing into north-eastern France. When they took the fortress town Valenciennes, it was expected that they would make towards Paris, but the British army was instead dispatched, under the Duke of York, towards Dunkirk, which it besieged for something less than a fortnight before being

driven off with the loss of most of its artillery and stores. Britain captured Martinique in 1762, during the Seven Years War, and held it for a year. Though Britain would capture the island again, in 1794, at the time this pamphlet was written it was, like the other places mentioned by Fox, once again under French rule.

⁴¹³ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*.

⁴¹⁴ On April 5 1793 the Austrian General Friedrich Josias, Prince of Saxe-Coburg, issued a manifesto to the people of France saying that it was accepted by the allies that Louis XVI had freely accepted the constitution of 1791, and that the allies had no intention of abolishing that constitution. On April 8 a Congress at Antwerp, attended by, among others, the Stadtholder, the Duke of York, Coburg, Metternich, Prince Frederick of Brunswick and Lord Auckland, cancelled this declaration, with the implication that it was the allies' intention to restore the French monarchy, in the form of Louis XVII, the powers it had enjoyed before the revolution: see *Diary or Woodfall's Register*, Friday, April 12; for a comment on these events from a point of view similar to Fox's, see *Morning Chronicle*, August 1 1793.

⁴¹⁵ Fox refers to the long-drawn-out dispute between Britain and France, from 1750-1755, and eventually settled by military means, on the boundary between British possessions in North America and French settlements (Acadia) in what became Canada, in which the British, Fox believed, had been ridiculously obstructive in pursuit of lands not worth claiming.

⁴¹⁶ 'Declaration', PH30: 1059. In 1793 Toulon, the French naval port on the Mediterranean, was the site of a royalist revolt against the government of the French Republic. Fearful of the vengeance of the National Convention, the rebels invited the aid of Britain and Spain. On behalf of Britain, Admiral Hood (1724-1816) promised a return to the 1791 constitution, with its limited monarchy, when the republic should be defeated. Hood's promise was not repeated when, on November 20 1793, George III issued a declaration to the people of Toulon expressive of his 'royal intentions'. This spoke of the restoration of the monarchy in the person of Louis XVII, but said nothing of the 1791 constitution: see PH30: 1060-1. The occupation of Toulon delivered the French Mediterranean fleet into British hands, two-thirds of which would be destroyed or towed away when the British were driven from the port in December 1793.

⁴¹⁷ French kings were traditionally crowned in the cathedral at Reims.

⁴¹⁸ French and British monarchs were both anointed with holy oil as part of the service and ceremony of coronation.

⁴¹⁹ 'Declaration', PH30: 1057.

⁴²⁰ St Stephen's Chapel, i.e. the House of Commons, which before the destruction by fire in 1834 of the old Houses of Parliament was the Commons' debating chamber.

⁴²¹ In the text, this word (and the others in brackets that follow in this paragraph) is handwritten over a blank line. Blanks were usually left in texts to conceal controversial, potentially libellous meanings, and by filling these blanks with apparently uncontentious words someone, whether Fox or Eliza Gurney (whose copy of the text we are using), seems anxious to demonstrate that no libel was to be discovered here. To 'squeeze' is to cause trouble for, or it can be to extort money from.

- ⁴²² A reference to the trial of Warren Hastings (1732-1818), Governor-General of Bengal 1772-85, who was first accused of corruption in 1775, put on trial in London in 1787, and eventually acquitted in 1795.
- ⁴²³ That is, the largely Hessian and Hanoverian soldiers hired by the British as mercenaries in the war with France. Even before the French declaration of war, on January 24 1793, 13,000 were hired; another substantial number were hired in March, and in the course of the year Britain subsidised its allies to hire a further 22,000 foreign mercenaries, partly in order to keep its own commitment to a land war proportionate to the size of the relatively small British army.
- ⁴²⁴ See above, n. 25.
- ⁴²⁵ 'Declaration', PH30: 1059.
- ⁴²⁶ 'Declaration', PH30: 1059.
- ⁴²⁷ In 1688 Queen Mary, the wife of James II, gave birth to a son James, who became heir to the throne and seemed destined to continue the catholic royal line. Among some of those appalled at this prospect, a rumour arose that he had been smuggled into the Queen's chamber in a warming-pan. He left England with his father in 1689, and became the 'Old Pretender', or, to militant Whigs, 'the warming pan bastard'.
- ⁴²⁸ 'Sooterkin' is an insulting term for a Dutchman – Fox applies it to William III, who landed at Brixham in 1788 at the head of an army of approximately 14,000 infantry and cavalry.
- ⁴²⁹ 'Declaration', PH30: 1059.
- ⁴³⁰ Tahiti.
- ⁴³¹ 'Declaration', PH30: 1057.
- ⁴³² Unlike the previous examples, no word was written over the blank line.
- ⁴³³ The 'Declaration delivered by Lord Auckland to the States General of the United Provinces; dated Hague, Nov. 16th, 1792', and the 'Translation of a Memorial presented by Lord Auckland, his Britannic Majesty's Minister at the Hague, to their high mightinesses the States General' (January 25 1793), PH30: 341-2 and 342-4, documents setting out the views of the British government on the invasion of the Austrian Netherlands by the French republic.
- ⁴³⁴ Part quotation, part paraphrase, of PH30: 342.
- ⁴³⁵ For Calonne: see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 13.
- ⁴³⁶ 'Declaration', PH30: 1057-8.
- ⁴³⁷ Calonne.
- ⁴³⁸ Burke, here mocked as himself one of the 'swinish multitude': see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 15. He had neither aristocratic lineage nor independent wealth, and began his career in politics under the patronage and in the employment of the Whig magnate and sometime Prime Minister Lord Rockingham (1730-82).
- ⁴³⁹ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 14.
- ⁴⁴⁰ Burke rehabilitated himself in the king's eyes by his publication of *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (which contained a coded apology to George). The king thanked and congratulated him for supporting 'the cause of the Gentlemen' (ODNB).
- ⁴⁴¹ Part quotation, part paraphrase, of PH30: 342.
- ⁴⁴² An Austrian army was assembled on the north-east borders of France in April 1792. In Paris in July, Louis XVI was threatening to veto legislation passed by the

National Assembly. When the Tuileries was stormed on August 10, written evidence of Louis's conspiring with the foreign enemies of the revolution was discovered, and later produced at his trial.

⁴⁴³ The monarchy was abolished on September 21 1792, following strong pressure from the Parisian people.

⁴⁴⁴ See Burke's speech in the Commons on the Alien Bill, December 21 1792, PH30: 180-9.

⁴⁴⁵ The Declaration of Pilnitz, issued by the Emperor Leopold II of Austria and the King Frederick Wilhelm II of Prussia following their meeting at Pilnitz in Saxony on August 27 1791. It announced that the position of Louis XVI following the revolution had implications for all the sovereigns of Europe, whom it invited to join together to concert means to restore Louis XVI to his former authority.

⁴⁴⁶ See *WEB*, vol. 5, pp. 375-94.

⁴⁴⁷ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 12.

⁴⁴⁸ For Poland and Hanover, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, nn. 42, 55.

⁴⁴⁹ Following the Battle of Jemmapes, on November 6 1792, after which France occupied the whole of the Austrian Netherlands.

⁴⁵⁰ A wild exaggeration, satirising the large number of small independent states of which much of Germany was composed.

⁴⁵¹ A reference to the alarm of November and December 1792, in particular the formation of the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, and Burke's 'dagger speech' of the following month: see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, nn. 48, 35.

⁴⁵² 'In the English manner', i.e. without specifying the objectives of the war.

⁴⁵³ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28.

⁴⁵⁴ Ochakov, a Turkish fortress on the Black Sea, about 40 miles east of Odessa, occupied by Russia since 1788. In 1791 Pitt decided that, in order to secure Polish supplies of wheat, timber and hemp, it was worth going to war with Russia to force the return of the fortress, which threatened Polish trade routes to Black Sea. Faced with a parliament reluctant to agree with him, Pitt negotiated a compromise.

⁴⁵⁵ Probably not a direct quotation, but a paraphrase of various documents and speeches professing the 'strict neutrality' observed by the British government towards France up to 1793.

⁴⁵⁶ From the king of Prussia's statement of his reasons for taking possession of part of Poland with his military forces, quoted in the House of Commons by Sheridan in his speech of April 25 1793 on his own motion respecting Lord Auckland's memorial to the United Provinces. The price demanded by Prussia for agreeing with Britain to protect Poland was the acquisition from that country of its Baltic ports, Danzig and Torun (Thorn). The Polish Diet was reluctant to part with Danzig, its chief port, but under pressure from Britain agreed to do so. Fox was not alone in seeing that as the first step in the dismemberment of Poland by Prussia and Russia: see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 42.

⁴⁵⁷ An allusion to l. 291 of *The Campaign* (1705), a poem by Joseph Addison: 'Rides in the Whirl-wind, and directs the Storm'.

⁴⁵⁸ See below, *A Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast*, n. 27.

⁴⁵⁹ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28.

⁴⁶⁰ PH30: 1057.

⁴⁶¹ 'Declaration', PH30: 1060.

⁴⁶² 'Declaration', PH30: 1059.

⁴⁶³ The style in which the States General of the United Provinces were addressed: see above, n. 47.

⁴⁶⁴ 'Declaration', PH30: 1058.

⁴⁶⁵ See the headnote at the start of this pamphlet.

8. *A Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast, February 28, 1794*

⁴⁶⁶ 'Political morality' as Fox describes it is clearly a version of the concept 'reason of state', generally associated with Machiavelli (1469-1527), though he did not use the phrase or invent the concept. It refers to the notion that the safety of the state is the paramount consideration of government, and that immoral or illegal acts may be undertaken for that end.

⁴⁶⁷ In 1769 ownership of the Falkland Islands, as they were known to the British, was disputed between Spain, France and Britain. In that year France withdrew its claim in favour of Spain, and in 1770 the Spanish captured the British base. Outraged at this insult to national honour, the Commons urged the Prime Minister William Pitt the elder to attempt the recovery of the base by military means; but when France refused to ally itself with Spain in the war that seemed about to occur, the Spanish returned the base to Britain but without the issue of sovereignty being resolved. For many in Britain ownership of the islands did not seem worth disputing, and the crisis was an example of a war nearly waged for the sake of national vanity alone.

⁴⁶⁸ For Fox, the Nootka Sound crisis was another example of a war nearly waged to assert ownership of a territory of little value. Nootka Sound is an inlet on the west coast of Vancouver island, claimed by both Spain and Britain, and occupied from 1788 by British fur traders, who in 1789 were evicted by the Spanish navy. In 1789 the Spanish navy evicted British fur traders occupying a post on the sound and impounded three British ships. An Anglo-Spanish war was narrowly averted.

⁴⁶⁹ 'Drawcansir' is a blustering, bellicose braggart in the farce *The Rehearsal* (1672) by George Villiers, Duke of Buckingham (1628-87). The name became proverbial to describe men of similar character.

⁴⁷⁰ See above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, n. 30.

⁴⁷¹ Fox has in mind not only the aid given by Britain to the royalists in Toulon, but Britain's support of the royalist revolt in Brittany and La Vendée.

⁴⁷² *The Great Theare of the World* is a play by the Spanish dramatist Calderón de la Barca (1600-81); the phrase became proverbial in the eighteenth century.

⁴⁷³ Fox has in mind the theory set out by Sir Robert Filmer (1588-1653) in *Patriarcha, or the Natural Power of Kings*, in which the government of a family by the father is claimed to be the true origin of government.

⁴⁷⁴ See for example Mark 2.17; Romans 13.1; 1 Peter 2.17.

⁴⁷⁵ See especially Ephesians 5 and 6.

⁴⁷⁶ See for example Matthew 5.39.

- ⁴⁷⁷ Romans 13.1-2.
- ⁴⁷⁸ Fox means the established Church of England, which appeared more than ever as an arm of government on the occasions of the eighteenth-century general fasts.
- ⁴⁷⁹ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 4.
- ⁴⁸⁰ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 15.
- ⁴⁸¹ These exhortations occur in so many forms as hardly to need exemplifying, but see for example Matthew 5 and 7, Ephesians 4.2.
- ⁴⁸² Johann Jakob Wetstein (1693-1754), Johann Albrecht Bengel (1687-1752), Johann Jakob Griesbach (1745-1812), *New Testament Critics*.
- ⁴⁸³ See above, n. 8.
- ⁴⁸⁴ Fox has in mind the Israelites, as the chosen people, and the lines of Abraham, to which authority was promised by God in his covenant with that patriarch, and of Jesse, whose line or 'stem' included David and Jesus himself.
- ⁴⁸⁵ i.e. the French East India Company, with whom the British contested India from the early 1740s through to the end of the Seven Years War.
- ⁴⁸⁶ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, nn. 43, 44.
- ⁴⁸⁷ i.e. the charter of the East India Company; see below, *On the Renewal of the East India Charter*.
- ⁴⁸⁸ From the reformation until 1869, Roman Catholics in Ireland were legally obliged to pay tithes, the equivalent of a tenth of the annual produce of their land, to support the protestant Church of Ireland.
- ⁴⁸⁹ i.e. to the absentee owners of Irish estates, living in England.
- ⁴⁹⁰ Pitt was a strong supporter of the abolition of the slave trade, which he twice failed to carry through parliament. However, like many supporters of abolition, he was opposed to the emancipation of those already enslaved.
- ⁴⁹¹ Ireland.
- ⁴⁹² In the late eighteenth century the ruler of the state of Travancore in south-west India was an ally of the East India Company and also of the Dutch. When in 1789 Tipu Sultan (1750-1799) of Mysore was attacking the territories of the Dutch, the rajah of Travancore came to their aid and occupied several Dutch forts that were in danger of falling to Tipu. Tipu demanded they be returned to the Dutch, and subsequently invaded Travancore. In response the Company invaded Mysore, forcing Tipu to surrender half his territories, worth £400,000 a year, and to pay an indemnity of more than £3m. Fox takes the position first developed by Lord Porchester in a debate in the Lords in 1791, that the Company had entered the war on the basis of a 'frivolous pretence' (PH29: 141)
- ⁴⁹³ The Scheldt; see *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 19.
- ⁴⁹⁴ Presumably because Mercury was a thief and a trickster: Fox no doubt rightly regarded the promise Hood made to the rebels at Toulon (See above, *Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 1*, n. 30) as fraudulent.
- ⁴⁹⁵ See above, *Poor Richard's Scraps, No. 1*, n. 26.
- ⁴⁹⁶ Belial and Moloch or Baal were false gods idolatrously worshipped by the Israelites.
- ⁴⁹⁷ Isaiah 9.6.
- ⁴⁹⁸ Luke 9.55.
- ⁴⁹⁹ Matthew 23.24.
- ⁵⁰⁰ John 18.36.

⁵⁰¹ Matthew 20.25, 26; Luke 22.25.

⁵⁰² James 4.1.

⁵⁰³ This and the preceding sentences paraphrase 1 Corinthians 5.10-11.

⁵⁰⁴ Nero Claudius Caesar Augustus Germanicus (37–68 A.D.), Emperor of Rome, notorious for his vicious and tyrannical behaviour and for his persecution of Christians, and believed by many early Christians to be the Antichrist described in the Book of Revelation.

⁵⁰⁵ Ephesians 5.11.

⁵⁰⁶ 2 Corinthians 6.17.

9. *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion of England*

⁵⁰⁷ For the partitioning of the Spanish monarchy, see above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28; the ‘Dutch Barrier’ refers to William III’s project to create a barrier between an expansionist Louis XIV and the United Provinces; among the projects of the Italian Cardinal Alberoni was a plan to invade Britain in order to restore the Stuart monarchy, in furtherance of which 300 Spanish soldiers were landed in Scotland in 1719 and were soon defeated; the ‘no-search war’ was another name for the War of Jenkins’s Ear, from Britain’s refusal to allow its shipping to be searched by Spanish ships under the provisions of the Treaty of Seville (1729): see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 24; the ‘pragmatic sanction’ of 1713 was a legal device aimed at ensuring that the Austrian throne would pass to Maria Theresa, the daughter of the Holy Roman Emperor Charles VI; ‘the Prussian power’ is a phrase used in the eighteenth century to denote the aggrandisement and expansionist power of Prussia and the military threat it represented.

