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Le massacre de Peterloo dans l'imaginaire populaire -
Causes et conséquences d'un évènement tragique
(Peterloo massacre in the collective imagination
Causes and consequences of a tragic event)

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Peterloo massacre in the collective imagination

Causes and consequences of a tragic event

Abstract

The 19th century is known as one of the most eventful periods in British history. Between the progress of the Industrial Revolution, and the waves of unrest at the start of the century, this era marks the beginning of societal evolution. This period is known, in particular, as a time when members of the working class tried to carve out a place for themselves and claim their rights. Of all the rallies that took place during this time, the 1819 protest in Manchester is undoubtedly the most important. On the 16th of August 1819, tens of thousands of people decided to peacefully demonstrate in order to demand parliamentary reform. Women and children were at the front of the group, playing and dancing to the sound of musicians. However, this did not prevent a militia from storming the crowd. As a result, fifteen people died and hundreds more were injured. This event prompted public outrage and strong reactions, especially in the press.

For this thesis, I decided to ask myself three questions: How were the demonstrators represented in the press after the event? How was law enforcement represented? What were the effects of this massacre on society? In order to answer these questions, I consulted several newspaper articles from the time. The majority of the articles were in support of the demonstrators, while denouncing the actions of the government. Nevertheless, some pro-government newspapers wrongly accused the demonstrators of violence and various crimes in an attempt to justify the militia attack. For this reason, it was especially interesting to compare these two perspectives in order to understand and emphasise the gravity of this event that serves as a turning point in the evolution of the working class in British society. Below, the English version of the table of contents:

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Causes et conséquences d'un évènement tragique

Wassila Boutchich

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Résumé

Le XIXe siècle au Royaume-Uni est connu comme étant l'une des période les plus mouvementées de l'histoire. Entre les progrès liés à la Révolution Industrielle, et les différentes agitations qui se sont déroulées au début du siècle, cette ère marque le début de l'évolution de la société. Cette société notamment marquée par la classe ouvrière qui a essayé de se faire une place et de revendiquer ses droits. Ainsi, le rassemblement des réformateurs radicaux au St. Peter's Field de Manchester, marquera le point de départ de cette reconnaissance. Même s'il s'est terminé en massacre et qu'on lui donnera très vite le nom de Peterloo dans la presse, il a permis de mettre l'accent sur les problèmes qui subsistaient au sein du gouvernement et de la société.

Mots-clés : classe ouvrière, Révolution Industrielle, agitations, rassemblement, réformateurs, radicaux, Manchester, massacre, Peterloo, presse.

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Abstract

The 19th century is still recognized as one of the most boisterous periods in history. On the one hand, the Industrial Revolution underlined the beginning of progress. On the other hand, many agitations took place, especially at the beginning of the century. But we can't deny that the British Society started to evolve from the moment the population wanted to fight and claim for more rights. That was particularly the case for the working-class who wanted to be recognised and supported. That's why, the great meeting of the Radical Reformers, at St. Peter's Field, in Manchester, can be considered as a turning point in the improvement of the working-class's way of life. Even if that event ended in the most terrible way and was renamed as 'Peterloo Massacre' through the press, it opened the way in obtaining their rights and liberties.

Keywords: agitations, working-class, progress, meeting, Radical Reformers, Manchester, Peterloo, Massacre, press

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Introduction

En pleine Révolution Industrielle, dès le début du XIXe siècle, le Royaume-Uni s'est retrouvé à faire face à différentes crises qui ont eu des conséquences importantes sur les années à venir.

En 1800, l'Angleterre est amenée à signer l'Acte de l'union avec l'Irlande. À travers cet acte, effectif seulement à partir du 1er Janvier 1801, l'Irlande a commencé à faire partie officielle du Royaume-Uni en rejoignant la Grande-Bretagne. C'est à partir de ce moment que le parlement de Dublin s'est dissout et que l'Irlande a été contrainte d'être représentée au Parlement de Westminster. Et comme la seule Église autorisée à représenter le Royaume-Uni était l'Église anglicane, les catholiques se sont vu refuser l'accès à des fonctions officielles. Ainsi, l'émancipation de la population catholique a été très restreinte, et l'alliance entre la Grande Bretagne et l'Irlande a laissé place à un mécontentement croissant de la population catholique et de ceux qui voulaient la paix[1].

En 1807, c'est un autre problème qui, même une fois résolu, n'a pas mis fin à la crise existentielle au sujet de l'esclavage. Cette année, William Wilberforce, après de nombreuses tentatives depuis la fin du 18ème siècle, a réussi à faire entendre ses idées en poussant le gouvernement à abolir la traite des esclaves. Même si cela a été considéré comme un premier pas important dans l'abolition de l'esclavage, cela n'a néanmoins pas empêché de nombreuses personnes à se soulever pour demander l'abolition totale de l'esclavage, créant ainsi de nombreuses tensions au sein même des abolitionnistes[2]. Mais ces deux aspects ne sont pas les seuls à avoir mis en place cette atmosphère de désaccord entre la population et le gouvernement britannique.

Effectivement, les années 1810 étaient particulièrement agitées jusqu'au début des années 1920, du fait des inégalités très présentes. Ces inégalités se trouvaient spécialement au niveau des représentations politiques, et plus précisément entre les différentes classes sociales[3].

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[1] http://www.victorianweb.org/history/ireland1.html [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]
[2] http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/historic_figures/wilberforce_william.shtml [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]
[3] http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/uk_news/politics/95699.stm [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]

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Il est vrai que le pays était découpé en plusieurs municipalités afin de représenter convenablement la totalité de la population. Or, au début du 19ème siècle, le gouvernement a accordé des privilèges à certaines circonscriptions au détriment d'autres villes plus importantes démographiquement. On appelait ces circonscriptions les « bourgs pourris[1] » car elles étaient à l'époque très peuplées, mais ont vu, au fil du temps, leur population diminuer. Puis, comme ces municipalités étaient peuplées de personnes aisées, même s'il ne s'agissait que d'un très petit nombre, elles conservaient tout de même leurs avantages électoraux. Ainsi, ils avaient la possibilité d'élire les représentants de leur choix au Parlement. Alors que certains de ces bourgs continuaient à avoir une influence importante sur la représentation électorale, des villes considérablement plus peuplées se retrouvaient avec peu, voire pas du tout, de représentants. C'était le cas, par exemple, pour la ville de Manchester. Pour rappel, à cette époque, seuls les hommes avaient le droit de voter, les femmes étant exclues de la sphère politique pour consacrer leur temps aux affaires domestiques. Cependant, même au sein de la population masculine, il y avait un manque d'équité en ce qui concerne le droit de vote. Ce sont surtout les propriétaires de terres qui avaient une place importante sur le plan électoral. De plus, les municipalités électorales étaient restreintes et les élections ne se déroulaient que dans certaines parties du Lancashire seulement. C'est pourquoi la classe ouvrière a commencé à se sentir exclue et à comprendre que sans pouvoir électoral, elle ne serait jamais correctement représentée. Cela revient à dire que sans droit de vote ils n'obtiendraient sans doute jamais réponse à leurs réclamations. C'est aussi à cause de ces inégalités électorales que l'Angleterre est entrée dans une période mouvementée, dans le but d'obtenir des réformes parlementaires justes et équitables pour toutes les classes sociales.

Ce n'est pas sans rappeler que la Révolution Industrielle a apporté en Angleterre une évolution au sein de l'industrie du textile avec l'exploitation du coton, au niveau de l'évolution des machines principalement, et a offert l'opportunité de créer des postes à pourvoir dans différents secteurs industriels. Cependant, si certains ont trouvé la satisfaction en obtenant un travail qui leur permettait de vivre, ils n'ont pourtant pas eu la chance de profiter des joies de la rémunération et des congés. D'une part, les conditions de travail étaient beaucoup trop

[1] "*rotten borough*" : « aux XVIIIe et XIXe s., ville britannique autrefois importante mais déchue et restée circonscription électorale malgré le petit nombre d'électeurs. »
http://encyclopedie_universelle.fracademic.com/2967/BOURG_POURRI [Dernière consultation le 06/01/2017]

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difficiles. Certains endroits étaient insalubres et dépourvus de sécurité. Les journées de travail étaient très longues, sans forcément compter de moments de pauses. Les travailleurs étaient contrôlés et malgré toutes ces difficultés, ils n'étaient pas payés en conséquence. Il est vrai qu'ils avaient la chance de travailler mais les salaires étaient considérablement bas comparés à la masse des efforts fournis. Ces mauvaises conditions ont eu des répercussions directes sur le mode de vie des ouvriers hors travail. La Révolution Industrielle a fait bouger les paysans de la campagne vers les villes nouvellement industrialisées. Même si la vie dans les campagnes n'était pas parfaite, elle n'était pas aussi difficile que la vie dans ces nouvelles villes industrielles. Ainsi, on pouvait trouver une concentration de la population dans des habitations parfois trop petites pour accueillir toutes les familles. De plus, la plupart de ces logements manquaient des premières nécessités comme l'eau courante ou autres installations sanitaires. C'est ce dont E.P. Thompson nous fait part dans son livre *The Making of the English Working Class* en écrivant : « But as the new industrial towns grew old, so problems of water supply, sanitation, over-crowding, and of the use of homes for industrial occupations, multiplied, until we arrive at the appalling conditions revealed by the housing and sanitary inquiries of the 1840s.[1] »

Au fur et à mesure que la classe ouvrière, sous la Révolution Industrielle, s'est formée, elle a certes connu des conditions difficiles tant sur le plan professionnel que personnel. Mais le gouvernement ne leur a également pas facilité la tâche en leur imposant des taxes conséquentes par rapport à leur faible rémunération. Et c'est un acte de 1815 qui a spécialement éveillé la colère de la classe ouvrière. Depuis 1773, le Royaume-Uni a adopté différents textes afin de réglementer les relations d'échanges avec les pays étrangers, en ce qui concerne l'importation et l'exportation des céréales. Mais c'est en 1815 que le texte de loi le plus important a été voté sous le nom de "Corn Law Act." Cette loi visait à décourager l'importation du blé, plus précisément lorsque le coût de celui-ci était inférieur à une certaine somme, et rendait donc l'importation non profitable pour le Royaume-Uni. Il fallait donc payer plus cher l'importation de cette céréale pour éviter toute concurrence allant contre les fermiers anglais. Le prix du pain est ainsi devenu plus élevé. Par conséquent, ceci est devenu une contrainte pour la classe ouvrière dont le pain était une première nécessité. Cela va sans dire qu'une telle loi a remis en question tout le système basé sous le libre-échange et sur la liberté des ouvriers de

[1] THOMPSON, E.P, *The Making of the English Working class*, Penguin Books, 1963. Format Kindle, emplacement 5976-5983.

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pouvoir disposer des denrées nécessaires à leur mode de vie. Ce manque de liberté nous mène à faire le lien avec la France, et plus précisément à l'atmosphère au sein de la population française, menant à la Révolution. Et c'est tout ce que voulait éviter le gouvernement britannique à l'époque : une révolution de la classe ouvrière. Cependant, après 1815, tout laissait à croire que cette population ne supportait plus les injustices sociales. En effet, une série d'agitations a pu être relevée entre 1815 et 1819, provoquant des incidents plus ou moins importants. Ces agitations pouvaient aller de simples manifestations à des rassemblements de masse en plein air. Mais pouvaient également se dérouler sous forme de rébellion et conspiration, utilisant la violence afin de parvenir à leurs fins. Pour vous donner quelques exemples, voici une brève énumération des principaux incidents qui se sont déroulés à cette période. En Mars 1815, ont eu lieu les « Riots in London » contre le Corn Bill. Du mois d'avril au mois de juin 1816, se sont déroulés les « Ely, Bury St Edmunds, and Littleport Riots » pour lutter contre la baisse des salaires en agriculture et la hausse des prix de la nourriture. En décembre de la même année, les « Spa Fields Riots » : ce rassemblement à l'origine pacifique, était présidé par Henry Hunt. Mais une partie de la foule s'est mise à attaquer les magasins, puis a essayé de saisir la Tour de Londres ainsi que la Banque d'Angleterre. L'année 1817 également n'a pas été épargnée par ces incidents. Au mois de janvier, alors qu'un rassemblement se déroulait à la « Crown and Anchor Tavern in the Strand » donné par Cobbett et Cartwright, la voiture du Prince Régent a été attaquée. Ensuite, au mois de mars, a eu lieu la « March of the Blanketeers » allant de Manchester à Londres. Les tisserands ont marché pour présenter une pétition au Prince Régent pour lutter contre le déclin de l'économie et la mécanisation de leur métier. Malheureusement, cette marche a été bloquée au niveau de Stockport, et un seul homme a pu se rendre à Londres pour présenter cette pétition. Au mois de juin, s'est déroulé le soulèvement de Pentrich, dans le Derbyshire. Sous la direction de Jeremiah Brandreth, un groupe de personnes a tenté de prendre le pouvoir de force. Ils ont été arrêtés et quatre d'entre eux ont été exécutés. Même si ces agitations ont provoqué du désordre et n'ont fait qu'augmenter la crainte du gouvernement à faire face à une possible révolution, c'est l'année 1819 qui restera la plus marquante.

Après plusieurs réunions et différents préparatifs, les habitants de Manchester en faveur de réformes parlementaires, ont décidé de se réunir le 16 août 1819 pour essayer d'être entendus, ne sachant pas avant le début de la manifestation que ce jour serait marqué à tout jamais dans l'histoire de la ville et du pays. Mais avant d'en arriver à ce jour fatidique,

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remontons quelques mois auparavant afin d'essayer de comprendre toutes les circonstances. Au mois de Mars 1819, trois radicaux ont décidé de former la *Manchester Patriotic Union Society*. Il s'agit de Joseph Johnson, John Knight et James Wroe[1]. Le but de la création de cette union était d'obtenir une réforme du Parlement qui serait juste et équitable pour tout le monde, sans oublier la classe ouvrière et ses besoins d'être réellement représentée au Parlement. C'est pourquoi ils ont décidé d'organiser une manifestation pacifique au cours de l'été de la même année, en invitant le major Cartwright, Henry Hunt et Richard Carlile, trois personnalités politiques impliquées dans les mouvements radicaux en faveur de la classe ouvrière[2]. Pour se faire entendre, ils ont choisi de se réunir au "St Peter's Field." Ils étaient environ 60000 personnes[3]. Hommes, femmes et enfants. Sans armes. Simplement unis, avec la force de leurs pensées et tenant leurs bannières. Comme nous pouvons le lire dans le journal *The Examiner* du 23 août 1819, ces bannières portaient des inscriptions du genre « Annual Parliaments, and Universal Suffrage », «No Corn Laws », «Vote by ballot », ou encore « *Major Cartwright's Bill, Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot.*[4] » Il n'y avait aucun signe de révolution, simplement les motifs de leur rassemblement mis en évidence. Selon ce que les journaux ont pu rapporter sur l'organisation de ce rassemblement, tout laissait croire que tout se déroulait dans le calme et dans la légalité. C'est ce que nous pouvons par exemple relever dans le Liverpool Mercury :

> That, for exercise of this right, a meeting was held at Manchester, on the 16th of August last, and without entering into the policy or prudence of convening such assembly, it appears to us from the information which has transpired, that the said meeting was legally assembled, that its proceedings were conducted in an orderly and peaceable manner, and that the people composing it were, therefore acting under the sanction of the laws, and entitled to the protection of the Magistrate.[5]

Mais les magistrats, dont le président William Hulton, craignaient que cette manifestation ne vire à une révolte, au vu des milliers de personnes présentes. Par conséquent, William Hulton a décidé d'envoyer ses troupes sur place en ordonnant l'arrestation des

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[1] SIMKIN, John, *Peterloo Massacre* http://spartacus-educational.com/PRpeterloo.htm
[2] COTTRET, Bernard, *Histoire de l'Angleterre,* 2011 pp.322-323
[3] BLOY, Marjie, *The Peterloo Massacre, 16 August 1819*, last modified 8 August 2003 http://www.victorianweb.org/history/riots/peterloo.html
[4] *The Examiner*, voir annexes
[5] *The Liverpool Mercury*, 24 septembre 1819, voir Annexes

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organisateurs ainsi que des participants, plus particulièrement Henry Hunt et ses associés. C'est ainsi qu'une soixantaine de cavaliers a fait face à la foule et n'a pas hésité à charger. Conséquence ? Une quinzaine de morts et des centaines de blessés. Le triste bilan est là : « At least 18 people were killed on the field or died later of their injuries, of whom four were women. These were Margaret Downes – sabred; Mary Heys - trampled by cavalry; Sarah Jones – truncheoned on the head by special constables; and Martha Partington, – crushed to death in a cellar. Of the 654 people listed as being injured, 168 were women.[1] » Des personnes qui sont venues réclamer leurs droits de manière pacifique, se sont retrouvées étalées sur le sol d'un instant à l'autre, sans comprendre pourquoi, sous les yeux insouciants des enfants et les regards impitoyables des soldats. C'est ce sentiment d'injustice qu'évoque également E.P Thompson à travers cette phrase « There is no term for this but class war. But it was a pitifully one sided-war.[2] » Car il est évident que les manifestants n'avaient aucune envie de provoquer quelconque violence, de se rebeller ou d'attaquer les forces de police. Au contraire, les organisateurs de ce rassemblement, notamment Henry Hunt, avaient mis en garde les participants en leur demandant d'éviter toute bousculade et surtout de ne pas répondre aux provocations. Ils ont également interdit les armes sous toutes leur formes pour éviter tout dérapage. « The leader of the contingents had warned their followers to ignore all provocations. Many staves - or 'walking-sticks' had been left behind[3] » nous rappelle E.P. Thompson. C'est-à-dire que même les objets, qui ne sont pas considérés à l'origine comme des armes, ont été laissés de côté. Ainsi, les personnes âgées ont par exemple dû se débarrasser de leurs cannes et demander de l'aide à d'autres manifestants pour marcher. Tout avait été mis en œuvre pour que le rassemblement se passe dans les meilleures conditions possibles. La présence de femmes et d'enfants appuyait cette idée de rassemblement pacifique, mais cela n'a pas empêché les soldats de la Yeomanry de reculer. Jemina Bamford, la femme de Samuel Bamford, qui était présente dans les premiers rangs de la foule avait tenu à décrire ce qu'il s'était passé :

> By this time Mr. Hunt was on the hustings, addressing the people…The people shouted, and then the soldiers shouted, waving their swords. Then they rode amongst the people, and there was a great outcry, and a moment after, a man passed without hat, and wiping the blood off his head with his hand, and it ran down his arm in a great stream. The meeting was all in a tumult; there were dreadful cries; the soldiers kept riding amongst the people, and striking with their swords. I became faint, and turning from the door, I went

[1] Article de *The Guardian*, Women's role at Peterloo revisited in Manchester anniversary walk.
[2] THOMPSON, E.P, *The Making of the English Working class*, Penguin Books, 1963. Format Kindle, emplacement 12887.
[3] *Ibid*, Emplacement 12871.

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> unobserved down some steps into a cellared passage; and hoping to escape from the horrid noise, and to be concealed, I crept into a vault, and sat down, faint and terrified…[1]

Les magistrats n'ont pas donné de réelles explications pour justifier leurs actes. L'unique justification, qui ne justifiait en rien la mort et les blessures de tant de personnes, était que les rassemblements de cette ampleur étaient interdits sans autorisation gouvernementale. Seulement, cette justification peut être remise en cause par le simple fait que les magistrats auraient dû lire le Riot Act afin de prévenir les manifestants que leur rassemblement était illégal. Or, de nombreuses incohérences et de nombreux doutes planaient autour de la lecture ou non de cet acte, avant l'intervention des soldats. Même si l'illégalité du rassemblement reste à confirmer, en revanche on ne peut pas nier qu'empêcher ces citoyens de revendiquer leurs droits peut être considéré comme une atteinte à leur liberté d'expression. D'autant plus que cette liberté d'expression a été attaquée de la manière la plus violente possible. Et cette liberté ce jour-là a été touchée sur plusieurs niveaux vu que la presse était également présente et que certains des journalistes se sont retrouvés en prison.

« Several of the newspaper reporters, including John Tyas of *The Times*, Edward Baines of the *Leeds Mercury*, John Smith of the *Liverpool Mercury* and John Saxton of the *Manchester Observer*, joined the speakers on the hustings.[2] » La presse était donc bien représentée, prête à couvrir cet événement pour appuyer, à la base, les arguments des ouvriers et les aider à faire entendre leurs réclamations de manière plus générale. Les journalistes aussi ne s'attendaient pas à vivre un tel 'massacre,' et encore moins à en subir des conséquences directes. C'est d'ailleurs à travers la presse que le mot 'Peterloo' a été créé pour définir cet évènement. En effet, comme nous le rappelle John Simkin dans son article en ligne, « James Wroe was at the meeting and he described the attack on the crowd in the next edition of the *Manchester Observer*. Wroe is believed to be the first person to describe the incident as the Peterloo Massacre.[3] » Le terme 'peterloo' est un jeu de mot construit à partir de 'Peter' pour rappeler le lieu du rassemblement, et de 'Waterloo' en référence à la Bataille de Waterloo, remportée par les anglais face à Napoléon en 1815. Comme le dit si bien Bernard Cottret : « Peterloo fut le Waterloo du pauvre.[4] » Or, ce 16 août 1819, peut-on vraiment parler de victoire du

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[1] Article de *The Guardian*, Women's role at Peterloo revisited in Manchester anniversary walk.
[2] SIMKIN, John, *Peterloo Massacre* http://spartacus-educational.com/PRpeterloo.htm [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]
[3] *Ibid,* http://spartacus-educational.com/PRpeterloo.htm [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]
[4] COTTRET, Bernard, *Histoire de l'Angleterre,* 2011, p.323

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gouvernement sachant que ce n'est pas l'ennemi qui a été vaincu mais le peuple? De plus, les conséquences de ces actes ont eu de telles portées que l'on peut considérer ce jour comme un premier pas vers l'accès à leurs droits. Du moins, on peut penser que les réformateurs ont eu droit à une victoire 'morale' étant donné le soutien qu'ils ont reçu des quatre coins de l'Angleterre, notamment grâce aux journalistes et aux caricaturistes.

