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ENGLISH RADICALISM
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ENGLISH RADICALISM
1886–1914

ENGLISH RADICALISM 1762-1785

THE ORIGINS

BY

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LONDON

George Allen & Unwin Ltd

MUSEUM STREET

FIRST PUBLISHED IN 1955

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PRINTED AND BOUND IN GREAT BRITAIN
BY JARROLD AND SONS LIMITED
NORWICH

TO THE MEMORY OF MY FRIEND
GILBERT GLEDDEN ARMSTRONG
WHO GAVE PATIENCE AND SYMPATHY
WHEN THEY WERE MOST NEEDED

PREFACE

THIS book is devoted to a study of what might be called the Oppositionism of the years 1762–85, the years in which modern English Radicalism was born. That Oppositionism took many forms. There were the street-mobs yelling variously as the period proceeded for "The Great Commoner", "Wilkes and Liberty", Lord Mayor Beckford, Lord Mayor Crosby, Admiral Keppel, and Fox, "Man of the People". There were the newspaper writers and pamphleteers who bred unending suspicion of "secret influence" at George III's Court and feared, or affected to fear, possible plans for establishing absolutism by military power. There were the juries who refused to convict such writers of "seditious libel" and gave large damages against those responsible for "illegal" arrests under questionable warrants. There were the municipalities, led by the City, who lavished praise and Freedoms on notable defenders of "Liberty" from Chief-Justice Pratt to Dr. Price and who were for ever ready to send anti-Ministerial Petitions, Addresses and Remonstrances to the King. There were the County Meetings called in criticism of Government by Oppositionist country gentlemen whether the Sheriff concurred or no. There were the precursors of modern political organisations in the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, set up in 1769, the pamphlet-distributing Society for Constitutional Information, instituted in 1780, and the County Associations and Committees calling for "Public Oeconomy" during the years 1780–2. And, finally, there were the conferences at Newcastle's house or Rockingham's, at Bedford House or Stowe, at Albemarle Street or Brookes's, where the Parliamentary Oppositions debated the strategy later employed on the grand Parliamentary scene.

When endeavouring to tell the story and deduce the significance of all this Oppositionism, a writer inevitably begins by hoping that manuscript collections like the voluminous Newcastle Papers, made famous by Professor Namier, will yield the most profitable information. To remember, indeed, that there are not only Newcastle Papers but Hardwicke Papers, Wilkes Papers, Chatham Papers, Liverpool Papers and so forth is to grow in hope. Moreover there are the Historical Manuscripts Commission's editions

of still other collections and, in addition, the great bodies of political correspondence put into print between the first issue of the *Wyvill Papers* in 1794 to the last volume of George III's *Correspondence* edited by Fortescue.

But though, in the formal hierarchy of historical evidence, an authenticated letter from a "statesman" ranks higher than an anonymous paragraph in a newspaper, periodical or pamphlet, this book came more and more to be written from pamphlet and periodical material. In the periodical material especially, there seemed to lie the best hope of discovering how far and in what manner the "public" was affected by the constant complaint and criticism of Government which, after 1762, was finally converted into a normal part of the Parliamentary process as the natural business of a "formed opposition". It was impossible, moreover, to use the leading periodicals and pamphlets for long without acquiring a healthy respect for their knowledge of much that is supposed to be confined to the Manuscript Collections of the British Museum and Record Office. When, for example, the Newcastle Papers once seemed to shed a very new light on the series of political dinners wherein a "formed opposition" was recruited and kept in heart, it was surprising to find in the newspapers of 1763 a full knowledge of the facts. The surprise was repeated when it became even plainer that the new Opposition's foundation of the "club in Albemarle Street" was a newspaper and pamphlet commonplace from the first.

A special advantage that seemed to come from making periodicals and newspapers the main sources used was the smaller danger of missing essential economic facts. There are accounts of the troubled politics of the succession of peace years between 1763 and 1774 from which it would have been almost impossible to infer the run of poor harvests and high food prices that characterised the time. The reader of the newspaper or the periodical, however, does not need to be reminded that political mobs were, after all, only one of the species of mobs active in those years and that "most daring outrages" were committed even in the deep countryside when crowds passed from mere grumbling against Enclosures or "Houses of Industry" to the forcible seizure of foodstuffs and their disposal at prices "fair to the poor". In the agitated London of 1768, again, the newspapers make it very plain that the "Wilkes mob" was composed, at least in part, of

operatives active simultaneously in bitter trade disputes, entered into on the ground of high prices and food-shortage.

Economic indications, in fact, have to be followed from year to year and even from season to season if the basic factors conditioning politics are to be properly understood. No one, for example, can suitably explain the temporary decline of Opposition in 1775 and 1776, at the very time, too, when Government was undertaking a new war, if he is unaware of the remarkable export-expansion taking place and rendering England completely independent of the American demand. The politics of the second half of the American War, again, are only to be explained in terms of the increasing dislike on the part of the "public" for the burdensome new war-taxes necessary every year. And only the closest examination of the day-to-day news would reveal how the Fox-North Coalition began digging its own grave by imposing the new Receipts Tax of 1783 and how Pitt, dogged by the same problem of outstanding war-liabilities, was barely prevented from ruining himself similarly in 1784 by suggesting a Coal Tax that would have driven the poor to riot. In 1785, finally, the newspapers and periodicals have been found to give the most satisfactory accounts of how powerful agitation blew up against Pitt on the textile taxes of 1784, the Irish Trade proposals of 1785 and the 1785 Shops Tax. Notes passing among the politicians could hardly be more than comment.

In this study it has been thought fit to give, after the narrative history, some special chapters devoted to important currents of thought making for radical criticism of the fundamental institutions of Society. Special chapters of this kind were welcomed by reviewers of the three volumes of *English Radicalism* already published, and they may be thought not less useful here. The long extracts prefaced to every chapter in the hope of illustrating, from the aptest possible contemporary sources, the chapter's subject-matter also reappear in this study.

That the Trustees of the Leverhulme Research Foundation furnished me with the opportunity of making this investigation will always be remembered by me with gratitude. So will the patience with which my friend, Mr. G. G. Armstrong of Stockton-on-Tees, listened to every problem put to him.

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CHAPTER I

"WILKES AND LIBERTY", 1762–4

"*The Favourite. A Political Epistle. Humbly addressed to all Monarchs, Favourites and Ministers in the Known World.* By an ancient Briton. 1*s*. . . . The whole is, indeed, nothing more than a rambling declamation against vicious Sovereigns and their Favourites; or to use this very familiar writer's own phrases, *Pimps, Stallions,* and *rascally Procurers*. . . ."

"*A Letter to her R——l H——s the P——s D-w-g-r of W——s, on the approaching Peace. With a few Words concerning the Right Honourable the Earl of B——, and the General Talk of the World.* 1*s*. 6*d*. . . . The title page of this pamphlet, in which is inserted also two or three very singular mottoes, is evidently calculated to catch the eye of the incautious Reader, and deceive him into the purchase of a very different performance from what he might reasonably expect . . . this piece . . . a dull recapitulation of hackney'd common-place . . . is . . . unworthy our farther notice."

The *Monthly Review,* September 1762, treats two pamphlets of the day.

"*The following advertisement appeared in all the papers on the 13th of April.*

. . . The SCOTTISH minister has indeed *retired.* Is HIS influence at an end? Or does HE still govern by the *three* wretched tools of his power, who to their indeliable infamy, have supported the most odious of his measures, the late ignominious *Peace,* and the wicked extension of the arbitrary mode of *Excise*? The *North Briton* has been steady in his opposition to a *single,* insolent, incapable, despotic minister; and is equally ready, in the service of his country, to combat the *triple-headed, Cerberean* administration if the SCOT is to assume that motley form. By HIM every arrangement *to this hour* has been made, and the notification has been as regularly sent by letter under HIS HAND. *It therefore* seems clear to a demonstration, that HE intends only to retire into that situation, which HE held before HE first took the seals; I mean the dictating to every part of the King's administration. The NORTH BRITON desires to be understood, as having pledged himself a firm and intripid assertor of the rights of his fellow-subjects, and of the liberties of Whigs and Englishmen."

Printed at the head of No. 45 of the *North Briton,* April 23, 1763, in the *North Briton from No. I to No. XLVI inclusive.*

"I have all imaginable reason to be happy and pleased with the prudent conduct and particular Honour which the Duke of Cumberland does me. And with the Steddiness, Affection and Friendship, with which my great Friends, the Duke of Devonshire in particular, the Duke of Grafton, the Duke of Portland, and my Friend, the Marquess of Rockingham, act with me. We have but one thought, one wish and one manner of acting. My Lord Temple and Mr. Pitt seem very hearty and sincere and disposed to act in perfect union and conjunction with us . . .

"To sum up the whole . . . I want to see an Administration settled which may make the King Easy and the Nation happy; which may make the King beloved and not feared; govern by Love and Affection and not by Power and Threats; which is the Principle originally laid down by my Lord Bute; and followed now by his Successors; and will be by whomsoever they are or may be, if appointed or supported by His Lordship; and which I am, in my Conscience convinced, never can or will be otherwise, till an Administration is formed out of what the worthy Dean of Christ Church calls The Factious Dinners."

The Duke of Newcastle in Add. MSS. 32949, ff 21–2, writes to Lord Kinnoul, on June 3, 1763, justifying the Opposition Dinners.

In 1766 there was published an important account, already circulating in private, of the first stages of political opposition to George III. It had what seems to have been a remarkable sale for the time—ten thousand copies being quickly disposed of[1]—and the title, too, had a somewhat modern ring as *The History of the Late Minority exhibiting the Conduct, Principles and Views of that Party during the Years 1762, 1763, 1764 and 1765.* As the author was the rising political writer Almon, who had, with the countenance of the Opposition and especially of Lord Temple, set up as the Opposition's political publisher,[2] the *History of the Late Minority* must be accepted as an authentic Opposition view of activities now seen as decisive in preparing the way for a more modern order of British politics. It is specially interesting, therefore, to find Almon claiming to quote *verbatim* the terms of a negotiation completed a number of years before George III's accession, by the "Cocoa Tree" party—the party of Tory and sometimes even Jacobite origins, whose social headquarters were the "Cocoa Tree", and which, excluded from office since 1714, had practised for decades as a "Country Party" opposing alleged Hanoverian rapacity at Court and Whig corruption and high-handedness in the Administration. According to Almon, the "Cocoa Tree" negotiators obtained both a promise that George II's heir, on his accession, would remove "all proscription from any set of men whatever", and particular pledges on four specific points of concern to their party. There was to be a Bill to allow all gentlemen paying Land-Tax for £300 per annum or more to sit on the County Benches;[3] a Bill to create a numerous and effectual Militia was likewise to be granted by His Royal Highness "whenever

[1] Cf. *Public Characters of 1803–4*, p. 130. The statement was made in the course of a short biography of Almon who was still alive.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 128: "These publications [Almon's earlier pamphlets] brought Mr. Almon acquainted with most of the noblemen and gentlemen who opposed the measures of the court, and who were distinguished by the name of the Minority. With this respectable connection and patronage, he began to turn his thoughts to the advantage of becoming his own publisher. In the year 1763 he accordingly resigned his situation in the *Gazetteer* [one of the four dailies priced at 2½*d.* wherein he had written against Bute as 'An Independent Whig'], commenced bookseller in Piccadilly, opposite Burlington House, and in a very short time his shop became the place of resort for the whole opposition."

[3] Cf. *History of the Late Minority*, pp. 38–41 n. The exclusion of Tory gentlemen from the rights and privileges attaching to a Justiceship of the Peace was an old complaint against the Whig Lord-Lieutenants appointed consistently since 1714.

he shall have it in his power";[1] a third Bill, "in like manner" promised Royal support, would forward the old Tory plan of excluding from the House of Commons "all military officers in the land-service, under the degree of colonels of regiments, and in the sea-service, under the degree of rear-admirals";[2] and, finally, His Royal Highness undertook to content himself with a Civil List of £800,000 per annum.[3] In return for these important assurances, we are told, His Royal Highness considered "he has a right not to doubt of having a most cordial support from all those good men who love their country and this constitution, and that they will become his and his family's friends, and unite with him to promote the good government of this country: and that they will follow him, upon these principles, both in court and out of court; and if he should have to form an administration, it shall be composed, without distinction, of men of dignity, probity and knowledge".

Whether or no a high degree of authenticity be attached to Almon's document and the initials of the seven Peers and seven Commoners, appearing therein,[4] certain it is that, right back to Walpole's day, discussion of the kind, depicted by Almon, had been going on though, at first, it had been between George's father, Frederick, Prince of Wales, and a "Country Party" of Opposition Whigs and of Tories, who had made their peace with Hanover. To all such discussions, moreover, the remarkable pamphlet Bolingbroke wrote in 1738 under Frederick's own eye and entitled

[1] Since 1714 the Tories had complained of the increase of the "standing army" and its use by "corrupt" Whigs as an engine of oppression. The Militia Bill here suggested would apparently have put a stop to further notions of army-increase, if no more.

[2] This, in fact, was to be a far-reaching Place Bill, of the kind advocated since Tories of William III's day had raised their protests against the Royal and Ministerial control of Parliament obtained by flooding it with "placemen and pensioners". One of William's Parliaments had, indeed, been nicknamed the "Officers Parliament".

[3] Tories had never forgotten or forgiven the way in which Whig control had been kept by Civil List bargains with George I and George II. At £800,000 the Prince would be agreeing to ask for no increase above George II's income. It should, perhaps, be added here that one point of the alleged agreement between the "Cocoa Tree" and the Heir to the Throne has not been given in the text—a rather indefinite Royal promise to inquire into "the great number of abuses in offices".

[4] Almon, *History of the Late Minority*, p. 41 n., gives the initials as follows: "The Duke of B.; The Earl of L.; The Earl of T.; The Earl of W.; The Earl of S.; Lord F.; Lord W.; Sir Wat. Wil. W.; Sir John H. C.; Sir Walter B.; Sir Robert G.; Mr. F.; Mr. P.; Mr. C." They suggest negotiations with George III's father on the occasion of the 1747 General Election.

On the Idea of a Patriot King, gave an assurance of moral and political justification strong enough to survive Walpole's fall and the death of Frederick himself in 1751, and to become the animating principle of the "Leicester House Party" that gathered round Frederick's son.[1]

Yet, after George III's accession, the greatest obstacle to the execution of any "Patriot King" plan there may have been, proved to lie in the unique popularity acquired by one who in his younger days had been under some obligation to Frederick, Prince of Wales, and who had owed something even later to his known good standing at Leicester House with the Dowager Princess. Pitt might, with his brother-in-law Earl Temple, have been isolated in the Cabinet and driven to resignation in October 1761. But Bute, who had taken charge of the work of obtaining for George III a "Patriot King's" rightful position in the State,[2] was to find that the elimination of the "Great Commoner" from the political scene was an altogether more formidable task than anything previously attempted by him during the year George had already been on the throne. Legge might have been driven from the Exchequer in March 1761, Holderness required immediately afterwards to vacate, for Bute, a Secretaryship of State, and even Newcastle himself, the nominal Chief Minister, reduced to growing powerlessness without a stir ensuing. But if, on Pitt's departure, Bute's friends had wished him joy of "being delivered of a most impracticable colleague, his Majesty of a most imperious servant,

[1] It is perhaps unwise for Professor Namier, despite his immense knowledge of the eighteenth century, to challenge the view, "traditional" though it be, of the importance to be attached to Bolingbroke's *Patriot King*. When in 1749 the general public at last got an edition of the pamphlet (bound together with the author's *On the Spirit of Patriotism* and *On the State of Parties at the Accession of King George the First*) it still caused excitement despite the printed copies that had long circulated in private and the unauthorised extracts already published in the *London Magazine*. Thus the newly-founded *Monthly Review*, hardly Tory in sympathy, went almost into ecstasies. After giving a long summary it concluded: "In short, this discourse may be properly called, *the whole duty of a British King*. Which ought not only to be got by heart, and remain graved in the breast of every one who shall be called to that exalted station, but become the standard of judgement for every subject to pass on the merit of his Sovereign, who must either be good or bad, false or true to his own interest, inseparably connected with that of his people, in proportion as he pursues, or deviates from, those admirable rules of guidance which are laid down in this treatise, the infinite value of which might alone compensate ten times the demerits imputed to the author. . . ."

[2] The almost pathetic reliance of George III on Lord Bute is well shown in Romney Sedgwick's edition of *Letters of George III to Lord Bute* as when he wrote: "I hope my dear Lord . . . you will bring me to the gole. I will exactly follow your advice without which I shall inevitably sink."

and the country of a most dangerous Minister";[1] if they hoped that the pension of £3000 a year for two lives which the "Great Commoner" had consented to take would end his popularity, they soon had reason to question the correctness of their expectations. Pitt had a powerful following in the City of London whose traders and merchants idolised him and whose very wealthy municipal institutions lent themselves to political demonstrations likely to give the lead to the rest of the country and, on occasion, to overwhelm opposition by permitting huge metropolitan crowds to express themselves. Thus, at a Court of Common Council of October 22nd, not only were the four members for the City instructed to oppose peace terms involving any return to the French of places important from the point of view of sea-power—this was known to be one of the subjects on which Pitt had had trouble with his Cabinet colleagues before his resignation earlier in the month—but an address in eulogistic terms was moved to Pitt lamenting "the national loss of so able, so faithful a minister, at this critical conjuncture".[2] It was a decisive defeat for those who had hoped to discredit Pitt as a "pensioner",[3] and gave the signal for more eulogistic addresses to be sent in from Dublin, York, Bath, and other places.

But it was on November 9, 1761, that the greatest and, for the King, the most exasperating pro-Pitt demonstration was undertaken in the City. The King having been but recently married and crowned, the City authorities had, before their idol's fall, adopted the plan of using Lord Mayor's Day not only for the customary show, along the river, of processional barges, wherein the City Companies in gala or fancy costumes attended the Lord Mayor for swearing-in at Westminster Hall, but also for street processions and displays, on the return, of special magnificence and to associate with these, and their later banquet at Guildhall, the Royal

[1] J. H. Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III*, i, 112.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1761, Chronicle, pp. 301–3.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 300–1, for an exchange of letters between Pitt and a friend in the City in which Pitt had expressed some dismay that his pensioned retirement had been "grossly misrepresented and infamously traduced in the city as a bargain for my forsaking the public" and had been reassured by his correspondent of the City's fidelity despite what "knaves" were attempting to teach "fools". This correspondence, quickly made public in quite a modern fashion, allowed Pitt to inform the country of the true cause of his resignation—"a difference of opinion, with regard to measures to be taken against Spain, of the highest importance to the honour of the crown, and to the most essential national interests, (and this founded on what Spain had already done, not on what that court may farther intend to do)...."

couple, the Ministers and the Court. It is well known in what danger Bute was as soon as the great London crowds watching the procession became aware of his identity.[1] In vivid contrast to Bute's reception was that given to Pitt. The *Annual Register* which found it politic to say nothing of Bute's sorry experiences, gave the following eye-witness account:[2]

> But what was most remarkable were the prodigious acclamations and tokens of affection, shewn by the populace to Mr. Pitt, who came in his chariot, accompanied by Earl Temple. At every stop the mob clung about every part of the vehicle, hung upon the wheels, hugged his footmen, and even kissed his horses. There was an universal huzza: and the gentlemen at the windows and on the balconies waved their hats and the ladies their handkerchiefs. The same, I am informed, was done all the way along.

The reception of the King himself, accompanied though he was by his young bride, was poor in comparison, and the same experience awaited the mortified monarch in Guildhall itself. There his welcome was felt to have been indifferent compared with the great burst of cheering and hand-clapping, led by the Corporation, that had greeted Pitt's appearance. The plans of Earl Temple, already rancorous against Bute, and of Alderman Beckford, M.P., Pitt's wealthiest supporter in the City, had succeeded, perhaps, better than the "Great Commoner" himself thought proper.[3]

Events again favoured Pitt when, in January 1762, Bute himself was forced, despite his wish for a speedy peace, to agree to the declaration of war upon Spain which Pitt had earlier pressed, to the point of resignation. Pitt's partisans, of course, did not forget to stress this new proof of their leader's far-sightedness in so early divining Spain's hostile intentions nor the loss the country had sustained in having to attack a fully-prepared Spain instead of one, that in the colonial sphere at least, would have been caught by Pitt very far from ready. For Bute, in these circumstances, to persist with his plan of edging the Duke of Newcastle out of office as well as out of power was a good deal more dangerous than he

[1] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III*, i, 115: "Groans, hisses, yells, shouts of—'No Scotch rogues!—no Butes!—no Newcastle salmon! Pitt for ever!' resounded from all sides. A rush was made at the coach. . . . The hired bruisers fought their best for their employer, but . . . they were overpowered and driven back. The mob, thus victorious, now turned its whole attention towards Bute who was, in fact, in a most critical situation . . . when a large force of constables and peace-officers rushed to his assistance."

[2] *Annual Register*, 1761, Chronicle, p. 237.

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 165.

seems to have realised. Under cover of the Duke's nominal Prime Ministership, much of Bute's policy might have been carried through with less opposition than it was subsequently fated to encounter. But when, on May 26th, the Duke was driven by increasing discourtesies to resign[1] and Bute was immediately substituted in his place, the danger of a most formidable political combination against the "Favourite" notably increased. The City leading the Corporations and merchants of the whole country; the London mob, giving by its violence the cue to smaller mobs from Exeter to Newcastle-on-Tyne; the still formidable remnants of the old Whig Government connection that saw in Newcastle's treatment a danger-signal to themselves—all these made up with Pitt a very dangerous ring of enemies. But it was a Parliamentary protégé of Pitt's brother-in-law, Earl Temple, who stumbled almost by chance on the kind of attack destined to make Bute's position untenable. It had probably not been without design that Bute's appointment as First Lord of the Treasury took place almost at the end of the Parliamentary Session of 1761–2. But if the new Chief Minister had hoped to enjoy freedom from the most worrying kind of political attack during a Parliamentary prorogation that lasted from June 2nd to November 25th, John Wilkes, M.P. for Aylesbury (thanks to some support from the Temple interest) and Colonel also of the Buckinghamshire Militia under Earl Temple as Lord-Lieutenant, was destined most rudely to undeceive him. Of Wilkes it is now necessary to give some account.

The second son of a prosperous London distiller and married in 1747, very young, to a city heiress much older than himself, John Wilkes soon appalled his sober wife and her cautious Dissenting relations by acquiring a taste for the companionship and amusements of some of the most dissipated men-about-town.[2] When in addition to ribald and infidel conversation, such a friend of Wilkes as Thomas Potter—son of an Archbishop of Canterbury! —brought into the Wilkes household expensive plans for seating Wilkes by his side in the House of Commons, a domestic crisis

[1] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III*, i, 120–5. There is a fully documented account in L. B. Namier's *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, pp. 331–80 which shows how large a part in Newcastle's final determination to resign was played by his sense of the insulting disregard displayed towards his authority at the Treasury by George Grenville, Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Samuel Martin, Secretary of the Treasury.

[2] J. Almon, *Wilkes Correspondence*, i, 17–22.

developed in view of the financial demands that electioneering competition with great aristocratic and landed fortunes would make.[1] An unsuccessful contest for Berwick, indeed, cost Wilkes £4000 and must have contributed greatly to the agreed separation from his wife arranged shortly afterwards on conditions, with regard to the property his wife had brought into the marriage, apparently very favourable to Wilkes who retained his grip, it would seem, on the Aylesbury holdings that had helped Potter to Parliament and were to serve, before long, to forward Wilkes's own entry. In June 1757 Potter, who had aided Pitt in the struggle that imposed terms upon Newcastle, became an Irish Vice-Treasurer but having to submit to re-election in common with Pitt, who had become Secretary of State, he arranged an involved change-over of seats which took Potter to Pitt's old seat for Okehampton and sent Wilkes to Westminster for Aylesbury. Wilkes had made himself responsible for financing these arrangements but their total cost seems to have amounted to £7000, to have involved him with moneylenders, and to have dragged him into the financial embarrassments, foreseen by his wife, that perplexed many years of his life.[2] Yet, as member for Aylesbury, Wilkes was able to give valuable help to Earl Temple in executing, in Buckinghamshire, the Militia Act of 1757, and this help was acknowledged by the award of a Lieutenant-Colonel's commission which was to become a Colonel's after Bute had, in May 1762, picked upon Sir Francis Dashwood, the first commander of the Bucks Militia, to be his Chancellor of the Exchequer.[3]

But Wilkes had long been driven by a mixture of ambition and financial necessity to play for higher game than a Militia Colonelcy.

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 23–4: "The general election of 1754 was now approaching. Mr. Wilkes's friends strongly urged him to come into parliament. Potter pressed him very much: it was the only place, he said, in which a young man of Mr. Wilkes's talents could commence the world with *éclat*. . . . At Berwick he was informed there was a probable opening; and that the Delaval interest, which had been very powerful there, might be opposed with success. . . . He resolved to go to Berwick. This indiscreet measure, which seemed to border almost upon rashness, was opposed by the earnest supplications of Mrs. Wilkes; of his own father, who was partial to his daughter-in-law; and of Mrs. Mead, her mother. They dreaded the consequences of this new line of conduct . . as laying the foundation of his ruin, by launching him into a series of convivialities and expences, the extent and mischiefs of which no one could estimate. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 33–7. Wilkes's meanest shift to get some relief was an attempt to override the separation arrangements, entered into with his wife, in order to force her to surrender an annuity of £200 a year that represented all that had been saved for her from the wealth she had taken into the marriage.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 38–9. See also the Wilkes MSS. in the Guildhall Library, London.

Early in 1761 he had applied for the Constantinople Embassy and blamed Lord Bute for a failure that involved him, among other things, in the expenses necessary to keep his seat in the General Election of 1761. Later in the year, on the occasion of the abortive Anglo-French peace negotiations of 1761, he had interested Lord Temple and Pitt in a project for making him the first British Governor of Canada. When the resignation of his friends in October 1761 had been followed by the Franco-Spanish manœuvres compelling even the reluctant Bute to declare for war with Spain, Wilkes put his hand to his first effective piece of writing, the *Observations on the Papers relating to the Rupture with Spain.* And after this pamphlet's considerable success in panegyrising Pitt and throwing "oblique sarcasms" on his successors,[1] it is, perhaps, less surprising to find Wilkes resolved to enter the lists against the *Briton*, the weekly newspaper set up by Bute to defend his administration from the very start. Wilkes's *North Briton*, moreover, did not confine itself to "oblique sarcasms". In the very first number of June 5, 1762 the public was treated to some tasty but unparticularised rhetoric on "dark and dangerous designs", "wicked and corrupt administration", "mercenary scribblers" and the rest; ancient and contemporary history was ransacked to provide in Sejanus and Count Bruhl parallels to Bute without naming him; and Scottish places and pensions were put under attack. The second weekly number was ironically full of alleged North British joy at Scotland's accomplishment of the "great, long sought and universally national object of all our wishes, the planting of a *Scotsman* at the head of the *English* Treasury". And the third number did more than claim for Pitt's plans the merit of newly announced victories and assign to Pitt's successors the blame that they were no greater. It ventured a first daring ribaldry on the royal family and followed with another on the alleged degrading poverty of Scotland, that bore plain marks that Wilkes was already discussing with his collaborator, the satirist Charles Churchill, the composition of Churchill's savagely anti-Scots *Prophecy of Famine.* It is, perhaps, little wonder that when, in September, Hogarth came to Government's aid with his engraving of "The Times", Wilkes and Churchill were represented

[1] Cf. *Monthly Review*, March 1762, p. 230, for an impartial review that held the pamphlet to savour "too much of party zeal" but found the *Observations* "many of them very spirited, and some of them extremely pertinent".

as forces inferior only to Pitt and Temple in hindering the Government's beneficent work of endeavouring to extinguish the flames of war.[1] And Wilkes had hardly yet thrown his most dangerous bomb—the insinuation that all events since the King's accession were explained by Bute's adulterous connection with the Princess Dowager—nor was the *North Briton* yet part of the imposing coalition that fought the peace terms signed with France and Spain in November.

How freely bribery and intimidation were employed to win Parliamentary sanction for the peace terms is a story that has been often and picturesquely told.[2] Here should rather be noted the significance of the fact that the beaten opponents of the Peace succeeded in converting the word *Minority* into a term of honour and in winning the ear of the noisiest and most explosive elements of the "public" for the view that the Peace was criminally over-lenient to France and Spain. In February, indeed, Wilkes was emboldened to direct against Bute and the Princess Dowager the notorious dedication prefaced to his reissue of Ben Jonson's *Fall of Mortimer*,[3] and almost at the same time there appeared Churchill's mordant *Prophecy of Famine*. To make matters worse, March saw Dashwood, Bute's incompetent and inexperienced Chancellor of the Exchequer, propose as part of his revenue plans, a cider and perry excise that played right into the hands of the "Favourite's" enemies. Over a large part of Southern and Western England there was so much farmhouse cider-making for domestic consumption as to render the notion of paying a wholly unprecedented composition-tax of 5*s*. per annum for, perhaps, every member of the household, thoroughly distasteful.[4] The Minority

[1] Cf. *North Briton*, No. 17, September 25, 1762, for an attack of marked ability on the print which Hogarth never forgave Wilkes and which apparently induced him to put No. 17 alongside No. 45 when pillorying Wilkes in the famous "Wilkes and Liberty" engraving of 1763.

[2] Jesse, *Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III*, i, 141–8. In the two divisions that took place in the Commons on December 9th and 10th the Minority was outvoted by 65 against 319 and 63 against 227. Despite these figures and those in the Lords it was confidently asserted on behalf of the Minority that "the voice of the honest independent was clear and strong against the terms of peace".

[3] Almon, *Wilkes Correspondence*, i, 70–90, for a reprint of the piece which Wilkes considered his best It ironically pretended to differentiate between George III's reign and the time when "Edward the third was held in the most absolute slavery by his mother and her minister. The first nobles of England were excluded from the king's councils, and the minion disposed of all places of trust. . . ."

[4] Only children under eight were excused the tax.

prepared to make another fight, and in better conditions than before, seeing the public dislike aroused by the very name of "excise" and the real fear, in the Western counties, that the safeguards against Excisemen's search and entry offered to the composition payer, producing for domestic consumption only, might prove very unreal.[1] It is, perhaps, the best indication of the Minority's good-cheer to note that when the Duke of Newcastle, about the middle of March, inaugurated a series of Minority dinners with a banquet at his town-house, the event was once again attended by a galaxy of magnates and celebrities—the Dukes of Devonshire, Bolton and Portland; the Marquis of Rockingham; the Earls Temple, Cornwallis, Albemarle, Ashburnham, Hardwicke and Bessborough; the Lords Spencer, Sondes, Grantham and Villiers; Mr. Pitt, Mr. J. Grenville and Sir George Savile.[2] And if the Minority was again overborne in both Houses, despite the wide rally of public opinion in its support headed by the City,[3] the unusual phenomenon was seen of no fewer than eight Bishops—those of Ely, Hereford, Worcester, Lichfield, Norwich, Lincoln, Chichester and St. Asaph—associating themselves with a large number of lay Peers in entering a solemn Protest on the Journals of their House.[4]

It was in this encouraging atmosphere that Wilkes produced, perhaps, his best-written *North Briton*, that of March 19, 1763, which attacked the terms on which £3,500,000 of loan had just been floated as proving what a "cant" was the Ministerial pretence of "Oeconomy". Wilkes's allegations that £300,000 had virtually been lost to the nation and bestowed on friends of the Government by the loan arrangements drove Ministers, presumably after the Law Officers' opinion had been obtained and debated, to undertake on April 20th the first steps of an official prosecution.[5] But

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1763: "Persons making cyder or perry to be consumed in their own private families only, shall be admitted to compound for the duties, they giving a list of the number in family, and paying at the rate of 5*s.* per annum. . . . Compounders may sell . . . any cyder or perry more than sufficient for their own use giving two days notice to the proper officer, who shall attend . . . and charge the duties. . . . No compounder shall let out or lend his mill, or other utensils without giving three days previous notice. . . ."

[2] Almon, *History of the Late Minority*, p. 91.

[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, March and April 1763.

[4] Almon, *History of the Late Minority*, p. 119.

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, 1763, Historical Chronicle, under April 20th: "A rule for an information was granted by the Court of King's Bench, against the printers and publishers of the papers called the *North Briton*, and the *Political Controversy* for publishing the *North Briton* of the 19th of March."

meanwhile a singularly important train of events had been in motion. On March 22nd peace had been formally proclaimed; on April 8th Bute had resigned in the hope, it was suspected, of diminishing opposition without surrendering control;[1] and on April 19th the King delivered a speech proroguing Parliament and praising the happy effects of the Peace. Four days later, on Saturday April 23rd, Wilkes issued in No. 45 of the *North Briton* an attack of yet unparalleled virulence on the "ministerial effrontery" evinced in the King's speech, and on "the tools of corruption", "the foul dregs" of Bute's power through whose presence in the Government the "Favourite" was still in control and seeking to impose upon King and people alike, Scottish nominees and Stuart ideas of prerogative.[2]

By any definition of seditious libel, acceptable to the lawyers of 1763, No. 45 was full of it from beginning to end—and the fact, that the paper opened and closed with passages of oblique criticism of the King himself, made the matter more serious. The extent to which Court and Ministry alike were infuriated by No. 45 has presumably to be judged from the speed with which legal advice must have been sought and given to permit the completion, on April 26th, of the famous "general warrant" for the arrest of No. 45's "authors, printers and publishers", and the seizure of their papers. The warrant, after being used a first time for the arrest of a wholly innocent printer and his workpeople, was used a second time for the seizure of the *North Briton*'s publisher with his workmen and account books, and a third time for the arrest of the owner and journeymen-printers of the establishment that had actually printed No. 45. To send out the same warrant a fourth time to effect Wilkes's arrest, after the forty-eight already undertaken on the one document, seems to have given Lord Halifax, the Secretary of State who had issued it, some concern on the ground of constitutionality. But he bowed to the Treasury Solicitor's view of the perfect legality of the further employment of the

[1] Cf. the *North Briton* advertisement in the papers of April 13th: "The SCOTTISH minister has indeed *retired*. Is HIS influence at an end? Or does HE still govern by the *three* wretched tools of his power—[the Earls of Egremont and Halifax, and George Grenville]?"

[2] Cf. *North Briton*, April 23rd, on "the slavish doctrines of the *absolute, independent, unlimited* power of the crown". It is worth noting that, on Bute's retirement, Wilkes had at first thought of stopping the issue of the *North Briton* which had cost him considerable labour. There were no Saturday numbers on April 9th, or 16th, to follow No. 44 of April 2nd.

general warrant, and to his opinion that it would be inexpedient to write Wilkes's name in a new warrant.[1]

Whether or no Wilkes had prepared himself for the eventuality of arrest, certain it is that he showed commendable presence of mind in challenging the legality of the warrant as soon as he found it did not contain his name, and in sending Almon, who chanced to call when the messengers were in the house, with an urgent message to Lord Temple. While Wilkes was therefore defying the Secretaries of State to whom the messengers had brought him and who finally committed him to the Tower, Lord Temple's attorney was obtaining in the Court of Common Pleas a writ of *habeas corpus* which, despite Ministerial attempts at evasion, forced on a hearing on May 3rd, and, on May 6th, the famous decision, given by Chief Justice Pratt on his own behalf and that of three brother-judges, that Wilkes must be released from custody on his privilege of Parliament. Meanwhile a case already full of dramatic episode, thoroughly stirring to the groundlings,[2] did not become less so from the King's unwise personal intervention in depriving Wilkes of his Militia command, before he had been found guilty, and in following this up by depriving Temple of his Lord-Lieutenancy.[3] Temple was given all the more motive to supply Wilkes with the financial assistance he needed to arrange numerous and sensational actions on behalf of those arrested under the allegedly illegal general warrant, and against those jointly responsible for their illegal imprisonment, the messengers, the Secretaries of State, the Under Secretary and the Treasury Solicitor.

Despite the fears and counter-efforts[4] of those who already saw

[1] Almon, *Wilkes Correspondence*, i, 96–101, for the best account and a copy of the warrant. Almon says that Lord Egremont, the other Secretary of State, in sending out the King's messengers a fourth time gave them "verbal orders to enter Mr. Wilkes's house even at midnight; and to seize his person, together with all his papers. The men, however, were not so intemperate: they waited till morning . . . and even then they did not choose to enter the house by violence, but waited some time in the street . . . and the messenger Watson arrested him at his own door."

[2] And to their betters also. The *Gentleman's Magazine* for May must have been at great pains to procure its long and documented account.

[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1763. Historical Chronicle, under May 7th.

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 249, 255. In view of the already threatening development of a pro-Wilkes mob in the metropolis, the Aldermen and Sheriffs of London (the Lord Mayor, Alderman Beckford, M.P., absenting himself) were induced in an enthusiastically worded address to the King on the Peace to give as their reason the concern with which they "observed a spirit of faction unhappily arising" and their apprehension that "their silence might be interpreted an encouragement of practices, which their dutiful attachment to your Majesty's person and

reason to believe that Wilkes's manœuvres, Temple's rancour,[1] and the unremitting agitation against the cider-excise[2] were sowing the seeds of a most dangerous period of anarchy, "Wilkes and Liberty" were destined to go much farther yet. Though, on June 16th, the messenger defendants in actions instituted under Wilkes's direction sought and obtained the advantage of propertied Special Juries, the first action that came to hearing on July 5th ended in Chief Justice Pratt's ruling against the legality of the arrest in question and the jury's award of £300 damages to the first of the fourteen journeymen-printers who had admittedly had nothing to do with No. 45.[3] This was an important strategic advantage for Wilkes to win at the very commencement of the long array of actions he was planning—an array so long that when, on December 6th, he at last obtained from Pratt an undeniable condemnation of general warrants as such and from the jury £1000 damages for the seizure of his papers, it was reported that he alone had nine further cases still to bring.[4]

But by December 6th Wilkes's sun seemed to have set in consequence of an extraordinary succession of events that made

government leads them to detest and abhor". The very wording of this Address seems as significant as the muffled tolling of bells with which some parishes greeted the Aldermanic procession to the Palace, and the shifts that were resorted to, in the absence of any "dutiful" manifestations from the Court of Common Council, to organise a second Address from 922 Merchants and Traders of the City of London and to convey it, accompanied by 140 coaches, to the King who received it "with very particular satisfaction".

[1] Cf. *A Letter to the Rt. Hon. Earl Temple on the Probable Motives and Consequences of his Lordship's Conduct with regard to Mr. Wilkes* for a bitter attack on the Lords of the Minority who had encouraged Wilkes without committing themselves (before his arrest they had, it would seem, "proposed to end their very splendid and honourable tour of political feasting, so pompously announced in the newspapers with a dinner at his house") and an appeal to Lord Temple to give up his intimacy "with a man of Mr. Wilkes's abandoned profligate character", even if it had brought him the doubtful satisfaction of standing, "to the acclamations of the mob" at Wilkes's window with Wilkes and "that wine-dasher, Humphrey Coates".

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1763, for reports of manifestations and meetings in Devonshire, Herefordshire, Monmouthshire, etc.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, July 1763. From the contradictory assertions in the *Gazetteer* of July 15th and 16th it would appear that Pratt's language in regard to general warrants was still not as wholly adverse as it became by December 6th.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1763, p. 615, on "the great cause of liberty in which John Wilkes Esq. was plaintiff and Robert Wood Esq., late under secretary of state was defendant". After narrating the "hearing of near 15 hours" the cause received and the verdict of £1000 damages "and full costs of suit" given it reported: "This important cause was decided by a special jury, at the desire of the defendant. 'Tis said there are nine more causes depending against the secretaries and other officers of the crown who were concerned in arresting Mr. Wilkes, taking possession and seizing his papers."

him more than ever the centre of national discussion. The populace, whose hero he remained for many years through good and evil report, never, it is true, abandoned him. His faithful middle-class partisans had, moreover, a long indictment to make of the methods that Government had employed or countenanced against him—the legal trickiness by which bills of exception were produced against every action won in the matter of the No. 45 arrests;[1] the dubious circumstances in which a Scottish military adventurer had pertinaciously sought to force a duel upon him;[2] the meanness with which bribery had been taken into Wilkes's own household in order to ruin him by the production of a copy of the *Essay on Woman*;[3] and the "practice" that lay behind the boldness with which a minor member of Bute's Government, Samuel Martin, had challenged Wilkes and wounded him so dangerously that his death, for a time, seemed probable.[4] To add, indeed, to the effectiveness of this indictment, promptly and effectively rhymed by Churchill in the *Duellist*, another Scottish plan for Wilkes's assassination seemed to stand revealed while he was still suffering from the effect of Martin's pistol-shot.[5]

But if Wilkes did not succumb to his injury; if the London mob fought fiercely and successfully to retrieve No. 45 from the flames

[1] Cf. *Gazetteer*, July 15th, on the first action won: "The Council for the crown tendered a *bill of exceptions against the opinion of the lord chief justice on the points of law*, ready engrossed" (and therefore obviously prepared beforehand against all legal propriety). Such a bill was virtually a claim for a re-trial under another judge or judges. Apparently twenty-one such bills of exception had been entered by December 10th—though, if as some Government pamphleteers were to contend in 1764, Chief Justice Pratt was the only one of the twelve judges to hold the views he did on general warrants, the Ministerial course loses much of its appearance of wilfulness.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, September, for the attempts of Captain Forbes who, after challenging Wilkes in Paris in August, apparently followed him to London.

[3] Cf. *An expostulatory letter to the Rev. Mr. Kidgell*, who, acting as one of the Ministerial tools, professed nevertheless to have been impelled by loftier motives than preferment.

[4] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1763, p. 525, for some wishful thinking: "Mr. Wilkes received a dangerous wound in the belly with a pistol-bullet. This occasioned various speculations, and men of moderate principles were willing to hope that the divisions by which the nation in general is agitated, would immediately subside by his death, which they looked upon as certain, and that all parties and disputes would cease, within doors and without, when that event happened. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1763, p. 615, under December 8th: "The life of Mr. Wilkes was attempted by one Alexander Dunn, a supposed madman: his letter, however, by which he endeavoured to gain access to Mr. Wilkes discovers no sign of insanity of mind, but, on the contrary, is penned with much art. . . ."

whither the Majority had consigned it;[1] and if December 6th brought him a most conspicuous legal triumph, the convalescent demagogue was nevertheless right in deciding that the Government had established an insuperable advantage over him by producing the *Essay on Woman*. How, for example, could any but the extremist members of the Minority resist the overwhelming temptation to follow Pitt in washing their hands of the "blasphemer"[2] and feeling their way back to the understanding which a sobered Court had already pressed upon the "Great Commoner"?[3] How, too, till the wind changed, could Wilkes's "respectable" following in the City Corporation be expected to stand up not merely to the almost certainly approaching sentences for seditious libel and for blasphemy but to the devastating revelations on Wilkes's already blackened private character which the Government's production of the *Essay on Woman* had made possible? Here, for instance, is one eagerly read account of what the work the demagogue had printed on his private press contained:[4]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 614, under December 3rd: "The *North Briton* No. 45 was, by both houses of parliament ordered to be this day burnt at the Royal Exchange by the hands of the common hangman; but a great multitude gathering upon this extraordinary occasion . . . not only the executioner, the constables, and the inferior officers were pelted with filth and dirt, but the chief officers present were insulted in the grossest manner. . . . The hangman, thinking it his duty to follow the High Sheriff, made his retreat too . . . and the constables, most of their staves being broken . . . mixed among the crowd, and marched off. . . . The *North Briton*, however, was partly consumed . . . but the remains of it, it is said, were rescued . . . by the violence of the assailants who carried it off in triumph and in the evening displayed it at Temple Bar, where a bonfire was made and a large Jack Boot committed to the flames in the room of it, amidst the acclamations of a vast concourse of people." It will be observed that the *Gentleman's Magazine* was too prudent to mention that a petticoat, representing the Princess Dowager, accompanied the Jack Boot to the flames.

[2] Cf. *Letters to and from Mr. Wilkes* (1769), i, 231–2, for Wilkes's anger at Pitt's having held him "a blasphemer of my God" and a "libeller of my King".

J. S. Watson, *Biography of Wilkes* p. 36, comments: "It was during the discussion on this subject that Lord Chatham, then Mr. Pitt, called Wilkes a blasphemer of his God and a reviler of his King, terms so just and applicable that Wilkes never forgave them, but continued a bitter enemy to Lord Chatham till his lordship's death."

[3] Cf. *A Summary of some late Political Proceedings: collected from the public Papers* for the negotiations according to the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September. Bute, who was now being threatened with impeachment by the louder members of the Minority, was believed to have persuaded the King to seek an accommodation but Temple to have made it impossible by holding out for such terms as the dismissal from office of practically every one concerned with the Peace, and the free disposal by him as First Lord of the Treasury of three places at the Board—one to go to Wilkes.

[4] *A genuine and succinct Narrative of a scandalous, obscene, and exceedingly profane Libel* (by the Rev. Mr. Kidgell) as summarised in the *Gentleman's Magazine*. The Wilkes MSS. at Guildhall contain some strange Kidgell material.

This Libel contains a parody on Mr. Pope's *Essay on Man*, almost from verse to verse, under the title of *An Essay on Woman*.

On the title page is an obscene print, under which is an inscription in Greek signifying The Saviour of the World.

Under this inscription is an insult on a private character, which cannot be repeated without reiterating the injury.

In a few prefatory pages, under the title of Advertisement and Design, all decency is formally renounced.

In the work itself, the lewdest thoughts are expressed in terms of the grossest obscenity; the most horrid impurity is minutely represented; the sex is vilified and insulted; and the whole is scurrilous, impudent, and impious to an incredible degree.

In the variations and notes, the inspired writings are perverted . . . with an invention new, wonderful, and horrid. The most solemn and important passages of the Gospel are tortured into the oblique obscenity of double meanings, worthy only of him, who is at once the enemy of God and man.

To the parody on the *Essay on Man*, is added another on the *Universal Prayer*. . . . There is also a paraphrase of VENI CREATOR, inimitably prophane, under the title of *The Maid's Prayer*. . . .

Actually Wilkes's situation was, perhaps, not quite so forlorn as, in the depression of the sick-room, he seems to have imagined. When in November the Ministry, strengthened by the accession of Bedford's "Bloomsbury Gang", had opened the Parliamentary Session of 1763–4 by sending No. 45 to the flames, the Minority had divided at 111 against 273 in opposition to the extreme terms of reprobation employed.[1] How much, too, the "respectable public" as well as the mob was revolted by the deceit and hypocrisy alleged against such a Minister as Sandwich, in the whole affair of the *Essay on Woman*, was evidenced in many more instances than the mob-rescue of No. 45 on December 3rd or the Special Jury's award of £1000 damages to Wilkes on December 6th.[2] If, moreover, Wilkes's departure for France late in December and his failure to appear in the Commons on January 19th, when his responsibility for No. 45 was to be considered, assumed, despite

[1] Cf. J. S. Watson, *Biography of Wilkes*, p. 33, for the full reprobation from which the Minority endeavoured to strike the charge that No. 45's effect on the King's subjects was "to excite them to traitorous insurrections against his Majesty's Government". On November 23rd the Minority did better against the Ministerial motion that "the privilege of Parliament does not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels", for they divided at 133 against 258.

[2] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 217–20, for some of the attacks on Sandwich. The Guildhall Wilkes MSS. show Sandwich's preparations against Wilkes.

a medical certificate from Paris,[1] the full appearance of a flight, a portion of the Minority still had to be thrice overborne before the severe penalty of expulsion could be imposed. There is, in short, reason to believe that Wilkes's darker fears of thoroughly savage sentences for seditious and blasphemous libel from Lord Mansfield in the Court of King's Bench were exaggerated.[2] The London mob would have been more dangerous than ever when rallying to a martyr, and a Minority, busily engaged in dissociating Wilkes's personal cause from the general cause of "liberty", would have been driven in upon the demagogue once more.

If Wilkes's flight was a stroke of good fortune for George III, the monarch failed to make good use of it. Exasperated by the Minority's giving itself an organisation for continuous Opposition in the "Club in Albemarle Street",[3] insulted by its making Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick's arrival as bridegroom of the King's sister the occasion of enthusiastic welcomes never accorded to himself,[4] he awaited with impatience the end of the Parliamentary manœuvres on all the issues raised in the Wilkes case. The Minority could not, of course, be prevented from discussing, from its Parliamentary aspect, the alleged breach of privilege of which the messengers, the Treasury Solicitor, and the ex-Under Secretary had been guilty when treating Wilkes as they had done the previous April. But if, after long debates on February 13th and 14th, the Ministers relieved these officials of further anxiety from the House of Commons, the Government still had, on February 17th, to dispose of a cleverly worded Minority motion on General Warrants, moderate enough to attract many non-Minority men.[5]

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1764, pp. 88–9. The certificate would seem to show that the journey from London had, indeed, affected his duelling wound and that he had some kind of a medical case worth the Majority's consideration. The truth would appear to be that Wilkes tried to use the wound to gain more time for considering whether or no to face things out in England.

[2] Cf. J. S. Watson, *Biography of Wilkes*, pp. 43–5, for a despondent letter written from Paris on January 20th in which he said that "no man in his senses would stand Mansfield's sentence on the publisher of a paper declared by both Houses of Parliament scandalous and seditious".

[3] Cf. *A Letter to a Member of the Club in Albemarle Street* for interested misrepresentations expected by members: "You must expect to be represented as a *factious* man, joined in a confederacy, which is supported by false alarms. . . . You may chance to be melted by complaints of the cruelty of involving an amiable young Prince in trouble and distraction during the infancy of his reign. You may hear of the anarchy to which popular discontents may lead . . . " The Crown case against Wilkes preparing meanwhile is in the Wilkes MSS. at Guildhall.

[4] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 236–44.

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1764, for the angry *Letter to a late Minority.*

On February 18th, after the Minority had raised as many as 218 votes against the Ministerial 232, the King was already impatient for his revenge and eagerly awaiting the now inevitable finding of contumaciousness against Wilkes for failing to appear to stand his trial in the Court of King's Bench. "Firmness and resolution", wrote the King, "must now be shown, and no one's friend saved who has dared to fly off. This alone can restore order, and save this country from anarchy; by dismissing, I mean not till the question is decided; but I hope in a fortnight that those who have deserted may feel that I am not to be neglected unpunished."[1]

The King's letter was written to George Grenville who had, since Bute's withdrawal, contrived increasingly to assume the functions of First Minister and hardly needed much encouragement to a course of severity. But the policy, resolved upon by the King and his Minister, was, from almost any point of view, thoroughly unwise. While from January to March the municipalities of Dublin, London and Exeter were heading demonstrations of gratitude to Chief Justice Pratt for his findings against general warrants;[2] while the Yorkshire Grand Jury was preparing to imitate the London Common Council in voting thanks to Parliamentary representatives who had supported the cause of "liberty",[3] a policy of punishing the "deserters" of the debates of February 1764 should have been avoided. It merely encouraged the Minority to hold together and supplied fresh material for agitation. That the most sensational dismissal—Lieutenant-General Conway's from his place in the army—should have been reserved for April 19th, the day of a Parliamentary prorogation destined to last until January 10, 1765, only increased the irritation of those who considered the policy of the Court and its Ministry as being at once harsh and tricky.[4] Parliamentary agitation of the grievance might,

[1] *Grenville Papers*, ii. 267, 297, and note.

[2] *Gentleman's Magazine*, February and March 1764.

[3] *Ibid.*, April 1764, which gives also in full the letters of acknowledgement from the two county members of Yorkshire who, as representing the largest county constituency, were regarded as occupying the same leading position among the county members as the four London members held among those for the boroughs.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, May 1764, for an indignant letter stating: "It was represented in the papers that he [General Conway] resigned. Were they who conveyed such a misrepresentation to the publick *afraid*, or were they *ashamed* to have the real truth known? He did not *resign*, but was *turned out*; and for reasons very well understood, he was turned out on the day of the prorogation." The correspondent was angry and suspicious enough to hint at a new danger—the possible abolition of "liberty" by military force.

indeed, have been deferred for a long time but the speedy flow of loud remonstrances,[1] in a land already full of grumbling and savagely unprincipled caricature should have been a warning to those in charge of the machine of State. Minority pamphleteering,[2] Cider County restlessness, anti-Government verdicts in the Law Courts,[3] and even Wilkes's eagerly sought *Letter to the Electors of Aylesbury*,[4] could not be stayed by Parliamentary prorogation.[5]

[1] The *Gentleman's Magazine* for May will be found to contain a great deal on the subject. So will Horace Walpole's *Memoirs of the Reign of George III*, for Walpole was Conway's cousin and a pro-Minority M.P.

[2] Such as *A Defence of the Minority. A Counter-Address to the Public, on a late Dismission of a General Officer. A Letter to the Peace-Maker on the Infraction of the peace by the French and Spaniards. Account of the Character of the late Rt. Hon. Henry Bilson Legge. Reply to the Defence of the Majority*, etc.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1764, for four verdicts by four separate juries against Lord Halifax (in the Court of Common Pleas) in regard to Press arrests of November 1762.

[4] The demand was apparently great enough for the smuggling of copies to be attempted from France and for the *Gentleman's Magazine* of December to venture to devote more than four sides to an abbreviated and bowdlerised version.

[5] But it must be admitted that no mass of scurrilous caricature such as had been rained upon Bute and the Princess Dowager appeared against the Grenville Administration. In fact, the continued preoccupation of the caricaturists and their public with Bute, which caused such a print-collection of 1762 as the *British Antidote to Caledonian Poison* to be continued for the years 1763, 1764, 1765 and 1766, possibly diverted much hostile attention from Grenville.

CHAPTER II

THE KING AND GRENVILLE, 1764–5

"The administration having weathered all storms, having recovered their lost strength, and compleatly triumphed over their enemies, considered themselves as secure for life. And so firmly persuaded were some of the Minority of the probability of this truth, that now thinking *the best of the lay* was on the side of the Ministry, several of them went over to the Court. The most distinguished of these was the Hon. Mr. Yorke the late Attorney-General: who had resigned that employment when a different opinion prevailed."

ALMON'S *History of the Late Minority* pictures the high point of the Grenville Administration, 1764–5.

"The Minority had pledged themselves during the summer, that they would renew the motion against General Warrants. . . . The motion made by Sir William Meredith was 'That a General Warrant for apprehending the authors, printers, or publishers of a libel, together with their papers, is not warranted by law, and is an high violation of the liberty of the subject.' It was supported with the same arguments as before, with some retort upon the administration, that the question was not now *sub judice* in the action brought by Mr. Wilkes against Lord Halifax; for Mr. Wilkes being outlawed that action could not be tried. The Ministry, however, still insisted that the question was *sub judice*; particularly in the cases between the printers and the messengers, where bills of exceptions had been brought, and which were not yet argued . . . and after debating it till five o'clock in the morning, . . . carried the negative by a considerable majority. . . . Here ended this great question concerning General Warrants for this year; about which the Minority had made such extraordinary parade, and given such solemn assurances to the public, that many well meaning persons in different parts of the kingdom, thought them in good earnest in this struggle for liberty . . ."

Almon records Grenville's victory of January 29, 1765.

"'Tis a time of most licentious and plentiful abuse of all persons of eminence among us, whether in or out of power; and the ill effect of these writings is apparent from the discontent and dissatisfaction, which grows more and more universally, without regard to the personal considerations of men.

Our fellow subjects in America are bent on rejecting the authority of the British legislature to levy taxes there; the people instigated by their leading men, have broken loose from all order, and the mob is supposed to be at this time triumphant through all the continent of America, except such few parts of it as the King's troops are stationed in. Should the cider counties prevail next session, 'tis but too likely that the immense number of beer-drinkers within the bills of mortality may immediately insist tumultuously on being indulged in their turn; and where this humour may stop, God only knows. The American example will certainly operate strongly with our common people. . . ."

Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury, i, 131–2, gives a family correspondent's view, October 25, 1765.

If in the winter of 1764–5 the country still showed many unmistakable signs of the tumult of political agitation in which it had been engaged; if widespread mob-demonstrations and rioting now accompanied food-scarcity[1] or unemployment;[2] and if the "licentiousness of the Press" still presented almost as serious a problem as the rancour of the Minority,[3] George Grenville, as First Minister, seems nevertheless to have considered that the worst was over. It was, for example, a gratification to know that, despite some last-minute consultations among the Wilkes following, that formidable demagogue had finally decided not to risk what would overtake him if he came to England to pursue his legal vendetta against the Government and its agents.[4] On November 1st, accordingly, sentence of outlawry could be proclaimed against him and his political career apparently more decisively annihilated than before.[5] Again, a good flow of anti-Minority pamphleteering

[1] Though as early as October 13th a proclamation was issued for the free importation of salted beef, salted pork, bacon, and butter, from Ireland, and "a reward of £100 for discovering any unlawful combinations in the purchase or sale of provisions of any kind", the high price of corn remained completely unaffected thereby. Accordingly the *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1764 (after reporting in October some Whiteboy fighting in Ireland and Plymouth demonstrations against allowing coal exportation when home coal prices were so high) gives under the date of October 30th its first serious account of mob action: "There has been a tumult in Derbyshire", it reports, "on account of the high price of wheat. It had been sold for 8*s*. 4*d*. a bushel, which the colliers thought unreasonable, and cleared the market at 5*s*. a bushel which they said was the London price."

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1765, for its account of what happened when Parliament was opened on January 10th: "Some thousands of weavers went in a body and presented the following petition to both houses of parliament. . . . The humble petition of the journeymen silkweavers . . . sheweth . . . that through the badness of trade, many hundreds of your humble petitioners are actually without work; others dread shortly to undergo the same fate: Our wives, sons, and daughters, are mostly without employ. . . . The assistance your humble petitioners pray for, is that you should this session of parliament, grant a general prohibition of foreign-wrought silks." There were great riots in May when the Parliamentary session was nearing its end without the statute desired by the weavers.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, February 1765, under February 14th: "Mr. Williams, bookseller in Fleet Street, stood on the pillory in New Palace Yard, Westminster, pursuant to his sentence for republishing the *North Briton*, No. 45, in volumes. . . . He was received by the acclamations of a prodigious concourse of people. . . ." Meanwhile in January the public had been told that "the attorney general moved the Court of King's Bench for a writ of attachment against Mr. Almon, the publisher of the pamphlet on juries, libels, etc.", a pamphlet in which Lord Mansfield had been directly arraigned.

[4] Cf. *Letters to and from Mr. Wilkes*, i, 332–5, for Churchill's advice of October 11, 1764, against Wilkes's going to England.

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1764, under November 1st: "John Wilkes Esq; had sentence of outlawry pronounced against him, at the sheriff's county court in Holborn, by the sheriff, coroner, and other officers."

was being maintained so that it seemed, at least on a cursory view, that the balance of forces in the Press was now much more favourable to Government than it had been in Bute's day.[1] To Grenville's mind, too, he had been on the strongest legal and constitutional ground in having spent so much of the energy of the preceding Parliamentary Session in attempting, despite Chief Justice Pratt, to deny the Parliamentary libeller the shelter of privilege[2] and in asserting, despite the Minority, that Pratt's views on General Warrants were only those of one judge out of twelve. According to Grenville, the Government's bills of exception were merely intended to secure a wider and more authoritative decision.[3]

It would seem, nevertheless, from the pro-Governmental pamphleteering of 1764, that, as against the Minority, Grenville was best pleased with two further parts of his record. Unaware apparently of the King's growing dislike for his narrow, domineering personality, convinced that their common war on Wilkes, the mob, and the Minority had bound the King closely to him, Grenville allowed the pamphleteers to claim that he was no Minister imposed by a mob or a faction but one freely chosen by the King according to his constitutional rights.[4] And to the merit of being the King's freely chosen Minister, pamphleteers added the merit of Grenville's alleged abilities as a financier and economist. The Budget of 1764, indeed, seems to have been regarded by Grenville with special pride and the Government pamphleteering on its behalf to bear plain marks of Grenville's own hand.[5] That is, perhaps, why Minority counter-pamphleteering was

[1] The death of Charles Churchill in November 1764, and of Robert Lloyd in December, removing two of Wilkes's most prominent supporters in the literary world, was another item to the Government's advantage.

[2] By motions of November 23, 1763 both Houses had declared that "the privilege of Parliament does not extend to the case of writing and publishing seditious libels, nor ought to be allowed to obstruct the ordinary course of the laws in the speedy and effectual prosecution of so heinous and dangerous an offence".

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1763, for a report of Pratt himself saying in his Court: "I do venture to pronounce this warrant illegal. However, I am well pleased that this matter is finally to be decided upon in the highest court of judicature in this kingdom where abler and more learned judges will argue and determine the point. . . ."

[4] Cf. *A Letter to the Right Hon. George Grenville Esq: upon the Conduct of the late Opposition*: "We have now a minister not obtruded upon his master, confessedly equal to the high post in which he is placed; and while our country has a chance of being honestly served, that service is not earned at the expence of a strain upon regal authority. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1764, for a shortened version of the very complacent *The State of the Supplies and Ways and Means for the present Year: as published by good Authority.*

particularly stinging and effective.[1] Certainly it seems to have done Grenville no ultimate good to paint too rosy a picture of millions of debt paid off, army expenditure reduced below the pre-war level, and £391,000 of new revenue secured on the single article of tea alone, thanks to the "smuggling cutters".[2] It is doubtless a sign of Ministerial irritation at the shrewd criticisms that were directed against Grenville's misleading financial picture that one Government pamphleteer should threaten the great Minority landlords, grumbling disturbingly of Land-Tax maintained at the war-level of 4*s.* in the pound, with a real Land-Tax valuation and not one fantastically below the facts of the case.[3]

One of the financial expedients adopted by Grenville in 1764 and still complacently praised in Government pamphlets of 1765,[4]

[1] Cf. *The Budget: inscribed to the Man who thinks himself Minister*: "I observe that the administration has condescended, in the public papers, to explain the Budget to the meanest capacity. That they should submit to catch at a little popular applause, is not surprising; but it is really so, that they should not have confined themselves within the bounds of truth. To say that they have paid off a great deal of the debt contracted in the late war is a misrepresentation; that the establishment of the army is less than after the last peace, is not true; that the sinking fund has been increased £391,000 by the smuggling cutters, upon 1,400,000 lbs. of tea is false, inconsistent, and impossible. . . ." This strong hitting was ascribed to Legge, who had good Exchequer experience and whose death in August was a real loss to the Minority.

[2] *The Wallet, a supplementary Exposition of the Budget* and *Remarks on the Budget: or a Candid Examination of the Facts and Arguments offered to the public in that Pamphlet* represent the Government's pamphlet defence against the shrewd home thrusts of Hartley, Legge's friend, and writer of *The Budget*. Neither brought conviction for it turned out that every special claim made for the Budget was exaggerated. It turned out, for example, that the Army expenses could only be reckoned as below the pre-war level if six or seven hundred officers on half-pay were omitted from the accounts and the claim that the "smuggling cutters" had brought in £391,000 extra revenue was abandoned by stages.

[3] Cf. *The Wallet*: "But now that the administration are obliged, in their own justification, to lay the state of the landed interest, in this respect, before the whole community, the *Budget*, not the Minister, is answerable for any disagreeable consequences that may ensue from the people's being fully apprised of this important truth! If the nation shall now insist on a thorough reform in this almost universally interesting case, and require a new and perfect account of the *real* rents of the estates all over the kingdom, the club in *Albemarle Street* that set the *Budget* to work, must answer it to those who may suffer by this delicate inquiry! *Then* it will appear whose friendship was greatest to the landholders . . . the minister whose tenderness induced him to wink at this inadequate tax, or the patrons of the *Budget*. . . ."

[4] Cf. *The Political Balance: in which the principles and conduct of the two parties are weighed*: "For these great purposes then, *to secure the dominion, regulate the commerce, and improve the revenue of the British Empire*, was the bill framed, that has been so warmly agitated without doors . . . at once a bill of *police*, *commerce*, and *revenue*. By the wise just and necessary clauses in this bill, the several members of the British dominions are bound together by the chains of commerce . . . and contribute, each in its proportion, by their riches, their labour, their arts, and their valour, to the commerce, the liberty, and the happiness of the whole etc. etc."

despite the strong objections raised in America, was the Act "for granting certain duties on goods in the British colonies for the support of government, and for encouraging the trade to the sugar colonies". This Act, besides imposing on the Colonies new Customs duties on Madeira, Port, and Spanish wines, on silks, calicoes and cambrics, on coffee and pimento, more than quadrupled the duties on foreign clayed sugars in the interest of the British West Indies. By October the growth of serious American discontent must have been obvious to the Government. Here, for example, is the *Gentleman's Magazine* of October 1764 reporting under the date of October 31st.[1]

"The advices received from America", it writes, "are full of the bad effects of the late act of parliament for regulating the trade of the plantations, and for laying a duty on their exports and imports, in order to defray the expences of their own government. The prohibitions laid upon their trade by this act, are grievously complained of, and the rigour with which these prohibitions are enforced by the men of war stationed on their coasts for that purpose, are by no means relished by the Americans, who subsist in a manner by their clandestine commerce with the French and Spaniards, and which must be connived at, if any advantage is to be expected from them by their mother country. On the other hand, the West Indians complain of this indulgence, and are preparing memorials to be presented to parliament, to put a stop to the North American distilleries, from French materials."

In face of this discontent and the protests that came in later from Colonial Assemblies both against the Act of 1764 and the further Stamp legislation he had proposed, Grenville resolved to go on unmoved.[2] In February he brought forward a Stamp Bill, and in March it was placed on the Statute Book without serious opposition.[3] Just when one American pamphleteer, who contrived to

[1] The American pamphleteers also objected violently to the duty of 3*d.* a gallon on foreign molasses and syrups which it was intended rigorously to enforce. The old duty had, indeed, been 6*d.* "which", according to the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "was seldom paid".

[2] Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 253, asserts that "memorials from the important provinces of Massachusetts and New York, though ordered by the King in Council to be laid before Parliament, were actually suppressed". This rather severe judgement was made because though he discovered in the MS. books of the Privy Council Office, under date December 14, 1764, the order for the memorials in question to be placed before Parliament, search of the Journals of the two Houses yielded no evidence that the order had been obeyed.

[3] *Burke's Speech on American Taxation of April 19, 1774*, gives the fact that the House of Commons "on the 15th of February 1765, whilst the stamp act was under deliberation, refused with scorn even so much as to receive four petitions presented from so respectable colonies as Connecticut, Rhode Island,

reach British ears, was affecting to look forward hopefully to the withdrawal of British troops and the end of the justification that had been suggested for the port-duties of 1764,[1] the unprecedented Stamp taxes of 1765 were being imposed, the first ever ordered by Westminster to be collected beyond the harbours and inside the Colonies.

It must, of course, be assumed that Grenville completely misjudged the explosiveness of the American situation and was probably unaware that he was facing anything more serious than the inevitable grumbling of a favourably placed class of taxpayers, asked at length to assume the full weight of their proper burdens. Such grumbling was apparently being overcome in the case of the Cider Counties and, on any Whitehall estimate, American grumbling could hardly cause greater trouble. Grenville, moreover, could not have given the American situation more than a fraction of his attention, for in the opening months of 1765 much else of seemingly greater urgency pressed upon him. Minority pamphleteering against the Government's boastful financial claims was not yet ended;[2] the reassembly of Parliament permitted the planning of more troublesome Minority manœuvre on General Warrants and the Seizure of Papers;[3] and, weightier possibly than all else,

Virginia, and Carolina". Of the debating he reports: "No more than two or three gentlemen, as I remember spoke against the act, and that with great reserve and remarkable. There was but one division in the whole progress of the bill; and the minority did not reach to more than 39 or 40. In the house of lords I do not recollect that there was any debate or division at all. . . ."

[1] Cf. *The mutual interest of Great Britain and the American colonies considered, with respect to an act passed the last session* . . . : ". . . now that there is not a French subject left on the continent, it is thought necessary to keep fifteen battalions of regular troops in the colonies, and for the support of them those grievous duties are imposed. With the recalling, therefore, of these troops from among them, the cause of those severe duties and taxes will be removed . . . the colonies would then resume their trade . . . and the language which they now hold, that they are not treated as Englishmen, but as aliens and slaves, in being taxed without having representatives, would immediately subside. . . ."

[2] Cf. *The State of the Nation, with a preliminary Defence of the Budget* for an attack of marked weight upon Ministerial attempts to discredit that already famous pamphlet, *The Budget*. "I go", said the writer, "to the real state of things, and not to that lamentable system which looks no farther than the drawing up an advertisement for the *Gazetteer*, or dispersing hand-bills of the surprising feats performed, as it were by sleight of hand, by this ingenious and wonderful administration."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1765, under the date of January 29th, for what seems to have been a definite attempt to subject the House of Commons to mob-pressure when the discussion began. "Hand bills" it is reported, "were this day circulated in the public streets, with only these few words,

Westminster, Tuesday, Jan. 29

This Day LIBERTY

The house sat till past five in the morning on the affair of general warrants, etc., and more than 400 members were present. On this occasion an eminent lawyer,

was the problem of the King's physical and mental condition. Only two days after he had opened Parliament on January 10, 1765 the King was seized with an alarming illness that brought some mental trouble and was hardly fully surmounted before the beginning of April.[1] No Regency provision had yet been made to meet the possibility of a Royal demise though the heir was an infant not three years old, while the constitutional problems opened up by the similar lack of provision for a Royal incapacity of any duration were even more intricate. If the Court, in fact, endeavoured to conceal from Grenville the full extent of the King's mental troubles,[2] it could hardly have desired anything better than that Ministers should occupy themselves with the consideration of Regency precedents. The very problem of etiquette, however, made difficulties so that it seems that Ministers waited for the King himself to suggest a Regency Bill before beginning overt work on the subject, and on the new Speech from the Throne that would be required.

It would appear that the King's first suggestions were for a Regency Bill empowering him to nominate a Regent by will, to act in the event of his son's succeeding while still a minor. In order, as he claimed, to avoid "faction" in the Royal Family,[3] the King wished for the right to make a completely private Regency instrument by which the name and even the rank of the nominated Regent or Regents would be undisclosed until a Regency became necessary. The King's proposals, if well meant, were but dubiously constitutional and they lay open, moreover, to the inevitable charge

in a much admired speech, made use of this expression. *For my own part, I think it far better to fall with the laws, than to rise on the ruins of them.*" Almon's *History of the Late Minority*, pp. 305–11, gives an extraordinarily prejudiced account of the position apparently because Almon considered that the Newcastle wing of the Minority forced the question on to their own advantage without waiting for Pitt, disabled by an attack of gout, to take the lead.

[1] Adolphus's *History of England* made no mention of mental troubles until the 1840 edition when there was inserted the following significant observation: "I did not mention this fact in former editions of this work, because I knew that the King and all who loved him were desirous that it should not be drawn into notice. So anxious were they on this point, that Smollett having intimated it in his Complete History of England, the text was revised in the general impression. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Grenville Papers*, iii, 115–25, for entries between January 13th and April 3rd on which Jesse's *Memoirs* base the view that Grenville was successfully kept in ignorance. But such an entry as that of March 18th hardly bears out this opinion. It runs: "Mr. Grenville found the King's countenance and manner a good deal estranged, but he was civil, and talked upon several different subjects."

[3] *Grenville Papers*, iii, 126, 157.

from the suspicions that they would permit a Bute-Princess Dowager Regency of a kind that would provoke revolution. Whether or no Grenville himself really shared some of the suspicions of those who saw Bute's hand in everything the King proposed, he certainly had good constitutional grounds for urging the King to agree to a modification of his original proposals. A compromise was reached, and on April 24th the King, in a Speech from the Throne, asked Parliament for an Act enabling him to nominate a Regent by will, his choice to be restricted "to the Queen or any other person of the Royal Family usually residing in Great Britain".[1]

It had, of course, been impossible for Ministers to state directly to the King the objections of at least some of them to the possibility of a Regency vested in the Princess Dowager. They apparently trusted to some cry being raised in Parliament which, when showing signs of spreading to the streets, would enable them to go to the King and ask him, for the sake of his own dignity and his mother's, to define "Royal Family" in a way excluding the Princess Dowager without offence. And, indeed, the opening proceedings in Parliament seemed to play into Ministers' hands. Objection was raised even to the modified conditions under which the King was to be given the power of constituting an "unknown person" Regent, and it became clear that the phrase "Royal Family" was so indeterminate that on a narrow interpretation it might exclude not merely the Princess Dowager but the Queen herself while, on a broad interpretation, the Princess of Hesse, the King's aunt, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, his brother-in-law, and even the King of Prussia might be included. After the House of Lords had, on May 2nd, rejected a specific motion declaring the Princess Dowager eligible for the Regency, the King was on May 3rd induced by Ministers' pretended fear of worse in the Commons, to authorise them to announce his desire for his mother's exclusion from the scope of the Bill.[2] By May 5th the King had become

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1765, reports the King as asking Parliament "to vest in me the power of appointing from time to time, by instruments in writing, under my Sign Manual, either the Queen, or any other person of my Royal Family usually residing in Great Britain, to be the guardian of the person of such successor, and the regent of these kingdoms. . . ."

[2] Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 262–4. Jesse's treatment based on most of the sources, including the *Grenville Papers*, Walpole's *Letters* and Walpole's *Reign of George III*, seems unimpeachable. There is a somewhat different emphasis in R. Pares, *King George III and the Politicians*, pp. 152–3.

aware of the Ministerial strategy of which he had been made the victim—a strategy based on the fact that the Minority in the Commons now detested Grenville so much as to be capable of assisting in the work of worsting him even if it meant the specific placing of the Princess Dowager's name in the Regency Bill.[1] In point of fact when, a few days later, a motion was brought on in the House of Commons by friends of the Princess Dowager, some of the Minority actually gave it support while others assisted it to victory by abstaining. The Ministers, now branded as baffled plotters against their master's family peace, soon had reason to know that the outraged King was turning to new advisers.[2]

Before dealing with the issues opened up by the King's consultations with his uncle, the Duke of Cumberland, and that prince's negotiations on his nephew's behalf with Pitt, it were well to notice the renewal of mob tumult in the streets that was the strangest feature of this Ministerial crisis period. Whether, as Horace Walpole believed, friends of Wilkes blew up the "Weavers' Riots" (and some earnest students of the period[3] have had their suspicions of what might have been done with a little of Earl Temple's money properly distributed among the leaders of a starving craft)[4] or whether, as the Duke of Bedford, Grenville's colleague, asserted, money had been set circulating by friends of Bute and the Princess Dowager,[5] certain it is that London seemed, in the middle of May, on the brink of street-fighting. The distressed Spitalfields silk-weavers, who had already made a mass-demonstration at the opening of Parliament in January, had been waiting hopefully for the result of a Bill to exclude foreign silks from the British market. When on May 13th this ultra-protectionist proposal, after passing the Commons, had been rejected by the Lords, mainly at the instance of the Duke of Bedford, the crowded thousands of Spitalfields prepared demonstrations on a big scale. On May 14th there was a large procession to St.

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. 1894), ii, 87–90.

[2] Cf. *Grenville Papers*, iii, 165, 171.

[3] Cf. Jesse, author of the meritorious *Memoirs of George III*, who says (*Memoirs of George III*, i, 295): "That these, and other popular tumults which disgraced the earlier period of the reign of George the Third, were fomented by men of high rank and powerful political influence, little doubt seems to exist."

[4] The *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1765, stated that the "principal orator for the weavers, is one Jones a Welchman". He seems to have been a moderate for the account goes on to say that "he has behaved with so much moderation, as to merit the regard of his superiors".

[5] Cf. *Grenville Papers*, iii, 171.

James's with a petition and carrying an ominous black flag. Having failed to find the King that day, the weavers came in even greater force to Westminster on the next when the King was due in the House of Lords to give the Royal assent to a number of measures, including the Regency Bill. On this occasion, many of the Peers, as belonging to the House responsible for the loss of the Silk Bill, were mobbed, and the King, though treated with respect, is reported to have been "followed by an incredible number of Spittle Field weavers, with black flags, imploring His Majesty's gracious interposition in behalf of themselves and their very wretched families".[1] On May 16th there was another procession of 8000 weavers to St. James's but the Guards had been ordered out and there was no serious trouble. The worst anxiety came the next day when, after demonstrations before the House of Lords, the march back began, and a swollen London mob commenced rioting.[2] The trouble, in fact, had finally to be met not merely by a display of civil and military force but by a relief subscription and a promise from the master-weavers to cancel a number of orders already sent to France.[3]

On Sunday, May 19th, the last day of real trouble from the "Weavers' Riots", the negotiations between the Court and Pitt, conducted through the medium of the Duke of Cumberland, must be held to have broken down.[4] On May 12th Cumberland had found the "Great Commoner", when appealed to on behalf of the King, haughty and exorbitant enough in his terms but not altogether impracticable. But after Pitt, then very much under Temple's influence, had insisted on drawing his overbearing brother-in-law into the negotiations, agreement became altogether impossible except, perhaps, on terms that would have left the King a cipher.[5] Temple's sense of his own importance had been vastly increased by the combination of overt and subterranean Opposition politics that had converted him into one of the most dangerous

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1765, p. 244.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for the calling out of the military to protect the Duke of Bedford in Bloomsbury Square.

[3] Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 294.

[4] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1765, under May 19th: "His royal highness the Duke of Cumberland waited on his Majesty, and had an hour's private audience in the royal closet. The same day he visited Mr. Pitt at Hayes, whom he found indisposed, and in the evening his royal highness returned to Windsor."

[5] *Rockingham Memoirs*, i, 194, gives Cumberland's experience of Temple. "I cannot help saying", he wrote, "that I think he was more verbose and pompous than Mr. Pitt."

men of his time, and he must already have been playing with his strange notion of a dominating family triumvirate composed of himself, Pitt, his brother-in-law, and George Grenville, his brother. Certainly, the breakdown of the Pitt-Temple negotiations with Cumberland coincided with a reconciliation between Temple and his brother that further strengthened George Grenville's hand when the baffled King had to ask his Minister to reassume responsibility for the Government.[1]

If Grenville and his colleagues had now refrained from pressing their advantage against the humbled King, it is possible that their Administration might have had a longer life. But they held themselves to have been the victims of a plot in which Bedford especially claimed to see Bute's hand, and they decided to make four demands that touched the King to the quick. They required permission to announce Lord Bute's total exclusion, for the future, from all concern in public affairs; they demanded the dismissal of Bute's brother from the Scottish office of Privy Seal and that of Lord Holland from the Paymastership; and they asked for the appointment of Lord Granby as Commander-in-Chief. It is characteristic of George III that in the midnight hours of May 22nd and 23rd, when he was wrestling with Grenville for some modification of these terms, he should have been most insistent on the promise he had given Bute's brother, in consideration of the surrender of another office, that he should hold the Scottish Privy Seal for life.[2] It is characteristic, too, that when his attempts failed he was for some days in such dejection that a return of mental instability seemed possible.[3] When, however, he reacquired control of himself, Ministers saw that he was so hostile as hardly to be able to refrain from encouraging their enemies by showing the little love that existed between his Administration and himself.[4] Before a large Ministerial exodus to the country was undertaken, an exodus made possible by the prorogation of Parliament on May 25th, it was resolved to send the

[1] The *Grenville Papers* seem to point to a reconciliation taking place on May 22nd just when Grenville was awaiting the result of a virtual Ministerial ultimatum to the King on the conditions for reassuming responsibility.

[2] Cf. *Grenville Papers*, iii, 187.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 188, for Grenville's own observation on the King's gloom and the summons of the Royal physicians.

[4] Cf. Walpole's *Reign of George III*, ii, 180. "Even at his levees", concludes Jesse of the King, "[he] made no scruple of encountering them with cold looks, while their political opponents were received by him with smiles and gracious words."

particularly irate Duke of Bedford to read a strong admonition to the King.

Rumour was long to credit the resulting interview of June 12th with astounding features, Horace Walpole, for example, alleging "invectives against the Princess" and "threats of bringing Lord Bute to the block".[1] But when all exaggeration is discounted to the utmost, there was, at the very least, the offensive insinuation that the King had broken his undertaking with regard to Bute, the unpalatable demand that he should show marks of public favour to his Ministers, and the implied threat that there would be a mass resignation if he did not.[2] It is little wonder that the King was again exasperated to the point of opening negotiations with Pitt, this time through the medium of the Duke of Grafton. Interviews between Pitt and the King took place on June 19th and 22nd, and on June 25th Temple, Pitt's designated First Lord of the Treasury, was summoned. Temple, however, without whom Pitt refused to act, decided against forming a Government,[3] alleging a mysterious reason which he could impart to nobody and which puzzles historians as much as it puzzled contemporaries.[4] Whether or no it was reluctance to help in turning out his brother, now there had been a reconciliation, certain it is that the King's straits threatened to become desperate unless he was prepared to turn for salvation to the Newcastle wing of the Minority. This he now resolved to do through the Duke of Cumberland who, after enlisting the good will of the septuagenarian Newcastle, contrived to forward the erection of a new Government with which the overconfident Grenville Administration was replaced on July 10th.[5]

The very personnel of the new Government represented, of course, important surrenders by the King. Rockingham, for example, the First Lord of the Treasury, had been dismissed from a Lord-Lieutenancy for opposing the Peace of 1762–3, and so had

[1] Walpole's *Reign of George III*, ii, 183. Junius's *Letter* of September 19, 1769, contains an account almost as sensational.

[2] *Bedford Correspondence*, iii, 286–90, certainly indicates indirect menace to Bute to have been uttered also.

[3] Cf. Jesse's *Memoirs of George III*, for a collation of authorities.

[4] Cf. Lord Chesterfield's *Letters*: "Lord Temple positively refused. There was evidently some trick in it, but what, is past my conjecturing: *Davus sum, non Oedipus.*"

[5] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 125, gives an interesting view of the difficulties still being encountered by the Government makers on July 4th.

July 10th was the date of Grenville's dismissal though the succeeding Government was not complete for some time after.

the Duke of Grafton, one of the new Secretaries of State. The other Secretary of State, General Conway, was now being offered signal reparation in his high office for the injury that had been done him in April 1764 when he had been deprived of his Army command in consequence of his stand against General Warrants. And the Duke of Newcastle as Lord Privy Seal not only recovered some of the patronage which the King had intended to place for ever beyond his reach[1] but had, at the age of seventy-two, the supreme satisfaction of reinstalling in place numbers of the faithful who had never deserted Newcastle House. Moreover, if personally more deferential to the King than the late Administration, the new Ministers certainly did not intend to be his tools. This they showed most strikingly, perhaps, when almost as their first Ministerial act they asked and obtained a peerage for Chief Justice Pratt as Lord Camden.[2] This might almost be regarded as a bid for support from Pitt, who had shown great admiration for Pratt's law, and so might one of the most significant of Ministers' numerous changes in the lower departments of Government, the substitution of Nuthall, Pitt's legal adviser, as Treasury Solicitor, in place of the unhappy lawyer who had been overwhelmed by the General Warrants controversy.[3] The Duke of Grafton, in fact, was energetic from the first in attempting, from within the Government, to smooth the way for Pitt's adhesion and consequent assumption of practical power.[4] And pending so happy a consummation Ministers were probably right in ignoring the suggestions they received that they should bind the King to them by permitting the reinstatement of Bute's brother. The problem of Bute's brother as well as that of his close political ally, Lord Northumberland, who had lost the Irish Viceroyalty at the same time that Bute's brother had lost the Scottish Privy Seal, had probably had something to do with Lord Temple's reluctance to take office in

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 127: "It has been said that the Duke of Newcastle is extremely busy disposing of places. . . ." It seems that to make it easier for Newcastle to accept the view that he was now too old for the responsibilities of the Prime Ministership, the ecclesiastical patronage had been attached to the Privy Seal for the first and last time.

[2] Cf. The *London Gazette* according to which the peerage was approved on July 16th, the day after Newcastle had taken the oaths of Privy Seal.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1765, for the following notice: "Tho. Nuthall, Esq: sollicitor to the E. India company—sollicitor to the Treasury, in room of P. C. Webb, Esq." *The Chatham Correspondence* contains numbers of letters to and from Nuthall.

[4] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 317–18, for Grafton early interviewing Pitt and taking the matter on to the King.

June.[1] A reinstatement would not only therefore seem suspicious to a "public", long habituated to see Bute's hand in everything, but might, in view of the Pitt-Temple alliance, prevent Pitt's acceptance of office once more. That Ministers were well advised, in the existing state of public opinion, to take every precaution against misrepresentations purporting to show them as mere tools of Bute for revenging himself upon Grenville, seems clear both from a hostile demonstration engineered by Pitt's City supporters[2] and the extensive flow of pamphleteering attack. During his administration Grenville had certainly profited from pamphleteering support[3], and now that he was reconciled with his brother, Temple, the two commanded some of the most formidable pens in politics. Accordingly the Ministry that had displaced Grenville's was promptly under fire not merely as a strange mixture of youthful inexperience and senile decay,[4] lacking all serious executive capacity at a critical time, but as a band owing place solely to Bute's resentments. Here is an extract from *A Letter to the Earl of B——*[5] which was given the place of honour in the August number of so reputable a publication as the *Gentleman's Magazine* and must be taken as a threatening apostrophe to Bute:

A few young and inexperienced noblemen, now for the first time in office, together with the dregs of a vanquished opposition, may, indeed, be brought to trust to your promises, to hold the helm they cannot

[1] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 313 n.

[2] A child having been born to the Queen on August 21st the occasion was seized to make a political demonstration of the City congratulations presented on August 28th. The address presented on this occasion by the City authorities assured the King that "whenever a happy establishment of public measures shall present a favourable occasion, they will be ready to exert their utmost abilities in support of such wise councils as apparently tend to render his majesty's reign happy and glorious". Some of the intricacies of City politics, then much under the sway of the now forgotten Beardmore, will be found noticed in the critical *Letter to the Common Council of London on their late extraordinary Address* whilst another pamphlet defending the Government under the title of *A Vindication of the Whigs* did not hesitate to counter-attack the Common Council's hero, Pitt, in good set terms.

[3] Cf. *Selwyn Correspondence*, i, 389, for Lord Holland on "the excessive self-conceit of Grenville that could make his writers call him—if he did not write it himself—the greatest minister this country ever saw. . . ."

[4] Rockingham, the thirty-five year-old head of the Treasury, and Grafton, the thirty-year-old Secretary of State, had never held even minor Ministerial posts before, and the same was true of Secretary Conway and Mr. Chancellor Dowdeswell, who might indeed be in their forties, but had not the slightest experience of the routine of their offices or the responsibility of leading the House of Commons. Experience, on the other hand, was represented by those uninspiring septuagenarians, Winchilsea and Newcastle.

[5] Published as a 6*d.* pamphlet.

govern, and by their weakness to increase your power. But, my Lords, the grave, the experienced, the capable, the efficient, you have so effectually driven from the counsels of your sovereign; you have so happily succeeded in sowing jealousies and discord; and have with so much artifice, weeded out, one after another, every man whose service could promise solidity to the King's government and prosperity to the state; that thinking men have now no hope remaining. . . . Is there no force left in the constitution to drag out this pernicious Favourite into light, and to emancipate our sovereign and ourselves from the shame and burthen of his yoke? I trust there is that force. . . . The grievances which are publicly known and felt, will not long wait for the redress of public, signal, and exemplary punishment. The grand inquest of the nation will not for ever be deluded. . . .

There was counter-pamphleteering, of course, some of it able enough,[1] but it is significant of the deep-seated suspicions entertained by public opinion that, during the autumn, when American Stamp Act discontents ought to have been monopolising public attention, Grenville-Temple pamphleteering on the alleged connections between Bute and the Administration, should still have held pride of place in the political field. The October number of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, for example, studied in innumerable country-houses and rectories early in November, gave its opening pages to the examination of an anti-Administration pamphlet entitled *The Principles of the late Changes impartially examined.* This ascribed Grenville's fall to his having "declared open war" on the "Favourite" and treated Grenville's successors as "poisoned with L—— B——'s system" and "obstacles in the way of getting back to the public service those ministers to whom the eyes of all England look", the Pitt-Temple-Grenville Triumvirate presumably. And it is, perhaps, just as significant to find the same number of the *Gentleman's Magazine* giving long extracts from yet another Grenville pamphlet, *The Political Apology, or Candid Reasons for not taking part in the present System.* In this pamphlet the

[1] Especially *The Merits of the New Administration truly stated in Answer to the several Pamphlets and Papers published against them.* Here is a significant summary: "The pretended charges against the present administration are few in number. I state them fairly, in affirming they amount to no more than this: That the new ministers are under the influence of the Favourite, which appears to be *false*; that they were recommended to the Crown by the D—— of *C——d*, which does them honour; that they are disavowed by Mr. *Pitt*, which has not yet been proved; that they are young, which is partly true, and not pertinent; and that their administration will not be lasting, which is more than either they can deny, or their enemies affirm, with certainty." As the *Gentleman's Magazine* noticed, however, of the pamphleteer's treatment of the charges against Ministers: 'the first, the *Favourite's influence*, he thinks of most importance to remove".

gravamen of the charge against Ministers was that, with two paltry exceptions, they had not "since their accession to power displaced any one man of all that numerous train which are listed under the favourite". But emphasis was also laid on the Administration's unsatisfactory mixture of "old men hackneyed in corruption" and young men who were mere novices in "every preliminary to business".

Less prejudiced observers than the Grenville-Temple pamphleteers also considered that the nearer the Parliamentary Session drew, the more desperate would grow the plight of the new Ministers.[1] It was not merely that the Duke of Cumberland's death in October had removed the Government's surest shield at Court and their surest guard against the inevitable suggestions from the King that Ministers were not by themselves of the calibre to deal with the troubled situation, especially in America. If, indeed, the King had known of one of the Ministers' devices for lessening their problems—the project of a subscription among themselves to keep the exiled Wilkes quiet—his sense of their insufficiency might have been much sooner followed by action than it was. But though Ministers ultimately managed to purchase Wilkes's silence without a crisis,[2] their principal problem, after all, as the Parliamentary Session approached, was how men so totally unversed in office as Conway and Dowdeswell were to control the Commons through a difficult Session and how the even more inexperienced, because more youthful, Rockingham and Grafton were to keep the lead in the Lords. It is no wonder that November found them painfully exploring means to conciliate Pitt,[3] and that when, in December, Newcastle, acting for his younger friends, began arranging the Debate on the Address he

[1] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 131–2, for a correspondent writing from London, October 26, 1765: "'Tis a time of most licentious and plentiful abuse on all persons of eminence among us; and the ill effect of these writings is apparent from the discontent and dissatisfaction, which grows more and more universally. . . ."

[2] *The Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, the pamphlet giving the controversy between the two in 1771, published a letter of Wilkes's to one of the Lords of the Treasury (dated Paris, December 12, 1765) announcing that "Mr. Fitzherbert [of the Commission for Trade and Plantations] has offered me, in the name of some of the ministry, the annual sum of 1000 *l.* to be paid out of the income of their respective places." Though Wilkes went on to say that he had "rejected this proposal as clandestine, eleemosynary, and precarious" there is evidence that his financial straits had already induced him to take some Ministerial money and that he was to take more.

[3] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 329, 333–5.

endeavoured to recruit at least a Seconder who was known as a friend of the "Great Commoner".[1]

It must have been a great discouragement to Ministers, in these circumstances, to learn that Pitt was advising his correspondents against helping the Government and was expressing special hostility to Newcastle.[2] That may have been one of the reasons why Ministers decided that Parliament should be opened on December 17th with a Speech from the Throne colourless enough to speak not of Stamp Act riots but "matters of importance" that had "lately occurred in some of" the American Colonies. Ministers were, in fact, modest enough to give as their principal reason for the reassembly of Parliament before Christmas, the opportunity thereby afforded "to issue the necessary writs on the many vacancies that have happened in the House of Commons since the last session: so that the Parliament may be full, to proceed, immediately after the usual recess, on the consideration of such weighty matters as will then come before them".[3] The Speech notwithstanding, the essential debating turned on the American disturbances, and the Grenville ex-Ministers, with the initial advantage of being able to make capital of the Government's almost ludicrous under-statement of the American position, scored heavily.[4] Ministers were helped, of course, by a widespread reluctance in England to consider the application of force in America. But it is hardly surprising that, before facing the full Parliamentary storms of January, they should once again throw out feelers to Pitt and once again endeavour to recruit from the Pitt connection.[5] And in declining advantageous office in the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 338–42.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 342–6, for such passages as "I confess it appears to me, that nothing would be less suited to your situation, or your opinions of men, than to be held out to the world as connected with the Duke of Newcastle; who, in my poor judgement, will render impossible any solid system for the settlement of this distracted country, as long as his Grace's influence predominates. . . ."

[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1765.

[4] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 351, for Grenville in the Commons on "why the parliament was not called sooner together? why his Majesty was advised to speak with so much lenity of America? with many other whys" and *Ibid.*, p. 354 for the Upper House proceedings where, according to Shelburne's report to Pitt "the Opposition, consisting of the late ministers, showed a great deal of factious ability: which, as it was not much pulled to pieces by any one, appeared to me to pass for real".

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 355–6, for Shelburne writing to Pitt as follows: "I had no idea that my conduct in the House of Lords could be remembered beyond the day; but the next day Lord Rockingham sent Sir Jeffrey Amherst to Colonel Barré, and yesterday sent Mr. Dunning to Colonel Barré and to me . . . he thought he could answer any opening would be made that I could wish, and that Colonel

Rockingham Government and the redress of "wrongs" received in 1763 and 1764, Lord Shelburne and Colonel Barré did more than assert that no political "system could be formed, durable and respectable, if Mr. Pitt could not be prevailed on to direct and head it". They criticised the "infatuation" of Ministers who believed they had "the confidence of the court; notwithstanding a very particular conduct in Lord Bute, and a party constantly pervading it, of Lord Egmont, Lord Chancellor, Charles Townshend, Lord George Sackville, Sir Fletcher Norton, etc., ready at a moment's warning to embrace any system".[1] That famous phrase "the King's friends" was plainly near coining already.

Barré should have rank in the army, or anything else added to the vice-treasureship, which had been offered him some time since. . . . Lord Rockingham expressed himself certain of Mr. Pitt's good wishes, and that they were most ready to be disposed of as he pleased; mixed, however, with very great apprehensions, in consequence of second-hand accounts and anecdotes . . . and a great embarrassment as to the manner of application. I did not think it fit to suggest anything, or to enter further into the matter."

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 357.

CHAPTER III

THE ROCKINGHAM AND CHATHAM GOVERNMENTS

"The late administration came into employment, under the mediation of the Duke of Cumberland, on the tenth day of July 1765; and was removed, upon a plan settled by the Earl of Chatham, on the thirtieth day of July 1766, having lasted just one year and twenty days.

"Whilst that administration provided for the liberty and commerce of their country, as the true basis of its power, they consulted its interests, they asserted its honour abroad. . . .

"They treated their sovereign with decency; with reverence. They discountenanced, and, it is hoped, for ever abolished, the dangerous and unconstitutional practice of removing military officers for their votes in parliament. They firmly adhered to those friends of liberty, who had run all hazards in its cause, and provided for them in preference to every other claim.

"With the Earl of Bute they had no personal connexion, no correspondence of councils. They neither courted him nor persecuted him. They practised no corruption; nor were they even suspected of it. They sold no offices. They obtained no reversions or pensions, either coming in or going out, for themselves, their families, or their dependants.

"In the prosecution of their measures they were traversed by an opposition of a new and singular character; an opposition of placemen and pensioners. . . . And having held their offices under many difficulties and discouragements, they left them at the express command, as they had accepted them at the earnest request, of their royal master."

From BURKE's *Short Account of a late Short Administration.*

"General Conway moved for leave to bring in a bill to repeal that [Stamp] Act: and drew an affecting and alarming picture . . . All orders for goods from this country were stopped: the Americans would neither take any more, nor pay for what they had. Eight merchants who had received orders to the amount of £400,000 had received counter-orders. Antigua was near ruined by famine. The tax fell particularly on the poor, particularly on the poor of Georgia. At home . . . Nottingham had dismissed a thousand hands: Leicester, Leeds and other towns in proportion. Three in ten of the labourers in Manchester were discharged. The trade of England was not only

stopped, but in danger of being lost. If trade suffered, land would suffer in its turn. . . . The fisheries were in equal danger. The right of taxation he did not doubt would be given for us in Westminster Hall: but the conflict would ruin both countries. We had but five thousand men in three thousand miles of territory: the Americans one hundred and fifty thousand fighting men. If we did not repeal the Act he did not doubt that France and Spain would declare war and protect the Americans. As the Colonies would not take our manufactures they would set up their own. He had a piece of cloth, he said, in his pocket, made at Philadelphia, as cheap as England . . ."

Horace Walpole's Parliamentary report for February 21, 1766. . . .

"Lord Chatham . . . was indeed long the favourite character of our countrymen. Every tongue was wanton in his praise. The whole people lavished on him their choicest favours, and endeavoured by the noblest means, by an unbounded generosity and confidence, to have kept him virtuous. With what anguish were we at last undeceived? How much it cost us to give up a man, who had so long entirely kept possession of our hearts? . . .

"But I have done with Lord Chatham. I leave him to the poor consolation of a place, a pension, and a peerage, for which he has sold the confidence of a great nation. . . ."

From WILKES's *Second Letter to the Duke of Grafton*, dated December 12, 1766.

THANKS to fine writing by Burke in the eighteenth century[1] and by Macaulay in the nineteenth,[2] the Rockingham Administration of 1765–6 is handled in very tender fashion by history books basing themselves on the "Whig tradition". But, as has already been pointed out, contemporaries were apt to think of that Administration as a creation of Bute's for ousting Grenville and to have no very high opinion of its composition or abilities. This remained largely true even when, in the course of the Session resumed on January 14, 1766 and ended on June 6th, marked changes in favour of "liberty" were undertaken—the repeal of the Stamp Act, the freeing of private houses, unengaged in the trade, from the Cider Excise, and the passing of House of Commons resolutions against General Warrants and the Seizure of Papers. Other "services" too might be claimed for Ministers who allowed the baffled silk-weavers of 1765 an import-ban on foreign-wrought silks in 1766 and who hoped, by some conciliatory modifications of the commercial regulations imposed on the Colonies, to forward a rapid British recovery from the severe trade depression that had followed American retaliation against the Stamp Act.[3] That an Administration, presiding over such a programme, should have been rumoured, during the whole of that programme's execution, to be in a bad way and tottering towards collapse is only as strange as that the rumour should be true.

Though the King had no lofty opinion of Ministers who, as he saw it, surrendered far too easily to mobs both British and American; though the Royal views, gauged very quickly by placeman and pensioner, inevitably made Ministers' Parliamentary tasks more

[1] Beginning with the well-known *Short Account of a late Short Administration* (1766).

[2] Especially in the *Chatham* Essay.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1766, History, pp. 31–2, on the consequences, in both Continents, of the American pledges not to import from Britain while the Stamp Act remained law: "But though a violent resentment supported the spirit of the colonists, they could not but sensibly feel the inconveniences which an entire stoppage of trade must occasion. . . . However, their warehouses were full of British goods, for which they had not paid. And the many resources of so vast an extent of country, abounding in the most essential articles of life, prevented them from feeling so much immediate distress, as our own manufacturing and labouring poor at home. It must be observed, that the enormous sums owing to our merchants, in the colonies, added greatly to the difficulties the public were under, and severely affected the trading and manufacturing part of the community. These debts, amounting to several millions sterling, the Americans absolutely refused to pay, pleading in excuse their utter inability. . . ."

difficult,[1] Pitt, it must be confessed, often worried the Government more than did the Court. In one of the most remarkable speeches he ever made in Parliament—and in 1766 he was speaking as well as he had ever done, and with greater authority—he had opened his participation in the events of the Session by announcing, on January 14th, that though he considered "every capital measure" taken by the Grenville Government as "entirely wrong" yet, in regard to their successors, "by comparing events with each other, reasoning from effects to causes, methinks I plainly discover the traces of an over-ruling influence".[2] After separating himself from mere ignorant denunciations of Bute and the Scots by praising the valour of the Highlanders in the last war; after skilfully ascribing his troubles with Bute not to the fact that that nobleman was a Scot but that he "wanted wisdom, and held principles incompatible with freedom", Pitt had passed on, in his Stamp Act discussion, to pronounce doctrines of "liberty" quite as advanced as those of the Americans. Here are some salient passages spoken by Pitt:[3]

It is my opinion that this kingdom has no right to lay a tax upon the colonies. At the same time I assert the authority of this kingdom over the colonies to be sovereign and supreme, in every circumstance of government and legislation whatsoever. They are the subjects of this kingdom, equally entitled with yourselves to all the natural rights of mankind, and the peculiar privileges of Englishmen; equally bound by its laws and equally participating of the constitution of this free country. The Americans are the sons, not the bastards of England. Taxation is no part of the governing or legislative power. The taxes are a voluntary gift and grant of the Commons alone. In legislation, the three estates of the realm are alike concerned; but the concurrence of the Peers and the Crown to a tax, is only necessary to close with the form of a law. The gift and grant is of the Commons alone.... When, therefore, in this House we give and grant, we give and grant what is our own. But in an American tax, what do we do? We, your Majesty's Commons of Great Britain, give and grant to your Majesty, what? Our own property? No! We give and grant to your Majesty, the

[1] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 321–47, for a long discussion by a patient student of all the important evidence who, very favourable as he was to George III and denying though he did the stronger insinuations against the monarch, admitted that he declined to undertake dismissals of placemen for opposition to Stamp Act Repeal.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 365 n. The speech survives in the form in which it was taken down by Sir Robert Dean, assisted by the Earl of Charlemont, gentlemen who had apparently prepared themselves for an announcement decisive in the course of politics.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 366–7 n.

property of your Majesty's Commons of America.' It is an absurdity in terms.

The distinction between legislation and taxation is essentially necessary to liberty. The Crown, the Peers, are equally legislative powers with the Commons. If taxation be a part of simple legislation, the Crown, the Peers, have rights in taxation as well as yourselves: rights, which they will claim, which they will exercise, whenever the principle can be supported by power.

Whatever be thought of Pitt's constitutional law—and in the Lords, Camden, at least, was prepared to defend it from Lord Mansfield[1]—events have justified it effectively enough to render even the "democratic" position on the Budget dispute of 1909 explicable in its terms. More immediately prophetic of the "popular" line, Colonial and British, in disputes nearer to his own time was Pitt's next passage:[2]

"There is an idea in some", said the "Great Commoner", "that the colonies are virtually represented in this House. I would fain know by whom an American is represented here? Is he represented by any knight of the shire, in any county in this kingdom? Would to God that respectable representation was augmented to a greater number! Or will you tell him that he is represented by any representative of a borough—a borough which, perhaps, its own representatives never saw? This is what is called 'the rotten part of the constitution'. It cannot continue a century: if it does not drop, it must be amputated. The idea of a virtual representation of America in this House is the most contemptible idea that ever entered into the head of man; it does not deserve a serious refutation.

"The Commons of America, represented in their several assemblies, have ever been in possession of this, their constitutional right, of giving and granting their own money. They would have been slaves if they had not enjoyed it. At the same time, this kingdom, as the supreme governing and legislative power, has always bound the colonies by her laws, by her regulations and restrictions in trade, in every thing, except that of taking their money out of their pockets without their consent. Here I would draw the line. . . ."

Here was not only a prophecy of the Rotten Borough abolition that had already commenced attracting adherents[3] but one of the

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 382–5 n., for the three contests between the two in the Lords on February 14, 17, and 18, 1766, when the Upper House was dealing with the Declaratory Bill and Stamp Act Repeal. Camden, like Pitt, was prepared to call the Stamp Act not merely injudicious but unconstitutional and illegal and therefore to object to those parts of the Declaratory Act that might still leave it open for a Government to attempt another Stamp Bill.

[2] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 367 n.

[3] Cf. *A Collection of Letters and Essays in favour of Public Liberty first published in the News-Papers in the Years 1764, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, and 1770 in three*

reasons why American satisfaction with Stamp Act Repeal was such that the firework celebrations claimed victims on a scale comparable with those of a modern Independence Day.[1] Nor did this speaking stand alone. Against the passionately convinced demand of Grenville that a few rowdy Colonial mobs should not be encouraged to defy Acts of Parliament with an impunity that would produce fatal consequences in the future, Ministers found their principal support in a second remarkable speech that Pitt was allowed to deliver in Parliament on January 14th.[2]

After such preliminaries it is not surprising to find Rockingham and Grafton seeking an interview with Pitt on January 18th which they thought and hoped would open the way to "great good to this country".[3] On February 13th, after another particularly fine speech from Pitt on the previous day,[4] rumour changed its course and reported not so much that Ministers were trying to persuade the King to call on Pitt to take charge, as that Ministers, when the American business was over, would propose "several removals", doubtless of Stamp Act defenders, and would resign on the King's expected refusal to consent.[5] By February 25th, when there were

volumes by an amicable Band of Wellwishers to the Religious and Civil Rights of Mankind (1774). This collection gives a letter of December 29, 1764 and another of December 26, 1765 advocating the freeing of the borough representation from the private controls, often established within living memory "under the management of mercenary lawmen and petty-foggers . . . while the honest industrious tradesman, intent upon his own business, had neither the means to detect the fallacy, nor to expose and punish the wrong doer". A third letter in Volume I, written on April 22, 1766 about the same subject, did not, of course, like the two mentioned, precede Pitt's speech.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1766, Chronicle, pp. 114–15, for how "a most melancholy accident happened to 22 young gentlemen who were busied at the school-house [of Hartford, Conn.] in preparing fire-works for the rejoicings that were intended on the news having been received of the repeal of the stamp-act".

[2] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 369 n. "I have been charged with giving birth to sedition in America. . . . The gentleman tells us, America is obstinate; America is almost in open rebellion. I rejoice that America has resisted. Three millions of people so dead to all feelings of liberty, as voluntarily to submit to be slaves, would have been fit instruments to make slaves of the rest. . . . If the gentleman does not understand the difference between external and internal taxes, I cannot help it; but there is a plain distinction between taxes levied for the purpose of raising a revenue, and duties imposed for the regulation of trade. . . ."

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 371–3.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 378, for an observer's report on the speaking of February 12th on the Third Reading debate on the "American Declaratory" Bill: "Mr. Pitt was there, and spoke as pleasingly, though not very argumentatively, as I ever heard him. He never appeared in better health; and introduced, with infinite humour, the meeting between Lord Bute, George Grenville and the Duke of Bedford: a delicate subject for George Grenville to speak upon: and yet he did speak upon it, guardedly and dexterously. . . ."

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 379 n.

perhaps increased signs of Royal doubts on the projected Stamp Act repeal, still being denounced by Grenville as "servile, mean, and contemptible",[1] some skilled observers, holding that Lord Bute sympathised with Grenville's plans for "constant opposition in *every* stage",[2] ventured to affirm that as likely a conclusion as any to the political difficulties of the day was the return of the Grenville-Bedford Ministry, strengthened by Earl Temple.[3] And, in point of fact, though Ministers had by this time passed the "American Declaratory Bill", the enactment of Stamp Act repeal seemed so much more formidable a task that on February 26th, the very day of the introduction into the Commons of the necessary Bill, Lord Rockingham sent an almost despairing appeal for help to Pitt.

The envoy entrusted with Rockingham's appeal was Nuthall, Pitt's friend, whom Rockingham had, on that account, made Solicitor to the Treasury. Here is Nuthall's report of Rockingham's overture as he gave it to Pitt:[4]

> Lord Rockingham, in Palace Yard, called to me to come into his coach, and, after some conversation concerning public affairs, said, He wished to God, Mr. Pitt would fix upon some plan for carrying on administration, putting himself at the head of it; and that such a plan might be laid before the King—that if such a thing was to be brought to the King, his Lordship verily believed his Majesty would concede to it—that if the ministry were to desire the King to put the management of public affairs into Mr. Pitt's hands, and on that idea the King should send for Mr. Pitt, his Lordship feared, if arrangements were not previously settled, it might end in breaking to pieces the present administration; which made him very desirous that a system might be previously settled. . . .

From this rather involved communication, which seems, perhaps,

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 395.

[2] Jesse's *Memoirs of George III*, i, 347–9, gives perhaps a biased account of the meeting Bute consented to hold with Grenville and Bedford in order to consider their plans against Stamp Act repeal. Bute was being canvassed in the attempt to get closer to the Royal ear which, despite all denials, he was still widely supposed to possess.

[3] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 396 n., for a letter from "Single Speech Hamilton" to an absent M.P. describing a last attempt to spoil the ground for the repeal of the Stamp Act by procuring the re-commital of the resolutions on which it was based: "The House of Commons sat till two o'clock [night of February 24th-25th]", wrote Hamilton, "upon the report of the American resolutions. Oswald moved, that the resolution of the repeal might be re-committed, and Lord Bute's friends took a warm part. I know nothing more with certainty of any change, than when you left me. The reports, as usual, are various and contradictory. Lord Temple is gone to Stowe; my opinion retains rather its former bias, and I still think it will terminate in the old ministry, and Lord Temple; but many who have a right to know think otherwise."

[4] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 397.

to explain Rockingham's ineffectiveness as a speaker, it may be deduced that Rockingham wished to make over his place as Head of the Government to Pitt while getting him to retain as much of the Government's personnel as possible. Pitt, however, who wanted an altogether freer hand, announced that he was willing to treat with Rockingham, Grafton and Conway, the Ministerial negotiators suggested by Rockingham, but only after the King should have commissioned him.[1] He urged, indeed, that the type of prior consultation, suggested by Rockingham, was unfair to the King but, in doing so, he virtually demanded that Rockingham, without guarantees for the mass of his following, should announce to the King his inability to continue, and his view that Pitt should be summoned. To leave his following and policy at the arbitrary Pitt's mercy must have seemed to Rockingham, moved by the intensely personal politics of the time, dishonourable so long as business could be transacted at all.

By March, under the impulsion of the two Secretaries, Grafton and Conway, the Rockingham following was beginning to resign itself to considerable "alterations" from the hand of Pitt though it hoped that "these would be moderate, and made as little disgustful as might be, and particularly as respecting the Duke of Newcastle".[2] In April a direct clash between Ministers and Pitt on their rumoured project of "economies" in the Militia was avoided, and they agreed, after some hesitation, to provide £150,000 for the annual expenses of the force which owed its modernisation to Pitt.[3] But the ship of state was set rocking once more by the hasty departure of the Duke of Grafton, tired of the delays in coming to terms with Pitt, and, if he was finally replaced by the Duke of Richmond, the small authority of the Government was revealed in the petty muster of members that could be gathered, even in the Commons, for the important legislation on Colonial Trade being undertaken in May.[4] On May 28th the Duke of Grafton, by

[1] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 398–401, for two messages from Pitt to Rockingham, the second announcing as Pitt's final decision that he was "under an impossibility of conferring upon the matter of *administration* without *his Majesty's commands*".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 408, for the wish of Lord John Cavendish, one of Rockingham's Lords of the Treasury, that, as Newcastle, at Pitt's desire, "was to be laid aside, it might be on a bed of roses, not on a bed of thorns".

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 412–14, for "the reluctance for a long time of the treasury to propose the usual estimate".

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 418, for Nuthall writing to Pitt on May 8th: "it makes but a ghastly appearance, on the part of the directors of the political machine, when,

stating in the open House of Lords his reasons for resigning, inflicted another dangerous blow on the tottering Government. The Duke claimed he had no objection to the persons or the measures of the Ministers in office but affirmed that their Administration "wanted authority, dignity and extension"[1] such as would be possessed by a Government formed by Pitt. Yet the Government still kept together, prorogued Parliament on June 5th after an unusually large Sessional addition to the Statute Book,[2] and was only overthrown by the bad-faith of one of its own number, less open and more self-seeking than Grafton. Lord Northington, the Lord Chancellor, who had had some previous experience of deserting threatened Governments and making terms with their successors, decided early in July that the time had come for him to act. Urging a difference from his colleagues on the problem of the future Canadian constitution, airing his grievance of being frequently left in the dark by brother-ministers who had good reason to distrust him, Northington went to the King to press his resignation and to beg him, in view of the Ministerial impotence he alleged, to send for Pitt.[3] The King had some excuse, if he desired it, for treating a Lord Chancellor's advice on such a subject with special attention, and Lord Northington had therefore the special pleasure of covering a Royal summons to Pitt with a letter of his own, hinting at the part he had played, offering assistance, and even conveying his readiness to make special allowance for Pitt's close connections with Lord Camden.[4]

It is difficult to hold that the King, if showing some lack of personal consideration for Rockingham, in any way transgressed the limits of the Constitution, as understood in 1766, when he sent for Pitt as he did. And it is to the King's credit that his conception of Pitt's task was hardly a wholesale removal of the Rockingham Government.[5] In fact, one of the reasons why Temple, who was

in a question of such importance as that now before the House, concerning the American duties, free port &c., only seventy members can be found. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 421.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1766, History, p. 47, for "this vigorous session of parliament; in which a more than ordinary share of business had been transacted". Ninety-five public, and one hundred and one private bills had been passed.

[3] Cf. Jesse's *Memoirs of George III*, i, 358–60.

[4] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 434–6.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 443, for the King giving Pitt an account of his talk with Temple: "I opened to him a desire of seeing him in the Treasury, and, in conjunction with you, chalking out such an administration as can be formed, considering the unhappy divisions that subsist between men, yet taking the present administration for the basis to build on, with such alterations as might appear necessary."

sent for to head the Treasury, declined to come in was apparently that the proposed sweep of the Government departments was not to be clean enough to allow him to surround himself at the Treasury with his own friends and to nominate others of higher status to the Cabinet.[1] The opening struggle of wills between Temple and Pitt may, indeed, have contributed something to the disappointing results that were ultimately seen to have flowed from the displacement of the Rockingham Administration, just when it was beginning to awaken genuine symptoms of "independent" support.[2] Despite Pitt's having to send for medical help in the very first week of taking up the royal commission,[3] no one, not even Temple, seems to have suspected that Pitt was already in the first stages of the physical and nervous collapse that was to have such catastrophic consequences. But a contest of wills between Pitt and a brother-in-law as imperious as himself was certainly an unfortunate commencement in Cabinet-making for one, who, in any case, lacked the art of tactfully soothing the disappointed and hardly possessed the patience to remember that the politicians with whom he had to treat were, electorally speaking, independent powers.

At the end of July, therefore, when Pitt was coming near the end of his Government-making, he must not only have been approaching the danger-point of nervous exhaustion but must already have awakened dangerous resentments. Outwardly, of course, his Government seemed strong enough with Grafton at the Treasury, Camden on the Woolsack (Northington being compensated with the Presidency of the Council and the reversion, for two lives, of a valuable sinecure), Conway and Shelburne in the Secretaryships of State, Charles Townshend at the Exchequer, and Pitt himself at the Privy Seal Office, free for leadership. But events were to prove that the Ministry was not so strong as it looked. It was not merely that Temple, angry that Pitt had taken for granted even his

[1] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 468, for Temple describing to Lady Chatham, his sister, "the indignation with which I received the proposition of being stuck into a ministry as a great cipher at the head of the Treasury, surrounded with other ciphers, all named by Mr. Pitt, of a different complexion from me".

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1766, Chronicle, under August 6th, for a warm address to Rockingham from the merchants of London trading to the West Indies and America, and under August 17th for the escort of "near 200 gentlemen" who accompanied Rockingham in a kind of State entry into York and for the Leeds, York, Halifax, Hull and Wakefield addresses afterwards presented to him by his fellow Yorkshiremen.

[3] *Chatham Correspondence*, ii, 439–40.

readiness to sacrifice his brother, George Grenville,[1] was about to direct his formidable Press-engines against his brother-in-law, or that Rockingham found it difficult to forgive Dowdeswell's supersession at the Exchequer after his retention had been made by him a subject of special concern. It was that Pitt, conscious, perhaps, already that he was incapable of the strain of leading the Commons, decided early in August to accept a Peerage as Earl of Chatham.

Pitt's acceptance of the Peerage brought against him an astonishing shout of wrath from those very parts of the nation most accustomed to yell for "liberty" and the "Great Commoner". There had already been busy rumours that Bute had played some part in deciding the change of government,[2] and it could be alleged, not altogether without reason, both that Bute's friends had been well looked after and that Bute's brother, dismissed by Grenville and kept out by Rockingham, had been reinstated by Pitt. These things notwithstanding, the overwhelming weight of feeling among shopkeeperdom in the City had been for taking Pitt's installation in the Premiership as a victory for the "popular" sentiment the City had been trying to lead since 1761. Accordingly a congratulatory Address from the City authorities had been resolved upon, a public illumination ordered, and a banquet in Pitt's honour projected at the Guildhall. Then had come the announcement of Pitt's Peerage which was taken almost as a personal blow by the shopkeeper Common Councilmen, once led by the disappointed attorney, *Magna Charta* Beardmore, in frantic adoration of the "Great Commoner".[3] Address, illumination and banquet were

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 469, for Temple himself writing to Lady Chatham, his sister, on the sacrifice of their brother, George Grenville, "to Mr. Pitt's indisposition towards him, for the sake of public and general union".

[2] Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 360–1, collects the references in Walpole's *Letters* and the *Rockingham Papers*. What many contemporaries would have regarded as clinching proof was finally given to the world by Temple's publishing protégé, Almon, in a notorious number of his *Political Register* published in April 1768 after Wilkes mobs had again taken occupation of the central fields of politics. This number, suitably decorated with a cartoon of Edward III seizing Mortimer wherein the lineaments of Bute and the Princess Dowager and even the Princess Dowager's bed were plainly to be seen, contained as its leading article "An eighteen Days faithful Journal, ending a few Days previous to the New Ministry's kissing hands in 1766." This article, based doubtless on the reports of Temple's spies, professed to show that Bute visited the Princess Dowager for long periods on nearly every evening between Tuesday, June 23, 1766 and Monday, July 13, 1766.

[3] Beardmore had distinguished himself even before Wilkes in consequence of a notorious article inserted in the *Monitor* during 1762 which, affecting to speak of Mme de Pompadour's high regard for the Abbé de Bernis's "athletic constitution, and consummate knowledge in the art of love", was read by

cancelled; the freest rein was given to those suspicions of Pitt that, by the exertions of his now alienated friends, had been successfully suppressed after his acceptance of a pension in 1761; and Pitt was bitterly criticised as a courtier and a renegade from the cause of "liberty" and the "people".[1] This burst of indignation was, moreover, destined to be long kept on the boil by Temple's pamphleteers. The most damaging pamphlet of all under the title of *An Enquiry into the Conduct of a late Right Honourable Commoner* could only have been composed from information supplied by Lord Temple personally. And it is not without significance for estimating the forces now opposed to Chatham to note that the pamphlet's author was Humphrey Cotes, Wilkes's most active friend in London.

In a prosperous season, the angry disappointment of the loudest of Pitt's one-time supporters might, in view of his hopes of winning the Prussian and Russian alliance and greater State control over

everybody as referring to the Princess Dowager and Bute. He and others had eventually been arrested by four King's messengers and their papers seized (November 1762) but Ministers had not ventured to bring them to trial. Accordingly, after the Court decisions on No. 45, Beardmore had brought actions against the King's messengers which not only continued the struggle for "liberty" but brought him £1000 damages on May 4, 1764, and the reward of seeing himself represented in all the print-shops expounding the *Magna Charta* to his son, a "patriot" attitude later found useful by Sir Francis Burdett.

When Beardmore had been responsible for seizing the occasion of the birth of a Prince in August 1765 for making of the conventional City Address, usual in such circumstances, a virtual declaration against the Rockingham Government and a call for Pitt, one indignant pamphleteer had made some revelations of the way things were managed in the City in *A Letter to the Common Council of London, on their late extraordinary Address.* According to his description of the Court of Common Council, "those people who are most capable of filling it with real weight, think themselves considerably above it; by this means the employment descends to the very lowest artisans, and a neighbourhood of capital merchants is often represented by a man, whom they would on no account condescend to be acquainted with. . . . Thus, though an Address goes up to Court, with the really respectable name of the City of London at the head of it, the sentiments which it contains are, in fact, no more than the private opinions of fifty or sixty very inconsiderable shopkeepers, who consult about the tendency of national measures at the *Half Moon* tavern in Cheapside, and pay an humble shilling a head to the master of the house for their evening's entertainment. At present their commander-in-chief is Master *Magna-Charta*, who is constantly seconded in the grossest absurdities by . . . a wholesale dealer in lead, both in his profession, and his arguments. . . .

"To rescue the dignity of the city out of such unfortunate hands, there is but one way left, and that is to establish a qualification for a common-councilman. If no man was to be elected who could not swear himself worth three or four thousand pounds, it would induce people of credit to offer themselves candidates; and the great room at the *Half Moon* would possibly be filled with a number of really eminent citizens—Till this event shall take place we can expect little besides insolence and tumult, vanity and impertinence."

[1] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 372–3.

India, not have proved particularly formidable. But the serious unrest among the poor, already resulting in July from the rising price of provisions, and increasing in August and September to food-riots of the most formidable dimensions only to be curbed by the use of troops,[1] hardly favoured what efforts there were to put the fallen idol back upon his pedestal. Nor by finally and illegally assuming the right to forbid the exportation of corn by Order in Council did Chatham's Government gain any conspicuous thanks. Yet the measure was intended to prevent the price of corn from rising still farther and, in sanctioning it, Chatham, as events proved, incurred the risk of playing into the hands of enemies waiting to denounce his arbitrary temper and contempt for constitutional precedent. It is, indeed, again of significance to note that when, in October, Wilkes came to London to seek a pardon, he and his friends decided that he should appeal for it not to Chatham but to Grafton as First Lord of the Treasury.[2] And when Grafton referred Wilkes to Chatham, Wilkes decided rather to return to Paris after securing ample newspaper publicity for his first *Letter to the Duke of Grafton*, dated November 1, 1766.[3] In Paris he set himself to compose the *Second Letter to the Duke of Grafton*, dated December 12, 1766 and containing much bitter abuse of Chatham in explanation of why he declined to supplicate one who had thought fit to exchange the adoration of the people for a place and a peerage, to desert a great character like Temple in order to become "the abject, crouching deputy of the proud Scot".[4]

[1] Cf. the *Annual Register*'s (1766) long accounts prefixed by the observation that "there having been many riots, and much mischief done, in different parts of England, in consequence of the rising of the poor; who have been driven to desperation and madness, by the exorbitant prices of all manner of provisions; we shall, without descending to minute particulars . . . give a short abstract of those disturbances" (caused mainly, be it observed, by a poor agricultural summer not only for wheat but for dairy products). Here is the *Annual Register*'s abstract in regard to two places: "At Great-Colton in Warwickshire they rose, traversed the country, and did considerable damage, till being met by the military they were encountered and dispersed, eight of them having been shot dead before they reached Kidderminster. . . . At Derby the mob encountered a party of light-horse, terribly pelted them with stones, and wounded the commanding officer: they plundered a warehouse of cheese, but thirty-four of them were apprehended, and carried pinioned to gaol. They afterwards assembled and attacked a boat on the Darwent. . . . They pay no regard to the civil magistrates, and are only in fear of the military. . . ."

[2] Cf. Almon, *Wilkes Correspondence*, ii, 233, for Wilkes writing on his return: "I find by Heaton, who had it from Beardmore, that Lord Temple is extremely pleased I did not write to Lord Chatham. I have the same satisfaction from the public at large . . . my conduct is warmly approved by all the true friends of liberty."

[3] Cf. J. S. Watson, *Biography of Wilkes*, p. 52.

[4] *Letters to and from Mr. Wilkes*, i, 233.

Chatham was, however, in sore political straits long before this dangerous venom from the revengeful Wilkes was, in the course of 1767, made widely available to the British public.[1] After Parliament was assembled on November 11th, on the running out of the last term of prorogation, Grenville very ably took the lead of a formidable band of critics in both Houses who argued that the illegal Order in Council of September 26th, forbidding the exportation of corn, was a very grave matter. The Crown, it was implied, had been advised to exercise a dispensing power supposed to have been abolished by the Revolution and an imperious Minister had reopened the way for doctrines of arbitrary rule in a fashion that would have been unnecessary had Parliament been allowed to meet on September 19th. Instead of permitting this date to stand from the last prorogation order, Ministers were alleged to have seized the occasion of a Council on September 10th, when scarcity was already of the utmost gravity, to issue an almost useless proclamation against forestalling and at the same time to prorogue Parliament to as late as November 11th.[2] Indeed, if after such arguments, the Opposition consented to enact a temporary prohibition of corn-export, and to add to this Statute others for permitting the temporary import of corn, duty free, from the American Colonies and the European Continent, they undoubtedly experienced the satisfaction of the righteous when on December 16th Parliament adjourned for the Christmas recess. Ministers had been compelled to admit that it was not only the subordinate officers at the ports who needed the shelter of an Indemnity Act for having enforced the Order of September 26th against corn-exportation. Ministers themselves needed indemnity for having advised it.[3]

[1] Thus the *Gentleman's Magazine* was unable or unwilling to give the letter to its readers until its number for May 1767 which, in view of the far greater promptitude with which the first *Letter to the Duke of Grafton* was given them is, perhaps, to be ascribed to fears of incurring libel risks. The *Letter* undoubtedly had a damaging effect on Chatham and his Government, and apparently bred a sufficient demand for more writing from Wilkes's pen to induce the *Gentleman's Magazine* proprietors to put in their June number a *Letter from Mr. Wilkes to Lord T——e* dating back to his duel with Lord Talbot in 1762. The fact that Almon began in May 1767 the *Political Magazine* containing every month political *bonnes bouches*, sometimes obtained from Temple or Wilkes, possibly stimulated enterprise in the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1767, History of Europe, pp. [44–8].

[3] Cf. *Ruffhead's Statutes at Large* (ed. 1771), x, 281, for the title: *An Act for indemnifying such Persons as have acted for the Service of the Public, in advising or carrying into Execution the Order of Council of the twenty-sixth day of September last . . . and for preventing Suits in consequence of the said Embargo.*

Meanwhile Chatham's imperious treatment of members of his Government, accustomed under others to being handled rather as colleagues than as subordinates, had produced grave trouble among those Ministers whom he had inherited from the Rockingham Administration. In consequence of approaches he had made to the Duke of Bedford,[1] Chatham desired to have some offices free to offer Bedford's "Bloomsbury Gang", and on November 21st, without any careful and conciliatory preparation of the ground, the Treasurership of the Household had been demanded of Lord Edgecumbe. Conway, aware of the angry feelings of Edgecumbe's friends, remonstrated with Chatham but in vain.[2] The result was that the Duke of Portland, Lord Chamberlain; the Earl of Bessborough, Postmaster General; the Earl of Scarborough, Cofferer of the Household; Sir Charles Saunders, First Lord of the Admiralty, and Sir William Meredith and Admiral Keppel, Junior Lords of the Admiralty, decided to resign and to rejoin Lord Rockingham with the injured Lord Edgecumbe.[3] What rendered the whole episode worse for Lord Chatham was that the "Bloomsbury Gang" now demanded such extravagant terms in Peerages, places and a Garter that the King made objections. The Ministry had, indeed, to be reconstructed in the end in circumstances that involved only loss of strength and prestige.

Worse still was to follow after Parliament reassembled on January 16, 1767. Chatham's colleagues found that he had been so prostrated by illness that it was impossible to get his directions in regard to the ambitious plans for winning continental friendships which had led him to make pompous announcements of Extraordinary Missions to Russia, Portugal and Spain.[4] More immediate Parliamentary trouble threatened from Chatham's inability to take charge of his further project for requiring the

[1] Almon's *Political Register* later gave what purported to be a full and intimate account which the *Gentleman's Magazine* for November 1767 retailed carefully to its readers. See also *Bedford Correspondence*, iii, 342–60.

[2] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, iii, 126 sqq. Secretary Conway, pliant as he was, was the colleague of Chatham's from whom a famous phrase was wrung on Chatham's overbearingness of language and manner. According to Horace Walpole's report Conway confessed that such haughty, such despotic language as he used had never been heard west of Constantinople.

[3] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 389–90.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1766, Chronicle, pp. 165–8, for announcements of the appointment on August 12th of an Ambassador Extraordinary to Russia, on September 20th of the Secretary to this embassy, on October 25th of an Envoy Extraordinary to Portugal, and on November 25th of an Ambassador Extraordinary to Spain.

powerful East India Company to submit to the results of the inquiry already begun into the Indian revenues and territories which the Company had virtually annexed.[1] As was, perhaps, inevitable in the circumstances, a Government defeat occurred on February 26th on a matter which allowed Dowdeswell, Rockingham's Chancellor of the Exchequer, with strong support from Grenville, who had been his own, to appeal against the Government to the country gentlemen who constituted the "independent" part of the House.[2] Charles Townshend, brilliant and ingratiating though he was, had assumed too easily that the Commons would accept the Government's excellent case for keeping the Land-Tax at the war-level of 4*s.* in the pound, in view of the ludicrously low land-valuation on which collection was based. But he had underestimated the strong resentments Chatham had excited, and the eagerness with which even the wealthy seize on a plausible excuse for ridding themselves of taxation against which a "popular" case can be made.

The defeat of the Government, the first on a tax-bill, it was said, since the Revolution,[3] led to some temporary expectations that Grenville, who was playing such a conspicuous part in the Commons, might have to be recalled. The King, indeed, exerted himself strongly to prevent such a result,[4] and the main effect of Grenville's successes was possibly that Charles Townshend tried harder to win Grenville's approval for the rest of his financial plans. The duties on glass, paper, painters' colours, and tea,

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 146–7, for the beginning of the enterprise: "The votes have informed you that a Committee of the whole house is to inquire into the state and conduct of the East India Company, on the 9th day (I think it is) of December. The division was, ayes 129, noes 76—a thin House. The motion was Mr. Alderman Beckford's who run himself into a second scrape by recommending to the House, in his unguarded way of talking, to turn their attention from the western to the eastern part of the globe. Mr. Grenville and Mr. Wedderburn rallied him very smartly. The former is said to have treated this debate with a good deal of humour and vivacity, as well as ability. Mr. Yorke distinguished himself, speaking, in his own profession, against the supposed right of inquiry, unless acquiesced in, at least, by the Company."

[2] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 392.

[3] *Annual Register*, 1767, p. 41*: "It was then, to the great surprise and disappointment of the ministers, that a resolution passed the house, supported by a considerable majority, which reduced the land-tax for the present year to three shillings in the pound. This was said to have been the first money-bill, in which any minister had been disappointed since the revolution; and it was now looked upon as a fatal symptom of weakness. In this the public was, however, mistaken, though appearances seemed strongly to countenance the opinion."

[4] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 393, for the King's resolve not to surrender himself "a prisoner and bound" to his former inexorable task-masters.

imported into America, that were enacted later in the Session, were laid on mainly to provide revenue that might free Colonial administration from alleged Assembly vagaries like those necessitating, it was claimed, the special Act of 1767 against New York. But it must have been a balm to Grenville's soul to know that any surplus from the new American duties over and above what was needed to permit the adequate "administration of justice and the support of civil government" would go into the Exchequer "towards further defraying the necessary expenses of defending, protecting, and securing the said Dominions".[1]

Other members of the Administration, including Grafton, were, indeed, alarmed by Townshend's American ideas which were known to be against everything Chatham had had in mind.[2] But the bulk of the House of Commons seems to have accepted Townshend's case for his duties as port-taxes, free from all the American objections against internal taxation, and to have felt, besides, that the Americans were behaving badly and needed a reminder of Britain's rights.[3] Moreover, from the House of Commons viewpoint, the future of British India undoubtedly bulked larger in men's minds than American issues during the whole of a Session whose early weeks, in November and December 1766, saw the opening of fundamental discussion on Indian topics which was very far from closed when on June 29th, just before the prorogation of July 2, 1767, the King put his signature to two Indian Acts. For one thing, there had been acute conflict between India Stock proprietors, anxious to take their share of the plunder of Nabobs' treasures in the form of high dividends, and Directors, only too well aware that Company servants had made away with the treasures and left the Company with the debts of military operations.[4] For another, the new Indian conquests had been

[1] Cf. *Ruffhead's Statutes at Large*, x, 369, for this extract from the preamble to the 7 Geo. III, cap. 46.

[2] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 402–3.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1767, p. 48: "The factious turbulent spirit, which seemed to have taken possession of the minds of some of our North American colonies . . . was far from being mollified. . . . Not content with the private acts of outrage that were too often repeated, and marks of disrespect to government which were too frequently shown; the assembly of New York had . . . passed an act . . . without any regard to that prescribed by Parliament."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 41*–2*. There is a long section in Lucy S. Sutherland's *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics*, pp. 138–76, which shows how dangerous speculation, based on the assumed certainty of increased dividends, raised the price of India Stock from 164 in April 1766 to a maximum of 273 in 1767.

looked to even more than America for relieving the home taxpayer over-burdened, it was alleged, in the late war. Though as a result of the Session's Parliamentary proceedings, a temporary limitation of East India dividend to 10 per cent was imposed on the stockholders and a Company contribution of £400,000 per annum to the Exchequer exacted for the military and naval help the taxpayer had afforded, it is difficult to believe that the Government did not emerge from the long Indian debates weakened rather than strengthened. Ministers had apparently differed when it had come to such ticklish business as cancelling, by Act of Parliament, the stockholders' resolution to raise their dividends to the level of 12½ per cent per annum before the public's claims on the Company had been met. And vengeful stockholders of influence had more than this cancellation to hold against the Government. An even more fundamental invasion of their alleged "rights" had been forecast by those supporters of the Government who had pointed to the Company's Charter as proof that trade, and not territorial rule, was its legal business.[1]

It may be well to conclude this chapter with a piece of venomous Grenville-Temple pamphleteering which shows more completely even than Wilkes's *Second Letter to the Duke of Grafton* or the contributions which the future Junius was already sending to the *Public Advertiser*[2] how heavy were the blows being rained upon the Chatham Government months before it wound up its first Parliamentary Session on July 2, 1767. Given below is an example of the charges which were being heaped up against Chatham even in February, charges ranging from the illegality of his now notorious corn-exportation prohibitory Order to the oppressiveness of his

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1767, pp. [41–4] and 41*–5*, for very full treatment. The challenge to the Company is thus summarised: "the right of the company to their territorial acquisitions was called in question. It was argued that they had no right by their charters to any conquest: that such possessions in the hands of a trading corporation were improper and dangerous; and that if it were even legally and politically right that they should hold those territories, yet the vast expenditure of government, in the protection of that company, gave it a fair and equitable title to the revenues arising from the conquests."