⁵⁰⁸ The Seven Years War (1756-63). The minister was Lord Bute (1713-92), who was attacked by William Pitt the Elder (1708-88) for agreeing to make peace on too easy terms.

⁵⁰⁹ A proverbial expression familiarised in translations of *Don Quixote* (see Part I, Book 3, Chapter 13) which Fox himself had published: see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 52.

⁵¹⁰ Largely as a result of France’s participation in the American War of Independence, the finances of the French state were hugely in deficit throughout the 1780s, a situation which led directly to the revolution: for Burke’s remark, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 29.

⁵¹¹ Which publication Fox has in mind we do not know, but that the acquisition of the ‘sugar islands’ in the possession of the French was a strong motive for Britain’s entry into the war is clear enough: see Jennifer Mori, *William Pitt and the French Revolution 1785-1795* (Edinburgh: Keele University Press, 1997) pp. 146, 152.

⁵¹² By the autumn of 1793, the allies had been defeated in battle at Hondschoote and Wattignies, and by December the rebellion in the west of France, half-heartedly supported by Britain, appeared also to have been defeated, though it would soon flare up again.

- ⁵¹³ By the beginning of 1794 France had 1.5 million men under arms, with a total field strength of 800,000, compared with little more than half that number in the allied armies. Poised to invade Holland, the French had 280,000 troops in north-eastern France, opposed by some 180,000 allied troops in Flanders.
- ⁵¹⁴ The prerogative of the British monarch to declare war by proclamation or by an order in council without consulting parliament.
- ⁵¹⁵ See Dundas's speech to the Commons on the East India Budget, May 24 1791, PH29: 609-11.
- ⁵¹⁶ Lord Hawkesbury (1729-1808), President of the Board of Trade, speaking in the Lords' debate on the abolition of the slave trade, May 3 1792, PH29: 1353-4.
- ⁵¹⁷ For Burke and 'eternal war', see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 22; for Burke and extirpation, see above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 21.
- ⁵¹⁸ France had invaded Savoy in 1792: for the Scheldt, see *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 19.
- ⁵¹⁹ See *WEB*, vol. 5, pp. 385, 409.
- ⁵²⁰ See Pitt's speech in the Commons on the budget, March 11 1793, PH30: 563-4.
- ⁵²¹ See Pitt's speech in the Commons, January 21 1794, PH30: 1277-87.
- ⁵²² See Pitt's speech in the Commons, March 6 1794, PH30: 1485.
- ⁵²³ In the summer of 1793 the Convention legislated the imposition of a forced loan, or requisition, on all 'superfluous', as opposed to 'necessary', income. It was very widely evaded or ignored.
- ⁵²⁴ In March 1792, following the treaty of Pilnitz (see above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, n. 59), the French government approached Britain with the offer of a defensive treaty and a request for a loan, neither of which was accepted.
- ⁵²⁵ The French flag, the fleur-de-lis (emblem of the Bourbon monarchy) on a white background, was abolished early in the revolutionary period, and was replaced by the tricolor.
- ⁵²⁶ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 5.
- ⁵²⁷ See above, n. 1.
- ⁵²⁸ The cordial Treaty of Peace, Good Correspondence and Neutrality, between James II and Louis XIV, drafted in 1686 and ratified the following year, did not survive the accession of William III, always suspicious of Louis's designs on Holland. It was long dead by the time Fox was writing, but the mention of it gives him another opportunity to contrast the humanity of James II with the belligerence of his protestant successors.
- ⁵²⁹ The repeated seizure of French ships by Britain in 1755, when a total of 300 vessels were captured and 6000 French seamen imprisoned, allegedly in retaliation for provocative actions by the French. The seizures in part initiated the Seven Years War, which had begun, *de facto*, at sea, before war was formally declared in 1756.
- ⁵³⁰ Robert Martin Lesuire (1737-1815), *Les Sauvages de l'Europe*, translated into English as *The Savages of Europe* (London: T. Davies, 1764).
- ⁵³¹ Pitt hoped the naval blockade of France – as Fox suggests, a peculiarly British mode of warfare – would not only starve the republic into defeat, but would enable British commerce to flourish in spite of the war. In March 1793 Spain agreed to a blockade of France's Mediterranean ports in conjunction with the British navy, and Russia also agreed to police the Baltic, cutting off the importation of corn into

France from that direction. All states friendly to Britain were invited to stop trading with France. By treaties of May 1793 with Spain, of July with Prussia, and with Austria in August, it was agreed to prevent neutral powers from 'giving any protection whatever, direct or indirect, in consequence of their neutrality, to the commerce, or to the property of the French, at sea, or in the ports of France': see PH30: 1049-54.

⁵³² See above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, n. 37; in the budget of February 1794 Britain had set aside an additional £800, 000 to help keep the Prussian army in the field. This proved to be insufficient, and the following month the sum was increased to £1m..

⁵³³ See Pitt's speech of June 17 1793 in reply to Charles James Fox's motion for the re-establishment of peace with France, PH30: 1013-20.

⁵³⁴ 'Carthage must be destroyed'; the phrase with which Cato the Elder ended his speeches in the Roman Senate during the Third Punic War, meaning that there was no other way of dealing with Carthaginian aggression than the entire destruction of the state.

⁵³⁵ 'bravado'.

⁵³⁶ When Charles Stuart landed in Scotland in August 1745, most of the English army was on the continent of Europe to fight the war of the Austrian Succession. After his victory at Prestonpans in September, the government began urgently repatriating its army, and by the time Stuart, marching to London, had reached Derby, with an army reduced to 5,000 men, he decided to retreat to Scotland. 7,000 Hessian troops were recruited during the rising for garrison duty.

⁵³⁷ This admonition, that the world is in danger of colliding with comets, is delivered to Gulliver by the Laputians in Part III, chapter 2 of Swift's *Travels into Several Remote Nations of the World* (1726).

⁵³⁸ In his *History of the American Indians* (London: E. and C. Dilly, 1775), p. 65, James Adair (fl. 1736-75) recorded seeing some Cherokees during a lunar eclipse: 'they all ran wild, this way and that way, like lunatics, firing their guns, whooping and hallooing, beating of kettles, ringing horse-bells, and making the most horrid noises that human beings possibly could. This was the effect of their natural philosophy, and done to assist the suffering moon.'

⁵³⁹ A stereotypical Englishman, after the verse satire by Daniel Defoe (1660?-1731), *The True-born Englishman* (1701), which Fox no doubt admired for its attack on English xenophobia more than for its support for William III.

⁵⁴⁰ An incident in the Seven Years War: In February 1760 a French naval squadron under the command of François Thuriot captured and briefly held the town of Carrickfergus in County Antrim.

⁵⁴¹ Britain was beaten by Spain in various encounters in the eighteenth century: most notably in 1741 at Cartagena in modern Colombia, and at Guantánamo Bay; and in 1756 and 1781 at Minorca.

⁵⁴² The game laws were the extended body of legislation which in effect restricted the killing of game to the propertied classes, widely regarded as oppressive by the poor but as defining the liberty of the (privileged) subject by those who could take advantage of them. Ecclesiastical courts exercised jurisdiction in spiritual matters, very widely defined so as to include, for example, probate of wills, defamation and

divorce; they derived their authority from the crown, and were regarded by the Church of England a crucial part of the partnership of church and state, at the heart of the constitution of Britain. Sleeves made of lawn (very fine linen) were worn by bishops of the Church of England, and had come to symbolise the dignity of their position; the ‘Corinthian capital’ of society was the aristocracy, according to Burke: see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps*, No. 1, n. 15.

⁵⁴³ Burke’s phrase again, for the mass of the people, considered as ignorant and with no mind of their own: see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 15.

⁵⁴⁴ For the policy of restoring the hereditary monarchy, see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps*, No. 1, and for ‘Capet’, see n. 25 in that pamphlet.

⁵⁴⁵ Two kings of Brentford appear in George Villiers’s play *The Rehearsal* (1672), who claim they lead an army ‘in disguise’ in case their enemies recognise them. The phrase ‘the king of Brentford’ became proverbial either for imaginary heroes and for fantasists who imagined themselves to be heroes. ‘Men in buckram’ are men existing only in the imagination: see Shakespeare’s *1 Henry IV*, ii, 4.

⁵⁴⁶ The dates of threats, which Fox the Jacobite does not believe to have been serious, to the protestant faith and the liberty it supposedly guaranteed: the Glorious Revolution (1688), the two major Jacobite rebellions of 1715 and 1745, and the beginning of the Seven Years War in 1755, when a French-backed landing by Charles Stuart seemed once again a possibility.

⁵⁴⁷ ‘In the French manner’, referring to the ‘Réquisition’ of 1793 that made all adult men under 36 liable to be conscripted.

⁵⁴⁸ During the anti-Catholic Gordon Riots in 1780, the Lord Mayor of London advocated the arming of citizens to oppose the rioters, a measure opposed by the senior army officer in London, Lord Amherst (1717-97), who justified himself in letters later read aloud in parliament. Then radical Duke of Richmond pointed out that Amherst’s orders contravened the clause in the Bill of Rights which allowed the carrying of defensive weapons. The Irish Volunteers were a non-denominational citizen-militia founded in 1778, when only Anglicans were permitted to bear arms. After 1789 they exhibited their sympathy for the French revolution by parading each year on the anniversary of the fall of the Bastille, and were disbanded in 1793.

⁵⁴⁹ Informations were the equivalent of indictments issued by the Attorney General when he thought a case was too urgent (or perhaps too controversial) to be brought before a Grand Jury; they were written on parchment, the same material as was used in the making the skins of drums.

⁵⁵⁰ In 1792-3 the real or imaginary fear of insurrection in Britain led to the policy of housing the army in barracks, away from local communities, instead of billeting them on those communities. Local militias were embodied at the same time, for the first time since 1783. For objections to the barracking of soldiers, and the fear that soldiers separated from the ‘mass of the people’ would be used to ‘overawe’ them and to ‘destroy their freedom’, see M.A. Taylor’s speech to the Commons, February 22 1793, PH30: 473-86.

⁵⁵¹ An indication of the date when the pamphlet was written. Prince Frederick, the Duke of York, the commander of the British forces in the Netherlands, had returned to Britain on February 7 1794, and left to rejoin his army in the first days of March. The imaginary ‘laurel’ is an ironic comment on the failure of the allied

campaign of 1793: the Prince himself had besieged Dunkirk, but had failed to capture it, taking ten thousand casualties in the process, and being forced to withdraw. The cattle had been requisitioned to drag the artillery to Dunkirk; where it was abandoned in the retreat.

10. *A Defence of the Decree of the National Convention of France*

⁵⁵² In May 1788 Pitt successfully brought a motion before the Commons for an investigation into the slave trade by the Privy Council. When it reported a year later Wilberforce moved a series of resolutions condemning the trade but they were rejected. In January 1790 a select committee was set up to examine the issue, and in April of the following year Wilberforce sought leave to bring forward a bill for the abolition of the trade which did not pass. He had tried again, unsuccessfully, in 1792, but when Henry Dundas moved in an amendment that the trade should be abolished ‘gradually’ the House agreed and voted for abolition by 1796. In May 1793 Wilberforce had succeeded in bringing forward a bill for abolishing the importation of slaves by British merchants into non-British possessions, which did not pass. In 1794, just before this pamphlet was written, he had won a motion to bring in the same bill again, but the bill had been defeated. The trade was eventually abolished in 1807. For the reasons behind Fox’s ironic characterization of the British constitution as ‘well ballanced’, see the next pamphlet, *Poor Richard’s Scraps*, No. 3-4.

⁵⁵³ Much consultation has thrown up several possibilities, none fully convincing, for Fox’s ‘antient Philosopher’. Closest, perhaps, are Protagoras (Hermann Diels and Walther Kranz. *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Zurich: Weidmann, 1985, 80b4) and Cicero (*On the Nature of the Gods*, I. i, and III, xxxix). Neither however is a very good match, and it may be that Fox has no one particular in mind, and is citing an imaginary philosopher to lend authority to a fairly ordinary thought. Thanks in particular to Professors Peter de Bolla and Simon Goldhill of King’s College, Cambridge.

⁵⁵⁴ See Pitt’s speech of April 2 1792 on the motion for the abolition of the slave trade, PH29: 1134, 1146.

⁵⁵⁵ In the Commons’ debate on the abolition bill, February 25 1794, Pitt is reported as describing the decree of the Convention as a ‘wild and improvident measure’: PH30: 1448.

⁵⁵⁶ In January 1794 a British force had reached the West Indies with the mission to capture French sugar islands, which meant that the slaves there, emancipated – at least in theory – by the Convention, would be re-enslaved by the British. In the Commons’ debate of February 7 1794, on the motion to bring in a bill for the abolition of British importation of slaves to the possessions of foreign powers, Wilberforce was asked whether the bill, should it pass, would forbid the importation of new slaves to such of the French islands as might fall into British hands. He assured the House that it would not: see *Morning Post*, February 8 1794. Martinique was captured by the British in March 1794, and Guadeloupe in April.

- ⁵⁵⁷ In Pitt's speeches of April 2 and 23 1792, he argues that the slave trade is no longer necessary, as the slave-population in the West Indies is high enough to be self-sustaining except where new land is required to be brought into cultivation, and that introducing more slaves from Africa will risk revolts and the disruption of the plantations: see PH29: 1133-58, 1262-3.
- ⁵⁵⁸ Speech of Dundas, April 2 1792, PH29: 1104-10.
- ⁵⁵⁹ See Dundas's speech April 23 1792, PH29: 1204-17; for Pitt on the four islands, see the same debate, PH29: 1263.
- ⁵⁶⁰ That is, to abolish the trade by 1796; see PH29: 1293.
- ⁵⁶¹ On May 8 1792, following the passage of Dundas's motion, the House of Lords voted for an anti-abolitionist motion to call witnesses on the slave trade to the bar of the House (PH29: 1355). Witnesses, all in favour of continuing the trade which they averred was conducted as humanely as possible, were heard on days scattered through May and early June, when the parliamentary session ended. 'Manes', in Roman mythology, are the souls of deceased forefathers (and foremothers).
- ⁵⁶² No member of either House of Parliament, in any of the debates on slavery, had proposed the abolition of slavery itself.
- ⁵⁶³ A play on the decree of fraternity of the French Convention, November 19 1792, offering to assist all nations wishing to regain their freedom. Fox suggests that the advocates of colonial slavery were making their case by associating the emancipation of slaves with the freeing of those allegedly oppressed by anciens régimes. For an example of what he has in mind, see the speech by Lord Abingdon (1740-99) in the House of Lords, April 11 1793, PH30: 652-7.
- ⁵⁶⁴ Locke's attitude to slavery, set out in chapters 4 and 16 in particular of his *Second Treatise on Government*, is an area of great controversy, too complicated to consider here. It is clear however that he thought those who had committed capital crimes could rightfully be enslaved instead of executed (§22), and that the aggressors in an unjust war could legitimately be enslaved in the event of their defeat (§178).
- ⁵⁶⁵ Edmund Burke, 'Preface' to *J. P. Brissot, Deputy of Eure and Loire, to his Constituents, on the Situation of the National Convention (1793)* (WEB, vol. 7, p. 326), adapted, and with 'French principles' substituted for 'Jacobinism'.
- ⁵⁶⁶ See Danton's motion to this effect, reported in the *Morning Chronicle* Feb 19 1794.
- ⁵⁶⁷ *Morning Chronicle* Feb 19 1794.
- ⁵⁶⁸ See above, *Address to the People of Great Britain*, n. 23.
- ⁵⁶⁹ 'Out' appears in the text, but 'ought', obviously the correct word, is written in the margin, possibly by Eliza Gurney.
- ⁵⁷⁰ See above, pp. 7, 8.
- ⁵⁷¹ For Locke, see above, n. 13; for Blackstone's counter-argument, see his *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, Book I, chapter 14 'Of Master and Servant', §1.
- ⁵⁷² See Pitt's speech in the Commons of April 19 1791 (PH29: 340).
- ⁵⁷³ See Pitt's speeches of April 19, 1791 (PH29: 335) and April 2 1792 (PH29: 1148-9).
- ⁵⁷⁴ See Pitt's speeches of April 19, 1791 (PH29: 340) and April 2 1792 (PH29: 1151).
- ⁵⁷⁵ Not from Samuel Butler (1613-80), *Hudibras*, though the metre is hudibrastic; these are lines 51-2 of Jonathan Swift's poem 'The Furniture of a Woman's Mind' (1727).