Assurément, la presse était l'un des moyens d'expression les plus utilisés à la suite de l'évènement pour témoigner de l'horreur et de la réalité des faits. Les quelques journalistes présents ce jour, comme Richard Carlile par exemple, ont écrit des rapports pour dénoncer l'agissement du gouvernement. Agir ainsi a coûté, à la plupart de ces journalistes, d'écoper de plusieurs mois de prison. Ils étaient considérés comme des traitres, tout comme les organisateurs du rassemblement. Et selon différentes sources, tous les journaux, aussi divers que variés, ont majoritairement soutenu les victimes tout en dénonçant les actes du gouvernement. En effet, John Tyas par exemple, journaliste pour le *Times*, avait été arrêté puis emprisonné, et une fois relâché, le journal a décidé de monter une campagne contre les magistrats et les soldats qui ont chargé la foule du St Peter's Field. Richard Carlile a lui aussi fait partie des journalistes qui, lors du 16 Août 1819, ont vu leur liberté d'expression mise à mal. Contrairement à John Tyas qui avait été relâché rapidement de prison, Richard Carlile a particulièrement dû être patient. Il a écrit un article sur le massacre de Peterloo dans son journal *The Republican*. Dans cet article, il a non seulement décrit tout le déroulement du rassemblement et l'arrivée des soldats, mais il a surtout osé critiquer le gouvernement. Selon le gouvernement, écrire de tels articles était une façon de soulever la population contre le gouvernement et faire planer une atmosphère de haine. C'est pourquoi, entre autres, Richard Carlile s'est retrouvé à purger une peine de trois ans de prison à 'Dorchester Gaol.[1]' De plus, au vu des sanctions données à certains journalistes, et du besoin d'exprimer leur colère dans un journal qui leur ressemble, une dizaine d'hommes dont John Edward Taylor ont décidé de créer le *Manchester Guardian*. Une action non moins difficile quand on sait qu'à cette période, des taxes sur les journaux avaient été imposées.

[1] SIMKIN, John, *Peterloo Massacre*
http://spartacus-educational.com/PRpeterloo.htm

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De manière plus officielle, la liberté d'expression, tant des réformateurs que des journalistes, a été lourdement remise en cause avec le passage du *Six Act*. Ce texte de loi qui avait été préparé depuis le début des années 1810, a vraiment vu le jour après le massacre de Peterloo. C'est pourquoi dès l'ouverture de cet acte on pouvait lire : « every meeting for radical reform is an overt act of treasonable conspiracy against the King and his government[1] ». Une sorte de législation rétrospective pour condamner l'organisation du rassemblement du St Peter's Field, mais aussi un moyen pour le gouvernement de se justifier. Cette mise en garde contre les rassemblements fait partie du *(The) Seditious Meetings Act*. Cet acte n'est ni plus ni moins un moyen de pression et de contrôle de la part du gouvernement sur la liberté de la population. Le dernier point de ce 'Six Act' rejoint celui sur le contrôle de la population, car il était une entrave à la liberté d'expression et de diffusion de la presse sous le nom de *The Newspaper and Stamp Duties Act*. Ainsi, le gouvernement a imposé une taxe sur l'impression de journaux et de pamphlets. De même, les journalistes devaient fournir l'assurance de leur 'bon comportement' dans l'écriture de leurs articles afin d'éviter tout dérapage, ou encore pour éviter d'être considérés comme agissant contre le gouvernement. C'est pourquoi, la presse radicale, qui était l'une des plus contrôlées, a décidé de créer ses propres journaux mais a aussi publié des articles de manière clandestine. Des journaux que l'on pouvait donc considérer comme avant-gardistes.

Au vu du déroulement des évènements, plusieurs questions peuvent se poser. En effet, la presse a relayé l'information à plusieurs reprises et de manière excessive. Néanmoins, après l'étude et l'analyse de plusieurs articles de différents journaux, on se rend compte que deux aspects se dessinent. D'un côté, on retrouve un discours qui est plutôt en faveur du peuple, c'est-à-dire qui souligne l'aspect légal du rassemblement, qui met en avant l'horreur que les manifestants ont vécue et qui remet donc en cause les choix des magistrats. Mais de l'autre côté, on peut lire un autre discours qui félicite les forces de l'ordre pour leur travail. Il en allait de la tranquillité des habitants de Manchester. Un agissement qui était donc nécessaire et ne pouvait malheureusement pas se faire sans dommages collatéraux. Une prise de position qui a été jugée efficace et encouragée notamment par Lord Sidmouth et le Prince Régent. C'est

[1] BLOY, Marjie, *The Six Acts 1819*
http://www.victorianweb.org/history/riots/sixacts.html

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pourquoi nous pouvons nous demander comment a été décrit cet évènement à travers la presse, quel a été le parti pris des journalistes et surtout quelle vérité doit être retenue.

En outre, il est certain que cet évènement a eu des conséquences terribles, si nous prenons en compte le nombre de morts et de blessés. Mais nous avons également pu remarquer que cet évènement a laissé place à de nombreuses interrogations sur le gouvernement. Effectivement, dans un premier temps, le choix des magistrats a été remis en cause mais de manière plus générale, tout le système du gouvernement a été remis en question. Ainsi, nous pouvons nous interroger sur les conséquences directes que l'évènement a eu sur la perception du gouvernement par la population.

'Et après?' est une question simple pourtant importante à la suite du massacre. De nombreux articles, principalement ceux de Richard Carlile dans *The Republican*, soulignent l'importance de ce que le gouvernement risquait s'il ne s'excusait pas pour les actes perpétrés par ses soldats. Il souligne également l'atmosphère de vengeance qui peut planer au sein de la population de Manchester. Sans oublier de rappeler qu'à travers différents articles, nous avons pu nous rendre compte que cet évènement n'avait fait que renforcer l'unité de la population et leur envie de parvenir à des réformes parlementaires coûte que coûte.

Ainsi, nous allons essayer de répondre à ces interrogations tout au long de ce mémoire. Dans un premier lieu en nous arrêtant sur la représentation des manifestants, à la fois à travers la presse et les caricatures qui étaient les moyens d'expression les plus utilisés après l'évènement. Il sera intéressant dans un second temps de s'attarder sur la double perception des forces de l'ordre, et comment leurs actes ont remis en cause tout un système judiciaire et gouvernemental qui, aux yeux de la population, n'apporte aucune solution aux problèmes du pays, mais ne fait que les empirer. De ce fait, nous pourrons finir par analyser la situation au sein même de la population après le massacre afin de voir si celui-ci a eu des conséquences sur l'atmosphère de la ville et sur leur façon de vivre.

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Chapitre Premier - La représentation du peuple

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1. Le massacre à travers la presse - une violence non nécessaire

La première chose qui peut nous venir à l'esprit lorsque nous abordons les évènements du 16 août 1819 à Manchester, c'est bien ce terme utilisé pour le nommer, c'est-à-dire "Massacre de Peterloo." Comme indiqué un peu plus haut dans l'introduction, le terme Peterloo fait référence à la Bataille de Waterloo, combiné à "Peter" pour rappeler le lieu du rassemblement, c'est-à-dire St Peter's Field. Or, le mot qui doit retenir un peu plus notre attention est sûrement "massacre." En effet, nous pourrions sans doute considérer l'utilisation de ce terme pour simplement désigner le fait qu'il y a eu plusieurs morts ainsi que plusieurs blessés. Mais il est important de le souligner afin de comprendre toutes les circonstances des vies qui ont été prises ce jour-là. Si nous parlons de massacre pour désigner Peterloo, c'est simplement pour mettre en avant le fait qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'un affront de la part des manifestants, ni d'une envie de déclarer la guerre au gouvernement. En vérité, le but premier de cette manifestation pacifique était de discuter des problèmes auxquels la population, principalement la classe ouvrière, pouvait faire face à cette période. Ils voulaient ainsi se réunir, afin de montrer leurs revendications grâce à différentes bannières, et grâce aux discours des différents orateurs présents tel que Henry Hunt. Seulement, les magistrats ont vu ce rassemblement d'un autre œil, et ont donc jugé nécessaire d'envoyer les troupes afin de disperser la foule. La principale raison de ce choix était de dire qu'il en allait de la sécurité des habitants et que ce rassemblement entravait à la tranquillité de la ville. C'est ce que nous pouvons lire dans le journal *Morning Post* du 24 août 1819 :

> The rebellious nature of the Meeting, its numbers, and threatening aspect, the warlike insignia displayed, the order of march and military arrangement, many of the Reformers having shouldered large sticks and bludgeons as representative of muskets, coupled with the depositions on oath of very many respectable inhabitants as to the consequences that must in their opinion unavoidably bow to lives and property from such an immense Meeting, assembled under such influences; and the Magistrates' own view of the whole of this tremendous scene— rendered it imperative to interfere.[1]

Ainsi, les magistrats ont justifié leur décision en donnant un aspect inquiétant et menaçant du rassemblement. Pourtant, dans de nombreux articles et caricatures sortis à la suite de l'évènement, ce n'est pas ce qui était le plus souligner. En réalité, nous retrouvons

[1] Morning Post, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER*, 24 août 1819, voir Annexes p.137

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principalement des cohérences, parmi différents journaux, sur le fait que les manifestants étaient venus en paix, et que le calme avait été demandé à plusieurs reprises par les organisateurs. Après avoir étudié et analysé plusieurs articles, nous nous sommes rendu compte que c'est avant tout le massacre qui a été décri et partagé dans la presse. Les journalistes, qui pour la plupart étaient présents sur les lieux des évènements, ont voulu montrer que ce n'était pas un simple évènement qui avait tourné au drame, mais que c'était un jour qu'il fallait garder en mémoire car il allait marquer l'histoire du pays. Ainsi, quelques jours après les évènements, on pouvait lire dans le *Morning Chronicle* : «This dreadful tragedy on Monday last, must fill all who have the peace and character of the country at heart with the most profound grief.[1]» On remarque que le journaliste d'un côté parle de l'évènement comme tragique et épouvantable, mais de l'autre côté avise les lecteurs que ces péripéties ne pouvaient que toucher chaque membre de la population qui aime son pays et sa nation. Et il insiste en ajoutant « It has hitherto been the peculiar boast of this country that its inhabitants were distinguished above those of every other by the horror in which they held the effusion of human blood. The transactions of Manchester constitute a new feature in our history[2]. » En quelques phrases, il utilise un vocabulaire fort afin de capter l'attention des lecteurs pour que ceux-ci ne perdent pas de vue l'atrocité des conséquences des actes des soldats.

Le choix des magistrats et l'agissement des soldats ont quelque peu choqué les personnes témoins des évènements. En effet, on se rend compte, à plusieurs reprises, que ce choix d'attaquer la foule reste incompréhensible et a laissé la population dans le questionnement. Pourquoi avoir usé de tant de violence pour arrêter le rassemblement? Il est peut-être inutile de le rappeler, mais très important de le souligner, le rassemblement au St Peter's Field se voulait être pacifique. En effet, si les réformateurs ont décidé de s'unir ce jour-ci, notamment en présence de femmes et d'enfants, ce n'était sûrement pas pour causer du tort. C'est ce que nous précise E.P. Thompson dans *The Making of the English Working Class* : « The presence of so many women and children was overwhelming testimony to the pacific character of a meeting which (the reformers knew) all England was watching[3]. » Et cette idée était déjà pleinement présente et expliquée dans la presse de l'époque. Certes, les femmes et

[1] Morning Chronicle, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.104
[2] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p. 104
[3]THOMPSON, E.P. *The Making of the English Working Class,* 1963*, Empl. 12871*

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les enfants étaient présents pour soutenir leurs frères, pères et maris, mais ces hommes eux-mêmes n'étaient pas venus pour semer le désordre. Les organisateurs avaient à plusieurs reprises demandé aux manifestants de rester disciplinés et de prouver qu'ils étaient dignes d'avoir le respect, en offrant le respect en retour. C'est principalement Henry Hunt, une fois désigné président du rassemblement, qui a pris la parole pour rappeler que leur but n'était pas de créer un mouvement de panique. Voici ce que nous rapporte un passage du journal le *Morning Chronicle* du 19 août 1819 :

> After the formality of proposing and seconding Hunt as Chairman, he rose and spoke to the following effect: —' Gentlemen, I crave your indulgence while I proceed to state the nature and object of this Meeting and I particularly request that no Gentleman will call *silence*, as it produces more disorder than any other circumstance, and perhaps will give our ennemies the opportunity they are seeking for to cause a further encroachment on our rights and liberties. Gentlemen, for the honour you have done me in electing me Chairman on this important occasion, I return you my sincere and heartfelt thanks, I am happy to see such an immense concourse of people assembled, and I fearfully regret that I shall not be able to make myself heard by all of you, but those who are able to hear me will I hope do so peaceably and quietly. It is useless to attempt to relate the proceedings that have occurred in your town for the last ten days, or to state to you the cause of the Meeting on Monday being postponed, you are all acquainted with it.[1]

Ici, Henry Hunt rappelle l'importance du rassemblement mais surtout l'importance qu'il devait se dérouler dans le calme. Il sous-entend que c'est l'agitation de certains qui ont pu être la cause de quelques débordements relevés lors de rassemblements qui ont pu avoir lieu dans le passé, sans donner de détails. Et c'est également à cause de cela que le rassemblement actuel avait dû être reporté à plusieurs reprises. La violence ne résout pas les problèmes et ne permet pas de mieux se faire entendre par le gouvernement. Bien au contraire, elle entraîne des conséquences terribles qui pourraient avoir des répercussions directes sur ceux qui réclament l'égalité et la liberté.

Même si les réformateurs avaient bien compris cela, en revanche, les magistrats n'ont pas semblé préoccupés par les conséquences terribles que leurs choix allaient engendrés. Pourquoi avoir choisi la violence quand celle-ci ne cause plus de tort qu'elle ne résout les problèmes? Et les conséquences de cette violence ont été sans étonnement : du sang versé, des

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, *PRIVATE LETTERS*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 107.

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morts et des blessés. Sachant que les manifestants n'étaient pas armés et ne s'attendaient pas à être attaqués par les forces armées, le résultat ne pouvait qu'être négatif. Pour resituer les évènements dans leur contexte, c'est lorsque Henry Hunt était sur l'estrade et qu'il s'adressait au public, notamment pour demander le calme, que les soldats de la Yeomanry sont apparus et ont dessiné leur chemin en fonçant dans la foule, afin d'atteindre la plate-forme où se tenait Henry Hunt. Les circonstances, dans lesquelles les forces de l'ordre se sont organisées et ont agi, seront développées un peu plus tard, mais ce qui nous intéresse particulièrement ici, ce sont les conséquences directes sur le peuple. En effet, différents écrits nous soulignent qu'au moment des faits, les manifestants étaient certes regroupés mais aucunement armés ou prêts à riposter. C'est le cas, par exemple, dans le journal *The Examiner* où l'on peut lire: « He [Henry Hunt] had scarcely said these words, before the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry rode into the mob, which gave way before them, and directed their course to the cart from which Hunt was speaking. *Not a brick-bat was thrown at them— not a pistol was fired during this period; all was quiet and orderly*, as if the cavalry had been the friends of the multitude, and had marched as such into the midst of them[1]. » Non seulement nous comprenons que la foule n'a pas essayé de se protéger en attaquant en retour les cavaliers, mais aussi nous nous rendons compte qu'ils ne s'attendaient pas eux-mêmes à l'attaque des officiers. Tout était 'calme et silencieux', il n'y avait donc aucune raison pour eux de s'inquiéter. Cet aspect se confirme dans d'autres articles comme celui par exemple du *Morning Chronicle* qui écrit : « all was certainly perfectly peaceable, when a body of cavalry rode up through the crowd, brandishing their drawn swords, surrounded the Hustings, and seized Hunt and his associates[2]. »

Ce comportement a donc causé la détresse mais surtout l'incompréhension. En effet, que ce soit les personnes dans la foule ou les journalistes présents, voire même ceux qui ont entendu parler des évènements, personne n'a compris la nécessité de tels actes. Ils se sont demandé comment un tel massacre avait pu se produire alors que c'est tout ce que cherchaient à éviter les réformateurs qui ont organisé le rassemblement. Ainsi, nous pouvons lire cette incompréhension dans différents articles et principalement dans le *Morning Chronicle* du 19 août 1819, dont le journaliste qui était présent sur les lieux, a tenté de décrire tout ce qu'il avait pu voir. Il commence par nous dire « We are quite at a loss then to conceive on what grounds

[1] The Examiner, *DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE.*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 128
[2] *Morning Chronicle*, *PRIVATE LETTER*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.110

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cavalry could be ordered to charge people conducting themselves in a peaceful manner.[1] » Ici, c'est principalement le choix des magistrats qui est remis en cause et qui est incompris. Il est évident que les officiers n'auraient pas agi d'eux-mêmes sans le feu vert des magistrats. C'est pourquoi ce même journaliste, qui n'a pas précisé son nom à la fin de l'article, ajoute : « Good Heavens ! To order regiments of cavalry to charge an unarmed and peaceable multitude, to hew down and trample on all who stood before them! Can this be possible? The whole country must be filled with horror at the very idea. The Magistrates of Manchester have indeed a serious account to render to their countrymen. We wait with impatience for their defence.[2] » On peut ainsi remarquer qu'il ne comprend pas les décisions des magistrats, mais il demande également des explications. Pour lui, les magistrats de Manchester auront des 'comptes à rendre' au peuple. La seule idée d'attaquer la foule est terrifiante, mais quand celle-ci est utilisée et provoque des dégâts physiques, moraux et matériels, elle ne peut qu'être considérée comme un massacre.

Pour rappel, les magistrats ont envoyé leurs troupes par crainte d'une révolte, mais aussi pour protéger la tranquillité de la ville et de ses habitants. Qu'en est-il alors de la sécurité de ces mêmes habitants qui étaient dans la foule? Ce journaliste, qui nous décrit les évènements dans le *Morning Chronicle,* continue en nous disant : « The circumstances have been terrific : I will give you as connected an account of them as I possibly can, but you must make allowances for the general state of confusion and alarm in which we have been the whole of the day.[3] » Il nous fait part de la détresse ressentie par ceux qui ont été attaqués, et ajoute même : « Every person who attended out of curiosity, finding his personal safety at risk, immediately fled[4]. » C'est-à-dire que les personnes qui supportaient le rassemblement en faveur des réformes parlementaires, mais aussi les personnes qui étaient présentes par simple curiosité, n'ont pas été différenciées lors de l'arrivée des troupes. En d'autres termes, les soldats ont foncé sur la foule en attaquant à la fois les réformateurs et les habitants curieux qui étaient venus voir ce qu'il se passait. Ainsi, ceux qui étaient utilisés comme excuse par les magistrats pour envoyer leurs troupes, se sont retrouvés victimes de ces mêmes décisions, et non protégés comme tel était le but initial. Dans ce même journal, on nous donne plus de précision sur les

[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p. 105
[2] Morning Chronicle, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 105.
[3] *Morning Chronicle*, *MANCHESTER MEETING- PRIVATE LETTERS*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.107
[4] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.108

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conséquences tragiques après l'arrivée de la Manchester Yeomanry, on nous indique « What is the extent of the carnage that has taken place it is at present impossible to say ; but five or six are know to be dead. There are 26 in the Infirmary, several of whom cannot live, and at least as many out-patients severely wounded. There are men, women and children, constables, and also soldiers among them : and, in all probability, there are many wounded who have not been heard of at the Infirmary.[1] » On remarque ici l'utilisation du mot 'carnage' pour désigner les faits, ce qui souligne une fois de plus l'idée de massacre pour définir l'évènement. Ce que nous pouvons également relever ici, c'est le fait que personne n'a été épargné. Les hommes comme les femmes avec leurs enfants, les agents de police qui étaient déjà présents avant l'arrivée des troupes et qui veillaient au calme, mais aussi certains des soldats eux-mêmes. En effet, montés sur leurs chevaux et galopant à toute allure dans la foule, cela a provoqué un mouvement de panique et de bousculade où tout le monde a été touché. C'est l'information générale que la presse a partagé. Pour une majorité de journalistes, les soldats qui se sont retrouvés blessés ont causé eux-mêmes leurs blessures. C'est ce que nous pouvons comprendre dans le journal The Examiner à travers ce passage : « *The great body of the people, though cut and trampled on in every direction, evinced no disposition to commit any sanguinary act*; and, with the exception of the young man belonging to the Yeomanry, who lost his life by falling from his horse and being trampled upon, *all the others were injured by the soldiery*. I dread to anticipate what will yet be the result of all these proceedings.[2] » Deux aspects sont à retenir dans ce passage. Le premier confirme ce qui a été dit précédemment, c'est-à-dire que dans leurs attaques les soldats se sont causés du tord à eux-mêmes. On nous donne ici l'exemple d'un membre de la Yeomanry qui a perdu la vie en tombant de son cheval. On peut comprendre que dans ce moment de panique, il a été difficile de tenir les chevaux en toute stabilité. De plus, on souligne que c'est bien la faute des soldats si tout le monde a été blessé. Le deuxième aspect important est celui expliqué au début du passage, celui qui nous décrit l'horreur de la scène. Ainsi, nous comprenons que la foule a été blessée par les coups de sabres des soldats, et a été piétinée à la fois par les chevaux et les autres personnes qui couraient dans tous les sens pour essayer de s'échapper. Le journaliste laisse donc entendre que les manifestants n'avaient aucun moyen de riposter comme ils étaient, pour la plupart d'entre eux, à terre.

[1] Morning Chronicle*, ANOTHER LETTER*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 109
[2] The Examiner, *From another correspondant,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 133.