[2] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius* for the *Miscellaneous Letters*, under other signatures beginning with the Letter signed Poplicola and dated April 28, 1767. All the eleven letters of 1767 are fiercely anti-Chatham, and the very first treats him as an arbitrary Grand Vizir at home and the "patron of sedition" in the Colonies. The best touch in the Letter is that of Chatham's "affectation of prostrate humility in the closet". But at this stage Junius's apprentice thunder was greatly surpassed in effect by the open ridicule of Chatham as a fussy and pompous invalid which Almon ventured to publish under the title of *Dr. Williamson's Narrative of the extraordinary Case of a late great C——r.*

treatment of the East India Company, from the encouragement he had given to American rebellion to the very opposite rigour shown by him when, through the Special Commissions he authorised, death-sentences were hurried on against scores of starving Englishmen accused of food-rioting. Such extracts as follow from the *Free Appeal to the People of Great Britain on the Conduct of the present Administration*[1] may serve to explain why Parliament had scarcely broken up when, on July 7th, the Rockingham and Bedford connections were invited to negotiate for office on apparently favourable terms.[2] Here are the extracts:

"It would be barbarous," writes the Free Appealer, "to upbraid a disappointed publick, or else one might insist on that general expectation which was affected to be entertained of the beneficial effects to be derived on these kingdoms from Mr. Pitt's accession to power. A stranger would have concluded from our prints and papers . . . that our national debt would have been instantly cancelled, and that we should have at once become an opulent, flourishing, united, and happy nation. Matters are now come to an issue. . . . He has maintained the liberty of the subject, by pleading for the dispensing power: He has defended their property, by authorising messages to be sent to a great, money'd company, intimating the impending power of parliament. Those who would be thought to speak *his* language have not scrupled to charge them with a forfeiture of their charter, have spoken of their territorial possessions as disposeable by parliament. . . . He has shown himself so true an oeconomist for his —— [King], that the civil list, which in July last was nine months in arrear, is now a compleat twelvemonth behind hand; and the public are indebted to him for the appointment of ambassadors extraordinary, aide de camps extraordinary, commander in chief extraordinary. . . . Where is his attention to the poor? What is his lordship so keen for bloodshed, that his punishment must outrun his justice? Was he always such an enemy to popular tumult? Some will be apt to think . . . that the seeds of our late domestic riots were sown last year, in the connivance and encouragement given to the outrages in America. They will be apt to draw comparisons between the starving, punished Englishman, and the tumultuous favoured American. . . . When one considers . . . the variety of men dismissed, disgusted, intreated, insulted, applied to, refused, purchased, during that period [between July 1766 and January 1767], it reminds one of the forty thousand conferences which the prophet Mahomet is said to have had with the deity. . . ."

[1] Cf. *The Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1767, which gives long extracts. The pamphlet's publisher was Temple's confidant, Almon, and it was on sale to the public from February at 1*s*.

[2] The well-known *Newcastle Papers* and *Hardwicke Papers* in the British Museum contain much manuscript material, and there is also the Duke of Grafton's *Autobiography*. In the *Newcastle Papers*, Add. MSS. 32983 and 32984 are the important authorities for this stage of politics.

CHAPTER IV

CHATHAM IN ECLIPSE

"We long hoped, my lord, that public virtue was the *guide* of his actions, and the love of our country his ruling passion, but he has fully shown, *omnis vis, virtusque in lingua sita est.* Our hearts glowed with gratitude for the important services he had done against the common enemy, and the voice of the nation hailed him as our deliverer; but private ambition was all the while skulking behind the shield of the patriot, and at length in an evil hour made him quit the scene of all his glory, the only place in which he could be truly useful, for a retreat, where he knew it was impossible the confidence of the people could follow, but where he might in inglorious ease bear his BLUSHING *honours thick upon him.* . . . A proud, insolent, overbearing, ambitious man is always full of the ideas of his own importance, and vainly imagines himself superior to the equality necessary among real friends. . . . Lord Chatham declared in Parliament the strongest attachment to Lord Temple, one of the greatest characters our country could ever boast, and said *he would live and die with his noble brother.* He has received obligations of the first magnitude from that *noble brother*, yet what trace of gratitude, or of friendship, was ever found? . . .

From WILKES's *Second Letter to the Duke of Grafton*, circulating in 1767.

"The power of the grandees is . . . become more formidable than ever. Their number, their privileges, their court-emoluments, their *influence* in *elections*, their weight in the law, the army, the navy, the church, and the public offices, are all to an unexampled degree increased. . . . It is not for nothing, that the wisdom of our ancestors established it as a fundamental maxim, which is to this day (for form's sake) a standing resolution of the House of Commons, that no lord of parliament, or peer of the realm, ought to interfere in elections of members of the lower house. But to observe how electioneering is, in our times, carried on, one would imagine the law of this land was, That no member of the House of Commons should be elected, but in *consequence* of *quality-influence.* . . ."

From the pre-election number of the *Political Register*, March 1768.

"I threw out hints in the papers of your intention to offer yourself a candidate at the general election; and I endeavoured, with as much art as I was master of, to let them be just strong enough to make those who wished you well suppose the event possible, without being so strong as to make those who feared such an event suppose it probable. . . . During the city election many worthy merchants having generously come forward to your assistance, and some of them being men of the most rigid morality you thought proper to adopt the language of a penitent. . . . On Tuesday morning, March 22, 1768, . . . it was very evident you had lost your election in the city. Then indeed I went to you, because I knew I could be useful to you in Middlesex; and I did then and do still think that there was no method by which I could do greater service to the public, than by espousing your cause; which the weakness and wickedness of our court had made, to a certain degree, the cause of every Englishman. . . ."

From *The Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, 1771.

To the Duke of Portland, March 22, 1768

"Nothing could give me more real comfort than the glorious account you sent me at your surprising success everywhere and the loyal attention of the crowds, that follow you everywhere, which is the natural and best consequence of notorious oppression.

"I really think your Grace's most astonishing success everywhere with our friend the Marquess's in Yorks. will give the tone to the next Parliment."

To the Duke of Richmond, March 24, 1768

"It gave me great pleasure that your Grace met with so much success in the choice of two members for the City of Chichester; and you will do me the justice to say that I did all in my power to contribute to it. . . .

"Lewes still sticks in my stomach. But as I have succeeded everywhere else, and as our friends, the Marquess and the Duke of Portland carry all before them, I must forget Lewes. . . ."

To the Duke of Richmond, April 4, 1768

"You ask me my sentiments upon the affair of Mr. Wilks . . . I don't love Riots and Tumults. But it is necessary that it should be known, that the Nation is not satisfied. . . ."

The sick Newcastle's last General Election in Add. MSS. 32,989.

A NOT unimportant agency in the critical politics of 1767–8 was a new monthly periodical issued by Almon under the name of the *Political Register*. Thanks to Almon's connections with Wilkes and Temple, it was able to give the public such intimate, if biased, accounts of important political happenings that even a non-party publication like the *Gentleman's Magazine* repeatedly found it wise to retail to its vast and miscellaneous readership whole articles from the *Political Register*. There is a particular interest in the article which the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September 1767 copied from Almon's columns under the title of *An Impartial Account of a late interesting Conference: with the several Particulars, previous and subsequent*, for it claimed to throw special light on the nature of the negotiations the Government was known to have conducted with the Opposition during July. Opening with the allegation that, even before Parliament had risen, Conway had desired to throw up his post and Northington had advised a "Great Personage" to send for Bedford, Temple, and Grenville, the article went on to relate how the "Great Personage" had written with his own hand to one of his principal servants, lying ill at Hampstead, asking, but not obtaining, advice on how to strengthen the Government. The Duke of Newcastle, expecting an application to the Opposition, had thereupon worked very hard to bring all the Opposition leaders to the resolve only to negotiate in common.[1] On the Court side, meanwhile, the "Favourite" was alleged to have called in Lord Holland with the result that that part of the Opposition, supposed to be least hostile to Bute, was appealed to. By order of the Court Rockingham was summoned "to assist in the present critical situation of affairs", and at their first interview Grafton was declared to have confessed that he was tired of his office and wished Rockingham to succeed him. This first interview failed of immediate effect but Rockingham, having, it was said, made it plain at a second that he was not to be drawn in without consulting others, received permission to take counsel with the Duke of Bedford.

Bedford in his turn was reported to have refused to settle

[1] Cf. *An Impartial Account*, etc., for a characteristic description of the means: "With a view to the final accomplishment of this union", it writes, "so extremely interesting to the welfare of the country, the Lords G—w—r, W—y——th, and Mr. R—gby, dined with his Grace at C——m——nt; and a few days afterwards [July 5, 1767] the Marquis of R—k—g—m and several of his friends, dined likewise with his Grace at the same place."

anything definitely until Temple and Grenville had been consulted but agreed provisionally to Rockingham as First Lord of the Treasury if room was made in the Government for some of Bedford's friends though not for Bedford himself. Rigby had then gone, on Bedford's behalf, for the stipulated consultations with Grenville and Temple, and these too had resulted in offers of support, without place, for a Rockingham Government.[1] As Bedford, Temple, Newcastle, and Grenville were now all reported to have undertaken to "sacrifice themselves in order to restore tranquillity to the public, unanimity to the King's Counsels, and establish an able and permanent administration" the King may well have had reason for the suspicion, ascribed to him, that he might next be asked "to exclude his friends, and those about his person".

But things never got as far as this despite the Government-making conference which is reported to have assembled at Newcastle House on July 20th and to have consisted of the Dukes of Bedford, Newcastle, Richmond, and Portland; the Marquis of Rockingham; the Earl of Sandwich; Viscount Weymouth; Mr. Dowdeswell, Mr. Rigby and Admiral Keppel. A first obstacle to Government-making was overcome when a letter from Grenville promising support on condition of a firmer American policy was, after argument, described as warm, met by arranging a judicious compromise. There seems to have been no objection to fixing on Rockingham as First Lord of the Treasury and on Dowdeswell as his Chancellor of the Exchequer. But the conference broke up when Rockingham insisted on keeping Conway as his leader of the Commons and Bedford, according to the accounts,[2] held firmly to the view that Conway had, during the last two Sessions, shown himself unequal to the post. Nor did Newcastle's effort to break the deadlock on July 21st by assembling a smaller conference of five, said to have been composed of Newcastle himself, Bedford,

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Rigby's report from Grenville and Temple: "They would take nothing themselves, for the same laudable reasons which had influenced his Grace, and they only desired as he had done, that their friends might be considered, and upon that condition they promised to support the new administration with all their power and ability."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 149–53, for Thomas Whately, M.P., Grenville's Secretary of the Treasury, writing on Grenville's behalf a report to his political supporter, James Harris, M.P., who had been one of Grenville's Treasury Lords. An earlier stage of this Government-making effort will be found, cynically treated, in *Walpole's Letters*. The relevant Letter is that of July 20, 1767 to Sir Horace Mann.

Rockingham, Dowdeswell and Rigby, prove successful. When therefore Rockingham resigned his quasi-commission next day it might normally have seemed a victory for the Court to have illustrated so clearly the Opposition's inability to agree. And Almon might have been reproved for believing that such an account would do the Court any harm or the Opposition any good.

But some of the sting of Almon's account lies in the tail. Rockingham is reported to have found the "Great Personage" unaware that there had ever been a proposal to put the Treasury in Rockingham's charge, a discovery showing apparently that Grafton's sense of the Government's insufficiency was not shared by the King who was merely anxious to attract some strength from the Opposition to fortify the existing "system". The sense of secret forces at work was heightened by a further part of Almon's story to the effect that immediately after Rockingham's departure from the King, Lord Holland went in to him for "a private conference which lasted a considerable time".[1] According to Almon's account, however, an agreement for continued co-operation, made between Rockingham and Bedford on July 23rd, spoiled Court projects for continuing the work of dividing the Opposition. Its first effect was, in fact, reported to have taken place on July 24th when an attempt made to enlist Rockingham "exclusively" was rejected. In September, in short, it was still possible for the Opposition to lay claim to an unctuous rectitude. "It is to the honour of the opposition", wrote Almon, "that all sinister efforts, and temptations, which were repeatedly held out to different parts of them, in order to divide them, were steadily repelled, and uniformly refused".

The death on September 4th of the most brilliant member of the Government, Charles Townshend, only replaceable at the Exchequer by one then regarded as vastly his inferior, Lord North, undoubtedly increased Opposition confidence.[2] When unfortunate harvest weather,[3] too, brought October food prices to scarcity

[1] *An Impartial Account*, etc., of course, still found it advisable to give this fact as follows: "Immediately after the Marquis of R's coming out, Lord H. was introduced to the Great Personage. . . ."

[2] Walpole's *Letters* (Letter of September 27, 1767) seem, however, to show that Government supporters kept their courage up by listening to reports of Chatham's recovery.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1767, for a report dated October 10th: "The high frosty winds, and great fall of rain, have retarded the harvest so much in the north, that great quantities of oats, pease, and beans were this day in the neighbourhood of Newcastle, uncut. . . ."

levels[1] and even produced some indications, despite the judicial severities of the preceding winter, of a revival of popular commotion,[2] Opposition prospects seemed to improve still further. Certainly Grenville may be found early in November preparing with assurance for the Parliamentary Session due to begin on November 24th. Here is a message sent to one of his supporters, James Harris, M.P. on November 8th:[3]

"I propose being in London", wrote Grenville, "on Saturday, the 21st inst., three days before the meeting of the Parliament, to learn what is intended, and what are the public dispositions in which we are to meet. There seems to me an universal despondency and listlessness in the minds of men, mixed with the most thorough contempt of their present Governors. Which of these two will prevail I know not, but the first appearance of distress will probably decide it, I fear too late and too violently for the public peace and happiness . . . it will be a great pleasure to me to meet you in town, and to talk over with you what has passed. . . ."

Popular commotions were, indeed, fated to come but hardly in the manner or with the effect that Grenville had anticipated. Ministers met Parliament on November 24th with their Parliamentary corps still unstrengthened. And the Speech from the Throne conveyed little but the warning that the Session could not be prolonged, because of the necessity for new elections, and the assurance that the state of foreign affairs portended no troubles likely to disturb the serious attention which Parliament was asked to give to the "distresses of the poorer sort of my People". Though debating and pamphleteering criticism of such a Speech was an easy undertaking,[4] Ministers had also penned a request for a

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 20th and 23rd.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 15th, for Spitalfields weaving-price rioting.

[3] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 153.

[4] Cf. *A remarkable Speech at opening a late S——s* reproduced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December 1767. "After an interval of so many months" said the orator, "instead of being told that a plan is formed, or that measures are taken, or, at least, that materials have been diligently collected, upon which some scheme might be founded for preserving us from famine; we see that this provident —— [Government], these careful providers, are of opinion, they have sufficiently acquitted themselves of their duty by advising the —— [Crown] to recommend the matter once more to our consideration . . . God knows in what manner they have been employed for these four months past. . . . As to vague and general recommendations to us, to maintain unanimity amongst us . . . I cannot help thinking it a vain and idle parade of words without meaning. Is it their own conduct that we are to look to for an example of this boasted union . . . their broken, distracted councils, their public disagreements, and private animosities? Is it not notorious that they only subsist by creating divisions among others . . . that their plan is to separate party from party. . . ? Is not their very motto *Divide et impera. . . ?*"

"spirit of harmony" in Parliament for the purpose of maintaining the country's strength, reputation and prosperity, which showed the lines on which they were still prepared to treat for Opposition support. Suffice it to say that, after having set Parliament to work in a Corn Committee, Ministers opened negotiations with the Duke of Bedford who, quieting his conscience with the thought that he was not proposing to take office himself, allowed the place-hunger of his followers to drive him to a junction with the Government, and a separation from the Grenville-Temple and the Newcastle-Rockingham connections.[1] And if the spoils offered to the "Bloomsbury Gang" for their desertion of the rest of the Opposition were important,[2] Ministers had, at least, one consolation. They knew they had broken up a most menacing working alliance of Opposition connections in good time to take advantage of a General Election not to be postponed beyond the spring of 1768.

It is, in fact, hard to see how the Ministry would have overcome some of their Parliamentary problems of January to March 1768 if the Opposition connections had stayed united. There was, of course, no opposition to Ministers' rather unimaginative handling of the food situation by the renewal and extension of Corn and Provision Bills facilitating duty-free import and forbidding corn-export. But the Bill to reimpose on a protesting Company the limitation of East India dividend to a maximum of 10 per cent per annum was only passed after a keen[3] struggle, and there was very bad trouble indeed about what was regarded as Ministerial connivance with Sir James Lowther's attempt to deprive the Duke of

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1767, for a reprint of writing, mirroring their resentment, under the title of *A Word at Parting, to his Grace the D—— of B——*. A characteristic touch was the following: "If your Grace's followers are starved into compliance . . . they are to be pitied, and not argued with. The remedy is a very easy one; refer their case to the Corn Committee, upon which so much is laid already. I do not see why a distressed patriot should not be relieved as soon as a clamorous weaver: It is a dear time and both ought to be provided for."

[2] Cf. *Political Register*, January 1768, for the full list of the changes, the most important gains by the "Bloomsbury Gang" being Lord Weymouth's Secretaryship of State for the Northern Department (Conway being promised a return to military employment), Lord Sandwich's appointment as Joint Postmaster and Rigby's nomination as Joint Vice-Treasurer of Ireland. The connection also gained Admiralty, Household and Board of Green Cloth appointments.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1768, History, pp. 77*–8*, for the "strong petition" of the Company, the "great debates" in the Commons, the "great force" of the arguments against the official measure, and the "great opposition in the House of Peers".

Portland of part of his inheritance. However much Ministers might have desired to weaken the Duke's Opposition influence in Cumberland electioneering; whatever gaps in the Bentinck title-deeds Sir James Lowther might have discovered, the Inglewood Forest episode did Ministers nothing but harm[1] and must have undone much of the strength they were felt to have gained from winning the Bedford alliance. All the stories of crafty Court machinations gained added force, and landed gentry, not committed to Opposition politics, had, in their consciousness of possible flaws, as against the Crown, in their own inherited title-deeds, ample reason for supporting Opposition pressure for the "Quieting" Bill conceded in 1769. It is not hard to guess what number of dubious titles were thus, by the irony of history, protected, if they had been but unchallenged for sixty years, against all later investigation on the part of the democracy that eventually inherited the Crown's rights.[2]

It is certainly time to turn to the elections that followed the debating outlined above. Thanks to the peculiarly bitter and quasi-modern character of the political contentions that had now been raging for years, the General Election of 1768 has a special place in British political history. For one thing, the British landed aristocracy, rich and growing ever richer, was driven to greatly increased election expenditure by the eagerness of the rivalry between Government and Opposition,[3] and by the frequent intervention of money representing the spoils of India,[4] or the profits

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 78*–83*, for a long account ending with this injured Opposition air when describing the fate of the Opposition motion to make sixty years' possession in all future times a bar against the claims of the Crown: "Notwithstanding the equitable ground on which this motion was founded, it met with a strong opposition from the Ministry, whose conduct fell under the heaviest censure upon the occasion; but the subject was of a nature so interesting to all parties, and the arguments that must be used to oppose it so generally odious, that it was thought proper to change the mode of defence, and, under colour of the shortness of the session, to put it off till the next meeting of Parliament. This manœuvre succeeded, but on so close a division, that it afforded a majority of only twenty."

[2] Cf. 9 Geo. III, cap. 16.

[3] Cf. *Chesterfield's Letters* (Letter of April 12, 1768). "Elections here have been carried to a degree of phrenzy hitherto unheard of; that for the town of Northampton has cost the contending parties at least thirty thousand pounds a side, and George Selwyn has sold his Borough of Luggershall, to two members, for £9,000."

[4] The *Political Register*'s List of Members (May 1768) shows four Clives (Lord Clive, Shrewsbury; George and William Clive, Bishops Castle; and Richard Clive, Montgomery Town); three Pigots (Lord Pigot, Bridgnorth; Hugh Pigot, Penryn; Robert Pigot, Wallingford); two Vansittarts (Arthur Vansittart, Berkshire; Henry Vansittart, Reading); and Eyre Coote, Leicester Town.

of West India slave plantations,[1] or the gains of Colony trade[2] and Army contracting,[3] or, finally, the political investment of rising lawyers aiming at Chief Justiceships and the Woolsack.[4] 263 changes of membership in a House of 558[5] denote, even when considerable allowance is made for those cases where a member was compelled by new "arrangements" to find a different seat, an unusual revolution in Parliamentary personnel and the keenest competition for Parliamentary place. Such competition was, of course, as far as possible kept short of the ruinous height of the contested poll, for then the "free and independent electors" came into their own and might hope to extract not merely the pittances and treating recognised as customary but the equivalent of months or, in a furious contest, of years of labour. That is why the bitterly anti-Government *Political Register* caustically suggested, after the elections, that veracious election reports should mainly have run as follows:[6]

Wednesday, March ——. Came on the election for the borough of ——, when, in pursuance of an order from the Treasury, C. and D. were chosen by a great number of custom-house officers, excisemen, tide-waiters, &c. and a few others, without opposition.

Thursday, March ——. Lord C. sent down his mandamus to the borough of D. to choose his eldest son their representative, when in obedience to his Lordship's command, he was elected accordingly: his younger son, two chaplains, his cousin, and two other of his relations who, by his Lordship's interest, had been appointed burgesses, were present as usual, to preserve the freedom of elections. N.B. The above-mentioned persons amounted to nearly half of the number of voters in this borough.

[1] Alderman Beckford was, of course, the best-known representative of the West India interest, *estimated to embrace or influence "upwards of forty members"*.

[2] Barlow Trecothick, elected junior M.P. for the City of London, was one of the avowed representatives of the American trades. He was American-born (Cf. *Political Register*, Feb. 1768).

[3] John Calcraft, the greatest Army-contractor of the day, who had failed to win Rochester in 1765 against the combined efforts of the Rockingham Admiralty and Treasury, was more successful in 1768. A Thomas Calcraft also sat for Poole.

[4] Edward Thurlow, M.P. for Tamworth, is the most notable example of this class. But attornies, too, were growing ambitious to taste the fruits of Parliamentary position as witness the City attorney, Brass Crosby, M.P. for Honiton, who became Lord Mayor in 1770, and John Robinson, M.P. for Westmorland since 1764, thanks doubtless to Sir James Lowther, who was destined before long to show how a simple Appleby attorney could blossom into a Secretary of the Treasury.

[5] Cf. *Political Register*, May 1768, for a list admittedly subject to correction.

[6] *Political Register*, May 1768, p. 322.

Friday, March ——. Lord D. sent down his mandamus to the borough of E. to two of his chaplains, six of his domestic servants, four of his tenants, and a few other abject fellows who were mean enough to be dictated to, and in pursuance of his lordship's order, two nabobs who had contracted with his lordship for the moderate sum of £7000 were returned by his lordship's steward, the mayor, without opposition.

Monday, March ——. There was a great contest between the duke of —— and the earl of —— at F. when after a hard struggle, the candidates nominated by his grace were elected by a great majority.

Tuesday, March ——. A great body of honorary freemen collected from most of the different counties in England, marched into the borough of W. and, by the assistance of a very small number of the inhabitants, obliged the town to return M. and S. for their representatives.

The whole story of the 1768 elections is not, however, represented in such happenings as those so caustically treated above. The mere fact of such treatment by a widely-read periodical is itself one of the proofs that the "rotten borough" talk, already rising in 1764 and 1765[1] and given some notable countenance by Pitt in his famous anti-Stamp Act speaking of January 14, 1766,[2] was not subsiding but was rather mounting higher. To turn, in fact, to some of the pre-election warnings issued to the "public" is to realise that criticism of existing Parliamentary forms was not confined to "rotten borough" abuses but embraced a number of other failings, some of them under attack for generations. In the case of so necessarily cautious a periodical as the *Gentleman's Magazine*, the most emphatic pre-election warning was not against the dangers of selling seven years' Parliamentary power "for two or three dinners, or the trifling consideration of four or five guineas".[3] It was against continued toleration, in a time of scarcity, of place and pension abuses treated thus:[4]

In reason, no pensions should be allowed but to merit in necessity; to necessity brought on by a train of unforeseen and not avoidable

[1] Cf. *A Collection of Letters and Essays in favour of Public Liberty first published in the newspapers in the Years 1764, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69 and 1770*, i, 21–3: 137–40: 198–202, etc.

[2] *Supra*, Cap. 3. Even when attacked later as Lord Chatham, Peer, Pensioner and Friend of the Dispensing Power in such a pamphlet as *Dr. Williamson's Narrative of the extraordinary case of a late great C——r*, there is an incidental admission that "I heard him discourse on the mischief of uninhabited boroughs, the dearness of provisions, the necessity of triennial Parliaments, and the general subjects, somewhat like a projector. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1768, p. 18.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 17, An Address to the Electors of Great Britain.

accidents. Would those gentlemen only consider who they are that contribute to the payment of this money, they could not but with indignation reject the thoughts of touching a penny of it. The poor of all denominations, from the necessitous tradesman to the meanest mechanick and common day labourer, pay them in the taxes laid upon the necessaries of life. For numbers of families to be pinched with hunger, and have scarce wherewith to cover their nakedness, that others may abound in superfluities of food and rayment, be clothed in fine linnen, and fare sumptuously every day, How hard, how partial, how unfeeling is this? . . .

The appointment of offices, when done for special purposes, without the least advantage to the state, is another grievance equally baneful, and as necessary to be redressed as pensions. The publick's money should always be dispensed with the strictest economy. The number of placemen in each department of the state should always be in proportion to the business of it; And their salaries suited to the work to be done, and the abilities necessary for doing it with propriety, decorum, and ease.

From these things brought together and laid before you, I leave it to you to judge whether it would be amiss to give it in charge to those you elect, that they use their endeavours to obtain an abolition of all superfluous places and pensions.

The *Political Register*, as might be expected from the extract already given on "rotten boroughs", brought to the elections of 1768 a temper, a good deal less influenced by convention than that of the *Gentleman's Magazine*. When, in January 1768, it uttered its *Cautions to the* English *Electors, against such persons as they ought* Not *to chuse to represent them in the ensuing parliament* it went farther than warnings against placemen and pensioners, actual or potential.[1] It held that the eldest sons of peers could not be trusted resolutely to uphold the privileges of the Commons;[2] it cautioned against lawyers equally ready to argue either side of a disputed question according to their interest, since their interest was normally to please Authority and acquire "robes lined with

[1] Cf. *Political Register*, January 1768, pp. 46–8, on the "Flying Squadron, Spendthrifts, Young Men, &c". Spendthrifts are treated as "another sort of men whom it is unsafe to depend upon: because prodigality begets poverty, and poverty, when joined to luxury, is a strong temptation to corruption etc.".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 44–5: "One of the great privileges which the Commons assert, is, that the Peers have no right to interfere in their parliamentary elections; a privilege, which, it is well known, the Peers do not acknowledge in theory, and still less, perhaps, submit to in practice. But the keeping the Lower House entirely free from the influence of the Upper one, is essential to the very being of our mixed constitution. For, should the Upper House ever, from the increase of such influence, gain the ascendancy in the Lower one, the democratical part of our government would be swallowed up in the aristocratical. . . ."

fur"; and, on very interesting grounds, it warned against electing "colonists, and persons connected with the colonies".[1] But the most interesting breach with recent convention that the *Political Register* allowed itself in its first *Cautions* to the electors was its critical examination of the once blindly-honoured classes who took for themselves the appellation of "merchants". Here are some extracts:[2]

"The character of a merchant," wrote the *Political Register*, "is deservedly respectable . . . but it behoves us, for that very reason, to be extremely cautious, upon whom we bestow that honourable title. There are none to whom it can be justly due but real adventuring merchants; men who have large fortunes actually employed in foreign traffic. Factors, agents, insurers, brokers, and such sorts of people, though highly useful in their stations, are by no means entitled to the honours of that character; much less are fund-mongers, stock-jobbers, directors of incorporated companies, government contractors, court-jobbers, and such other sorts of people as may be rather stiled instruments of power, and preyers upon the people. . . .

"But of Merchants in general, this much may be affirmed, that all their services done to the community proceed from their search after private gain, and it is merely by accident that this coincides with the public interest, while they only seek to benefit themselves. . . . The sole object of a merchant, in all his undertakings, is private gain. It is his duty to make it such, the great duty of his station. . . . But this useful propensity gives a bias to his mind, till gain, by degrees, becomes the sole object of his thoughts; and when that is the case, extraordinary opportunities for making it may prove very dangerous baits. Hence, even genuine merchants may be considered as an order that should not predominate in a House of Commons. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, January 1768, pp. 42–3. In view of the Grenville-Temple alliance Almon, of course, found it necessary to stress the need for guarding against Colonial tendencies to independence. But it is possible that these views also had reference to the knowledge Almon may already have had that Wilkes intended to stand as a candidate for the City of London and that the American-born Trecothick would make a most dangerous competitor for one of the junior seats. With that flair, indeed, for feeling his way prophetically towards the positions of nineteenth-century Radicalism, that was his outstanding characteristic, Almon justified his warning against Colonist M.P.s on the further ground that American M.P.s, coming necessarily as they would from the American wealthy, would have every interest, while emancipating themselves from British control, in maintaining American abuses profitable to themselves but noxious to everybody else. "I cannot help remarking," wrote the *Political Register*, "that the soil of our South American colonies is too much monopolised; and that monopoly affects the pockets of everyone in this Kingdom. The owners of lands there ought to cultivate them, or part with them; and not be allowed to make their own prices for a necessary commodity, from the scantiness of the production. . . . These are things that require to be remedied and that remedy must be a Parliamentary one. Ought we then to favour an influence that must naturally operate against such a remedy?"

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 40–2.

But the first *Cautions to Electors* issued in the *Political Register* for January 1768 pale into insignificance beside the contents of the *Political Register*'s "Extraordinary Number", a number almost comparable to the pre-election numbers of twentieth-century periodicals.[1] The "public" was, for example, given the division list of February 17, 1768 on the "Quieting Bill" as a test of which members of the late Parliament had stood for justice and which against.[2] Voters were offered a remarkable list of pledges which candidates were to be asked to take in public before their constituents.[3] And the whole of early nineteenth-century Radicalism was anticipated in a third and most remarkable article, entitled *Regulus: or a View of the present State of public Affairs with certain Proposals, addressed to the independent Electors of Great Britain.*[4] Opening with a lament on the precarious state of trade and manufacture and the consequent threat of revenue deficiency and bankruptcy, the writer admitted that disorder in the national affairs was not irretrievable if the people insisted firmly on redress. And how that redress, he thought, might be obtained is indicated in the following extracts:

[1] Volume II of the *Political Register* contains the *Political Register Extraordinary* bound between the numbers for March and April. As Parliament was dissolved on March 12, 1768, the "Extraordinary Number" corresponds almost exactly to the modern Election Number. [2] *Political Register*, ii, 210–15.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 216: "It would be endless to recapitulate all the instances of the most shameless servility, and want of principle, in the wretched tools we have just got rid of. I hope we shall never see their like again. . . . That those who shall now be chosen, may give some assurance to their electors of their principles, I would recommend the following test, to be offered to every candidate on the day of the election.

"I do declare, that I will maintain, to the utmost of my power, the entire legislative authority of the parliament of Great Britain over her colonies. [Almon's concession to Grenville.]

"That I will vote against all augmentations of the civil list, unless a true list of the pensions, with the pensioners' names be first printed.

"That I will propose or support a bill for limiting the house of Peers to its present number, that some men of property and independence may be left among the commons. That I will endeavour to procure relief to the people in general, by promoting the reduction of the taxes upon soap, candles, leather, and beer. That I will promote an enquiry into the conduct of the several administrations during the last seven years, and the causes of the late frequent changes; and particularly a strict scrutiny into the secret influence of the Favourite, whose pernicious counsels and wicked practices, have brought us into our present state of poverty and anarchy. . . ."

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 218–43. Though in addition to the striking points given below *Regulus* added a jealous watchfulness of the increasing influence of Peers over the individual members of the Commons, one allowance, proper to the eighteenth century, must be made for him. In defining *the People*, for whom he claimed the control of politics, he expressly excluded "the illiterate rabble, who have neither capacity for judging of matters of government, nor property to be concerned for".

The state reformers at the Revolution were so intent on binding down our *kings* to their good behaviour, that they left the *grandees* in possession of powers inconsistent with the first principles of liberty. For what can be imagined more contradictory to the natural rights of mankind, than that . . . *two* or *three hundred* persons should have it, at any time, in their power to stop the whole business of the *nation*? It ought to have been settled at the great reformation of the state in 1688, that if at any time a law, or regulation affecting the whole community, should be found agreeable to the majority of the *lower* house, and to the *sovereign*, it should be established, whether passed by the *grandees*, or not. . . .

Let us, in order to form just notions of the degree of liberty at present secure to us, consider a few other particulars respecting the *lower* house. First, with regard to the *representation* . . . what could blind chance have determined more *unequal*, *irregular*, and imperfect, than we see it at this day? First, as to the landed interest, there are two members for each county. But, on comparing the extent and value of the counties, you will find, that one county, as Yorkshire for instance, is of six times more value than another, as Rutlandshire. There are but six representatives for the immense contiguity of the metropolis, comprehending London, Westminster, and Southwark, in which the very number of *dwelling-houses* (to say nothing of the *wealth* of the inhabitants), is beyond computation. There are as many for Old Sarum, and one or two other rotten boroughs in that neighbourhood, the whole number of houses in which have been estimated below the value of £4000. . . .

The monied interest is not represented at all. One hundred millions and upwards of property wholly excluded from a share in the legislature! excepting where the proprietors have other qualifications. The case is much the same with the *commercial* interest. A merchant or manufacturer, who exports to the value of half a million every year, is not represented as a merchant or manufacturer: he has not the privilege of a beggar in a Cornish borough. Accordingly the great manufacturing towns of Manchester, Birmingham, Sheffield, &c., have no representation in parliament. And in most towns the *corporation*, which bears no proportion to the inhabitants, either in number, or property, are the only voters.

London, Westminster, and Southwark, pay eighty parts in five hundred and thirteen of the land-tax, and of the subsidy, one hundred and thirty-five; while they send only eight members to the house of commons. Cornwall and Devon, pay twenty-nine parts land-tax, and twenty-four subsidy, while they send no less than seventy members. . . . May not the interest of a few persons deputed by a twentieth part of the people, by a fiftieth part of the property, be, by an artful and corrupt court, made to appear to them quite *different* from that of the *nation*? . . . the court has in its gift, including places in the law, the army, the navy, the church, and the public offices, together with the pensions, which are publickly known (what is pocketed in private is out of the present estimate) no less than the enormous sum of TWO MILLIONS A YEAR.

Is not this sufficient to biass *two* or *three hundred* individuals? And does not this explain the *eagerness* we see in so many to get into the *house*?

Every housekeeper, who pays tax for eight windows, ought to have a vote; and men of large property, two, or, at the most three. And there ought not, as at present, in one great city, or populous county, to be five thousand voters bundled together for electing two members, while in another small place there are not fifty, perhaps not five . . . Were every substantial *housekeeper*, in every county, a voter, and all votes of equal weight, bribery must proceed with a very slow pace. And were members elected by *ballot*, corruption must soon become impracticable, and voters would not, as now, be awed by those who have an ascendency over them; as it would not be known for whom each particular elector had ballotted.

Septennial parliaments are a shameless encroachment on the antient rights of the *people* . . . even the French, a nation of slaves, remark, that we are *free* only *once* in *seven* years. . . . Whatever pretence there was formerly for lengthening parliaments, they are now ceased. Triennial parliaments are, on some accounts, less eligible than septennial. They would be attended with most part of the present debauchery, bribery, and perjury, and would gain us but little advantage. Annual elections would, with other proper regulations . . . produce effects of inconceivable importance to the state.

Students will recognise in these accents an almost incredibly accurate forecast of the course of middle-class Radicalism for the next century. And if suspicion of the standing army and desire to replace it by a reformed militia looks back as well as forward,[1] the veritable accents of Mr. Bentham at his worst—not to mention those of Mr. Gradgrind—seem recognisable in such a passage on public employments as the following:[2]

There is, in fact, no employment in either church or state, which deserves above two or three hundred pounds a year, exclusive of those in the navy and army, and these only in time of *war*. The common abilities of gentlemen's stewards, or merchants' clerks, are fully sufficient for the common routine of business. Had the first shopkeeper, or the first porter, to be met with in Cheapside, guided our public affairs, and so on to the rest in rotation, ever since the Revolution, could they have been in a worse situation than we now see them? Yet

[1] *Political Register*, ii, 233–4: "The proper force of a free state is, the whole body of the *people*, or a certain number of the people enrolled by rotation, and never finally detached from the rest, as an *army* necessarily must be, but *returning* again, after a short absence, among their friends and acquaintances, and carrying on their *civil* employments, as before. This would keep up their attachment to the *people* in such a manner, that they never could be made instruments of tyranny against their friends, relations, and acquaintance. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 232–3.

the money dissipated by way of salaries to those, who have applied their time and talents to the ruining of their country, would almost pay the debt of the nation.

The pretence of the necessity of state and pomp, to strike the *vulgar* with a sense of authority, is pretence, and nothing else. If it be said, that, on this account, persons in high places must have large incomes to defray this extraordinary expense, the answer is easy, *viz.* that it is not vain shew and *parade*, that impresses a people with a sense of the necessity of obedience; but good principles planted in the *youth* (in which important work the parochial *clergy* of England are, by the bye, most infamously negligent), a good *example* exhibited by persons of rank (our people of condition are the principal corrupters of the virtue of the nation), and superior wisdom and goodness in governors. . . .

If my steward, clerk, or footman, has served me faithfully, and, during his service, has been liberally maintained and salaried by me, am I obliged, or will he (if his impudence be not equal to that of a lord) demand of me, to settle on him a *pension* for *life*, to devolve on his *son* after him? And must I do the same by fifty *successive* servants? Suppose, instead of serving me faithfully, they have put my affairs into utter *confusion*, am I obliged to overpay them tenfold, while in my service, and to pension their sons after them, to the beggaring of myself and my family? . . .

In the, perhaps, excessive attention that has been bestowed in Political Histories on the consequences of Wilkes's part in the 1768 Elections, the place of the writing even in so conspicuously pioneering a publication as the *Political Register* has been completely forgotten. Yet it was only a stage, after all, from such election writing as that ventured by the *Political Register* in 1768 to the definite list of rotten boroughs (with approximate statistics of the number of their voters) which, amid much else of importance, made its appearance during the next General Election year, 1774, in Burgh's *Political Disquisitions*.[1] And such a list permitting, for

[1] Burgh's name is not on the title page of the first volume of this three-volume work. Its full title is *Political Disquisitions; or An Enquiry into public Errors, Defects, and Abuses—Calculated to draw the timely Attention of Government and People to a due Consideration of the Necessity, and the Means, of reforming those Errors, Defects, and Abuses: of Restoring the Constitution, and Saving the State.* The list of boroughs is to be found in Volume I, pp. 40–8, and Burgh warmly acknowledges his indebtedness to the "learned and indefatigably laborious Brown Willis Esq: in his *Notitia Parliamentaria*". According to Burgh, Old Sarum and Newton, I.O.W. were the worst cases with *one* voter constituting a majority for the return of two members in each place. But Marlborough with a majority constituted by two voters, Buckingham and Malmesbury with majorities constituted by seven, Bramber with a majority constituted by eight, Camelford with a majority constituted by ten, and Calne, Bossiney, and Banbury with majorities constituted by eleven in each case were next on the list of electoral abuses.

example, the proof that 254 members out of 558 could be returned by 5723 electors,[1] many of them dominated by their landlords,[2] has, after all, just as important a place in the history of Parliamentary Reform as the activities of Wilkes. To these activities it is now necessary to turn.

After consultations with his friends, Wilkes, whose skilful damnation of Chatham in the famous *Second Letter to the Duke of Grafton* had, during 1767, put him back into the forefront of politics, resolved to return to England for the General Election of 1768. In view of the hard winter and the existing unrest among large sections of the metropolitan population, Wilkes's chances, even for the mercantile City, were deemed good, and certainly the London mob promptly adopted him as their candidate, the Spitalfields weavers apparently taking the lead. On March 15th, accordingly, the day before the City election came on at Guildhall, Wilkes, who had already petitioned for the royal pardon,[3] duly enrolled himself a Freeman of the City and a Liveryman of the Joiners Company. Next day he was declared by the Sheriffs to have been one of the four members chosen on "the show of hands" from among the seven candidates.[4] When a poll was, however, demanded on behalf of the beaten candidates and the polling

[1] *Political Disquisitions*, i, 45. As Burgh deals only in the number that would make a majority if it came to a poll the total number of electors would be nearly twice this figure.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 48–52. "Here we see (*monstrum horrendum, ingens!*) two persons, the lord of the pitiful town of Newton, in the Isle of Wight, and him of Old Sarum, Wiltshire, where there is not a house, send in as many members as the inestimable wealth of the city of London, in which the livery, who are the legal electors, are 8,000; and the persons who ought to have votes are probably 30,000 and upwards.... It is a handful of beggars, bribed, or awed, by the court, or the grandees, that sends the majority of the members into the house.... In antient times, when parliaments were first established, there was no property, but that of *land*. Therefore all powers, and all honours were heaped on the landed men.... It is the over-balance of the power in the hands of the landed men, that has produced the bounty on exportation of corn which increases the manufacturer's expence of living, and discourages the exportation of our manufacture."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1768, which, in view of the renewal of nation-wide interest in Wilkes printed not only his Berwick Election Address of 1754 by the side of his Address to the Livery of London but also his petition for the royal clemency. Its most characteristic passage runs: "Some former ministers, whom your M——, in condescension to the wishes of your people, thought proper to remove, employed every wicked and deceitful act to oppress your subject, and to avenge their own personal cause on him, whom they imagined to be the principal author of bringing to public view, their ignorance, insufficiency and treachery to your M—— and the N——. I have been the innocent and unhappy victim of revenge. I was forced by their injustice and violence into exile."

[4] *Political Register*, April 1768; *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1768.

machinery set in motion for seven successive days, it became apparent that almost the entire influence of the upper mercantile classes was, in opposition to the sentiment of the streets,[1] being exerted against Wilkes and successfully annihilating his electoral chances. As Wilkes put it, his opponents had not only had a long start of him in canvassing but "ministerial influence, assisted by private malice, had been exerted in the most arbitrary and unconstitutional manner, and by means of the basest chicanery and oppression".[2] In fact, before the City polling was ended on March 23rd with Wilkes at the bottom of the poll, the returned exile had, on March 22nd, found it advisable to anticipate the possible legal measures against him, which constituted his most formidable electoral handicap, by volunteering to appear in the Court of King's Bench on the first day of the ensuing term.[3]

If Wilkes had, perforce, to resign his hopes of a City seat on March 23rd, that only made it more necessary for him to succeed in the Middlesex candidature which he announced the same day. The election for that county had been fixed for March 26th at Brentford, and this time London's working classes, in their resolve that their hero should be sent to the House of Commons, must have undertaken a good deal of organisation. Here is Horace Walpole's account of the result:[4]

By five in the morning a very large body of weavers, &c., took possession of Piccadilly, and the roads and turnpikes leading to Brentford, and would suffer nobody to pass without blue cockades, and papers inscribed "*No. 45, Wilkes and Liberty*". They tore to pieces the coaches of Sir W. Beauchamp Proctor, and Mr. Cooke, the other candidates . . . and it was with difficulty that Sir William and Mr. Cooke's cousin got to Brentford. There, however, lest it should be called a void election, Wilkes had the sense to keep everything quiet. But, about five, Wilkes, being considerably ahead of the other two, his mob returned to town and behaved outrageously. They stopped every

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine* gives the following under March 21st: "The populace on Mr. Wilkes's return from Guildhall, to show their zeal, took the horses from his carriage, and drew it themselves; other extravagancies of the like kind have been practised, but this will suffice to show the spirit of the multitude."

[2] *Political Register*, April 1768, p. 302. It appears that those who voted for Wilkes had cause for worry not only at the time of the polls but afterwards when it was determined, against considerable protest (cf. *Gazetteer*, April 4, 1768; *Political Register*, May 1768), to publish the poll list.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under March 22nd.

[4] *Walpole's Letters*. Letter begun on March 31, 1768, and concluded on April 1st.

carriage, scratched and spoilt several with writing all over them "No. 45", pelted, threw dirt and stones, and forced everybody to huzza for Wilkes. . . . At night they insisted, in several streets, on houses being illuminated, and several Scotch refusing, had their windows broken. Another mob rose in the City, and Harley, the present Lord Mayor . . . having acted formerly and now with great spirit against Wilkes, and the Mansion House not being illuminated, and he out of town, they broke every window, and tried to force their way into the House. The Trained Bands were sent for, but did not suffice. At last a party of guards, from the Tower, and some lights erected, dispersed the tumult. At one in the morning a riot began before Lord Bute's house . . . though illuminated. . . .

Nor did Wilkes's return as senior member for Middlesex, certified though it was next morning after only a single day's polling,[1] suffice to stay the tumult that had been raised. Here is Horace Walpole's report of the night of March 29th:

The day was very quiet, but at night they rose again, and obliged almost every house in town to be lighted up, even the Duke of Cumberland's and Princess Amelia's. About one o'clock they marched to the Duchess of Hamilton's. . . . She was obstinate and would not illuminate . . . they brought iron crows, tore down the gates, pulled up the pavement, and battered the house for three hours. . . . They stopped and opened the coach of Count Seilern, the Austrian Ambassador, who has made a formal complaint. . . .

Reassured, however, by the comparative quiet reigning on the night of March 30th, Ministers, though called together, refrained from issuing an intended Proclamation and treated the affair as just such another aggravated election riot as had taken place elsewhere.[2] Horace Walpole, nevertheless, still anticipated trouble, having heard that Wilkes's lawyers had discovered a flaw in the

[1] Cf. *Political Register*, April 1768, for a report: "The poll books were opened at half past one, from which time the books were fully employed until near five o'clock, when the freeholders slackened; and at half an hour after five no freeholders offering to poll, it was proposed to close the books at six o'clock; at the same time the sheriffs sent to Mr. Cook, at a house contiguous, for his concurrence; no answer being received, four other messages were sent, one after another, without any answer, until past seven o'clock. . . . The sheriffs then went round to every book, and finding no person polling, made a proclamation for freeholders to come and poll, or that the books would be closed. After wasting some time, and three several proclamations, without any freeholders appearing to poll, the books were sealed up, when the sheriffs adjourned until Tuesday morning, at nine o'clock, to cast up the books, and make their return. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under February 24th and March 7th, for early and fearful election violence at Preston and Lancaster.

outlawry which would save Wilkes his seat,[1] and having information, apparently, of the fact that the demagogue was in such financial straits as to have no other resource but to continue exciting commotion. "Wilkes is undone," wrote Walpole, "and though he has had great support, his patrons will be sick of maintaining him. He must either sink to poverty and a jail, or commit new excesses, for which he will get knocked on the head." This was to underrate both Wilkes's coolness and the amount of "respectable" constitutional discontent already inclined to accept him as figure-head and make use of the mob behind him. Wilkes knew he had now made it impossible for Mansfield to sentence him to anything like the life-imprisonment and the pillory he had once dreaded. He was beginning to see the possibility of going to prison for a short term not merely as undisputed M.P. for Middlesex but as a popular idol, with a party outside collecting funds to maintain him, and awaiting his release impatiently in order to begin constitutional agitation. It is one of the tragedies of British history that Wilkes was at once too small and too corrupt for the part that men like his remarkable Brentford supporter, the Rev. Mr. Horne, were seeking to create for him.[2] More ultimate popular good might still have been obtained from Chatham.

[1] Cf. *Walpole's Letters* (Letter March 31–April 1, 1768): "Wilkes has notified that he intends to surrender himself to his outlawry, the beginning of next term, which comes on the 17th of this month. There is said to be a flaw in the proceedings, in which case his election will be good, though the King's Bench may fine or imprison him. . . ."

[2] Cf. *The Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, pp. 34–5, for Horne's account of his activities of 1767–8.

CHAPTER V

WILKES AND HIS SUPPORTERS, 1768–9

". . . behold a nation overwhelmed with debt; her revenues wasted; her trade declining; the affections of her colonies alienated; the duty of the magistrate transferred to the soldiery; a gallant army, which never fought unwillingly but against their fellow subjects, mouldering away for want of the direction of a man of common abilities and spirit; and, in the last instance, the administration of justice become odious and suspected to the whole body of the people. This deplorable scene admits but of one addition—that we are governed by counsels from which a reasonable man can expect no remedy but poison, no relief but death.

"If, by the immediate interposition of Providence, it were possible for us to escape a crisis so full of terror and despair, posterity will not believe the history of the present times . . . they will not believe it possible that their ancestors could have survived, or recovered from so desperate a condition, while a duke of Grafton was prime minister, a lord North chancellor of the exchequer, a Weymouth and a Hillsborough secretaries of state, a Granby commander in chief, and a Mansfield chief criminal judge of the kingdom."

JUNIUS to the *Public Advertiser*, January 21, 1769.

"To the king's most excellent majesty.

"The humble address of the lord lieutenant and nobility, high sheriff, grand jury, gentlemen and clergy, assembled at the assizes held in Chelmsford, in and for the county of Essex, on Thursday the second day of March, one thousand seven hundred and sixty-nine.

"Most gracious sovereign,

"Whilst we feel the happy effect, and retain in our breasts a most grateful sense of the mildness and benignity of your majesty's government, we cannot see, without the utmost abhorrence, the spirit of sedition and licentiousness, which hath lately manifested itself in such various shapes, with design to lessen the respect and affection due to your majesty, to traduce and misrepresent your parliament, and draw into contempt the authority of the courts of justice, which in no time were more happily or more eminently supplied.

"Every part of the conduct of these disturbers of the public repose, appears to us as weak and unreasonable as it is wicked; yet we think such proceedings, if not timely checked, may

operate to subvert the constitution, and destroy that liberty which has been made the specious but false pretence for committing outrages of the most dangerous and alarming kind . . . we are determined at the risque of our lives and properties, to support your royal authority in suppressing and subduing all seditious and riotous attempts, which threaten destruction to the state, and disturb the happiness and honour of your reign."

An anti-Wilkes manifesto from the *Annual Register*, 1769.

THOUGH there was a temporary subsidence of Wilkes excitements during the first half of April 1768; though public attention might well have been claimed by the serious American situation necessitating the Council meeting of April 15th,[1] Wilkes's appearance before the Court of King's Bench on April 20th inevitably concentrated all eyes on him once more.[2] Having made, before a packed Court, a skilful speech justifying his past behaviour and charging Lord Mansfield with an improper alteration of Court records without which his convictions of February 1764 would have been impossible, Wilkes left the further conduct of his case to the four lawyers whom his supporters had enabled him to engage.

It soon appeared that, if Lord Mansfield was prepared to justify what he himself had done in 1764, he found flaws in what the Attorney General was doing in 1768. Wilkes was therefore discharged for the time, and the populace, which had gathered outside the Court in great force, seems to have been too surprised to alter the character of the demonstrations which had been planned or, indeed, to make any demonstrations at all.[3] That industrial troubles in the East End should nevertheless be leading to serious bloodshed almost simultaneously was proof enough of what might yet be effected by mobs, inflamed by the winter of hardship and political agitation through which they had passed. When therefore Wilkes was once again brought before the Court of King's Bench on April 27th, Westminster Hall is reported to have been

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1768, under April 15th: "Was held a great council at St. James's, at which lord Gower, president, the duke of Grafton, the two secretaries of state, the earl of Hillsborough, secretary for the colonies, assisted." But Ministers were doubtless disinclined to stress the American resistance to the Townshend duties of 1767 for the report proceeds as follows: "The subject is said to be the Indian war, with which the colonies are threatened, on account of some outrages committed by the back settlers."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, May 1768 for "a curious picturesque print of John Wilkes, Esq; delivering his Speech at the Bar of the Court of King's Bench on a late memorable Occasion". For the *Gentleman's Magazine* to supply a print of this character was unexampled, and it is a further proof of the interest in Wilkes that this print was put at the very beginning of the bound volume of the collected numbers for 1768.

[3] *Ibid.*, April 1768, under April 20th: "About two o'clock Mr. Wilkes left the Court, and though there was a very great crowd, not the least disturbance happened. Information, indeed, had been given to the lord mayor, that some persons at a public house in Duke's Place, were preparing to raise a mob, and his lordship ordered the proper officers to enquire . . . who found a blue flag with No. 45 upon it, a hauger and hatchet lying by it, and two men as a guard to defend it, whom the officers apprehended. . . ."

guarded by "many justices of the peace, and a prodigious number of constables".[1] On this occasion he was committed to the King's Bench Prison, bail being denied as unprecedented in such a case. But, despite the great muster of force in and around the Court, he hardly reached the prison in the manner intended by the authorities. According to the *Annual Register*'s account of what happened to the hackney-coach that had been hired for Wilkes and the two Court tipstaffs guarding him:[2]

> The mob stopped the coach on Westminster-bridge, took out the horses, and drew it along the Strand, Fleet-street, &c. to Spitalfields. When they came to Spital-square they obliged the two tip-staffs to get out . . . they then drew Mr. Wilkes to the Three Tuns tavern in Spitalfields, where, from a one pair of stairs window, he earnestly entreated them to retire, which they did accordingly. After which he went in a private manner, and surrendered himself to the marshal of the king's bench prison. . . .

It can hardly have pleased Authority that a large part of London should have been treated to yet another Wilkes display ending in the edifying spectacle of Wilkes piously upholding the laws of his country even against himself. Nor was this, of course, the end. Day after day increasing numbers of "respectable" supporters flocked to see Wilkes within the prison while, outside, a vast concourse was always assembled despite the military force that had been called in to check its first tumultuous proceedings.[3] It would seem, indeed, that the ever-changing mob outside Wilkes's place of confinement became a breeding-ground of economic as well as political discontent—and not only in London. Of Newcastle it was reported, "the cry for Wilkes and Liberty is said to be as loud among the sailors as at London, and attended with the same violence. The women interest themselves in his favour, and are as zealous as the men, but not so *outrageous*."[4] As for London, on May 7th, the very day when Serjeant Glynn opened his case for the illegality of Wilkes's outlawry before the Court of King's Bench, the sailors organised a great procession to St. James's "with colours flying, drums beating, and fifes playing, and presented a petition to his majesty, setting forth their grievances and praying relief". On Monday, May 9th, the day when the hatters

[1] *Annual Register*, 1768, Chronicle, p. 100.
[2] *Ibid.* [3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under April 27th.
[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, May 1768, p. 241.

struck[1] and a "numerous body of watermen assembled before the mansion-house" with complaints for the Lord Mayor, the evening hours saw "a large mob of another kind assembled before the mansion-house, carrying a gallows with a boot hanging to it, and a red cap".[2] On Tuesday, May 10th, again, the day when a specially large mob assembled outside Wilkes's prison in the hope of seeing him leave for the opening of Parliament (and with dangerous consequences to be examined later), there were formidable sawyers' riots at Limehouse and a large coalheavers' procession from Stepneyfields to Palace-yard "with a flag flying, drums beating, and two violins playing before them".[3]

Before continuing to deal with this striking simultaneity of industrial and political agitation, it is necessary, in view of the serious political developments flowing therefrom, to examine in detail what happened outside the King's Bench Prison on May 10th. Here is the *Gentleman's Magazine* account, omitting though it does that one of the factors in the situation was the popular fear that Wilkes would be denied his seat, a fear that had already produced a surprising demonstration from his old Aylesbury constituency:[4]

> "The mob," says the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "which has constantly surrounded the King's Bench Prison in St. George's-fields, ever since the imprisonment of Mr. Wilkes grew outrageous; the riot act was read, and the soldiers ordered to fire. Several persons who were passing along the road at a distance, were unfortunately killed; and one youth about 17, son to a stable-keeper in the Borough, was singled out, followed, and shot dead, in an out-house where he had fled for shelter."

From this bloodshed flowed consequences which, with the related industrial troubles, altogether overshadowed the brief Parliamentary proceedings between May 10th and May 21st, proceedings important only because, before a prorogation that lasted until November 8th, the relaxation of food-import restrictions had again to be undertaken and corn-export forbidden.

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1768, p. 242. This must be a relatively early use of the word.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under May 9th.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 242–3. The most active Westminster Justice, Sir John Fielding, is reported to have thereupon talked with "their leaders and] prevailed upon them to meet some of their masters at his office in the afternoon, and accommodate their differences".

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1768, p. 110, which gives the copy of a letter addressed by thirty-four Aylesbury electors to their two M.P.'s directing opposition to any such attempt.

If Ministers had hoped to bring to an end the long metropolitan disturbances by a display of power carried to the point of bloodshed, the immediate course of events after the shootings of May 10th must have deeply disappointed them. On May 11th, the very day after the shooting, it looked as though the London mob was not only uncoerced but might have been strengthened by the awakening of anti-military and anti-Court sentiment among "respectable" portions of the capital's citizenry. Thus while two of the magistrates who had called for the military action of the previous day were having their premises demolished in Bermondsey; while coalheavers were parading riverside wharves in Shadwell and Wapping, and sailors, intent on higher pay, were holding a procession through the City, a coroner's jury, summoned for an inquest on one of the victims of May 10th, returned a verdict of "Wilful Murder" against a lieutenant, a corporal and a grenadier, who all, as Ministerial bad-luck would have it, belonged to a "Scottish detachment" that had been used the previous day.[1] On May 12th reports were circulating of Royal approval for what the troops had done and Royal assurances of protection to the soldiery concerned. And, on May 18th, there was an account that "a most audacious treasonable paper was stuck upon the walls of St. James's palace; and at night a letter was found on the back-stairs to the same purport".[2]

There were now doubtless those who talked in the miserable depths of London's poorest and most criminal quarters of a rising to execute Bute and release Wilkes. But helped, perhaps, by the growing anger of the prosperous middle-classes at the unceasing industrial unrest of the masses, Ministers were never driven to real alarm. Most encouraging to them must have been the action of two further coroners' juries sitting on victims of the shootings of May 10th who, instead of following the precedent of the first jury, returned, on May 13th, a verdict of "Chance Medley". And new industrial demonstrations on May 17th by glass-grinders, journeymen-tailors, and coalheavers, followed before long by reports of new food-riots in the countryside[3] and further trouble in

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1768, p. 243.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 244–5.
[3] The *Gentleman's Magazine* reports the first food-riot of the summer of 1768 under the date of May 19th and to the following effect: "The Sherborne waggon was stopped by the populace, and about a thousand weight of butter taken away, designed for London."

America,[1] must certainly have disposed responsible City men to much greater sympathy for Ministers and the Crown. That the King should have made a bold bid for the City's support by inviting into the Privy Council the Lord Mayor, Harley, who had distinguished himself against mob-disorder and headed the City poll,[2] probably helped members of the City "Court party". They were, indeed, sometimes to be heard speculating on whether Wilkes had not been given shelter by France in 1764 with the deliberate intent of having him available to make trouble for England at a time of such strained relations as was soon, in fact, provoked by the French annexation of Corsica.[3] And even City opponents of "Court tools" like these must have been glad to hear of the Lord Mayor's vigour in combating dangerous food-rumours[4] and of the eventual use of the military to suppress the species of private war between sailors and coalheavers that had terrorised the riverside for months. The attitude of the politically effective part of the "public" is well mirrored in such an extract as the following:[5]

> The insolencies of the coalheavers arrived to such a height, that the military was called in to the assistance of the civil power, and an engagement ensued, wherein several were killed on both sides; 20 of the desperadoes however have been apprehended, and pursuit made after many more. The gaols are full of those fellows, who would neither work nor let others work, so that the business on the river has been greatly obstructed.

And July 26th, the day when seven coalheavers were executed at Shadwell and a reward offered for information as to the

[1] The *Gentleman's Magazine*, under May 20th, has the following: "Advices from America by the way of Scotland, have been received, that things are in a great confusion in New York, and that at Boston they threatened to pull down the Custom house."

[2] The *Gentleman's Magazine* reports the Lord Mayor's swearing-in under May 27th. He was the first Lord Mayor so honoured since Sir William Walworth, who had slain Wat Tyler, and the precedent was noted with a good deal of interest.

[3] The *Gentleman's Magazine* gives the first mention of Franco-Genoese agreement for a French occupation of the island under June 4th. It is interesting to note from the *Political Register* (June, p. 410) that Wilkes not only had to defend himself from the charge of subserviency to the French Government but from suspicions that he had attended Catholic worship in France.

[4] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under May 31st: "The report in the papers that 700 quarters of wheat had been thrown overboard into the Thames has been publickly contradicted by the lord mayor of London. Such reports are of a very dangerous nature at this critical time, when bread is dear, and probably WILL BE DEARER before the harvest can be got in. The stock at home, *notwithstanding what may be said to the contrary*, is near exhausted. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, under June 12th.

Spitalfields terrorism being practised by the silk-weavers,[1] was presumably no day of mourning among prosperous supporters of Wilkes even though that demagogue had begun serving the twenty-two months of imprisonment finally imposed upon him on June 18th.

It seems extraordinary that after the events the year 1768 had already seen, and while all manner of questions were still pending —the serious American troubles, for instance,[2] the Anglo-French tension on Corsica,[3] and the embarrassing legal aftermath of the "massacre" of May 10th[4]—the arrival of the King of Denmark for a long stay should largely have diverted the fickle "public's" attention from political complaint. Yet so it was, and from August 11th, the date of the Danish monarch's arrival at St. James's to October 14th, the date of his departure from Dover, the news of his movements and activities was, to judge from the periodicals, the leading interest of the country. The "public's" absorption in a new curiosity seems temporarily to have served the Ministers, and the more so as Parliament was in recess. But threatening trouble blew up for them even before the approaching reassembly of Parliament gave Wilkes the chance of issuing a new manifesto to his constituents, dated November 3rd, and of announcing a new petition for the redress of all his grievances.[5] The hand, moreover, that anticipated Wilkes's in striking a dangerous blow at Ministers was that of Chatham, now recovered and intent on dissociating himself from the mistakes of his colleagues.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1768, p. 139, for the "prodigious number of peace officers" and the guard of three hundred soldiers that made the coalheavers' execution possible near the scene of their outrages. The action against the weavers was justified because "notwithstanding one well-adapted plan, which the most principal of the manufacturers in Spitalfields are at this time pursuing, with the utmost vigour, for the benefit and satisfaction of their journeymen in every part of the trade, yet a great number of evil-disposed persons, armed with pistols, cutlasses, and other offensive weapons, and in disguise, assembled themselves together . . ." for work-spoiling.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under August 9th, for the following: "The 13th regiment of foot sailed from Dover for Cork, in four transports; they are to relieve two regiments on duty there, who are to embark immediately on board the same transports, and others provided for them, for Boston in N. America."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, under August 27th, for financial alarm on account of the predicted "rupture with France, and a general revolt of the Colonies", an alarm serious enough to cause quasi-official reassurances to be supplied "in the papers of this day".

[4] Though the problem of the three soldiers and the J.P., put on trial for murder, was eventually disposed of, it was not without difficulty and embarrassment which would doubtless have been greater but for the fortunate desertion of the soldier actually responsible for "the murder of Allen".

[5] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1768, pp. 182–3.

What interpretations, harmful to Grafton and his brother-ministers, could be put upon the Chatham resignation of October 15th, those worthies were to learn while wrestling with Wilkes's opening manœuvres to dominate the Parliamentary Session begun on November 8th. Here is malice from the *Political Register*, copied by the November number of the very widely-read *Gentleman's Magazine* as its "Historical Chronicle" for October 15th:[1]

This day the Earl of Chatham resigned the post of Lord Privy Seal.... The principle now adopted with respect to America is said to have been one cause of his resignation. And, amongst others, the following are added: The plan to destroy the peace and liberty of Europe, being looked upon with indifference by those who call themselves ministers. The high language lately held by the British ministers at Paris upon the invasion of Corsica, and the strong contradiction by authority given to it here. The disregard to the memorial of a southern potentate, once the natural and firm ally of Great Britain, representing the danger to Great Britain, as well as to himself in *suffering France to secure the empire of the Mediterranean*, these are his words, and not one effort made by Great Britain to check its progress. Mr. Lynch appointed minister to the court of Turin, in preference to the Earl of Tankerville. A general officer of unspotted character driven from the service of his country, lest his abilities should contribute to prevent the approaching distress. Public business for some time executed only by clerks. Men of profligate character, whose fortunes have been dissipated in scenes of lewdness and debauchery, placed in great offices of honour, trust and emolument . . . who knowing that their own date in office cannot be longer than while the shadow of peace is preserved, daily disgrace and debilitate the state by the most infamous practices. Corruption practised in the most open and daring manner. And to crown all, beyond their incomes, they are known to have accepted of an annual £500 out of the minister's private pocket-book, under the denomination of secret service, as the reward for betraying their country.... The arch-fiend of corruption now performing the part of *locum tenens* to the absent favourite; a wretch, who upon his legs in a certain assembly had once the hardihood to defend . . . corruption, and to add that the public business would not be carried on without it.... At the death of the late king he was said to be worth a million sterling; and how much more hath he amassed by the peace and other jobs since? . . .

When Parliament met on November 8, 1768 the debates on the Address speedily proved that Ministers might have more to fear

[1] It is hardly difficult to recognise references to General Amherst, the recruits from the "Bloomsbury Gang" and Lord Holland in this passage.

from what was widely regarded as their careless and pusillanimous attitude towards the French operations in Corsica[1] than from the severe reprobation of American disorder they had undertaken. Of course Ministers' Parliamentary majority, reinforced by the acquisition of the "Bloomsbury Gang", was not in question. But the Rockingham and Grenville Oppositions, if not acting in avowed concert, were both intent on damaging the Government by stressing the unsatisfactory condition of foreign affairs, a subject on which they could co-operate more heartily than on American troubles. Then on November 14th, the day when, in view of the still serious food situation, it was once again necessary for Ministers to initiate the legislation for temporarily stopping corn-exportation and the use of wheat for the production of liquor, Ministers found themselves facing the further ordeal brought upon them by the Wilkes petition. Some members of the Opposition were later to claim that they warned Ministers against debates intended to permit the refutation and exposure of the demagogue but inevitably passing into angry constitutional discussion capable of use in Wilkes's further glorification with the mob.[2] But Ministers could, perhaps, hardly trust men closely associated with those who were calling the loudest for publication of all the diplomatic papers on Corsica, all the War Office papers on the May "massacre" and all official papers on the Colonies since January 1, 1766.[3] Such partisan clamourers seemed, from the official point of view, recklessly blind to the many dangers of the situation at home, abroad and in America.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 64: "The dangerous breach of treaty, and violation of the general tranquillity by the invasion of Corsica, and the spreading and baneful influence of the family compact, were particularly insisted on. A total neglect of our foreign interests, as well as those in which the general safety of Europe was concerned, was strongly charged. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 50*: "Some persons, of great weight in opposition, from the beginning recommended to the ministry that this petition should be passed by without notice, and very strongly pointed out the mischievous consequences which must attend an enquiry into that sort of matter. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 51*–2*: "A motion was made early in the session, that copies of all the correspondence between the secretaries of state, and our ministers at the court of France, relative to the affairs of Corsica, from the 1st of January 1767, should be laid before the house; . . . A motion was made in a few days after, for an address that there should be laid before the house, copies of all the applications from the civil magistrates to the war-office for troops, and of all orders and letters to the troops employed . . . and also copies of the several reports made to the war-office from such officers, during the riots in the month of May last. . . . A motion was afterwards made . . . for copies of all letters and affidavits, which had been received since the 1st of January 1766, relative to any disputes or disturbances in America. . . ."

Yet even if Ministers had found it possible to come to some understanding with "responsible" members of the Opposition as to the Parliamentary treatment of Wilkes's petition, that demagogue would have been difficult to silence. Favoured by the death of his co-member for Middlesex and helped by the lax prison regulations of the day, Wilkes was, in November and December, not merely engaged in his usual "feeding" of the anti-Government Press but also in successfully organising the City anti-Court politicians round him to return his lawyer, Serjeant Glynn, as second member for Middlesex.[1] And as a further insurance against being neglected, Wilkes had possessed himself, by the treachery, perhaps, of someone in Government service, of the Secretary of State's written assurance of military aid for the magistrates responsible for the policing of the huge crowds gathered outside Wilkes's prison in April and May. A copy of the Secretary of State's letter he sent to the *St. James's Chronicle* with a deliberately libellous and malevolent comment aimed at the entire Ministry. As printed in the *St. James's Chronicle* Wilkes's introduction for the Secretary of State's letter ran: "I send you the following authentic State paper, the date of which prior by more than three weeks to the fatal 10th of May, shows how long the horrid massacre in St. George's Fields had been planned and determined upon before it was carried into execution, and how long a hellish project can be brooded over by some infernal spirits without one moment's remorse."[2] And while the Lords, in vindication of the injured Secretary of State, Viscount Weymouth, were establishing Wilkes's authorship as a preliminary to further action, the country had been set ringing with yet another "horrid massacre", that of a peaceful Wilkite supporter of Sergeant Glynn by the alleged band of "armed ruffians" with whom the unsuccessful "Court candidate" had supposedly endeavoured to overawe Brentford during the Middlesex polling of December 8th to 14th.[3] That the "villains" specially responsible, Balf and M'Quirk, should be found guilty of murder merely made matters worse, for the partisans of "liberty" had only sinister explanations to offer of why continual respites were sent by the King to save them from

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1768, p. 587.
[2] *St. James's Chronicle*, December 8–10, 1768.
[3] The new *North Briton*, issued by William Bingley and always in trouble, will be found to be the completest authority for the Wilkite activities and views at this stage.

the gallows.[1] The very atmosphere had been created allowing Wilkes to be elected a City Alderman in January 1769 and thus presented with improved opportunities of stimulating the City against the Court.

Wilkes, confident of mob support, could hardly have asked for more favourable circumstances in which to fight out the quarrel he had forced on Ministers, some of whom had, like Grafton, been anxious to avoid the expulsion from Parliament on which the King was set. Before the Session, in fact, began, Grafton had sent intermediaries to offer Wilkes, if he abandoned his troublesome petition, the Government's pledge to avoid challenging his return for Middlesex.[2] But Wilkes's provocative libel had finally forced Grafton's hand, and January 27th, the day when business on the Wilkes petition was resumed after the Christmas Recess, found the whole weight of Court and Government bent on securing the petition's contumelious dismissal. After long proceedings on January 27th, January 31st and February 1st the petition, already torn to shreds, was finally disposed of without a division.[3] The way was now clear for the Speaker's summons to Wilkes, brought from prison for the purpose, to make his defence against the charge of scandalously libelling Lord Weymouth that had already formed the subject of negotiation between the two Houses of Parliament.

Wilkes was acute enough to know that the least sign of flinching would ruin him outside the House with admirers, middle-class and poor, most of them fascinated, perhaps, more by his personal intrepidity than by the variety of "liberty" he claimed to be defending against Court principles of arbitrary power. That is presumably why, on February 2nd, he confessed his responsibility for the attack on Lord Weymouth's letter with audacity. "I was the person", he declared, "who sent Lord Weymouth's letter to the printer and I do glory in confessing myself the author and

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 69, under January 23rd: "Balf and M'Quirk, whose execution had been respited on account of some powerful representations in their favour, were again respited during his majesty's pleasure."

[2] Cf. J. S. Watson's *Biography of Wilkes*, pp. 69–70, for a short summary of what Almon's fuller information gives. Grafton's first assurance to Wilkes went through Almon and the second through one of the Lords of Trade, Fitzherbert, who visited Wilkes in prison.

[3] Cf. Walpole's *Letters* for an epistle of January 31, 1769, reporting the long proceedings of January 27th and the division of 270 against 131 for confining Wilkes to his two chief complaints instead of allowing him a wider field. It is significantly added of Wilkes: "Today he goes again to the House, but whatever steps he takes there, or however long debates he may occasion, you may look upon his fate as decided in that place."

publisher of the prefatory remarks. I thought it my duty to bring to light that *bloody scroll.* I ask pardon, sir," he continued, with a bow to the Speaker, "that I made use of too mild and gentle expressions when I mentioned so wicked, so inhuman, and so cowardly a massacre as that in St. George's Fields."[1] Such a statement rendered it more inevitable than ever that the main business of that day should be the adoption of a motion that Wilkes had been guilty of an "insolent, scandalous, and seditious libel" and that the great business of the next should consist in the debate of an official Government motion for Wilkes's expulsion from the House of Commons.

It is difficult to estimate what was, at this stage, the real feeling of the "respectable" outside Parliament to what was proceeding within. But it is certain enough that the Ministers as such enjoyed little prestige or favour. It is most significant that the famous series of the *Letters of Junius* should already have opened in the *Public Advertiser* with a bludgeon attack on the Government, dated January 21st and soon and often to be repeated.[2] It is even more significant that some little time previously the *Gentleman's Magazine* had turned for its hope of political salvation to reports of a family reconciliation among the "Brotherhood" of Temple, Chatham, and Grenville, a reconciliation the more welcomed as it might permit an agreed and amicable solution of the formidable problem of American discontent.[3] It is not therefore as strange as it might otherwise seem to find Grenville, Wilkes's old enemy, now opposing his expulsion in the wisest speech delivered in the long and stormy debates of February 3rd. "Let us look a little forward," urged Grenville, "and see in what difficulties a concurrence in the present measure will involve us. Mr. Wilkes will certainly be re-elected; you will expel again, and he will be again returned. What is to be done then, and how is so disgraceful a contest to terminate?"[4]

[1] Cf. Horace Bleackley, *Life of John Wilkes*, pp. 214–15. It is the fullest one-volume biography.

[2] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius* (ed. 1814), i, 387–402, for the first devastating assault of a writer who had already for years been perfecting his weapons of attack under other signatures.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1768, p. 585: "From these [American] reports, joined to the late reconciliation of the brotherhood, the friends of America have formed favourable hopes of a reconciliation with the mother-country; it being certainly known that the sentiments of the brothers on American affairs were the principal cause of their disagreement."

[4] Cf. *Parliamentary History*, xvi, 569, for slightly different reporting.

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to recount here the manner in which Grenville's prophecy was more than fulfilled after Wilkes's expulsion of February 3rd. It should, however, be noticed that, even at his first re-election, Wilkes's defiance of what were regarded as the noxious Court influences corrupting Parliament won him two members, James Townsend and John Sawbridge, as nominator and seconder, and "the unanimous voice of above two thousand of the most respectable freeholders who, notwithstanding it proved a very wet day, attended at their own expence early in the morning to support the re-election".[1] When on February 17th, the day following the re-election, the Commons majority resolved that Wilkes was "incapable of being elected a member to serve in the present Parliament", they presumably hoped that, at the next hustings, the Sheriffs of London, who were also Sheriffs of Middlesex, would treat a renomination of Wilkes as invalid and that even obstinate freeholders would bow to the Commons definition of the rules of their own House. Yet if the legal problems arising for the City Sheriffs doubtless had something to do with the postponement of the election hustings from February 28th to March 16th,[2] they did not in the end prevent Alderman Wilkes, as he now was, from enjoying a third triumphant return. Before that return, however, was effected, surprising developments had taken place, and a novel political organisation, with its own finance, had been set up in support of Wilkes.

The Society of Supporters of the Bill of Rights, the designation soon taken by the organisation set up at the large foundation-meeting of February 20th at the London Tavern, had its basic origins in the subscriptions that had been repeatedly collected in 1768 among the anti-Court party in the capital. The very able and energetic "Parson Horne" must now have been growing quite accustomed to gathering in such levies,[3] and certainly the contributors had so far had plenty of excitement and consciousness of civic virtue for their money. But whether they were fully conscious of it or no, it was not merely love of "liberty" but the unexpected chance also of greater prominence than had ever before seemed

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 74–5. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 77, 82.

[3] Cf. *Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, pp. 13–21, for Horne's account of two subscriptions, one for £262 10s. and the other for £1,401, that had been gathered to assure Serjeant Glynn's election as second member for Middlesex. It is apparent that similar efforts were mooted in a variety of other now forgotten cases, e.g. the bringing to trial of Gillam, the magistrate regarded as guilty of murder for his part in the "massacre" of May 10th.

likely that now animated the founders of the new political society —M.P.s who had acquired some notoriety by support of Wilkes like Townsend, Sawbridge and Mawbey; Common Council lights like George Bellas of Doctors' Commons, Samuel Vaughan of Mincing Lane, and Arthur Beardmore, Lord Temple's attorney; "public-spirited clergymen" like Horne and Dr. Wilson of St. Stephen's Walbrook; and, finally, such miscellaneous supporters of public virtue as John Churchill, popular Westminster apothecary and brother to the more famous Charles; Humphrey Cotes, wine-merchant, pamphleteer, and wire-puller for both Wilkes and Temple; John Reynolds, Wilkes's active attorney, and Richard Oliver, wealthy owner of distant plantations but thirsty for the civic distinctions of London.[1] Those founders, too, had already had some taste of novel political emotions in that first remarkable forerunner of the modern indoor election meeting that took place, on February 14th, at the Mile End Assembly Rooms and successfully prepared the Middlesex freeholders for their Brentford business two days later.[2] Those novel emotions were apparently still fresh and undimmed, both at the foundation-meeting of the Bill of Rights Society, held on February 20th at the London Tavern, and at the new meeting of Middlesex freeholders, gathered two days later at the Mile End Assembly Rooms, for the purpose of re-pledging themselves to Wilkes and receiving from Sir F. Delaval a solemn pledge of non-intervention. Here, for example, is the *Annual Register*'s short account of the foundation-proceedings of the Bill of Rights Society on February 20th:[3]

At a very large and respectable meeting of gentlemen at the London tavern (friends of Mr. Wilkes and the constitution), and at which meeting many members of the house of commons attended, a subscription was set on foot to support the cause, when the sum of £3340 was immediately subscribed, and a committee appointed to carry on the same throughout the kingdom. . . . The preamble to the subscription paper runs in the following manner: "Whereas John Wilkes, esq; has suffered very greatly in his private fortune, from the severe and

[1] Oliver, who became Treasurer of the Bill of Rights Society must, like Horne's friend Tooke, treasurer of another subscription, have assumed a considerable portion of financial responsibility himself.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 74, which gives some little space to the speeches from the two M.P.s present, James Townsend and John Sawbridge, and proceeds on the rest of the oratorical feast thus: "Mr. Horne, Samuel Vaughan Esq; Sir Francis Blake Delaval . . . Eyre, Esq; . . . Jones, Esq; and many other gentlemen of property and character, spoke to the same effect."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 75.

repeated prosecutions he has undergone in behalf of the public; and as it seems reasonable to us, that the man who suffers for the public good, should be supported by the public: We, &c. &c."

Yet in this very foundation-report may partly be seen why a movement, outwardly quite imposing in its first stages, considering the complete lack of precedent, had no other ultimate effect than the confusion, after much uproar, of the agitators themselves. The movement was tied from the first to the irresponsible coat-tails of Wilkes who, to the great dismay of Horne, regarded it as a mere aid in paying for the extravagances he was still indulging,[1] even in prison, and in obtaining his permanent endowment as an anti-Court politician, trading on stale seventeenth-century maxims of "liberty" whose use in 1769 was largely factious. The truth is that the Opposition politicians of 1769, even when given their supreme grievance of Colonel Luttrell's substitution for Wilkes as M.P. for Middlesex, were driven on by no such devouring sense of injustice as filled the Americans of their own time when contemplating the Navigation and Customs Laws, or as filled the French *bourgeoisie* of 1789 when contemplating the advantages of the "privileged orders". Reared for the most part on the old shibboleths of 1689, practising anti-Court politicians even of the most popular order were far from prophetic in their reception of such demands for Parliamentary Reform as had already been spasmodically raised. The most effective proof of this will be found, of course, in the petitioning agitation that swept the country after Wilkes's second re-election of March 28th had been followed by a third expulsion, succeeded, in turn, by the polling of April 13th and the Commons' resolution three days later to treat Wilkes's 1143 votes as invalid and to seat Colonel Luttrell in virtue of 296.[2] But here may be set down, with a view to illustrating their limitations, what in later days would have been called the most "advanced" political declarations of 1769.

Southwark enjoyed in Sir Joseph Mawbey, wealthy distiller and baronet of Rockingham's making, a prominent Wilkite member who had carried with him his brewing brother-member, Henry Thrale, in the resolution to take formal instructions from their constituency. The following report of what resulted on March 1,

[1] Cf. *The Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne* for much stout hitting from the parson on the general subject of Wilkes's debts and expenditure, revealed by Horne to the public in 1771 after the two had quarrelled.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 89–90.

1769 from conduct which Mawbey doubtless considered as setting a high constitutional example is worth attention:[1]

"Was held at the town-hall in the Borough", writes the *Annual Register*, "a numerous meeting of the electors, in order to draw up a form of instructions to be presented to their representatives in parliament. Both members attended the meeting, and Edward Stevens Esq; took the chair. Sir Joseph Mawbey defended the propriety of instructions, and Henry Thrale Esq; acquiesced. The instructions were to this effect:

"1. That you endeavour to confirm to us our old constitutional right of trial by juries. 2. That you carefully guard the great bulwark of our liberties, the habeas corpus act. 3. That you preserve inviolate the right of electors, and the privileges of the elected. 4. That you encourage applications for redress of grievances; and discourage partial enquiries, by which the tenor of petitions may be turned against the petitioners. 5. That you promote the security of all those liberties derived to us from the principles of our excellent constitution. 6. That you use your utmost endeavours to reconcile the unhappy differences subsisting between the mother country and her colonies. 7. That you enquire into the abuse of the military power; and endeavour to put the magistracy upon a more respectable footing. 8. That you endeavour to promote a standing committee for examining the public accounts. 9. That you enquire into the causes of the great increase of the civil list debt; and if any misapplication appears, to oppose granting money for unnecessary purposes. 10. That you promote a Bill for limiting the number of placemen in parliament, and for preventing peers from interfering in elections. 11. That you endeavour to procure a bill for quieting the minds of the people, with respect to obsolete claims of the crown. And 12. That you promote a bill for shortening the duration of parliament."

It might be well, before dealing in another chapter with the steadily rising political temperature of 1769, to make it plain to what questions of the day the Southwark instructions primarily had reference. The first two may be taken as siding with the "libellous" writers and printers, liable to apprehension and punishment by either House of Parliament without the constitutional safeguards, it was urged, of habeas corpus and trial by jury. The third and fourth reprimanded, first, the alleged violation of the Middlesex voters' freedom of election constituted by Wilkes's two expulsions and, next, the violation of the right of petition alleged to be manifest in Parliament's treatment of Wilkes's petition. The seventh harked back to the conduct of military and magistrates in

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 78–9.

the "massacre" of May 10th; the eighth plainly aimed at forcing "oeconomy" on a wasteful and perhaps peculating Administration; and the ninth showed abundantly how much Opposition politicians desired to believe that the Civil List deficiencies, which Parliament was being asked to rectify by paying £500,000 of Civil List debt for the Crown, had been caused by the Court's "misapplication" of its existing incomes to political "corruption".[1] The tenth instruction bore on the old grievance of the domination of Parliament by placemen and the revived complaint of Peers' interference on the side of the Court in elections to the Lower House. And, finally, the eleventh demanded the "Quieting Bill", actually conceded during the Session, and the last required a repeal of the Septennial Act and more frequent elections. It was a programme, "licentious" enough doubtless by Court standards but containing nothing yet of the bolder suggestions of the Election pamphleteering of 1768.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, pp. 62*–4*, for Opposition raising also the question of other revenues enjoyed by the Crown—those of the Principality of Wales, the Duchy of Cornwall and the West India Islands annexed in 1763.

CHAPTER VI

THE AGITATION SPREADS

"St. James's Street,
"March 24, 1769.

"Wednesday, the 22nd, the merchants were to carry a loyal address to His Majesty. About noon a hearse, attended by an immense mob, came down Pall Mall; the hearse was decorated with prints, and two pictures, one of which represented the killing of Allen in St. George's Fields, the other the killing of Clarke in the riot at Brentford. . . . This hearse, amid the acclamation of the mob, went close to the Palace Gate, and then up St. James's Street. It had taken its place just before the procession of merchants, who came up with their address, and who, when they arrived, appear to have been pelted with dirt and stones . . . the same insults continued when the merchants alighted. . . . The Riot Act was read without any effect, Lord Talbot harangued the mob, and whilst he was haranguing at the gate, one Mr. Whitworth was haranguing from St. James's coffee-house, and a drunken woman in a third place; they had each their audiences, but the Wilkism, and obscenity of the woman proved the greatest attraction. The tumult still continued at its height, when from the Palace yard issued the Horse Guards and Horse Grenadiers, with their swords drawn. . . . The Guards patroled the streets that afternoon and evening. . . . Many of the mob cried *Wilkes and no king*, which is shocking to think on. . . ."

Mrs. Harris to her son (later Lord Malmesbury) at Madrid.

"The grievance which had produced all this tempest of outrage, the oppression in which all other oppressions are included, the invasion which has left us no property, the alarm that suffers no patriot to sleep in quiet, is a vote of the House of Commons, by which the freeholders of Middlesex were restrained in their choice of a representative by the exception of one man.

"The character of the man thus fatally excepted, I have no purpose to delineate. Lampoon itself would disdain to speak ill of him of whom no man speaks well. It is sufficient that he is expelled the House of Commons, and confined to jail as being legally convicted of sedition and impiety.

"That this man cannot be appointed one of the guardians and counsellors of the church and state, is a grievance not to

be endured. Every lover of liberty stands doubtful of the fate of posterity, because the chief county in England cannot take its representative from a jail. . . .

". . . we hear of nothing but of an alarming crisis, of violated rights and expiring liberties. The morning rises upon new wrongs, and the dreamer passes the night in imaginary shackles. . . .

"Fired with this fever of epidemic patriotism; the taylor slips his thimble, the draper drops his yard, and the blacksmith lays down his hammer; they meet at an honest alehouse, consider the state of the nation, read or hear the last petition, lament the miseries of the time, are alarmed at the dreadful crisis, and subscribe to the support of the Bill of Rights. . . .

DR. JOHNSON in *The False Alarm*, January 1770.

EVEN before Wilkes's second expulsion of February 17, 1769 had been followed on March 16th by his third election for Middlesex, there had been considerable efforts on the part of what may be called the conservative elements in the nation to rally behind the King and to defy the Wilkes mob. The first conspicuous example of such efforts was at the Essex Assizes of March 2nd at Chelmsford when the assembled Lord-Lieutenant, nobility, High Sheriff, grand jury, gentlemen, and clergy adopted an Address to the King which expressed the "utmost abhorrence" for "the spirit of sedition and licentiousness" fomented by the "disturbers of public repose" and promised the volunteering of "lives and properties" to aid the Royal authority in "suppressing and subduing all seditious and riotous attempts".[1] On March 6th the High Sheriff, grand jury, gentlemen and clergy of Kent, assembled for the Assizes at Maidstone, adopted a similar Address expressing the same "determined resolution to support" the royal authority with their "lives and properties".[2] This was the beginning of an effort which brought on, before very long, the inevitable loyal Addresses from both Universities, others, besides, from the county of Surrey, Bristol (three),[3] Liverpool, Leicester, Coventry and the county of Salop, and, it is significantly related, in addition to those from further places in England, Addresses from almost every part of Scotland.[4]

It was, perhaps, unfortunate for the Court that its alleged partisans attempted an important manifestation even in the City, spurred on apparently by the hope of showing the vast majority of the City's most "respectable" names arrayed against Wilkes. From the first it was obvious that the attempt to collect such a list and to declare it representative of all that was reputable in the City would be fiercely resisted by Wilkes's friends. On March 8th, for example, when "several merchants and others met at the King's Arms tavern in order to sign an address to his majesty, which lay

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, Appendix to Chronicle, pp. 192–3.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 193.
[3] *Ibid.*, p. 82, under March 18th, for the following: "Three several addresses were, this day, presented to his majesty from Bristol; the first, from the mayor, burgesses, and commonalty; the second, from the merchant-adventurers; and the third, from the gentlemen and clergy; all expressive of the utmost detestation and abhorrence of those seditious attempts that have been lately made to spread riot, licentiousness, and disaffection throughout the Kingdom."
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 197.

ready prepared for the purpose", Wilkes's partisans, led by his attorney, Reynolds, and Samuel Vaughan of Mincing Lane, took charge of the meeting after an exchange of blows, adjourned it, subsequently, to March 10th, and then adopted a set of resolutions putting a very different appearance upon the proceedings from that originally intended. The "loyal" merchants nevertheless persisted with their efforts even after their expulsion from their original rendezvous, and their Address was held available for signature at the "merchant seamen's office over the Royal Exchange".[1] Yet if the Address wisely refrained from the menacing language of "suppressing and subduing" thought proper for the Kent and Essex manifestos, expending itself rather in lavish praise of "the best of kings" and shocked reprimand of "that spirit of licentiousness, profaneness, and irreligion which has been industriously propagated",[2] its further history was destined to make more trouble than its origins. The Wilkes leaders, angered, perhaps, by the Address's continued assumption of speaking for "the merchants, traders, and other principal inhabitants" of London, saw no reason to prevent the great uproar in the streets which finally overtook the Addressers on March 22nd. Why that uproar was quite as dangerous as any of those of 1768 needs some explanation.

It should be noted, first, that immediately before March 22nd the capital had been excited by a succession of political events —Wilkes's third election of March 16th, his third expulsion of March 17th, and the fighting spirit that had been shown on March 20th at a "very numerous meeting of freeholders of Middlesex at the Mile-End assembly room". This meeting had not only unanimously adopted Wilkes as its candidate for the fourth election but had shown the bitterest resentment of the threats being employed in the attempt to frighten Sheriffs and electors into the belief that the Sheriffs' acceptance of Wilkes votes or electors' proceedings against them on their refusal, would alike be visited by punishment from the Commons for conduct "in contempt of the House".[3] After such preliminaries, the attempt to organise the

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 80–1.
[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 195–6.
[3] Cf. The *Annual* Register's (1769) summary, p. 83: "Before the last election it had been said in the papers, that Mr. Wilkes being, by a resolution of the house, 'rendered incapable of sitting there during the present parliament' could not be returned by the sheriffs 'but in contempt of the jurisdiction and privileges of the house'; and that, as the freeholders who should presume to sue the

presentation of the City merchants' Address, fixed for March 22nd, into a great loyalist display through the streets both provoked an ugly temper in a now excited populace and gave that temper ugly opportunities of manifesting itself. Here is the *Annual Register*'s report:[1]

A cavalcade of merchants and tradesmen of the City of London, in coaches, in their way to St. James's with a loyal address, were interrupted by a desperate mob, on passing through the city, who insulted, pelted, and mal-treated the principal conductors; so that several coaches were obliged to withdraw, some to return back, others to proceed by bye-ways, and those who arrived at St. James's were so bedaubed with dirt, and shattered, that both masters and drivers were in the utmost peril of their lives.

The rioters carried their outrages within the palace-gates. Lord Talbot, on this occasion, behaved with unparalleled intrepidity; and tho' he had his staff of office broken in his hand, he secured two of the most active among the rioters, when deserted by his own servants. His example animated the military, who, without employing either guns or bayonets to destroy the deluded populace, secured fifteen of them.... Mr. Boehm, to whom the address was entrusted, was so severely handled, that he was obliged to quit his coach, and take shelter in Nando's coffee-house. His coach was rifled, but the address escaped; it was, however, with some difficulty recovered by the addressers; which occasioned a disagreeable delay at St. James's, where those who had arrived in safety remained in the greatest anxiety.

There was clear proof, moreover, that the disorder was far from spontaneous, in the specially prepared vehicle that forced itself to the head of the loyalist procession at a calculated vantage-point. Here is the account:[2]

"In the Strand," said the *Annual Register*, "a hearse with two white and two black horses, took the lead of the cavalcade. On one side of the hearse were strikingly represented the soldiers firing at young Allen, and on the other the murder at Brentford. An attempt was made to drive it into the court-yard at St. James's; but the riot-act being read, it drew off to Carleton-house, afterwards to Cumberland-house, and last of all to lord Weymouth's; at all which places, the driver made a particular kind of compliment, and then retired."

sheriffs 'for refusing their votes' for Mr. Wilkes, would be liable to be sent to Newgate by the house of commons, so the sheriffs would be liable to the same punishment 'if they presumed to poll them'."

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 84.

[2] *Ibid.*: The "particular kind of compliment" paid, of course, was an insulting one. The account, moreover, avoids mention of the man habited as an executioner and having an axe in his hand, who stood on the roof of the hearse and was later reported to have been the young Irish nobleman, Viscount Mountmorres

Strange as it may appear after such an account which, indeed, falls short of the whole truth, the capital settled down very quickly after the disorder, aided, perhaps, by the strong Proclamation speedily issued.[1] The fact seems to have been that the large criminal and loafer element in London's average mob always took advantage of political uproar to ply its own trade, and the wanton and reckless damage it was responsible for may well have sickened "respectable" Wilkites into approval of the strong "peace" measures ordered by Proclamation. Certainly the political rioting of March 22, 1769, was never again equalled until the "Gordon Riots" of 1780 although, on April 16th, the capital was given what Wilkes's partisans considered the supreme provocation of Colonel Luttrell's acceptance as M.P. for Middlesex in virtue of the 296 votes he had obtained on April 13th as against Wilkes's allegedly invalid 1143. Despite their great polling processions of April 13th, to Brentford and back,[2] the Wilkite leaders seem to have been in considerable doubt as to how best to meet the Commons' resolution to seat Luttrell three days later. A Middlesex freeholders' meeting of April 17th decided to name a grand committee of a hundred and a select committee of eleven to act for them,[3] but it is doubtful whether the "long expected meeting" of the Bill of Rights Society on April 25th gave the committees much special inspiration.[4] An expostulatory petition was so obviously the first resort.

But in their efforts to arrange some appearance of constitutional support from the City of London, the Wilkite leaders were baffled and defeated. On April 27th some thirty Liverymen asked the Lord Mayor to call a Common Hall to permit the whole Livery to express itself on the "present circumstances of public affairs" but received the answer, next day, that it did not seem justifiable to call together "so large a body as the livery of London at the request

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 229, for the Proclamation "strictly charging and commanding the lord mayor, and the justices of the peace of our city of London, and the justices of the peace of our city and liberties of Westminster, and borough of Southwark, and of the counties of Middlesex and Surry, that they do use their utmost endeavours . . ." Neglect or insufficient attention to such a Proclamation by the authorities concerned was a serious matter.

[2] Cf. *Public Advertiser*, April 14 and 15, 1769.

[3] Cf. *The Political Register*, iv, p. 296, for the adjournment to April 27th that followed.

[4] The reports seem to show it as too exclusively occupied in attacking a loyal address from Coventry wherein the members had been denounced as "enemies to monarchy, and subverters of all legal government".

of a few of them". On May 2nd, therefore, when it had become plain that the Rockingham and Grenville Oppositions were increasingly inclined to worry Ministers on the Middlesex Election, the Wilkites succeeded in assembling some five hundred of the Livery to request a Common Hall. This request the Lord Mayor put before a Court of Common Council on May 5th—and it was doubtless aversion to the reckless rioting of March 22nd which produced a notable anti-Wilkes victory.[1] It ended the Opposition's chances of doing much harm in Parliament on May 8th when, despite the Middlesex electors' petition, Luttrell was again declared their legal member. As Parliament was prorogued next day for a period ultimately extended to January 9, 1770, the further agitation of the Middlesex grievance had to take the altered guise of petitions to the King.

The King had already become an altogether stronger rallying-point for the conservative forces in the country than either Majority or Ministry, and his action in regard to the strongly-worded Middlesex Petition, addressed to him, showed discretion.[2] In return for what was apparently an understanding that those charged with the presentation of the Petition should come privately, unattended by demonstrators or a mob, the King consented to receive them on May 24th and even managed, according to the accounts, to behave "very graciously". He had, of course, not the slightest intention of yielding and possibly underestimated the noise that the Middlesex grievance was destined to make throughout the country for the remainder of the year. To the end, doubtless, George III never fully understood how such a completely unofficial person as the Rev. Mr. Horne, manœuvring with so completely untried an instrument as the Bill of Rights Society, managed to produce all the clatter against Ministers that was to come not merely from the Wilkes-inflamed metropolis but from points as distant from it as Berwick or Newcastle. Yet on June 6th the Society had been occupied with some very significant business besides the raising of funds to clear Wilkes of debt. A circular letter was approved for dispatch "to the gentlemen of the minority, who are to promote it in the different counties they live in, and [it] is also to be sent to all the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 99, for six Aldermen and eighty-six Commoners outvoting the three Aldermen and sixty-nine Commoners in favour of calling together the Livery.

[2] *The Political Register*, iv, p. 347, for the Petition.

cities and borough towns in England, with Mr. Wilkes's case, written by himself".[1]

It is obviously impossible to go fully into the resulting summer and autumn of agitation, or to notice how it was stimulated by such things as anger at the final collapse that Ministers had permitted to overtake Corsican resistance to France,[2] a collapse represented as the greatest triumph ever obtained by the Family Compact over Britain. Junius's unflagging assaults in the *Public Advertiser* on the record of Grafton and Bedford,[3] the noblemen regarded as primarily responsible for keeping the corrupt and oppressive Majority together, can only be cursorily referred to, and this, too, is the case with the use that was made against Ministers of the thoroughly unsatisfactory position in the American Colonies. Here it must suffice to catalogue the steady stream of county and borough petitions to the King, many of them demanding much else than the righting of Middlesex's wrongs, and some even insisting on a dissolution of Parliament calculated to permit the electors to sweep away the unrighteous Majority from Westminster. It is, perhaps, justifiable to give some extra space to the manner in which the first petitions in aid of Middlesex were launched in June, and here, to begin with, is an account from Surrey.[4] On June 16th, it is related

> ... the honourable Mr. Howard, the honourable Mr. King, sir George Colebroke, sir Joseph Mawbey, and many other gentlemen of the county of Surrey, dined at the St. Alban's tavern, where a general meeting was agreed to be held at Epsom on the 26th inst. to which all the freeholders of the county have been invited. This meeting has since been disclaimed by the high sheriff, and every art made use of to discountenance it.

Despite the alleged Court manœuvres, presumably through the "Lord Lieutenant and the nobility", to restrain the Sheriff, the

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 107.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 110 (under June): "After many flying reports about the success of the Corsican army, and of the defeat of the French in that island, which were universally believed at the beginning of the present month, the contrary is now found to be the truth; and that the Corsicans, either intimidated by the superior number of the French forces, or corrupted by the allurement of French gold, deserted their leader . . . laid down their arms, and submitted to the yoke of France." George's Civil List had been debt-encumbered in vain.

[3] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius* for successive attacks on Grafton, dated May 30th, June 12th, June 22nd, and July 8th, after which Junius turned for a time to rend the Majority and its legal apologist, Sir William Blackstone. The great assault on Bedford is dated September 19th.

[4] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 108.

legal convener of any county meeting, from acting, an Epsom meeting was nevertheless held on June 26th, the appointed day. Here is an account:[1]

> The gentlemen, clergy, and freeholders of the county of Surrey met at Epsom, to consider the best constitutional measures to be taken in support of the right of elections, when two expedients were proposed, either instructing their members, or petitioning the king; to the first it was objected, as nugatory, one of their members having already done all in his power to support their rights, the other all in his power to resign them; to petition, was therefore the only eligible measure left, and was, after some debate, unanimously adopted, and the following resolution agreed to as the basis. That it is the opinion of this meeting, that, by the laws of the land, the freeholders and electors of Great Britain have an undoubted right to be represented in Parliament by any person qualified according to law, who has a majority of legal votes; and that they have reason to apprehend these rights have been abridged in the case of the Middlesex election.

It is apparently the story of a small knot of politically active gentlemen, defying the nobility, and, aided by the temporarily dominant currents of "public opinion", sweeping sufficient brother-gentlemen, suburban property-owners,[2] and yeomen farmers with them to be able to assume the style and functions of a county meeting. Yet the innate Conservatism of much of their "respectable" following is visible enough in the reluctant caution of the protest, a caution which hardly makes the Surrey Petition, or the date of its presentation at Court by "the hon. Peter King, sir Francis Vincent, bart. sir Joseph Mawbey, bart. Joseph Martin esq; Anthony Chapman esq; and Joseph Clarke esq;" very remarkable in the annals of agitation. But possibly the organisers were well satisfied in having defeated the opposite county faction and given a lead, in aid of Middlesex, to the rest of the shires of England.

A much more unqualified lead was, meanwhile, being given to the boroughs of England by Wilkes's partisans in the City of London. Baffled though these had been in April and May by Mayoral and Aldermanic manœuvres, showing the heartiest dislike for the mob outrages of March, Wilkes's supporters were not for ever to be put off by Aldermanic strategy in the employment of the City's machinery of self-government. Here is what

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 109.

[2] Including those of Southwark, Kennington, Lambeth, Brixton, Streatham, Norwood and Croydon, many of them "City" men.

happened when, on June 24th, a meeting attendable by the whole Livery was no longer to be postponed:[1]

> Came on the election of sheriffs for the city of London and county of Middlesexat Guildhall, when James Townsend and John Sawbridge were unanimously chosen.
>
> The number of liverymen that attended on this occasion was greater than has been known for many years past, and it was proposed to petition his majesty on the present state of national grievances. This proposal was unanimously approved; a petition was read, and one alteration only, at the request of the lord mayor made, viz. that instead of "the humble petition of the lord mayor, the aldermen, and livery of the city of London", it should run thus, "the humble petition of the livery of the city of London". A motion was then made, that the lord mayor, sheriffs, and city members, be requested to wait on his majesty with the petition; this motion was seconded, and all, except Mr. Harley who was not present, expressed their readiness to comply with the request. The whole business was transacted with the greatest decorum; only one unlucky affair intervened, by the indiscretion of a young man, who was detected in taking minutes of the speakers, which was resented by the populace, and the poor fellow was very roughly used.

This meeting is of some consequence in national history for it marks the beginning of the City's capture, over a period of years, for Opposition demonstrations of a more radical character than any known for generations. This was made obvious enough by the nature of the petition adopted which, if somewhat less of a sledge-hammer political manifesto against the whole course of the reign than that adopted, under Horne's generalship, by the freeholders of Middlesex, was still a very inflammatory document. George's Ministers were flatly charged with invading the right to trial by jury, issuing general warrants, evading habeas corpus, inflicting "perpetual imprisonment without trial, conviction, or sentence",[2] and appointing unqualified magistrates to "furnish a pretence for calling in the aid of a military power".[3] By the military power, as was alleged, Ministers had "wantonly and wickedly sacrificed the lives of many" and had then proceeded to prostitute the King's "sacred name and authority, to justify, applaud, and

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 109. For a fuller account of the events of the day, sent by Edmund Burke to Rockingham, see *Memoirs of the Marquis of Rockingham*, ii, 96–101.

[2] A reference presumably to Parliamentary proceedings against Pressmen, guilty of breach of privilege.

[3] A reference, of course, to the "massacre" of May 10th, 1768.

recommend their own illegal actions". The indictment then continued:[1]

> They have screened more than one murderer from punishment, and in its place have unnaturally substituted reward.
>
> They have established numberless unconstitutional regulations and taxations in our colonies. They have caused a revenue to be raised in some of them by prerogative. They have appointed civil law judges to try revenue causes, and to be paid from out of the condemnation money.
>
> After having insulted and defeated the law on different occasions, and by different contrivances, both at home and abroad, they have at length completed their design, by violently wresting from the people *the last sacred right we had left*, the right of election; by the unprecedented seating of a candidate notoriously set up and chosen only by themselves. They have thereby taken from your subjects all hopes of parliamentary redress, and have left us no resource under God, but in your majesty.
>
> All this they have been able to effect by corruption. By a scandalous misapplication and embezzlement of public treasure, and a shameful prostitution of public honours and employments; procuring deficiencies of the civil list to be made good without examination; and, instead of punishing, conferring honours on a paymaster, the public defaulter of unaccounted millions. . . .

After the adoption of this violent petition, Ministers and King were, perhaps, hardly to be blamed for giving themselves but little concern to facilitate the presentation of what was, after all, no really official representation from the City. First the Lord Mayor and then the Sheriffs had it made plain to them, in circumstances possibly regarded by them as humiliating to the City, that the Livery Petition would be accorded no special consideration but would have to be presented in the normal fashion of other petitions.[2] And when on July 5th, nevertheless, quite a ceremony was made of the Petition's being taken to Court since the honour of the City seemed to be involved, no special notice was taken of the fact that the Lord Mayor and three of the City members were in the company of the Sheriffs and the Petition. After being detained some time in an ante-chamber and subjected to humiliating "disrespect" by three Court officials in succession, the deputation was admitted to the Levee to present its Petition as best it could.

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 202. The paymaster and "public defaulter" attacked was the hated Lord Holland. See *St. James's Chronicle*, 11–13 July, 1769.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 110, 200.

The King was found near the door and listened, in silence, to a few set words from the Lord Mayor. Then, handing the Petition unopened to the Lord in Waiting, he turned his back on the deputation, without a word of reply, and began a conversation with the Danish Minister.[1]

This marked snubbing was keenly resented in the City and eventually cost the Court dear. Possibly the action of the "free and independent citizens of Bristol" in changing from their lavish "humble addressing" of March to the petitioning of July was not wholly uninfluenced from London.[2] On August 9th, too, the freeholders of Worcestershire, in deciding to follow those of Middlesex and Surrey in petitioning, showed how the new popular mode of opposition was threatening to spread to areas relatively remote from the disaffected populace of the capital.[3] The lesson was enforced on the 16th by the Wiltshire resolution to petition. And when 7,000 electors of Westminster met at Westminster Hall on August 29th, a new turn was given to the agitation by the determination to petition for the speedy dissolution of the Parliament responsible for the violation of electors' rights.[4] On September 4th the Ministerial ally, the Duke of Bedford, already humiliated earlier at Exeter,[5] had the unusual experience of assisting, as Recorder of Bedford, at municipal proceedings marking a complete, if temporary overthrow, of the ducal influence in the Corporation and among the Freemen.[6] A week later, on

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 112–13: "The right honourable the lord mayor, sir Robert Ladbroke, alderman Beckford, and alderman Trecothick, with the two sheriffs, accompanied by . . . the city remembrancer, proceeded in state to St. James's with the petition of the livery of London, where after waiting a short time in the anti-chamber, his lordship [the Lord Mayor] sent a messenger to the lord in waiting, to acquaint him with his business, and to know the king's pleasure. After much interruption, his lordship was told with some marks of disrespect that the levee was begun, and the gentlemen might walk in. The king being near the door, the lord mayor addressed him. . . . After which, his lordship presented the petition to his majesty: but the king made no answer, and immediately turned about to baron Dieden, the Danish minister, and delivered the petition to the lord in waiting. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 116, for the one dissentient only in a city that had bestowed three dutiful addresses on the Court in March.

[3] *The Political Register*, v, p. 119, for the Worcestershire Petition. The same number of Almon's monthly also printed those from Bristol, Cornwall, Hereford and Liverpool.

[4] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 125–6.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 117–18, for the "hissing all the way" on the Duke's road to Exeter's Guildhall to receive the Freedom, and the similar hissing "with the sound of 'Wilkes and Liberty' joined to it", on his return. It was suspected that he had come to counter the petitioning movement by using the occasion of the Assizes to win a "Humble Address" from Devonshire.

[6] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 128.

September 11th, the freeholders of Buckinghamshire resolved to petition in aid of those of Middlesex, and by September 16th even loyalist elements in Gloucestershire were being swept into the stream. That, certainly, is the only conclusion to draw from such a report as the following:[1]

> This day the high sheriff, and several noblemen and gentlemen of the county of Gloucester met at the Town-hall, when a petition full of duty and loyalty, complaining only of the measures taken in the Middlesex election, and praying general relief, was produced and read, and being copied, was ordered to be circulated and signed.

Meanwhile there had been busy preparation in the City to make sure of an Opposition Lord Mayor for the coming year, a Lord Mayor who with the Opposition Sheriffs, Townsend and Sawbridge, should be capable of repelling the insults of the Court. The very wealthy and prominent Beckford, who had followed Chatham and Shelburne into Opposition in 1768 and had since looked with some favour on Wilkes, was deemed the most suitable Opposition nomination, and though he had already served a Mayoralty no long time before, there was found a single precedent to urge against the angry objections of the Aldermanic majority to a second term.[2] On September 29th, accordingly, the Court of Aldermen was faced by a revolt of the Livery against Sir Henry Bankes, the candidate entitled by normal precedent to the nomination, and a strong demand, on the show of hands, for a choice to be made between Beckford and his brother M.P., Trecothick. A poll was nevertheless demanded on behalf of Bankes against whom the special Livery grievance was that he had resisted the opening manœuvres of April and May for a City Petition. Yet it could have done the Court party little good that, by October 6th,

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 130–1.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 133–4: "Came on the election of a lord mayor for the year ensuing, when sir Henry Bankes, who was next the chair, (having incurred the displeasure of the livery, in opposing their application to the present lord mayor for a common hall, to consider of a petition to the throne) was rejected upon the shew of hands; and William Beckford esq; who served the office in the year 1762, and Barlow Trecothick esq; were returned to the court of aldermen for them to elect one. . . . Some attempts had been made by the city officers to prevent this nomination, by quoting a bye-law made in the reign of Henry VI but on searching for precedents, it appeared that in the year 1740, sir John Barnard had been a second time elected within the term objected to, which totally overthrew the bye-law. It is worthy of observation, that there should appear on this occasion, such a combination among the city officers to mislead the livery. . . ."

the poll should have closed with complete disaster for Bankes or that, between October 10th and 12th, continued Aldermanic opposition to a Beckford Mayoralty should have made the demand for it an overwhelming one.[1]

During the course of this eagerly-followed struggle for the London Lord Mayoralty, Middlesex and the City had given new proof of the trouble they could make. On October 5th, for example, Serjeant Glynn, Wilkes's lawyer and, before long, City Recorder, had played a great part in winning from Devonshire, resolutions to petition in aid of Middlesex, to offer public thanks to the Middlesex freeholders for their "spirited conduct", and to instruct Devonshire's members to support the claims of Middlesex in Parliament.[2] On October 10th, again, before the Mayoral struggle had finally ended in Beckford's favour, the City Livery made a virtually direct attack on the King's treatment of their last petition and demanded the impeachment of Lord Holland, suspected to be the insidious adviser of arbitrary methods behind the scenes. The first resolutions adopted on October 10th by the "livery of London in common hall assembled" were in fact no less than these:[3]

> Resolved, That the lord mayor be asked if his lordship hath received any answer to the petition of the livery of London to his majesty, which prayed for the redress of various grievances, the removal of evil counsellors, and the dissolution of the present parliament. . . .
>
> Resolved, That Henry lord Holland was the paymaster whom we, the livery of London, in our late petition to the throne for the redress of grievances, &c. affirmed to be the public defaulter of unaccounted millions.
>
> Resolved, That . . . when it shall appear on—enquiry that Henry lord Holland has, by unnecessary delays, detained the public money for years in his hands, and appointed the interest thereof to his own use, and has also by various pretences obtained repeated impediments to public justice, and by various misrepresentations induced our

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40, for Beckford's reluctance to face a Mayoral year with the Court of Aldermen in opposition, and the general shouts of "None but Beckford" from the Livery whose "amazing firmness and patience, in a very uneasy and painful situation, nine hours without refreshment" (on October 10th) really decided the issue. Beckford, who was far from well and was to die during the course of his Mayoralty, undertook on October 12th to face the worst that his angry brother-Aldermen could do which included, among other things, a boycott of the "magnificent entertainment" he gave at the Guildhall on November 9th, an entertainment boycotted also by nearly the entire official world.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 137.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 139–40.

sovereign to stay the legal proceedings against him, thereby endeavouring to lessen that respect that is due to his majesty, and introduce a power superior to that of law, the use and disuse of which create the distinction between monarchy and tyranny.

Resolved, That then it will become in the highest degree the duty of our representatives in parliament to endeavour that Henry lord Holland be impeached, that he may be an example to all future ministers, and shew them how dangerous it is to enrich themselves with the public treasure, and sport with the rights of a free people. . . .

The obstinate contest between Government and the now dominant anti-Court element in the City was to give an eagerly-watching "public" much more excitement yet. November 9th, for example, the day of Beckford's installation as Lord Mayor, became almost one of demonstration and counter-demonstration. For a celebration, meant apparently to be grander than usual, Beckford not only provided "a magnificent entertainment" at Guildhall but even went to the trouble of importing for his processional State coach "a set of beautiful horses, purchased at a great price from abroad".[1] The groundlings of the crowded streets, it would appear, were duly impressed, for it is related that "the whole procession was grand, and a greater concourse of people, expressing their satisfaction by repeated acclamations, has not been known upon any like occasion". But it is also related as "not a little remarkable":

> . . . that only five aldermen, besides the late lord mayor, attended either the procession or the entertainment; but whether from fear [of the mob] or dislike can only be guessed. The recorder neither went with them to Westminster, nor returned with them, but met them at the exchequer court, and quitted them there. Of all the great officers and ministers of state who were invited, the lord chancellor [Lord Camden soon to resign] was the only person who attended; and of the judges, only the master of the rolls, Mr. Justice Willes, and Mr. baron Perrot; of the nobility, the right hon. earl Temple, lord Effingham, and lord Shelburne. . . .

It must, in fact, be taken that, despite the "numerous and splendid company" boasted of at the Guildhall, illumined, too, by Lady Temple's "most brilliant appearance, the diamonds and jewels she wore, being estimated at no less than £50,000", Government had had some success in its endeavour to discredit the Beckford Mayoralty from the very beginning. Beckford's opponents

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 149.

indeed, claimed that "the mean and contemptible practices of Mr. B. and his instruments" in consenting for a little outward glory, improperly obtained, to act as cover for Wilkes had been revealed to the world in their true colours when "the most respectable and the major part of the corporation withdrew their attendance on this mock patriot (as they would have done from his imperious task-master)".[1]

While the struggle in the City between the anti-Court party and its opponents had been proceeding in the fashion just described, Opposition elements had not been standing idle in other parts of the country. Stimulated by the inevitable approach of what was bound to be a stormy Parliamentary Session, Opposition forces carried, for example, a Southwark Petition on October 17th and, on October 25th, a Somerset Petition for dissolution. On November 11th, again, Newcastle, Northumberland, and Derby petitions were successfully set in motion. These successful petitioning resolutions of November 11th were, of course, won without aid from the remarkable legal victory gained the previous day over the Earl of Halifax by the still-imprisoned Wilkes who, in the much-disturbed and much-adjourned suit going back to the seizure of papers on the general warrant of 1763, now at length obtained a verdict for £4000 damages.[2] Wilkes's triumphant legal vindication must nevertheless have had its importance for all petitioning movements that could be influenced by the news. A Berwick petition, for instance, was resolved upon on November 19th, "notwithstanding much influence used to discountenance the measure", and on November 27th the Kent freeholders, at the other end of the country, decided on a petition also. The figures given for the voting at the Kent freeholders' meeting in the Maidstone Town Hall were 700 in favour of a petition against 7 in opposition, figures the more remarkable because the Kent Assizes gathering of the previous March had been second only to that of Essex in its ardour to rush to the Court's assistance with a "Humble

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 149, quoting "a writer in the *Public Advertiser*".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 150, which makes it plain that the damages would have been nearer the £20,000 asked for by Wilkes if it had not been made plain that Halifax had in 1765 obtained a Treasury Minute under which Government became responsible for any damages awarded against him for conduct in pursuance of his official duties. Even though to award Wilkes a larger sum would thus merely have been to punish the taxpayer instead of Lord Halifax, the verdict is stated to have been "so little to the satisfaction of the populace, that the jury were obliged to withdraw privately, for fear of being insulted".

Address" denouncing the "general spirit of disorder and opposition to constitutional and legal authority". And the same overwhelming reversal of a former Court success was apparently accomplished in Essex on December 15th when it was reported that:[1]

> At a numerous meeting of gentlemen, clergy and freeholders of Essex, held at Chelmsford, to consider of proper measures to be taken in support of the right of election, it was almost unanimously agreed to petition his majesty for a dissolution of p——t.

Meanwhile the Court had already been given a taste of what an Opposition Lord Mayor and Opposition City Sheriffs, all members of Parliament, might venture to do in challenging Government when any legal ground could be found for them to stand on. Since July the high politics of the London struggle against the Court had been accompanied by yet another Spitalfields industrial war, fought by a silk-weavers' combination, enforcing a subscription of 6*d.* per loom "to support their cause against the masters"[2] and capable, by night, of turning out large bands of armed men to cut and spoil the work in looms belonging to resisting men or masters. On September 30th, by concert doubtless with the Middlesex magistrates, troops proceeded to "invest" a Spitalfields public-house where, in the fashion very familiar to later students of Trade Unionism, it was alleged that "a number of riotous weavers, called cutters, were assembled to collect contributions from their brethren, towards supporting themselves in idleness, in order to distress their masters, and to oblige them to advance their wages".[3] According to the official account of those responsible for the somewhat dubious importation of the military, the surprised weavers attacked the soldiers with firearms and, for one soldier killed, suffered a casualty roll of two dead, several more wounded and four "principal rioters" captured. On October 21st two weavers were sentenced to death by hanging at the "usual place of execution".[4] But doubtless in order to cow

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, p. 161.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 124, for some of the troubles of August originating with the handkerchief-weavers "thinking themselves oppressed in their price" and turning against one of the masters who though he "paid satisfactory prices, insisted notwithstanding that his men should not belong to the subscription society, or pay such sixpences, and armed his people to defend their looms against the body".

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 136.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 151–2.

Spitalfields, it was decided to command the Sheriffs to arrange that the two convicted weavers should be executed not at the "usual place of execution", but near Bethnal Green Church in the vicinity of the weaving district.

This was to give Townsend and Sawbridge, the Sheriffs, and Beckford, the Lord Mayor, the chance they wanted. Doubts were thrown upon the validity even of a royal direction to alter the judicial sentence received from the Recorder of London, and those doubts were strengthened by the fact that the royal direction was alleged to be in aggravation of the sentence. The King, it was admitted, had the prerogative of mercy and could mitigate judicial sentences but, here, the royal prerogative was being strained to add to the agony of the condemned the sense that it was intended "to force, in a manner, the wives and children of the unhappy sufferers to be spectators of the infamous deaths of their husbands and fathers".[1] The Sheriffs certainly forced respites upon the King and finally bowed only to the unanimous verdict of the Judges that the King had the right to change the place of execution to Bethnal Green. But by December 8th, when the Bethnal Green execution was at last set in train after more than three weeks of delay, the populace was once more in a fiercely combative mood not, perhaps, wholly unpleasing to the Opposition Sheriffs. Here is a description of what happened after the mournful execution procession had wound its slow and unaccustomed way from Newgate to Bethnal Green, bearing with it the gallows specially constructed for the occasion:[2]

> There was an inconceivable number of people assembled, and many bricks, tiles, stones, &c. thrown while the gallows was fixing, and a great apprehension of a general tumult, notwithstanding the persuasion and endeavours of several gentlemen to appease the same. The unhappy sufferers were therefore obliged to be turned off before the usual time allowed on such occasions, which was about eleven o'clock; when, after hanging about 50 minutes, they were cut down and delivered to their friends.
>
> John Doyle, before he was turned off, made the following declaration—"I John Doyle do hereby declare, as my last dying words, in the presence of my almighty God, that I am as innocent of the fact I am

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 181–6, for its special section entitled "Genuine copies of letters which passed between the lord chancellor, and the sheriffs of London and Middlesex, and between the sheriffs and the secretary of state, relative to the execution of Doyle and Valline." The *Annual Register* concluded the section with comment most unusually and thoroughly hostile to Government.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 159–60.

now to die for as the child unborn. Let my blood lie to that wicked man who has purchased it with gold, and them notorious wretches who swore it falsely away."

Valine likewise persisted in his innocence to his latest moments. The sheriffs gave strict orders to the executioner, neither to strip the unhappy sufferers, nor to compound for their cloaths, but to deliver them to their friends, and they would pay him for them. Immediately after the execution, a number of evil-disposed persons came in a riotous and tumultuous manner to the house of Lewis Chauver esq; in Spital-fields, broke into his house, broke the glass of the windows . . . and also damaged and destroyed part of his furniture; his majesty's pardon, and a reward of £50 are offered for the discovery of the offenders.

Nor did the executions of December 8th end the utility of the Spitalfields affair to the City Opposition. Representative though this Opposition ultimately was of a well-to-do and "respectable public" who had at first denounced the executed weavers as leading a "desperate gang of cutters" and work-spoilers, the action of the Sheriffs against the Court once again permitted the rally of the mob behind the Court's City opponents. On December 18th, too, Beckford got another chance of going into action against Government on advantageous grounds.[1] He publicly protested against the action of some troops who had marched from the still militarily-cowed Spitalfields through the City, and even before the Mansion House, without his permission and making "a very warlike appearance, which raised in the minds of the peaceable citizens the idea of a town garrisoned with regular troops". In a reply that was intended to be disarming, Lord Barrington, Secretary at War and responsible for a still-remembered congratulatory letter to the military, "guilty" of the "massacre" of May 10, 1768, undertook that troops should not again march through the City "with drums beating and fifes playing" unless previous notice had been given to the Lord Mayor, but claimed incidentally that the soldiers were in Spitalfields "at the requisition of the worthy magistrates acting there". But disarming though Lord Barrington's letter was intended to be, it apparently did very little to offset the growing suspicions, fanned by the Opposition, that there was good ground for fearing that, unless there was unceasing vigilance, elements at Court were capable of attempting government by military power. It is astonishing, for example, to find even so reputable a

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 187–8 for its special section entitled "Genuine letters which passed between the lord mayor and the secretary at war.

publication as the *Annual Register* accompanying its documentation of the dispute between City and Ministers on Spitalfields with a comment, though a copied one, like the following:[1]

Thus ended this affair; from the proceedings in which, this writer thinks it is evident, that there is a settled plan, a wicked conspiracy, to expose and set aside the civil power of this country. It is pretended that the civil power is too weak to keep the peace in the neighbourhood of Spital-fields; a barrack has been therefore built, and soldiers have regularly mounted guard there for a long time past; they have likewise been employed as constables to apprehend offenders; for which purpose, and not to quell a riot, they were first sent thither. Yet, after every method had been used, still more to exasperate and incense those unhappy people, the civil power is ordered, out of the common course, into that very neighbourhood, to *execute* the criminals it could not *apprehend.* The sheriffs saw plainly the snare, and the wickedness of those who laid it for them; but being as solicitous to preserve, as the others to destroy the authority of the civil power, they were determined to support it at the hazard, and, if necessary, at the expence of their lives. Without the assistance of the military, the sheriffs *executed* those whom Lord Barrington's *worthy* magistrates could not *apprehend.*

It would, perhaps, be to give a false idea of the general political situation to close this chapter on an exclusively metropolitan note. For adequate correction it would be necessary to quote, perhaps, Junius's Letter to the King, dated December 19, 1769, or the surprisingly strong, if respectful, Cornish Petition presented to George III on January 5, 1770, or, finally, the batch handed him from Devonshire, Derbyshire, Gloucestershire, Herefordshire, and Wells on January 9th, the day he opened Parliament for an obviously critical Session. Here, for example, is Junius, treating the King with scarce more tenderness than he had shown Grafton:[2]

The destruction of one man has been now, for many years the sole object of your government; and if there can be any thing still more disgraceful, we have seen, for such an object, the utmost influence of the executive power, and every ministerial artifice exerted without success. Nor can you ever succeed, unless *he* should be imprudent enough to forfeit the protection of those laws, to which you owe your crown, or unless your ministers should persuade you to make it a question of force alone, and try the whole strength of government in opposition to the people. . . .

[1] *Annual Register*, 1769, pp. 186–7. The comment is presumably copied from the pamphlet which gave the documents.
[2] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 71–5.

Far from suspecting you of so horrible a design, we would attribute the continued violation of the laws, and even this last enormous attack upon the vital principles of the constitution, to an ill-advised, unworthy, personal resentment. From one false step you have been betrayed into another. . . .

The circumstances to which you are reduced, will not admit of a compromise with the English nation. . . . Nothing less than a repeal, as formal as the resolution itself [on the Middlesex election], can heal the wound which has been given to the constitution, nor will any thing less be accepted. . . .

Taking it for granted, as I do very sincerely, that you have personally no design against the constitution, nor any views inconsistent with the good of your subjects, I think you cannot hesitate long upon the choice. . . . If an English King be hated or despised, he *must* be unhappy. . . . But if the English people should no longer confine their resentment to a submissive representation of their wrongs; if, following the glorious example of their ancestors, they should no longer appeal to the creature of the constitution, but to that high Being, who gave them the rights of humanity, whose gifts it were sacrilege to surrender, let me ask you, Sir, upon what part of your subjects would you rely for assistance?

CHAPTER VII

THE OPPOSITION SHOOTS ITS BOLT

"The progress of a petition is well known. An ejected placeman goes down to his county or his borough, tells his friends of his inability to serve them, and his constituents of the corruption of the government. His friends readily understand that he who can get nothing, will have nothing to give. They agree to proclaim a meeting, meat and drink are plentifully provided, a croud is easily brought together, and those who think they know the reason of their meeting, undertake to tell those who know it not. Ale and clamour unite their powers, the croud, condensed and heated, begins to ferment with the leaven of sedition. All see a thousand evils, though they cannot shew them, and grow impatient for a remedy, though they know not what.

"A speech is made by the Cicero of the day, he says much, and suppresses more, and credit is equally given to what he tells, and what he conceals. The petition is read and universally approved. Those who are sober enough to write, add their names, and the rest would sign it if they could.

"Every man goes home and tells his neighbour of the glories of the day; how he was consulted and what he advised; how he was invited into the great room, where his lordship called him by his name; how he was caressed by Sir Francis, Sir Joseph, or Sir George; how he eat turtle and venison, and drank unanimity to the three brothers. . . .

"The petition is then handed from town to town, and from house to house, and wherever it comes the inhabitants flock together that they may see that which must be sent to the king. Names are easily collected. One man signs because he hates the papists; another because he has vowed destruction to the turnpikes; one because it will vex the parson; another because he owes his landlord nothing; one because he is rich; another because he is poor; one to shew that he is not afraid, and another to shew that he can write. . . .

"With great propriety and dignity the king has, in his speech, neglected or forgotten them [the petitioners] . . . a nation discontented to madness, without any adequate cause, will return to its wits and its allegiance when a little pause has cooled it to reflection. Nothing therefore is necessary at this alarming crisis, but to consider the alarm as false. To make concessions is to encourage encroachment. Let the

court despise the faction, and the disappointed people will soon deride it."

DR. JOHNSON in *The False Alarm* advises George III against concession.

"The papers will tell you of the City's remonstrance, and the King's spirited answer. So impudent a performance as this same remonstrance was never, I believe, heard of, charging the Parliament with corruption, and asserting the House of Commons to be no House at all, and all their acts invalid. . . . Lord Barrington took the matter in the highest tone, said 'twas framed by a Junta that, like Catiline and his associates, wished to involve us in anarchy and confusion; Beckford, at whom this was levelled, retorted by bringing up the affair of the soldiery, the loss of life in George's Fields, and the approbation of it by Lord Barrington. He then praised the citizens and himself. . . . This morning about two the House divided; for the previous question (opposition), 127, against it (Administration) 284. The violence, I may say madness, of the opposition, have done Administration as much good as all their own sagacity. A man may wish to see a house altered or cleansed, who does not wish to see it blown up."

Mr. Harris, Grenvillite M.P., to his son, March 20, 1770.

FEW active politicians would have ventured, early in 1770, on such confident advice to the King, to persevere in resisting "Wilkism", as was tendered by the famous Dr. Johnson in his forcefully-written pamphlet, *The False Alarm.* Administration speakers were, indeed, to borrow heavily from Dr. Johnson during the course of the Parliamentary Session begun on January 9th, for *The False Alarm* provided excellent material for deriding Opposition "patriots" and the petitions they had been so active in promoting. But after a bold start, with a Speech from the Throne, completely ignoring the petitioning and concentrating, instead, upon a "distemper among the horned cattle" and the grave American situation, Ministers suffered an apparently mortal blow. Chatham, who bore much of the responsibility, would doubtless have made trouble whatever the character of the King's Speech, for rumour had been busy for some time with the intention of the now reconciled "brotherhood" to fall upon the Administration, hip and thigh. But such a speech as that read from the Throne on January 9th must only have stimulated Chatham next day in denouncing the illegality that had seated Luttrell, the injustice that had driven America to tumult, and the folly that had exposed England, baffled on Corsica, to stand "on the slippery edge of a new war—without allies abroad, and without unanimity at home".[1]

The direct responsibility, however, for the collapse of the Grafton Administration was borne not by Lord Chatham but by his friend Lord Camden, still Lord Chancellor, who threw the Government into complete confusion by following Chatham's oration with one of the meanest speeches ever made in Parliament even by an eighteenth-century lawyer. Separating himself from his colleagues with ostentatious rectitude, he announced that[2]

> . . . for some time he had beheld, with silent indignation, the arbitrary measures which were pursuing by the ministry; that he had often

[1] Cf. *Lord C——m's Speech before a great Assembly* in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for January 1770. In this article and another entitled *A short sketch of the Debates in the Upper Chamber, January 10, 1770,* the *Gentleman's Magazine* was undertaking such undisguised Parliamentary reporting as might still have been punishable for breach of privilege. That is, perhaps, why, in a fit of caution, it decided when printing in its next number summaries of some of the January speeches in the Commons, to print them as *Debates in a newly-established Society* and to twist the speakers' names to contorted but still recognisable forms.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine,* January 1770, p. 3.

drooped and hung down his head in council, and disapproved, by his looks, those steps, which he knew his avowed opposition could not prevent; that, however, he would do so no longer, but would openly and boldly speak his sentiments . . . the mi——y, by their violent and tyrannical conduct, had alienated the minds of the people from his majesty's government, he had almost said, from his majesty's person; that in consequence, a spirit of discontent had spread itself into every corner of the kingdom, and was every day increasing; and that if some methods were not devised to appease the clamours that so universally prevailed, he did not know but the people, in despair, might turn their own avengers, and take the redress of their grievances into their own hands.

Though the Government majority in both Houses was, despite Camden's turning-of-coat in the Lords and the Solicitor-General's less ostentatious desertion in the Commons, maintained in what seemed virtually undiminished strength,[1] Temple and Shelburne proved far from wrong in prophesying, after Camden's speech, that an attempt to replace "the virtuous and independent Lord who sat on the woolsack" by an "obsequious tool that would do as he was commanded" was likely, in the existing state of things, to be difficult and dangerous.

In point of fact, the feat of winning a lawyer of high reputation from among the Rockingham Opposition was accomplished by January 17th though it was to prove but the gateway to new troubles. On January 17th Charles Yorke, brother to the Lord Hardwicke, who was proving as great a stay to Rockingham as his father had been to Newcastle, seems to have been driven to accept a peerage and the Lord Chancellorship from the King by the threat that such elevation would never again be offered if he now declined to help his Sovereign.[2] Yet despite this undoubted *coup* on the part of the King, it would appear from items of news that accompanied the intelligence of Camden's dismissal and Yorke's appointment that many politicians had judged a "change of system" inevitable whatever the King might effect. Here, for example, are quotations from the "Historical Chronicle" of the *Gentleman's Magazine* under the date of January 17th:[3]

[1] In the Lords the Government majority was 89 (besides 11 proxies) against 36, and in the Commons 254 against 138.

[2] Cf. *Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose*, ii, 165, for the King's admission thirty-four years later.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1770, p. 44. It added the Earl of Harrington's resignation under the date of January 19th.

The duke of Beauford resigned his post of master of the horse to the queen.

The earl of Coventry has resigned his post as one of the lords of the bed chamber to his majesty.

The marquis of Granby resigned all his places except his regiment of the blues.

The duke of Manchester resigned his employment as one of the lords of the bed chamber.

The right hon. James Grenville resigned his post of one of the vice treasurers of Ireland.

Mr. Dunning, solicitor general to his majesty, resigned that employment but continues to officiate till another is appointed.

And what astounding suggestions rumour was offering on the "new system of politics" that might be coming, are best displayed by quoting the *Gentleman's Magazine* a second time for part of its report on January 18th:[1]

"A conference," wrote the *Gentleman's Magazine*, "was said to be held at a house in Grosvenor square, at which, among other things, it was settled, that, should the present opposition succeed, L——d C——m, Lord T——ple, and the M—— of R——m, should be created dukes, and hold each a cabinet office; that G. G——lle, under the control of the three Dukes, should appear as ostensible minister, at the head of the treasury; and to render the present administration permanent, that all who call themselves the K——g's friends in both houses, should be turned, and for ever kept out of office.

"A great personage, on being told of the above league, expressed his indignation in the following manner: 'And have *they* resolved to invade my rights, and abuse those of my people? . . . it has for ever excluded them from my favour, as it shall from the service of a country, which they would sacrifice to their ambition . . . *Apocryphal*'."

The news that Yorke, unable to face the anger of his Rockingham friends, had died on January 20th[2] brought new troubles on a monarch who needed all his determination to prevent the triumph of the "brotherhood". On January 22nd, for example, in the course of a speech made in support of Rockingham's motion that a day be appointed to take into consideration the state of the nation, Chatham, conscious of reviving popularity, ventured to use almost seditious language. Only an effectual repair of the breach made in the constitution, he argued, would restore tranquillity to the people, and if no such repair was offered, "may Discord", he cried, "prevail

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] The *London Evening Post* of January 20th is quoted by the *Gentleman's Magazine* as giving reliable intelligence but there is no mention of the fact that Yorke had died by his own hand.

for ever". Almost as extreme was another phrase Chatham employed that day. "Rather than the nation should surrender their birthright to a despotic minister," he declaimed, "I hope, old as I am, I shall see the question brought to issue, and fairly tried between the people and the government."[1] And a couple of new resignations from Ministerial employment,[2] as well as the rise of the Opposition vote to 180 against 224 on a Wilkes debate in the Commons, initiated by Dowdeswell and most ably supported by Burke, seemed to bring fresh proof that the Government's position could not be maintained much longer. Certainly, the Duke of Grafton, whose private life had already been mercilessly dragged into the open by Almon in 1768[3] and who had had much to suffer from Junius in 1769,[4] decided on January 28, 1770 to go on no longer and insisted on resigning.

Though Grafton continued to support "Administration", and North, with whom George III replaced him, had had, as Chancellor of the Exchequer, considerable experience in guiding the Commons, a new crop of reported resignations showed how little confidence there was that the King would be able to defy the Opposition indefinitely. The reports, moreover, that Lord Howe had laid down the Treasurership of the Navy, Lord Cornwallis the Vice-Treasurership of Ireland, and Lord Lisburn a seat at the Admiralty Board,[5] were accompanied by fresh evidence of the determination of the Opposition to force the King to terms. After having raised their Commons' strength in division from 180 against 224 to 186 against 226 it was the turn of the Lords where, if the Opposition Peers were beaten on February 2nd by 96 votes against 47, 41 of them, including 5 Dukes and 18 Earls, resolved nevertheless on adopting a Protest containing the following remarkable defiance:[6]

> ... we here solemnly declare, and pledge ourselves to the Public that we will persevere in availing ourselves, as far as in us lies, of every right, and every power, with which the constitution has armed us for the

[1] *Parliamentary History*, xvi, 748.

[2] Those of Sir G. Yonge and Sir P. Brett from the Admiralty.

[3] Cf. *Political Register*, June 1768, pp. 393–4, for revelations on troubles with his Duchess, whom he was alleged to be accusing of faithlessness, while himself forming an "immoral attachment" for "a woman of low origin and prostituted life" to whom he committed his children's education.

[4] Cf. Woodfalls' *Junius* for the Letters of June 12, and June 22, 1769, on Grafton's alleged public parade of Miss Nancy Parsons. And even when his Divorce Act permitted Grafton to marry again, Junius derided his marriage to a "virgin" niece of the Duchess of Bedford.

[5] Lord Lisburn's resignation was not ultimately confirmed.

[6] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, p. 197.

good of the whole, in order to obtain full relief for the injured electors of Great-Britain, and full security, for the future, against this most dangerous usurpation [the seating of Luttrell] upon the rights of the people; which, by sapping the fundamental principles of this government, threatens its total dissolution.