- ⁵⁷⁶ Richard Phillips (1756-1836) was a Quaker lawyer of Lincoln's Inn and a member of the Society for the Abolition of the Slave Trade, as was his elder brother, James (1745-99), the Committee's printer. The younger Phillips was associated with various abolitionist publications, notably Alexander Falconbridge's *An Account of the Slave Trade, on the Coast of Africa* (London: James Phillips, 1788).
- ⁵⁷⁷ By 'the evidence at large', which Phillips refuses to let him use, Fox means the *Minutes of the Evidence taken before a Committee of the House of Commons, being a Committee of the Whole House, to whom it was referred to consider of the Circumstances of the Slave Trade*, 4 vols, 1789-1791 ([London]: [n.d.], [1791]). He was therefore obliged to use the *Abridgment* (see above, *Address to the People*, n. 11) which the Committee of the Abolition Society had made.
- ⁵⁷⁸ For Captain John Ashley Hall (former slaver), see *Abridgment, No. II*, p. 211; Mr Wadstrom, (Swedish explorer), Henry Hew Dalrymple (army officer), Anthony Howe (botanist) and Dr Thomas Trotter (naval surgeon) see *Abridgment, No. III*, pp. 9-10, 118, 87, 39; for Richard Storey, naval lieutenant, and James Towne (naval carpenter), see *No. IV*, pp. 4, 7; for Alexander Falconbridge (ship's surgeon) see *No. II*, p. 238.
- ⁵⁷⁹ Wadstrom and Rev. John Newton (former slaver) *Abridgment, No. III*, pp. 9-10, 56.
- ⁵⁸⁰ John Giles (farmer, former occupation unspecified, in various islands), *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 51.
- ⁵⁸¹ Rev. Thomas Rees (chaplain, Royal Navy) *Abridgment, No. III*, p. 100.
- ⁵⁸² Dr. Harrison (physician, formerly of Jamaica), *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 27.
- ⁵⁸³ Dr. Jackson (physician, formerly of Jamaica), *Abridgment, No. IV*, pp. 31-2.
- ⁵⁸⁴ Henry Coor (former Jamaica millwright) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 48.
- ⁵⁸⁵ John Terry (former plantation manager, Grenada) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 62.
- ⁵⁸⁶ Captain John Samuel Smith, (Royal Navy), *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 77.
- ⁵⁸⁷ William Duncan (former overseer and storekeeper, Antigua) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 80.
- ⁵⁸⁸ Captain Thomas Lloyd (Royal Navy) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 82.
- ⁵⁸⁹ Baker Davison (army officer) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 86.
- ⁵⁹⁰ Rev. Mr. Stuart (no occupation specified prior to ordination, various islands), *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 101.
- ⁵⁹¹ Rev. Mr. Davies (former trainee plantation-manager, Barbados) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 104.
- ⁵⁹² Mark Cook, (former Jamaica planter, schoolmaster) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 108.
- ⁵⁹³ Thomas Clappeson (former Jamaica wharfinger and pilot) *Abridgment, No. IV*, p. 127.
- ⁵⁹⁴ Rev. Robert Boucher Nicholls (born in Barbados, two years clergyman there) *Abridgment, No. III*, p. 132.
- ⁵⁹⁵ Thomas Woolrich (former merchant, various islands), *Abridgment, No. III*, p. 110.
- ⁵⁹⁶ '*Church and King Mob*': a riotous crowd mobilised for the purpose of intimidating those it considers disloyal to the established church and the king; most famously the crowd which, in Birmingham in 1791, attacked dissenting chapels, and the house and library of the scientist and philosopher Joseph Priestley (1733-1804). The activities of such 'mobs' were often ignored by local magistrates.

⁵⁹⁷ The volumes of the abridgment of the *Minutes of Evidence* contain various examples of the emasculation of slaves as a punishment, and the near-blinding of others as collateral damage in the course of punishment: see for example *No. IV*, pp. 31, 110, 122.

⁵⁹⁸ A legal maxim (“Nullus commodum capere potest ex sua injuria propria”) in use for many centuries and attributable to no individual author.

⁵⁹⁹ Unlocated.

⁶⁰⁰ See Pitt’s speech April 2 1792 (PH29: 1139-40). The same point is implicit, though not directly stated, in Dundas’s speech of April 23 1792, PH29: 1204-18.

11. *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 3-4*

⁶⁰¹ On December 1 1792 a Royal Proclamation claimed that ‘evil-disposed persons’, acting in concert with a foreign power, were attempting to subvert the laws and constitution by riots and insurrections (of the existence of which the evidence was very scanty). Relying on the ‘zeal and attachment’ of his ‘loyal subjects’ to his own person and the ‘happy constitution’, the king announced that he was mobilizing the militia to help keep order. The proclamation followed the foundation, of November 20, of the ‘Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers’. This fostered numerous local branches, some of which produced loyal addresses to the king and carried them from door to door, asking for signatures; a refusal to sign could have serious consequences for tradesmen especially, in the form of loss of business, eviction, and so on.

⁶⁰² Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man* (1791), in Paine, *CWP*, vol. 1, p. 279.

⁶⁰³ Dulcinea is a peasant girl beloved of Don Quixote de La Mancha in Cervantes’s novel, in which she never actually appears. Though he has barely seen her, he is convinced of her surpassing beauty, persuades himself she is really of royal birth, and dedicates to her his various knightly achievements. A ‘dowdy’ is a ‘woman or girl shabbily or unattractively dressed, without smartness or brightness’ (OED).

⁶⁰⁴ Brutus was a legendary descendant of the legendary Aeneas of Troy who became the first king of Britain, according to the ninth-century Welsh historian Nennius, the supposed author of *The History of the Britons*. Nennius also wrote of the legendary King Arthur, who became more familiar however from the writings of Geoffrey of Monmouth, a twelfth-century Welsh clergyman, author of *The Prophecies of Merlin* and *The History of the Kings of Britain*. For the kind of panegyric on the constitution that Fox is satirising, see below, n. 27.

⁶⁰⁵ Caesar described his invasions of Britain in his *Commentaries of the Gallic War*.

⁶⁰⁶ Probably a reference to Canute or Knut, the viking who became king of England, Denmark and Sweden, and settled in Wessex. He could be called a pirate by virtue of his successful struggle to control the seaways from Scandinavia round Britain to Ireland.

⁶⁰⁷ Edward Gibbon (1737-94), *The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, ed. David Womersley, 3 vols (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1995), vol. 2, pp. 473.

- ⁶⁰⁸ Paul Rapin de Thoyras (1661-1725), *The History of England. Written in French by Mr. De Rapin Thoyras. Done into English ... by N. Tindal*, 15 vols (London : James and John Knapton, 1725), vol. 1, p. 343n. (note by Nicholas Tindal).
- ⁶⁰⁹ The source of Fox's information about Anglo-Saxon law in this and the preceding sentences is mainly Henry Robert (1718-90), *The History of Great Britain, from the First Invasion of it by the Romans*, 6 vols (London: T. Cadell, 1771-93), vol. 2, ch. III, Section iii (pp. 276-310, on the history of Anglo-Saxon law. Robert himself was drawing on David Wilkins's *Leges Aglo-Saxonicae Ecclesiasticae et Civiles* (London: Gosling, 1721).
- ⁶¹⁰ Fox appears to be using mainly the account of the 'wittenagemot' offered by Robert (pp. 262-7). Robert however offers too democratic an account of the institution for Fox: he points out, for example (p. 264), that the forty-hide qualification was not instituted until the reign of Edward the Confessor, before which the qualification stood at five hides. Fox therefore prefers to follow the account of the exclusiveness and relative powerlessness of the 'wettena-gemot' as described by Rapin, *The History of England*, vol. 1, pp. 159-79. There was great disagreement over the nature of the political institutions of the Anglo-Saxons in England. Some whig and radical reformers, like Joseph Gerrald (1763-96), John Cartwright (1740-1824) and Thomas Oldfield (1755-1822), followed Algernon Sidney (1623-83)) and Henry St. John Bolingbroke (1678-1751) in interpreting the 'micklegemote' as a convention in which all free men participated, and, like Sidney, thought the 'wittenagemote' was a representative assembly. Blackstone, and the liberal Scots reformer John Millar (1735-1801), treated the terms as synonyms for the same institution, an oligarchic council of wise men. See John Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793-1796* (Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2000), p. 144.
- ⁶¹¹ There is no trace of this restricted meaning in OED.
- ⁶¹² 'The feudal tenant holding his land of a lord by military service, gradually supplanted ... the allodial holder who held his land of no other man' (OED).
- ⁶¹³ Magna Charta was issued, unwillingly, by King John in 1215, and reissued with some clauses omitted by the regents of his nine-year-old son, Henry III, in 1216, two months after John's death.
- ⁶¹⁴ The original 'palladium' was an image of Pallas Athene at Troy, whose presence was believed to guarantee the safety of the city; hence the word came to be used for anything on which the safety of a nation or institution was believed to depend. At one time or another late eighteenth-century writers described the liberty of the press, the House of Commons, the Bill of Rights, the statute of treasons, the king, the Grand Jury, the petty jury, and the right to return a general verdict, as well as Magna Charta, as the 'palladium' of the constitution or of British liberty.
- ⁶¹⁵ 'No Freeman shall be taken or imprisoned, or be disseised of his Freehold, or Liberties, or free Customs, or be outlawed, or exiled, or any other wise destroyed; nor will We not pass upon him, nor condemn him but by lawful judgment of his Peers, or by the Law of the Land. We will sell to no man, we will not deny or defer to any man either Justice or Right.'
- ⁶¹⁶ Richard Neville, Earl of Warwick (1428-71) was known as the kingmaker for having successfully placed Edward IV on the throne in the place of the apparently insane Henry VI, and later for restoring Henry VI in place of the defeated Edward.

- ⁶¹⁷ Fox is alluding to the accession and rule of William III.
- ⁶¹⁸ The statute of Edward I, passed in 1290, known as *Quo Warranto* (by what warrant) originated in his attempt to recover royal lands by demanding of English lords by what warrant they claimed to hold their estates.
- ⁶¹⁹ Hincmar (806-882), Archbishop of Reims, theologian and annalist.
- ⁶²⁰ Fox appears to be deriving his examples from volumes 1 and 2 of Owen Ruffhead, *The Statutes at Large; from Magna Charta, to the End of the last Parliament, 1761*, 8 vols (London: various booksellers, 1763-4); the first quotation, for example ('By the council ...') appears on vol. 1, p. 161. But as Fox cites statutes by their number without giving their year, it would be necessary to leaf through many statutes to attribute these quotations, and we have not chosen to do so.
- ⁶²¹ William Prynne (1600-69), *A Plea for the Lords and House of Peers* (London: Henry Brome and Edward Thomas, 1659), p. 188.
- ⁶²² Between the accession of Edward VI in 1547 and the death of Elizabeth in 1603, the number of MPs was increased from 343 to 462.
- ⁶²³ For example the earls Clarendon (impeached but escaped, 1667); Orrery (impeached 1669 but acquitted); Arlington (impeached 1674 but acquitted); Danby (1678). Earlier attempts to impeach Clarendon and Danby had been made in 1663 and 1675 respectively.
- ⁶²⁴ The Upper House, of House of Peers, invented by Cromwell which sat as a chamber in parliament in the two years before the Restoration in 1660.
- ⁶²⁵ A reference to Charles I's insistence on levying the 'ship money' tax without the consent of parliament. Ship money had previously been levied only in time of war and only in coastal towns; Charles determined to levy it in time of peace, and on all parts of the kingdom. He was resisted by the House of Commons, most notably by John Hampden, and the issue became one of the causes of, or pretexts for, the Civil War that broke out in 1642.
- ⁶²⁶ In 1793 Thomas Oldfield calculated that 257 MPs, a (bare) majority of the Commons, were returned by 11,075 electors; see *The State of the Representation of England and Wales* (London: for the Friends of the People, 1793), pp. 6-7.
- ⁶²⁷ Fox is remembering part of the argument of one or both of two speeches by Lord North (1732-92) in the Commons on motions for reform, on June 16 1784 and April 18 1785. Perhaps the second of these is the more likely, for in the reports of it given in the *Public Advertiser* and *Morning Chronicle* the following day he would have found a handy collection of phrases on which to base his satire, earlier in this pamphlet, on the excellence of the British Constitution. North was hostile to reform, he said, because it would destroy a constitution that was 'at once the envy and admiration of surrounding nations' (*PA*); it was 'a work of infinite wisdom, the source of many blessings, much happiness, much glory, ... the most beautiful fabrick that, perhaps, had ever existed from the beginning of time ... that glorious fabrick, the work of his ancestors' (*MC*). Such phrases are everywhere in the mouths of the opponents of reform, but perhaps never so many in one mouth, in one speech.
- ⁶²⁸ Copyhold tenure was an ancient form of tenure of land 'according to the custom of the manor', the conditions being inscribed in the manorial rolls and a copy given to the tenant. Copyholders were enfranchised in the nineteenth century, as were leaseholders. The four MPs for the City of London 'are not,' writes Oldfield, 'the

representatives of the inhabitant housekeepers, resident and paying taxes within the city, but of a corporate franchise ... limited to the liverymen of the said city' (*History ... of the Boroughs*, p. 380).

- ⁶²⁹ The politician Lord William Russell (1639-83) and the classical republican political theorist Algernon Sidney became perhaps the most revered martyrs in the Whig pantheon. Both were tried for high treason and executed for their part in the abortive Rye House plot against Charles II and James II, intended to exclude the Catholic James from succeeding to the throne. Crucial to Sidney's conviction was the discovery of his 'Discourses concerning Government', which he had not published and should not have been used in evidence, but which argued for the right to resort to arms in order to resist government repression.
- ⁶³⁰ At this point (p. 17 in the original text), a new title appears at the top of the page: *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 4. / Sold by M. GURNEY, No. 128, *Holborn-Hill*. [Underneath the title, the text continues.]
- ⁶³¹ That is, by virtue of his ruling over India.
- ⁶³² Fox appears to be claiming that papal control of kings would have little or no effect on their protestant subjects; of all his arguments for Catholic toleration this would perhaps have been found the least persuasive. That James would have resisted the 'domineering claims' of the Pope was the stronger case.
- ⁶³³ In 1681-2 Louis XIV made a concerted attempt to limit the authority of the Pope over the Gallican church, to the extent of proposing that the king should be able to enact ecclesiastical laws and that all regulations made by the Pope would need the assent of the French monarch if they were to be valid in France. He was unable to persuade the Pope to accept this programme of reforms.
- ⁶³⁴ The tiara is the diadem worn by the Pope, but here Fox appears to mean that Henry and Elizabeth became more powerful by uniting the powers of the monarch and the head of the church, and that James II, who, had he acknowledged the claims of the Pope could not have remained Supreme Governor of the Church of England, would have been weakened as a result.
- ⁶³⁵ The Exclusion Bill was an attempt, initiated in 1679, to exclude the Catholic James from succeeding to the throne; it was frustrated by Charles II dissolving parliament before the bill could be passed. A fortnight before the bill was introduced the king, through the Lord Chancellor, had offered to place limitations on the powers of a Catholic successor, but the proponents of the bill would not accept this.
- ⁶³⁶ This is a radical Whig wish-list: a citizen army, and no standing army under the command of the king to enforce the will of the executive; legislation to limit the king's and the executive's powers of patronage, by the award of lucrative sinecure offices, pensions, and the creation of new peerages to strengthen the government's voting strength in the Lords; and the full implementation of the Duke of Richmond's plan (see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 47).
- ⁶³⁷ Pope Sixtus V was said to have pretended to be old, weak and harmless at the conclave at which he had been elected; thereafter he came to be regarded as cruel and tyrannical.
- ⁶³⁸ For Charles II 'trampling' on the lower house, see above, n. 35; as for his giving away too easily to 'such assemblies', Fox is referring to his surrender to joint Anglican/Presbyterian pressure in the Convention to prevent a measure of religious

toleration towards dissenters, and his giving way to Anglican pressure in parliament to penalise Presbyterians, which led to the Corporation Act of 1661 and the Act of Uniformity the following year.