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Ce qui a été retenu de ce massacre par les journalistes, c'est bien évidemment la violence inattendue et le sang qui a pu couler ce jour-là. C'est même l'une des premières choses dont on nous fait part dans les articles qui traitent du sujet. Dans le *Morning Chronicle* par exemple, pour annoncer le sujet des évènements à Manchester, le journaliste utilise la phrase suivante comme entrée en matière : « The public Meeting, so long talked of, took place this day, and it has not terminated, I regret to say, without bloodshed[1]. » Dès le début de son article donc, il nous annonce que le rassemblement ne s'est pas terminé dans les conditions espérées. En effet, comme il a été dit dans l'introduction, ce rassemblement a demandé beaucoup d'organisation afin qu'il se déroule dans les meilleures conditions possibles, et d'être pris au sérieux et que leurs demandes aient un impact positif. Malheureusement pour les réformateurs, celui-ci a à peine débuté qu'il s'est terminé dans un bain de sang. Ainsi, dans le même article, il poursuit en décrivant brièvement la scène, mais en utilisant des termes qui nous font comprendre qu'il s'agissait bien d'un massacre et non d'un affrontement entre deux clans :

> In a few moments five Caps of Liberty, with eight or ten flags, bearing various inscriptions, were torn down, and hundreds of people trampled under the feet of the horses. Indeed the Special Constables shared a harder fate than tens of thousands on the ground : four persons died on the field, and one Special Constable in a half-an hour afterwards, at the Bull's Head, Market-place.[2]

Les 'Caps of Liberty' sont les bonnets phrygiens utilisés comme signes distinctifs de liberté. On peut le retrouver aujourd'hui encore, notamment sur la Marianne en France, incarnation de la liberté et de la raison, et figure emblématique de la Révolution Française. Le lien est ici intéressant étant donné que les magistrats, et le gouvernement en général, craignaient une révolution en Angleterre comme celle qui a pu avoir lieu en France en 1789. Or, la volonté des réformateurs n'était pas d'entrer en guerre contre le gouvernement mais de lui demander des réformes parlementaires. Néanmoins, après le passage des troupes au St Peter's Field, la scène de violence et d'horreur faisait tristement penser aux scènes qui ont pu avoir lieu en France lors de la Révolution. Excepté que cette fois-ci, ce n'est pas le peuple qui avait décidé de prendre les armes, mais le gouvernement. Dans le journal *Saunders' News Letter* nous pouvons relever un passage important pour confirmer ces dires : « They do not alter the impression made by the first reports. In reading the description of this sanguinary scene, we

[1] Morning Chronicle, *PRIVATE LETTER*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 110.
[2] Morning Chronicle, *PRIVATE LETTER*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 111.

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can scarcely credit that we live in England in a moment of a profound peace, and the mind is carried back to the most violent periods of the French Revolution.[1] » Ici, on relève l'aspect terrible des évènements qui nous ramène au massacre. Même si c'est très bref dans ce passage, on nous rappelle qu'ils ont assisté à une 'scène sanguinaire'. De plus, il sous-entend que malgré les problèmes d'inégalités, à plusieurs niveaux, qu'il pouvait y avoir à cette période, le pays ne connaissait pas de troubles et n'était pas dans une atmosphère de guerre. Mais cette attaque des soldats, venue entacher la tranquillité des manifestants comme l'atmosphère générale du pays, a marqué l'histoire tout comme la Révolution Française a pu marquer l'histoire de la France de par la violence qui s'était propagée. Une fois de plus, dans cet article du *Saunders' News Letter*, on nous souligne la violence mais surtout l'incompréhension de cette façon de réagir, alors que des mises en garde, et des arrestations si besoin, auraient pu mettre fin à la manifestation sans conséquences graves. Il est écrit : « We mean that the violence used on the present occasion was unnecessary for the attainment of its professed object.[2] »

S'il est important de mettre en avant la notion de massacre pour décrire Peterloo, c'est vraiment parce que c'est l'aspect qui revient le plus lorsqu'on évoque les évènements du 16 août 1819. En effet, nous pouvons penser que si l'attaque n'avait jamais eu lieu, peut-être que ce rassemblement n'aurait jamais eu la même importance historique, ni même la même portée politique et sociale. Si ce jour a autant marqué les esprits, pendant si longtemps, c'est bien à cause des conséquences inattendues et terribles. Cet aspect a tellement touché la population que même des semaines, voire des mois après on en parlait encore dans les journaux, à Manchester et à travers l'Angleterre. On s'en rend compte par exemple dans le journal *Liverpool Mercury* datant du 24 septembre 1819. Plus d'un mois après les évènements, le journal a continué à évoquer les évènements de Manchester, sans doute un moyen de ne pas oublier et de prouver à la population qu'il fallait continuer à lutter pour ses droits. Nous pouvons relever un passage important, qui même des semaines après le massacre, montre encore le même état d'esprit que l'on pouvait trouver dans des articles parus seulement quelques jours après le 16 août :

> "We have, nevertheless, learnt, with grief and astonishment, that while the meeting was so assembled, and when no act of riot or tumult had taken place,

[1] Saunders' News Letter, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 114.
[2] Saunders' News Letter, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes pp. 114-115.

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> the Magistrates issued their warrants for the apprehension of certain persons then present ; for the execution of which, although no resistance was made on the part of the people, or those against whom the warrants were issued, they immediately resorted to the aid of the military; when, without any previous warning of their intention, the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry suddenly rushing forward, opened a passage through the multitude, furiously attacking, by force of arms, peaceable and unoffending citizens, whereby great numbers of men, women and children, and even peace-officers, were indiscriminately and wantonly rode over, and many inhumanly sabred and killed.[1]

Ce qui est intéressant avec ce passage, c'est que nous retrouvons un condensé de toutes les informations qui caractérisent le Massacre de Peterloo. En effet, on retrouve la notion de 'pacifisme' de la part de la foule, l'étonnement et la douleur qu'ont pu ressentir les témoins de la scène et ceux qui en ont été informés, l'incompréhension lors de l'arrivée des troupes, la violence utilisée face à des personnes qui n'ont pas riposté, et surtout la violence de cette attaque qui n'a pas fait de différence entre les hommes, les femmes et les enfants. Tout le monde a été attaqué au sabre, a été piétiné, blessé et dans le pire des cas tué. On peut souligner le terme 'inhumain' utilisé à la fin du passage qui renforce le caractère des évènements.

Nous pouvons donc remarquer que la presse a été le principal outil de contestation à la suite des évènement mais surtout la principale source pour relayer l'information au plus vite afin d'atteindre un maximum de personnes et que cet évènement ne soit pas oublié. Mais en plus de la presse, les caricaturistes et autres dessinateurs ont eux aussi trouvé le besoin de partager leur ressenti sur ce sujet. Ainsi, de nombreuses gravures sont parues, sous différentes formes et ont circulé pendant plusieurs mois. Il est intéressant de voir les concordances entre les faits écrits et les faits représentés en image. Il est tout aussi intéressant de voir le parti pris de ces dessinateurs, et de voir la 'mise en scène' de cet évènement pour nous donner un visuel, comme une photographie afin de garder en mémoire l'atrocité de Peterloo.

[1] Liverpool Mercury, *NEWS, FOREIGN & DOMESTIC COMMON COUNCIL ADRESS and ANSWER* , 24 Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p. 173.

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2. Mise en scène du tragique - concordance entre les écrits et les dessins

Si la presse se doit d'être objective, même si elle ne respecte pas toujours cette règle, en revanche les dessinateurs et caricaturistes sont plus libres d'exprimer ce qu'ils pensent. En effet, quand la presse doit simplement servir à informer la population, les dessins servent surtout à dénoncer et à marquer les esprits. De nos jours, il est facile de partager des informations grâce aux technologies comme la photographie ou la vidéo, et ainsi d'avoir rapidement une représentation réelle des actualités. Or, au XIXe siècle, nous étions loin de ces avancées et le seul moyen d'avoir une description des évènements importants dépendait des artistes. Ce fut le cas pour Peterloo qui a particulièrement suscité l'engouement chez plusieurs dessinateurs. Le seul problème est que nous ne pouvons pas être à cent pour cent sûr de la véracité de ces reproductions. D'un côté il se peut que ces dessins aient été créés par des artistes n'étant pas sur les lieux. C'est-à-dire qu'ils ont pu mettre en image simplement ce qu'ils ont pu lire dans la presse. De l'autre côté, nous pouvons imaginer que certains d'entre-eux, principalement les caricaturistes, ont pu exagérer certains points dans leurs dessins et faire en sorte que ceux-ci soient en accord avec leurs propres opinions politiques. Néanmoins, ces sources restent importantes à analyser du point de vue de leur authenticité et de ce qui peut en être tiré.

Comme nous avons déjà pu le remarquer, de nombreux articles de presse de l'époque ont décrit la scène comme terrible, en mettant en avant le massacre commis sur la foule. Nous allons voir, en ce qui concerne les images représentant les évènements de Peterloo, que cette idée est tout aussi présente. De nombreuses gravures et autres caricatures sont sorties après le 16 août. Certains dessinateurs ont même continué à reproduire des scènes, liées aux faits qui se sont produits à Manchester, des mois voire même des années après. C'est le cas particulièrement de George Cruikshank. Comme son père, Isaac Cruikshank, c'était un illustrateur, graveur et caricaturiste anglais. George Cruikshank, reconnu pour ses talents d'illustrateur de livres thématiques et des livres d'enfants, a commencé sa carrière en créant des dessins satiriques sur des sujets politiques, et ce jusqu'en 1825.[1] Il était notamment réputé pour ses dessins contestataires. Nous pouvons particulièrement nous rendre compte de cet aspect dans ses dessins sur Peterloo, un sujet sur lequel il a été très actif. Nous pouvons en effet

[1] https://www.britannica.com/biography/George-Cruikshank

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remarquer que la majorité des gravures et des caricatures, qui traitent de ce sujet, sont signées de son nom. Il est important, sans doute, de souligner le fait qu'à partir de 1818 George Cruikshank collaborait avec William Hone, un éditeur particulièrement radical dans ses idées politiques. Nous pouvons d'ores et déjà imaginer que le parti pris du dessinateur, dans les différentes images que nous allons analyser, sera principalement tourné en faveur du peuple et contre le gouvernement.

Parmi ses dessins très variés, commençons par celui-ci : *Manchester Heroes*, publié en septembre 1819 par S.W. Fores.[1] Il s'agit d'une gravure à l'eau forte, sur papier et en couleurs. Sur une vision globale, nous pouvons rapidement remarquer trois niveaux à analyser dans ce dessin. Le premier étant la représentation de la foule, le second se rapportant aux soldats, et le troisième tourne autour des bulles de paroles.

Tout d'abord, arrêtons-nous sur ce premier plan. De gauche à droite de l'image, nous pouvons apercevoir hommes, femmes et enfants à terre. En effet, tout à gauche, nous apercevons un homme au sol, allongé sur le ventre, semblant être sans vie. Au-dessus de lui se trouve un autre homme, tombé sur lui. Ce second personnage, de profil, se tient le front, et laisse apercevoir son visage ensanglanté. Juste à côté, se trouve un homme vêtu de jaune, piétiné par un cheval. Nous pouvons voir qu'il regarde le soldat qui est juste au-dessus de lui, la bouche grande ouverte. Cette expression peut à la fois être considérée comme de la douleur ressentie sur le moment, de la peur et de la surprise. À ses pieds se trouve le corps d'un enfant, allongé sur le dos, les yeux fermés, comme mort, et le sabot du cheval sur son torse. Au-dessus de ces personnages, le cheval est monté par un soldat qui s'adresse à son collègue, brandissant son épée et en lui disant « Cut him down, cut him down. » Ici, nous pouvons voir que le dessinateur marque bien une rupture entre la foule et les soldats. Les soldats ont le dessus sur les habitants, et ils ne leur laissent aucun répit. L'expression de son visage est très agressive. Et nous pouvons relever cette même agressivité sur la gueule de son cheval. Ensuite, au centre de ce premier plan, nous voyons un enfant, portant une veste verte ainsi qu'un pantalon déchiré, les chaussures manquantes. Nous le voyons escalader un homme, et regarder le cavalier auquel il dit : « Oh Mercy Sir, don't kill mommy, she only comme to see Mr Hunt. » En effet sa mère est à sa droite et nous remarquons qu'il s'accroche à elle en tenant son foulard. En ce qui concerne la mère, nous pouvons voir qu'elle est en train de tomber, le sabre du soldat pointé

[1] CRUIKSAHNK, G. *The Manchester Heroes*, Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p. 181.

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vers elle. Elle est retenue par homme qui la tient par le bras, comme pour fuir. Une petite fille la tient également par les bras en regardant elle aussi le soldat. Ce soldat, auquel s'adresse l'enfant, montre lui aussi son manque d'indulgence en répondant : « None but the brave deserve the Fair. » Il est lui représenté avec un visage boursouflé et rouge, le regard baissé. Et si nous regardons de plus près, nous nous rendons compte que son cheval a exactement la même posture que celui-ci. Nous pouvons ressentir la détresse à la fois chez les enfants et chez les adultes grâce à l'expression de leurs visages. C'est le cas également des personnages tout à droite du premier plan. Il y a un homme à quatre pattes, le visage couvert de sang, qui essaie de s'échapper. Au-dessus de lui, nous remarquons d'autres personnes paniquées, les visages tournés vers les soldats mais les corps en avant de façon à courir pour essayer de les fuir. Nous pouvons donc remarquer que la représentation du peuple faite ici par G. Cruikshank, est identique à la description que nous avons pu avoir dans certains articles. Les éléments importants, pour mettre en avant le massacre, sont présents. C'est-à-dire que le caricaturiste nous montre une foule à terre, sans moyen de riposter, le sang qui coule, la présence des femmes et des enfants, et l'agissement impitoyable des soldats. Nous pouvons souligner ceci avec l'illustration de l'enfant qui demande au soldat d'épargner sa mère. Ainsi, nous pouvons penser que G. Cruikshank met en avant le massacre de manière à toucher les lecteurs. Nous avons donc d'un côté les cavaliers que nous pouvons considérer comme des tyrans, et de l'autre côté le peuple qui fait plus figure de martyre.

Au second plan, nous remarquons un contraste entre la gauche et la droite. En effet, à gauche de l'image nous pouvons voir d'autres soldats. Si nous faisons référence aux différents articles au sujet de Peterloo, tout porte à croire que ces soldats, comme ceux du premier plan, sont membres de la Manchester Yeomanry, comme ce sont eux qui ont foncé sur la foule, sur les ordres des magistrats. Nous pouvons les voir en rang, montés sur leurs chevaux et tenant leurs épées. Alors qu'à droite de l'image, au second plan, se trouvent quatre personnes sur une estrade qui regardent la scène de massacre. Parmi eux de gauche à droite nous pouvons voir : le premier, celui qui porte une veste verte, assis, il tient un drapeau blanc. Selon les circonstances du rassemblement, nous pouvons penser que ce drapeau se réfère à la liberté. À ses côtés, un deuxième homme debout s'écrit « Shame ». Tout porte à croire que le troisième serait Henry Hunt, étant donné qu'il est au centre sur la scène et que c'était lui le président. Il tient dans sa main gauche son chapeau, sa main droit levée, il dit, de ce que nous arrivons à lire « Shame, Shame, murder, murder … » Le quatrième homme, tenant un drapeau au vert ainsi

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qu'un bonnet phrygien rouge sur la pointe de celui-ci, s'écrit lui aussi « Shame, shame ». En arrière-plan de cette estrade, on aperçoit vaguement les visages d'autres personnes. Ce qui est intéressant avec ce deuxième plan, c'est qu'il confirme une fois de plus les écrits des articles. En effet, comme nous pourrons l'expliquer un plus tard dans ce mémoire, les soldats qui ont agi ce jour-là ont été considérés comme des meurtriers, sans foi ni loi, par une majorité de journalistes.

Le dernier plan de cette image, plus précisément ce qui se trouve en haut à gauche, attire un peu plus notre attention. À cet endroit, G. Cruikshank a décidé de représenter la balance, symbole de la justice. Au centre de la balance se trouve un visage qui s'exprime : « Cut them down, don't be affraid, they are not armed, courage my boys, and you shall have a vote of thanks, & he that Kills most shall be made a Knight errant and your exploits shall live for ever, in a song or second. Chivey Chase. » Si nous prenons en compte ce passage et que nous le lions au symbole de la justice, nous pouvons comprendre que celui représente les magistrats. C'est pourquoi, à travers cela, nous pensons que le dessinateur a voulu condamner leurs choix, c'est-à-dire d'envoyer les troupes sur la foule. Et si nous cherchons à voir plus loin, nous pouvons penser qu'il utilise également cette image pour remettre en cause le système de la justice qui, comme nous pourrons le voir dans le second chapitre, est considéré comme corrompu et injuste.

En terme général, ce dessin reflète majoritairement la pensée commune de l'époque au sujet de Peterloo, notamment dans la presse. C'est-dire que l'affront n'allait que dans un sens : ce sont les soldats qui ont attaqué et c'est la foule qui a subi. Le seul point qui différencie le train de George Cruikshank, comparé à d'autres dessins voire à d'autres articles, c'est l'accentuation du massacre par l'exagération des paroles ajoutées au dessin. Ces paroles donnent un ton grotesque au dessin, mais renforcent l'aspect pathétique. Cette dimension souligne l'idée que le choix des magistrats et les actes des soldats étaient ni plus ni moins qu'absurdes et inutiles.

Nous pouvons retrouver cette même dimension dans un autre dessin de George Cruikshank qui s'intitule *Massacre at St Peter's or "Britons strike home"!!!*[1] Celui-ci est

[1] *Massacre at St Peter's or "Britons strike home"!!!*, George Cruikshank, 1819, voir Annexes p. 181

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également en couleur, et il a été publié par Thomas Tegg. Il n'y pas de date précise mais nous savons qu'il a été créé en 1819. Dans ce dessin, il y a également trois niveaux.

Au premier plan, de gauche à droite, nous retrouvons des corps à terre qui semblent inanimés. Tout à gauche, un homme est assis, le visage en sang, la main sur sa poitrine et l'expression de son visage nous montre qu'il crie de douleur. À côté de lui, un homme tient la patte du cheval qui lui écrase le visage. Sur cet homme, nous pouvons voir le corps d'un enfant, écroulé sur le dos, les yeux fermés et la bouche ouverte. Ici, deux interprétations sont possibles : soit l'enfant est dessiné comme mort, soit il est représenté comme hurlant de douleur. Juste au-dessus, nous pouvons relever un duel entre une femme qui porte son enfant dans les bras et un soldat. La femme tient son enfant à l'aide de son bras gauche, et tente de repousser le soldat avec sa main droite. Or, celui-ci lui fonce droit dessus et brandit sa hache ensanglantée, comme prêt à la frapper. À droite de ce premier plan, d'autres corps sont écroulés les uns sur les autres. Un homme au centre est représenté en train de tomber à cause d'un soldat qui lui monte dessus avec son cheval. Un autre homme est agenouillé. Il se tient la tête, la main droite sur son crâne et a la main gauche sur son oeil d'où sort une coulée de sang. En-dessous de lui, une femme inanimée portant une tâche de sang partant du dessus de sa poitrine. Tout à droite de l'image, un homme effrayé fait face au cheval du soldat. Ses jambes se confondent avec celles du cheval. Nous pouvons comprendre qu'il ne peut rien faire, pas même s'enfuir, comme si c'était trop tard. À ses pieds, nous apercevons un corps, allongé sur le ventre, qui semble à moitié nu et sans vie. Il n'y a pas de tête apparente, mais il semblerait que ce soit un homme. En arrière-plan de ceux-ci, nous pouvons entrevoir quelques visages portant la même expression, la bouche ouverte. L'utilisation de la couleur grise, comme des coups de crayons pour représenter la foule en arrière-plan est importante à souligner. Elle permet de mettre en avant la confusion.

Le second plan est formé par les soldats et leurs chevaux. De gauche à droite il y a comme une ligne tracée par ceux-ci. Il y en huit en tout, et ils sont tous représentés de la même manière. En effet, le dessinateur a décidé d'en faire des personnages grotesques de par leurs apparences : ils sont tous gros, le visage boursoufflé et rouge. Le premier tout à gauche se trouve face à nous, il regarde ses collègues et crie « Down with 'em ! Chop em down ! my brave boys ! give them no quartern they want to take our Beef & Pudding from us! — & remember the more you kill the less poor rates you'll have to pay so go it lads show your courage & your Loyalty! » Une fois de plus, le dessinateur a décidé de mettre en avant l'atrocité du conflit en utilisant le grotesque dans les paroles. Nous retrouvons bien évidemment ce côté

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impitoyable des soldats, mais avons aussi une critique du gouvernement. En effet, si nous prenons en considération ces mots, nous pouvons croire que G. Cruikshank détermine le choix d'attaquer la foule pour faire baisser le taux de pauvreté du pays. Mais aussi, nous pouvons penser qu'il veut souligner les inégalités qui existent entre les classes riches et les classes plus médiocres. Surtout que le rassemblement ce jour-ci consistait principalement à demander des réformes pour que ces inégalités soient effacées. C'est pourquoi, en lisant « ils veulent nous prendre notre boeuf et notre pudding », le dessinateur met en évidence qu'attaquer la foule était un moyen pour le gouvernement d'effacer ces inégalités. En ce qui concerne la représentation de la violence et de l'horreur, nous la retrouvons certes dans le comportement des soldats, mais aussi avec leurs armes. Ici, ce ne sont pas des épées ou des sabres mais des haches qui sont utilisées. De plus, elles sont toutes tâchées de sang. Ainsi, nous avons l'impression que le dessinateur a voulu appuyer le comportement de ces officiers en les faisant ressembler à des bouchers. Parmi eux, deux soldats portent des drapeaux. À gauche il s'agit du Union Jack, le drapeau du royaume-Uni. Celui de droite tient une bannière blanche bordée de dorure. D'après le British Museum, nous pouvons lire sur celui-ci : « Loyal Manchester Yeomanry - "Be bloody, bold & resolute" ["Macbeth", IV] - "Spur your proud Horses & ride hard in blood" ["Richard III", V.iii] » Nous reconnaissons bien évidemment les références aux deux oeuvres de Shakespeare, qui sont toutes deux des tragédies.