Nor did Opposition efforts show the slightest sign of slackening despite the months of agitation and organisation already spent. On February 7th, for example, were reported two new resignations at Court—the Duchess of Northumberland's from her post as Lady of the Queen's Bed-Chamber and Lord Galway's from his place as Master of the Stag-Hounds.[1] Meanwhile the expectation of a formidable new move from the City was raised both by a declaration from "one of the patriotic sheriffs in a great assembly, that he should refuse to pay the land-tax in a county that was not represented"[2] and by Beckford's preparation to follow up his "elegant entertainment" of February 7th, calculated to win over hesitating Aldermen,[3] with a grand social rally of the Opposition on the 9th. Beckford certainly left as little as he could to chance when he arranged to dazzle "a great number of merchants and their ladies" by a display of "a numerous and brilliant assembly of the first quality in the kingdom", "a very grand supper served up in the Egyptian Hall", and dancing continued till near five o'clock in the morning.[4] Among the great personages named as present at the Mansion House on this occasion were the Duke of Devonshire, the Duke and Duchess of Portland, the Duke and Duchess of Richmond, the Duke and Duchess of Bolton, the Duke and Duchess of Queensbury, the Duke and Duchess of Manchester, the Duke and Duchess of Northumberland, Earl Temple, the Earl of Suffolk, Lord Camden, Lord Lyttleton, General Paoli, the Russian Ambassador, and Lord George Sackville.

Whether or no the City Remonstrance to the King, fated to make so much noise in March, was already being planned at Beckford's Mansion House rallies, certain it is that the Opposition in Parliament did not relax its own efforts. On February 12th a motion from Dowdeswell that a Bill should be introduced to deprive those alleged tools of Government, the revenue officers, of their votes, brought together, it was said, "the fullest House of

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1770, p. 94.
[2] *Annual Register*, 1770, Chronicle, p. 71.
[3] *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1770, p. 94, for the fourteen Aldermen who decided to refuse Beckford's invitation.
[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, Chronicle, pp. 71–2.

Commons that has been known". And what is more, such a presumably cautious journal as the *Gentleman's Magazine* might afterwards be found emphasising the fact that 451 members were present and repeating the Opposition taunt that "by a list in the Court Calendar 192 hold places under the government, and it is affirmed upon the best authority, that the number of revenue officers is now double to what it was in 1740".[1] The division of the night which gave the Opposition 188 votes against 263 was hardly a discouragement, for it marked the highest point yet reached by Opposition numbers.[2] To what extremes, in fact, some of the Opposition were prepared to go was shown when, on February 15th, the new Speaker, just nominated by the Majority, was worried for five hours on an unfortunate remark that he had let slip about one of the Rockingham debaters, Sir William Meredith.[3] Some slight weakening of Opposition pressure was, perhaps, evidenced on February 19th when Meredith divided against the Majority's reassuring Report on the State of the Nation at 174 against 243.[4] Yet, on February 28th, when a man of George Grenville's position agreed to move for an account of the Civil List expenses between January 5, 1769 and January 5, 1770, the Court's situation was still an exposed one. Grenville pointed out that £33,000 per annum of annual income had fallen at the Crown's disposal by the death of the Royal Dukes of Cumberland and York and left others to speculate on how that income and much of the King's own "sufficient and honourable allowance" must, of late, have been spent on politics. Yet, from the House of Commons point of view, it was probably a mistake for Colonel Barré, for example, to declaim upon the theme of the Government's continual beating up for recruits with offers not only of present pay and good quarters but of provision, also, for wife and children upon the Civil List. Barré's own pretensions to compensation for the loss of his military prospects, after a quarrel with the Court, were known to be extensive—or so thought a Majority of 261 against an Opposition reduced to 165.[5]

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1770, p. 137.
[2] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 192–3.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 193–4, for the Grenvillite, James Harris, M.P., expressing private disapproval: "I don't like this levelling of all authority."
[4] Cf. *Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine*, 1770, p. 603.
[5] *Ibid.* The large Barré Civil List pension eventually awarded in 1782, caused some scandal seeing that it came from the party that had always complained of the political use of Pensions.

The Opposition shoots its Bolt

At this stage it is necessary to turn to the new effort being made by the City Opposition to increase the pressure on the Court. Planning to lead a campaign of national Remonstrance with the Crown for its complete disregard of the Petitions of 1769, the City Opposition began formally on March 1st with an appeal to the Common Council from a Livery Committee. Here is the Livery appeal which the Common Council had been specially assembled to consider:[1]

The Memorial of the Committee of the Livery of London, appointed 28th September last, Sheweth,

That the Livery of London, in Common Hall assembled, did, on the 24th of June last, direct a Petition to be presented to his Majesty, praying a redress of many enumerated and intolerable grievances. The subjects of the most despotic prince on earth, when they humbly petition their sovereign on the score of grievances, though they cannot promise to themselves redress, at least expect an answer. That the Livery of London know they have a right to both; yet, contrary to antient usage, the Livery of his Majesty's loyal city of London, after a delay of eight months, do still remain unanswered and unrelieved.

That the violation of the Right of Election by which they are most specially affected, has been, since that time, avowed and declared legal by the influence of his Majesty's ministers.

Your memorialists, therefore, apply to you, the Common Council of the City of London, that you may join with them in a request to the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor, speedily to assemble the Livery of the several companies of this city in a common hall, that they may have an opportunity to take such farther measures therein, for the re-establishment and security of their antient rights and franchises, as the times require.

Heated debates ended with the reception of the Memorial by a majority of 3 Aldermen and 109 Commoners against 15 Aldermen and 61 Commoners. On March 6th, therefore, the day after Lord North had undertaken to conciliate America and satisfy British exporters suffering from American non-importation, by a repeal of all the Townshend duties except that on tea,[2] Beckford was presiding at Guildhall over what he and the City Opposition hoped would prove an epoch-making Livery meeting.

[1] Cf. *Authentic Narrative of the Proceedings of the Livery and Corporation of London, relative to the Rise, Progress and Presentation of their late Remonstrance to his Majesty.*

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine, Supplement 1770*, pp. 603–4, for a summary of proceedings in the Commons on March 5th when a petition of the merchants trading to America was considered. The excepting of tea from the list of repealed duties was carried by 204 votes against an opposition of 142.

Beckford's opening address was sufficiently startling. Asking for dignity and order in the proceedings, he counter-attacked the newspaper-writers who had abused him and, he alleged, misrepresented the Livery "as a factious, seditious rabble, a turbulent mob, the scum of the earth". He himself gloried in the abuse for he considered the writers of the hostile papers and letters, as mere hirelings of Ministers base enough to use the public money to pay dependants and tools, for vilifying and abusing the people. After dealing with the grievances that had occasioned the former and the actual meeting, and especially the great grievance of the violated freedom of election, Beckford went on to give the Livery his *Political Creed.* As summarised in the prints of the time, the substance of Beckford's *Creed* was no less than this:[1]

> That the number of little paltry rotten boroughs, the number of placemen and pensioners, and the corruption of the electors as well as elected, were the instruments that would in time prove the ruin of the state. To prevent those evils it was necessary that there should be a more equal representation of the people, that the number of placemen should be limited by law, and that the servants of the crown should be obliged to exhibit fuller accounts of the manner in which the public money was disposed of.

After stressing his suspicions of Government accounting in a query whether Liverymen, accustomed to accounts, would be content to receive one "where a million of money was accounted for in one line", Beckford ended with professions of loyalty to the King, "the best of princes", accompanied by attacks on the "evil counsellors" to whom alone "many of the national calamities were to be ascribed".

But much more startling even than Beckford's speech was the Remonstrance to the King twice moved and carried "with long and continued acclamations". Complaining of the disregard of the City's previous Petition, the unmerited dismissal of Lord Camden, "the only judge whom the revolution has left removeable at the pleasure of the crown", and the bestowal of the royal bounty and favour, instead, on the "instruments of our wrongs", the Remonstrance went on to what were, officially, the gravest improprieties. The Commons' majority, in seating Luttrell, was charged with having undertaken a more ruinous blow at the constitution than Charles I when levying ship-money or James II when assuming the

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1770, p. 109.

dispensing power. The House of Commons, it was claimed, had thereby forfeited its legal character as representative of the people, its acts were invalid, and the King was summoned, as a duty he constitutionally owed to his people, to dissolve it as well as remove his "evil ministers for ever" from his councils.[1] And even more unprecedented than these demands was the language of would-be intimidation that did not hesitate to speak of liberty successfully won in the past by the "stern virtue of our ancestors", and "the virtue of their descendants" which would preserve it.

As the official name of "The Address, Remonstrance, and Petition, of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, Common Council, and Livery of the City of London, in Common Hall assembled" had been carefully given to the Remonstrance, it became exasperatingly difficult for the Court to find a valid reason for refusing to receive it from a City procession arriving in state.[2] On March 7th, certainly, while Westminster's electors were signalling support of the City by arranging for a Westminster Remonstrance, and while Grenville was attempting to purify future Parliaments by proposing a new method of trying Election Petitions,[3] the City Sheriffs were at St. James's confidently requiring arrangements to be made for the Remonstrance's reception. Indeed, after a Court official had opened by questioning the document's proper signing, sealing and authentication, and had gone on to ask whether the City had ever presented a Remonstrance before in any reign, Mr. Sheriff Townsend, M.P., had been bold enough to retort with: "Did ever a king of England before turn a deaf ear to the petitions of sixty thousand freeholders, and his back on those who presented them?"[4] Though legal difficulties, made by the Court, as to the Livery's proper rights and functions, held up the Remonstrance's

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 110–11.

[2] Among other things, the title given to the Remonstrance was intended to obscure the fact that it was not a "corporation" document proper, adopted by the Mayor, Aldermen and Common Council and assured, from long precedent, of reception by the King on the Throne, if it was so desired. The Beckford Remonstrance, of course, had not won, and could not have won its way through the "corporation" proper.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine, Supplement 1770*, p. 604. Grenville, as usual, succeeded in making a practical point as well as a purely constitutional one. In recommending the choice of "juries" of fifteen members to try Election Petitions by a system in which chance rather than party played the principal part, he urged, not only that to leave things as they were, that is in the hands of the whole House, was to leave Petitions to be decided by "Administration", but that it was also to continue the "insuperable obstruction to all public business" by Petition matters at the beginning of every new Parliament.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, March 1770, p. 111.

presentation for a week, March 14th saw the Court's capitulation and the acceptance by the King, seated on his Throne, of the Livery's violently anti-Ministerial manifesto.[1]

The Court's capitulation was not uncalculated. The mere spectacle of the King consenting, despite the strong legal doubts that might have been urged, to receive a thoroughly distasteful document merely because a show of precedent could be made, was, in that age, well designed to arouse strong feelings in his favour as one willing to respect even the shadow of a traditional right. The King's temperate but unyielding reply, moreover, with its emphasis on the desire he had always shown to "avoid even the appearance of invading any of those powers which the constitution has placed in other hands" was just the manifestation needed to allow the strongest forces to be rallied in reprobation of the City Junta responsible, as the King alleged, for a Remonstrance "disrepectful' to me, injurious to my Parliament, and irreconcilable to the principles of the Constitution".[2] The counter-attack of Court and Ministry, made in two fields, must, in fact, be deemed to have enjoyed a great deal of success. In Parliament, "two independent gentlemen of the North", the former "Minority men", Sir Thomas Clavering, M.P. for the County of Durham, and Sir Edward Blackett, M.P. for Northumberland,[3] undertook to lead the condemnation of the alleged reckless and unscrupulous language of the City Remonstrance. And Opposition attempts to prevent the despatch on March 23rd of a loyal counter-manifesto from Commons and Lords were repeatedly and heavily defeated, the Minority in the Commons, for example, sinking from 127 on March 19th to 108 on March 20th and a mere 94 on March 21st.[4] Meanwhile, in the City itself, preparations had been undertaken which permitted the Goldsmiths' Company, on March 23rd, to lead a revolt against the Beckford-Townsend-Sawbridge assumption of the City's name for Opposition political

[1] Cf. *Authentic Narrative of the Proceedings . . . relative . . . to the late Remonstrance*, for the considerable procession that had brought the document.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for the reply read by the King and beginning: "I shall always be ready to receive the requests, and to listen to the complaints of my subjects. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 198, for the manifest fellow-feeling of another Minority man, the Grenvillite James Harris, M.P. Under March 19th the *Gentleman's Magazine* reported the gift of a military place to Clavering's brother, Major-General G. Clavering.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, 198–201, for the report of three divisions in the Commons of 127–284, 108–231, and 94–248 and of one division in the Lords of 35–95.

manœuvres, a revolt speedily joined by the Weavers' and Grocers' Companies.[1]

To go farther into detail on the intricate manœuvre for political position represented by these efforts of the Opposition and the Administration may well seem a work of supererogation. Yet a great deal could be learned of the essential politics of the day by following up, say, the activities of the great bevy of Parliamentary guests, headed by six dukes, gathered anew on March 22nd for a grand entertainment offered by Beckford at the Mansion House.[2] Some of the visitors would be found, for example, to have had a great deal to do with the forwarding of the Westminster Remonstrance, adopted on March 28th, the Middlesex Remonstrance, adopted on March 30th, and the Kent, Durham, Cumberland and Northumberland Petitions of whose fruitless presentation at St. James's there is mention during April.[3] In the City, meanwhile, Beckford, encouraged among others by Chatham and Temple, was preparing for the Common Hall on April 12th which allowed him to denounce rebel City Companies and hireling Ministerial writers in preparation for a new City Remonstrance to the Crown.[4] It became plain before long that Beckford intended, in the fashion already chosen by Horne for Middlesex, to make of the City's second Remonstrance a direct challenge to George's unyielding speech of March 14th, refusing a dissolution of Parliament.

Before dealing with Beckford's renewed attempt to use the City's prestige in a vital attack against the Court, it might be well to notice some of the powerful agencies working in a similar direction. Two of Junius's most mordant letters, those dated

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, under March 23rd for the Goldsmiths stigmatising the Remonstrance as "most indecent" and resolving that the Wardens of the Company would not summon the Livery to the Guildhall on the Lord Mayor's precept unless for the purposes of election or with the Company's express approbation. The Weavers' resolve is given by the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under March 28th and the Grocers' (with long resolutions), under March 30th.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, Chronicle, under March 22nd for the chronicler's rapture. "The Egyptian Hall," he related, "was illuminated in the most elegant manner, with new chandeliers, and other illuminations, which surpassed all description. . . . The most excellent band of music which could be procured in this kingdom . . . was conducted by Mr. Rush." And while the guests toasted "liberty" within, "several persons had their windows broken at night by the mob, for not illuminating their houses".

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 6th: "The Durham, Cumberland, and Northumberland petitions for redress of grievances, were presented to his Majesty at St. James's, and received, but no answer was returned; they were given to the lords in waiting."

[4] Cf. *The Speech delivered by the Rt. Hon. the Lord Mayor, at the last meeting of the Livery at Guildhall.*

March 19th and April 3rd, were written in support of the City and against the Ministers who had advised rejection of the City's Remonstrance.[1] Horne, busy drafting Petitions and Remonstrances and successfully preparing to repel a prosecution brought against him by a renegade Parliamentary friend of Wilkes whom he had attacked in the newspapers,[2] found time also to see that prominence was given in the Press to the damaging allegation that the King laughed mockingly after the retiring City deputation that had vainly brought the Remonstrance.[3] Wilkes, released from his prison on April 17th,[4] re-entered the fray against the Court next day with another of his *Addresses to the Freeholders of Middlesex*.[5] And while Burke was preparing to issue the Rockingham party's indictment of the course of George III's reign in the very notable *Thoughts on the Present Discontents*,[6] Chatham was not to be restrained by his own friends from a very fever of Opposition.[7] Chatham it was, indeed, who anticipated Parliament's prorogation on May 19th by moving in the Lords, on the 14th, for a dissolution

[1] Cf. the Junius Letter of March 19th, for such biting comment on the King's reply as: "Our gracious King indeed is abundantly civil to himself. Instead of an answer to a petition, his Majesty very gracefully pronounced his own panegyric. . . . His Majesty is pleased to say, that he is always ready to receive the requests of his subjects; yet the sheriffs were twice sent back with an excuse; and it was certainly debated in council, whether or no the magistrates of the city of London should be admitted to an audience. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, under April 6th: "Came on . . . the famous cause between the Right Hon. George Onslow, and the Rev. Mr. Horne, for two letters published the 14th and 28th of July last. The action was brought against Mr. Horne for £10,000 damages. The trial lasted about an hour and a half, when Mr. Onslow was non-suited. It is supposed the expence to Mr. Onslow will amount to at least £1,500."

[3] The *Public Advertiser* was given an account of Horne's which contained the following: "When his Majesty had done reading his speech, the Lord Mayor, &c. had the honour of kissing his Majesty's hand; after which, as they were withdrawing, his Majesty instantly turned round to his courtiers, *and burst out laughing*.

Nero fiddled, whilst Rome was burning.

John Horne, Author."

A prosecution, begun against the printer, was later abandoned.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, under April 17th: "The Committee of the supporters of the bill of rights settled all Mr. Wilkes's debts and about six o'clock in the evening that gentleman was discharged from the King's Bench Prison. . . . It has been remarked with astonishment, that there never was perhaps so general and voluntary illumination on any occasion, as on the event of Mr. Wilkes's release; not in London only, but in every part of England. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1770, for the full text.

[6] Cf. *Ibid.*, May 1770, where the pamphlet is given a full notice. It had already aroused so much attention that the *Gentleman's Magazine* reviewed the "republican" Mrs. Macaulay's extremer *Observations* on Burke's pamphlet together with the pamphlet itself.

[7] Cf. *Ibid.*, March 1770, under March 29th.

of Parliament on the ground of the great public discontent in England, Ireland and America. He was heavily outvoted by the Majority.[1]

Active and able as were the forces ranged against the Court, large as was their success in stirring up, amid a great part of the populace and trading classes, anger and resentment against the alleged secret influence at work round the King, it must be admitted that, by the time Parliament was sent into a prorogation lasting from May 19th to November 13th, the bulk of the eight hundred or so members of both Houses, who were the ultimate arbiters of national politics, were more decidedly anti-Oppositionist than at any time since 1767. It is especially significant to find that though George Grenville had been regarded throughout 1767, 1768 and 1769 as the most likely Leader of the Commons imposable by the Opposition factions upon the Crown, in 1770 his following tended to be coldly hostile towards the more "indecent" Opposition manifestations in Press,[2] Parliament and City while he himself, suffering from the broken health and heavy private affliction destined to bring on his death in November,[3] devoted his principal attention to promoting his successful Election Petitions Bill.[4] It seems certain, moreover, that the ultimate effect of the long-prepared City demonstration against the Court, a demonstration finally staged at St. James's on May 23rd, was still further to antagonise hesitant politicians. A London rabble, of course, still eagerly cheered the carriages of the City deputation bearing to St. James's the reiterated Remonstrance, which this time implored "with most earnest supplication, the dissolution of

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, under May 14th.

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, for the views of Malmesbury's father, James Harris, M.P. for Christchurch and one of Grenville's colleagues at the Treasury between 1763 and 1765. On April 3rd he was writing to his son, then at the Madrid Embassy but soon to be associated with his father as the second member for Christchurch: "The license of our press is intolerable. We shall lose the most valuable privilege under heaven, by the rascality of the lowest of scoundrels."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, i, 206, for a letter of October 31st, reporting Grenville's grave illness. He died on November 13th never, apparently, having recovered from the shock of his wife's death.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 199–202, for some of the Bill's history. Mr. Harris described the Bill thus: "Mr. Grenville's idea is to take the judicature out of the House at large, and of committees nearly as numerous as the House, and transfer it to a smaller number, who are to be sworn, and whose determination is to be final. This committee is to be formed out of thirty-seven chosen by lot, out of which number the parties litigating are to reject twelve apiece, and the remaining thirteen are to be judges." This type of Bill, "practical", and yet making for some diminution of current abuses, was just of the kind to enhance Grenville's prestige.

the present parliament, the removal of evil ministers, and the total extinction of that fatal influence, which has caused such national discontent".[1] But in view of the absence of such discussion as there had been in previous years on food-scarcity and the distress of the poor, it must be assumed that the cheering mob of 1770 was better fed and more prosperous than some of those that had been responsible for the long course of street-troubles since 1761. To notice also that the carriages accompanying Beckford, the Sheriffs and the City officers contained only 75 Common Councilmen instead of the 153 who had escorted the Remonstrance of March 14th[2] is to acquire an increased conviction that the anti-Court clamour, conducted so long and so continuously, was beginning to weary even originally sympathetic sections of the "public". Certainly, King and Ministers felt able to assume the responsibility for a very confident reply to the City, a reply which justified the impugned Royal answer to the former Remonstrance and the King's refusal to undertake a dissolution of Parliament.

Beckford hereupon did a remarkable thing[3] which, if it aroused a storm of applause from the "patriots" led, in this instance, by Lord Chatham, further disgusted the Majority and even the more "sober" elements of the Minority. He stepped forward and, against all Court tradition and etiquette, delivered almost a debating speech in criticism of the King's reply. It was said that "Parson" Horne was responsible for its tenor, as he certainly seems to have been for the version of the speech that found its way into the newspapers.[4] Here, after the "loyal and dutiful" opening, is the kernel of Beckford's unprecedented speech:[5]

> We do therefore, with the greatest humility and submission most earnestly supplicate your Majesty, that you will not dismiss us from your presence without expressing a more favourable opinion of your faithful Citizens, and without some comfort, without some prospect, at least, of redress.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 202.
[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1770, p. 113 and May 1770, p. 218.
[3] Cf. *Bedford Correspondence*, iii, 413–14, for Rigby to the Duke: "I have just come from Court, where the insolence of Beckford has exceeded all his, or the City's, past exploits. . . . This is the first attempt ever made to hold a colloquy with the King by any subject, and is indecent in the highest degree. There were very few Aldermen attended, and not great numbers of the Common Council. The rabble was of the very lowest sort."
[4] Cf. Jesse's *Memoirs of George III*, i, 494 n.; Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 121 n; *Chatham Correspondence*, iii, 458.
[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1770, pp. 218–19.

Permit me, Sire, farther to observe, that whoever has already dared, or shall hereafter endeavour by false insinuations and suggestions to alienate your Majesty's affections from your loyal subjects in general, and from the City of London in particular, and to withdraw your confidence in, and regard for your people, is an enemy to your Majesty's person and family, a violater of the public peace, and a betrayer of our happy constitution as it was established at the glorious and necessary Revolution.

It might suit the "patriots" to report what spirit Beckford had shown at Court.[1] Chatham might announce his "admiration, thanks and affection", prophesy that Beckford's Mayoralty would "be revered till the Constitution is destroyed and forgotten", and receive, in his turn, fulsome compliments from a City deputation.[2] The "patriots" might point to the Press dangers revealed anew by Mansfield's attempts in June, when Almon of the *Political Register* and Woodfall of the *Public Advertiser* were on trial, to confine King's Bench juries to the mere facts of publication while reserving to himself the decision as to criminality.[3] The death of Beckford on June 21, 1770—overwrought as he was by the strain of a Mayoralty full of clashes with the Court, the last one occurring as late as June 1st—might be followed by the defiant City resolution to give him a statue in Guildhall bearing the words of his historic rejoinder to the King.[4] All these Opposition demonstrations seemed to be made in vain until news of gradually increasing seriousness from the Falkland Islands raised hope afresh. But that is a subject which must be left to the next chapter.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*: "the whole Court acknowledged, he spoke with great propriety, and that his whole behaviour, and that of his attendants, was very far from answering the description given of them by a noble Lord in a certain place who said, 'however swaggering and impudent the behaviour of the low Citizens might be on their own dunghill, when they came into the royal presence, their heads hung down like bullrushes, and they blinked their eyes like owls in the sunshine'."

[2] Cf. *Chatham Correspondence*, iii, 462; *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1770 under June 1st.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770, Chronicle under June 2nd and 13th: "Lord Mansfield, in his charge to the jury, said, they had nothing to do with the *intention*, nor with the other words in the information, such as *malicious*, *seditious*, &c. . . ." Both juries, however, gave some trouble and hampered the blow doubtless intended against the "licentiousness of the Press". Thus five absences from the Woodfall special jury of June 13th—hardly all ascribable to chance—compelled the inclusion of five common jurymen taken from the lists by lot, and the jury so formed would, after nine hours of seclusion, merely find "Guilty of printing and publishing ONLY." On July 18th, when two more publishers, Miller and Baldwin, were on trial, deficient special juries completed from the common jurymen, ventured, against Mansfield's direction, to find "Not guilty", pure and simple.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, under July 5th.

CHAPTER VIII

FALKLAND ISLANDS, PRESS, AND "PATRIOT MAGISTRATES", 1770–1

"The journey of the Princess Dowager to Germany is indeed an extraordinary circumstance. . . . It is much canvassed and sifted, and yet perhaps she was only in search of a little repose from the torrents of abuse that have been poured upon her for some years. Yesterday they publicly sung about the streets a ballad, the burthen of which was, *the cow has left her calf*. With all this we are grown very quiet, and Lord North's behaviour is so sensible and moderate that he offends nobody."

Horace Walpole, June 15, 1770.

"Will you descend so low, will you so shamefully betray the King's Honour, as to make it matter of negotiation whether his Majesty's possessions shall be restored to him or not? The Ministry . . . have taken pains to possess the public with an opinion, that the Spanish Court have constantly disavowed the proceedings of their Governor, than which there never was a more ABSOLUTE, A MORE PALPABLE FALSEHOOD. When the first communication was made by the Court of Madrid, of their being apprised of the taking of the Falkland Islands, was it accompanied with an offer of restitution instant, of immediate satisfaction, and the punishment of the Spanish governor. If it was not, they have adopted the act as their own. . . .

"After what I have said, it will probably be given out, that I am for hurrying the nation *at all events* into a war with Spain. But I disclaim such counsel. Let us have peace, but let it be honourable, let it be secure. A patched up peace will not do. It will not satisfy the nation, though it may be approved of by P—l——t. I am as tender of the effusion of human blood, as the noble Lord who dwelt so long upon the miseries of war. If the bloody politics of some noble Lords had been followed; England, and every quarter of his Majesty's dominions would have been glutted with blood—the blood of our own countrymen.

"When one considers who are the men by whom a war, in the outset, must be conducted, who but must wish for peace? The strength and preparations of the House of Bourbon are known; the defenceless unprepared condition of this country is notorious. . . ."

From *Lord Ch——m's memorable Speech on a late Motion* (made November 22, 1770).

"His Majesty went to the House Wednesday, and prorogued the Parliament. We were in the Park when he returned, and as there was no hired mob, people had an opportunity of showing their own sentiments, and he passed 'midst the acclamations of a great concourse of people. In the evening a mob was hired, which attacked Lord North's house, and also Sir Fletcher Norton's and broke all their windows; no justice of peace or constable to be found. The horse-guards were ready saddled, in case they were wanted; probably the mob heard of it, so they went off without pulling down Lord North's house, which some think was intended. The Lord Mayor and Oliver were released, the City patriots illuminated; but we were quiet here, without exposing ourselves by putting up candles."

An anti-patriot account of May 8, 1771, sent to James Harris, Jr., M.P.

THE Falkland Islands affair, which was to awake new hope in the Opposition, assumed a steadily increasing place in public attention from June 6, 1770, when the first, hardly-credited reports appeared,[1] until the furious Parliamentary exchanges marking the Session of November 13, 1770 to May 8, 1771. It was, of course, only gradually, as increasing information seemed to confirm the first accounts of Spanish aggression and of Bourbon readiness to attempt, while Britain was entangled in American disputes, a national "humiliation" even profounder than that on Corsica, that the Opposition made its main battle-ground of the Falkland Isles. In June and July 1770 "patriot" feeling was concentrated on such things nearer home as Beckford's death and statue, and his successful replacement, as Lord Mayor, by the now amenable Trecothick, and as City member, by Richard Oliver, Treasurer of the Bill of Rights Society.[2] In August, again, such matters as the Rt. Hon. George Onslow's renewed attempt to break Horne by lawsuit,[3] Junius's assault on Lord North,[4] and the Yorkshire preparations to call a County Meeting in condemnation of Ministers, were the leading political topics.[5] From September, however, the tension with Spain began gradually to outstrip other subjects in the public mind as the newspapers filled with the results of the effort to enlist or press sufficient sailors for a naval armament, intended by Government to

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1770, under June 6th: "By the Tamar Sloop of War, and Florida Fire Ship, arrived at Plymouth, from Port Egmont, an Island on the Coast of Patagonia, there is an account, that two Spanish Frigates of 36 guns each, came to the said Port, and in the name of his Catholick Majesty, required our people to quit the Island. This news was at first discredited but has since been confirmed—The Spanish claim is founded, it is said, on an old Treaty, made in the reign of the first James by which that monarch renounces all right to make settlements in South America, beyond a certain line."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, July 1770, under June 29th and July 11th. On July 4th Oliver had already earned as reward for his patriotic services Beckford's Aldermanry.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, August 1770, for a long account of a cause, ending this time with a verdict of £400 damages against Horne, a verdict quickly challenged before the Court of Common Pleas as improper.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, August 1770, under August 22nd: "A letter signed Junius, appeared this day in the *Publick Advertiser*, and in *Lloyd's Evening Post*. It is addressed to Lord North, and contains a charge of rewarding Col. Lutterell, at the risque of the national safety. It is written with the usual spirit of the admired author; but of the truth or falsity of its contents, we can say nothing." After this last saving formula the *Gentleman's Magazine* felt safer in bestowing upon its readers the entire letter.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Opposition and Ministerial Circular Letters being sent round before a projected Yorkshire County Meeting.

display to the Spaniards and their French allies the dangers of delaying evacuation of the Falklands, and apology for having encroached there.[1] When, on October 10th, one of the two Opposition clubs ruling Westminster resolved on giving a lead to the country by staging a Westminster Electors' meeting on October 31st, a fortnight before the reassembly of Parliament, the cause alleged was not now merely "the invasion of the sacred rights and liberties of the people at home" but also "the attack of our territories abroad", an attack ascribed presumably to the Government's failings.[2]

Yet while Lord North's Government was busy with naval preparations, the "patriots", not yet capable of raising the cry against "capitulation to the House of Bourbon" which later Anglo-Spanish negotiations brought, found their principal emergency-opportunities, in adding opposition to press-gang abuses to their other efforts for "liberty". On October 26th, for example, Wilkes, officiating as sitting Alderman at Guildhall, ordered the discharge of a barber impressed under an Admiralty warrant,[3] and early in December Brass Crosby, the new Lord Mayor, announced that he would no longer authorise press-gang activities within his jurisdiction by backing Admiralty warrants.[4] There had been a number of scandalous press-gang scenes that had led to great criticism of Lord Mayor Trecothick's more compliant attitude,[5] and the City, which had done its best to stimulate voluntary naval recruiting by leading the municipalities in offering to naval volunteers bounties additional to those of the Government,[6]

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, September 1770, for a Royal Proclamation offering bounty-money to naval volunteers and for the first ominous reports of press-gang activities.

[2] Cf. *Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, p. 3.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1770, under October 26th. This warrant had been backed by Lord Mayor Trecothick.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1770, under December 5th: "The Lieutenants in the press service waited on the Lord Mayor . . . with a message from the Admiralty, desiring his Lordship to back the press-warrants, which his Lordship refused."

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, November 1770, under November 8th for Trecothick's defence when laying down the Mayoralty: "He observed that many ill-natured reflections had been thrown out against him for backing press-warrants in the city, in which he remarked, he was justified by the precedents of all the former Lord Mayors: that at a time, when the whole nation was alarmed with the enemy's great preparations for war, he should have thought himself inexcusable, as Chief Magistrate, if he had thrown any obstruction in the way, which might have retarded the manning of our fleet; that though he had his doubts with respect to the legality of press-warrants, yet as an individual . . . he thought it too weighty a matter for him singly to determine upon, and the more particularly as the parliament was so near upon meeting. . . ."

[6] Cf. *London Gazette*, November 17th for municipal bounties offered by London, Bristol, Montrose, Edinburgh, Aberdeen, and Lynn.

felt that it needed not to fear the imputation of lack of patriotism.

Meanwhile a characteristic Wilkes manifestation, ostensibly in the name of the electors of Westminster, had been staged on October 31st in the hope of influencing members of Parliament, due to reassemble on November 13th. The accounts contain some hints that the Opposition politicians, looking principally to the streets, were already watchful of Wilkes, whose attitude towards the finances of the Bill of Rights Society left something to be desired. Here is a characteristic account which shows what "patriotism" was then busy with:[1]

This morning (October 31st), about ten, a prodigious number of people crowded into Westminster hall, which continued to fill till noon, when Mr. Wilkes came into the hall, attended by Mr. Sawbridge, and having received several huzzas, he ascended the stairs, and after informing the company of the intent of their present meeting, he began to read a paper of instructions to their members, the purport of which was, That as petitions, addresses, and remonstrance to the throne, for a redress of grievances hitherto unprecedented, had been of late despised, and by the advice of evil counsellors, dismissed from the throne; therefore, that their representatives be instructed to move for an impeachment of Henry North, commonly called Lord North, as not only the contriver and schemer, but even the carrier into execution of these cruel and unconstitutional machinations.

Mr. Sawbridge opposed the instructions, for this reason, "That Lord North, having places and pensions at his disposal, was at the head of a set of people, against whom the nation had evident reason to complain; that in the house of Lords he had the Bishops and the Scots peers; and all the placemen in the house of Commons on his side; that if his conduct were brought into question in either or both houses, he would be acquitted, and they precluded from any complaint hereafter." He therefore moved for a remonstrance, and the question being put, it was carried in the affirmative. A committee went out to draw it up, and returned with it in half an hour, the heads of which were—

1. That a bill be brought in and passed for establishing triennial parliaments.
2. That his M——y would remove from his presence and councils all his ministers and secretaries of state, particularly Lord M[ansfield] and not admit a Scotsman into the administration.

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1770; *Annual Register*, 1770. Wilkes's defeated Instructions to Westminster's members for North's impeachment dragged in the Falkland Islands affair thus: "that the contempt in which this Nation is now held Abroad, in consequence of his Administration, has been the true cause of the Insults we have received in Europe, and the Loss of the Territories in America".

3. That a law be made that the electors of Great Britain be empowered to chuse any representatives they think proper, without regard to any sentence whatsoever.
4. That no general warrants be ever issued, even in case of manning a fleet, or recruiting the army.
5. That a law be made for appealing to a superior court. . . .

When Ministers composed the most vigorous King's Speech the nation had heard for years and their master read it at Parliament's re-opening on November 13th, it can hardly be pretended that it was because there was reason to fear the Parliamentary results of the Westminster demonstration of October 31st or of previous Opposition display in Yorkshire during September. From the Court's point of view, indeed, both events had allowed encouraging signs of impatience with mere vulgar clap-trap to be perceived among the Opposition[1] so that Junius's attack on Lord North, dated August 22nd, and his onslaught on the very unpopular Mansfield, dated November 14th, were possibly graver Governmental pre-occupations. And in view of developments soon after Parliament commenced business, it may well be that the vigorous language on the conduct of Spain used in the King's Speech,[2] and the anxiety to put as good a face as possible on American affairs,[3] had some relation to notions of forestalling criticism from Lord Chatham. Chatham, in fact, opened the Session as Ministers' most dangerous and persistent foe not merely on the now rather threadbare topic of the Middlesex election or the newer one of Lord Mansfield's conduct of Press trials, but on the really heady theme of England's abasement by the House of Bourbon. Thus, on November 22nd, when the Duke of Richmond

[1] Cf. *Account of the proceedings at the County meeting at York, in a letter from a gentleman present* which shows division between what might be called the "moderate" and "extreme" Opposition.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1770: "By an act of the Governor of Buenos Ayres, in seizing by force one of my possessions, the honour of my crown, and the security of my people's rights, were become deeply affected. Under these circumstances, I did not fail to make an immediate demand from the court of Spain, of such satisfaction as I had a right to expect for the injury I had received. I directed also the necessary preparations to be made, without loss of time, for enabling me to do myself justice, in case my requisition to the court of Spain should fail of procuring it for me. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*: "With respect to the state of my colonies in North America, although I have the satisfaction to acquaint you, that the people in most of them have begun to depart from those combinations, which were calculated to distress the commerce of this kingdom; yet, in some parts of the colony of the Massachusett's Bay, very unwarrantable practices are still carried on, and my good subjects oppressed by the same lawless violence which has too long prevailed in that province. . . ."

moved for the production of papers relative to the Falkland Islands dispute and Ministers declined to consider such a course at a delicate stage of critical negotiations, Chatham delivered himself of an anti-Ministerial philippic in his best style, a philippic widely reproduced and read as *Lord C——m's memorable Speech on a late Motion.* Its effects seem to have helped the Government as little as Camden's criticism of Mansfield's Press trial methods, made on a Chatham motion of December 5th,[1] or the violence shown on December 10th by the badgered Majority in both Houses who found a Commons debate on December 9th, again in virtual arraignment of Mansfield, succeeded next day in the Lords by Opposition charges alleging the defencelessness of Gibraltar.[2] On December 11th Ministers had a particularly bad day in the Commons, where landed members resented the proposal to raise the Land-Tax to 4*s.* in the pound before war was declared, and the Minority continued to declaim upon danger to Gibraltar and Jamaica.[3] And over Ministers' Christmas Recess hung the black shadow of certain war with Spain and France unless Madrid consented to save the British Government's face. Even if peace were preserved, the prospect was merely that Spain's grudging concessions would still leave Government exposed to Opposition taunts of cowardice and Opposition complaints of millions thrown away for a worthless and dishonourable result.

Thanks to war-hesitations in France, where the Duke of Choiseul's fall proved decisive, the Spanish Ministers thought it prudent to allow their London Ambassador to sign the really advantageous terms procurable there on January 22, 1771, the very day Parliament reassembled.[4] But the fact that Spain, after seizing the Falklands and causing England huge expenses in war-preparations, got off without reparations and actually entitled, after evacuation and British re-occupation, to renew legal claims

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1770, for the article *Some account of what passed on Wednesday the 5th instant in a great Assembly.* A few days later there was another exchange in which Camden, according to the *Annual Register* of 1771, retorted upon Mansfield who was avoiding debate and referring the Lords to his written memorial, "that he would pin down the Chief Justice and drive him to a legal contest on these great points".

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, History, pp. 37–40, for strong criticism of the Lord's Majority for excluding "strangers" (even Commoners) for the rest of the Session. The Commons retaliated, incidentally excluding newspapermen too.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1770, under December 11th: "Many very severe things were said of the Ministry; and, in short, they were attacked from all sides." Ministers' majority on this occasion was 199.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, History, pp. 45–6.

upon the Islands, seemed bound to help the Opposition mightily. The Government might have strengthened itself by finding place for the Grenville connection, now bereft of its leader and thoroughly tired of "patriot" company,[1] and for purchasable lawyers like Thurlow and Wedderburn.[2] It might argue the folly of drenching the world in blood and spending money like water on a point of punctilio in an affair of remote and desert islands, whose strategic worth had been greatly over-estimated and which were, in any case, to be restored to British occupation under the terms signed. Yet Junius, when he showed in another famous letter how the long-continued Opposition attacks ought to be conducted, was felt to have inflicted such poisoned wounds that Dr. Johnson, who had helped the Government considerably in 1770 with the *False Alarm*, was straightway applied to for a counter-irritant that took the form of *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands*.[3] This literary warfare now deserves some attention though it may be observed in passing that the high point of an obstinately-contested Parliamentary battle was the Commons division of February 13th when, somewhat to the Government's dismay, the Opposition raised as many as 157 votes against 271 given in approval of the Ministerial course.[4]

Here is how Junius began his Letter to the *Public Advertiser* of January 30th:[5]

If we recollect in what manner the *King's friends* have been constantly employed, we shall have no reason to be surprised at any condition of disgrace to which the once respected name of Englishman may be

[1] *Ibid.*, "About the same time, some of those gentlemen who had been particularly attached to the late Mr. Grenville, and had, both as to acts and declarations, been among the most violent of those in opposition, now came over to the side of administration." The Earl of Suffolk became Lord Privy Seal, Thomas Whately, a Lord of Trade, and James Harris's reward lay in seeing his son promoted to the diplomatic status of Minister Plenipotentiary.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, pp. 170–1. Besides Thurlow's Attorney-Generalship and Wedderburn's Solicitor-Generalship the appointment of Bathurst to the Lord Chancellorship as Lord Apsley had its uses. If Wedderburn, for example, represented almost a gain from the "patriots", the choice of a Lord Chancellor from a traditionally Tory family might help to quiet Land-Tax unrest among a normally docile section of "King's friends".

[3] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 194–200 n., gives a long note at the foot of Junius's Letter of January 30, 1771. "It was against this letter", it says, "that Dr. Johnson was engaged to muster the whole of his political and argumentative powers. . . . Of this pamphlet the ministry were not a little proud; and specially as they made no doubt that Junius would hereby be drawn into a paper contest with Johnson, and that hence they would possess a greater facility for detecting him. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, History, p. 53.

[5] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 182–4.

degraded. His Majesty has no cares, but such as concern the laws and constitution of this country. In his royal breast there is no room left for resentment, no place for hostile sentiments against the natural enemies of his crown. The system of government is uniform. Violence and oppression at home can only be supported by treachery and submission abroad.... The plan of domestic policy which has been invariably pursued, from the moment of his present Majesty's accession, engrosses all the attention of his servants. They know that the security of their places depends upon their maintaining, at any hazard, the secret system of the closet. A foreign war might embarrass, an unfavourable event might ruin the minister, and defeat the deep-laid scheme of policy, to which he and his associates owe their employments. Rather than suffer the execution of that scheme to be delayed or interrupted, the King has been advised to make a public surrender, a solemn sacrifice, in the face of all Europe....

And here is Johnson in reply:[1]

Junius knows his own meaning, and can therefore tell it. He is an enemy to the ministry, he sees them hourly growing stronger. He knows that a war at once unjust and unsuccessful, would have certainly displaced them, and is therefore, in his zeal for his country, angry that war was not unjustly made, and unsuccessfully conducted....

The real crime of the ministry is, that they have found the means of avoiding their own ruin; but the charge against them is multifarious and confused, as will happen, when malice and discontent are ashamed of their complaint. The past and future are complicated in the censure. We have heard a tumultuous clamour about honour and rights, injuries and insults, the *British* flag, and the *Favourite's* rudder, *Buccarelli's* conduct, and *Grimaldi's* declarations, the *Manilla* ransom, delays and reparations....

The *English* ministry asked all that was reasonable, and enforced all that they asked.... There can be none amongst us to whom this transaction does not seem happily concluded, but those who having fixed their hopes on public calamities, sat like vultures waiting for a day of carnage. Having worn out all the arts of domestick sedition, having wearied violence, and exhausted falsehood, they yet flattered themselves with some assistance from the pride or malice of *Spain*; and when they could no longer make the people complain of grievances which they did not feel, they had the comfort yet of knowing that real evils were possible, and their resolution is well known of charging all evil on their governors....

The reconciliation was therefore considered as the loss of their last anchor; and received not only with the fretfulness of disappointment but the rage of desperation....

There was perhaps never much danger of war . . . but what danger

[1] *Thoughts on the late Transactions respecting Falkland's Islands* the first version of which was available in March.

there was, proceeded from the faction. Foreign nations, unacquainted with the insolence of common councils, and unaccustomed to the howls of plebeian patriotism, when they heard of rabbles and riots, of petitions and remonstrances, of discontent in *Surrey*, *Derbyshire*, and *Yorkshire*, when they saw the chain of subordination broken, and the legislature threatened and defied, naturally imagined that such a government had little leisure for *Falkland's Island*. . . .

When towards the end of February Johnson was completing his pamphlet, he seems to have had a good deal of confidence that the worst the "patriots" could do during the Session was over. As he put it in his own words:

. . . our enemies have now lost their hopes, and our friends I hope are recovered from their fears. To fancy that our government can be subverted by the rabble, whom its lenity has pampered into impudence, is to fear that a city may be drowned by the overflowing of its kennels. . . . Among the disturbers of our quiet are some animals of greater bulk, whom their power of roaring persuaded us to think formidable, but we now perceive that sound and force do not always go together. . . . After all our broils, foreign and domestick, we may at last hope to remain a while in quiet, amused with the view of our own success. . . .

But this proved something premature not, so much, because the Rockinghams, aided both by "patriots" and "independents", attempted a contentious extension of the 1769 Nullum Tempus Bill, worrying to Ministers,[1] as because the City "patriots" lighted, in March, on a new way of promoting both "liberty" and revived street-enthusiasm in their favour. All had not been well of late with the City "patriots". The Beckford exploits had led to the mutiny of several Companies against the reigning City Junta, and troublesome lawsuits, dragging on for years and ultimately decided adversely, were already in prospect in the attempt to restore the full alleged authority of the Lord Mayor.[2] The anti-press-gang campaign, too, had not only been attacked as unpatriotic[3] but

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, History, pp. 56–9, for the size assumed by this controversy in which Ministers held themselves bound not to destroy litigant rights left to their supporter, Sir James Lowther, under the 1769 Bill and the Rockinghams fought for the Duke of Portland though, it was alleged, under the cover of clamour raised on behalf of his tenantry, harassed by fear of Lowther lawsuits. It took, it was said, the whole weight of Government influence on February 27th to kill the proposal at third reading by a mere majority of 164 against 155.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under March 5th, for a legal opinion obtained.

[3] Cf. *Lord C——m's memorable Speech on a late Motion* for one of the criticisms.

circumvented by the Admiralty's claim that an Alderman's backing for City press-warrants was as effective as the Lord Mayor's—a claim that caused violent but largely ineffectual anger among the "patriots".[1] Then the ever-present danger of a scandalous and open breach between Wilkes, charged with regarding the Bill of Rights Society as a mere device for raising money for himself, and Horne, embittered by Wilkes's financial irresponsibility and the very personal nature of his politics, had already become a pressing anxiety.[2]

From all these cares the City "patriots" were gloriously if only temporarily relieved by the great opportunity that came to them in March. Antagonised by the large measures lately taken in the Lords and the lesser measures taken in the Commons to secure privacy of debate against their efforts, newspaper printers had also been emboldened by the great public interest shown when the absorbing Falkland Islands dispute came to reinforce the Middlesex Election, Lord Mansfield, Nullum Tempus, Dissolution of Parliament, electoral corruption[3] and the rest of the "patriot" themes discussed at Westminster. Largely cut off from their normal means of obtaining the speedy Parliamentary intelligence their readers now required, newspaper printers had apparently taken to filling out such information as they obtained from friendly "patriot" Parliamentarians with matter, often apocryphal, calculated to be of service to the "patriot" cause. Angry Ministerial supporters, asserting that their speeches had been vilified and

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under January 15th for: "At a common council held this day, a motion was made to censure Mr. Alderman Harley for having backed the press-warrants sent into the city; but Mr. Harley not being present the motion was withdrawn. Another motion was made to thank the Lord Mayor and those worthy Aldermen, who had refused to back the press-warrants; but this likewise, after much debate and personal altercation between Mr. Wilkes and Mr. Townsend was withdrawn. A third motion was made for prolonging the time for granting a bounty to seamen, who should voluntarily enter themselves to serve his Majesty; to which strong opposition was made, because the benefits arising from the bounty were totally defeated by Aldermen backing the press-warrants. . . . The court grew clamorous on this occasion. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*: "A paper having appeared in the *Gazetteer*, supposed to be written by a friend of Mr. Wilkes, charging Mr. Horne . . . Mr. Horne has this day given distinct answers . . . of the five charges, three he has proved totally false, and for the truth of what he has said of the other two he appeals to the gentlemen concerned. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, pp. 54–6, for the Parliamentary proceedings on the corruption lately uncovered at New Shoreham where a majority composed of some eighty Freemen were proved to have organised themselves under the specious name of a *Christian Club* for the purpose of selling the representation and excluding non-members from the share-out.

perverted rather than published, demanded redress seeing that even straightforward publication constituted a breach of privilege. On February 8th, accordingly, Colonel George Onslow, M.P. for Guildford, procured an order for summoning to the Bar of the House the publishers of two offending journals, *The Gazetteer* and *The Middlesex Journal.*[1] Taking counsel with Wilkes, the two men ignored the summons, and after a vain attempt to procure their arrest by Speaker's messengers, the Commons obtained on March 9th a proclamation offering a reward of £50 for the apprehension of each.[2]

By this time Wilkes had scented a splendid opportunity for a new "patriot" display on behalf of "Liberty", and his opportunity became all the greater when March 13th found the Commons, in defiance of Opposition warnings and objections, further ordering before them the printers of *The Morning Chronicle*, *The St. James's Chronicle*, *The London Evening Post* and *The London Packet.*[3] On March 15th, when Wilkes was sitting Alderman at Guildhall, Wheble of *The Middlesex Journal* was collusively arrested by his own journeyman, who quoted the proclamation and took his master to Guildhall. There Wilkes found, on carefully chosen grounds, that the proclamation was no legal authorisation for the arrest and proceeded not only to release Wheble but to bind over his captor to appear for prosecution on charges of assault and false imprisonment. The flavour of this "patriotic" jest was increased when it became known that Wilkes had nevertheless sent on the defeated captor, with proper attestations, for claiming the £50 reward.[4]

But this first blow for "Liberty" was altogether inferior to one Wilkes was able to strike later the same day when, thanks to the refusal of Miller of *The London Evening Post* to obey the summons of March 13th to the House of Commons, a Speaker's messenger attempted his arrest under warrant from the Speaker.[5] Both Wilkes and Horne had apparently expected some such development,

[1] Cf. *London Gazette*, March 9th, for the Royal Proclamation repeating the charges against these journals of "misrepresenting the speeches, and reflecting on several of the members of the said House, in contempt of the order, and in breach of the privilege of the said House. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under March 13th.

[4] *Ibid.*, Appendix to Chronicle, pp. 183–6, for a full documentation. Cf. also H. Bleakley's *Life of John Wilkes*, pp. 260–1, for an account based on the *Public Advertiser* file.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 186–7, for the warrant.

and "patriot" plans had been laid accordingly. Miller, as a Freeman of London, declined to recognise the validity of a warrant bearing no marks of City authorisation and, when he resisted the Speaker's messenger at the doorway of his shop, a constable, specially stationed near, appeared to receive Miller's charges of assault and false imprisonment against the messenger and to take both men to the Mansion House.[1] There a Court composed of Lord Mayor Crosby, M.P., Alderman Oliver, M.P., and Alderman Wilkes decided, without going into larger questions, that the messenger's attempt to enforce his warrant inside the City, without submitting it first to a competent City authority, was completely illegal. Despite the protests of the Deputy Serjeant-at-Arms, who had now arrived from Westminster, the three "patriot" magistrates, in default of an offer of bail, wrote out a warrant committing the messenger to gaol for assault and false imprisonment, a committal only withdrawn when the Deputy Serjeant, swallowing his resentment, allowed bail to be given.[2]

Whatever happened now seemed bound to tend to "patriot" advantage. For example, by resting their case, not on the dubious "Liberty of the Press" to circulate mangled and perverted Parliamentary reports, but on the more appealing one of the ancient and flouted rights of the City, the "patriots" had greatly weakened the possibilities open to the City "Court" party. In fact, aided by City resentment about a Bill, then in passage through Parliament, which seemed to ignore the City's alleged property rights in the bed of the Thames,[3] the "patriot" magistrates attracted support, on the messenger question, from importan

[1] Apparently with three witnesses.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, History, pp. 63–4: "The Deputy Serjeant at Arm also attended, and demanded in the name of the Speaker, that both the Messenge and the printer should be delivered up to him; this was refused by the Lor Mayor, who asked for what crime, and upon what authority, the Messenger ha arrested the printer? who answered that he had done it by warrant from th speaker; it was then asked, if it had been backed by a city magistrate? whic being answered in the negative, the warrant was demanded, and after muc altercation produced; and its invalidity being argued by the printer's counse the three magistrates present discharged him from confinement. His complair for an assault and false imprisonment being then heard and the facts proved an admitted, the messenger was asked for bail, which the serjeant having refused t comply with, a warrant for his commitment to prison was made out. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under February 28th, March 1st, April 18th, April 25t May 3rd, for the City's persistent attempt to defeat the ignoring of its allege rights in the Bill giving leave "to embank a certain part of the river Thame near Durham Yard"—a Bill which was part of the Adelphi site plans of th "Scotch" Adam brothers, one of them a pro-Government M.P.

City sections altogether outside the "patriot" ring.[1] The Parliamentary Opposition, too, especially after the imprisonment of the "patriots" came into question for their "contempt" of the House's authority, might well feel on stronger ground than they were before the ancient and respectable rights of the City were available to buttress their objections to the Majority's Press courses.[2] Even the Middlesex Election issue was ingeniously reopened by Wilkes who, when summoned with Crosby and Oliver to answer for his conduct to the House, refused to accompany them on March 19th because he had not, like them, been summoned as a member of Parliament.[3] As for the London populace, the artful way in which the authority of the detested Majority had been flouted aroused from them storms of mirthful approval.

The intervention of the populace in a way the "patriots" had been missing for some time seemed, from the first, likely to be decisive. This intervention was, perhaps, not wholly spontaneous for there is report of the circulation of three different types of hand-bill on March 19th, when the effort was being made to ensure popular demonstrations on behalf of Lord Mayor Crosby and Alderman Oliver on their way to and from the House of Commons.[4] Here is a report of what happened on the streets and in the House that day:[5]

At two o'clock in the afternoon the Right Hon. the Lord Mayor set out from the Mansion-house in a coach, to attend the House of Commons, in pursuance to a summons, to answer for his conduct on Friday

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 198, for some non-patriot names inserted in the list of the Committee appointed by the Common Council on March 21st to aid the defence of the three accused. This consummation had been helped by the adoption of a moderately worded vote of thanks speaking merely of their "having on a late important occasion supported the privileges and franchises of this city, and defended our excellent constitution".

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 220–1: "On Tuesday, March 12th, there was a debate, which lasted till five in the morning, on the subject of taking up the printers who published the speeches and transactions of the House of Commons. Opposition having little to say against this, showed themselves and their candour in frivolous and captious disputes, dividing the House (in a manner unprecedented) no less than 23 times. On Thursday, the 14th, the same affair was taken up again. . . . The same captious behaviour continued in Opposition: in the clearest of cases they divided the House six times—117 to 24; 113 to 28; 92 to 20; 86 to 6; 86 to 12; 79 to 10. There were two or three divisions after these. Townsend, the Alderman, redde in the House a most impudent opinion of a Councillor Morris reflecting on the authority of both King and Parliament. It looks as if he and Alderman Sawbridge had a mind to be noticed by the House, but the House was too wise to give them the chance of being patriot martyrs."

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Appendix to Chronicle, p. 188.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, pp. 82–3, for the contents.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 83.

last. His Lordship appeared very feeble and infirm, but in good spirits. Mr. Alderman Oliver, and his Lordship's chaplain . . . were in the same coach. A prodigious crowd of the better sort were at the Mansion-house and in the streets near it, who testified their approbation by repeated huzzas, which were continued quite from the Mansion-house to the House of Commons. On his arrival there, one universal shout was heard for near three minutes, and the people, during the whole passage to the House, called out to the Lord Mayor as the *people's friend, the guardian of the city's rights, and the nation's liberties.* When his Lordship was questioned concerning his conduct at the Mansion-house, in signing a warrant of commitment for one of the messengers, his Lordship replied, "That he had only done his duty as chief magistrate of the city of London, having acted conformable to his oath and the charters of the said city, by which he was bound to protect the persons, property, and franchises of his fellow-citizens." His Lordship being very ill, Mr. Trecothick acquainted the Speaker of it, and . . . the affair was put off till Tuesday next. About five o'clock his Lordship returned home, attended by a great number of people; and the populace took the horses out of the carriage at St. Paul's, and drew the coach to the Mansion-house.

But all this proved a mere beginning to the greater street-excitements still to come. On March 25th, the day to which the messenger affair had been adjourned, Wilkes again refused to come except as the recognised member for Middlesex, while Crosby and Oliver were acclaimed by more "prodigious" crowds than ever. At half-past ten in the evening, before the Majority had quite decided upon how to punish Crosby's contempt, his illness forced the adjournment of his case and the coming-on of Oliver's. The Alderman proved even less repentant and much more defiant than the Lord Mayor so that at three in the morning, after a division of 170 against 38, he was ordered to the Tower. On March 27th Crosby, accompanied to Westminster by a City defence committee which came into the House with him and "an amazing number of people" who, of course, stayed outside, returned to Parliament, still ill from gout. That afternoon and evening the greatest confusion reigned in the House because the huge mob outside attacked unpopular members, including Lord North and his youthful, talented, and violent follower, Charles James Fox, as they arrived. As neither the City Sheriffs, who implored order, nor the mobilised Westminster Justices and constables who tried to enforce it proved of any avail, and as the troops held in reserve were fortunately not used, the Commons failed to begin their order of the day until eight o'clock. Since

Crosby refused to consider a milder offer, made him, of detention in the house of the Serjeant-at-Arms, he too had finally to be committed to the Tower by a majority of 202–39.[1]

At the Tower, Oliver had already been reaping the fruits of political martyrdom in early visits from "Lord Temple and a great number of the nobility and members of the House of Commons". After he had been joined by Crosby on March 28th, a day of renewed street-tumult when Fox was again assaulted and the King in person insulted, the two prisoners became the object of national attention. Thus there is a speedy report of the arrival at the Tower on a complimentary visit of "the Dukes of Manchester and Portland, the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord King, Sir Charles Saunders, Admiral Keppel, Sir James Pennyman Bart., Mr. Dowdeswell and Mr. Edmund Burke". On April 5th, again, there was new street-excitement provoked by the vain attempt to get the Tower prisoners released on Habeas Corpus proceedings before the two Chief Justices. Here is a description of what the rough humour of the mob perpetrated on this occasion:[2]

About noon, two carts preceded by a hearse were drawn through the city to Tower-hill. In the first cart, sat a man representing an executioner, having the care of three figures painted on paste-board, near as large as life, hanging on a wooden frame in form of a gallows, which reached quite across the cart. In the front the figures were painted with nightcaps on, and handkerchiefs over their eyes; on their backs were written, in large characters, the names of two persons of rank, and an alderman: in the second cart were four figures painted, and hanging in the same manner, with names also on their backs. When the carts, &c. arrived at Tower-hill the gallows was fixed up.... A man in the croud being observed taking down the names, written on the back of the figures, was seized as a spy, and ducked in the Tower-ditch till he was almost dead.... An hour after the above transaction, the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under March 27th. Wilkes had meanwhile been ordered a third time to appear. This order to appear after the Easter Recess he a third time defied because he was not summoned as M.P. for Middlesex. In view of their troubles with the Crosby and Oliver imprisonments, the Majority finally decided to pass over the repeated contempts of the even more formidable Wilkes in silence. It is interesting to note that the *Annual Register* found it politic not to mention the renewal of street-riots on the 28th when the King himself was insulted.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 5th. The paste-board figures, put up on the gallows, included representations of Lord Halifax and Lord Barrington. The Alderman executed in effigy was the recognised head of the City "Court" party, Alderman Harley, M.P., who had backed the Admiralty press-warrants when Lord Mayor Crosby had refused to do so.

dying speeches of some supposed malefactors were cried about the streets. . . .

Amid these excitements and others, arising from the Court-cases following on the street-troubles,[1] there came the long threatened split in the Bill of Rights Society between those who looked for inspiration to Wilkes and those others who, with Horne, objected to his over-personal politics and his determination to take charge of City patronage. The split did the "patriot" cause less immediate harm than might have been expected. While the excitement, in fact, continued with another Habeas Corpus hearing for Crosby on April 22nd and yet another for Oliver on April 30th, nothing seemed able to check the "patriot" tide—not even the public refusal of Oliver, who thought with Horne, to allow his name to go forward with Wilkes's in a common candidature for the next Sheriffdoms. "Patriot" display, indeed, never appeared so imposing and so "respectable" as on May 8th when the prorogation of Parliament automatically ended the confinement of Crosby and Oliver. Fifty-three carriages containing, it was reported, almost the entire Common Council if only some of the Aldermen, went in procession from the Guildhall to the Tower accompanied by the Honourable Artillery Company in uniform. When Crosby and Oliver appeared, they were greeted with salvoes from twenty-one cannon of the Artillery Company and the loudest acclamations from the "people", acclamations continued all the way to the Mansion House. And at night the "people" displayed their less amiable side when seeking to make the wide-spread illumination universal by breaking the windows of non-illuminated houses.[2]

[1] It is significant to find a City hosier, who had shouted at George III on March 28th "No Lord Mayor, no King", discharged from prosecution by a Westminster jury on April 5th.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under May 8th: "The city was grandly illuminated. The populace broke down the iron gates at Serjeant's inn, Fleet-street, and obliged the inhabitants to put up lights. They likewise assembled about the house of Sir Fletcher Norton, speaker of the honourable House of Commons, and were very outrageous, breaking all the windows, together with those of several other houses which were not illuminated."

CHAPTER IX

"PATRIOT" DISSENSIONS, 1771–2

"No man laments, more sincerely than I do, the unhappy differences which have arisen among the friends of the people, and divided them from each other. The cause undoubtedly suffers, as well by the diminution of that strength, which union carries with it, as by the separate loss of personal reputation, which every man sustains, when his character and conduct are frequently held forth in odious and contemptible colours. —— These differences are only advantageous to the common enemy of the country. —— The hearty friends of the cause are provoked and disgusted. —— The lukewarm advocate avails himself of any pretence to relapse into that indolent indifference about every thing that ought to interest an Englishman, so unjustly dignified with the title of moderation. —— The false, insidious partisan, who creates or foments the disorder, sees the fruit of his dishonest industry ripen beyond his hopes. . . . —— It is time for those who really mean the *Cause* and the *People*, who have no view to private advantage, and who have virtue enough to prefer the general good of the community to the gratification of personal animosities, —— it is time for such men to interpose. —— Let us try whether these fatal dissensions may not yet be reconciled; or, if that be impracticable, let us guard at least against the worst effects of division, and endeavour to persuade these furious partisans, if they will not consent to draw together, to be separately useful. . . . Wilkes, and Horne, and Townsend, and Sawbridge . . . and Savile, Richmond, Camden, Rockingham and Chatham. . . . I speak to the people as one of the people. —— Let us employ these men in whatever departments their various abilities are best suited to, and as much to the advantage of the common cause, as their different inclinations will permit. They cannot serve *us* without essentially serving themselves."

JUNIUS in the *Public Advertiser*, October 5, 1771.

"I have seen the signals thrown out for your old friend and correspondent. Be assured that I have had good reason for not complying with them. In the present state of things, if I were to write again, I must be as silly as any of the horned cattle, that run mad through the city, or as any of your wise aldermen. I mean the cause and the public. Both are given up. I feel for the honour of this country, when I see that

there are not ten men in it, who will unite and stand together upon any one question. But it is all alike, vile and contemptible."

Junius despondent, January 19, 1773.

THANKS to the "patriot" enthusiasm of the populace, evoked anew by the events of March–May 1771, the open split of April 1771 among the "patriot" leaders had, as was remarked above, less damaging effects upon their cause than might have been expected. Even when Horne, after marching the more "respectable" half of the Bill of Rights Society into revolt against Wilkes, was provoked into beginning a series of sledge-hammer attacks upon him by public letter, the full exposure of "patriot" dirty linen to public view, that resulted, still hardly proved ruinous.[1] Horne undoubtedly got the better of Wilkes in that furious exchange of heavy epistolary broadsides, during May and June, that is known in pamphlet history as *The Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne.* Yet as Horne himself prophesied, Wilkes, even with a reputation further damaged by Horne's revelations, held such a place in the regard of the populace and such a reputation for unerring ingenuity with more moneyed "patriots" that the defeat of his immediate ambition for the Sheriffdom proved impossible.[2] Horne's friends, who formed a second "patriot" organisation sometimes called the Constitutional Society,[3] tried hard to return Oliver as one of the Sheriffs instead of Bull, a rich tea-merchant whom Wilkes, in default of Oliver's alliance, had chosen as his co-candidate because he needed Bull's purse for the contest and for the Bill of Rights Society. The Court, meanwhile, aware of the openings that might come to Wilkes from the Sheriffdom and encouraged by the "patriot" split, endeavoured, through Robinson of the Treasury, to assist Alderman Harley's "Court party" to return two non-"patriot" Aldermen[4] anxious to

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under May 16th: "A literary war has just broke out between Messrs. Horne and Wilkes, in which personal abuse and scurrility are not spared on either side. It is likely to continue for some time."

[2] Cf. *Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, p. 314, for Horne's striking comment: "Give you joy, Sir. The parson of Brentford is at length defeated. He no longer rules with an absolute sway over the city of London. You have detected his jesuitical deep-laid schemes of running away with the monument on his back. You have rescued the prostrate livery from his dictatorial authority; have congratulated them on their victory; and restored to them a perfect liberty —of doing whatever *you* please. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under April 9th, for the Bill of Rights Society when Alderman Townsend, M.P., headed a group of dissidents generalled by Horne and including Alderman Sawbridge, M.P., Sir Francis Delaval, M.P., Sir Francis Bernard, Sir Cecil Wray, M.P., Charles Turner, M.P. (these last two not present but acted for by Townsend), Messrs. Bellas, Took, T. Oliver and Towgood of the City, etc., etc.

[4] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 253, for a letter from Robinson that went astray and probably decided the issue as between Bull and the Aldermen: "Mr.

end the use of the City's municipal machinery for a ceaseless round of extreme Opposition demonstrations. After a bitter contest and a hard-fought poll, watched throughout the country, the figures announced on July 1st were: Alderman Wilkes, 2315; Frederick Bull Esq., 2194; Alderman Kirkman, 1949; Alderman Plumbe, 1875; Alderman Oliver, 245.[1] If the Court was revealed as possessed of surprising strength even in the City, it was at least a remarkable Wilkite triumph over Horne who, it suited Wilkites to allege, had sold himself to Administration from jealousy of Wilkes and hopes of a fat living. After being burned in effigy before the Mansion House[2] and trampled upon by Junius,[3] Horne might well be held to be a spent force and his alleged poisonous influence in alienating influential patriot leaders from Wilkes to have ended.

Horne, however, was not an easy man to suppress. He closed the *Controversial Letters* to Wilkes with possibly his best piece of writing[4] and then compelled Junius to offer the public an explanation.[5] It was in the exchanges of July and August between Horne and Junius that a fascinated public received a further insight into the motives and purposes of the most mysterious force in politics. It became plain that Junius was moved by a most bitter hatred and contempt for the King and by a most violent desire to prevent the "patriot" forces in the country from becoming permanently divided, however justified might have seemed the immediate occasion of the breach with Wilkes. Here is his condemnation of Horne's political sagacity:[6]

> . . . to gratify your personal hatred of Mr. Wilkes, you sacrificed, as far as depended upon *your* interest and abilities, the cause of the country. I can make allowance for the violence of the passions, and if ever I should be convinced that you had no motive but to destroy Wilkes, I shall then be ready to do justice to your character, and to declare to the world, that I despise you somewhat less than I do at present—But

Robinson presents his compliments . . . Mr. Harley meets his ward publicly to day, to support Aldermen Plumbe and Kirkman. The friends of government will be very active. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, Chronicle, under July 1st. [2] *Ibid.*

[3] In Junius's Letter of July 9th.

[4] Cf. *Controversial Letters of Wilkes and Horne*, pp. 314–20, beginning: "Give you joy, Sir. The parson of Brentford is at length defeated."

[5] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 258–321. It seems plain that when Junius, having dispatched this, as he conceived, crushing letter, was prepared superciliously to overlook Horne's vigorous reply, the publisher and the public of the correspondence columns pressed on an answer.

[6] From the Junius Letter, dated July 24, 1771.

as a public man, I must for ever condemn you. You cannot but know,—nay you dare not pretend to be ignorant, that the highest gratification of which the most detestable —— in this nation is capable, would have been the defeat of Wilkes. I know *that man* much better than any of you. Nature intended him only for a good-natured fool. A systematical education, with long practice, has made him a consummate hypocrite. Yet this man, to say nothing of his worthy ministers, you have most assiduously laboured to gratify. To exclude Wilkes, it was not necessary you should solicit votes for his opponents. We incline the balance as effectually by lessening the weight in one scale, as by increasing it in the other.

The mode of your attack upon Wilkes (though I am far from thinking meanly of your abilities) convinces me, that you either want judgement extremely, or that you are blinded by your resentment. You ought to have foreseen, that the charges you urged against Wilkes could never do him any mischief. After all when we expected discoveries highly interesting to the community, what a pitiful detail did it end in! Some old clothes—a Welch pony—a French footman—and a hamper of claret. Indeed, Mr. Horne, the public should and *will* forgive him his claret and his footmen, and even the ambition of making his brother chamberlain of London, as long as he stands forth against a ministry and parliament, who are doing everything they can to enslave the country, and as long as he is a thorn in the King's side. You will not suspect me of setting up *Wilkes* for a perfect character. The question to the public, is, where shall we find a man, who, with purer principles, will go the lengths and run the hazards that he has done? the season calls for such a man, and he ought to be supported. What would have been the triumph of that odious hypocrite and his minions, if Wilkes had been defeated! It was not *your* fault, reverend Sir, that he did not enjoy it completely . . . I beg, Mr. Horne, you will hereafter believe that I measure the integrity of men, by their conduct, not by their professions. Such tales may entertain Mr. Oliver, or your grandmother, but trust me, they are thrown away upon Junius . . .

Though Horne replied ably enough, his controversial weapon lacked the fine and polished edge of his opponent's stiletto. Yet the public took a vast interest in Horne's suggestion that Junius only seemed interested in forcing into power, through a clamour centred in Wilkes, the Opposition factions of Chatham and Rockingham, whereas Horne had always stood for changed measures as well as for changed men and had actually helped Beckford in 1770 to commit Chatham to some inadequate suggestions of Parliamentary reform.[1] And the heart of Junius's political

[1] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius* for Horne's Letter of July 31, 1771 and the explanatory notes. In effect Horne argued that a Common Council vote of thanks to Chatham on May 14, 1770 had been deliberately worded to commit him to Shorter Parliaments and "a more full and equal representation". In his desire

motivation could hardly have been more neatly displayed than in these two sentences:[1]

> The *cause of the country* it seems, in the opinion of JUNIUS, is merely to vex the King; and any rascal is to be supported in any roguery, provided he can only thereby *plant a thorn in the King's side.* This is the very extremity of faction, and the last degree of political wickedness!

Horne's flash of insight on the subject of Junius's lack of interest in constitutional, as compared with personal, changes in Administration, is well borne out by matter then secret to him. On July 23rd the Bill of Rights Society, in an effort to prove itself a good deal more than a mere club to finance Wilkes, had adopted a bold 11-point political programme, which included "a full and equal representation of the people in Parliament", the imposition of an anti-bribery oath on all candidates, a Pension and Place Bill, attention to Irish and American grievances, and the re-institution of Annual Parliaments. It was a programme even bolder than that Beckford had tried to impose on the Chatham and Rockingham Oppositions in 1770 yet Junius, when secretly corresponding with Wilkes in September during the course of an effort to promote "patriot" reunion, was full of objections.[2] In fact while himself putting forward the suggestion of establishing political clubs all over the country, Junius was busy demolishing the very foundations on which they would have to be erected. He saw acutely the anxiety that such clubs would give the Government but failed to understand that they could hardly be recruited on a basis of cautious objections even to rotten borough disfranchisement. And how, for example, were the "great trading towns", unrepresented in Parliament, to be won, even on Junius's maximum programme of Triennial Parliaments and an extra member for the shires, when they were told that they would find "the interruption of business . . . by the triennial riot and cabals of an election, too dear a price for the nugatory privilege of sending members to Parliament?".[3]

to keep touch with the Rockinghams as possible allies in a new Government, Chatham had declined Triennial Parliaments, though with a characteristic reservation "if the wish for that measure shall become prevalent" and had confined his "earnest wishes for a more full and equal representation" to advocating "the addition of one knight of the shire in a county, as a further balance to the mercenary boroughs".

[1] Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 290.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, i, 275 sqq., for some of the remarkable material to be found in the section entitled "Private Correspondence between Junius and Mr. Wilkes."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 291.

But constitutional invention was so alien to the normal political mentality of the day that even Wilkes was ready to confess, in answer to Junius's objections, that the programme of July 23, 1771, was the work of the American Dr. Lee.[1] It would be revealing to know whether, when suggesting, as a compromise between Junius's Triennial and the Bill of Rights Society's Annual Parliaments, an Assembly of which a third retired every year, Wilkes was again drawing on his inventive American friend.

But it is certainly time to turn from this excursion into remoter political causation to face the facts of everyday politics. To study the national scene even from so anti-"patriot" a quarter as the columns, say, of Edinburgh's *Weekly Magazine* is to be forced to come to the surprising conclusion that, in despite of what might have been expected after the "disgraceful" Wilkes-Horne-Junius *fracas*, "patriot" willingness and ability to make trouble for the Government seemed in no way diminished.[2] "Patriots", for example, even when divided, could not be deprived of public attention when for months at a time, especially during the Parliamentary Recess, they seemed to constitute the only active political forces in the country. Thus in June political news was made up of the Wilkes-Horne controversy, the opening of the London Sheriffdom contest, and the adoption of another London Remonstrance, adding to previous grievances the Oliver-Crosby imprisonment and the Act depriving the City of its property in the bed of the Thames. In July, beyond the London Sheriffdom results and the opening of the Horne-Junius controversy, there were incidents surrounding the presentation of the Remonstrance at Court to comment upon,[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 300. But Wilkes maintained his point on rotten boroughs: "I am sorry likewise to differ with JUNIUS as to the power *de jure* of the legislature to disfranchise any boroughs. How originated the right and why was it granted? Old Sarum and Gatton, for instance, were populous places, when the right of representation was given them. They are now desolate, and therefore in every thing should return to their former state. A barren mountain or a single farm-house can have no representation in Parliament."

[2] Cf. *The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement*, October 3, 1771, for a week when there was no Junius Letter to reproduce. The number contains all the same an admonition to Junius, a satiric poem, called "The Times", full of references to Wilkes, Horne, Beckford, Junius, Crosby and Oliver, and London intelligence, packed with Wilkes and Bull as Sheriffs, Townsend and Sawbridge as candidates for the Mayoralty, and even the Bill of Rights Society deciding to adopt a rule of "No French wine at meetings"—a rule apparently borrowed from the old Whig society, the Anti-Gallicans.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, under July 9th, for the Court refusal to consider the Mayor's being accompanied by the Livery.

the King's reply, more unyielding than ever,[1] and, finally, the renewal of suspicion that there was a Court plot to seize every opportunity for overriding civil authority in the capital. During the revival of street-disorder, in the spring, on the Oliver-Crosby affair, the opportunity had been taken in Spitalfields to wreak a vengeful death on the informer who had betrayed the silk-weavers' combination of 1769.[2] Two men had been sentenced for the crime, and on July 8th when London's Sheriffs had to enforce their execution in Spitalfields as a warning against local combination-violence, military had been stationed near despite the Sheriffs' objections.[3] In fact after an August, marked principally by continuation of the Horne-Junius controversy and evidence of a growing "patriot" movement in Ireland,[4] September was distinguished by an anti-military declaration issued by Wilkes and Bull before their entry into office. During their term of office they would not, they announced, "suffer any part of the army to interfere, or even to attend, as on many former occasions, on the pretence of aiding or assisting the civil magistrate". This "extraordinary address", to quote the *Annual Register*'s cautious words, was naturally reproduced in "all the public papers".[5]

For the greater part of October news-columns, even in Edinburgh, still tended to be dominated by City politics.[6] On September 28th there had opened a hot contest, for the next Lord

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, under July 10th, and Appendix, p. 193. After expressing readiness to listen to "well founded complaints" from the City, the King had concluded: "it is therefore with concern that I see a part of my subjects still so far misled and deluded, as to renew, in such reprehensible terms, a request, with which I have repeatedly declared, I cannot comply".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 16th: "Yesterday, between four and five o'clock, a mob assembled in a field near Bethnal-Green, consisting of upwards of two thousand, when they set upon one Clark, a pattern drawer, who was the principal evidence against the two cutters that were executed at Bethnal-Green some time since; they continued pelting him with brickbats, &c. for three hours, which laid his skull entirely open. Never did any poor mortal suffer more than he did. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*, under July 8th. See also Appendix to the Chronicle, pp. 193–5, for the Sheriffs' refutation of rumours that they had given any countenance to the military. One of the men executed is said to have pinned on his breast in capital letters the ensigns of a society he belonged to.

[4] *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under August, for the report of Dublin's presentation of freedom ("in silver boxes") to Crosby, Wilkes and Oliver, and the striking from the Irish Privy Council list of the names of the Earl of Westmeath and William Pole "for their conduct in opposing Lord Townshend during the last session of parliament there".

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, under September 21st.

[6] Cf. *The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement*, October 3rd, 10th, 17th, 24th, 31st.

Mayorship, over which Wilkes and Bull presided as Sheriffs. Junius had begged Wilkes to seize the opportunity to make his peace with the Horne following by offering to support a Sawbridge candidature. Wilkes was, however, already committed to a second term for Crosby who had rendered him indispensable service by helping to keep the Bill of Rights Society alive. Accordingly, with the "patriot" vote split between Sawbridge and Crosby (not to mention Townsend), the non-"patriot", Alderman Nash, to the great disgust of the streets and to the considerable pleasure of the Court, had, on October 5th, to be declared head of the poll.[1] Yet Edinburgh news-columns of the first part of October were perforce reporting on Wilkes's "impartiality, diligence and prudence" in presiding over the heated and long-drawn-out poll and his chivalrous protection of Alderman Nash, at some personal hazard, from partisan violence. And if these same Edinburgh news-columns bore witness on October 17th to a late fierce clash in the Court of Common Council between Wilkes and the discontented Townsend,[2] and on October 24th to the temporary submergence of City news beneath fresher matter on the reopening of the Irish Parliament and the rumoured renewal of Anglo-Spanish tension,[3] October 31st found Edinburgh once more presented with ample intelligence on the City "patriots". The *Weekly Magazine* printed, in full, Junius's remarkable letter of October 5th in which he had urged the harmful results of the "patriot" dissensions on the *Cause* and the *People* and had advocated a sinking of minor differences which might permit not merely Wilkes, Horne, Townsend and Sawbridge, in their several ways, to render the *Cause* service but also men like Savile, Richmond, Camden, Rockingham and Chatham. The letter was the more interesting in Edinburgh since, apart from its urgency that personal differences or differences on single points of constitutional[4] doctrine should

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, October 10th, which reports the figures as being for Alderman Nash, 2199; Sawbridge, 1879; Crosby, 1775; Halifax, 846; Townsend, 151; Bankes, 36. It adds significantly: "It is said that the state of the poll has been carried to a great person, every day as soon as it could be procured."

[2] *Ibid.*, October 17th, reporting Townsend's objections to the presentation of a silver cup to Wilkes in commemoration of his part in the Crosby-Oliver affair.

[3] *Ibid.*, October 24th, for such items as: "Certain advices have been received from Paris, which say that the King of Spain has actually insisted on the co-operation of the court of France with him in a scheme to be put in motion early in the ensuing spring. . . ."

[4] *Ibid.*, October 31st. Though mentioning the dormant constitutional disputes on the Stamp Act and the 1766 Corn Bill as still capable of giving trouble,

not be allowed to divide the Opposition, it contained a declaration of war upon "the cunning Scotchman", Lord Mansfield.[1]

The recital of all these minutiae will not, perhaps, have been in vain if it helps to make clearer what manner of domestic political topic it was that Englishmen were apt to be discussing in the autumn and winter of 1771. The importance of Junius is specially worth noting for, even in a letter principally directed to preaching co-operation and mutual tolerance to the Opposition, he was capable, on October 5th, of dealing Administration the most poisoned and rankling wounds. To follow him contemptuously brushing aside Ministers like Gower and Hillsborough, Grafton and Barrington, in order to concentrate a sharp series of venomous stiletto-stabs on Mansfield,[2] with a promise of more to come, is to appreciate why, even in anti-"patriot" Edinburgh, a Junius Letter exceeded in importance all the eventful reports coming from Turkey and Poland, all the signs of discontent related from Ireland and America, and all the naval rumours emanating from France and Spain. Nor should it be forgotten what marked reverberations there were apt to be even when, as in November, the discontented Alderman Townsend, M.P., chose to make a "patriot" demonstration of his own. Certainly, Townsend had no cause of complaint about the amount of attention given in the "public prints" to his gesture of refusing to pay Land and Window Tax on his politically misrepresented Middlesex property and to the action for illegal distress that he announced against the officer who had distrained upon him.[3] This forgotten piece of Hampdenism, indeed, seemed to bring Townsend much better results than a previous "patriot" gesture by Wilkes and his brother-Sheriff, the letter to Akerman, Governor of Newgate, philanthropically ordering the removal of prisoners' irons before their appearance in Court and directing, also, an end of fee-taking

Junius showed most concern about the more recent controversy on press-warrants. There had apparently been deep Wilkite anger against Chatham for attacking in Parliament the City's stand for the illegality of press-gangs.

[1] *The Weekly Magazine*, October 31st.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for the section beginning: "When the guards are called forth to murder their fellow-subjects, it is not by the ostensible advice of lord Mansfield. That odious office, his prudence tells him, is better left to such men as Gower and Weymouth, as Barrington and Grafton. Lord Hillsborough wisely confines *his* firmness to the distant Americans. The designs of Mansfield are more subtle, more effectual and secure. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, November 14th, for a considerable account in a not unfriendly tone. Edinburgh was even told that "it is said that Mr. Townsend's refusal to pay the land-tax has greatly embarrassed the present administration".

for admission to the galleries of the Old Bailey during trials. When it transpired that not merely penniless friends of those on trial flocked to take advantage of the new indulgence but the whole criminal classes of London, assured of free entertainment which they helped on by row and noise, Wilkes undoubtedly suffered a set-back. It was as unexpected as his discovery that prisoners, expecting to be convicted, did not desire to have their irons painfully knocked off only to have them painfully knocked on again after sentence.[1]

If it is now perchance, clearer that many incidents, completely ignored by posterity, have to be taken into account when attempting to re-create the political scene of 1771 as contemporaries saw it, explanation of political developments during the winter of 1771–2 should prove easier. It should be plainer, for example, why other things besides "patriot" quarrels and mistakes were considered to have helped in strengthening Lord North's Administration beyond the possibility of serious Parliamentary challenge during the Session that was to begin on January 21, 1772. Thus rumours of a final split between Lord Camden and the overdomineering Lord Chatham could have done Opposition no good,[2] and repeated reports of Ministers' firm naval line with Spain certainly did the Government no harm.[3] The decorous George III's strong objections to the indifferent moral conduct and

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, October 31st, 1771: "The Old Bailey yesterday was a remarkable scene of riot and confusion. The sheriffs' letter to Mr. Akerman brought the rabble together from every part of the town. Judge Gould declared from the bench, he never saw so much irregularity in a court of justice in his life . . . and repeatedly declared, that he would not sit on that bench, if better decorum was not observed. So far are the prisoners from thinking the taking off their irons while they are tried any indulgence, that several of them requested it, as a favour, to be tried with their irons on, declaring the incumbrance so very trifling, that they had rather submit to it, than be at the trouble of having them knocked off and riveted on again." Wilkes, in fact, decided to beat a partial retreat from indiscriminate admission to the Old Bailey on the pretence that Parson Horne had spoiled the good effects intended by hiring the mob that had caused the trouble.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 5th, 1771: "It is beyond a question certain, that Lord Camden has broke entirely with Lord Chatham, from an utter impossibility of submitting any longer to that nobleman's assumed airs of superiority, so that opposition is now weakened in one of its principal quarters, and bids fair for annihilation before the meeting of parliament."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*: "It is now positively said, that Lord Sandwich's perseverance has brought over a great personage to assert the dignity of the crown of Great Britain to effect; and that the Spanish minister is *now* given to understand, that the ministry are *serious* in their requisitions of satisfaction, either by fair means immediately, or by their 'crying havock and letting loose the dogs of war'."

notorious *mésalliance* of his brother, the Duke of Cumberland, could also do his Ministers little but good with "respectable" people despite reports of a projected and wholly unprecedented Royal Marriages Bill.[1] And possibly Administration's greatest gain was in Junius's mistaken absorption in attempting to make of the intrinsically unimportant Eyre case a ruinous bombshell for Lord Mansfield and the Government. It seems almost incredible that Junius, after giving admirable lessons in political strategy to the "patriots" and the Opposition, should have been presumptuous enough to consider that even his pen was able to make a first-class political crisis out of Mansfield's grant of bail to a wealthy miser, detected stealing paper from the London Guildhall. It seems just as incredible that Junius should have expected Lord Camden to make a great opening-of-Parliament matter out of his sorry materials—the refusal of bail by a City Alderman and the Lord Mayor, and Mansfield's merciful decision, when the matter was taken to him, to grant it in £300 personal surety from the accused and £100 each from three of his friends, all Scots.[2] Plainly a three-years career of uniform success had affected Junius's judgment, and Ministers profited just as much from his ambition to close his mysterious career as Junius before the mystery was unveiled or the declining effect of his political writing reduced his claim to the immortality he craved.[3] The last writing included in the volume of collected *Letters* on which Junius staked his claim to fame was that of January 21, 1772, and though nine more letters from his hand appeared in the *Public Advertiser*, they no longer bore the dreaded Junius signature and had no special effect except to worry Lord Barrington, North's Secretary-at-War.[4]

[1] "The implacability of a great personage towards his inconsiderate brother is carried to a very extraordinary height. . . . The Duke of Cumberland's guards are taken away; and a bill is preparing, not only to make the king's consent indispensibly necessary in all future marriages of the royal family, but to exclude the issue of such marriages as have been lately entered into without that consent, from ever succeeding to the possession of the crown." (*The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement*, December 12, 1771.)

[2] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, ii, 441 sqq., for the Letter to Lord Camden immediately after that to Lord Mansfield. They appeared in the same number of the *Public Advertiser*, that for January 21, 1772, the day when Parliament opened for the 1772 Session.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 317, for a remark from Junius's Letter of August 17, 1771, against Horne Tooke that had excited surprise and indignation: "I may venture to foretell, that the Bible and Junius will be read, when the commentaries of the Jesuits are forgotten."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, iii, 422–57, for the nine Letters, the last of which is dated May 12, 1772. Philip Francis's identification as Junius rests largely on these letters

Having noted the cessation of Junius's activity and the lesser power of the divided "patriots" to disturb the Government, it remains to study the course of the Parliamentary Session of 1772. It is very significant of the much stronger position of Administration that when, on January 29th, naval matters came under review in the first "conversation" of the Session on the Estimates for the Fleet, Opposition criticism was in a vein surprisingly subdued after the scaremongering of the Falkland Islands crisis. Despite all the points, in fact, made by the two Opposition Admirals, Saunders and Keppel assisted by some non-professional friends of Rockingham and Chatham including Dowdeswell and Barré, the Government's Estimates, if criticised as over-burdensome for peace but insufficient for war, were not divided against.[1] A clearer proof still of the Government's strength was seen early in February when a Ministerial reduction of the Land-Tax was carried without a debate.[2]

The most interesting Parliamentary transaction of the early part of the Session was, indeed, one which was not directly political even though Opposition tended to be on one side and Government supporters on the other. The Rev. John Jebb, fated afterwards to become one of the most strenuous of early "radical reformers", had already, as a Peterhouse Don, stirred clerical and University dove-cotes by attempting, as a barrier against Atheism, Deism, Romanism, or mere carnal self-indulgence, to revive, among undergraduates, serious and searching Bible study.[3]

which show a knowledge of the War Office interior and mention Francis's resignation of a chief-clerkship there owing to Barrington's alleged improper choice of a deputy. The passing-over of Francis early in 1772 might have been due to some suspicion of his connections and activities.

[1] The *Annual Register*, 1772, History, pp. 85*–6*, summarises the Opposition thus: "if this motion was complied with, there was no reason for hoping that this enormous peace-establishment would ever be lessened, as the same, or similar arguments, with those now made use of, could be applied with equal propriety in every future year . . . that bending, as the nation was, under the weight of an over-grown and monstrous public debt, instead of taking any measures to lighten the burdens of the people, our peace-establishment was every year increasing. . . ; that we had undergone in the last year all the expences of a war, without any of its benefits; that it seemed to be intended to keep us always in that ruinous situation. . . . Two of our greatest naval commanders strongly opposed the motion, and as strongly arraigned and condemned many parts of the present arrangement and disposition of the fleet. They observed that the force in the East Indies was either too great or too small. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 246: "The land-tax passed Wednesday, [February 5th] three shillings in the pound, without a debate."

[3] Cf. *A Short Account of Theological Lectures now reading at Cambridge. To which is added a New Harmony of the Gospels* (1st ed. 1770; 2nd ed. 1772).

Finding, as he considered, the sixteenth-century formularies of the Thirty-nine Articles an insuperable obstacle to an unfettered, though devout, Protestant approach to the Scriptures, Jebb had become one of the centres of both a University and national movement against the compulsory subscription of the Articles imposed upon the Church and the Universities.[1] And if a first result of this activity was an appeal from Cambridge undergraduates to the Vice-Chancellor for the removal of compulsory subscription from among the requirements for the Bachelor's Degree,[2] a more important one was the presentation to Parliament, on February 6, 1772, and after efforts very modern in style,[3] of a similar petition for liberation from compulsory subscription made by 250 clergymen and a number of lay graduates in Law and Physic as well as Arts.

The long debate that resulted on the question whether the Petition should be received and considered is worth some little attention. On the Government side, Tory High Churchmen considered it little less than blasphemous for clergymen to express dissatisfaction with the Thirty-nine Articles; accused those active in the movement against subscription of anti-Trinitarian views; and prophesied a collapse of the State as well as of the Church if the Church's doctrinal pillars were removed. The main body of Government supporters took a less extreme but still hostile tone towards the Petition, while part of the Opposition saw no special hardship in imposing, on the clergy, definite doctrinal positions though they admitted that there was hardly the same necessity in the case of Physicians, Civil Lawyers and undergraduates, not yet in Orders.[4] It was therefore only the fraction of the Commons represented in the minority of 71 votes against 217 that favoured

[1] Cf. *Letters on the Subject of Subscription to the Liturgy and Thirty Nine Articles of the Church of England first printed in the Whitehall Evening Post under the Signature of Paulinus*, and *An Address to the Gentlemen of the University of Cambridge who Intend proposing themselves . . . for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts* for Jebb's principal part in the struggle of 1771–2.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1771, under December 31st: "The petition from the undergraduates of the University of Cambridge was presented to the Vice-chancellor . . . praying relief in regard to subscription to the thirty-nine articles . . . at taking their bachelor's degree, &c."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1772, History, p. 86*: "These gentlemen [the leading petitioners] had for some time assembled at a tavern called the Feathers, and had invited by public advertisements in the papers, all those who thought themselves aggrieved in the matter of subscription, to join them in obtaining redress."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 87–9. It was against Oxford especially that the grievances of Physicians and Civil Lawyers lay for Oxford required subscription as early as the matriculation stage.

reception and consideration of the Petition, a minority, however, that included such prominent Opposition figures as Sir William Meredith, Thomas Pitt, Lord John Cavendish, Alderman Sawbridge, Dunning, and Sir George Savile.[1]

After another interesting debate on February 17th when alarmed "high church gentlemen" assisted in saving the Church from a second danger, a Bill to reverse the Nullum Tempus axiom with regard to dormant Church claims as it had already been reversed with regard to Crown claims,[2] a third danger appeared somewhat later in the Session. During the debate of February 6th on compulsory subscription to the Church of England's Articles, there had been sympathetic reference to the special hardships of Dissenting Ministers, compelled under the Toleration Act to subscribe the great bulk of the Articles though without any hope of emolument or promotion in the Church which framed them.[3] It transpired that large numbers of Dissenting Ministers, unlike their predecessors of 1689, had long been unable to subscribe all the Articles required under the Toleration Act and were therefore theoretically liable to the heavy penalties of the Clarendon Code and more.[4] On April 3rd, therefore, a Bill was introduced to exempt Dissenters from subscription and it passed easily through all its stages in the Commons. Despite the alarm of High Church members who forecast that, with the restraints of subscription removed, Dissenting pulpits would be invaded by "Arians, Socinians, Deists, and profane Scoffers of all denominations" determined "to undermine, ridicule, or directly attack the principles of the Christian religion", many Administration supporters seem to have relished the chance, where the tenure of no valuable endowments was in question, of appearing as liberal as the

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 246.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, History, pp. 89*–90*, for a debate ending in a division of 141 against 117. The proposal made a special appeal to the landed classes and "instances were pointed out of the heavy grievances that attended the revival of these dormant and obsolete claims; and one in particular, of a gentleman then present, whose family were losers to the amount of £120,000 by a bishop's reviving a claim of this nature, though they had been in quiet possession of the estate above a hundred years". Against these things was urged for the Church "that she had been sufficiently stripped at the reformation . . . that the effects of this bill would fall particularly upon, and be peculiarly injurious to the poorer clergy, who were frequently unable to defend their rights against the combination of rich farmers, and the oppression of their richer neighbours. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 96*–7*.

[4] *Ibid.*

Opposition. Administration Peers, admonished by the Bishops, were much more cautious, for in the Lords the Bill was defeated on May 19th by 102 votes against 19.[1]

It remains to conclude the account of an important Session by mentioning three more significant discussions that took place during its course—those on the Royal Marriages Bill, East India affairs and repeal of the Septennial Act. A Royal Marriages Bill, freely forecast before the Session began owing to the scandal of the Duke of Cumberland's marriage,[2] was formally requested in a Royal Message to Parliament on February 20th. Averring that the Crown already had constitutional powers in the matter, which however lacked precise legal definition, the King asked for a Bill making the Royal Assent necessary for future marriages undertaken by descendants of George II other than those issuing from Princesses married abroad. The Government Bill, speedily introduced as a result, met with surprisingly strong opposition, both in Commons and Lords, despite the tactful introduction of a clause permitting a Prince or Princess affected, if over twenty-five, to undertake a legal marriage without the Royal Assent when notification had been made to the Privy Council and no express disapprobation pronounced by both Houses of Parliament within twelve months. In the Lords, much objection was taken to the Royal claim that the Crown was already possessed of the powers dealt with in the Bill, while in the Commons, the energy with which the brilliant young Charles James Fox, having laid down his minor office, brought every possible argument to bear against the Bill counted for much. The aristocracy and gentry of England certainly showed no great enthusiasm for the projected enlargement of Crown prerogative over the Royal family when, after a hotly-contested passage through the Lords, Opposition in the Commons was, on one occasion, able to divide at 164 against 200.[3]

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, History, pp. 97*–101*. It relates that the High Church gentlemen "found the general sense of the house [of Commons] strongly against them, and were surprised to see a considerable part of administration, and almost the whole of opposition for once join in opinion, and both appear equally sanguine in the cause of religious liberty".

[2] Cf. *The Weekly Magazine or Edinburgh Amusement*, December 26, 1771, for another scandal in Miss Flood's claim to have been married to the Duke of York. That Cumberland should have capped a series of follies by a clandestine marriage to a sister of Colonel Luttrell was peculiarly trying to the Court.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, History, pp. 92*–6*, for some of the more general grounds of opposition: "Among the great objections made to the general principles of this bill, by those who were the most violent opposers of it, were the following: that it militated with every law, human and divine, relative to

The plight of the East India Company with servants, military and civil, out of control and alleged to be responsible for the famine of 1770–1 that had depopulated Bengal and broken the Company's finances was brought before the Commons on March 30th. The Company, through its Deputy Chairman, then, in effect, made proposals for greatly increased powers over its servants in India and opened up important Parliamentary debates. In view of the desire, not confined to the Opposition, to attack the record of the "Nabobs", headed by Clive, and to uncover, before granting new powers, the whole sorry history of Bengal since Plassey, North showed undoubted skill in managing what might have become a difficult Parliamentary position. By securing the temporary abandonment of the Company Bill and setting up a Select Committee of thirty-one chosen by lot, a Committee ultimately given permission to continue its inquiries after the Parliamentary prorogation of June 9th,[1] North went far to committing the Opposition, in advance, to any legislation drafted on the Committee's recommendations.[2]

The above account of the 1772 Session has, perhaps, made it clear that "patriot" uproar in the streets was not one of its problems. Wilkes had apparently had plans for forcing on the Lords something like the troubles the Commons had had with the Press and the streets in 1771.[3] But Lords and Commons had alike learned prudence, and even Wilkes's plan of baiting the Lords into a fatal exertion of privilege by encouraging Miller of the *London Evening Post* to print inexcusable libels on irascible Peers seems to have failed of effect.[4] Not merely did no messenger appear

matrimony; that it was subversive of those natural rights inherent in mankind. . .; that being equally contrary to the canon, the civil, and the common law, and repugnant to the natural rights of mankind, it is in itself null and invalid. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 102–4.

[2] Cf. Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics*, pp. 213–39, for very detailed treatment of the position in 1772.

[3] Cf. *Private Correspondence between Junius and Mr. Wilkes* in Woodfall's *Junius* for Wilkes's Letters of November 6, 1771, and January 15, 1772. In the second Letter Wilkes outlined his plans thus: "The winter campaign will begin with the next week. I believe that the sheriffs will have the old battle renewed with the Commons. . . . Another scene will probably open with the Lords . . . I intend a manifesto with my name on Monday to give spirit to the printers, and to show them who will be their protector." (Cf. Add. MSS. 30881, ff. 32–3.)

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, in Woodfall's *Junius*, i, 336–7: "The progress of the business I suspect will be this—a bitter libel against Pomfret, Denbigh, or Talbot, attacking the peer personally, not in his legislative or judicial capacity, will appear. His Lordship, passion's slave, will complain to the House. They will order the printer into custody, and set a heavy fine. The sheriffs the next

in the City to take into custody printers reproducing Commons' debates or libels upon the Peers, but it became obvious that, for the time at any rate, libellously misreported speeches or criminal personal attacks were to be dealt with otherwise than by arrest and sentence decreed by the offended House of Parliament. It was as good a way as any other for the right of printing Parliamentary debates to make its appearance—or the axiom that it was best to leave libelling printers to the ordinary law of the land and the juries it provided. But Wilkes's calculations may possibly have been disturbed. The greatest "patriot" activities of the Session promised to turn on Alderman Sawbridge's motion for a repeal of the Septennial Act.

It was in February that the City really began to stir on the subject of Sawbridge's motion; 143 Liverymen signed a requisition to the Lord Mayor for a Common Hall whither all Freemen were to be invited for the purpose of instructing the City's four members in favour of Sawbridge's motion.[1] Lord Mayor Nash, who had been elected to stop just such Opposition demonstrations, sent a reply professing his inability to call an "extraordinary" Common Hall while the Mayoral power to do so was under judicial examination.[2] Twenty Common Councillors thereupon asked for a speedy meeting of the Common Council but had to be contented with one somewhat later than they had desired. Here a "great majority" was obtained for a "patriot" resolution requesting the summons of a Common Hall for instructing the City M.P.s in favour of the Sawbridge motion but, again, the Lord Mayor could not be compelled to call one against his will.[3] And after such an unfortunate opening in the City, it is understandable that the zeal of provincial "patriots" was damped. It is, in fact,

morning will go to Newgate, examine the warrant of commitment, and like the angel to Peter, take the prisoner by the hand, and conduct him out of prison; afterwards they will probably make their appeal to the public against the usurpation of their Lordships, and their entirely setting aside the power of juries in their proceedings.

"Are there more furious wild beasts to be found in the upper den than the three I have named? Miller, the printer of the *London Evening Post* . . . is the best man I know for this business. . . ." The original is in Add. MSS. 30881.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, Chronicle. The date of the requisition was February 12th.

[2] In the case between the City and the three objecting Companies.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, Chronicle, under February 20th: "The lord mayor declared; that he neither could, nor would, comply with their requisition. He referred them for the reasons of his refusal to the answer he had formerly given them."

difficult to find a successful example of a triumphant meeting held and instructions in favour of Shorter Parliaments sent except in the case of Rochester, and even there one of the two M.P.s instructed made his objections plain.[1] There need be no surprise therefore to find that when, on March 4th, Sawbridge moved and Townsend seconded a motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments, the motion was defeated by 251 votes against 83.[2]

Their Shorter Parliaments quandary might have been expected to teach the City "patriots" the folly of the divisions of 1771 that had allowed an anti-"patriot" candidate, with the support of Administration, to head the poll for Lord Mayor. During the spring and summer of 1772 Wilkes seems to have been assiduous in nursing all his City connections[3] including, of course, the Bill of Rights Society and to have made some attempts at reaching an accommodation with Sawbridge and Oliver,[4] which Horne's objections possibly defeated. Anxious for the unique "patriot" opportunities of the Lord Mayorship, Wilkes appears to have expected no great trouble from Alderman Townsend whose "famous" Middlesex Land-Tax action had now been ignominiously thrown out of court after a charge from Lord Mansfield to the jury that all "patriots" alike considered unfair.[5] In fact, after Aldermen

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, under March 2nd: "At a general meeting of the free citizens of Rochester at their town hall, it was unanimously agreed to transmit instructions to their representatives, to support the motion for shortening the duration of parliaments. To these instructions Mr. Calcraft returned, that he received them with very particular satisfaction. . . . Vice-Admiral Pye, on the other hand, writes, that many of his electors being of a different opinion, he thought it right to act in this business as it seemed to him to be most for the public good."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under March 4th, for the view nevertheless that "the argument was clearly in favour of the motion".

[3] Add. MSS. 30866 (British Museum), a species of Diary of Dinner Engagements kept by John Wilkes between April 17, 1770, and October 1797, is of some use here. It shows frequent attendance at meetings of the Bill of Rights Society, occasional attendance at other "patriot" functions (e.g. assemblies at the Westminster Tavern and meetings of the Anti-Gallican Society) and unending dinners with City notabilities.

[4] *Ibid.*, which has for June 26, 1772: "At the Hatchet in Little Trinity Lane, Queenhithe with Bull, Sawbridge, Oliver, Laurence, etc."

[5] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, Chronicle, under June 8th: "Came on before Lord Mansfield, the long-expected trial between Mr. Townsend and Mr. Hunt, collector of the land-tax, when after hearing counsel on both sides, Lord Mansfield told the jury, that the question before them was, in fact, no other than, 'Whether there was any legislative power in this country?' If they acknowledged there was, then they must find for the defendant: and in less than two minutes after his lordship had done speaking, the jury found for the defendant accordingly."

Hallifax and Shakespear had been raised as formidable anti-Wilkite candidates for the two votes allowed to Freemen, Wilkes appears to have done nothing to dissuade his supporters from giving their second vote to Townsend. The Court of Aldermen had constitutionally the right of choosing between the first two candidates on the Livery Poll, and it was felt to be inadvisable to allow either Hallifax or Shakespear to reach second place since anti-Wilkite Aldermen might then have made of Wilkes's shorter Aldermanic experience a reason for passing Wilkes over. Considerations of this kind must be borne in mind when interpreting the poll-figures at length available on October 6th—Wilkes, 2301; Townsend, 2278; Hallifax, 2126; Shakespear, 1912; Sir H. Bankes, 3.[1] It is perhaps worth noting also that Townsend appeared to take no interest in the contest and so lent confirmation to the report that, even if he were chosen by the Aldermanic majority though second on the poll, he would not accept the Lord Mayorship.[2] When, through an Oliver manœuvre, the Aldermen did choose Townsend and pass Wilkes over, and when Townsend did nothing to give way for Wilkes, the anger of the streets was intense.[3] But the riotous scenes at Townsend's inaugural procession of November 9th, and the alarming disturbances outside Guildhall later that night when Townsend's inaugural Ball was going on within, did the "patriot" cause harm rather than good.[4] Gleeful "friends of Administration" and despondent enemies of the Court alike considered that "patriot" divisions were growing too inveterate to cure. Horace Walpole's conclusion to his account of the Mayoral contest of 1772 is worth repeating. "The real advantage that flowed from these dissensions", he wrote, "accrued to the Court, who enjoyed Wilkes's disappointment and the unpopularity of Townsend. The real damage was to the nation, which saw those who would have gone furthest to stem the encroachments of the Crown divided and warring on each other."[5]

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, Chronicle, under October 6th.
[2] Cf. Horace Walpole, *Journal of the Reign of George III*, i, 163–5.
[3] Cf. *Public Advertiser*, November 10th and 13th. For the Press attacks on Townsend cf. the new *Morning Post*, November 17th.
[4] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, i, 256–7 for the publisher's despondent view.
[5] Cf. H. Walpole, *Journal of the Reign f George III*, i, 165.

CHAPTER X

INDIA AND AMERICA, 1773–4

"The Colonel [Barré] next said, that the movement of administration had been too slow; but, added the Colonel, 'better late than never'; for had the minister longer delayed an inquiry into the East-India Company's affairs, he would have deserved *impeachment*. I love you not (said the colonel, addressing himself to the ministry, with the honest bluntness of a Belisarius), I love you not; but in this business, while you conduct yourselves with propriety, I will go with you hand in hand; but seek not power in your researches; aim not at a distribution of offices; you have already enough at your disposal; permit me to say that you have too much to answer any good purpose; by which means you carry all before you. We only, continued the Colonel, come here to know the hour when you order your carriages to be ready. Opposition is dead, (here the Colonel folded his arms and reclined his head) opposition is dead, and I am left chief mourner o'er her bier; but let not this, I constrain you, be a motive for your grasping at more power; have no cousins, no younger brothers, no servile dependants, to quarter upon the Company.

"The Colonel then concluded, by recommending perseverance. . . . The affairs of the Company ought, he said, to be finished this session, even if the House sat until August. . . ."

Colonel Barré in the Commons, March 23, 1773.

"What think you, Captain, of a halter round your neck, ten gallons of liquid tar decanted on your pate, with the feathers of a dozen wild geese laid over that to enliven your appearance? Only think seriously of this, and fly to the place from whence you came; fly without hesitation, without the formality of a protest; and, above all, Captain Ayres, let us advise you to fly without the wild geese feathers."

A Philadelphia "Committee for Tarring and Feathering" warns a tea-ship master, November 27, 1773.

"Some claim a place in the list of Patriots by an acrimonious and unremitting opposition to the court. . . . He that has been refused a reasonable or unreasonable request, who thinks his merit underrated and sees his influence declining, begins soon to talk of natural equality, the absurdity of *many made for one*, the original compact, the foundation of authority, and the

majesty of the people. . . . These, however, are the most honest of the opponents of government. But the greater, far the greater number of those who rave and rail . . . are vehement and clamorous, only that they may be sooner hired to be silent. . . . Few errors, and few faults of government can justify an appeal to the rabble; who ought not to judge of what they cannot understand, and whose opinions are not propagated by reason, but caught by contagion . . . To fill the newspapers with sly hints and intrigue, to circulate the *Middlesex Journal* and the *London Pacquet* . . . to [profess to] be disturbed by incredibilities . . . that the last peace was obtained by bribing the Princess of *Wales*; that the King is grasping at arbitrary power; that the protestant religion is in danger, because *popery is established in the extensive province of Quebec*, . . . all this may be done . . . without real patriotism. . . .

"He that wishes to see his country robbed of its rights, cannot be a Patriot. That man therefore is no patriot who justifies the ridiculous claims of *American* usurpation. . . . But there are some who lament the state of the poor *Bostonians*, because they cannot all be supposed to have committed acts of rebellion, yet all are involved in the penalty. . . . The power of lawful government must be maintained; and the miseries which rebellion produces, can be charged only on the rebels. . . ."

From DR. JOHNSON's pre-election pamphlet, *The Patriot* (1774).

DESPITE the despair of such men as Junius when, at the beginning of 1773, they surveyed the prospects of "the cause and the public",[1] Administration and Court were yet very far from being beyond the possibility of challenge. In Rockingham and Chatham there were still two ex-Prime Ministers in Opposition, each of them capable of forming an alternative Government and, in Rockingham's case, with a following maintaining some organisation and undertaking regular and systematic criticism of Government measures in both Houses of Parliament. In the streets, too, there was still the liveliest suspicion of the Court, and in the City, still the machinery and the leadership to call it into action. The City leadership might now be divided by bitter personal feuds. But there was no desertion of popular political principles, and the normal working of the City's municipal calendar furnished, or could be made to furnish, constant occasions when the sundered leaders joined in challenging the suspect Court and the detested Majority. Signs and tokens had not been lacking even before Parliament's early reassembly on November 26, 1772—a reassembly due to the East India Company's difficulties—that the City "patriots" had not given up the fight. Thus on November 13th, at the first opportunity, the anti-"patriot" ex-Lord Mayor was censured by the Court of Common Council

[1] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, i, 255, for Junius's last Letter to his publisher, dated January 19, 1773. This despair seems almost justified by the *Annual Register*'s view: "At home administration had carried every thing with such irresistible force in the last session, that opposition seemed reduced to little more than a name; and could afford only a weak and unavailing dissent, to measures which it was not capable of impeding; whilst its members were weary of fruitless exertions. . . . In this state of things it seemed as if nothing but disunion or intrigue in the cabinet, was capable of obstructing the views, or endangering the security of the minister."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, pp. 62–3: "With respect to parties, the remains of the old whig and revolution interest, which we have frequently taken notice of, under the name of the Rockingham party, although there were some actual desertions from them, and a doubtful appearance in a few of those that remained, they were, in the main, rather better united than the rest. They, in general, continued pertinaciously in their opposition, to the system and measures of the court. . . . The party which was thought particularly attached to Lord Chatham, did not seem much nearer to a political arrangement with administration; though they agreed with them in many of the measures, or at least in some parts of many measures of the session. This circumstance added extremely to the weakness of opposition. We have formerly shewn, that several of the late Mr. Grenville's friends . . . went over to the court; some of them, however, have still continued on their old ground, and have accordingly acted occasionally with the other parties who dissent from administration. . . ."

for his refusal to call Common Halls,[1] while on November 17th even the Court of Aldermen was induced, by a majority of one, to elect a "patriot" Recorder in Serjeant Glynn. Then when the Commons at Westminster were first asked for a Committee of Secrecy on Indian affairs and then faced on December 7th, scarce a week after its appointment, with an opening recommendation for quashing, by Bill, the Company's projected dispatch to India of a "Commission of Supervision", the Parliamentary Opposition showed the liveliest signs of fight.[2] The Company was, of course, trying to avert a Government-imposed Commission of Control sitting at Calcutta, but many Opposition members, especially among the Rockinghams, might well feel that it was but dubious work to quash a legally-taken Company decision at the behest of a Secrecy Committee. The Bill recommended by the Secrecy Committee met, in fact, with a surprisingly vehement resistance from Opposition speakers in Commons and Lords, resistance not adequately mirrored in a First Reading division of 43 votes against 114 which sank at Third Reading in the Commons to 28 against 153. The final vote when the Lords, at a date unusually near to Christmas, divided at 6 against 26 shows what was the Opposition's trouble. Whereas Ministerial place-holders, in large numbers, were almost obliged to stay at Westminster to see Government business through, the average Opposition member was not to be kept there on hopeless errands at unwonted seasons.[3]

When Parliament resumed business on January 19, 1773, some

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, Chronicle, p. 138, for the resolution carried by a large majority: "That the late lord-mayor having refused to call a common-hall on a most important public business, at the requisition of many respectable gentlemen of the livery; having denied a considerable body of this court, to call a court of common-council; having refused to put questions in common-hall of the utmost consequence to the rights of the livery; and having ordered the word to be taken up, both in common-hall and in this court, before the public business was finished, has been guilty of violating the rights and privileges of this city."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1773, History, p. 73*: "This proposition [a quashing Bill] greatly alarmed, not only the gentlemen who were more immediately interested in the affairs of the Company, but those who considered it merely as an invasion of legal rights, and the principles of the constitution in general. It accordingly occasioned one of the warmest debates that had been known for some time."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 63–83*, for such observations as: "The restraining bill was presented the next day to the House of Lords, and it being so near the holidays, was carried through with the greatest dispatch. . . . It was much objected to, that the bill was brought in at a season, when the House is always ill attended, and hurried through with a violent, and it was said, indecent precipitation."

Opposition members were still absent, and even on January 27th, when Sawbridge's renewed motion for Shorter Parliaments was debated, it raised only a division of 45 against 133.[1] Matters were better in February for, to Englishmen's credit, some of the most praiseworthy speaking, and two of the largest divisions seen for some time, turned on a military expedition that had been directed against the "black Caribs" of St. Vincent, apparently because white planters, who desired their lands, had represented them as "a cruel and perfidious race of savages". It is hard, indeed, to know which of the motions of February 15th represents a more striking innovation—that reprobating the motives of the planters, who had called for war, which raised a division of 88 against 206, or that condemning the use of British troops, improperly equipped and at an unhealthy season of the year, which brought a division of 88 against 199.[2]

On February 24th came the renewal of the attempt against compulsory subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles, though this time the motion was confined to the suggestion that such subscription be no longer required on matriculation in the Universities, Oxford just having taken an unbending attitude and refused the slightest change.[3] Against the 1772 division of 71–217, that of 1773 resulted in figures of 64 votes against 159. A similar renewal of a matter already raised in 1772 was the attempted legislation to relieve Dissenters from subscription. The attempt proved remarkable not merely for the appearance of Wesleyans in the character of conservative petitioners against the Bill[4] but for the renewed and decisive rejection in the Lords of a measure passed by large majorities in the Commons, thanks to an unusual

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, p. 70. There had been at least one municipal effort on the motion's behalf, this time from Canterbury's corporation.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, pp. 83*–92*. The "black Caribs" were the descendants of negroes who had come ashore from a wrecked slaver, and proving more powerful than the aboriginal "yellow Caribs" compelled later French settlers to treat them with respect. After 1763, when St. Vincent became British, the French were selling out to British planters who regretted to see valuable sugar lands largely "wasted" in Carib occupation. The tone taken by the Opposition is made clear from Administration complaints that "an amazing fund of tenderness and humanity had been displayed in favour of the Caribbs, while the smallest degree of either was refused to our natural-born subjects and countrymen. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under February 4th. Cambridge had been more liberal when on June 23, 1772, it had substituted for the B.A.'s subscription to the Articles a short declaration affirming *bona fide* membership of the Church.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 94*. The petition was taken to the point of a speech by Counsel at the Bar of the House.

combination of Opposition and Administration votes.[1] There is, perhaps, hardly any point in going here into any detail on the East India business which continued to dominate the Session almost until its close on July 1st. Suffice it to say that, taught by misfortune, British opinion on India had now come round full circle against the "Nabobs", as was very plainly evidenced in some of the Reports both of the Secrecy Committee and the Select Committee still inquiring alongside. Opposition, indeed, decided, in part, to support Lord Clive against the extreme consequences sought to be drawn from a Select Committee Report "containing charges of the blackest dye, of rapacity, treachery, and cruelty, against those who were principally concerned in the deposal and death of Serajah Dowlah . . . the establishment of Meer Jaffier, the terms obtained from him, and the other capital circumstances which led to, or attended, the celebrated revolution of 1756".[2] The Rockingham Opposition, too, if not the Chathamite, sought, in alliance with the Company and the City, to resist the proposals that Administration had adopted, for its East India Regulating Bill, from the results of the Secrecy Committee's investigations. The City "patriots" were concerned at the alleged violation of the Company's chartered rights implicit in the whole of the secret investigation and the resulting proposals.[3] The City's own chartered privileges, and those of every other municipal corporation in the country were, in fact, held to be imperilled by the precedents established—and much could also be urged against the wholesale disfranchisement of smaller stockholders contained in Government's plan for reducing the size and increasing the "respectability" of Company meetings, big with India's fate.[4]

[1] *Annual Register*, 1773, History, p. 94*.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 105*–7*, for the tangled divisions on the £234,000 obtained by Clive as "private donation" in 1757. On the motion for putting a special stigma on Clive by adding to the resolution reporting his acquisition of £234,000 the words "to the dishonour and detriment of the state", Lord North divided against Clive, "the courtiers went different ways", and "the most considerable part of the opposition supported Lord Clive" and aided him to defeat the motion accepted by the head of the Administration whom he had decided to help against the Company.

[3] Cf. Woodfall's *Junius*, i, 256–7, for Wilkes's vain attempt through Woodfall to interest Junius in raising his pen once more on the East India issue: "Mr. Wilkes", wrote Woodfall after a tentative reference to further writing, "indeed mentioned to me the other day that he thought the East India Company a proper subject; and asked if I could communicate anything to you, to which my reply was that I could not tell, (as I did not know whether you might chuse to be intruded upon)." Junius did not take up this hint of March 7, 1773.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, p. 102*: "the East-India Company, the

The Directors' bitterest grievance against the Bill was Administration's resolution to force into their Indian system a Governor-General at £25,000 per annum, four Councillors at £10,000, a Chief Justice at £8000 and three puisne Judges at £6000—all of them, in effect, to be nominated by Ministers though paid by the sorely burdened Company. And if the Rockingham Opposition did not forget to voice the views of the City and of the Company, it had grave objections of its own. The nomination, in a Parliamentary Bill, of five executive officials with such tempting salaries and power as those allotted to the Governor-General and Council, was regarded as most questionable constitutionally since it opened a dangerous road to the corruption of Parliament.[1] To increase Ministerial and Crown patronage, moreover, as in effect the Regulating Bill did, at the very time, too, that the existing effects were so much complained of and at the cost of a Corporation "independent" of Government, promised, it was averred, double danger to the Constitution.

Though, thanks to Chathamite divergence from the Rockinghams,[2] no great difficulty was found by Administration in securing continuous and imposing majorities for the new Regulating Bill, neither Rockinghams nor the City "patriots" seem to have lost by their resistance. "Solid men" of the "independent" sort were, throughout the eighteenth century, disposed to be suspicious of all proposals whose effects might be to strengthen Administration to the point of rendering it uncontrollable by the "public". If,

City of London, and those proprietors who possessed votes, by holding £500 stock, but being under a thousand, were now to be deprived of their franchises, and who amounted to above 1200 in number, presented separate, and unusually strong petitions against the bill. Counsel were also heard in behalf of the Company, and of the £500 stockholders. . . ." Two divisions on behalf of the smaller stockholders brought votes of 65–179 and 43–123, though one of the arguments against some of them was that they were often merely nominal proprietors and in reality only fagot-voters for larger stockholders struggling for control of the Directorate.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 105*, for an additional objection to nomination of officials by Bill as "freeing ministers from all responsibility whilst it leaves them all the effects of patronage".

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1773, for a full report of the debate of March 23rd wherein Burke, the Rockingham theoretician and orator, defended the Company, and Barré justified the Chathamite projects of 1766–7 (which would practically have confined the Company to trade) and promised Administration support so long as the Government control, to be imposed on the Company, was not used to extend Administration patronage and cover Administration nepotism. "I love you not," said Barré to the Ministry, "I love you not; but in this business while you conduct yourselves with propriety, I will go with you hand in hand. . . ."

owing to the "Nabobs'" bad reputation and the Directors' apparent powerlessness to keep the "Nabobs'" successors in control, such "independent" men had resolved to give Administration the benefit of the doubt, they seem to have been appreciative, none the less, of the uses of Opposition as a watch-dog on the Administration. On May 28th, for example, there had been the most unusual unanimity in the City on the resolve to petition against the Regulating Bill, and a non-"patriot" had been allowed to take the lead. The report is worth giving:[1]

> The Lord-Mayor held a court of common-council, in pursuance of a summons, "to consider of an application to parliament, respecting a bill now depending, relating to the East-India Company". Mr. Alderman Kirkman very ably went into the particulars of the bill, and proved incontestably, that the bill was no less injurious to the rights of every corporate body in the kingdom from its principle, than a direct and immediate attack on the privileges of the East-India Company, and the rights of the proprietors, secured to them by charter and by parliament. He afterwards expatiated on the consequences of placing so enormous a power in the crown, to the total destruction of the constitution, and concluded with moving for a petition to the House of Commons against the bill now depending, and for instructions to the members to oppose its progress in the House. Mr. Alderman Wilkes seconded Mr. Alderman Kirkman, and observed, that the bill was founded on the principle of iniquity and robbery, as well as a barefaced violation of the public faith, and therefore ought to be opposed by every corporation in the kingdom, as well as by every elector in it. Mr. Kirkman's motions were then carried unanimously, and the petition was ordered to be immediately presented to the House of Commons.

During the first six months of 1773 the City "patriots" had, of course, been busy with much else than East India affairs. The re-establishment of Common Halls, achieved on March 11th, was straightway followed by the adoption of yet another Address, Remonstrance and Petition to George III and by such general political business as a resolution in favour of Short Parliaments, accompanied by a proper form of pledge to be imposed on Parliamentary candidates.[2] When this was closely followed by

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, Chronicle, under May 28th. The most authoritative modern account is in Lucy S. Sutherland, *The East India Company in Eighteenth Century Politics*, Section IX, The Passing of the Regulating Act.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–3, for a short account of Lord Mayor Townsend's apparent gratification at receiving great applause, Wilkite and Horneite, for calling a Common Hall despite the unfavourable precedent set by Nash, the previous year. The Short Parliament pledge to be imposed on candidates was this: "I

similar action on the part of "members of a constitutional society for the counties of Durham, Northumberland, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne",[1] and this, in turn, by yet another City procession to St. James's with the Remonstrance, "patriots" might well have felt that "liberty" was beginning to stir once more.

In April came a special "patriot" opportunity in view of a call of the whole House ordered for April 26th. Such a call involved the sending of letters from the Speaker to the Sheriffs, directing them to require the attendance of all County and Borough members. With somewhat unequal "patriot" alacrity, the two City Sheriffs responsible for Middlesex, the Horneite Oliver and the Wilkite Lewes, summoned Wilkes and not Luttrell to take his seat for Middlesex, and Wilkes, for his part, armed with the Sheriffs' summons, did renewed battle for his place in Parliament. His letter to the Speaker of April 20th was certainly a vigorous exercise in denunciation of the Majority,[2] and Wilkes followed it up by making a personal appearance at Westminster, on April 26th, with a demand to be sworn.[3] The whole affair, in fact, led up to April 26th's being occupied not by East India business, as had been intended, but by renewed debates on the Middlesex Elections in which a resolution moved and seconded by two Rockinghams, Savile and Dowdeswell, raised the best Opposition division of the Session, one of 151 against 201.[4]

No better preliminary could apparently have been wished for the attempt of April 30th to revive, with the aid of both sections

A.B. do most solemnly engage my word and honour, that as long as I live I will faithfully and sincerely endeavour, to the utmost of my power, to promote and procure, and having procured, to maintain and continue a perpetual act of parliament to shorten the duration of parliaments and to restore and preserve to the people their constitutional right of an annual, or, if that cannot be obtained, at least a triennial choice of representatives. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, under March 20th, for the mutual pledging "not to vote for any member at the ensuing general election, who will not engage to use his endeavours to obtain a bill for shortening the duration of parliament; and for rescinding the arbitrary and illegal resolution of the House of Commons, which seated Colonel Luttrel. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 20th, for such a denunciation of the seating of Luttrell as: "It is scarcely possible to imagine a precedent more fatal to the free constitution of any state, or more alarming to the members themselves, who, indulging in supine ease and luxury, amidst the cries of the starving poor, unfeeling as unrelenting, now glory in the rich spoils of this ignoble victory over their bleeding country." Some of the more rhetorical flourishes seem almost prophetic of the "democratic" oratory of the nineteenth century though it is worth remembering that there was again a food scarcity in the spring and early summer of 1773.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 26th.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*

of "patriots", the old holiday of a Middlesex Freeholders Meeting on the old scene of action, the Mile End Assembly Rooms. A surprising amount of harmony was, in fact, maintained between the two sections at a meeting which voted thanks freely to all who had undertaken or assisted the late efforts on behalf of the Middlesex Freeholders' violated rights and which also adopted a "patriot" platform of Short Parliaments, Exclusion of Placemen and Pensioners and "A more fair and equal Representation of the People."[1] "Patriot" co-operation with the rest of the City against the alleged unconstitutionality of the Government's East India legislation would also, as has been shown, do the "patriot" cause no harm. And if "patriotism's" less agreeable side was witnessed in Wilkes's bitter jest of moving the Court of Common Council to send the King congratulations on the birth of a child from the Duke of Gloucester's *mésalliance*,[2] and in the trial of the Wilkite printer, Miller, for a reckless libel accusing Lord Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, of traffic in naval posts,[3] such incidents only made it the more difficult for Court and Administration to avoid becoming reinvolved in the dangerous struggle to keep Wilkes out of the Lord Mayorship.

But before the Mayoral battle of 1773 reached its climax in October, new troubles were preparing for the Court to spoil the great satisfaction it undoubtedly experienced in surveying the smooth control Administration seemed to have established over Parliament. When in August 1772 Lord Dartmouth had been won over from the Rockinghams by the offer of Lord Hillsborough's

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, Chronicle, under May 1st, however, for evidence that the split and its consequences were still very evident: "Yesterday the Lord Mayor, Mr. Sheriff Oliver, and several other gentlemen, went from the Mansion-house to Mile-End, to be present at the meeting of the freeholders of Middlesex. Mr. Wilkes also went thither from his house in Prince's Court, accompanied by many gentlemen of Westminster, &c. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under June 9th. Wilkes was probably unwise to make the motion though he had the constitutional justification of the Court's complete refusal to acknowledge an event which might, in the future, provide a Sovereign.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1773, under July 8th. It appears from the full report given here that the prosecution suspected Wilkes of knowledge of the letter signed "Alfred" which Miller published in his *London Evening Post*. The defence actually proved that some attempted traffic in such posts was going on though it failed completely to connect Sandwich with the traffic. The result was a verdict of £2000 against Miller, less it is true than the £10,000 asked for, but still a crushing one for a mere printer whose connections with Wilkes's plans of forcing another "privilege" battle on Parliament and the Administration were possibly not unsuspected. Sandwich, in fact, had avoided appealing to the House of Lords or the Government's Law Officers but had brought a civil action for damages.

American Secretaryship, it had undoubtedly been considered a conciliatory gesture towards the Colonies, for Dartmouth had been Rockingham's President of Trade and Plantations at the time of Stamp Act Repeal and had discountenanced suggestions of American taxation afterwards.[1] Yet so far had the new appointment been from calming mutual Anglo-American recriminations on old grounds like the Townshend tea-duty and new grounds like the "outrage" to H.M.S. *Gaspée*,[2] that the situation had been steadily passing from bad to worse. Even before Americans could have learned the details of the East India Company's plans to send them large quantities of tea under the favourable terms granted as part-recompense for the Regulating Act, the August 1773 number of so reputable a periodical as the *Gentleman's Magazine* printed a long and alarming article with a catalogue of Colonial grievances. Its almost American tone could have given the Court no pleasure, as may well be judged from the following extracts:[3]

> The discontents in America, that were thought in a great measure to have subsided, begin again to break forth with more virulence than ever. . . . The spirit of governing by force a populous and wide-extended empire, is too mighty for the feeble race of puny politicians who have successively aspired to the direction of plantation affairs, since the commencement of the present reign. Before that period, the colonies were governed with ease. . . . While they were suffered to enjoy the rights of Englishmen, they gloried in the English name. But when other policy prevailed, and it was thought expedient to distinguish them by an odious badge of slavish dependence, can it be wondered that . . . they should strain every nerve in support of their rights and properties?
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> With this view, they have, throughout the principal provinces, appointed committees of correspondence, to state the rights of the colonists in general, and of the respective provinces in particular; and to communicate and publish the same to their several towns, and to the world. . . . They trust, that regard for the rising generation, cannot suffer the people to dose, or sit supinely indifferent on the brink of destruction, while the iron hand of oppression is daily tearing the choicest fruit from the fair tree of liberty, planted by their worthy predecessors at the expence of their treasure, and abundantly watered by their blood.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, p. 63.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1772, Chronicle, under July 16th, August 1st, September 7th, for the grave consequences attendant on the burning on June 10th, of this too vigilant anti-smuggling craft by a Rhode Island mob.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1773, Historical Chronicle.

To remember that Benjamin Franklin's *Rules by which a Great Empire may be reduced to a Small One* was to be reproduced in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September[1] and that Franklin must even then have foreseen serious possibilities in Massachusetts from the struggle between the Assembly and Governor Hutchinson, is to recall some of the unpleasant shocks that were preparing for the Court. But George III was hardly prophet enough to foresee the Boston Tea Party, and his most pressing anxiety in September 1773 was probably lest Wilkes became Lord Mayor. In view of the pertinacious Wilkite war of abusive newspaper paragraphs, conducted against the allegedly treacherous Townsend during the greater part of his Mayoralty, the Court had some hopes from the candidature of the angry Sawbridge, who with the still angrier Oliver, was standing against Wilkes and Bull. Moreover, Wilkite newspaper tactics led to such bitter altercations among the rival "patriot" candidates on the Guildhall hustings of September 29th that the Court might well have expected dangerous discredit to result for Wilkes in particular and the "patriots" in general.[2] But when, after a very bitter contest, the results of the poll were declared on October 6th as having yielded Wilkes 1683 votes, Bull 1649, Sawbridge 1177, and Oliver 1093, it seemed proved that the greater the attempts to destroy Wilkes, the more the "public" was inclined to suspect his value as the biggest single brake upon the ambitions of the Court. And Wilkes undoubtedly gained rather than lost when the "public" was given a full report of how he had once again been excluded from the Lord Mayorship on October 8th despite his place, for the second time, at the head of the Livery's poll. That Wilkes should, despite the pleas of his Committee, have insisted on throwing his Aldermanic vote not for himself but for Bull, and that Oliver and Townsend, on the other hand, after using their votes against Wilkes and bringing matters to a tie, should then have decided to claim a Lord Mayor's

[1] *Annual Register*, 1772, September 1773, pp. 441–5.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1773, under October 6th: "Mr. Sawbridge began by charging Mr. Wilkes with diabolically wishing to depreciate the *honest* in the estimation of the *worthy*, and employing his whole time in traducing the servants of the public in letters and paragraphs. Mr. Wilkes, on the other hand, publicly avowed, that he had written many things in the papers attacking the public conduct of Mr. Sawbridge, and condemning him as a betrayer of the common cause of liberty . . . but never penned a line against him as a private person. . . ." The *Magazine* concludes with apparently justified superciliousness: "This short specimen of the controversy between the city patriots, may suffice to show the *importance* of it to the public."

casting vote for Townsend and use it to defeat Wilkes,[1] proved of great ultimate benefit to George III's most formidable single opponent. In November, indeed, it was possible to take Wilkism for an experimental contest in the provinces where, on the occasion of a Worcester vacancy, Sir Watkin Lewes, the Wilkite ex-Sheriff, polled surprisingly well against a candidate whose money had forced a previous opponent off the field.[2] In December, too, after a strenuous contest, Wilkes returned the grateful Lord Mayor Bull to Parliament for a vacant City seat,[3] and when Parliament met on January 13, 1774, "patriots" were not without hopes of a Session somewhat more influenced by the "public". A General Election was inevitable before the spring of 1775, and it usually helped private members to accumulate proofs of "independence" beforehand. Did not the most debauched "free and independent" elector normally express a preference for "patriot" or "independent" money if it was available in the recognised measure?

A Session, opened by a Speech from the Throne recommending, domestically, little definite save attention to the state of the gold currency, hardly seemed likely, in its first stages, to be particularly eventful. And though, by the end of January, some serious news was already to hand of hostile American demonstrations preventing the landing of Company tea for taxation and sale,[4] Administration had perforce to wait throughout February for the confirmation and completion of its information, especially that from Boston, the scene of the most unpardonable disorder. During February, therefore, Parliament saw no greater deviation from its customary routine than the Opposition display of the 15th when Wilkes, summoned again by the Sheriffs to take his seat, repeated his vain effort to be sworn on the occasion of important business.[5] The Opposition's divisions on that day are worth recording. On

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 8th, for long reports on proceedings that contemporaries plainly found most exciting.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, November 1773, under November 11th and 25th. The voting was 900 against Lewes's 635.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1773, under December 4th. The figures were Bull, 2695 and Roberts, 2481.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, Chronicle, under January 24th, for the first information: "Arrived safe in the river Thames, the ship *Polly*, Captain Ayres, from Philadelphia, with 600 chests of tea, with which he was chartered by the East-India company for that port, but was not permitted to land the same. . . . The tea thrown into the sea at Boston is valued at £18,000 at 1*s.* 6*d.* per pound. The whole sent to America is said to be about £300,000 worth, which is returning home, not being suffered to land."

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, under January 29th and February 15th.

Sawbridge's now familiar motion for shortening the duration of Parliaments, the Opposition raised 94 votes against 221.[1] This figure was considerably improved upon when Savile went on to a motion, also growing familiar, for a Bill to safeguard the rights of electors from the wrongs suffered by Middlesex. Thanks to the readiness of numbers of Rockinghams and "independent men" to support this motion, though they were opposed to Sawbridge's, the Opposition divided this time at 147 against 206.[2] But even this figure was left far behind when, on February 25th, North urged caution and further trial on those proposing to make the Grenville Act on Election Petitions perpetual. Opposition and "independent" men were so resolute against leaving the door open to the return of the old abuse of party-voting on Election Petitions that North found himself completely overborne in a division of 250 against 122 and had, perforce, to allow the required Perpetual Act to go to the Statute Book.[3]

On March 7th Administration was ready to begin on American affairs and caused a Royal message and the American papers to be sent to both Houses. This was a preliminary to the rapid passage through both Houses of the Boston Port Bill to punish the "guiltiest" city in America for the outrages lately enacted there. Opposition deprecated the Bill but did not divide against it in view of a "public" temper anxious to impress Americans that they had gone too far at last.[4] When in April, however, after the appointment of a military Governor of Massachusetts in the person of General Gage, a second Government Bill for permanently curtailing Massachusetts liberties began a rapid progress to the Statute Book, Opposition objections became more strenuous.[5] Already, on April 19th, a motion to go afresh into the question largely responsible for the American troubles, the 3*d.* tea-duty of

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, History, p. 55.

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 58: "The minister upon this occasion found himself in one of those disagreeable situations, which though not wholly uncommon in very late times, were unknown in former; or at least only known, as a certain indication of the immediate downfall of a ministry. He was now deserted by many of those whom he had a right to consider as certain friends, and who had usually gone with the court. . . . The disposition of the nation was so strong in favour of this bill, that very few who voted against it could venture to show themselves at a general election."

[4] The Government's acquisition from the Opposition of Sir William Meredith at this time is worth noting.

[5] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, History, p. 70: "The opposition to this Bill was much more active and united than upon the Boston Port Act."

1767, had brought a division of 49 against 182 and a wonderful speech from Burke that made a great impression inside and outside the House.[1] On May 2nd, therefore, Opposition divided against the Third Reading of the Massachusetts Bill at 64 against 239,[2] and there was keen opposition also to another important Government measure bearing on Massachusetts, the Bill allowing the transfer of capital trials to another Colony or to England when the Governor was satisfied that a Massachusetts jury would not show justice to those indicted for conduct in suppressing tumults or riots.[3] Before this third Bill, in fact, completed its final stages in the Commons on May 6th, its reversal of all legal tradition, though in emergency, had brought from one member, not usually in Opposition, a revealing prophecy.[4]

"I will now take my leave of the whole plan," he said, "you will commence your ruin from this day. I am sorry to say, that not only the house has fallen into this error, but the people approve of the measure. The people, I am sorry to say it, are misled. But a short time will prove the evil tendency of this bill. If ever there was a nation running headlong to its ruin, it is this."