- ⁶³⁹ For Mansfield's judgment, see the case of *Campbell v. Hall*, the cause of the island of Grenada, 1774, in Capel Lofft, *Reports of cases adjudged in the Court of King's Bench from Easter term 12 Geo. 3. to Michaelmas 14 Geo. 3* (London: W. Strahan, M. Woodfall, and William Owen, 1776), pp. 738-48. Mansfield quotes the judgment of Earl Hardwicke (1690-1764), when Sir Philip Yorke, on p. 745.
- ⁶⁴⁰ Instead, Charles had permitted provinces to be formed in America not under the jurisdiction of the crown: the Carolinas, New York and New Jersey. For a conveniently brief summary of Charles II's policy towards the colonies, which agrees with Fox's account, see J.M. Sosin, *English America and the Restoration Monarchy of Charles II* (Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, 1980), pp. 1-4.
- ⁶⁴¹ At the Restoration, there were five established colonies in New England: Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Haven, New Plymouth, and Rhode Island. Between 1661 and 1663, new charters had been granted to all but Massachusetts, which resisted granting appeals of their own legislative decisions to the Crown, believing the charter of 1629 granted them sole authority. They effectively rebuffed the Royal Commission Charles sent to Boston in 1665, which is (in part) what Fox is referring to when he says the provincial assemblies 'reduced his authority to as despicable a state in the colonies as it was in England.' However, Charles II also granted charters for the formation of six new colonies, beginning with the Carolinas in 1662. These were proprietary colonies and were even less subject to the control of the Crown than the earlier colonies.
- ⁶⁴² That is to say, had James II behaved like William III or the Hanoverian kings in regard to the army; had he built barracks throughout the country to house a militia intended to suppress rebellion at home, as Pitt's government had done in 1793; had he had a Richmond to entrap dissenters by converting them to universal manhood suffrage so that they could be transported to Botany Bay, as Gerrald, Margarot and Skirving had been (see below, *Defence of the War*, n. 51), he would never have been deposed.
- ⁶⁴³ See above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, n. 42. At the Cock and Pynot in the village of Old Whittington in Derbyshire in 1688, various enemies of James II including Earl Danby met to invite William III to invade Britain.
- ⁶⁴⁴ Algernon Sidney, *Discourses concerning Government*, ch. 2, §21.
- ⁶⁴⁵ The phrase is intended to recall 'terror is the order of the day'; see below, *On Trials for Treason*, n. 21.
- ⁶⁴⁶ Sir John Sinclair, *The History of the Public Revenue of the British Empire* (Dublin: P. Byrne, 1785), pp. 247-9.
- ⁶⁴⁷ Some 50,000 Huguenots – French Calvinists – fled from persecution in France to Britain and Ireland, bringing with them their manufacturing skills, most notably silk-weaving.
- ⁶⁴⁸ Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 3, §28.
- ⁶⁴⁹ Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 2, §21.
- ⁶⁵⁰ Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 2, §19.
- ⁶⁵¹ Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 2, §20.

- ⁶⁵² Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 3, §28.
- ⁶⁵³ Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 2, §22.
- ⁶⁵⁴ James Tyrrell (1642-1718), whig political theorist and defender of the 1688 revolution. The view Fox attributes to him is especially the theme of the sixth dialogue of his *Bibliotheca Politica: or, an Enquiry into the Antient Constitution of the English Government* (1692-4, 1702).
- ⁶⁵⁵ Andrew Fletcher of Saltoun (1653?-1716), Scottish patriot and whig who, following successive failures of the harvest in Scotland in the 1690s, proposed providing for the poor by making them domestic slaves; he believed that chattel slavery was not inconsistent with Christianity; see the second of his *Two Discourses concerning the Affairs of Scotland* (1698).
- ⁶⁵⁶ See above, *Defence of the Decree*, n. 13.
- ⁶⁵⁷ 'The Fundamental Constitutions of Carolina' (1669?), published in *A Collection of Several Pieces of Mr. John Locke* (London: R. Francklin, 1720). ODNB notes: 'It is unlikely that Locke was the sole author of this but there is evidence that he had a hand in the original drafting, and he was certainly involved in suggesting alterations and improvements.'
- ⁶⁵⁸ A reference to Burke's *Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (1791), an attack on the 'new Whig' Charles James Fox, who had accused Burke of inconsistency in supporting the American, but opposing the French revolution.
- ⁶⁵⁹ The London Whig Club was founded in 1784; prior to the French revolution its members had included Burke, and also the Duke of Portland, who in the summer of 1794 would enter Pitt's cabinet, but by the time this pamphlet was written it had become a stronghold of Fox and the Foxites, including Thomas Erskine (1750-1823), Philip Francis (1740-1818), Charles Grey (1764-1845), and Sheridan. One of the club's 'standing toasts', given at every meeting since its foundation, was 'the Cause for which HAMPDEN bled in the field, and SYDNEY on the scaffold.'
- ⁶⁶⁰ Sidney's manuscript 'Discourses', used as evidence against him in his trial, had been discovered in his 'closet', or study, when his house was being searched.
- ⁶⁶¹ See above, n. 35.
- ⁶⁶² Sidney, *Discourses*, ch. 3, §28.
- ⁶⁶³ A 'bill of pains and penalties' is an act of parliament which by-passes normal judicial processes, and inflicts a punishment on someone supposed to be guilty of high treason or some other serious crime who has not been found guilty in a regular trial.
- ⁶⁶⁴ The Bill of Rights enshrined in law a specific narrative of the process by which William and Mary succeeded to the thrones of England and Scotland, which was confirmed by the Crown and Parliament Recognition Act of 1689. To propose a different account was to lay oneself open to the charge of libelling the revolution and the settlement of the crown. This was the charge brought against Paine in 1792 for publishing *Rights of Man*.
- ⁶⁶⁵ The Dymocks are the hereditary king's champions, which office requires them to throw down a gauntlet at the monarch's coronation, inviting any who disputed the monarch's title to single combat.
- ⁶⁶⁶ *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 50.
- ⁶⁶⁷ The fifty-nine Commissioners (Judges) who sat in judgment at the trial of Charles I, and sixteen others involved in the trial and execution. They included Cromwell,

John Bradshaw (1602-59) (President of the court) and Henry Ireton (1611-51), who had all died by the time of the Restoration in 1660 but were exhumed, hanged, drawn and quartered. Of those who had survived, some were executed for high treason, some imprisoned, others successfully escaped to Europe or America.

12. *On the Renewal of the East India Charter*

⁶⁶⁸ The Council Chamber at St James's Palace, the residence of the king, and the House of Commons.

⁶⁶⁹ Ireland.

⁶⁷⁰ Electorate, i.e. Hanover, of which George III was the 'elector', one of the Princes of the Holy Roman Empire.

⁶⁷¹ The unmapped areas of Canada claimed by the British.

⁶⁷² The African Company of Merchants, chartered in 1752, on the dissolution of its predecessor, the Royal African Company, chartered in 1660.

⁶⁷³ The East India Company was chartered in 1600; it had styled itself the 'Honourable' East India Company at the end of the seventeenth century, apparently to distinguish itself from the English Company of Merchants trading to the East Indies (chartered 1698), with which it merged in 1708. For an explanation of 'half the remainder of the world', see below, n. 39.

⁶⁷⁴ During the continuance of the East India Company, the Company guaranteed to pay, out of its profits from all sources, 'a sum not exceeding Five hundred thousand Pounds in every Year, into the Receipt of His Majesty's Exchequer, to be applied as Parliament shall direct' [i.e. £10m. over the full twenty years]: see the terms of the deal between the government and the company, in *Papers respecting the Negotiation for the Renewal of the East-India Company's Exclusive Trade* (London: Proprietors of the East-India Company, 1793), p. 13.

⁶⁷⁵ Samuel Butler, *Hudibras*, Part I (1663), Canto 1, lines 495-6.

⁶⁷⁶ See above, n. 7.

⁶⁷⁷ 'hurled from their thrones', 'swinish multitude': two memorable phrases of Burke's: see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, nn. 14, 15.

⁶⁷⁸ Ballooning, pioneered by the brothers Montgolfier from 1782.

⁶⁷⁹ 'Georgium sidus' was the name given to Uranus by Sir William Herschel (1738-1822), who discovered it in 1781, and named it in honour of George III ('Georgian star' or 'Georgian planet'). For Change Alley, see above, *An Examination of Mr. Paine's Writings*, n. 56.

⁶⁸⁰ George Louis, Elector of Hanover, sided with William III against Louis XIV in the War of the Spanish Succession. Had he declared for Louis XIV, he would have been deprived of his position as next in line to the British throne after his mother Sophia, the heir presumptive, and would have been deprived of his offices and titles as was the pro-French Elector of Bavaria; instead, he was formally confirmed as Prince-Elector of Hanover by the German princes, and became king of Britain in 1714.

- ⁶⁸¹ The Mughal Emperor, who controlled most of the Indian sub-continent until the victories of Clive.
- ⁶⁸² Probably in the sense of a 'perquisite'.
- ⁶⁸³ 'Stared' is possibly an error for 'started', but either word makes sense in the context. That is, to the East India Company, whose *de facto* possession of the Indian provinces it had taken over was acknowledged by parliament in 1767, though they were taken to belong to the state *de jure*. It was a perennial source of concern among those opposed to the company's government of India that the company was no more than its shareholders, who included many foreigners; at any time foreigners could form the majority shareholders, with no obvious motive for governing India in Britain's interest – a possibility Fox will consider below.
- ⁶⁸⁴ Fox, like Burke, sees in the Bengal famine, in which 15 million are now reckoned to have died – a third of the population of Bengal – a direct result of the settlement of 1767, which by leaving the administration of Bengal in the hands of the company, guaranteed that it would be administered with the aim of maximising returns to its shareholders rather than with a concern for the welfare of the inhabitants. The degree to which the famine was caused by the exactions and inattention of the company, rather than by drought and epidemic, is still disputed among historians, but it is clear that the company ignored the evidence of severe rural distress until it was much too late to prevent the famine.
- ⁶⁸⁵ Examples of private acts of parliament usually passed with little or no debate. The bill which according to Fox passed with equal ease was the Regulating Act of 1773, confirming the company's monopoly in return for a biennial fee of £40,000.
- ⁶⁸⁶ Fox still has Burke in mind, perhaps especially his speech on the taxation of the American colonies, delivered to the Commons on April 19 1774.
- ⁶⁸⁷ Mughal name for Bengal.
- ⁶⁸⁸ The seminary of the English Jesuits at St Omer, near Calais. The suggestion seems to be that Burke, in defending the ancien régime and the pre-revolution Gallican church, is a crypto-Jesuit (he was repeatedly caricatured as such), disseminating pro-Catholic propaganda.
- ⁶⁸⁹ Jean-Paul Marat (1743-93) revolutionary journalist and a leader of the jacobins, along with Robespierre (or Roberespierre as Fox chooses to call him) one of the chief architects of the 'Terror' of 1793-4: see below, n. 40.
- ⁶⁹⁰ See the king's speech on opening the parliamentary session, December 13 1792, PH29: 1558.
- ⁶⁹¹ Emmerich de Vattel (1714-67), Swiss diplomat, Baron Samuel von Pufendorf (1632-94), German philosopher, both important contributors to the theory of the law of nations, the early form of international law.
- ⁶⁹² By Lord Auckland's memorial of 1793: see above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1.
- ⁶⁹³ PH29: 1558.
- ⁶⁹⁴ Part quotation, part paraphrase of *The Speech of Edmund Burke, Esq; on moving his Resolutions for Conciliation with the Colonies, March 22, 1775* (1775), *WEB*, vol. 3, pp. 56-7.
- ⁶⁹⁵ 'Saladin' (Salāh ad-Dīn Yūsuf ibn Ayyūb, 1138-93), recaptured Palestine from the Crusaders and at the height of his power ruled over Egypt, Syria, Yemen, Hejaz, and Iraq.

⁶⁹⁶ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁶⁹⁷ The Sultan of Turkey and his corps of guards; a pacha is an official of high rank; by 'the' pacha, Fox probably intends Ali Pacha (1744?-1822), the most powerful of contemporary pachas who would become ruler of European Turkey.

⁶⁹⁸ In a number of speeches in 1782-4, at the opening and closing of parliamentary sessions in which Fox's and Pitt's India bills would be or had been debated, the king was made to express concern at the situation of India, though not quite in the terms Fox suggests here.

⁶⁹⁹ The shareholders in the company.

⁷⁰⁰ Richard Bentley (1662-1742) was a controversial classical scholar who famously produced an edition of *Paradise Lost* so full of his own fanciful textual emendations as to constitute a corrective rewriting of the poem.

⁷⁰¹ In the Commons' debate on Dundas's bill on May 24 1793, Charles James Fox recalled the two India bills he had unsuccessfully introduced in 1783, with the object of 'taking the influence out of the hands of the company, and putting it in the hands of commissioners, who were themselves under the controul of Parliament': *Morning Chronicle*, May 25.

⁷⁰² *WEB*, vol. 5, p. 122.

⁷⁰³ On his speech of April 23 Dundas argued that parliament might feel it should favour the continuance of the company's monopoly trade on the grounds that, taking together dividends, duties, repayment of government loan and charges of various kinds the company distributed £3,700,000 annually throughout Britain.

⁷⁰⁴ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷⁰⁵ See the king's speech December 13 1792, PH29: 1558.

⁷⁰⁶ By the terms of the original charter of 1600, granted to the 'Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading with the East Indies' (the forerunner of the East India Company), and continued thereafter, the Cape of Good Hope and Cape Horn were the limits within which the Company was granted a monopoly of trade.

⁷⁰⁷ Here and in the next paragraph Fox writes as if Marat is still alive. He was assassinated on July 13 1793, and the news of his death was first published in the London newspapers on July 20. Thus Fox's pamphlet appears to have been completed in the 16 or 17 days from June 4, when Grenville's speech was reported (see below, n. 41) to July 20.

⁷⁰⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷⁰⁹ Lord Grenville's speech to the Lords on the second reading of Dundas's India Bill, June 3 1793, *Morning Chronicle*, June 4. In 1793 it was nine years since Pitt's India Act: see below, n. 67. 'Sub-silentio' means 'in silence, without formal notice being taken'.

⁷¹⁰ Adam Smith criticised both the monopoly position of the Company and the system of government it had established for India in *The Wealth of Nations* (1776), Book 4, ch. 7; Josiah Tucker (1713-99), Dean of Gloucester and writer on trade, had attacked the East India Company monopoly ('the Bane and Destruction of a Free Trade') in *A Brief Essay on the Advantages and Disadvantages, which respectively attend France and Great Britain, with regard to Trade* (London: the author, 1749), p. 25.

⁷¹¹ The French National Assembly had by now of course been replaced by the Convention.

⁷¹² *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷¹³ The king's speech at the close of the parliamentary session, July 11 1782, PH23: 202.

⁷¹⁴ See above, *Defence of the Decree*, n. 12.

⁷¹⁵ The classical unities were rules for drama derived from Aristotle. The unity of place was observed when the action of a play occurred in one single place, so that the stage was not required (as it was for example in early modern English drama) to represent a succession of different places. The idea of 'unity of design' was developed for the visual arts by analogy with the dramatic unities, and indicated a history painting in which all the parts and details contributed to communicating one single story and meaning.

⁷¹⁶ See above, n. 36.

⁷¹⁷ India was conquered by muslims from the west, who, beginning in 1526, by degrees came to rule over almost all of India by 1700, establishing the great Mughal Empire.