Au dernier plan, se trouvent deux bâtiments, l'un à droite et l'autre à gauche. Dans les deux cas, nous pouvons apercevoir les silhouettes de personnes qui regardent à la fenêtre. Entre ces deux bâtiments, se forme un nuage de fumée grise, comme si des coups de feu avaient été tirés. Cette fumée nous fait penser à un réel champ de bataille, opposant les soldats à la population. Une fois de plus, à travers cette caricature, George Cruikshank représente le massacre comme il a été présenté à l'écrit. Nous nous rendons compte que ces évènements ont permis à cet artiste, comme à d'autres, de donner leurs opinions sur le gouvernement et de remettre en cause son fonctionnement.

George Cruikshank laisse comprendre que cet évènement du 16 août 1819 est très important et à garder en mémoire, d'une part à travers ses dessins en eux-mêmes, mais également grâce à la quantité de dessins produits sur ce sujet. En effet, pour en citer quelques-uns, il a dessiné *These are the people all latter'd and torn* en décembre 1819[1]. Un dessin en noir et blanc en deux plans distincts. Au premier nous distinguons deux hommes debout,

[1]CRUIKSHANK, G. *These are the people all latter'd and torn,* Décembre 1819 p.182

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portant des vêtements délabrés. Il y a également un enfant, accroché à la jambe du premier homme, qui lève la tête pour le regarder. Ce même homme a yeux portés sur une femme qui assise à droite. Elle repose sa tête sur sa main droite, cachant ainsi une grande partie de son visage. Mais le peu que nous pouvons voir de ce visage laisse percevoir une expression triste, presque abattue. Sur ses cuisses se trouve un enfant, qu'elle retient de son bras gauche. En arrière-plan, on retrouve un condensé de la scène du massacre de Peterloo. On peut voir plusieurs soldats sur leurs chevaux, brandissant leurs épées. L'un d'eux tenant un drapeau blanc. Le soldat qui est plus en avant que les autres fait galoper son cheval sur des personnes qui sont au sol. On peut reconnaitre un corps d'enfant, et quelques autres silhouettes de corps à terre qui se superposent. Parmi eux une femme tenant son enfant de la main gauche et repoussant le soldat qui lui fonce dessus. Nous pouvons également apercevoir un homme qui essaie de s'enfuir vers la droite alors qu'un soldat le poursuit à cheval. Si nous faisons le lien avec les deux dessins précédents, nous nous rendons compte que, mis à part la couleur, l'atmosphère générale du massacre est la même. Cependant, dans ce dernier dessin nous ne trouvons pas l'aspect grotesque qu'il peut y avoir dans les deux autres. Au contraire, dans *These are the people all latter'd and torn,*
le lien entre le premier et le second plan n'est pas défini, ni expliqué. Mais l'hypothèse que nous pouvons soulever est sans doute celle de la représentation d'un peuple meurtri qui se remémore les conséquences terribles qu'a pu causer le passage de la Manchester Yeomanry sur la foule.

Le 21 janvier 1820, il a également traité d'un autre aspect du rassemblement dans *The Law's Delay*[1]. Ce dessin montre principalement le désordre causé autour du Riot Act. Mais nous nous intéresserons à ce dessin au chapitre suivant. Pour conclure sur le travail de George Cruikshank autour de Peterloo, il est intéressant de parler de son dessin *Victory of Peterloo*[2]. La technique utilisée ressemble plus à *These are the people all latter'd and torn* qu'à ces autres dessins. En effet, celui-ci aussi est en noir et blanc, et ne représente qu'une partie du massacre. Nous retrouvons un membre de la Manchester Yeomanry, ici nous pouvons en être sûr grâce aux initiales 'MYC' inscrites sur son blason. Il est sur son cheval, brandit son épée, et a les yeux rivés vers le bas. À terre il y a un homme à gauche, la main posée sur la tête renversée en arrière. Ses vêtements sont déchirés, et les coups de crayons nous laissent presque croire à un

[1] CRUIKSHANK, G. *The Law's Delay*, 21 janvier 1820, voir Annexes p. 182
[2] CRUIKSHANK, G. *Victory of Peterloo*, 02 août 1821, voir Annexes p. 183

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corps squelettique. À l'arrière on aperçoit la silhouette d'un homme, comme en train de tomber, la main en l'air et la bouche ouverte. Et à droite nous retrouvons cette femme allongée sur le sol qui tient son enfant du bras gauche, et qui lève sa main droite comme pour repousser le soldat et se protéger de lui. Ce que nous pouvons relever de nouveau ici, c'est que cette scène est surélevée. Elle se passe sur une sorte de coffre noir. Au centre de ce coffre se trouve une couronne entourée de plusieurs épées. Et tout autour, comme à la pointe des épées, le dessinateur a placé des têtes de morts. Ceci nous fait penser aux épées utilisées par la Yeomanry pour attaquer la foule, et les conséquences terribles, voire mortelles, que cette attaque a eu sur certaines personnes. Ainsi, nous pouvons penser que George Cruikshank encore une fois critique les choix qui ont été faits ce jour-là. En utilisant la couronne, on peut même penser qu'il remet en cause tout le gouvernement et son système. Ce qui est plus étonnant avec ce dessin, c'est qu'il a été fait en août 1821, soit deux ans après le Massacre de Peterloo. Cela confirme qu'il était important à l'époque de continuer à parler de ces évènements. Nous pouvons donc soulever l'hypothèse qu'en 1821, la population n'avait pas encore eu d'excuses du gouvernement, ni gain de cause en ce qui concerne des réformes parlementaires pour une représentation plus équitable.

Même si le travail de George Cruikshank est le plus présent en ce qui concerne Peterloo, d'autres artistes se sont également penchés sur le sujet. Certains même de manière anonyme.

C'est le cas par exemple de la gravure à l'eau forte, en noir et blanc, intitulée *To Henry Hunt, Esqr. as chairman of the meeting assembled on St.. Peter's Field, Manchester on the 16th of August, 1819.*[1]. Cette gravure date de 1819. Il n'y a aucune spécification, ni sur le mois, ni sur son créateur. Au premier plan, nous pouvons remarquer beaucoup de similitudes avec les dessins de George Cruikshank. Nous pouvons voir que toutes les personnes dans la foule ont le regard porté sur les soldats. À gauche comme à droite, nous voyons les corps qui se superposent, les personnes à terre, et celles qui essaient de s'enfuir. La qualité ne permet pas de déceler les expressions de tous les visages ni même certaines silhouettes. En revanche, nous pouvons tout de même relever que dans ces personnes, il y a des femmes, des enfants, et des hommes de tout âge. Une fois de plus, on nous rappelle que personne n'a été épargné. Au centre de ce premier plan, il y a un corps, semblant être celui d'une femme, qui est allongé sur le dos, les vêtements déchirés et se tordant de douleur. Près d'elle, un homme qui semble appeler à

[1] ANONYMOUS, *To Henry Hunt, Esqr. as chairman of the meeting assembled on St.. Peter's Field, Manchester on the 16th.. of August, 1819*, 1819, voir Annexes p. 184

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l'aide. L'utilisation du crayon noir donne un effet de brouillard et accentue le mélange des corps, que l'on n'arrive presque pas à discerner en dessous des soldats et de leurs chevaux. Nous remarquons tout de même à droite, le corps d'un enfant à côté d'un homme âgé. Un autre homme, dans la précipitation, le regard porté sur le soldat qui le poursuit, ne se rend pas compte qu'il marche sur cet homme qui est à terre. Selon le British Museum, cet homme se fait poursuivre car il porte un drapeau blanc sur lequel est dessiné la silhouette d'une femme tenant une épée. Et à la pointe de celui-ci, nous retrouvons également un bonnet phrygien. Les cavaliers sont eux juchés sur leurs chevaux, avec leurs épées. Au centre de cette gravure, nous trouvons également une scène qui attire plus particulièrement notre attention par son caractère pathétique. En effet, nous pouvons voir l'un des soldats brandir son épée, regardant vers le sol comme près à attaquer. Et aux sabots du cheval sur lequel il est monté, nous apercevons une femme de dos qui tient son enfant et qui le porte de façon à le montrer au soldat. Nous comprenons qu'elle essaie sans doute de demander de l'indulgence et de la compassion.

Au second plan, se trouve l'estrade sur laquelle sont représentées sept personnes, dont une femme. Au centre de cette scène, nous pouvons remarquer Henry Hunt qui, une fois de plus, est représenté comme levant la main droite et tenant son chapeau dans la main gauche. À sa droite se tient une femme debout, tenant une bannière sur laquelle nous pouvons lire l'inscription « Manchester Female Reform » et apercevoir la silhouette d'une femme qui piétine la 'Corruption'. Derrière cette femme, il y a un homme qui s'adresse directement à un officier qui le regarde en tenant son épée, comme de façon à réagir à tout moment si besoin. De l'autre côté de la scène, à droite, trois hommes portent chacun une bannière. Ainsi de gauche à droite nous pouvons lire « Universal Suffrage », « Liberty or death », et « Universal and Religious Liberty. » Et sur toutes ces bannières nous pouvons une fois de plus remarquer les *Cap of Liberty*. Entre Henry Hunt et la femme présente sur l'estrade, nous pouvons même voir un homme qui essaie d'aider un homme, en essayant de le soulever pour le faire monter sur l'estrade. On remarque également que d'autres personnes sont accrochées à la scène, comme pour vouloir échapper à l'horreur provoquée par l'arrivée des soldats. En parallèle à l'estrade, à gauche du dessin, nous pouvons voir un duel entre un groupe de la Yeomanry et un groupe de femmes. Tous les soldats tiennent leurs épées, prêts à attaquer. Le plus proche des femmes est même en train d'attaquer l'une d'entre elles, lui donnant un coup d'épée au niveau de la poitrine. En arrière-plan se trouvent les bâtiments où nous pouvons apercevoir certaines personnes aux fenêtres être témoins de la scène.

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L'anonymat de ce dessinateur, ainsi que l'imprécision autour de la date de publication, ne nous permet pas de dire s'il a réellement été témoin ou non du massacre. Néanmoins, nous retrouvons énormément de similitudes, à la fois entre d'autres dessins étudiés et les articles parus au sujet de Peterloo. Dans celui-ci, nous avons une description globale du déroulement de la scène. Le dessinateur n'a pas décidé de représenter l'évènement de manière grotesque, ni même de dénoncer autre chose que les actes commis ce jour-là. On peut penser qu'il se porte témoin des évènements et que son rôle est simplement de transmettre l'information.

Pour donner un dernier exemple de la représentation du massacre dans les dessins, nous allons analyser celui de John Lewis Marks, paru en 1819 et qui s'intitule *The Massacre of Peterloo ! or a Specimen of English Liberty, August 16th, 1819.*[1] Il s'agit clairement d'une caricature qui se compose de plusieurs éléments très intéressants à souligner.

Au premier plan, nous retrouvons les mêmes éléments que précédemment. Les hommes, comme les femmes et les enfants, sont représentés. Comparé à d'autres dessins déjà étudiés, nous n'avons pas ici la représentation de la foule dans sa quantité mais comme un 'échantillon' de cette foule pour représenter le tout. En décidant de dessiner simplement quelques personnes, le dessinateur accentue la dimension du massacre. En effet, on peut ainsi voir avec plus de précision les conséquences causées par l'attaque de la Yeomanry. Par exemple, tout à gauche on aperçoit un soldat qui transperce de son épée l'homme sur lequel il se ruait avec son cheval. Un autre homme essaie de retenir l'homme blessé. Près d'eux, on retrouve la représentation d'une femme qui tient son enfant. Ici, seule la position de cette femme change. On la voit tenir son enfant du bras droit en essayant de repousser le soldat de sa main gauche, alors qu'elle est en train de chuter. En dessous d'elle, il y a le corps d'un homme allongé sur le dos. On ne remarque qu'une partie de son corps, sa tête ensanglantée sur le haut du crâne et un visage exprimant la douleur. À droite de l'image se déroule une autre scène très représentative de la notion de massacre. On y voit d'abord une femme au sol, le visage écrasé par le pied d'un soldat. Nous pouvons voir le sang qui coule de sa poitrine, côté coeur, et sur elle un enfant, les yeux fermés et la bouche ouverte. Tous les deux semblent morts. Ce soldat qui est au-dessus d'elle, au visage grotesque étant donné sa bouche disproportionnée, laissant paraitre ses dents serrées, semble enragé. Ceci est accentué par son regard, en fronçant

[1] MARKS, J.L., *The Massacre of Peterloo ! or a Specimen of English Liberty, August 16th, 1819,* 1819, voir Annexes p. 184.

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les sourcils. Sa main gauche est posée sur l'épaule d'un homme agenouillé. Et dans sa main droite, il tient une sorte de large bâton, prêt à battre l'homme qui est à terre. Au moment de cette action, il s'exprime « What a Glorious Day, this is New Waterloo. » Ce passage est intéressant parce qu'il nous renvoie au nom donné au massacre, c'est-à-dire Peterloo. Mais insiste aussi sur le fait que les soldats ont considéré ce rassemblement comme un affront et qu'il a vite tourné en un champ de bataille. À la seule différence qu'à Waterloo, les victimes étaient armées. Ici, les soldats se sentent victorieux. Aux pieds du soldat se trouve un autre enfant qui le regarde. Deux interprétations sont possibles ici. Soit l'enfant demande au soldat d'être indulgent et d'épargner l'homme qu'il est sur le point de battre. Soit il lui reproche d'être sans scrupule à piétiner le visage de la femme qui est à terre avec son enfant.

Au deuxième plan, les traits des soldats sont tels qu'ils semblent menaçants et sans pitié. Ils brandissent tous fièrement leurs épées qui sont couvertes de sang. Au centre, un membre de la Yeomanry, comme l'indiquent les initiales sur son blason, est le seul sur un cheval blanc et vêtu d'une veste à rayure. On remarque que son cheval attaque un homme en lui mordant la main. Ce soldat tient dans sa main droite une épée en sang, et de sa main gauche une trompette d'où sortent des paroles malheureusement illisibles. Tout à droite, un autre soldat s'en prend à une femme tenant son enfant. On s'aperçoit même que c'est le cheval qui tient les vêtements de l'enfant dans sa mâchoire. Derrière cette femme, il y a un homme à la fenêtre d'un bâtiment. Tout nous laisse croire qu'il s'agirait d'un magistrat. En effet, il tient une bouteille de vin et une coupe dans ses mains. On voit même qu'il essaie de repousser la femme avec cette bouteille et il dit « Cut away lady the Riot Act is being read in the corner. » Ainsi, le dessinateur remet en cause la lecture du Riot Act qui est normalement censé se faire avant l'envoi des troupes. De nombreuses interrogations planent autour de ce sujet, et c'est ce que nous verrons dans le deuxième chapitre. Au loin, en arrière-plan, nous pouvons apercevoir des bâtiments ainsi que l'estrade et des silhouettes, mais il n'y a aucune précision autour d'eux.

Quand nous faisons le lien entre ces différents dessins, nous nous rendons compte qu'ils expriment tous la même chose et ont la même utilité. Ils nous permettent d'abord d'avoir une image de ce rassemblement. Mais ils permettent aussi de dénoncer l'injustice vécue par la foule ce jour-là, voire même l'injustice et les choix du gouvernement en général. Lorsque l'on s'attarde sur les similitudes de certains passages de ces gravures, comme la récurrence de certains personnages, tout nous porte à croire que nous avons donc une représentation plus ou

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moins proche de la réalité du massacre. Même si dans les caricatures, on retrouve quelques exagérations, ce sont ces exagérations elles-mêmes qui nous permettent de définir l'ampleur des évènements de Peterloo.

En ce qui concerne l'injustice, il est indéniable que chaque personne qui était présente ce jour-là en a été victime. Et si l'on devait en retenir une plus particulièrement parmi d'autres, ce serait sans hésitation Henry Hunt. Même s'il n'a pas été une victime directe de l'attaque de la Manchester Yeomanry, il a été victime de la justice. Et lorsque l'on étudie les différents articles à son sujet, nous comprenons qu'il était ce jour-là, 'l'homme à abattre'.

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3. Henry Hunt : incarnation de l'injustice subie par le peuple

Avant de parler de Henry Hunt au moment de Peterloo, il est important de rappeler qui il était, afin de comprendre son arrestation ainsi que toutes les circonstances qui ont suivies.

Henry Hunt était le fils de Thomas Hunt, un riche exploitant agricole. En 1800, Henry était impliqué dans un un conflit avec le colonel de la Wiltshire Yeomanry, Lord Bruce, au sujet de la mort de faisans. Un conflit à la suite duquel il s'est retrouve condamné à six semaines de prison. Il y a rencontré Henry Clifford, un avocat radical qui était impliqué dans une campagne en faveur du droit de vote pour tous les hommes adultes. C'est ainsi qu'il a commencé à s'engager dans la politique radicale. Et une fois à Rowfant House, il est devenu de plus en plus actif dans cette politique. Il a réussi à avoir la réputation d'être un orateur fantastique. Il était donc souvent appelé à parler en public à différents rassemblements en faveur des réformes parlementaires. En 1818, Hunt a été choisi comme candidat radical pour la circonscription de Westminster. Dans sa campagne, il défendait les parlements annuels, le suffrage universel, le bulletin secret et l'abrogation des *Corn Laws*. C'est pourquoi il a été invité, avec Richard Carlile, à parler lors du rassemblement du 16 août 1819 à Manchester, face à un public d'environ 60000 personnes. Le jour-même, il a été désigné Président du rassemblement. Et c'est au moment où il a pris la parole que la cavalerie a chargé la foule[1]. Nous pouvons comprendre que, à cause de son implication dans la politique radicale, les magistrats craignaient que Henry Hunt soit une cause de débordements. Mais nous allons nous rendre compte, au fur et à mesure de cette analyse, que même si Henry Hunt était le premier à vouloir la paix, il était le premier sur la liste, des personnes à mettre hors de nuire, des magistrats. Cependant, si nous considérons que le rassemblement était légal et qu'en tant que président il avait demandé le calme, nous pouvons nous poser des questions au sujet de son arrestation.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné un peu plus tôt dans ce chapitre, Henry Hunt avait demandé le silence aux manifestants afin d'éviter le désordre et ainsi de ne pas être considérés comme des causeurs de troubles. Nous pouvons donc constater que ses intentions étaient loin d'être mauvaises. Si on ajoute à cela ce que nous savons de lui, à propos de son éloquence et

[1] Henr 'Orator' Hunt
http://spartacus-educational.com/PRhunt.htm [Dernière consultation le 23 juin 2018]

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de ses actions pour soutenir les plus délaissés de la société, nous avons du mal à lui attribuer une image de monstre, comme certains ont pu le désigner. En effet, dans le *Morning Post* du 24 août 1819, nous retrouvons un article qui est particulièrement en faveur du gouvernement et qui dénigre à la fois le rassemblement, mais surtout Henry Hunt. Voici les mots utilisés par le journaliste : « During the first few moments, the GREAT delinquent, the monster in human shape, to whom all these evils must be attributed, was dragged by NADIN and others to the Magistrates, admidst the execrations and hisses of every good subject.[1] » Ici, Hunt est clairement désigné comme le chef de l'organisation et surtout comme coupable de tout ce qui s'est passé ce jour-là. Nous pouvons donc penser que, à travers ce journal, on cherchait à déculpabiliser le gouvernement pour son choix d'attaquer la foule en remettant toute la faute sur Henry Hunt. Or, il convient de mentionner que mis à part avoir présidé le rassemblement, il n'a pas cherché à remonter la foule contre les soldats de la Yeomanry, ni contre les magistrats. Au contraire, nous apprenons dans la presse que, même lors de son arrestation, il n'a montré aucun signe de rébellion et qu'il a voulu que cette arrestation se fasse de manière juste et légale. Et ceci commence par la volonté de savoir si les officiers, qui étaient venus l'arrêter, avaient un mandat d'arrêt contre lui. On se rendra vite compte que plusieurs doutes reposent sur cette question, et que la réponse donnée reste floue. Les magistrats étaient au courant du déroulement du rassemblement et de la venue de Henry Hunt en tant qu'orateur. Nous pouvons donc imaginer que s'il était considéré comme dangereux, ou apte à lancer une émeute, les magistrats auraient envoyé des officiers pour l'arrêter avant même que son discours ne commence. Or, ce ne fut pas le cas. C'est ce qui est mentionné dans le *Morning Chronicle* : « It is said that Mr. HUNT, before the meeting, took place, repaired to the Magistrates to know whether they had any warrants against him, and that he was answered in the negative.[2] » C'est pourquoi H. Hunt a poursuivi son discours, en toute légalité. Pour ce qui est du mandat d'arrêt demandé au moment même où il se faisait arrêter, là encore planent des doutes, comme nous pouvons le lire dans *The Examiner* :

> After they had surrounded them in such a manner as to prevent all escape, the *officer* who commanded the detachment went up to Mr. Hunt, and said, brandishing his sword, "Sir, I have a warrant against you, and arrest you as my prisoner." Hunt, after exhorting the people to tranquility in a few words, turned round to the officer, and said, "I willingly surrender myself to any civil

[1] Morning Post, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER*, 24 Août 1819, voir Annexes p. 138.
[2] Morning Chronicle, 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p. 105

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> officer who will show me his warrant." Mr. Nadin, the chief police officer at Manchester, then came forward and said, "I will arrest you ; I have got informations upon oath against you;" or something to that effect.[1]