But it was when most members were expecting a speedy end to the Session that Opposition got its best chance against the Government's American programme. The Quebec Bill, first introduced into the Lords, had slipped through that House almost without comment. But when it reached the Commons, Opposition raised what it claimed were the gravest constitutional, legal and religious objections to this permanent plan for governing Canada in accordance with the French traditions of the bulk of its inhabitants, traditions, Administration claimed, guaranteed in any case under the Peace terms of 1763. Opposition, of course, made much of the absence of all provision for an elected Canadian Assembly[5]

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under April 19th, for a special note: "On this occasion Mr. E. Burke distinguished himself in a masterly manner."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under May 2nd.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 74: "The debate on this bill was even more warm than on the former."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 74–5.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 76: "a form of arbitrary government established by act of parliament, for any part of the British dominions, was a thing new to the history of this kingdom . . . it was of a most dangerous example . . . an assembly might be formed on the principles of the British constitution. Why did the ministers chuse to admit the Roman Catholicks of Canada into a [nominated] legislative council, and deny the propriety of their sitting in a legislative assembly by a free election? Nothing, said they, could induce the ministry to embrace that distinction, but the hatred which they have to any such assemblies, and to all the rights of the people. . . ."

and nearly as much, perhaps, of the omission to introduce trial by jury in civil cases.[1] The sinister impression of an attempt to domesticate a system of "arbitrary power" within the British dominions was increased, in contemporary eyes, by further terms which, according to the Opposition, made "Popery" Canada's established religion.[2] And the fact that this combination of "arbitrary power and Popery" was to be established within territorial limits much wider than those originally drawn for Canada in 1763, limits, indeed, which trenched seriously upon the claims of the self-governing British Colonies,[3] completed the reasons for alarm which Opposition found in the measure.

Before the Quebec Act could be passed and the Session ended, the City "patriots" resolved to make a display against it. On June 18th, four days before the close of the Session, the Common Council determined on a Petition to the King praying him to withhold his assent from the Bill,[4] and it is significant of much that the City Petition should have laid its principal emphasis on the alleged establishment in Canada of "the Roman-catholic religion, which is known to be idolatrous and bloody" while Protestantism and Protestants were left insecure.[5] Though an unusually large City procession reached the King with the Petition just before he set out on June 22nd to prorogue Parliament and give his assent to the last Sessional Bills, the Quebec Bill among them, Ministers were apparently still hopeful that America would be impressed and even intimidated by the great majorities obtained

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, History, pp. 76–7. Opposition emphasised that an action for damages against a public official, guilty of violating a citizen's rights, would be tried without a jury. Yet in such actions as those brought by Wilkes and the printers the jury had proved the "palladium" of British liberties.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 77: "On the subject of religion the conflict was very warm. The minority insisted that the capitulation provided for no more than a bare toleration of the Roman Catholic religion; which they were willing they should enjoy to the utmost extent; whereas this is an establishment of it. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Further they asked, why the proclamation limits were enlarged, as if it were thought that this arbitrary government could not have too extensive an object. If there be, which they doubted, any spots on which some Canadians are settled, provide, said they, for them: but do not annex to Canada immense territories now desart, but which are the best parts of that continent, and which run on the back of all your antient colonies. That this measure cannot fail to add to their other discontents and apprehensions, as they can attribute the extension given to an arbitrary military government, and to a people alien in origin, laws, and religion, to nothing else but that design, of which they see but too many proofs already, of utterly extinguishing their liberties, and bringing them by the arms of those very people they had helped to conquer, into a state of the most abject vassalage. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under June 18th.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix to the Chronicle, pp. 232–3.

for the Government's American measures.[1] But the very first news of how Boston and New York had taken the Boston Port Bill when it reached them on May 15th,[2] and the later news of general American determination not to leave Boston and Massachusetts at the mercy of General Gage's troops, nor to allow the Quebec Bill to stand uncontested, must alike have convinced Government that a formidable challenge to British authority was probable. Before accounts could reach England of Gage's growing difficulties at Boston or the first appeal to the "People of Great Britain from the Delegates appointed by the several English Colonies . . . to consider of their Grievances in General Congress, at Philadelphia, September 5th, 1774" become available,[3] Ministers resolved upon a General Election. It was, in a sense, a surprise Election since the existing Parliament could have held another Session and, hitherto, Administration had looked askance at motions for "shortening the duration of parliament".[4] The Dissolution of September 30th must, in fact, be partly reckoned as a political manœuvre to throw out the electoral calculations not only of the Opposition but of the East and West India fortunes whose competition for seats in 1768 had raised prices so high even for the Treasury.[5]

It is interesting to find that though Ministers had reason to be pleased with the total results of an election manœuvre that reduced the number of contests in England and Wales from the 58 of 1768

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 73: ". . . the most sanguine expectations were entertained by the ministry, that when Parliament had shown so determined a resolution and the advocates for the colonies had appeared so very little able to protect them, the submission throughout America would be complete. . . . The triumphs and mutual congratulations of all who supported these measures, within doors and without, were unusually great."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under June 28th: "The Americans received a copy of the Boston Port Bill on the 15th of May, by Capt. Cooper, who sailed from the Downs on the 10th of April. The first step was printing it at Boston and New York upon mourning paper, with a black border, and crying it about the streets under the name of a barbarous, cruel, bloody, and inhuman murder. In the first transports of rage they denounced vengeance with great warmth; but the cooler and wiser people . . . would suffer no resolution to be taken at either Boston or New York, till they heard further from England. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix to the Chronicle, pp. 207–14, for this long appeal written, not without an eye on the inevitable Election, since it ends with the hope that "the magnanimity and justice of the British nation will furnish a parliament of such wisdom, independence, and public spirit, as may save the violated rights of the whole empire from the devices of *wicked ministers*, and *evil counsellors*. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under September 30th.

[5] Cf. *Chesterfield's Letters*, September 19, 1767, March 12, 1768, April 12, 1768.

to 47, their satisfaction could hardly have been uniform. At Bristol, for example, where Burke, the most powerful pro-American voice in the Commons, was returned in company with the almost Wilkite Cruger and where, in consequence, two Ministerial seats were lost, Administration supporters could hardly have relished the greater representative significance Burke acquired from a constituency so much more important than Lord Verney's Wendover or Lord Rockingham's Malton.[1] In the metropolitan area, too, Wilkes had made an organised and not wholly unsuccessful effort to win for the "patriot" cause the most important group of seats in the country—the four for the City, the two for Westminster and the two for Middlesex. With the account of that effort and its results this chapter must end, and, fortunately, Wilkes's simultaneous achievement of the Lord Mayorship can be rapidly disposed of first. On September 29th the usual poll was demanded for the two Aldermen nominated against the "patriot" candidates for the Lord Mayorship who had carried the show of hands, Wilkes and Bull. And though the King still hoped that "friends of Administration" and Wilkes's "patriot" enemies were, in combination, strong enough to exclude him,[2] his Majesty was doomed to disappointment. On October 8th the Court of Aldermen could no longer be persuaded to ban Wilkes, now a third time at the head of the Livery's Poll.[3] The least consequences to be anticipated by the Court were tremendous street-scenes on November 9th, the day of Wilkes's inauguration,[4] and the official conduct of new City manifestations against Administration by the most intrepid political manager in the country.

It is time to turn back to the Parliamentary Election campaigns opened by the "patriots" on September 26th at a Middlesex Freeholders' Meeting, held on the customary manœuvre-ground of the Mile End Assembly Rooms. Here, after Wilkes and Glynn had been readopted as the "patriot" candidates against only four

[1] Cf. *Burke's Speeches* (ed. James Burke), pp. 125–31. Burke, however, had declined to be bound by Cruger's Wilkite view that a member was bound by his constituents' instructions.

[2] Cf. *Letters of George III to Lord North.*

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, Chronicle, under October 8th, for the polling figures: Wilkes, 1957; Bull, 1923; Sir J. Esdaile, 1474; Kennet, 1410.

[4] Cf. W. P. Treloar, *Wilkes and the City*, pp. 142–7, for the reproduction of contemporary Press-accounts. The crowds in the streets were apparently greater and more hilarious than ever before.

objectors, the constituency was offered a solemn engagement intended to serve as a model for "patriots" everywhere. Here is this significant document:[1]

> We, (J. Wilkes and J. Glynn, Esqrs.) do solemnly promise and engage ourselves to our constituents, if we have the honour to be chosen the representatives in parliament of the county of Middlesex, that we will endeavour, to the utmost of our power, to restore and defend the excellent form of government modelled and established at the revolution, and to promote acts of the legislature for shortening the duration of parliaments, for excluding placemen and pensioners from the House of Commons; for a more fair and equal representation of the people; for vindicating the injured rights of the freeholders of this county, and the whole body of the electors of this united kingdom; and an act for the repeal of the four late acts respecting America; the Quebec Act, establishing popery, and the system of French Canadian laws, in that extensive province; the Boston port-act, the act for altering the charter of the province of Massachusett's Bay, and the act for the trial, in Europe, of persons accused of criminal offences in America; being fully persuaded, that the passing of such acts will be of the utmost importance for the security of our excellent constitution, and the restoration of the rights and liberties of our fellow-subjects in America.

On October 3rd came the adoption meeting of the London Livery. Here it transpired that pledges very similar to those offered by Wilkes and Glynn would be volunteered by Bull, Brass Crosby, George Hayley, Wilkes's wealthy brother-in-law, and Sawbridge, now half-reconciled to Wilkism by the prospect of a City seat and the 1775 Lord Mayorship. These four were therefore regarded as the "patriot" candidates proper, since Oliver and Baker, also put in nomination in consequence of "patriot" behaviour as Sheriffs, were still anti-Wilkite enough to refuse to sign the list of pledges dictated by Wilkes.[2] And next day, on October 4th, "at a numerous meeting of the inhabitants of Westminster", two "patriot" candidates of rank were offered the electors in the persons of the Irish Viscount Mountmorres and Chatham's son-in-law, Lord Mahon, heir to the Stanhope earldom.[3]

The first results of Wilkite efforts in the metropolitan area were available on October 15th when the City poll closed. Here success was chequered by disappointment for if Alderman Harley, Wilkes's most formidable opponent in the City and head of the

[1] *Annual Register*, 1774, Chronicle, under September 26th.
[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 3rd. [3] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 4th.

poll in 1768, had not even ventured a candidature,[1] Sawbridge beat Hayley for first place and Oliver, with the rumoured aid of "friends of Administration", took third place, leaving Bull the City's junior member and Brass Crosby heavily defeated.[2] Matters were more uniformly satisfactory at Brentford on October 20th whither a great procession of Middlesex voters in carriages and on horseback had followed Wilkes and Glynn to find no opposition ventured by any "friend of the Court".[3] "Court" efforts, indeed, seem now to have been concentrated on Westminster where it had at first been assumed that the "patriot" Lords Mountmorres and Mahon would be victorious despite some defection of old Wilkites in favour of Humphrey Cotes and some Whiggish preferences for a Burke candidature. But the final polling figures available on October 27th proved that even in a borough as widely enfranchised as Westminster, street clamour and the support of tavern political clubs were not yet all-decisive at elections. Court and Administration had good reason to be grateful for the intrepid Duchess of Northumberland's daily appearances at the Westminster hustings in Covent Garden on behalf of the candidature of her son, Earl Percy, and that of his colleague, Lord Thomas Clinton, son to the Duke of Newcastle. Westminster tradesmen and householders, who had seemed deaf to the arguments of "friends of Administration", fell to the personal attack of a Duchess, wife to a great local property-owner.[4]

[1] Cf. Treloar, *Wilkes and the City*, p. 140, for the "patriot" ability to harm Harley even in his Herefordshire candidature where he was not only defeated but "exceedingly ill-treated by the populace".

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, Chronicle, for the figures; Sawbridge, 3456; Hayley, 3390; Richard Oliver, 3354; Bull, 3096; Baker, 2802; Brass Crosby, 1913; Roberts, 1398.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 20th.

[4] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters*, under October 22, 1774: "He [Wilkes] has, however, met with a heroine to stem the tide of his conquests; who, though not of Arc, nor a *pucelle*, is a true Joan in spirit, style, and manners. This is her Grace of Northumberland, who has carried the mob of Westminster from him; sitting daily in the midst of Covent Garden; and will elect her son and Lord Thomas Clinton against Wilkes's two candidates. . . ." The polling figures were in the end: Earl Percy, 4994; Lord T. Clinton, 4744; Lord Mountmorres, 2531; Lord Mahon, 2342; Cotes, 130.

CHAPTER XI

FROM BAD TO WORSE IN AMERICA, 1774–5

"In favour of the exemption of the Americans from the authority of their lawful sovereign, and the dominion of their mother-country, very loud clamours have been raised, and many wild assertions advanced. . . . The nation is sometimes to be mollified by a tender tale of men, who fled from tyranny to rocks and deserts . . . are now invaded by unprecedented oppression, and plundered of their properties by the harpies of taxation. We are told how their industry is obstructed by unnatural restraints, and their trade confined by rigorous prohibitions. . . .

"But while we are melting in silent sorrow . . . another friend of the Americans thinks it better to awake another passion . . . by accounts of their greatness and their opulence . . . we are soon told that the Americans, however wealthy, cannot be taxed; that they are the descendants of men who left all for liberty . . . that the continent of North America contains three millions, not of men merely, but of Whigs, of Whigs fierce for liberty and disdainful of dominion; that they multiply with the fecundity of their own rattlesnakes, so that every quarter of a century doubles their numbers. . . .

"They allow to the supreme power nothing more than the liberty of notifying to them its demands or its necessities. Of this notification they profess to think for themselves, how far it shall influence their counsels, and of the necessities alleged, how far they shall endeavour to relieve them. . . . This claim, wild as it may seem, has found among the libertines of policy many clamorous and hardy vindicators. The laws of nature, the rights of humanity, the faith of charters, the danger of liberty, the encroachments of usurpation, have been thundered in our ears, sometimes by interested faction, and sometimes by honest stupidity. . . .

"But hear, ye sons and daughters of liberty, the sounds which the winds are wafting from the Western Continent. . . . The Congress of Philadelphia, an assembly convened by its own authority, has promulgated a declaration, in compliance with which the communication between Britain and the greatest part of North America is now suspended. They ceased to admit the importation of English goods in December 1774, and determine to permit the exportation of their own no longer than to November 1775. . . . They have declared, that

they shall treat all as enemies who do not concur with them . . . and that they will trade with none that shall trade with Britain . . . they are not only raising armies, but forming alliances. . . .

"Since the Americans have made it necessary to subdue them, may they be subdued with the least injury possible to their persons and possessions! When they are reduced to obedience, may that obedience be secured by stricter laws and stronger obligations! But there is one writer, and perhaps many who do not write, to whom the contraction of these pernicious privileges appears very dangerous, and who startle at the thought of *England free and America in chains*. . . . *Chains* is undoubtedly a dreadful word; but perhaps the masters of civil wisdom may discover some gradations between chains and anarchy. . . . We are told that the subjection of Americans may tend to the diminution of our own liberties. . . . If slavery be thus fatally contagious, how is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes? . . ."

From DR. JOHNSON'S *Taxation no Tyranny*, 1775.

"It is but too certain that everything grows worse, and unless soon and very spiritedly applied to, will, I fear, be irrecoverable. The besieged state of the army and inefficacy of the fleet in America but too unhappily justify my repeated suggestions that the reduction of this country when united in an open opposition to Great Britain would require a much more powerful army than has been hitherto employed. Every month's delay will add to the difficulty . . . with such enthusiastic principles of resistance as undoubtedly prevail, and have hitherto produced the most astonishing and incredible effects. . . . For such, most certainly, is the embodying an army of more than 20,000 men, without money or magazines. . . . and causing them to submit to the discipline and fatigue of war who were before impatient of the least subordination. . . . Negotiations are not to be prudently relied upon. . . . Attempts in this line may be artfully made to gain time and furnish military stores, but will not terminate in accommodation. Many reports are circulated of divisions in the Congress; . . . I wish they may not deceive. . . ."

The American-born Governor Wentworth of New Hampshire, sheltering at Boston, warns Lord Rockingham, October 10, 1775.

If one of the reasons that caused the unexpected Dissolution of September 1774 was Ministers' desire to get Parliament elected before serious American news came,[1] they certainly showed intelligent anticipation. On October 20th an American Congress, representing twelve Colonies, not only adopted the entire case of Boston and Massachusetts against the legislation of 1774 but demanded also the repeal of much previous legislation.[2] And to compel the Mother Country to yield, an extensive non-importation, non-consumption, and non-exportation agreement was drawn up, providing for regular inter-communication between the Colonial Committees of Correspondence with a view to its enforcement, and even authorising a boycott of Colonies, violating or refusing the agreement.[3] That this should have been followed, first, by an Address to the French-Canadians inviting their adhesion to the general Colonial cause[4] and, then, by a Petition to the King, respectful in tone but unyielding in substance, was perhaps less serious, for the moment, than the open defiance increasingly reported from all parts of Massachusetts. If the new Parliament was called as early as November 29th, it was because Gage's authority as Governor was so ineffective, beyond the immediate circle of British bayonets holding down Boston, that news of armed clashes between redcoats and adherents of the defiant Massachusetts Provincial Congress, seemed possible at any moment.[5]

The Speech from the Throne, delivered on November 30th, used very grave language when speaking of the "most daring spirit of resistance" prevalent in Massachusetts, the encouragement given to Massachusetts by the other Colonies, and the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, History, pp. 37–9, for the acceptance of this as the principal reason. If serious news, it was held, "should coincide with the time of a general election, there was no doubt but the opposition must carry everything before them".

[2] Cf. *Supplement to the Gentleman's Magazine for the Year 1774*, p. 613 et sqq.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1774, Appendix to the Chronicle, pp. 214–17, under the title of *The Association of the American Congress.*

[4] Under the title of *Address of the General Congress to the Inhabitants of the Province of Quebec.*

[5] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, History, pp. 121*–2*: "The Governor's proclamation against the provincial congress in Massachusetts Bay, had not the smallest effect, either upon the proceedings of that assembly, or the conduct of the people, who paid an implicit obedience to its determinations. . . . The critical situation of the capital was an object of much consideration. . . . One [proposal] was, simply, to remove the inhabitants; another, to set a valuation upon their estates, burn the town, and reimburse them for their losses. . . ."

King's steadfast resolution, nevertheless, to withstand every attempt to weaken or impair Parliament's authority.[1] In both Houses, indeed, the alarmed Opposition, fearful of civil war, divided against the Addresses moved in reply to the Speech, obtaining, however, only votes of 73 against 264 in the Commons and 13 against 63 in the Lords. Soon there was rumour of differences between the Court, still persuaded that the same resolution that had got the better of "faction" at home would serve also in America, and the Minister who, unlike the Court's "interior Cabinet", was reckoned not so sanguine of the effects of refusing all alteration of the Acts of 1774.[2] Certainly, the Naval and Military Estimates submitted, while Administration was waiting for the outcome of the Continental Congress, hardly showed North preparing for immediate hostilities. As if to confound Opposition's direr prognostications, North moved no Vote of Credit; left the Land-Tax at 3*s.* in the pound; asked for no increase in the Army; and went so far as to reduce the Naval Service by 4000 seamen now that the last echoes of the Falkland Islands dispute had passed away.[3] On December 22nd, when Lord Dartmouth received his copy of Congress's Petition to the King, the worst American news had not yet reached his Department so that next day's adjournment of Parliament to January 19, 1775, must not be accounted strange. So long an adjournment would hardly have been undertaken had it been known that Rhode Island and New Hampshire had already set the other Colonies the dangerous example of seizing the Royal cannon and military

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1774, pp. 591–2.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1775, History, p. 44: "The minister appeared less than usual in the House of Commons, and studiously avoided all explanation. Many imagined that he was thwarted and overruled by what in the cant phrase is called the interior cabinet, and did not approve of the violent measures that were there generated. It was even at this time supposed, that he was feeling his own strength, and had some thoughts of making an effort to emancipate himself. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 45: "An attempt was made in those debates, and supported with pleasantry, to turn the tables upon the gentlemen in opposition, who had for several years been complaining of the greatness of our peace establishment by sea and land, and now seemed to oppose a reduction as soon as it was attempted by the ministers. But they justified their conduct . . . they were far from desiring war; as little did they relish large peace establishments; but if, against their will, war *must* be carried on, common sense dictated, that it ought to be carried on with effect. . . . In answer to this, the minister of the naval department [Sandwich] publicly asserted, in the House of Lords, that he knew the low establishment proposed would be fully sufficient for reducing the colonies to obedience. He spoke with the greatest contempt both of the power and the courage of the Americans. He held, that they were not disciplined nor capable of discipline. . . ."

stores.[1] That action, like the plan adopted soon afterwards in Pennsylvania to encourage the local production of gunpowder, saltpetre, and steel,[2] was intended to meet a Royal Proclamation forbidding the export of arms and military stores from England to America. The Colonies did not intend to face England unarmed.

Before Parliament reassembled on January 19th to receive more disquieting American intelligence than ever, there had been some effort among the merchants of cities threatened with heavy loss by the American boycott, to move Parliament not to plunge deeper into American disputes but to retrace its steps from the fatal legislation of 1774. And even before the attention of the Commons was drawn, on January 23rd, to the petitions from London, Bristol, Glasgow, Norwich, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Dudley and other places, Chatham had moved in the Lords, on January 20th, for the withdrawal of the British troops from Boston as a necessary preliminary to conciliation and in order to prevent an armed clash with irretrievable consequences. But Administration was now committed to "firmness", and not only was Chatham's motion decried and heavily defeated[3] but, in the Commons, a majority of 197–81 decreed on January 23rd that the merchants' petitions were not to go to the Committee of the Whole House on American affairs, fixed for the 26th, but to the alleged "Committee of Oblivion" offered instead.[4] When this decision not to consider the commercial effects of Government policy alongside the main American problem was, on the 26th, again challenged by Opposition, Ministers secured a majority of 250 against 89. And a petition for a hearing at the Bar, made by three Colony Agents, headed by Franklin, who claimed to have important light to throw on Congress's Petition to the

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 122*–3*.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 123*.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 47–9, for the debate and the concluding division of 68 against 18. The Minority, which included the King's brother, Cumberland, might have been larger had some Peers not found the abandonment of Boston, without prior security even for the local Loyalist element, too extreme.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 54: "All the debates on this subject of the petitions, were attended with an unusual degree of asperity, and even acrimony on the side of opposition. The charges of negligence, incapacity, and inconsistency, were rung in the ears of the minister. The acts of the last parliament were arraigned in the severest terms. . . . The ministers were told that a bitter day of reckoning would come. . . . A pathetic picture was drawn and deplored, of the miseries of that civil war, which must be incurred through their rashness and blind precipitation. . . ."

King, was decisively rejected by a Government majority of 218 against 68.[1]

On February 1st, before the Government's new coercive proposals were offered to Parliament, Chatham urged Conciliation a second time. On this occasion the veteran statesman had provided himself with the outline of an ambitious Conciliation Bill. America was to be offered freedom from Parliamentary taxation, and if Congress's contentions on the illegality of stationing British troops in America were denied, the Colonies were yet promised full constitutional guarantees against the political misuse of such troops. The Continental Congress, fixed for May 1775, was, moreover, to be awarded a legal status in the hope that it would, in return for the British promise to suspend all the legislation complained of in the Petition to the King, offer the Crown a fixed and certain revenue in recognition of that part of the National Debt properly ascribable to the Colonies. With the defeat by 61 votes against 32 of this bold plan, urged so authoritatively, went, it is plain, the last prospect of a settlement without fighting.[2]

Before Lord North indicated, on February 2nd, what would be Government's reply to events in America, the Commons had been given the opportunity of studying, in an alarmed petition from the West India interest, further possible repercussions of Ministerial policy.[3] Nothing daunted, however, North proceeded to move an Address to the Crown, clearing the way for financial, naval, and military votes, by praying the King to enforce obedience on America and promising support with members' lives and

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, History, p. 56, for a convenient summary of the arguments used: "The ministry alleged that the congress was no legal body, and none could be heard in reference to their proceedings, without giving that illegal body some degree of countenance. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 59–60, for Lord Dartmouth's attitude which apparently showed some reluctance to undertake outright rejection. "The noble Lord, at the head of the American department", reported the *Annual Register*, "behaved with great moderation. . . . Whether respect for the framer of the bill, or whatever the motives were that induced this concession, they had no effect on the other Lords in administration, who opposed it with so much heat. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 62: "They stated, that the British property in the West India islands amounted to upwards of thirty millions sterling; that a further property of many millions was employed in the commerce created by the said islands . . . and that the profits arising from the present state of those islands, and that are likely to arise from their future improvement, in a great measure depend on a free and reciprocal intercourse between them and the several provinces of North America, from whence they are furnished with provisions and other supplies absolutely necessary for their support. . . ."

fortunes.[1] Though the Address contained a conciliatory passage promising due indulgence to any Colony making proper application, Opposition speakers bitterly reprobated Administration's readiness for violence, marked especially, it was claimed, in the ominous and unwarranted application of the term "rebellion" to proceedings which Massachusetts considered as enforced preparations for legitimate self-defence.[2] An amendment moved by Charles Fox, now in Opposition, brought a division of 105–304, and later the Address itself was carried by 296 votes against 106.[3] On so serious a matter as the American situation, Opposition, it was plain, could still fight hard. This was proved again on the long proceedings which began with Lord North's motion of February 10th for leave to bring in a new Bill to coerce the Americans. The debates on this hard-fought measure to punish the New England Colonies by stopping their Newfoundland and other fisheries, and their whole trade with the non-British world, were often renewed before the Royal signature was affixed on March 30th. Punctuated as these proceedings were by the repeated presentation of petitions from threatened interests, and by such ominous business as the vote of February 13th for 2000 more seamen, the vote of February 15th for 4383 more soldiers and the anxious North's own ineffective Conciliation proposals of February 20th,[4] Opposition found in them every motive for zeal and activity. Alleging the injustice of punishing whole Colonies for the misdeeds of a few individuals; the starvation that would threaten the large parts of New England living on fishing and whaling; the inhumanity of including fishing-boats in the coercive

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 288–9, for an interesting account of the proceedings.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, History, p. 64, for Dunning, ex-Attorney-General, opening for the Opposition in unyielding style. His conclusion is thus summarised: "Whatever the disorders might be, they were created by the conduct of those, whose views were to establish despotism . . . as a prelude to the realising of the same wicked system in the mother country . . . and opposition to arbitrary measures was warranted by the constitution."

[3] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 289.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 292–3, for the troubles Lord North brought upon himself by trying to offer the Americans a road of retreat from the advanced positions Congress had taken up. Of proceedings on his offer to remit Parliamentary taxation of those Colonies who offered an acceptable financial plan to provide their proper share of the cost of defence and who undertook, besides, proper responsibility for the costs of civil government and judicial administration, it is sufficient to say that Opposition declared them quite inacceptable to the Americans while part of the Majority were resentful of what they regarded as a symptom of retreat.

proposals when even the Custom of War respected their immunity; the folly, after 1774, of still hoping to divide the Americans by concentrating punishment on New England—Opposition made of all this a very plausible case quite apart from emphasising the greatly heightened risks of civil war. When, on March 9th, after the New England coercive Bill had been sent to the Lords, fresh intelligence of American "outrage" drove North to introduce a second coercive Bill for New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Virginia and South Carolina, debates, petitions and Conciliation proposals began to multiply once more. Among the notable occasions of an eventful Session, not terminated until May 26th was Burke's speech of March 22nd introducing a Conciliation plan of his own.[1] Its rejection by 78 votes against 270 gives no inadequate representation of the temporary balance of forces in the House of Commons on American questions.

It is certainly time to turn to the "patriots" and the streets. The first motion of 1775, which was of direct importance to the "patriots", was made on February 1st when Sawbridge repeated his attempt to shorten the duration of Parliaments and obtained the improved division of 104 votes against 195. One of the speakers for Sawbridge's motion was Wilkes, whose election North had been too wise to challenge again. But Wilkes in the name of the violated rights of Middlesex electors and, indeed, the electors of the whole country, claimed also the reversal of the Commons Resolution which had "illegally" kept him out of the House from 1769 to 1774. When his first annual motion to secure this obtained, on February 22, 1775, as many as 171 votes against 239,[2] "patriots" again seemed to have some reason for satisfaction. On the American question, meanwhile, the "patriot" stand, always anti-Court and pro-American, had been taken up once more when, on February 10th, the Common Council had, quite in the old style, sent its thanks to Chatham for his Conciliation Bill.[3] On February 24th the City petitioned the House of Commons against the Government's coercive Bill for New England "on the ground of its being an unjust, cruel, partial, and oppressive bill, injurious

[1] This speech was quickly printed and very widely read.

[2] Wilkes's speech on this occasion is given in full in *Speeches of John Wilkes* (ed. 1777), i, 31–52.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, Chronicle, under February 10th. Chatham replied, deeming himself "too fortunate to find his efforts for preventing the ruin and horrors of a civil war, approved, honoured, and strengthened by the greatest corporate body of the kingdom".

to the trade of Great Britain, and tending to increase the wealth and strength of her rivals and enemies".[1] The mob took its turn on March 7th when the burning by the common hangman of a pro-American publication, condemned by both Houses as "a false, malicious, and seditious libel", brought huge and protesting crowds outside the Royal Exchange.[2] Then, on March 14th, the Common Council sent a second petition against the Bill coercing New England, which was now before the Lords, and two days later the Bill of Rights Society made an even more significant gesture when voting £500 "for the present relief of the inhabitants of Boston, and of the poor distressed fishermen of New England".[3]

All this proved but the prelude to a new series of brushes between Wilkes and the King. On April 5th, the New England Bill having become law, Wilkes gathered a Common Hall which voted its thanks to the Bill's opponents in both Houses and adopted a Remonstrance and Petition to the King. One aim of this Remonstrance was to undo the work of those who had been promoting pro-Government petitions and exulting over the two New England towns which had sent for British garrisons in order to obtain immunity from the Coercion Bill and safety from the anger of brother-Americans.[4] But even before this City Remonstrance against the Government's American legislation and this demand for the Ministry's dismissal could be delivered on April 10th, the Lord Chamberlain had made difficulties about the number of Liverymen to be admitted with the Petition and had requested Wilkes to refrain from addressing the King.[5] After the King, moreover, had sent the City deputation back with a particularly unyielding reply and the Lord Chamberlain had followed this up with an attempt to impose new restrictions on similar

[1] *Ibid.*, under February 24th.

[2] *Ibid.*, under February 24th, where the Parliamentary proceedings against "a periodical paper, called *The Crisis*, No. 3" are described also.

[3] *Ibid.*, under March 16th.

[4] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 296–7, for the tone reigning in Administration circles: "Two towns in New England have applied to General Gage for troops to protect them against their rebellious brethren. Gage sent them 100 men, and as soon as the advanced guard of this handful appeared, 800 of the brave Bostonians took immediately to their heels. . . . The House of Commons sat yesterday [March 20th] on the Nottingham petition; there were two petitions from the town—one for, the other against, America. It was a very dull, tedious debate . . . Charles Fox takes all opportunities of abusing Lord North. . . ."

[5] H. Bleackley, *Life of John Wilkes*, pp. 290–1.

deputations in the future, Administration supporters proceeded to work themselves up into a really impolitic rage. When actual fighting was growing daily more probable in America, and when "concessions" were already being mooted for Ireland, worse treated than America and steadily to be drained of troops,[1] friends of Administration were hardly wise to talk of the "patriots" as follows:[2]

> Monday [April 10th] the Lord Mayor and the Livery went to St. James's, to petition His Majesty to remove his Ministry. The answer was a most excellent one; you will have seen it in the papers. I never saw so shabby an appearance as they made; for except the Lord Mayor's coach and Mr. Sawbridge's chariot, no equipage had even the appearance of belonging to a gentleman. They dispersed hand-bills, Sunday, to assemble a mob; and some blackguard fellows got together, but they would not cheer, though the Lord Mayor's servants called to them so to do. The Duke of Queensbury had his pocket picked, in the Drawing-room of a gold snuff-box. It is thought some of these Livery people when they came from the King got into Christie's, and there Lord Sandys had his pocket picked. . . .

But Administration was made to pay dear for this insufferable tone. Nothing could have given greater encouragement to the Americans when they were busy, after Lexington, taking full charge of their separate Colonies and conferring sovereign powers upon Congress than the extraordinary heights to which the war between City and King seemed by midsummer to have risen. When, for example, the Livery were assembled on June 24th for the election of officers, and Wilkes, as Lord Mayor, laid before them the Lord Chamberlain's notification that the King would receive no more Livery petitions sitting on the Throne, this slight both to themselves and the most cherished of their alleged "privileges" produced instant consequences liable to serious misinterpretation on the other side of the Atlantic.[3] A Resolution was adopted declaring those who had advised the King in the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, History, p. 114*, for the bounty offered Irish as well as British ships engaging in the Newfoundland fishery, etc.

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 301–2, for Mrs. Harris, wife of James Harris, M.P., Comptroller to the Queen, to her son James Harris, Junior, British Minister at Berlin.

[3] Cf. L. B. Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, p. 296, quoting Samuel Curwen writing on August 8th: "It is a capital mistake of our American friends to expect insurrections here. . . . The manufactories are in full employ. . . ." Namier also quotes evidence to show that some of the commercial petitioning earlier in the year had been taken too seriously in America. Thus a strong Glasgow petition on behalf of the Americans was reported in March as meant "to gain credit in America, and, thereby more easily collect their debts".

matter "enemies to the right of the subject to petition the throne, because such advice is calculated to intercept the complaints of the people to their Sovereign, to prevent a redress of grievances, and alienate the minds of Englishmen from the Hanoverian Succession". But this resolution was not, of course, as important as that adopted immediately afterwards for sending another Remonstrance surpassing in vigour anything dispatched to the Throne even in the most agitated days of 1769 and 1770. Its character may be judged from the fact that the *Annual Register* for 1775, completed though it necessarily was in 1776, ventured no mention of the document and even the *Annual Register* for 1776 still confined itself to the following brief and cautious summary of the Livery's language:[1]

> Among those expressions that were the least exceptionable, they desire his Majesty to consider "what the situation of his people here must be, who have nothing now to expect from America, but Gazettes of blood, and mutual lists of their slaughtered fellow-subjects". In other respects, they passed the severest and harshest censures upon the Grand Council and Representatives of the nation, as also upon ministers and secret advisers; and they conclude with a prayer for the dissolution of parliament, and a dismission for ever of the present ministers and advisers.

This was not all. The Livery gave instructions that their "Address, Remonstrance and Petition" was only to be presented if security was obtained that it would be received by the King sitting on the Throne. When the Livery was informed on July 4th that the King would only consent to receive it casually at a Levee, there was another explosion of wrath very useful to Wilkes. More fierce resolutions were adopted on this alleged denial of the rights of petition, "recognised and established at the Revolution"; it was determined to have the City Remonstrance printed in all the public papers; and the Sheriffs were sent to the King with a copy both of the Remonstrance and the resolutions adopted on the Court's decision not to receive it in State. Finally, instructions were drawn up for the City members. At the next meeting of Parliament they were immediately to move for an humble address from the Commons to the King:[2]

> . . . requesting to know who were the advisers of those fatal measures, which had planted popery and arbitrary power in America, and had

[1] *Annual Register*, 1776, History, p. 40. [2] *Ibid.*, pp. 40–1.

plunged into a most unnatural civil war, to the subversion of the fundamental principles of English liberty, the ruin of our most valuable commerce, and the destruction of his Majesty's subjects; also to know who were the advisers of the present measure of refusing petitions; and then to move for an impeachment of the authors and advisers of all those measures, that by bringing them to public justice, evil counsellors might be removed from before the King, his throne established, the rights of the people vindicated, and the whole empire restored to the enjoyment of peace, liberty, and safety.

After such an outburst it is, perhaps, plain why, on the moderates' persuading the Court of Common Council to adopt much less drastic representations, on the subject of America, under the title of a "Humble Address and Petition", the King was glad to receive it in State and to make a very mild reply.[1]

It was unfortunate for the immediate future both of America and Britain that, even at the end of August, "patriot" manifestations were taking place in England and Ireland[2] which, when read of in America, conveyed a disproportionate sense of their power to arrest Administration war-preparations and weaken Ministers' war-will. It was as mistaken to think that Government would be affected by a Dublin Freemen's pro-American resolution[3] or a reported "general hiss" outside the Royal Exchange for the Heralds' proclamation of "rebellion and sedition" in America[4] as it would have been to expect Dean Tucker's[5] startling affirmation of the advantages of abandoning political control of America, to carry weight with merchants brought up in the completely opposite tradition. Merchants, indeed, were among the foremost to be

[1] *The London Gazette*, July 15, 1775, for the King's "I am always ready to listen to the dutiful petitions of my subjects, and ever happy to comply with their reasonable requests; but, while the constitutional authority of this kingdom is openly resisted by a part of my American subjects, I owe it to the rest of my people . . . to continue and enforce those measures by which alone their rights and interests can be asserted. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, p. 39, for Scotland's universal pro-Administration feeling, natural after the insults of the "patriots": "We must except from all these observations, the people of North Britain, who, almost to a man . . . not only applauded, but proffered life and fortune. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1775, Chronicle, under August 28th.

[4] *Ibid.*, under August 23rd, the date of the Proclamation's issue.

[5] In *Taxation no Tyranny*, Dr. Johnson's pro-Government pamphlet of 1775, there is a neat summary of Dean Tucker's views: "The Dean of Gloucester has proposed . . . that we should at once release our claims, declare them masters of themselves, and whistle them down the wind. His opinion is, that our gain from them will be the same, and our expense less. What they can have most cheaply from Britain they will still buy; what they can sell to us at the highest price, they will still sell."

affected by the general drift of sentiment towards Administration in the second half of 1775. Till news came, during the summer, of the Americans' seizure of Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point and their projects for conquering Canada, merchants, more, perhaps, than any other "respectable" class of the community, had been reluctant to call for irretrievable steps. Even under the provocation of American seizures of military stores and American ambitions to starve out the British troops in Boston (and the British ships off the coast), it had been easier to persist in believing that American intentions were merely defensive and that Administration had been guilty of mismanagement or, perhaps, worse. But when it became plain during the course of the summer and autumn of 1775 that Congress, now in command of a considerable and, it was claimed, victorious army, had no serious intention, for all its dutiful words, of permitting any effective restoration of British authority, the revulsion of feeling among large parts of the mercantile classes seems to have been great. They were tired of having the threat of American boycott constantly suspended over their heads; a great revival of European demand, following on the end of the Russo-Turkish War and the crisis of the First Polish Partition rendered manufacturers temporarily independent of American trade;[1] and wounded British pride craved for some signal demonstration of British power in the eyes of America and the world.[2]

Nothing, in fact, helped Administration more when preparing for what was bound to be a trying Parliamentary Session than the revolt of provincial trading and manufacturing towns, led by Manchester, against the Opposition attitude still maintained by the mercantile interests of London and Bristol. For the Manchester, Lancaster, Liverpool and Leicester worthies who, during

[1] *Annual Register*, 1776, History, p. 38, adds Spain and Spanish America to North Eastern Europe in accounting for the absence of harm from the American boycott: "The sailing of the flota," it reported, "the [Spanish] armament against Algiers, and the peace between the Russians and Turks, occasioned an unusual demand for goods and manufactures of various sorts from Spain, the North of Europe and Turkey, which keeping up a brisk circulation in trade, business, and money, all contributed to the same effect."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 38: "The late engagements in America, had, in a certain degree, affected both the national and military pride of the people. Many of those who had not approved of our late conduct with respect to the colonies, thought it now too late to look back, or to enquire into past causes, [thought] that government must be supported . . . that we must not hesitate at any expence or danger to preserve our dominions, and that whoever was right in the beginning, the American insolence deserved chastisement at present."

September, vied with the Scots in sending loyal anti-American Addresses to the King,[1] it was doubtless easy to take the comfortable view that the loss of the money owed to British houses in America would only be a very temporary one. But though the London and Bristol houses to whom the money was owed, and who saw extensive damage from hostilities likely to spread to their West India interests, re-entered the fray in October with a petition for the cessation of hostilities, Administration already enjoyed the signal advantage of having established an apparently overwhelming preponderance of support.[2] Administration efforts had even given a more Courtly complexion to Middlesex whose magistrates had adopted a Loyal Address on September 24th and whose Freeholders' Meeting next day was much less under "patriot" control than usual.[3] It was, possibly, the Court's crowning gratification to find a Loyal Address with the signatures of 941 merchants and traders brought from the City on October 14th, only three days after a previous Oppositionist Petition with 1171 signatures had been presented as coming from "the Gentlemen, Merchants, and Traders of London". It is characteristic of the times to find it reported that the Loyal Address was received "very graciously; and the Gentlemen of the Deputation had the Honour to kiss his Majesty's hand".[4] George III was doubtless grateful to all who helped him in his self-imposed task of bringing as much force to bear on American rebellion as possible. He had already offered the services of his Hanoverian Army so that British troops in Gibraltar and Minorca might be spared for North America, and he hoped from the coming Session a vote for great increases in the military and naval forces as well as approval for

[1] Cf. Blair's *Chronological Tables* (ed. Bohn) puts these addresses under September 13th.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 46–7: "As the time approached for the meeting of parliament, addresses were poured in from different quarters, some in violent, others in more temperate language, but all condemning the conduct of the Americans, approving of all the acts of government, and, in general, recommending a perseverance in the same strong measures, until the colonies were reduced to a thorough obedience. . . . In several of these, very intemperate reflections were passed upon those gentlemen who had opposed administration in the present American measures, who were represented as factious and desperate men."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under September 25th: "Much clamour arose; a set of instructions, however, was produced and read, to be presented to the county members, but a protest was made against them and very little unanimity was observed throughout the whole: the sheriffs differed in opinion: and one of them only, Alderman Plomer, signed all the resolutions. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, State Papers, p. 269.

the continental recruiting that British diplomacy was suggesting in friendly European quarters.[1]

There was, then, no lack of resolution about the Speech from the Throne with which Parliament was opened on October 26, 1775. Opposition, in fact, drew from it a picture of an army of 70,000 men operating in America and having to be supplied from Europe at a supposed cost in increased Land-Tax and National Debt that was calculated to give much anxiety to "independent country gentlemen". Another picture of dread, conjured up by Opposition was the dangerous increase of Crown power that would come from the control of greatly augmented military forces, some of them foreign mercenary troops.[2] When Opposition, in the Commons, debated the Speech until half-past four in the morning and divided at 108 against 278, they must be held to have produced some effect. That effect, indeed, seemed likely to grow until Administration decided to reassure "independent men" on the subject of Hanoverian troops' having been moved into the British dominions without Parliamentary consent. First, Ministers merely agreed to ask Parliament for a Bill of Indemnity if members, on examination, decided that Government's action, though necessary, had been technically unconstitutional.[3] On November 3rd, however, when, following on the failure of an Opposition censure motion in the Lords, a similar motion in the Commons was expected from no less an "independent" than Sir James Lowther, Bute's

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 270–1: "I have also the satisfaction to inform you that I have received the most friendly offers of foreign assistance; and if I shall make any treaties in consequence thereof, they shall be laid before you. And I have, in testimony of my affection to my people, who can have no cause in which I am not equally interested, sent to the garrisons of Gibraltar and Port Mahon a part of my Electoral troops, in order that larger numbers of the established forces of this kingdom may be applied to the maintenance of its authority. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, 1776, History, p. 60, for a short summary concluding thus: "The consequences of so enormous an additional power thrown into the hands of the crown, are . . . too melancholy to be dwelt upon with pleasure. The English constitution will inevitably perish in the same grave, into which our pride and injustice had a little before precipitated the liberties of America."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 64–7: "The part of the speech which mentioned as a favour the sending of Hanoverian troops to Gibraltar and Minorca . . . had, besides the party in declared opposition, given disgust to several of those gentlemen, who call themselves *independent*; a distinction, which is well known, to include a numerous and powerful body in that house. The gentlemen under that appellation, who had long been distinguished in the late reigns for the steadiness of their opposition to court measures, have for several years past taken the contrary side. . . . In American affairs particularly, they have always been among the foremost, in proposing or supporting the most coercive measures . . . an aversion to continental connections—upon this occasion, however—shewed its efficacy. . . ."

son-in-law, North decided to bring in an Indemnity Bill at once.[1]

It was by careful watch of this kind on the moods of the "independent men" in the Commons that North helped George III most in foiling the Opposition. And, at the moment, a good deal of care was necessary to prevent the Opposition from profiting from some Administration mishaps—the Duke of Grafton's anti-Coercion outburst in the Lords, necessitating his retirement from the Cabinet;[2] the over-frank confession of another Ministerial Lord that concealment had been practised by Government to disguise the seriousness of the American situation;[3] and Lord Rochford's blunder as Secretary of State in lighting on a mare's-nest, pro-American plot, freely rumoured, at first, to involve Opposition.[4] The Ministerial reconstruction undertaken during November was not unskilful. Lord Dartmouth, who had had three hard and unsuccessful years in the American Department, was made Lord Privy Seal in Grafton's place. To the American Department was brought the sole important survivor of George Grenville's following who had retained his independence, Lord George Germaine, known to have been for years an influential advocate with "independent members" for firmness on American questions.[5] In place of Lord Rochford, Lord Weymouth came to the Southern Secretaryship, whose principal task would be to guard against the attempts of France and Spain to profit from the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 81–3, for Lowther's consequent defeat in a division of 81–203.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 69–70, for a convenient summary: "Besides a decisive condemnation of all their acts for some time past with respect to America, as well as of the measures now held out by the speech, he declared that he had been deceived and misled upon that subject; that by the witholding of information, and the misrepresentation of facts, he had been induced to lend his countenance to measures which he never approved. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 70.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1775, Appendix to the Chronicle, pp. 239–43, and *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 53–5: "The report of this transaction [the arrest on October 23rd, 1775, of the American-born banker, Sayre] flew like wild-fire throughout the kingdom, and for a while confirmed all the rumours that had been already spread of treasonable acts and designs . . . Mr. Sayre's confinement, however, lasted only for five days . . . and . . . he sued Lord Rochford for illegal imprisonment, for which a jury granted him a thousand pounds damages, liable, however, to the future determination on a question of law."

[5] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 331–2, for his first characteristic appearance in his new part of American Secretary on November 15, 1775: "Lord George Germaine arose from the Treasury Bench . . . told us the opinion he was about to give was what he had always been of, that he was desirous to bring the Americans to submit to taxation. He was very firm and strong."

American War. As Weymouth was supposed to have shown, when in this office before, greater spirit in resisting the Bourbon Courts on the Falklands than Rochford, his successor, the change in the Southern Department hardly weakened the Government. The King, indeed, had been so much impressed by Weymouth's "firmness" in dealing with the Wilkes mobs of 1768–9 that, Germaine being impossible, he came to think of Weymouth, one of the best speakers in the Lords, as a possible substitute for North in certain eventualities.[1] To make the record of Administration changes complete, it should be added that, as an offset to the possibly suspicious "firmness" of the two new Secretaries, Germaine and Weymouth, some disarming nominations to minor places were made simultaneously. Lord Ashburnham, of the one-time Minority, was given a Court appointment; a previous deserter from the Opposition fold, Lord Pelham, Newcastle's nephew, obtained Court promotion; and Lord Lyttleton, bearer of a well-known name and hitherto critical of Administration's American policy, was bought off with a place and a Privy Councillorship.[2]

After such preliminaries it was that, helped by the revulsion of feeling among the "public", Administration carried through a formidable Parliamentary programme before the Christmas Recess, and in the teeth of the Opposition. Thus, on November 2nd, a majority of 259 against 50 was obtained for the Second Reading of a new Militia Bill despite strenuous objection to provisions allowing the Crown to call Militiamen out, and put them under martial law, if rebellion occurred in any British dominion in any part of the world.[3] Opposition pointed out that, though Administration might urge the need of such power in case France and Spain were tempted by the withdrawal of regulars from Home

[1] Cf. *Dictionary of National Biography*, for George III's consideration of Weymouth for the Treasury when national dangers thickened in 1778 and the retirement of North was in question.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, Chronicle, pp. 204–5. Ashburnham became Groom of the Stole, Pelham, Keeper of the Great Wardrobe, and Lyttleton, Warden and Chief Justice in Eyre of all his Majesty's Forests, etc. beyond Trent.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1776, History, pp. 83–4: "This was said to be, in fact empowering the crown to draw the militia out whenever it thought fit, as a pretence could never be wanting for the purpose, while there was a black Carib remaining in St. Vincent's, a runaway Negro in the mountains of Jamaica, or a Hindoo Rajah left on the coast of Coromandel. The bill was said to be entirely subversive of every idea of a constitutional militia . . . the present militia was formed under the express condition of not being called out, except in cases of invasion, rebellion, or an imminent danger of either, in the kingdom. . . ."

Defence, it was still unwise to leave the Crown complete discretion to embody the Militia every time a few black slaves escaped in a Carib island. But that availed Opposition even less than their resistance to the vote of great offensive forces for 1776. On November 8th, for example, after a large increase of seamen had already been voted for the Fleet, Opposition could only divide at 73–227 against Army increases, permitting the use in America of more than 25,000 men out of a total of 55,000.[1] Still more disappointing to the professed Opposition must have been the complete failure to rouse the country gentlemen on their tenderest point, the Land-Tax. On November 13th, Opposition's motion to keep the Tax at 3*s.* in the pound, instead of raising it to 4*s.* in aid of Administration's war-finance, brought only the calamitous division of 55 against 182. Two days later, on the Committee stage of the Militia Bill, Opposition was doing scarcely better even with justifiable amendments. Thus the suggestion that the Crown's special Militia powers, to meet the event of rebellion, should, under the Bill, terminate with the American struggle was rejected by 140 votes against 55.[2]

Administration undoubtedly owed much to the skill and disarming frankness with which North handled the House, and his obvious lack of any bloodthirsty sentiment towards the Americans. Nothing, for instance, could have helped Government more on the Army vote than North's manner of treating the questions raised. Admitting that, despite the increase of bounty-money offered and the lowering of the physical standards required, recruiting at home was still disappointing enough to make all manner of other effort necessary,[3] he could all the more effectively rebut Opposition's exaggerated case for holding that recruiting difficulties proceeded "from the abhorrence, with which the people

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 330: "It was opposed as usual by Burke, Barré, and also by General Conway. Sir John Wrottesley told us he had just seen three gentlemen from New York, who said that the Petition from that place, denying our supremacy, was forged here, and sent to them hence. The division was, for old England 227, for America 73."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 101–2, for a summary of the Opposition case beginning: "The Opposition said that, if the ministers opposed the motion, it would convince them beyond a doubt, that the suspicions they had formed with respect to this bill were too well founded, which were, that it was brought in merely as a colourable pretext to arm the crown with a power hitherto unknown to the constitution. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 89: "attempts had been made to enlist Irish Roman Catholics, and to incorporate foreigners singly into the British regiments; but all failed of the expected effect".

in general regarded the present odious civil war". North showed much more reason to ascribe the slowness of recruiting to the flourishing state of trade which at once belied the dismal prophecies of the Opposition and proved the country's ability to support the American war or any other. And in frankly, if unofficially, confessing that every idea of taxing America was surrendered and that the British struggle was now for preventing America throwing off "constitutional dependency", North did Administration as much service as by his indication that Conciliation Commissioners would accompany the British forces operating in 1776.[1] By such means and by drafting a really generous Bill for Nova Scotia, the only American Colony with an Assembly that had accepted the Conciliation offer of February and submitted financial proposals for meeting civil and defence charges,[2] North went far to justify, in contemporary eyes, Administration's refusal to accept Congress's "Olive Branch" Petition.[3] Even a mighty new Conciliation oration by Burke on November 16th hardly met with more success than previous efforts by the Duke of Richmond in the Lords[4] though, perhaps, an Opposition vote of 105 against 210 must be counted as a relatively good one.[5]

On November 20th an important new Government measure to coerce the Americans was introduced into Parliament by Lord North. The full rigour of naval power was to be exerted against them; all trade with them was prohibited under penalty of losing

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*: "He also threw out, without pretending, however, to any absolute authority, that every idea of taxing America, was now entirely given up. . . . That this armament would be attended with commissioners, who should be furnished with powers to accommodate matters. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 331 et sqq., for Administration pleasure that "the colony of Nova Scotia have sent a very handsome address to the Lords, and another to the Commons". Though Administration at first laid great emphasis on the Nova Scotia offer, and had some hopes that generous treatment might recall to their "duty" some of the recalcitrant Thirteen, those hopes and the Nova Scotia Bill were ultimately abandoned. The doings of Nova Scotia, much under military and navy control and very sparsely populated, were found to possess little interest for the Thirteen, and it may even be that Nova Scotia, by offering to exchange all existing taxes for a uniform *ad valorem* duty on foreign imports hoped to get the better of the bargain especially if it had received hints of being awarded "a relaxation of the Navigation Act".

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, State Papers, pp. 262–6. It is printed as "A Second Petition from the General Congress in America to his Majesty". It was handed to Lord Dartmouth on September 1, 1775, who replied that no answer would be given.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1776, History, pp. 93–9, for proceedings in the Lords on November 7th and 10th when the "Olive Branch" Petition was discussed.

[5] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 331–2. Burke opened the debate in a three-hour speech.

ship and cargo; and Americans' own vessels and their contents were to be good prize whether seized afloat or in harbour.[1] But it was characteristic of North's Parliamentary management that this same Bill, after thirty-five clauses of pains and penalties, went on to authorise the appointment of the promised Conciliation Commissioners and to recite their great powers of pardon and their large authority to investigate grievances, general and particular. Opposition's first objections that day were defeated by 192 to 64, and before Second Reading proceedings on December 1st gave Government the even better majority of 207 against 55, Administration had been able to teach the "patriot" extremists of the Opposition a very smart lesson. Nobody's credit had fallen faster than theirs when anti-American spirit, already capable, in the autumn, of raising large subscriptions for the relief of suffering British troops in Boston and widows and dependants of the slain,[2] rose higher on the sight of the first ship-loads of casualties,[3] and reports of the aggressive American invasion of Canada. Nothing, perhaps, would illustrate the vastly weaker position of pro-Americanism than to give a description of what happened in Parliament on November 27th when the City members endeavoured to fulfil the Wilkite instructions imposed upon them on June 24th, when pro-Americanism was still rampant. Here is Mr. James Harris, M.P., Comptroller to the Queen, describing the scene and showing Administration's easy confidence:[4]

In obedience to the hot and heavy instructions of his constituents, Alderman Oliver made a motion to address the King, to know who were the advisers of the measures (established you will observe by Act

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 109–20, for the story of the Bill. Opposition argued against giving captors property in the captures because it turned the Navy into a species of pirates; they condemned loudly the clause which rendered Americans taken in a captured ship liable to serve as common sailors in the British Fleet; they denounced the provision which made ships, even when laid up in harbour by American owners who might be Loyalists, liable to capture; and they claimed especially that Government had been completely blind to the vital interests of the West Indies, some of whose essential imports came from North America.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 52: "As the compassion and humanity of this country are always awake to the wretched, and particularly those who are sufferers in the cause of the public, a subscription was opened towards the latter end of the year, for the relief of the soldiers at Boston, and of the widows and children of those that were slain. This scheme was most liberally supported. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Some ships which arrived from Boston . . . exhibited the spectacle of maimed and wounded soldiers, with the wives and children of those that were slain, all of whom were in the most extreme degree of misery and wretchedness. . . ."

[4] *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 333–4.

of Parliament) about the Courts of Admiralty in America, about Popery and Despotism in Canada, &c. This was seconded by my Lord Mayor Sawbridge, and supported by Wilkes and Hailey, the City members. Lord North and others opposed with great force. At length the patrons of the motion, suspecting the division would bring it to disgrace, got Lord Folkestone to move the previous question and Charles Fox the order of the day, two methods of gently letting the thing down. But these projects would not do; the previous question was rejected by 159 to 16: then came the main question, and that was rejected by 163 to 10, a majority of more than 16 to 1. Rigby was humorous on the occasion, and treated the Livery with the contempt they deserved. A former design of the Ministry was mentioned to prosecute five of the City Aldermen for some of their seditious practices, but Lord North was said to have rejected it by observing that one Wilkes was more than enough.... We adjourned at six o'clock, an early hour. We shall have passed before Christmas, Land-Tax, Malt, Army, Navy, Ordnance, Militia, Indemnity Bill, Bill for prohibiting the Rebel Colony Trade, Bill for encouraging Nova Scotia, the only dutiful colony. It seems as if our business was done, and that after the holidays nothing would be left but Turnpikes and Navigation. And yet I doubt not something will spring up from the fecundity of Opposition heads.

[1] *The Calendar of Home Office Papers* (1773–5), p. 473 seems to show this shipowner-brother-in-law of Wilkes under some suspicion just about this time of making high profits by helping the Americans to obtain war-supplies. The Colonial Department was already being helped by British representatives abroad and by the Secretary to the Post Office's efforts with intercepted or deciphered letters to collect information on gun-running by or for the Americans. But on November 21, 1775 it was the Treasury which reported: "there seems reason to believe that the large quantities of cannon lately exported for Spain and Lisbon are intended to supply the rebels in America, Mr. Hayley being said to be the merchant for whose account they are shipped . . . and it is said that Mr. Hayley is now fitting out a ship in the River Thames and contracting for cannon etc., to be cleared out for the Brazils . . . ."

CHAPTER XII

AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE DECLARED

"Ye that oppose independence now, ye know not what ye do; ye are opening a door to eternal tyranny, by keeping vacant the seat of government. There are thousands and tens of thousands, who would think it glorious to expel from the continent, that barbarous and hellish power, which hath stirred up the Indians and negroes to destroy us.

"Ye that tell us of harmony and reconciliation, can ye restore to us the time that is past? Can ye give to prostitution its former innocence? Neither can ye reconcile Britain and America. The last cord is now broken, the people of England are presenting addresses against us. There are injuries which nature cannot forgive. . . .

"O! ye that love mankind! Ye that dare oppose, not only the tyranny, but the tyrant, stand forth! Every spot of the old world is overrun with oppression. Freedom hath been hunted round the globe. Asia, and Africa, have long expelled her. Europe regards her like a stranger, and England hath given her warning to depart. O! receive the fugitive, and prepare in time an asylum for mankind. . . .

". . . we have every opportunity and every encouragement before us, to form the noblest, purest constitution on the face of the earth. We have it in our power to begin the world over again. A situation, similar to the present, hath not happened since the days of Noah until now. The birthday of a new world is at hand. . . ."

From PAINE's *Common Sense*, January 1776.

"The affairs of America seem to be drawing towards a crisis. The Howes are at this time in possession of, or are able to awe, the whole middle coast of America, from Delaware to the western boundary of Massachusetts Bay; the naval barrier on the side of Canada is broken; a great tract of country is open for the supply of the troops; the river Hudson opens a way into the heart of the provinces; and nothing can, in all probability prevent an early and offensive campaign. What the Americans *have* done is, in their circumstances, truly astonishing. . . . It is now, however, evident that they cannot look standing armies in the face. They are inferior in everything, even in numbers; I mean in the number of those whom they keep in constant duty and in regular pay. . . . Foreign assistance they have little, or none, nor are likely soon to have more. . . .

In this state of things, I persuade myself, Franklin is come to Paris to draw from that court a definitive and satisfactory answer concerning the support of the colonies. If he cannot get such an answer (and I am of opinion that at present he cannot), then it is to be presumed he is authorised to negotiate with Lord Stormont on the basis of dependence on the Crown. . . . On this supposition, I thought it not wholly impossible that the Whig party might be made a sort of mediators of the peace . . . it would undoubtedly have an effect to revive the cause of our liberties in England, and to give the colonies some sort of mooring and anchorage in this country. . . ."

Burke to Rockingham, January 6, 1777.

DESPITE the decided turn of public sentiment towards Administration during the closing months of 1775, Ministers were destined to have a sufficiency of awkward moments before a long Parliamentary Session, begun on October 26, 1775, could be closed by prorogation on May 23, 1776. If, for example, the concluding stages of their most important Sessional measure, the Bill prohibiting all commerce with revolted America, showed Opposition still weakening,[1] one nasty shock, at least, came for Ministers before the Bill reached the Statute Book on December 23rd and Parliament could be adjourned. On December 17th news had arrived from Canada of important successes by the invading American forces. The fort of St. John's had been compelled to surrender with 500 men, and General Carleton, marching to its relief, had been forced to fall back on Montreal with scant hope of saving even that place in view of the unfriendly or, at best, neutral attitude of most French-Canadians. The "high spirits" Administration supporters claimed to find depicted on the faces of Burke and Fox after the bad news[2] came, must stand as an indication of what was expected to be Administration's plight if Britain had next received the staggering but by no means impossible news of the fall of Quebec.

Administration, then, must be deemed to have undergone considerable anxiety both before and after the reassembly of Parliament on January 25, 1776. But some compensation was to come in February for the long weeks of uneasiness Ministers had suffered on the subject of Quebec, for from that place, if not from the beleaguered and hungry garrison of Boston, came much better news. It came, too, at a most opportune moment, after the Opposition was thought to have made some strong points in the Parliamentary encounters of February 15th and 20th. On February 15th Opposition had made a better display than for some time past on Thomas Townshend's motion attacking a message to the Irish Parliament from Administration's Lord-Lieutenant, Harcourt. That nobleman was thought to have offered Ireland, some of

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, p. 113*, for the Third Reading division in the Commons on December 11th when the voting was 112 against 16. As to the Lords, though the rather Opposition-biased account of the *Annual Register* talks of the Bill being combated there on December 15th "upon every ground of policy, justice, and expediency" the division gave Government 78 votes, including 30 proxies, to 19, including 7 proxies.

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 337.

whose troops were desired, a financial bargain at England's expense without the prior consent of the Westminster Parliament. Nor was the matter confined to Administration's readiness to pay for 8000 troops while apparently only obtaining the use of 4000, since Ministers' willingness to finance the introduction of 4000 foreign soldiers into Ireland, in replacement of the Irishmen drafted off, took on, to the suspicious, the appearance of an insidious plan for bringing foreign regiments permanently into the British Isles.[1] The resulting division of 106 to the Government's 224 was even better than the division of 104–240 with which debate was concluded on February 20th after Fox had moved for inquiring into the causes of the military failures in America and the defection of the French-Canadians.[2]

That such debates should have gone before, and that others even more delicate on Hessian and Brunswick troop-hiring treaties and the Scottish Militia Bill should be due to follow before Easter, made it all the more useful for Administration that cheerful instead of depressing news was at last to hand from Canada on February 22nd.[3] That the dreaded American assault on Quebec should have been decisively repulsed on New Year's Day with heavy losses in American dead and prisoners, certainly led to encouraging ideas of what would happen when the great British blow fell, whose preparation was stimulating industrial activity, already great. The first immediate result of the good Canadian news may well, indeed, have been the ominous "patriot" defeat in London when Wilkes was baulked of election to the City Chamberlainship whose £2000 of annual income would have given him financial independence. Though strongly supported by "patriot" friends, alive to the advantages of moving the burdens

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, pp. 124*–8*. The Irish Parliament, however, had declined the foreign troops offered by the Crown. In the *Annual Register*'s words: "The Commons of Ireland granted the 4000 troops which were demanded; but—notwithstanding the naked and defenceless state in which that Kingdom was left exposed, and the irresistible force with which administration carried all other questions through that assembly, the measure of accepting the foreign troops was, however, deemed so dangerous, and was so generally odious, as, after great debates, and the most vigorous exertions in its support to be rejected by a considerable majority."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 340, for an Administration admission that this debate had been on a high level and continued till half-past two in the morning.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 339. The news came via Boston from which place a British officer had just made a passage in the astonishing time of eighteen days. It should be remembered that the complete isolation of Quebec from England during the winter was the Government's greatest anxiety.

of his maintenance from their own shoulders to those of the "public",[1] Wilkes was, on February 26th, found to have polled only 2710 votes against the 2887 of a brother-Alderman of damaged reputation. Wilkes, of course, put the blame on Administration's corruption and the efforts of a Bank of England Directorate, guilty of advancing eight millions to the Government in improper circumstances. But though he announced his intention to re-fight the issue at the City's midsummer nominations, the February defeat could hardly have helped him. It is certainly singular to find that, re-stimulated though the "popular cause" undoubtedly was by the remarkable success of Dr. Price's trenchant *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty, the Principles of Government, and the Justice and Policy of the War with America*,[2] pamphleteering scarce inferior to Paine's contemporary *Common Sense* at Philadelphia,[3] Wilkes's motion of March 20th[4] for "a more fair and equal representation of the people" received only what is described as "very jocular treatment".[5] And when, after the Easter Recess, Wilkes associated representational changes and Shorter Parliaments with the annual Opposition demand for a reversal of the "illegal" Commons Resolution of February 17, 1769, incapacitating him,[6] the resulting division of April 30th, at 92 against 186, was much less promising than the 171–239 of 1775.

Before concluding the account of the Session it is necessary, for a moment, to look back to the pre-Easter business on Scottish Militia and Hessian and Brunswick troop-hiring treaties. In view of the well-nigh unanimous Scottish support for Administration, the result of the anti-Scottish diatribes "patriots" had unremittingly directed against Bute, the Government-supported Bill to introduce Militia arrangements into Scotland had given trouble in England at once.[7] From the "patriot" standpoint it was, of course, easy to show that Scotland had not been provided with

[1] Cf. W. P. Treloar, *Wilkes and the City*, pp. 174, 193–7.

[2] Cf. *Critical Review*, February 1776, for long extracts despite an hostility, marked again by the periodical's friendly reception of the long succession of counter-pamphlets reviewed in later numbers. It may be remarked that the City Freedom was voted to Dr. Price "in a gold box to the value of £50".

[3] *Complete Editions of Paine's Works* often give extracts from letters of Generals Washington and Lee in January 1776 showing how their reading of *Common Sense* prepared them for Independence.

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, Chronicle, under March 20th. [5] *Ibid.*

[6] *Ibid.*, under April 30th.

[7] *Ibid.*, History, pp. 140*–1*: "Besides the apparent weight and sanction of administration, this bill was eagerly patronised by the gentlemen of North Britain; but notwithstanding these powerful supports, it met with a strong, and

England's new-style Militia arrangements of 1757 because it was then still under suspicion of Jacobitism, and that the proposal to bestow such organisation upon Scotland in 1776 might conceal very dangerous views on the part of the Court, now become Scotland's idol. If a "patriot" case of this kind carried no great weight with the "independent country gentlemen" of England, there was undeniable suspicion among them that the eagerness of Scotland's nobility and gentry for a Scottish Militia proceeded partly, at least, from a desire to stand well at Court and to handle the patronage and pickings Militia arrangements brought. It thus became the "independent" case against the Bill to show both that Scotland was much less exposed than England to the consequences of Bourbon intervention in the American War, and that Scottish Militia expenses would be borne almost entirely by England since Scotland paid only one-fortieth of the Land-Tax, upon which Militia costs were charged. Opposition, indeed, could have asked for nothing better than such a Land-Tax case to put to the "independent country gentlemen" as was shown on March 20th when Government experienced the set-back of a defeat by 112 against 95 at the end of the Committee stage.[1]

The loss of the semi-official Militia Bill, annoying though it was, subtracted only part of the profit Administration had won from having put through the Hessian and Brunswick troop-treaties by such comfortable majorities as the 242 against 88 of February 29th in the Commons and the 100 against 32 of March 5th in the Lords. Opposition's case on these treaties, on the ensuing business of the vast Army extraordinaries, hotly debated for three March days in the Commons, and finally on Grafton's Conciliation motion of March 14th in the Lords, hardly needs detailed treatment. On the troop-treaties, for example, it is sufficient to say that Opposition declaimed upon the theme that Ministers, having driven the King's American subjects to arms, were hiring Germans to butcher them and agreeing to pay the German princelings concerned extravagant terms under treaties that bristled with dubious clauses.[2] Then in the debates aroused by the announcement

at length effectual opposition. Many of the country gentlemen were extremely jealous of this novel attempt. In this contest, it was ably controverted in all its stages. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 142*.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 130*–7*, for a convenient summary containing such revealing passages as this: "That clause in the 9th article of the Hessian treaty, which provides that the Crown shall employ those troops as it thinks proper by land

that £845,165 would have to be voted for supplemental Army expenses incurred between March 9, 1775, and January 31, 1776, Opposition undertook to prove that the Blenheim campaign and the Canada operations of 1760, producing the French surrender, had each cost less than had been spent on maintaining at Boston 8500 wretched, disgraced and half-starving troops. It was doubtless well for Administration that on March 11th it secured a division of 180–57 on the Army expenses and on March 14th a Lords' division of 91–31 against Grafton's Conciliation proposal. Such divisions would hardly have been obtainable if it could have been known that, across the Atlantic, at that very time, General Howe was hurriedly completing arrangements for taking his long-imperilled army off by sea from Boston to Halifax, Nova Scotia. Nor would reports of the joyful American entry into Boston on March 17th have helped Administration if they had been available before the Easter Recess.[1]

By the time Parliament had met, after Easter, to conclude the Session, excellent Canadian intelligence of British ships forcing their way to Quebec long before the usual time, was available, to offset any depression that might come from the Boston news.[2] Moreover it was known that new and powerful British forces would soon be coming into action in the South, where the British Governors of Virginia and North Carolina were still making a fight from warships off the coast, while further north Admiral Howe was to bring a huge armament to the assistance of his brother, the General, who was expected to make an attempt to seize New

in Europe, was much commented on by the noble mover [the Duke of Richmond], and other lords on the same side, and represented as bearing a most dark and dangerous complexion. It was asked, what country in Europe except these Kingdoms, they could be employed in? What military operations were intended for them here? . . ."

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 345, under May 10th, for the use the pro-Americans endeavoured to make of the news when it came: "there was no capitulation between Washington and General Howe when our troops quitted Boston,—Howe never meant to begin any operations from Boston, and left it but some days sooner than he intended as provisions were falling short. They were ten days embarking, carried off twelve ships laden with cannon, and what cannon they left was spiked. Why the rebels let them go off so very quietly, they best know themselves; but true it is, though the mock patriots tell another story." Opposition, it is plain, was trying to infer both that the British withdrawal had been assisted by American magnanimity, and that the British had yet been compelled to leave much valuable military material behind.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, History, p. 152* ,for the three British relief ships which "with great labour, conduct and resolution, having forced their way through the ice, arrived at Quebec before the passage was deemed practicable" early in March.

York. With a more hopeful and more resolute temper pervading Administration's vast majority, Opposition hardly ended the Session with *éclat*. A cry was, indeed, raised about the alleged favour shown by Administration in allotting licences for export to America not to the old-established merchants, who had lost their normal trade thither and would have been glad of substitute business in troop provisioning, but to new-comers who made large fortunes by abusing the licence conditions. But after Lord North tactfully admitted that some abuses had occurred which had since been stopped, Opposition's teeth were drawn.[1] A Vote of Credit for a million was obtained for financing the war over the Recess; Opposition's demand for copies of the instructions given to the Conciliation Commissioners, Admiral Howe and General Howe, was brushed aside;[2] and on May 23rd the King's Speech proroguing Parliament, spoke confidently of the assured tranquillity of relations with the Continent.[3]

In June excellent news again arrived from Canada where the American collapse was now such as apparently to offer very bright prospects to British troops who should follow the retreating Americans into upper New York. A curious light on Opposition's attitude to the triumphant British reconquest of Canada is furnished by the following letter of June 24th from Fox, now Opposition's most dashing representative in Parliament, to Lord Ossory, his political ally.[4]

"It will give the tools and Tories here", wrote Fox of the news, "such spirits as to make them insufferable. As to myself, you know little matters do not oppress me much. I am still convinced the Americans will finally succeed, whether by victories or defeats; and if they do not, I am sure . . . that it will check all future enterprise to such a degree as to give the completest triumph to Toryism that it ever had. I suppose the particulars of this news will be in tomorrow's Gazette, to which I refer you for them. Whatever happens for God's sake let us all resolve to stick by them [the Americans] as handsomely . . . in their adversity as we have done in their glory, and still maintain the Whig cause, however discredited by defeats, to be the only true principle for this country. The *sérieux* of this letter may probably make you think

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 142*–3*. North had consented to go into Committee of the Whole House on the question, and Opposition after producing witnesses carried on the resulting debate of May 8th till five next morning.

[2] It was General Conway who moved on this occasion.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, State Papers, p. 257: "it is with pleasure I inform you, that the assurances which I have received of the dispositions of the several powers in Europe, promise a continuance of the general tranquillity".

[4] Lord John Russell, *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 143.

me more dispirited than I am by this news. I am really not much so myself; but I see such strange dispositions in others to despond on every trifling disadvantage, that I fear the effect it may have upon them. . . ."

Another and more experienced Oppositionist who was finding the times hard was Wilkes. Proposed anew for the City Chamberlainship on June 24th, he finally found himself repulsed after some days of polling by 2869 votes against 1673. In a bitter speech[1] Wilkes thus described and explained the collapse of the "patriot" cause in the City:[2]

By the late transactions, the moment seems to have at length arrived so ardently wished by every administration, when a majority of the livery appear to have sold and surrendered the capital to the ministry. By the creation of so many unnecessary lucrative offices, the division and subdivision of contracts, the threats of the opulent and insolent to the necessitous and dependent tradesmen, and all the captious promises of power, the greater number of the livery seem at present either lulled into supmeness and a fatal security, or enrolled among the mercenaries of corruption and despotism. No longer worthy the name of freemen, they are sunk into tame, mean vassals, ignominiously courting, and bowing their necks to the ministerial yoke. Such, gentlemen, it gives me pain to think, is the faithful, but melancholy picture of this once free and independent city. All public spirit in the capital is visibly decaying. . . . A dissolution of the empire, ruin, and slavery, are, I fear, advancing with giant strides upon us. We are ripe for destruction. If we are saved, it will be almost solely by the courage and noble spirit of our American brethren, whom neither the luxuries of a court, nor the sordid lust of avarice in a rapacious and venal metropolis, have hitherto corrupted. . . .

Opposition in the City and in Parliament was destined to find matters grow even worse before they grew better. Thus when the very big British preparations against New York were balanced by a failure against Charleston in the South and by the American Declaration of Independence, the Rockingham Opposition half-adopted a plan for seceding from Parliament during the coming Session. By abandoning Parliamentary attendance the Rockinghams hoped to make a demonstration more likely than any other to concentrate public attention on the increasingly dangerous paths into which Administration, with its irresistible Majority

[1] Wilkes needed the Chamberlainship's income for his finances were now desperate. Of his financial plight till the Chamberlainship was ultimately obtained for him, Wilkes found it wisest to ascribe responsibility to heavy expenses during his years as Sheriff and Lord Mayor. In November 1779, when Wilkes was finally elected, the tide had turned again towards the "patriots".

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, Chronicle, p. 154.

was alleged to be dragging the nation. But this plan was apparently adopted on the supposition that the assured tone of Washington and Congress in refusing to treat with the Howes as Conciliation Commissioners or, indeed, on any other basis than Independence, meant that the Americans were confident of their ability to hold New York.[1] But when the great British blow was struck and the Americans were swept in disaster, first, off Long Island, then out of New York City, and, finally, out of the most valuable part of New York State, there was some consultation on a change of plan. Charles Fox, for example, uneasily conscious though he was that the American defeats had been of such dimensions as to threaten the complete collapse of the American military organisation, asked Rockingham nevertheless to organise the greatest possible Opposition attendance for the opening of Parliament on October 31st. The beginning of the Session, at any rate, ought, he urged, to find Opposition refusing to be so disheartened as to seem to give up their case by default in face of a temporarily exultant Majority. Instead Opposition should issue an exhortation asking that the advantageous opportunity for accommodation with the Americans should be promptly seized or even suggesting that British liberties would be endangered if the Royal armies obtained peace in America, not by accommodation, but by subjugation.[2]

Opposition decided, in fact, to make a demonstration at the opening of the Session and, then, on the expected revelation of its complete inability to stay Administration's course, to abandon public business to the heedless Majority. But even before Parliament met, Opposition was made aware of the existence of a yet unused weapon in the Court's armoury when Proclamations were issued setting aside Friday, December 13th as a day of public fast and humiliation. In all the churches of the country the Almighty was to be invoked that day speedily to deliver the King's loyal subjects in North America from the violence, injustice and tyranny of those daring rebels, who had assumed to themselves

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 144–5: "What I lay the principal stress on in all this news is, 1st, that the Congress and Washington seem to be in perfect unison; and, 2ndly, that both of them, being fully apprised of the force prepared against them, do not think it even worth while to amuse the enemy by hopes of a treaty. . . . If they have common sense, and surely that is not to be doubted, they must be pretty secure at New York in their opinions. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 145–7, for Fox on October 13th as soon as he heard the first "terrible news from Long Island".

the exercise of arbitrary power; to open the eyes of those who had been deluded by specious falsehoods into acts of treason and rebellion; to turn the hearts of the authors of these calamities; and finally to restore the people of the King's American dominions to the happy condition of being free subjects in a free State.[1] Against this way of stating the Court's case it was, of course, almost impossible for Opposition members to campaign but they did make a struggle against similar self-righteousness in the Speech from the Throne as well as point meaningfully to that Speech's hint of further measures of Home Defence despite the reported friendly assurances of Continental powers.[2] Motions from Rockingham in the Lords and his lieutenant, Lord John Cavendish, in the Commons led, in fact, to debates in which the Speech from the Throne was hotly attacked and the whole Opposition case against Administration's American policy restated. The panegyrics which Ministers were alleged to have composed on themselves were, of course, derided; the Speech's pretence that the American Declaration of Independence should produce national unity in England was treated as a bad joke;[3] and a lively fear was expressed lest the Bourbon Courts, already bullying the British ally, Portugal, should be presented by Administration's folly with an American alliance. The Declaration of Independence was even treated as the deliberate production of the Ministers' own policy for, how else, it was asked, than by a crooked desire to win national approval for pretended moderation could Administration's recent policy be explained—the announcement of Conciliation Commissioners in November 1775 who did not appear on the American scene until July 1776 when the Americans had already been successfully goaded into the Independence Declaration by the adoption and enforcement of the ruthless Bill for the seizure of all American ships and cargoes? The old anxiety, moreover, as to what might happen in England if military subjugation were successfully

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, Chronicle, p. 188, under October 30th.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1777, State Papers, pp. 275–6, for: "I am happy to inform you, that by the blessing of Divine Providence on the good conduct and valour of my officers and forces by sea and land . . . Canada is recovered . . ." and "I continue to receive assurances of amity from the several courts of Europe . . . I think nevertheless that, in the present situation of affairs, it is expedient that we should be in a respectable state of defence at home."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 37: "Was ever any thing more truly ridiculous [said the Opposition] than the calling for unanimity in measures, because those measures had been uniformly productive of all the mischiefs which have been foreseen and predicted? . . ."

effected in America was once again expressed,[1] and there were those in Opposition who were still prepared to maintain that the withdrawal of British troops from America and the repeal of obnoxious British laws would recapture the allegiance of grateful Americans. But a majority of 242 against 87 in the Commons and one of 91 against 26 in the Lords was quite unprepared to venture upon such acts of faith. Nor had it yet given any serious attention to Adam Smith's tentative suggestion, in an already famous book, for a voluntary British emancipation of the Colonies in return for a favourable long-term Trade Treaty and the hope, after such a friendly parting, that ties of blood, language and history would continue to draw the emancipated Colonies into the same political and even military co-operation with Britain as Greek colonies had practised towards their Mother Cities.[2] And if Smith's magnificent sanity was not yet practical politics, still less so was Tucker's shriller affirmation, that, British victories notwithstanding, England was fighting for what was ultimately untenable and, in any case, opposed to British interests.[3]

Before undertaking so questionable a step as secession, Opposition made another Parliamentary demonstration on November 6th. A new proclamation of the Howes, acting as Conciliation Commissioners, had been issued in America inviting Americans to negotiate, independently of Congress. The great inducement held out was that altered instructions from the King had now been received which would permit the Commissioners to go much

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 34, which quotes Lord John Cavendish's amendment to the Address.

[2] *The Critical Review* was so impressed by the *Wealth of Nations* on its very first appearance that it gave the book articles in four successive numbers, those of March, April, May and June 1776. It held, moreover, that while the "rational theory which he [Smith] has developed of national prosperity will remain equally permanent and just in every age and country" England was fortunate to be able to derive some temporary utility also from the work since, "among other important subjects, the learned author has treated, with great knowledge, judgement, and candour, of the controversy with our colonies". It would appear that though Smith put the case for a voluntary emancipation of the Colonies hypothetically, and only to dismiss it as politically impracticable, the reviewers appreciated its strength at once.

[3] Cf. *A Series of Answers to certain popular Objections, against separating from the rebellious Colonies, and discarding them entirely* to which pamphlet the *Critical Review* still thought proper to devote over five pages of its number for November 1776 though, as Tucker himself ruefully admitted, the late British successes might temporarily make "a great alteration in some men's minds, respecting the necessity or expediency of a total separation". Tucker thought that the British successes, if properly utilised, would permit an advantageous settlement of the Loyalist problem.

farther in meeting the American point of view. The Howes' Proclamation of September 19th, with its promise to respect Colonial legislative rights and to concur in the revision of burdensome British Statutes, won, indeed, great temporary success as was evidenced by the large numbers who flocked in to headquarters to make their submission.[1] When Opposition members raised the debate of November 6th it was not, of course, that they objected to the comparative lenity being offered the Americans, for they were prepared to carry lenity a good deal farther than Administration. Opposition objected, first, to the form in which Parliament had been left to hear of the important American developments that had taken place. No greater contempt of Parliament could have been shown, they alleged, than to allow members to learn of the changes in America, not from a Ministerial statement or from the columns, at least, of the *London Gazette*, but from the unauthenticated reports of a morning newspaper. There was special complaint, moreover, of what might be the ultimate constitutional effect of first blackening Parliament in American and other eyes by making it pass rigorously coercive legislation and, then, when such legislation was discovered to be completely inexecutable, to assume for the King the merits of undertaking mitigation. And after Opposition's objections had been overruled in a division of 109–47, figures showing, perhaps, that some partial secession had already begun, the Rockinghams could proceed with the full secession plan, satisfied that relatively strong ground had been chosen. Fractions of Opposition, indeed, remonstrated and declined compliance but the bulk of Opposition members seem to have been satisfied with the Majority's discomfort as they trooped out day after day when American or other contentious business was reached. They hoped, too, that the "public" and the newspapers would be affected by this continuous demonstration.

If Opposition's secession allowed a smooth passage for the huge Naval Estimates introduced on November 8th and the parallel Army Estimates of November 16th, and this though such business meant much larger additions to the National Debt than had been necessary hitherto, part of the Majority was not altogether easy on the automatic registration of Administration's decisions that was now taking place.[2] It illustrates, perhaps, the Court's more

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1776, Chronicle, under September 19th.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1777, History, pp. 48–50, for a discussion of the secession: "Though by this means a clear field was left to the ministers, and the vast

questionable side to find George III urging on North, not the politic restraint wisest in the circumstances but a hurrying forward of Government business in the apparently favourable conditions brought about by Opposition's abstention. "Bring as much forward before the recess as you can", wrote George to North on hearing of Fox's approaching departure for Paris, "as real business is never so well considered as when the attention of the House is not taken up by noisy declamation."[1] And certainly, during a Christmas Recess lasting from December 13, 1776, to January 21, 1777, Opposition was again in doubt as to whether secession had been the wisest course and how long it could be continued. Burke, for example, advised Rockingham against an immediate return to Parliament but confessed both that American prospects were of the bleakest and that Opposition's attempt to justify secession in such an Address to the King as he prepared would, in the existing temper of the "public", be unpopular and possibly dangerous.[2]

The introduction of a new Government measure in February that Dunning, Opposition's ex-Solicitor-General, found very open to attack brought some revival of controversial politics. Alleging Government's need of special powers to arrest and hold treason suspects as well as to keep, in other places than the gaols, Americans taken red-handed in treason or "piracy", North introduced a Bill that Opposition at once found sinister. The designation of "piracy" for American naval and privateer operations was naturally disliked whatever the formal legal justification, and there was no desire to give the Crown power to sweep entire American communities, allegedly suspect, into an indefinite confinement, unchallengeable by Habeas Corpus and in the most distant parts of the world. But

articles of supply were carried without a debate; yet these silent votes, in the granting and disposal of such immense sums of the national treasure, was by no means so pleasant a circumstance, as might at first be imagined; the trouble of being obliged to listen to the arguments of a minority . . . and of undergoing occasionally the fatigues of a late evening, being abundantly compensated by that sanction, which a decided majority afforded . . . the passing of such resolutions without debate or enquiry, seemed in some degree to leave them open for future discussion. . . ."

[1] W. B. Donne, *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, under November 15, 1776.

[2] Cf. Burke's *Speeches and Letters on American Affairs* (Everyman Edition), for the Letter to the Marquis of Rockingham dated January 6, 1777. Burke thought it possible that the Address might lead to the prosecution of some of the Whig leaders and asked dubiously: "The only question is, whether the risk ought to be run for the chance (and it is no more) of recalling the people of England to their ancient principles, and to that personal interest which formerly they took in all public affairs?"

Opposition's main contention was that, by copying and improving upon past enactments in regard to purely domestic rebellion, Administration was taking the power to suspend Habeas Corpus in Britain as well as in America and, what was more, to sweep alleged British suspects, like American, at pleasure to the ends of the earth in a fashion undreamt of in 1715 and 1745. To quote the *Annual Register*'s summary of the gloomiest Opposition forecast:[1]

> This secure and unoffending Englishman may find himself suddenly seized, carried off without warning from his family, transported to the Highlands of Scotland, the rock of Gibraltar, the burning coasts of Africa, the most pestilential and loathsome dungeon in the putrid marshes of Bengal, or to any other part of this wide-extended empire, in which it is thought fitting to institute prisons by the sign manual. There he may continue to languish during the term of this bill, without a possibility of legal succour. . . . When the act expires, indeed, if it is not renewed, and the unhappy sufferer has still preserved life, through the horrors of captivity, and the stench of his dungeon, he may again return to his native country. He may then, perhaps, be tempted to inquire what he was confined and banished for; the answer is ready, "for treason"; as he is conscious of his innocence, he will endeavour to throw himself upon the laws of his country for justice . . . but the ministerial agent, by whom he was kidnapped, will laugh in his face, and tell him there was no charge, but he was suspected; and, producing this act of parliament, it will be an effectual plea. . . .

These dire prophecies served notably to stimulate Opposition. The City "patriots", helped by the discontent that Admiralty press-warrants provoked when executed in defiance of alleged City privileges,[2] once again succeeded in carrying the Court of Common Council for a unanimous Petition to the Commons against a Government Bill.[3] At Westminster, meanwhile, the Rockingham policy of secession was temporarily abandoned by more Opposition politicians, anxious to participate in Dunning's fight against the Bill. Fox, for example, who had been in Paris

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, History, pp. 56–7.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 28, for a summary: "The Lord Mayor claimed an exemption for the watermen of his barge. The City claimed an exemption from pressing within its jurisdiction. The court of King's Bench held that these claims did not appear to them supported by adequate proof. This dispute continued very hotly for a time, and ended without any definitive decision on several of the most material points of law. However the right of pressing seemed to grow in strength, and all ideas of local or personal exemptions, to lose ground very considerably."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under February 14th.

when the first reports of a Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill were heard, decided, though incredulous, to return[1] and had the satisfaction of finding North offering concessions, on February 13th, despite Administration's Second Reading victory by 195 votes against 43. North's offer to alter the Act so as to make it impossible, in any circumstances, to deport British suspects out of the realm seems to have caused some trouble between him and other figures in Administration, more intent on overriding Opposition altogether.[2] It was a circumstance encouraging Opposition to fight to the end in a way that had not been seen for some time, and to renew the struggle on the huge war-expense figures that the Commons were being asked to accept on February 21st. While the Majority still had the brightest hopes of the 1777 campaign and while Versailles intelligence confidently reported the complete official neglect of Franklin's suggestions of Franco-American Alliance,[3] what Westminster Opposition there was could hardly have done better than concentrate on Habeas Corpus Suspension and swollen war-expenses. On war-expenses, North certainly seems to have been at pains to rebut Opposition complaints of the exaggerated freight-rates alleged to be paid by Administration and the war-contracts given, it was said, with one eye on politics and resulting in hospitals filled as a consequence of the poor beef, tainted pork and bad flour supplied. Two Opposition charges appear to have perturbed North more than most of the others, and they shall be given as examples. One concerned an expense account of £35,000 for rum that Opposition discovered to specify neither the quantity supplied nor the price paid per gallon. The other turned on a payment of £44,000 made to the Landgrave of Hesse because that princeling, over and above the advantages offered him in the late troop-hiring treaties, chose to consider himself entitled to extra sums under a treaty of 1755.[4]

A matter destined to give Administration great trouble even in

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 154.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 154–5.

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 353–63, for three letters of January and February 1777 to the Queen's Secretary, James Harris, M.P. On January 30, 1777, Mr. Harris was told of Franklin: "Certain it is that if he has any powers from the Congress he is ashamed to show them, as I believe he is well informed that the Ministry here will acknowledge no power in the Congress. He never has been at Court, or with any of the Ministers . . . Government laughs at him and his character, and acknowledges him in no other but in that of a fugitive from his country. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, History, pp. 67–71.

the very confident spring of 1777 came on in April. Despite Parliament's paying off £500,000 of Civil List debt in 1769, another great debt had now accumulated. For some time, therefore, Administration had been awaiting a favourable opportunity to propose both the paying off of this new debt and a permanent increase in the Crown's Civil List which should prevent accumulations of such debt in the future. With over £600,000 of debt, owed to all manner of Court purveyors, Palace servants, pensioned officials and the rest, the matter was urgent enough, and no more favourable moment for proposing it was likely to occur than at a time when the Majority was confident and Opposition divided, depressed and discredited. On April 9th, accordingly, Lord North, whose Parliamentary management, with its happy appearance of constitutional moderation, was deemed indispensable, found himself obliged, before he was completely recovered from an illness that had disturbed the Session considerably, to appear in Parliament with a Message from the Throne.[1] The Message drew Parliament's attention to the state of the Civil List accounts and was, of course, accompanied by much material in support of Administration's case. In the customary forms, a resolution was passed agreeing to take the Royal Message into consideration on April 16th when it seemed probable Opposition would return to Westminster in virtually full force. It was the most favourable chance the Session had yet yielded, and Opposition had an old grudge about George III's alleged misuse of his Civil List for political purposes.

On April 16th, then, Opposition attended Parliament in large numbers to challenge North's account of why it was that he was demanding £618,340 to discharge Civil List debts, already accumulated, and a further £100,000 per annum to add to the £800,000 of Civil List revenues voted at the beginning of the reign. If Administration argued that £800,000 per annum could not suffice for George III, as it had done for George II, because prices had risen and George III's family was large, Opposition had other reasons to give. Even by Administration's own accounts, made, it was alleged, to defeat rather than to aid investigation, Opposition claimed to find that George III's last octennium, when compared with George II's, showed £113,298 more spent in one branch of pensions, £80,846 more spent in another, and £65,559 more spent

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, State Papers, p. 281.

in Secret Service.[1] And just as Opposition claimed that these increases of expenditure, contributing so powerfully to the alleged difficulties of the Civil List, had had no other end than greater Crown influence, so they denounced a system of so-called accounting which entered over half-a-million of Board of Works expenditure without a single detail and gave just two lines to sums of £171,000 and £114,000 entered as Secret Service payments through the Secretaries of the Treasury. Another complaint of Opposition was Administration's alleged pretence that the Crown was only asking its own, or less than its own, in the requests put forward, since the increase in the Crown's "hereditary revenues" would more than suffice to pay off Civil List debts and provide an additional £100,000 per annum for the Civil List of the future. There was, in fact, a double danger about this attempt of Administration to go behind the arrangement of 1760 by which George III, anxious to play the "Patriot King", resigned his claims to the so-called "hereditary revenues" in return for Parliament's adding their assumed equivalent to the other sums paid into the Civil List by specific Parliamentary direction. The mere phrase "hereditary revenues" had its constitutional dangers since it ignored, how in every reign since the Revolution, Parliament had directed their application to the Civil List and even on occasion withdrawn some of their yield for other purposes.[2] Moreover the boasted surplus in these revenues was, it was claimed, largely the result of the Post Office Act of 1765, passed at a time when there was not the slightest notion that increased Post Office profits would be half-claimed for the Crown.

After such divisions as the 231–109 of April 18th in the Commons and the 90–26 of April 16th in the Lords, Ministers' preoccupations with their Civil List Bill should normally have ended

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 76.

[2] As Civil List complaints were to play a large part in Radical history and, even now, are far from disposed of, it might be well to put the Opposition's case of 1777. Here is a summary from the *Annual Register* of the year (History, pp. 81–2): "On the other side, the idea of considering the duties appropriated by parliament to the support of the civil list establishment, as an hereditary property, and the revenue of the crown as the entailed estate of a private gentleman, was laughed at by the opposition. Those duties, they said, belonged at no time to the Crown; they were always under the disposition of parliament. Even in the reign of King William . . . parliament withdrew £4000 a week of those duties, and applied it to other services. The grant of the forfeited estates, which had composed a part of the royal revenue, was resumed in the reign of Queen Anne, and with a charge of £700 a week upon the post-office, and other charges upon other branches of the civil-list fund were applied to the support of the war, and to other public exigencies. . . ."

with its presentation by the Speaker for the Royal signatures on May 7th. But the Speaker, for reasons best known to himself, had made of his short speech on this occasion almost a political reproof to the King, recounting how[1]

> ... in a time of public distress, full of difficulty and danger, their constituents labouring under burthens almost too heavy to be borne, your faithful commons postponed all other business; and with as much dispatch as the nature of their proceedings would admit, have not only granted to your majesty a large present supply, but also a very great additional revenue; great, beyond example; great beyond your majesty's highest expence.

Administration supporters hardly seem to have grasped the true nature of the Speaker's words until the printed text was available on May 9th, and even then it was probably unwise to attempt reprimand. The Commons had had, on May 7th, to accept yet another Hessian imposition in the shape of a hospital account dating back to the Seven Years War, and on May 9th they were debating an even more delicate subject on a motion of Sir James Lowther's virtually suggesting to the King, that now he had been so generously treated, it was time for him to do more for his brothers, the Dukes of Gloucester and Cumberland. In such circumstances Rigby,[2] Administration's hardest hitter, was mistaken in launching an attack on the Speaker in the course of his remarks on the Lowther motion. After this motion's inevitable defeat the Speaker took up the cudgels for himself and, on Rigby's renewed assault, was bold enough to offer the resignation of the Speakership rather than continue the object of Administration attack. He doubtless guessed that Administration could not afford just then to become involved in a first-class political scandal, and, in fact, thanks to Opposition's delighted intervention, he had the pleasure of seeing Government compelled to allow two Opposition motions in his favour to pass unopposed.[3]

The Speaker episodes of May 7th and 9th are reminders that Administration, despite its American successes and hopes, was playing a dangerous game and that the Speaker, for one, was possibly taking his precautions in case fortune turned in America and Europe. Before the Session ended on June 6th, Administration was destined to receive another ominous jolt. On May 30th

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, State Papers, p. 283.
[2] Paymaster of the Forces.
[3] *Annual Register*, 1777, History, p. 94.

the aged Chatham reappeared in the Lords to move an Address to the Throne and to announce Britain's impending ruin if the "unnatural war" against the Colonies were not speedily terminated by the removal of America's "accumulated grievances".[1] Rightly or wrongly Chatham expressed confidence that the acceptance of his resolution and the opening of negotiations under it would end American insistence on Independence. If, however, the opportunity was lost and the next few weeks allowed to pass away without conciliatory overtures, a Franco-American alliance was inevitable despite all the professions it still suited official France to make. The debate thus begun was ably sustained, and more than a few of those composing the majority of 99 against 28 must have been convinced that, unless a decisive victory could be quickly achieved, French intervention was unavoidable. The Paris Embassy's secret information on the source of the funds promoting arms-running into America must already have been considerable,[2] and the friendly reception accorded in French ports to the American privateers preying on British commerce was no longer to be concealed.[3]

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 110–12.

[2] Blair's *Chronological Tables* (ed. Bohn) gives under the date of April 4th: "The French government secretly supports the Americans; the marquis La Fayette and many officers proceed to join them." It should be added that Versailles was still cautious enough to issue a formal order forbidding the departure of La Fayette and his companions, an order by them disregarded. It is, moreover, difficult to disentangle the whole story of French help to the Americans, for some French-financed shipments of military supplies seem to have been made via Holland and the Dutch West Indies. British anger in regard to the conduct of the Governor of Dutch St. Eustatia had, in fact, already been made the occasion of a virtual British ultimatum to a country less formidable than France or Spain.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, History, p. 27, for a summary of the position in the winter of 1776–7: "In the mean time the French and Spanish ports, in Europe, began, some time before the close of the year, to swarm with American privateers, and to be crowded with their English prizes, which were at first openly sold without any colour of disguise. On remonstrances from this court, a little more decorum was observed; some check was given to the open and avowed sale of prizes; but the practice still continued. In the present unhappy state of affairs, it was thought necessary for a while to suspend the assertion of the national dignity. . . . In the West-Indies, the American depredations were carried on to a much greater extent, and much more avowedly countenanced in all the French Colonies. Even French ships took American commissions. . . ."

CHAPTER XIII

SARATOGA AND THE WAR WITH FRANCE, 1777–8

"On a subject which has for many months engrossed my thoughts, I cannot have the smallest difficulty instantly to answer the letter I have just received from you. My sole wish is to keep you at the head of the Treasury, and as my confidential minister. That end obtained, I am willing through your channel to accept any description of persons, that will come avowedly to the support of your Administration, and as such I do not object to Lord Shelburne and Mr. Barré, who personally, perhaps, I dislike as much as Alderman Wilkes, and I cannot give you a stronger proof of my desire to forward your wishes. . . . But I declare in the strongest and most solemn manner that though I do not object to your addressing yourself to Lord Chatham, yet that you must acquaint him that I shall never address myself to him but through you, and on a clear explanation that he is to step forth to support an Administration wherein you are First Lord of the Treasury. . . . I leave the whole arrangement to you, provided Lord Suffolk, Lord Weymouth, and my two able Lawyers are satisfied as to their situations. . . . Having said this, I will only add, to put before your eyes my most inward thoughts, that no advantage to this country, nor personal danger to myself, can ever make me address myself to Lord Chatham, or any other branch of Opposition. Honestly, I would rather lose the crown I now wear than bear the ignominy of possessing it under their shackles. . . . Should Lord Chatham wish to see me before he gives his answer, I shall most certainly refuse it. I have had enough of personal negotiations, and neither my dignity nor my feelings will ever let me again submit to it. Men of less principle and honesty than I pretend to may look on public measures as a game. I always act from conviction, but I am shocked at the base arts all these men have used; therefore cannot go towards them; if they come to your assistance, I will accept them. You have now full powers to act, but I do not expect Lord Chatham and his crew will come to your assistance; but if they do not, I trust the rest of the arrangement will greatly strengthen. . . . Administration. Numbers we have already. . . ."

George III declines to change North for Chatham, March 15, 1778.

To read such a product of the American Independence party as the successive numbers of Paine's *Crisis* is to become convinced that Administration had some justification for its view that the bulk of unofficial America was tired of the war and anxious to purchase a reasonable peace by agreeing to some restoration of the British connection. The dominant Republican cliques, who had been taken to power on the successive waves of agitation blown up between 1765 and 1775, hardly seem to have enjoyed much credit in the spring of 1777 when, with ruined trade and broken currency, America, still without the promised European allies, faced greater military shocks than in 1776. Here, for example, is Paine, on April 19, 1777, spitting fury at the "toryism" that had come to terms in New York and was ready, with Quaker aid, to do so in Philadelphia:[1]

> The principal causes why independence has not been so universally supported as it ought, are *fear* and *indolence* and the causes why it has been opposed, are *avarice*, *down-right villainy*, and *lust of personal power*. There is not such a being in America as a tory from conscience; some secret defect or other is interwoven in the character of all those, be they men or women, who can look with patience on the brutality, luxury and debauchery of the British Court, and the violations of their army here. A woman's virtue must sit very lightly on her who can even hint a favourable sentiment in their behalf. It is remarkable that the whole race of prostitutes in New York were tories; and the schemes for supporting the tory cause in this city, for which several are now in jail, and one hanged, were concerted and carried on in common bawdy-houses, assisted by those who kept them.... All we want to know in America is simply this, who is for independence, and who is not? Those who are for it, will support it, and the remainder will undoubtedly see the reasonableness of paying the charges; while those who oppose or seek to betray it, must expect the more rigid fate of the jail and the gibbet.... In every former publication of mine, from *Common Sense* down to the last *Crisis*, I have gone on the charitable supposition that the tories were rather a mistaken than a criminal people.... I have done my duty by them and have now done with that doctrine, taking it for granted, that those who yet hold their disaffection, are, either a set of avaricious miscreants, who would sacrifice the continent to save themselves, or a banditti of hungry traitors, who are hoping for a division of the spoil....

That writing of this kind, containing dangerous propositions for the penal taxation of those not zealous for Independence, was

[1] *The Crisis*, No. 3.

of questionable propriety in one who had only arrived from England in 1775, was probably not lost on the "tories" of Philadelphia. They doubtless understood also how indifferent were the prospects of Washington's beaten army and how hollow some of the choicer rhetoric of Congress's phrase-mongers was beginning to sound. But the governing faction in every State Assembly and in Congress had gone too far to retreat, and only a succession of shattering American defeats, leaving no gleam of hope, promised to lend the alleged "tories" sufficient strength to overthrow the anti-British party everywhere in control of the machinery of justice, the State Militia and the Continental Army. In New England, indeed, there had hardly seemed to be the nucleus of a pro-British party left, in however disguised a form, so thorough had been the rooting out of "tories" and the confiscation of their property.[1] But following on the British reoccupation of Rhode Island in 1776, the rest of New England, too, might have seen some strange changes if General Burgoyne had finally succeeded in isolating it by occupying the line of the Hudson. The "tory" families, who would have returned in his wake to reclaim their property, would have furnished him with the framework of Colonial governments and would, doubtless, have advised on whom it was indispensable to pardon and who might safely be left for punishment.

This is not the place to recount how disaster overtook Burgoyne's ambitious plan to occupy the Hudson line by marching thither 8000 men from the specially reinforced army of Canada and, in addition, a fine train of artillery, numerous Indian auxiliaries and large numbers of Canadian bateaux men. Lord George Germaine certainly worked hard to give Burgoyne something like the numbers and equipment he had asked for, but he failed to impress sufficiently on Howe, who was intent on capturing Philadelphia, that Burgoyne was relying on help in the shape of an advance up the Hudson from New York. For three months, however, after Burgoyne opened his campaign on June 21st, his prospects seemed good. Indeed, when news reached home of his rapid capture of

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1775, Chronicle, under December 9th: "By letters from New-York of this date, the assembly of Rhode Island had passed an act, by which they had forfeited the real estates of Thomas Hutchinson, late governor of Massachusetts; Gilbert de Blois; Dr. Moffet; Samuel Sewel; George Rome; Jahaleel and Benjamin Brenton; to be sold for the use of the public; the amount to be applied to the defence of the liberty of America. The Preamble sets forth, that the above persons were traitors to the liberty of America."

powerfully-fortified Ticonderoga and his speedy and successful pursuit of the American forces that had abandoned its defence, there was news also of the species of panic that seemed to seize New England in consequence.[1] Unfortunately Burgoyne had clearly underrated the transport difficulties likely to attend his army when the troops were compelled, in wild and trackless country, almost to carry their tremendous equipment from the scenes of their lake-side victories to the first navigable points on the Hudson River.[2] By the time the army was on the Hudson, the effects of surprise had been lost and the panic had subsided. Moreover, some outrages by the Indian auxiliaries, which rumour wildly exaggerated, had put all Upper New York as well as New England at the service of those organising resistance. Before long strong forces were beginning to surround Burgoyne in a way whose dangers he failed soon enough to appreciate, owing to his reliance on the effects of a British advance from New York under Clinton, an advance only begun too late.

It is certainly ironical to find that in those late September days when the hemming-in of Burgoyne was beginning, very high hopes were still entertained at Court that the first panic reported from New England would bring about a collapse of resistance in that most embittered portion of revolted America. In October, again, news decisive enough to check the growing desire of France and Spain to prevent an American capitulation, was hoped for not only from Burgoyne but from Howe who, after worrying but failing to force Washington to action in New Jersey, had put himself on shipboard for a landing in Philadelphia's rear at the head of Chesapeake Bay. Even in the uncertain November days,

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1777, History, pp. 152–5: "At home the joy and exultation was extreme; not only at court, but with all those who wished the . . . unconditional submission of the colonies. . . . All the contemptuous and degrading charges which had been made by their enemies . . . were now repeated and believed. . . . It was not difficult to diffuse an opinion that the war in effect was over. . . . Nothing could exceed the astonishment and terror, which the loss of Ticonderoga, and its immediate consequences, spread throughout the New England provinces. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 153: "It will scarcely be believed in after times . . . that it cost an active and spirited army, without an enemy in force to impede his progress, not many fewer days in passing from one part to another of a country, than the distance, in a direct line, would have measured miles. . . . Besides that the country was a wilderness in almost every part of the passage, the enemy had cu large timber trees . . . so that the troops had several layers of these frequently to remove . . . they had no less than forty bridges to construct, besides others to repair; and one of these of log-work, over a morass two miles in extent. . . ."

when official Britain must already have guessed that something was seriously amiss with Burgoyne's army, an envious Europe was still reading Gazettes[1] full not only of Washington's heavy defeat at Brandywine and the British capture of Philadelphia but of Clinton's hurrying up the Hudson for a junction with Burgoyne whose outcome might apparently be more fatal to American Independence than Brandywine.

It is not, perhaps, surprising that the "patriots" appear to have reached their nadir when the Court was at its zenith. A study of City politics in 1777 seems, for example, to show Wilkes reduced to helplessness and suffering additional discredit from debts that were becoming too much for him. A renewed attempt on the City Chamberlainship at the June elections resulted not in solvency but in more unfortunate polling figures than before.[2] The City's choice for Lord Mayor, again, fell not on any of the "patriot" Aldermen put up on September 29th[3] but on one who was approved by the King and congratulated by the Lord Chancellor on the City's recovery "of that dignity, peace, and tranquillity, which had been lost and disturbed for many years past".[4] And on November 19th Wilkes's last financial hopes from the City must have seemed at an end when, despite careful and diplomatic preparation of the ground, the notion of rewarding his "past services to the public" by a grant of £500 per annum from the revenues of the Chamberlainship was rejected in the Common Council by a majority of 12 Aldermen and 96 Councillors

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 365, for the British Minister at Berlin to his colleague at Petersburg. "The *Bienfaisant* from Halifax", he writes "confirms the former accounts of Howe's victory, with little addition or diminution. Philadelphia is certainly ours, and Washington, after losing his baggage and artillery, escaped into the Jerseys. Government has not yet received Howe's despatches, but as these circumstances are taken from the *New York Gazette*, published by authority, they do not admit of a doubt. The same *Gazette* says that Clinton has sailed up the North River to join Burgoyne at Albany. No certain news from thence, but many reports of success; I own I doubt them. . . ."

[2] Cf. W. P. Treloar, *Wilkes and the City*, pp. 196–7. The polling figures were Hopkins, 2132, Wilkes, 1228. Here is a typical piece of election literature issued against Wilkes: "YOUR VOTE POLL AND INTEREST ARE DESIRED FOR JOHN WILKES CITIZEN AND JOINER TO BE CHAMBERLAIN HE HAVING MORE CREDITORS THAN ANYONE ELSE."

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1777, Chronicle, p. 202. The "patriots" put up were Oliver and Hayley, both M.P.'s for the City, and Sir Watkin Lewes. The show of hands was adjudged "greatly in favour of Esdaile and Kennett" and the Court of Aldermen declared Sir James Esdaile Lord Mayor for the ensuing year.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, under November 1st, for the Lord Chancellor's statement "that his majesty highly approved of the choice made by the city of London".

against 4 Aldermen and 69 Councillors.[1] Strangely enough the career of that other "patriot" notability, the "Parson of Brentford" seemed to be closing in irretrievable ruin almost simultaneously. Despite great audacity and legal ingenuity "Parson" Horne had at last been brought to book in July 1777 for describing the American victims of Lexington as "having been inhumanly murdered by the king's troops". The libel was contained in an advertisement sent to the Press by Horne's Constitutional Society as far back as June 1775 but neither the Special Jury of July 4, 1777, which found Horne guilty, nor the four Judges, who sentenced him to a year's imprisonment and £200 fine on November 24th, were any longer to be put off by the elaborate legal difficulties Horne sought to raise against the Attorney-General's information.[2]

Yet it is wise not to lose sight of the fact that, even in adverse circumstances, Wilkes still kept a following in the City and the *Annual Register* still devoted over twelve pages to Horne.[3] From such things and the surprising quantity of pro-American pamphleteering still being noticed by the *Reviews*,[4] it must be concluded that far-sighted contemporaries were not unaware that "patriotism" and Opposition might still have prospects in the event of ultimate military disaster.[5] When, indeed, news of

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, under October 23rd, November 4th and November 19th.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 240, for Horne's venturing, on November 19th, a last effort in arrest of judgement which delayed his sentence until November 24th. It may be mentioned that the sentence included, besides the fine and imprisonment, the finding, before release, of sureties for good behaviour for three years.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 234–45 and Chronicle, p. 211.

[4] *Monthly Review*, August 1777, for *A Letter to the Earl of Chatham* which advocates not only negotiations on the basis of Independence but the offer of compensation to the "sufferers in America!"; *A Letter to the English Nation . . . from which the absolute impossibility of reducing the Colonies will sufficiently appear*; and *Reflections on our present critical Situation*, three pro-American pamphlets, that is, to balance against two anti-American productions noticed in the same number. Or to take the less Whiggish *Critical Review* for January 1778, the two pamphlets noticed on the American question were, first, *Plan of Re-union between Great Britain and her Colonies*, advocating the offer to the Americans of complete equality of rights with Great Britain, and, then, *Thoughts on the present State of Affairs with America*, which is praised for ability and information but adjudged as follows: "It begins also with some degree of impartiality; but the American scale, gradually sinking, at last settles. . . ." It must be considered that dislike of the Court made the pro-American minority surprisingly active and persistent.

[5] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters*, for that of October 26, 1777, when there was already some apprehension: "I could have done nothing but describe suspense, and every newspaper told you that. Still we know nothing certain of the state of affairs; the very existence where, of the Howes, is a mystery. The General is

Burgoyne's surrender at Saratoga reached Parliamentarians on December 3rd, one observant friend of Administration not only prepared a correspondent for a possible British evacuation of Philadelphia in America but for large changes at home. Here, on December 4th, is Mr. Hooper, Commissioner of Customs, writing to James Harris, M.P., Comptroller to the Queen:[1]

> The Opposition are in very high spirits, and seem to conclude that the game is now in their hands. Indeed, the affairs of this kingdom in America seem to be now totally overset by the rash enterprising courage of one man. A sufficient supply of troops to sustain this shock cannot be had. The King of Prussia has stopped all recruits from Germany. Our Bishops have caused a rejection of the proposal from the Irish Catholics, and we have hardly a regiment of our own to spare. From Russia no assistance can be had.... Some late particulars in Lord Chatham's speeches in the House of Lords are much remarked on. Great encomiums on the King. Great abuse of the Ministers. The Americans driven into rash steps of assuring an independency by our insisting on unconditional submission; that the claim of independency was however absolutely inadmissible; but taxation must not be thought of. Some of revenue, however, there must be, but not by Act of Parliament; to any treaty on terms of independence no Minister ought on any account to set his hand, and much more to this effect. His Lordship has, they say, the appearance of being in as good health as at any time for many past years of his life....

Opposition and even Lord Chatham were not, however, destined to get quite the Session they were hoping for. Though tension and anxiety with regard to Burgoyne had undoubtedly clouded the Parliamentary atmosphere after the Houses' reassembly on November 20th, Brandywine and Philadelphia, followed as they were by German Town on October 3rd, had been great things to set against vague premonitions of evil in Upper New York. Accordingly despite an early and notable anti-Ministerial intervention by Chatham,[2] Administration carried, without special

said to have beaten Washington, Clinton to have repulsed three attacks, and Burgoyne to be beaten. The second alone is credited. Impatience is very high, and uneasiness increases with every day...."

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 368–9.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, p. 50, for a striking summary: "He declared that the House of Bourbon would break with us; that he knew their intentions to be hostile; and that the present, was the only time, in which parliament or the nation would have it in their power to treat with America. That France and Spain had done a great deal; but they had declined to do all that America desired. That America was at that time in an ill humour, and might then be detached from her connections with those powers, if reasonable terms of accommodation were held out to her; but if not the opportunity would be lost; an opportunity, which he foretold, we should never again have...."

difficulty, its business on the King's Speech and proceeded, with comparative ease, to renew Habeas Corpus Suspension, to pass Naval Estimates for 60,000 seamen, and to vote Land-Tax at 4*s.* in the pound. And if there was obvious dismay among Ministers when the Saratoga news came in on December 3rd, they must speedily have been fortified behind the scenes by Royal expressions of undiminished confidence and resolution. Certainly another scathing attack by Chatham on December 5th was repelled with assurance despite the veteran's use of inflammatory language, thus summarised by the *Annual Register*:[1]

> Among other causes to which . . . he attributed the unhappy change which had taken place in our public affairs, he particularly reprobated, in terms of the greatest bitterness, a court system, which he said, had been introduced and persevered in for the last fifteen years, of loosening and breaking all connection; destroying all faith and confidence; and extinguishing all principle. . . . A few men, he said, had got an ascendancy. . . ; by having the executive powers of the state at their command, they had been furnished with the means of creating divisions, and familiarising treachery. Thus were obscure and unknown men; men totally unacquainted with public business; pliable, not capable men; and the dregs, or renegades of parties, brought into the highest and most responsible stations; and by such men was this once glorious empire reduced to its present state of danger and disgrace. . . .

This was strong language in which could be identified not merely "obscure" men like Jenkinson[2] and Robinson,[3] content to manage behind the scenes the realities of Crown and Treasury "influence", but such leading Ministers, for example, as Sandwich, Weymouth and Rigby[4] whom contemporaries would have picked on

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 75–6.

[2] Cf. Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, i, 535–6: "Throughout the whole period of Lord North's Administration, from 1770 down to 1782, [Jenkinson's] Intercourse with the King, and even his Influence over the Royal Mind, were assumed to be constant. . . . In the House of Commons . . . the Speakers in Opposition continually affected to consider Lord North, together with the whole Cabinet, as played on by unseen Agents, who alone possessed the Secret of State, and the real confidence of the Crown. They did not scruple to designate Mr. Jenkinson as the Depository of this mysterious and undefined influence. . . ." Jenkinson was Master of the Mint already, and soon more.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 547–9 on "one of the most essential Functionaries of the Executive Government. . . . Robinson was the Depository of the "*Livre Rouge*", where were supposed, or asserted to be contained, the Names of those Members of one, if not of both Houses of Parliament, who were retained by, and devoted to, the Administration. . . ." Robinson was Joint-Secretary to the Treasury.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 541: "If Jenkinson might be esteemed the secret Oracle, to whom all those Men denominated the *King's Friends*, constantly looked for direction in difficult *Cases*, such as occasionally arose; Rigby was the avowed standard round whom they rallied. . . ." Rigby, a bold, ready, cynical speaker was

at once as the "dregs" of the "Bloomsbury Gang". Strengthened, however, by Royal approval, Ministers, obscure and notorious alike, found no need yet to grow desperate because Chatham abused them in the Lords and Fox, Burke and Barré hurled insults in the Commons. Chatham's invectives could be treated as the outpourings of a sick, irresponsible old man; the character and motives of Opposition's three leading orators in the Commons were open to all manner of question; and, finally, even Wilkes proved of service to illustrate to the moderate how there was no logical end to pro-Americanism. On December 10th Wilkes moved specifically for the repeal of the Rockingham Declaratory Act as the first of a list obnoxious to the Americans, and the offended Rockinghams[1] allowed him to be defeated by 160 votes against 12. After such an introduction Ministers found it easier to move and carry, against the protests of Opposition,[2] an adjournment of the House to so relatively distant a date as January 20th. And the division of 155 against 68 on Ministers' case, that all necessary business had been completed for some time to come, is hardly testimony that Saratoga had yet materially weakened their hold on the Commons.

Ministers had, in fact, not arranged a six-weeks Christmas Recess altogether for pleasure, and surprising activity was soon on foot, in which it is tempting to see a reflection of the Court's resolution to win the war and to carry the nation with it. The problem of replacing the wastage of Crown troops in America, greatly increased as it was by Saratoga, threatened, unless met with determination, to become increasingly difficult. Recruiting in Germany, despite the bounties offered, was falling off sharply, and Frederick of Prussia's refusal to allow passage for recruits through any part of his dominions made one serious difficulty the more.[3] Hopes of getting Russian troops had again proved delusive;

Paymaster and, after his death, was reported to have left "near half a million of public money".

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, p. 72: "Although a debate of some length ensued, the opposition in general were more taken up with a defence of the ground and principle on which the declaratory law had been founded . . . and in stating the particular situation of affairs, which, they insisted, had at that time rendered it not only a wise, but an absolutely necessary measure."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 73–5 for Opposition's counter-suggestion of a seven-day adjournment.

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 351–2, 365, for two letters from Elliot, British Minister in Berlin, who was convinced of Frederick's malevolent desire to distress England and prevent her reconquest of America. Even when Frederick's ability to worry England was reduced by the outbreak of the great

Catholic Irish in any numbers were unprocurable save by yet impossible concessions to their priests and gentry;[1] and there was nothing for it, therefore, but to appeal boldly to Britons themselves. Scotland could certainly be relied upon to do its best for Administration, and the Scots nobility and gentry undoubtedly exerted themselves to raise considerable Highland forces. Edinburgh and Glasgow, too, could be trusted to volunteer the bounty-money required to find a regiment each for the service though they, like others, might look for compensation to patronage in the regimental commissions and the profits possible on the War Office's allowances for clothing.

The mention of the compensations undoubtedly present in the minds of Scots recruiters, however loyal, suggests one inevitable line of criticism open to the Opposition. To prevent an unwelcome re-stimulation of anti-Scots and anti-Court suspicion in England, as well as to make use of England's vastly superior man-power, it was urgently necessary for thoroughly reputable recruiting leadership to be undertaken south as well as north of the Border. Efforts were, indeed, already on foot among the gentry of Wales and certain parts of England. In Manchester and Liverpool, moreover, the controlling elements that had already served the Crown well by their sharp revolt of 1775 against the pro-American Oppositionism of official London and Bristol, were ready to give a loyal lead once more. Manchester and Liverpool, in fact, each made itself responsible for raising a regiment of 1000 men, and Manchester soon enough to allow an official notice of January 3, 1778, to put the Royal Manchester Volunteers at the head of "the new intended corps" so far undertaken.[2] But the fact that the Manchester Volunteers were the only English corps yet mentioned as against seven Scottish corps[3] was a signal of a double danger

Austro-Prussian dispute on the Bavarian Succession, the anxiety of German Courts about the war-preparations, already being reported in January 1778, hardly facilitated British recruiting negotiations.

[1] The priests, apart altogether from the Penal Laws, could hardly be expected to encourage individual enlistment in regiments served by Protestant chaplains. Catholic Irish battalions, however, not merely frightened the Irish Parliament but raised the then insuperable problem of commissioning Catholic chaplains and subaltern, if not regimental, officers.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, Chronicle, pp. 161–2.

[3] *Ibid.* The Seven Scots corps are given as Col. William Gordon's (brother to Lord Aberdeen); Col. M'Kenzie's (Lord M'Leod); Lt.-Col. John M'Donnel's; Col. Francis M'Lean's—assisted by the Duke of Hamilton; Col. James Murray's —Athol Highlanders (uncle to the Duke of Athol); Lt.-Col. John Campbell's—Argyleshire Highlanders; and a new battalion of 1000 men to be added to Lord John Murray's Highlanders.

unless the Court's endeavours could spur English Loyalists to greater efforts. At home the Opposition's case against the new corps would be strengthened while, abroad, the hard-pressed Americans and the still hesitating Bourbons would be stimulated by the apparent proof that no sufficient flow of reinforcements across the Atlantic could be maintained.

The Court, indeed, set itself no less a task then attempting to win the City of London to put itself officially at the head of the regiment-raising movement. The Court's friends in the City, banded together as the Associated Livery, had, of late, been able to beat the "patriots" consistently whenever "patriot jobs" were proposed or patriot nominations attempted in complete disregard of seniority in City service. Fired by these successes, the Court's friends were now dreaming of moving the City not merely to raise 5000 men but to maintain them for the duration of the war.[1] But if the Lord Mayor and an Aldermanic majority were anxious to please the Court, the bulk of Common Councillors can hardly be blamed for holding that it was the Associated Livery rather than the "patriots" who were now attempting a "job". It was a "job", moreover, of a most gigantic kind, threatening to engulf the City's revenues for the Court's pleasure even while the City was still lamenting the unchecked violation of its Freemen's rights by the press-gangs. Well before the Common Council meeting of January 16th, therefore, the certainty of a rebuff must have been foreseen. Yet though this rebuff was greater than was expected[2]—and official Bristol, too, rejected a motion for raising troops by bounty—Loyalist plans were nevertheless set in motion on another footing. Only a few hours after the rejection of the regiment-raising proposed for the City of London, a meeting of merchants resolved to raise a fund of their own for the same purpose, and soon the surprising sum of £14,000, eventually increased to £20,000, was available as bounty for recruits of the new units projected.[3] Almost parallel with the City merchants'

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 81–5, for a long account.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 84: "The motion [for a City bounty] was supported by a majority of eleven to nine in the court of Aldermen; but thrown out by so great a majority of the Common Council, that while the lowest calculation held it at three to one, it was estimated by the highest at 180 to 30. Upon this complete victory, a resolution was moved and passed, which condemned in strong terms the giving any countenance to, or being in any manner instrumental in the further continuance of the present ruinous and destructive war."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under January 16th.

troop-raising subscription was another undertaken in Bristol, and as an example of the county subscriptions set on foot may be instanced the Middlesex subscription to raise Tower Hamlets Volunteers to serve in America for the duration of the "disturbances", a subscription inaugurated on January 16th at "a general meeting of the justices, grand jury, gentlemen, freeholders, and others".[1] It certainly seemed that a flow of recruits across the Atlantic was assured for some time to come—and not merely from Scotland, or Germany.

When Parliament reassembled on January 20th, Opposition inevitably directed a number of successive attacks on the constitutionality of Government's proceedings in adjourning Parliament on December 10th and in spending the succeeding six weeks in stimulating the raising of large bodies of troops under varied, and often private, control. If Dunning, Opposition's lawyer, was dangerous on some of the constitutional aspects of the case, Fox's great speech of February 2nd, when the Commons had gone into Committee on the State of the Nation, showed how Administration also had reason to fear able debating treatment of the growing Bourbon danger and the further facts now available on Saratoga. The measure of Fox's biting examination of Administration's American record may be judged from the surprising division that followed on his uncompromising motion against permitting the dispatch to America, in face of the Bourbon peril, of any more "old" troops from the home establishment or from Gibraltar and Minorca. Opposition's vote of 165 against 259 was the best for a very considerable time,[2] and may well have stimulated the reopening of underground approaches to Chatham by circles anxious to bring him into office in the hope that his name might still be useful at home and abroad.[3]

If Opposition's vote fell somewhat during the next fortnight, there were anxious enough moments for the Government on

[1] *Ibid.*

[2] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 166–71, for Fox's own views "of a very good division compared with the past. . . . We had several Tories with us, and I really think it was a great day for us."

[3] Cf. *An Authentic Account of the Part taken by the late Earl of Chatham, in a Transaction, which passed in the Beginning of the Year 1778* which seems to show that though a friend of Bute's had approached Dr. Addington, Chatham's confidential friend and physician, before, it was not till February 2nd that Bute was reported in terms tempting enough to induce Addington to go to Chatham on February 3rd. It appears that Bute was acting on his own initiative, though he possibly knew North's mind.

February 4th and 5th, when £286,000 voted for the clothing of the bounty-givers' new forces, was decried as concealing the first pickings of those alleged patriots;[1] on February 6th when Burke denounced the British use of redskins in America; and on February 11th when Fox concluded from Government's own papers that the American contest had already cost the nation £25,000,000 and the lives of 25,000 soldiers. But more worrying to Government than Opposition's Parliamentary assaults, assaults which included, be it remembered, action in the Lords as well as the Commons, must have been that stream of disquieting information from the Paris Embassy that caused North, on February 17th, to give Parliament a first-class surprise by introducing very far-reaching Conciliation proposals in two Government Bills. In what must have been one of his very ablest speeches North affirmed that though Government had a most powerful fleet, disposed of large new military forces and had virtually undiminished financial resources to draw on, Conciliation had always been its hope. Though years more of war could still be supported, he was proposing to send out another Conciliation Commission with the largest powers, a Commission authorised, if necessary, to treat with Congress, and without making preliminary demands for a surrender of the American claim to Independence. It transpired later in the proceedings that it was being proposed to equip the Conciliation Commissioners with powers to offer British security for American loans and British backing for American currency.[2] The rapidity with which both "Continental" and State paper of all kinds was depreciating was undoubtedly one of the weakest spots of American resistance, and many elements in America must

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 373–5 for James Harris, M.P. on the proceedings: "Last night [the 4th] we had another debate on the legality of *private* subscriptions to raise men and money to defend Government. Dunning argued for an hour very ably on their *illegality*. . . . Thurlow answered him ably and minutely. . . . Wedderburne was not less able. . . . Charles Fox replied. . . . Reflections were thrown out upon the Scottish promotions in the late levies, and upon that nation in general. This produced from Dundass (the Lord Advocate) as handsome and manly a defence of his country and countrymen as I ever heard. . . . Opposition, if they can do no good, can clog, embarrass, and perplex, and talk about public virtue without possessing an atom of it. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, p. 136. On "the declaration of a great law officer, that a security for the congress debts, and a re-establishment of the credit of their paper currency, would be one of the objects of the commission, and one of the principal inducements held out to that body to return to its allegiance. . . ."

have been tempted by British offers that would have restored some stability to commercial life.[1] Unfortunately both Administration and Opposition had learned that very day that a Franco-American Commercial Treaty had just been signed in the French capital which would certainly induce the controlling American elements to continue the struggle for full Independence. The French Government's virtual recognition of that Independence would itself do much, at least temporarily, to prevent any further rapid depreciation of American securities while, if that recognition proved but the preliminary to the outbreak of Anglo-French hostilities, direct French financial aid would become available provided France was guaranteed against America's surrender of Independence by a separate treaty.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about the aspect of Parliament on February 17th was not the dismay with which some of its elements saw North surrender all hope of unconditional American submission but rather the welcome given by Opposition members to North's conversion and the urgency they showed that the Conciliation Bills should be passed as soon as possible.[2] In the hope, now admittedly faint, that Congress might be induced to pause before ratifying the reported Franco-American Treaty, expedition and unanimity enough was shown to allow the Conciliation Bills to finish all their stages in the Commons by March 3rd and to receive the Royal signature by March 11th. It was doubtless during the relative cessation of party warfare while the Conciliation Bills were in agitation that North nerved himself for another effort to make the King see that a large and possibly complete change of Government, with Chatham as Premier, however personally distasteful and even distressing he would find it, might contribute best to the country's salvation. And if the Budget business

[1] *The Crisis*, No. 5, which Paine issued in Lancaster, Pennsylvania (whither Congress had been compelled to betake itself) on March 21, 1778, contains many evidences of America's financial plight. There is, for example, Paine's rather comical anger over the allegation that the British Commander-in-Chief was abetting "the forging and uttering counterfeit continental bills" as one of his methods of warfare, and there is also the assurance that American "currency would rise to millions beyond its present value" if a great American effort against Howe should succeed.

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under February 17, 1778: "The astonishment of great part of the House at such extensive offers *precluded all expression*. The Opposition felt honestly they could not decently disapprove a pacification they had so much recommended. . . . Lord G. Cavendish and Frederick Montague pressed the Ministers not to lose a moment in passing the Bills. . . . Burke and Charles Fox yielded to and seconded the torrent. . . ."

of March 6th and 9th had seen the renewal of what the King considered the factiousness of Opposition in blaming Government for the six millions of fresh loan necessary and the house and wine duties required to meet the interest,[1] there was some countervailing matter even here. When on March 9th a cry, fascinating alike to the "independent" and the "patriot", was raised for a 25 per cent war-tax on the income of places and pensions, Fox and Burke as well as the more senior General Conway and Sir George Savile came to North's rescue against a particularly irresponsible and undiscriminating attempt to place disproportionate war-burdens on some of the most helpless shoulders in the country.[2] And if North, even with such unusual help, was only able, on March 10th, to reverse by 147 votes against 141 his losing division of 82 against 100 on the place and pension tax proposed the previous day, such figures only stressed the case he had for some time been making with the King for permission to withdraw. Nor would his case have been weakened by the scarcely-veiled insolence of the fateful communication made, on March 13th, by the French Ambassador requesting, almost with menace, complete respect for French trade with the United States "who are in full possession of their independence".[3] As Opposition politicians had, ever since Bute's negotiations of 1762–3, unceasingly lamented the Bourbon danger, the time seemed very apt to offer them participation in the responsibility for meeting it.

George III was, in fact, induced at last to authorise quite far-flung negotiations. It was not only Chatham, for example, who was approached once more, or Lord Shelburne who was induced to go into detail on his idea of a Chathamite Government to

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 380: "The tax on houses is sixpence in the pound on all houses from £5 a year to £50, a shilling in the pound where the yearly value of the house exceeds £50 a year. . . . Wine, four guineas a tun on port, eight guineas on claret, &c. . . . Total £336,558. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 381, for some stinging comment from the Queen's Comptroller, James Harris, M.P.: "A noble patriotism this, a heroic generosity, to dispose of money *not your own*. . . . The poor chance of an office so blinded men's eyes, and so tempted their avarice . . . that they did not see the injustice such a measure would do to a multitude of official drudges who *now* dearly earn their money, have nothing but their salaries to live on, and who, not being in Parliament, have no blame for not being patriots. . . ." Salaries and pensions were already having tax deducted at the Land-Tax level of 4*s.* in the pound.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, State Papers, p. 299, for the closing menace of the Ambassadorial note to the effect that the French King "being determined to protect effectually the lawful commerce of his subjects, and to maintain the dignity of his flag, his Majesty has, in consequence, taken eventual measures with the United States of North America".

include Rockingham and Grafton but to exclude Lord George Germaine and all North's legal advisers including Lord Mansfield, who was to be retired in favour of Dunning, while Camden returned to the Woolsack.[1] Sandwich, First Lord of the Admiralty, seems to have sought an interview with Opposition's naval speaker, Admiral Keppel, and Eden, First Lord of Trade and Plantations, before undertaking a series of unsatisfactory interviews with Shelburne, certainly sounded Fox for the Treasurership of the Navy and gave him the chance of mentioning the names of friends.[2] In sanctioning these negotiations George III had declined to give up his private view that the behaviour of Opposition politicians, including Chatham, had been inexcusable and largely accounted for the American situation. But anxious, almost to the point of mental danger, to add no strength to North's heart-felt wish to retire, the King had permitted the negotiations in order to show North his good-will and so commit him, in honour, to further efforts on behalf of his master and the threatened Ministerial colleagues whose case the King considered the most deserving Here is the King writing on March 16th to Lord North and displaying the most violent resentment of the Chathamite terms suggested to Government's negotiator, Mr. Eden, by Lord Shelburne:[3]

You can want no further explanation of the language held to Mr. Eden. . . . It is so exactly contrary to the only ground on which I could have accepted the services of *that perfidious man* [Lord Chatham], that I need not enter on it. Lord Chatham as dictator—as planning a new administration—I appeal to my letter of yesterday if I did not clearly speak out upon. If Lord Chatham agrees to support your Administration (if you like better), the fundamentals of the present Administration,

[1] Cf. William Eden's *Secret Negotiation for a new Arrangement in March 1778, which failed* as given in *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 180–7 for such passages of Lord Shelburne's talk as that "the Duke of Grafton and Lord Rockingham must be included; that a great law arrangement would, in Lord Chatham's opinion, be material; and that Lord Mansfield ought to be removed. . . . He professed no disregard to Lord Suffolk [Northern Secretary] and Lord North. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Eden's cautious negotiations: "I rather speculated on changes than proposed any. The removal of the American Secretary was much liked. An office like the Treasury of the Navy was allowed to be more eligible than a responsible office . . . he expressed a desire to hear again from me if any other set should accede, and hinted that in case of an actual arrangement he should hope some regard would be shown to his friends Mr. Fitzpatrick and Lord Ossory. Many particulars occurred in the course of three hours; upon the whole it appeared sufficiently practicable to obtain his assistance, if he could be kept in countenance by others. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, under March 16th, 1778.

viz. Lord N[orth] at the head of the Treasury; Lords Suffolk, Gower, and Weymouth, in great offices to their own inclination; Lord Sandwich at the Admiralty, Thurlow Chancellor, and Wedderburne as Chief Justice, I will not object to see that great man, when Lord Shelburne, Dunning, and Barré are placed already in office; but I solemnly declare that nothing shall bring me to treat personally with Lord Chatham. If I saw Lord C., he would insist on as total a change as Lord Shelburne yesterday threw out.

Lord North undoubtedly showed a truer sense of the ultimate possibilities of the situation than the King when he continued, for weeks and even months longer, to press his agitated master to resign himself to taking a new Administration.[1] Yet the King was not wrong in his view that if North would but exchange his despondency for vigour and resolution the machine of State could be made to give a very good account of itself against Americans and French combined. In Parliament, for example, the King's Message communicating the fateful French signature of an American Treaty brought, on March 17th, loyal Addresses from Commons and Lords by votes of 263 against 113 and 100 against 36. On March 19th Fox, trying to single out Germaine as responsible for Saratoga, was decisively beaten by 164 against 44 after Germaine, Thurlow and Dundas had given a convincing demonstration of the debating resources possessed by Government and had driven Fox, deserted by some of his friends, almost beside himself with rage.[2] Meanwhile the country was facing without special trepidation a whole succession of grave war-measures from Admiral Keppel's departure on March 16th to take charge at Portsmouth of a "fleet of observation" to the orders sent out on March 27th, after the withdrawal of the French Ambassador, for the embodiment of the Militia of the entire country. Indeed the nation seems to have been prepared for a Spanish intervention,

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North* for letters of George III on March 17th, 18th, 22nd, 23rd, 29th, 30th. On March 31st there is another letter that shows that the King had prevailed upon North to continue to the end of the Session and for as much longer as should be necessary to complete changes inevitable if North departed from the Treasury. On April 1st a letter expressing lively satisfaction that North's last message was "so very unlike the coldness and despondency of your correspondence for some time" prepares the reader to find Lord North unable to shake off George III's pressure for his continuance in office despite North's renewed application at the end of the Session.