⁷¹⁸ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793. The Battle of Plassey, or Palashi in West Bengal was fought on June 23 1757 between the troops of the Company, commended by Robert Clive (later Baron Clive, 1725-74), and Siraj ud-Daulah, the Nawab of Bengal (1733-57). The Company won a decisive victory, which established its rule over large tracts of India.

⁷¹⁹ This information in the last sentences of this paragraph – for example about tax farmers ('best bidders'), the draining of specie from Bengal, the amputation of thumbs – is derived from the first volume of William Bolts (1739-1808), *Considerations on India Affairs; particularly respecting the Present State of Bengal and its Dependencies*, 3 vols (London: J. Almon, etc.: 1772-5).

⁷²⁰ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷²¹ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷²² *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷²³ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793. The 'dewanee' is the revenue administration of Bengal, ceded to the company in 1765 by the Mughal Emperor.

⁷²⁴ See above, n. 46.

⁷²⁵ The twenty-six bishops of the Anglican Church (the 'Lords Spiritual') who sit on the bishops' bench in the house of Lords.

⁷²⁶ In 1793 Pope Pius VI had joined the coalition of allies against the French Republic.

⁷²⁷ Haidar Ali (c. 1722-82), ruler of Mysore and enemy of the Company, which, after sustaining repeated defeats at his hands, eventually defeated him. For his son Tipu (1750-99), see above, *A Discourse on the East*, n. 27.

⁷²⁸ Fox is referring to the eleven reports, many largely or wholly written by Burke, on the administration of justice in Bengal following the Regulating Act of 1773, and especially the ninth and eleventh reports (1783) which detailed many abuses by the employees of the Company and the government of India.

⁷²⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷³⁰ In 1781 Dundas had been appointed chairman of the secret committee inquiring into the war with Haidar Ali, and the following year published a critical report on the conduct of the company and its government of India.

⁷³¹ Presumably Kannur, or Cannanore, on the Malabar Coast.

⁷³² *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

- ⁷³³ A seventeenth-century London executioner, and so generally a hangman.
- ⁷³⁴ The ‘Board of Control’ was the board set up by Pitt’s India Act of 1784 to exercise the powers over the administration of India granted by that act to the British government. For the ‘parliamentary commissioners’ see above, n. 34.
- ⁷³⁵ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 42.
- ⁷³⁶ See above, *A Summary View*, p. 18.
- ⁷³⁷ As it stands, the construction of this sentence is not clear. Perhaps Fox intended to write: ‘The mere drawing three millions *per annum* from her, insures misery to Asia’.
- ⁷³⁸ See [Burke], *Ninth report from the Select Committee, appointed to take into Consideration the State of the Administration of Justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa* (1783), *WEB*, vol. 11, pp. 48-65.
- ⁷³⁹ Compare Burke, in his speech on Fox’s East India Bill, 1783: ‘Every rupee of profit made by an Englishman is lost for ever to India’ (*WEB*, vol. 4, p. 40).
- ⁷⁴⁰ A ‘factory’ in this sense is ‘an establishment for traders carrying on business in a foreign country; a merchant company’s trading station’ (OED).
- ⁷⁴¹ It had been thought necessary to make temporary alterations in the internal architecture of Westminster Hall to accommodate the trial of Warren Hastings and the large audiences it attracted, including boxes, lined with crimson, for the king, queen and the royal princes. The alterations began to be dismantled as soon as Burke ended his closing speech in June 1794, but they were still in place when Fox was writing.
- ⁷⁴² For the meaning of ‘squeeze’, see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, n. 35. ‘Pachas’ in this context means officials of the Company returning from India.
- ⁷⁴³ By ‘them’ Fox appears to mean the inhabitants of India. On ‘jew’, the OED writes: ‘In medieval England, Jews, though engaged in many pursuits, were particularly familiar as money-lenders, their activities being publicly regulated for them by the Crown, whose protégés they were. In private, Christians also practised money-lending, though forbidden to do so by Canon Law. Thus the name of Jew came to be associated in the popular mind with usury and any extortionate practices that might be supposed to accompany it, and gained an opprobrious sense.’ A ‘jobber’ was a wholesale dealer or principal on the stock exchange. Such people had funded the debts of the Company, incurred in the late 1760s on, when the revenues derived from the revenue administration fell far below expectation.
- ⁷⁴⁴ Fox has in mind the late Louis XVI.
- ⁷⁴⁵ That is, those who had bought the national debt, in the form of government securities.
- ⁷⁴⁶ In part II of *Rights of Man* (1792), Paine had proposed that by reducing government expenditure on patronage and defence, it would be possible to introduce a welfare system including old age pensions, child benefit, free education, and so on. See above, *An Examination of Mr. Paine’s Writings*.
- ⁷⁴⁷ In April 1793, at the age of 22, Jenkinson (see above, *On Jacobinism*, n. 30) had been appointed to the Board of Control, see above, n. 67). His father, Lord Hawkesbury, was President of the Board of Trade and a member of the cabinet.
- ⁷⁴⁸ In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the Portuguese had established many colonies and trading posts on the coasts of India; for their complicated story of

expectations raised and disappointed, see M.N. Pearson, *The Portuguese in India* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 1987). In the early eighteenth century Spain had found her empire in the Americas difficult to police and control: there was much illicit access to Spanish American markets by French and British traders; the attempts of the Creole aristocracy to assert their own authority against that of Spain; the rival territorial control of the Jesuits; the expense of the armed convoys which carried trade goods between Spain and the Americas; incompetent government in Spain and the incompetence of the armed services.

⁷⁴⁹ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793; for the world between the capes, see above, n. 39.

⁷⁵⁰ That is, the ‘experiment ... of extending both our exports and our imports’, and of destroying clandestine trade, by loosening the Company’s monopoly by some small degree and providing shipping ‘at a moderate rate of freight to carry out goods to India for all who might choose to send them; and to bring home in raw materials, or any other shape, the fortunes or adventures of individuals’: *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷⁵¹ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷⁵² The Act for the more effectually securing a Quantity of Oak Timber for the Use of the Royal Navy prohibited the Company from building new ships for the India trade until its total tonnage was reduced below 45,000. Fox’s quotation comes from the preamble to that act, which was however passed in 1772, some ten years before Dundas became Treasurer of the Navy.

⁷⁵³ *Morning Chronicle*, April 24 1793.

⁷⁵⁴ Bamboo walking-canes, made in India from cane imported to India from China and Japan, then exported to Britain.

⁷⁵⁵ Usually spelled ‘rouleau’, a cylindrical roll of twenty to fifty gold coins packed in paper.

⁷⁵⁶ A reference to the speech of George Hardinge (1743-1816) in the Commons, March 22 1793, on the Traitorous Correspondence Bill: ‘With respect to commerce, as far as this bill touched upon it, he would cut the knot, and would say, “Let it perish, ...” As to loss and profit, he would ask, with whom are we engaged in this traffic? With common enemies? No. With enemies who lived by confusion; who hated all that was likely to be of permanent good ... and profited by the convulsions of order it trade, as well as in every thing else’, etc.: PH30: 622.

⁷⁵⁷ Lord Macartney (1737–1806), former Chief Secretary in Ireland and Governor of Madras, was at the time Fox was writing on a diplomatic embassy to Peking intended to increase the China trade of the East India Company.

⁷⁵⁸ The ‘burse’ (more usually the ‘bulse’) was a bag of diamonds, including the Hastings diamond, now in the crown jewels. It was a present from the Nizam of Deccan to George III, and handed to him at a levée in the summer of 1786 at which Warren Hastings was present. It was widely believed, though it seems erroneously, to have been an attempt by Hastings to get the king to pardon him, in the event of his being found guilty in his forthcoming trial. The belief was the more plausible in that two years earlier Mrs. Hastings had given the notoriously acquisitive Queen Charlotte a ‘state bed’, which ‘far exceeds any thing of the kind for grandeur ever seen in this kingdom’: *Felix Farley’s Bristol Journal*, October 2 1784. The bulse became a favourite

topic in verse and graphic satires of the late 1780s, by Peter Pindar, James Gillray and others.

13. *On Jacobinism*

⁷⁵⁹ On the word ‘Puritan’, the OED notes: ‘Originally the name applied chiefly to those within the Church of England who sought further reform, especially in the direction of Presbyterianism, and who gained ascendancy during the Commonwealth period. Subsequently ... it was applied to those who separated from the established episcopal Church as Presbyterians, Independents (Congregationalists), or Baptists. It adds that according to John Stow, writing in 1605, ‘the name *Puritan* was assumed by Anabaptist congregations in London, but he may be wrong in supposing that they adopted the designation themselves, since it otherwise appears consistently in early use as a term of reproach used by opponents and resented by those to whom it was applied’.

⁷⁶⁰ A depreciative term for ‘a supporter of the royalist cause or of the Established Church during the English Civil War’ (OED).

⁷⁶¹ A depreciative term for a Roman Catholic, especially one who advocates papal supremacy.

⁷⁶² Probably a reference to the jacobite riots in London shortly after the succession of George I, in which the crowds chanted ‘High Church and Ormonde’ (a reference to the Jacobite conspirator the Duke of Ormond, 1665-1745). ‘Liberty’ and ‘Property’ were the watchwords of pro-Hanoverian whiggery. The phrase ‘balance of power’, referring to the relations of power among the various states of Europe, is first recorded in the OED as from 1701, referring to the principle of William III’s foreign policy. Fox believed that the determination of William and his successors to preserve the balance among the powers of Europe committed them to an endless series of interventions in European wars.

⁷⁶³ The term ‘jacobin’ originally described the members of the political club established in Paris in 1789, ‘to maintain and propagate the principles of extreme democracy and absolute equality’ (OED). The term came to be applied in Britain to those who sympathised with the French jacobins, or (more loosely) with the French revolution. According to the OED, by about 1800, it became ‘a nickname for any political reformer’, among loyalists at least. Fox is arguing it was already that by 1794.

⁷⁶⁴ The ‘Country’ party claimed to stand for the interests of the country of Britain as a whole, as opposed to those of the party of the court. The distinction was in use for a hundred years or so from the last decades of the eighteenth century.

⁷⁶⁵ After the Declaration of Independence, anyone who remained loyal to the English Crown was termed a ‘Tory’ and ‘Loyalist’. Fox is mocking the fact that the word had little attachment to any actual political ideals; it became a derogatory term used by the so-called American Whigs to create resentment among the middling classes primarily against the privileged classes, who in many cases were more closely aligned with, or at least sympathetic to, the British aristocracy, and could not bring themselves to take up arms against what they believed to be a lawful government.

- ⁷⁶⁶ George Abbot (1562–1633), Archbishop of Canterbury, was during his lifetime accused of being a puritan, perhaps because, though he was opposed to the teachings of the puritans, he was relatively lenient in his dealings with them.
- ⁷⁶⁷ Father Paul of Venice (1552–1622) was a Catholic priest, canon lawyer and historian, whose liberal-minded attitude to protestants nearly led to his excommunication. St Dominic (1170–1221), founder of the Dominican order of preachers, was believed to have played an important role in the Spanish Inquisition.
- ⁷⁶⁸ Joseph Berington (1746–1827) was a ‘cisalpine’ Catholic priest, who advocated the independence of English Catholics from papal control; Robert Bellarmine (Roberto Francesco Romolo Cardinale Bellarmino, 1542–1621) was an Italian Jesuit involved in the proceedings against the philosopher Giordano Bruni, who was sentenced to be burned alive, and the astronomer Galileo Galilei, who was imprisoned for eleven years. He was canonised in 1930.
- ⁷⁶⁹ The Correspondence with James the Pretender (High Treason) Act, 1701.
- ⁷⁷⁰ Following the reformation in England, the thirty-nine articles (of faith) of the Church of England set out the doctrines of the church as contradistinguished from those of Calvinism and Roman Catholicism. All ordained clergy of the church are still obliged to acknowledge that the articles were ‘agreeable to the word of God’, and all holders of civil offices under the crown had to adhere to them until 1824. By the time Fox was writing, it was probably impossible to find any member of the church who sincerely believed in all of them.
- ⁷⁷¹ That is, the Anglican clergy, supported by tithes.
- ⁷⁷² For ‘lawn sleeves’, see above, *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 36.
- ⁷⁷³ William III (of Orange), husband of Mary, the daughter of James II.
- ⁷⁷⁴ Pugh refers to the conquest of Ireland, the usurpation of the Irish kings by the English, and the establishment of the Church of Ireland as the possessor of church lands.
- ⁷⁷⁵ Conquest of the French sugar islands in the West Indies (see above, *A Defence of the Decree*, n. 5) meant the re-enslavement of slaves emancipated by the French, and was undertaken to preserve the liberty of Britain, supposedly threatened by the French republic.
- ⁷⁷⁶ The partition of Mysore was undertaken in part to weaken the power of Tipu Sultan so as to prevent him threatening property in India that the British regarded as their own; see *A Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast*, n. 27.
- ⁷⁷⁷ The term ‘whig’, originally meaning ‘yokel’ or ‘bumpkin’, began to be applied in mid seventeenth-century Scotland to the presbyterian Covenanters. Later in the century it became the pejorative nickname of the Exclusioners who opposed the succession of the Catholic James II, and began to mean, more generally, a ‘rebel’. From the accession of William III it came to be applied to the political party opposed to the Tories. ‘Tory’ had a corresponding but opposite history, also deriving from the mid seventeenth century, but Irish, not Scottish, and originating in catholicism, not presbyterianism. Tories were originally dispossessed Irish Catholics in arms against the protestant ascendancy; and hence, more generally, bandits or marauders, in which sense it was also used to refer to Scottish highlanders as well as Irish catholics. Hence it came to be applied by the Exclusioners, or ‘whigs’, to those who favoured the accession of James II; and hence to the Tory party.

- ⁷⁷⁸ The parish of St Giles, which included Seven Dials, was regarded as the poorest and roughest quarter of London, where many of the women were prostitutes; Billingsgate was the London fish-market, where the ‘fish-wives’ were famous for their foul and abusive language.
- ⁷⁷⁹ In 1709 the Tory churchman Henry Sacheverell (1674-1724), a fiery opponent of the dissenters, preached and published a sermon which caused great dismay to the Whigs. He was impeached, and was charged, among other counts, with declaring ‘that the Church of England is in a condition of great peril and adversity under her Majesty’s administration’, and that the government of Queen Anne tended ‘to the destruction of the constitution’. His trial, in which his prosecutors included some of the most influential Whig politicians and lawyers of the day, was accompanied by violent riots against dissenters in London. He was found guilty, and forbidden to preach for three years. For Filmer, see above, *A Discourse, Occasioned by the National Fast*, n. 8.
- ⁷⁸⁰ The Rev. Richard Price (1723-91), a leading Welsh intellectual, philosopher, statistician and Unitarian minister, whose enthusiasm for the French revolution made him the object of a violent attack in Burke’s *Reflections*.
- ⁷⁸¹ See above, n. 4.
- ⁷⁸² For the wars of William III, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 36, and *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28.
- ⁷⁸³ John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough (1650-1722), a successful general under both William III and Queen Anne, was continually in and out of favour, but was nevertheless very well rewarded for his victories in the War of the Spanish Succession, especially for Blenheim (1704).
- ⁷⁸⁴ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28.
- ⁷⁸⁵ The feudal system, by which ‘vassals’ held land on condition of paying homage and owing allegiance to their feudal overlords, was regarded as having survived unchanged in Hungary. The kingdom of Naples for most of its mediaeval and modern history had been under ‘despotic’ rule, sometimes moderately enlightened, sometimes thoroughly dark, so that ‘Neapolitan despotism’ would become a proverbial phrase.
- ⁷⁸⁶ Though we have not found this phrase in Burke’s writings or speeches, it is a constant theme of his writings on the French Revolution that France is in ruins, or has been reduced to a ruin, constitutional and financial, as a result of the revolution. The idea crops up repeatedly in *Reflections*, and is a major reason why his readers saw him as employing his own theory of the sublime in that text to describe the events in France. The idea can be found also in *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs* (1791), in *A Letter from Mr. Burke, to a Member of the National Assembly* (1791), and in *Substance of the Speech of the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, in the Debate on the Army Estimates* (1790).
- ⁷⁸⁷ In 1749, advertisements appeared in the London newspapers advertising a performance at the New Theatre in the Haymarket in which a man would jump into an ordinary-sized wine bottle and sing from within it. On the designated evening the theatre was full to bursting, no performers appeared, and the crowd wrecked the theatre. The full story of the hoax is told in William Walsh, *Handy-Book of Literary Curiosities* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1893), pp. 475-8.