On se rend bien compte qu'à aucun moment les officiers ne mentionnent, ni ne présentent le mandat d'arrêt contre lui. L'officier en chef lui dit simplement qu'il a des informations contre lui qui ont été déposées sous serment. Si le rassemblement était considéré comme illégal, l'arrestation de Hunt ne l'était pas moins. Non seulement il n'y avait aucune preuve à ce sujet, mais le traitement qu'on lui a infligé à ce moment était loin d'être irréprochable. D'après plusieurs sources, les officiers en charge de l'arrêter avaient pour but de le 'réduire en miettes'. Nous pouvons citer comme exemple ce passage du *Morning Chronicle* : « "Had it not been for the interference of Mr. NADIN, the deputy constable whom these men have particularly calumniated, it is certain Mr. HUNT would not now have been alive, *for the military were determined to cut him to pieces*."[2] » Si l'officier en chef n'était pas intervenu, on sous-entend que Hunt aurait pu être abattu. En revanche, aucune raison ni aucune explication n'a été donnée à ce sujet. Ce même passage est repris par le journaliste de *The Examiner* qui ajoute : « The military determined to cut a man to pieces for saying what they do not like! This may be a piece of thinking a la Waterloo; but we are sure it is not fit even for the imitators of a standing army in England; and we trust both the words and the determination will be well enquired into, as well as every the minutest circumstance of these apparent outrages. [3]» Ce que mettent en avant ces extraits, c'est que l'arrestation de Hunt relève certes de l'injustice, mais aussi, que cet état d'esprit autour de l'envie de le tuer rappelle une fois de plus la bataille de Waterloo. Il convient de rappeler que le massacre a été renommé autour de cette bataille, et cette référence une fois de plus nous permet de constater le niveau de cruauté dans les intentions des soldats. Même si Henry Hunt n'a pas perdu la vie lors du rassemblement, il n'en est pas moins ressorti sans blessures. Quand nous lisons les conditions dans lesquelles il a été mené jusqu'aux magistrats, nous nous rendons compte qu'il a été victime d'un abus de pouvoir de la part des officiers. Nous pouvons dire qu'ils se sont comportés de manière injuste envers lui. Voici comment on nous décrit la scène :

> When they arrived at the hustings, the standards were torn or cut from the hands of those who held them, and Hunt, Johnson, Saxton, and several other persons, including

[1] The Examiner,*DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 128
[2] Morning Chronicle, 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.105
[3] The Examiner, *DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 120

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> three or four women, were taken into custody. Hunt was taken along by the Constables to the house where the Magistrates were sitting, crying out 'Murder!'as he was every instant struck by the bludgeons of numbers of Constables who surrounded him. An attempt was made to knock his hat off, but unsuccessfully ; and, just as he was going up the *signs*, a person, who shall be for the present nameless, with a club of large size, struck him with the force of both hands a blow on the head, which completely […] his hat, and almost levelled him with the ground ; of this I can produce evidence on oath.[1]

Quelques mots de ce passage n'étaient pas lisibles, mais leur absence n'enlève rien à la compréhension de cette scène. En effet, on remarque que Hunt était entouré de tout un groupe d'officiers qui le menaient vers la maison des magistrats. Cependant, ces officiers lui ont infligés plusieurs coups qui auraient pu avoir des conséquences graves sur sa condition physique et mentale. Il a reçu plusieurs coups, dont un gros sur la tête, non pas parce qu'il se débattait, mais parce qu'il criait au meurtre, faisant référence à la scène de massacre dont il a été témoin du haut de son estrade. Dans une lettre à Lord Sidmouth, révélée dans le Morning Chronicle, cette fois du 31 août 1819, Henry Hunt s'exprime lui-même sur ce sujet : « I saw one man with his nose cut off, and I received several blows with a sabre on my head myself. I was brought here by the Magistrates under a military guard, at two o'clock yesterday, and I have been kept here without the means of sending to procure bail, not having had any copy of the warrant, or having any charge made against me, till after I had been kept in custody upwards of 24 hours, when that which is enclosed was given me by the Governor.[2] » Il nous parle d'abord du mauvais traitement dont il a été victime lors de sa mise en détention. Nous comprenons dans un autre article du Morning Chronicle qu'en plus d'avoir reçu des coups, il n'a pas été mieux traité par la suite. Voici ce que nous lisons :

> Hunt resumed : I must say I suffered much bodily pain from the blows of the constables and from sabres. They are visible. I scorned to tell the Doctor of it. My health certainly has, by my apprehension and confinement, been preserved : the exertions should have made to keep that meeting quiet, would have affected me for years. I have slept on a bed such as I would not have put my servants to ; but, thank God, I slept well and have suffered nothing, but from the recollections of my fellow prisoners, and the mangled creatures put to death. I have no complaint to make against the jailor.[3]

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[1] Morning Chronicle, *LETTERS ROM MANCHESTER*, 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p. 131
[2] Morning Chronicle, *LETTER FORME HUNT TO LORD SIDMOUTH*, 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p.160
[3] Morning Chronicle, *MANCHESTER*, 30 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 148

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Pour resituer ce passage, il a été relevé lors du procès de Henry Hunt. C'est lui-même qui donne ces détails sur sa mise en préventive et qui demande un peu plus d'indulgence de la part des magistrats. Car, si le massacre de Peterloo a permis de relever plusieurs failles sur le gouvernement et son système judiciaire, le cas de Henry Hunt en est bien l'exemple. Il reproche ainsi avoir été arrêté et placé en détention, sans mandat ni preuves. Il ne savait même pas quelle charge pesait contre lui. Ceci est un autre problème à relever pour souligner l'hypothèse de l'injustice subie par Henry Hunt. Nous apprenons dans le *Morning Chronicle* qu'aucune précision n'avait été donnée sur les charges qui pesaient contre lui, si ce n'est des rumeurs sur la charge de « Haute Trahison ». Voici la preuve : «"What are the charges upon which Hunt and the rest are arrested, I know not. Rumour says *High Treason*, of which carrying the Cap of Liberty is stated as an overt act!!"[1] » Il convient d'expliquer que cette charge est considérée comme l'une des plus importantes car elle est donnée pour des offenses contre le gouvernement. Par exemple, si un individu est arrêté pour avoir comploté contre le gouvernement et le Roi, comme cela a pu être le cas lors du 'Gunpowder Plot', il peut être mis en examen pour *Haute Trahison*. Or, dans le cas de Henry Hunt, aucune preuve n'a été relevée sur un quelconque complot.

Lors de sa mise en examen, nous pouvons également relever à la fois des incohérences et un manque d'informations. On nous explique qu'à plusieurs reprises lorsqu'il interrogeait des témoins qui avaient des informations contre lui, les magistrats interféraient et demandaient aux témoins de ne pas répondre. Nous remarquons que les questions posées étaient simples et utiles pour faire avancer l'enquête. Alors nous nous demandons pourquoi Hunt n'a pas eu la chance d'obtenir les réponses nécessaires. Le journal *Morning Chronicle* nous décrit tout le déroulement de la mise en examen de Hunt et des échanges entre lui et les témoins ainsi que les magistrats. En toute objectivité, nous ne pouvons pas nier que les magistrats n'accordent aucune chance à Hunt pour se défendre. Nous nous posons même la question si le rassemblement n'était pas une excuse pour mettre Hunt en prison. Comme il était partisan de la politique radicale, tout nous laisse penser qu'il n'était pas apprécié du gouvernement. En effet, le gouvernement n'était pas forcément en faveur des réformes parlementaires. Ainsi, mettre Henry Hunt hors de nuire, ne lui autorisant pas à avoir de contact avec l'extérieur,

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, *ANOTHER LETTER*, 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.110

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permettrait peut-être d'éviter que la population continue à se rassembler pour revendiquer ses droits. Henry Hunt souligne lui-même cette injustice lors de sa mise en examen :

> Hunt to the Bench: Here's a witness does not choose to answer : what will you do ? — Mr. Norris : He is not obliged to answer it.
> — Hunt : How are you to get at the truth ?
> — Mr. Norris : He had made oath to it already.
> — Hunt put some other questions to the witness, to one of which Mr. Norris observed, you can put that on your trial not now.
> — Hunt : Then you are determined to send me to trial, whatever the evidence is ![1]

Nous ne pouvons donc pas savoir si les témoins disaient vrai. En ne répondant pas aux questions de Hunt, leurs déclarations sous serment sont en quelque sorte décrédibilisées. Ainsi, un tel comportement renforce ce sentiment de doute autour de l'arrestation et de la mise en examen du suspect présupposé. C'est en prenant en considération toutes ces informations que nous pouvons dire que Henry Hunt, comme toutes les autres personnes qui ont été arrêtées, ont été victimes d'une injustice.

Cependant, même si Hunt n'avait pas le soutien du gouvernement, nous avons pu voir qu'il était adulé et soutenu par une grande partie de la population. La majorité des personnes présentes au St Peter's Field le 16 août, étaient venues principalement pour voir et écouter le discours de Henry Hunt. Ce fut particulièrement le cas des femmes, qui considèrent le travail de Hunt comme primordial et nécessaire à l'avancée des réformes du pays. Le journal The examiner nous transmet une lettre de 'Female Reformers of Manchester' qui a été envoyée à Hunt après sa mise en détention. En quelques lignes, elles montrent leur soutien et insistent pour qu'il ne baisse pas les bras. Lisez plutôt :

> TO HENRY HUNT, Esq.,
> CHAIRMAN OF THE REFORM MEETING IN MANCHESTER
> SIR, —Permit the Female Reformers of Manchester, in presenting you with this flag , to state, that they are actuated by no motives of petty vanity. As wives, mothers, daughters, in their social, domestic, moral capacities, they come forward in support of the sacred cause of liberty—a cause in which their husbands, their fathers, and their sons, have embarked the last hope of suffering humanity. Neither ashamed or afraid of thus aiding you in the glorious struggle for recovering your lost privileges—privileges upon which so much of their own happiness depends—they trust that this tribute to freedom will animate you to a steady perseverance in obtaining the object of

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, *MANCHESTER,* 30 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.146

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> our common solicitude — a radical reform in the Common House of Parliament. In discharging what they felt to be an imperative duty, they hope that they have not "overstepped the modesty of nature,'' and they shall now retire to the bosoms of their families with the cheering and consolatory reflection, that your efforts are on the eve of being crowned with complete success.
>
> May your flag never be unfurled but in the cause of peace and reform; and then may a female's curse pursue the coward who deserts the standard.[1]

Cette lettre permet à la fois de soulever l'horreur vécue à Manchester, mais aussi l'injustice subie par Hunt. On se rend rapidement compte que leur envie de changer les choses n'a pas changé après les évènements. Le gouvernement aurait pu penser que l'attaque calmerait les esprits et les retiendrait de vouloir se réunir à nouveau. Or, nous avons la preuve que c'est l'effet inverse qui a été provoqué. Non seulement ces femmes lui demandent de continuer à se battre et de ne pas oublier pourquoi tout ceci a eu lieu. Mais aussi, son arrestation n'a fait que renforcer l'esprit d'unité et de volonté de réformer le Parlement. C'est pourquoi de nombreuses personnes sont venues le soutenir, à la fois lors de sa mise examen et lors de sa libération.

Les évènements de Peterloo ont donc permis de relever plusieurs problèmes liés au gouvernement. D'un côté les choix discutables des magistrats, de l'autre l'injustice du système judiciaire. Mais au centre de ces problèmes résident les forces de l'ordre en elles-mêmes. Même si l'ordre a été donné par les magistrats, ce sont les soldats qui ont attaqué la foule et qui ont décidé de ne pas laisser de répit en usant de la violence. Ainsi, un double discours a été repéré dans la presse de l'époque. D'un côté, nous avons pu relever des éléments qui venaient soutenir les actes de la Manchester Yeomanry, notamment de la part du gouvernement. Mais de l'autre côté, ces soldats ont vivement été critiqués à la fois par la presse et la population. Nous avons donc un contraste entre deux catégories de la société qui nous permettra de voir comment le Massacre de Peterloo a été à l'origine d'une remise en cause du gouvernement et du système. C'est ce qu'il sera intéressant d'analyser dans le prochain chapitre.

[1] The Examiner, *TO HENRY HUNT, Esq.,CHAIRMAN OF THE REFORM MEETING IN MANCHESTER*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 134.

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Deuxième chapitre - La représentation des forces de l'ordre

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1. Des héros du gouvernement

Avant de souligner comment le gouvernement a réagi aux attaques des officiers au St Peter's Field, il convient d'abord de mentionner quelles troupes avaient été envoyées sur place. Le rassemblement comptait plus de 60000 personnes, il était donc nécessaire de regrouper un nombre conséquent d'officiers pour faire face à la foule si besoin. C'est pourquoi, le matin du 16 août, les autorités ont préparé l'organisation autour du lieu de rassemblement. Dans le *Morning Post*, on nous donne une idée précise sur les choix des Magistrats que voici :

> Early in the morning the various responsible Authorities were on the alert. The Magistrates, the Boroughreeves and Constables of Manchester and Salford, an immense body of Special Constables, many of them men of the first consideration, and the various forces of military and artillery, were in motion for their appointed duties. The latter consisted of our own Yeomanry Cavalry, under Major TRAFFORD; the Prince Regent's Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry, under Lieut. Colonel TOWNSEND; the 15th Hussars, from the barracks under Lieut. Colonel DALRYMPLE; a detachment of the 88th Foot, now stationed in the King-street barracks, under colonel M'GREGOR; some pieces of Royal Horse Artillery, under Major DYNELEY; and a detachment of the 31st foot, under Lieutnant-Colonel L'Estrange, the able, intelligent, and active Officer who commanded the whole, and made all the necessary arrangements for the occasion.[1]

Nous nous rendons bien compte du nombre considérable de personnes réunies autour du lieu de rassemblement, mais nous pouvons aussi d'ores et déjà soulever le ton approbateur de cet article. En effet, à la fin de ce passage on nous met en avant les qualités du Lieutenant-Colonel L'Estrange, qui a été le commandant en chef de toute l'organisation. Nous allons voir au fur et à mesure de cette analyse que c'est principalement ce journal, le *Morning Post*, qui met en avant les qualités des officiers, et qui par ailleurs décrit les manifestants de manière péjorative. Il est intéressant de remarquer ce contraste car, parmi une dizaine de journaux étudiés, le Morning Post est le seul à défendre les actes commis sur la foule. Nous comprenons donc qu'il était plus en faveur des choix du gouvernement qu'en faveur des manifestants.

À travers ce journal, nous comprenons que les victimes deviennent les principaux coupables. Comme expliqué dans le premier chapitre, la notion de massacre est la plus représentée dans la presse. Les manifestants sont en général considérés presque comme des martyrs. Or, ici, les manifestants et les réformateurs radicaux sont représentés comme des

[1] *Morning Post, THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER*, 24 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.135

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rebelles, se comportant comme s'ils allaient en guerre contre le gouvernement. C'est ce que nous comprenons à travers ce passage : « The Radical Reformers now began to make their formidable appearance. *They marched in regiments under regular leaders*, and all the appalling insignia, *Caps of Liberty*, &c. which had been long preparing for what they considered to be a most glorious day. As they progressively advanced to the hustings, they were received with the loudest acclamations, with huzzas, and the clapping of hands.[1] » Si nous comparons avec les autres articles déjà étudiés, nous pouvons croire que l'auteur de cet article, dont le nom n'est pas mentionné, donne une image négative de la foule pour justifier les actes commis par les soldats. En effet, décrire les manifestants en rang, comme peuvent le faire les militaires, laisserait penser que ceux-ci venaient dans l'optique de lancer des hostilités. Ainsi, les soldats n'auraient pas eu le choix que de les attaquer pour se défendre et défendre le gouvernement. Cette idée se confirme lorsqu'on nous apprend que les soldats auraient été attaqués de toute part par la foule. Pour rappel, à plusieurs reprises il a été indiqué dans la presse que les manifestants étaient venus en paix. Ils n'avaient pas d'armes comme il est possible de le lire dans une lettre privée publiée par le *Morning Chronicle* : « but it is but correct to say, they carried no weapons — few of them even a stick.[2] ». Il avait même été demandé aux personnes âgées de laisser leurs cannes de côté et de se faire aider par d'autres manifestants pour marcher. Mais c'est une toute autre image qui est donnée dans le Morning Post. Voici ce que nous pouvons lire :

> On every side the soldiers were attacked with the most determined resolution : many of the Cavalry were struck to the ground, and the Reformers attempted to knock out their brains with large stones (previously provided) and sticks, whilst lying on the ground. Our [..] youth, Mr. JOHN HULME, was struck in the face with a brick. It took away his senses, and he checked his horse so suddenly, that the both fell together. A man had also stabbed him in the back with a sharp instrument, and whilst in this deplorable state, a fellow with a club was about to finish him, when a foot soldier bayoneted the villain, who sprang high from the earth, and fell down dead.[3]

Dans ce passage, on nous décrit d'un côté les réformateurs comme des rebelles, et de l'autre les soldats comme des victimes. Les manifestants auraient préparé des armes à l'avance et utilisé en plus des pierres, pour faire tomber les soldats et les attaquer lorsqu'ils étaient à terre.

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[1] Morning Post, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER*, 24 août 1819, voir Annexes p.137
[2] Morning chronicle, *PRIVATE LETTER,* 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.110
[3] *Op. Cit*, voir Annexes p.137

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Nous avons beaucoup vu le scénario inverse, à la fois dans les journaux et dans les images. Nous pouvons donc imaginer qu'il était important de diaboliser la foule afin de mettre en avant l'héroïsme des officiers. En rapportant ce genre d'informations, on justifie la conduite des soldats en laissant penser qu'il ne s'agissait pas d'une attaque à sens unique mais bien d'un affront. De plus, comme cela a pu être fait pour décrire le massacre sur la foule, dans ce passage nous pouvons aussi remarqué que le tragique est souligné, de telle manière à avoir de la compassion pour les soldats. Mais aussi, dans la dernière phrase de ce passage, on nous explique qu'un soldat a tué un manifestant pour protéger son collègue John Hulme. Cela nous permet de sous-entendre que s'il y a eu usage de violence contre la foule, c'était principalement pour se protéger de leurs attaques. Il est certain de dire que l'histoire dépend de celui qui la raconte et il est donc normal de voir un double discours. Nous savons qu'il n'y a jamais de vérité absolue, sachant qu'il est difficile de donner une information sans parti-pris. Néanmoins, nous pouvons nous rendre compte de quelques incohérences au sein du même journal. En effet, dans le passage du *Morning Post* cité ci-dessus, nous avons pu lire qu'un membre de l'infanterie avait utilisé sa baïonnette en tirant sur un manifestant qui voulait porter des coups sur John Hulme. Or, nous pouvons lire également dans ce journal : « To the front of these premises a considerable quantity of timber was laid, which unfortunately sheltered the refractory from direct approach. *Not a single shot was fired by any of the military, although they were fired upon several times by the Reformers and their abettors*.[1] » On nous souligne dans ce passage qu'aucun coup de feu n'avait été tiré par les soldats alors que quelques passages avant celui-ci on nous assure que, pour leur protection, l'un d'entre eux a dû tirer sur un malfaiteur. C'est pourquoi tout laisse à penser que le gouvernement et la presse pro-gouvernementale ont donné une image péjorative des manifestants, afin de justifier leurs actes et éviter d'avoir à endosser le rôle de criminels. Nous nous rendons compte à plusieurs reprises que le journal doit faire des soldats des victimes pour qu'ils ne soient pas considérés comme des assassins. Et nous remarquons également qu'il dénonce un mauvais comportement venant des manifestants, afin de justifier les actes perpétrés sur la foule. Au milieu de l'article, on nous fait comprendre qu'avant même leur arrivée près de la scène, les militaires ont été victimes de l'agitation des personnes rassemblées. Dans le passage que nous allons citer ci-après, on nous parle d'une attitude professionnelle et organisée de la part des soldats. On comprend qu'ils

[1] Morning Post, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS,* 24 août 1819, voir Annexes p.138

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étaient arrivés sur les lieux sans faire de vague, simplement pour arrêter les personnes contre qui ils avaient un mandat. Voici le passage :

> Mr. Nadin therefore took the warrant, attended by a host of Special Constables, Mr. Trafford, a highly respectable Cheshire Magistrate, headed the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry, and an order was given for the whole to advance and take their prisoners. This was done in a steady and masterly style; but the Cavalry had not advanced many yards before they were assailed with heavy volleys of stones, shouts of defiance, and the most coarse and insulting language. Till thus assailed, no Yeomanry-man used his sword, each man having confined himself to waving it over his head. [1]

Dans cet extrait, on nous expose un contraste entre les deux clans. D'un côté les officiers avec le Magistrat du Cheshire qui est présenté comme 'respectable.' De l'autre, les manifestants presque décrits comme des sauvages qui n'ont aucun savoir-vivre. La dernière phrase de ce passage est également intéressante. En effet, ici on nous fait comprendre que les soldats ne voulaient pas utiliser leurs armes, en l'occurence leurs épées. Elles devaient simplement servir de dissuasion. Cet aspect est renforcé avec la phrase suivante : « Now the duty of self-preservation obliged them to strike, but in very few instances to cut.[2] » Ces passages viennent appuyer l'idée qu'il fallait redorer le blason des soldats après qu'ils ont été considérés comme des meurtriers sur leur propre peuple.