[2] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 176–7 for the admission even by this friendly source that Dundas succeeded in provoking Fox "to the utmost rage. He burst out into a torrent of abuse, and lost all temper and conduct. . . . Charles Fox said to many he would attend the House no more. . . ."

too,[1] though, as matters turned out, the Court of Spain found more reason than that of France to hesitate in face of British prophecies of the inevitability of Colonial rebellion, if successful against Britain, affecting the American holdings of other Powers also. Another unexpectedly favourable factor abroad, besides Spanish caution, turned out to be the Austro-Prussian contentions on the Bavarian Succession, for Prussia certainly dropped its patronage of American rebellion for a time and grew much more amenable on the question of passage for Britain's Hanoverian recruits.[2] And finally all the boasting of Congress and all the brave words of American pamphleteers like Paine[3] could not disguise the sorry plight of "Continental" finances and currency and the desperate winter the bedraggled and dwindling "Continental" Army had spent at Valley Forge.

North's characteristic moderation, too, though it made some Administration hot-heads rage,[4] was of undoubted service in convincing large upper- and middle-class elements that Government did not deserve, and had, perhaps, never deserved the unceasing censure of Opposition. To appoint the Opposition Admiral Keppel to take charge of the Portsmouth Fleet; to meet Barré's motion of March 30th, for an investigation into war-expenses, by the concession of a Select Committee;[5] to give up—because of Opposition's objections—the notion of doing something for the loan-contracting bankers who had lost heavily on contract-terms that had been settled before the stock-declines following on French intervention[6]—all these things hardly bore witness to

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 382–3 for James Harris, M.P. on March 27th: "The French declaration has surprised but not terrified us. We were never in so respectable a state, in such a situation, I mean at the beginning of a war. Forty-one ships of the line ready; thirty thousand soldiers; and the militia, which will double the number, ready to be called out. This, I believe, mortifies the heroes of Opposition; their minorities grow daily less and less, and people of both sides grow weary of attending their captious cavillings. . . . Report says, among other things, the Spaniards will soon send a declaration like that of the French. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 387, for the British Minister at Berlin reporting on April 12th: "I received assurance from the King of Prussia, that all American connections should be put a stop to, the passage of the Hanoverian troops granted, and a courier was dispatched to prevent the arrival of the [American] agent. . . ."

[3] Cf. *The Crisis*, No. 5, dated March 21, 1778.

[4] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 387 for the British Minister at Berlin on "that cursed want of vigour which has occasioned all our misfortunes".

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 384, for the Committee granted "to report upon facts, but not to give opinions".

[6] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 171*–2*.

the scheming, corrupt and oppressive Government of Opposition diatribe. Nor was better evidence to be found in North's welcome, early in April, for suggestions that the time had come for relaxing the trade restrictions imposed by Britain on Ireland and the Penal Laws imposed by the Dublin Parliament on Irish Catholics.[1] Yet on April 7th when the Duke of Richmond, for example, professed to sum up in a long Address the conclusion the Lords had come to after long inquiry into the State of the Nation, the old fascinating Opposition rhetoric on tarnished crown, dismembered empire, wasted public treasures and the successful arts of wicked men was revived once more. And if Lord Chatham arrived to make his last broken speech on the Duke of Richmond's suggested Address to the Throne, it was not to protest against the "patriot" language that he knew so well himself but to attack Richmond's advice that reconciliation with America should be sought by surrender.[2] In 1778 the average Englishman still seems to have been reluctant to abandon the hope of Imperial reunion and still to have longed that North's Conciliation Commissioners, who embarked at Portsmouth on April 16th, might win a hearing in America. And to judge from George III's enthusiastic reception when undertaking reviewing at Chatham on April 25th and at Portsmouth early in May,[3] reviewing extended during the summer to include the specially organised defence camps manned largely by Militia,[4] the first effects of the irruption of the old French enemy into the war were rather to promote loyalty than to strengthen criticism.

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 174*–5*.

[2] "I rejoice that the grave has not closed upon me, that I am still alive to lift up my voice against the dismemberment of this ancient and noble monarchy. . . . Shall a people, so lately the terror of the world, now fall prostrate before the House of Bourbon? Let us at least make one effort; and if we must fall, let us fall like men."

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 391: "Their Majesties appear highly satisfied with the loyalty and affection they met with on their Portsmouth journey" to the Fleet.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 394, for the veteran James Harris, M.P., communicating some of the Loyalist excitement to his son, the British Minister to St. Petersburg: "I was at the [Salisbury] camp last night, and drank tea in an officer's tent with Lady Pembroke and Lady Cecilia Johnson; General Johnson commands the camp. Lady Cecilia told me Colonel St. John . . . had orders to attend His Majesty when he reviewed the camps. I had this morning a letter from Lord Rivers at the Winchester Camp, by which I find His Majesty is expected there in September; should this event happen, 'tis not unlikely the King may come hither."

CHAPTER XIV

OPPOSITION REFUSES COALITION, 1778-9

"I am ready to allow that we ought not to expect the removal of *every* man in office, from the First Lord of the Treasury to the lowest tide-waiter; and . . . you will allow that we must expect more than the removal of the lowest tide-waiters, or even than one or two obnoxious men, when it is a whole system we complain of . . . Let me suppose, for instance, that those who say they mean to give us effectual power, should stipulate to have in each board and department some one man of apparently inoffensive manners, but who from his connections we could but look upon as a spy, would not such a symptom indicate rottenness? . . . If I am told that it is difficult for Lord Weymouth to open upon all these subjects, and that, although experience may have convinced him that a change both of measures and of men may be necessary, yet that it would be risking a great deal for him to particularise what measures he would agree to change, and which of his former colleagues he would remove, without previously knowing whether his offers of such change would procure the coalition with Opposition which he wishes, I must in return say, that it would be absurd in us, who have every reason to be confirmed in all our former opinions of measures, to declare that we could relax any of them, without a clear prospect of obtaining some great good, to overbalance small concessions.... The most ready way . . . on the part of Lord Weymouth, if he really intends the management of affairs should be in our hands, would be for him to advise the King to send for Lord Rockingham . . ."

The Duke of Richmond to C. J. Fox, February 7, 1779.

"No man in my dominions desires solid peace more than I do. But no inclination to get out of the present difficulties, which certainly keep my mind very far from a state of ease, can incline me to enter into the destruction of the Empire. Lord North frequently says that the advantages to be gained by this contest [with America] never could repay the expense. I own that any war, be it ever so successful, if a person will sit down and weigh the expense, they will find, as in the last, that it has impoverished the State enriched; but this is only weighing such points in the scale of a tradesman behind his counter. It is necessary for those whom Providence has placed in my station to weigh what expenses, though very great, are not

sometimes necessary to prevent what would be more ruinous than any loss of money. The present contests with America I cannot help seeing as the most serious in which any country was ever engaged . . . step by step the demands of America have risen. Independence is their object, which every man, not willing to sacrifice every object to a momentary and inglorious Peace, must concur with me in thinking this country can never submit to. Should America succeed in that, the West Indies must follow, not in independence, but for their own interest they must become dependent on America. Ireland would soon follow, and this Island, reduced to itself, would be a poor Island indeed."

George III to Lord North, June 11, 1779.

To understand both the opportunities and the difficulties of Opposition as increasing French intervention became certain, it might be well to undertake a brief survey of Opposition's most characteristic activities, hitherto insufficiently recorded. It is interesting to find the "popular" Opposition of 1778 already displaying, on taxation and expenditure, many of the special prejudices and antagonisms of the "popular" Oppositions of today. This was not only to be seen in the plentiful support, already reported, for the suggestion of a 25 per cent tax on the "places and pensions" long undiscriminatingly denounced in popular rhetoric as though all places were sinecures and all pensions the mere fruit of corruption. It may be found also in some of the speaking of March 30th when Barré demanded and was conceded an inquiry into the war-expenditure since 1776 after he, followed by other Opposition speakers, had attacked Ministers and war-contractors alike for the exorbitant profits supposed to be made on war-contracts.[1] But even Opposition's refusal, already recorded, to hear of any concessions to the banker-contractors who had taken up the six million loan of the year on terms that seemed disastrous after the French intervention,[2] hardly looks so modern as Opposition's strenuous efforts of April 2nd against the new House-Tax that had been proposed in the Year's Budget. Under Government's proposal to exempt only houses valued at under £5 per annum, London and its environs were expected to yield £189,208 of house-tax per annum as against £71,250 for all the rest of England and Wales, and a mere £5000 for Scotland. Opposition's immediate deduction from these figures had, of course, been that the tax had been laid on to punish London in perpetuity for its dislike of the alleged folly, cruelty and injustice of Administration's war. And in order to lessen the effect of this

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 383–4, for James Harris, M.P., on the scene: "In this debate Barré spoke for two hours; Burke spoke also, but not Fox. The minor orators followed their leaders, and were stupidly abusive to the noble lord, just as the parish curs all yelp when once the great dogs begin. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 171*–2*: "This proposal was however reprobated in such unreserved terms by the opposition, that, although it was afterwards talked of, the Minister never thought fitting to bring it forward. . . . Suppose, said they, that these subscribers had (as has frequently been the case) made six or eight per cent upon their money, would they come to the treasury, or to that bar, to acknowledge that their gains were exorbitant, and that they were come to refund the extraordinary profits. . . ." North was, of course, anxious about the possible effects of the situation on future loans.

unrighteous tax on the "poorer orders of the people", Opposition began dividing in an attempt to increase the number of houses exempted. First, members divided to exempt all houses of £10 a year and under; then all houses of £7 a year and under; and, after several further divisions on a descending scale, they thought it worth while to divide for the exemption of houses valued at £5 1*s.* 0*d.* per annum.[1]

But "popular" Oppositions occasionally meet trouble when the prejudices of the "people" or of a large part of them run, on a particular issue, sharply counter to the normal Opposition pose of special solicitude for the unfairly penalised or oppressed. Thus, before the Easter Recess, Parliament had seemed unanimously to accept the proposition that Ireland had suffered heavily from the results of the American War and that a more liberal attitude towards Irish trade and manufactures was needed not merely for Ireland's sake but for Great Britain's. Burke had distinguished himself by widening the suggestions made for liberating Irish trade from restrictions, and another Opposition leader had even advanced into the province of the Irish Parliament by calling for the end of the Irish Penal Laws. Yet the Easter Recess was to find a popular panic spreading throughout industrial England concerning the effects likely to flow from the very limited concessions being considered for Ireland. Cheap Irish labour and low Irish taxation, it seemed, would completely ruin English manufactures, burdened, it was said, by high wages and taxes, if Ireland were allowed direct trade with the Empire (though in British ships and with the British wool trade safeguarded); if Irish cotton-yarn, sail-cloth and cordage became exportable to England; and if the Irish glass industry were at last permitted an export trade, though never to Britain.

This is not the place to go into detail on such significant phenomena as Burke's first serious troubles with his Bristol

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, p. 172*, for a spirited summary: "The house-tax bill was either combated in the whole, or controverted in its parts, by some in the opposition, in every part of its progress through the House of Commons. They said it was particularly injurious, unjust, and oppressive, from its being unequally and partially allotted, as near nine-tenths of its burthens were to be borne by the metropolis, and the county of Middlesex. That it carried more the appearance of a bill of punishment on the citizens of London, for their daring to oppose the American war. . . . Failing in their opposition to the general principle of the bill they used the most strenuous efforts in the committee on the second of April, for lessening its effect with respect to the poorer orders of the people. . . ."

constituents,[1] or to explain why the Protectionist panic failed to subside even after exposure of the baselessness of the terrors that had been conjured up on Irish sail-cloth and cordage, which, it transpired, had been importable into Britain all the time. Here it will be best to see how the Wilkite, Sir Cecil Wray, a Bill of Rights Society man, contrived when, on May 6th, he led the Opposition to the Second Reading of the Irish Trade Bills, to combine a "patriot" dislike of alleged Government oppression in Ireland with obedience to the dictates of "popular" Protectionism in Britain. In the approved Parliamentary style Sir Cecil Wray, of course, made much of the many petitions that had been presented against the Bills and the necessity, before legislation, of a special inquiry, impossible so late in the Session. But the most characteristic parts of Sir Cecil Wray's speech were later summarised thus in the *Annual Register*:[2]

The Gentleman . . . professed, in the first place, the best disposition towards the whole Irish nation; said, he was ready to concur, at any time, in whatever might promote the true interests of that country; and expressed his hearty wishes, that the British Parliament might render her every assistance in its power, without infringing on the trade of Great Britain. He well knew the grievances of that country, and lamented them. Of these he numbered, the Irish pension-list; the sinecure offices; the penal laws against Roman Catholics; with absentees, and some others. He assured the House, that he would not only gladly join in redressing these grievances; but . . . would do everything in his power to forward the interests of that country, where they did not immediately interfere with those of England.

He further declared, that he had no objection to admit of Ireland's participating equally with us in the benefits of a free trade, provided she bore an equal share of our national burthens; but that was not the

[1] Cf. *Critical Review*, May 1778, for its biting conclusion on the pamphlet, *Two Letters from Mr. Burke to Gentlemen in the City of Bristol, on the Bills depending in Parliament relative to the Trade of Ireland*: "These Letters, so far as they relate to Ireland, are written in the true spirit of humanity and policy. They reflect as much honour on the writer as dishonour upon those to whom they are addressed. . . ." The same number of the *Critical Review* also notices favourably the satire directed against the Glasgow opposition to the Irish Trade Bills in *A Letter to the Worshipful the Dean of Guild, and the Merchants and Manufacturers of the City of Glasgow, on their Opposition to the Irish Bills*. And here is Burke quoted against "popular" Protectionism: "I know, that it is but too natural for us to see our own *certain* ruin, in the *possible* prosperity of other people. It is hard to persuade us, that everything which is *got* by another is not *taken* from ourselves. But it is fit, that we should get the better of these suggestions, which come from what is not the best and soundest part of our nature, and that we should form to ourselves a way of thinking, more rational, more just, and more religious. Trade is not a limited thing. . . ."

[2] *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 181*–2*.

case. . . . Ireland was supposed to contain above two millions of souls, and they were taxed at one million in money; which was about ten shillings, on an average, to each head. But Great Britain, with six millions of souls, was taxed at twelve millions of money; by which each inhabitant paid forty shillings towards the support of government. So astonishing a difference between the circumstances of both countries, carried with it such intuitive conviction, as to supersede all argument . . . and to shew, at the first view, the impolicy, the unreasonableness, and even the injustice to our own people (who had undertaken this heavy burthen on the faith of our navigation laws, and the supposed security and stability of our commerce), of passing the bills now depending. . . .

As to any danger of a rebellion in Ireland, from a failure of expected relief founded on these propositions, he could not think that there was the smallest foundation for any such apprehension. Besides that rebellion was not in the character of that nation, the people at large were not at all interested in the event of these bills. . . .

To appease the "popular" clamour, large modifications were made in the original Irish Trade proposals before they were placed on the Statute Book towards the end of a Session terminated on June 3rd. The whole affair, of course, hardly forwarded Administration's increasingly difficult task of "managing", at Dublin, the Parliament of a country with "patriots" of its own, ready to assail the British "public's" selfish blindness to Ireland's terrible poverty in capital and industrial opportunity, and the harm that England's war had already inflicted by closing Irish vents first in America and then in France.[1] And if, before long, "patriots" like Sir Cecil Wray were to learn, with the steady growth of the Irish Volunteer movement, how unwitting had been their reliance on Ireland's inability to resent Britain's Trade regulations, they were to receive, almost simultaneously, an even more damaging demonstration of

[1] Cf. *Manuscripts and Correspondence of James, First Earl of Charlemont*, i, 49–50: "The unnatural and wicked war with America still raged . . . and one great vent for our linens was consequently cut off. France had taken part in the contest, and under the pretence of excluding her from purchasing our provisions, that nefarious job the embargo had been laid, and still continued the first and fundamental cause of all our misery. Our black cattle, in consequence, everywhere fell in their value. . . . Our wool remained upon our hands. . . . The streets of our metropolis were filled and disgraced by crowds of famishing wretches. . . . In the country the price of land was fallen to nothing. The farmer was undone, and rents remained unpaid. . . . Meanwhile in England our situation was known. . . . But, alas, a few manufacturing towns took the alarm, and, in the English political scale, a few manufacturing towns will ever outweigh Ireland. . . . Petitions, founded in insolence and folly were presented . . . and nothing was granted that was worth our acceptance. . . ."

their misjudgment of the "public" they most particularly served. But how the "public" of Great Britain, or the most "popular" part of it, kicked out furiously against the relaxation of anti-Popery laws begun on May 14, 1778, when, with Government approval, Sir George Savile moved, Dunning seconded and more popular "patriots" blessed the repeal of some anti-Catholic legislation, must be related in another place. Here shall be recited Opposition's more characteristically "popular" demonstrations during the closing stages of the Session.

First may be mentioned the so-called Contractor's Bill to exclude from the House of Commons all those having an interest in Government contracts not obtained by public tender. The "general odium under which this order of men had long laboured" is said to have rendered the Bill "exceedingly popular without doors",[1] and on April 13th a combination of "independent" and "patriot" members had carried a motion for its introduction by 71 votes against 50. On May 1st the Bill received a First Reading, and an attempt by its opponents to delay the Second Reading demanded for May 4th, was rebuffed in a second victorious division of 72 against 61. On May 4th, however, it was obvious from the unusually full state of the House so late in the Session that an effort was to be made to destroy the Bill before it got any farther. And though the effort succeeded, a mere wrecking majority of 115 against 113 hardly gave Administration a triumph. Contractor's Bills would be heard of again.[2]

On the day following the defeat of the Contractor's Bill, there came a Message from the Throne requesting a Vote of Credit, and, on North's motion for the grant of a million, Opposition spent two days abusing the Ministers and wondering at their temerity in expecting, after so many exhibitions of incompetence, to be entrusted with so huge a sum to dissipate on further muddled and unfortunate war-operations. The unchallenged departure of the French Toulon squadron for American waters in mid-April was

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, History, pp. 176*–7*.

[2] Cf. L. B. Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, i, 56–72, for an important section on "Contracts, Remittances and Loans: The Merchants and Bankers." Professor Namier estimates that of the fifty or fifty-one merchants returned to Parliament in 1761, "at least thirty-seven can be proved to have had extensive business dealings with the Government". Yet the expense scale of the Seven Years War, being fought in 1761, was destined to be far exceeded before the American War was over, with corresponding increase of opportunity for the Government contractor.

the principal theme of Opposition censure on this occasion,[1] and dark charges of incapacity and dark prophecies of woe in America and the West Indies abounded. Then on May 11th Opposition found another opportunity for embarrassing Government in the news of Chatham's death.[2] A tear-stained Barré moved and Townshend seconded a motion for a public funeral, and, doubtless, in fear lest such a funeral were turned into a demonstration against Government, an Administration spokesman suggested a public monument instead. Opposition, however, proceeded to demand both the monument and the funeral, and North, arriving in the House, decided to let Opposition have its head. But this was not the end. The Rockingham spokesman in the Commons, Lord John Cavendish, made another demand on May 13th when he asked that, in view of Chatham's having left his family without "suitable provision" owing to his exclusive devotion to public affairs, something special should be done. Again North decided on graceful compliance, and, finally, in addition to the £20,000 voted for the discharge of Chatham's debts, a pension of £4000 per annum was annexed in perpetuity to the Chatham title. And though Opposition was ready to lament loud and long on the burdens imposed by unmerited pensions on a suffering and ruined nation, there was doubtless plenty of casuistry available to prove that an exception should be made for the rather dull young man who was to be the first beneficiary of Opposition's enterprise in discovering new ways of perplexing Administration.

On May 25th the unchallenged departure from the Mediterranean of the Toulon squadron of D'Estaing was again in agitation, and Opposition seems to have taken every advantage of Administration's inability to speak out fully on its reasons for avoiding an armed clash while war was still not declared and a hesitant Versailles moved by Spanish doubts on the Independence issue, still delayed the final plunge.[3] When, in fact, an over-blunt

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 197: "T. Townshend, Charles Fox and Mr. Burke attacked the Ministers with great warmth on their receiving an account of the sailing of the Toulon fleet on the Monday, and not calling a Council even to give orders till the Wednesday. Mr. Fox even hinted having heard that Lord G. Germaine was so dissatisfied with the other Ministers that he had threatened to resign. Lord George did not positively deny this. . . ."

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters*, for that of May 31, 1778, where he decides that "The Opposition and the Administration disputed zeal; and neither care a straw about him. He is already as much forgotten as John of Gaunt."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, for that of May 31, 1778, showing the issue still in doubt: "I know not what to say of war. The Toulon squadron was certainly blown back. That

Administration spokesman ventured to remind the House that it was not a fit place for discussing or deciding delicate questions of policy, he merely furnished Fox with the opportunity for an eloquent harangue on Parliament's rights, and Opposition with the chance of dividing not unfavourably at 91 against 117. Next day Opposition found yet another opportunity of harassing Ministers in the presence in the House of Commons of General Burgoyne, returned on parole from America and seeking the vindication he could not be very hopeful of obtaining from Government. The whole question of Government's planning of the 1777 campaign was once again brought into debate, and Burgoyne's manifest anger at Ministers' attitude opened up the possibility of intriguing revelations next time he spoke. Burgoyne took his opportunity, indeed, on May 28th when, on an Opposition motion to prevent the Parliamentary prorogation towards which Ministers were thankfully hurrying, he declared Government totally unequal to the times and announced the nation's need, during the coming critical summer and autumn, to find in Parliament a trusted rallying-point. Government countered by doubting Burgoyne's right to speak and vote while he was a prisoner of war, Opposition rushed in on Burgoyne's behalf, and after the Speaker's decision in Burgoyne's favour, Ministers had reason to congratulate themselves on a division of 105 against Opposition's 53.[1] That, on June 2nd, Sir James Lowther should have attempted, from the "independent" angle, to substitute short adjournments for the usual prorogation, must only have increased Administration's profound pleasure in obtaining, on June 3rd, what might prove a long freedom from Opposition's activities.[2] And, in point of fact, though successive prorogations were for disarmingly short intervals, their total effect was to keep Parliament

of Brest is supposed to be destined to invade some part of this country or Ireland . . . in my own opinion, there is no great alacrity in France—I mean, in the Court of France—for war; and, as we have had time for great preparations, their eagerness will not increase. . . . Spain continues to disclaim hostility as you told me. If the report is true of revolts in Mexico, they would be as good as a bond under his Catholic Majesty's hand. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 198.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Sir James Lowther moved to renew the motion against prorogation. This was objected to by the Court, when Richard Fitzpatrick, brother of Lord Ossory and a great friend of Charles Fox, having arrived the day before from America, rose and . . . complained that the army had been promised 20,000 recruits and had been deceived; commended General Howe, and complained bitterly how ill that General, Burgoyne and Carleton had been treated by the Administration."

from the political scene until November 26th, a period of well-nigh six months.

Knowledge of the ultimate outcome of Administration's struggle, in America and elsewhere, makes it dangerously easy to assume the inevitability of such a result even in June 1778. But in point of fact there was no such inevitability. If in America, for example, General Howe had withdrawn in favour of Clinton, and Clinton had decided to evacuate Philadelphia because of the heavy drafts of troops needed to guard the West Indies from the French, Washington yet proved completely unable to prevent Clinton's army, loaded down though it was with enormous baggage-trains, from marching overland from Philadelphia to New York. Moreover, even though Congress affected completely to reject all notion of treating with the Conciliation Commissioners save on the footing of Independence, the desperate financial pass of "Continental" America was no secret.[1] If the British evacuation of Philadelphia, delayed until after Congress's rejection of the British overtures on June 17th, produced great temporary elation in America, American gloom proved all the greater when it became clearer that this was so far from being the beginning of the end that it might have increased Great Britain's ability to fight on indefinitely. Especially disappointing to Americans was the comparative ineffectiveness, during the summer of 1778, of the French naval intervention in American waters. Twice in succession, outside New York Harbour in July and off Rhode Island in August, D'Estaing's splendidly equipped fleet displayed altogether inferior fighting spirit to Admiral Howe's worn and weather-beaten ships, some of which had been in continuous commission since 1776. American bitterness was very marked when, towards the end of August, the French fleet, professing its urgent need for repairs, left an American land-force to extricate itself, as best it might, from the joint operations that had been intended to force the British out of Rhode Island. At Boston, indeed, into whose harbour the French fleet sailed and whose fortifications alone kept off Howe's pursuing squadron, there were serious collisions between French sailors and a disgusted American

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 391–2, for information before the evacuation of Philadelphia that even the headquarters of rebellion in Boston were tiring of the war: "I have heard from good authority, that the Americans about Boston and in that disaffected quarter are quite exhausted, tired with the war, and crippled with the expense. . . ."

mob,[1] whose habitual lawlessness seemed to be approaching dangerously near to anarchy.[2]

The catalogue of French naval incompetence must have seemed complete, in critical American eyes, when D'Estaing, departing to the West Indies, failed to prevent the British reduction of St. Lucia despite his vast superiority of naval force over the British squadron in the Caribbean. Nor could it have been lost on all Americans that the capture of St. Lucia, then deemed the inevitable strategical centre of Anglo-French contention in the Caribbean, had been accomplished by troops spared by Clinton without any apparent increase in the "Continental Army's" ability to bring him to bay. Nay, the departure of D'Estaing from American waters and the serious problems winter always brought upon Washington and his Generals, were soon destined to tempt the British commander to strike by sea from New York, and in a new direction. But long before it was confirmed that a force sent from New York in November had successfully inaugurated at Savannah, Georgia, a new series of operations among southern populations, known to be reluctant to fight on indefinitely for the word "Independence", American difficulties were not to be concealed either at home or abroad. To read, for example, the successive *Crisis* numbers produced in October and November by the very loudest professor of American confidence, Thomas Paine, is to become convinced, despite the jeers he shouted after the departing Conciliation Commissioners, that he himself felt less confidence in American power than he professed.[3] And in England the Court

[1] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, ii, 229–30: "In the town of Boston, more especially, such was the exasperation of its seafaring population, when, day after day, and night after night, they witnessed the provoking spectacle of French sailors lounging about their streets, and sauntering into their places of amusement, that some serious riots were the consequence, which, but for the judicious precautions adopted by the authorities, might have led to grave political results."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 397–8, for news at St. James's of the desperate pass at Boston owing to the surrounding farmers' refusal to bring in provisions for sale at prices fixed in ever-depreciating paper.

[3] *The Crisis*, No. 6 of October 20th, seems to show a real apprehension lest some effect should arise from the Conciliation Commissioners' parting proclamation. And in *The Crisis*, No. 7 of November 21, 1778 Paine may be found, amid much else, asking the people of England, in a new strain, to consider whether war really paid and whether the "national honour" was really staked upon the result. "In a general view", wrote Paine sagely, "there are few conquests which repay the charge of making them, and mankind are pretty well convinced that it can never be worth while to go to war for profit's sake. . . . War never can be the interest of a trading nation, any more than quarrelling can be profitable to a man in business. But to make war with those who trade with us, is like setting a bull-dog upon a customer at the shop-door. . . . In whatever

had apparently every reason for satisfaction with a Parliamentary situation that found the Session beginning, on November 26th, with Opposition outdoing Administration in declamation against France.

Yet Parliament's mere assembly opened, of course, every channel of criticism and discontent. In the first debates on the Speech from the Throne, moreover, it became obvious that Opposition's call for a concentrated war against France was rooted, not in any special resentment of French conduct, but in the hope of facilitating the withdrawal of British forces from America.[1] And divisions of 107 against 226 in the Commons and 35 against 67 in the Lords certainly showed, when compared with the 86–243 and the 24–86 of the previous Session, that the long drawing-out of the war was hardly likely to weaken Opposition. That seemed to become even clearer on December 4th when on an Opposition motion criticising the Conciliation Commissioners' parting proclamation for having mentioned the possibility of a British war of desolation,[2] the anti-Government vote in the Commons rose to 122 against 209. Meanwhile, on December 2nd, when the House had been called upon to make provision for 70,000 seamen, there began the Parliamentary ventilation of a naval quarrel already beginning to rise towards its later sensational heights. The Oppositionist Admiral Keppel, who had been in command of the indecisive fighting waged by the Home Fleet against the Brest Fleet, considered that a victorious decision might have been reached but for the questionable reception given by Vice-Admiral Palliser to repeated orders sent him

light the war with America is considered upon commercial principles, it is evidently the interest of the people of England not to support it."

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 199–200, for Fox candidly confessing to a brother-Oppositionist that an open demand for the recognition of American Independence would antagonise "that very great number of people, who think as ill of Ministry as we do, and yet are not ripe for such conduct as you and I may think right. . . . I own my present idea (considering all things as well at home as abroad) is rather with Lord Shelburne for being silent on that subject, but acting as if it were acknowledged, withdrawing our troops from North America, and making the most vigorous attacks upon France, or possibly Spain too. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, State Papers, pp. 329–30, for the passage: "The policy as well as the benevolence of Great Britain have thus far checked the extremes of war, when they tended to distress a people still considered as our fellow-subjects, and to desolate a country shortly to become again a source of mutual advantage; but when that country professes the unnatural design not only of estranging herself from us, but of mortgaging herself and her resources to our enemies . . . the question is, how far Great Britain may, by every means in her power, destroy or render useless a connection contrived for her ruin, and for the aggrandisement of France."

off Ushant on July 27th. The fact that Palliser was an Administration M.P. and a member of Government as a Lord of the Admiralty, made it all the more serious for Ministers that Keppel, when rising in the House on December 2nd, should be able to complain of further questionable behaviour on Palliser's part. Keppel had made no adverse written report on Palliser, but Palliser, angered by the broad hints spread from naval circles to the newspapers, had procured the insertion in the Press of his own version of the affair, a version inculpating the conduct of Keppel, his senior officer A final Administration disadvantage in the affair proved to be the fact that though Keppel as Admiral had offered Sandwich as First Lord an important verbal communication not be be trusted to paper, Sandwich had not seen fit to ask for it.

But dark popular suspicions of a Court manœuvre to ruin a "gallant" Opposition Admiral sprouted most wonderfully from events in the Commons on December 11th when Palliser, who had begun to appreciate something of the mistakes he had made, announced that he had seen no other way of obtaining justice than to call for a court martial on Keppel, which the Admiralty had granted.[1] The instant rally of naval opinion and of many "Independents" in Parliament to Keppel's side soon became the dominating fact of national politics. Even the Army Estimates business of December 14th, with its provision for a still further increase of 14,000 men in the Army, lost some of the importance it might otherwise have obtained. There occurred, indeed, Opposition charges of official incompetence and partiality in the allotment of commissions, and Administration counter-assurances that America's war-debt of fifty millions, its paper-currency depreciated to one-fortieth of the nominal value and the great and general hardships Americans were suffering all went to justify Government's perseverance and methods. But to a public, avid for novelty, this was almost an irritating old story when compared with the fascinating new vista of Court and Admiralty intrigues that a suspicious Opposition and a populace, traditionally

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 204, for an Oppositionist M.P. on "the most interesting debate I ever remember to have heard. . . . The House was violently disposed to Keppel, who spoke like a man inspired, and no tool was bold enough to venture one word in favour of Palliser. The Admiralty have certainly taken a step that is not defensible, and it can hardly be believed that Lord Sandwich would have been so hasty to order a court-martial if he had not wished ill to Keppel. . . ."

prejudiced against the Court, expected to see opened up at the Keppel court martial. At the very time, indeed, when in distant St. Lucia and Savannah great feats of arms were being performed that might, in days of faster communication, have helped Court and Ministers, supporters of Administration were looking forward with undisguised apprehension to the outcome of the Keppel court martial, due to begin at Portsmouth on January 7, 1779.[1]

The eager absorption of public and Parliament in the Keppel court martial is, perhaps, best proved from the fact that neither in the Commons nor in the Lords was it possible to transact any vital public business until after the Admiral's trial terminated on February 11th. Considerable parts of both Houses, especially on the Opposition side, had in fact transferred themselves to Portsmouth and made the gathering of proper "Houses" for the transaction of weighty business impossible.[2] And Administration saw reason for apprehension not only in the popular explosions, now certain at the conclusion of the Portsmouth proceedings, but in much else. The Scottish clergy and populace, for example, were already in motion against such "illegal" consequences of the English Catholic Relief granted in 1778 as the opening in Scotland of Catholic chapels; suffering Ireland was demanding with ominous insistence much greater Trade concessions than the truncated Bills of the previous Session; and Clinton in America, mindful of the fate of Gage, Burgoyne and Howe, was threatening to lay down his command unless Administration accompanied instructions with assurance of the numbers he thought necessary for their execution.[3] The situation, indeed, seemed grave enough for

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 400, for James Harris, M.P., Comptroller to the Queen, writing thus to his son, the British Minister to Russia, on January 3rd: "Those who hate Ministry, asperse it with every species of calumny: those who favour it say Opposition in Parliament began our calamities; Opposition commanders have given us the *coup de grâce*. Keppel seems growing into another Vernon: what will become of him and his trial I know not, but I fear it will occasion great turmoils, be the event as it may. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, History, p. 109: "The trial at Portsmouth, seemed not much less to affect the proceedings of parliament, than it did the minds of the people at large. Nothing material was done, or even brought forward in either House during its continuance . . . Indeed some of the most distinguished names, and most active characters in both Houses, attended the trial, during the whole, or the greater part of the time that it lasted. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 401–2, for James Harris, M.P., writing, on February 6th: "We are at present most eager about the fate of two admirals, and 'tis probable the sober part among us may soon feel the insolent cry of a beggarly canaille . . . we have matter enough for storms political, and enough to keep us sitting in our tedious way of debating till Whitsuntide or later. There is Lord Pigott and the East Indies; in America Burgoyne's troops, and

North, after having been kept in office only by successive personal appeals from the King, to insist on reality being given to his master's promised search for a new and stronger Government.[1]

All accounts of the renewed overtures made to Opposition during the course of the Keppel trial seem to show how great were now the obstacles to any harmonious co-operation between the Crown and the leading figures in Opposition. On the one hand, even Fox may be found protesting to Rockingham against the utter impracticability of expecting the King to surrender himself completely to Opposition's discretion.[2] The King, on the other hand, though willing to give Weymouth and Thurlow, as the designated First Lord of the Treasury and Lord Chancellor of a new Government, wide discretion in offering participation even to inveterate Oppositionists of the Rockingham school, was insistent that all who accepted office were explicitly to declare zealous concurrence in prosecuting the war *in all the quarters of the globe*.[3] The King, that is, could apparently see the personal

whether we are to send thither 15,000 men or 7,000 men or none at all. 'Tis said the activity of Clinton's genius will not suffer him to hold a command where he cannot operate effectually. After these matters comes Scotland, where the clergy are in an uproar for fear we should indulge the Papists. . . . Last of all, and this is the most dangerous question, Ireland. . . . To this dismal enumeration I had forgot to add Africa, and our settlements there, as well as ways and means, loans, bonuses, new taxes, etc. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, for the Royal letters of June 16th, November 10th and November 14th which well illustrate how the King had been side-tracking North's applications to be allowed to retire. On November 14th, for example, the King, in answer to North's plea that he had not the requisite "authority" for the conduct of affairs, wrote: "The word *authority* puzzles me, for from the hour of Lord North's so handsomely devoting himself, on the retreat of the Duke of Grafton, I have never had a political thought which I have not communicated unto him, have accepted of persons highly disagreeable to me, because he thought they would be of advantage to his conducting public affairs, and have yielded to measures my own opinion did not quite approve. Therefore, I must desire to have an explanation in writing on what is meant by that word. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 206–10, for a letter of January 24, 1779 mentioning a "proposition" that Fox himself had been desired to put to the Rockinghams during the summer and autumn of 1778 and continuing "is it, or is it not, a fair and open declaration that you will never have anything to do with any Ministry that is *not entirely* of your own framing? . . . I do not mention this as a matter of reproach, but only to show you how very impossible it is for anybody who is not *one of you* to enter into your ideas and objects of opposition . . . surely, if ever there was a crisis where a country demanded all the efforts of its best men, it is the present, and surely some blame must lie at the doors of those who, from mistrust or suspicion, deprive it of the best assistance it can have. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, for the King's letter of February 4, 1779 requiring this condition to be imposed on Lord Howe if he were offered the Admiralty.

grievances of able, active and high-born men, who desired public activity and had long been excluded from it, but limited his notions of political compromise to a readiness to surrender, for political convenience, his personal resentments against Oppositionists who had caused him Parliamentary difficulties. He had no notion yet of compromising with the views of those who, like Grafton and Shelburne, were in favour of a cessation of hostilities in America and he resented bitterly, as a still plainer preliminary to American Independence, the more far-reaching suggestion of the bulk of the Rockinghams for withdrawing from America the British armies and fleets. And as to the Rockinghams' hopes of requiring the King, before they accepted office, to parley also on the Civil List, the Parliamentary influence of the Crown, and a variety of other subjects from the East India Company to the necessity for disgracing the Ministers who had lost America,[1] no good judge of Parliamentary strength in 1779 would have considered their aims attainable. Thurlow and Weymouth, certainly, were not the men to advise George III to yield. And even North seems to have agreed, by the beginning of February, to continue, at least temporarily, at the Treasury on condition of being allowed to approach such very cautious friends of "liberty" as Lord Howe who, if professional scruples had permitted him just then to go to the Admiralty in Sandwich's place, would have helped mightily to reduce Opposition's expected advantages from the Keppel case.

The anticipated popular explosions on the Keppel issue, when they came, proved very violent. Here is the *Annual Register*'s account of what happened in the metropolis on the night of February 11th after the news arrived from Portsmouth of Keppel's triumphant acquittal:[2]

> . . . the windows of the houses in the principal streets of London and Westminster were illuminated with lamps, candles, &c. and different devices, and the portico of the Mansion-house was illuminated with upwards of 300 glass lamps. The bells of several churches were rung, guns fired, and other demonstrations of joy prevailed.
>
> A guard, both horse and foot, were placed before the house lately occupied by Sir Hugh Palliser, in Pall Mall, which went off about one,

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 213–23, for a long letter to Fox from the Duke of Richmond that makes it plain that the Rockinghams, in acceding to office, would have sought to parley on some disgrace for outgoing Ministers and could not have accepted the King's idea of sweetening their retreat by a distribution of honours and rewards, including three Garters.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, pp. 198–9.

soon after which, the mob having first broke all the windows . . . proceeded to break open the door, destroyed great part of the furniture, and threw the rest out of the windows. . . . The windows and doors of Lord George Germaine's house in Pall Mall were likewise demolished. Most of the windows of the Admiralty were destroyed by the mob who took the gates from the hinges, and thereby got into the Court-yard. A party of the mob also broke all the sedan-chairs near the Admiralty, and made a bonfire with them before the gates. Some of the mob seemed not to be of the lower class.[1]

About three o'clock an attack was made upon Lord North's house, in Downing-street, where the rioters, after breaking the windows, burst open the shutters, and attempted to get into the house. In about half-an-hour a small party of foot-guards appeared, which was soon followed by a detachment of horse. . . . Captain Hood's house in Harley-street, suffered also in the same manner; as likewise the house of Lord Mulgrave in Berkeley-square. Effigies of Sir Hugh Palliser were carried about, suspended by the neck, and afterwards burnt.

Nor was this the end.[2] On the evening of February 12th, after the Commons had congratulated the fortunate Admiral and the City had voted him its freedom, to be presented in a box "made of heart of oak richly ornamented", general illumination was again the order of the day. Even on February 20th, the day of the ceremonial connected with the formal City presentation, there were popular saturnalia, and so late as February 25th Keppel himself decided to have the "West India interest's" banquet in his honour postponed for fear of a revival of mob disorder that could now do him no good.[3]

The late exhibitions of senseless and brutal mob violence and destructiveness had, by this time, certainly lost Opposition much of the profit it might otherwise have derived from the Keppel affair.[4] Especially must "independent" members have contrasted

[1] Cf. T. Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges* (ed. 1876), p. 340: "Young men of rank gave encouragement to, and even joined with, the populace. Mr. Pitt, who began his political life in the ranks of the popular party is said to have assisted in breaking windows, and the young Duke of Ancaster was taken among the rioters, and passed the night in the watch-house. . . ."

[2] Cf. *York Chronicle and General Advertiser*, February 19, 1779, for reports of typical provincial rejoicings as the news from Portsmouth and London reached York, Beverley and Thirsk.

[3] *Annual Register*, 1779, p. 201: "The entertainment . . . for Admiral Keppel by the West India planters and merchants, and which was fixed for to-day, was put off by the particular desire of the Admiral, from an apprehension that the excesses which were committed on Saturday last [February 20th], and which he or his friends could not repress, might be renewed on this occasion."

[4] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under February 11th, for facts that must have become notorious within a few days: "It happened at three in the morning that Charles Fox, Lord Derby, and his brother, Major

Keppel's dubious laurels with the fate of Palliser, an energetic officer who had risen high without Keppel's aristocratic advantages and who had now been driven out of various offices and the House of Commons itself.[1] Further matter in aid of Government was the good West India news of St. Lucia's capture, that arrived on February 22nd.[2] Administration certainly needed every possible piece of favourable intelligence, to help North with his cheerless Budget statement of February 24th. It was, after all, no light matter to present the nation with the unwelcome fact that, even after allowance was made for yet another appropriation of the entire Sinking Fund and yet another State Lottery, war-expenses would necessitate the issue of seven millions more of loan, the interest on which would, in conjunction with Lottery awards, require, besides other new taxation, a 5 per cent increase in nearly the entire range of customs and excise duties.[3] The St. Lucia news, moreover, promised to do something to meet the unending grumbling of the powerful West India interest who, after suffering for years in Administration's American quarrel, now had the attentions of French as well as American sailors to fear.[4]

Soon the situation as between Administration and Opposition

Stanley, and two or three more young men of quality, having been drinking at Almack's, suddenly thought of making a tour of the streets, and were joined by the Duke of Ancaster, who was very drunk . . . Finding the mob before Palliser's house, some of the young lords said, 'Why don't you break Lord G. Germaine's windows?' The populace had been so little tutored that they asked who he was, and being encouraged broke his windows. The mischief pleasing the juvenile leaders, they marched to the Admiralty, forced the gates. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 403, for an Administration M.P. in close contact with "independent" men. He lamented that in Palliser's "total ruin . . . we lose an able and excellent officer at a time when they are wanted, and are not over plentiful".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 403–4: "Last night [February 22nd] we had an account in the St. Vincent Gazette of the taking of St. Lucia from the French, by Barrington with his fleet, and General Grant with his troops. The French are said to have had 400 men killed, and 700 wounded. D'Estaing was there, with (as they say) eleven ships of the line and three frigates, but sheered off at the very time the island surrendered, for fear of the arrival of Byron. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, Appendix to Chronicle, pp. 330–5, for a tabulated statement of the new taxes and their estimated yield.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1778, pp. 200–1, for Richard Oliver, M.P., writing to decline a nomination for the Lord Mayorship (September 6, 1778) and intimating his approaching resignation of his Aldermanship and Parliamentary seat, because of the need of his presence to attend to the "precarious state" of his "much injured property" in the "once flourishing West Indies". Oliver's bitter language, while professing his hope that the West Indies would stay connected with Britain, also bears evidence that he had been discussing with "many persons more, whose property is situated as mine is" not merely Government's numerous shortcomings but even the possible necessity of a change of allegiance.

was affected by new factors. On the one hand, increasingly good war-news from Georgia hardly promised to assist Opposition's customary rhetoric on Government's incompetence in conducting hostilities. On the other hand, the Admiralty was again in trouble owing to what was deemed the stilted way in which Keppel had been reinstated after his complete vindication by court martial. When, indeed, Fox opened an attack in form on Sandwich's naval management during the previous year, he obtained, on March 3rd, the surprising division of 170 against 204. It was a division which encouraged him to bring the matter forward again on March 8th in a slightly altered form. And though Administration succeeded, this time, in mobilising 246 votes against the Minority's 174, Ministers suffered badly in prestige from the fact that it was not merely Keppel who now declared war upon them but Admiral Lord Howe, a very formidable enemy after his three gallant years in American waters. Howe promised to bring his own particular grievances up later, but now chose to declare in advance that Ministers had deceived him when he had first taken up his command; and had gone on deceiving him during its course; but would do so no longer since he had decided he could do the country no real service by accepting any further commissions while they were in office. It was particularly disconcerting that the species of Admirals' strike, declared by Keppel and Howe, should be joined by a number of other naval commanders,[1] for conduct of this kind undoubtedly comforted the enemy and increased the Spanish temptation to intervene.

Once more, however, Opposition found that it lost rather than gained with "independent" men when it showed itself over-eager to extract party advantage from a national peril. When on March 21st Fox moved against the Admiralty a third time with motions based, it appeared, on Howe's views, Administration succeeded in bringing down Opposition's vote to 126 against 219.[2] And a

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1779, History, p. 121: "About this time also, or soon after, Sir Robert Harland, Captain Leveson Gower, Sir John Lindsay, and some other officers of high name and distinguished merit, either quitted the service, or declined acting under the present system. And so general was the discontent and defection, that it was reported and believed, that no less than twenty, of the most experienced and distinguished captains in the navy, were on the point of throwing up their commissions on one day in a body. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 404: "Fox yesterday [March 21st] made two motions, one against the ministry for neglect in the West Indies, the other for their neglect of the Mediterranean. . . . The motion was a compliment of Faction to Lord Howe, as they had already paid one to Keppel. Strong

fourth attempt on April 19th with a motion by Fox for an Address to the Throne for Sandwich's dismissal brought the even more disappointing division of 118 against 221 despite the malicious private gossip long brought to bear against Sandwich.[1] Ministers, of course, had been greatly worried throughout these proceedings and showed it by anxiety to stifle any problem threatening to add to their difficulties. Even the question of giving some reality to the Trade concessions admittedly needed by an increasingly discontented Ireland was smothered on the indication of some revival of manufacturing opposition in Manchester and Glasgow.[2] With somewhat more justification the revived Contractor's Bill was smothered in a division of 165 against 124. And possibly it was the professed Administration aim of uniting all descriptions of loyal men behind the Throne that helped to save a Protestant Dissenters Relief Bill from the fate that had been allowed to overtake two forerunners in 1772 and 1773. Though some High Church opposition was still heard, the Toleration Act reliefs were far exceeded in a Bill that allowed Protestant Dissenting ministers to substitute an unimpeachable declaration for signature of the bulk of the Anglican Articles and which, on the same condition, removed many legal pitfalls from the feet of the Dissenting teacher.[3] The Bill, too, was not only a sop for Opposition but, by providing a Protestant counterpart to the already much-abused

altercation, but decently conducted, between Lord Howe and Governor Johnson, about American operations. About twelve o'clock Fox's motion was rejected by 219 to 126."

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under February 11, 1779, for the sneering close to his account of the Keppel disorders of the night at the Admiralty: "Lord Sandwich, exceedingly terrified, escaped through the garden, with his mistress, Miss Ray, to the Horse Guards, and there betrayed most manifest panic." It is singular that Miss Ray should have been shot dead by a would-be suitor on April 7th.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, History, p. 128: ". . . the clamour without doors had been much fainter, and the opposition from the manufacturing districts weaker, than they had been in the preceding session . . . Glasgow and Manchester, however, petitioned; and the minister's late warm partisans in both, began now to accuse him of the duplicity . . . of neutrality. This clamour and reproach suddenly brought him to a determination; and setting his face totally against the proposed relief, it was accordingly rejected upon a close division . . . by a majority of 62 to 58 [March 18th]."

[3] Cf. 19 Geo. III, c. 44, for the new declaration carrying exemption from signature of the bulk of the Thirty-nine Articles. It runs: "I A.B. do solemnly declare, in the presence of Almighty God, that I am a Christian and a protestant, and as such, that I believe that the scriptures of the old and new testament, as commonly received among protestant churches, do contain the revealed will of God; and that I do receive the same as the rule of my doctrine and practice."

Catholic Relief Act of 1778, offered some prospect of quieting the anti-Popery agitation already marked in Scotland.[1]

Though Ministers made an encouraging opening after Easter by defeating, on April 19th and by a decisive majority, Fox's motion for Sandwich's dismissal, the rest of the Session was to bring them great trouble in both Houses on Service matters. Admiral Howe and General Howe both sat in the Commons, and there their impressive American records were bound to bring them more sympathy from "independent men" than Burgoyne, also aggrieved and agitating, had so far been able to obtain. The embittered General Howe, indeed, not satisfied with the normal Parliamentary discussion he could initiate on the alleged lack of proper Government support for his campaigns, proceeded to ask for the summons of military witnesses. On April 29th Government had everything it could do to beat him off in divisions of 189 against 155 and 180 against 158. But the demand was renewed on May 3rd, and on May 6th North found it necessary to give way to the widespread feeling, not confined to the Opposition side of the House, that as Howe had been blamed, at least by implication, for Administration's failure to end the war, he was entitled to special facilities for stating his case. This widespread sympathy for a brother-member led, as the unlucky North had foreseen, to the House plunging itself into a very morass of professional military inquiry to which not merely Howe but even Burgoyne dragged bands of witnesses.[2] Only on June 29th, long after the prorogation date which North would have liked to set, was it found possible to use a lucky chance to break off an inquiry which was beginning to pall even on Opposition.[3] The truth was that the Opposition no longer needed an inquiry from which, at

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, pp. 197–8 for the Edinburgh riots of February 2nd in which, after the mob had gone on from the sack of a Catholic presbytery to that of a chapel, they proceeded to attack suspect private houses. The Glasgow rioting on February 9th was, according to the *York Chronicle and General Advertiser* of February 19th, mob-work unexampled before.

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 409–10 for an interesting view: "We have had tedious examinations in the House of American officers. Opposition in this, as in everything else, never think of their country and its perilous state, but of how they shall abuse or traduce a minister: here they begin, and here they end. Sir Guy Carlton was four hours being examined at the Bar of the House. He answered like a gallant and wise man, scorning to make his court to a faction either by abusing Lord George Germaine or exculpating Burgoyne. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 415–16, for North even on June 12th finding himself able to excuse James Harris, M.P., from attendance owing to a fully assured superiority of numbers over Opposition members still at Westminster.

best, it might have been possible to obtain a few more charges to hurl at Government. But no such charges could now possibly equal the effect of the hostile Spanish manifesto which Government had been handed on June 16th.

The Spanish decision to intervene in the war gave a new turn to the closing stages of the Session. In both Houses business on the Loyal Addresses to the Throne, customary on such occasions, found Opposition full of warlike professions against the House of Bourbon and pressing, with renewed vigour and hope, resolutions indirectly aimed at breaking off the American War on the plea of concentrating against France and Spain. And if Administration was still able to defeat such attempts by majorities in Commons and Lords, respectively, of 156 against 80 and 57 against 32, these figures indicate that Administration's majorities, weary of a long, tiresome and depressing Session, were hardly to be depended on any longer for the energy to force stiffly-fought Bills through. The country's naval tradition, indeed, and the necessity for preparing to meet the combined fleets of France and Spain, helped Government to secure, with some modifications, its Bill for temporarily restricting the classes legally exempt from naval impressment.[1] But the Bill by which it had been hoped to double the Militia seems to have produced serious differences in the Cabinet itself, two of its members in the Lords assisting Opposition to remove the clauses for extending compulsory Militia service to 31,500 more men as likely to arouse popular discontent and deprive the regular army of its best recruiting ground. When going into prorogation on July 3rd Opposition might well hope that the Ministerial "system", at which it had battered so pertinaciously during the Session, had suffered a most dangerous blow from Lords Gower and Weymouth, the Cabinet Peers who had left nothing of North's Bill but the provision for Volunteer Companies.[2]

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, State Papers, pp. 348–51, however, for Opposition's Protest against the Bill's legalisation of illegal impressments already effected.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 172: "the minister was exposed to the bitter taunts o the opposition, who observed, that that spirit of disunion and discord, whicl administration had so industriously and successfully spread, through ever department of the state . . . and through every part of the empire, had nov seized the cabinet itself, and was equally visible among themselves. Th minister could not conceal his chagrin, nor refrain from complaining of th conduct of his colleagues in the other House."

CHAPTER XV

THE DEMAND FOR "PUBLIC OECONOMY", 1779–80

"The principles on which the American war was originally founded, continue to be maintained by multitudes of all ranks; and the want of success in it was rather imputed to the fault of particular commanders, than to the nature of the undertaking . . . Neither had the commerce of this kingdom suffered in the degree that was to have been apprehended. Our manufactures were supposed to make their way to America, though indirectly, and certainly not in any proportion to what had been the case hitherto; and the diminution of them, where the demand for them was diminished, was rendered less sensible by large numbers of workmen having enlisted in the army, or been engaged in the militia. It is said, also, that the national trade in other respects, and especially to the northern and north-eastern parts of Europe, was in a flourishing state. The war, too, itself found employment for a great number of people. The fortunes which certain persons obtained by it, together with the advantages that were held out to monied men, in subscribing to the public loans, occasioned a facility in raising supplies, which was extremely favourable to the measures of government, and lessened the general discernment of the calamities and dangers of the nation. . . . There had been for some years past a very vigorous and spirited opposition to the measures of government in parliament; but it had not hitherto been much supported by the people without doors. Great discontent appeared in the nation; but it was not productive of any considerable effects, nor did it excite, in any very high degree, the apprehensions of the government. At length, however, the enormous expenses of the American war, and the burthens which it occasioned, seemed to threaten more vigorous exertions of the people. . . ."

"Mr. Fox particularly distinguished himself at the meeting of the freeholders of Wiltshire. . . . He conjured them, in the most emphatic language, to depend chiefly on themselves for a redress of their grievances; and not to sit still in expectation of it from any statesmen. . . . It had been thrown out, that no retrenchment could be made of the civil list, because this was his majesty's, and no part of it should be touched; upon which Mr. Fox exclaimed with vehemence, In God's name, is the king to be the only person who is to feel nothing from the

distresses of his kingdom? It is but two years since, that his majesty was complimented with no less than one hundred thousand pounds a year: though it was surely not the most seasonable time for such an augmentation, when almost all his subjects were obliged to deny themselves the most innocent luxuries, and even the decent conveniences of life. Should princes, he asked, too fond as they generally are of war, from ambition, from pride, or from obstinacy, be led to promote measures which would impoverish their people: should they at such periods, increase in splendour? On the contrary, he maintained, that they ought to feel inconveniences from war, and have the check put to their ambition. He concluded, by exhorting constituents diligently to watch the conduct of their representatives. . . ."

The New Annual Register, 1780 on the winter of 1779–80.

THE summer of 1779 was a very anxious time in England. It was early known that a great Spanish fleet of over thirty capital ships had joined the French for combined operations against England and Ireland. On July 9th the seriousness of the situation was revealed to all by the issue of a proclamation commanding, in case of need, the removal of all horses, oxen, cattle and provisions from the sea-coast into the interior so that they might not fall into the hands of enemy landing-parties. Throughout August when there was talk of numerous enemy transports ready to land troops and when the combined Bourbon fighting fleet, estimated at sixty capital ships, was faced by only thirty-seven British ships of the line,[1] there was the greatest alarm in the southern counties.[2] Fortunately, Bourbon seamanship was not equal to the opportunities it enjoyed during its first August weeks in the Channel, and by the beginning of September the energetic British measures everywhere in evidence had succeeded in reassuring even the more apprehensive.[3] It is particularly revealing to find Opposition, which had considered the King's surrender to its demands inevitable before the beginning of the next Parliamentary Session, growing much less sure of itself.[4] Especially disconcerting, after Opposition's confident prophecies, was the plight of its American protégés, harried and harassed both

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 280, for one of the varying estimates of the time, communicated from London on August 17th. "The French and Spanish fleets", wrote Fox to an Opposition friend, "are certainly off the Lizard Point, and between Sir Charles Hardy and Plymouth. You may depend on this being true; sixty-three were seen; but whether there were more or not, or how many of them were frigates, is not certain. There must be a battle, and Sir Charles Hardy has but thirty-six."

[2] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 422–3 for a letter from Plymouth at the height of the alarms. Written on the evening of August 17th it said: "Never was a more unfortunate concurrence of incidents. The wind was westerly until this morning, when it changed to the east and blew fresh all day, which will prevent Sir Charles Hardy coming up Channel, and their troops may come over from Havre, St. Malo, &c., without let or molestation before tomorrow evening. The consternation among all ranks here is not to be expressed, many families have already removed, and others are removing. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 433 for a letter of September 5th to the British Minister at St. Petersburg from his mother: "It is thought a very fine stroke of Sir Charles Hardy getting past the combined fleet when he was for a considerable time to the westward of them . . . he gets great reinforcements daily. We are well fortified and manned at Plymouth, and though I am not so sanguine as Colonel Dundas, I am by no means so terrified as I was three weeks back. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 235–6, for Fox on September 27th ruefully reflecting on an Extraordinary *Gazette* just received that brought more encouragement to Administration in the shape of very good war-news from America.

by destructive amphibious expeditions in every direction from New York[1] and by English and American Tory operations in the southern Colonies which threatened at times to add the Carolinas to captured Georgia.[2]

Yet if Opposition saw reason for some lowering of tone, Administration was justifiably apprehensive of the coming Session. New loans and new taxes would again have to be proposed to a country, very rich indeed and growing daily richer, but undoubtedly suffering from war-dislocations rendering it increasingly liable to be swept off its feet by the Opposition prophecies of approaching bankruptcy and ruin which had such a strange fascination for the age.[3] The truth is that though the historian, with all the facts before him, can understand what exaggeration it was to talk of ruin for a country so busy canal-digging, turnpiking and enclosing, very real economic disturbance was doubtless responsible for such phenomena as the mob-destruction of Lancashire's new textile machinery in October 1779[4] and the nation-wide talk of "distress" during the ensuing winter. Perhaps the hardest-hit of politically powerful interests were those deriving their wealth from the West Indies where, thanks to D'Estaing's great local superiority of force during the summer, the Grenadas as well as Dominica were

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, History, pp. 186–98, for the very successful destruction accomplished in Virginia in May, the capture in June of American forts on the Hudson guarding the line of communication between New England and the rest of the United States, the grave punishment inflicted on privateering Connecticut in July, and the severe lesson taught Boston and Massachusetts in August when the best part of their marine, attempting to dislodge a British force from their Maine territory, was captured or destroyed.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 179–86, for the North Carolina Tories and the successful British operations in South Carolina where a footing was established and Charleston gravely imperilled.

[3] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters* for that of February 6, 1780: "By the tenor of the petitions you would think we were starving; yet there is a little coin stirring. Within this week there has been a cast at hazard at the Cocoa Tree, the difference of which amounted to a hundred and four-score thousand pounds. . . . However, as it is a little necessary to cast about for resources, it is just got abroad, that about a year ago we took possession of a trifling district in India called the Province of Oude, which contains four millions of inhabitants, produces between three and four millions of revenue. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, under October 9th, for Manchester reports of much mob-mischief effected during the week "by destroying the engines for carding and spinning cotton wool. . . . In the neighbourhood of Chorley, the mob destroyed and burned the engines erected by Mr. Arkwright at a very great expence. . . . At one o'clock this morning two expresses arrived, one from Wigan, another from Blackburn, intreating immediate assistance, both declaring the violence of the insurgents, and the shocking depredations yesterday at Bolton: it is thought they will be at Blackburn this morning, and at Preston by four this afternoon. . . ."

in French hands, and privateering, American, French and Spanish, was taking heavy toll of the trade of the other British islands.[1] Privateering in European waters, too, was proving destructive and vexatious enough to throw the normal commercial activity of London and other ports seriously out of gear and to drive Government to the perilous course of threatening the Dutch with war unless the Prince of Orange's Admiralty prevented the pro-American Republicans of Holland from opening their harbours to the famous Paul Jones.[2] The fact was that the Dutch were suffering sorely from the attentions of British privateers,[3] and that these, in their turn, represented the diversion of much British shipping and mercantile capital from disturbed and perilous trades to dangerous but attractive gambling for high stakes in the shape of captures from Spain, France or neutrals against whose ships a case could be worked up after capture.[4] But the large disorganisation of sea-traffic, inevitable in the maritime conditions pictured above,[5] promoted increased speculation in all water-borne commodities and brought perilous increases of price even in a key-article like Tyne coal for the London market. British speculators doubtless gained more than their proportionate share from world increases in commodity-prices, but the great enrichment, within a country, even of a whole class of individuals, is apt to aggravate the discontent of those who pay increased prices without apparent compensation. In an England, still untutored in searching economic analysis, the angry feeling of the "public" was dangerously prone to follow tradition and the Opposition in ascribing war-prices to a corrupt political system and swindling Government war-contractors.

[1] D'Estaing's naval superiority during the summer was largely the result of the detachment of a strong naval force to act as convoy for imperilled vessels sailing for England.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, State Papers, pp. 430–1, for serious language.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 412–21, for three appeals made to the States-General to secure the release of many ships in British hands. They were from "the Merchants, Proprietors of Vessels, and Exchange Insurers of the Town of Amsterdam", "the Merchants and Owners of Ships of the Town of Rotterdam", and "the Merchants, Proprietors of Vessels, and Exchange Insurers of the Towns of Amsterdam, Rotterdam, and Dordrecht".

[4] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters*, for a caustic comment made in that of December 31, 1780 after the breach with Holland had finally come: "All chance of accommodation with Holland is vanished. Count Welderen and his wife departed this morning. All they who are to gain by privateers and captures are delighted with a new field of plunder. Piracy is more practicable than victory. . . ."

[5] It is worth remembering that the disorganisation was further increased by the great impressment of seamen that had taken place.

It is well, therefore, to bear economic facts in mind when returning to the political scene as it appeared in the autumn of 1779. The best proof, perhaps, of Administration's fear of the consequences of going on without change, as the King desired, is to be found in the new Cabinet troubles facing George III as Parliament's inevitable reassembly drew nearer. Lord North may be discovered once more soliciting permission to retire, and Lords Gower, Weymouth and Thurlow concurring with him in the view that Government could not carry on the public business without an accession of strength. Indeed, Gower and Weymouth seem finally to have been forced to resign in the attempt to make the King face the Government's difficulties while yet giving him, as they would have claimed, two offices in hand which might prove useful in bargaining with Opposition. As November 25th, the day of Parliament's reopening, approached, even sympathetic observers considered a Royal capitulation inevitable. Increasing Irish unrest had just come to a head in the disquieting Dublin riots and demonstrations of November 15th;[1] Wilkes, rising once more on the anti-Court tide, obtained financial independence by triumphantly winning, after repeated rebuffs in the days of Court power, the City Chamberlainship;[2] and even petitioning by the Middlesex Freeholders was being revived. Here is one view of the situation communicated on November 22nd to the Comptroller and Secretary to the Queen:[3]

Every day seems more and more to confirm the probability of Lord North's downfall. No successor is yet found for Lord Gower or Lord Weymouth. Lord Hilsborough declines coming into office, probably on account of his Irish property. The Opposition are determined to go *all lengths* to obtain their purpose. There is great reason to believe

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 441, for rioting and the besetting of the Irish House of Commons so that the members might be put on oath to vote for *Free Trade and a short Money Bill*. The short Money Bill meant voting the supplies for six months only instead of the two years, customary in Ireland, and indirectly it meant the Irish Parliament in virtually continuous session till England had been forced to give way.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, for the polling figures declared on November 24th. They were Wilkes, 2332; James, 370.

[3] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 442–3. The Middlesex excitements here referred to arose from the obstacles thought to have been deliberately put in the way of George Byng's succession to the deceased Serjeant Glynn's place as Wilkes's co-member for Middlesex. After Serjeant Glynn's death earlier in the year Byng, though the "popular" candidate, was held to have been denied the opportunity of divesting himself of his Wigan membership that would have come from temporary appointment to a Crown place that barred from Parliament—a place like the Stewardship of the Chiltern Hundreds.

that they mean on Thursday to try the effect of a large mob on the King, and particular persons in the Ministry. The presenting of the Middlesex Freeholders' petition in the House of Commons will furnish a pretext for a tumultuous assembly on that or some other day, when no doubt the leaders of that band will point out to them objects of insult. Lord North is alarmed at this circumstance, but is otherwise without fear of the Opposition, of whose rancour he has no notion. . . . How all this will end it is impossible to guess. It seems barely possible that Lord North being removed, the Chancellor and the Bedford party [Gower, Weymouth, Sandwich and Rigby] may coalesce with Lord Shelburne or Lord Rockingham, and so form another Ministry: it is more likely that everybody now in office will be driven out and taken by storm. Wedderburne has sent word to Lord North that he must expect no support from him. A friend of mine, a shrewd calculator, guesses Lord North's majority on Thursday at less than 50. . . .

But calculations of this kind reckoned without George III's courage and persistence. They ignored, too, the fact that the all-important groups of "independent" men in Parliament were much more likely to be antagonised than attracted by Opposition's thirst for power and the supposed readiness of some of its members to appeal to the mob. And then, Opposition's expected declamations, when they came on the Address, were not too well borne out by the facts. There was no tremendous war-incompetence apparent in a record of almost consistent success in America during 1779 or in an Indian position, seemingly stronger than ever with Pondicherry, Chandernagore and all the other French holdings in British hands. Against the British losses in the West Indies, moreover, St. Lucia with St. Pierre and Miquelon provided an equivalent, and if D'Estaing's reported storm-distress off the Bahamas were confirmed and his erratic operations, now directed towards Georgia, curtailed or ended, the Caribbean position was likely to swing violently in Britain's favour. Finally, despite great temporary superiority of force in the summer, the grand Franco-Spanish Armada of the Channel had achieved absolutely nothing and was now lying in Brest harbour with all its prospects gone, and with Spanish discontent making a dispersion almost inevitable.[1] Facts like these seem to have contributed to opening divisions of the Session very mortifying to Opposition after the sanguine

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 443: "D'Estaing's distress by a storm off the Bahama Islands, and the consequent dispersion of his fleet, seems to be believed; and it is also said with confidence that the Spaniards and French disagree exceedingly at Brest."

forecasts that had been made. It was impossible to pretend that Opposition had expected a Cabinet in dissolution to win a majority of 233 against 134 in the Commons or one of 82 against 41 in the Lords.[1]

It seems doubtful whether Opposition's figures had been helped by a speech from Fox, eloquent indeed but going to dangerous lengths in virtually forecasting popular insurrections unless policy were changed.[2] Fox's strength of language, too, in ridiculing the Scottish member Adam who had gone over to Administration because of the alleged factiousness of Opposition, brought him a much-discussed duel of dubious utility to his political standing. Meanwhile the relatively favourable opening of the Session had hardly conduced to that surrender by George III on which Opposition was set. The King did, indeed, under pressure from Lord North, renew negotiations with Opposition through Lord Thurlow as intermediary. But if Lord North's very willing retirement was offered at one stage, the rest of the King's ideas were so far from surrender that the negotiations broke down. Opposition was apparently mortified to find that the King had authorised Thurlow to go no farther than indicate the King's willingness[3]

> . . . to blot from his remembrance any events that may have displeased him, and to admit into his confidence and service any men of public spirit and talents, who will join with part of the present Ministry in forming one on a more enlarged scale, provided it be understood that *every means are to be employed to keep the Empire entire*, to prosecute the present just and unprovoked war in all its branches, with the utmost vigour, and that his Majesty's past measures be treated with proper respect.

It was Lords Shelburne and Camden who were principally

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, British and Foreign History, pp. 1–14, for a summary of events in both Houses on November 25th and 26th.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 13, for a summary of the speech thus concluded: "His majesty had set out in life with the brightest prospects that a young prince could have desired. He was possessed of immense dominions, and the warmest affections of his people. But how unhappily was the scene now reversed. His empire was dismembered, his councils distracted, and his people's attachment to his person much lessened. He said, he only spoke within doors the language that was held without: the people were beginning to murmur, and their patience was not unlimited. They would at last do themselves justice: there certainly would be insurrections: and though it was impossible that the calamities that would attend them could be justified or compensated by any good that could be obtained by them, yet they would certainly take place. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 237.

approached on these lines, presumably because, as Chatham's disciples, they were half-committed to keeping the Empire entire. And it was doubtless hoped that acceptance of office on their part would lead to fissures among the Rockinghams. But Thurlow was hardly the most insinuating of negotiators and what hope there was of splitting Opposition was lost.[1] Meanwhile Opposition in an attempt to force the King's hand made all the trouble it could before the Christmas adjournment of Parliament, undertaken on December 23rd. Shelburne's Irish motion of December 1st, preceding as it did North's announcement of Trade terms acceptable to the Irish Parliament, allowed some particularly strong Opposition speech-making to be undertaken in the Lords on the theme of North's criminal procrastination.[2] On December 3rd, again, the Commons heard the Oppositionist, David Hartley, compute the additions already made to the National Debt, by the war, at thirty-six millions and calculate, on the basis of the huge Estimates for the coming year, that even if peace came in 1780 the Debt's total increase would prove to be fifty-eight millions, requiring for interest over three millions annually in new taxes. It was Hartley, too, angry at being encouraged in some approaches to his friend Franklin which North had finally dropped, who revealed that the Americans had been prepared to consider a ten years' truce on the basis of *uti possidetis* and a conference.[3] But it may be doubted whether this revelation of America's straits, and of the bland American proposal for gaining an interval for recovery, did not do Administration more good than harm with "independent" members of the House.[4] Certainly Habeas Corpus Suspension, the Irish Trade terms and huge Navy, Army and Ordnance Estimates were carried before Christmas without much greater

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 237–8.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 239–40, for an Oppositionist M.P. who had attended the Lords' debate, "the best I ever remember to have heard". What impressed him most was Shelburne's being "very violent, and very personal to the King", the equal violence of the Duke of Richmond for the Rockinghams, the condemnation uttered even by Lord Gower, just retired from the Cabinet, of North's alleged negligence, and Lord Camden's refusal to consider "the idea of union with any of the present Ministers".

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, pp. 21–2, for a convenient summary of Hartley's statement. Hartley's temptation had been increased by American suggestions "that the people in America, or the ruling powers there, were desirous to quit their confederacy with France".

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 22–3, for North's objections to "relinquishing, under the cover of a single word, a Truce, the sole and essential point in question" and challenging a division to test "the present sentiments of the house, and prevailing opinions of the people".

difficulty than in past years. And thanks to Opposition's rejection of his overtures, George III found it possible to complete the Cabinet from his own side without forfeiting Lord North's now indispensable services as Leader of the Commons.

But some important developments in the country were already coming to Opposition's aid in a way that seems to have taken all political quarters by surprise. After such a portent as Wilkes's great majority for the City Chamberlainship in November, Administration was doubtless not altogether taken aback by London's return, under the stimulus of increasing taxation and rising prices, to its old "patriot" position. But the revived Common Council demonstrations of December were strategically sounder for affecting the "public" than had been previous "patriot" demonstrations with their principal consequences in the mob. Letters of thanks directed to the Opposition Peers who had just been advocating "public oeconomy" and a reduction of the Crown's corrupting Civil List, produced, for example, thirty-two replies, some of them, like those from the Dukes of Cumberland, Portland and Bolton making excellent material for the newspapers. The City's own Resolution omitted all mention of "the people" when affirming "that the ruinous measures which have brought the landed and mercantile interest of this country into its present reduced and deplorable situation, could not have been pursued to their actual extremity, had it not been for the abuse of the present increased, enormous, and undue influence of the crown". And, finally, the appearance of primary concern with tangible financial grievances was completed by promising support in advance for Lord Shelburne's motion, due to come on in February and requesting a Committee of both Houses to examine into public expenditure.[1]

Yet these City demonstrations, however moderated their tone, were not calculated to have nearly so much effect with the "public" as the strikingly successful meeting of Yorkshire Freeholders held on December 30th. City demonstrations, after all, were still associated in the mind of the well-to-do "public" with disturbing mob-excesses, totally alien from the species of meeting, graced by the presence of many land-owners and members of Parliament, that the Rev. Christopher Wyvill, clergyman and Yorkshire land-owner, had been organising for some time. Despite the hearing

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 50.

given on December 30th in the York Assembly Rooms to several pro-Administration objectors, one of them of very high Royalist views, the meeting seems to have gone very much as Wyvill had designed it. A remarkable Petition to the House of Commons was adopted by the great majority present, and what was more remarkable, American example was followed in the nomination of a Committee of Correspondence to push the Petition and even to construct a legal Association in support of "that laudable reform and such other measures as might conduce to restore the freedom of parliament".[1]

The Yorkshire Petition is worth giving at some length. It claims to show:[2]

> That this Nation hath been engaged for several years in a most expensive and unfortunate war; that many of our valuable Colonies, having actually declared themselves independent, have formed a strict confederacy with France and Spain. . . ; that the consequence of these combined misfortunes hath been a large addition to the National Debt; a heavy accumulation of taxes; a rapid decline of the trade, manufactures and land-rents of the Kingdom.
>
> Alarmed at the diminished resources and growing burthens of this Country, and convinced that rigid frugality is now indispensably necessary in every department of the State, your Petitioners observe with grief, that, notwithstanding the calamitous and impoverished condition of the Nation, much Public Money has been improvidently squandered, and that many Individuals enjoy sinecure places, efficient places with exorbitant emoluments, and pensions unmerited by public service, to a large and still increasing amount; whence the Crown has acquired a great and unconstitutional Influence, which, if not check'd, may soon prove fatal to the Liberties of this Country.
>
> . . . until effectual measures be taken to redress the oppressive grievances herein stated, the grant of any additional sum of Public Money, beyond the produce of the present taxes, will be injurious to the Rights and Property of the People, and derogatory from the Honour and Dignity of Parliament. . . .

The sequel to the adoption of the Yorkshire Petition is well known. The Petition's insistence on "rigid frugality" in public expenditure, its demand for sinecure abolition and the reduction of excessive salaries and pensions, and its final objections to new taxation until these demands had been met proved so attractive even to the well-to-do "public" that, all over the country, meetings

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 50–2.

[2] Cf. *Form of the Petition agreed to at the Meeting of the County of York, held the 30th of December 1779* as extensively circulated by Wyvill for years.

similar to Yorkshire's were soon being projected. And it certainly seems necessary to suppose that numbers of men, not hitherto to be brought to criticism of the King, were so greatly attracted by the "oeconomy" provisions of the Yorkshire Petition as to consent to similar petitions from their own county despite explicit condemnation of the Crown's acquisition of "a great and unconstitutional influence". Otherwise it is difficult to account for the long list of eighteen counties that adopted petitions and appointed Committees of Correspondence on the full Yorkshire model,[1] the second list of five counties that contented themselves with petitioning only,[2] and the third list of boroughs which, under the lead of London and Westminster[3] decided to co-operate in this petitioning activity inaugurated by the shires.[4] And despite the counter-efforts of "friends of Administration" in preventing the emergence of still other petitions, in producing occasional marks of division, and in issuing protests, particularly against the resort to the dreaded Committees of Correspondence,[5] Opposition

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 52, for Cheshire, Herts., Sussex, Surrey, Somerset, Wilts., Gloucester, Hunts., Dorset, Cumberland, Norfolk, Devon, Berks., Notts., Bucks., Cambridge and, of course, Middlesex.

[2] *Ibid.*, for Bedford, Suffolk, Northumberland, Hereford and Denbigh. Northamptonshire sent instructions to its members instead of a Petition.

[3] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under February 2, 1780: "Meeting for a petition in Westminster Hall. The Court party dispersed handbills to represent the dearness of coals, and thence to excite the people against the Duke of Richmond as enriched by the coal-tax. About 3000 persons met, headed by the Duke of Portland, the Cavendishes, Charles Fox, Richard Fitzpatrick, Wilkes, Sawbridge, Lord Temple, and the Grenvilles, General Burgoyne, Burke, Townshends, &c. Charles Fox was placed in the chair. Sawbridge moved the petition, and was seconded by Wilkes; and a petition similar to that of York voted, and a committee of Lords and others chosen. Charles Fox then made a fine and warm speech, and was particularly severe on Lord North and the Duke of Northumberland. Dr. Jebb proposed Mr. Fox for the future candidate for Westminster which was received with universal applause. Lord J. Cavendish and Charles Turner likewise spoke. It was curious to see Charles Fox, lately so unpopular a character, become the idol of the people. . . ."

[4] The *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 52, mentions London, Westminster, Reading, Cambridge, Newcastle and Nottingham. But there were other borough petitions, too, notably those from Bristol and York.

[5] Cf. *Protest of some of the Noblemen, Gentlemen and Freeholders of Hertfordshire* (reproduced in the *New Annual Register*, 1780, Public Papers, p. 103), for its concluding points: "Fifthly . . . we conceive that the petition and the resolutions are calculated to produce diffidence and suspicions in the minds of his Majesty's subjects, at a time when unanimity and confidence in government are essentially necessary to support the . . . state, in our defence against the most formidable attack that has ever been made on his Majesty's dominions." "And, Sixthly, We do most particularly protest against the resolutions for appointing a committee of correspondence, apparently tending to over-awe the legislature by collecting and combining the factious discontents of the several parts of the Kingdom into one system . . . and to establish a plan which appears to us to lead

unquestionably gained vastly from the whole movement. From the time of Parliament's return, after the Christmas Recess, the Session was one long anxiety to Ministers.

That Administration was facing new risks of being largely deserted by "independent" men whenever "Public Oeconomy" was in question, first became obvious in Parliament on February 8th. This was the day of Shelburne's demand in the Lords for a Parliamentary Inquiry into Government Expenditure and of Sir George Savile's presentation, in the Commons, of the Yorkshire Petition, now bearing the signature of more than 8000 Freeholders and enjoying the support of many parts of the country. Savile, hitherto one of the most responsible Rockingham Oppositionists, was deemed to have used almost threatening language to Government in announcing that his constituents did not mean to be put off with palliatives, excuses, shuffling artifices, partial expedients or mock inquiries.[1] He had certainly been very effective when declaring that the Petition was so far from being the result of underhand machination or the work of men of straw that the hall, wherein six hundred gentlemen first adopted it, had held at this meeting more property than was contained within the walls of the House of Commons. Undoubtedly North was wise in not opposing the motion for having the Petition read and in adopting a semi-apologetic tone when declaring that, though the House would wish to inquire into it, such inquiry could not take precedence of all other proceedings and especially not of the Ways and Means business that could not be delayed much longer.[2]

In the Lords, meanwhile, Shelburne had made a damaging attack on Government finance; Grafton had declared that the petitioning was a spontaneous exhibition of public dissatisfaction and apprehension; and Rockingham had explained why he had been active for seventeen years in combating the disastrous and unconstitutional "system" inaugurated at the beginning of the reign. By

to the greatest calamities which can befall our country, viz. insurrection, confusion, and anarchy."

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under February 8th: "Sir G. Savile, in presenting the Yorkshire petition used many threats of the resentment of petitioners. Lord North turned the argument artfully, and said he found Parliament was to be threatened, and not allowed even to inquire whether there were abuses or not. Charles Fox finely and wisely explained away Sir G. Savile's violence. . . ."

[2] This was tactfully to prepare the House for new taxes, the laying on of which the Yorkshire petitioners had opposed until their demands on official sinecures, pensions and salaries had been fulfilled.

dividing at 55 against 101 Opposition in the Lords certainly achieved a marked increase of its voting strength. And if Shelburne's speech had impressed many with the conviction that Opposition had a real alternative to Government finance and one that would permit the ending of many abuses and the making of many economies, that impression was vastly increased by Burke's famous speaking of February 11th on "Oeconomical Reform".[1] In that speaking, whose effect was heightened by the notice given of five accompanying Bills for executing its recommendations, the nation was first enlightened on the Crown influence exercised through such often unrecognised but costly channels as the Principality of Wales, the Duchy of Cornwall, the Duchy and Palatinate of Lancaster, and the Earldom of Chester; great savings were shown as possible throughout the King's Household; and whole departments of Administration like the Third Secretaryship of State, the Board of Works and the Board of Trade and Plantations were held to have little other real use than providing obedient politicians with places and salaries.

The "oeconomical" attack was already serious enough for North to deem it wise to praise Burke highly and to refrain from opposition to Burke's motion for leave to bring in his first Bill "for the better regulation of his majesty's civil establishments, and of certain public offices; for the limitation of pensions, and the suppression of certain useless, expensive, and inconvenient places; and for applying the money saved thereby to the public service". Nor was similar leave refused shortly afterwards to three more of Burke's Bills that provided not only for the abolition of offices attached to the Principality of Wales, the Earldom of Chester and the Duchy and Palatinate of Lancaster, but proposed to dispose both of the property attached to these jurisdictions and that still nominally attached to the Crown itself.[2] It is, indeed, no bad commentary on the rising ambitions of Opposition to find

[1] Cf. *Monthly Review*, March 1780, on "this noble and wonderful piece of oratory" which, after partial reproduction in the newspapers, was now being offered in complete form in two separate editions.

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, pp. 102–3. Burke's fifth Bill "for uniting the duchy of Cornwall to the Crown; for the suppression of certain unnecessary offices now belonging thereto . . . and for the sale of certain rents, lands, and tenements, within, or belonging to the said duchy; and for applying the produce thereof to the public service" had brought objections from the Surveyor-General to the Duchy who, sitting in the House, raised the question of the Prince of Wales's minority as a bar to the Bill and induced Burke to agree to some postponement.

Burke hoping to persuade the "public" to undertake such a breach with tradition as the sale of Crown Lands and Forests on the ground that, though their revenues had long been diverted into the Exchequer, their administration was very wasteful because they were still expected to supply the Crown with offices and influence.

On February 14th Colonel Barré, spokesman for the Opposition groups that had once looked to Chatham and now looked to Shelburne, introduced another branch of the "oeconomical" question. Pointing to the higher perquisites enjoyed by sundry Exchequer officials now that greater sums were annually passing through their hands; to the six millions that had been voted to Government without previous estimate and that were still unaccounted for; and to the unsatisfactory information once furnished him when investigating some 1775 expenditure made without previous estimate to Parliament, Barré called for the setting up of a small committee to check the accounts. Again North found it wisest to go some way with Opposition,[1] to admit that existing Exchequer procedure did not permit speedy or, indeed, effectual accounting and to show some sympathy for the notion of a small committee permanently supervising the accounts. This Administration moderation was doubtless related to the business that came on next day when Sir George Savile, claiming to be taking the first steps to execute the instructions of his petitioning Yorkshire constituents, called for two bodies of information. Government bowed to his first demand for an account of all places under Government with the salaries attached and undertook to procure and publish the information. But Savile's second demand for "an account of all subsisting pensions granted by the Crown during pleasure, or otherwise, specifying the amount of such pensions respectively, and the times when, and the persons to whom, such pensions were granted" produced a different result. A hot contest ensued between Government which claimed to be sheltering the secrets of numbers of impoverished Lady Bridgets, Lady Marys and Lady Jennys who had been granted some help by the Crown, and Opposition which contended that behind the Lady Bridgets, the Lady Marys and the Lady

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under February 14th, noting how "Charles Fox congratulated Lord North ironically on his being grown so moderate."

Jennys were being concealed political pensioners in both Houses of Parliament receiving secret pensions at the end of every Session. North tried to elude Opposition's demand by offering an account of all the pensions paid at the Exchequer and by affirming that these and all others would be found to total only £48,000 to £50,000 per annum if deduction was made of sums paid out as pensions, which were not properly pensions at all, and of the abatements made for pensions tax. But North's own figures, though arranged with a view to displaying the King's pensioning as well within the £60,000 per annum allowed even by Burke's "Oeconomical Reform", revealed to the initiated the existence of a large margin for political pensions. The result was astounding. Government only obtained a majority of two in a division of 188 against 186.[1]

In view of this vote and the active measures going forward in Yorkshire and elsewhere to unite the petitioning activities of the counties and give them wider scope, North again resolved on caution when meeting his next Parliamentary ordeal. On February 23rd Burke's principal "Public Oeconomy" Bill was read a first time and North, in answer to Burke's inquiry, affirmed that he did not yet know whether he would oppose it at a later stage. On the same day when large sums were granted for the ordinary and extraordinary service of the Navy, a demand for accounts of the application, during 1779, of the similar votes of the previous year was accepted. And in reply to those voices raised against any granting of supplies until the County Petitions had been attended to and the petitioners' grievances redressed, North took, in part, almost a "popular" line. He affirmed that even if the 9000 signatories of the Yorkshire Petition were all Freeholders that would only constitute them one-third of all the Freeholders of the county and even if there was a universal wish for "oeconomy" it was certainly not the general wish to withhold supplies from Government until the desired system of "oeconomy" was established.

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, pp. 106–12, for an interesting summary of the debate. When North claimed "that £35,000 of what passed for pension-list was not really so" he was probably right but this figure, when taken in conjunction with the others mentioned by him, furnished a valuable clue to the sum available for politics. One M.P., Byng of Wigan, said he had good information that a list of Parliamentary pensions and pensioners was made out at the end of every Session and burnt immediately after payments had been made according to it. Dunning, in the course of a powerful speech, ventured the figure of a possible forty political pensioners.

Meanwhile an inspiring naval success won against Spain by Admiral Rodney who during January had, with slight loss to himself, nearly destroyed a Spanish fleet that tried to prevent his taking a relief convoy to Gibraltar,[1] was not without its effect in encouraging Administration. On March 2nd North determined to take his own line rather than Barré's in regard to the national accounts and announced a Bill that would set up a Commission of Accounts and not the species of Select Committee Barré had had in mind. North affirmed that he saw a salutary part for such a Commission to play in preventing large sums accumulating in the hands of some officials while other parts of Administration were hard-pressed; in contriving quicker methods of passing and auditing accounts in the Exchequer; and in inquiring into possible methods of profiting the public by reductions of official fees and perquisites. As an earnest of good faith to Barré, who complained of North's alterations of his plan, two motions from him were accepted. One called for an account of the fees and perquisites of the officers of the Mint and the second provided for similar information concerning the tax-receiving officials in the Exchequer.

It was by tactful handling of this kind that North prepared Administration for the ordeal on "Public Oeconomy" that could not be held off much longer. On March 2nd he gained an important point when Administration raised a majority of 230 against 195 for declining to be hurried by Opposition into fixing the Committee stage of Burke's hitherto-unopposed "Oeconomy" Bill to begin the very next day.[2] By making March 8th the opening day instead of March 3rd, North was able, on March 6th, to deliver himself of most of his financial plans for the year. The only cheerful part of a story of £2,500,000 to be taken from the Sinking Fund, £3,400,000 raised on Exchequer Bills, £12,000,000 found by a 4 per cent Loan and a last £480,000 provided by a State

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences, pp. 16–19, for the battle of January 16th, announced by the Admiralty on February 28th. The battle had been fought off Cape St. Vincent.

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters* for that of March 3, 1780: "The troops of the Palace even rallied a little yesterday on Mr. Burke's Bill of Reformation, or Reduction, yet with evident systems of *caution;* for Lord North, who wished to defer the second reading . . . his majority was but of 35, and the minority remained 195, a very formidable number. The Associations in the counties increase, though not rapidly; yet it will be difficult for the Court to stem such a torrent . . . Fortunately, happily the tide abroad seems turned. Sir George Rodney's victory proves more considerable than it appeared at first . . . Admiral Parker has had great success too. . . ."

Lottery was the fact that bankers, despite what was then deemed the colossal projected expenditure of twenty-one millions for the year, had still considered the national credit good enough to offer not merely twelve millions but up to twenty millions on loan. Though North wisely left the announcement of the new taxes to a later day and indicated that there were some hopes of securing financial help from the East directly the East India Company's obstinacy could be broken, it was a cheerless statement at best. But by making it when he did and securing the House's assent to the Loan project despite the grumbling of an Opposition which had no real alternative to suggest, North had gained two important advantages. In persuading the House to accept the Loan, North had in effect bound the Commons in advance to vote the new taxes required to meet the interest. The Yorkshire Petition had thus been circumvented and the financial issues of the year effectively decided before vital contests opened, first, on Burke's "Oeconomy" Bill and, after Easter, upon the Petitions, whose flow to Westminster had not yet ceased.[1]

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 114, for the presentation of a Petition for a reformation of the public expenditure from the Mayor, Aldermen and citizens of Hereford on March 8th. It was followed by the reading of a protest alleged by Opposition to have "been set on foot by the clerical gentlemen about the cathedral of Hereford with the bishop at their head".

CHAPTER XVI

THE GORDON RIOTS

"The early negative put upon the Inquiry into the Public Expenditure in the House of Lords; the refusal of any account of Places and Pensions held by Members of that House; the violence done to the Constitution by the arbitrary removal of the Earl of Pembroke from the Lord Lieutenancy of our County . . . as well as by that of the Marquis of Carmarthen from the Lord Lieutenancy of the East-Riding of Yorkshire.

"And in the House of Commons, the proceedings to lay new burthens, without *any*, much less *effectual* oeconomical measures, in direct opposition to the Prayer of our Petition, as well as those of other Counties; the number of Taxes proposed to be superadded; some bearing very hard upon Our County in particular, . . . when it is certain that triple the sum might have been, and may still be produced from the suppression of unnecessary offices, savings in the mode of expenditure, and other oeconomical Reforms. . . ; the difficulties which have been thrown in the way of a very able Plan of Reform now before the House;—no enquiry made into exorbitant contracts;—Accomptants suffered to remain with large public balances at their own disposal; the measure for a Commission of Accounts taken out of independent and disinterested hands, and assumed by the authors of our Distress, in such a manner as to mock every idea of Parliamentary Independency, or Popular Enquiry; no expectation offered by the Minister, except a possible reversionary reduction of those Places which do not contribute to the Influence of the Crown, in answer to the Petitions desiring an abolition of those that do. . . .

"These facts, I apprehend, can leave little doubt with any Freeholder who approved of the former Meeting, of the necessity of immediately associating for the accomplishment of those indispensable objects stated in our Petition. . . ."

LORD SHELBURNE's Letter read at a General Meeting of the County of Wilts., held on March 29, 1780.

"It is certain, that it would be unjust to impute to the Protestant Association . . . the whole of the mischief that ensued. . . . Some of the common people probably engaged with more readiness in the riots, from the unpopularity of the administration, at least among persons of that class: and, perhaps, so much violence and disorder could not have

happened under any administration, which had been universally respected by the common people. . . . It was at first imagined by some, that the rioters would have exerted much of their rage against the houses or persons of the ministers of state; which might possibly restrain them from exerting themselves against them with the vigour they otherwise would have done. But when it came to be a general attack upon all property, and no man was sure that he was safe, there was then a more universal and earnest desire for the suppression of the riots. . . . Such were the alarm and terror that was occasioned by the riots, tumults and devastations in the metropolis, that the ardour which had appeared for promoting popular meetings and associations, and for opposing the measures of government, was in a great degree suppressed. . . ."

The New Annual Register, 1780, on the Gordon Riots.

On March 8th the House of Commons witnessed the first real trial of strength, on the "Public Oeconomy" issue, between Administration and an Opposition, strengthened by the yet uncertain number of "independent" members affected by the Yorkshire and other Petitions. Before the House went into regular Committee on Burke's first Oeconomy Bill, Rigby, the Paymaster, a bluff and cynical speaker who often made Administration's extremer points, began, in or out of concert with North, to challenge Burke's constitutionality in proposing changes in the Civil List settled on the King for life at his accession. He asked, indeed, for a discharge of the order of the day that made Burke's Bill the immediate business of the House so that a Civil List resolution from himself might be debated first. But this extremer Court line was not, in the existing temper of the House, judged a prudent one to follow,[1] and North, while offering Rigby's case his full support in due time, allowed him to be defeated on his demand for postponing consideration of Burke's Bill. This permitted Burke's first clause to be brought forward, that for abolishing the Third Secretaryship of State, founded in 1768 to relieve the other two Secretaries of Colonial business though, according to Burke, without real necessity from any press of work on either. The final majority for rejecting Burke's clause was only a very narrow one in a very full House, 208 against Opposition's 201.

As Burke's Bill was to receive further attention on March 13th, there was doubtless some Ministerial guile in North's choosing that day for asking leave to bring in his Commission of Accounts Bill and for emphasising the non-political character he wished to give his Commissioners who should not, he thought, be members of the Commons. Unfortunately for North, Opposition had designed a better plan than his for affecting the sentiment of "independent" waverers on Burke's second "oeconomical" proposition, that calling for the abolition of the Board of Trade and Plantations. Taking advantage of the Speaker's known discontent with Government, Fox requested him to guide the

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under March 8th. After reporting Rigby's questioning the right of the Commons to inquire into the Civil List, Walpole adds: "Fox, Burke, Conway, and others would not allow the right of the House could be doubted; and declared, if denied, they would appeal to the people."

House when Rigby reasserted his view of the constitutional impropriety of much of Burke's Bill.[1] A balanced and important speech resulted that told very much in Opposition's favour on the immediate Board of Trade issue before the House. The Speaker declared that Burke had done a public service in introducing his Bill; found no proper constitutional objection to the proposition for abolishing the Board of Trade, and, though showing dislike for some of Burke's proposed Household economies and disapproving also the setting up of Associations and Committees of Correspondence by the House's petitioners, blamed Government, too, for not already having allotted certain days each week for taking their Petitions into consideration. It was just the kind of speech to turn numbers of "independent" men, and when the debate closed Opposition had the supreme satisfaction of raising 207 votes for the abolition of the Board of Trade as against Government's 199.

It was a victory tempting extremer Oppositionists to make another display on March 15th when North recited the catalogue of additional taxes he proposed for meeting the interest on the twelve million loan—new malt, wine, and spirit duties; new imposts on salt, newspaper advertisements and legacies; and even a licensing duty to be paid by retailers of tea. George Byng, indeed, shortly to become Wilkes's colleague for Middlesex,[2] and Lord George Gordon, already achieving some notoriety in several directions,[3] raised the cry that the people's Petitions should be

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole, *Journal of the Reign of George III*, under March 13, 1780: "Charles Fox protested against so unparliamentary a declaration, and said he would appeal to the highest authority, the Speaker. This was probably in concert, or at least Sir Fletcher had declaimed against Rigby's doctrine to Fox, for on this appeal the Speaker came down from the gallery, and made a warm and good speech against the increased influence of the Crown, and in favour of the petitions. . . ."

[2] It is, perhaps, worth noting that he had already supported Wilkes on February 18, 1779 when the annual effort was made to secure the expunging from the Journals of the House of its Middlesex Election resolution of February 17, 1769. The effort of 1780 was made on March 15, 1780, and brought a division of 101 against Administration's 113.

[3] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Letters* for that of February 6, 1780: "I must introduce a new actor to you, a Lord George Gordon,—metamorphosed a little, too, for his family were Jacobites and Catholics: he is the Lilburne of the Scottish Presbyterians, and an apostle against the Papists. He dresses, that is, wears long lank hair about his shoulders like the first Methodists. . . . This mad lord, for so all his family have been too . . . has likewise assumed the patronage of Ireland. Last Thursday he asked an audience of the King, and, the moment he was admitted into the closet, began reading an Irish pamphlet, and continued for an hour. . . ."

dealt with before new taxes were voted. But they found little support from weightier Oppositionists, anxious, presumably, to show a sense of responsibility when perhaps on the threshold of office. Other political possibilities were revealed next day when a Luttrell brother-in-law of the now Oppositionist Duke of Cumberland, brother to the King, complained that North's agents had already begun preparations for the next General Election by endeavouring to make it impossible for him to keep his seat for Milbourn Port. There was truth in the charge that the Treasury was at work in Milbourn Port but Luttrell's indifferent reputation hardly made it wise for him to attack North personally as was abundantly shown when the House, upon investigation, found the charges of corrupting Milbourn Port, that had been brought against North, to be ill-founded and injurious. And when on March 20th the House again went into Committee on Burke's Bill, Burke himself appeared to some hitherto sympathetic eyes to be showing irresponsibility when, in his zeal for abolishing thirteen Household offices, he proposed that Palace tables and apartments should be furnished by contract. Certainly, this part of Burke's Bill was not hard for Administration to defeat.

Unfortunately for Government, irresponsibility was not confined to Opposition. One youthful Government member, Fullarton, who had been given a colonel's commission in a force he had undertaken to recruit and who had been criticised by Shelburne in the Lords, expressed flaming resentment in Parliament, forced on a duel, and on March 22nd wounded a recognised statesman and a possible Opposition Prime Minister.[1] As Fox had been wounded in a similar fashion earlier in the Session, Government hardly seems to have gained from the impression that its supporters, if unchecked, were capable of trying to silence opponents by methods reminiscent of the Polish Diet. It was, in fact, the very prince of "independents" of a Tory cast, Sir James Lowther, who vainly called for a resolution that would stop the repetition of such practices. And Fox's duelling opponent seems to have found it necessary to rise and assert that neither he nor Fullarton had challenged Opposition leaders with a view to finding favour with Administration.

It is now necessary to turn from the House of Commons, entering upon its Easter Recess still delicately balanced on "Public

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, Principal Occurrences, pp. 28–9.

Oeconomy" between Administration and Opposition, in order to follow what had been the activities of the petitioning organisations while waiting for a Parliamentary decision. The Rev. Mr. Wyvill, an active personality and a great letter-writer had managed as Chairman of the Yorkshire Freeholders' Committee to keep touch with similar Chairmen and Committees in other parts of the country.[1] And he had been occupied, on behalf of the Yorkshire Petition, in two different directions. He had been down to Westminster to arrange joint action by the County and Borough Committees through Delegates authorised to consult together for the purpose of forwarding the Petitions' progress at Westminster.[2] And he had also been using the Yorkshire Committee to construct a model County Association, capable of giving greater authority to Deputies or Delegates than could be conferred by a Committee appointed at a single ephemeral meeting like that held in the York Assembly Rooms on December 30, 1779.

It was almost inevitable that when the formation of an Association, designed to influence Parliament, came under discussion among Yorkshiremen, proud of their county's size and "independence", a demand should be made for a juster quota of Parliamentary representatives than the two members Yorkshire actually enjoyed. "Rotten Boroughs", Bribery and Corruption, and Septennial Parliaments had, of course, been vainly complained of for generations.[3] But something more definite than grumbling

[1] Wyvill's *Political Papers chiefly respecting the Attempt of the County of York and other Considerable Districts, commenced in 1779, and continued during several subsequent years, to effect a Reformation of the Parliament of Great Britain* show, in their six volumes, ample evidence of Wyvill's activity and zeal.

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under February 29, 1780, for Wyvill's determination not to allow the petitioning movement to be simply annexed by Opposition politicians: "Mr. Charles Fox and Mr. Wyvil almost quarrelled on the latter insisting that no members of Parliament should be on the deputation of the committees of petitions. At last it was compromised that it should not be specified as a condition, but that none should be sent."

[3] Cf. *Monthly Review*, November 1757, pp. 467–8, for a despairing reply to a pamphleteer who considered that an agitation might effect the repeal of the Septennial Act: "The people are either not to be moved, or not to be fixed . . . they are a quicksand, now agitated by interest, now by passion; consistent never: —while, on the other hand, the Borough holders only tumultuate till they agree in the choice of a proper Pay Master. After which the Macedonian phalanx was not more compact. . . . Acting then for themselves in the name of the nation and in possession of all the powers requisite for their own purposes, what room is there to hope, that they can be either writ, or talked, or clamoured up to such a pitch of self-denial, as should induce them to make a sacrifice of themselves to the public? . . ." It was Dr. Brown's famous *Estimate of the Manners and Principles of the Times* that was pointing out simultaneously that the Nation, though grumbling against corruption, was eager enough to profit from it "from

had undoubtedly emerged from the Middlesex Elections agitation of 1769–71, something still growing and definable as a demand for Short Parliaments and "a more equal representation of the people".[1] It was never, in fact, overlooked in after-years that Chatham himself had in 1770 accepted the justice of giving the shires additional members[2] and that in 1771, after some hesitation, he had accepted Triennial Parliaments also.[3] It was to such agreed and current formulae of political justice that the "independent" country gentlemen and clergymen of the Yorkshire Committee could be urged to turn when defining, in their Form of Association, what kind of Parliament might be trusted to undertake the effective "Oeconomical Reform" the nation demanded. And though other Committees, notably that of Westminster, contained members prepared, as events showed, for even more[4] than the

the Cobler to the managing Alderman; from him to the Member; from the Member to the *great Man* who ruled the Borough: and thence to the Minister. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1770, p. 109, for Beckford's first use of this telling phrase, probably on Horne's suggestion.

[2] Cf. W. Belsham, *Memoirs of the Reign of George III* (ed. 1795), i, 274–5, for Chatham in Parliament on the Middlesex Election: "Instead", he said, "of depriving a county of its representative, one or more members ought to be added to the representation of the counties, in order to operate as a balance against the weight of the several corrupt and venal boroughs." Beckford, with Horne at his elbow, hereupon tried to commit Chatham to Triennial Parliaments also by sending the City Deputation of June 1st to him with thanks for Parliamentary exertions that were calmly assumed to have been for the purpose of restoring the "original purity" of Parliaments "by shortening their duration, and introducing a more full and equal representation". On this occasion Chatham was, according to Horne's Letter to Junius of July 31, 1771, sorely embarrassed to avoid a breach with the Rockinghams who had declared against Short Parliaments (as only making for more frequent orgies of riot and corruption). He therefore announced himself as favouring "a more full and equal representation, by the addition of one knight of the shire in a county, as a further balance to the mercenary boroughs" but was most unsatisfactory on Short Parliaments. Yet even in this matter he left a road open when declaring "that I cannot recommend triennial parliaments as a remedy against that canker of the constitution, venality in elections; ready to submit my opinion to better judgement, if the wish for that measure shall become prevalent in the kingdom".

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 274 n., for Chatham finally committing himself and seeking to draw Lords Temple and Lyttleton into a joint manifestation on its behalf as well as that of "more equal representation". On April 17, 1771, Chatham wrote to Temple thus: "A plan for more equal representation, by additional Knights of the Shire, seems highly reasonable, and to shorten the duration of Parliaments not less so. If your Lordship should approve, could Lord Lyttleton's caution be brought to taste those ideas, we should take possession of strong ground, let who will decline to follow us."

[4] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 131–6, for a letter from Lord Shelburne to the Wiltshire Chairman of date March 26, 1780, and for which he received the thanks of the City of London. This letter, though plainly directed to inducing the Wiltshire Meeting to content itself with calling for the repeal of the Septennial Act "and a reasonable addition of County Members, chosen by districts, or under some regulation which might preclude all unnecessary

Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments already advocated for some time by Major Cartwright as both natural justice and ancient English right,[1] it was no small achievement in Wyvill to persuade his Yorkshire Committeemen to the Form of Association they finally accepted. It is difficult to believe that the achievement would have been possible but for the national position Wyvill had acquired by first arranging, and then presiding over, the remarkable gathering of County Deputations in March, a gathering that seemed to some alarmed observers to threaten the position of Parliament itself.[2]

expense", does not, however, wholly discountenance those "pushing the Right of the People to its utmost extent, by insisting upon an Annual Election, and a total change of the Representation". Even the lesser Representational courses, favoured by Shelburne, took into account, it will be noticed, the difficulty of "independent" candidates, fighting corruption over so large an area as an individual county, and this accounts for the suggestion of dividing the counties into Electoral Districts. As for the increase of members to be allowed the counties, Shelburne suggested a solution in decrying the existing Representation as confessedly bearing "no proportion either to the number of People, the quantum of Property, or the proportion of Public Contribution; nor does it hold to any rank or description whatever; but is the mere child of accident or intrigue". Yet Shelburne's most far-reaching suggestions were, as will be seen, comparatively tame when compared with those put forward in the *Report of the Sub-Committee of Westminster* and dated May 27, 1780. The *Report* will be dealt with below.

[1] Cf. *Public Characters of 1799–1800*, pp. 276–333, for an early biographical study shedding a good deal of light on his past. Born in 1740 he had quitted the navy as a lieutenant on half-pay in 1771 and had declined an invitation to resume naval activity, made him by Lord Howe in 1776, because unwilling to shed American blood. He did, however, accept a Major's commission in the Notts. Militia in 1775 and after 1778, when the Militia was embodied, would be spending much of his time in the service. Yet after having published his *Legislative Rights of the Commonalty Vindicated* in 1777 (the first edition appeared under the title of *Take your Choice*) he seems to have had the time to issue *The People's Barrier against undue Influence and Corruption* in 1780, take a part in petitioning activities in both Nottinghamshire and Westminster and, most important of all, help in founding the Society for Constitutional Information, which enlisted so many active men for financing pamphlet-distribution in aid of "radical reform". Though Cartwright's pamphleteering never had the quality or historical grip of James Burgh's *Political Disquisitions* (1774–5), his persevering advocacy of Universal Suffrage gave it importance as did, indeed, his notion that both Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments were old English rights only gradually whittled away from the time of the Norman Conquest.

[2] It is worth remarking that Dr. John Jebb's *Address to the Freeholders of Middlesex assembled . . . on Monday the XXth of December, MDCCLXXIX* had already sketched out a full plan by which such a gathering would allegedly be entitled to claim complete constitutional authority as a "commons' house of parliament" and the right to require the Crown and the House of Lords to co-operate with it instead of the existing House of Commons whose mandate it would have discharged for having failed to meet the nation's wishes. The presence of Jebb's "Republican" *Address* in many hands—it reached a fourth edition in 1782—would help to account for Horace Walpole's tone in the following extracts from his *Journal* and his *Letters* after mid-March:

(*Journal*, March 16 and 17) "The Committees of Associations begin to give

It is worth quoting salient passages from the Form of Association, "agreed to at the General Meeting of the County of York, held the 28th March", to explain why there were some who considered that the adoption of such documents in the counties, on the recommendation, too, of a body of such allegedly dubious constitutionality as the March Convention of County Deputations, would alienate all "independents" of a "moderate" or Tory cast and ruin the chances of the "oeconomical" Petitions.[1] Here are some extracts from the Yorkshire Form of Association:[2]

Whereas during the present expensive and unfortunate war, the trade, manufactures, and land-rents of this Kingdom have been greatly diminished; the Public Burdens grievously augmented by the annual imposition of new and additional taxes; the National Debt enormously increased; and the undue influence of the Crown extended to an alarming degree. . . : And whereas . . . a just redress of grievances can only be expected from a free and uncorrupted Parliament. . . .

WE whose names are under-written, considering an Oeconomical Reformation in the expenditure of Public Money, to be a most essential and necessary measure for restoring the Freedom of Parliament;

And considering also, that the representation of the People in Parliament is become extremely unequal, insomuch that a great majority of Members is returned by decayed and indigent Boroughs, which are either at the command of the Crown, and a few great Families, or else open to general venality; whence support in Parliament may be obtained for the measures of any Administration, however ruinous they

great alarm. They voted themselves a right of considering and deciding on questions pending in Parliament, and of censuring or approving the part taken by particular members. But they were going much farther still, and were for engrafting on Petitions two resolutions of the highest moment, one, that there ought to be a more equal, consequently a new, mode of representation; the other, that there should be frequent Parliaments, at first triennial. . . . In the first place, it will be very unfair to engraft new matter on the Petitions. They who voted for a Petition for economy may not approve of a new mode of representation, nor of more frequent Parliaments. Next, it is unwise to add new matter. It was the necessity of economy, which every man felt, that produced so great a change against the Court and so much unanimity. The two others are very problematic questions, and will sow difference of opinion and dissension. . . ."

(*Letters*, March 21) "The Associations were very ready to affect Parliamentary airs, and accordingly assumed cognisance of matters actually pending in Parliament. This has offended many moderate men, and many who approved the Petitions were alarmed at the Associations, with good reason, for the deputation, composed of three members of each Committee, which is assembled in London, are going to take large strides indeed, and intend to propose to their several counties, to demand annual Parliaments, and to alter the mode of representation. . . ."

[1] Cf. Walpole's *Letters*, for that of March 22nd bitterly criticising "Mr. Wyvill's manifesto".

[2] Cf. *Form of Association agreed to at the General Meeting of the County of York, held the 28th of March, 1780.*

may be. . . ; which inequitable distribution of the right to elect Representatives in Parliament is now a principal cause of our numerous Public Evils, to which no radical cure is likely to be applied, till a more adequate Representation of the People hath been established by law. . . .

We do declare our Assent to

1. The Oeconomical Reform requested by the Petitions of the People. . . .

2. The proposition for obtaining a more equal representation in Parliament, by the addition of at least One Hundred Knights, to be chosen in due proportion by the several Counties of the Kingdom of Great Britain.

3. The proposition for Members of the House of Commons to be elected to serve in Parliament for a term not exceeding three years. . . .[1]

It is surprising to find that the threatened alarm of the "moderates" at such language and propositions as these did not seem at first to take much effect. If several counties are reported to have withdrawn from co-operation with Wyvill and his Central Committee of Association, Charles Fox did not hesitate, on the morning of April 6th, the day when the Commons were to take the Petitions into consideration, to carry Westminster much farther than Wyvill had taken Yorkshire. The Westminster meeting, too, not only went as far as Annual Parliaments in addition to the hundred extra Knights of the Shire but seemed so likely to produce a mob attempting the coercion of the Legislature that troops were held in readiness for counter-measures.[2] Yet despite these apparently unpromising auspices for winning the "independent" men, Dunning's famous Opposition motion of the evening declaring "that the Influence of the Crown has increased, is increasing, and ought to be diminished" brought at midnight, and after hot debate, a majority against Government of 233 against

[1] The *Form of Association* had tried to reassure "independent" members, alarmed at the thought of what Short Parliaments might mean in election expenses, by prefixing to the three assented points a paragraph making it plain that "Oeconomical Reform" was intended to come first and asserting that when this had reduced "the fund of corruption", more frequent elections might be faced "without the mischievous consequences of exposing Independent Gentlemen to vexatious contests with the Dependants of any Administration".

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal of the Reign of George III*, for the account of what he called "another very memorable day". Of the Westminster meeting he wrote: "In the morning Charles Fox harangued the petitioners of Westminster in the hall and was exceedingly severe on the King and the present reign, and declared loudly for annual Parliaments and the additional 100 knights, which were eagerly adopted by the assembly. The Court had expected that Fox would be attended to the House by a great mob, and the Guards were ordered to be in readiness, but he went privately as usual, and there was not the least tumult. . . ."

215. And taking instant advantage of its temporary supremacy, Opposition carried two further motions, the one declaring the competence of the House to examine Civil List expenditure, like all other expenditure, and the other asserting that it was the duty of the House "to provide, as far as might be, immediate and effectual redress of the abuses, complained of in the petitions to the House". Nor was this all. To deny Administration the chance of attempting to upset, at the Report Stage, what had now been achieved in Committee, Charles Fox, against precedent and North's protests, carried the Commons for reporting at once.[1] When the Opposition motions, technically carried in Committee, had been reported to the House proper, action upon them could be required with every show of constitutional propriety and in bland disregard of the fact that Administration had been jockeyed out of the chance of restating its position, at the Report Stage, and bringing up its reserves.

The night of April 6th marked the high tide of Opposition's success in exploiting the Petitions. On April 10th, for example, there was only an Opposition majority of 215 against 213 for a species of self-denying ordinance proposed by Dunning when moving "that the persons holding the offices of treasurer of the chamber, treasurer of the household, cofferer of the household, master of the household, the clerks of the green cloth, and the deputies of them, should be rendered incapable of a seat in that house". With better luck in getting tardy members of Government's flock included instead of excluded from the division, North would have had a majority,[2] and, in any case, he seems to have been already gaining with "independents" from the characteristic and disarming moderation with which he was meeting exhibitions of what must certainly have appeared to some as Opposition's irresponsibility. Thus on the strength of Dunning's success of

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 458, for an old member, James Harris, M.P.: "This question, in the *Committee*, though carried at midnight, was very indecently reported that instant to the *House* against all form; but insolence in victory is nothing unusual. They even talked of stopping the revenue bills till the petitions they had procured were heard and satisfied. This must needs take up great time. In the meantime the money (twelve millions) had been agreed to by the creditors, and fifteen per cent actually paid, though not a single tax has been enacted to secure them their interest. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 459: "As the majority was no more than two, 'tis a mortifying circumstance to tell you that, for want of proper attention, Eden, Sir G. Cooper, North, and George Selwyn were shut out and could not vote. To them some add, by the same accident, Lord Clive and General Phillipson. . . ."

April 6th, North, without protest, had allowed more time to be devoted on April 10th to the discussion of petitioners' grievances, and this though he badly needed the day for financial business on taxes, long promised, as security for their interest, to subscribers who had already advanced 15 per cent of the new Twelve Million Loan.[1] And that some members of Opposition should seem so recklessly blind to the need for sustaining British credit as to talk of postponing taxation business not merely for one day, but for the whole time required to secure enactment of the Petitions' demands—this must have told with numbers of "independents", heavily against Opposition and in favour of Administration. On April 13th, certainly, Opposition's search for more alleged corruption to uproot was heavily checked when a majority of 225 against 196 defeated "Mr. Crewe's Bill for preventing revenue officers from voting at elections."[2] And on April 14th, though the Commons were suddenly forced to adjourn for ten days owing to the Speaker's illness, Government succeeded in the House of Lords in strangling by a majority of 61 against 41 a Contractor's Bill that it had not been politic to oppose in the Commons during the earlier part of the Session.

On April 24th, after the Commons had reassembled, it became plainer that Opposition was facing more serious obstacles. On Dunning's motion of that day for a Humble Address to the King requesting that there should be no Prorogation or Dissolution until proper measures had been taken "to diminish the influence of the Crown and to correct the other evils complained of in the petitions of the people", Ministers defeated Opposition by 254 votes against 203. And Horace Walpole was probably right in accounting for this decisive defeat of a third Dunning motion, after two others had been taken to victory earlier in the month, by showing "most of the Tories returning to vote with the Court, particularly Sir Roger Newdigate, who had owned he hated the

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, p. 458: "Lord North gave way to this madness yesterday the 10th instant, proposing this day to take up the business aforesaid. Whether Opposition will have the decency and justice to admit this, the day must show. If they do, it will only be from fear lest some of their friends, being ashamed of them, should desert them. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 460, for a feeling complaint from James Harris, M.P., as to how one Oppositionist had sought to forward the Bill: "He had the hardiness to assert in the House, when this Bill was first proposed, every voter of mine was a revenue officer: out of twenty-seven or twenty-eight (Mr. Hooper included), I have but four. This bill is now pending, and I hope in common justice will be thrown out either by Lords or Commons."

Opposition, but preferred knaves to fools".[1] Nor is it strange to find Horace Walpole thus continuing: "Charles Fox abused them after the division, and said the House had broken its promise to the petitioners, and it would be better to secede, but his friend Dunning would try one question more." Abuse and the threat of secession were hardly the right means to employ to win the erring "independents" back into the "patriot" camp as was proved on April 28th when another clause of Burke's bill was under consideration. There certainly seemed more justification for abolishing "the office of the great wardrobe, the office of the removing wardrobe, the office of master of the robes, the office called the jewel-office and the places dependent upon them" than ever there could be for abolishing the Board of Trade. Yet while the clause for abolishing the Board of Trade had been carried on March 13th by 207 votes against 199, the clause for abolishing the Wardrobe offices was defeated on April 28th by a majority of 210 against 162. Perhaps wavering "independents" returning to the Court side had lost their dread of constituency wrath when the Contractor's Bill could be rejected in its third year, as it had just been, without the least stir ensuing and with Fox, unable or unwilling to break away from Newmarket to promote effective protest.[2]

Opposition was, however, to get some good tactical opportunities once more when North's Commission of Accounts Bill went into Committee on May 1st. Dunning attacked North's proposal to exclude members of Parliament from the Commission as constituting, in effect, an invitation to the House to surrender its most cherished financial privileges, at the very time, too, when the country had called, in the Petitions, for their ruthless exercise. The Speaker, also, who knew that as far as Administration was concerned his fate in a new Parliament was sealed, came once again to the aid of Opposition in a dangerous speech. Supporting Dunning's contention that the Bill was unconstitutional, he urged the need for doing something very different to meet the Petitions than allowing Government to appoint, under the name of

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under April 24, 1780. Newdigate was the much respected member for Oxford University and had first entered the House in 1741.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under April 28th: "In one of these debates, Lord G. Gordon took notice that the rejection of Contractors' bill had made no impression. It was very true. Charles Fox had been at Newmarket instead of applying to it, and the country took no notice of it."

Commissioners, nine new placemen with large salaries and the power to employ as many secretaries, clerks and messengers as they should think proper. After such an opening it is little to be wondered at if Opposition roused itself to a strenuousness that kept the House sitting till three in the morning for a total result of one Commissioner appointed, amid the most carping criticism, by a majority of 195 against 163.[1] But effort of this intensity proved unsustainable for long, and the remainder of Lord North's Bill went through much more easily.

Opposition's inability to maintain grave pressure on Government may have partly arisen from a war-situation still turning in Administration's favour. At sea, Admiral Rodney's great victory of November had first permitted the revictualling of Gibraltar and Minorca and, then, Rodney's subsequent voyage to the Caribbean whence news was expected every day of a blow "at the other branch of the House of Bourbon".[2] Of the American continent, too, it was known that desertion and discontent were so rife in Washington's army, paid in paper "continentals" ever depreciating in value,[3] that General Clinton would be able to take a large force by sea against Charleston, South Carolina, without needing to fear overmuch what Washington might seek to do against New York in his absence.[4] Indeed, the report had been current for some time that Congress's agents in Paris had indicated to French Ministers that the Americans would have to open

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 461: "Yesterday was a late day in the House; they did not rise till three in the morning. The subject was Lord North's bill for appointing Commissioners to inspect the public accounts. Lord North, in order to do what he thought most acceptable, was for having these Commissioners not members of Parliament. This made Opposition desire they should be so. Much declamation and abuse was poured forth on the occasion, and nine Commissioners were intended to be chosen, but during the whole day the Committee could get no further than the voting of one—that was Sir Guy Carlton; the only other named, Mr. Bolby of the Excise, was withdrawn. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, Principal Occurrences, p. 42, for the Admiralty announcement of May 25th in which was reported the French abandonment of the plan to recapture St. Lucia and Rodney's attempt to force on a battle with the powerful French fleet of the West Indies. He gave it some severe punishment though it successfully evaded a major action.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 40, for official dispatches from New York dated March 27, 1780, that estimated Washington's army at "about 5000 men, besides militia" and reported: "There has been a great desertion among them: tired of the war, and dissatisfied with the depreciated value of their money, a general discontent pervades the whole army."

[4] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 461, for James Harris, M.P.: "The news from Carolina and Sir H. Clinton is favourable. Should this province fall, some think Maryland and Virginia must follow." The letter is dated May 2, 1780.

negotiations with the English Government unless France could supply large loans and land military forces to help Washington.[1] It was in these circumstances that General Conway who had had charge of Stamp Act Repeal in 1766, brought in Conciliation proposals that he conceived might still tempt Americans to abandon their demand for Independence. The immediate result seems to have been to divide Opposition, part of which was now committed to Independence under the thin disguise of "withdrawing British troops from America".[2] When, on May 5th, Government, helped by Opposition differences, defeated Conway by 123 votes against 81, Opposition seemed in danger of relapsing once more into complete powerlessness. The impression was confirmed when Sawbridge, moving on May 8th for Triennial Parliaments, found so prominent a member of Opposition as Burke loudly dissenting and thus helping Administration to decisive victory by 182 votes against 90.[3] Nor was Burke's own turn long delayed. On May 18th, successive clauses of his famous Bill were rejected one after the other, and the Master of the Foxhounds, the Master of the Buckhounds, the Master of the Harriers, the Paymaster of Pensions and other officials of the kind were taken under the protection of the House while Burke's own Bill was destroyed. For such a change to have occurred since Opposition's bright days of hope in March and April, only one explanation could be advanced by Government's enemies. The "patriot" Sawbridge, in fact, openly charged North with having used corruption.[4]

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 454, for what Harris had written on March 23rd: " 'Tis said that Adams, the American rebel agent at Paris, has told that Government that the Congress can hold out no longer, but must make their peace with us, unless their good friends the French give them extraordinary help. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, pp. 162–3. Walpole's *Journal* shows Hartley and Sir G. Savile as the leading Opposition spokesmen disliking Conway's proposal as not going far enough.

[3] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under May 8th: "Sawbridge moved for triennial parliaments; Burke declared strongly against them, and said he desired his constituents should know his opinion; Fox for them—rejected by 182 to 90; great dissensions at this time on that question between Lord Shelburne and Burke."

[4] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 164, for one stage of the dispute in Parliament: "Mr. Sawbridge rose again and maintained his former assertion, in the most direct and unqualified terms. He was convinced, he said, that the noble Lord had, during the speaker's illness, influenced or corrupted several of the majority of the 6th of April, and that he had tampered with many. If his lordship was prepared to meet the charge, he dared him to take down his words: for if he did, though it might be, perhaps, difficult to prove the actual corruption, he was ready and fully prepared to go into the actual proofs of the tampering;

It may be that Opposition's bitterness at Government's decisive recapture of the Commons and Opposition's despair at its complete desertion by the "independents" played some part in two very significant developments of the next few weeks. On May 27th was produced the remarkable Report of the Sub-Committee set up by the influential Westminster Committee of Association, a Report containing a complete and most advanced programme for the full democratisation of the nation's representation in Parliament.[1] Its interest is enhanced when it is remembered that this programme was, of course, quite independent of French revolutionary models, claimed to be based on ancient English precedents,[2] and was a principal source of the "People's Charter" of the nineteenth century. It is singularly suggestive, therefore, to find in this Report a plan for re-allotting England's 513 members more justly among counties, themselves to be divided into equal electoral districts;[3] to notice how parish electoral rolls, prepared on the basis of Universal Male Adult Suffrage, were to allow Annual Elections to take place; and to see not only Vote by Ballot added to Universal Suffrage, Annual Parliaments and Equal Electoral Districts, but also Payment of Members and Abolition of Members' Property Qualification.[4] And it is still more singular

or of offers having been held out, to influence some of the members of that house, to vote against their former opinions, their perfect conviction, and the interests of their country. . . ." For a modern account of the Opposition's discomfiture, see H. Butterfield, *George III, Lord North and the People, 1779–1780*, pp. 329–33.

[1] A clue to the effective authorship of the *Report of the Sub-Committee of Westminster* is, perhaps, provided by its inclusion among *The Works Theological, Medical, Political, and Miscellaneous, of John Jebb, M.P., F.R.S.*, edited by John Disney, D.D., F.S.A., in 1787. Jebb, who has been met earlier in this work as a Church and University reformer, had abandoned those spheres on becoming a Unitarian, had had the energy to acquire a second profession as a doctor, and was now a most active Westminster politician.

[2] Cf. *Report of the Sub-Committee of Westminster* on Equal Representation, Annual Elections and Universal Suffrage: "They were substantially enjoyed in the times of the immortal Alfred; they were cherished by the wisest princes of the norman line. . . ; they ought not to be esteemed the grant of royal favour, nor were they at first extorted by violence from the hand of power: they are the birthright of englishmen. . . ." These sentences bear marks of acquaintance with Major Cartwright's *The People's Barrier against undue Influence and Corruption*, noted for "great boldness of language" and "much strength of argument" in the *Monthly Review* for July 1780 but plainly circulating earlier, perhaps in manuscript, among the Major's Westminster friends.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Yorkshire's allowance (with its boroughs) of 46 members; for Middlesex's allowance of 45, this figure to include London and Westminster representation; for Norfolk's allowance of 22, etc., etc.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*: "That the poll of each district be taken by ballot, under the conduct of the churchwardens of the parish in the district where the election

to find that when, on June 2nd, a considerable approximation to this plan was being submitted for a First Reading by the Duke of Richmond,[1] Rockingham's most active ally in the Lords, the Gordon "No Popery" mobs should have already begun those demonstrations of stupid and destructive violence that, for decades, militated so much against all notions of entrusting the populace with Universal Suffrage.

It has, of course, to be admitted that the Protestant Association, round whose anti-Popery alarums and excursions the Gordon mobs had been rallied, was a more genuine and spontaneous "popular" creation than ever the "Public Oeconomy" agitation of Wyvill could be. Opposition activity in sowing suspicion of George III was, after all, only eighteen years old or less, while hatred and suspicion of priests and Jesuits, the Pope and the Inquisition, had been cultivated, under the auspices of Church and State, for two hundred and fifty years. And it was in Scotland, where such cultivation had been even more strenuous than in England (at first, because of the need of safeguarding the more wholesale seizures of ecclesiastical lands, and, then, because of the greater threat of Jacobitism) that the Anti-Popery movement of 1778–80 was born. Though the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 did not apply to Scotland, since it merely relaxed some English anti-Catholic provisions of William III's time, Scottish Presbyterian synods were already, in October, protesting against the very possibility of the extension of such legislation to Scotland and appointing solemn fasts "on account of abounding sin and the present melancholy state of public affairs".[2] Possibly the

is made. . . . That all members serving in parliament be entitled to reasonable wages, according to the wholesome practice of ancient times. . . . That every person competent to give his suffrage as an elector, be also esteemed qualified to be elected to serve his country in parliament. . . ."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 173: "The bill which he proposed, he now only wished to have read the first time, and should then leave it upon the table, without attempting to do any more with it during the present session except having it printed, that their lordships and the public might, during the summer recess, consider it fully, and prepare themselves against the next session of parliament. . . . Some little opposition was made to his grace's proposition; but the further prosecution of the business was prevented by the riots, and the insults offered to the members, which commenced while the duke was speaking in support of his motion."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1778, Chronicle, under November 4th: "The synod of Dumfries, after the example of that of Glasgow and Ayr, met on the 20th ult. and appointed a solemn fast on the first Thursday of December, on account of abounding sin and the present melancholy state of public affairs. The synod also appointed their moderator to write to the lord advocate, requesting him to oppose any alteration in the Roman Catholic laws in Scotland"

"abounding sin" consisted in the blind official eye turned, despite Scotland's draconian anti-Catholic laws, upon a very minimum of discreet priestly activity, inside the Catholic community, which the zealous feared might spread. The ferment grew until early in January 1779 such reports as these were coming from Scotland:[1]

> *Edinburgh, January 8.* The towns of Glasgow, Perth, Dundee, Dunfermline, Kilmarnock, Stirling, Dunse, &c. and a great many others, entered into resolutions to oppose to the utmost any relaxation of the laws against the Roman Catholicks.
>
> A great number of the inhabitants of Glasgow also formed themselves into a society to oppose the Roman Catholick bill, the same as the society at Edinburgh, under the denomination of friends to the Protestant interest.

And not long afterwards there were considerable anti-Catholic riots in Edinburgh and Glasgow.

Soon effects were following in England from the Scottish news and the type of sermon reproduction coming from the Scottish presses.[2] And, indeed, there is plenty of English sermon- and pamphlet-evidence, both Anglican and Dissenting, to suggest that if Catholic Relief had not been carried through quickly, on "patriot" motion, and virtually without previous notice to the nation, it might not have been carried through at all. One hair-raising Anglican *Antidote to Popery; or the Protestant's Memory jogged* was early offered at 3*d.* each or 2*s.* 6*d.* the dozen,[3] and here is what the *Monthly Review* was saying of a product of the Dissenting school entitled *The Remembrance of Former Days* and reproduced from a Bristol pulpit oration of November 5, 1778:[4]

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, under January.

[2] Cf. *A Defence of the Clergy of the Church of Scotland* (by the Rev. J. M'Farlan, D.D.); *Considerations on the Spirit of Popery* (by the Rev. J. Erskine, D.D.); *Popery dissected: or a Speech against the Popish Toleration Bill* (by W. Drysdale); *The Doctrine of Toleration, applied to the present Times* (by the Rev. W. Porteous), etc., etc. The character of some of the anti-Popish productions may be judged from the Rev. Mr. Porteous's sermon-divisions which, after noticing Popery as a false religion, a faction in the State, and a system of immorality, were concentrated on an alleged proof that, even on the most liberal principles, toleration could not be granted to an organised system of immorality.

[3] The Protestant's Memory was jogged "by the following Narratives and Facts. I. The Persecutions of the Protestants in the Reigns of Henry IV. V. VIII, and that of Queen Mary. II. The Irish Martyrology. III. Popish treasons and conspiracies in England. IV. Persecutions in France. V. Extracts of Letters from Lisbon.... VI. A short Account of the most material Errors now taught in the Church of Rome."

[4] *Monthly Review*, January 1779, p. 80.

A good, honest, zealous, dissenting declamation, against DESPOTISM, and against POPERY, the friend of despotism. Mr. Evans does not absolutely protest against the indulgence lately extended to the Roman Catholicks of this country; but he strongly recommends it to us still to keep a watchful eye upon them. . . .

But even such views proved too moderate for those alarmed Protestants who were pursued by visions of a flooding of the country by Catholic priests, and the widespread establishment of Jesuit and nunnery schools,[1] taking increasing charge, under thin disguises, of the perversion of Protestant youth. Though the Methodist community contributed most notably to the alarmist camp, there were numerous church-goers, who disregarded the silence of their Bishops, and a high proportion of Dissenters, who, when the "abominations of Rome" were in question, proved themselves completely unrepresented by the group of liberal ministers, headed by Price and Priestley, that was most in the public eye.[2] On the basis of local Protestant societies, therefore, a Protestant Association could be founded both earlier and with roots deeper in the masses than the National Association projected by Wyvill on the basis of his County movements for "Public Oeconomy". And an *Appeal from the Protestant Association to the People of Great Britain*, issued in the autumn of 1779, called for the repeal of the Catholic Relief Act of 1778 in tones that, before long, were recognised by some to be potentially dangerous.[3] But

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, April 1779, for a revealing notice on a new novel, entitled *Friendship in a Nunnery. . . .*: "Containing a full Description of the Mode of Education and Living in Convent Schools, both on the Low and High Pension; the Manners and Characters of the Nuns; the Arts practised on young Minds, and their baneful Effects on Society at large." The *Monthly Review* found that "there is so much truth as well as execution in the piece, that it merits some attention in an age, in which it is become too fashionable for females to receive the last finishing of their education in the convent".

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 170: "They were chiefly Methodists, and bigotted Calvinists of the lower ranks of life. Hardly any of the clergy of the established church, or of the dissenting clergy gave the least countenance. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Monthly Review*, March 1780, pp. 238–9, on "the malignant poison which the ministers of Pseudo-Protestantism have been so assiduous to scatter abroad . . . in their endeavours to raise a ferment in the nation, and to excite mutual animosities amongst the inhabitants of these kingdoms. . . ." The *Review* significantly notes of the author of the *Appeal from the Protestant Association* that "it is not merely on account of the consequences to be apprehended from their repeal, that this Author wishes to have all the laws against Popery stand in full force; he desires it likewise by way of retaliation for the cruelties of the Papists. The statutes against Popery, notwithstanding their severity, he tells us, are mild when compared with the bloody edicts now in full force against Protestants in Popish countries. . . ."

Parliamentary leaders were engaged in a more than usually exciting war of "Ins" against "Outs" on "Public Oeconomy" and completely disregarded the Protestant Association even while it was gathering a Protestant Petition more numerously signed than all the "Public Oeconomy" Petitions put together and was preparing to launch it in Parliament through the agency of the "mad" Lord George Gordon and the "patriot" Alderman Bull.[1] Even on Friday, June 2nd, after the Protestant Association had brought to Westminster a huge and lawless mob to demonstrate in aid of the Protestant Petition to be presented that day, it was still deemed wiser to ignore the mob-violence that had made the transaction of Parliamentary business impossible and to hope that the storm would blow over as suddenly as it had arisen. Nay, Lord George Gordon himself was invited to preach order to his mob and, after remarks from him calculated to incite rather than to quiet, to inform them that discussion of the Protestant Petition would begin on the following Tuesday, June 6th.[2]

As is well known, the rough and criminal element of London had taken charge of Protestantism long before that time, and the police system of the world's richest metropolis had apparently

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 170: "the utmost pains were employed to procure subscriptions to it. Besides being carried about to private houses, copies of the petition, with parchments for signature were sent to the vestries of the churches and meetings of the metropolis. But the petition received little countenance from the established clergy; and no English dissenting minister of the metropolis, who had been regularly educated, or who was of any note for knowledge or learning, would suffer the petition to lie in his vestry for subscription. It was only from the methodists, a few lay-preachers, and some of the more bigotted Calvinists, that it received any encouragement or support. Notwithstanding these disadvantages, one hundred and twenty thousand persons are said to have signed this illiberal and intolerant petition; among whom were men, women, and children, and some who could only make their marks. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Public Occurrences, pp. 46–8, for a recital of the events of June 2nd which makes it plain that the mob's procession had had some "respectable" countenance from men on horseback and in coaches and which gives as the principal Parliamentary sufferers from mob attention the Archbishop of York, Lord Mansfield, Lord Stormont, Secretary of State, Lord Boston, the Bishop of Lichfield, the Bishop of Lincoln, the Lords Hillsborough, Townshend, Willoughy de Broke, Ashburnham, St. John and Dudley, Mr. Strahan, Mr. Welbore Ellis, Lord Trentham, Lord North, and Lord George Germaine. When the Commons had nevertheless proceeded to allow Gordon to move and Bull to second the bringing-up of the Petition to lie upon the table "lord George", it is reported, "was frequently called upon to disperse his followers. His manner of addressing them is differently reported. First, he told them they had nothing to hope from the temper of the house; then, that it was resolved to consider their Petition on Tuesday, but he did not like delays; and lastly, he advised them to depart peaceably, and rely upon the goodness of their gracious King who, now that he knew the desires of his people, would be ready to meet their wishes."

gone to pieces under a Lord Mayor and Westminster and Middlesex magistrates, afraid or unwilling to direct timorous parish constables upon mobs before they passed from incipient "Protestant" rioting to indiscriminate destructiveness. On June 6th, after the Houses, now under military protection, had again adjourned consideration of the Protestant Petition on the ground that it was unconstitutional to discuss it when under the double shadow of force in the shape of protecting troops and the returned "Protestant" mob, that mob's obviously criminal leadership became more evident in such exploits as the sacking of Newgate Prison in the City and the gutting of Sir John Fielding's active police office in Bow Street, Westminster. Though next day perhaps two thousand prisoners, released from the fire-gutted gaols of the metropolis, were abroad, vigorous official measures were already being taken. Thousands of militiamen were being brought to the capital; and a special meeting of the Council, to which Opposition members were invited and over which the King presided, had authorised a Proclamation "for the military to act without waiting for directions from the civil magistrates". Already, on the 7th, things were taking a different turn once the troops were no longer held back by the Lord Mayor's constitutional scuples in the City and by the non-appearance, elsewhere, of timorous magistrates, fearful of mob-reprisals, if they read the Riot Act and authorised the troops to fire. But the rioters were not really cowed until the determined military action taken that night and the next day, when hundreds of casualties were inflicted on mobs, still apparently hopeful of finding Authority paralysed by the old assertion of City privileges and the new rumour of Protestant assistance from provincial branches of the Protestant Association.[1] And not till June 9th were shops opening again, the Courts once more at work in Westminster Hall, and Lord George Gordon being marched to the confinement that was already overtaking swarms of the more notorious rioters.

[1] Cf. *Letters of the first Earl of Malmesbury*, i, 466–7, for "the suspicions entertained of large supplies to the rioters from the corresponding committees of several counties". It is added that: "the summons to the Council wherein the proclamation of the 7th instant was resolved on extended to all whether in or out of office, and it is said also that Lord Rockingham and some others of the Opposition attended. The city magistrates have been shamefully remiss. The Lord Mayor looked on when the rioters forced open and set fire to Newgate, and would not authorise the military to fire. It is reported that even now the Republican party in the city councils are attempting to set on foot some representation to the Crown against the proclamation and martial law within the City, but that they cannot succeed in it. . . ."