⁷⁸⁸ On April 10 1794, the Commons debated the causes of the Duke of York's failure to capture Dunkirk and the forced evacuation, in the previous December, of Toulon (see above, *Poor Richard's Scraps*, No. 1, nn. 26, 30). Robert Jenkinson (1770-1828), the future Earl of Liverpool and Prime Minister, argued that the way to defeat France was to march an army to Paris. 'He had no difficulty in saying,' he told the Commons, 'that the marching to Paris was attainable and practicable; and he, for one, would recommend such an expedition' (PH31: 249). Jenkinson's recommendation was widely regarded as ludicrous, and was the occasion of much satire at his expense.

⁷⁸⁹ A reference to Burke's notorious peroration in his closing speech in the trial of Warren Hastings, delivered on June 16 1794, in which he warned the Lords that their House 'stands in the midst of ruins, in the midst of ruins that have been made by the greatest moral earthquake that ever has convulsed and shattered this globe of ours' (P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke, Volume VII, India: The Hastings Trial 1789-1794* [Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2000], pp. 692-3). The only newspaper report we have found of this part of the peroration is in the *Morning Herald*, June 17 1794, where Burke is said to have told the Lords that their House 'stands amidst a heap of ruins, which surround it in every corner of Europe'. But very likely Fox had had an oral account of Burke's words from Joseph Gurney (1744-1815), Martha Gurney's brother, who had taken down the whole speech in shorthand, and whose version is the basis of the text given by Marshall.

⁷⁹⁰ Gaius Julius Caesar Augustus Germanicus, known as Caligula (12-41), a Roman Emperor famed for his perverse, unpredictable, cruel and despotic rule.

⁷⁹¹ Land had been 'confiscated' since the beginning of the revolution, from the church, from émigrés, from the heirs of those executed; but early in 1794, just before Fox wrote this pamphlet, confiscation became a topical issue once more: the decrees known as the 'Laws of Ventôse', passed in February and March, ordained the sequestration of the property of 'enemies of the revolution'.

⁷⁹² The Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen, adopted by the French Constituent Assembly in August 1789, to be the basis of the new post-revolutionary constitution.

⁷⁹³ In Fox's version of the history of the Dutch Republic the credit for its origin is given to Phillip II, for his generosity in 'casting off' a portion of his empire, rather than to the Dutch for their courageous and determined resistance to his despotic rule.

⁷⁹⁴ For Richmond, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 47.

⁷⁹⁵ The London Corresponding Society and other popular radical societies in Britain in the 1790s repeatedly claimed to be campaigning for the adoption of the Duke of Richmond's plan, and not for the more revolutionary proposals attributed them by the government, such as the abolition of the monarchy and the House of Lords.

⁷⁹⁶ Richmond raised his proposals for parliamentary reform on the very day when the Gordon Riots began, anti-catholic riots which caused many deaths, much destruction of property, and amounted to the worst disorder in London for a century.

⁷⁹⁷ 'Impropriations' were benefices, lands, even tithes, originally the property of the Church of England, which had been 'impropriated' (in effect 'appropriated') to corporations or private citizens and were now in lay hands. An 'advowson' was the

right of appointing a clergyman to a benefice or living; advowsons had come to be regarded as items of property which could be bought and sold. They had value in that they could be used to support dependents who had taken holy orders, and their owners ('patrons') could command a fee in exchange for appointing a cleric to a living in their gift. Advowsons could be regarded as landed property in that church livings carried land with them which could be rented out to provide the 'living', the income.

⁷⁹⁸ That is, the Gallican church had land before the revolution, but not in the form of advowsons owned by lay persons, and no church lands were appropriated to the laity.

⁷⁹⁹ Plundered, that is, by the appropriation of church property by the laity.

⁸⁰⁰ It of course goes without saying that the constitutional monarchy of the late eighteenth century was very different from the absolute monarchy of the Tudor and Plantaganet dynasty, but the comparison of George III with Alfred is intended satirically, to contrast Alfred, the great reforming Saxon king, with George who in the early years of his reign had done whatever he could to wrest power back from parliament to the throne.

⁸⁰¹ The doges of Venice were the chief magistrates of the city, elected for life and entrusted with very considerable powers, which however by the end of the eighteenth century had been removed until the doge was a largely ceremonial figure. Fox was writing in the last years of the institution, which would be abolished in 1797.

⁸⁰² 'Litigated' tithes were tithes the ownership of which was the subject of a legal dispute: for ecclesiastical courts see above, *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 36. In the Church of England, the Easter offering is money paid by parishioners for the maintenance of the parson of the parish. By law, Quakers who refused to do it could be imprisoned until they did.

⁸⁰³ Westminster Hall, where the trial of Warren Hastings was being held.

⁸⁰⁴ In the version of his closing speech in the trial of Warren Hastings given by the *Morning Herald* (see above, n. 31), Burke warned the House of Lords that 'If you slacken justice, and thereby weaken the bands of society, the well-tempered authority of this court, ... must receive a fatal wound, that no balm can cure, that no time can restore.' Burke was also interpreted by the MP George Sumner as having told the Lords, 'whether with a view to intimidation, or from the wildness of the moment, that the Commons had not only prosecuted, but they had found Mr. Hastings guilty when they impeached him; that the Lords could not acquit him without proving the legislature a liar' (PH31: 942).

⁸⁰⁵ See above, n. 30.

⁸⁰⁶ Fox is recalling some of the more famous motifs of Burke's *Reflections*.

⁸⁰⁷ The cry of the Gordon Rioters in 1780.

14. *Defence of the War against France*

⁸⁰⁸ Dr Richard Price, whose views on warfare were not very dissimilar from Fox's, was not a jingoistic anti-Gallican like Samuel Johnson (1709-84), nor was the remark

Fox refers to made ‘from the pulpit’, but in an address to a meeting called to celebrate the first anniversary of the French Revolution on July 14 1790. Price said, ‘In this kingdom we have been used to speak of the people of France as our *natural enemies*; and however absurd, as well as ungenerous and wicked, such language was, it admitted of some excuse while they consisted only of a monarch and his slaves.’ Now, however, that they are free as are the British, the relations between the two people will be friendly and peaceful: Price, *Preface and Additions to the Discourse on the Love of our Country*, 4th ed. (London, 1790), pp. 36-7. Johnson’s remark is recorded in Hester Lynch Piozzi (1741-1821), *Anecdotes of the late Samuel Johnson, LL.D.* (London: T. Cadell, 1786), p. 54.

- ⁸⁰⁹ That the French peasantry were so poor as to go barefoot, or to wear wooden shoes, was one of the most frequently repeated instances in British accounts of the superiority of their nation. In the debate on the Alien Bill (December 28 1792), for example, Burke had remarked, ‘The French when they were slaves had wooden shoes – now that they were free they had no shoes at all’ (PH30: 186).
- ⁸¹⁰ Part of the refrain of the song ‘Rule Britannia’, from *Alfred: a Masque* (1740) by James Thomson (1700-48) and David Mallett (1701/2?-65).
- ⁸¹¹ Apparently a reference to the events of August 10 1792, of which Fox offers an account derived entirely from pro-Jacobin propaganda. The Swiss Guards of Louis XVI fired first on the by no means unarmed crowd besieging the palace of the Tuileries. About 600 of the guards were killed, but probably no more than 300 of the besiegers.
- ⁸¹² Charles I, James II, and James Francis Edward Stuart, the ‘Old Pretender’: see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, n. 41. The blank should be filled with ‘the heir’ or ‘the rightful heir’, or some such phrase suggestive of Fox’s jacobitism.
- ⁸¹³ The front bench in the House of Commons, to the right of the speaker, reserved for the First Lord of the Treasury (the Prime Minister) and the cabinet.
- ⁸¹⁴ Charles Jenkinson was the father of Robert Jenkinson, whose extreme youth, Fox pretends, means that he speaks in the Commons to his father’s orders; see above, *On Jacobinism*, n. 30.
- ⁸¹⁵ That is, in order to maintain the position of the Church in the constitution of Britain, the clergy of the Church of England are willing to accept its unnecessary ceremonial and antiquated doctrine (in previous pamphlets Fox has picked out fast days, the lawn sleeves of bishops, and the requirement to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles as examples).
- ⁸¹⁶ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 19.
- ⁸¹⁷ See Burke’s speech, April 17 1794, PH31: 426, on the bill to enable French subjects to enlist in the British army, a moment of calculated bathos by the author of *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful* (1757). He had gone on to explain the real motives of the war: ‘It is to resist and destroy the savage power of a desperate gang of plunderers, murderers, tyrants, and atheists’.
- ⁸¹⁸ These two quotations are from the Declaration of George III of October 29 1793, PH30: 1057-8, discussed by Fox in *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*.
- ⁸¹⁹ See Dundas’s speech, April 17 1794, on the bill to enable French subjects to enlist in the British army, PH31: 412.
- ⁸²⁰ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 22.

⁸²¹ For Poland, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 42.

⁸²² A very topical issue, with the treason trials of 1794 about to be staged, where the prosecution would attempt greatly to extend the law of treason against the majesty of the king; see below, *On Trials for Treason*. Fox here may be referring to a novel doctrine unveiled by the crown lawyers in the trial for treason of Robert Watt (1761?-94) on September 3 1794 Edinburgh, and which they would use again before the end of the year, that any attempt to ‘overawe’ parliament in order to influence the government to change the law or its measures of government was to constrain the regal rights of the king, which was tantamount to deposing him, which was tantamount to killing him, which was high treason; see Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, pp. 278-81.

⁸²³ Fox means apparently that insofar as the Bill of Rights (1689) removed certain royal prerogatives, but not that of making war and peace, it confirmed that prerogative.

⁸²⁴ See Gilbert Burnet (1643-1715), *A Sermon preach’d at St James’s Church, upon the Reading the Brief for the Persecuted Exiles, of the Principality of Orange* (London: Richard Chiswell, 1704). The phrase ‘glorious deliverer’, applied to William III, is used on p. 19. The ironic jacobite italics have been added by Fox.

⁸²⁵ One of Fox’s favourite themes, and a justification for his jacobitism, that because since 1689 Britain has been ruled by monarchs drawn from foreign countries, throughout the previous 100 years those kings have taken Britons into wars that did not concern them, in order to defend Holland and Hanover from real or possible threats.

⁸²⁶ That is, the House of Commons has to agree to provide the money to fund wars.

⁸²⁷ In 1620 Charles I joined the Thirty Years War by declaring war on Spain, but following a disagreement on the scale of the war, he found himself granted by parliament only £140,000 with which to conduct it, and limits were placed on his authority to collect the customs duties, ‘tonnage and poundage’, by which he had hoped to augment that sum.

⁸²⁸ ODNB notes, of William III, ‘His prolonged war with Louis XIV taught governments to mobilize tens of thousands of soldiers and sailors, and demanded solutions to long-standing difficulties in financing sustained military campaigns. Six years into their war with Louis the British states were employing over 100,000 people in their armed forces (nearly 2 per cent of their entire population), and were paying for them through both new types of taxation and pioneering systems of funded debt. Thus while William’s predecessors had often withdrawn from conflict for lack of money or effective armed forces, his successors could rely on the experienced fighting machines and the robust structures of public finance which had been developed in the 1690s.’

⁸²⁹ In the form of high-interest-bearing wartime loans that were not secured against specified government revenues, mainly navy bills (promissory notes issued in lieu of cash by the Navy Board) and ordnance debentures (promissory notes issued by the Board of Ordnance).

⁸³⁰ Pitt announced this measure in his budget of February 5 1794, PH30: 1357-8, and it passed on March 25.

- ⁸³¹ Apparently a reference to the conduct of William Wyndham (now Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary) during the East India Bill crisis in 1783; see below, *On Trials for Treason*, nn. 25, 60.
- ⁸³² For much of her reign Elizabeth refused to allow parliament to discuss the questions of her marriage or the succession. For James I, see above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 25.
- ⁸³³ For Richmond, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 47.
- ⁸³⁴ 'The voice of the people is the voice of God'; proverbial.
- ⁸³⁵ A reference to the incident in Part I, chapter 5, of *Gulliver's Travels*, where Gulliver dowses a fire in the royal palace by pissing on it.
- ⁸³⁶ Another reference to the political prosecutions in Britain in 1793 and 1794, about to culminate in the London Treason Trials of October to December.
- ⁸³⁷ From the debate on Lord Auckland's memorial to the States General, April 25 1793, Pitt had never disguised that it was the intention of his government to make peace with France only when a government was established there that was not inimical to the monarchies of Europe, but we have not found where he cited 'the greatest writers' to justify this stance.
- ⁸³⁸ Apparently a reference to Hugo Grotius, *The Rights of War and Peace*, Book 2, ch. 20., ¶xl, §2, and see above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 21.
- ⁸³⁹ William III, who landed at Brixham in 1688 at the head of an army of approximately 14,000 infantry and cavalry; he defeated James II in Ireland at the Battle of the Boyne, 1690, but then alienated Irish protestants by the terms he offered to conciliate the Catholics; Hanover was made the ninth electorate of the Holy Roman Empire by Leopold I in 1692, but perhaps Fox gives too great credit to William III for procuring this distinction. For William and the War of the Spanish Succession, see above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 28.
- ⁸⁴⁰ Fox evidently regarded George I's use of the British navy in the Baltic at the start of the War of the Quadruple Alliance (1718-20) as another instance of a Hanoverian monarch on the British throne furthering the interests of Hanover, not of Britain.
- ⁸⁴¹ Probably a reference to Pitt's speech of May 30 1794 in answer to Charles James Fox's motion for putting an end to the war with France, PH31: 645, but this was Pitt's position as soon as he chose to see the opening of the Scheldt (the original cause of war) as a direct effect of republican government.
- ⁸⁴² See Burke's speech, April 17 1794, on the bill to enable French subjects to enlist in the British army, PH31: 422.
- ⁸⁴³ Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, Book 2, ch. 3, §§16, 19.
- ⁸⁴⁴ See Charles James Fox's speech to the Commons on his motion for putting an end to the war with France, May 30 1794, and especially the fourteen resolutions in which he set out the grounds of the Oppositions objections to the continuance of the war, PH31: 628-32.
- ⁸⁴⁵ The Rohillas were Pashtuns living in Rohilkhand, now a region of Uttar Pradesh in north-eastern India. In the Rohilla war of 1773-4 they were defeated by Jalal ad-Din Shuja' ad-Dowla Haydar, the Nawab of Awhad (1732-75), with help from the East India Company which appropriated the region and provoked a guerrilla war in which the Rohillas were hunted and massacred by the Company soldiers. Their

treatment formed the first charge against Warren Hastings but it was dismissed early in the proceedings against him.

⁸⁴⁶ See above, *A Discourse on National Fasts*, nn. 43, 44, and *On the Renewal*, n. 17.

⁸⁴⁷ Edmund Spenser (1552?-99), *A View of the State of Ireland as it was in the Reign of Queen Elizabeth* [1633] (Dublin: Laurence Flin and Ann Watts, 1763) pp. 158-9. 'Manurance' is the control, management, cultivation of land.

⁸⁴⁸ Sarah Malcolm (1710?-1733), executed for murdering her employer and two other women by cutting their throats; Elizabeth Brownrigg (1720?-67), executed for torturing workhouse children, one of whom died of her injuries.

⁸⁴⁹ Spenser, *View*, p. 159.

⁸⁵⁰ See above, *On the Renewal*, n. 17.

⁸⁵¹ For Burke on extermination, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 12, and *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 21; for Windham and Mansfield, see below, *On Peace*, nn. 1, 38.

⁸⁵² Fielding, *The History of Tom Jones* (1749), Book XVIII, ch. 4.