Il est certain que l'attaque de la Yeomanry a été atténuée dans le *Morning Post*. Mais il y a également l'importance des conséquences de cette attaque qui a été réduite. Si dans d'autres journaux l'attaque a été qualifiée de massacre, dans celui-ci les victimes ne sont pas considérées comme tel. Aucune excuse n'a été faite aux victimes ni à leurs proches. Au contraire, on nous présente les faits comme inévitables, non pas parce que les soldats ont foncé sur la foule, mais parce que les manifestants étaient violents et armés. On nous dit : « « Under the circumstances these accidents were unavoidable; not the smallest blame is attached to the military by those who were the temporary sufferers. It was scarcely to be anticipated that great numbers of the Reformers would come to the Meeting prepared with offensive weapons; but it was the case.[3] » Non seulement le journaliste souligne bien le fait que le comportement des soldats ne doit pas être critiqué. Mais aussi, les victimes sont considérées comme des personnes qui ont souffert 'temporairement.' De cette manière, il éloigne la notion de crime, et rejette une fois de plus la faute sur les manifestants eux-mêmes. S'ils n'étaient pas venus armés et n'avaient pas

[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.137
[2] Morning Post, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER,* 24 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.137
[3] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.138

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essayé de repousser les militaires, les conséquences n'auraient pas été aussi terribles. De plus, on nous explique que si les Magistrats avaient donné l'ordre de rester neutre et de ne pas se diriger vers la foule, le résultat aurait été grotesque. C'est-à-dire qu'il y aurait forcément eu des blessés et des morts, voire même en nombre plus conséquent, sans au final avoir la certitude de réussir la mission qui leur avait été donnée. C'est ce que nous comprenons à travers cette phrase : « To have attempted it by the common means would have been preposterous, and could only have caused the loss of a great number of lives without a chance of completing the object.[1] » Partant de ce fait, le journaliste nous fait comprendre qu'il convenait aux officiers d'agir ainsi, car il était certain qu'il fallait empêcher au maximum des débordements. Leur comportement a été jugé plus que nécessaire, il a été jugé légal. Cette idée est soulignée dans la phrase suivante : « These pockets were all filled with stones. Therefore it is manifest, that is THE LAW found occasion to interpose, a regular system of prevention had been arranged to defeat its object.[2] » Comme les manifestants, d'après ces dires, sont venus avec différentes armes et ont utilisé des pierres pour s'en prendre aux soldats, il était normal pour eux de réagir à ces attaques.

En ce qui concerne la loi, un autre aspect reste incertain quant au respect de celle-ci. Et cette incertitude tourne autour de la lecture du Riot Act. Au XIXe siècle, la loi stipulait que lors d'un rassemblement jugé illégal, et que le gouvernement voulait que la foule soit dispersée, les autorités devaient lire le Riot Act afin de prévenir les personnes rassemblées. Si ces personnes décidaient d'ignorer la lecture de l'acte, ils encouraient différentes peines plus ou moins sévères, et savaient que le sang allait couler.[3] Dans le cas du rassemblement à Manchester, et ce dans la majorité des écrits et une partie des caricatures, on nous confirme que le Riot Act n'a pas été lu, et que si c'était le cas il n'avait pas été entendu. Pourtant, dans le *Morning Post*, on insiste sur le fait que les autorités avaient bien respecté la loi en faisant la lecture du Riot Act, et que celle-ci avait même été faite à deux reprises. Il est écrit : « A short consultation now took place amongst the Justices, and they immediately issued a warrant against Hunt, Johnson, Knight, and Moorhouse. Mr. NADIN, the Deputy Constable of Manchester, was appointed to execute it. THE RIOT ACT HAD BEEN TWICE READ :

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[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.137
[2] *Morning Post*, *THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER*, 24 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.138
[3] RIOT ACT, https://www.phrases.org.uk/meanings/read-the-riot-act.html [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]

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ONCE BY THE REV. MR. ETHELSTON, AND ONCE BY JOHN SYLVESTER, ESQ[1] ». En revanche, on ne nous donne pas de précision quant au moment exact de la lecture de l'acte. Il est certain que si les autorités, ou les Magistrats, ont lu le Riot Act avant de traverser la foule, et qu'ils ont attendu le délai nécessaire avant de se diriger vers eux, leurs décisions peuvent être jugées comme étant légales.

Le journaliste de cet article du *Morning Post* n'est pas la seule personne à soutenir les forces de l'ordre et à les mettre sur un piédestal. Le gouvernement en général a pris le temps de féliciter les troupes pour leur courage et leur comportement. C'est le cas tout d'abord pour, nous le supposons, les Magistrats. Le Morning Post nous transmet une lettre qui a été écrite le 17 août 1819, c'est-à-dire le lendemain des évènements, à la 'New Bailey Court House'. C'est là où étaient jugés le criminels par les Magistrats. Voici ce que nous relève le journal :

> THANKS TO THE MILITARY FOR THEIR HUMANE AND FORBEARING CONDUCT ON MONDAY LAST.
>
> In the course of our duty we have felt it necessary to obtain every species of information on this momentous subject, documentary or oral, that could tend to the use and advantage of the public. The Officer who had the command of the troops, and whose range of service here has been wide, intricate, and arduous, has executed the whole of his functions in a way that secures to him the approbation of all the judicious and thinking part of the inhabitants. We mean of course, Lieut-Colonel L'ESTRANGE. For the expression of all that can satisfy an honourable mind, we refer our Readers to the Resolutions inserted, and also to the following official letter. "The Magistrates of the two Counties of Lancaster and Chester assembled at Manchester, request Colonel L'ESTRANGE will accept, for himself, and convey to the Officers. Non-commissioned Officers and Privates of the Garrison under his command, their best and sincerest thanks for the energy, tempered by the greatest humanity, displayed in their conduct yesterday:— a conduct peculiarly characteristic of the British Soldier.[2]

Les Magistrats ont donc pris le temps de remercier les soldats. On peut relever que pour eux les soldats ont fait preuve de patience et d'humanité. Ils soulignent particulièrement les qualités du Colonel L'Estrange. Pour rappel, le Colonel était le Commandant en chef des opérations militaires au Saint Peter's Field. C'est lui qui a décidé de réunir différentes troupes pour encercler le lieu de rassemblement pour empêcher quelconque débordement. Nous comprenons donc que les soldats ont agi avec toutes les aptitudes que peuvent avoir les Soldat Britanniques. C'est-à-dire que les Magistrats ressentent un sentiment de fierté en ce qui concerne la conduite de ces derniers.

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[1] *Op. Cit.*, voir Annexes p.137

[2] *Morning Post*, *THANKS TO THE MILITARY FOR THEIR HUMANE AND FORBEARING CONDUCT ON MONDAY LAST.,* 24 août 1819, voir Annexes pp.139-140

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Lord Sidmouth a également trouvé le besoin de souligner le travail des troupes. Avant de discuter de sa lettre, il est important de rappeler sa personnalité et ses fonctions dans la société. Henry Addington de son vrai nom, avocat de profession à l'origine, devient le Premier Ministre du Roi Georges III en 1801. Le problème était qu'il n'était pas populaire même au sein de son propre parti où les membres lui ont tourné le dos. C'est pourquoi en 1804 il a décidé de démissionner. L'année suivante il a obtenu le titre de Lord Sidmouth et a accepté d'être membre du gouvernement de William Pitt. Et c'est en 1812 qu'il a été choisi comme Ministre de l'Intérieur au sein du gouvernement de Lord Liverpool. Nous comprenons très vite qu'il était contre les radicaux si on s'arrête en 1817, lorsque l'on voit qu'il est à l'origine du *Gagging Acts*. Ces mesures ont été instaurées pour arrêter quiconque diffusait des écrits diffamatoires séditieux. Ceci causera par exemple l'arrestation et l'emprisonnement de journalistes radicaux comme Richard Carlile.[1] Nous comprenons pourquoi il a apporté son soutien aux troupes qui ont attaqué le rassemblement organisés par les radicaux. C'est dans le journal *The Republican* que l'on nous transmet la lettre de Lord Sidmouth que voici :

> "My Lord,—Having laid before the Prince Regent the accounts transmitted to me from Manchester, of the proceedings at that place on Monday last. I have been commanded by his Royal Highness to request, that your Lordship will express to the Magistrates of the County Palatine of Lancaster, who attended on that day, the great satisfaction derived by his Royal Highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures, for the preservation of the public tranquility ; and likewise that your Lordship will communicate to Major Trafford, his Royal Highness's high approbation of the support and assistance to the civil power afforded on that occasion by himself and the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, serving under his command.[2]

Il est intéressant de mentionner que *The Republican* était le journal du radical Richard Carlile, qui avait déjà été emprisonné, à cause de Lord Sidmouth, pour ses écrits. Mais nous verrons par la suite que, s'il nous transmet cette lettre dans son journal du 3 Septembre 1819, c'est principalement pour remettre en cause ses dires. En ce qui concerne cette lettre, nous pouvons nous rendre compte que le Ministre de l'Intérieur loue les actes des forces de l'ordre. Il nous

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[1] LORD SIDMOUTH http://spartacus-educational.com/PRsidmouth.htm [Dernière consultation le 23 juin 2018]

[2] CARLILE, R. *A LETTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT,* The Republican, 3 Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.162

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dit également que 'his Royal Highness', c'est-à-dire le Prince Régent, futur George IV, approuve le déroulement des opérations du 16 août 1819 et qu'il ne manquera pas de le communiquer au Major Trafford, le commandant de la Manchester et la Salford Yeomanry. Il est clair et normal que le gouvernement apporte son soutien aux officiers, étant donné que les ordres venaient du gouvernement lui-même. Critiquer les agissements des soldats aurait voulu dire remettre en cause les choix du gouvernement, donc se ranger du côté des manifestants, ce qui était impensable. En effet, les réformateurs voulaient un rassemblement afin de discuter des problèmes gouvernementaux et demander des réformes nécessaires de telle manière à obtenir des décisions plus justes. Il était donc préférable de mettre en avant les valeurs de fierté, de courage, et de souligner l'héroïsme de chacun, pour éviter de montrer les incohérences qui résidaient au sein même de leur politique. En revanche, mis à part le *Morning Post* et les membres du gouvernement, peu d'éloges ont été faites à ces officiers.

Comme nous l'avons mentionné dans le premier chapitre, nous ne pouvons pas parler de Peterloo sans avancer la notion de massacre. Il est vrai que, en général, le caractère terrible de ces évènements a principalement été souligné par l'attaque des soldats. Dans une majeure partie des articles de presse qui circulaient à l'époque, les soldats étaient représentés comme des personnes sans scrupules, contrairement à ce qu'ont voulu nous faire penser les membres du gouvernement. Ainsi, dans ces journaux, nous allons nous rendre compte qu'il y a une cohérence entre les actes des soldats et les conséquences directes de celles-ci.

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2. Des meurtriers

Lorsque nous nous intéressons de près aux évènements de Peterloo, nous ne pouvons pas passer à côté des conséquences terribles relevées ce jour-là. Il est compréhensible que le gouvernement ait protégé et soutenu ses soldats qui ont, d'une certaine manière, remplis leurs missions. Mais il n'est pas moins nécéssaire de souligner la gravité des faits. Or, dans leurs différentes lettres, les membres du gouvernement quels qu'ils soient, n'ont pas émis le moindre sentiment de culpabilité, ni transmis leurs excuses à la population qui a été touchée, de près ou de loin, par cette attaque. Cette façon de faire pouvait être vue du mauvais oeil et pouvait amplifier le sentiment de désaccord qui était déjà présent au sein de la foule, envers le gouvernement. Mais aussi, soutenir les actes atroces commis par les forces de l'ordre, sans penser à relever la tristesse et la douleur des victimes, ne pouvait que renforcer l'idée que ces soldats s'étaient comportés comme des ennemis de la population.

Richard Carlile, dans son journal *The Republican*, rejoint cette idée de dire que les soldats s'étaient comportés ni plus ni moins que comme des meurtriers. D'un ton accusateur, il écrit « *On the conduct of the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester, on the* 16*th August,* 1819*; and on his Lordship's conduct as subsequently connected with that Assassination.*[1] » comme légende pour annoncer sa lettre à Lord Sidmouth. Nous remarquons ici la double utilisation de 'assassins' et 'assassination' pour mettre en évidence le mauvais comportement des soldats, mais aussi pour remettre en cause le soutien de Lord Sidmouth. Nous pouvons relever le même genre de légende lorsqu'il adresse une autre lettre, cette fois au Prince Régent, le 30 Août 1819. Il écrit : « *On his thanking the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester for MURDERS COMMITTED by them on the 16th of August last.*[2] » Nous pouvons nous attarder une fois de plus sur l'utilisation des mots 'assassins' et 'murders.' Il est certain que Richard Carlile ne fait pas dans l'objectivité. Connaissant sa personnalité, et ses nombreux écrits radicaux allant contre le gouvernement, nous pouvons bien penser qu'il a utilisé cet événement pour une fois de plus dire ce qu'il pensait de la façon dont le pays était dirigé. Mais il n'était pas le seul à dénoncer l'atrocité des actes commis par les troupes. Comme

[1] CARLILE, Richard, *A SECOND LETTER TO LORD SIDMOUTH*, The Republican, 3 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p. 165
[2] CARLILE, R. *A LETTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT,* The Republican, 3 Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.162

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nous l'avons déjà mentionné, la majorité des articles diffusés dans la presse ont donné la même version des faits. Nous l'avons vu en ce qui concerne les victimes dans la foule, et nous allons maintenant le voir au niveau de ceux qui ont perpétrés l'attaque, c'est-à-dire les soldats.

C'est tout d'abord le *Morning Chronicle* du 19 août 1819 qui nous décrit l'attitude des soldats de manière péjorative. À plusieurs reprises dans cette édition, on nous explique que les troupes se sont précipitées sur la foule directement après avoir reçu les ordres. Dans le premier chapitre nous avons pu exposer les conséquences de l'attaque plutôt que les causes. Il est donc important de relever les passages qui nous indiquent clairement comment ont procédé les soldats, et ce afin de comprendre pourquoi ils ont été considérés comme des criminels. Dans la colonne « Manchester Meeting », le journal nous diffuse des lettres privées venant de personnes qui étaient présentes sur les lieux le 16 août. Nous n'avons aucune information sur l'identité de ces personnes mais elles nous décrivent le déroulement du rassemblement avec précision. Dans la première lettre nous pouvons lire : « "The Yeomanry Cavalry arrived on the ground at the full speed. They took up a position under the wall of 'The Cottage,' (a well-known building so called) where they remained in a line about five minutes, during which time I believe the Riot Act was read, immediately after which they made a dash into the crowd, and surrounded the Hustings.[1] » Nous constatons des incertitudes au niveau de la lecture du Riot Act. Mais nous comprenons surtout que s'il a été lu à ce moment, d'un côté personne ne l'a entendu, et de l'autre ils n'ont laissé que très peu de temps entre cette lecture et la charge sur la foule. Ainsi, même s'il était de leur devoir de charger la foule au nom de la loi, on sous-entend qu'ils n'ont pas agi de manière professionnelle. Nous pouvons nous dire qu'ils auraient pu faire en sorte que le Riot Act soit entendu par une majorité de la foule. Et compte tenu du nombre conséquent de personnes rassemblées, un laps de temps un peu plus élevé aurait été nécessaire afin que tout le monde soit au courant que la lecture avait été faite. Nous supposons que cela aurait évité aux troupes d'attaquer la multitude et ainsi d'être considérés comme des criminels. Dans une autre lettre, qui suit celle citée ci-dessus, on retrouve la même explication sans la mention du Riot Act. Voici le passage qui concorde avec les faits énoncés précédemment : « But a few moments had elapsed, when some orders were given to the troops and they instantly dashed at full gallop amongst the people, actually hacking their way up to the hustings.[2] » À deux reprises on nous explique qu'il n'y a eu qu'un court instant entre

[1] Morning Chronicle, *MANCHESTER MEETING*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.108
[2] Morning Chronicle, *ANOTHER LETTER*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.109

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l'arrivée des soldats autour du lieu de rassemblement, et leur précipitation sur la foule. De plus, on nous affirme qu'ils sont arrivés à fond de train sur les personnes rassemblées. Le massacre était donc inévitable. L'assemblée était tellement grande et compacte qu'il était difficile d'éviter de se faire piétiner par les chevaux.

Les cavaliers ont donc eu un comportement incompréhensible. En effet, de manière générale, les officiers ont pour fonction de faire régner l'ordre. Or, ce jour-là, si l'on en croit la plupart des articles traitant du sujet, tout se déroulait dans le calme jusqu'à ce que les soldats aient décidé d'attaquer. Non seulement ils ont foncé sur la foule, à l'origine pour les disperser. Mais nous apprenons, une fois de plus dans le *Morning Chronicle*, que les militaires ne se sont pas limités à simplement éloigner les gens pour mettre fin au rassemblement. Intéressons-nous donc au passage suivant : « "The proceedings of the Manchester Cavalry were seconded by the Cheshire Yeomanry, and a detachment of the Dragoons stationed here. The people were pursued at full gallop through all the avenues leading from the place of meeting, and to distant parts of the town. What is the extent of the carnage that has taken place it is at present impossible to say ; but five or six are know to be dead.[1] » Nous comprenons que les cavaliers ont continué à chasser ces personnes dans les rues. Voilà pourquoi notre questionnement se rapproche de celui du journaliste : quel a été le but d'un tel agissement? Les soldats n'ont pas fait preuve de professionnalisme mais ont profité de leur pouvoir avec excès dans une situation qui n'en demandait pas tant.

Nous pouvons donc nous interroger sur les qualités professionnelles de la Yeomanry, et sur leurs compétences. D'après les différents écrits au sujet de Peterloo, nous pouvons relever à plusieurs reprises que certains d'entre eux ont attaqué la foule sans grande organisation ni cohérence. C'est ce que l'on nous expose dans l'extrait ci-après :

> A comparatively undisciplined body, led on by officers who had never had any experience in military affairs, and probably all under the influence both of personal fear, and considerable political feeling of hostility, could not be expected to act either with coolness or discrimination ; and accordingly, men, women and children, Constables and Reformers, were all equally exposed to their attacks. Numbers were trampled down, and numbers were cut down.[2]

[1] Morning Chronicle, *ANOTHER LETTER*, 19 Août 1819, voir Annexes p.110
[2] Morning Chronicle, *Extract from a correspondent*, 19 août 1819 voir Annexes p.115

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On nous laisse entendre qu'un groupe de militaires, sans indications de leur régiment, n'ont fait preuve d'aucun professionnalisme et ont exposé tout le monde à un risque certain. En effet, on nous souligne que ces militaires n'avaient aucune expérience dans ce domaine. Il est donc normal de savoir que la situation a dégénéré. Sans expérience, ils n'ont sans doute eu aucune maîtrise et ne se sont pas imposés de limites. Ainsi, leurs idées politiques mélangées à la peur et au besoin de faire respecter les ordres des magistrats, ils ont attaqué la foule sans discernement. Les conséquences ont été telles que nous les avons déjà mentionnées, mais qui sont rappelées dans ce passage : 'un bon nombre d'entre eux a été piétiné, et d'autres ont été fauchés'. Alors que, rappelons-le, le but de l'envoi des troupes était de disperser la foule pour arrêter les personnes qui se trouvaient sur l'estrade. Par conséquent, ce manque d'habileté et de sérieux accentue le côté criminel des actes perpétués. Il est également vrai qu'en dehors des conséquences physiques et mortelles soulevées parmi la foule, nous pouvons relever le fait que ces évènements ont eu des répercussions plus générales. Un autre passage du *Morning Chronicle* du 19 août 1819 nous donne plus d'informations sur les dégâts causés sur les lieux de l'attaque et aux alentours. Voici un extrait :

> The crush was so great in one part of the field, that it knocked down some outbuildings, at the end of a row of houses, on which there were at least 20 or 30 persons, with an immense clash. As I was carried along by the crowd, I saw several almost buried in the ruins — others in their anxiety to escape had fallen down, and were trampled on by the populace. A feeling of *sauve qui peut* appeared now to fill the mind of every body, and the dreadful result is not yet known.[1]

Il convient de mentionner cet extrait pour comprendre l'étendue des dommages causés par la cavalerie. On nous précise que la cohue était tellement immense que le choc entre les soldats et les manifestants a provoqué des dégradations matérielles. En effet, comme la foule était compacte, il était difficile pour chaque personne de se disperser. De ce fait, les troupes ont poussé ces personnes de manière tellement forte que cela a causé la destruction de certaines maisons et dépendances qui se trouvaient aux abords du St Peter's Field. Ainsi, les spectateurs de la scène se sont retrouvés eux aussi victimes des agissements des militaires.

Dans le *Morning Chronicle*, cette fois datant du 31 août 1819, d'autres éléments sont intéressants à analyser pour surligner les aspects négatifs qui ont permis de qualifier les soldats

[1] Morning Chronicle, *MANCHESTER MEETING-PRIVATE LETTERS*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.108

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de criminels. C'est principalement Henry Hunt qui se permet de transmettre ses opinions à ce sujet dans une lettre destinée à Lord Sidmouth. Il a rédigé cette lettre le 17 août 1819, soit le lendemain des évènements, de la Prison de New Bailey où il avait été mis en détention. L'avantage d'avoir écrit au Ministre de l'Intérieur aussitôt après le massacre, a permis d'avoir une description précise et concrète des évènements. Dans cette lettre, il explique à Lord Sidmouth son incompréhension autour de l'attaque en relatant les faits ainsi : « But, just as we were proceeding to the business of the day, and before I had taken the Chair, the hustings were surrounded by a military force of horse soldiers, who charged through the multitude with sabres, cutting and trampling all under foot, and particularly a body of special constables, who suffered very severely.[1] » Il nous rappelle ici que les forces militaires ont foncé sur la foule sans faire de différence entre les personnes présentes, ce qui a causé également du tort aux officiers de police qui étaient sur place. Et il met en évidence que les soldats ont utilisé leurs épées au moment de charger la foule. On comprend donc que ces armes n'ont pas été de simples outils de dissuasion comme le *Morning Post* a voulu le faire entendre. C'est d'ailleurs un fait qui a été relayé à la fois dans la presse et dans les différentes caricatures. L'image la plus importante à ce sujet est sans doute la caricature de George Cruikshank intitulée *Massacre at St. Peter's or "Britons strike home"!!!*[2] Comme nous l'avons mentionné dans le premier chapitre, elle met bien en évidence les caractéristiques du massacre en exagérant les traits. Plus particulièrement en ce qui concerne les soldats. En effet, ils sont représentés comme des personnes sans scrupules. Ils ont tous les mêmes gabarits bedonnants, le visage boursouflé et rouge. Mais surtout, George Cruikshank a décidé de représenter leurs épées comme des haches. Cette illustration nous laisse donc paraître une image péjorative des forces militaires, en leur attribuant comme armes les outils du boucher. Ainsi, ces haches d'où coule le sang des manifestants, insiste sur le caractère criminel des actes perpétrés ce jour là. D'autant plus que le caricaturiste pousse encore plus loin ce caractère en faisant parler l'un des soldats, de telle manière à nous faire comprendre qu'ils ont pu prendre plaisir à attaquer la foule. Ce soldat donne l'ordre à ses collègues de ne pas leur laisser de répit en montrant leur courage et leur loyauté au gouvernement.