CHAPTER XVII

THE 1780 GENERAL ELECTION AND AFTER

From the *Parliamentary Papers of John Robinson, 1774–1784.*

"1779			£	s.	d.
18 September	Paid on account of	Milborne Port	3,374		
13 December	Paid on account of	Hampshire contest	2,000		
1780					
10 January	„ „ „	„ Stafford	800		
12 May	„ „ „	„ Reading	300		
24 June	„ „ „	„ Milborne Port	3,197	10	
20 July	„ „ „	„ Bristol	1,000		
28 July	„ „ „	„ Taunton	1,500		
26 August	„ „ „	„ Penryn	400		
29 August	„ „ „	„ Reading	500		
1 September	„ „ „	„ Stafford	700		
6 September	„ „ „	„ Harwich	100		
6 September	„ „ „	„ Reading	800		
6 September	„ „ „	„ Westminster	1,000		
6 September	„ „ „	„ Windsor	1,500		
9 December	Paid on account of	1 seat at Fowey, 2 at Plympton, 2 at Lostwithiel, and 1 at Bossiney	18,000		
13 December	Paid on account of	Horsham	5,325		

etc., etc."

The Joint-Secretary of the Treasury sends North and the King his account of Election Expenditure between September 18, 1779, and March 25, 1782. The total was £103,765 15*s.* 2*d.* towards which the King had already paid £40,000 and arranged a bond for £13,000 more. As private election subscriptions seem to have come below expectations at £31,010 17*s.* 0*d.*, the King was eventually obliged to find not £13,000 but £33,000 more and some interest besides.

"If Lord North remembers correctly, the last [1774] General Election cost near £50,000 to the Crown, beyond which expense there was a pension of £1,000 a year to Lord Montagu and of £500 a year to Mr. Selwyn for their interest at Midhurst and Luggershall."

"The Elections of 1779, 1780 and 1781 will cost £53,000 [they cost £20,000 more than that at the final account] but there has been no additional pension promised. Nay, Lord Montagu's Pension of £1,000 a year was struck off, because two friends of Government, Sir Sampson Gideon and Mr. Drummond, purchased, with their own money, at Lord North's recommendation, the seats at Midhurst. So that all things consider'd, this Election will not, in the end, have been so burthensome to His Majesty as the last."

"Lord North begs leave to submit to His Majesty that, at the time of the [1780] Election, it was thought of the first importance to secure a number of friends in the House of Commons; that the Opposition was numerous, eager, and powerful; That the times were distressing upon Gentlemen, very few of whom were able to assist themselves as well as in former times; That, in fact, till after the calamity of York Town, the Parliament appeared very friendly to the last Administration. . . ."

· Lord North to the King, April 20, 1782.

FOR weeks after the Gordon mobs had been cowed by the military action of June 7th and 8th, the aftermath of the Riots remained a principal concern of the country. It was not only that the London news had quickly raised formidable "Protestant" mobs at Bath and Hull, suppressed by the military, or that a large number of the captured rioters remained to receive the severe sentences that, during July and August, took the gallows to many different parts of the metropolis in order that the rioters might suffer near the scene of their crimes and the rest of the populace be intimidated into future discretion.[1] Against the mobs themselves, propertied "public opinion" seems, for the most part, to have hardened rapidly, and only in private were occasional Opposition voices raised in criticism of the gallows-work to which Wedderburn, Government's Attorney-General, had been set as newly-promoted Lord Chief Justice.[2] But if the grim fate meted out to scores of rioters, some of them women and youths, aroused little audible opposition, "patriots" nevertheless showed plenty of anxiety about the ultimate effects of allowing the Royal Proclamation of June 7th to establish a precedent for the Crown's ability to declare what was, in effect, martial law. There was one dubious military order, sent in a letter from Lord Amherst to Lt.-Col. Twistleton, that was to give special concern, for it appeared to envisage a possible wholesale disarming of London's citizenry by the troops.[3]

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, Principal Occurrences, pp. 62–7 for executions at Tower Hill, Bishopsgate St., Coleman St., Bow St., Holborn Hill, Oxford Rd., Bethnal Green, Whitechapel, Old Bailey, Old St., Moorfields, Bloomsbury Square, and St. George's Fields.

[2] Cf. Campbell's *Lives of the Lord Chancellors*, vi, 140–6 for a condemnatory treatment of Wedderburn's behaviour when presiding as Lord Loughborough over the Special Commission that dealt with many of the rioters. A private plea for mercy from Burke is included in the account. And in the *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 255–6, Col. Fitzpatrick, M.P., an Opposition-ist soldier in the military camp that watched London for some time after the Riots, may be found writing thus: "The conduct of the Special Commission, and the number of executions and improper objects fixed upon, give general disgust. They have done their utmost to spread reports of a black conspiracy at the bottom of it all, but hitherto without success. . . . I hope when all the rebellious women and children are hanged, our camp will break up: I am heartily tired of it, indeed."

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, History, p. 176: "A letter written by Lord Amherst . . . and which was understood to be an order for disarming the citizens, was much canvassed in both houses of parliament. The letter, however, was denied to have such a meaning and was said to be levelled only at disorderly persons who were found in arms. It excited, however, no inconsiderable alarm; and was an inducement, added to the consideration of the late riots, to lead a

Government, however, helped doubtless by the fortunate arrival of the splendid American news of Charleston's capture,[1] came off very well indeed from the Parliamentary proceedings of June 19th, the day of its return to business after interruptions since June 2nd. It was correct and disarming strategy to bring the King in person to Westminster with a short speech explaining why he had been forced to act as he did. And when the Houses separated to discuss Addresses of Thanks, and the Duke of Richmond asked for the introduction of a Bill of Indemnity as necessary to cover all the military steps that had been taken without authorisation from civil magistrates, Lord Mansfield rose to make what was deemed to be a triumphant reply. It was based on the position that the soldiers had only acted as every civilian, too, was authorised and indeed bound to act in the presence of embattled High Treason and Felony. The sympathy of his brother-Peers with one who had been specially aimed at by the rioters doubtless helped his argument to victory in their House. But there were many in the capital who expressed great distaste for a doctrine that seemed vastly to increase the possibility of uncontrolled military intervention in civil affairs. Indeed, Mansfield's disquieting speech seems to have been a special inducement to metropolitan "patriots" to form an armed military association of their own which would be at the service of the City authorities for the purpose of suppressing riots and so prevent the necessity for "any future interposition of the military".[2] And for a space the example seems to have had some of the contagiousness that had already made the Irish Volunteers one of Administration's most troublesome problems.[3]

great number of citizens to provide themselves with arms, and to join in plans of military association, that they might be able to protect themselves and the city from violence and outrage, without any future interposition of the military. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under June 15th, for the arrival of dispatches with the news. 6,000 men in arms, 400 pieces of cannon and several warships had fallen to the British army.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 175: "This speech . . . was much canvassed, both in conversation, and in news-papers and pamphlets. It was admitted, that if soldiers came accidentally, as individuals, to any place where felonies were committing, they might interfere, as well as others of the king's subjects, in the prevention of them. But this was a totally different case, from that of bodies of armed troops being sent, under officers commissioned by the king, and with orders to act . . . without any authority from the civil magistrate. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences under September 25th: "Yesterday Mr. Alderman Kirkman was interred, with unusual pomp. . . . It was thought somewhat singular, that a gentleman who had not been of any considerable note

Meanwhile the House of Commons, too, was discussing the Riots and undertaking the reply promised to the Protestant petitioners on June 2nd. Here again Administration had little cause for anxiety, thanks to the readiness of Burke and Fox to take a strong line in support of North's refusal to grant any repeal of the Catholic Reliefs passed in 1778.[1] Parts of Opposition, however, showed greater susceptibility to the wishes of the "people". Even Sir George Savile, the widely-respected senior member for Yorkshire, if he did not go so far as Sir Joseph Mawbey, the Oppositionist representative of Surrey, in accepting the views of the Protestant Association as those of the nation, still thought it incumbent upon him as the proposer of the Catholic Reliefs of 1778, to go farther in meeting Protestant anxieties than the mere projected Resolution for declaring all anti-Catholic legislation, not expressly repealed in 1778, to be still fully in force.[2] Savile's Bill, too, for disabling Catholics from undertaking the education of Protestants' children was passed through all its stages in the Commons fairly quickly as an effort to meet that part of Protestants' fears for which some warrant could be claimed in history. When this Bill was rejected in the Lords towards the end of a Session, closed by prorogation on July 8th, it seemed plain that the dread of popular tumult was over.

It is to North's credit that, though Administration was now greatly strengthened, as well by the conquest of South Carolina as by the violent distaste the Gordon Riots had given "independent" men for all "popular" causes, he yet made another conciliatory offer of place to Opposition. Rockingham was apparently assured through Frederick Montagu, M.P. for Higham Ferrers, that place could be found not only for himself but for the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, Thomas Townshend, Burke and Fox, though

in his lifetime, should be so magnificently attended to his grave. But he had been a member of the London military association; and therefore that and the other military associations about the metropolis attended on the occasion. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 250–1, 257.

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under June 20th, for some of the cross-currents: "In the Commons, resolutions that all the penal laws against Papists not repealed were in full force. Sir G. Savile promised a bill against their educating Protestants in their schools, and did bring it in. Burke spoke well but too passionately against repeal; attacked the dissenters, but said the worthiest Presbyterians had not signed the petition. . . . Charles Fox made one of his finest speeches against a repeal, only Sir Joseph Mawbey gave a negative to the resolutions as they were meant in lieu of a repeal. . . ."

the office proposed for Fox should, to begin with at least, involve little personal contact with George III, and the Duke of Richmond, too, would be required, if he desired a place of importance, to make some amends for personal affronts to the King. But Opposition declined to pledge itself to fight on against American Independence; demanded Mr. Crewe's Bill disfranchising revenue officers, the oft-discussed Contractor's Bill, and a part, if not the whole, of Mr. Burke's Bill; and would only sweeten the pill by offering, in return for more consideration for Richmond, Fox and Keppel, to press for no Minister's retirement save Sandwich's.[1] But the King had not the slightest intention of submitting to such terms and prepared instead the surprise Dissolution of Parliament on September 1st.[2]

Of the General Election which necessarily followed, it can be said at once that contemporaries considered that it went generally to improving Administration's control of Parliament. This, indeed, seems proved by what happened as soon as the new Parliament came together though it is not easy to extract a great deal even from an attentive examination of the election returns. The surprise Election certainly operated to prevent all thought of contest in the great majority of the counties, and this probably went in favour of the Crown. In the boroughs, it is not only possible to observe the elimination of such acute annoyances as Lord George Gordon and Temple Luttrell but to find such more reputable Oppositionists as Burke, Hartley, Sir W. Meredith, Sawbridge, Sir Cecil Wray and Admiral Keppel withdrawing or failing at Bristol, Hull, Liverpool, London, East Retford and Windsor. Still other results like the failure of that youthful Oppositionist, William Pitt the younger, at Cambridge University are to be set against Opposition's success in carrying Fox for Westminster, though second to Admiral Rodney, and in electing Keppel, whom the King succeeded in driving from Windsor, as Sir Joseph Mawbey's junior for Surrey. Here, in fact, is the *New Annual Register*'s despondent Oppositionist report of the

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 251–5. for a fairly full account co-relating the *Correspondence of George III with Lord North* with other material.

[2] Cf. H. Jephson, *The Platform*, i, 127 quoting the *Annual Register*: "There was every reason to expect that, in the present state of things, and disposition of the people, the elections would go greatly in favour of the Court. A dissolution was accordingly determined upon; but the design was kept concealed in the most profound secrecy. . . . The Proclamation for dissolving the Parliament acted like a thunderclap, with respect to suddenness and surprise. . . ."

atmosphere in which the Election was fought,[1] a report that makes it doubtful whether North might not have reduced the employment of Crown money considerably:[2]

In the nation at large, a spirit of opposition to the measures of administration was far from being increased. For though few persons in the kingdom, it might be presumed, could be wholly insensible of the fatal consequences of the American war, of the burthens under which the nation laboured, and of the dangers with which it was surrounded; the people seemed more disposed to resign themselves with patient acquiescence to the events that might arise, than to take any active part in bringing about a change of men, or of measures. The little effect that had been produced by the vigorous and able stand that had been made by the opposition, during the last session of the last parliament, had inclined many almost to despair of the success of any future opposition; and a great damp had been thrown upon public associations by the late dangerous and destructive riots in the metropolis. These, and other causes, occasioned the meeting of the new parliament to be attended with circumstances favourable to the views of the minister, whatever they might be to the general welfare of the nation.

Ministers themselves put their position in the new Parliament to the test on October 31st, the very first day of its assembly. They had decided to dispense with the services of Sir Fletcher Norton, Speaker since 1770. For the sake of tactics they made Norton's "ill state of health" their ground for proposing another Speaker, Charles Cornwall. But though it was obvious that Norton's real offence had been a notable hedging towards Opposition in 1777, when George III's Civil List had been increased, and in 1780, when "Public Oeconomy" was under discussion,

[1] *New Annual Register*, 1781, p. 4.

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, under April 18, 1782, for the King writing: "As to the immense expense of the General Election, it has quite surprised me. The sum is at least double of what was expended on any other general election since I came to the throne." It would appear that this outburst from the King was provoked by seeing the full table of Crown election expenditure between September 18, 1779 and Lord North's retirement in March 1782 returned at £103,765. 15*s*. 2*d*. (Cf. *Parliamentary Papers of John Robinson, 1774–1784*, pp. 57–9). Though it is only fair to say that a considerable part of this total represented expenditure on elections before or after the General Election proper, and that £31,010 17*s*. 0*d*. of the gross total was met by private subscriptions handed over to Lord North, that Minister still had to admit to the King that some of the £72,754 18*s*. 2*d*. written down to the Crown had brought little advantage. The King, who had between November 1777 and February 1781 paid £40,000 into an Elections account at the rate of £1000 per month from the Civil List and found himself heavily indebted besides, doubtless saw reason to complain of such vain expenditure as the £8000 at Westminster, the £4000 in Surrey, and the £4000 in the City of London.

Government carried the day by 203 votes against 134.[1] Next day, precisely the same majority gave approval to Government's proposed Address in answer to a Speech from the Throne, at once confident and resolute about the war, and in the Lords Government's majority was 68 against 23.[2] It is plain that Opposition had not been helped by the news, available on October 9th, of the complete military superiority displayed by the British forces at Camden, South Carolina, over the American army that had attempted reconquest in August and, though helped by back-country risings, had been driven into a disastrous retreat instead. In the *éclat* of victory, British opinion hardly yet noticed how American willingness to settle down under British rule, that had been so important at New York and in Georgia, showed an ominous decline in the Carolinas under the impulse of growing hope in the distractions provided for the British Government by France, Spain, the Opposition, and the Armed and complaining Neutrals of Europe.[3] Instead of being able to increase their insufficient man-power from local levies, Lords Cornwallis and Rawdon, in charge in South Carolina, had to use far too high a proportion of their almost irreplaceable British troops in holding down disaffected back-country areas,[4] rebelling against compulsory Militia service for King George.

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under October 31st, for an impression of the day: "The first day in the Commons was appointed for choosing a Speaker. Lord G. Germaine and Mr. Ellis proposed Mr. Cornwall. Sir Fletcher Norton rose and complained that Lord North had not even intimated to him that he was to be laid aside. Charles Fox rose and attacked violently Lord George Germaine, who had paid great compliments to Sir Fletcher. Charles Fox said it was stabbing him in the back, but it was like Lord George's well-known cowardice. He accused Rigby too (who defended himself) of being an enemy to Sir Fletcher, with whom he had formerly had a quarrel. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, pp. 9–16.

[3] T. S. Hughes's *History of England, 1778–1785* (ed. 1835), p. 99, for the state of things before Camden. News of the detachment of 6000 men from Washington's army and of Virginia's additional provision of 5000 men proved decisive with those, who had at first submitted to British authority and had been required to accept Militia liability under British control. "At length", writes the careful Hughes, "treachery began openly to show itself; and one Lisle carried over to the enemy a battalion of militia, with their arms and ammunition; in the meantime, news of the hostile confederacy of neutral states, and of the political dissensions in England, gave additional spirit to her enemies in the colony. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 100. It seems plain that the Carolina troubles arose partly from the condition, imposed on those seeking the British pardon, of doing Militia service under British orders for six months. This attempt to increase British man-power produced more unfortunate effects after Camden. Hughes writes thus: "The victory at Camden was succeeded, on the part of Lord Cornwallis, by acts of questionable severity; he not only sequestered the estates of all who had opposed the re-establishment of the royal government but denounced death

But these growing British problems were hardly yet obvious at home, and till they became clearer, Government's course was relatively easy. Thus, on November 10th, there were some opening grumbles, but little more, when Government began the rapid passage through Parliament of yet another Habeas Corpus Suspension Bill applying to Americans, held for or suspected of High Treason or "Piracy". There followed in due course the huge Navy Estimates of November 15th for 91,000 seamen and the Army Estimates of November 24th for 39,000 soldiers, exclusive, of course, of Militia embodied for Home Defence. On the Army Estimates, Opposition was hardly wise in attempting to force Government to promise exact information on the distribution of British troops in America for, as Charles Jenkinson, Secretary-at-War, and special confidant of the King, had little difficulty in showing, that was exactly what the enemy would have liked. On November 27th, again, Opposition undertook the ungrateful task of criticising Votes of Thanks proposed to Clinton and Cornwallis because, in Wilkes's rather threadbare phrase, these victorious commanders had been "active to rivet the chains of slavery on the free-born inhabitants of the new world, and the descendants of Englishmen".[1] Perhaps that was why an Opposition motion, asking for a re-commitment of the Army Estimates so that they might be debated again after the Christmas Recess, was heavily defeated in a division of 37 against 108. In short, when on December 6th the Government succeeded in adjourning Parliament till as late as January 23rd, it can be truly said that Ministers had every reason to be pleased with the "conduct" of the new House of Commons.[2]

The situation in Parliament must certainly have encouraged

against those who, after receiving British protection should join the enemy; and he actually executed some of these. . . ; by these measures he greatly inflamed the animosity of the provincials. . . ."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, p. 33, for some more of this eloquence: "Mr. Wilkes added, that he would not give thanks for victories, which only tended to protract a destructive war. Peace with America could only save this sinking state, and give us permanent prosperity. There was more matter of grief than of triumph, of bewailing than thanksgiving, in this civil contest. . . . Public thanks from that house on the present occasion would only widen the breach. . . ." Wilkes, as City Chamberlain was no longer "quite shabby now and almost in rags" as Bentham described him in Add. MSS. 33538.

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under December 6th, for a significant note marking the depression and disorganisation of Opposition: "House of Commons adjourned; half Opposition had not appeared. Scarce any body but Charles Fox and T. Townshend."

Government to bring their long disputes with Holland to a decision. An ex-President of Congress, going as American envoy to the Dutch, had a short time before fallen into British hands with all his papers, and these yielded sufficient information on pro-American activities proceeding in the dominant province of Holland to strengthen Government's case considerably.[1] On December 12th Sir Joseph Yorke, British Minister at The Hague, presented the States General with a demand for an "immediate and satisfactory answer in every respect" to British complaints, and if the Dutch imagined that fear of other Armed Neutrals would hold Britain back from following up this ultimatum they were mistaken. Russia as the only Neutral capable of disturbing action on the sea had already been offered compromise terms,[2] and on December 20th the Dutch Minister in London experienced the thunderbolt of a declaration of hostilities whose withdrawal was refused despite a last-minute effort by the sobered States General.[3] The British Government, aware of the desperate financial straits of America, the difficulties of Spain and the taxation anxieties of Necker in France,[4] was not minded to tolerate what it considered unneutral conduct in a very rich and ill-prepared State, that offered commercial and colonial plunder the very thought of which excited the Navy, the East India Company and all the speculators in privateering. Here is an interesting if spiteful note that Horace Walpole inserted in his *Journal* at the end of December:[5]

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, Public Papers, pp. 129–41, for "Papers which were communicated by Sir Joseph Yorke, by express orders from the King his master, to his Serene Highness, the Prince Stadtholder, and which were taken out of Mr. LAUREN'S trunk." York had been complaining since 1775.

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 152–3, for a Cabinet Minute of November 18, 1780, recommending "that an additional Instruction should be given to the Commanders of His Majesty's Ships of War and Privateers for stricter Conformity to the Articles of the Russian Treaty than has hitherto been used in fact".

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1780, Public Papers, pp. 145–6.

[4] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, for the King on December 18th: "Within these few Minutes I have received Lord North's letter accompanying the Secret he has received from Mr. Necker; it shews France is certainly in greater difficulties than we imagined or She would [not] by Such various Channels seem to court Peace; no one has more inclination or interest in wishing so desirable an event as myself provided it can be obtained on honourable and Solid terms; with France it [is] easily to be settled if She would desist from encouraging Rebellion and not add to Her insults by wanting to affect Independency which whether under its apparent name, or a truce is the same in reality; till she gives up that view I do not see how Peace can be a safe measure. . . ."

[5] Horace Walpole, *Journal*, under December 31st.

Count Welderen [Dutch Minister] went away without taking leave, and thus the year finished with the outset of a new war. Yet the Scotch had so infatuated and poisoned the nation, that the Dutch war was popular, at least in the city, where the spirit of gaming had seized all ranks, and nothing was thought of but privateering. The people were told and believed that the Opposition encouraged America, and that several rich persons had been ruined by sending money thither. The Opposition were all split and inactive. The Duke of Richmond on one side, Lord Shelburne and Lord Camden on the other, would not come to Parliament. And the Government which had precipitated us into all these calamities, and achieved nothing, were more popular.

Government, of course, could not undertake the new war with complete impunity. It suffered most, perhaps, in the more burdensome Loan terms asked by the financial groups with whom the worried North was already conducting preliminary negotiations for the Loan and Lottery of 1781.[1] In the existing state of politics, the greater part of war-expenses had necessarily to be borrowed, and even new taxes, just sufficient to guarantee interest on fresh loans, were becoming more difficult to propose and carry in a country never-endingly exposed to Opposition advocacy of peace with the Americans. But Loan difficulties were not yet before the public when the reassembled Parliament, in its business of January 23rd and 24th, read the world a lesson in British financial resources by accepting, in the midst of war, Government's proposition to vote £80,000 for Barbados and £40,000 for Jamaica in view of damage sustained in a late hurricane. Next day, however, in a discussion of the way in which hostilities had been opened against the Dutch, Opposition undertook the biggest Sessional effort so far made when resisting the Loyal Addresses, customarily voted in both Houses to the Crown after it had notified to Parliament the occasion and circumstances of an outbreak of war. In the Lords, indeed, Opposition's defeat by 84 votes against 19 seemed decisive enough, though strong Protests by the Minority showed unusual resentment to reign among Government's opponents.[2] In the

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 163, for North writing despondently on December 17th: "Lord North is afraid that the step we have been obliged to take with respect to Holland will greatly increase the difficulties of raising this year's supplies. He will endeavour to do his best but he thinks it is duty again to submit to His Majesty, that he feels his strength of body & of memory impair'd, & that he is doubtful whether he shall be much longer able to carry through his Majesty's business. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, Public Papers, pp. 117–20, for the Protests of January 25, 1781. One of them declared that "the sudden attack" on Holland which the Ministers had advised appeared "unwarranted by the law of nations,

Commons, however, Burke, Thomas Townshend and Fox led Opposition in throwing such doubts on the prudence of declaring war, in the circumstances, and on the constitutional propriety of Government's conduct in sending Parliament into a specially long Christmas Recess while war was being engineered, that Opposition's figures rose to 101 against 180.[1] A division like this meant the possibility of serious trouble on many matters awaiting discussion—Sandwich's much maligned management of the Navy, for example, Burke's "Oeconomy" Bill, the deteriorating aspect of affairs in India, and the year's Loan and Tax arrangements.

The long-heralded renewal of the attack on Sandwich came on February 1st when Fox moved "that the appointment of Sir Hugh Palliser to be governor of Greenwich Hospital, after he had been declared guilty of having preferred a malicious and ill grounded accusation against his commanding officer . . . was a measure totally subversive of the discipline, and derogatory to the honour of the navy". It had, of course, been unwise for George III to insist on making such signal reparation to an officer whom he considered to have fallen a victim to factious Oppositionists and to political Admirals of doubtful merit. But Opposition was presumably just as unwise in attempting, at such a time, to stir up every species of trouble for Sandwich who, if he had been guilty of distrusting Keppel, Opposition's Admiral, and of helping George III to bring Palliser back to Parliament, was yet an efficient enough naval administrator with ten years' invaluable experience of Admiralty methods and an understandable desire to damp down active party politics in the Navy. The perilous lengths to which Opposition thought it right to go in challenging and obstructing a naval régime, suspected by some of harbouring sinister Court

and contrary to good faith", and the other held "that it is not yet too late to open negociation, by which, if conducted with the temper, and in the language of conciliation, we may avert the evils which the continuance of this unnatural war cannot fail to produce. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 55, for Thomas Townshend (later Pitt's Home Secretary as Lord Sydney) on the engineering of the war: "Mr. Thomas Townshend expressed his dissatisfaction at the late long adjournment of parliament. It had, indeed, been their frequent practice, to settle matters of the first importance during the holidays; and when the house met after the recess, to call upon parliament to support them. . . . In this manner had the house been led into the American war. . . ; in this manner had the ministers announced the French rescript, and afterwards the Spanish rescript; and now they came to declare that they had commenced war against Holland, our old and our natural ally. Year after year had the minister acquainted the house with a new enemy; but, from the commencement of the American war, he had never brought down the welcome news of a new ally. . . ."

designs, are not merely to be seen in the division figures of February 1st at 149 for Opposition against Government's 214. Dangerous charges of rotten naval stores, bad repair-work at the Government dockyards, and inefficient use of the nation's capacity for new shipbuilding, lie behind such a significant Parliamentary note as Horace Walpole inserted in his *Journal* under the date of February 19th:[1]

"A conversation of severity", remarked Walpole, "on Admiral Darby's having declined the French fleet. Mr. Fox added, that he had heard that Governor Johnstone had sent from Portsmouth, whither he was gone to sail with the grand fleet for the relief of Gibraltar, a complaint to Lord Hillsborough, that the fleet was in a rotten condition, and not fit to sail. Not one Minister denied it; but next day it was given out, that Johnstone had only complained of one ship not being ready at the time it had been promised."

In view of Opposition's ability to make capital out of a naval situation in European waters that was taking the main English fleet not to Brest harbour but to hard-pressed Gibraltar, hungry for the contents of the ninety-seven victuallers that were in convoy, it was perhaps well for Government that there were distractions before its next notable ordeal came on February 26th. Thus the General Fast observed on February 22nd produced hundreds of sermons inevitably telling in favour of Government like most of those annually delivered at similar observances since 1776.[2] Moreover the hopeful news that had just come in of a great mutiny in the American Army, short of pay, clothing and provisions, must have lent special unction to the normal cleric's prayer for the establishment of unity and peace among all subjects of the Crown, American and British. And when, in fact, Parliament debated Burke's "Oeconomy" Bill on February 26th, the news of American Mutiny had been supplemented by further hopeful intelligence of Cornwallis's reinforcement in the Carolinas to a strength apparently sufficient to compel a complete American withdrawal, and by reports of the simultaneous landing of a British force in Virginia under the direction of the very notable

[1] Cf. *The Parliamentary Register*, under February 19, 1781, for Opposition's charge that Admiral Darby with only seventeen ships had, early in December 1780, been compelled to retire before the French Brest fleet. The division that resulted gave Opposition 63 votes against 97.

[2] Cf. the *Monthly Review* and the *Critical Review*, for notices every year of the considerable number of such sermons that found their way into print between 1776 and 1782.

American deserter, General Arnold.[1] Accordingly Burke's "Oeconomy" Bill, which in 1780 had had to be allowed a Second Reading unopposed, was defeated by Government at a similar stage in 1781 by 233 votes against 190. The King seems to have been well pleased with these figures,[2] for on the necessity for "oeconomy" in Places and Pensions, the "independents" were still apt to be belligerent. It was this fact, indeed, that still gave some hope to Wyvill's diminished band of County Associations preparing to petition anew. It was this fact, too, of "independent" restiveness on "oeconomy", that had received a signal illustration when the most discussed Opposition speech of February 26th was made by the twenty-two-year-old William Pitt, sitting for Appleby by grace of that very Tory "independent", Sir James Lowther.[3]

On March 1st another talented new Oppositionist, the playwright Sheridan, who had bought and borrowed his way into Parliament for Stafford,[4] essayed to move resolutions seeking to

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, Principal Occurrences, pp. 20–3, for the latest news from Clinton available in Whitehall on February 20th. The American Mutiny was still raging despite offers from Congress, and Clinton was still hopeful that his offers of full pardon and British pay might bear some fruit. And as to the South, Clinton wrote: "I make no doubt that general Leslie has joined Lord Cornwallis, and I expect every hour to hear that the rebels have quitted the Carolinas; more especially as brigadier-general Arnold arrived in the Chesapeak on the 2nd. Rebel reports say he has reached Richmond, the capital of Virginia. There is every reason to suppose that Ethan Allen has quitted the rebel cause. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, under February 27th, for the King writing: "The Account of the Second Reading of Mr. Burke's Bill having been negatived by So great a Majority has as Lord North can easily imagine given Me much pleasure."

[3] Cf. N. W. Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 62–70, for such passages as: "Great expectations having been formed of Pitt, a sort of anxious impatience for his coming forward pervaded the assembly; which was strongly impressed from common report, with a belief of his hereditary talents and eloquence. . . . The same composure, self-possession, and imposing dignity of manner, which afterwards so eminently characterized him when seated on the Treasury Bench; distinguished him in this first essay of his powers, though he then wanted three months to have compleated his twenty-second year. . . . All men beheld in him at once a future Minister; and the Opposition, overjoyed at such an accession of strength, vyed with each other in their Encomiums. . . . Burke exclaimed, that 'he was not merely a chip of the old block, but the old block itself'. Nor did Fox do less justice. . . . Mr. Pitt when he thus rose . . . was indebted for his seat in the House, to Sir James Lowther; whose property and parliamentary influence, which in the Counties of Cumberland and Westmoreland were immense, enabled him to bring seven or eight members into that assembly. . . ."

[4] Cf. Moore's *Memoirs of R. B. Sheridan*, i, 405, for a table of the expenses Sheridan was still having to meet in the Parliament of 1784–90. 248 "independent" burgesses of Stafford apparently expected election gratuities of 5 guineas each as well as an annual expenditure in the town of £143 17*s.* 6*d.*

prevent, for the future, such suspect use of military power as had been seen in the capital during June 1780. Though Sheridan coupled his ban on independent Army action with an admission of the need for proceeding straightway to a strengthening of the civil police of Westminster, a division of 94 against Government's 171 showed that on the Gordon Riots, at least, there were no "independent" hesitations.[1] But North could hardly have expected the same unhesitating "independent" support when he rose on March 7th to "open a budget" making provision for the expenditure during the coming year of well over £21,000,000, a figure then regarded as immense. Twelve millions of the sums necessary were to be raised by Loan and £480,000 by Lottery, and North was under the special disadvantage of having negotiated the Loan terms when Government credit was unusually low after the addition of Holland to the enemy ranks and before a smart recovery had followed the hopeful American news of February. North had, indeed, had to offer for every £100 lent to the Government £150 worth of 3 per cent stock and £25 worth of 4 per cent stock, though this scrip, on the great recovery of Government credit, already showed immense prospective profits of perhaps £900,000 for the fortunate groups of loan-contractors whom Administration was alleged specially to favour. Happily for Government, North's personal incorruptibility was unquestionable,[2] and the more responsible elements in Opposition must have boggled before the dangerous, because credit-shaking, work of directly opposing the Loan proper. It was the Lottery arrangement attached to the Loan, by which big subscribers of £1000 or over were allowed to purchase four £10 Lottery tickets per £1000 subscribed, that therefore became the special mark of Opposition. But it was possibly unwise for such a notorious gambler as Fox to take the lead in opposing the proposed Lottery on the ground "that of all the different species of gaming, that of lotteries was

[1] Cf. Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 75–7.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, i, 488–9: "Never had any Minister purer hands, nor manifested less rapacity. In fact, he amassed no wealth, after an Administration of twelve years. . . . His Adversaries reproached him likewise, that though incapable of personally descending to unworthy means of enriching himself, he allowed peculations or abuses to be practised by those employed under him. Sawbridge, when speaking in his place, as a Member, alluding to this accusation, exclaimed with Cato, 'Curse on his virtues, they've undone his Country!' But it never entered into any man's mind, however inimical, to accuse either Lord North or Mr. Pitt of making undue purchases in the public funds, or of turning their Ministerial information to private purposes of pecuniary emolument. . . ."

the most dangerous and destructive to the people at large". Opposition was defeated on March 7th by 169 votes against 111,[1] and next day the King was congratulating North on the speed with which the Loan Resolutions, carried in Committee on the 7th, had been adopted in the House on the 8th.[2]

In his financial statement of March 7th North had not included details of the inevitable new taxes. That may have been done partly from the design of breaking the bad news by instalments but it was possibly due also to the difficulties of finding new taxes that would both meet the heavy interest on the new Loan and reduce the necessity of so constantly annexing the Sinking Fund. It was distinctly fortunate for North therefore that news of immense booty captured in the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatia, for years the supply base for much American, French and Spanish effort, came in on March 13th,[3] just in time to ease North's task in carrying his first batch of new imposts a preliminary step towards the Statute Book—the additional $1\frac{3}{4}d.$ per lb. on tobacco, the $\frac{1}{2}d.$ per lb. extra on sugar, the 5 per cent increase in many branches of Excise and the end of discount allowances in the Customs. There were objections, of course, as when one ardent Oppositionist, Turner of York, recalled the demand of 1780 for no new taxes until there had been a redress of grievances, and another, George Byng of Middlesex, added to Turner's denial that tobacco was any longer to be regarded as a luxury, more proper for extra taxation than beer,[4] a similar assertion on behalf of sugar.[5] Sawbridge, back in Parliament, defended "republican"

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue) v, 201, for North communicating the news and the King expressing surprise that Opposition had resisted the Lottery since he was certain that "it is right for the Public to avail itself of that Vice rather than lay Taxes on the Necessaries of Life. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 202.

[3] *Ibid.*, 203, for Sandwich congratulating the King on the capture of the island "with a Dutch man of war of 60 guns and a frigate of 32, besides near 200 sail of Merchant ships, and immense booty of all kinds, especially in Naval stores and provisions".

[4] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, March 29, 1781, reporting the proceedings of March 15th: "Mr. Turner then rose, and in animadverting on the noble Lord's leaving out the brewery in the excise tax, mentioned, that it was done with a view of acquiring popularity, which would be as dangerous as corruption. . . . He objected to the tax on tobacco, and said that it was now become a necessary of life; and observed, that his tenants in Yorkshire, when following the plough, could not now afford to chew it, tho' it was a great part of their subsistence. . . ."

[5] *Ibid.*, "Mr. Byng then expressed his dislike of the duty on sugar. It was now so generally used, that it could scarcely be any longer called a luxury; and in as much as the tax must affect Ireland, he looked to the consequences of it there with the greatest apprehension. . . ."

principles[1] and denounced the Loan once more, and there was an interesting objection from the Suffolk county member, Bunbury, who declared that he would have preferred taxes directly paid by the public, like that previously imposed by North on servants, to taxes collected through the medium of merchants who often charged the public many times the amount of Customs and Excise increases they paid to the Exchequer.[2] But it is significant that, despite the objections made on March 14th and 15th, there were no divisions, and that Barré, a formidable critic armed with the calculations of Shelburne House,[3] ended a speech containing lamentations that Necker should be introducing into France the "oeconomical" principles banished from England, with an outburst of patriotic pleasure at the news from St. Eustatia. Here is the report:[4]

The Colonel took notice of the victory of the day, and said that he who did not feel pleased on account of it, could neither be a good subject nor a good man. He rejoiced at it, but not so extravagantly as some persons did, because it depended upon the use we made of it, whether it would be a matter of real triumph or whether it was one of those victories we should have to pay for hereafter. It deeply wounded a power with whom we ought not to have quarrelled, and which, if ever it was stripped of that weight it held in the balance of Europe, all Europe would suffer for it. At the same time that he said this, he was far from blaming the Ministry for having ordered the enterprize; having quarrelled with our old friend, it was right to strike the most important blow we could.

[1] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, March 22, 1781, for reporting this in the proceedings of March 14th: "Mr. Sawbridge said, that the hon. gentleman who spoke last did not understand his own meaning when he talked of republican principles. This country was a republic—a republic with a chief magistrate at the head of it; call him king, emperor, or what you would, he was no more than the chief magistrate. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Bunbury preferring direct taxation "because there was no greedy merchant who could exact more from the person who was to pay the tax than the Legislature had expressly marked out. . . ."

[3] Cf. Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 59: "It is a fact, that during the latter years of Lord North's Administration, he [Shelburne] retained three or four Clerks in constant pay and employment, under his own roof, who were solely occupied in copying state-papers or accounts. Every measure of Finance adopted by the first Minister, passed, if I may so express myself, through the Alembic of Shelburne House, where it was examined and severely discussed. There, while Dunning and Barré met to settle their plan of action, as Members of Parliament on the Opposition Bench in the House of Commons; Jackson, who likewise sat in the same assembly, for New Romney . . . furnished every species of legal or general knowledge. Dr. Price and Mr. Baring produced financial plans, or made arithmetical calculations, meant to controvert and overturn, or to expose those of the first Lord of the Treasury. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, March 22, 1781, reporting the speaking of March 14th.

The spread of the St. Eustatia news throughout the country, with its tale of millions of booty taken and the complete hoodwinking effected of the French Caribbean fleet, must have helped Government in other matters. Thus there seems to have been no special difficulty in carrying the Resolutions to impose the next instalment of new taxes, the elaborate code of paper-duties laid on in substitution of the lighter schedules reigning hitherto. Then, on March 21st, two of Opposition's favourite remedies for the country's ills were rejected without being allowed a detailed examination in Committee. In view of the Loan suspicions still being noised abroad against the whole financial tribe, Opposition's Contractor's Bill, to exclude Government contractors from the Commons, attracted sufficient "independent" men to be defeatable only by 120 votes against 100.[1] But apparently "independent" men viewed with much smaller favour the mass-disfranchisement of all the revenue officers of the country suggested by Opposition in order to obtain what it believed would be purer elections, because elections less influenced by Government. Certainly "Mr. Crewe's Bill for restraining revenue officers from voting" was much more decisively rejected in a division of 133 votes against 86. And next day an attack, on a wide front, against Government's

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, pp. 113–14, for a good summary of the arguments employed. Here are some extracts: from its treatment of Government and Opposition speaking: "Why should government be precluded from intrusting the business of contracts to members of parliament, when perhaps among them must be found persons the best entitled to public confidence? . . . What great and irretrievable mischief might result from the incapacity or inability of a contractor! In the contract for remittances, for instance, and those for victualling our fleets and armies, how easily might negligence be the ruin of our forces! It was therefore incumbent on the minister, to give contracts only to gentlemen of undoubted responsibility, wherever they were to be found. It was also an objection to the bill that it excluded not only contractors themselves from the house, but all those who were employed or interested in the contract. Now this clause might by construction render many gentlemen ineligible . . . as most men of landed property had coals, copper, or timber on their estates, all of which might be sold to the contractors. . . .

"It was alleged in support of the bill, that it was absolutely necessary to restrain the ministry in the making of contracts, the extravagance and the corruptions of their dealings in this particular having been long considered as a great grievance. . . . Contracts were more dangerous means of influence than almost any other in the hands of government. They were attended with such great profit, that they were calculated to increase the corruption of parliament in a very high degree. Nor could any contract be equitably made when the service of the contractor in parliament was understood to be a part of the agreement. . . . It was very desirable that merchants should sit in that house, and they ought to be considered as amongst the most respectable members, when they came there as independent men. . . . But it could be no hardship upon them to be told by an act, that if they preferred a secret to an open contract, they must give up their eligibility of sitting in that house. . . ."

management of the Navy brought Ministers a triumphant division of 147 votes against 45 despite the busy Mr. Minchin's play with apparently startling statistics of naval desertions, shipbuilding delays and dockyard idling, resulting, it was claimed, in the French ability to dominate the Channel whenever, as during the past December, Versailles was so minded.[1] An attack of this kind might well have been dangerous before the St. Eustatia news but, as matters were, it merely helped Government to record a most satisfactory division which weakened, in advance, Opposition's prospects for the next assault in form.

That assault came on March 26th when, aided by the startling rumours circulating of the manner in which the now enacted Loan had been negotiated and distributed, Sir George Savile moved and George Byng seconded a motion for a Committee of Inquiry. In putting up the members for Yorkshire and Middlesex, the two most important counties in the Kingdom, to lead the demand, Opposition was, of course, making a tacit appeal for "independent" support, and much, indeed, of what was said by Savile and Byng, followed by Townshend, Fox and Dunning, was of a nature to antagonise and alarm landed "independents", and not least those with Tory anti-loanmongering family traditions going back to the time of William and Anne. After Savile had conjectured that the 10 per cent premium, at first ruling on the Loan, had been brought down to 6½ per cent by deliberate Ministerial manœuvre, and Byng had offered details of how it was done by financiers,[2] anxious to help Ministers and the concealed

[1] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, April 5th, reporting Mr. Minchin opening on March 22nd: "He could not help observing, that the superiority of this country at sea had been given up to the enemy, and given up without a blow, on the first of December last. Admiral Darby had 19 sail of the line under his command; on the 6th of the same month 20. On the other hand the force of the enemy amounted to between 38 and 44 line of battle ships in the Channel; our fleet retreated before them; so that instead of a superior victorious navy, we had an inferior runaway navy. In that navy the loss we had sustained in battle was inconsiderable; it was no more than 1200 men; but by sickness, occasioned by bad provisions furnished by contractors, there had perished 18,000, and what was almost incredible, we had lost 42,000 by desertions. . . . The manner in which the men were employed in the yards was absolutely scandalous; they were bound to work till twelve, and yet they always left off at half after eleven; and though the bell rung for them to begin again at one, he himself had often observed that not a stroke of work ever was begun before three o'clock. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, April 12th, for the reporting of Byng on the 26th as follows: "The fall of the premium to 6½% he believed to be a mere trick of the Minister, who had *commanded* some of his creatures to sell out great sums. It was well known, that on Monday Mr. Atkinson had sold £100,000 worth of stock, and on Tuesday as much more. He was convinced, that the Minister had laid his commands for that purpose, and he would prove it: he could not indeed

loanmongers of Parliament to hoodwink a cheated public,[1] it is only surprising that Government could do as well as it did in defeating the suggested Inquiry by 209 votes against 165. It seems, in fact, that the spectre of financial panic had had to be raised in explaining why Ministers were reluctant to tell a Committee of Inquiry their reasons for distributing the Loan as they had done.[2] Another alarm, too, seems to have been of use. The Gordon mob-terror of 1780 could be recalled against Savile who had undertaken, despite that example of outrageous "popular" action, to forward another "popular" movement challenging, and even, it was claimed, denying Parliament's legitimate authority. Savile had, it is true, agreed to present a new Petition to Parliament for what the King was pleased to call "Mr. Wyvill's Congress", a gathering of Deputies from those County Associations strong enough to survive the chill winds of criticism and reproof blowing upon them since the Gordon Riots.[3] But perhaps the Parliamentary Majority's now icy attitude towards Wyvill's movement should be treated in a new chapter.

prove that the noble Lord had given the orders, nor that they had been given by his secretary [Mr. Robinson], but he would bring evidence to the bar to prove, *that it was said in the Alley*, that orders had been given by the noble Lord to those whom he could command to sell out. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, for another part of Byng's speech: "He produced three or four long lists of persons who had obtained or written for scrip. One consisted of persons, who, though of the first characters in the city, had not been able to obtain any share in the loan. Another contained the names of those who had indeed obtained some scrip, but then it was not more than a twentieth, or some a tenth, of what they had writ for. A third list consisted of those who had obtained large sums without any pretensions whatsoever from fortune to so great a share. Several of those were clerks to Mr. Drummond the banker. . . . He could not, he said, suppose, even for a moment, that Mr. Drummond's clerks were the *real* proprietors of the stock set down in their names; he had not a doubt but that they served only to cover some others, who wished to benefit by the loan, without being known to have any concern whatsoever in it. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, reporting the speeches made by William Adam, Lord Nugent and Sir Richard Sutton on the Savile motion of March 26th. Here is an extract from the report of the speaking of William Adam, Fox's duelling antagonist and lately promoted Treasurer of the Ordnance: "As to the partiality with which it was said, the noble Lord had dealt shares in the loan, it might produce very pernicious consequences to call upon the noble Lord to assign his reasons for having given more to one house than to another; and the credit of many houses would be shaken, if, in his own vindication, the Minister should say, that he had given to every banker who had applied, just as much more as he thought the house should be able to pay . . . the Committee that the hon. Baronet had moved for might give a deadly blow to national credit. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Correspondence of George III with Lord North*, under March 27th: "The conduct of Sir Geo. Savile in making so strange a motion yesterday was very consistent with His looking [upon] Himself as the Representative for Mr. Wyvile's Congress. I am glad it met with the rejection it deserved." This hint of Court resentment will be found much expanded in the Parliamentary speaking of May 8th when Savile moved for the House to go into Committee on the Petition.

CHAPTER XVIII

THE WAR GROWS INTOLERABLE

"It is difficult to express which appears more strongly the manly fortitude of the Great Majority last night in rejecting the hacknied question of a Committee for considering the American War, or the impudence of the Minority in again bringing it forward; for whoever the most ardently wishes for Peace, must feel that every repition [*sic*] of the question in Parliament only makes the Rebels and the Bourbon family more desirous of continuing the War from hopes of tiring out this Country; We have it not at this hour in our power to make Peace it is by steadiness and exertions that we are to get into a situation to effect it; and with the assistance of Divine Providence I am confident we shall soon find our Enemies forced to look for that Blessing . . . we are contending for our whole consequence whether we are to rank among the Great Powers of Europe or be reduced to one of the least considerable: He that is not stimulated by this consideration does not deserve to be a Member of this Community."

The King to Lord North, 7.25 a.m. June 13, 1781.

"Among the active Opponents of the undue influence of the Crown, the advocates for the Oeconomical Reformation *alone*, compose a numerous, and in rank and figure, the most distinguished class. To recommend *their palliative plan*, they display the mischiefs of innovation, and treat propositions for the melioration of Parliament as specious, but as impracticable projects. In their conception, the improvement of the popular representation by any of those alterations which other Reformers have proposed, is a speculative advantage almost impossible to be obtained; and a shorter duration of Parliament is not only undesirable, but positively evil. Instead of attempting to correct the internal disposition of Parliament to admit temptation, they would content themselves with reducing that ostensible fund of corruption, which is externally supplied with such fatal success. . . . But if that patronage which forms the visible influence of the Crown had been abridged in the most indefensible instances, *without a radical Reformation of Parliament*, the practice of Corruption would still have been carried on to as great an extent as ever, only perhaps in a more dangerous and degrading mode. . . . Who can suppose *loans of money* would not have been contracted on terms still more grossly disadvantageous

to the Nation; and the loss of sinecure places and unmerited pensions would not have been compensated by shares of *beneficial subscriptions*, in an adequate proportion? or, if the Minister had chosen to vary his mode of gratification, what could have hindered the immediate increase of the *Secret-Service-Money*? or the augmentation of the *Royal Debts*, incurred to any amount which might be necessary, and sure to be discharged, without examination, by a grateful Parliament. . . . But whether the People should attempt to restore annual Parliaments; to extend the right of suffrage universally; and to establish a perfect equality of representation; or whether it does not behove them rather to confine their efforts to the accomplishment of a more limited plan . . . : These are questions which . . . were the subject of . . . much anxious deliberation. . . ."

A Second Address from the Committee of Association of the County of York to the Electors of Great Britain, approved October 17, 1781.

THOUGH the Rev. Christopher Wyvill had had to display prodigies of tact and patience for many months on end, he had in March 1781 the satisfaction of seeing another "General Deputation" of "Associated Counties" gathered in London for the purpose of making representations to Parliament on the subject of "Public Oeconomy" and the "Reformation of Parliament". Representatives, it is true, now came only from eleven areas but attention could hardly be denied them in view of their considerable claims to speak part of the mind, at least, of Middlesex, Westminster, Hertfordshire, Devonshire, Surrey, Kent, Huntingdonshire, Nottinghamshire, Yorkshire, Essex and London.[1] Both Opposition and Administration, in fact, saw reason for taking considerable interest in the March proceedings of the Deputies in the London Guildhall, and their methodical discussion of the successive resolutions submitted with a view to settling the basis of a new Petition to Parliament. And because of the possible political repercussions of the Deputies' actions, all the scruples and precautions, proper to important political assemblies, may be found at work in this gathering of some thirty gentlemen and clergymen, deputed at the rate of three for every Committee of Association still active.[2] A few characteristic examples must suffice for all. When Dr. Jebb, deputed for Huntingdonshire thanks to a freehold there, desired to combine with the project of One Hundred new Knights of the Shire a plan for finding them seats in Parliament by taking one hundred representatives from the decayed boroughs, he was left in a minority of one. Despite Jebb's strong case against expanding the House of Commons to 658 members, despite his readiness to consider the buying-up of the interests that would suffer from his

[1] Cf. *A State of the Associated Counties*, &c.

[2] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 138, for Wyvill communicating on January 4, 1781, Yorkshire's arrangements to Sir R. Smyth in another county. As the message affords a good view of the nature of Wyvill's organising activity, it is here given. "The inclosed instructions to the Deputies of this Committee", writes Wyvill, "were yesterday agreed to by the largest Meeting which we have yet had; 60 Gentlemen were present. The Deputies are Mr. Shore, Sir James Norcliffe and myself. An Address from the Committee to the Electors of the Counties, Cities, &c. was also unanimously agreed to; but, on account of its great length, it is impossible to transmit a copy at present. That piece, with the instructions, will soon be printed, and sent throughout the Kingdom.—From the great distance of this County from London, it is very inconvenient to Gentlemen to attend a meeting there. It was therefore found advisable to keep to our first number of Deputies. . . ."

proposal,[1] the caution of his fellow-Deputies saw sufficient obstacles already in their way without adding to them, for the time, a complete antagonisation of the "borough-owners". The Yorkshire Committee's resolution against the Septennial Act, again, moved by Sir James Norcliff, was worded too strongly for some Deputations and was considerably watered down in order to preserve unanimity.[2] And the Kent Deputation, composed of two clergymen and Chatham's son-in-law, Viscount Mahon, very nearly ruined the results of all the efforts that had been necessary for months to collect a "General Deputation", first, and to win its assent afterwards to a long string of Resolutions and a Petition to Parliament based on them. Though only Jebb, perhaps, was in favour of asserting for the "General Deputation" an authoritatively representative character, and the bulk of the other Deputies were satisfied with the moderate course of claiming to have drawn up their Petition for themselves and "others", the ultra-constitutionalists from Kent held out obstinately for the omission even of the "others" who could not be held to have played any direct part in framing the Petition and the mention of whom might be construed as a menace to a Parliament still mindful of the Gordon Riots. It needed Dunning's refusal to have anything to do with a Petition that only purported to speak for a small group of individuals, and the fortunate discovery, also, of a legal precedent for the petitioning for "others" as well as oneself in the common

[1] Cf. Dr. Jebb, *A Letter to Sir Robert Bernard Bart. Chairman of the Huntingdonshire Committee* (edns. 1781 and 1782): "In the first place, it appeared to me, that the house of commons is already sufficiently numerous. . . . In the happiest periods of our history its number was far inferior to what it is at present; and it has been ably observed, that with the increase of its members would, in all probability, be increased the national depravity, and the expense of the public . . . popular sentiment seemed more favourable to the idea of diminishing the number of the borough members, than to the proposed augmentation of the counties. And although it was alledged, that in case this idea was adopted, we should have the interest of the proprietors of boroughs to contend with, it appeared to me such interest might be purchased, in many instances, by a proper compensation . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, "The resolution, as moved by Sir James Norcliff, was as follows: 'Resolved, That the Bill, enacting the septennial duration of parliaments was a violation of the rights of the people, by which the constitutional connection between the constituent body and the representative has been impaired, and the parliament exposed to great and systematic corruption.'

"This resolution passed with the following amendments: after the words 'septennial duration of parliaments', was inserted, 'however expedient it might have been rendered by the circumstances of the times', and instead of 'systematic corruption', was substituted 'unconstitutional influence'.

"I do not conceive these alterations to have been real improvements. . . ."

form of Enclosure Petitions, to win the Kentish Deputation to reason.[1]

The Petition on which so much mingled enterprise and caution had been expended was presented in Parliament on April 2nd. In the absence through illness of Sir George Savile, Duncombe, his brother-member for Yorkshire, had undertaken the task of presentation. Lamenting the lesser authority he brought to bear on behalf of the Petition, Duncombe warmly associated himself with the reforms demanded. Then a borough-member followed, Daniel Parker Coke of Nottingham, who gave plain proof of the wisdom that had been shown by the "General Deputation" in advancing not the slightest formal claim to a representative character. Coke accepted the justice of the Petition but declared, nevertheless, that had it been made by the Deputies in the character of the "delegates of certain counties", a character illegal and unconstitutional, he would have been compelled to oppose its reception. Coke's speech brought forward Dunning and Fox with arguments intended to show that there would have been nothing unconstitutional in the Deputies truthfully laying claim to represent the views of vast numbers of Freeholders.[2] And after such speeches, tending to bring out the Deputies' uncommon scrupulousness in submitting a Petition bearing only their own

[1] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 141 n.: "Mr. Dunning was unwilling to support the Petition of the Deputies to the House of Commons unless the disputed expression that they Petitioned on behalf of themselves *and others* were admitted. His reason was, that a Petition in behalf of themselves alone probably would be objected to, as being too insignificant from the paucity of signatures, to occupy the attention of Parliament; and on that ground it was possible, it would not be allowed to lie upon their Table. He might think too, that by retaining the disputed expression, which was a usual one in cases of inclosure, &c. a more favourable precedent for the People acting by Deputation would be established. The Kentish Deputies, satisfied by Mr. Dunning's Reasons, acceded to the Measure adopted by the Meeting. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, pp. 132–3: "Mr. Dunning said, that there could be no question now before the house concerning the propriety, or impropriety, of accepting a petition from men represented to be delegates, because the present petition was not offered to them under that description. If it had, he should have been ready to have defended the propriety of such a petition, because he conceived that there was nothing either illegal, or unconstitutional, in the character or in the name of a delegate. He wished, however, to provoke no debate on that day; it was merely intended to move for the petition to lie on the table, in order that it should be taken into consideration on a future day. . . . Mr. Fox observed, that he did not rise to provoke a debate . . . but he could not sit still, and hear it asserted, that it was an illegal, or unconstitutional thing, to appoint delegates . . . by what law, or what act, was it declared to be unconstitutional for the people of this country, to appoint delegates to reside in the metropolis, and to watch the conduct of their representatives? And by what law was it declared to be unconstitutional for the delegates so appointed, to apply to parliament by a loyal and submissive petition? . . ."

thirty-two signatures, the Majority could not with any decency refuse permission for the Petition to lie on the Table until it could be debated.

The real debate on the Petition did not, therefore, come until May 8th when Sir George Savile was able to move its reference to a Committee of the whole House. The war-news of the intervening period, meanwhile, may possibly be regarded as having told rather for the Government than against it. If Hyder Ali's attack on the Company-controlled Carnatic, for example, seemed serious enough to justify the "committee of secrecy" resolved upon at the end of April, there was news also of the prompt dispatch of reinforcements from Bengal whose armies, too, were winning successes against the Mahrattas. The American news seemed specially favourable to the cursory reader. Certainly accounts of Cornwallis's advance into North Carolina and of Arnold's exploits off the Virginia coast[1] tended to distract attention from Lord Rawdon's ominous difficulties with South Carolina insurgents,[2] and reports of French naval and military preparations to come to the help of threatened Virginia were too often treated as instancing the plight of the Americans rather than as spelling a threat to the British themselves. Even the loose and seemingly unfounded rumours of a pro-British *démarche* to be expected from Joseph II of Austria, a *démarche* which would compel the Dutch and the Bourbons to make peace,[3] may have contributed to help Government to win the decisive majority of 212 against 135 for declining to go into Committee on the Wyvill Petition.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences, under April 25th, for Clinton's last dispatches dated March 14th: "The best information which my late letters from the southward, and intelligence from the rebel country, enable me to give to your lordship, respecting Lord Cornwallis's situation, is, that having forced the passage of the Catawba, and dispersed the militia who opposed him, his lordship has penetrated into North-Carolina as far as Hillsborough, driving before him the rebel generals Green and Morgan, who fled towards Virginia with the utmost precipitation: and general Arnold's late despatches give me reason to think, that his lordship has even reached the banks of the Roanoake."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences, under May 2nd. Lord Rawdon's dispatch was itself too optimistically worded considering the facts recounted. Rawdon like Clinton possibly had to consider giving Opposition as little material for anti-war agitation as possible.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 157: "Some expectations were this year formed in England, that the emperor of Germany would declare in favour of Great Britain, that he would enter into an alliance with it, and make such a diversion on the continent, as must compel the House of Bourbon, as well as the States of Holland, to enter into a treaty of peace. These expectations appear to have been totally groundless; . . ."

The war-optimism of the Court and the Majority was supported by two more encouraging pieces of news that came in towards the end of May and promised Administration a smooth end of the Parliamentary Session. The fall of Necker in France certainly seemed to argue serious financial strain in that country,[1] and the first accounts of Cornwallis's victory at Guilford Court-House, North Carolina, hardly showed that French loans had yet enabled Congress markedly to improve its military and financial organisation.[2] Yet these things notwithstanding, there was already some evidence that public acquiescence in the indefinite continuation of the war could hardly be expected to survive the first news of a grave British set-back. Thus on June 12th, when Fox moved for the House to go into Committee "to consider of the American War", he was not only able to win the support of such talented young bearers of famous names as Pitt and Pratt, but from Cornwallis's own dispatches, proved the long-term hopelessness of his efforts so strikingly as obviously to disturb the Majority.[3] Though Fox's motion was rejected by 172 votes against 99, the

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 238–9, for Secret Service news from Paris, dispatched on May 22nd and received on May 28th: "On M. Neckars resignation, India actions fell from 197½ to 190o, & the discounts rose from 8 to 11½ on rescriptions &c. Mr. Fleury sent the Court Banker, & first Clerk of the Royal Treasury to assure the merchants on the Exchange that all engagements made during M. Neckars administration should be sacred: & the same principle pursued. M. Beausquiene [?] also bought considerably so that the fall was checked. But the run on the Caisse d'Escompte continues . . . and the best men consider M. Neckars retreat as a fatal stab to the Credit of France and the Independancy of America. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 224, for a communication from the King to North making it obvious that these things were being followed with attention in England. "The Intelligence from Paris", writes the King on April 30th, "though it makes the Supply France gives to the Congress more considerable than was first proposed. Yet I do not think it sufficient to reinstate the paper, and if that is not effected it is impossible [that] the Rebellion can long subsist. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, June 21, 1781: "Sir T. Clarges [M.P. Lincoln City] professed himself a convert to Mr. Fox, ascribing his having voted in favour of the American war, to his hopes of a prosperous campaign, on the suggestions of Ministers; but said he was now convinced by Lord Cornwallis's letters, that the war was impolitic and absurd." Just as dangerous must have been the bluff speech of the more Oppositionist Sir Edward Astley, M.P. Norfolk, whom the *Edinburgh Magazine* thus reported: "He said, that he too, as well as the noble Lord, [Westcote] had lost a son in this unfortunate war; he still had three sons in the King's service; and he wished to know if any more of his blood was to be spilt in a war, which must end in our ruin, if pursued any longer? Nothing but a truce could save us; he told the noble Lord in the blue ribbon, that nothing but a truce could save us. . . . Besides our blood and treasure were thrown away; for notwithstanding the sums voted by parliament, the subject really had not protection; and he was sure that the county of Norfolk . . . was so defenceless, that 100 men landing in it might do incredible mischief."

American version of the battle of Guilford Court-House, available in England long before Parliament was prorogued on July 18th, must have reinforced some of the doubts sown by Fox. The American commander, General Greene, insisted so strongly on the heavy losses sustained by Cornwallis[1] that Guilford Court-House to eyes, aware of Cornwallis's small and virtually irreplaceable numbers, must have already begun to assume the aspect of a very Pyrrhic victory.

During the Parliamentary Recess the war-news became slowly but steadily more unfavourable. Thus, early in August, came naval news that showed the French able to threaten St. Lucia and capture Tobago.[2] This was followed almost immediately by the report of a grimly-fought engagement between Admiral Parker's Nore Fleet and the Dutch, which made it plain that these had lost none of their old naval tenacity and that too few rather than too many ships were being detained in home waters whatever the need off the American coasts.[3] Then came details of the loss of West Florida to the Spaniards,[4] of the capitulation to General Greene of small British garrisons in the South Carolina back-country,[5] and of Admiral Hood's failure, late in April and with eighteen ships, to suppress de Grasse's fleet with twenty-one.[6] It was de Grasse's fleet, of course, that was available for the naval part of Washington's plan to surround Cornwallis in Virginia whither that General had over-venturesomely advanced from North Carolina. On Cornwallis's assumption that the British could command any portion of the sea where they chose to operate, there was much to be said for his advancing into Virginia and effecting a junction with the British forces that had been for some time harassing the Americans from its southern coasts. But

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, Public Papers, p. 150, for General Greene writing: "From the best information I can get, the enemy's loss is very great, not less in killed and wounded than six hundred men, besides some few prisoners that we brought off. . . . Our men are all in good spirits, and in perfect readiness for another field-day. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, which dates the Colonial Office's report of these transactions of May and June at August 7th.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences, pp. 84–5, for naval dispatches on the Dogger Bank fighting of August 5th.

[4] *Ibid.*, Principal Occurrences, pp. 85–6, for the issue by Lord George Germaine's office on August 10th of a communication from the ex-Governor of West Florida. It announced that after resisting a Spanish expedition against Pensacola for over two months he had been compelled to sign a capitulation on May 9th.

[5] *Ibid.*, pp. 86–7, for dispatches from South Carolina.

[6] *Ibid.*, p. 87, for August 11th as the date on which the Admiralty received full information of the "kind of drawn battle" that had been fought.

unfortunately for Cornwallis the naval position was not such as he could have wished. Large numbers of British warships had had to be retained in Europe to meet possible menace from France, Spain and Holland, and even so it had proved impossible to prevent combined Franco-Spanish fleets from landing siege-troops in Minorca and from imitating afterwards the Bourbon Channel parade of 1779 in a way particularly aggravating Administration's difficulties with the Irish Volunteers. To make matters worse, it seems plain that, on the western side of the Atlantic, Rodney's temporary incapacitation through illness completed the harm begun months before by the dispatch of war-vessels to Europe to guard the plunder of St. Eustatia. Without Rodney, the depleted and separately organised British naval Commands in the West Indies and North America lacked a figure of sufficient authority to enforce co-operation vigorous enough to prevent the catastrophic French hold on Chesapeake Bay fully established in August and early September.[1] Nor was the responsibility for Cornwallis's inability to escape from Yorktown exclusively naval. For several critical weeks in August, Clinton had adhered to his fixed opinion that New York was the real aim of Franco-American effort, and when, at the end of August, he was finally undeceived by Washington's march south,[2] it was already dangerously late to begin planning combined military and naval operations in aid of the imperilled Cornwallis. The anxieties of Clinton were increased after the first naval attempt to force a way into the Chesapeake had been heavily repulsed on September 5th and the battered and inferior British fleet had had to return to New York for repairs. For some critical weeks, a fine British army was on transports in New York awaiting an expected naval reinforcement and the completion of repairs to the ships damaged in the Chesapeake. It was only on October 24th that the re-equipped and reinforced

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, pp. 168–9: "On the 28th of August, Sir Samuel Hood, with a squadron from the West Indies, joined the squadron under the command of Admiral Graves before New York . . . some time seems to have been needlessly lost. . . . They arrived, however, in the Chesapeak, on the 5th of September with nineteen ships of the line: where they found the count de Grasse, who had anchored in that bay, on the 30th of August with twenty four. . . . The British and French fleets came to an action. . . . That this action had not been favourable to the English was manifest from the event: . . . the French [were] left masters of the Chesapeak. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 167–8: "Having for a considerable time kept Sir Henry Clinton in perpetual alarm in New York, though with an army much inferior . . . general Washington suddenly quitted his camp . . . and marched towards Virginia. . . ."

British fleet with Clinton's attendant army in transports arrived off the Chesapeake ready to fight the French fleet once more. But on October 19th Cornwallis had capitulated with over 6000 men.

It is characteristic of George III's pertinacity that, though he had been confidently expecting a very different result and the shock of the Yorktown news must have been correspondingly severe, he yet secured for the opening of Parliament on November 27th a King's Speech breathing unflinching determination to fight on for a "safe and honourable peace to all my dominions".[1] In Parliament, of course, Opposition hotly assailed Administration's implied refusal to abandon the American War, and Fox even ventured to paraphrase the King's Speech thus:

> Our losses have been singularly calamitous. The blood of my subjects has flowed in copious and unavailing streams. The treasures of the country have been thrown away; and the weight of taxes imposed, with such a heavy hand, upon an overburthened and sinking people, is grown at length almost intolerable. Yet I will tax you to the last shilling. When all hope of victory is fled for ever, and the operations of the war must accelerate the ruin of an empire, I will forbid you to think of peace; for my thirst of conquest is not quenched; my revenge is unsated; and nothing short of the total subjugation of my opponents is capable of appeasing it.

But the Commons debate of November 27th, concluded by a division giving Government a majority of 218 against 129, and the Lords debate of the same day, yielding a Government majority of 75 against 31 despite Shelburne's gloomy prophecy of possible Chesapeakes at Jamaica, Plymouth or "even in the Thames", hardly showed Administration's Majority yet in flight or in dissolution. Possibly the naval scare-mongering, associated with Opposition's use of wild continental rumours of the formation of

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1782, Public Papers, pp. 100–1. The Yorktown disaster was thus treated in the Speech: "The favourable appearance of our affairs in the East Indies, and the safe and prosperous arrival of the numerous commercial fleets of my kingdoms, must have given you satisfaction; but in the course of this year, my assiduous endeavours to guard the extensive dominions of my crown have not been attended with success equal to the justice and uprightness of my views; and it is with great concern that I inform you, that the events of war have been very unfortunate to my arms in Virginia, having ended in the loss of my forces in that province . . . the late misfortune in that quarter calls loudly for your firm concurrence and assistance, to frustrate the designs of our enemies, equally prejudicial to the real interests of America, and to those of Great Britain. . . . Among the many ill consequences which attend the continuation of the present war, I most sincerely regret the additional burthens which it must unavoidably bring upon my faithful subjects. . . ."

overwhelming Bourbon Armadas, was beginning to grow tiresome,[1] and certainly the Court could not be made to yield until public sentiment "out of doors" had been much more effectively mobilised against the continuation of American hostilities than had yet been done.

It was the anti-Court party in the City, enabled by Yorktown to take a decisive lead once more, who opened the campaign "without doors" against the continuation of the American War. On December 6th a Common Hall adopted a "Humble Address, Remonstrance and Petition", lamenting the tone imported by Ministers into the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament and declaring that in consequence of "the present unnatural and unfortunate" American War "the trade of this country has suffered irreparable losses, and is threatened with final extinction". After emphasising the alleged ruin, disaster and disgrace brought by the American War, the City's Remonstrance ended thus:[2]

We beseech your Majesty no longer to continue in a delusion from which the nation has awakened; and that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to relinquish entirely, and for ever, the plan of reducing our brethren in America to obedience by force; a plan which the fatal experience of past losses has convinced us cannot be prosecuted without manifest and imminent danger to all your Majesty's remaining possessions in the western world.

We wish to declare to your Majesty, to Europe, to America itself, our abhorrence of the continuation of this unnatural and unfortunate war, which can tend to no other purpose than that of alienating and rendering irrecoverable the confidence of our American brethren, with whom we still hope to live upon the terms of intercourse and friendship, so necessary to the commercial prosperity of this kingdom. We do, therefore, farther humbly implore your Majesty, that your Majesty will be graciously pleased to dismiss from your presence and councils all the advisers, both public and secret, of the measures we lament, as a pledge to the world of your Majesty's fixed determination to abandon a system incompatible with the interest of your crown, and the happiness of your people.

[1] Cf. *Morning Chronicle*, October 19th, which gave a Brest report, alleged to have been received through Bristol, according to which 200 transports were lying in Brest harbour preparing to sail for a "secret destination". The *Morning Herald* of October 30th, however, reduced the troops ready to sail to 6000 and announced that the escorting fleet would not be ready until the end of November. Later the dread figure of 200 transports reappeared once more accompanied by circumstantial accounts of Franco-Spanish plans to combine the Brest and Cadiz fleets with West and East Indies conquests in view. (Cf. *Morning Chronicle*, November 28th and 30th.)

[2] *New Annual Register*, 1781, Public Papers, pp. 164–5.

The adoption of this Remonstrance instantly brought in its train a revival of the old vexatious dispute between Court and City as to whether the King was constitutionally bound to accept a distasteful Common Hall Petition sitting in state on the Throne.[1] But more important were the preparations quickly made to get similar Petitions adopted in Westminster, Middlesex and Surrey as a preliminary, it was hoped, to a nation-wide effort.[2] Already on December 8th the Cabinet, in view of the Army and Navy Estimates about to be taken in the Commons, was moved to submit to the King a resolution "that under the present circumstances it would not be expedient to send to North America any more Force than what is necessary to recruit the Regiments there".[3] Yet there was still possible encouragement for the Court in the apathy displayed, for example, at the Westminster Petition meeting, crowded as it was. Here is the account Horace Walpole made in his *Journal* of this event of December 10th, an account the more significant from the fact that he was no friend of the War:

A great meeting of Westminster voters in Westminster Hall, to consider of a petition similar to the City's; it was moved by Charles Fox, and approved, but with the utmost tranquillity, for the people, though in vast numbers, seemed to be perfectly indifferent, and to have assembled only from curiosity. Yet the Court, fearing or hoping a tumult, had a large body of Guards in readiness.

It was on December 12th, when the order of the day in the House of Commons was for the Army Estimates, that Administration gave an indication of how far its policy was to be affected by Yorktown and the outcry it had stimulated. Sir James Lowther prince of "independents", had risen to make two motions against the continuance of the American War,[4] and another county member, Powys of Northamptonshire, had been even more dangerous

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 308–12.

[2] *Ibid.*, 311, for the attention given by the Court to the subject. The Joint-Secretary to the Treasury, Mr. Robinson, in transmitting his Whip's view of the "state of the House of Commons" concluded: "Lord North, Mr. Robinson apprehends, would lay to-day before Your Majesty the Minutes from the City relative to the receiving of the Petition from the Common Hall of the City of London, and state to Your Majesty the Proceedings at Westminster Hall to-day, and at the Surry Meeting. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*, 310.

[4] The *Political Magazine*, January 1782, gives Lowther's motions thus: "I. That it is the opinion of the House that the war carried on in the colonies and plantations of North America has proved ineffectual, either for the protection of his Majesty's loyal subjects in the colonies, or for defeating the dangerous

when he appealed, in seconding, to the members of "independent principles and independent fortunes" who had so long and loyally given incapable Ministers fame and wealth by voting with them.[1] North certainly rose at once with a speech claiming that the Army Estimates themselves showed that Administration had decided against a further carrying on of the war "internally in America" and paid his own compliments to the "country gentlemen" without whose independent and disinterested support Administration could not have stood so long.[2] From North's own speech and the rest of the debate it was obvious that Ministers had decided to abandon all large-scale land-operations in America while leaving it open to themselves to order harassing operations of detail against the American coasts from the strong British bases at New York and Charleston. Yet a mere Government majority of 220 against 179 seemed to show that even greater concessions would prove necessary, and if the Army Estimates division of December 14th was much more satisfactory at 166 against 84,[3] all was once again in question on December 20th. The Opposition had seized on the fact that Admiral Kempenfelt had just been sent with a mere dozen ships-of-the-line to face superior French forces issuing from Brest as a signal example of Admiralty mismanagement or worse.[4] Government spokesmen had already been singularly inept in attempting to defend the Admiralty on the ground that, historically, Bourbon numbers had always been superior to British and even to British and Dutch combined.[5] Now North found himself compelled to accompany the motion for adjournment of the Commons to January 21, 1782, with the

designs of our enemies. II. That this House is of opinion, that all further efforts to subdue the Americans to obedience by force, will be ineffectual, and injurious to the interests of Great Britain, by tending to weaken our endeavours to resist our ancient and natural enemies."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, History, pp. 32–4, for a fairly full report of the speech.

[2] Cf. *Political Magazine*, January 1782, for North "moving the order of the day on Sir James Lowther's motion".

[3] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 313–14, for George III's pleasure at what he believed to be a revulsion of feeling among the "Country Gentlemen".

[4] Cf. *Political Magazine*, January 1782, for the proceedings in the Lords on December 19th when Rockingham had set a lead for the Commons next day by talking of "treason and treachery" at the worst and "unpardonable" ignorance of French strength at the best.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Lord Mulgrave, for the Admiralty, reasserting that "the House of Bourbon has ever been superior at sea, both to Great Britain and Holland united, whenever she chose to throw her whole force into her marine; it was an historical fact".

offer of a "call to the House" for that day as an assurance that there would be a full attendance for a projected inquiry into the state of the Navy.[1]

There are indications that the Kempenfelt imbroglio encouraged some Ministers in a plan, already mooted before, for effecting what they would have called an extrication of the King from his embarrassments by a shedding of their most unpopular colleagues.[2] The retirement of Lord George Germaine had already been brought into question when Sir Guy Carleton, between whom and Germaine there was a personal feud, had been suggested as the new Commander for instituting in North America the day of strictly limited objectives and expenditure. The overbearing Lord Chancellor Thurlow, however, safe in an office that brought him no critical war-decisions to make, was in favour not only of letting Germaine go from the American Secretaryship but of facilitating also Sandwich's departure from the Admiralty and North's from the Treasury.[3] Naval men were complaining of Sandwich as a landsman,[4] and Thurlow was often harshly critical of what he considered to be North's chronic weakness and indecision. Undoubtedly Thurlow made no proper allowance for the kind of

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Lord North resisting Fox's opposition to an adjournment thus: "Let a fair, a liberal, and a free enquiry be instituted. The call of the House stood for the 31st of January, suppose the House adjourned to the 21st, and fixed the call for that very day, will that please gentlemen? It had always been usual where a call was proposed to give a notice of three or four weeks. . . . For the commencement of the very important enquiry now determined upon, he thought the 21st of January as early a day as could be appointed, without acting uncandidly."

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 316–17, 321–4, for Germaine and Sandwich both informing the King that they felt there was a Ministerial party in favour of "a change of administration" involving their retirement.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 323, for what Thurlow was capable of even when, as on December 22nd, Sandwich found him "in perfect good humour all the time". "He had, however", reports Sandwich, "some little flings at several present, particularly Lord North, Lord George Germain and Lord Sandwich . . . he said he was always for decision, tho' there were wiser heads than his who he understood judged differently, and generally chose to avoid the question. . . . He entered a good deal into the discussion of Lord George's plan for carrying on the war, and asked Lord G. where the man was to be found that was qualified to act the superintending part which was so principal a point in the arrangement. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Political Magazine*, January 1782, for a long non-party communication from an anonymous naval officer which, while censuring Opposition's factious trouble-making, advised Sandwich to resign and "to recommend some able sea-officer, untinctured with faction, to fill your present station. . . . For what absurdity it is for a set of ignorant landsmen to direct the operations of an intricate profession. . . ." There are indications that Thurlow favoured Lord Howe as Sandwich's successor.

agonised Recess North was about to spend—meditating on difficult new taxes and a Loan; trying to prepare the King for a Peace that would at best exchange British Sovereignty over America for the vaguest "Federal Alliance";[1] and, above all, attempting to decide who would be the least objectionable successor to Germaine's American responsibilities. And it is characteristic of the times that Lord North's decision on Ministerial reconstruction had to wait until Parliament reassembled and Lord Advocate Dundas, of late North's most indispensable assistant in the Commons, could be forced to declare himself plainly. Dundas, safe in his Scottish Law Office, had been quite a minor Thurlow in criticism of the Service departments and, smelling the approach of death to the North Government, was in no mind to put himself into a post of danger on its account save on the most extravagant terms.[2] Early in February, after Parliament had already been sitting for a critical fortnight, a methodical and uninspired bureaucrat, Welbore Ellis, had to be raised to the American Secretaryship as an avowedly stop-gap and temporary nomination.[3]

Meanwhile the Commons had reassembled on January 21st, and on January 24th, Fox and the young Pitt had been specially active in demanding Admiralty papers for the House in preparation for the Naval Inquiry fixed for January 31st.[4] They asked, in

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 317, 324–5, 335–7. On January 21st, North, in a letter to the King, declared: "Peace with America seems necessary, even if it can be obtained on no better terms than some Federal Alliance, or perhaps even in a less eligible mode. This is my opinion, which I have had the honour of submitting before to Your Majesty. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, 336–7, for North somewhat hesitantly suggesting high promotion for Dundas to the King: "ability, spirit, eloquence he has in perfection, but how far he may be capable of any situation, where he can acquire competent knowledge [of American affairs] I am not able to determine. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*, 361, for the King contrasting Dundas's conduct with Ellis's very much to Dundas's disadvantage. Of Dundas he wrote: "I am clear that the trouble He has given this winter is not a reason for my rendering him independent. And great as his desires seem to be, the best English House of Commons Office [Dundas was to be offered Ellis's very lucrative Treasurership of the Navy for continued active support of North] and one of Two thousand per annum in Scotland during pleasure are no small recompenses, let his merits be ever so great." Dundas had apparently tried to bargain for the Lord Advocateship for life.

[4] Cf. *Political Magazine*, February 1782, for a report of House of Commons events. Fox had asked for twenty-four different papers to be made available but he seemed disposed to meet the view of North and Mulgrave, the Admiralty representative, that they should have a day to decide whether there were objections to the publication of any of the twenty-four. "Mr. Fox", writes the *Political Magazine*, "seemed willing to consent, but on a whisper from the Hon. William Pitt, he changed his mind. . . . This occasioned a teazing and unentertaining debate in which the speakers were, Mr. Fox, Mr. W. Pitt, Admiral Keppel, Sir George Saville, Mr. T. Townshend, Lord North. . . . At length the difficulty was removed by Mr. William Pitt's moving . . . an amendment. . . ."

fact, for so many that Government was finally compelled to urge the postponement of the Inquiry until February 7th and, having obtained it, was rumoured to be pressing coalition on the Shelburne connection once more.[1] When, however, a still unchanged and unstrengthened Ministry faced, on February 7th, a veritable flood of charges, justified and unjustified, against Sandwich's management of the Admiralty, a mere Government majority of 205 against 183 sufficed to please some "friends of Administration" who had apparently feared worse.[2] An even more significant indication of the political atmosphere was the ludicrously scant attendance next day at the official Parliamentary sermons preached on the occasion of the annual Fast Day appointed on account of the American War. Never since the institution of those Fasts in 1776 can the King have had such mortification concerning them as when he read that the House of Commons Fast Day service had been attended by the Speaker and eighteen other members.[3]

It is worth turning for a moment, from a Parliamentary scene about to grow ever graver for the Court, to follow political activities "out of doors". Apparently the certainty that a "change of men and measures" would, before long, be enforced by Parliament tended to encourage apathy outside. Certainly the anti-Administration petitioning of the winter of 1781–2, confined as it had practically been to the London, Bristol, Westminster, Southwark, Surrey and Middlesex Petitions, can hardly be called imposing. At the end of January, indeed, the London "patriots"

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 82–3, on "Particulars of the Negociation with Lord Shelburne which have not before transpired." According to this report Jenkinson had been the intermediary, and Shelburne had asked for eleven "inferior offices" for his rank and file and four great offices for himself, Camden, Dunning and Barré. It was assumed, however, that the American War was to "be given up".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 96, for a report, possibly apocryphal, of one exhibition of pleasure. "After the division", writes the *Political Magazine*, ". . . the facetious Mr. Selwyn, just as Mr. Fox was passing by him, put himself into the attitude of a banker tallying at Faro, and making as though he turned up cards to the right and left, called out in the stile of that game, Charles . . . Knave loses . . . King wins. . . . This Bon Mot was received with universal applause. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 97, giving eighteen. But there is a possibility that even this figure is too large. Here is the *New Annual Register*'s report of the central Fast Day observances of February 8th: "Their majesties attended divine service at the chapel-royal, and heard a sermon preached by the Rev. Dr. Kaye, sub-almoner. The bishop of Worcester preached a sermon on the same occasion in Westminster-abbey, before the lord chancellor, five temporal, and ten spiritual lords. As did the rev. Dr. Dampier before the speaker and several members of the house of commons at St. Margaret's church."

made a new attempt to rouse an agitation, finding in the Court's refusal to receive in State their "Address, Remonstrance and Petition" of December 6th the necessary occasion for the convocation of a new Common Hall. And on January 31st this Common Hall had, despite some opposition,[1] adopted a number of startling resolutions. Here they are:[2]

Resolved, that whoever advised the king to deviate from the accustomed mode, admitted by his majesty of receiving the livery of London, sitting on his throne, is an enemy to the rights and privileges of the citizens of this great capital of the British empire.

Resolved, that the unequal representation of the people, the corrupt state of parliament, and the perversion thereof, from its original institution, have been the principal causes of the unjust war with America, of the consequent dismemberment of the British Empire, and of every grievance of which we complain.

Resolved, that these grievances can never be removed, until the right of the people to their constitutional share in the English government shall be re-established, by a fair and equal representation in parliament, and a frequent election of their representatives, according to ancient usage.

Resolved, that for the purpose of obtaining a restoration of these rights, a committee of the livery of London be appointed.

Resolved, that the said committee do take the most effective methods for obtaining a more equal representation of the people in parliament, and a frequent election of the representatives, according to ancient usage, and for these purposes do confer and correspond with other committees throughout the kingdom.

But neither this well-advertised City adoption of the Committee of Correspondence methods of American "rebels" and Irish Volunteers[3] nor Wyvill's busy circulation of his Yorkshire Committee's *Second Address to the Electors of Great Britain* succeeded

[1] Cf. *Political Magazine*, February 1782, pp. 98–101, for a full account in which it is curious to see those Parliamentary Aldermen, Wilkes and Townsend, once again leading the "patriots". Of one Court speaker it is reported: "Mr. Merry was very often interrupted by the clamour of the patriotic party; but by the intercession of Mr. Alderman Townsend and Mr. Alderman Crichton, he was permitted to proceed so far with his first speech. He was replied to by Aldermen Wilkes, Townsend and Crichton. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, Principal Occurrences, p. 7.

[3] Cf. *Political Magazine*, February 1782, pp. 101–3, for a certain Court reaction at the Common Council meeting of February 5th after it had been revealed that the "patriots", in their newspaper advertisements of the Common Hall Resolutions of January 31st had appended the Town Clerk's signature without authorisation. A majority of 97 against 84 refused the Committee of Correspondence, set up by the City Livery, the use of their new Common Council Room as requested by the Common Hall.

in arousing a genuine agitation.[1] The nation's attention was too absorbedly fixed on the last stages of the struggle that had so long been proceeding in Parliament and which at length, towards the end of February, entered on its concluding phase. After Fox's renewed attack on Sandwich's management of the Admiralty had won sufficient "independent" gentlemen over, on February 20th, to permit Opposition to divide at 217 against Government's 236,[2] the more respectable figure of General Conway was brought forward on the 22nd with a motion against the further pursuit of the American War. Conway's motion, only defeated by a majority of one in a division of 193 against 194, made Administration's position almost untenable. And, presumably, North's Budget statement of February 25th, with its melancholy details of the new thirteen and a half millions of borrowing necessary and the further £793,125 of annual taxation,[3] required to pay the interest, was not of a nature to render the "country gentlemen" more favourable to Government. When, in fact, Conway renewed his motion against further American hostilities on February 27th and made the concession of affecting to ban only the "farther prosecution of offensive war", it proved useless for North to argue the impossibility of conducting even defensive strategy in pure passivity[4] or for the Attorney-General to plead for a fortnight's adjournment while a Bill was drawn up and passed to authorise negotiations with the Americans. A majority of 234 against 215 declared against Government and, what is more, instantly adopted a corresponding Address to the King which it was resolved to have delivered by "the whole House" as soon as the House's Privy Councillors could make the arrangements. Here is one description of what happened in consequence on March 1st:[5]

[1] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 157, for Priestley, in Birmingham, thanking Wyvill, on February 14th, for a copy of the Yorkshire *Address* just sent him. Though Priestley asked for some copies which he undertook to put "in the way of those who ought to read them", he remarked, nevertheless, that "at present what you call *a pause of astonishment*, is in this part of the country, a pause of *indifference*".

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, History, pp. 87–90.

[3] *Ibid.*, Public Papers, p. 180.

[4] Cf. *Political Magazine*, April 1782, p. 244, for North asking: "was it meant, that the forces in the different parts of America, were to be withdrawn from that continent? If so, the mode by which they were to effect it, was by no means evident to him. Great obstacles stood in their way. . . . If that however was not the case, what was then to be done? Were the troops to remain there passive and inactive without doing anything?"

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 246.

"At three o'clock", wrote the *Political Magazine*, "the Speaker with his retinue, attended by nearly the whole of the Members of the House, who voted on Wednesday last against the American war, waited on his Majesty with the address of the House. The Speaker's state coach was followed in the procession by the carriages of General Conway, Lord Viscount Althorpe, Earl of Shelburne, Earl of Surrey, Mr. Elwes, Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, General Burgoyne, Sir Watkin Williams Wynne, Admiral Keppel, Aldermen Sawbridge and Wilkes, &c. &c. &c. There were upwards of 200 carriages in the Speaker's train."

And the meaningfulness of the demonstration was increased when the opportunity was taken to present not only the Address of the Commons but also the much-discussed "Addresses, Remonstrances and Petitions" from London, Westminster, Middlesex, Surrey and Southwark.

Meanwhile the King, though he returned what was considered a stiff answer to the Commons' Address of March 1st,[1] had already made some attempt to prepare for North's now inevitable withdrawal. On February 28th, Thurlow had been authorised to approach Lords Gower and Weymouth, ex-Ministers who had resigned from Administration late in 1779, with a view to the three men becoming the centre of a new Government. And to render their task of attracting members of the Shelburne and, perhaps, even of the Rockingham connection easier, the King made the bitter sacrifice of agreeing to "the basis of Public Measures being founded on keeping what is in our present possession in North America, and attempting by a Negotiation with any separate Provinces or even Districts to detach them from France, even upon any Plan of their own, provided they remain seperate [*sic*] States".[2] But the King's attitude to the recognition of American Independence and to the bestowal of office upon Opposition was so plainly a bitterly grudging one that Lord Thurlow's efforts with Shelburne were soon being supplemented, on North's advice, by approaches through Gower and Weymouth to the Duke of Grafton, described, even by Jenkinson, as "the most temperate of all the Opposition". It seems, for example, that after March 4th had brought the catastrophic intelligence of

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under March 4th: "Charles Fox proposed to the House of Commons to complain of the King's answer; but General Conway . . . Thomas Pitt, Sir [Thomas?] Gilbert, and others overruled Fox and declared against violence. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 375–6.

the fall of St. Kitts in the Caribbean and of Minorca in the Mediterranean, a Grafton Ministry would have been possible, leaning on Thurlow, Weymouth and Gower in the Lords and putting Howe at the Admiralty in place of Sandwich. But Grafton doubtless felt that the formation of such a Ministry would only encourage the King to hold out obstinately against the American changes now inevitable.[1] The Ministry's position in the Commons would, moreover, have been untenable from the first for there would have been no resources against the oratorical assaults of Fox, Burke, Dunning, Barré, Pitt and Thomas Townshend save the re-enlistment of such discredited "experience" as that of Rigby, Welbore Ellis, Jenkinson, Dundas and Grey Cooper.

The position in the House of Commons may, in fact, be deemed to have passed right out of the limits of "management" on the receipt of the disastrous war-news that was being buzzed through the capital on March 4th.[2] It was on March 5th, for example, that on the Government Bill for permitting the opening of negotiations with America, Fox declared every idea of Coalition inadmissible. "From the moment when he should make any terms with one of them," he cried of the Ministers, "he would rest satisfied to be called the most infamous of mankind."[3] And next day, on March 6th, the Earl of Surrey, heir to the Norfolk Duchy, ventured to complain of the presence of General Arnold at Court, when the Commons' Address was presented, as an insult to the House and worthy of its censure.[4] Perhaps Opposition was here

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, 380, for North reporting to the King an interview between Grafton and Gower, arranged by Rigby: "The Duke of Grafton expressed his disapprobation of the violent language used by some of the most violent of the Opposition, but did not think himself qualified to take the lead in forming any political arrangement. Indeed, Sir, I am afraid it will be very difficult to form a mixed system. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Political Magazine*, April 1782, for Fox and Burke demanding confirmation of the reports on St. Kitts and Minorca. The Government denied that official confirmation could yet be given.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 250. In the triumphant mood of the moment Fox made other unguarded statements eventually to cost him dear. Here is another quotation from the report of his speech on March 5th: "He would inform them for certain, that there were persons now in Europe, who were fully empowered to treat for a peace between Great Britain and America; and though he believed they would not treat with the present Ministers, still he would put them in the way of making peace; nay more, if they did not like to interfere in it themselves, HE WOULD UNDERTAKE TO NEGOTIATE IT FOR THEM HIMSELF."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 257: "Earl of Surrey complained exceedingly of a certain person's having been suffered to stand at the right hand of his Majesty, when that House went up to St. James's to present the address . . . to suffer General Arnold, a person particularly obnoxious, as having been one of the causes of

going too far ahead of the sentiment of the "independent country gentlemen", and certainly, on March 8th, Government speakers like Adam, Dundas and Rigby enjoyed themselves proving either that Fox stood pledged to violent alterations of the Constitution if he came into office or else, as Rigby pleasantly surmised, he was prepared to abandon other promises "made in Westminster Hall" as he had that day abandoned Annual Parliaments.[1] The business was on a motion of that eminently respectable representative of Rockingham in the Lower House, Lord John Cavendish, which in ascribing the "melancholy national situation" to the "want of foresight and subsequent management of Ministers" had been intended to give the *coup de grâce* to the North Ministry, though without undue severity.[2] Yet Administration's ability to rally a majority of 226 against 216 in answer even to this moderate censure was a proof enough that the "country gentlemen" did not intend the Opposition to take the Cabinet by storm and without proper consideration for the King.[3]

If, indeed, he had not been systematically discouraged by North, the King would still have been capable of attempting to keep Administration in office.[4] Even after North's miserable afternoon of March 11th when he had had to recite the long catalogue of new and unwelcome taxes proposed on Small Beer, Tea Licences, Soap, Tobacco, Brandy, Salt, Medicinal Salts, Fire Insurance Policies, Inland Bills of Exchange, Admission to Places of Amusement, and Land-, Inland Water- and Coasting-Transport, the King was still capable of cheering North on. But Thurlow, wiser

several material events of that war [meaning apparently his desertion of the Americans and his later destructive raids on their coasts as a British general] to stand at the right hand of the Sovereign, in the teeth of the Commons, was an insult to that House, and deserved its censure."

[1] Cf. *Political Magazine*, May 1782, pp. 294–300.

[2] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 381, for North telling the King that: "It was moved by the Opposition that they meant by their Motions to remove, in as little offensive a manner as possible all the administration."

[3] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 283–4, for an infelicity from Pitt likely to give offence: "The debate had turned much on a new arrangement of Ministers. Pitt said he knew not who they would be, but he felt himself obliged to declare (even that was not very modest), that he himself could not expect to take any share in a new Administration, and were his doing so more within his reach, he never would accept a *subordinate* situation. So arrogant a declaration from a boy who had gained no experience . . . and who for half a dozen orations (extraordinary indeed, but no evidence of capacity for business), presumed himself fit for command, proved that he was a boy, and a very ambitious and a very vain one. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 381–2.

than his master, had already cut the Gordian Knot and made a direct approach to Lord Rockingham, despite that nobleman's profession of a policy which George III believed would compel his abdication. Rockingham's terms and the formation of his Ministry will be discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER XIX

ROCKINGHAM, SHELBURNE AND COALITION, 1782–3

"That this House taking into consideration the great sums voted, and debts incurred, for the service of the army, navy, and ordnance, in this unfortunate war, to the amount of upwards of one hundred millions; and finding that the nation, notwithstanding these extraordinary exertions, lost thirteen ancient Colonies belonging to the Crown of Great Britain, the new acquired Province of West Florida, and the Islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, Tobago, and Minorca, besides several commercial fleets of the utmost importance to the wealth of this country; and that we are still involved in war with three powerful nations in Europe, without a single ally, can have no farther confidence in the Ministers who have the direction of public affairs."

Motion in the Commons on March 15, 1782, supported by 227 votes against 236.

"*The Rupture among the New Ministers.*

"On the first of July the Marquis of Rockingham died. On the death of the Marquis, Mr. Fox, with little pretension to such a distinction, expected to be called upon by the Sovereign to fill the post of Prime Minister; some time however elapsing without this expectation being gratified, he summoned a secret council at his house in Grafton-street, of the Cavendishes, of Lord Keppel, Mr. Burke, &c. &c. when he concisely told them, that unless they all united firmly, the Earl of Shelburne would be appointed Minister! On this it was unanimously agreed, that the Duke of Portland should be named for Prime Minister under their auspices, and that Mr. Fox should immediately wait upon the King, with a strong recommendation of his Grace by this majority of his Cabinet. Mr. Fox, however, reached the Royal closet only time enough to learn, that Lord Shelburne had just gone out with the appointment of First Lord of the Treasury. Mr. Fox, expressing great astonishment . . . asked his Majesty, '*If under this circumstance, he had any objection to his (Mr. Fox's) naming the new Secretary of State?*' To this his Majesty replied, '*That, Sir, is already done.*' On which Mr. Fox rejoined, '*Then I trust your Majesty can dispense with my services.*'"

From the *Political Magazine*, July 1782.

"He had been accused of having formed an union with a noble lord, whose principles he had opposed for several years of his life. But the grounds of their opposition were removed and he did not conceive it to be honourable to keep up animosities for ever. The American war was the source of his disagreement with the noble lord; and that cause of enmity being now no more, it was wise and fit to put an end to the ill will, the animosity, the rancour, and the feuds which it engendered. It was a satisfaction to him to apply the appellation of friend to the noble lord. He had found him honourable as an enemy; and he had no doubt of his openness and sincerity as a friend. . . . Our condition, of late, had been improved; our navy was increased; we had a commanding force in the West Indies . . . and victories of the most brilliant kind had recovered to our nation its natural high tone of thinking and acting. In the moment when we might indulge in fair expectation and hope, we were about to be ruined by the impolicy and imprudence of statesmen, who possessed no talents for negociation. . . ."

Fox in the Commons, February 17, 1783.

On Thursday March 12th Lord Chancellor Thurlow, commissioned by the King to negotiate for the formation of an Administration on a "broad basis", had an interview with Lord Rockingham. That politician claimed to be "able to answer for the different component parts of the Opposition" and undertook to consult them on the Lord Chancellor's approach. Two days later Rockingham arrived with the results. The King was required to accept four preliminary conditions and then to negotiate direct with Rockingham on the subject of a new Ministry. George III's own account of Rockingham's conditions is in these words:[1]

1. The King must not give a veto to the Independence of America.
2. The Contractors Bill must be past. [*sic*].
3. A Bill for disqualifying all Officers of the Customs, from the right of voting at Elections. (*must be accepted*).
4. Mr. Burke's Regulation of the Civil List. (*must be approved*).

If these were granted, the Marquis was ready to wait on the King with whom alone He could treat on the subject of forming a new Administration.

And while these negotiations were in progress, yet another demonstration was being prepared in the Commons, perhaps, because it was seen that without the heaviest and most continuous pressure the King would not yield.[2] On March 15th, in fact, Opposition had the advantage of hearing "no farther confidence in the Ministers" moved by a county member who could declare that he had come "into that House strongly attached to the noble lord in the blue ribbon, and had supported almost every one of his measures, until the noble lord had brought the country into such an alarming state of calamity, disgrace and distress".[3] And if this "No Confidence" motion of Sir John Rous, M.P. for Suffolk, was barely defeated by 236 votes against 227, Fox was, nevertheless, busy after a prolonged debate, begging members to "continue in town" for a new "No Confidence" motion to be made on March 20th.[4]

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 392–3.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for the King declaring: "The whole of these demands were so strange that it can only be looked upon as the disinclination of Opposition to give any Assistance to their Country. The King feels the indignity offered to His Person by such propositions, and cannot direct any further conversation to be held with the Marquis. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Political Magazine*, June 1782, p. 353.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 367.

By March 18th Jenkinson, desiring to save the King from the worst, was trying to arrange a conference to be attended by Thurlow, Gower, Grafton, Shelburne, Rockingham and Lord John Cavendish, a conference to be charged with recommending an "arrangement" to the King.[1] But Rockingham saw no need to fall in with such views or, alternatively, to surrender, under pressure from Thurlow, any of the conditions he had laid down for the King on March 14th.[2] The Opposition leader doubtless knew that a group of "country gentlemen", hitherto supporting Government, had decided they were doing more harm than good by helping a doomed Administration in "vain and ineffectual struggles" that now tended "only to public mischief and confusion". Certainly, North had decided, immediately on hearing this news, to press the King to send "either for Lord Rockingham or Lord Shelburne",[3] and next day he implored the King for permission to retire to avoid the certain defeat of the morrow on a motion that would leave him "for ever stigmatised upon record by a Vote of Parliament for my removal".[4] And even when, after overcoming difficulties with the King, North went down to Parliament on the 20th with the news of the dissolution of the Government to communicate, he very nearly failed to arrest Lord Surrey's motion calling for an end of the Government as "contrary to the interests of his Majesty". There was a good deal of confusion and much complaint from Opposition members, baulked of a long-prepared triumph, before the House could be adjourned to March 25th to await the construction of a new Government.[5]

When the Commons reassembled on March 25th, a further

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 393–4.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, 401.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 394–7. The King received also the comforting assurance that "if Your New Ministers should attempt any dangerous innovations in the Constitution, they will, I believe, meet with a powerful, and I hope, a successful opposition".

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, 398.

[5] Cf. *Political Magazine*, June 1782, pp. 367–77, for a long account of the fateful afternoon of March 20th at Westminster. It begins thus: "Since the beginning of the Session, or perhaps during the present reign, there never were so many Members in the House as appeared there this day; and the crowds of spectators were in proportion greater than usual. At a quarter after four o'clock, when the House was ready to enter upon the great business of the day, and the Speaker had called to gentlemen to take their places, the Earl of Surrey, the Member who was to have made the motion, stood up; and just at the same moment Lord North got upon his legs. The Speaker pointed to Lord North. The opposition side of the House instantly set up a cry of 'Lord Surrey! Lord Surrey! Lord Surrey!' which gave rise to a scene of clamour and confusion unexampled in the annals of Parliament. . . ."

adjournment had to be asked for until March 27th, the final day which a large Opposition meeting had determined to give the King for announcing the construction of a new Administration.[1] It is well known that the King, who had been considering Abdication or a retirement to Hanover,[2] could not bring himself to negotiate direct with Rockingham but would only communicate with him through Lord Shelburne. Prudent enough to recognise that his time had not yet come, Shelburne had declined the Treasury offered him by the King but had set himself, in conjunction with Lord Thurlow, to whittle down the special demands which the Rockingham connection were making on the Sovereign. Even though Rockingham allowed himself to be influenced to some small extent, the list of Cabinet and other appointments given to Parliament on March 27th contained numbers of names long odious at Court. Fox as Secretary of State, Keppel as Viscount and First Lord of the Admiralty, and the Duke of Richmond as Master General of the Ordnance were the new Cabinet Ministers most personally obnoxious to the King. Their close union with the less objectionable Rockingham as First Lord of the Treasury and Lord John Cavendish as Chancellor of the Exchequer seemed to give extremism no fewer than five votes in a Cabinet originally fixed at ten. For protection against this closely-knit band, supported by a powerful phalanx outside, the King had to rely on the more moderate Oppositionism represented by Shelburne, Grafton, Camden, General Conway and Dunning, though Thurlow was finally available also as Lord Chancellor.[3]

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 291–2: "A large meeting of members of the House of Commons was held in the evening [of March 24th] at the house of Mr. Thomas Townshend . . . the list [of Rockingham's suggested Cabinet] was approved of, and sent to Lord Shelburne . . . it was resolved at this meeting of Opposition not to accede to any further adjournment of the House of Commons unless these terms were complied with, and to one not exceeding two days if they were. Lord Shelburne wished to have the House adjourned over the Easter holidays, but Charles Fox would not by any means consent. . . ."

[2] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under March 18th: "He not only talked of returning to Hanover, but it *is most certain* that for a fortnight together the Royal yacht was expediting and preparing for transporting [him]. What further steps he meant to take I do not pretend to know, nor whether he had digested any plan whether his secession was to be permanent or temporary; whether he meant to leave the Queen Regent, or to carry her and the younger children with him. . . ." The *Correspondence of George III* contains a draft Abdication and a possible allusion by Lord Stormont, Secretary of State, to its suppression.

[3] Shelburne was Secretary of State, Grafton, Privy Seal, Camden, Lord President, Conway, Commander-in-Chief, and Dunning, Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster with a Peerage (and an additional salary during life). Dunning had apparently been intended, at one time, for Lord Chancellor but

The list of secondary appointments, headed by Burke as Paymaster, Barré as Treasurer of the Navy and Townshend as Secretary-at-War, was to have some peculiar exasperations for the King before it was completed,[1] and so, too, was the list of new honours demanded.[2] But it is specially indicative of the times to find that, amid his private lamentations on the virtually clean sweep that had been made of his Cabinet and Ministry, the King should have resented, nearly as much as anything else, the enforced reinstatement of the two Lord-Lieutenants whom he had dismissed for supporting the "Public Oeconomy" agitation.[3]

The King soon saw reason to throw off the gloom and despair that had overtaken him during the March weeks when he had been considering Abdication. Scarce a fortnight after the change of Government, he is reported to have been growing "more and more good-humoured every day"[4] and, doubtless, he was no stranger to the interior disharmony of a Cabinet from which Fox was already contemplating a united secession of the Rockinghams as early as the end of April.[5] A mere month of association in office was, in short, sufficient to bring almost to a head a dangerous antagonism between Shelburne, unable to conceal his confidence in Court favour, and Fox who commanded the situation in the Commons. And while Fox was furious over the steady whittling

Thurlow was finally allowed to retain this office partly, perhaps, because Shelburne, Dunning's principal, desired to humour the King and partly, it may be, because Thurlow was considered a great potential danger to the new Government if allowed to head opposition to it in the Lords where its following was not large.

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, Public Occurrences, pp. 93–4, for such promotions as those of General Burgoyne to the Irish Commandership-in-Chief and of General Howe to the Lieutenancy of Ordnance and the Privy Council.

[2] Cf. Wraxall's *Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 161–3, 189, for the troubles on the Peerage demanded by Rockingham for Sir Fletcher Norton, the obnoxious Speaker of 1770–80, and on the bestowal of three of the four vacant Garters.

[3] Cf. *Correspondence of George III* (ed. Fortescue), v, 422, for the King on the Rockingham party who "will rather see the Country in a flame than not restore the late Lieutenants of Wilts. and East York to those County Honours. You know how I love Lord Aylesbury: I trust he will feel that this goes to my Soul; I have wrote him my distress, but I trust . . . he must see how I am used. Do not let him add to my distress. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 314–15.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 316, for Fox to Fitzpatrick on April 28th: "With respect to affairs here, they are really in such a state as is very difficult to describe; I feel them to be worse than they were, and yet I do not know what particular circumstance to state as the cause of this feeling. Shelburne . . . affects the Minister more and more every day, and is, I believe, perfectly confident that the King intends to make him so. Provided we can stay in long enough to have given a good stout blow to the influence of the Crown, I do not think it much signifies how soon we go out after, and leave him and the Chancellor to make such a Government as they can. . . ."

down of "Burke's (Public Oeconomy) Bill" that was being effected in Cabinet by Shelburne and Thurlow, Shelburne had, perhaps, more reason to fume over Fox's unavoidable prominence in every public sphere. Thus Fox's first days in office were marked by busy negotiation with Russia which had offered mediation in the Anglo-Dutch War.[1] Moreover, as the reorganisation of the Secretaries' Departments necessary from the suppression of the Third (the American) Secretaryship had brought to Fox what were practically the functions of Foreign Secretary, it was Fox who was soon arranging the sending of a mission to sound Versailles on the subject of peace. Such a mission was bound to be faced almost at once by French commitments to the American Envoys to France, and Shelburne, who had taken as his Secretaryship sphere the Home and Colonial fields, was fearful enough of having the American negotiations removed from his control to allow disturbing manœuvres by his own envoy in France.[2] Meanwhile the developments in Ireland, also in Shelburne's sphere, had given Fox his first official prominence when, on April 8th and 9th, the Commons had taken the first steps towards that grant of Irish "Legislative Independence" which 88,000 armed Volunteers and a "patriot" Parliament were demanding.[3] And when, later in the month, arrangements for the progress of "Mr. Crewe's Bill" for disfranchising revenue officers and Jennings Clerke's Contractor's Bill had to be made, not to mention such other business as the Cricklade Disfranchisement (for corruption) Bill and long East India proceedings for bringing to book the peculating "Nabob" blamed for the Carnatic disasters,[4] Fox's

[1] Cf. *Correspondence of George III*, v, 427–30.

[2] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 316, for Fox on Shelburne on April 28th: "Shelburne shows himself more and more every day, is ridiculously jealous of my encroaching on his department, and wishes very much to encroach upon mine. . . ." Of Shelburne's "eagerness in traversing Lord Rockingham and Fox in every point", Horace Walpole's *Journal* has the following: "If *they opened a negotiation, he commenced another underhand at the same court.* Mr. Fox dispatched Thomas Grenville to Paris. Lord Shelburne sent one, two, or three privately to the same place, and addressed them to different Ministers or persons of supposed credit."

[3] Cf. *Political Magazine*, July 1782 for full reports.

[4] Cf. Wraxall's *Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 193 sqq. on the Reports presented by Lord Advocate Dundas as Chairman of the Secrecy Committee that had been examining the "causes, not only of the calamities sustained in the Carnatic, but of the improper expenditure of blood and treasure in other parts of Hindostan. Sir Thomas Rumbold, late Governor of Madras, and two of his Colleagues, Members of the Council, became the first objects of public accusation. The second blow fell by rebound, on Sir Elijah Impey, who, in his quality of Chief

help was again essential. Amid the Parliamentary distractions constantly brought by war-events and the aftermath of the change of Government,[1] only Fox's superb debating power seemed able to give assurance that the shrunken "Mr. Burke's Bill" could be steered through the Commons sufficiently fast after Mr. Crewe's Bill and the Contractor's Bill to gain the necessary time for other essential legislation. Especially was it necessary to placate "Grattan's Parliament" and to undertake the Exchequer business of finding a list of new taxes that did not raise a clamour.[2]

From the crowded Parliamentary events of April, May and June 1782, events soon giving the ex-Majority inevitable scope for scoffing at the professions once made by "patriot" Ministers and now abandoned, it would be wise to turn to the situation "out of doors". How far, it may be asked, was the "public" able to withstand the interested jeering at Burke's much-diminished "Public Oeconomy" Bill[3] or at Fox's inability to produce a rapid peace, after it had been claimed for him in Opposition that he had "a peace in his pocket"?[4] Or how far was Fox's position affected

Justice of Bengal, was supposed . . . to have lent his legal aid and support to the Supreme Government, from self-interested motives. . . . Hastings himself . . . and Hornby, Governor of Bombay, became implicated. . . . Measures, adapted to the nature of the imputed offences, or misconduct of each of the above-mentioned persons, were adopted. . . . But the advanced period of the Session, and the unsettled state of domestic affairs in a Cabinet divided by Animosity, prevented or postponed the further prosecution of these interesting concerns. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Political Magazine*, August 1782, for trouble on the pensions that had been recommended by the North Government before its fall (Parliamentary Reports for April 26th, April 30th, etc.)

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for Lord John Cavendish on May 22nd, June 13th and June 21st. He soon found it was difficult to discover a tax that did not raise an outcry.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, October 1782, for this account of Burke's apologetic Second Reading speech of June 14th: "Mr. Burke . . . rose to account for the omissions in it. He had omitted,

The regulation of supplying the King's table by *contract*. He had found it to be a measure, that . . . few or *none* seemed to relish.

The regulations respecting the principality of Wales, he had given up for the present, as they did not appear agreeable to the people of Wales.

The reform of the Ordnance he had also omitted, there was now at the head of that Board a noble duke, from whose vigorous efforts the public might expect a substantial correction. . . .

The mint he had omitted, as the bank was unwilling to take it. But in all probability all that was necessary would soon be done.

The two officers of the household, with white staves, the treasurer and cofferer he had agreed should remain, as part of the necessary splendour of the Crown.

The Pay office which he himself filled, he intended to bring before Parliament in the next session. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 601, for a sarcastic note on the Parliamentary speeches made on July 9th, the occasion of Fox's resignation. Of Fox it said: "When he was out, the American envoys were ready to treat, and Holland was ready to treat; but

by his being compelled to admit when the news came of Rodney's tremendously popular victory of "the Saints"[1] that the Admiral's recall had already been ordered by a Government which, but for his victory, would have recommended not a Peerage but a severe inquiry into the wholesale and reckless plunder of St. Eustatia.[2]

It must be readily conceded that such things as the foregoing greatly reduced the effect of Fox's revolt against the King's nomination of Shelburne to the Treasury after the unexpected death of Rockingham on July 1st. Despite the astounding ability and versatility Fox had displayed in office[3] and the affectionate interest still shown by the "streets" in his career,[4] only one other member of the Cabinet, Lord John Cavendish, determined to resign with him and the handful of minor Ministers, like Burke, who accompanied him. Even the Duke of Richmond could not be brought to approve the attempts to impose a Prime Minister

when the House of Commons, seduced by these assurances voted against the American war, and he was made a Minister . . . notwithstanding all his abject humiliations, Holland would not even listen to him, and his American Envoys that had been said to be in the very next street, were not to be found. . . ."

[1] Cf. Wraxall's *Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 210 sqq: "the capital and the country were thrown into a delirium of joy. . . . We had been habituated, during so long a time, under Keppel, Byron, Hardy, Parker, Graves, Geary, Darby, and their successors, to indecisive or unfortunate engagements . . . that the nation began to despair of recovering its former ascendancy on the ocean. . . . Under these circumstances, the excess of the public exultation was prodigiously augmented. . . ."

[2] Cf. C. P. Moritz, *Travels in England in 1782* (ed. Cassell), p. 47: "Fox is still much beloved by the people, notwithstanding that they are (and certainly with good reason) displeased at his being the cause of Admiral Rodney's recall. . . ." At Rodney's capture of St. Eustatia there had been some grossly improper seizures of great masses of private property, and what was worse, the property had been so hurriedly and carelessly disposed of that much of it soon found its way into the enemies' war-stores. Thanks to the alarm of British West India islands, fearful of like treatment when their turn came, the Opposition of 1781 had acquired some knowledge of the facts. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 46, for the great impression he made on a German visitor who wrote: "It is impossible for me to describe with what fire and persuasive eloquence he spoke, and how the Speaker in the chair incessantly nodded approbation . . . and innumerable voices incessantly called out, 'Hear him! hear him!' and when there was the least sign that he intended to leave off speaking they no less vociferously exclaimed, 'Go on'; and so he continued to speak in this manner for nearly two hours." Such a report of Fox's difficult speech, made in defence of his appearance, though a Minister, on the Westminster hustings in support of Sir Cecil Wray against Admiral Hood as successor to the now ennobled Rodney, seems to confirm what would otherwise appear the extravagant eulogium of Horace Walpole's *Journal*.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 182–3: "They are much displeased that Fox has given up his seat (in the Cabinet). And yet it is singular, they still are much concerned, and interest themselves for him, as if whatever interested him were the interest of the nation. . . ."

on the King in the person of the Duke of Portland, or to accept Shelburne's diplomatic refusal to recognise American Independence, in advance of Anglo-American negotiations, as a proof of Shelburne's readiness to continue the American War. In the Rockingham Cabinet, Richmond had apparently constituted himself the special advocate of Parliamentary Reform and seems to have secured the promise that led to the famous debate of May 7th on William Pitt's motion for a Committee of Inquiry into the subject.[1] And though Pitt's motion, despite support from Sawbridge, Savile, Byng, Turner, Fox, Sheridan and Alderman Townsend, had been rejected by 161 votes against 141,[2] Shelburne was apparently ready to pledge his personal assistance to the cause over and over again. He could hardly have done more, perhaps, to commit himself in this direction than invite Pitt into the Cabinet as Lord John Cavendish's successor at the Exchequer and as colleague to Townshend, now Secretary of State, and Conway, Commander-in-Chief, in the management of the Commons. But it is plain that Shelburne, though fortunate enough to be able to prorogue Parliament, with all the Sessional business done, almost as soon as he was installed at the Treasury, was conscious of the need for gaining support "without doors" before Parliament was reassembled. Naturally, during nearly five months of prorogation between July 11th and December 5th, Ministers must have been principally absorbed by the peace negotiations and by the war-reports still coming in, alongside, from Gibraltar, gloriously defended by Elliott and relieved by Howe, from the Carnatic preserved for Britain by the dogged naval efforts of Hughes against Suffren, and from North America where Charleston, still in British hands, saw the first sorrowful preparations for a mass-emigration of American Loyalists. But, despite all these Ministerial distractions, Wyvill, preparing another great

[1] Cf. Horace Walpole's *Journal*, under April 4th: "There was a meeting of the Associators at York. They agreed to trust the new Ministers, at least for the present. . . . A principal inducement to this temper was that the Duke of Richmond, who had given in to the wildest visions of the right of every man to vote for representatives, had extorted an unwilling engagement from his fellows, the other Ministers, that a committee of the House of Commons should be appointed to examine, and, if they could agree on any system (which was most unlikely, in such a chaos of opinions and interests . . .) to settle a new and juster mode of representation; an engagement diverted by the subsequent schisms, and forgotten in the flat rejection of the demands of the Associations."

[2] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 321–3, for Fox and others regarding this as a Ministerial defeat and worrying over the "spirit and confidence which it has given to the old [North] Ministerialists. . . ."

petitioning movement, this time specifically for Parliamentary Reform,[1] may be found repeatedly informing his correspondents of the receipt of gratifying assurances from Shelburne and Pitt.[2]

It may well be that Shelburne rated too high, in his time of need, the good opinion of the Parliamentary Reformers of the Yorkshire Committee with their important "independent" connections stretching throughout England and even into Wales and Scotland.[3] Assurances to Wyvill could not win from Fox the support of the now very active Society for Constitutional Information, led by the Universal, Equal, Annual Suffragists like Dr. Jebb and Major Cartwright.[4] And, as moderates warned Wyvill, the distribution of their extremist literature was frightening all the lukewarm away from the mere mention of Reform[5] to the

[1] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 187–90.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 195–6, for Lord Surrey, M.P., acknowledging a letter from Wyvill: "I think myself much obliged by the honour of your communication of the Earl of Shelburne's message, expressing his resolution to support the Association of the County of York. . . . I have some pleasure in relating, that in different interviews with the Earl of Shelburne and Mr. Pitt, it was their fixed system of Government to conduct his Majesty's affairs by strict rules of Oeconomy, and to give most honourable support to measures that would restore the People to their Rights by a Reform in Parliamentary Representation. . . ." Also *Ibid.*, iv, 191, for Wyvill thus to a brother-Associator: "In addition to my former intelligence respecting Lord Shelburne, I have the pleasure to mention that I also received a message from W. Pitt, assuring us of his invariable adherence to the principles he has professed, &c. All this looks well . . . but I am convinced with you, we have no business to embark with the present Minister, nor, I will freely add, with any man whatever who may be attempting to displace him; our great object is to secure the Constitution, by obtaining a Reform of Parliament. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 192, for a communication from the Flintshire Committee through the Dean of St. Asaph and pp. 197–216 for relations with "the Committee of Edinburgh" concerned among other things with reforming the peculiarly objectionable and peculiarly restricted rights of voting in Scotland.

[4] Cf. *The Speech of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox, at a General Meeting of the Electors of Westminster, assembled in Westminster-Hall, July 17, 1782.* The prominence of Jebb and Cartwright as electioneers for Fox and Wray may be judged from this concluding comment on the pamphlet in the *Monthly Review*: "This publication contains, likewise, in the detail of the whole proceedings at the meeting, [to hear Fox's reasons for resigning] the motions and speeches of Dr. Jebb, and Major Cartwright; in which the last named gentleman gives a striking view of the inequality of our parliamentary representation, particularly instanced in the case of the numerous electors of the city of Westminster."

[5] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 236–47, for Sir G. O. Paul, Bt., on political conditions in Gloucestershire. The most cogent passage runs thus: "Since our meeting on the Petition, the Whigs have felt a check to their expectations at home, which, added to a total disappointment in the new Ministry . . . may account for much of our present torpor . . . the late publications of the Constitutional Society, of Major Cartwright, Mr. [Granville] Sharpe, and others, together with the report of the former Westminster Committee (all tending to means alarming to the Established Government): These, I say, having been carefully distributed through the County, have alarmed many, and caused them to shrink from their former zeal. . . ."

undoubted profit, apparently, of those who, as North's supporters, were now being called "the old Ministerialists". Though, indeed, before the adjournment of Parliament in July, at least one much-canvassed speech had been made suggesting North's return to power,[1] Shelburne could hardly have foreseen such an eventuality as the Fox-North coalition. When, in fact, he faced Parliament again on December 5th he seems rather to have fancied that, as the King's Minister, he could not be denied the support that many had given to North and that, as the maker of preliminary terms with America, in advance of a General Peace, he had cut out, from under Fox's feet, the principal ground of objection on which the ex-Secretary had made his stand in July.

Unfortunately for himself Shelburne, before succeeding to his peerage in 1761, had had virtually no experience of the Commons and hardly understood the peculiar temper, stimulated by able and venomous pamphleteering,[2] that rapidly arose in that House when it reassembled just after Government's announcement of the signature of yet unrevealed Preliminary Terms with America.[3] The ostensible purpose of the announcement—the desirability of checking speculation in the Funds—was not attained because it soon transpired that Ministers held different views as to whether the terms finally recognised American Independence

[1] Cf. *Political Magazine*, October 1782, for a report of Sir Edward Dering's speech of July 9th, stated to have "greatly attracted the attention of the House". Part of the report runs thus: "Where he took an attachment once, he was not apt to change it without good cause; thus having formed a good opinion of the Administration antecedent to that of Mr. Fox, he still retained a predilection for members of it, and he wished to have supported them and kept them in office. Nay so zealous a friend was he, that where he attached himself politically, he would go the length of supporting Ministers at all hazards, of whose talents and integrity he had a good opinion. . . ."

[2] Amid such other anti-Shelburne pamphlets as *A Word at Parting, to the Earl of Shelburne* and *Remarks upon the Report of a Peace* a special stir seems to have been made by the ironically-named *Defence of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Shelburne, from the Reproaches of his numerous Enemies.* Of this able piece the *Monthly Review* of December 1782 wrote: "In this ironical performance very strong charges are brought against Lord Shelburne. He is censured for wanting integrity, both in his private and in his public capacity. The facts produced to his prejudice are numerous, and seem to be forcible; and unless they are refuted, they must leave a stain upon his character, which cannot fail of disconcerting the public measures in which he may be engaged. . . ."

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 7: "Mr. Secretary Townshend, to prevent the mischiefs resulting from speculations in the funds, had addressed a letter to the lord mayor of London, in the end of November 1782, stating that the negociations . . . were brought so far . . . as to promise a decisive conclusion . . . Upon the third day of December following, he addressed a new letter to the lord mayor . . . with an account of provisional articles having been signed the 30th of November by his majesty's commissioners and the commissioners of the United States of America. . . ."

or made it provisional on the terms obtained from France. With the co-operation of friends in the Lords, Fox quickly took the chance of staging debates in both Houses, and Shelburne showed peculiar ineptitude in attempting to parry the demand for information by sheltering himself behind the King's Treaty-making prerogative and his own Privy Councillor's Oath.[1] Though Fox's demand for parts of a yet secret Treaty was rejected by a majority of 219 against 46, the really decisive speech securing these figures of December 18th was not the youthful Pitt's but Lord North's. And the fact that Lord North chose, on this occasion, rather to pour ridicule upon Shelburne's tergiversations than assist Fox against him was, of course, no great help to Shelburne's Government.[2] Already, before the adjournment of December 23rd, it seemed to be the general view that Shelburne's reputation for furtive shiftiness[3] was becoming so well confirmed that he could not long survive the reassembly of Parliament in January or hope to carry through Peace terms, bound to be unpalatable. On Peace,

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, pp. 8–9: "The earl of Shelburne was not disposed to give an explicit answer to the interrogatory of Lord Fitzwilliam. He considered that it was improper in itself; that he was bound not to reveal the secrets of the king, and that if he should venture to reply directly to the noble lord, he might endanger the public security. It was the prerogative of the king to negotiate for peace. . . . Earl Fitzwilliam was dissatisfied with this mode of reasoning . . . The Earl of Shelburne called anew the attention of the noble lord to the royal prerogative. . . . To preserve secrecy in cases like the present was one great use of the monarchical branch of our government. To carry on negociations was not the business of popular assemblies. If the constitution was to be altered the best way was at once to go to St. James's to bow to the king, and to say to him, 'God bless you; good bye to you; after having been obliged to your family for rescuing us from popery; and after having been a mixed monarchy for three generations of your family; we find we can do better as a republic; we mean in future to save the expence of the monarchical establishment. . . .'"

[2] Cf. *Political Magazine*, January 1783, for its report of the "vein of wit and irony" in which North had spoken.

[3] Cf. Duke of Buckingham, *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 89, for W. W. Grenville, M.P. negotiating with Shelburne for his brother, Earl Temple, Irish Lord-Lieutenant: "I never heard any man, in the whole course of my life, affirm any one thing more distinctly, positively, and unequivocally, than he did, when he told me that Government were upon a sure foundation here. . . . This language is the more extraordinary because the opinion of the world in general, I might say of almost every man in London, is directly the reverse. Either, therefore, Lord Shelburne is (not a dissembler, but) the most abandoned and direct liar upon the face of the earth, or he is deceived himself, too grossly to be imagined, or the whole world besides is deceived. . . . But this is mere conjecture. What is certain, on the other hand, is that the explanation given by him in the House of Lords of the American treaty does not tally with that of Pitt, Townshend and Conway in the House of Commons, to which nevertheless the three last have positively pledged their faith and honour, that the Cabinet has been postponed because Lord Shelburne was afraid to meet them. . . ."

'or example, was it not strongly rumoured that the Prime Minister ıad been ready, if not outvoted by his own Cabinet, to bend to Bourbon obstinacy on the point of Gibraltar?[1]

Meanwhile, sustained by the hope of making Parliamentary Reform the great domestic question of 1783, Wyvill had been ;etting the machinery in motion for the campaign's central meeting ıt York on December 19th. Here the Yorkshire Freeholders ıdopted a deliberately short and unobjectionable Petition leaving heir own list of suggested Reforms as recommendations, un-:mbodied in the Petition, so that their opponents might not claim hey were dictating to Parliament or not leaving it free to come to ts own decisions.[2] Perhaps, before setting down the recommenda-ions of the York meeting, it might be well to give a list of the places vhich were induced to follow its example. By May 5th when the Commons, before the critical Reform debate of May 7th, received Suffolk County Petition praying for "most earnest consideration" 'or the "present inadequate representation of the people in ›arliament", Petitions of a like nature had already been received luring the Session from:[3]

Sussex, Launceston, Poole, Tiverton, Yarmouth, Winchester, Cam-›ridge town, Lynn Regis, North-west division of Devon, Derby county, St. Edmund's Bury, Derby borough, York city, Carmarthen county, Gloucester city, Somerset, Southwark, Penryn, Cornwall, Rochester, Lymington, Scarborough, Surry, Nottingham, Flint county, Denbigh, Droitwich, Southampton county, Portsmouth, Chichester, Montrose, London, Middlesex, Dumbarton, Kent, Westminster, freeholders of London, burghs of Irvene, Tower Hamlets.

Such a list obviously lends importance to the York recommenda-ions adopted on the tactfully taken ground that the "general erms" of the Yorkshire Freeholders' Petition might be "miscon-trued, as aiming at a reformation of parliament on principles,

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 89–90: "the report of the day is that Lord Shelburne was outvoted ıere [in the Cabinet] upon the question of Gibraltar".

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, Principal Occurrences, p. 83. The Petition roper stated that: "your petitioners, sensible of the original excellency of the ınstitution of this country, most ardently wish to have it maintained upon the enuine principles on which it was founded. Your petitioners farther show, ıat it is necessary for the welfare of the people, that the commons house of arliament should have a common interest with the nation; and that in the resent state of the representation of the people in parliament, the house of ›mmons do not sufficiently speak the voice of the people. Your petitioners ıerefore humbly pray this honourable house to take into their most serious ınsideration the present inadequate state of the representation . . . and to apply ıch remedy . . . as to this honourable house may seem meet. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, 1783, Principal Occurrences, p. 21.

and to an extent which they do not mean to recommend". On this ground, therefore, the petitioners found it necessary to declare that they would highly approve the "correction of parliamentary abuses" that would be effected if,[1]

I. A Bill shall be passed in parliament for abolishing at least fifty of the most obnoxious boroughs; providing for the electors in the several boroughs abolished a proper gratuitous compensation for their extinguished franchises; and enabling them to vote, together with other freeholders, in elections for knights of the respective shires to which they belong; and also adding an adequate number of members, not less than a hundred, in a due proportion to the several counties and the metropolis.

II. And if the septennial bill shall be repealed.

III. And if a bill shall be passed for admitting proprietors of copyhold lands of inheritance, with fine certain, of the clear yearly value of 40 shillings, to vote at county elections. . . .

IV. And, lastly, if a bill shall be passed for setting aside nominal and fictitious votes in Scotland, and for regulating elections to parliament in that part of the kingdom, in a manner agreeable to the true intent and spirit of the constitution.

Many sensational and distracting events were, of course, destined to happen before such Reform came to be debated in Parliament on Pitt's motion of May 7, 1783. There was almost continuous political crisis, in fact, throughout the early months of 1783. Thus on January 8th it had been confidently reported that Spanish obstinacy on Gibraltar had caused a complete breakdown of the Peace negotiations at Versailles and that a widespread resumption of active hostilities was inevitable.[2] If the report of breakdown was soon glossed to speak merely of delay,[3] Versailles rumours continued to be the centre of anxious speculation for some time and lent importance even to Dublin's demand for an outright confirmation of Ireland's judicial independence, deemed, despite the British concessions of 1782, to have been re-invaded in a late instance. When, in fact, a very crowded Parliament

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 83. The reference to the "salutary and oeconomical bills of reform" in another resolution, though accompanied by a reminder that more was necessary, must be taken as another placatory effort.

[2] *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 121, for W. W. Grenville, M.P.: "The general idea is, that they [Ministers] have received the exceedingly bad news of their negotiation being totally at an end. . . . Lord Shelburne's conduct . . . is to be ascribed . . . to an intention of pledging you [Earl Temple, Lord-Lieutenant] to some very strong measure to be immediately proposed to Ireland—of men, money, or some other support. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 123: "The news at Court was, that the negotiations are not broke off, only delayed. . . ."

reassembled on January 21st and no report of Peace-progress could be given,[1] the principal business Administration set before Parliament was the Bill introduced on January 22nd to meet the Irish demand.[2] And if, on January 24th, Parliament was given definite intelligence of the signature of Peace Preliminaries with France and Spain, that was but to set loose new floods of speculation on the character of the terms obtained, terms promised to Parliament, if possible, on the 27th. Speculation was heightened by such events as Keppel's resignation of the Admiralty which, when added to strong rumours of the Duke of Richmond's resignation also, induced belief in such reports as that Minorca was not being signed away to Spain but, much more discreditably, to France.[3]

After Parliament and the "public" had been put in possession of the Preliminary Terms on January 27th, new floods of political rumour began on the subject of Cabinet differences and Cabinet reconstruction. By February 6th, for example, when difficult Parliamentary discussion of the Preliminaries was drawing nearer, three members of Shelburne's Cabinet were known to have resigned on account of them, Keppel, Richmond and the Earl of Carlisle, and a fourth resignation was expected from the Duke of Grafton, believed to be conducting a political "flirtation" with Fox.[4] More sensational rumour, meanwhile, spoke of Shelburne's negotiations to win Lord North's alliance by the offer of places of emolument though not of power,[5] and even of the possibility that North and Fox might try to complete their own negotiation, already rumoured

[1] Cf. *Political Magazine*, January 1783, p. 16: "The House was exceedingly crowded from the expectation of a Royal Message respecting the negotiation for peace; but to the unspeakable disappointment of numbers, Mr. Secretary Townshend after postponing the consideration of the affairs of Ireland until tomorrow, immediately made a motion to adjourn. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 16–17, on the "Bill for removing and preventing all doubts which have arisen, or might arise, concerning the exclusive rights of the Parliament and Courts of Ireland. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 137, for this belief expressed even by a relative "insider" like W. W. Grenville, M.P., Chief Secretary to his brother, the Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 143–4: "Lord Keppell and the Duke of Richmond both assign the badness of the peace for their reason for resigning. Lord Carlisle does the same, but I understand his great objection goes to the Loyalists, to whom he considered his personal honour engaged. The report of the day is, that the Duke of Grafton has followed their example . . . his Grace has certainly had a kind of flirtation with Fox for some days past. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 143: "The prevailing idea certainly is that Lord Shelburne is making overtures to Lord North. Whether those are to go to Cabinet arrangements, or only to provision for Lord North's family and offices of emolument,

to have been attempted and broken off. And on February 11th one clear-sighted observer, who knew from Pitt himself that Fox had that day rejected a Cabinet overture, reported growing conviction that the Fox-North negotiations were advancing.[1] On February 15th the question had become merely one of whether a detailed Fox-North alliance could be settled in time to allow the two to act openly together on Monday, February 17th. It was the day when Peace Preliminaries were to be debated in both Houses under the form of a discussion of the Government-proposed Addresses of Thanks to the Throne for having communicated the terms.[2]

Business in the Lords found Shelburne able to win the not very stimulating majority of 69 against 55 after inflammatory attacks had been made by Rockingham Peers, by allies of Lord North and even by late colleagues of Shelburne himself. In the Commons, however, things went differently on a more moderately framed Amendment to the Address offered by Lord John Cavendish, friend of Fox, on behalf of the old Rockingham party. The most exciting passages in a debate of fifteen hours, concluded at seven in the morning by a division leaving Government in a minority of 209 against 224, have often been described. Lord North intervened early with strong criticism of the merely nominal concessions obtained for the American Loyalists though Charlestown, New York, Rhode Island and Penobscot gave Government the strongest possible bargaining-counters. Dundas attacked the coalition between Fox and North as specially unprincipled on Fox's part and called up Sheridan in biting counter-attack on Dundas's own self-interested record. Then Fox condemned the terms negotiated as specially disgraceful and humiliating after the great British blows struck at the Bourbons in 1782 and was himself aimed at when Pitt wound up with a strong censure of

&c., for George North, &c., &c., I do not know; if the former, it is clear that he keeps it from the knowledge both of Townshend and Pitt; the latter, I have very good reason to believe, would object to it. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 148–9: "Lord Shelburne's weakness is every day more apparent. . . . The strongest proof of this is what Pitt told me today: that it being thought necessary to make some attempt at a junction with Fox, he had seen him today, when he asked one question, viz., whether there were any terms on which he would come in. The answer was, None, while Lord Shelburne remained. . . . On the other hand, I know for certain that negotiations, *through more than one channel*, have been *entamé* between Fox and Lord North. This must be *bien en train*. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 150.

those who had called so loudly for peace during the long years of war and who now shouted just as violently against peace when it was negotiated on the only possible terms. But both in the debate of February 17th, and in that successfully staged four days later to put Shelburne in a second minority, depriving him of all justification for attempting to stay,[1] the most-canvassed feature of the whole proceedings was Fox's wonderfully eloquent defence of his combining with North in order to give the country the possibility of a strong government now that the American War, the subject of their honestly-held differences, was over. Fox's treatment of the text "*Amicitiae sempiternae, inimicitiae placabiles*" seems to have made a temporary impression even on some of the "country gentlemen" inclined at first to be "outrageous" on the subject of the "profligate and abandoned" Coalition.

Shelburne's resignation on February 24th, and the King's long and obstinate resistance to the "storming" of his Cabinet by Shelburne's would-be successors, deluged the country, of course, with a new flood of rumours that poured out copiously until the beginning of April. At first, report concerned itself with the King's attempt to find a new head for the remnants of Shelburne's Cabinet, and the names of Lord Gower and Pitt were freely heard.[2] Both these politicians, in fact, regarded the task as hopeless.[3] But before the King could be induced to surrender his hopes of excluding both Fox and North, the situation had had to become serious. On February 28th, when there was still talk of making a forlorn attempt with a Government under Gower at the Treasury, Jenkinson at the Exchequer and Townshend in the Leadership of the Commons,[4] the first dangerous signs of commercial alarm and of a military and naval insubordination, destined

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 46, for Government's second defeat on five resolutions again offered by Lord John Cavendish and seconded by St. John. A majority of 207 against 190 declared against Government when it attempted to make a stand against the fourth resolution declaring "that the concessions made to the adversaries of Great Britain . . . are greater than they were entitled to, either from the actual situation of their respective possessions, or from their comparative strength".

[2] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 166–8.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 168: "The offer has been made to Pitt of the Treasury, with *carte blanche*; which, after two days' deliberation, he has this day refused. [February 26th] No other person has yet been sent for. Lord Gower was with the King on Monday, but I believe no offer made to him. Whether the King has any resource left, or whether he will (as I rather think) acquiesce, God Knows. . . ."