⁸⁵³ *Gulliver's Travels*, Part I, ch. 6.

⁸⁵⁴ Canonists are lawyers skilled in Catholic ecclesiastical law.

⁸⁵⁵ This is Auckland's memorial of April 5 1793, which in the translation presented to the House of Commons included the sentence, 'Some of these detestable regicides are already in the case to be liable to be subjected to the sword of the law'; see PH30: 705n.

⁸⁵⁶ In *Areopagitica* (1644) Milton had tolerated Catholicism within strict limits, but in his late work *Of True Religion* (1673), he attacks Catholicism as idolatry, and as politically disruptive. Early in his career Locke had been opposed to toleration, believing it was a recipe for social disorder, but in his four *Letters on Toleration* (1689-1706) he writes as a firm advocate of freedom of religion. Philip Furneaux (1726-83), an Independent minister, was a champion for the toleration of Dissenters but unfriendly to Catholics: see for example his *Letters to the Honourable Mr. Justice Blackstone, concerning his Exposition of the Act of Toleration*, 2nd ed. (London: T. Cadell, 1771), pp. 126n.-127n.

⁸⁵⁷ Spenser, *View*, pp. 157, 159.

⁸⁵⁸ In early September 1794, Robert Watt and David Downie were found guilty of High Treason for a conspiracy to seize Edinburgh Castle and the banks, to arrest the judges and Lord Provost, and to demand the king dismiss Pitt and end the war. Watt was executed, Downie reprieved and banished. But Fox no doubt also has in mind the draconian sentences passed by the High Court of Justiciary in 1793 and early 1794 on the reformers Thomas Muir (1765-99), Thomas Fyssh Palmer (1747-1802), and three delegates to the British Convention, William Skirving (d. 1796), Maurice Margarot (1745-1815), and Joseph Gerrald, all transported to Botany Bay for periods of seven or fourteen years. For Poland, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 42.

⁸⁵⁹ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 28.

⁸⁶⁰ That is, the clergy of established churches, like the Gallican church and the Church of England.

⁸⁶¹ See for example Pitt's speech in the Commons on the Address of Thanks at the opening of the parliamentary session, January 21 1794, PH30: 1281-2.

⁸⁶² The *Girondists* or Girondins were a faction of intellectuals within the French Convention who, though they came to espouse republicanism, were keen to arrest the most disorderly and bloodthirsty manifestations of the revolution. They included Brissot, Condorcet (1743-94), Roland (1734-93), Pétion (1756-94), Kersaint (1742-93) and Paine. Most were liquidated in late 1793; the *Maratists* were followers of the popular journalist Jean-Paul Marat who, before his assassination, had been the chief opponent of the Girondins, and who came to be regarded as one of the most extreme of the revolutionaries, partly on account of his power-base among the poor of Paris. The *Jacobins*, known in the Convention as the *Montagnards*, because they occupied the highest seats, were in effect the ruling party there from May 1793 to the death of their leader Robespierre in the summer of 1794. They too enjoyed the support of the Parisian people, and were the proponents of the reign of terror. The *Feuillants* had split from the Jacobins in 1792, led by Antoine Barnave (1761-93), opposed the war with Austria and were consequently themselves opposed by the Girondins, and were regarded by the factions to the left of them as royalists. They were a spent force after 1791, and some, including Barnave, died in the Terror. The *Moderates* was a name of opprobrium given to the Girondins by the Montagnards.

⁸⁶³ Corsica was selected as a base for the British Mediterranean fleet and the island was occupied by the British from 1794-6, though without successfully subduing the interior of the island.

⁸⁶⁴ Another reference to the political trials in Britain of late 1793 and 1794.

15. *On Trials for Treason*

⁸⁶⁵ In a nutshell, the problem for the prosecution in the London trials of 1794 was that there was no direct evidence that the reformers had intended to endanger the king's life, or to do anything that would probably endanger it. The actions of the reformers amounted at most to an unfulfilled conspiracy against the 'kingly government', a crime, if it was one, which had been established by various precedents to fall short of high treason: see below, n. 66. The crown lawyers were therefore driven to interpret the law in such a way as to argue that their actions *might* lead, by one means or another and even in spite of their intentions, to the king's natural life being put at risk. In his charge, Eyre was doing much of their work for them.

⁸⁶⁶ A total of twelve members of the London Corresponding Society and the Society for Constitutional Information were indicted by the Grand Jury to whom Eyre addressed his charge on October 2. Over the next few days several more were indicted. But some twenty more members of five reform societies, from Norwich, Sheffield and Scotland, as well as from London, had been arrested on warrants alleging treasonable practices. Some of these agreed to appear as witnesses for the prosecution, but it was thought likely that many of the others, and other reformers still, not yet in custody, would have been put on trial had the prosecution secured guilty verdicts against the first twelve.

- ⁸⁶⁷ Pitt became Prime Minister in December 1783 as part of the political upheaval in Westminster following the end of the war with America.
- ⁸⁶⁸ Before he became Prime Minister, Pitt had been one of the leaders of the movement for a moderate parliamentary reform, one more moderate however than many of his ‘coadjutors’ wanted, like the Duke of Richmond, now in his cabinet (see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 47), and the veteran radical John Horne Tooke, now indicted for High treason.
- ⁸⁶⁹ The coalition of Charles James Fox and Lord North was hardly as powerful as William Fox suggests, and it was toppled by the more powerful coalition of George III, Dundas and Pitt, who immediately became Prime Minister. Following the defeat of Charles James Fox’s India Bill, the king’s dismissal of the Fox-North coalition, and his appointment, in December 1783, of Pitt as first minister, Fox launched an attack in the Commons on the king’s prerogative of choosing his ministers (January 16 1784, PH24: 364-9). In early 1784, after several votes in the Commons of (effectively) no confidence in his government, Pitt asked the king to dissolve parliament, and at the subsequent general election of May 1784 he was returned with a huge majority in the House of 120 seats.
- ⁸⁷⁰ The famous motion in the Commons of April 6 1780, proposed by John Dunning (1731-83) and passed by 18 votes, ‘that the influence of the crown has increased, is increasing and ought to be diminished’ (PH21: 347).
- ⁸⁷¹ See Pitt’s speech on his reform motion of May 7 1782, *Morning Chronicle* May 8. A ‘nabob’ is ‘a British person who acquired a large fortune in India’ (OED).
- ⁸⁷² See Burke’s speech on the king’s message at the opening of the parliamentary session, December 6 1782, PH23: 262.
- ⁸⁷³ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 14.
- ⁸⁷⁴ The blank here might be filled with ‘oppress’, or ‘enslave’, or ‘pillage’ or (one of Fox’s favourite words) ‘squeeze’.
- ⁸⁷⁵ See above, *Defence of the Decree*, n. 45.
- ⁸⁷⁶ To justify using the law of treason against the reformers, their crime was described by various politicians and loyalists as ‘modern treason’, ‘the treason of the day’; the ‘treason of the hour’ (see Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, p. 275).
- ⁸⁷⁷ William Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-9), Book IV, ch. 6.
- ⁸⁷⁸ John Barrell and Jon Mee (eds), *Trials for Treason and Sedition 1792-1794*, 8 vols (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2006-7), vol. 2, p. 8.
- ⁸⁷⁹ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 9.
- ⁸⁸⁰ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 14.
- ⁸⁸¹ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 9.
- ⁸⁸² *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 8. The phrase ‘Revolutionary Tribunal’ derives from political trials in France during the Terror; Fox suggests that the law as Eyre pronounces it is as unfixed and unpredictable as it had been in Paris.
- ⁸⁸³ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 14.
- ⁸⁸⁴ A cant phrase of the day, used both to justify the introduction of specific measures which at other times would be regarded as oppressive, and to defer the introduction of measures in themselves desirable but for the moment deemed inopportune. A radical pamphlet of late 1795, *Existing Circumstances, the Watch-word of Despotism*,

captures precisely the spirit of those who believed the phrase was used by government to justify doing whatever it pleased.

⁸⁸⁵ The famous declaration of the French Convention of September 5 1793, announcing that the government would use all necessary force to ensure obedience to the law on the part of its own citizens. That Pitt's government had similarly adopted a policy of terror against its own citizens was a frequent claim of radicals in the mid 1790s; even that Pitt was 'the English Robespierre'.

⁸⁸⁶ Fox is arguing (as did the reformers themselves), that in planning to call a meeting of delegates to consider reform, they were following a precedent set by Pitt himself when he was a reformer, and that in their demand for universal manhood suffrage, they were simply adopting the Duke of Richmond's plan for reform.

⁸⁸⁷ The *Letter to Colonel Sharman* (1783) set out the plan the Duke of Richmond had presented to the House of Lords in 1780 for universal suffrage and annual parliaments (see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, nn. 44, 47). Richmond made his motion in the Lords on the day of the anti-Catholic demonstrations aimed at forcing a repeal of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778, which developed into the Gordon Riots, which lasted for several days, and in which great damage was done to the capital, and the house of Earl Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice, was destroyed.

⁸⁸⁸ The main problem for the moderate reformers of the 1780s were the borough rather than the county constituencies, for boroughs often contained very few electors who could easily be influenced by rich and powerful men. Pitt was wary of attacking borough corruption directly, and, instead of attempting to redraw the constituency boundaries, proposed to increase the number of seats in the Commons by 100, mainly with the aim of increasing the number of the county members as a check on the influence of the boroughmongers. In his early career Dundas had shown some interest in reforming the corrupt electoral system in the Scottish boroughs, but gave up when he found himself in a position to benefit by corrupting it still further.

⁸⁸⁹ Of these only Pitt and Richmond had much interest in parliamentary reform; William Wyndham (by the time Fox was writing Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary) was not much interested, and Burke was a proponent, in mid career, of 'economical reform', to curtail the power and expense of government patronage.

⁸⁹⁰ Parades of soldiers regularly took place in St James's Park.

⁸⁹¹ A halberd was 'a kind of combination of spear and battle-axe'; 'soldiers of the infantry, when flogged, [were] commonly tied to three halberts, set up in a triangle, with a fourth fastened across them' (OED).

⁸⁹² Of all the scandals of parliamentary representation, none was more egregious than the 21 Cornish boroughs, which each returned 2 members to the unreformed House of Commons. None had more than 200 electors; most had fewer than 20. T.H.B. Oldfield, *An Entire and Complete History, Political and Personal, of the Boroughs of Great Britain*, 2nd ed., (London: B. Crosby, 1794), vol. 1, pp. 68-120, lists only seven in Cornwall which first sent members to parliament in the reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

⁸⁹³ That is, execute Charles I, banish James II, and agree to pass the throne to William III.

- ⁸⁹⁴ As the principal clause of the 1351 law of treason stated that it was high treason to ‘imagine or compass the death of the king’, the crime of ‘treason against the people of England’ had to be invented in order to charge the king himself with treason; though, as Fox points out, he could plausibly have been charged with imagining his own death.
- ⁸⁹⁵ In 1640, after ruling without parliament for eleven years, Charles I was forced to summon one in order to obtain funds for a war against the Scots. When parliament refused to do as he demanded, he tried in 1642 to arrest the five MPs whom he regarded as responsible for this refusal. They escaped, but Charles’s violation of the privileges of parliament precipitated the country into civil war.
- ⁸⁹⁶ As the treason of ‘imagining the king’s death’ was an internal act of the mind, in order to amount to a crime it had to be manifested in ‘overt acts’, visible actions that revealed the inner intention, and in indictments for treason these had to be specified. It was because it was impossible, as lawyers pointed out, to list the more or less infinite number of different actions in which a treasonable intention could be manifested, that Eyre insisted it was impossible to lay down any certain rule about what would lay a person open to the charge of imagining the king’s death, though certain *classes* of acts had been established by precedents as sufficient to support such a charge.
- ⁸⁹⁷ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 17.
- ⁸⁹⁸ All these acts were swept away at the Restoration of Charles II, and the 1351 act became once again the law of the land.
- ⁸⁹⁹ Sir Matthew Hale (1609-76), judge and author of the posthumously published *History of the Pleas of the Crown* (1736), probably the most revered treatise on crown law in general, and on treason in particular, in the late eighteenth century.
- ⁹⁰⁰ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 12.
- ⁹⁰¹ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 14. Chalk Farm, just north of London, was the site of a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society in January 1794, and some of the evidence produced by the prosecution in the London treason trials was drawn from the proceedings of that meeting; see Barrell, *Imagining the King’s Death*, pp. 189-90.
- ⁹⁰² ‘Lettres de cachet’ were documents signed and sealed by the king of France enforcing a decision of his from which there was no appeal, most notoriously consigning a person to indefinite imprisonment without trial.
- ⁹⁰³ James II ‘received a request from William to remove himself from London. At first the prince recommended Ham House, up river from the City. James, however, preferred to go downstream to Rochester. William agreed to this, seeing in the king’s request a plea to let him leave the country, which would be easier to effect from Kent than from Surrey’ (ODNB, ‘James II and VII’).
- ⁹⁰⁴ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 17.
- ⁹⁰⁵ The Prince of Orange, about to become William III, wished it to appear that he would be offered the crown of England with the consent of the legislature (though he managed affairs so that there was no real alternative). He held meetings with the Lords, with the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and 50 members of the Common Council of the City of London (a representative institution made up of men elected by the different wards of the City), and with men who had been MPs in the reign of Charles II, and these bodies agreed to the summoning of a convention with the

power to decide the succession. The election was held on the basis of the parliamentary franchise, and Fox points out how narrow that basis was: in 1793 the Society of the Friends of the People, a grouping of élite Whigs, calculated that the influence and patronage of 162 individuals, many of them members of the House of Lords, could deliver a majority of the seats in the Commons for their chosen candidates: see *The State of the Representation of England and Wales* (London: Society of the Friends of the People, 1793), p. 25.

⁹⁰⁶ See above, n. 20.

⁹⁰⁷ Fox is imagining a political speech urging the people to resist the invasion and usurpation of William III. If the last italicised passage is a quotation we have not discovered its source, though Defoe, Dryden, Pope, Sterne, Swift, Thomson, Waller and no doubt other great writers all agreed that the stinking brown Thames was 'silver'. To clarify where this supposed speech begins and ends, we have substituted single for the original double inverted commas around internal quotations.

⁹⁰⁸ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 17.

⁹⁰⁹ Probably not a direct quotation, but a selection of cant phrases used by loyalists, whose veneration for, and fidelity and attachment to the sovereign were always 'profound', 'inviolable', and 'the warmest'.

⁹¹⁰ Trinitarians were believers in the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, the three-in-one; in the British constitution, sovereignty is not vested in the king but in 'the king in parliament'.

⁹¹¹ That is, a plan for a reform of the House of Commons which would abolish the constituencies known as 'pocket boroughs' and 'rotten boroughs' exemplified by those in Cornwall: see above, n. 28.

⁹¹² When George I came to the throne in 1714, the maximum length of parliaments was three years as stipulated by the Triennial Act of 1694. Following the Jacobite rebellion of 1715, however, George I was unwilling to risk an early election which might unseat the Whig, pro-Hanoverian majority in the Commons, and accordingly the Septennial Act was passed, increasing the maximum length of parliaments to seven years. The reformers indicted for High Treason in 1794 proposed (according to the Duke of Richmond's plan) parliaments of one year only.

⁹¹³ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 16.

⁹¹⁴ 'Burgage tenure', the renting of certain houses in parliamentary boroughs, was the basis of the franchise in some constituencies. Burgages could be bought and sold and the tenures were easily transferrable, so that such constituencies became 'pocket' boroughs, in the pocket, that is, of some rich man.

⁹¹⁵ The 'British Convention', held in Edinburgh in late 1792, which led to the prosecution and transportation of William Skirving, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerald. The principal overt act alleged against those indicted for treason in 1794 involved a design to reconvene that convention.

⁹¹⁶ That is, when the three years permitted them by the (now superseded) Triennial Act had expired.

⁹¹⁷ *Trials*, vol. 2, pp. 15-16.

⁹¹⁸ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 16.

⁹¹⁹ See above, n. 7.