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[1] Morning Chronicle, *LETTER FROM HUNT TO LORD SIDMOUTH*., 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p.160

[2] CRUIKSHANK, G., *Massacre at St. Peter's or "Britons strike home"!!!*, 1819, voir Annexes p.181

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Pour en revenir à Henry Hunt, il a également écrit une lettre aux magistrats qui ont donné l'ordre d'attaquer la foule le lundi 16 août. Dans cette lettre nous pouvons relever le passage suivant:

> Gentlemen— As I was informed by the Magistrates, before whom I was taken yesterday, that a Coroner's Inquest would sit to-morrow (Thursday) on those persons who lost their lives on Monday last, in consequence of the dreadful attack of the military upon an unarmed and peaceable multitude, and as I was present, and saw the commencement of this illegal and unconstitutional act of violence, and can identify some of those who first committed a breach of the peace, I demand, as an act of common justice, that I may be permitted to be present at such inquest, in order that the Coroner, if he thinks proper, may interrogate me before the Jury;[1]

Henry Hunt nous fait part de la décision des Magistrats de lancer une enquête criminelle auprès du médecin légiste afin d'établir les causes liées à la mort des personnes qui sont tombées au St Peter's Field. Il aimerait se porter comme témoin, car avant d'avoir été arrêté et emmené auprès des Magistrats ce jour-là, il avait pu voir tout le déroulement des évènements. Il nous explique ainsi que les soldats avaient fait preuve d'une violence qui allait à l'encontre des valeurs de la constitution et du respect de la loi. Il met aussi l'accent sur le contraste entre la foule, qui était ordonnée et respectueuse, et les soldats qui ont enfreint cette ambiance paisible en laissant planer une atmosphère épouvantable autour d'eux. Nous pouvons donc penser que Henry Hunt aurait voulu faire partie de cette enquête afin que les causes ne soient pas étouffées. Nous savons que la majorité des personnes décédées ce jour-là sont mortes sous les coups de sabres des soldats, ou sous les sabots de leurs chevaux. Ainsi, il se pourrait que, sans témoins, l'enquête criminelle atténue l'implication des troupes dans ces pertes. De ce fait, cela permettrait de ne pas autant considérer les militaires comme des criminels. Si nous pouvons nous permettre ce genre de supposition, c'est principalement grâce à un passage du *Manchester Mercury*, cité dans le *Liverpool Mercury*, qui nous fait part de certains cas de morts jugées comme non liées aux attaques. Voici le passage en question :

> The *Manchester Mercury* states, that John Lees, the person on whose body the inquest is still to be held at Oldham, did not die in consequence of the wounds he received in the area of St. Peter's Church, on the 16th ultimo; but that his death was occasioned by his subsequent debauchery and revelling, which produced a fever that terminated his existence. On this matter we can only say, that it seemed to be the opinion of the Deputy-coroner and the Jury,

[1] Morning Chronicle, *COPY OF HUNT'S LETTER TO THE MANCHESTER MAGISTRATES*, 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p.160-161

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> both of whom *had seen the body*, that Lees did die of his wounds, and there is a strong impression, not only that he died of those wounds, but that a British jury will return a verdict of wilful murder against those that inflicted them.[1]

Le premier problème soulevé est que John Lees, mort des coups et blessures qu'il a pu recevoir lors de l'attaque de la Yeomanry, a été annoncé comme mort à cause d'une fièvre dont il était l'unique responsable. En effet, on nous parle de lui comme s'il menait une vie de débauche et d'excès, ce qui aurait causé sa perte. Or, le *Liverpool Mercury* nous fait part d'un autre passage, relevé dans le *Morning Chronicle*, qui nous permet de confirmer les doutes sur cette enquête criminelle. Il cite « Mr. Milne, the coroner who refused to enter into the inquest at Oldham, and who presided at the five inquests which have taken place upon the victims of the outrage on the 16th, has a brother in the yeomanry cavalry, while another is the clerk of the magistrates, and Mr. Marriot, the magistrate, is his brother-in-law.[2] » On nous sous-entend ici que, celui qui était en charge de mener l'enquête criminelle, et qui a refusé de présider l'enquête sur les outrages commis sur les victimes, avait un membre de sa famille dans la cavalerie qui a attaqué ces mêmes victimes. Nous pouvons donc comprendre qu'il y aurait eu un parti pris au sein même du jugement et que l'enquête aurait pu être faussée. Si ces passages sont intéressants à analyser, c'est simplement parce qu'ils remettent en cause non seulement le comportement des militaires, mais aussi la façon dont ceux-ci ont été protégés par le gouvernement pour atténuer les conséquences terribles liées à leurs actes.

Henry Hunt poursuit sa lettre aux Magistrats en soulignant de manière concrète, comme a pu le faire Richard Carlile dans *The Republican*, le caractère criminel des soldats. Il écrit :

> And as I have seen quite enough already to convince me that the real murderers are endeavouring to wipe the bloody stain from their remorseless, guilty souls, by casting imputations and suspicions upon others that they know had no hand, directly or indirectly, in the foul and cowardly deed, I am bold to say, that such inquest will be esteemed in the eye of God and man, worse than suspicious, unless all the parties who are imprisoned, or said to be instrumental in the act, be permitted to be present, and interrogated before the Jury by the Coroner.[3]

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[1] Liverpool Mercury, *MANCHESTER POLICITCS,* 24 Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.179
[2]Liverpool Mercury, *MANCHESTER POLICITCS,* 24 Septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.180
[3] *Morning Chronicle*, *COPY OF HUNT'S LETTER TO THE MANCHESTER MAGISTRATES*., 31 août 1819, voir Annexes P.161

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Il qualifie les militaires de 'meurtriers' et insiste sur le fait que nous avons supposé précédemment, c'est-à-dire que le gouvernement a cherché à les déculpabiliser de leurs agissements. Mais Henry Hunt sous-entend qu'ils ne pourront pas effacer tout le sang qui a coulé ni empêcher les personnes de penser que les soldats ont agi comme des criminels. Il utilise également la religion en faisant référence à Dieu, pour mettre en évidence qu'ils ne pourront tromper ni Dieu ni personne sur de telles atrocités. C'est pourquoi, après sa signature, il insiste sur le fait que des milliers de témoins respectables pourraient se présenter devant le jury afin d'être interrogés par le médecin légiste pour faire entendre la vérité sur les personnes qui sont mortes de leurs blessures. Il se permet également de souligner que les manifestants ne se sont pas rebellés car on leur avait donné l'ordre de ne pas se comporter violemment. Leur seule échappatoire était d'essayer de résister pour se protéger. Selon lui, si la population avait décidé de vraiment se rebeller, comme l'ont sous-entendu des écrits pro-gouvernementaux tels que ceux cités dans le *Morning Post*, les évènements auraient pris une toute autre tournure. Voici ce que Henry Hunt avance pour conclure sa lettre : « As for the Manchester Yeomanry, they were all in disorder before the charge; and if the people had chosen to resist, the men who had the flag staves would have unhorsed and taken them every one prisoners, if they thought proper. But the people had been instructed not to resist. Whether this were wise advice or not remains to be proved.[1] » Si les manifestants, qui étaient en grand nombre, avaient réellement décidé de se rebeller et de combattre les soldats, ils auraient pu facilement prendre le dessus sur eux. Mais ils ont préféré respecter les ordres donnés par les réformateurs de ne pas user de la violence.

Le journaliste de *The Examiner,* dont nous n'avons aucune mention de l'identité, a également fait part de sa vision des évènements. Il rejoint les dires de Henry Hunt et décrit lui aussi la scène comme tragique, causée par les soldats criminels. L'extrait ci-après reprend un condensé de toutes les informations en ce qui concerne le déroulement du rassemblement et de l'attaque. Nous pouvons lire :

> At this stage of the business the Yeomanry Cavalry were seen advancing in a rapid trot to the area : their ranks were in disorder, and on arriving within it, they halted to breathe their horses, and to recover their ranks. A panic seemed to strike the persons at the outskirts of the meeting, who immediately began to scamper in every directions. After a moment's pause, the cavalry drew their swords, and brandished them fiercely in the air : upon which Hunt and Johnson desired the multitude to give three cheers,

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, *COPY OF HUNT'S LETTER TO THE MANCHESTER MAGISTRATES*., 31 août 1819, voir Annexes P.161

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> to show the military that they were not to be daunted in the discharge of their duty by their unwelcome presence.[1]

D'un côté, on nous met en avant le manque d'ordre au sein même de la cavalerie. De l'autre, on nous montre l'esprit de panique qu'a pu déclencher l'arrivée de la Yeomanry Cavalry, avant même leur avancée sur la foule. Ici, on nous met l'accent une fois de plus sur cette intensité et cette férocité au sein des soldats, qui montrent qu'ils étaient fiers d'être là pour attaquer. Ceci faisant également écho à la caricature de George Cruikshank, *Massacre at St. Peter's or "Britons strike home"!!!* dont nous avons parlé quelques pages auparavant. Ce passage se termine également sur le fait que Hunt et Johnson ont demandé à la foule de sourire et d'applaudir les soldats comme signe non pas d'ingratitude, mais simplement pour montrer qu'ils pouvaient résister et ne pas se laisser intimider. En revanche, rien n'est mentionné au sujet d'une quelconque rébellion ou d'actes de violences commis par le peuple. Dans ce même journal, il poursuit la description du déroulement qui met une fois encore l'accent sur l'indélicatesse et l'assurance des soldats dans leurs opérations. Nous pouvons relever : « As soon as Hunt and Johnson had jumped from the waggon, a cry was made by the cavalry, "Have at their flags." In consequence, they immediately dashed not only at the flags which were in the waggon, but those which were posted among the crowd, *cutting most indiscriminately to the right and to the left* in order to get at them.[2] » On nous fait part du manque de discernement des militaires qui ont attaqué la foule dans tous les sens, avec leurs épées, sachant qu'il y avait des femmes, des enfants, mais aussi des officiers de police, d'où l'utilisation du terme « indiscriminately. » Ainsi, nous remarquons que les soldats ont agi de manière non professionnelle et injuste en attaquant la foule, dans laquelle ne se trouvaient pas les personnes qu'ils devaient arrêter. En effet, ils s'en sont pris à la foule seulement pour tracer leur chemin vers l'estrade où se trouvaient Hunt, Johnson, Knight et Saxton. C'est pourquoi nous pouvons comprendre qu'ils ont été considérés comme des meurtriers, quand nous savons que d'un côté ils devaient faire régner l'ordre et respecter la loi en dispersant les personnes rassemblées. Et que de l'autre côté, des personnes ont été victimes injustement de coups et de blessures, parce qu'ils se trouvaient sur la route des cavaliers. Dans *The Examiner*, il ajoute : « This set the people running in all directions, and it was not till this act had been committed that any brick-

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[1] *The Examiner,DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.128
[2] *The Examiner,DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.128

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bats were hurled at the military. From that moment the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry lost all command of temper.[1] » Si nous revenons à ce qui a été publié dans le *Morning Post*, on nous justifiait l'attaque des soldats en disant qu'ils avaient été victimes en premier des jets de pierres et de coups de bâtons venant des manifestants. Or, ici c'est tout l'inverse qui se présente. On nous explique que c'est précisément quand les soldats ont commencé à se ruer sur eux et à leurs donner des coups d'épées, que les manifestants ont décidé de se défendre en jetant des morceaux de briques pour essayer de les repousser. Les seules personnes pouvant témoigner, et donner raison à l'une ou l'autre version des faits, ce sont bien évidemment celles présentes sur la scène. Néanmoins, ces personnes, qui étaient au centre et contre qui les officiers avaient un mandat d'arrêt, n'ont pas pu échapper à cette violence provoquée par les militaires. Nous avons pu le constater, et le mentionner, par exemple avec Henry Hunt qui avait reçu plusieurs coups dont un conséquent sur la tête. C'est d'ailleurs ce que nous rappelle le journaliste de *The Examiner* à travers cette phrase « Just as we came to the house, the constables were conducting Hunt into it, and were treating him in a manner in which they were neither justified by law nor humanity, striking him with their staves on the head.[2] » qui montre le mauvais traitement subi par Hunt des militaires qui n'ont fait preuve d'aucune humanité. Mais ce fut le cas également pour Saxton qui aurait pu perdre la vie ce jour-là. *The Examiner* nous partage une altercation entre ce dernier et deux soldats. Voici ce que l'on peut retenir :

> A person of the name of Saxton, who is, we believe, the Editor of the Manchester Observer, was standing in the cart. Two privates rode up to him. "There," said one of them, "is that villain, Saxton; do you run him through the body." "No," replied the other, "I had rather not— I leave it to you." The man immediately made a lunge at Saxton, and it was only by slipping aside that the blow missed his life. As it was, it cut his coat and waistcoat, but fortunately did him no other injury.[3]

Tout comme Henry Hunt, Saxton a subi un mauvais traitement de la part des officiers. Ils se sont violemment jetés sur lui en le qualifiant de vaurien. Si Saxton n'avait pas eu le réflexe de glisser sur le côté, le coup qu'il lui était porté aurait pu lui être fatal.

Lorsque nous récapitulons chaque descriptions qui ont été faites, par différents journaux, au sujet du comportement des soldats, nous comprenons pourquoi les évènements du

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[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.128
[2] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.129
[3] *The Examiner*,*DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE*, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.128

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16 août 1819 à Manchester ont été renommés « Le Massacre de Peterloo. » Il est certain que deux discours ont pu être relevés, mais nous avons principalement pu noter que celui qui comportait plus de cohérences et de justifications, est bien celui qui représente les militaires comme des meurtriers. Cependant, un tel comportement venant des forces de l'ordre nous mène à penser qu'il y avait des failles au sein du gouvernement, et au niveau de la gestion de leurs troupes. De ce fait, nous avons jugé utile de nous pencher sur les conséquences qu'ont pu avoir de tels évènements sur l'opinion publique. Effectivement, le Massacre de Peterloo a permis à de nombreuses personnes de remettre en cause le gouvernement et le système sur plusieurs niveaux.

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3. Remise en cause du gouvernement et du système

Les premiers points remis en cause lors de Peterloo tournent autour de la lecture du *Riot Act*. Comme nous avons pu le souligner à quelques reprises précédemment, de nombreuses incertitudes planent autour de celle-ci. Nous avons pu voir que du côté de la presse en faveur du gouvernement, tel que le *Morning Post*, il est expliqué que les magistrats et les soldats ont respecté la lecture de cet acte. Alors que de l'autre côté, dans une presse plus populaire, et d'après les témoignages de différentes personnes présentes sur les lieux, nous comprenons que la lecture ne s'est pas faite, ou du moins n'a pas été entendue. Dans ce dernier cas, s'il a été réellement lu, alors le délai entre la lecture et l'attaque n'a pas été respecté. C'est l'édition du 19 août 1819 du *Morning Chronicle* qui expose en premier ces doutes. Dans celui-ci, nous pouvons lire :

> It is said, that previous to the Meeting several inhabitants deposed that they were apprehensive acts of riot and tumult might take place, and that in consequence of these depositions, the Riot Act was read ; but no overt act of riot did take place. It was quite clear that the Magistrates did not act on information against any particular individuals, for among others, a Gentleman who was taking notes for the *Times* Newspaper was arrested and conveyed to prison. It does not appear that the persons assembled had the slightest notice of the Riot Act having been read, for it was read before the meeting commenced, and the previous tranquillity could lead no one to expect the scene that ensued.[1]

Tout d'abord, nous remarquons que ce passage ne se base, au départ, que sur des suppositions. Il a été dit que le Riot Act avait été lu, mais il n'y a eu aucune preuve sur ce sujet. D'une part, l'auteur de cet article tient à souligner qu'il n'y avait aucun signe d'émeute, ce qui mènerait à penser que la lecture du Riot Act n'avait pas lieu d'être. D'autre part, il précise que les personnes présentes dans la foule n'ont pas fait attention à celle-ci. C'est-à-dire que nous ne pouvons pas estimer, dans un cas comme dans l'autre, que la foule a fait preuve de non respect de la loi. Dans l'idée que l'assemblée se déroulait de manière paisible et pacifique, il était difficile d'imaginer les conséquences que tout ceci allait provoqué sur eux. Cette même supposition est retrouvée dans une lettre privée rédigée le jour-même des évènements, dans laquelle nous pouvons lire « It is not believed that the Magistrates read the Riot Act — if they did, at least nobody was aware of it.[2] » Et il est important de notifier que l'auteur de cette lettre,

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.105
[2] Morning Chronicle, *PRIVATE LETTER,* 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.111

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quand bien même anonyme, déclare avoir été témoin de la scène dont laquelle il était spectateur. Et cette idée se confirme un peu plus loin dans cette lettre en citant «"I have not heard that the Riot Act was read, excepting it was read by some of the Magistrates in the house alluded to, or in some other quarter of the ground which my informants did not visit. — Greatly in haste. "A PASSING TRAVELLER."[1] » Ici, nous avons le témoignage d'un passant qui confirme les faits exposés précédemment. Si le Riot Act a été lu, cela ne s'est pas fait de manière officielle ni à la vue de tous. Il est donc normal que la population remette en cause l'organisation des magistrats et les ordres qui ont été donnés. Si nous partons du principe que la manifestation se voulait être pacifique, alors nous pouvons imaginer que si les manifestants avaient entendu la lecture de l'acte, ils auraient sans doute mis fin au rassemblement ou auraient du moins tenté de s'expliquer auprès des forces de l'ordre.

Le journal intitulé *Public Ledger and Advertiser* a également transmis des articles concernant la lecture du Riot Act. Nous pouvons particulièrement relever un passage qui est plus catégorique sur ce sujet que ce qui a été relevé dans le *Morning Chronicle*. Voici l'extrait dont il est question :

> I have procured the testimony of individuals from every part of the area, and they all concur in saying, that they heard no Riot Act read, and that it was impossible it could have been read in their respective quarters, without being heard or noticed. The inhabitant of Windmill-street overlooked the Meeting and the Hustings. — They heard nothing read. Many of them were near the place where the Magistrates had fixed their headquarters : they saw no demonstration of an attempt to read. These people are no Reformers, and therefore their testimony cannot supposed to be biased in favour of the Meeting. They are ready to give their oaths in a Court of Justice, that no Riot Act was read so as to *be heard by any portion* of the Assembly. When told that the Riot Act was certainly read, for the Magistrates had said so, one of them replied, "Then it must have been read by one of the 13 in Mr. Buxton's house, for the edification of the rest, or in the Police Office, to instruct the Constables; or in their own houses, to settle some domestic tumults."[2]

Le journaliste nous affirme que tous les témoignages qu'il a pu recueillir venaient de différentes personnes qui se trouvaient chacune à un endroit différent du rassemblement. Ainsi, il peut avancer avec certitude que la foule n'a pas eu écho de la lecture du Riot Act. Il suppose que la lecture s'est peut-être faite au sein des Magistrats ou au poste de Police, c'est-à-dire à l'écart du lieu de la manifestation. Si ceci était le cas, alors sa lecture n'avait aucun intérêt. Le but

[1]Morning Chronicle, *PRIVATE LETTER,* 19 août 1819, voir Annexes p.111
[2] Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, *MANUFACTURING DISTRICT,* 27 août 1819, voir Annexes p.143

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général du Riot Act est de mettre en garde la population lorsqu'ils agissent contre la loi et de disperser les grands rassemblent afin d'éviter de potentielles émeutes. Or, si ces personnes rassemblées ne pouvaient pas entendre l'avertissement, il est normal qu'elles n'aient pas pris le temps de mettre un terme à leur assemblée. C'est pourquoi de nombreux auteurs, journalistes et caricaturistes ont remis en cause l'attaque des militaires, car celle-ci n'a pas été faite dans les règles prescrites par la loi. Non seulement la lecture de l'acte reste une interrogation, mais lorsque certains témoins supposent que celle-ci a été faite, ils remettent en cause le délai laissé à la population entre le moment de la déclaration et le moment de l'attaque. D'après plusieurs articles on nous explique que l'attaque a été incomprise spécialement parce qu'il n'y a eu que très peu de temps à partir de l'arrivée des militaires autour des lieux jusqu'à leur précipitation sur la foule. Mais c'est principalement une caricature qui attire notre attention sur ce sujet.