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 167–70. This letter of Grenville's also mentions another report that Earl Temple had been sent for from Ireland.

to grow worse, were already to be seen. And if the King sent for Lord North on March 1st, it was still in the hope of persuading him to submit a plan of Administration which would exclude Fox and Fox's nominee for the Premiership, the Duke of Portland. But North was apparently a sincere convert to the view that it would be most unwise to recommence a struggle of Court against Opposition of the kind in which Fox had worn him down over a course of years. The King was, however, not to be persuaded to harness the ability of Fox rather than drive him into Opposition and persisted in regarding a Portland Premiership and a Fox Foreign Secretaryship, not as the delivery of hostages into his hand, but as a sovereign humiliation. It took until March 12th for the King to be brought to send for North once more and grudgingly to waive the complete ban on the Portland Premiership. But, then, new trouble began on the detailed Cabinet and Ministerial list. On March 17th, for example, it was widely known that a crisis was threatening between a possible majority in the Commons, tired of day-to-day adjournments with no business done, and a Sovereign who was now fighting to retain Lord Thurlow as Chancellor and to introduce into the Cabinet another "courtier", Lord Stormont, as Secretary of State.[1] By March 21st the threat of a formal Address from the Commons, requesting the construction of a suitable Government, had forced the King back another step and he had consented to receive a Cabinet List of seven from the Duke of Portland direct instead of through North as intermediary. But the difficulties he still made about this list and his attempted sowing of trouble between Fox and North on the second list of "inferior arrangements", not yet drawn up,[2] led to a new collapse of the negotiations on March 23rd and new reports that Pitt was being pressed to form a Ministry with every assurance of Court support in winning "country gentlemen" away from North. The King's pertinacity, in fact,

[1] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 194, for W. W. Grenville's letter of March 17th: "The Duke of Portland had a meeting last night, to which were summoned all Fox's people, and all the country gentlemen who had formerly acted with them. The Duke stated to them what had passed, and told them that the whole had broken off upon the King's insisting upon the Chancellor and Lord Stormont. . . . The Duke said, however, that Lord North was then with the King, and therefore hoped that nothing might be done till they heard the result. This was applied to Lord Surrey, who had expressed an intention of moving an address. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 205–6, for a private admission from a supporter that George III was deliberately trying to make trouble.

was only foiled by North's steadfast adherence to his pact with Fox and his firm conviction that nothing but good would ultimately result even if Fox's following of perhaps 70 Commoners was allowed, for the present, to dictate four Cabinet members against three allowed to North's 160 and the Court combined.[1]

Two memorable steps had, indeed, to be taken before the King finally surrendered on April 2nd and put into office the Cabinet of seven designated to him, a Cabinet in which Portland, Fox, Keppel and Lord John Cavendish represented the old anti-Court Opposition and North, Stormont and Carlisle the old North Administration.[2] On March 24th an Address from the Commons to the Throne was carried with only four dissentients though it asked for the King's "compliance with the wishes of this house, by forming an administration entitled to the confidence of his people, and such as may have a tendency to put an end to the unfortunate divisions and distractions of the country".[3] On March 31st a much stronger Address was drafted after originally strenuous objectors to the Fox-North Coalition had themselves agreed that anything was better than a continuation of existing uncertainties, with ready money in the Treasury almost exhausted, soldiers and sailors ripe for mutiny if pay should have to be suspended, and "the licentiousness of the people, already arrived at a pitch never known in this country" being daily further "inflamed by newspapers and pamphlets".[4] And though this second Address needed not to be adopted or carried to the Throne, two facts significant of the future may be discovered in the intimate political correspondence of the days when George III was deciding to acknowledge temporary defeat. Despite Lord North's loyal adherence to his compact with Fox, he apparently declined to leave the Commons in Fox's sole charge until, at least, he had had the opportunity of using his greater numbers to outvote Fox thoroughly on

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 158, for an estimate that of the 224 members who had outvoted Government on February 17th, "Lord North's share of the 224 is computed from 160 to 170."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 203, for the Portland List delivered on March 21st and ultimately confirmed without alteration. Portland took the Treasury, Fox and North the Secretaryships, Stormont the Presidency of the Council, Keppel the Admiralty, Carlisle the Privy Seal, and Lord John Cavendish the Exchequer.

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 47.

[4] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 215.

Parliamentary Reform.[1] More significant still is the character of the King's conversations at this time with his adherents. In those conversations the manner of the blow which was eventually to strike down the Coalition was accurately forecast and even the blow's striker, Earl Temple, was indicated. Temple, in fact, was early prepared for his task by messages, written and verbal, sent to him at the Viceregal Lodge, Dublin.[2]

[1] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 202, for the first mention of North's promotion to the Lords. *Ibid.*, pp. 231–2 for a message to Dublin of April 9th: "Lord North will not be called to the House of Peers till the question of Representation has been discussed in the Commons, then that House will be left to Mr. Fox, and from that moment many wise men already begin to date his downfall. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 209–19, for much enlightening matter and a letter to Temple from the King asking him to hold himself ready. It seems that an earlier crisis even than that of December on the East India Bill was expected on the King's expressed determination to refuse all recommendations for honours made by the new Cabinet. W. W. Grenville, Earl Temple's brother and Chief Secretary, like him a son of George Grenville and a cousin of Pitt, pointed to the King's resistance to Peerage "*advancements* as well as *creations*" as bound to put the Coalition into great difficulties.

CHAPTER XX

THE FOX-NORTH COALITION AND ITS INDIA BILL, 1783

"And now, having done my duty to the bill, let me say a word to the author. I should leave him to his own noble sentiments, if the unworthy and illiberal language with which he has been treated, beyond all example of parliamentary liberty, did not make a few words necessary; not so much in justice to him, as to my own feelings. I must say then, that it will be a distinction honourable to the age, that the rescue of the greatest number of the human race that ever were so grievously oppressed from the greatest tyranny that was ever exercised, has fallen to the lot of abilities and dispositions equal to the task; that it has fallen to one who has the enlargement to comprehend, the spirit to undertake, and the eloquence to support, so great a measure of hazardous benevolence. His spirit is not owing to his ignorance of the state of men and things. He well knows what snares are spread about his path from personal animosity, from court intrigues, and possibly from popular delusion. But he has put to hazard his ease, his security, his interest, his power, even his darling popularity, for the benefit of a people whom he has never seen. . . . He is abused and traduced for his supposed motives. He will remember that obloquy is a necessary ingredient in the composition of all true glory. . . ."

Burke on Fox and the India Bill, December 1, 1783.

"Lord Thurlow was astonished to hear the noble and learned Lord [Loughborough], of whose abilities no man had a higher opinion treat the seizure of books, houses, goods, merchandise, in short, the whole property of a great and powerful Company, in possession of dominions equal to the whole German empire, like the ordinary concerns of mercantile pedlars. The finances of the East India Company, like those of every great state, must naturally depend on contingences which no human foresight is able to control. Is it to be wondered, that the war in which the government of this country has been involved, and which has plunged the nation in more than one hundred millions of additional debt, should affect the finances of the East India Company, who were perhaps unjustly, though necessarily, constrained to bear a part in it? In the late war we had been losers in every part of the globe but in India; and there were only saved by the spirited arrangements

and astonishing talents of one man (Gov. Hastings), who had so firmly established the government of that country, that it would be almost impossible, even for the present Minister, to derange it. . . . His Lordship reprobated the idea of *necessity* to wound the constitution by violently breaking in upon the chartered rights of the Company. . . ."

The Gentleman's Magazine reports Thurlow's defence of the Company on December 9, 1783.

DURING the period of Ministerial interregnum between February 24th and April 2nd, the Shelburne Cabinet had, of course, conducted urgent administrative business from day to day though, in Parliament, the loss of their authority largely incapacitated them from forwarding the Sessional routine. Accordingly the new Ministers had much to do before Parliament could be prorogued on July 16th. Apart from the Irish Jurisdiction Bill, for example, to satisfy Irishmen of their complete judicial independence, such things as the official Bill to open British ports to American shipping and the Company Bill for enabling an East India dividend to be paid with the aid of a loan (and a postponement of Company dues to the Government) were bound to make subjects for debate. On Indian topics, in fact, were already heard some of the controversies destined to reverberate for a decade as Dundas on a draft India Government Bill of his own, the result of experience as Chairman of the India (Secrecy) Committee, denounced Hastings in terms[1] almost as strong as those employed by Burke on the Company Bill,[2] and suggested Cornwallis, a man of honour and of independent fortune, as Hastings's successor.

Finance, too, inevitably loomed large in Parliamentary proceedings after the loss of so much time in the interregnum. Thus on April 16th, before he had been more than a fortnight in office, Lord John Cavendish was explaining the arrangements he had just made for borrowing twelve millions and taking pride in the fact that he had negotiated the Loan with as many as eleven bankers and even so, to avoid all charge of partiality, had reserved £2,700,000 for distribution mainly among other bankers who had

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 59: "It appeared to him decisively proper that governor Hastings should be recalled; and that steps should be taken to prevent the court of proprietors from presuming to act in contradiction to the sense of parliament. He thought that Lord Cornwallis should be the person that ought to be sent to supercede Mr. Hastings: his rank and birth were distinguished; and he would leave behind him, as the pledge of his good conduct, his personal honour and the honour of his ancestors. The fortune too, of this nobleman, being independent, he could not have it in view to repair his estate by the spoils of India. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 60–1: "Mr. Burke was disposed to establish it as a maxim, that the relief of the India company and its reform, should go together. . . . He enlarged upon the bloodshed, the ravages, and the rapacious practices of the servants of the company . . . and criminated Mr. Hastings in the strongest language. . . ."

declined his invitation to participate in the fixing of terms.[1] Apart from Shelburne's attack in the Lords, when Cavendish's attempts to prevent favouritism came to be debated there, Pitt made a shrewd assault on Cavendish's methods of Loan negotiation as having fallen between two stools.[2] Pitt was already recognised by Fox as a source of real danger to the Coalition if the King should decide to act against it, and Pitt's Parliamentary Reform motions of May 7th though, as will be seen, heavily defeated did not make him less so, since they only increased Pitt's attraction for numbers of men like Sir Cecil Wray and Dr. Jebb who had loudly condemned Fox's alliance with North.[3] There were accordingly some hot exchanges between Fox and Pitt on May 20th after Lord John Cavendish had submitted his intimidating list of new imposts on Receipts, Bills of Exchange, Promissory Notes, Wills and Legacies, Contracts and Inventories, Turnpike and Enclosure Bills, Legal Writs (and many other kinds of legal document), Patent Medicines and their Vendors, Carriages, Diligences and Carts, and, even, the Registration of Births, Marriages and Deaths. Lord Mahon, Pitt's brother-in-law, had urged a termination of North's extensive increases of the Customs Duties, alleged to have made widespread smuggling so profitable as more than to defeat the intention with which the increases had been voted. Fox had turned with devastating effect upon Mahon's too unqualified assertions that the way to increase Customs yield was to lower Customs

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, pp. 63–4: "He had chosen to treat with as many as eleven bankers, that he might avoid the imputation of having a few favourites.... To the eleven bankers there was allotted £2,700,000. To the great trading companies of England another part of the loan was given. A third division of it, according to custom, went to the clerks of the treasury, and the other public offices. And he had reserved two millions and seven hundred thousand for distribution. Of this sum there had been given promiscuously among the bankers of London, who were unconnected with the leading contractors in the loan, the sum of two millions and two hundred thousand pounds. There could then remain only a few hundred thousand pounds for what had been termed ministerial allotment. But in fact no sum had yet been distributed with a view to influence.... As to members of parliament, they might in the present business be said to have been proscribed by him...."

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 63: "There were two ways of making a loan, by the use of either of which the public would have been served in a much higher degree.... The first of those ways was by dividing the money-lenders into sets, and creating a competition. It was obvious, that by this means, terms better for the public must have been procured. And in the second place, if the eleven bankers, who had made proposals for the loan had obtained the whole of it, they would most certainly have been disposed to behave with the greater generosity to the public."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1783, p. 472, for Wray in Parliament on February 21st.

Duties,[1] and Pitt had risen to challenge Fox's "flippant" treatment of Mahon's serious suggestions in regard to both Customs and Loan-Raising, on which latter subject Mahon had argued Government's unwisdom in keeping nominal interest low by issuing scrip at great discounts. Fox had then retorted upon Pitt charging him with "schoolboy petulance" and the Government to which he had belonged with culpable official "sterility" in having done nothing at all in preparing tax-reform or a Loan plan. That North also came forward against Pitt on this occasion would seem proof that the allies already understood something of Court plans against them, plans turning on the use of Pitt and proved as well by Jenkinson's association with the young politician as by George III's determined refusal of favours to the Coalition in the then vital province of Peerages and Honours.[2]

The future may be seen even more clearly foreshadowed when Pitt, in the guise of "oeconomic reformer" came forward with a "Bill for preventing abuses, and establishing regulations in the several offices of the Treasury, Admiralty, Ordnance, Excise, and Stamps, and of several other offices." This Bill, he claimed, was the result of the late Government's studies in conjunction with the Commission of Public Accounts, and despite hot attack from Burke, objections of detail from Cavendish, and personal recriminations from Fox upon the conduct of the late Board of Treasury under Shelburne and Pitt,[3] the Bill was carried through the Commons and barely smothered in the Lords.[4] Fox was, perhaps,

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 107: "Mr. Fox diverted himself with the notions of Lord Mahon, and expressed in particular his wonder at the maxim, that to increase the revenue it was proper to lessen and abolish the taxes. The idea that the taking off any taxes already laid on would advance the revenue, was involved in doubt and uncertainty. It was not an experiment to be tried hastily . . . and the circulation of speculative doctrines of this sort could only tend, at present, to foster popular clamour and discontent. There was even something criminal in hinting to the people that they were taxed unncessarily. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 217, for W. W. Grenville, M.P. speculating meaningfully: "the difficulty about peerages still remains. They [the Coalition] are said to be pledged by absolute promises; on the other hand, the King neither can, will, nor I think ought, to give way on that head. Should they be so weak as to resign on that ground, their support would certainly fail them, and the road would be opened for us. . . ."

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, pp. 121–2: "Mr. Fox exclaimed against the enormous fees which had been taken during the late administration at the board of treasury on the score of passports. The late board of treasury had been infinitely remiss in reforming their own official abuses . . . but when they had reaped their harvest they were inordinately vigilant to prevent their successors from imitating their example. . . ."

[4] *Ibid.*, pp. 122–3. A protest on its behalf was made after Government procured its rejection by 40 votes against 24.

again over-forceful on June 11th when a City of London Petition against the Receipts Tax was being dealt with. The Lord Mayor demanded that the City's Counsel should be heard against the Bill and, in view of the strong commercial dislike of the tax,[1] Fox was probably unwise to be emphatic in denial. This suspicion is increased when it is remembered that after the Lord Mayor had been outvoted by 178 against 15, Sir Cecil Wray, Fox's colleague for Westminster, rose with a petition from 4000 constituents who condemned the plan to subject all receipts for sums between £2 and £20 to a stamp-duty of 2*d.* and all receipts for sums over £20 to a stamp-duty of 4*d.* Wray claimed that the Receipts Tax was not a tax on the rich but an oppressive and obnoxious tax upon the "middling ranks of men"; he asserted that it was unequal since it would cost some traders £200 per annum while affecting others hardly at all; and wound up by suggesting, in place of an impost calculated "to clog all money transactions", either an addition to the admittedly under-assessed Land-Tax or, if that was too much for members, an abolition of Parliamentary franking privileges combined with an additional penny on all letters.[2] Interesting example as all this is of the self-assertion of Wray's shop-keeping constituents, it is not as interesting as Fox's defence of a tax admittedly obnoxious to the "public" whose Petitions "the Man of the People" was presumably pledged to respect. On tax-matters, Fox argued, the House could not go on the clamour and meetings raised by men only anxious to escape from impost;[3] the Land-Tax, confined to one class in the community

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1783, under June 10th: "A Common Hall was held at Guildhall, when it was unanimously agreed to instruct the City Members to oppose the Bill agitating in Parliament for a tax on receipts. This tax is equally odious to every part of the united kingdom."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, p. 128, which, for example, reports Wray on the Land-Tax, thus: "it would be a wiser expedient to lay an additional land-tax. He contended that the land-tax, so far from being too high, was, in reality, too low. This doctrine might be unpopular in the house, but it was solid, and not to be controverted. . . ." It is not insignificant that the next stage of the business is thus reported in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, under June 12th: "The Bill for granting certain stamp duties on Notes, Bills of Exchange, and Receipts was debated . . . and carried with a high hand. Sir Cecil Wray moved that the whole clause laying duties on receipts be left out. He was seconded by the Lord Mayor of London. But on a division it [the motion] was rejected 145 to 40."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 129: "To obtain petitions against a tax including a great variety of names was very easy, and very immaterial. . . . After a clamour had been raised without doors against a tax, a meeting of individuals who are affected by it is called. The persons composing this meeting, even if they were not affected by the tax, are improper judges of it. But being concerned to escape

was so partial a tax as to be most improper to raise higher; and, finally, there could be no more proper source of revenue than a tax totally exempting the poor, and optional even with the wealthy if they consented to forgo the luxury of legally-secured receipts. Fearful, however, that the 2*d.* and 4*d.* stamps would, in effect, bring a corresponding deduction from profits on every transaction,[1] the trading community continued the fight before the House of Lords.[2] In assessing, in fact, the peculiarly important part the merchants of the capital eventually played in unseating the Coalition and enthroning Pitt in power, resentment of the Receipts Tax is too often forgotten. So, perhaps, also is the effect of Pitt's successfully carrying, near the end of the Session and against the objections of Ministers, a motion calling for a prompt accounting of past expenditure of forty-four millions, details of which, it was alleged, ought, in some cases, to have been submitted to the "auditors of the imprest" long before.[3] Some importance must even be attached to the protests that were made on behalf of the countryside against Lord John Cavendish's abolition of the much-abused compounding facilities hitherto allowed by the Excise to farm- and manor-house malting for domestic beer.[4]

from it, and having their own interest solely in view, resolutions are proposed to them which they greedily swallow. . . . What is this but to trifle with public affairs? and to be strenuous to fasten an unmerited odium upon ministers? . . ." In office Fox was plainly less respectful of Petitions than he had been in Opposition.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 130, for Mr. Beaufoy, M.P.: "By the spirit of the act every gentleman may at his pleasure throw the expence of the tax upon his tradesman. He will say to him, 'If I pay you this bill you must give me a legal discharge.' The tradesman may indeed say, 'It is you who must provide the stamp.' But the gentleman might reply to him, 'It is enough for me that I pay you the money; I cannot take the trouble of providing you with stamps. And if you disturb me with your impertinence, I must give my custom to those who are worthy of it.' The tradesman is, undoubtedly, in a situation where he must submit, or endanger his ruin. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1783, under June 18th.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, July 1783, under July 10th for a succinct and not inexact account: "Mr. William Pitt moved an address to his Majesty, on the subject of large sums being paid to sub-accountants, amounting in the whole to above 44 millions, which have not yet been accounted for before the auditors of the imprest. In the course of the above debate, opposition charged Ministry with wanting to conceal from the public, that forty-four millions were unaccounted for; and the ministry retorted, that opposition wished to deceive the public, and alarm them by false facts, no such sum being unaccounted for, and in all probability not one million justly due." Though the controversy really turned, in the main, on the stage which accounting had reached, Government found it advisable to accept Pitt's motion after amending it to make it refer to "large sums of money" instead of to "above 44 millions".

[4] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, pp. 133–5. Here is one typical account of a speech against Cavendish's Bill: "it was objected by Mr. Hill, that it would

It is time, perhaps, to recount the Parliamentary Reform debate of May 7th wherein Pitt won himself new favour with an important section of ex-Opposition politicians, hitherto looking to Fox but now expressing sharp dislike of his alliance with North. That dislike, strongly voiced in Parliament by the Duke of Richmond[1] and Sir Cecil Wray[2] and, outside, by the whole school of politicians of whom Dr. Jebb was the principal oracle,[3] might well seem justified by the paramount part North and his adherents took in the destruction of the long and carefully-prepared Reform effort of 1783. With a caution that Wyvill himself approved despite the imposing number of Petitions before Parliament, Pitt made his motions of May 7th moderate enough to avoid offence to any important section of opinion that could be induced to entertain even slight notions of Reform. The resolutions the House was asked to adopt were merely these:[4]

That it is the opinion of the house that, measures are highly necessary to be taken for the farther prevention of bribery and expence at elections.

That for the future, when the majority of voters for any borough shall be convicted of gross and notorious corruption before a select committee of this house . . . such borough should be disfranchised, and the

infringe upon the liberty of the subject. To allow excisemen to enter into private houses at their pleasure was an act of tyrannic power. Against the bill therefore was in full force all the arguments which had been applied against the cyder-tax; and what had been said on that occasion by the great lord Chatham, might now be repeated . . . 'That every Englishman's house, however mean it might be, was his castle. If it were a wretched clod hovel, without either door or window; if it were even such a one as the rain and the wind could enter, still the king could not enter . . . the laws of a free country were his defence and protection against the visits of arbitrary invaders.' It was contended that as the persons compounding for the malt duty committed so many frauds, the right should be taken from them. . . . Because some frauds were committed, was it right to involve the innocent with the guilty? . . ."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, pp. 52–3.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1783, reporting Fox on February 21st: "Here Mr. Fox took occasion to express his regret for the desertion of some of his friends. He was sure Sir Cecil Wray must have totally misunderstood the principle of the resolution, or the cable of friendship which had long held them together could never have parted. What that gentleman has said goes equally against forming any administration, and it shows that he has not been much used to making of Ministers."

[3] Cf. *Letters addressed to the Volunteers of Ireland*, for Jebb's own account of December 6, 1783: "I must confess, that, with others, I long indulged the fond persuasion, that the spirit and abilities of Mr. Fox would strenuously, and at length successfully, have been exerted in restoring the mutilated constitution of his country. . . . Alas! it was my lot to lament over him . . . I behold him the associate and the advocate of men, in principle and practice most despotic. . . ."

[4] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, History, p. 69.

minority of voters not so convicted should be intitled to vote for the county in which such borough shall be situated.

That an addition of knights of the shire, and of representatives of the metropolis should be added to the state of the representation.

Fox, of course, supported these resolutions warmly and even ventured to defend theoretical extremists, ready to speculate much farther than such reforms,[1] from the bitter attacks that had been made upon them as "incendiaries".[2] It is, in fact, symptomatic of the dangers to which Fox was exposed that, while condemned for alliance with North on the one hand, he was hotly denounced, on the other, for alleged plans of "throwing power in to the scale of the people" against the monarchy, to the complete disturbance of the "equilibrium" of the Constitution. Meanwhile North, Fox's new ally, was exposing him to fresh objections in the ex-Opposition camp by making a speech refusing the addition to Parliament of even a single knight of the shire since such addition would only begin the ruinous innovations called for merely by the "puny voice of a few discontented individuals breaking in upon the tranquillity of a vast and contented multitude".[3] In studying how much North contributed to the great majority of 293 against 149 by which Pitt's resolutions were crushed, men like Wyvill seem to have been disposed to welcome the fall of the Coalition and the rise of Pitt.[4] And such sentiments would not be changed by the fate that overtook the annual Sawbridge motion for Short Parliaments which was rejected on May 10th by 123 votes against 56.

[1] *Ibid.*, p. 75: "To throw a ridicule on the political speculations of public bodies of men and individuals, he regarded as illiberal and unjust. Sydney, Locke, and other writers, had speculated beyond the line of practicability. But their books were not therefore useless. Much good had resulted from their speculations, and great helps to political beauty and harmony might be extracted from them. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 70, for Mr. Powis: "He asserted that the people of England felt no real grievance; but that their passions had been excited by incendiaries, who had been sent into the different counties to promote the business of petitioning for a reform of parliament. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 72–3.

[4] Cf. Wyvill, *Political Papers*, iv, 286–95, for Wyvill's warm commendation of Pitt's conduct on Reform: "Upon the whole, I see no good reason to change the opinion I have already avowed, that Mr. Pitt, on the 7th of May, brought forward the best and most extensive Plan for the Reformation of Parliament, which could then have had any probability of success or any sufficient support. . . ." On the political crisis of the winter of 1783–4 breaking out, Wyvill and most of his friends declared against the Coalition and for Pitt.

Though hardly ignorant of all the different resentments to which he was exposed, Fox, confident of the good-faith of North and of the apparently invincible strength of their combined vote in the Commons, spent some busy and useful months after Parliament's prorogation on July 16th. As Foreign Secretary he was able to secure the signature of definite Treaties of Peace with France, Spain and the United States on September 3rd and, after the exchange of ratifications, to have peace with France and Spain solemnly proclaimed on October 6th. Meanwhile he could claim to have done better than his predecessors in the Preliminary Terms with the Dutch, ratification of which arrived in London on October 4th and left the field clearer for preparing the negotiation of the "new arrangements of commerce" with France and Spain, provided for at Versailles. Moreover, important India and revenue legislation seemed so satisfactorily projected that it was decided to reassemble Parliament on November 11th, after a recess then deemed short enough to require apology in the Speech from the Throne.[1]

In planning their course Ministers possibly underrated the hostility of the King and the means open to him to make them grave trouble. They were, indeed, aware that Earl Temple, back from the Irish Lord-Lieutenancy, was in frequent consultation with the Sovereign and was no friend.[2] But they could hardly have guessed the malignant hostility of the comments on their Irish problems that he sent for use in Dublin by Lord Mornington,[3] or the campaign of bitter opposition and detraction that the King was virtually undertaking to countenance at Westminster when the proper moment should have come. From the pleasure Fox expressed at Pitt's intention not to oppose the customary Ministerial Address, moved in the Commons after the opening of Parliament on November 11th, it would even appear that, so far from anticipating the blow soon directed at him, Fox would have been well inclined to the notion of offering place to

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, Public Papers, pp. 118–19: "The objects which are to be brought under your deliberation, will sufficiently explain my reasons for calling you together after so short a recess. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 275–80, for allegations that Earl Temple's letters were opened in the post.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 281, for Temple's evident pleasure in the trouble Ministers were facing in Ireland on account of the readiness of France and Spain to offer Ireland a favourable Commercial Treaty if English advantages against them in Irish markets could be reduced. It seems, too, that Temple was being furnished with foreign reports of which Ministers were ignorant.

Pitt.[1] Fox altogether approved Pitt's view that the projected India Bill should be bold, the anticipated revenue measures complete enough to turn deficits into surpluses available for Debt-reduction, and the commercial negotiations with Britain's late enemies directed not "by piece-meal" but so that "one grand system of commerce" might be submitted to Parliament. Fox was still unaware of the full extent of his young opponent's ambitions, and congratulated himself too soon on being set an aspiring programme which, if congenial, would nevertheless provide ample opportunity for his every enemy.

Fox's introduction of the projected India legislation on November 18th was followed by the outbreak of bitter political strife. An essential part of Fox's plan for cleansing the Augean stables of Company rule in India was to transfer the whole authority of Directors and Proprietors into the hands of seven Commissioners headed by Earl Fitzwilliam, Rockingham's nephew and heir. These Commissioners, all Coalition politicians, were to enter into full possession of East India House with a mandate for reform and, aided by nine Assistant Commissioners for Company trade, would take control of the Company's resources and authority for the next four years. Here is Pitt's prompt summarisation of the objections to the plan.[2]

India wanted a reform, but not such a reform as this. The bill under

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, History, pp. 6–8, for the following extracts from Fox's summarised speech: "Mr. Fox desired to return his thanks to Mr. Pitt; and he declared that few things could give him more satisfaction than to find that the speech and address appeared unexceptionable to him, and were to be honoured with his support. . . . Mr. Pitt had expressed his surprise that the business of India had been so long postponed. Upon this subject the secretary was ready to take shame to himself. . . . To convince them that it was his design to bring forward the business immediately, Mr. Fox took advantage of the full house he then saw, to give notice, that, on that day sevennight, he would make a motion relative to India. The secretary was particularly pleased with the manly and open manner in which Mr. Pitt had pointed out the remedy that must be applied to the state of our finances. . . . The great difficulty lay in drawing the line, and distinguishing how far the public, in time of peace, could bear to be additionally burthened, and how far it was prudent for ministers to go. . . . If that house would have the fortitude to lay aside local prejudices, and the fear of a momentary unpopularity . . . that path to prosperity would be considerably smoothed, and the national prospect brightened apace. Whenever the present ministry were found to shrink from their duty in this respect, he desired the house to withdraw from them their support. . . . If he could indulge the idea that the unanimity of this day, an unanimity which gave him the most sensible delight, was the earnest of future temper, moderation and union . . . he should indeed be warm in his expectations, and should believe that a very few years would behold us in renovated strength and splendour. . . ."

[2] T. S. Hughes's *History of England* quotes this version which has been found more pointed than others consulted.

consideration included a confiscation of the property and a disfranchisement of the members of the company: the influence which would accrue from it—a new, enormous, and unexampled influence—was in the highest degree alarming. Seven commissioners, chosen ostensibly by parliament, but really by administration, were to involve in the vortex of their authority the patronage and treasures of India: the right honourable mover had acknowledged himself to be a man of ambition; and it now appeared that he was prepared to sacrifice King, parliament, and people at its shrine: he desired to elevate his present connexions to a situation, in which no political convulsions, no variations of power, might be able to destroy their importance, and terminate their ascendency.

Events, of course, proved that it was not by Parliamentary effort alone that Fox could be defeated, and Fox's enemies were fortunate enough to find the City, where East India House influence was always considerable, moved to take energetic action. And if the strong City Petition against the Bill, procured even in advance of the Second Reading debate of November 27th,[1] was a good omen for the East India Directors' formidable campaign for alarming the "public", another was the speedy success of the political caricatures attacking Fox and the Bill. The caricaturists had, of course, filled the print-shop windows earlier in the year with mockery of the Coalition but seem to have reaped no such harvest as with their attacks on the India Bill.[2] Here is Wraxall, a member of Parliament in 1783, describing, in after-years, the effect of two cartoons by Sayer published respectively on November 25th and December 5th:[3]

Two Prints in particular, conceived with admirable humour, were circulated throughout the Metropolis. In one, Fox, under the Character of a "political Sampson", appeared carrying away on his shoulders the India House, that he had pulled down; out of the windows of which Edifice, the terrified Directors were endeavouring to effect their escape. The other Print, denominated "The triumphal entry of Carlo Khan into Delhi"; displayed the Secretary of State, habited in the Costume of a Mogul Emperor, seated on an Elephant, whose countenance bore a most striking resemblance to Lord North; and preceded by Burke, as his Trumpeter. It is difficult to conceive the moral operation and wide diffusion of these Caricatures, through every part of the Country.

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1783, Principal Occurrences, p. 59, under November 26th: "The two sheriffs and city remembrancer went from Guildhall to the house of commons, to present a petition of the lord mayor, aldermen, and common-council, against a bill depending in parliament, intitled, 'a bill for vesting the affairs of the East India company in the hands of certain commisioners for the benefit of the proprietors and the public'."

[2] T. Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges* (ed. 1876), pp. 366–71.

[3] *Historical Memoirs of my own Time* (ed. 1815), ii, 510–11.

It would seem, indeed, that Wraxall, no bad authority, was prepared to allow this cartoon-making almost as much importance in securing Fox's eventual defeat as the intense activity at East India House, thus by him described:[1]

During the two first weeks of December, while the fate of the "India Bill" remained still doubtful the Committee of Proprietors, which sat unintermittingly in Leadenhall Street, sounded the alarm from one end of the Kingdom, to the other extremity. A Member of that Committee, who took an active part in their Deliberations, assured me, that in the circular letters which they addressed to almost every Town or Corporate Body throughout Great Britain, they contented themselves with saying in few words, "Our Property and Charter are forcibly invaded. Look to your own." A copy of Fox's Bill, enclosed, which served as the best Commentary on the text, soon produced a corresponding and general effect.

It was some time, however, before the certainty of a great public stir became obvious in Parliament or effects could be produced even by the report that advance-nominations to the best posts in India were being canvassed at Brookes's, by good Coalitionists.[2] Thus on the Second Reading division of November 27th, with its majority for the Bill of 223 against 123, only the strange juxtaposition in the Minority of men of every shade of opinion from Jenkinson and Sir James Lowther to those "patriots" Wilkes, Watkin Lewes, Sir Cecil Wray and Sir Joseph Mawbey, gave any indication of the possibilities open to opponents of the Bill. After the very memorable debate of December 1st, when Burke made his great effort for the Bill,[3] the measure went into Committee opposed merely by 103 votes against 217, and only close students of portents at Court, like Wraxall,[4] were sufficiently aware of

[1] *Ibid.*, pp. 509–10.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 426–7: "It was well understood that the first employments, civil and military, from the post of Governor General of Bengal, or Commander in Chief at Calcutta, down to the Seats in Council at Madras and at Bombay, were already promised or filled up, principally with Members of Parliament, distinguished for their adherence to Administration. The names of the individuals destined for these high situations became circulated in every company; and as many of them were better known among the Club at Brookes's, than in Leadenhall Street; the consciousness of all India being speedily subjected to their rapacious hands, by no means tended . . . to tranquillise the public mind."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 433–4.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 428, for Wraxall's own version: "On the Question of going into the Committee, which took place on the first of December, when 217 voted with Government, and only 103 against them; I quitted Lord North, whom I had commonly supported up to that time, and joined the Minority; conceiving it to be, upon every view of the subject, improper longer to adhere to a Minister, who seemed to have forsaken himself."

coming developments to break early with Lord North as never likely to be acceptable again to the King. Even at the final Third Reading stage on December 8th, Fox could affect to pooh-pooh claims "that the country had taken the alarm, and that the great Corporations were preparing to petition against this bill". He pointed to the fact that, so far, only "the great Corporation of Chipping Wycomb" had joined the City of London in hostile petitioning and obtained a triumphant majority of 208 against 102.

It has often been related how matters changed in the Lords despite the great band by whom Fox was accompanied when taking the Bill there on December 9th. After a formal First Reading, the Duke of Portland moved for a Second Reading to be taken on December 15th and found Thurlow and Earl Temple opening a stubborn resistance to this alleged precipitancy,[1] and the Duke of Richmond making trouble of his own. This was apparently to prepare for the famous interview between Earl Temple and the King on December 11th, an interview believed by the age to have been decisive in envenoming the King against the India Bill but now long known to have turned merely on whether the King could consider that the proper time had come for him to act against his hated Government.[2] Persuaded according to calculations, that had been going forward for some time, that the Government could be defeated in the Lords if he would but appeal to his friends, the King gave Temple authority to declare, "That he should deem those who should vote for it [the India Bill] not only not his friends but his enemies; and that if he [Earl Temple] could put this in stronger words, he had full authority to do so."[3]

The use of such authority could hardly be concealed, and it was soon widely known at Westminster that a number of Peers had been persuaded to withdraw their Proxies, hitherto in the hands of Portland and his friends, only a few hours before the Second Reading debate was due on December 15th.[4] Other Peers,

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1784, pp. 55–7.

[2] Cf. *Court and Cabinets of George III*, i, 288–9, for a document prepared by Thurlow and Temple and dated December 1st. This document already spoke of "the changing of Ministers" after a defeat in the Lords but thought an expression of the King's wishes called for, "and that in a manner which would make it impossible to pretend a doubt of it, in case they were so disposed".

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, History, p. 69.

[4] *Ibid.*: "Several lords, who had entrusted their proxies to the minister and his friends, withdrew them only a few hours before the house met; and others, whose support he had every reason to expect, gave their votes on the side of opposition."

moreover, hitherto voting with Ministers, helped in person to defeat them on the question of adjourning the India Bill debate to December 17th after its commencement on the 15th. Such virtually undisguised use of the personal authority of the Sovereign with Peers, Spiritual and Temporal, from the Archbishops downwards,[1] had hardly ever occurred before in similar circumstances, and it evoked very angry feelings in the House of Commons among many not particularly enamoured of Fox or the Coalition. Moreover the means already used to put Government in a minority of 79 against 87 on December 15th were being extended energetically enough for the more decisive trial of strength on the 17th to induce two independent members of the Commons to come forward on the 17th with the following angry motion:[2]

> That it is *now* necessary to declare, that to report any opinion, or pretended opinion, of his majesty, upon any bill or other proceeding depending in either house of parliament, with a view to influence the votes of the members, is a high crime and misdemeanour, derogatory to the honour of the crown, a breach of the fundamental privileges of parliament, and subversive of the constitution.

And after Pitt's objections to acting upon "mere unauthenticated rumours" had been indignantly swept aside by a majority of 153 against 80,[3] fresh venom was instilled into the proceedings by reports of what was happening almost simultaneously in the Lords. Fox had already, in a furious refusal to accept Pitt's advice to resign, spoken of the "band of janissaries who surround the person of the prince and are ready to strangle the minister at the nod of the moment".[4] He had prophesied that a Bill, passed as necessary by a great and largely "independent" majority of the Commons, would in all probability be lost by the vote of Bedchamber Lords, inspired by treacherous "secret influence" and capable of turning Parliament itself from the "palladium of liberty" into the "organ of despotism". And when, in fact, the

[1] Cf. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 443: "The Archbishops of Canterbury and of York led the way, though the former Prelate, whose Connections, political and matrimonial, seemed to connect him with the 'Coalition', had been previously regarded as a firm Supporter of the Measure. Nor can it excite Surprise, that all those noble Individuals without Exception, who occupied Situations in the Royal Household, or near the King's person, should, without fastidiously hesitating, give the example of tergiversation. They abandoned Ministers and joined the Crown. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, History, p. 39.

[3] *Ibid.*, p. 43.

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 42.

vote came to be taken in the Lords it was proved that two Bedchamber Peers, Rivers and Oxford, whose Proxies had still supported Government on the 15th, had re-directed their Proxies to Government's opponents; that the same was true of the Earls of Hardwicke and Egremont; and that a Cabinet Minister, Lord Stormont, together with his uncle, Lord Mansfield, had exhibited the even stranger spectacle of personally casting votes for Government on the 15th and against it on the 17th.[1] By such means had the India Bill been destroyed in a division of 95 against 76.

The Commons Majority was indignant enough at the methods that had been employed in the Lords to retort the same night. After pledging themselves to go into Committee on the "state of the nation" on December 22nd, Members adopted a motion making the Royal Dissolution, already rumoured,[2] more difficult to undertake. The motion's wording ran thus:[3]

> That it is necessary to the most essential interests of this kingdom, and peculiarly incumbent on this house, to pursue with unremitting attention the consideration of a suitable remedy for the abuses which have prevailed in the government of the British dominions in the East Indies; and that this house will consider as an enemy to his country any person who shall presume to advise his majesty to prevent, or in any manner interrupt the discharge of this important duty.

The tendency to this taking of a seventeenth-century attitude of Commons' House against Palace camarilla seemed likely to increase from the next dubious steps taken at Court. At midnight on December 18th a messenger was sent to Fox and North requesting the surrender of their official seals through their undersecretaries "as a personal interview on the occasion would be disagreeable" to the Sovereign.[4] The seals were immediately bestowed upon Earl Temple who, on the 19th, dispatched letters of dismissal to the rest of the Cabinet and was joined in office by Pitt as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer and by Gower as Lord President of the Council.

[1] Cf. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 443–4. The young Prince of Wales, who had voted personally with Government on the 15th, absented himself on the 17th owing to the receipt of a message from the King.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, History, p. 71: "As a change of ministers appeared to be a measure determined upon by the king, and the dissolution of parliament an immediate and necessary consequence, the majority of the house thought no time was to be lost in endeavouring to render the attempt as difficult as possible. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 71.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*

Disaster nearly overtook the new Government at the very beginning, since Temple was in favour of an immediate Dissolution[1] while Pitt, whose appointment to office removed him until re-election from the Commons, apparently believed that so violent a Court measure might fatally alienate the "public" at the very time when its dislike of the Coalition's India Bill was being stimulated with increasing success. On the 22nd, therefore, Temple's resignation had to be announced, and Pitt's friends, in order to secure the Coalition's permission to pass the Land-Tax Bill, a permission refused on the 19th, had to commit him to resignation if a hasty Dissolution were attempted.[2] Moreover, putting aside all Dundas's objections, the Majority adopted an emphatic Address to the Throne, declaring the danger of Dissolution or delay in legislating for India. This Address, ordered to be taken to the King by the whole House, was presented on the 24th and was accorded almost a meek Royal reply, giving security against immediate Prorogation or Dissolution and requesting only "such an adjournment as the present circumstances may seem to require".[3] This was virtually an appeal for some respect to the custom which adjourned the Commons till a responsible Government Bench was made available by appointment and re-election. And it was hard to ignore, not only because of constitutional custom and convenience, but because members of the Majority wanted their Christmas Holidays. Accordingly after some grumbling that security had only been offered against immediate Dissolution, it was thought sufficient to tie the hands of the new Government by two resolutions, one binding the Treasury to watchfulness of bill-acceptances by the East India Directorate and the other virtually prohibiting any attempted use of the vacant Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster as an attractive life-sinecure.

[1] Cf. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 453–4: "Lord Temple insisted on the immediate Dissolution of Parliament, as necessary to their ministerial, if not even to their personal, preservation. But Pitt . . . resisted Lord Temple's proposition; who, in consequence immediately resigned, only three days after his Appointment; thus involving the half-formed Administration in confusion and embarrassment, not even wholly exempt from some degree of ridicule and of danger."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, History, p. 73: "The high prerogative language used by the partizans of the new administration, in the debate on the 19th, and their eagerness in presenting the third reading of the tax bills, left no room to doubt of their intention to dissolve the parliament . . . But on this day [the 22nd] there appeared some marks of indecision, at least, if not of a total desertion of that design."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 74.

With these safeguards taken, the Commons, after a first short adjournment from December 24th to 26th, consented to a new adjournment until January 12, 1784.

Though the Court's position was precarious enough, the Coalition leaders plainly underrated the possibilities open to it. Already before the adjournment, a Cabinet of seeming responsibility had been collected—Thurlow as Lord Chancellor, Howe as First Lord of the Admiralty, Lord Sydney (once "Tommy" Townshend) and the Marquess of Carmarthen as Secretaries of State, Lord Gower as President of the Council, the Duke of Rutland as Privy Seal and Pitt as First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer.[1] Though with six Peers out of seven members it promised to leave Pitt without distinguished assistance in the Commons, aid could be expected from Dundas's experience, the talents already obvious in Wyndham Grenville and the readiness of John Robinson, North's Joint-Secretary of the Treasury from 1770 to 1782, to put his vast electioneering knowledge at the King's service now that North had ceased to be a Minister. And if Robinson, representing one type of early "desertion" from North, was speedily put to use, advising upon the inevitable General Election,[2] employment was found for Wraxall, an even earlier deserter, in securing the support for Government of the one-time Lord George Germaine, now Viscount Sackville and patron of the two-member pocket borough of East Grinstead.[3] In numbers of other private negotiations of this type, set on foot during the Christmas Recess, importance must be attached to the new Cabinet's ability to hint at British Peerages for the deserving and to give better earnest of fulfilment than the Coalition had ever done when forced to content itself with Irish Peerages extorted with difficulty from the King. How important "contingent" Peerage promises were in that title-loving

[1] Wraxall's *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 454–5, was only prepared to allow real talent to Pitt and Thurlow. He considered that Gower and Rutland "brought indeed a considerable accession of Parliamentary interest and connexions; but a very scanty addition of eloquence or talents".

[2] Cf. *Parliamentary Papers of John Robinson*, for much proof of Robinson's help to George Rose who, after a short experience as Shelburne's Secretary of the Treasury, was re-appointed by Pitt and held the office until 1801. The reward for Robinson's help Wraxall describes thus: "I have always considered the *Earldom* of Abergavenny, as the remuneration . . . Robinson's only daughter and child, had been married some years before, to the Honourable Henry Neville, eldest son of Lord Abergavenny; who was placed at the head of the list of *Earls*, created by Pitt, on the 11th of May, 1784. . . ."

[3] Cf. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 505–9.

age may be judged from the fact that, after Government had created one Peer in December and followed with two in January,[1] report credited Coalitionists with promising thirty in an endeavour to keep their ranks together.[2] Possibly they had already seen considerable reason for alarm in the "very numerous and splendid court" gathered at St. James's on New Year's Day "to pay compliments to their Majesties".[3]

A particular stroke of good fortune befell the Ministry, and especially Pitt, when on January 11th, the eve of Parliament's reassembly, an aged son of Sir Robert Walpole, the Prime Minister, died and released a very lucrative Exchequer sinecure in the Clerkship of the Pells. Pitt quickly took the chance to make an invaluable gesture by offering the post to Colonel Barré, holder of a large pension, in return for the pension's cancellation and the consequent saving to the public. To find the country promptly resounding with exaggerated praises of the virtuous young Minister, who had declined to bestow the office upon himself or his family,[4] is to understand the advantage Pitt had obtained against Fox and the Coalition. But the honest hostility of the Parliamentary Majority to the species of Palace revolution just effected by George III was not to be borne down merely by trumpeting forth

[1] Cf. Wraxall, *Historical Memoirs of my own Time*, ii, 511: "About the close of the year, the new First Minister exhibited, (perhaps not without profound design) a proof of power, which his predecessors had never been able to display; in elevating his relation and active supporter, Mr. Thomas Pitt, to the Peerage. Before the month of January had elapsed, two other individuals were raised by him to the same dignity." Thomas Pitt, be it noted, was patron of Old Sarum, and Eliot, one of the January Peers, was credited with the control of no fewer than seven Cornish seats in Parliament.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 511–12, for the promise of "a long list of contingent British Peerages, exceeding thirty in number, to their principal friends in the Lower House. The names of these Gentlemen were in general circulation; and the greater part of them have since, at different times subsequent to the French Revolution, received from Pitt the Boon, which they had failed to obtain from the Coalition Administration."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1784, p. 69.

[4] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 352–7, for two letters sent immediately afterwards to Wyvill. On January 16th the Earl of Effingham recounting the "most honourable proceeding of Mr. Pitt" concluded a letter cursing the Coalition with these words: "I am sure you join with me in thinking that we cannot more truly serve our country than by supporting a man who, tho' not in affluent circumstances, is capable of giving so solid a proof of his disinterested generosity and integrity." The Rev. Mr. Mason, another member of the Yorkshire Committee of Association and curser of Coalition, wrote thus at York on January 22nd: "It is certain that Mr. Pitt has done the noble thing reported, viz. relieved the Nation from Barré's Pension, by giving the Clerk of the Pells to him. Such rare instances as these of Public Spirit are necessary to my mind to keep me in common charity with human nature."

praises of the "virtuous young Minister". The Majority, it is true, was proved by the first few days of Parliamentary strife in January 1784 to have been considerably affected by the busy manœuvres of the Recess.[1] But if the Majority's numbers had been somewhat reduced, they were still far too numerous for Ministers. A strong section, in fact, of the most "respectable" and "independent" part of the House did more than condemn the manner of the King's action against the India Bill and the Portland Government. It maintained a Coalition of parties to be a necessity of the times and deplored the flood of ignorant abuse of Fox and North that was being stimulated "without doors". How the level of this flood was raised still higher until, at the General Election of 1784, it submerged some of the best "independents" in the House—this is a story that must be reserved for the next chapter.

[1] The subject was soon treated pictorially in the print-shop windows. The best of the caricatures on the subject of the tempting away of members of the majority was entitled *The Apostate Jack R— the Political Rat Catcher—N.B. Rats taken alive!* It shows Robinson, North's ex-Secretary of the Treasury, plying the rat-catching trade with the baits of pensions, places and gold—Coronets would, in fact, have been more to the point but to introduce them into the caricature would have been to raise the whole perilous subject of George III's use of the royal prerogatives.

CHAPTER XXI

THE "VIRTUOUS YOUNG MINISTER", 1784

"The city of London, sir, with pride and exultation, now behold revived in the son those solid virtues, shining talents, and powerful eloquence, which they long admired in the father, but above all that generous love of our country, and its divine constitution. You have, sir, thus early in your ministerial career, commanded the esteem and admiration of this city and nation, by a noble act of disinterestedness in favour of the public, for which I believe you scarcely could find a precedent, nor I fear will you be imitated by any future minister.

"We look up, sir, to that superior ability, and purity of public virtue, which distinguish you, for the reformation of many abuses, as well as the steady protection of our chartered rights, property and freedom. The administration of your noble father gave us security at home, carried the glory of this nation to the utmost height abroad, and extended the bounds of the empire to countries, where the Roman eagle never flew. A late administration undertook an unjust and wicked war, which dismembered the empire . . . and has brought us almost to the brink of bankruptcy. To restore this kingdom to any degree of prosperity and greatness, demands the utmost exertions of virtue and ability, with every support both of the crown and people at large. I hope you will meet with both. . . . Much is to be done; but you have youth, capacity, and firmness. It is the characteristic of a true patriot never to despair, and we have a well-grounded hope of your making us again a great, powerful, happy, and united people. . . . Your noble father, sir, annihilated party, and I hope you will in the end bear down and conquer the hydra of faction, which now rears its hundred heads against you. I remember his saying, that for the good of the people he dared to look the proudest connections of this country in the face. I trust that the same spirit animates his son, and as he has the same support of the crown and the people, I am firmly persuaded that the same success will follow."

Wilkes on Pitt in the City, February 28, 1784.

"This representation [of March 8th] was the last effort made by opposition, and was carried only by a majority of 191 to 190. If we consider all the circumstances of this extraordinary

contest, it cannot but appear surprising that so few instances should have happened of defection to the court party. The fixed determination that appeared early in the court to support the new administration, at all hazards; the terrors of a dissolution; a perseverance in the minister, insensible to consequences; the violent prejudices entertained without doors, and the cautious and indecisive conduct of opposition within, afforded no doubtful presages of the event. To a conviction of the justice and importance of the cause in which they were engaged, we are bound in candour to attribute this steadiness, in part; and some share of it may probably be ascribed to a high rival sense of honour in the several members of the coalition, desirous of rescuing that measure from the odium of its being founded merely on selfish and interested designs."

The Annual Register, 1784–5, on the defeated Coalition.

On January 12, 1784, when Parliament came together again, with the re-elected Pitt on the Treasury Bench, a hot contest opened at once. Fox declined to allow postponement of the order of the day providing for a resumption of the December Committee on the "state of the nation", and Pitt found it useless to claim priority for his Message from the King on some Hessians returned from America.[1] Pitt postponed the Message and made another endeavour to alter the order of the day by announcing that he wished leave to introduce a new India Bill. He, of course, took the opportunity of criticising the Coalition's Bill once more and the Coalition's strong resolutions after the Bill's defeat. Perhaps he was encouraged thereto by knowledge of the powerful City alliance of old "patriots" and old "courtiers" formed in defence of the "Chartered rights of the Company" and soon to send the King a City Address whose congratulations on the "salutary and constitutional" use he had made of his prerogative, when dismissing his late Ministers, were destined to provide a model for anti-Coalitionists all over the country.[2] But the stream of Loyal Addresses had not yet commenced, much less become a flood, and in Parliament on January 12th, Pitt's unhappy reference to himself as "the Minister of the Crown" and his refusal to explain himself on Dissolution brought a storm about his ears. An attack opened by the gifted Foxite lawyer, Erskine,

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1784, p. 58, for Fox getting possession of the House by rising immediately the Speaker was in the Chair and before the new and re-elected members including Pitt were brought in to take the Parliamentary oaths. Fox sat down while the swearing-in was in progress and then followed a scene thus reported: "Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox rose at the same time, which produced a general uproar, the friends of each gentleman calling upon him to proceed. Mr. Pitt said he had a message to deliver from his Majesty. Mr. Fox expressed the highest respect for a message from the King; but declared his duty to his country rendered it necessary for him to persevere in moving for the order of the day. The Speaker decided in favour of Mr. Fox, on the ground of his having risen to move the order of the day before Mr. Pitt came into the House."

[2] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 355–6, for the Earl of Effingham writing on January 16th: "This day the City of London have been with the King to address his Majesty on the subject of the India Bill and Change of Ministry. The Address you will see in the papers. I hear the example will be much followed, which, if it is, may put it out of the power of the cursed Coalition to throw the country into confusion, as they are now aiming to do, being as it should seem, resolved to ruin or to rule the State." On January 22nd Wyvill received news from York that "there are engines here at work to get a Petition similar to London from this City" though it was represented by two Coalitionists, one of them Lord John Cavendish.

was later taken up by Fox, North, General Conway, Sheridan and Rigby and ended in a division of 232 against 193 for going into Committee "on the state of the nation" rather than allowing Pitt to introduce his India Bill.[1]

In Committee Fox promptly opened by moving resolutions aimed at meeting the Dissolution threat both by declaring Exchequer issues, in such a case, and unauthorised by the yet unpassed Appropriation Bill, illegal, and by deferring the Second Reading of the Mutiny Bill until February 23rd. These resolutions were supplemented by two others offered by the more "independent" Lord Surrey and asking for a Ministry enjoying "the confidence of the House" and unattended by the "new and extraordinary circumstances" of the late appointments. Only after Government had been defeated by 196 votes against 142[2] and these resolutions adopted and reported to the House was Pitt, in the morning hours, allowed the opportunity of communicating his Message from the King. A new Government could hardly have had a worse or more humiliating Parliamentary *début*.

Pitt attempted to improve matters when on January 14th he introduced his East India Bill with the claim that, if it was "less bold and radical" than the late Government's, it was yet much fairer to the Company whose Proprietors had been consulted and who would approve the suggested Government Board of Control which left them so much patronage and authority otherwise destined for the Foxite Commissioners. Fox, of course, proclaimed the Bill a typical half-measure calculated to produce further embarrassments instead of the thorough amendment that was necessary and which he had sought to secure by setting up a Commission, given supreme and certain authority for four years and not liable to replacement like Pitt's Board of Control every time there was a change of Administration in England. Fox made a strong point when asking what was to become of Indian Government if the Board of Control was to be subjected to such vicissitudes as had provided Ireland with four different Lord-Lieutenants in the past two years. But in the state of feeling then reigning in the House personal issues were as important as those of policy. This was proved by Fox's sneer at the youthful Prime Minister's providing that certain high Indian appointments should depend

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, January 1784, p. 61. [2] *Ibid.*

on seniority[1] and by his bitter attack on Robinson who, despite great obligations to North, had consented to become the Court's agent "to seduce Members of that House". Personal issues, in fact, blazed up sharply when an unfounded charge of attempted bribery was made against the late head of the Treasury, the Duke of Portland,[2] and they completely overshadowed a debate notable in regard to India only because Fox announced opposition to Pitt's Bill "to the utmost of his power".

The tense situation in Parliament was illustrated once again on January 16th, the day when the presentation of the City Address congratulating the King on the "dismission" of the late Ministers set an example gradually destined to overwhelm the Coalition. Wyvill's Yorkshire Association had sent another Parliamentary Reform Petition for presentation, now that Sir George Savile was dead, by Henry Duncombe, a colleague who, unlike Savile's nephew and Parliamentary successor, had decided to support Pitt against the Coalition. When laying the Petition before the House on January 16th, Duncombe, among other things, urged in its favour that existing "distractions" would have been impossible if there had been a Reform of Parliament producing Members really committed to the "public" instead of to "the ambition of daring and desperate men" totally indifferent to the "sufferings of the great body of the people" and the "dignity of the throne".[3] In a cutting reply to this unprovoked attack North pointed out that a solitary Petition from Yorkshire after years of agitation hardly evidenced any general desire for Parliamentary Reform and that, in the very three weeks just past, the existing system of representation had been found, against all the assertions of the

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 62, for Fox's bitter comment on this succession by seniority provision: "It was by that, no doubt, that the right hon. Gent. himself had arrived to the dignified station he now filled."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 63: "This instantly threw the whole House into a ferment; and Mr. Yorke was called upon from every side to name his authority. He named Mr. Dalrymple. The clamour was now directed to that Gentleman; and he, agitated as he was, mentioned the Duke of Portland. The uproar was now greater than ever. He was called upon to give an account of the whole transaction. Many Members speaking together, increased the tumult . . . Mr. Dalrymple seemed much embarrassed. Said he had nothing personal to alledge against his Grace of Portland. He had never seen him in his life; that his name occurred to him in the agitated state of his mind. . . . Some of the friends of the Duke of Portland had apprised his grace of what was going forward—He, with both his secretaries (Mr. R. Burke and Mr. O'Beirne) came to one of the committee-rooms and gave notice, that his grace was ready to answer any questions that might be put him. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, February 1784, p. 125.

Reformers, to furnish a body of men "zealous for the purity of the Constitution whom corruption could not warp". A reference to the "fourth Estate" that the Coalition had desired to set up in the India Commissioners brought Burke to his feet in anger, and then trouble blew up from the opposite quarter when Lord Surrey referring to the few sentences uttered by Pitt charged him with having grown colder in the cause of Reform and having disappointed the "Yorkshire gentlemen" who had been led to expect him to refuse to sit in the same Cabinet with its opponents. While re-pledging himself to Parliamentary Reform "to the utmost of his power" Pitt denied that he had given any cause for believing that he would decline to sit in Cabinet with its opponents. Fox then rose and reminded the House of the attacks that had been made upon him for having joined with North and of the claims that had been advanced in his own constituency that Pitt would never have done such a thing. Now it turned out that whereas he himself had sat in a Cabinet containing only one enemy of Parliamentary Reform, Pitt had consented to sit in one where Parliamentary Reform had only one friend.[1]

But all this made only the beginning of a sitting continuing until three in the morning. When Pitt, for example, asked for the Second Reading of his India Bill to be set down for the 21st, Fox reminded him of the charges of precipitancy urged against the last India Bill and carried the Second Reading for the 23rd. Then Fox made another motion for resuming the Committee on "the state of the nation" and hot questions were fired at the Treasury Bench on the subject of whether Dissolution was going to be held as a threat over the House if it presumed to reject the new India Bill. Of course, members had a natural objection to the expense and inconvenience attending a General Election three years earlier than was necessary, but there was genuine indignation also that the whole issue should be forced upon them in consequence of a very questionable Court manœuvre against Fox, a politician whose Parliamentary talents were outstanding and whose

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 126, for this summary of part of Fox's speech: "It had even been charged as a crime in him of the blackest dye, that he had coalesced with a man who was a professed enemy to the proposed reform; and to such a length had the cry of the populace been raised without doors, that when his Majesty honoured him with the seals, and he was sent back to his constituents on that occasion, his conduct had been contrasted on the business with that of the Rt. Hon. Gentleman, who, it was then said, would not associate with a man who was known to be an enemy to that measure. . . ."

India Bill was at least thorough. That is why, when the Committee was resumed, a resolution was brought forward by Lord Charles Spencer for expressing in still plainer terms than on the 12th the objection of the House to the continuance of the new Ministers in office. This resolution was carried by a majority of 205 against 184.[1] There is no doubt that "independents" were furious that some of the hottest partisans of Government in the City were playing with fire-brand plans of annihilating the financial checks against a speedy Dissolution imposed by the Commons on the 12th. The notion of providing Ministers with a "Voluntary Loan" of a million, sufficient to carry them over the period of a Dissolution, seemed to many members to aim an even more sinister blow at the financial rights of the Commons than had already been aimed at their Ministry-approving rights by the late change in Government.[2]

By January 20th rumours were floating of a possible negotiation between the Treasury Bench, helpless to carry its measures through Parliament, and the Coalition leaders, unable to force the hand of the Crown without taking hazardous steps likely to antagonise the "public" completely, and especially that vital section of the "public" with capital in the falling Funds or in business enterprises suffering from the political uncertainty. Possibly Fox was hardly yet aware of his full danger from the growing feeling stimulated "without doors" against the Coalition as an unprincipled alliance which, after loading the "public" with the hated Receipts Tax and robbing the King of his Minister-making prerogative, had all but looted East India House. Certainly he took a high enough line in expressing a patriot grief and shame that, after the emphatic "No Confidence" voted on the 16th, the world should still have in England such a spectacle as "had not been seen since the Revolution, an Administration holding their

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 129.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 128, for the "independent" Mr. Baker who seconded Lord C. Spencer: "He thought it was high time, that, while we had a constitution, to endeavour to preserve it. The House had already, in language pretty intelligible, delivered what it thought of the present Ministers; but since they affected not to understand it, it was now become the indispensable duty of the committee to speak out to them, and convince them that there was still virtue enough in the House of Commons to crush any set of men who should presume to place themselves in the first offices of the State by means the most unconstitutional. . . . Besides, a rumour had gone forth, that those who had unconstitutionally grasped at power were to be equally unconstitutionally supported in it; that a loan of a million was now negociating to be employed by Ministers, for what purposes may be more easily guessed than determined."

places in defiance of the House of Commons".[1] But feeling in the House was apparently so strong for a negotiation to be attempted on the constitutional issues raised since December that Fox, while expressing his own view that the obstacles to a successful arrangement between Ministers and ex-Ministers were "almost insurmountable", agreed to defer the resumption of the Committee on "the state of the nation" until January 26th. Thus would more time be allowed for the consideration of an idea strongly pressed from among the "independents", the formation of a very strong Government, based on a still wider and less objectionable Coalition and therefore able to conduct the country with ability and authority through the inevitable post-war difficulties. The "satisfaction" reported "throughout the House" at Fox's readiness to suspend the Committee on the "state of the nation", and the pleasure with which it was accepted as "an happy presage of future reconciliation" is only one proof the more that the original Fox-North Coalition had been honestly supported as a genuine attempt to wipe out past controversy and furnish a strong Government.

While preparatory negotiations were going on among "independent" members with a view to the famous meetings "held at St. Alban's Tavern for the purpose of recommending an union of parties", the Second Reading proceedings on Pitt's India Bill came on January 23rd. What is described as a "very tedious debate" lasted until the morning hours and, after the Bill had been rejected by 222 votes against 214, Fox rose to give notice of a revised Bill from himself in which he claimed there were only two principles he was bent on maintaining from the former—a Control or Commission authorised to act for a fixed time, and not changeable like Pitt's with every change of Administration, and a Control sitting in London and not like the unsatisfactory Council of the 1773 Regulating Act sitting in Calcutta. This was to take very skilful ground, but in the two hours of "irregular conversation" that supervened the House was not concerned so much with the rival merits of the India ideas of Fox and Pitt as with trying to extort information on whether Pitt would make the rejection of his Bill the occasion for advising a Dissolution.

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 129, for Fox thus: "He wished that the sea which surrounded the island could prevent the shame of this country from reaching the nations on the Continent.—To see what had not been seen since the Revolution, etc. etc."

Pitt declined to rise to his feet except, on a point of order, to rebuke General Conway's violent language,[1] and after two angry hours Fox moved to adjourn until three o'clock that afternoon—a Saturday—when he hoped proper measures would be taken to vindicate the honour of the insulted House.

The Saturday afternoon sitting of January 24th found Pitt compelled to promise that there would be no Dissolution before the House assembled on the Monday. More than this, it found the "independents" persuaded that they would need to act instead of talk if the dangerously plausible censure of the Coalition and praise of the King, being busily and successfully stimulated "without doors", was to be prevented from leading on not merely to a Dissolution but to a complete condonation of the Court's dubious behaviour of December. When fifty-three members foregathered at the St. Alban's Tavern on January 26th at noon, they could not be blind to the difficulty that had been experienced even by men as popular as Byng and Lord Surrey in getting a Middlesex Freeholders' meeting of the 21st to declare some support of the Commons.[2] Nor could they ignore the completely opposite expressions from Norwich, Leicester and Yarmouth, published in the *London Gazette* of the 24th[3] and reinforced by the triumphant victory being won in the City by an nati-Coalitionist candidate for the seat of the deceased AldermanBull.[4]

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 130: "General Conway, in the course of the debate, was very pointed. He said, it was a new thing in that House, to see a Minister sit in sulky silence, refusing to answer to an explanation of his own words." It was actually to other remarks of Conway's that Pitt objected. "The present ministry", Conway had said, "originating in darkness and secrecy, maintain themselves by artifice and reserve: they exist by corruption; and are now about to dissolve parliament, after sending their agents round the country to bribe the electors."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, January 1784, p. 71, from which it appears that the notion of addressing the King had been carried by Alderman Townsend and Mr. Robinson against Byng and Lord Surrey but that, when a Committee of five had been appointed to draft an Address, it was made to include a desire for "such an Administration as may possess the confidence of your parliament and the publick". But there were charges that this Address was only carried because Coalitionists had filled the room of meeting early and thus many anti-Coalitionists had been kept outside.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 71, under January 24th: "In this day's Gazette, the address of the mayor and corporation of the City of Norwich is inserted, returning thanks to his Majesty for his paternal care in dismissing a powerful and violent confederacy of men from his councils. Also that of the boroughs of Leicester and Great Yarmouth for the same purpose."

[4] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, pp. 6–7, for the election of Brook Watson whose long record as an army commissary would have made his election impossible only a short time before.

The assembled fifty-three resolved to send a Committee to the Duke of Portland, Pitt and Fox with an appeal for a composition of differences and the formation of "a stronger and more extended Administration". Portland's reply to the Committee like Fox's speech in the House, when the "state of the nation" was again under consideration later that day, expressed no disapprobation of the suggested "union of parties" but made Pitt's resignation, in deference to the Commons' vote of January 16th, an indispensable prior condition.[1]

Apparently when seventy members, instead of fifty-three, met on January 27th to consider these developments, they were of opinion that Pitt should be requested to resign but that if in subsequent negotiations for the much-desired "union of parties" Portland and Fox proved unreasonable, Pitt should be aided in returning to office.[2] The Committee's renewed attempt at mediation brought fresh messages from Portland and Pitt, read on the 29th to an assembly of members now swollen to eighty. Pitt's message declared him ready for an "immediate intercourse" with Portland, and Portland's letter expressed his extreme readiness "to confer with Mr. Pitt" if the obstacle, presented by his remaining in office after the Commons' vote of January 16th, could be properly overcome. These messages seemed to make the gap between the two sides so bridgeable that, after the meeting had recommended a recourse to "the intervention of mutual friends", there was great expectation in Parliament later that afternoon that the longed-for "union of parties" would be announced.[3] Fox was, however, fated to rise with a vehement attack on Ministers who, though unable to conduct the public business in Parliament, were yet being entrusted with the distribution of the favours of

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 130, for Fox on Pitt: "Why was the gentleman now in office, after the House had resolved that his continuance in office without the confidence of Parliament was unconstitutional? It was a dangerous precedent for any Minister to set himself up superiour to the House of Commons, and must be opposed. . . . He said he had no objection to a fair and proper union; but while the Right Hon. Gent. remained in office, no treaty could be made upon equal terms. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, January 1784, p. 71: "It seemed to be the general sense of the meeting, that Mr. Pitt should be requested to resign, and hold the office vacant for a few days, to try the further effect of their moderation; to which, if it failed, he should be restored and supported."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, February 1784, p. 131: "The House was uncommonly crouded, in expectation of a coalition being formed for restoring the tranquillity of the House, and for terminating the debates that had retarded the business of the state. After waiting with impatience till four in the afternoon. . . ."

the Crown for ends that were plain to see. After this bitter reference to the two anti-Coalitionist Peerages just announced, Fox moved the adjournment to February 2nd, and with the help of an able and unusually severe speech from North carried it without opposition.[1]

Great efforts were now made by the "independents" of the St. Alban's Tavern to prevent a breakdown of their negotiations, and the Duke of Portland was induced to suggest in a letter of January 31st that he would be satisfied with Pitt's provisional resignation.[2] Encouraged, perhaps, by a new stream of Loyal Addresses just published in the *London Gazette*[3] and congratulating the King on the dismissal of the late Ministry, Pitt declined to resign in any form as a prior condition to negotiation and gave Portland the chance of suggesting that his character now stood revealed.[4] Certainly Mr. Grosvenor, M.P. for Chester and Chairman of the meetings at the St. Alban's Tavern, decided to make himself responsible for moving this resolution on February 2nd:[5]

> That in the present circumstances of this country, so arduous and pressing, it is necessary for this House to take such measures as were most conducive to render a strong, permanent, extensive, and united administration, as would carry the full confidence of the public.

The motion was very much to the taste of Fox and North and, though criticised by friends of Government, these were apparently advised by the longer heads to let it pass unopposed as not pointing

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Lord North insisted, that some decisive measures should be taken. The noble Lord stated with great ability, the heterogeneous situation of the present ministry. With regard to the government of the day, it was merely a board, a check upon the House of Commons. The noble Lord (to shew the world what were the moderate dispositions of him and his friend, notwithstanding the treatment the House had received when it had expressly withdrawn its confidence) said, he would support the motion for adjournment; and leave in the most specific manner at the door of the proper parties, the confusion . . . when the House, in support of its dignity, must reject all communication with the present ministers."

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 267.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, under January 31st: "This night's gazette contains addresses to his majesty from the merchants and traders of London; from the lord provost, magistrates, and council of Edinburgh; from the aldermen, burgesses, &c. of Southampton; from the manufacturers, traders, &c. of Taunton; and from the mayor and inhabitants of Plymouth, upon the removal of the late ministry, &c."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix to the Chronicle, p. 269: "it was with Mr. Pitt that you were desirous I should have a liberal and unreserved intercourse, and not with the head of an administration, to which I was merely to bring an accession of strength. But Mr. Pitt's message places him in another character. . . ."

[5] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 131.

specifically against Ministers. It was on that very account that "Coke of Norfolk" decided that it must be supplemented by a further resolution calling definitely for an end to the existing Ministry. A majority of 223 against 204 was found to declare:[1]

That it is the opinion of this House, that the continuance of the present Ministers in power is an obstacle to the formation of such an Administration as is likely to have the confidence of this House and the people, and as would have a tendency to put an end to the present divisions that distract the country.

Next day, as the resignation of Ministers had still not been offered, Coke came forward with a motion that the resolutions of February 2nd should be laid before the King by the Privy Councillors in the House.[2] A long and angry debate found men like Duncombe and Wilberforce[3] pointing to the still-swelling stream of Loyal Addresses as proof that the country was opposed to the resolutions and to the unconstitutional attempt, as it was called, to dictate to the King on how he should use his admitted right to appoint the Ministry. Not only the Coalition but some "independents" seem to have been antagonised by what Lord John Cavendish called the attempt of Ministers "to shelter themselves under the shield of prerogative",[4] and there was complaint also of the "language of adulation" that was being increasingly employed in regard to Pitt.[5] Finally a majority of 211 against 187 declared, in opposition to Ministers, for taking the resolutions to the Throne.

The first Ministerial reply was, in effect, through resolutions and an Address adopted in the Lords on February 4th. A very

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 133.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, under February 3rd: "Mr. Coke stood up, and lamented the necessity the House was under, to take some further steps to bring about the end proposed by the resolutions of yesterday. . . ."

[3] *Ibid.*, "Mr. Duncombe opposed the resolutions. . . . The public dissented from them. . . . Mr. Wilberforce . . . said . . . Did the late Ministers possess the confidence of the people? the numerous addresses from every part of the kingdom were proofs that they did not. Why then insult the throne by violent resolutions. . . ." The night's *London Gazette* (February 3rd) actually contained new addresses from Westminster, York, Exeter, Lancaster, Reading, Colchester and Evesham.

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, February 1784, under February 3rd: "Lord J. Cavendish was severe on those bosom friends of Lord North, who had grown rich under his auspices, and who were now the most inveterate against him. He justified the India Bill, and exposed the mischievous effects of Ministers continuing in office, to the hindrance of public business, while the navy and army were unprovided for, the public creditors unpaid, and the India business unsettled. . . ."

[5] *Ibid.*, for Colonel Hartley.

Loyal Address to the King was sent after a majority of 100 against 53[1] had declared in obvious opposition to the Commons:

> That it is contrary to the letter and spirit of the constitution, for either House of Parliament to pass any resolution which may tend to deprive the Crown of its just prerogative in nominating its own servants, or to desire the removal of the executive servants of the Crown, when no charge of neglect or misconduct has been alledged against them.

This virtual censure of what had been done in the Lower House raised new feeling in that assembly on the score of privileges menaced from a fresh quarter. The "independent" Lord Beauchamp demanded and obtained a Committee to inspect the Journals of the Lords and, meanwhile, in reply to Ministers' tentative efforts to advance the "public business" Fox made it plain that, while some Debt, Tax and Fortification information might be laid before the House, the existing "state of affairs" rendered the advance of Ministerial Bills impossible. Thus matters passed in Parliament, while on the 7th a report from the Journals of the Lords was given to the Commons, on the 9th a Commons' Committee to search for precedents was set up and on the 11th, before that Committee could report, new exchanges broke out on an anti-Ministerial *obiter dictum* which Eden permitted himself when giving the House some startling information from the Committee that had investigated Revenue losses through smuggling. For a man of forty, Eden had much official experience, gained under North, but having, unlike the more forceful and more unscrupulous Dundas, assumed a Coalition victory as certain, he now lamented that the obstinacy of Ministers should prevent speedy measures being taken against the smuggling that his Committee had estimated to cost the Revenue two millions a year. This was, of course, to force forward the whole Coalition controversy once more, and in the long exchanges that took place one thing stood out. Amidst "independent" pleas for a union of parties, assurances from the St. Alban's Tavern meeting that participants favoured the Commons' resolutions, and arguments as to whether Fox's India Bill had or had not been unpopular before adverse clamour had been organised against it,[2] there could be no doubt that, as between Pitt and Fox, the position was very

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, February and March 1784, for the proceedings. The voting in the Lords was 79 and 21 Proxies against 44 and 9 Proxies.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, March 1784, p. 212: "Mr. Fox said, he could not help contradicting what had fallen from the hon. Gent. respecting the India Bill. He had

different from that of a month before. Whereas Fox was now doing the pressing for an "efficient, strong and united Administration" and met one attack on his India Bill by urging that such controversy was calculated to hurt the "so much wished for union", Pitt was now assuming an air of growing self-assurance. Claiming that "he had the confidence of his Sovereign and the other branch of Parliament, a respectable part of the House in which he then stood, and of the people at large", Pitt declared that he had no personal objection to association with Fox. He gave a broad hint, however, that there was such objection to North and made it plain that even Fox would have to surrender an India Bill which would have been "tyrannic in its operation".

To understand Pitt's confident assumption of the power to ban Fox's India Bill and North's return to Government, it is perhaps worth mentioning that the *London Gazette* of February 7th had contained further congratulatory Addresses to the King on "the dismission of his late ministers" from Exeter, Plymouth, Launceston, Wolverhampton, Dysart and Perth County and that these had been supplemented on the 10th by others from Salisbury, Wycombe, Preston, Berwick and Chippenham. On the 10th, too, the City had done its best to expedite Pitt's triumph by voting him the Common Council's thanks for his "able, upright and disinterested conduct", by adding the City's freedom "to be presented . . . in a gold box of the value of one hundred guineas" and by thanking even the Lords for "the late timely interference . . . for the preservation of our excellent constitution".[1] To balance these latest exhibitions of hostility to the Coalition, Fox could only point to some cautious words from Exeter[2] and the preparations for a Westminster meeting where he was already certain to be bitterly opposed.[3]

asserted that it was unpopular. He would be bold to say, that it was by no means so; and that it was as popular a bill as ever was brought forward till the great weight of the Company's connections had found means to bear it down. . . ."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, p. 9.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, for the second Exeter Address "expressive of their attachment to his majesty's person and government, and declaring that it is not their intention to . . . foment the alarming divisions that at present prevail . . . they therefore hope his majesty will be graciously pleased to call to his councils men whose abilities and integrity may recommend them to his royal favour, and whose measures may entitle them to the full confidence and support of his majesty's faithful subjects".

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1784, p. 145, under Saturday, February 14th: "Agreeably to public notice, the Electors of Westminster assembled, with a view to agree to an Address. About 12 o'clock Mr. Fox and

But Pitt had not yet obtained the Mutiny Bill or the Supplies, and his banning of North's return to office possibly did him more harm than good among Parliamentarians who wisely considered that seasoned politician's public spirited offer not to stand in the way of an accommodation[1] as setting an example to the stripling Minister, greedy enough for power to be willing to upset the Constitution to obtain it. Certainly North's speech seems to have had its importance on February 16th when Lord Beauchamp's Committee, having finished its investigations of the Commons' privileges, offered six resolutions in defence of all the Commons had done and especially of their resolve to tie the hands of the Treasury and the East India Company financially. On this occasion North "deplored the situation of the country; but said there was a time coming, when the eyes of the people would be opened to their own interest; they would see by whose lust of power they had been misled".[2] The division of the night resulted in Government's defeat by 186 against 157 though, for Ministerial consolation, there was next evening's *London Gazette* with more Loyal Addresses on the "dismission of the late Ministry" from Bath, Worcester, Lichfield, Birmingham, Honiton, Dartmouth (two) and Trowbridge. It was doubtless on this widely-obtained evidence of the "support of the public" that King and Minister relied when preparing the Royal reply to the Commons' representations against the continuance of the existing Ministry in office, a reply necessarily delayed for some time by the outbreak of the privileges controversy between the two Houses.

There was, of course, dismay and anger in the Commons when

his friends came; and, after much disorder and confusion, were put into possession of the place where the chair stood. The riot of contending interests, the clamour of alternate groans and plaudits, and the incessant acclamations of Fox on one side, and Pitt on the other, drowned the attempts of every individual to obtain the notice of the multitude. When neither party could be heard, it was proposed to try their strength by a division. Mr. Fox agreed to it. Sir Cecil Wray led up his party towards the top of the Hall. Mr. Fox his into Palace Yard; and when out, they were kept out. Mr. Fox then addressed the multitude from the window of the King's Arms Tavern."

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Lord North said, [on February 11th] he was happy to remark a growing disposition to unite. He understood the Right Hon. gentleman's [Pitt's] meaning; and though he would not, to please any individual, give up his personal rights, yet, to serve his country, he would not stand in the way. He would sacrifice all his own feelings to the public good, and with pleasure retire from public business. He was complimented from all sides of the House, on this manly, candid, and open declaration."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, March 1784, p. 215, for this in answer to Pitt after "he gave the House to understand, that it was not to his pride, his obstinacy, his lust of power, that the discord that now prevailed was not effectually done away".

on February 18th Pitt gave the information "That his Majesty, under all the circumstances of the country, has not thought fit to dismiss his present Ministers, and they have not resigned."[1] Fox, Lord Surrey, North and the eloquent "independent" Powys all expressed the view that the House could not be expected to proceed with the business of the Supplies while, in Fox's words, the Commons were insulted and the Constitution was tottering. At one stage, in answer to heroics from Pitt on his personal honour being involved in resisting the proposal that he should first resign and then "stoop [!] to negociate for a part in a new administration", Fox offered that the Duke of Portland would negotiate without a literal resignation if it was firmly understood that such negotiation was "for the purpose of forming a *new administration*". When Pitt declined to take up this offer, North rose with a speech of cutting irony exposing the "impertinent pretensions" upon which Ministers stayed in office and the motley heterogeneity of the bands of political supporters they were gathering.[2] And after Fox had carried by 208 votes against 198 the postponement of the order of the day respecting Supply to Friday, February 20th, the House was given over, on the 19th, to warm recriminations. Pitt and his followers warned members of the perils of "refusing the supplies", "independents" contended that there was no refusal but a postponement for the sake of the Constitution, and Coalitionists laid all the blame upon Pitt's pride and obstinacy.[3] On February 20th, Supply business was again impossible. First an "independent" motion was carried by 197 votes against 177 for expressing confidence that the King's "parental goodness" would remove "such obstacles as this House had declared stand in the way of an extended, efficient and united Administration, such as the House has resolved to be necessary

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1784, pp. 215–16.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 217. The effectiveness of North's speech must be judged from Earl Nugent's pro-Government complaint that "every hour the noble Lord in the blue ribband diverts the House with the brilliancy of his remarks, it costs the nation £250" (to the unhindered smuggler) and from the new pro-Government City member's rising to reply "to a stroke of Lord North's at the assembly of liverymen at Guildhall". The *Gentleman's Magazine* was most diverted, amid North's satire "on some characters that stood the most forward in support of the present measures", by his attack on the Irish Viscount Mountmorres, the unstable, ex-Wilkite political adventurer who failed to carve the fortune for himself which the Wellesleys succeeded in doing by attaching themselves to Pitt at this stage.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, for "much altercation and very little argument . . . gentlemen seemed to lose their temper . . . and the House broke up without any motion".

in the present arduous and very critical situation of his Majesty's dominions". Then, in despite of the boasted fresh stream of Loyal Addresses that had been set flowing—this time from the counties—Fox carried by 177 votes against 156 that the resolution just passed should, in the form of an Address, be carried to the Throne by the whole House. Business was again impossible until the ceremony of presentation, arranged for February 25th, was over. The Royal reply, moreover, read to the House on February 27th, was found to be unyielding enough in substance to induce the "independent" Lord Beauchamp to move the delay of its consideration until March 1st when tempers might have cooled and a new negotiation for a "union of parties", understood to be on foot, might have had a chance of showing results.[1] This was carried against Government by 175 votes against 168 despite the new batches of Loyal Addresses that had appeared in the *London Gazette* of February 21st and 24th.[2]

Before Parliament debated the Royal reply on March 1st, the City authorities had encouraged a great demonstration in the capital in favour of Pitt. Here is one description of what happened in London on Saturday, February 28th:[3]

A Committee of Common Council went in procession to Berkeley Square, and presented the resolutions of the Court to Mr. Pitt. Mr. Ald. Townshend addressed Mr. Pitt in an elegant speech, to which a most polite answer was returned. The cavalcade then returned, amidst the acclamations of applauding thousands to Grocers Hall; where Mr. Pitt received the freedom of the City and afterwards was entertained

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, April 1784, p. 290: "Lord Beauchamp rose, to apologise for the motion made by him, for adjournment to this day, from a kind of prescience he had had of the species of answer that would be given to the address. He thought it more proper to give gentlemen time to grow cool and recover their tempers. . . . He had still another motive. . . . He was desirous to prevent a discussion that might have a tendency to interrupt a negociation, which he understood was on foot, and on which the salvation of the country depended."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, for the Addresses from Denbigh county, Bristol, Wells, Wolverhampton, New Windsor, Andover, King's Lynn, Lancaster, St. Albans, Marlborough, Alnwick, Berks county, Cornwall, Aberdeen, Oxford county, Shrewsbury, Hull, Folkestone, Dover, Wilts., York county, Abingdon.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1784, p. 225, which does not, however, report that as the "people" dragging Mr. Pitt's coach homeward came to St. James's Street "an affray happened between them and a parcel of chairmen at Brookes's, in which the latter proved triumphant, and Mr. Pitt was obliged to quit his carriage, and retire to White's for protection. His coach was much injured, and the mob that dragged it went and broke Mr. Fox's windows in St. James's Place in revenge. . . ."

with a most sumptuous dinner. The City, on this occasion, was one continued scene of joy; a general illumination closed the evening, in which several emblematical devices were exhibited, which displayed equal ingenuity and taste. The illustrious visitor's carriage was drawn by the people from Berkeley-Square to the end of the procession, and back in the evening, when much confusion ensued, many windows were broken, for not illuminating, &c.

To remember, too, that Wilkes as City Chamberlain bestowed on the new Freeman a fulsome eulogy, widely reproduced,[1] and that the evening's *London Gazette* printed new Loyal Addresses to the King from Westminster, Durham, Worcester, Newcastle, Buckingham, Newark, Maidstone, Aylesbury, Sandwich, Lanark, Glasgow and Dundee, is to realise the determination and conviction that was necessary in the House to cause the adoption by 201 votes against 189 of a new Address to the Sovereign in what was, for such documents, fairly direct terms. Not only was the right claimed for the Commons "to advise your Majesty touching the exercise of any branch of your royal prerogative" but there was a conclusion as resolute as this:

> We feel ourselves bound to remain firm in the wish expressed to your Majesty in our late humble address; and do therefore find ourselves obliged again to beseech your Majesty, that you would be graciously pleased to lay the foundation of a strong and stable government, by the previous removal of your present Ministers.

While arrangements were being made for the Commons to present their Address on Thursday, March 4th, the House was, on March 3rd, permitted, in Committee of Supply, to vote the ordinary expenses of the Navy. But if this must be accepted as a significant sign of Fox's growing need not to appear, on such a vital matter as the Navy, animated by personal or factious interests, he was still, despite the ever-flowing stream of Loyal Addresses, supported by many "independents" in objecting to the Royal reply of March 4th. For the King blandly to meet the Commons' request for a removal of Ministers, by asserting, while keeping them in office, that "I know of no further steps which I can take", was but to help the hard-pressed Fox on March 5th to carry, by 171 votes against 162, the deferment of the Committee stage of the Mutiny Bill until after the Royal answer should have been

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1784, p. 204; *New Annual Register*, 1784; etc., etc., for reproductions of this speech.

debated on March 8th.[1] Before that debate began, the St. Alban's Tavern associates had made a last effort to bring about the "union of parties" that had been their aim. They had even succeeded in effecting the much wished-for interview between Portland and Pitt[2] though, as had been foreseen during the long weeks when Portland and Fox had objected so pertinaciously to such an interview without a preliminary resignation by Pitt, Pitt had all the advantage of the position and Portland and Fox reaped most of the blame for the failure to reach a settlement. If not positively abandoned by "independents", anxious to be welcome at the splendid reception offered to the St. Alban's Tavern intermediaries at Carlton House by Fox's friend, the young Prince of Wales,[3] Fox still failed to carry the "most spirited remonstrance" he moved on March 8th by more than a majority of one in a division of 191 against 190.[4]

This proved the beginning of the end. Those members, who had been in doubt of the issue and had not wholly committed themselves, decided that Fox was beaten and that it behoved them, in view of the now certain Dissolution, to make no more difficulties about a Mutiny Bill expiring, if not renewed, on March 25th. The Mutiny Bill, moreover, was not rendered a "short" one, as had at one time been threatened, but was to last until March 25, 1785, and troubles were not even made about the Army extraordinaries of £2,360,992 voted in Committee of Supply on March 22nd. Indeed, from March 9th, when the new Mutiny Bill's termination date, hitherto left blank, was boldly written in as March 25, 1785, until March 23rd, when, on the Report stage of the Army extraordinaries, General Conway and Lord North, past leaders of the House, bitterly reproached Pitt for having sacrificed its rights and degraded its dignity, there was hardly a moment of difficulty for Government. Even on March 12th, when Sawbridge's unsuccessful motion for a Committee on the State of the Representation

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1784, pp. 226–7. [2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 227.

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, under March 10th: "The entertainment at Carleton House was one of the grandest spectacles that we have had in this country for years and was becoming the prince of a free nation. The dinner was given to the whole of that most respectable body of gentlemen who have assembled at the St. Albans Tavern. . . ."

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, History, p. 96, for the opening of Fox's resolution: "That an humble representation be presented to his majesty, most humbly to testify the surprize and affliction of this House on receiving the answer which his majesty's ministers have advised to the dutiful and seasonable address of this House. . . ."

tempted Lord Surrey to try and trap Pitt into a statement that might have been damaging, no profit could be extracted from Pitt's reply that he would not bring forward a Reform plan of his own till he should see a favourable opportunity.[1] In asking whether Pitt would bring forward the subject during the existing Session, Surrey was also attempting to fathom Government's intentions on Dissolution as, indeed, were Conway and North in pouring reproaches upon Pitt on March 23rd.[2] On March 24th, however, all doubts were resolved by a Royal announcement of the intention "to recur as speedily as possible to the sense of my people, by calling a new Parliament". The Court was now completely certain of success, and the *London Gazette* had already begun printing a new flood of Loyal Addresses.[3] Most of these differed significantly from previous examples by associating high praise of the Ministry in office with eulogy of the King's "paternal goodness" in saving the country from a "violent confederacy" "The virtuous young Minister" had come to stay.

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, March 1784, p. 228. Sawbridge's motion was defeated by 141 against 93.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 229–30: "General Conway endeavoured to force a reply. He rose, he said, to take his share of the humiliation in which the house was sunk. He had hitherto been fool enough to consider the House of Commons as of consequence to the country and of weight in the constitution; but the right hon. gent. [Mr. Pitt] had undeceived him; he had triumphed over the House of Commons, and proved it to be a cypher. But he warned him to make a moderate use of his triumph. The country, perhaps, never was in so perilous a state. In India, a distracted government, verging almost to a civil war. The Parliament of Ireland sitting at this moment on the most important commercial business, the protecting duties; which, whatever may be done, or however injurious, may perhaps never be within the bounds of possibility to be remedied. At such a moment was Great Britain to be left without a Parliament, and the country to be plunged into confusion. . . ." North was as bitter.

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784 Principal Occurrences, pp. 18–20: "March 16. . . . This night's gazette contains addresses from the county of Essex, the town of Sunderland, the corporation of Penzance, the borough of Tregony, the borough of Ashburton, the borough of Ludlow, the town of Paisley, the town of Kilmarnock, the burgh of Kirkcudbright, and the city of Aberdeen, humbly thanking his majesty for the appointment of his present ministers. Likewise a second address from the inhabitants of Tregony, expressive of their concern at the present distracted state of the British empire, and humbly imploring his majesty to call such men into his service as have the confidence of the representatives of the people." The last-named Address was, of course, a pro-Coalition one, and the later *London Gazettes* of March 20th, 23rd and 27th hardly show much improvement in the proportion of Addresses as between the Coalition and its enemies.

CHAPTER XXII

PITT'S FIRST TWO SESSIONS AS MAJORITY PREMIER

"Pert without fire, without experience sage,
Young with more art than Sh——ne glean'd from age,
Too proud from pilfer'd greatness to descend,
Too humble not to call Dundas his friend,
In silent dignity and sullen state,
This new Octavius rises to debate!
Mild and more mild he sees each placid row
Of country gentlemen with rapture glow;
He sees, convuls'd with sympathetic throbs,
Apprentice peers and deputy nabobs!
Nor rum contractors think his speech too long,
While words, like treacle, trickle from his tongue!
O soul congenial to the souls of Rolles!
Whether you touch the luxury of coals,
Or vote some necessary millions more,
To feed an Indian friend's exhausted store.
Fain would I praise (if I like thee could praise)
Thy matchless virtues in congenial lays.
But, ah! too weak. . . ."

The Opposition's *Rolliad* satirises Pitt and the new Parliament.

ut let us do what we please to put India from our thoughts we can do nothing to separate it from our public interest and our national reputation. . . . A government has been fabricated for that great province; the right honourable gentleman says, that, therefore, you ought not to examine into its conduct. Heavens! What an argument is this! We are not to examine into the conduct of the direction, because it is an old government: we are not to examine into this board of control, because it is a new one. . . . Unfortunately the basis of this new government has been laid on old condemned delinquents. . . . The event has been such as might have been expected. . . . Baffled, discountenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring before you any thing towards the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards a subversion of the present most corrupt and oppressive system for its government, in me shall find a weak I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and faithful assistant."

Burke attacks Pitt's Board of Control, February 28, 1785.

"The shop-keepers of London and Westminster, the borough, and Wapping, began signing a general declaration, rather to suffer their goods to be seized than voluntarily to pay the partial and oppressive shop-tax. It is said the Scots shop-keepers began this covenant."

The Gentleman's Magazine reports, under the date of September 24, 1785, one of the numerous protests against Pitt's shop-tax.

AFTER the long and absorbing preliminary struggle, lasting, in effect, from December 17, 1783, to March 23, 1784, the General Election of 1784 proved the most exciting and decisive of the eighteenth century. The dislike, and even hatred, that had been roused against the Coalition and its India Bill, extended from the Court to the lowest elements of the population who, if mainly without votes, enlisted with special eagerness as hustings-mobs. The "people", in short, declared decisively for the King's "paternal goodness" and "the virtuous young Minister" and against the "powerful and violent confederacy" that had, it seemed, endeavoured to storm the King's Cabinet and loot the India House under the lead of the ruined gambler and modern Catiline, Charles James Fox. Here is one contemporary account of the elections that contains a feature often thought to be characteristic of the English "democracy" of the nineteenth century, the anxious watching of the early contests for advance indications of the "verdict of the nation":[1]

Never was any decision, if we take it in all its parts, more full and explicit. . . . In two of the earliest contested elections, which were made on the 30th and 31st of March for the boroughs of Hertford and Hull, Mr. William Baker and Mr. David Hartley,[2] two very distinguished adherents of the ex-ministers were rejected. These determinations however were made upon a confined scale, and could at best be regarded only as a kind of earnest of the victory which was to follow. But the memorable day, which seemed finally to overthrow all opposition, was the sixth of April. On this day the poll was finally closed for the city of York. The importance of this place, as constituting one of the most numerous and independent bodies in the kingdom, was lost in the two circumstances, of their election furnishing a kind of touchstone of the disposition of that celebrated and opulent county, and of the advantage possessed by the declining party in that place, in having as their leader lord John Cavendish, a nobleman of the most unspotted character. . . . Lord John Cavendish and his fellow-candidates were thrown out upon the poll,[3] and on the same day Mr. Foljambe, the successor and heir of sir George Savile, and Mr. Weddel, declined all farther contest for the county of York. The other considerable persons in the party of Mr. Fox, who suffered in this general election, were sir Robert Clayton,

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, History, pp. 112–13.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, Chronicle, p. 186, for the figures. At Hertford the voting was Calvert, 365; Dimsdale, 292; Baker, 223; and at Hull it was Wilberforce, 807; Thornton, 751; Hartley, 337.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, Chronicle, p. 187, for the voting: Lord Galway, 1086; R. B. Milnes, 1019; Lord J. Cavendish, 911; Sir William Milner, 802.

member for Surrey; sir Richard Hotham, for Southwark; sir Thomas Charles Bunbury, for Suffolk; general Conway, for Bury St. Edmunds; Mr. Thomas William Coke, for Norfolk; colonel Hartley and Mr. Elwes, for Berkshire; Mr. Thomas Halsey, for Hertfordshire; Mr. Thomas Grenville, for Buckinghamshire; lord Sheffield, for the city of Coventry; Mr. John Townshend, for the university of Cambridge; and Mr. Thomas Erskine, for Portsmouth.

In Westminster took place the contest that has gone down to history for its fantastic display of all the peculiar virtues and follies of eighteenth-century England. In a determined attempt to drive Fox from the Westminster seat he had held in the last Parliament, Admiral Lord Hood, who might be regarded as the Court candidate, associated his cause with that of Sir Cecil Wray,[1] a Parliamentary Reformer in rebellion against the Coalition, the India Bill and the Receipts Tax. In the absence of a fourth candidate, Hood was relatively sure of election in his character of naval hero and principal assistant to Lord Rodney, since many partisans of Fox could hardly be persuaded to give their favourite a "plumper" and not use their second vote for Lord Hood. Accordingly the contest became more and more one between Fox and Wray, and Wray enjoyed not merely the important support of semi-Republicans like Dr. Jebb, furious against the Coalition,[2] but that of the very opposite influences represented by Hood's bands of brawling sailors and the Guardsmen and Palace employees brought to vote by the Court. It was soon a matter of national notoriety how Fox, who had had the lead in the two first days of a contest beginning on April 1st, had, after all the Court's engines were at work, been reduced to an apparently hopeless position by April 12th when polling had been closed almost everywhere else.[3]

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, April 1784, p. 314: "At Wood's hotel, the ensigns of the French and Spanish nations, taken by Adm. Hood during the late war, were displayed, and a band of music, playing 'Britons Strike home' was seated in the windows of the hotel. A flag was displayed before the hustings, on which was written 'Lord Hood, Sir Cecil Wray; No bribery—No receipt tax'; and under these words the *Ville de Paris* [a captured French warship] was displayed. . . ."

[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Public Occurrences, pp. 21–2: "Dr. Jebb, who addressed the people nearly in the following words . . . proceeded to declare, that, in order to warn persons, who might hereafter obtain the affections of the people, against insulting their honest feelings, it became them to show their abhorrence of the coalition, by a rejection of that candidate, who had failed the past expectations of the people of England, and had joined with a set of men, who had brought this country to the brink of destruction. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, p. 113, and Principal Occurrences, p. 34, where a day-to-day state of the poll is given. By April 12th over ten thousand people had

But the electoral law of the time only permitted polling to be closed well in advance of the day fixed for the meeting of the new Parliament—in this instance May 18th—if the contesting candidates agreed or no more voters presented themselves after a decent interval fixed by the Presiding Officer. Fox's aristocratic friends, however, headed by the Dukes of Portland and Devonshire,[1] now saw to it that the highways and bye-ways of Westminster were searched for possible claimants to a vote who had not yet been polled. They proved sufficient in widely-enfranchised Westminster to permit of a thin trickle being maintained to the hustings for over a month, and the nation followed excitedly how, with the aid of canvassing by the much-caricatured Duchess of Devonshire and Sam House, Fox's publican admirer,[2] Fox first drew level with Wray and then, to the bitter chagrin of the Court, passed him irretrievably. More excitements followed after the poll was closed on May 16th, and Westminster met on May 17th to hear the High Bailiff as Presiding and Returning Officer accept a demand for a scrutiny from Sir Cecil Wray and declare that, meanwhile, he would merely state the facts and the figures in his return and refrain from giving the names of any of the candidates as "duly elected". This was not only contrary to precedent[3] but seemed deliberately inspired to prevent Fox from leading Opposition on the morrow as member for Westminster. There was even doubt whether the seat for the northernmost Scottish burghs, arranged for him when his Westminster prospects were at their darkest, would not be challenged on the ground that,

voted, a greater number than ever before, and the state of the poll was Hood, 5464; Wray, 4995; Fox, 4677.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, History, pp. 113–14. In the "splendid" procession celebrating Fox's victory on May 17th a conspicuous place was given to the Duke of Devonshire's coach and six, the Duke of Portland's coach and six, and "seventy-eight livery servants mounted, belonging to the two noble families". Amid the trumpeters, parish committees, bands of music and the "select committee, sumptuously mounted, composed of the first men of rank and fortune" who were in closest attendance on Fox in his "simple and elegantly adorned chair, interwoven with laurel, myrtle, and flowers" and borne by thirty-two men in white, with another relief of thirty-two to take over, room was found for the "crest of his royal highness the prince of Wales".

[2] Cf. T. Wright, *Caricature History of the Georges*, pp. 384–97, for some caricature reproductions. See also *The History of the Westminster Election* (1784).

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, p. 35: "Mr. Fox observed, that in the most severe and hard-fought election battles that he was acquainted with, either by his own experience, or that he had learned from the journals, he knew but of two such special returns . . . and both made on account of the utter impossibility of the returning officer making a due return, owing to riotous proceedings . . . a violent altercation took place. . . ."

at the time of the election, he was not a qualified burgess of any of the towns in question.[1]

It would seem that the circumstances of the Westminster Election and the appearance of rancorous unfairness with which Fox was pursued helped him to recover ground surprisingly in the new Parliament. Nor did it harm him that the heir to the throne signalised the opening of Parliament by offering the leaders of the beaten Coalition a magnificent entertainment at his newly-acquired mansion of Carlton House and that at this event and at another elsewhere, later in the evening, and similarly distinguished by great social success, Lord North's following continued undisturbed their happy fraternisation with Fox's.[2] During a Parliamentary Session, indeed, lasting from May 18th until August 20th and dominated, first, by the Westminster Election dispute and, afterwards, by a Government India Bill and the laying-on of heavy new taxes, Opposition had considerable opportunity. On India subjects, Fox, Burke and Francis found a dangerous line against Government by concentrating on the alleged crimes of Hastings,[3] still the favourite servant of a Company to whom Pitt owed much and which could be represented as receiving repayment not merely in permission to declare an 8 per cent

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, p. 27, under April 26th: "This day came on the election of a member for the northern district of the boroughs in Scotland, when the delegates from the towns of Wick and Dornock voted for John Sinclair, esq. late member for Caithness, and since returned for Lostwithiel, in Cornwall; and the delegates from Tain, Dingwall, and Kirkwall, for the right honourable Charles James Fox. . . . Objections, however, were stated. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 37–9: "About six hundred of the most distinguished persons in the kingdom assembled. . . . The preparations on the occasion were full of taste and magnificence. . . . The political party, lord North, Mr. Fox, col. North, col Fitzpatrick, Mr. Byng, and others, retired under another groupe of trees. . . . Mrs. Crewe's ball on Tuesday night, in honour of Mr. Fox's victory, was the most pleasant and jovial ever given in the circle of high life. . . . There were present among others, the prince of Wales, duke of Devonshire, earl Fitzwilliam, earl of Jersey, earl of Carlisle, earl Cholmondley, earl of Derby, lord North. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1784, p. 783, for Fox on July 16th: "He followed Mr. Francis in criminating the conduct of Gov. Hastings, who, to use the words of a Rt. Hon. gentleman (Mr. Dundas) two years ago, never went from Calcutta, but blood and rapine followed him; and in enforcing and elucidating the arguments against the exceptionable parts of the bill which Mr. Francis had pointed out, he dwelt long on the merits of his own bill. The propositions contained in it were such as looked villainy in the face. He detested temporising expedients; he well knew that if the same servants were to be continued, the same abuses would be continued. But he boldly struck at the root. Had he done otherwise, he might have been in a very different situation to that in which he now stood. . . ."

dividend[1] but in an India Bill so admittedly imperfect that Government accepted suggestion after suggestion from Opposition[2] and still left the Company capable of oppression. And as for Pitt's tax-programme, here is an extract from the City records of York showing the effect of merely one of the new taxes in changing sentiment in a city the declaration of whose poll, on April 6th, had been considered one of the deadliest blows to the Coalition:[3]

City of York. At the Guildhall of the said city, the first day of September, in the year of our Lord 1784, it was resolved by the mayor and commonalty of the said city,

That the thanks of this corporation here assembled be given to the right hon. Charles James Fox, the right hon. William Eden, William Joliffe esq., George Dempster esq., and John Courtney esq. for their wise, strenuous, and patriotic opposition to the bill brought into parliament during the last session, imposing an additional duty on windows in lieu of part of the late duties on tea, which bill had been declared by the inhabitants of this city, at a general meeting, to be extremely impolitic, partial, compulsory, oppressive, and unjust, and which now appears to this corporation to lay a heavy and peculiar burthen upon the people of this kingdom. . . .

Nor was it only the increase of window-tax which had its enemies "without doors". Proceedings in Parliament made it plain that Pitt's barely-defeated coal-tax would have pressed more harshly on the poor than even his unpopular candle-tax,[4] while there was

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1784, p. 938, for Commons proceedings on August 4th: "The report of the India relief bill was brought up, and the debate again recommenced. Sir James Erskine, fully satisfied that the whole was a direct fraud . . . concluded with moving, That the word *six* stand for *eight*. . . ." The dividend absorbed money due to Government.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, November 1784, p. 859, for Commons proceedings on July 26th: "On the report of the India regulating bill being read. . . . Mr. Sheridan, on this occasion displayed astonishing powers of reasoning and ridicule. He took the bill up, as first brought in, and exhibiting it in every point of view, made almost every clause either in sense or substance so truly ridiculous as to extort from administration a confession that it had been much indebted to opposition for many very considerable amendments. . . ."

[3] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, under September 1st.

[4] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1784, p. 700, for the points made in the Commons on July 1st: "Mr. Joliffe objected to the tax on coals as materially affecting the poor, who would thereby be reduced to great distress. . . . Sir H. Mackworth stated, that provisions were so dear in many parts of the country, that the poor might be said to be nourished by the warmth of the fire. Deprive them of that comfort, and they must literally starve. . . . Sir James Johnstone desired to know if the cottager, who groped his way to bed with his farthing tallow, was to pay; and the duke who ranted all night in the full blaze of meridian light, with his wax-candles, was to go scot-free. . . ."

much to be said also against his taxation of cotton[1] and linen,[2] not to mention his imposition of licence-duties on new categories of citizens from the hop-growers[3] to the hat-dealers.[4] Certainly it did not go altogether unremarked that Fox, upon whom so much public abuse had been poured only a few months before, was, on September 15th, once again having the London populace take the horses from his carriage in order to draw it along themselves.[5] Pitt would plainly have to avoid major mistakes.

Doubtless Pitt considered that the plans for the 1785 Session, upon which he was engaged during a Recess lasting until January 26, 1785, were such as would raise his reputation and strengthen his position. Thus, early in December, Wyvill's Yorkshire Association was given the promise that Pitt would move boldly and Ministerially for Parliamentary Reform.[6] Pitt, of course, expected imposing supporting demonstrations[7] and, meanwhile, he had good reason to concentrate upon the highly important British and Irish Bills that were being prepared in the hope of securing an agreed Anglo-Irish commercial settlement. Such a settlement was urgent because the new "independence" of the

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1784, p. 938, for proceedings on August 4th when it became clear that the cotton trade disowned the delegates who had negotiated with Administration.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, when the linen taxes were reached: "Mr. Ilay Campbell said, this would ruin the trade in Scotland; and so apprehensive were the linen manufacturers there of the consequences that they had made up their minds to follow some other branch of business. Sir William Cunningham said, the Scotch manufacturers would all emigrate. . . . Mr. H. Blair said, if the resolution for laying three farthings a yard on linen be agreed to, they may as well make a present of the trade to Ireland, for it could not be carried on in Scotland. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, September 1784, p. 700: "Mr. Marsham objected strongly against the licence to hop-planters. It would not affect the wealthy, but totally annihilate the little planters. The duty was already as much as the planter could bear."

[4] Cf. *Ibid.*, December 1784, p. 941: "Mr. Sheridan stated the hardship that a licence of ten shillings a year would bring upon little shop-keepers in the villages . . . who . . . sold hats among other things for which they must likewise take out licences. He insisted that these licences must operate to the ruin of all such petty shop-keepers, if not mitigated. . . . Mr. Pitt saw the necessity of the reduction and yielded to it. . . ."

[5] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Principal Occurrences, pp. 64–5; *Annual Register*, 1784–5, Chronicle, p. 201.

[6] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 390–466, for such messages sent by Wyvill as the following to London supporters: "I am authorised by Mr. Pitt to assert, that he will bring the subject of Parliamentary Reformation before the House of Commons as early as possible in the approaching Session; that he will support his intended propositions to the utmost of his power and credit, *as a Man* and *as a Minister, honestly and boldly*. . . ."

[7] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 465, for Wyvill's information that the letters he sent in various directions in order to stir up such demonstrations were, many of them, "seen and approved by Mr. Pitt".

Irish Parliament made it impossible to disregard, any longer, Irish protests against the height of British tariffs upon Irish goods when Irish tariffs against England were still, in the main, so low. Matters had, in fact, gone far beyond mere protests when "voluntary" observance of non-importation agreements was being enforced upon reluctant Dublin merchants by tarring and feathering mobs,[1] often led on by Irish workmen whom English wares had supposedly reduced to starvation. That non-importation was smiled upon by Irish Volunteer organisations,[2] now hopeful of eliminating English influence altogether[3] by Parliamentary Reform, only made the situation more urgent as did, indeed, the readiness of the Bourbon Powers to fish in troubled waters. In the absence of English concessions, even the Irish Parliament of luxury consumers might be forced to take some anti-British measures despite its anxiety not to be deprived of high-quality British imports of unlimited variety and driven on to the scanty choice and indifferent quality of Irish manufactures.

Pitt finally resolved to offer Ireland tariff reciprocity on a plan which would have chosen the lower of the two existing duties on any article—Ireland's upon England or England's upon Ireland—as the future standard for exchanges between the two countries. This plan of "equal trade" it was which, after being welcomed by the Irish Commons on February 12th and the Irish Peers on February 16th, was introduced by Pitt himself at Westminster on

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1784, p. 790: "Letters from Dublin, by the last Mail, mention, that the enormities committed by the mob every day become more desperate. A reputable draper was, last week, upon a charge of importing English articles, taken out of his house, and dragged by a prodigious number of people to a place called the Tenter-grounds . . . where he was tied to a post, and lashed by those rioters till he fainted; they then tarred and feathered him, and led him through the principal streets. . . . He now lies so dangerously ill that his life is despaired of."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, August 1784, pp. 631–2: "At a full meeting of the Rathdowny Volunteers, held on Sunday August 1, the following resolutions were unanimously agreed to: '. . . Resolved, That it is our duty at this crisis to accede to that non-consumption [of imported goods] agreement which has been so universally adopted throughout this kingdom. Resolved, therefore, That we will not purchase for ourselves or families any other than Irish manufactures, until the legislators shall have established some proper and permanent encouragement for the commerce, trade, and manufactures of this kingdom'. . . ."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, September 1784, p. 709: "On the 30th of Aug. Mr. Dowling, printer of the Volunteers Journal, was taken up by order of the Lord Lieutenant, charged with high treason. The following paragraph, inserted in his paper, is marked by the Crown lawyers: 'O Ireland, Ireland, unhappy Ireland, will you for ever bear with such tyranny! Are you asleep with arms in your hands?. . . . Pull those tyrants from the seat of power, and convince the world, that Ireland must be free'. . . ."

February 22nd. Though the plan nearly always involved a large reduction of English duties against Ireland and though the menace to British industry of cheap Irish labour had been heard of before, Ministers seem at first to have been very hopeful. In urging Ireland's readiness to throw, into the settlement, valuable revenues to be earmarked for the Navy; in demonstrating the vast superiority that English manufacturers enjoyed in respect of capital and skilled labour; in noting, even, that the cry of cheap Scottish labour had been vainly employed against the magnificently successful Scottish settlement of 1707, Pitt apparently satisfied himself that he had a winning case. He was still a young politician, inexperienced enough to withhold the generous gesture to Fox which would have prevented the unjustifiably interminable Westminster Scrutiny from proving the prickliest problem of the Session's opening weeks,[1] and he hardly seems to have paid sufficient heed to the indignation already excited among the most powerful section of the new industrialists by what they considered his completely unfair textile taxes of 1784.[2] When the whole body of the new industrialists, together with their workmen, grew excited about the threat to their livelihood that would come from the Irish Trade proposals, and more especially if some current

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, pp. 57–80, for the proceedings of February 1st; February 8th (when the continuation of the Scrutiny was only carried by 174 against 135); February 21st, when the voting was merely 140 against 135; and March 3rd, when Sawbridge defeated Pitt and secured the enforcement of due returns upon Westminster's High Bailiff by 162 votes against 124. Pitt's majority had tired of his apparent vindictiveness but came to his rescue on March 9th by a vote of 242 against 137, when Fox moved to have the proceedings of June 8, 1784, expunged from the records of the House because it was on that day that the House had declined to order Westminster's High Bailiff to make the normal return of "duly elected" members.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1785, pp. 524–5, for some Lancashire bitterness from bleachers and dyers against the cotton and calico taxes of 1784: "While this petition [presented April 4th] was pending, 18 of the principal manufacturers, who employed 42,000 workmen, held a meeting, and came to the following resolutions unanimously:

1. That the destructive systems adopted towards the manufactures of this kingdom . . . render it incumbent upon them immediately to appoint delegates to go to Ireland, for the purpose of treating with any public body, or individual nobleman or gentleman, respecting a proper situation for conducting an extensive cotton manufacture. . . .

3. That, to justify their conduct to their countrymen, for adopting a measure so repugnant to their feelings, and so ruinous to the nation, as transplanting the cotton manufactures to foreign parts, they beg leave to give the following reasons. . . . That to introduce vexatious and restrictive excise laws amongst the manufactures of this Kingdom, when surrounding nations are panting for participation of them, and offering the most tempting allurements to our artist to emigrate, is a measure wholly *unjustifiable*. . . ."

plans for transplanting industries to low-cost Ireland matured, Pitt was fated to have a very critical reverse.

Only a knowledge of the detailed Parliamentary proceedings of the spring and summer of 1785 gives an adequate idea of the chagrined Pitt's increasingly uncomfortable position on the Irish Trade proposals as the Session progressed. Industry after industry sent in petitions demanding to be heard by Counsel at the Bar; the heavily excised sugar, soap, tobacco, glass, salt and leather trades expressed peculiar apprehensions of their own; and shippers, merchants and even the "West India interest" showed reasons for fearing some aspects of the import facilities that Ireland would receive. Here is one description of a movement whose most remarkable demonstration was the Petition "of the merchants, manufacturers, and others of the town and neighbourhood of Manchester" signed by the unprecedented number of 55,352 persons:[1]

> The petitions presented against the Irish propositions amounted in the whole to upwards of sixty. They were sent to parliament from almost every quarter of the kingdom, and there was scarcely a single species of manufacture or merchandise, upon the subject of which the persons peculiarly interested did not appear to have conceived considerable alarm. From the sixteenth of March to the twelfth day of May, the house of commons were almost incessantly employed in the hearing of council, and the examination of witnesses.... The persons examined were unquestionably many of them, not more respectable for their opulence, than venerable for their integrity. The names of several acquired so much celebrity in the progress of the business, that it might be thought an omission... to fail to enumerate.... Mr. Wedgewood of Staffordshire, messieurs Walker, Richardson and Peele of Manchester, Mr. Robertson of Glasgow, and Mr. Gibbons of Bristol....

It was on May 12th after the Irish propositions had once again undergone assault by witnesses called in support of a Petition "from the iron manufacturers of London, Bristol, Staffordshire, Warwickshire, and Scotland" that Pitt rose, at nine o'clock in the evening, to make a three hours' speech offering modifications but insisting that there could be no further adjournment of the business of adopting a preliminary general resolution. Fox replied by congratulating the country on a happy escape from great dangers, reprimanded Pitt for his scornful treatment of industrial

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, History, pp. 151–3; and *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1785, p. 525.

witnesses,[1] pointed with pride to Government's adoption of changes first suggested by Opposition, and demanded further time for the consideration of Ministers' altered propositions. If Fox was defeated by 281 votes against 155 and the Minister finally obtained his way at eight in the morning, the end of Pitt's troubles on Anglo-Irish Trade was still very far off. It took until May 31st to complete detailed business in the Commons on the Trade propositions, and then vexatious delay occurred in the Lords owing to the adoption of amendments in seeming violation of the financial privileges of the Lower House. As late in a Session (begun on January 25th) as July 23rd, Pitt was still facing the prospect of further Conference with the Lords; the adoption of an Address to the King with the original Resolutions offered Ireland and the Amendments subsequently found necessary in England; and the introduction of a Bill grounded on the Address but probably displeasing to Ireland. On August 2nd the Bill was introduced, and Government adjourned Parliament to October 27th. When the adjournment was turned into prorogation in October and the immense Irish efforts of the Session automatically cancelled,[2] it was because Ireland had already rejected with contumely the Trade propositions as unilaterally altered by England.[3]

The Irish set-back was not the only one suffered by Pitt during the 1785 Session. On Parliamentary Reform he had had to move on April 18th when the new industrial elements in the country, whose ardent support might have been expected, had no energy to spare from their hot fight against the Anglo-Irish Trade proposals. There were genuine merits in Pitt's plan of listing thirty-six decayed boroughs, returning seventy-two members, for

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1785, p. 710, whose summary of Pitt's speech of May 12th makes him refer "to the exaggerated testimony given at the bar of the House by manufacturers who wished to engross every market to themselves, and who, not well knowing how to command those markets, were determined, at all risks of truth or consistency, to run into every extreme that the present prevalent agitation of mens minds could prompt them to entertain. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Supplement for 1785, p. 1016.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, August 1785, pp. 656–7, for proceedings in the Irish House of Commons on August 11th and 12th, when Flood and Grattan overbore Chief Secretary Orde, handicapped, as he was, by the alleged English inroad attempted on Irish legislative independence by the new demand that Ireland should adopt and follow the English Navigation System as part of the commercial bargain. The populace celebrated "the supposed victory gained by the Patriots" by making the night of August 16th a triumph with illuminations general throughout Dublin and bonfires blazing "in every street".

compensated disfranchisement on the application of two-thirds of the voters in each case. And these merits were not decreased by Pitt's readiness to give the county vote to Copyholders as well as Freeholders; to extend voting rights in populous boroughs of restricted franchise; and to consider, after the redistribution of the first seventy-two bought-up seats to under-represented counties and the Metropolis should have been arranged, further redistribution, up to a grand total of one hundred seats, on behalf of populous unrepresented places making proper application.[1] It seems very plain, however, that the new industrialists of Lancashire, Scotland and the Midlands were not minded to demonstrate in favour of Pitt's plan at the very time they were fighting him on his Anglo-Irish Trade proposals.[2] They were more than disappointed in the return the "virtuous young Minister" was making for the important support he had received from the industrial districts against the Coalition. And the distant prospect of Parliamentary honours, in respect of newly-enfranchised county districts or boroughs, was hardly yet a temptation to industrialists still not firmly enough established to be able to contemplate the conduct of their highly speculative enterprises by deputy from Westminster. Indeed what measure of attraction there was in the idea of enfranchisement must often have been more than overborne by the distasteful attendant prospect of election saturnalia and the industrial indiscipline and heavy loss of working-time likely to result among the "hands". Nothing, in fact, seems to have impressed the anxiously-watching Wyvill as more fatal to Pitt's proposal than North's dexterous demonstration of the poor petitioning on its behalf.[3] When Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, History, p. 83: "He intended in the like manner to purchase the franchise of other boroughs besides the original thirty-six, and to transfer the right of returning members to large towns hitherto unrepresented, upon their presenting a petition to parliament to be indulged with this privilege. The result of his plan, according to a calculation that was made, was to give one hundred members to the popular interest in the kingdom, and to extend the right of election to one hundred thousand persons, who, by the existing provisions of law were excluded from it."

[2] Cf. Wyvill's *Political Papers*, iv, 458–61, for his disappointment that his applications to Matthew Boulton and Samuel Garbutt had failed to induce them to co-operate with the more decided Mr. Russell to procure a Birmingham Petition for Parliamentary Reform.

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 461 n.: "The Ex-Minister of Corruption was aware of this circumstance [the failure of a petitioning movement in Birmingham], and of a similar want of zeal in Manchester, and other great unrepresented towns; and when the motion for Reforming the Representation was made by Mr. Pitt, he ably availed himself of it. Affecting ignorance, he desired the Clerk of the

and Sheffield all refrained from Petitions; when, according to North, only three hundred persons could be induced to attend a widely-advertised supporting meeting in the City, he was plainly justified in denying that a sufficient case had been made out for great constitutional changes. And if Fox stood manfully to his old advocacy of Reform, his heartily expressed dislike of Pitt's readiness to make pecuniary inducement Reform's prime motive power[1] must have done it nearly as much harm as Burke's joining North in eulogy of the existing order and condemnation of Mr. Wyvill's "disseminating notions through the kingdom, tending to unsettle the minds of poor industrious men, who were quiet enough before they were told the constitution was subverted".[2] It is not hard to see why a majority of 248 against 174 refused Pitt leave "to bring in a bill to amend the representation of the people of England in parliament".

The full tale of Pitt's 1785 troubles, however, is not told until his tax-vexations are described. Pitt had pledged himself over and over again, as Fox sarcastically noticed, to a great effort to resume Sinking Fund operations on a large scale. Accordingly though boasting, according to Fox, of his ability to show a great surplus,[3] Pitt had resolved to join to "oeconomy" plans in the public offices, legislation adding yet another batch of new taxes to existing burdens. Those taxes made a formidable string of imposts for they were intended to prepare the way for a large Sinking Fund plan as well as to furnish interest for the loan needed to absorb much of the heavy floating debt that was the American War's most troublesome legacy and the principal

Commons House 'might read the Petitions from the Towns of Birmingham and Manchester'. He was told, that they had presented no Petitions. Leeds and Sheffield also had presented none. By this artifice a willing Senate was taught to resist Reform though pressed by the Minister. If the People are indifferent to the change . . . surely, exclaimed the Adversary of Reform, Parliament will not obtrude the boon, and rashly innovate, before the People ask it."

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, History, pp. 85–6: "There was something injurious in holding out pecuniary temptations to an Englishman to relinquish his franchise. He entertained an opinion, which, though not a popular one, he was always ready to avow, that the right of governing was not a property but a trust, and that whatever was given for constitutional purposes should be resumed when those purposes were no longer subserved. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1785, p. 620.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 623–4, for the summary of Parliamentary proceedings of April 22, 26 and 29, 1785. Pitt had claimed on the 22nd to have a surplus of £702,529 on the old Sinking Funds and Fox on the 29th had argued that it looked as though Pitt was omitting £1,110,000 on the debit side unless intending it "to furnish a pretence for a taxation".

obstacle to the inauguration of a sound new Sinking Fund. And if, as in the case of Irish Trade and Parliamentary Reform, Pitt aimed at a major success that would secure his political primacy, he was to find much tribulation on the way. No great agitation, indeed, seemed possible, say, against his projected revenue from the licence-duty on pawnbrokers, the extension of the manservant tax to cover tavern-waiters and the reduction of trade allowances by the Salt-Excise. But the very reverse proved the case with Pitt's suggested imposts on maidservants, gloves and retail shops though Pitt balanced the last and heaviest by offering the irate shopkeeping community a placatory suppression of hawkers and pedlars as "a pest to the community and a nursery and medium for the preservation of illicit trade".[1]

This is not the place to recount Pitt's detailed troubles on the score of oppressed maidservants or of hawkers threatened with the pillage of their livelihood. His glove-troubles, too, shall be omitted and notice concentrated upon the wrath brought down on him even by his modified shop-tax. Here is one account of what followed the entry into force of the Shop-Tax on July 15th:[2]

> The shopkeepers at Bath, on the 15th inst. (the day the tax on their shops took place), . . . hung their doors and windows with mourning . . . , and most of them had inscriptions expressive of their detestation of their once favourite minister. *No Pitt, no partial Tax*. . . . At Bristol, the shops were all shut, and hung with emblems of mourning; inscriptions appeared in all parts, expressive of the most indignant contempt of the author of the tax, and the bells of the several churches were rung muffled on the occasion. At Norwich the effigy of the Minister was conducted through the town on horseback, attended by six executioners, and a vast multitude of people; and, after receiving the most disgraceful treatment was led to Mousehold Heath, where a gallows was erected. . . . In almost every town in England this odious tax was marked with disgrace. A little shop-keeper, in the parish of Deptford, near Warminster, whose returns do not often exceed forty shillings a week, pays a duty for a licence to deal in hats, for another in medicines, for another in tea, for another to ride an horse, and for another to keep a cart, and, sixthly, his little hut is now assessed to the shop-tax!

The "virtuous young Minister" was thus a second time in one Session experiencing a formidable outburst of temper from a powerful section of the "public".

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, History, p. 128.
[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1785, p. 564.

Before closing this chapter it might be profitable to hazard a few general reflections on the progress of politics between 1762 and 1785. A first obvious point to make, perhaps, is the unprecedentedly long, continuous and effective education which the "public" had been given in asserting its own views and prejudices against Government. Ever since November 1761 when Chatham as "the Great Commoner" had been used as the idol of the "streets" against the Palace, Parliament had seen, and a large part of the "public" had applauded, an almost unvarying criticism of Government policies. On occasion not only Wilkes but the more responsible Fox had been driven by Opposition zeal to excite dread of a possible tyranny by the Crown among the strong elements of the "public" ever ready for almost diseased suspicion of the Court.[1] The "sober portion of the public", indeed, had sometimes rallied strongly to the Palace against such inexcusable Opposition faction as justified everything, however criminal, done by Americans or sought to intimidate the King at home by promoting Guildhall demonstrations of the half-ignorant and street-demonstrations of the wholly ignorant. But the eager gratitude with which the Court acknowledged its bursts of temporary popularity during the American War is proof of a new sense of dependence on the active goodwill of the "public", and a special anxiety to stand well with the "public" is noticeable in all the Royal Messages and Speeches penned during the critical 1784 struggle against the Coalition.

If, moreover, George III professed, in 1784, to owe the preservation of the Crown's last constitutional prerogatives to the efforts of the "people" on his behalf, the King's "virtuous young Minister" claimed his power to be almost the special creation of the national revolt against the Coalition. In his most difficult moments of 1785, for example, Pitt appealed to the House elected in 1784 as to a very special embodiment of the General Will. He urged, in fact, as one of his reasons for pressing Parliamentary Reform, the advantage of getting the national will always as effectively embodied as it was in 1785, though without a grave preliminary crisis proving necessary for the defeat of "factious ambition and corrupt venality".

[1] Cf. *Memorials and Correspondence of C. J. Fox*, i, 146, for Fox suggesting even to Rockingham on October 13, 1776, a manifesto to the King "to express openly and fairly to him the well-grounded apprehensions every man must entertain from the power of the Crown in case his Majesty should be able to subdue the American Continent by the force of his arms".

Here is Pitt, on March 9, 1785, successfully appealing to the members of his Majority, weary of the Westminster Election controversy, to uphold the legitimacy of not having seated Fox immediately and without question:[1]

Mr. Pitt was extremely zealous in urging the house not to incur such a disgrace as would follow the rescinding their former resolutions. The plainest legal analogies, the most obvious precedents . . . the strongest convictions of reason and right, together with the pride of consistency, and the jealousy of incorruptible but insulted integrity, must preclude the possibility of a compliance with the present motion. He exulted in the complexion of the existing house of commons, which, notwithstanding the disadvantages inseparable from the imperfect mode of its election, retained so much of the characteristic dignity of the British nation. He attributed this in a great measure to Mr. Fox, and his colleagues in office, who, by pressing forward a crisis the most momentous and important that was to be found in our history, had roused every exertion of public spirit that remained among the people, and had centered the weight of those exertions in the assembly he addressed. . . . He derived a flattering presage from the character of the house, that the great question which was nearest to his heart, that on which the whole and only prospect of a final triumph over every obstacle to greatness and to glory depended, that which alone could entitle Englishmen to the appellation of free, and that which must finally ensure to wise, to virtuous, and to constitutional endeavours, a victory over factious ambition and corrupt venality, the stupendous question of a parliamentary reform, would be taken up by them with a determined and upright boldness, and be crowned with the most memorable success. He warned that assembly which Mr. Fox had so repeatedly treated with the most insolent invective and contempt, those new members with which the house had been crowded on the opening of the session "men with whose faces nobody was acquainted" not to be seduced, by those meretricious blandishments which the good humour of one successful day had drawn from that gentleman. . . .

After this view of a monarch, schooled by over twenty years' experience of Opposition to study the "public", and of his Minister, committed to quite radical Parliamentary Reform, what is to be said of Opposition's foremost figure? Even before Pitt's worst troubles on Irish Trade and the Taxes, his speech of March 9, 1785, quoted above, bears obvious witness that Fox was gaining ground enough in the Commons to give the Minister anxiety. Opposition had certainly made the wits roar by that capital skit on the "schoolboy" Minister and his most devoted supporters,

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1785, History, pp. 79–80. Pitt won the division by 242 votes against 137.

the *Rolliad*,[1] and Pitt's speech of March 9th seems to breathe resentment of the species of satire that had ventured to speak of

> . . . the infant Atlas of the State
> The matchless miracle of modern days,
> In whom Brittania to the world displays
> A sight to make surrounding nations stare:
> A kingdom trusted to a schoolboy's care.

Yet so long as the existing Parliament should sit or George III should reign, office seemed out of the question for Fox. That was, perhaps, why he felt free, on April 18, 1785, to take a more "republican" attitude towards Parliamentary Reform than Pitt and to condemn the notion of the country's needing to buy back from decayed boroughs the seats desired for under-represented areas. That, too, was perhaps why he was strongly interesting himself in that still-vexed question of "public liberty"—the right of juries in libel cases to decide on a publication's guilt or innocence as well as on the confined issue of who had published. This question, raised again in August 1784 by Court altercations between Judge, Jury and Defending Counsel in the action against the Dean of St. Asaph for having published Sir William Jones's "levelling" *Principles of Government*,[2] Fox was not able to get decided in favour of "liberty" until 1792. It served, however, as introduction to a new career of Opposition usefulness in defence and extension of the old Whig cause of "civil and religious liberty", and, meanwhile, India went on providing Opposition with a new and generous extension of its field of action. It was on February 28, 1785, for example, that Fox and Burke, in trying to secure information as to whether Pitt's boasted new Board of Control could really be trusted to stop the pillage of India by Company servants, brought on a famous debate on the alleged debts owed by the Nabob of Arcot. In treating of the iniquitous means by which a total of £3,400,000 of alleged debt had been accumulated

[1] The full title is *Criticisms on the Rolliad, a Poem, being a more faithful Portraiture of the present Immaculate Young Minister and his Friends, than any extant.* Rolle, M.P. for Devonshire, was chosen to give his name to the title because of his lead in the attempt often made by the Ministerial benches to stop Burke's speeches by coughing, hawking and the making of other unseemly noises.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1784–5, Appendix to Chronicle, pp. 280–88 for the ample space assigned to the proceedings in a *Register* covering the events of two years. Erskine as Defending Counsel strongly resisted Mr. Justice Buller's attempt to twist the Jury's verdict of "Guilty of publishing only."

against the Nabob, Burke took leave to doubt whether one claim for £880,000 had meant more than £100,000 of real money put at the Nabob's disposal. All in all, the devastated Carnatic was to be asked to provide £383,000 annually as interest for a number of grasping and usurious adventurers who had possessed nothing when they came to India and who had never had anything to lend save the product of India's own pillage.[1] It seems to have been Opposition's failure to stop the assignment of huge Carnatic revenues to these alleged creditors of the Nabob that induced Fox and Burke to plan a new appeal to the country's conscience. The head-pillager of all, in Opposition's view, Governor Hastings, had been emboldened by news of the Company's complete victory over the Coalition to depart for England which he reached in June 1785.[2] Him it was resolved to impeach if the 1786 Session yielded the slightest encouragement.

[1] Cf. Burke's *Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts*, for his estimate that the most notorious of these adventurers, Paul Benfield, had at one time claimed to be creditor for £800,000. Burke showed reason to expect that his claims for £592,000 were going to be accepted as well as for £106,500 that represented alleged arrears of interest. Burke also claimed that Benfield and his ally Richard Atkinson had financed Pitt's struggle against the Coalition, having good reason to dread the probable attitude that the Commissioners under Fox's Bill would have taken towards their accounts.

[2] Cf. Bohn Edition of Blair's *Chronological Tables*, for February 8th, as the date of his laying down the Governor-Generalship and June 16th, as the date of his arrival in London. "An audience of his Majesty" is reported on October 23rd.

CHAPTER XXIII

WORKMEN AND THEIR EMPLOYERS

"A large body of coal heavers assembled in a riotous manner in Wapping, went on board the colliers and obliged the men who were at work to leave off; so that the business of delivering ships, in the river, is wholly at a stand. These men complain of their masters, the undertakers; that they oppress them in various shapes, that they curtail their wages; pay them not in money but in liquor and goods of a bad quality; and that these undertakers get fortunes, while the poor men's families who do the work are starving. This riot was attended with much blood shed; the rioters having met with opposition fought desperately, and several lives were lost."

The Gentleman's Magazine reports a trade dispute of April 1768.

"We rarely hear, it has been said, of the combinations of masters, though frequently of those of workmen. But whoever imagines, upon this account, that masters rarely combine, is as ignorant of the world as of the subject. Masters are always and everywhere in a sort of tacit, but constant and uniform, combination, not to raise the wages of labour above their actual rate. . . . Masters, too, sometimes enter into particular combinations to sink the wages of labour even below this rate. These are always conducted with the utmost silence and secrecy till the moment of execution; and when the workmen yield, as they sometimes do, without resistance, though severely felt by them, they are never heard of by other people. Such combinations, however, are frequently resisted by a contrary defensive combination of the workmen, who sometimes, too, without any provocation of this kind, combine of their own accord, to raise the price of their labour. Their usual pretences are, sometimes the high price of provisions, sometimes the great profit which their masters make by their work. But whether their combinations be offensive or defensive, they are always abundantly heard of. In order to bring the point to a speedy decision, they have always recourse to the loudest clamour, and sometimes to the most shocking violence and outrage. They are desperate, and act with the folly and extravagance of desperate men, who must either starve, or frighten their masters into an immediate compliance with their demands. The masters, upon these occasions, are just as clamorous upon the other side, and never cease to call

aloud for the assistance of the civil magistrate, and the rigorous execution of those laws which have been enacted with so much severity against the combination of servants, labourers, and journeymen. . . ."

The Wealth of Nations (1776) on trade disputes.

"Manchester, Oct. 9. During the course of the week several mobs have assembled in different parts of the neighbourhood, and have done much mischief by destroying the engines for carding and spinning cotton wool (without which the trade of this country could never be possibly carried on to any great extent). In the neighbourhood of Chorley, the mob destroyed and burned the engines and buildings erected by Mr. Arkwright at a very great expence. . . ."

The Annual Register, 1779, reports the first mob-attacks on the new textile machinery.

THE comfortable "public" of the mid-eighteenth century was not altogether unaware of the existence of a Labour problem or even of the tendency for strong workmen's "confederacies" to appear whenever trade disputes developed in a large industry. To make a study of eighteenth-century labour legislation however, is inevitably to find it as much concerned with problems that have passed away as with those that have remained and grown in importance. Thus an examination of the eighteenth-century Statute Book would suggest that contemporary industry's most engrossing problem had long been how to check the illicit sale, or pawning for ready money, of the material handed out to domestic workers for making up in their own homes. And it is very enlightening to find anti-Truck clauses balancing the anti-Theft clauses both in the Act of 1702 for checking the embezzlement of material in the woollen, linen, fustian, cotton and iron manufactures, and in the Act of 1740 for perfecting those checks and extending them to all the leather-working industries. Apparently Parliament declined to accept the varied justifications that might have been offered for Truck in an age suffering from a chronic shortage of coin and from a slowness in marketing apt to ruin speculative *entrepreneurs*, not supported by very solid capitals. Indeed, the character and appearance of the clauses against compelling workmen to accept Truck[1] suggest that Parliament considered embezzlement, and even workmen's combinations, as partially explained by the lack of cash-wages and the hardships resulting, hardships sometimes fraudulently aggravated by the original serving-out of short weight in raw material to workmen unpossessed of scales. Here, for example, is a revealing clause of the Act of 1740:[2]

And to prevent Oppression of the Labourers and Workmen employed in any respect in or about the making or manufacturing of Gloves, Breeches, Boots, Shoes, Slippers. . . : Be it enacted by the Authority

[1] It will be noted that the anti-Truck clauses of 1702 and 1740 are against *compulsory* Truck and left it open for workmen to agree to take part or even all of their pay in kind. The discovery that a workman's agreement to forgo payment in current coin of the realm could hardly ever be a genuinely voluntary one came, for the most part, later.

[2] Clause 6 in 13 Geo. II, c. 8, the *Act to explain and amend an Act made in the first Year of the Reign of her late Majesty Queen Anne, intituled, An Act for the more effectual preventing the Abuses and Frauds of Persons employed in the working up the Woollen, Linen, Fustian, Cotton, and Iron Manufac ures . . . and for extending the said Act to the Manufactures of Leather.*

aforesaid, That from and after the said first Day of May one thousand seven hundred and forty, all Payments and Satisfaction hereafter to be made to any such Labourers . . . for any Work by them done . . . shall be in and of the lawful Coin of this Realm only, and not by any Victuals, Goods or Commodities whatsoever, in lieu thereof (except at and by his and their Request and Consent only); and all goods and Materials delivered out to be wrought up . . . shall be delivered with a Declaration at the same Time, of the true Weight, Quantity or Tale thereof, on Pain that every Offender in either of the said Cases shall forfeit and pay to such Labourer . . . double the Value of what shall be due for such Work by him. . . .

Clauses like this reveal the considerable protection which the workman received from the dislike of landed gentry for the sharper practices of industry. But other clauses may be quoted showing the same class's almost inescapable tendency to immobilise the craftsman and to subject him to summary procedures, threatening him, like the agricultural labourer under the Settlement and Vagrancy Laws, with a new species of quasi-serfdom. Thus the Act of 1740, already quoted as penalising the Master for Truck or Short Measure, also contains a clause making it an offence for a workman to engage himself with a new master before he had both completed and delivered any work or service stipulated for by the old. Moreover one witness and one Justice of the Peace sufficed to send a workman, charged under this clause, to Hard Labour for a month. This right to arrest and summarily imprison working-men for alleged "breach of contract of employment" was not removed from the Statute Book until after a considerable struggle by the "Labour" movement of the second half of the nineteenth century. But meanwhile the tendency to assign to the workman an inferior status in law, and the persistence of embezzlement as one of industry's major problems, may be found emphasised in such further industrial legislation as the clauses of the new Manufactures Act of 1777 which subjected the workman's premises to constant invasion. Not only could the owner of materials, being worked up, demand an entry "at all seasonable hours in the day time, into the shop, outhouse, or other place" of those engaged on his goods, but two Justices could issue a search-warrant permitting a thorough investigation of every part of dwelling-house premises suspected to harbour "embezilled materials".[1] The same Act, moreover, limited the workman's

[1] Cf. R. Burn, *The Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer* (15th ed., 1785), iv, 152–3.

contract-rights even more jealously than that of 1740 since it condemned to Hard Labour "not exceeding three months, nor less than one" a workman who, after engaging himself to one master, either neglected for eight successive days to work up his materials or took in materials from a second master.