- ⁹²⁰ ‘Constructive’ treasons were treasons not specified by act of parliament, but based on a particular interpretation (‘construction’) of the statutes.
- ⁹²¹ At the beginning and end of each parliamentary session the king would address parliament, in a speech composed by the government, and ministers would reply, thanking him for it. Understandably, these exchanges portrayed king and commons (or the government majority there) as wholly in agreement.
- ⁹²² Thomas Newton (1704-82), Bishop of Bristol, wrote an excellent autobiography with which he prefaced *The Works of the Right Reverend Thomas Newton*, 3 vols (London: Rivington, 1782). After reading the life, however, we are not sure to what part of it Fox is referring.
- ⁹²³ The form of the royal assent given to bills in parliament; ‘La’ should be ‘Le’.
- ⁹²⁴ The Duke of Portland (1738-1809) was the head of the Fox-North coalition, and titular Prime Minister. When Fox was writing this pamphlet, he had just led the majority of the Whigs into coalition with Pitt, and was Home Secretary. Burke was Pay-master General under the coalition, and was the true author of the East India Bill, the defeat of which precipitated its collapse. Wyndham (see above, n. 25) had held office under the coalition, but by a combination of luck and nimble footwork had ingratiated himself with the king, and was given office again under Pitt.
- ⁹²⁵ A summary of arguments at the time of the collapse of the Fox-North coalition and the coming to power of William Pitt: see above, n. 5.
- ⁹²⁶ In the *Copy of the Poll for the Election of Two Knights of the Shire to serve in the present Parliament, for the County of Middlesex* (London, 1784), p. 52, a William Fox appears owning a freehold in the parish of St Martin’s-in-the Fields, Westminster, while living in the parish of St Andrew, Holborn, the same parish where Fox and Gurney had their bookshops. This Fox voted for Wilkes and Mainwaring, who in 1784 were supporting Pitt in his opposition to the Fox-North coalition. This then is probably ‘our’ William Fox. A check of the surviving poll-books for elections in 1784 within thirty miles of London (and we cannot be sure if Fox means that to be a one-way or a round-trip journey from London) has uncovered no William Foxes. It seems likely therefore that Fox walked to, rather than from London in order to vote, the more so as our best-supported conjecture about Fox’s origins and antecedents locates them in Tunbridge Wells, more or less exactly thirty miles from London, and, if Fox was a qualified elector in Kent, he would have been unable to vote there in 1784, as the county was uncontested in that year. Two further comments. It is not surprising that Fox, a self-proclaimed Tory, should emphasise that Wilkes was to him a ‘perfect Stranger’, as it must have gone against the grain to vote for a man who had been such a thorn in the side of the Tory Prime Minister Lord Bute twenty years earlier. Secondly, by telling us that he walked thirty miles to vote, Fox, described by the Home Office informer as ‘a man of considerable Property both Landed and Funded’ (see Introduction, nn. 6 and 85), appears to be attempting to represent himself as a poor but honest patriot, willing to sacrifice his comfort on a matter of principle, when in fact he could almost certainly have afforded to travel to London by horse or coach.
- ⁹²⁷ See above, n. 41.

- ⁹²⁸ Sir Gilbert Elliot (1751-1814), later first Earl of Minto and Governor-General of Bengal, had been another of the Whigs who had opposed Pitt on the matter of the royal prerogative in 1784.
- ⁹²⁹ Another summary of arguments at the time of the collapse of the Fox-North coalition and the coming to power of William Pitt; see above, n. 5.
- ⁹³⁰ John Anstruther (1753-1811) was a barrister and Whig MP who had been a follower of Fox but, having disagreed with him on the French Revolution, had now followed the Portland Whigs into supporting Pitt. He had just led for the crown in the prosecution of Robert Watt and David Downie in Edinburgh in September 1794; see above, *Defence of the War*, n. 51. He pioneered the more oppressive constructions of the law of treason shortly to be used in the London trials; see Barrell, *Imagining the King's Death*, pp. 269-82.
- ⁹³¹ This had been established by Lord Chief Justice Holt in the trial of Sir John Freind (1696), and recently reconfirmed by Lord Chief Justice Mansfield in the trial of Lord George Gordon (1781).
- ⁹³² *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 16.
- ⁹³³ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 16.
- ⁹³⁴ See Sir Michael Foster, *A Report of some Proceedings ... to which are added Discourses upon a few Branches of the Crown Law* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1762), pp. 213-16.
- ⁹³⁵ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 17.
- ⁹³⁶ That is, they had been prosecuted instead (though not always) under the second clause of the 1351 statute of treasons, as 'levying war against the king'.
- ⁹³⁷ See above, n. 1.
- ⁹³⁸ That is, from the earliest sources of English law to the latest: the year books were 'The books of reports of cases in the English law-courts published annually during several periods from the reign of Edward II to that of Henry VIII' (OED); Henry Bracton or Bratton (d. 1268) was believed until the late nineteenth century to have been the author of the mediaeval treatise *On the Laws and Customs of England*; more recent were [Sir James Burrow], *Reports of cases adjudged in the King's Bench, since the Death of Lord Raymond*, 5 vols (London: John Worrall, [1766]-1780), and Blackstone's *Commentaries* (1765-9).
- ⁹³⁹ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 19.
- ⁹⁴⁰ *Trials*, vol. 2, p. 17.

16. *On Peace*

- ⁹⁴¹ No minister, certainly not Pitt, ever claimed that the war against France was a war of extermination of the French themselves, only of French principles. The question is discussed at some length in the debate on Lord Auckland's memorial, PH30: 701-25. William Windham (1750-1810), however, before he became Secretary at War, did declare that the war was a '*bellum internecinum*' (a war of extermination), but explained that he had meant by this 'not a war for the extirpation of the enemy, but a war in which we ourselves have everything at stake' (February 18 1793, PH30: 452). Before Windham, however, Charles James Fox had used the Latin phrase, in the

debate on the declaration of war (February 12 1793, PH30: 364), no doubt in implied dialogue with Burke and the Brunswick Manifesto (see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 12, and *A Discourse on National Fasts*, n. 21). On July 10 1794 Pitt expressly denied having ever used the phrase *bellum internecinum*, or *bellum usque ad internecionem*, or ever claiming that the war was one of extermination, saying that the phrase was one used only by the Opposition; in reply, Grey acknowledged that it had been used by Windham, not by Pitt: see *An Impartial Report of the Debates that occur in the two Houses of Parliament* (London: T. Chapman, 1794), vol. 4, pp. 389, 397.

⁹⁴² For Burke, see previous note. Did Pitt ever say that Britain would fight to the ‘last man’ and to the ‘last guinea’? In addition to Fox, in July 1794 Sheridan claimed that an ‘Hon. Gentleman’ had made such a statement (*An Impartial Report*, 1794, vol. 4, p. 381), and in the previous January the phrases were used by Earl Stanhope (1753-1816) as if he were quoting a government spokesman (*The Speech of Earl Stanhope, in the House of Peers, on his Motion to acknowledge the French Republic* [London: London Corresponding Society, 1794], p. 6). We have found no instance of Pitt suggesting that the war would be continued until the ‘last guinea’ had been spent; the nearest we have found to the claim that Britain would fight to the last man is in his speech of February 12 1793 on the declaration of war, which, as reported in the *World* the following day, declared that the war would be continued ‘so long as remained in the land men inspired with loyalty to their Sovereign, veneration for the glorious fabric of our Government, and reverence for Religion and Laws;’ or, as the speech appears in PH30: 357, ‘not till the spirit of Englishmen was exterminated, would their attachment to the constitution be destroyed and their generous efforts be slackened in its defence;’ or as it appears in *Jordan’s Parliamentary Journal, for the year MDCCXCIII* (London: J.S. Jordan, 1792-93 [1793]), vol. 1, p. 424, ‘Never, never would England, till the very nation was extirpated, receive those principles which the National Assembly of France proposed to substitute in the place of British liberty.’

⁹⁴³ Charles Jenkinson, Lord Hawkesbury, was Secretary at War in North’s administration during the American war.

⁹⁴⁴ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 53.

⁹⁴⁵ ‘Consolidated annuities’, government stock sold to fund the war.

⁹⁴⁶ See above, *On the Renewal*, n. 75.

⁹⁴⁷ See above, *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 17.

⁹⁴⁸ On April 8, George Harrison had proposed a motion in the Commons for ‘taxing Placemen and Pensioners [those in receipt of lucrative sinecure stipends from government] during the Continuance of the War’. A coalition of horrified placemen and pensioners on the government side of the House, and of those hoping to become placemen and pensioners, ensured that it was voted down by a very large majority.

⁹⁴⁹ Fox refers to the press-gangs forcibly recruiting for the navy, and ‘crimps’ recruiting for the army, often with the help of alcohol and prostitutes.

⁹⁵⁰ See above, *Thoughts on the Death*, n. 22.

⁹⁵¹ A remark directed at the French *Declaration of the Rights of Man, and of the Citizen*, and perhaps also at Paine’s *Rights of Man*, and echoing the criticism of those publications

in the title of Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97), *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792).

- ⁹⁵² For Chauvelin and Lord Grenville, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 5; ‘buckram’, a fabric stiffened with glue, signified a stiff and starched manner of behaviour; Fox has in mind the unbending formality affected by Grenville in his correspondence with Chauvelin, in which he insisted on the precise punctilios of diplomatic exchange.
- ⁹⁵³ ‘Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth’, Genesis 1.22.
- ⁹⁵⁴ The first generation of Romans after the founding of the city obtained wives by stealing (‘raping’, in its old meaning) women from the nearby Sabine people.
- ⁹⁵⁵ According to later, embroidered versions of the Lady Godiva legend, ‘Peeping Tom’ spied on Godiva as she rode naked through Coventry, despite a command from her that all citizens should remain indoors and not look out. He was struck blind.
- ⁹⁵⁶ See *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 1.
- ⁹⁵⁷ According to the OED chuck-farthing was ‘a game of combined skill and chance in which coins were pitched at a mark, and then chucked or tossed at a hole by the player who came nearest the mark, and who won all that alighted in the hole’ (OED). The earliest citations suggest it was a game played by boys. Jenkinson was 23 when he made his famous table-thumping speech about marching to Paris: see above, *On Jacobinism*, n. 30.
- ⁹⁵⁸ A rather approximate memory of the various misadventures the writer Henry Fielding had with unfavourable winds at the start of a voyage to Lisbon, between Ryde (not Rye) on the Isle of Wight, and Devon. The closest the book comes to Fox’s memory of this incident is at Portland, where the captain ‘grew outrageous, and declaring open war with the wind, took a resolution, rather more bold than wise, of sailing in defiance of it, and in its teeth: *The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon* (London: A. Millar, 1755), p. 170.
- ⁹⁵⁹ See next note.
- ⁹⁶⁰ Valenciennes in north-eastern France had been captured by Austrian forces in July 1793 (see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, n. 26), and recaptured by the French at the very end of August 1794, the news reaching the London newspapers on September 6. By the end of September the allies had withdrawn from most of what is now Belgium, and the French had even captured Cologne.
- ⁹⁶¹ For the Scheldt, the Savoy and Avignon, see *The Interest of Great Britain*, nn. 19, 51.
- ⁹⁶² ‘Un-accommodating’ appears thus hyphenated in the original edition. We have not found the word in the correspondence of Grenville and Chauvelin; possibly Grenville used it in his speeches reviewing that correspondence, on February 1 and 12 1793, but we have not found the word in any version of those speeches.
- ⁹⁶³ That is, Toulon (see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, n. 30), the French sugar islands (see above, *Defence of the Decree*), and India.
- ⁹⁶⁴ That is, to *withdraw* the stakes (OED).
- ⁹⁶⁵ See above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, nn. 26, 30.
- ⁹⁶⁶ The indecisive battle of Weissembourg, mid-October 1793; for Dunkirk, see above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps, No. 1*, n. 26, and *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 45.

- ⁹⁶⁷ Earl Spencer (1758-1834) and William Windham had joined the government following the split in the Whig party in the summer of 1794. Earl Spencer became Lord Privy Seal on July 11 1794 and was immediately sent as ambassador-extraordinary to Vienna in what ODNB describes as ‘a futile effort to persuade the Austrians to increase their efforts in the war against France’. Also on July 11 Windham became Secretary at War, and was sent on a morale-raising visit to Holland in September 1794. Auckland, ambassador to Holland at the start of the war, had retired from the diplomatic service in May 1793. The reference to his trip to Holland makes it clear that Fox here (and presumably on the next page) has in mind William Windham, not William Wyndham (by 1794 Lord Grenville, Foreign Secretary). In his other pamphlets the name ‘Wyndham’ appears to refer to Grenville.
- ⁹⁶⁸ By May 1794 the French army of Italy had captured mountain passes in Piedmont, and by June Bonaparte was at the Col d’Argentières. By August the French army of the West Pyrenees had forced their way nearly to Pamplona.
- ⁹⁶⁹ See above, *Poor Richard’s Scraps*, No. 1.
- ⁹⁷⁰ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 42.
- ⁹⁷¹ See Pitt’s speech in the Commons, March 6 1794, PH30: 1485.
- ⁹⁷² PH31: 249.
- ⁹⁷³ British defeats and defeated generals. The Battle of Almanza (1707) and in the Battle of Brihuega (1710) were British defeats at the hands of Franco-Spanish forces in the War of the Spanish Succession; for Fontenoy, St Cas and Closter-Seven, see above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 17; Edward Braddock (1695-1755) was defeated and fatally wounded by an army of French and native Americans near Fort Duquesne; John Burgoyne (1723-92) was defeated by General Gates at Saratoga in 1777.
- ⁹⁷⁴ The word prudently omitted is perhaps ‘pressing’, ‘crimping’, or more likely ‘kidnapping’, as that would suggest the armed forces acted illegally when recruiting; see above, n. 9.
- ⁹⁷⁵ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 30.
- ⁹⁷⁶ See above, *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 23.
- ⁹⁷⁷ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 5.
- ⁹⁷⁸ The Earl of Mansfield had become one of the most vociferous opponents of any idea of making peace with France. See for example his speeches to the Lords of April 4, 30, and May 30 1794, PH31: 147-8, 460-1, and 678-80.
- ⁹⁷⁹ See for example the treaty between Britain and Prussia, dated April 19 1794, PH31: 435, article VI.
- ⁹⁸⁰ A pretty fair account of Britain’s treatment of Ireland. The current, disastrous Lord-Lieutenant was the Earl of Westmoreland (1759-1841), at the very opposite end of the political spectrum from Paine.
- ⁹⁸¹ See above, *On the Renewal*, n. 7.
- ⁹⁸² ‘La Carmagnole’ and ‘Ça ira’ were the best known, in England, of the songs of the French Revolution.
- ⁹⁸³ An attack on the evidence given to a committee of the House of Commons by defenders of the slave trade, see above, *Defence of the Decree*, n. 26.
- ⁹⁸⁴ The idea is of a French equivalent of Burke; see above, n. 1.
- ⁹⁸⁵ See above, *Thoughts on the Impending Invasion*, n. 25.

⁹⁸⁶ See above, *The Interest of Great Britain*, n. 38.

William Fox was one of the most brilliant writers of political pamphlets in the 1790s, the decade which saw the most fundamental debate about politics since the English civil war. He was the author of probably the most widely read pamphlet in British history, which proposed a boycott on sugar to bring to an end not only the slave-trade but the system of slavery itself. The pamphlets that followed, mainly on slavery, the French revolution, the war with France, and the conduct of the British in India, earned him a high reputation as an unusually sharp satirist and political commentator. His writings have been neglected by historians of the 1790s because, as both a Tory and a strong supporter of the French republic, he does not fit into a version of the period based on the simple opposition of Whigs and Tories, or of followers of Burke or Paine, and also because, until now, his identity has been a complete mystery. This edition gathers together all Fox's known writings, with full explanatory notes and an introduction which explains who he was and how he believed he could reconcile his apparently incompatible beliefs. It recovers for the tradition of political commentary in Britain a new and utterly distinctive voice.

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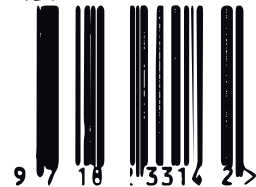
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