The searcher after the eighteenth-century roots of modern "Labour" developments will, of course, be inclined to turn away from Statute clauses of the kind just noticed in order to concentrate his attention upon others promising some clue to the "public's" attitude towards workmen's "confederacies" and even to the views held by the "confederacies" themselves. It is unfortunately true that workmen as a class are practically unrepresented in the economic writing of the age, and the Statute Book, taken in conjunction with occasional pamphlet material, normally inclined to the master's side, must be accepted as a principal source of information. It is not, perhaps, without significance that, in 1749, legislation of 1725, punishing, sometimes very severely, the illegalities ascribed to the Clubs, Societies or Combinations of the old-established trades of Journeymen Woolcombers and Journeymen Weavers was extended also to "Journeymen Dyers, Journeymen Hot Pressers and all other persons employed in the Woollen Manufactures of this Kingdom, and also to Journeymen, Servants, Workmen and Labourers, employed in the making of Felts or Hats, and in the manufactures of Silk, Mohair, Furr, Hemp, Flax, Linnen, Cotton, Fustian, Iron and Leather".[1] The preamble to the 1725 Act makes it obvious that in the woollen districts there had appeared the same almost modern craft temper that had given notoriety a few years before to the remarkable Tailors' Strike of 1720 in the capital.[2] Here is the preamble:[3]

Whereas great numbers of Weavers, and others concerned in the Woollen Manufactures in several Towns and Parishes in this kingdom have lately formed themselves into unlawful Clubs and Societies, and have presumed, contrary to Law, to enter into Combinations, and to make By-Laws or Orders, by which they pretend to regulate the Trade

[1] Clause 12 from the 22 Geo. II, c. 27.

[2] Cf. 7 Geo. I, c. 13: "Whereas great Numbers of Journeymen Taylors, in and about the Cities of London and Westminster . . . have lately departed from their Services without just Cause, and have entred into Combinations to advance their Wages to unreasonable Prices, and lessen their usual Hours of Work which is of evil Example, and manifestly tends to the Prejudice of Trade, to the Encouragement of Idleness, and to the great Increase of the Poor. . . ."

[3] Cf. Ruffhead, *Statutes at Large* (ed. 1768), v. 604, for 12 Geo. I, c. 34.

and the Prices of their Goods, and to advance their Wages unreasonably, and many other things to the like purpose: And whereas the said Persons so unlawfully assembling and associating themselves have committed great Violences and Outrages upon many of his Majesty's good Subjects, and by Force protected themselves and their wicked Accomplices against Law and Justice: and it is absolutely necessary that more effectual Provision should be made against such unlawful Combinations. . . .

And it indicates the gravity of the "Outrages" ascribed to the Woolcombers' and Weavers' Clubs to find that, whereas the 1720 Tailors' Combination had been met by an Act declaring its illegality and permitting imprisonment, for up to two months, of those who continued active in it, the 1725 Act for suppressing the Woolcombers' and Weavers' Clubs contained clauses allowing the infliction both of transportation for seven years and of the death penalty. Thus inflicting "any bodily hurt" upon a master in the course of a trade dispute or sending him a message threatening to burn down his premises, cut down his trees, or maim or kill his cattle, was met, in the 1725 Statute, by seven years' transportation; and death was the penalty for breaking or forcibly entering into premises "with intent to cut or destroy any serge or other woollen goods in the loom, or any tools employed in the making thereof" and even for maliciously damaging cloth or implements without forcible entry.

Much combination-activity and much "wilful and malicious" spoiling of material in the loom marked the capital's silk-trade troubles of the 1760's. Packed in their thousands in the Spitalfields and Bethnal Green areas, politically sophisticated by close proximity to the City and near neighbourhood to St. James's and Westminster, the capital's silk-weavers were, as befitted a population often descended from Huguenot refugees, peculiarly apt to respond to Pitt's agitation against the "French" peace of 1762–3 and to Wilkes's appeal to "Revolution principles". But that economic interests as well as political prejudices played some part in Spitalfields's long and ready supply of street-mobs to Opposition is suggested by some of the silk-trade's more striking demonstrations in the years immediately following 1763. Thus when the restoration of peace with France increased French competition in the silk-trade, and when Spitalfields's troubles were further enhanced by the high food-prices of the "bad years" of 1764 and 1765,[1] a loud demand was raised for the total exclusion of French

[1] Cf. *Supra*, Cap. II.

silks. And if, on January 10, 1765, the silk-weavers' long procession to Westminster for Parliament's opening day set a startling new fashion to "distressed" operatives, claiming the total prohibition of "foreign wrought" products, the age had even more reason to rub its eyes over events towards the end of the Session. In May, legislators had some excuse for thinking that the repeal of raw-silk duties, the increase of the tariff against foreign-wrought silks and velvets, and the suggested total ban on imported silk stockings, mitts and gloves, represented very ample concessions to the silk-trade. On May 13th, therefore, the Duke of Bedford, Lord President of the Council, induced the Lords to reject the total prohibition of imported wrought-silks that would have been effected under a Bill that had come up from the Commons. The silk-weavers' reply was remarkable even if, as some believed, Opposition money, especially from Lord Temple, set it in motion for political purposes. On May 14th there was a large procession to St. James's under a black flag and with a petition it was hoped to hand in to the King.[1] On May 15th, the King being due at Westminster to give the Royal Assent to a number of Bills, another weavers' demonstration was organised outside the Houses of Parliament. On this occasion many of the Peers were mobbed[2] as belonging to the House responsible for the continuation of silk-importation, and the King, though treated respectfully, is reported to have been "followed by an incredible number of Spittle Field weavers, with black flags, imploring His Majesty's gracious interposition in behalf of themselves and their very wretched families". On May 16th there was another procession of 8000 weavers to St. James's, but the Guards had been ordered out, and dangerous designs of destroying the Duke of Bedford's great town mansion were temporarily defeated. The worst troubles came next day when, after "formidable" demonstrations before the House of Lords, rioting began on the demonstrators' march home, and the military defence of Bedford House and the City's defence of the silk-warehouses were seriously tested. The City, in fact, had to call in military aid, and, at one time, troops outside London were being hurried towards it and the Duke of Cumberland was ready to take charge of a full military operation. Even on May 19th

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, May 1765, p. 244.

[2] Jesse's *Memoirs of George III*, i, 291–4, pieces together the story, not fully recountable by the periodicals of that day, from the *Bedford Correspondence* the *Grenville Papers*, the *Rockingham Papers*, and Horace Walpole's reports.

there still seemed to be danger, on May 21st a proclamation for the suppression of riots appeared in the *London Gazette*, and till May 30th the troops brought towards London from outside were held in readiness.[1] And if tranquillity was finally restored to the silk-weaving district, military measures had had to be supplemented by a lowering of the price of bread,[2] the collection and distribution of relief funds, and a promise of the silk-merchants to cancel orders already sent to France.[3]

Metropolitan silk-weaving was not the only trade which caused the "public" of 1765 astonishment by the intensity of its discontent. It is in a sense more surprising to find a trade, centred nearly three hundred miles from the capital and hardly, even by its own account, suffering from falling standards, capable both of organising a long strike and winning plenty of national attention for it. Here is the *Gentleman's Magazine* of September 1765 summarising *An Account of the unhappy Differences betwixt the Pitmen at Newcastle, and their Masters*:[4]

> The method of hiring pitmen has hitherto been by bond for twelve months, on the signing of which a shilling was given to each, and this was called a binding.
>
> About this time last year, a gentleman or two upon a neighbouring river [the Wear] being in great want of pitmen, endeavoured to obtain them by tempting them with binding-money, as far as two, three, and even four guineas. This encouragement made the men in the other collieries work with great reluctance all the year, and as the time was approaching when the above-mentioned gentlemen would again be in want, it was natural for the several coal-owners on the two rivers to consider of some method to prevent of such proceedings for the future; for which purpose a meeting was held, at which it was agreed that no coal-owner should hire another's men, unless they produced a certificate of leave from their last master, and as no coal-owner would grant such a certificate, it was called a binding during the will of his master, consequently a species of slavery, unknown in a free country. This notion spreading like wildfire, on or about the 14th of August last, all the pitmen on the two rivers left off work, and have continued so ever since, notwithstanding the coal-owners have repeatedly declared they had no intention of hindering them from hiring with whom they pleased, and earnestly exhorted them to return to their work till the expiration of

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, June 1765, p. 296.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, May 1765, p. 245, under May 21st: "The price of bread was reduced by the Lord Mayor of London twopence in the peck." The arrival of some corn-ships from the Low Countries had apparently started a fall of wheat-prices.

[3] Cf. Jesse, *Memoirs of George III*, i, 294.

[4] *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1765, p. 430.

their bonds, at which time they should have a regular discharge in writing, if required. Several meetings have been held, at which the pitmen's demands have risen every time; and tho' they in general earn from 12 to 14*s*. a week, yet in one colliery their demands were an advance of wages equal to 75 per cent. The grand article they now insist on, is, that all their bonds be given up, tho' some of them have till Christmas to go, which demand the coal-owners are determined not to agree to; for they have always avoided binding too many at one time, lest it should be in their power to distress the trade, by refusing to work till their demands were satisfied.

It seems clear that the pitmen, stirred by their masters' plan to reduce them to quasi-serfdom and tempted by the better pay plainly possible in an ever-advancing industry, had organised a very effective combination covering nearly all the Tyne- and Wear-side pits. If unable fully to achieve their purpose of effecting the simultaneous cancellation of all existing bonds so that future binding could always be negotiated by the men together, they did not apparently give up their strike until assured of solid advantages.[1]

At this stage, and before passing on to examine the new outburst of London trade unrest in 1768, it might be well to glance at the economic discontents of rural labour. If there had been an adequate police system to enforce upon the rural poor the full rigour of Settlement and Vagrancy Laws, very menacing to liberty of movement among the landless labourers, examples of organised protest would doubtless be easier to find. As it was, the individual migrating labourer took his chance, very often without a certificate from his parish of origin accepting Poor Law responsibility. And it is certainly tempting to believe that more protest would have been heard, if as Adam Smith ventured to assert in a generously humane passage of the *Wealth of Nations*, there was hardly a poor Englishman over forty who had not felt himself grievously oppressed, at some time in his life, by the power of receiving parishes to force him back to his place of origin for fear he became a Poor Law charge.[2] For protest there certainly was

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, October 1765, reports an amicable settlement between masters and men.

[2] *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, Cap. X, Part II: "To remove a man who has committed no misdemeanor, from the parish where he chooses to reside, is an evident violation of natural liberty and justice. The common people of England, so jealous of their liberty, but like the common people of most other countries, never, rightly understanding wherein it consists, have now, for more than a century together, suffered themselves to be exposed to this oppression without a remedy. . . ."

in rural England—and sometimes in very violent form. The breaking down of the toll-bars of Turnpike Trusts was a frequent manner of protest by village poor who found their liberty of movement to market with a pig, a foal or a calf, bred on the common, made chargeable for the first time. Demonstrations against enclosures and new-style workhouses, intended to discourage applications for Poor Relief, give a clue to other thoughts in the rural mind. It is reported, for instance, that on July 26, 1765, "a number of people assembled at West Haddon in Northamptonshire, under pretence of football-playing: but in an instant formed themselves into a tumultuous mob, and pulled up the fences of a new enclosure there, and laid the whole field open. Several of the rioters have since been apprehended and committed to prison."[1] Despite these arrests, another part of Northamptonshire undertook a new levelling of fences in September, which was stayed by a species of expeditionary force of magistrates, gentry and servants.[2] And just as toll-bar riots had already forced Parliament to inspect and regulate Turnpike Bills more closely with a view to prevent inexcusable oppression of the poor, so enclosure riots doubtless forwarded the similar treatment of Enclosure Bills, especially those petitioned against by cottagers enjoying rights on threatened commons, heaths and moors.[3] Meanwhile the rural poor showed more apprehension of yet another "improvement" urged on by the successful of a bustling and enterprising age, the union of parishes to set up a real workhouse where conditions might be made so deterrent to applicants for Poor Relief, hitherto accustomed to small weekly doles, that the rising Poor Rate, so much complained of, would, in the case of the uniting parishes, be brought to show a reduction. Here is a report of what happened in Suffolk on August 5, 1765:[4]

[1] *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1765, p. 391.

[2] *Ibid.*, September 1765, p. 441.

[3] The safeguards experience showed to be essential if, among other things, destructive rioting by the "poor" were to be avoided, gradually became the basis of a Code of Rules and Standing Orders of the House of Commons "relative to the applying for, and passing Bills for inclosing and draining of Lands, making Turnpike Roads, Navigations, and other purposes". A new *Collection of Rules and Standing Orders of the House of Commons* was issued by one publisher in 1774 because important additional Standing Orders had just been adopted requiring the promoters of Private Bills to give previous notice at the Michaelmas Quarter Sessions, and in the County Newspapers, as an added precaution against sharp practice and an added security against attempted smuggling through Parliament of Private Bills, affecting interests left unaware of what was being projected.

[4] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, August 1765, p. 392.

Some thousands of rioters assembled in the neighbourhood of Saxmundham in Suffolk, and destroyed the Industry-House, in which he poor were employed. Their pretence was to release the poor to ıssist in the harvest-work; but the fact was to defeat a late act of parlianent, lately obtained for the relief of the poor of the hundreds of Wil-ord, and Loes, &c. In this riot, the military were called in, and several ost their lives before the rioters were dispersed.

After such work, the uniting parishes could doubtless not show the quick and tempting reduction of Poor Rate that would have induced much following of their example.

It is time, perhaps, to turn to the remarkable outburst of industrial unrest in 1768, an unrest not altogether to be dissociated from the political excitements of the year on the score of Wilkes. It has been noted in a previous chapter how the crowds that gathered outside Wilkes's prison became almost as much a school of plebeian economic agitation as of plebeian politics. Coal-heavers, sailors, Thames watermen, hatters, and sawyers all plunged into bitter industrial dispute with sometimes bloody results, and there was a marked tendency to make use of imposing street-parades whether to Westminster, in imitation of the silk-weavers' demonstrations of 1765, or merely to the Mansion House. The coal-heavers' methods of enforcing their strike for the large advance in pay they claimed to have been made necessary by the "high price of provisions" became ruffianly and desperate enough[1] to cause the "public" to give its heartiest approval to the use of troops against them and to such a mass execution near the scene of their "crimes" as was undertaken on July 26th at Stepney upon seven together. But though the sailors' strike, enforced by the boarding of outward-bound ships and the removal of seamen, also "necessitated" the interposition of the military,[2] it was Spitalfields weaving which again proved itself capable of the greatest "combination" tenacity among the many disturbed trades of the time.[3] On August 20th Spitalfields weavers are reported

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1768, p. 347, for the methods employed against collier-crews and lightermen who, attracted by the emergency pay offered, undertook coal-heavers' work: "It has been publickly asserted, that some hundreds of these coal-heavers have again and again paraded the streets, armed with bludgeons, cutlasses, and other offensive weapons, repeatedly crying out, 'Five pounds for a Sailor's head, and twenty for a Master's; we'll cut the Lightermen's throats, and murder all the Masters, burn their houses and set fire to their ships,' without any man daring to molest them. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, September 1768, p. 422.

[3] Which includes, besides those already given, the journeymen tailors and the glass-grinders.

to have risen in a body, broken into two houses, cut the silk in the looms and shot dead a boy they encountered. Though the reward quickly offered failed apparently to produce information, events in August 1769 were of more help in throwing a light upon "combination" activities in Spitalfields. A club of "oppressed" silk-handkerchief weavers had opened a contest against the masters and was conducting armed night-operations to force all in the trade to subscribe to the club's funds and the terms it was attempting to enforce. The constant pistol-firing and sentry-posting was doubtless intended to intimidate rather than to inflict physical harm, but some justification was thus lent on September 30th for the use of soldiers against a gathering of weavers in the public-house which was their headquarters.[1] The weavers showed fight since a soldier was killed for the two weavers slain and the several wounded. Moreover fighting was renewed a few days later, and with still heavier casualties for the weavers,[2] after it became plain that soldiers were to be stationed in Spitalfields indefinitely.

There was a first sensational outcome to these events in December when the execution of two captured "rioters" was delayed by the outbreak of a constitutional dispute between the Wilkite Sheriffs of London and Middlesex, charged with executing the sentence, and Ministers, who had altered normal procedure and ordered execution in Bethnal Green in the hope of intimidating the silk-weaver combinations. After the enormous interest excited by the circumstances of the delayed executions, and the spirited protests the condemned men made from the gallows, some City sympathy was given to the efforts of Spitalfields and Bethnal Green to secure the reprieve of other "rioters".[3] Eventually the

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1769, Chronicle, p. 136: "About 11 o'clock, an officer, with a party of soldiers, was ordered to invest the Dolphin ale-house in Spital-fields, where a number of riotous weavers, called cutters were assembled, to collect contributions from their brethren, towards supporting themselves in idleness, in order to distress their masters, and to oblige them to advance their wages. When the soldiers arrived, the rioters instantly took the alarm, and arming themselves with guns, pistols, and other offensive weapons, immediately began the attack upon the soldiers. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 138, under October 7th: "Late this evening there was another severe engagement between the military and the cutters in Spital-fields, in which five of the latter were killed, and many wounded."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 161, under December 18th: "The weavers . . . retired to a field in Kingsland-road, to which place Mr. sheriff Sawbridge followed them, and persuaded them, if they had any grievances to complain of, to appoint a committee of eight of their body to represent the whole, and to petition his majesty in a modest and becoming manner for relief. The intent of their meeting was

silk-weavers seem to have been not unwilling to look to the City's part in administering the "Spitalfields Act" of 1773 for the protective wage-regulations that would balance the Act's formal prohibition of combinations. And it is possible that their hope of regulations that would award "fair" wage-rates was not altogether misplaced. Certainly, the slow decline of Spitalfields under the competition of other districts without regulations was always instanced by nineteenth-century "political economy" as a classic example of the unwisdom of political interference with "natural" rates of wages. The speciousness of the argument is more obvious in these days of national wage-regulation but, undoubtedly, the tendency of silk-trade capital to flow out of Spitalfields towards districts where pay and apprenticeship were unregulated and new inventions much more freely usable, produced unfortunate results for Spitalfields.

No discussion of industry, however rapid, is complete without some reference to the problem of piece-work as against time-work. There is a very long tradition in the crafts against piece-work where it can possibly be avoided, and Adam Smith already observed, as one of its justifications, the tendency of men to overwork themselves under the piece-work system, to ruin their health early and soon to require what the unsympathetic called three days' "idleness" after four days' work.[1] Adam Smith was undoubtedly ahead of his time in the matter, and one of the most interesting trade disputes of his day shows the obstinate adherence of Admiralty shipwrights to time-rates though promised much greater earnings under piece-rates. Here is Lord Sandwich, in January 1782, explaining how the men had resisted what was then called task-work:[2]

Faction, Enthusiasm, Obstinacy, and Ignorance have kept the artificers of those Yards in direct opposition to work in that mode. In

to sign a petition to his majesty, in favour of their unfortunate brethren now under sentence of death."

[1] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, Cap. VIII: "Workmen, on the contrary, when they are liberally paid by the piece, are very apt to overwork themselves, and to ruin their health and constitution in a few years. . . . Excessive application during four days of the week, is frequently the real cause of the idleness of the other three, so much and so loudly complained of. Great labour, either of mind or body, continued for several days together is, in most men, naturally followed by a great desire for relaxation. . . . It is the call of nature. . . . If masters would always listen to the dictates of reason and humanity, they would frequently have occasion rather to moderate, than animate the application of many of their workmen. . . ."

[2] Cf. Fortescue, *Correspondence of George III*, v, 347–8.

the year 1775, which was before we were involved in a war that required the assistance of every Shipwright in the Kingdom, Task work was nearly established in all the six Dockyards: but the causes already mentioned occasioned a general meeting in all of them except Deptford, which probably from being so immediately under the eye of the Navy Board, adhered to their duty and went on with Task Work. In the other yards, all the men (except a few who had apprentices and did not dare to desert on that account) laid down their tools and quitted their work. This fortunately happened at a time when no particular exertions were wanted; and we were enabled by this circumstance to set the men at defiance, and to leave them to shift for themselves for two or three months, till they were starved again into the Dockyards; but they then came under an express engagement that they should not be called to do Task Work without their consent. Since that period, by various managements, and pointing out to the men quietly the immense advantage the Task men had over those who worked by the day, the four Eastern Yards, namely Deptford, Woolwich, Chatham and Sheerness have been brought to adopt this plan, and are now eager in the execution of it. To explain the advantages which accrue to the workmen by being employed on Task, it is necessary to state that in a common day's work, which consists of 12 hours, the Shipwright's pay is two shillings and a penny; if he works double tides (which generally happens for the greatest part of the year in times of extraordinary exertions) he is at work 17 hours and consequently earns four shillings and two pence. The Taskman works twelve hours only and at an average earns five shillings and three pence per day. As to Portsmouth and Plymouth, everything has been tried to bring them to reason; but it is dangerous at this moment to attempt coercive measures, for if the men in those two Yards were to lay down their tools for a month, our principal equipments for home or foreign service would be at a stand. . . .

Long experience, it is plain, had taught Sandwich not, perhaps, Adam Smith's view that no real gain in total output over a lengthy period was to be obtained by piece-work driving, but, at least, the lesson that "laziness" was not the sole reason for his shipwrights' objections to piece-work. This was something better than the attitude of the average member of the leisured "public" who seems often to have been in total ignorance of workpeople's normal objections to being driven at an exhausting pace for the "busy" part of the year and left in partial or total idleness for the rest. During the American War, indeed, Sandwich's Opposition enemies made of the alleged slowness of output from the Admiralty yards, whether they were compared with private yards or Brest, the basis of a politically formidable indictment. It will serve to

recall one line of attack, that operatives always have to meet, to quote Captain Minchin saying in an Admiralty debate of March 22, 1781:[1]

> The manner in which the men were employed in the yards was absolutely scandalous; they were bound to work till twelve, and yet they always left off at half after eleven; and though the bell rung for them to begin again at one, he himself had often observed, that not a stroke of work ever was begun before three o'clock. At Deptford, their negligence was scandalous; they never had more than one ship of the line, and two frigates in dock; and yet in the private yards on the Thames there were actually 11 men of war now building; so that there was infinitely more work done in the private than in the royal yards. . . .

And another line of attack is well exemplified by quoting this from Minchin's seconder in Parliament that day:[2]

> He arraigned the Admiralty for the shameful negligence that was to be observed in our dock-yards; and held out the activity of the workmen at Brest as highly worthy of our imitation; he instanced this in the case of the *Ville de Paris*, which had received so much damage in the action of the 27th of July, that she was obliged to undergo a thorough repair; nay, her very keel was taken out, and a new one put in; so that she was almost entirely new when the workmen had done with her; and yet this very *Ville de Paris*, that went into dock a shattered and almost totally ruined ninety gun ship in the beginning of August, was turned out of dock in the April following, an almost complete new hundred gun man of war.

It well illustrates the constant threat to operative standards from new angles to notice that Adam Smith, despite his remarkably sympathetic comprehension of the journeyman's attitude on piece-work, combinations and much else, was partly responsible, nevertheless, for the growth of a new menace. From the French Physiocrats, Smith had absorbed a generous desire to protect agricultural interests, and especially agricultural labour, from the inferiority of status and remuneration imposed upon it in contemporary European society. He was even prepared to hold that European civilisation had taken a dangerously wrong turning when allowing town-interests, living and working though they did on the primary products of the countryside, to establish during the Middle Ages the civic, guild and market monopolies that had given them unfair advantages over the countryside ever

[1] Cf. *Edinburgh Magazine*, April 5, 1781, p. 407. [2] *Ibid.*

since.[1] Of course, his main attack was on the jealous monopolisation of industry and commerce by Guilds of Masters, even when they were, as often, small men working with their own hands. But his attack was made applicable also to monopolistic journeymen like the Woolcombers who, by persistently taking advantage of strategic opportunities, had reduced whole departments of less fortunately placed Labour to subordination and raised their own reward disproportionately.[2]

Adam Smith had here, of course, placed his finger upon one of the most fundamental ethical difficulties of all professional and craft organisation. And in his very damaging attacks on existing apprenticeship regulations, too, he was moved by the spectacle of agricultural labour, placed at a grave economic disadvantage by being necessarily left open to all comers, while the crafts exercised every device of apparently selfish ingenuity to restrict their numbers. Smith, indeed, was prepared to argue that, for variety of skill and extent of knowledge, the agricultural worker was normally far superior to the industrial worker,[3] whose great advantage of economic position had only come from the perverted and socially harmful practice of barring entry into crafts to all save limited numbers of those willing to serve a seven-years apprenticeship. Another of Smith's generous partialities, in arguing against apprenticeship, was for the would-be artisan of

[1] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, Cap. X, Part II: "The whole annual produce of the labour of the society is annually divided between these two different sets of people. By means of those regulations, a greater share of it is given to the inhabitants of the town than would otherwise fall to them, and a less to those of the country. . . . That the industry which is carried on in towns, is, everywhere in Europe, more advantageous than that which is carried on in the country . . . we may satisfy ourselves by one very simple and obvious observation. In every country of Europe we find at least a hundred people who have acquired great fortunes, from small beginnings, by trade and manufactures, the industry which properly belongs to towns for one who has done so by that which properly belongs to the country, the raising of rude produce by the improvement and cultivation of land. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*: "Half-a-dozen wool-combers, perhaps, are necessary to keep a thousand spinners and weavers at work. By combining not to take apprentices, they can not only engross the employment, but reduce the manufacture into a sort of slavery to themselves, and raise the price of their labour much above what is due to the nature of their work."

[3] *Ibid.*: "Not only the art of the farmer, the general direction of the operations of husbandry, but many inferior branches of country labour require much more skill and experience than the greater part of mechanic trades. . . . The common ploughman . . . is less accustomed, indeed, to social intercourse, than the mechanic who lives in a town. His voice and language are more uncouth. . . . His understanding, however, being accustomed to consider a greater variety of objects, is generally much superior. . . ."

skill who was excluded from a craft[1] for not having fulfilled all the legal conditions of apprenticeship. It was hardly Smith's fault that his generous advocacy increasingly helped the consuming "public", anxious only for cheap labour, to its final victory over statutory apprenticeships in 1814.

Meanwhile the spate of new industrial inventions had long brought the crafts new problems. The first notable attempt to end, by mob-action, the possible threat from the new-style textile machinery took place in several Lancashire towns in October 1779.[2] It had to be met not only by troops and Militia but by some efforts to convince the population that the introduction of machinery was not merely inevitable but promised great advantage to Lancashire. Particularly effective was the argument that to destroy the machinery which had already enlarged the county's wealth would only be to cause future machinery to be set up in another county, that would thus become Lancashire's successful rival. And to the argument that Parliament could prohibit the erection of the new machinery anywhere in Great Britain, the obvious retort was that, in that case, the new machinery would be erected abroad, there to become a source of wealth for the foreigner and of added danger to Lancashire.[3] The foreigner's desire to plant industries of his own, instead of importing from Britain, had long been met by Statutes punishing the export of trade implements and prohibiting the "seduction" of workmen abroad, or their voluntary departure, to practise or teach their processes, particularly in wool, mohair, cotton, silk, iron, brass and clockmaking.[4]

[1] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, Cap. X, Pt. II: "The patrimony of a poor man lies in the strength and dexterity of his hands; and to hinder him from employing that strength and dexterity in what manner he thinks proper, without injury to his neighbour, is a plain violation of this most sacred property. It is a manifest encroachment upon the just liberty, both of the workman, and of those who might employ them. . . ." Smith objected less to Scottish three-year apprenticeships.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, pp. 228–9, 233.

[3] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1779, Chronicle, p. 233, under November 11th: "At the quarter sessions held at Preston for the county of Lancaster, it was unanimously agreed . . . that, if a total stop was put to the erection of them [certain engines for the manufacturing of cotton] by the legislature in Great Britain, it would only tend to their establishment in foreign countries, to the great detriment of trade in this. For these reasons the court came to the resolution of transmitting to one of his Majesty's Secretaries of State a copy of their proceeding, intimating a desire at the same time that a special commission may be issued for the trial of the ringleaders now in Lancaster gaol."

[4] Especially the Statute 23 Geo. II, c. 13, an enlargement and extension of 5 Geo. I, c. 27.

That the foreigner's desire to profit from British inventions was still regarded as a grave peril is proved by the special Statute which calico-printing obtained in 1782 and iron-working in 1785. Master and man were always most united on this danger to their common industry from the foreigner. Nay, the immense dangers feared from enlarging even Ireland's export opportunities to Britain produced in 1785 the greatest united industrial petitioning from master and man yet known in British history.[1]

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, July 1785, p. 525, for the 55,352, persons who had signed one petition alone, that from "the merchants, manufacturers, and others of the town and neighbourhood of Manchester".

CHAPTER XXIV

THE CHALLENGE TO THE CHURCH

"It is to be lamented, that an author of superior abilities, when he is writing the history of a particular period, in which he has occasion to speak of Christianity, should indulge himself in observations on that subject, which must necessarily give pain to every intelligent and impartial reader . . .

"Reflections, calculated to disparage a religion, which bears the most incontestable marks of divinity, cannot possibly arise from knowledge or from reason; but either from infidelity, from false ideas, from a love of speculation, or an ambition to be thought superior to the common prejudices of mankind, and the weakness of a superstitious credulity . . .

"We are concerned to find the ingenious author of the History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire, reprehensible in this respect. . . ."

The Critical Review, December 1776, complains of Gibbon's anti-Christian tendency.

"Suppose the mighty work accomplished, the cross trampled upon, Christianity everywhere proscribed, and the religion of nature once more become the religion of Europe; what advantage will you have derived to your country, or to yourselves, from the exchange? I know your answer—you will have freed the world from the hypocrisy of priests, and the tyranny of superstition. No: you forget that Lycurgus, and Numa, and Odin, and Mango Copac, and all the great legislators of ancient and modern story, have been of opinion, that the affairs of civil society could not well be conducted without *some* religion: you must of necessity introduce a priesthood, with, probably, as much hypocrisy: a religion with, assuredly, more superstition, than that which you now reprobate with such indecent and ill-grounded contempt. But I will tell you from what you will have freed the world; you will have freed it from its abhorrence of vice, and from every powerful incentive to virtue . . . you will have robbed mankind of their firm assurance of another life; and thereby you will have despoiled them of their patience, of their humility, of their charity, of their chastity. . . ."

WATSON's *Apology for Christianity* (1776) addresses the sceptics.

"Near the conclusion of this admirable address, the author

takes notice of an argument, by which some philosophers have of late endeavoured to overturn the whole system of revelation. The objection tends to invalidate, as is supposed, the authority of Moses, by shewing that the earth is much older, than it can be proved to be from his account of the creation, and the scripture chronology. We contend, that 6000 years have not elapsed since the creation; these philosophers contend, that they have indubitable proof of the earth's being at least 14000 years old. . . ."

The Critical Review, December 1776, applauds the *Apology for Christianity*'s contradiction of the cosmological doubts excited by the seven distinct and earth-covered lava strata near Etna.

"He was very ready and happy to allow that a considerable part of the clergy, in every country, might be men of real worth . . . but he was equally ready to declare, that he believed the majority to be composed of characters as ambitious, as selfish, as worldly-minded, and as ignorant, as those of any set of men whatever. . . ."

The anti-clerical Mr. Martin, M.P. opposes a new Sunday Act, May 15, 1781.

It is tempting, when examining the changes of religious attitude perceptible in any epoch, to begin with those of the most thorough-going character. In the first years of George III's reign, for instance, the apologetics of the State Church will still be found occupied very largely with the fundamental challenges long made by the Deism, native to the country and very worthily represented at the time by Peter Annet. Annet has many claims to be considered as the link between the older line of professed British Freethinkers, dating back to Toland and including Anthony Collins, Chubb and Tindal, and a newer line which was to be vastly stimulated by the work of Thomas Paine. And certainly one work commonly ascribed to Annet, *History of the Man after God's own Heart*, gave rectories and episcopal palaces a considerable shock in 1761 by its damaging examination of King David's life on the authority of the Scriptures themselves.[1] Moreover if Annet was, in 1762, sentenced to imprisonment and the pillory for issuing nine numbers of the *Free Inquirer* in criticism of the Five Books of Moses,[2] it appears that the populace round the pillory was rather sympathetic than shocked, and that unavowed supporters continued to help him until he died in 1769.

Orthodox defenders of Revelation were, meanwhile, having to deal with dangerous scepticism of another order with particular temptations for the great. Ever since Bayle's famous *Dictionnaire Historique et Critique* had laid a tremendous foundation for the scepticism of the upper classes,[3] the appearance of a Bolingbroke in England was, doubtless, as inevitable as that of a Hume in

[1] Cf. *Monthly Review*, March 1762, which opened thus its examination of a counter-blast, entitled *A Review of the History of the Man after God's own Heart. . . . In which the Falsehoods and Misrepresentations of the Historian are exposed and corrected*: "When we gave the public an account of *The History of the Man after God's own Heart*, we intimated our earnest wish that some able hand would undertake the defence of the illustrious character, so roughly attacked in that History; and our wish has been highly gratified by the learned and ingenious performance now before us. . . ." To this performance the *Monthly Review* devoted seventeen pages.

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1762, Chronicle, under November 29th. The full sentence was a month of Newgate, during which he was to be pilloried twice, a year of hard labour in Bridewell, and the finding of sureties for good behaviour for the rest of his life. He was nearly seventy.

[3] W. J. Harris, *First English Translations*, p. 20, reports the translation of Bayle's four enormous volumes into English in 1710. J. Darling reports in the *Cyclopaedia Bibliographica* an improved edition in five volumes folio appearing between 1734 and 1737. Finally Bayle's *Dictionary* became the basis of a ten-volume *General Dictionary* in English completed in 1741 though "with reflections [by clerics] on such passages of Mr. Bayle as seem to favour scepticism. . . ."

Scotland or a Voltaire in France. The issue in 1754 of Bolingbroke's volumes of scornful Freethinking on the Bible was, if posthumously made, none the less a vexation for the orthodox who now found a name famous in the literature and politics of the nation gracing opponents, hitherto lacking all social distinction. Controversial reply was, of course, issued in plenty as well to Bolingbroke as to the more plebeian Deists of Annet's school. But its main effect was rather to fortify the orthodox than to convert the sceptics, declared or undeclared.

It was the undeclared sceptics, especially those in high stations, who made some of orthodoxy's worst problems. But even Wilkes went to church "so long", as he facetiously declared, "as it was by law established", and the bulk of the English aristocracy seems to have taken care to air its religious doubts out of earshot of the servants. This peculiarly English regard for the conventions, for the comfort of clerical friends, and for the avoiding of disturbance to the Biblical pillars on which social discipline still so largely rested, is revealed with particular ingenuousness by Horace Walpole when describing his amazement at what he found going on in Paris society in 1765 and 1766. He wrote thus to an English friend:[1]

> Freethinking is for one's self, surely not for society; besides one has settled one's way of thinking, or knows it cannot be settled, and for others I do not know why there is not as much bigotry in attempting conversions from any religion as to it. I dined today with a dozen *savans*, and though all the servants were waiting, the conversation was much more unrestrained, even on the Old Testament, than I would suffer at my own table in England, if a single footman was present.

The scepticism of English society, its freethinking if not its free living, was plainly capable of changing its face rapidly in case of need, or even of advantage. And such advantage already presented itself in the strict regard to outward observances maintained by the Court of George III. That monarch's attentive performance of all his duties as Head of the Church of England did, at least, something to regularise the external appearance of society at the top while the Wesleyans infused Christian enthusiasm lower down, among circles unacquainted with the work of Bayle or Voltaire.

One peculiarly British manifestation, making trouble for Anglican clerics during a considerable part of the eighteenth century, needs

[1] Horace Walpole's *Letters*, under the date of September 22, 1765.

some special mention. No student of the century's politico-religious literature can ignore the mixture of attack on Papalism, and on Anglican Prelacy's alleged points of resemblance to it, in respect of great worldly station, pomp and wealth, that was so successfully begun in the *Independent Whig* of 1721. Thomas Gordon, one of the *Independent Whig*'s authors,[1] was still writing tracts of the same anti-prelatical or inspiring temper till his death in 1750; in 1763 a third edition of one set of tracts appeared in three volumes under the title of *A Cordial for Low Spirits* while more tracts, in four volumes, were reissued in a new edition of 1768 though under the old portentous title of *The Pillars of Priestcraft and Orthodoxy shaken.* It is specially interesting to find a determined effort made by admirers of the *Independent Whig* to continue this species of anti-clerical campaign in the newspapers, and a three-volume collection of their contributions between 1764 and 1770 was issued in 1774 by this "Amicable Band of Wellwishers to the Religious and Civil Rights of Mankind."[2] One passage from these journalistic efforts should, perhaps, be quoted in order to show how some very Radical, nineteenth-century notions of a redistribution of Church property in aid of "poor clergy", and even of Dissenting ministers were anticipated by this "amicable band" of Low Churchmen, Dissenters and Deists. Here is a newspaper contribution of May 20, 1766, expressing annoyance at the constant Anglican begging for the "poor clergy":[3]

> The inconveniencies and mischiefs arising from the overgrown revenues of the church, are a proper object of the consideration of the legislature. . . . Many poor clergy of the church of England want bread, or have only a bare necessary pittance of it, while the footmen and postillions of their superiors have bread enough, and to spare. And the grievance is, that our churchmen are solliciting the laity to provide for these miserables, while they themselves have engrossed the portion that should (and would more than sufficiently) maintain them. If the

[1] The *Essays in Favour of Public Liberty*, has this of the other author: "The late Mr. Trenchard often insisted among his friends, that next to bribery and corruption among the lay members of the civil community, nothing would endanger the liberty of England more than the increasing power and opulence of the clergy . . . 'our posterity may look for a return of the same slavery of conscience, with all its horrible attendants which church tyranny brought forth in the darkest times of popery, with this melancholy difference, that the yoke of a Pope, seated in our own country, with all his myrmidons about him, will not be so easily shaken off as it was when the Pope was no nearer than Rome'."

[2] Under the "long title" of *A Collection of Letters and Essays in favour of Public Liberty.*

[3] Cf. *A Collection of Letters and Essays in favour of Public Liberty*, i, 212–13.

revenues of the church were to be distributed in proportion to the substantial duties required to be done by christian ministers, to the real edification of a christian people, they would be found sufficient to maintain all the episcopal and all the presbyterian ministers in the kingdom of England. . . .

Suggestions of this kind increased greatly in compelling power during the more Radical days of the nineteenth century and forced on the creation of the Ecclesiastical Commission for fear of worse. But these things were still a very long way indeed from "practical politics" during the eighteenth century when tithes gave Anglican ecclesiastics much more anxiety. The politically dominant landlord class might fully recognise the utility of a State Church, which inculcated social discipline and buttressed it with divine sanctions. But the support of the State Church, mainly by an agricultural tithe, subtracting greatly from the rents demandable from tithable tenantries, inevitably made landlords grumblers as well as tenants. Landlords, for example, had Adam Smith's assurance that whereas, on their best lands, tithes might only diminish the rent, capable of being paid, by four shillings in the pound, in the case of poorer lands tithes might represent a tax on rent of up to ten shillings in the pound.[1] Nor was this all. It was an "improving" age above everything, and here is what Adam Smith had to say of the effect of tithes upon cultivation:[2]

The tithe, as it is frequently a very unequal tax upon the rent, so it is always a great discouragement both to the improvements of the landlord, and to the cultivation of the farmer. The one cannot venture to make the most important, which are generally the most expensive improvements; nor the other to raise the most valuable, which are generally, too, the most expensive crops; when the church, which lays out no part of the expense, is to share so very largely in the profit. The cultivation of madder was, for a long time, confined by the tithe to the United Provinces, which, being presbyterian countries, and upon that account exempted from this destructive tax, enjoyed a monopoly of that useful dyeing drug against the rest of Europe. The late attempts to introduce the culture of this plant into England, have been made only in consequence of the statute, which enacted that five shillings an acre should be received in lieu of all manner of tithes upon madder. . . .

[1] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Cap. II, Pt. II, Art. I beginning: "Taxes upon the produce of land are, in reality, taxes upon the rent; and though they may be originally advanced by the farmer, are finally paid by the landlord. When a certain portion of the produce is to be paid away for a tax, the farmer computes as well as he can, what the value of this portion is, one year with another, likely to amount to, and he makes a proportionable abatement in the rent which he agrees to pay to the landlord. . . ."

[2] *Ibid.*

When the cultivating classes had this not wholly friendly attitude towards tithe, it is plain that disputes were likely to be common, and, indeed, the incumbent, who did not want to go to law, often agreed, perforce, to take somewhat less than his legal due. The common ill-will towards tithe was freely admitted even by episcopal speakers when the subject came to be debated in Parliament. Below is a report of what the Bishop of St. David's said in the Lords on March 30, 1781, when opening an important tithe debate. His incidental admissions are the more revealing in that he was arguing for the maintenance of tithe, despite the problems it brought the clergy, as preferable to commutation proposals that, he believed, would ultimately cost incumbents dearer than the tithe-concessions normally forced upon them. Here are the Bishop's words:[1]

> Tythes had been considered by many . . . as a very improper maintenance for the clergy, because they were apt to produce disputes, and to breed much ill-will between a pastor and his flock; and it was therefore thought, that an allotment in land would be much more desirable. But he professed himself to be of contrary opinion. He observed, that the incumbent always asked a reasonable price for his tythes, because he always asked less than an impropriator did, in all cases under the same circumstances; and if it sometimes happened, that a suit was instituted by the incumbent for the recovery of his dues, it generally proved in the end, that the occupiers were to blame, since out of seven hundred tythe causes which had been tried at Westminster-hall, six hundred and sixty were determined in favour of the incumbents; and therefore it appeared to be particularly hard, that a remedy which was so detrimental to the real interests and rights of the parochial clergy should be made use of, on a pretence of establishing peace, when the fact was, that the peace and quiet of a parish had hardly, in any one instance, been interrupted by the incumbents themselves.

The particular method of tithe-commutation the Bishop was arguing against was that in which new enclosed lands under Enclosure Bills were made tithe-free by granting incumbents a portion of the land dealt with. He showed that both farmers and Lords of Manors had already learned how to cheat the Church despite fair professions at the time of a Bill. Here is a report of what he said on the matter:[2]

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, pp. 124–5. The matter was being debated on the Bishop's motion for sending the Ilmington (Warwickshire) Enclosure Bill back to Committee for revision.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 124–5.

Parishes of any considerable extent consisted partly of old enclosures, and partly of common fields; and when these last were enclosed, and exempted from the payment of tythes, it was usual for the occupiers to threaten the incumbents to plough up the new enclosures only, which were now become tythe-free, and to keep the old enclosures in grass, they being subject to tythe, unless the incumbents would consent to let the occupiers have their corn-tythes in the old enclosures at a very low price. This was a very obvious piece of craft and was practised every day to the great detriment of the parochial clergy. Another objection to the practice of giving lands in lieu of tythes was, that it often tempted the incumbent to collude with the patron. Patrons were frequently lords of the manor, and, as such, were commonly the principal proprietors of the land. This being the case, the patron forms a design of inclosing the parish, and communicates it to the incumbent, who readily consents and only asks, that care may be taken, that the allotment to be made in lieu of his tythes may be equal in value to them. The patron promises to take care of this, and to free the incumbent from all apprehensions, engages to farm the allotment of him at as high a rent as he ever made of the tythes in the best times. The inclosure takes place, and the patron hires the allotment . . . on the fair terms he proposed. In a few years the incumbent dies, or is removed: a new incumbent succeeds, who proposes to let the allotment at the same price his predecessor had done, but finds that he cannot get so much by half, and finds also that it is really worth no more.

The story of lay chicane against tithe is not, perhaps, complete until there is an examination of the reasons most lay Peers alleged for helping to defeat the Bishop of St. David's in a division of 31 against 23. The Earl of Sandwich and the Duke of Richmond were, for once, in complete agreement. It was because of his anxiety "to maintain the cause of religion and virtue" that Sandwich professed himself to favour allotment of land in lieu of tithe. And here is Richmond's argument for the commuting of tithe on terms generous to the laity:[1]

From a variety of facts, which had come within his knowledge, he was convinced of the inexpediency of taking tythes in kind, and of the numerous law-suits, disagreements, and bad blood, which were thereby occasioned between the incumbent and his parishioners. In those parishes, where tythes were taken in kind, they bred perpetual dispute and animosity; and even as to the point of emolument, his grace solemnly protested, that he believed, upon an average, the clergymen would be much better off by making a reasonable composition, by which his parishioners would even be considerable gainers, than by collecting his tythes in kind.

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

Some mention has already been made in a previous chapter of the problems brought upon the Church by the strenuous efforts of a group of Anglicans to abolish compulsory subscription of the Thirty-nine Articles. Numbers of earnest Christians, quite unprepared for Deism or scepticism, were, nevertheless, pushed by the challenging spirit of the age to try and rid themselves and their Church of what seemed to them the mistaken swaddling-bands devised by sixteenth-century clerics for an infant institution which had quite outgrown them and which now needed no Elizabethan Articles to confine its interpretation of the Scriptures. To follow the unorthodox organisation necessary to take the anti-subscription movement from its first general meeting of July 17, 1771, to the famous Parliamentary debate of February 6, 1772, on its Petition,[1] to remember that the heavy defeat of that day was not the end but that effort continued in regard to the more limited University aspects of compulsory subscription, is to understand the real zeal that the hope of becoming free of the Thirty-nine Articles inspired. And here is a quotation from the astonishingly strong pamphleteering the Cambridge clerical lecturer, Dr. John Jebb, directed against the Articles:[2]

> The first article of our church professes to treat of faith in the holy trinity; an expression not to be found in scripture, a doctrine not connected with the performance of a single duty in social life. A man may believe the contrary, and yet be a good christian, a good father, a good master, a good husband, a good citizen, and a good friend. . . . With respect, then, to the first article, in order to make it of any use, the title should be changed; it should be said to treat, not of the trinity, but of the unity of God; and the latter part of it should be expunged, not because it is false, but because it is unintelligible, unless by men of very elevated minds.
>
> If the first article is faulty, the second is like unto it, and the subscription . . . should by no means be insisted on. It defines with a logical, or rather chemical precision, what never was comprehended, or ever can be comprehended, by the help of those rational powers which we now enjoy.
>
> As for the third article, which treats of the going down of Christ into hell, I cannot conceive how the state can be interested in the decision of such a question. I may believe him to be the author of my salvation . . . without believing that he assailed the devil in his own dominions; as the compilers of our articles certainly supposed he did. . . .

[1] Cf. John Disney, *The Works of John Jebb*, i, 31–7.

[2] *Letters on the Subject of Subscription* . . . first printed in the *Whitehall Evening Post*, Letter IV.

With respect to the fifth article . . . it recalls to our remembrance that unchristian controversy, which was long maintained between contending churchmen upon the holy ghost's procession from the son. The belief of it is not naturally connected with the practice of any social duty. Many have believed the divine mission of Jesus, without supposing this procession. . . .

The ninth article treats of original, or birth sin; but the state has to do with those sins only when they are committed after birth.

I would gladly avoid the consideration of the eight following articles . . . I am satisfied that, upon perusal of them, no english senator will see the necessity of binding these metaphysical subtilties upon the consciences of those, who are sent forth, by the civil power, to instruct the people in the necessity of obedience to the laws of God and man. While they continue unintelligible, they are useless. When understood, they are prejudicial, nay, even dangerous. . . .

Pamphleteering of this energetic character aroused, of course, the hottest opposition from conservative sections of the clergy and of Parliament. Yet it was far from remaining without result. If, for example, the Commons on February 6, 1772, rejected the Anglican petition against subscription by 217 votes against 71,[1] they did accept the justice of freeing Dissenting Ministers from the necessity of subscribing to the great bulk of the Articles in order to obtain the benefits of the Toleration Act. Meanwhile, with the aid of undergraduates preparing to take their first degree, the question had been raised at the Universities in the shape of a Petition to the Cambridge Vice-Chancellor "praying relief in regard to subscription to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England, at taking their bachelor's degree".[2] On June 23, 1772, and though the House of Lords had meantime rejected the Commons' Bill for relieving Dissenting Ministers of subscription, a promising University success was achieved which may be found described in these words:[3]

The subscription of bachelors of arts at Cambridge to the 39 articles was this day removed, *nem. con.* Instead of it is substituted the following declaration, "I, A.B., declare that I am, *bona fide*, a member of the Church of England as by law established."

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1772, History, p. 89.

[2] *Annual Register*, 1771, Chronicle, p. 165. It is, of course, impossible not to connect this movement with Jebb's *Address to the Gentlemen of the University of Cambridge who intend proposing themselves, the ensuing January, as Candidates for the Degree of Bachelor of Arts.*

[3] *Ibid.*, 1772, Chronicle, p. 110. This success was not won without such preliminary checks as those reported in the *General Evening-post* of December 7, 1771, and the *Whitehall Evening Post* of January 16, 1772.

The old cry of "the Church in danger" had been raised from the very first moment of the new agitation—and, below, Dr. Jebb will be found trying to display that cry's injustice in advance of anti-subscription activities planned for 1773. It will be noticed that he even boldly swept into the argument assumptions regarding the propriety of University attendance and degrees for Dissenters that did not become "practical politics" for a very long time. Referring to the subscription concession just won, after very considerable effort, in regard to the Cambridge B.A. degree, Dr. Jebb thus displayed its inadequacy to the political personality who had raised the whole subscription question in Parliament:[1]

> Why should the bachelors of music, or physic, and of law, be bound to the ancient formulary, and the bachelor of arts alone released? The plea of danger to the constitution of the university will not avail the opponents of Mr. Tyrwhitt's generous proposal. Such graduates will not be intitled, by the requested indulgence, to a vote in the Cambridge senate, or to any authority, which may render them formidable to the church. Besides, the idea on which the opposition to the sentiments of your house (so explicitly declared on the 6th of last February) is founded, is exceptionable and illiberal throughout. Degrees are the testimonies and rewards of literary merit; and should therefore lie open to every son of science, without distinction of party, sect, or nation . . . no degree whatever will authorise the person, on whom it is conferred, either to minister or to preach in the church of England, without a legal ordination. And, even supposing we were to admit the illiberal idea, that the universities should be considered as seminaries for the education of youth, in one particular set of doctrines; there is no room for apprehension, that the dissenting interest would ever become dangerously prevalent in those seats of learning; as every fellow of a college, upon admission to his fellowship, subscribed a declaration of conformity to the worship of the established church.

The mere possibility of Dissenting Bachelors and undergraduates shocked academic Oxford thoroughly. Here is a description of what happened on February 4, 1773, when the proposition was made that the example of Cambridge should be followed in substituting declared Church membership for subscription to the Thirty-nine Articles as a sufficient requirement in candidates for the Bachelorship of Arts:[2]

[1] *A Letter to Sir William Meredith Bart. upon the Subject of Subscription to the Liturgy and Thirty-Nine Articles.* This was first issued under the *nom de plume* of "Englishman".

[2] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, Chronicle, p. 73.

A convocation was held at Oxford, for the enacting of a new declaration in the place of subscription to the thirty-nine articles. There were some excellent speeches made for and against the question. The house would not assent to any alteration of the statutes; of course the new formulary was excluded, and not so much suffered to become the subject of debate, . . .

Yet despite Oxford's conservative enthusiasm the Commons again voted, in 1773, for the abolition of the requirement of subscription from Dissenting Ministers and teachers. Moreover, a most conspicuous debate took place on a motion "for a committee of the whole House, to consider of the subscription, to the 39 articles of the church of England, or any other tests now required of persons in the universities". It ended, it is true, in an unfavourable division of 64 against 159 but the motion had had strong debating support,[1] and, despite the military, naval and political excitements of the American War, the anti-subscription cause was kept sufficiently alive to achieve one notable success in 1779. In that troublous year, after Government had, during 1778, smiled upon the first notable instalment of Catholic Relief, Protestant Dissenters had undeniable claims. They were met when the House of Lords gave up the objections which had destroyed two Bills, that had passed the Commons, and permitted Dissenting Ministers and teachers the full benefits of the Toleration Act without the need of subscribing to the great bulk of the Thirty-nine Articles.

During the height of the subscription controversy, it was, of course, the Athanasian Creed that was the ultimate bone of contention. Even the reasonably moderate *Monthly Review* may be found using sensational language in condemning the Bishops' complacent conservatism in regard to the Creed:[2]

The Athanasian Creed is one of the offences in the service of our church "which furnishes matter of scorn to her enemies and of concern and shame to her friends". An offence it is indeed of the worst kind. A greater never disgraced any system of religion. It confounds all our notions of the Deity; and, at the same time, it shocks all the feelings of humanity—But our right reverend bishops will not give it up. They have lately, it seems, determined not to attempt making any alterations; and we must go on mocking the Almighty and profaning Christianity by repeating this creed in our religious services, and pronouncing solemnly, thirteen times in every year, everlasting damnation on all that

[1] Cf. *Ibid*, History, p. 94. [2] *Monthly Review*, June 1773, p. 481.

do not believe it! But things cannot continue always in this state. It is not possible that the good sense and humanity of the kingdom should bear much longer such barbarism in religion. If no reformation takes place soon, a fatal catastrophe must come.... But the governors of the church are deaf to all remonstrances. They are at ease in the enjoyment of their emoluments; they are asleep; and nothing will awaken them till the church of England falls to pieces, and they are buried under its ruins.

This was, perhaps, the wrong language to use even in 1773 when the Church was on the eve of its vast fortification by the Evangelicalism already strongly at work under the stimulus of Methodism. The disappointed intellectualism of men as truly pious as Lindsey, Jebb,[1] Disney[2] and Fyshe Palmer[3] might, indeed, come to be lost to the Church and driven into Unitarianism, but this proved as nothing when compared with the *vis inertiae* of a tremendous institution, receiving ever-greater reinforcements of anti-intellectual Evangelic fervour while able to recruit and reward the greatest controversial ability. Conservative churchmen came to hail the epoch of the controversial exchanges between the formidable scholarship of their champion, Archdeacon Horsley, and the ardent rationalism of their most prominent opponent, Dr. Priestley, as marking the time when they were relieved of their worst fears in regard to the intellectualist attack upon the Thirty-nine Articles and the Athanasian Creed. Priestley, the most remarkable product of the eighteenth-century Dissenting Academies, had quickly adopted Unitarian views and was exercising a great attraction upon the younger men in the Dissenting ministry. In 1782 Priestley delivered what was meant to be a capital assault on all the traditional ecclesiastical positions, and here is Dr. Horsley's own typical Church-apologist account of the weaknesses he spied in his enemy's armour:[4]

[1] Jebb gave up his Church livings in 1775 and began to study medicine. Theophilus Lindsey had already resigned his livings in 1773 and opened his Unitarian Chapel in 1774. He was an able controversialist.

[2] Threw up his Church livings in 1782 to become assistant minister in Lindsey's Unitarian Chapel.

[3] After becoming B.D. and Fellow of Queens' College, Cambridge in 1781, he is to be found as a Scottish Unitarian pastor from 1783 to 1793 when his sympathy with Parliamentary Reform earned him a notorious sentence of seven years' transportation.

[4] Cf. *British Critic*, February 1813, pp. 124–5 quoting Horsley's General Preface to his *Tracts in Controversy with Dr. Priestley upon the historical Question of the Belief in the first Ages in our Lord's Divinity. Originally published in the Years 1783, 1784, and 1786.*

In the year 1782 an open and vehement attack was made by Dr. Priestley upon the creeds and the established discipline of every church in Christendom, in a work in two volumes 8vo. entitled *A History of the Corruptions of Christianity*. At the head of these the author placed both the catholic doctrine of our Lord's divinity, and the Arian notion of his pre-existence in a state far superior to the human, representing [instead] the Socinian doctrine of his mere humanity, as the unanimous faith of the first Christians. It seemed that the most effectual preservative against the intended mischief would be to destroy the writer's credit and the authority of his name, which the fame of certain lucky discoveries in the prosecution of physical experiments, had set high in popular esteem, by a proof of his incompetency in every branch of literature connected with his present subject, of which the work itself afforded evident specimens in great abundance. For this declared purpose, a review of the imperfections of his work in the first part relating to our Lord's divinity was made the subject of a Charge, delivered to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of St. Alban's the spring next following Dr. Priestley's publication. The specimens alledged of the imperfections of the work, and the incompetency of its author, may be reduced to six general clauses. 1. Instances of reasoning in a circle; 2. Instances of quotations misapplied through ignorance of the writer's subject; 3. Instances of testimonies perverted by artful and forced constructions; 4. Instances of passages in the Greek Fathers misinterpreted through ignorance of the Greek language; 5. Instances of passages misinterpreted through the same ignorance, driven further out of the way by an ignorance of the Platonic philosophy; 6. Instances of ignorance of the phraseology of the earliest ecclesiastical writers.

Horsley had, in fact, chosen the method most likely to discredit Priestley both with the scholars of rectory and manse and with the amateur lay-theologians of the upper and middle classes, repelled above everything by the mere suspicion of presumption and lack of scholarship. Priestley's appeal, after all, had not been to the vulgar "common sense" which was before long to be so powerfully attracted by Paine's *Age of Reason*, and, though he tried repeatedly, the Unitarian failed to drive the Archdeacon from the controversial ground which gave him such advantages with a fastidious audience. Here is Horsley recounting what happened after Priestley's counter-attacking *Letters to Dr. Horsley* (1783) had brought a *riposte* in *Letters from the Archdeacon of St. Alban's in Reply to Dr. Priestley*[1] (1784):

Dr. Priestley mortified to find that his letters had failed of the expected success; that his antagonist, touched with no shame, with no remorse,

[1] As quoted by the *British Critic*, February 1813, p. 127.

remained unshaken in his opinion; and that the authority of his own opinion was still set at nought, his learning disallowed, his ingenuity in argument impeached; and what was least to be borne—finding that a haughty Churchman ventured incidentally to avow his sentiments of the divine commission of the episcopal ministry, and presumed to question the authority of those teachers who usurp the preacher's office without any better warrant than their own opinion of their own sufficiency—lost all temper. A second set of *Letters to the Archdeacon of St. Alban's* appeared in the autumn of the year 1784, in which all profession of personal regard and civility was laid aside. The charge of insufficiency in the subject was warmly retorted, and the incorrigible dignitary was taxed with manifest misrepresentation of his adversary's argument; with injustice to the character of Origen . . . and with the grossest falsification of ancient history. . . . the Archdeacon remained silent for eighteen months. *A Sermon on the Incarnation*. . . , in the year 1785, was the prelude to a renewal of the contest on his side, which was followed early in the ensuing spring by his *Remarks on Dr. Priestley's second Letters*. . . . It consists of two parts. The first is a collection of new specimens of Dr. Priestley's temerity in assertion. . . .

But, perhaps, there is no need to go further in showing why Horsley's malicious collection of doubts as to Priestley's comprehension of the ideas of the Greek Fathers or even the subtler points of their Patristic Greek, was felt, before he had done in 1789, to have broken up a dangerous attack on ecclesiastical traditionalism.[1] Horsley's nomination to a Bishopric in 1788 was not only richly earned but served, by example, to incite further controversial ardour on behalf of the Church.

Yet during the eighteenth century, the checking of the attack upon Christianity from one quarter by no means implied a cessation of the attack from others. For example, Gibbon's notoriously sceptical treatment of the numberless Christian martyrdoms claimed for the faith's first three centuries, hotly assailed though it was from the time Gibbon's opening volume appeared in 1776,[2] was followed by no change in Gibbon's temper in regard to ecclesiasticism. His second and third volumes of 1781

[1] Cf. *Edinburgh Review*, xvii, 467 and *Quarterly Review*, iii, 399–400, for the opinion of the next generation. Even the Whig *Edinburgh* admitted (in 1811) that "in his controversy with Dr. Priestley, Bishop Horsley had a manifest advantage (as is now pretty generally acknowledged) both in learning and argument", while the Tory *Quarterly* asserted that Horsley had administered "the severest castigation which a rash and arrogant invader of another's province ever received".

[2] Among the attacks noted in Gibbon's *Autobiography* were those of Davis, Watson, Apthorp, Taylor, Priestley, Dalrymple and White. Watson's *An Apology for Christianity* eventually brought him a Bishopric despite a Whiggery thoroughly distasteful to the Court.

and his concluding three of 1787 were felt to be just as hostile as the first. To Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, indeed, much more than to the professed French atheism of Helvétius's *Système Social*[1] or the confused wrangling of continental cosmologists, nearly all professing undiminished adherence to Genesis,[2] did hopeful English sceptics look for the collapse of "superstition". According to one correspondent of the *Gentleman's Magazine* writing in August 1785:[3]

> When the elaborate and elegant work of the historian of the Roman empire was published, the sceptic and infidel rejoiced, hoping that the Christian yoke would, like Dalilah's cords, be broken by it; and that the Christian superstition (the expression of one of them to the writer) could not survive seven years.

And if this correspondent professed to find the "Insinuations and sarcasms of the historian" passing into oblivion, another later in the year declared that "a more dangerous enemy to Christianity never appeared".[4]

Nor was it only the alleged pride of fallible human intellect that was making the Church all manner of problems at this stage. Sometimes the lusts of impatient flesh were united to "sinful" intellectual pride in very novel shapes. The Legislature, indeed, had just been called in to deal with new profanations of the Sabbath or, as some already had it, "the Calvinism of the English Sunday".[5] The Parliamentary debates on the Sunday Act of

[1] Cf. *Monthly Review*, Appendix (on Foreign Literature) to Volume 47 (1773), p. 561: "We have thus given a sufficient specimen of this execrable *System*; our just censure of which is sufficiently expressed in the introductory part of the article; to which we shall here only add, that we think it impossible for any candid, intelligent, and well-disposed person, even if he disbelieved the divine original of the Bible, not to feel a generous indignation against a writer, who is capable of misrepresenting in so gross and injurious a manner, the most benevolent and amiable system of morality that ever appeared among men; a system that breathes universal love and charity in every precept! But such is the style in which all the *wits* and *geniuses* of France, in this *enlightened* age, affect to talk of Religion."

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Appendix (on Foreign Literature) to Volume 62 (1780), pp. 527–41, where are reviewed the five volumes of the noted Protestant physicist, J. A. De Luc, under the title of *Lettres Physiques et Morales, sur l'Histoire de la Terre et de l'Homme*. It is, perhaps, worth noting that De Luc was already forced to meet the contention of "the high antiquity of the human race" and that "the truth and authenticity of divine revelation, and particularly of the Mosaic history" was claimed in rather cautious terms.

[3] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, September 1785, p. 685.

[4] *Ibid.*, Supplement for the year 1785, p. 1025.

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 1020, from a correspondent who did not like the term and complained, indeed, that he would be better pleased if the facts fitted it instead of presenting him with a very different picture, "not only in the vicinity of London, but in every part of the kingdom".

1781 will be found, in fact, to reveal some strange developments towards the "Continental Sunday" and the "infidel" Sunday meetings which, in the nineteenth century, were to call out the wrath of the Lord's Day Observance Society. In introducing the Bill "for preventing certain profanations and abuses of the Lord's day, commonly called Sunday", the Solicitor-General made it plain that it was levelled against two different kinds of practice. At Carlisle House, a notorious rendezvous for "women of the town", there was a public promenade where, according to the Solicitor-General, "very licentious persons resorted on Sunday under the pretence of drinking tea and coffee". And if this foremost representative of the perils to Sunday from the lusts of the flesh was singled out for special notice, there was attention, too, for other resorts where the perils might be different because "the doctrines of religion were discussed in a very indecent manner". The Solicitor-General, it is related, hereupon read the House two advertisements; "one, wherein the doctrine of the Trinity was the subject proposed for disputation; and the other, the existence or non-existence of Purgatory".[1]

Oppositionists did not hesitate to speak strongly against the Bill on the score of intolerance. On Second Reading, for example, Turner claimed to see in the proposed enactment a Government threat to "the foundations of religious liberty" and went so far as to assert that Administration should encourage rather than prohibit meetings wherein men met to examine the basis of their "faith".[2] Sawbridge complained bitterly of Parliament's readiness to rush in to put more penal laws on a Statute Book already "full of nothing scarcely but crimes". And a very modern touch was fated to be lent to the proceedings, both on Second Reading and after, by those who, whether opposing or supporting the Bill, complained that it did not touch the West-End clubs, "the gaming houses that were open every Sunday in the neighbourhood of the palace". Parliamentarians, it was claimed, should not be ready to make new offences for those "who were beneath them, in regard to rank and fortune . . . while they themselves passed

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, p. 145.

[2] *The Parliamentary Register* (Debrett's), iii, 297, reporting the proceedings of May 11th, makes it plain that Turner advocated an extension of the Toleration Act to cover such meetings which he also defended as a "consolation of the poor": "They should grant patents to preachers of all kinds, and abandon the mean, suspicious policy of religious slavery. . . . He begged the House to have some regard to the consolations and the enjoyments of the poor. . . ."

their lives in one continued round of offence to morality and decency".[1] Even in the Lords there was some debate thanks to those stout Oppositionists the Duke of Manchester and the Earl of Abingdon. The Duke, for instance, while professing himself an enemy to dissipation and immorality and disclaiming all personal knowledge of Carlisle House, held that both the places of religious debate, and of Sunday walking and tea-drinking were perfectly innocent.[2]

That there were some honest doubts about the Bill seems obvious from several facts. The Bishop of Chester felt it advisable to make two special points in favour of the Bill. Attempting to rebut the charge that it savoured of "Popish" persecution, he rather infelicitously argued, with the "Gordon riots", perhaps, in mind, that so far from being "Popish" in tendency, "the Bill was levelled at Popish customs: for in France, and in other countries where the same religion prevailed, from the principles of that religion, plays, operas, and other pastimes, were tolerated on the Lord's day". Moreover, to meet allegations which represented the main speakers at the Sunday religious debates as a species of respectable lecturers, the Bishop asserted that they were paid to draw people to the house which employed them and which looked not to the promotion of religion but to the pecuniary advantage of the proprietors. And it certainly argues a subtle change of temper in the "public" to find the *New Annual Register* thus reporting the continuance of grumbling after the passage of the Bill:[3]

> It was considered by many as little better than an awkward affectation of religion in the promoters of the bill; it was feared, that it might lead to some other improper restraints on the liberty of the subject; and it was thought, that while houses of the most licentious nature were permitted to be open on Sunday, without any effectual opposition from the magistrates, it was scarcely worth while for the legislature to frame a penal statute to prevent men from disputing, however absurdly, on religious subjects.

The ground seems already to have been half-prepared for Paine's *Age of Reason.*

[1] Cf. *Ibid.*, iii, 298, 342–8.
[2] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, History, p. 146.
[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 147.

CHAPTER XXV

OPINION ON RENT AND LANDLORDS

"The landlord demands a rent even for unimproved land, and the supposed interest or profit upon the expense of improvement is generally an addition to this original rent. Those improvements, besides, are not always made by the stock of the landlord, but sometimes by that of the tenant. When the lease comes to be renewed, however, the landlord commonly demands the same augmentation of rent as if they had all been made by his own.

"He sometimes demands rent for what is altogether incapable of human improvements. Kelp is a species of sea-weed, which, when burnt, yields an alkaline salt, useful for making glass, soap, and for several other purposes. It grows . . . , particularly in Scotland, upon such rocks only as lie within the high water-mark, which are twice every day covered with the sea, and of which the produce, therefore, was never augmented by human industry. The landlord, however, whose estate is bounded by a kelp shore of this kind, demands a rent for it as much as for his corn-fields."

The Wealth of Nations on the Rent of Land.

"Both ground-rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are a species of revenue which the owner, in many cases enjoys without any care or attention of his own. Though a part of this revenue should be taken from him in order to defray the expenses of the state, no discouragement will thereby be given to any sort of industry. The annual produce of the land and labour of the society, the real wealth and revenue of the great body of the people, might be the same after such a tax as before. Ground-rents, and the ordinary rent of land, are, therefore, perhaps, the species of revenue which can best bear to have a peculiar tax imposed upon them.

"Ground-rents seem, in this respect, a more proper subject of peculiar taxation, than even the ordinary rent of land. The ordinary rent of land is, in many cases, owing partly, at least, to the attention and good management of the landlord. A very heavy tax might discourage, too much, this attention and good management. Ground-rents, so far as they exceed the ordinary rent of land, are altogether owing to the good government of the sovereign, which, by protecting the industry either of the whole people or of the inhabitants of some particular place, enables them to pay so much more

than its real value for the ground which they built their houses upon. . . ."

The Wealth of Nations suggests specially taxing ground-rents.

"Whatever good reasons may be given for restraining money-holders from taking too high interest, may with still greater force be applied to restraining proprietors of land from an abuse of their right. By exacting exorbitant rents, they exercise a most pernicious usury, and deprive industry that is actually exerted of its due reward. By granting only short leases, they stifle and prevent the exertion of that industry which is ready at all times to spring up, were the cultivation of the soil laid open upon equitable terms."

WILLIAM OGILVIE'S *Essay on the Right of Property in Land* (1781).

It can hardly be pretended that, during the period covered by this book, criticism of the land-holding position in Britain existed to a degree in any way comparable with criticism of the ecclesiastical position. As a result, it is true, of the succession of disastrous "dear years" in the 1760's, some scattered complaint was heard of the landlord-control that had made Parliament, it was said, responsible at once for dear bread, by payment of rent-enhancing corn-export bounties, and for dear meat, by promoting the conversion of small mixed holdings and commons into the large wheat farms that brought high rents. As one dissatisfied and Oppositionist *View of the present State of Public Affairs* had it in 1768:[1]

> The present scarcity is either real, or artificial. If real, they are curious watchmen, who suffered and encouraged the exportation of corn, the over-breeding of horses, and the killing of calves and lambs, in so boundless a manner, that the land must have suffered famine, had not his Majesty stretched prerogative to save the nation. If the scarcity is artificial, they are able statesmen, who suffer the few to starve the many, and reduce our artificers to the necessity of flying their country. Instead of exporting corn, they ought to have imported people. This, and small farms, are the true method of encouraging agriculture, and at the same time of keeping our manufactures on a foot with those of our rivals.

Grumbling of this kind, seeking to combine every possible indictment, was doubtless troublesome. Certainly corn-export bounties and even corn-import duties were repeatedly suspended, and on one famous occasion all corn export was prohibited in advance of enabling legislation. Moreover restrictions or prohibitions on the entry of Irish provisions seem to have been set aside in "bad years" even more readily than the wheat-export bounties.[2] Yet mob-intervention in the food situation remained frequent and alarming, and dealers and marketers of food products, if not landlords, were often assaulted by crowds who, at best, seized their produce and disposed of it at what they considered a "reasonable price".

[1] Cf. *Political Register*, Extraordinary No. 12, April 1768.

[2] Thus in 1765 and 1766 the first Acts placed on the Statute Book were those "for importation of Salted Beef, Pork, Bacon, and Butter, from Ireland, for a limited Time". On the other hand, in the 1765 Session, the "Act to discontinue for a limited Time, the Duties upon Wheat and Wheat Flour imported, and also the Bounty payable on the Exportation of Wheat and Wheat Flour" was only the thirty-first Statute of the Session.

Adam Smith's examination of the food-position is worth attention, because, as is well-known, his bias as between country landlords and city interests was rather towards the landlords. Writing in 1776, he began by holding that "the high price of corn during these ten or twelve years past" was due to "the extraordinary unfavourableness of the seasons" and pointed out that "so long a course of bad seasons" though not a very common event was no more surprising than "the ten years of extraordinary plenty" that had reigned from 1741 to 1750. But though maintaining hopefully that the scarcity would pass and assigning no great part in the worst price-increases to the operation of an oft-suspended bounty, Smith was unable to refrain from making some dangerous points. He asserted, for example, that when the corn-export bounty had first been voted in 1689, it represented the pressure of country gentlemen upon a King not yet firmly established and needing a Land-Tax, for which the country gentlemen, in control of Parliament, sought to recoup themselves in the corn-export bounty.[1] Moreover in making the bounty operate until the reigning home price was as high as 48*s.* the quarter of wheat, a really dangerous scarcity price was held in view. This price, too, was the more likely, on occasion, to be reached or even passed because the "extraordinary exportation" which the bounty encouraged in years of plenty necessarily hindered "the plenty of one year from compensating the scarcity of another".

But if these positions were taken up by Smith in an incidental discussion of Rent, his criticism was considerably stronger in his chapter on Bounties. Refusing to accept the plea that the bounty had been responsible for a remarkable increase in tillage, certain ultimately of itself to produce corn in plenty, Smith wrote as strongly as follows:[2]

> ... every bushel of corn, which is exported by means of the bounty, and which would not have been exported without the bounty, would have remained in the home market to increase the consumption, and to lower the price.... The corn bounty, it is to be observed, as well as every other bounty upon exportation, imposes two different taxes upon the people; first, the tax which they are obliged to contribute, in order to pay the bounty; and, secondly the tax which arises from the advanced price of the commodity in the home market, and which, as the whole body of the people are purchasers of corn, must, in this particular

[1] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book I, Cap. XI. (Of the Rent of Land), Part III.
[2] *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Cap. IV.

commodity, be paid by the whole body of the people. In this particular commodity, therefore, this second tax is by much the heaviest of the two. Let us suppose that, taking one year with another, the bounty of 5*s*. upon the exportation of the quarter of wheat raises the price of that commodity in the home market only 6*d*. the bushel, or 4*s*. the quarter higher than it otherwise would have been. . . . Even upon this very moderate supposition, the great body of the people, over and above contributing the tax which pays the bounty of 5*s*. . . . must pay another of 4*s*. upon every quarter which they themselves consume. But according to the very well informed author of the Tracts upon the Corn Trade, the average proportion of the corn exported to that consumed at home, is not more than that of one to thirty-one. For every 5*s*. therefore, which they contribute to the payment of the first tax, they must contribute £6.4*s*. to the payment of the second. So very heavy a tax upon the first necessary of life must either reduce the subsistence of the labouring poor, or it must occasion some augmentation in their pecuniary wages. . . . So far as it operates in the one way, it must reduce the ability of the labouring poor to educate and bring up their children. . . . So far as it operates in the other, it must reduce the abilities of the employers, to employ so great a number as they otherwise might do. . . .

It is a testimony to the powerful position of the landlords in "public esteem" that incidental criticism of this kind hardly seems to have affected their position with the "public". Perhaps that was because, as Smith himself admitted, the Corn Law revision undertaken in 1773 had altered matters for the better,[1] and, in any case, a "people" yet untutored in economics inevitably put the human blame for high prices mainly upon "engrossers, forestallers", and the crowd of market agencies seeming most obviously to profit from distress conditions. In regard to Land-Tax also, the landlord seems to have emerged over-favourably from what controversy there was. It seems to have been easier for landlords to concentrate the public attention on the high nominal rate of tax than for others to demonstrate the very low valuation on which it was collected, a valuation stabilised since William III's time and even then too low. Though the Grenville Government, for example, at odds with great Opposition land-owners, threatened, through its pamphleteers,[2] to call for a new land-valuation that

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, Book IV, Cap. IV: "we may perhaps say of it what was said of the laws of Solon, that though not the best in itself, it is the best which the interest, prejudices and temper of the times would admit of". Smith specially applauded stopping the 5*s*. per quarter wheat-export bounty at 44*s*. instead of 48*s*.

[2] *The Wallet, a Supplementary Exposition of the Budget.*

would expose the baselessness of their complaints on Land-Tax being continued in peace-time at the war-level of 4*s.* in the £ nominal.[1] a retreat to 3*s.* in the £ was, in fact, forced by division on the "patriot" Chatham in 1767.[2] When, again, in November 1775, the North Government, with full American revolt on its hands, asked for the restoration of the 4*s.* level for Land-Tax, it was a "patriot" Opposition that asked the "country gentleman" to resist.[3] Even the *Wealth of Nations* of 1776, though pointing out numbers of possible improvements, reads, perhaps, over-favourably to the existing constitution and effects of the Land-Tax.[4] And what is, perhaps, most curious of all, while land-owners were emerging very favourably from the tax-discussions of an age, having repeatedly to seek large extra revenues, "Quieting Nullum Tempus Bills" to secure them from dormant claims of the Crown and Church became, thanks to the relative unpopularity of those institutions, causes that "patriots" thought it well to forward.[5]

A good deal of the strength of the landlord position undoubtedly came from what were felt to be the very satisfactory relations of patron and client normally ruling between landlord and tenant. A revealing example of such relations is to be seen in the attachment of the tenantries of Inglewood Forest and the Manor of Carlisle Castle to the Duke of Portland when his rights were challenged, apparently with Crown support, by Sir James Lowther in the famous case that raised the *Nullum Tempus* issue in 1768. And here is the Duke of Portland informing the tenantries

[1] *Ibid.* (1764): "It is now a well-known fact, that many estates, I had almost said many *Counties*, do not pay, when the land tax stands at 4*s.* in the pound, above 9*d.* or 1*s.* . . . now that the administration are obliged, in their own justification, to lay the state of the landed interest, in this respect, before the whole community . . . if the nation shall now insist on a thorough reform . . . and require a new and perfect account of the *real* rents of estates all over the kingdom, the [Opposition] club in Albermarle street . . . must answer it to those who may suffer by this delicate enquiry! . . ."

[2] Without much complaint apparently though the *Political Register*'s "extra-ordinary" Election number in 1768 (p. 235) had a lament that Parliamentarians "have eased themselves of a fourth part of the land-tax, and left the burden on soap, candles, and beer, without which the poor cannot subsist". No victory against Government was then unpopular.

[3] Cf. *Parliamentary Register* (Almon's), for the Commons' proceedings of November 13, 1775, when Opposition was outvoted by 182 against 55.

[4] Cf. *Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Cap. II, Part II, Art. I.

[5] The "Quieting" Bill against the Crown was put on the Statute Book, thanks to Opposition, in 1769. And the "Quieting" Bill against the Church, though aided by no such "scandal" as Sir James Lowther's attempt, with a Crown title, to dispossess the Duke of Portland of Inglewood Forest, won a division of 117 against 141 on February 17, 1772—and this despite the notoriety of the many attatements of legal claims still being forced on the Church.

concerned, on January 30, 1768, that he was resisting Sir James Lowther's claims and would help them to do the same:[1]

> ... I therefore think it necessary to inform all such Tenants, and Other Persons above mentioned, That I do not acquiesce under such Lease [as had been obtained from the Crown by Sir James Lowther], or Relinquish my Right to, and Possession of the Forest, Manor or Lands, above described: And I further think it my duty, as their Friend, to remind them, that my claim is founded on a Grant made in the last Century, by King William the Third, to my Great Grandfather, and his Heirs for Ever, and Confirmed by an uninterrupted possession of more than sixty Years; and therefore I advise them to pay no Regard to the said Notice [from Sir James], and assure them, that in consequence of their so doing, neither their Persons nor Properties, can or shall be affected; as I am determined to defend their Rights and my Own. Portland.

The *Wealth of Nations* has a revealing passage too.[2] After pointing out the legal accident that had made English tenantries more secure in covenants entered into with their landlords than almost anywhere in the world—secure, that is, not only against the covenanting landlord himself but against the overriding claims open, in different versions of feudal law, to overlords, heirs and even successors by purchase—Adam Smith continued thus:[3]

> In England, therefore, the security of the tenant is equal to that of the proprietor. In England, besides, a lease for life of forty shillings a year value is a freehold, and entitles the lessee to a vote for a member of parliament; and as a great part of the yeomanry have freeholds of this kind, the whole order becomes respectable to their landlords, on account of the political consideration which this gives them. There is, I believe, nowhere in Europe, except in England, any instance of the tenant building upon the land of which he had no lease, and trusting that the honour of his landlord would take no advantage of such an improvement. Those laws and customs, so favourable to the yeomanry, have perhaps contributed more to the present grandeur of England, than all their boasted regulations of commerce taken together.
>
> The law which secures the longest leases against successors of every kind, is, so far as I know, peculiar to Great Britain. It was introduced into Scotland so early as 1449.... Its beneficial influence, however, has been much obstructed by entails; the heirs of entail being generally restrained from letting leases for any long term of years, frequently for more than one year. A late act of parliament has, in this respect, somewhat slackened their fetters, though they are still by much too

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, February 1768, p. 116.
[2] *Wealth of Nations*, Book III, Cap. II. [3] *Ibid.*

strait. In Scotland, besides, as no leasehold gives a vote for a member of parliament, the yeomanry are upon this account less respectable to their landlords than in England.

It is plain, of course, from the above passage on strict entail, that Adam Smith, for all his occasional praise of the "landed interest" as less selfish and monopolistic than the mercantile, was no undiscriminating friend. Indeed, the large estate, kept together by entail and Primogeniture, was strongly deprecated by him as the worst enemy to systematic and thorough-going agricultural "improvement". Doubtless the "unimproved" character of much of the hugest estates in the Scottish Highlands was very much in Smith's mind when he penned the following:[1]

When great landed estates were a sort of principalities, entails might not be unreasonable . . . they might frequently hinder the security of thousands from being endangered by the caprice or extravagance of one man. But in the present state of Europe, when small as well as great estates derive their security from the laws of their country, nothing can be more completely absurd. . . . In Scotland, more than one fifth, perhaps more than one third part of the whole lands in the country, are at present supposed to be under strict entail.

Great tracts of uncultivated land were in this manner not only engrossed by particular families, but the possibility of their being divided again was as much as possible precluded for ever. It seldom happens, however, that a great proprietor is a great improver. . . . To improve land—with profit, like all other commercial projects, requires an exact attention to small savings and small gains, of which a man born to a great fortune, even though naturally frugal, is very seldom capable. . . . He embellishes, perhaps, four or five hundred acres in the neighbourhood of his house, at ten times the expense which the land is worth after all his improvements; and finds that if he was to improve his whole estate in the same manner, and he has little taste for any other, he would be bankrupt before he had finished a tenth part of it. There still remain, in both parts of the united kingdom, some great estates which have continued, without interruption, in the hands of the same family since the times of feudal anarchy. Compare the present condition of those estates with the possessions of small proprietors in their neighbourhood, and you will require no other argument to convince you how unfavourable such extensive property is to improvement.

What made criticism of this kind from Smith particularly effective in the long run was the marked sobriety of all his views. He admitted, for example, in an acute discussion of fair ways of improving the yield of the Land-Tax—a discussion wherein the

[1] *Ibid.*

deficiencies of the tax, profitable to landlords, probably came off too lightly—that in any remodelling of the impost it might be worth while allowing an abatement to landlords on farms, up to a certain proportion, that they kept in their own hands for working themselves. Smith proposed this, of course, as one not blind to the advantages of agricultural experiment by those who could afford it. Yet in advancing the proposal, he remained as searching and as critical as when recommending that a remodelled Land-Tax should be made to press more heavily on landlords who tied their tenants too tight, by prescribing their exact mode of cultivation, or who periodically and harmfully depleted their tenants' working-capital by calling for considerable cash-payments as one of the conditions for a tenancy-renewal. Here is Smith on the subject:[1]

> It is of importance that the landlord should be encouraged to cultivate a part of his own land. His capital is generally greater than that of the tenant, and, with less skill, he can frequently raise a greater produce. The landlord can afford to try experiments and is generally disposed to do so. His unsuccessful experiments occasion only a moderate loss to himself. His successful ones contribute to the improvement and better cultivation of the whole country. It might be of importance, however, that the abatement of the tax should encourage him to cultivate a certain extent only. If the landlords should, the greater part of them, be tempted to farm the whole of their own lands, the country (instead of sober and industrious tenants, who are bound by their own interest to cultivate as well as their capital and skill will allow them) would be filled with idle and profligate bailiffs, whose abusive management would soon degrade the cultivation, and reduce the annual produce. . . .

Enough has hardly yet been said to suggest why the *Wealth of Nations*, which became influential so comparatively quickly, may be regarded as having sown the seed for much of the criticism of landlords, destined to become common. To exhibit the full influence of the *Wealth of Nations*, indeed, it would be necessary to make a complete examination, for example, of the astounding long-term effects of Smith's suggestion of a heavy tax on landlords' urban ground-rents, and to follow the more distant echoes of some of the incidental illustrations in his analysis of Rent, unfavourable to landlords.[2] Even the sober Smith's relatively

[1] *Wealth of Nations*, Book V, Cap. II, Art. I.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, Book I, Cap. II: "The sea in the neighbourhood of the islands of Shetland is more than commonly abundant in fish, which makes a great part of the subsistence of their inhabitants. But, in order to profit by the produce of the water, they must have a habitation upon the neighbouring land. The rent

few allusions to the ultimate origin of contemporary Europe's property titles in the armed violence of barbarian conquest or feudal anarchy must be deemed to have had their importance. At least they did not completely discountenance those plebeian theorisers on all men's "natural and equal rights of property in land" who looked back to the "State of Nature", denounced the first landlords as "usurpers and tyrants", and denied the moral claim of all who succeeded them to exclude every man from the appropriated ground. Of these theorisers the Newcastle schoolmaster, Thomas Spence, was a very pattern, and it seems that his plan to recover the people's "usurped" land-rights had first been propounded by him in 1775.[1] The plan was nothing but the resumption of all property-rights by the parishes as representatives of their inhabitants, and Spence's picture of the parishes in action, whether internally or externally, was the purest Utopianism. But Spence has his importance as the ultimate founder of a working-class party of challenge to the private appropriation of land, and there is in his *Lecture* of 1775 a reminder of the game issue on which the most unpolitical of the rural poor were always, in fact, challenging the landlords' claims. Spence's *Lecture* was at its bitterest when complaining that, on appropriated land, "no man, more than any other creature, could claim a right to as much as a blade of grass, or a nut or an acorn, a fish or a fowl, or any natural production whatever, though to save his life, without the permission of the pretended proprietor: and not a foot of land, water, rock, or heath, but was claimed by one or other of these lords".[2]

But if the "landed interest", having swept into its own possession all the old Crown rights to the *ferae naturae*,[3] had since 1670 elaborated a whole Game Code to preserve its alleged privileges from possible depredators, the never-ending stream of Game Acts is, perhaps, the best proof of the countryside's refusal to accept the moral right of Lords of the Manor to the monopoly of the wild game. Hunger and the sporting spirit, moreover, drove men on, and the normally conservative villages were ever full of conspiracy against a Code which not only denied those

of the landlord is in proportion, not to what the farmer can make by the land, but to what he can make both by the land and the water. . . ."

[1] Cf. *Spence and his Political Works* (ed. R. W. Martin, 1917), p. 2.

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 124.

[3] Cf. R. Burn, *Justice of the Peace and Parish Officer* (15th ed., 1785), ii, 249–50.

without considerable landed property[1] the right to possess a snare or a ferret, a gun or a sporting dog, but gave the Lord of the Manor's gamekeeper dangerously wide powers of search, confiscation and even summary arrest.[2] The indifferent moral basis on which was erected a Code, that ventured in the extreme instance of the "Black Act" of 1721[3] to threaten the death penalty itself, may be judged from the following attempted justification quoted in Burn's contemporary *Justice of the Peace*:[4]

It is a maxim of the common law, that such goods of which no man can claim any property do belong to the king by his prerogative; and hence all those animals *ferae naturae*, which come under the denomination of game, are styled in our laws his *majesty's* game; and that which he hath he may grant to another. . . . And from hence cometh the right of lords of manors, or others, unto the game within their respective liberties. And upon this foundation the several acts of parliament are established, for the preservation of these species of animals: for the recreation and amusement of persons of fortune unto whom the king with the advice and consent of parliament hath granted the same; and to prevent persons of inferior rank, from squandering that time, which their station of life requireth to be more profitably employed. For these restrictions do not take from the common people any right which they ever had; but only grant unto some persons those privileges which before rested solely in the King.

Concern, indeed, gradually grew at the way in which the Game Laws bred "crime", from the initial offence of failing to account satisfactorily for a dog or an "engine" through the intermediate

[1] The 22 & 23 Car. II, c. 25 of 1670, decreed that every person not having lands or tenements, or some other estate of inheritance, in his own or his wife's right, of the yearly value of £100, or for term of life, or having leases for 99 years, or any longer term, of the clear yearly value of £150 (other than the son and heir apparent of an esquire, or other persons of higher degree, and the owners and keepers of forests, parks, chases, or warrens, being stocked with deers or conies . . .) shall not have guns, bows, greyhounds, setting-dogs, ferrets, cony-dogs, lurchers, hays, nets, lowbells, hare-pipes, gins, snares, or other engines. . . ."

[2] In the 16 Geo. III, c. 30 of 1776, against deer-stealing, regarded as the most reprehensible offence of the poacher, any keeper or under-keeper and his servants and assistants could arrest those found hunting or snaring deer and conveyt hem before a Justice. The more normal method in cases regarded as less serious was for "one creditable witness" to lay an information before one Justice who thereupon issued a summons or a warrant.

[3] Provoked apparently by an unusual burst of deer-poaching in Epping Forest by persons in disguise or with their faces blacked, this Act even made it a "felony without benefit of clergy" to attempt to enlist any one for this kind of deer-poaching.

[4] Cf. R. Burn, *Justice of the Peace, and Parish Officer* (15th ed., 1785), ii, 249–50.

stages of, say, taking conies at night from a breeding-place to the final sinfulness of, perhaps, firing on gamekeepers to avoid arrest while night-poaching. Many spirited country-lads undoubtedly had their first quarrel with the law when a single Justice of the Peace, on information laid by a gamekeeper, sentenced them, in default of ability to pay a fine that might range from five shillings to a pound, to between ten days and a month in the House of Correction, "there to be whipt and kept to hard labour".[1] Such treatment for, perhaps, the possession of a ferret, and the subsequent ill-effects of the disapproval of the "gentry" tended to make the recipient ripe for night-poaching as a partial means of subsistence. And even if for such a later offence, say, as robbing rabbit-warrens by night, transportation was avoided and whipping and imprisonment suffered instead, the feud with the gamekeeper often tended, in the end, to bring graver consequences. Certainly when Pitt, in search of revenue during 1785, resolved to make all "qualified persons" who desired to make use of their game-rights take out and pay for a game-licence, Sheridan thought fit to remind him that he might actually be adding, unless he took care, to that oppression of the villager by the Game Laws which the Prime Minister had himself criticised. Here is one report of the occasion:[2]

> The order of the day for going into a committee on the game act, being read; Mr. Sheridan rose, he said, to oppose it on the grounds of imposing an additional restraint on unqualified persons, rendering them more liable to prosecution, and subjecting them in some measure to be witnesses against themselves. He charged the minister with inconsistency in declaring himself last session no friend to the rigour of the game laws, and that nothing contained in the then bill should in any way enforce it; whereas words were now introduced in the present bill which evidently tended to give operation to the former system of tyranny which had been enforced on the poorer sort of people, under the pretence of preserving the game.

Pitt, of course, objected that his Bill must be regarded purely as a Revenue Bill and, as such, it naturally had to take account of the punishment of all persons, unqualified as well as qualified, who sported without paying the required dues. Yet it seems symptomatic of the growing criticism of the existing Game Laws to find Pitt's own Attorney-General, though voting with his chief, acknowledging himself of Sheridan's opinion.

[1] Under the 4 & 5 Will. & Mary, c. 23 of 1692.

[2] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, November 1785, p. 870, giving the summary of the proceedings of June 16, 1785.

It is time, perhaps, to turn to the remarkable *Essay on the Right of Property in Land* issued anonymously in 1781 by Professor William Ogilvie of Aberdeen University. Despite the handicaps of anonymous authorship and novel contentions, it was very favourably reviewed in 1781,[1] awoke some expectations at the time of the French Revolution,[2] and was twice reissued when, in 1838 and 1891, the nineteenth century was facing the stresses of the "Land Question". Ogilvie's avowed purpose was, without suggesting hazardous and revolutionary changes,[3] to frame regulations by which the private appropriation of land "might be rendered more beneficial to the lower Ranks of Mankind" whose rights and interests alike, according to his contentions, were ignored by existing arrangements. Though Smith's *Wealth of Nations* had, it seems, deliberately excluded from its discussion of land all questions of "Natural Right" to the soil, those questions were in the very forefront of Ogilvie's contentions. Availing himself of the Lockeian admission of the primitive community's "original right of equal property in land", Ogilvie declined to allow that the subsequent effects of occupancy and labour had permanently overridden it, or that new generations born upon the earth could make no claim of their own to be admitted, if they desired it, to a suitable portion of mankind's original heritage. Indeed, dividing land values into three parts—original, accessory and contingent—Ogilvie contended that only the second, representing the effects of "improvement" already effected, was indisputably the landlord's as the successor to all the improvers. Both to the original value of land "which it might have borne in its natural state" and to the contingent value which expressed, in the existing state of things, the value of the landlord's exclusive right to make further profitable improvements, the landlord had only the same proportionable right as every other member of the community.

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, Domestic Literature, pp. 217–18, and *Monthly Review*, November 1781, pp. 365–7. The *New Annual Register* concluded that the author's arguments "merit the closest examination of the profound and enlightened politician" and the *Monthly Review* confessed the "singular pleasure" that the perusal of the work had afforded.

[2] S. A. Allibone, *Critical Dictionary of English Literature*, ii, 1451, quotes from Sir James Mackintosh's *Life* the opinion that the book's "bold agrarianism attracted some attention during the ferment of speculation occasioned by the French Revolution".

[3] Cf. *Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, Introduction, for the author's being "well aware that great changes, suddenly accomplished, are always pregnant with danger, and with evil, and ought on almost no occasion whatever to be desired, or brought forward by the friends of mankind".

A modern land-reformer would hardly, perhaps, have allowed the landlord to absorb the right to the improvements of all the ages so unreservedly as did Ogilvie. But doubtless that only made him more acceptable to the contemporary reader[1] as did, indeed, the marked ingenuity and quasi-moderation with which he proposed to combine enforcement of the land-rights claimed for the community with the establishment upon the land of those landless who desired it.[2] Thus the community's right to the "original value" of cultivated land was not to be enforced by wholesale resumptions but by a land-tax which might, indeed, go to the full limit of the estimated "original value" in the landlord's hands, above his proper share, before taxation from other citizens needed properly to be called for. And in regard to the community's right to set in motion machinery for assuring the utmost yield from the "improvable" value of land, Ogilvie, after a long and absorbing discussion of the sufferings of the poor from the existing "land monopoly" and the loss society suffered from the retardation of all the great "improvements" possible if the effects of "land monopoly" could be overcome, brought forward the suggestion of an Agrarian Law. Ideally this law would entitle any landless man, who desired it, to ask for a suitably-placed forty-acre holding to cultivate on conditions uninfluenced by "land monopoly".

Though proposing to win some ground for the community by a tax on "barren lands" calculated to force the proprietor to hand over all but his proportionate share, Ogilvie fully admitted that this would not suffice to meet the needs of the Agrarian Law. On the other hand, to subject private estates without ceremony, and after having loaded them with new taxes, to the onerous obligations of the Agrarian Law, Ogilvie recognised as impossible. For one thing, the "public's" sense of justice, moulded by long years of "superstitious reverence" for the landed interest, would not permit it. Ogilvie proposed therefore to introduce the project

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1781, Domestic Literature, p. 217, urging that the *Essay on the Right of Property in Land* "deserves a greater degree of attention than it appears to have met with from the studious part of mankind".

[2] Cf. *Ibid.*: "We should not too hastily condemn laudable, though arduous attempts, as absolutely impossible to be effected. Something, as the writer himself proves, might be done gradually, and by embracing favourable occurrences; and who can tell what regulations may, at length, take place, in the course of human affairs, and from the spirit of improvement which pervades Europe? . . ."

gradually by taking advantage of all manner of opportunity, private and public. He suggested, for example, the passage of a private estate to a collateral successor, in the absence of direct heirs, as a suitable occasion for compulsorily submitting it to the obligations of the Agrarian Law. He suggested, again, that the much-attacked Church might win the support of "the Plough" by voluntarily submitting its estates to the same obligations.[1] And in regard to Crown Lands and any "superfluous" possessions of Colleges, Universities, Hospitals and Charitable Foundations generally, he saw no reason why the provisions of an Agrarian Law might not be introduced at once. It is typical of Ogilvie's peculiar quality to notice his incidental proposal of a Board commissioned to inspect Charity properties with a view to check "private abuse and peculation" and even to propose the remodelling of obsolete charities whose effects had become pernicious. Of course Ogilvie was here, in the interests of his Agrarian Law, anticipating much nineteenth-century legislation and the Charity Commission, but it is worth noting that he also anticipated the directly agrarian activities of such nineteenth-century Government agencies as the Congested Districts Board and the Crofters Commission.

Apart, however, from noticing discussions of this kind which Ogilvie's reviewers, if not the public, found absorbing and which show the most intelligent anticipation, it remains necessary to quote at least one of the passages of real rhetorical fire directed by him against the "Abuses and Pernicious Effects of that Exorbitant Right of Property in Land which the Municipal Laws of Europe have established." Here is such a passage:[2]

Of a million of acres, scarcely twenty thousand are cultivated by proprietors . . . Of five hundred cultivators, not more than twenty are proprietors, or have any permanent tenure of the soil which they cultivate. Of ten thousand acres, scarcely ten are raised to that highest

[1] Cf. *Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, Part II, Section III, Para. 59: "It is supposed by many intelligent persons that, partly through the increase of infidelity . . . the ecclesiastical order have of late lost much of that ascendant which they seem formerly to have possessed over the higher classes of men, so that in almost every country of Europe . . . a crisis of great danger to their temporal rights and privileges cannot be far distant. . . . It would not be unwise nor improper to connect thoroughly the interests of the ecclesiastical order with those of the laborious poor. . . . That sort of correspondence and co-operation which might be denominated an alliance between the Church and the Plough . . . would not only prove equally beneficial to both parties, but seems in the present state of Europe to have become necessary for the support of their mutual interests."

[2] *Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, Part I, Section III, Paras. 27, 28, 29.

degree of fertility which experience has shown that the common soil of the country may be brought to, by the judicious culture of occupiers, to whom the remotest advantages of that improvement are secured. Of one thousand people, not five can be thought to be endowed with that degree of strength and comeliness, which nature seems to have intended for the human face.

All these untoward circumstances, which take place in most countries in Europe, in a higher degree than what is here specified, may be traced up, as to their cause, to that exclusive right to the improvable value of the soil which a few men, never in any country exceeding one-hundredth part of the community, are permitted to engross—a most oppressive privilege by the operation of which the happiness of mankind has been for ages more invaded and restrained, than by all the tyranny of kings, the imposture of priests, and the chicane of lawyers taken together, though these are supposed to be the greatest evils that afflict the societies of human kind.

The silent but pervading energy of this oppression comes home to the bosoms and to the firesides of the lowest orders of men, who are thereby rendered mean-spirited and servile. It begets in them also, for their own defence, so much cunning, fraud, hypocrisy, and malignant envy towards those who enjoy affluence, that by its wide and continual operation the virtue of mankind is more corrupted, and their minds more debased, than by all the luxury and ostentatious meanness of courts, together with the debauched indigence and riotous profusion of great cities. . . .

There, indeed, seems to speak a fitter prophet altogether of peasant proprietors and smallholders than Thomas Paine, whose *Agrarian Justice apposed to Agrarian Law and to Agrarian Monopoly*, though using in 1797 some of Ogilvie's terms without acknowledgment, was almost solely concerned with compensating and not re-settling the dispossessed. But it will explain the limitations of Ogilvie's age to notice one singular fact. It would seem that when he came to write his Introduction, he was somewhat concerned for the bold anti-landlord position he had taken in his text. Accordingly he thought fit not only to deprecate "sudden changes" most energetically but to utter an eloquent eulogy of English landholders as superior to others which one at least of his reviewers printed in full with great satisfaction.[1] Agrarian Reform was plainly not very near when the most eloquent and learned critic "land monopoly" had yet produced in Britain decided to go on record, in his Introduction, to the following effect:[2]

[1] Cf. *Monthly Review*, November 1781, pp. 366–7.
[2] *An Essay on the Right of Property in Land.*

With the greatest satisfaction of mind [the author of these pages] avows his persuasion, that were great and important innovations respecting property in land, as practicable and safe as they are difficult and full of danger, there is no country under the sun which stands less in need of such reformation than England. Although, indeed, the principles of jurisprudence respecting property in land which the laws of England recognize, are derived from the same source, and partake of the same absurd and pernicious nature, with those maxims which prevail almost everywhere on the continent of Europe; yet such has been the generosity of English land-holders, such their equitable conduct towards their tenants and dependents, and such the manly spirit of the lower classes, fostered by a sense of political rights, that, in England, the comfortable independence of the farmer, and actual cultivator of the soil, is established on as secure a footing as the most refined system of property in land, deduced from the general principles of public good, and natural right, can propose to render effectual and permanent. It is to be regretted only, that this comfortable independence which the farmers enjoy cannot be extended to a still greater proportion of the community. . . . To increase the number of land-holders, by advancing farmers to that more independent situation, can never be made the object of legislative care in this country. . . ; but to increase the number of farmers, by favouring the advancement of day labourers and manufacturers, to the more animating and manly occupations of cultivating a small farm for their own, is an object very similar to many branches of enlightened policy, which the British legislature (more than any other) has pursued with attention and success.

CHAPTER XXVI

PHILANTHROPY IN REGARD TO THE "OPPRESSED"

"Mr. Ramsay's *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* is a work of the highest importance to the interests of humanity. The reverend and benevolent author hath pleaded the cause of the Negroes with great energy, and has described their sufferings in a very pathetic manner. He is entitled to the warm thanks of every rational and feeling mind, for his zealous endeavours to meliorate the condition of slavery . . . we trust that, in conjunction with other efforts, it will tend to produce an important revolution in the state of mankind."

New Annual Register, 1784, on West India slavery.

"Upon the whole I can see no better expedient at present than that of permitting them (not *obliging* them, but *permitting* them) to betake themselves to some sedentary employment; such as knitting, spinning or weaving, that might afford them a small profit. This profit, if made their own, would make the employment pleasant to them. Devotion, it is true, is better on such a day than industry; but industry is better on every day than total idleness; that is, than despondency or mischief. The necessity in this case seems at least as strong as that which has induced the legislature to permit the practice of certain trades on the day in question. . . ."

BENTHAM'S *View of the Hard Labour Bill* (1778) treating convicts' Sundays, displays a new attitude.

"That much of the dissipation and profligacy of the poor arises from their not having a proper object of saving offered to their hopes was surely the opinion of those who framed an excellent bill which, in 1773, passed through the House of Commons, for inviting the poor to set apart money, for the purchase of annuities, in their respective parishes and townships. An annuity may be a very proper object for the unmarried, and those who purpose to have none but themselves to care for; but the natural object of every young person is a small farm on which he may settle with the companion of his affections, and raise a family of his own; for this object, if it appears attainable, far the greater number of them will work hard and save with economy. Perhaps no greater reason can be given for the great increase in poor

rates in England, since the reign of Charles II (while in Wales, they remain almost the same) than the increase of manufactures and the diminished number of small farms."

OGILVIE's *Essay on the Right of Property in Land* (1781) refuses to blame the poor.

IT is intended in this chapter to collect together observations on a number of "movements" of which scant mention, or no mention at all, has proved possible in the text though they were fated to become highly important. If, in regard to the outcry for justice to India or Ireland, for example, the reader must be referred to the main body of the text, some treatment will here be given to subjects like the movement against the Slave Trade and the campaign to import humanity into the treatment even of the criminal poor at home. And there is this much of justification for giving a chapter to such subjects in a study like the present—they came, soon or late, to have a special appeal for most of those engaged in the cause of political "reformation". Granville Sharp may be taken as a case in point. This grandson of the Williamite Archbishop of York, after serving in the Ordnance Office between 1758 and 1776, resigned rather than assist against the Americans and threw himself with ardour into the cause of political "liberty" in regard to America, the Press Gang, and Parliamentary Reform.[1] And if his election as Chairman of the Anti-Slave Trade Committee did not come till 1787, it had been well earned already by a series of remarkable efforts, begun over twenty years before, on behalf of unfortunate negroes in England claimed as slaves. Some short mention of these activities seems called for.

Sharp's interest in "poor blacks" was first aroused by the case of Jonathan Strong, a slave brought over to England by a Barbados lawyer and turned out upon the London streets when worn out by bad usage. After Sharp and his brother had charitably had the man nursed back to health and placed in a situation, his old master attempted his recovery but, despite a challenge and the commencement of a lawsuit, failed to force Sharp's hand. Remarking, however, that his own lawyers doubted whether he was entitled to proceed as he had done, Sharp, already engaged in another successful case for recovering from slavery a female, kidnapped from her husband and reshipped by her reputed owner for Barbados, determined on stating a case for the view that the laws of England did not tolerate the institution of slavery. This *Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of*

[1] He had already issued in 1774 and reissued in 1775 his *Declaration of the People's Natural Rights to a Share in the Legislature*, pronounced by the *Monthly Review* "a sober, rational and dispassionate performance".

tolerating Slavery, issued in 1769,[1] certainly represented the mind of the jury in a third anti-slavery case in which Sharp became involved. Thomas Lewis, a Negro forcibly placed on board a ship for transport to Jamaica and released in consequence of a habeas corpus procured by Sharp, was declared, when his reputed owner brought an action for his recovery, not to be that owner's "property". But the question of fundamental principle was not really determined until judgment was given in 1772 in the famous case of James Somerset, a Negro brought over from the West Indies, who had attempted to quit the service of his master and been seized and put on shipboard for sale in Jamaica. On June 22nd the Court of King's Bench, through the mouth of Mansfield, the Lord Chief Justice, ordered Somerset's release on the ground that "no master ever was allowed here to take a slave by force to be sold abroad, because he had deserted from his service, or for any other reason whatever". Henceforward the principle contended for by Sharp in a second anti-slavery pamphlet[2] was admitted, and it became an axiom of English law, "That so soon as any slave sets his foot on English ground, he becomes free."

It was inevitable, after such preliminaries, that Sharp should warmly interest himself in the case of the St. Vincent Caribs, whose treatment, at British hands, aroused debates in 1773 which show almost as welcome a stirring of national conscience as the contemporary debates on plundered India. The French, it seemed, had learned to respect the fighting qualities of the race which had arisen, before European settlement, from the African castaways of a shipwrecked slaver. Certainly the British land-speculators who expected, after the Treaty of 1763, to reap a rich harvest in the ceded island, had been bitterly disappointed both in the amount and quality of the land available for purchase from the Crown. Having settled on the island, nevertheless, the British planters were unending in complaint of the rich plantation land wasted in the Caribs' hands and the danger to themselves from Carib ferocity and Carib intrigue with the French islands. It was even thought fit to use the argument, that the dominant "black Caribs" had no original claim to land at all, since they had ousted and oppressed the native "yellow Caribs", some of whom still survived.

[1] Cf. James Darling, *Cyclopaedia Bibliographica*, 2711.

[2] *An Appendix to the Representation (printed in the Year 1769) of the Injustice and dangerous Tendency of tolerating Slavery, or of admitting the least Claim of private Property in the Persons of Men in England.*

It was as a result of this agitation by the new settlers that it was resolved in 1768 to survey the Caribs' lands, allow them some compensation for improvements and then transplant them to that part of the island, which was poorest, from the planters' point of view, though adequate, it was claimed, for the methods of agriculture pursued by the Caribs. The Caribs objected violently, called for French aid and prepared to resist even though it was refused. In May 1769 a bloody struggle was only averted by the withdrawal of the surveying parties that had been pushed into the Carib country. But after the Carib preparations to fight, the white planters' lamentations to the home authorities of impending massacre grew louder, and the suggestion was put forward that there was now no safety except in a transplantation of the "black Caribs" to Africa.[1] Before, however, persuading the home authorities to undertake the troublesome military effort required, the planters were compelled to see Royal Commissioners offering the Caribs in 1771 a great improvement on the terms of 1768. Only when the Caribs, now encouraged from the French islands,[2] declined all notion of land-exchanges and even denied British sovereignty, did the British authorities seriously begin to prepare a considerable expedition. It transpired from the papers, obtained by Opposition during the Session of 1772–3,[3] that the expedition had orders which envisaged the removal of the Carib community to Africa by force.

It was certainly a new thing for a Negro community to obtain the pertinacious support which the St. Vincent Caribs enjoyed during the Parliamentary Session of 1772–3.[4] This support rose to its climax in the first of the resolutions moved when the whole policy pursued at St. Vincent came to be debated on February 15, 1773. The resolution was to the following effect:[5]

That the expedition against the Caribbs in the island of St. Vincent was undertaken without sufficient provocation on the part of those

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, p. 87*: ". . . the most passionate complaints were sent home: the Caribs represented as most daring and incorrigible rebels: and their own danger exaggerated in the highest degree. Nothing less than their total extermination could now afford safety; and it was proposed to transport them to the coast of Africa, or to some desart island in that quarter."

[2] Owing to the Falkland Islands dispute.

[3] The Oppositionist publisher, Almon, printed them as *Authentic Papers relative to the Expedition against the Charibbs and the sale of Lands in the Island of St. Vincents.*

[4] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, pp. 88*–9*. Military officers gave some aid by testifying mainly in favour of the Caribs at the Commons' inquiry.

[5] Cf. *Ibid.*, pp. 89*–90*.

unhappy people, and at the instigation of persons interested in their destruction, and appears to be intended to end in their total extirpation.

And it seems singularly to anticipate some types of later argument against "excessive" advocacy of "native" claims to find, alongside the smooth official case, the more vehement contention:[1]

That an amazing fund of tenderness and humanity had been displayed in favour of the Caribbs, while the smallest degree of either was refused to our natural-born subjects and countrymen, who had purchased estates at high prices from the crown, under the sanction of its protection and security, and whose lives and fortunes were at stake in the event of the present expedition.

Government was, in fact, victorious by 206 votes against 88, and despite its assurances that forcible removal of the Caribs from their lands to Africa was only intended as a last resort, the Caribs probably owed their final salvation to the trouble they were giving the British troops from hill fastnesses protected by dense tropical forest. Only two days, in fact, after the Commons' debate of February 15, 1773, the general officer commanding in St. Vincent brought an unexpectedly difficult and prolonged campaign to a close by conceding the Caribs terms much better even than the improved terms of 1771. If the Caribs yielded a large portion of fertile land to the Crown, acknowledged the duty of allegiance and accepted St. Vincent law in regard to their relations with whites, much territory was guaranteed to them and their posterity for ever[2] and full security given that the observance of their own customs would not there be interfered with.

Both the Treaty in St. Vincent and the agitation at home were, in fact, remarkable precursors of better days. Next time there was mention of transplantation to Africa, it was not by planters, anxious for fertile lands, but by philanthropists concerned to do the best possible for the hundreds of "poor blacks", many of them the runaway slaves of American masters, who had been brought to London, after the Peace of 1783, alongside the British armies with whom they had found shelter and employment. Granville Sharp's hopes of re-establishing them at Sierra Leone,

[1] Cf. *Annual Register*, 1773, History, p. 91*.

[2] *The American Gazetteer* (2nd ed., 1798) reported of St. Vincent that of a total area of 84,000 acres, 23,605 were then possessed by British subjects, "about as much more" by the Caribs, and the remainder was deemed incapable of cultivation.

as free peasant producers under the protection of the British Crown, seemed at last in a way to be realised when the *Belisarius* dropped down river in December 1786 with its cargo, not of slaves from Africa but of free men to Africa.[1] And with them went high hopes of convincing the world that Africa's best contribution to world-economy could be made as a continent stimulated to produce and exchange its natural products instead of serving as the devastated breeding-ground of the terrible moral pollutions of the slave-trade. What these pollutions were had been vividly described by Wesley[2] and terribly demonstrated in a late lawsuit when, after the master of a slaver, fearing a shortage of water, had thrown the 132 sickliest Negroes of his cargo overboard, his owners thought fit to claim their full value from the objecting insurers. These 132 murders of 1783, incidentally revealed in a commercial case in the Law Courts, may be held to have given the final stimulus necessary to the launching of the Abolition campaign. The stimulus was the greater from Granville Sharp's failure to achieve the guilty man's condemnation for murder.

As this statement on the Slave Trade has been made here, it should, perhaps, be added that, even before 1785, the first influential British voice had been raised with a detailed case, economic and religious, for the transformation of cruel and wasteful West Indies plantation slavery into a free-labour system. The British public, of course, had long been familiar with the growing Quaker objections to slavery[3] and, during the War of American Independence, was often tempted to ridicule Americans for demanding the uttermost liberty for themselves while preserving the severest institutions of slavery for others.[4] Indeed,

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1786, Principal Occurrences, p. 50.

[2] Perhaps Wesley's best service in his strongly pro-Negro *Thoughts upon Slavery* (1774) had been to show how slavers deliberately encouraged internecine wars in Africa in order to buy the resulting captives as slaves though, in Europe, they alleged that their purchases were merciful since the captives would otherwise have been put to the sword. Wesley had also vindicated the natural ability and kindliness of African natives against those who sought to justify slavery on the ground either that their dull brutishness made them fit for nothing better or that they were mere "fierce, cruel, perfidious savages". And he had known how to make the blood of his readers run cold by descriptions of the horrors of the "passage" and of the plantation.

[3] Cf. T. Clarkson, *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade*, i, Caps. III and IV, for the attitude of the Quakers of England and America.

[4] Cf. *Fragment of an original Letter on the Slavery of the Negroes* published, in 1784, by the pro-American Thomas Day from a letter he had written to an American friend in 1776.

but for the danger of the example spreading to the West Indies, the temptation to encourage wholesale servile insurrectious against the Americans might have proved overwhelming. But not till 1784 did an Anglican clergyman of long West Indies experience begin the work of persuading the "public" that a gradual Emancipation of British-owned slaves would not only be charitable but that it would prove "practical" and even profitable. To find not merely the Oppositionist *New Annual Register* but the very different *Critical Review* giving the warmest praise to Ramsay's *Essay on the Treatment and Conversion of African Slaves in the British Sugar Colonies* is to appreciate all the marks of long experience, deep thought and upright purpose it plainly revealed. The *New Annual Register* spoke of the "general notice" the book had excited; hoped that in conjunction with other efforts it would tend "to produce an important revolution in the state of mankind"; and, in a closing passage on "the indignity and cruelty, and we might add, the ill policy of slavery", urged "the friends of reason, justice, and compassion" to continue till slavery "shall be banished from the face of the earth".[1] It seems stranger to find the *Critical Review*, stiffly conservative as a rule, giving excited attention to Ramsay's detailed account of the "enormous oppression" practised in the West Indies,[2] accepting his case that free plantation-workers would both prove more productive and make a bigger demand for British goods, agreeing that effective Christianisation was impossible in slave-conditions, and commending his plan for the gradual introduction of freedom. Here, for example, is the *Critical Review*'s final estimate of Ramsay's *Essay* after an examination in two successive numbers:[3]

It is unquestionably the clearest, the most rational, and the strongest appeal, that has hitherto ever been made to the wisdom of the legislature, and the humanity of the nation, relative to the slavery of the Negroes in our West India islands. The unwearied application and ardent zeal with which the author has pursued this important and interesting

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1784, Domestic Literature, p. 276.

[2] Cf. *Critical Review*, June 1784, p. 449: "Mr. Ramsay informs us, that the ordinary punishments of slaves, for the common crimes of neglect, absence from work, eating the sugar-cane, or theft, are cart-whipping, beating with a stick, sometimes to the breaking of bones; the chain, an iron crook about the neck, a large iron pudding ring about the ancle, and confinement in the dungeon. There have been instances of the slitting of ears, breaking of limbs, so as to make amputation necessary, beating out of eyes, and castration; but these outrageous acts of violence have been seldom committed of late years."

[3] Cf. *Ibid.*, p. 452.

subject, justly entitle him to the warmest applause that impartial criticism can bestow; and whatever shall be the result of his spirited and generous efforts, he may enjoy the conscious happiness of having contributed all in his power towards vindicating the dearest rights of human kind, and promoting the inseparable interests of civil liberty and religion.'

And, after such a reception for Ramsay's *Essay*, it gives the measure of the plantation-interest's power to notice that the rest of Ramsay's life was embittered by the attacks of angry pro-slavery controversialists,[1] and that the political revolution of 1832 was necessary before his suggestions became "practical politics". Here Ramsay shall be left in 1785, driven out of all endurance by the opening of a searching and often personal attack, typical of those normally directed against all disturbers of "settled institutions". The story, too, shall be told in the words of the Oppositionist *New Annual Register*:[2]

In our Register of last year, we expressed great satisfaction at the endeavours of Mr. Ramsay to meliorate the conditions of the Negro slaves in our plantations. . . . His pamphlet, of which we then gave an account, has been warmly attacked by Mr. Tobin, of Bristol, in his *Cursory Remarks upon the rev. Mr. Ramsay's Essay*. . . : The design of this remarker is to shew, that Mr. Ramsay's descriptions of the hardships of the Negroes belonging to British subjects, and their comparative happiness in the French islands, are not founded in truth; that his motives in writing his Essay, were not those of humanity, but the effects of an irritable disposition, and personal pique; and that many parts of his plan are impolitical, inconsistent and impracticable. We are ready to acknowledge that this author writes with great shrewdness and plausibility. But he has not been able to lessen our detestation of the inhuman custom of enslaving our fellow-creatures, which received a keener edge from the representations of Mr. Ramsay; nor can what he says of the peevishness of his temper, of his cruel treatment of his slaves, of his avarice, and of his neglect of his duty as a clergyman, be considered as tending, in the least degree, to invalidate the principles for which he contends. To these *Remarks* Mr. Ramsay hath published a *Reply*, in which after quoting and answering many passages from Mr. Tobin's performance, he indulges to the same kind of personal invective. . . . We wish to lose sight, entirely, of the personal asperities which have been very improperly admitted into this controversy; and to

[1] Cf. T. Clarkson, *The History of the Abolition of the African Slave Trade*, ii, 115–17, which mentions the agitation in which Ramsay's "mind had been kept for the last four years of his life [he died in 1789] in consequence of the virulent attacks on his word and character by those interested in the continuance of the trade".

[2] *New Annual Register*, 1785, Domestic Literature, pp. 317–18.

express our hopes, that the various efforts made in favour of the interests of humanity, will ultimately prove successful, in abolishing a practice inconsistent with the genuine spirit of the British constitution, and disgraceful to the improvement and liberality of the age.

One more significant example of that hatred of unnecessary cruelty and suffering, which was inspiring the humanitarians and innovators, should be given in relation to warfare before the same spirit is followed at work in Britain. When Burke decided to protest against what British armed forces had done on the Dutch island of St. Eustatia early in 1781, he threw into the challenge that generous vehemence of temper which was fated to do so much for India and which inevitably brought Fox and other Oppositionists into the cause with him. It was no light thing to challenge the most popular and successful British Admiral of the day who, it was claimed, had just inflicted a tremendous blow on the country's enemies and brought great help to its war-effort by seizing the enormous stocks of goods, worth millions,[1] that lay on an island whose situation, neutrality and "free port" regulations had made it, between 1775 and 1780, the great depot for American exchanges with Europe and the West Indies. It was not so much the preliminaries of the seizure that infuriated Burke, questionable though he deemed the circumstances in which a powerful expedition, inflamed by hopes of huge booty, had been dispatched from the West India station with such suspicious speed after the notification arrived from Europe that England had broken off relations. It was the apparently reckless military and naval lust for spoil which, unbridled by Government orders, had been allowed to set aside all the ameliorations in the practice of war that had been developing for generations and throwing an increasing shield round the citizen's private property in a conquered land. Thus, while the French in a late capture of Grenada had left all British private property untouched and guaranteed, Admiral Rodney and General Vaughan proceeded to declare enormous quantities of Dutch property in St. Eustatia's warehouses lawful booty, and confiscated also much property claimed as British or British West Indian on the ground that it was there illegally or for the purpose of helping the enemy. Subordinates went on to improve on their chiefs by ordering the stripping and search of the island's Jews before expelling many

[1] Estimates ran between two and three millions.

without a shilling.[1] Here is Burke in the full tide of his generous rage:[2]

What was the discretion and mercy of the conquerors! A general confiscation of all the property found upon the island, public and private, Dutch and British; without discrimination, without regard to friend or foe, to the subjects of neutral powers, or the subjects of our own state: the wealth of the opulent; the goods of the merchant; the utensils of the artisan; the necessaries of the poor were seized on; and a sentence of general beggary pronounced in one moment on a whole people. A cruelty unheard of in Europe for many years, and such as he could venture to proclaim was a most unjustifiable, outrageous, and unprincipled violation of the law of nations.... After all these stages of unheard-of oppression had been successfully gone through, there wanted no more but an attack upon the persons of the unhappy people to finish the scene. He blushed, he said, to relate the sequel for the honour of humanity, of this enlightened age, and still more of the Christian character. The persecution was begun with ... the Jews ... a resolution was taken to banish this unhappy people from the island.... He mentioned some particular instances of aggravated cruelty inflicted on the Jews.... These cruelties were soon followed by others as dreadful. The persecution was not confined to the Hebrew nation. Another proclamation was issued, ordering all the Americans, without distinction, to depart the island.... The next was a proclamation, ordering all the French inhabitants to depart. The next was a proclamation ordering all the inhabitants, late citizens of Amsterdam, to depart; and, last of all, a proclamation, ordering all foreigners of every kind, and all but the settled inhabitants of the island, to depart. The honourable gentleman animadverted, with becoming indignation on all these shameful proceedings....

Government, of course, had a smooth flow of disarming assurances to give. Distinctions were set up between the French position in Grenada and the British in St. Eustatia; everything that had been done was justified from the laws of war except the harsh treatment of the Jews, undertaken, it was explained, without the Commanders' orders and already being rectified;[3] the British Admiral and General were declared incapable of rapacity or lust

[1] Cf. *Parliamentary Register* (Debrett's), under May 14, 1781: "They were confined in a weigh-house ... and orders were given that they should be stripped, and all the linings of their clothes ripped up, that every shilling of money which they might attempt to conceal and carry off should be discovered and taken from them ... money to the extent of eight thousand pounds was taken from these poor miserable outcasts."

[2] *Ibid.*

[3] Cf. Lord George Germaine in the *Parliamentary Register*, under May 14, 1781: "The case of the treatment experienced by the Jews, and stated by the honourable gentleman with all that force of description ... he was ready to admit was true in most of the leading particulars ... the whole transaction happened without the knowledge of the commanders in chief...."

for booty; and, in conclusion, Burke's demand for papers was pictured as likely to help the enemy. But though Burke was heavily defeated for the moment, he was a dangerous enemy, and the more so as the neutral world was resounding with denunciations of the British Commanders similar to his own and plainly giving concern to the Ministers. Moreover, after the disaster of Yorktown, it became clear that the fatal naval shortage in American waters during the summer of 1781 was not wholly unconnected with the naval force that had been required to convoy the booty of St. Eustatia home. Certainly on December 4, 1781, after the opening of a new Session, when Burke again demanded a St. Eustatia Inquiry, General Vaughan thought fit to declare that he was not a shilling the richer for the booty taken and Admiral Rodney to assert that he had regarded the spoils from the first as belonging of right to the Crown. These things doubtless made it easier for Inquiry again to be rejected though by the less convincing majority of 163 against 89.[1] But neither Rodney nor Vaughan, despite this tacit recognition that no share of the booty would now be claimable, could yet be considered out of danger. When North fell and Fox and Burke came into power with Rockingham, Admiral Rodney's recall from his command was quickly ordered. By one of the ironies of History it had to be countermanded owing to popular elation at Rodney's naval victory of the "Saints". Yet a much-needed lesson had undoubtedly been taught certain types of military and naval commander by the political troubles, and even the mercantile lawsuits, that followed on the stretching of the laws of war by Rodney and Vaughan in the hope, perhaps, of becoming Clives.

But it is time to turn from opposition to the wrongs inflicted on enslaved Negroes or on the civil populations of conquered lands to consider what it was at home that the innovating or humanitarian friends of the poor thought needed doing most. An age growing humane enough to pass Jonas Hanway's Act of 1767 to save workhouse infants from dying like flies and even to undertake the first systematic protest against Cruelty to Animals[2] was, of course, full

[1] Cf. *New Annual Register*, 1782, History, p. 30. It is worth remarking that Burke jeered at North's attempt to confirm Rodney's account of never expecting a shilling from the booty at St. Eustatia.

[2] Of the Rev. Humphry Primatt's *Dissertation on the Duty of Mercy and Sin of Cruelty to brute Animals* (1776), the *Critical Review* of February 1776 gave a notice over nine pages long remarking: "It is the only work of any considerable extent we have seen upon the subject."

of humanitarian schemes. The Prisons Act of 1774, for example, due to John Howard's efforts, represents a real beginning in the amelioration of the abominable gaol conditions of the time, and the widespread opposition among the "friends of liberty" to the abuses of the Press Gangs was an important factor forcing the Admiralty to begin meditation upon the problem of making the lower deck more attractive, if only by bounties. Then, after the Act of 1775 for releasing colliers, coal-bearers and salters in Scotland from their species of hereditary serfdom, that energetic Scottish Oppositionist, George Dempster, may be found occupying himself in 1784 with a Bill proposing to commute for a money rent some further Scottish "remains of vassalage" harmful, he claimed, to the small fisherman-farmers, famous to a later Radical age as the "Scottish crofters".[1] But significant as all such things certainly were, the ability to apply for Poor Relief remained, after all, the prime institutional concern of the English poor, and this seemed rather threatened than forwarded by certain advocates of the alleged improvements of the age. On the ground that Poor Rates were rising fast enough to threaten the absorption of the entire annual capitals, normally devoted to "improvement", and yet were going mainly to support the "profligate poor" who knew how to push their claims more impudently than quieter and more deserving people, all manner of schemes of "reformation" had been put forward for decades. Under some, the larger parishes, at least, would have put in a paid Assistant to help the unpaid Overseers as a combination of Workhouse Taskmaster, Interviewer of Relief Applicants and Inspector of families granted outdoor Relief.[2]

[1] Cf. *Gentleman's Magazine*, December 1784, p. 937, reporting the proceedings of August 3rd: "Mr. Dempster, as a previous step to an intended bill for the encouragement of the fisheries in Scotland, opened the way by submitting . . . the propriety of a bill, which he had in contemplation, for abolishing some remains of vassalage in Scotland. Tenants in that country, he said, were obliged to work so many days in harvest, and other seasons, for their landlords, by which they were prevented from getting in their own harvest, or engaging in any other employment. This was a grievance in many respects. . . ."

[2] But a Kentishman's *Thoughts on the present State of the Poor* (1776), suggested a superior kind of Inspector acting as the Justices' Assistant Supervisor over several parishes. He was "to overlook a certain number of parishes with a convenient salary; to examine what persons are upon the lists, and the reasons for their admission. . . ; to see that all such regularly wear the badge; to have a particular eye to all boys and girls as are not put out to trades and service at proper ages, or do not keep to service afterwards: or to such single men or women as lay upon their own hands before they have been married. . . . And if there is a workhouse within any of their districts, to have a further power to inspect the management. . . ."

Other schemes went as far as suggesting compulsory deductions from wages to serve as provision for illness and old age;[1] yet another set merely proposed to deny all Poor Law help to those not participating in voluntary provision; and a milder set still is typified by a 1773 Bill that passed the Commons and was designed to "invite the poor to set apart money, for the purchase of annuities, in their respective parishes and townships".

But the scheme that the poor dreaded most was the Union of Parishes to set up a "well-managed House of Industry" where Overseers might offer institutional relief to all the "troublesome", "saucy", or "profligate" poor while refusing them every further kind of dole in their own homes.[2] The events of 1834 and afterwards were to prove that the poor were prescient in their fears. But for a long time the evil day was kept off by doubts as to whether the "House of Industry" system, even if its "regular labour" should prove a deterrent to many applicants for Poor Relief, really promised, from the few examples already instituted, to be cheaper for the rate-payers than the system of small doles. Those doubts were aided, of course, by fears of riot among the poor at the introduction of the proposed severer system, and so humanitarian "friends of the poor" often had no specially difficult task in assisting to defeat local proposals for applying to Parliament for an "Incorporation of Parishes" to maintain a "House of Industry". "Gilbert's Act" of 1782, indeed, did provide general legislation allowing parishes to unite for the provision of poor-houses and permitting them to appoint paid Assistants to the Overseers under the name of Guardians of the Poor. But it is obvious from the whole text of "Gilbert's Act" that it must be regarded rather as a triumph for the humanitarians than for the disciplinarians.[3] The rules for the "united" poor-houses of "Gilbert's Act" seem to have been intended to make them larger, more orderly and better-managed alms-houses than most parish

[1] Cf. *The Heads of a Plan for raising the Money for maintaining Paupers, by a new Method* (1784).

[2] Cf. *Critical Review*, May 1776, p. 400: "The directors of the Heckingham House [Norfolk] do, indeed, assert that much expense is spared by it, but this is owing chiefly to the vehement dislike which the poor have to a workhouse, so that many chuse rather to starve at home, than to apply the directors."

[3] Cf. this extract from the Preamble to the 22 Geo. III, c. 83: "Notwithstanding the many laws now in being for the relief and employment of the poor, and the great sums of money raised for those purposes, their sufferings and distresses are nevertheless very grievous."

poor-houses could be; the arrangements for cooking, lodging,[1] illness and death figure as prominently as those for work; and, indeed, the able-bodied poor were not intended to be brought in at all. But they, too, were not to be denied benevolence. If able and willing to work but unable to obtain employment, work was to be found for them, and if it was only procurable below the usual rate of wages, then the wages were to be made up by the parish. Here are all the ingredients of the "Speenhamland System" already except the Bread Scale.

The character of "Gilbert's Act" is, perhaps, to be ascribed to the admittedly increasing distress of many even of the "deserving poor" in bad seasons when their problems, constantly aggravated by the fresh war-taxation imposed year after year, threatened to become altogether unmanageable in a labouring family containing several children. That is also, perhaps, why there is a fairly constant stream of suggestion, even from conservative Poor Rate reducers, for "granting to the poor the use of a certain portion of waste lands".[2] Doubtless the strength of the poor's latent Agrarianism, capable even in the nineteenth century of calling so vigorously for the "nationalisation" and "home colonisation" of "waste lands", was not fully suspected. One man, however, there was who warned the landlords that Poor Rates were but the inevitable accompaniment of land-monopoly and lack of small farms, and that complaints of high rates were unjustifiable where no Agrarian policy was adopted. Here is Ogilvie in 1781 in an *Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, already noted in a previous chapter:[3]

> England virtually acknowledges by the system of her poor laws, that right of common occupation of the territory of the State which belongs to every individual citizen, and has only varied, perhaps mistaken, the natural means of rendering that right effectual.
>
> It has been common of late to complain of, and to traduce, this the most generous and the most respectable establishment of which the jurisprudence of nations can boast. It is the monopoly of landholders that renders such an establishment necessary; it is their discontent that

[1] Cf. *Rules, Orders, Bye-Laws and Regulations &c.*: "That the governor shall place in the best apartments such poor persons who, having been creditable housekeepers, are reduced by misfortune, in preference to those who are become poor by vice and idleness; and that separate apartments shall be provided for the reception of the sick . . . and an apothecary or surgeon to be sent for. . . ."

[2] Cf. *Some Hints in regard to the better Management of the Poor* (1784).

[3] *Essay on the Right of Property in Land*, Part I, Section III, Para. 40 n.

aggravates the complaints against it. All men who can regard the interests of the poor, and of the landholders, with an impartial eye, will perceive that it is not less just than generous, and will find reason to think that it has proved highly beneficial to England, in respect of the spirit of her people.

The abuses which may have crept into this respectable system of laws, ought not to be alleged against its utility . . . and that they are not in a great measure rectified and removed is the fault of those only whose interest and whose duty require them to attend to this care. . . .

The great amount of the poor rates is justly imputed to this, that, whilst young and healthy, the lower classes of labourers and servants do not save their wages as they might, for the assistance of their old age. The reason why they do not save for that purpose, is supposed to be the assurance they have of being maintained by the parish when they come to stand in need of it. Another reason might be given; they do not save, because they see no probable view of obtaining by such saving a comfortable settlement, in which they may spend their old age with their families around them. "I never yet knew", says a writer who has observed them well (*Farmer's Letters*, p. 294), "one instance of any poor man's working diligently while in health, to escape coming to the parish when ill or old. Some will aim at taking small farms; but if by any means they are disappointed in their endeavours, they consider the money they have already saved as of no further value, and spend it long before they really need it." Almost all of them, it may be believed, would aim at taking small farms, were the opportunities frequent, and the terms easy.

Perhaps a chapter like this, mainly concerned with the propagation of unfamiliar if benevolent new ideas on behalf of the unfortunate, should not be closed without mention of three personalities already, by 1785, active in that field and typical of much that was to come. Jeremy Bentham, a non-practising barrister with a father of means, had attracted notice as early as 1776 with *A Fragment on Government* which had delivered an unexampled blow at the enormous credit of Blackstone's complacent *Commentaries on the Laws of England.*[1] But if Bentham had here concentrated his devastating criticism upon the real meaninglessness of much that passed for treatment of the British Constitution,[2] it was in 1778

[1] Cf. *Critical Review*, May 1776, on "the first attempt deliberately made to invalidate the great reputation of that valuable work". And the *Critical Review* was sufficiently impressed to own Bentham "a shrewd and acute antagonist" aiming "his remarks with peculiar address against such parts of the *Commentaries* as seem the most liable to objection".

[2] *The Monthly Review* (1776) protested its "disgust at the severity with which the justly-admired Commentator is treated in the critique now before us. In order to convict him of obscurity and inaccuracy, this *anonymous* writer has taken much pains . . . has scrutinised every word and idea with a rigour, which few

and in *A View of the Hard Labour Bill*, evoked by the current plans for new-style prisons, that he announced himself as occupied with the principal interest of his long life "the subject of punishment more at large". After 1780, indeed, when the *Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation* was put into print, a scheme, almost over-elaborate in analysis, was at the service of crusaders for substituting a rational Criminal Law in place of the monstrous barbarities of the existing Statute Book. Another lawyer, almost as unusual as Bentham, had in 1784 as Sir William Jones, Judge of the High Court of Calcutta, begun making India some compensation for the first generation of British plunderers by founding the Asiatic Society in the very year that his "levelling" pamphlet on *The Principles of Government* was being indicted in an English Court of Law. But the Dissenting Manchester physician, Dr. Thomas Percival, was, in a sense, even a newer type of figure to acquire importance than unusual lawyers like Bentham or Jones. Already in 1774, at the age of thirty-four, this remarkable projector of provincial quasi-Universities at Warrington and Manchester, had established well-nigh a new branch of medico-social literature in issuing his *Observations on the State of the Population in Manchester and other adjacent Places.*[1] It was because Percival's medical ability was on the spot and alive to considerations of social hygiene that the spread of disease from the dirty and crowded cotton-factories and prentice-houses of the first manufacturing generation was under shrewd observation from the very beginning. It was apparently due to Percival's influence in Manchester, safely resting by 1785 on much able publication as well as assiduous practice, that Manchester workhouse children were not apprenticed for factory-work except on safeguarded conditions prophetic of the Factory Acts.

even of the most admired writers would be able to endure. . . . In what the author advances concerning the British constitution, he controverts, with a mixture of argument and raillery, many popular opinions. . . ."

[1] Cf. J. R. MacCulloch, *Literature of Political Economy*, who still pronounced it "a valuable tract" in 1845. It was republished in 1778 and was also included in the third volume of Percival's *Histories of Diseases*.

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Annual Register (founded 1758). Burke's hand or influence often obvious.

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