La caricature en question est signée une fois encore par George Cruikshank, et a été publiée par George Humphrey le 21 janvier 1820. Une fois de plus nous remarquons que l'artiste a été marqué par les évènements du St. Peter's Field puisque cette gravure est sortie plusieurs mois après les incidents. Il s'agit d'une gravure à l'eau-forte, en noir et blanc, intitulée *"The law's delay".-showing the advantage & comfort of waiting the specified time after reading the riot act, to a radical mob.*[1] Dans le titre lui-même nous comprenons ce que l'artiste a voulu mettre en évidence. Il nous indique que G. Cruikshank remet en cause le temps écoulé entre la lecture de l'acte et l'ordre donné de foncer sur la foule. Notre regard se porte en premier sur le centre de l'image. Le personnage représenté se tient debout. Prenant en compte le fait qu'il tient en sa main gauche le Riot Act et considérant les vêtements qu'il porte, nous pouvons croire que ce personnage est un officier. Dans sa main droite, il tient une montre sur laquelle se pose son regard. Nous remarquons que ses vêtements son tâchés, probablement de sang. Sur son visage également nous pouvons voir qu'il est ensanglanté, notamment au niveau de l'oeil droit et sur le haut de sa tête. Derrière lui, nous pouvons apercevoir des personnages en formation, debout tenant de grands manches à la verticale. Cependant, nous ne savons pas s'ils représentent les autres membres de la cavalerie ou des magistrats qui se cacheraient derrière l'officier en charge de lire l'acte. Ils sont tous entourés par la foule, qui crie et qui lève les bras en l'air par signe de contestation. Au premier plan, à gauche, nous remarquons un homme

[1] CRUIKSHANK, G. *"The law's delay".-showing the advantage & comfort of waiting the specified time after reading the riot act, to a radical mob.,* 21 janvier 1820, voir Annexes p.182

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tenant en sa main une lance qui regarde l'officier. Près de lui se trouve un homme avec une pelle ainsi qu'un enfant au visage d'adulte, qui regarde l'officier en le pointant avec un bâton taillé en pic. À droite nous pouvons voir un homme de profil qui semble plus âgé, qui soulève sa canne. En dessous de celui-ci, on remarque un homme tenant une tête dans ses mains. Et la dernière chose qui attire notre attention est la présence une fois de plus du bonnet phrygien sur lequel est inscrit 'Death or Liberty'. Plusieurs interprétations de cette caricature sont possibles. Mais celle qui nous paraît possible, après avoir étudié d'autres gravures de l'artiste, c'est de considérer ce dessin comme représentatif des conséquences causées par le délai entre la lecture et l'attaque des soldats. En effet, si nous rapprochons cette caricature aux faits qui ont été diffusés dans la presses à ce sujet, nous pouvons croire que G. Cruikshank dénonce le manque de temps laissé à la foule pour se disperser après la supposée lecture du Riot Act. Ainsi, il nous fait comprendre que l'ampleur du massacre dépendait du temps accordé.

Dans le journal *The Examiner*, nous pouvons relever des accusations autour du Riot Act qui vont encore plus loin pour dénoncer les choix du gouvernement. Dans le passage que nous allons citer, nous remarquons comment le journaliste, non mentionné, critique le système en place. Voici ce que nous pouvons lire au début de l'édition du 23 août 1819 :

> Can any thing, in fact, on the face of the transaction, afford a more revolting specimen of impatient, violent, arbitrary feeling on the part of the retainers of Government? Or one more foolish as well as violent? For they talk of the revolutionary tendencies of the conduct of the Reformers; but how can revolutionary tendencies be more excited than by government's lawlessly drawing the sword, and being the first to shed blood systematically? We say lawlessly, and first; for every account we have seen subsequent to that of the *Courier* affirms that an hour had certainly not elapsed (one says not more than twenty minutes) between the reading of the Riot Act and the charge of the soldiery. And where after all, was the Riot Act read ? Who heard it? The account sent up to the *Times* newspaper by a gentleman who obtained a place for convenience sake on the hustings, and who in the infinite hurry of the government-officers was arrested with the leaders of the meeting, says that nobody knew any thing about the Riot Act ; and concludes it must have been read by the Magistrates to one another in-doors. Granted even for the sake of argument that the Riot Act was known to have been read, we have other questions to ask. Why was is not acted upon before ? If the meeting was illegal, why not have prevented it? If the inflammatory inscriptions on the flags are the plea for interference, why not have seized them on the road? By all accounts but the one before mentioned (which appeared in a paper notoriously violent in favour of the seat-sellers, and in the habit of publishing the most exaggerated statements about the Reformers), there does not seem to have been the last reason for the interference of the military; and if so, we leave our readers to judge of the dilemma with which the Government have hampered themselves, and of the dangerous provocation which such an *example* is likely to give to the Reformers.[1]

[1] The Examiner, *DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.119

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Nous pouvons remarquer le ton accusateur en relevant les questions rhétoriques qui ponctuent ce passage. Nous comprenons que ces questions lui permettent de mettre en avant les failles liées aux choix du gouvernement. Il nous fait comprendre que chaque fois que le gouvernement décide d'agir, la situation ne se termine jamais sans que le sang ne coule. Il souligne d'abord la violence utilisée par les militaires. Un acte qui semble invraisemblable et pourtant pas si étonnant si nous nous fions au fait que le gouvernement fait toujours des choix qui ont des conséquences terribles. Il continue à dénoncer ces choix en parlant lui aussi du Riot Act. Non seulement il remet en cause le fait que personne n'a entendu la lecture de celui-ci, ni même personne n'a pu apercevoir un officier ou un magistrat en position pour le lire. Mais aussi, il demande des explications. Il ne comprend pas pourquoi la lecture ne s'est pas faite avant le rassemblement, sachant que les magistrats étaient au courant de cette organisation et qu'eux-mêmes ont commencé à organiser l'agencement des troupes le matin du 16 août. Il se demande pourquoi ne pas avoir prévenu la foule avant que le rassemblement ne soit au complet et que les orateurs ne prennent la parole. De plus, il nous rappelle que l'une des raisons, pour lesquelles les militaires ont été envoyés, était liée à la présence de drapeaux et de *Caps of Liberty* comportant des inscriptions allant contre le gouvernement, susceptibles d'amplifier une haine contre celui-ci. Or, comme nous avons pu le lire dans certains articles, les personnes portant ce genre de drapeaux et banderoles étaient les premiers arrivés sur les lieux, ou en tête de cortège. Nous pouvons donc imaginer que si ces panneaux étaient à l'origine du mécontentement des magistrats, ils auraient dû envoyer les militaires au moment où ces personnes étaient en marche. Ainsi, ils auraient pu les arrêter ou simplement confisquer les banderoles. Ainsi, en quelques lignes il nous offre un sommaire de différents point reprochés au gouvernement au sujet des attaques au St Peter's Field.

Cependant, ce journaliste poursuit ses accusations de manière plus générale. Il utilise les évènements de Peterloo afin de dénoncer tout un mauvais fonctionnement du gouvernement. Ainsi, nous pouvons lire :

> We lament as much as any human being possibly can the effusion of human blood, and all those first causes of wilfulness and injustice which give rise to it; but the seat-selling violators of the British Constitution can see, with philosophy enough, whole oceans of blood shed for the security of their own guilty power, or the restoration of a tyrannical dynasty ; and the interested hypocritical howl raised by their hirelings at

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> the fatal consequences of a disturbance to a few individuals, excites in us nothing but anger and disgust.[1]

Ce qui est souligné ici, c'est l'injustice qui pour lui est à la base de tout ces maux. Il considère le gouvernement comme hypocrite, contre sa propre Constitution. À travers les mots 'seat-selling violators of the British Constitution' nous comprenons qu'il remet en cause les membres du Parlement. Ainsi, il est évident qu'en voulant empêcher le rassemblement des réformateurs, les magistrats ont amplifié ce besoin de réformer le Parlement. En effet, cette attaque sur la population a mis en évidence les différences qu'il existait à cette époque. La population a pu comprendre que la classe ouvrière n'était pas autant respectée que les autres classes plus aisées de la société. C'est pourquoi ici le journaliste ne comprend pas comment un gouvernement pouvait rester aussi silencieux autour d'évènements qui ont touché leur propre peuple et mener à la perte d'une partie d'entre eux. Nous pouvons remarquer qu'il pointe du doigt le gouvernement en le considérant comme coupable. Mais ce qui nous semble intéressant et important à relever dans ce passage, c'est la comparaison à une 'dynastie tyrannique'. Il ne précise pas directement à qui il s'adresse ici, mais nous pouvons comprendre avec cette référence qu'il critique le Roi George III et son fils le Prince Régent. Il va encore plus loin dans la critique en dénonçant la corruption qui serait présente au sein même de ceux qui gouvernent le pays. Voici ce qu'il dit :

> So that it is an innocent, admirable, and desirable thing for thousands of human beings to slaughter and be slaughtered for the greater security of a corrupt Government ; but if the corruptions of that Government provoke a half-starved populace to the destruction of a single constable or a soldier, we are allowed to return to our abstract lamentations on the shedding of blood ! In the former case, "Carnage is GOD's daughter;"—so says a pathetic court poet. In the latter, a single fatal blow is all that is diabolical :—so says a grinning court buffoon.[2]

Non seulement il dénonce les crimes commis sur la population, mais aussi il remet en question le fait que ces crimes ont été commis non pas pour protéger les habitants de la ville mais pour protéger le gouvernement lui-même. Ce que nous pouvons comprendre, c'est que si les magistrats ont envoyé les troupes sur la foule c'est simplement parce que leurs demandes et revendications allaient à l'encontre de leurs valeurs, de leurs opinions politiques et de leurs positions dans le gouvernement. Et enfin, il ponctue sa pensée avec la phrase suivante « The

[1] The Examiner, *DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.120
[2] The Examiner, *DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.121

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Corruptionists assume at every step that they are in the right, and at every step they stumble upon a betrayal to the contrary.[1] » Quand nous pensons que les écrits qui dénonçaient le gouvernement étaient interdits à l'époque, et qu'ils étaient passibles de prison pour leurs auteurs, nous pouvons mettre en évidence que le massacre de Peterloo a permis à de nombreuses personnes de s'exprimer sur le sujet. Ce fut le cas également de Richard Carlile.

Richard Carlile était connu pour ses écrits provocateurs et dénonciateurs des actes du gouvernement, et cela lui a valu quelques mois de prison comme nous avons pu le voir un peu plus tôt dans ce mémoire. Par conséquent, il était évident pour lui de s'exprimer après les évènements de Manchester et d'en profiter pour manifester son désagrément de manière plus générale au sujet du gouvernement. Il est intéressant de se pencher sur les écrits de Richard Carlile rien que pour sa maîtrise de la rhétorique. C'est principalement le cas dans son journal *The republican*, où il commence à exposer ses opinions, notamment en s'adressant directement au Prince Régent. Dans le passage que nous allons analyser subséquemment, nous verrons qu'il essaie de faire culpabiliser le Régent pour soulever les conséquences tragiques et intolérables liées aux attaques des protecteurs du gouvernement. Voici le passage dont il est question :

> How shall the future impartial historian record, with the necessary effect, that a Prince of the House of Brunswick, whose ancestors ascended the throne on the condition of keeping it only by their good behaviour, or as our Judges are presumed to hold their authority (quamdiu se bene gesserint) as long as they behave themselves well, that the Regent of Great Britain has publicly sanctioned the slaughter of several hundred of his unoffending subjects, and has not taken one step to satisfy himself of the facts of the case, or shewn the least disposition to protect any other portion of his People from a similar slaughter, but, on the other hand, has given every encouragement to it?[2]

Nous remarquons qu'il essaie de toucher le Prince dans son amour-propre en supposant que s'il reste silencieux sur les évènements de Manchester, cela restera graver dans l'histoire du pays. Lorsque nous ferons référence au futur George IV, ce sera principalement pour parler de son accord sur les actes criminels qui ont touché son propre peuple. De plus, il le compare avec ses prédécesseurs qui ont tenté de garder possession du trône en se comportant convenablement. Ainsi, il ne comprend pas comment le chef du gouvernement a pu féliciter le

[1] I*bid,* voir Annexes p.122
[2] *The Republican*, 3 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.163.

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comportement des forces de l'ordre qui ont agi pour protéger la population, alors que c'est cette population elle-même qui a été victime de cette attaque.

L'édition du journal se termine sur une lettre d'un dénommé Joseph Filtch destinée à R. Carlile. Dans cette lettre nous pouvons relever la phrase suivante qui rejoint la pensée de Carlile. Il écrit : « It is not simply a question whether you shall be allowed to follow your own peaceable avocations, or waste the prime of your years in a dungeon ; it is a question between the present Government and the People of the British Empire;—between a hypocritical "Vice Society," and a liberal-minded public; —between boroughmongering despotism and universal liberty.[1] » Ce que cet homme voulait nous faire comprendre, c'est qu'il existait à cette période un contraste entre une société enfermée dans un système qui ne veut pas changer, et un peuple qui ne fait qu'évoluer et vouloir un gouvernement qui évolue avec lui. Et cette évolution se trouvait dans le manque de liberté et d'égalité qu'il fallait obtenir à travers différentes réformes, principalement au sein du Parlement. Il était important de se dire que l'évolution commencerait une fois que tout le monde sera représenté au Parlement. Et nous savons que la classe ouvrière peinait à trouver sa place au sein de la Société.

Pour terminer sur l'engouement pour la revendication qui a été déclenchée par le Massacre de Peterloo, il est intéressant de se pencher sur une caricature créée par Allan Robert Branston. Elle a été publiée par John Lindsay Turner, certes en décembre 1820 soit plus d'un an après les évènements, mais elle utilise Peterloo pour dresser le portrait de Georges IV, le Prince Régent étant devenu roi à la mort de son père en 1820. Cette caricature s'intitule *Nero Vindicated*[2]. Au premier plan, nous pouvons voir Georges IV habillé comme un empereur romain. Si l'on se réfère au titre, nous comprenons qu'il est comparé à l'empereur Néron. Il est important de rappeler que Néron était considéré comme un souverain cruel et despotique, notamment pour avoir tué sa propre mère. Mais aussi, de nombreuses rumeurs ont été lancées, l'accusant d'avoir été à l'origine de l'incendie de Rome qui a eu lieu 64.[3] En d'autres termes, Néron était la personnification même de la tyrannie. Ainsi, le Roi est dessiné juché sur un pavillon, jouant du violoncelle et souriant. Son regard se pose sur la scène qui se déroule en contre-bas. Cette scène, que nous pouvons voir en arrière-plan, fait référence à Peterloo. Nous

[1] FILTCH, J. , *To Mr CARLILE,* The Republican, 3 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.171
[2] BRANSTON, A.R., *Nero Vindicated,* Décembre 1820, voir Annexes p.184
[3] NÉRON
https://mythologica.fr/rome/bio/neron.htm [Dernière consultation le 23 juin 2018]

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trouvons tous les indices qui reconstituent l'attaque : d'une part les soldats en formation sur leurs chevaux, attaquant au sabre les femmes et les enfants qui tentent de s'échapper. Au-dessous de l'image, nous pouvons lire un court poème de six vers qui juge la personnalité du roi. Il est considéré lui aussi comme un tyran, tenant en sa poitrine 'des passions enragées'. On lui demande de se confesser, nous supposons, en partie sur son silence au sujet des crimes commis le 16 août 1819. Ainsi, cela permettrait d'empêcher la « malédiction », ou en d'autres mots, d'éviter d'avoir à faire face à une révolution animée par l'envie de vengeance. Enfin, le dernier vers est intéressant car il peut à la fois servir de conclusion pour l'idée revendiquée sur cette caricature, mais aussi conclure l'atmosphère générale qui règne au sein de l'opinion publique. Ce dernier vers nous dit « Another despot reigns, and yet is worse. » Nous comprenons que plus les années passent, plus les rois se succèdent, plus cela va de mal en pis.

Il est certain que le Massacre de Peterloo, en soi, a permis de mettre l'accent sur les failles du gouvernement, mais il a aussi permis de reconnaître qu'il y avait un problème de reconnaissance de la classe ouvrière. L'attaque en elle-même a prouvé que la société n'était pas prête à prendre en considération leurs revendications. Par conséquent, il est intéressant maintenant de se demander : Et après, que s'est-il passé? Une fois l'attaque terminée, une fois les personnes arrêtées et les rues désertées, que pouvons-nous retenir?

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Troisième chapitre - Impact sur la cohésion nationale et l'imaginaire collectif

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1. Une atmosphère pesante

Il est évident que les évènements du 16 août 1819 ont laissé planer une atmosphère pesante dans la ville de Manchester et ses alentours. L'attaque a été d'une telle violence que la population comme le gouvernement ne se sentaient pas forcément en sécurité. Au vu des circonstances, un sentiment de vengeance pouvait se faire ressentir et inquiéter la tranquillité de la ville.

Certains correspondants, principalement de Londres, qui avaient été envoyés à Manchester lors du rassemblement, ont fait part de la situation une fois la foule dispersée. Et nous pouvons vite nous rendre compte que l'attaque n'a pas permis d'atténuer les craintes de révolte. Au contraire, nous verrons qu'il était important pour les soldats de continuer à patrouiller dans les rues pour s'assurer qu'aucune conspiration contre l'État ne se prépare. Dans l'édition du 23 août 1819 du journal *Saunder's News Letter*, on nous dresse un bilan au sujet des circonstances relevées à partir de la nuit du lundi 16 août, jusqu'à plusieurs jours après. La première chose dont on nous informe c'est que la dispersion de la foule n'avait pas mis fin à l'inquiétude. Au contraire, cela n'a fait qu'augmenter les suspicions et la préoccupation de la population. Dans ce journal, on nous partage l'extrait d'une lettre dans laquelle nous pouvons lire : « We remain comparatively quiet, but we are not without anxious forebodings. It is yet uncertain what the Reformers will do; whether their discomfiture on Monday will break up their nefarious system altogether, or whether they will rally for one desperate and decisive struggle. In all the towns and villages round Manchester they are numerous ; and if they were to unite, distressing consequences would follow.[1] » Cependant, nous pouvons relever ici que l'auteur de cette lettre est contre les réformateurs, car il les considère comme 'infâmes.' Ainsi, nous n'avons aucune certitude une fois de plus sur la véracité de ses dires. Mais il n'en est pas moins vrai que les spectateurs du massacre, et les personnes qui ont perdu un proche ce jour-là, ont voulu continuer à se rassembler. Certains sans doute pour tenter de vouloir se venger. C'est pourquoi le commentateur pense que si ces personnes décidaient de se rassembler à nouveau, les conséquences pourraient être alarmantes.

D'autres analyses de la situation ont été relevées dans la colonne 'Manchester Meeting' de ce journal. Nous n'avons aucune mention des auteurs, et nous ne savons pas si ces

[1] Saunder's News Letter, *Extract of a letter,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.116

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descriptions sont données par une seule et même personne ou par un groupe de correspondants. Néanmoins, leurs informations nous permettent de comprendre et d'avoir un aperçu des tensions qui pouvaient régner à ce moment-là. D'autant plus qu'ils nous donnent des informations parfois précises sur les heures et les endroits concernés. Tout d'abord, ils rejoignent ce qui a été mentionné précédemment. C'est-à-dire qu'il n'y avait pas d'incidents à déclarer le lendemain des évènements et que la tranquillité était revenue. Toutefois, l'ambiance restait anxiogène. C'est ce que nous pouvons confirmer avec le passage suivant :

> Accounts from Manchester, up to two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, reached us last night. At that hour nothing had occurred of a nature sufficiently serious to disturb the peace of the town. Compared with the tumultuous proceedings of Monday, tranquility might be said to prevail; but indications of a forced submission on the part of the populace, of vindictive feelings suspended, but not suppressed, were too apparent not to cause alarm in those who carefully observed their motions, and listened to their discourse.[1]

L'auteur de ces constats se présente comme témoin des faits. Il nous explique que l'atmosphère était plutôt calme. Ceci était lié au fait que la population était en quelque sorte sous contrôle des forces de l'ordre qui surveillaient les rues. Il y avait donc un grand contraste entre les évènements de la veille, qui ont mis la ville dans une situation alarmante, et le lendemain où tout semblait sous contrôle. Le gouvernement a jugé nécéssaire d'envoyer les troupes dans les rues afin de veiller à ce qu'aucun débordement n'ait lieu. Il fallait éviter de répéter la scène de la veille et donc de ne pas laisser le moindre petit rassemblement se tenir. C'est ce que nous comprenons avec la phrase suivante : « The military who had patrolled the streets during the whole of Monday night, were equally vigilant on Tuesday morning; they were judiciously employed in checking before they could become formidable, the first symptoms of riot and disorder. Small parties of cavalry rode through the principal streets ; and if any of the populace were collected into a group, they were immediately dispersed.[2] » Le but était d'éviter que les évènements de la veille ne se renouvèlent. En prenant en compte ces différents passages, nous pouvons dire que le massacre de Peterloo avait changé la vision à la fois de la population et du gouvernement. D'un côté, le gouvernement s'est rendu compte que la classe ouvrière et les réformateurs n'arrêteraient pas de revendiquer leurs droits. De l'autre côté, après l'attaque au St. Peter's Field, il était évident de se dire que la population allait redoubler d'efforts pour

[1] Saunder's News Letter, *Manchester meeting,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.116
[2] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.116

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obtenir les réformes parlementaires qu'ils souhaitaient. Cela commence par porter un intérêt particulier aux réformateurs qui ont été arrêtés comme Henry Hunt. L'arrestation de Henry Hunt et des autres a provoqué un élan de solidarité et de soutien de la part de la population. Mais comme il était considéré comme la personne la plus influente du rassemblement, sa situation intéressait beaucoup les journalistes. C'est le cas par exemple dans le *Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser*. On nous diffuse l'extrait d'une lettre d'un homme, dont on ne mentionne pas l'identité, ayant passé plusieurs jours à Manchester depuis les évènements.

> "I safely arrived here on Monday night, and find all things quiet. I have been refused to see Mr. Hunt ; he and all the other prisoners are kept very close, on a charge of High Treason. The Magistrates do not know what to do, till orders are received from London. Mr. Hunt's servant is down here with him. I cannot collect any more particulars than the Newspapers have already given. It is generally expected that the prisoners will liberated this week. Mr. Hunt is perfectly well."[1]

Nous comprenons qu'après leur arrestation, les magistrats n'ont pas tenu à transmettre d'informations au sujet des détenus. Mais même si la presse n'avait pas assez de matière pour parler de Henry Hunt, elle diffusait la moindre information qui pourrait intéresser la population. Comme le simple fait de savoir qu'il se portait bien, devenait utile pour continuer à parler de Peterloo. Dans d'autres communications citées dans le même journal, on continue à nous parler de Mr. Hunt :

> MANCHESTER.— *Tuesday Evening*.— We still continue perfectly quiet. Nothing has yet been decided on as to Mr. Hunt, or any of the other prisoners. A general expectation prevails that they will be liberated before the week is over. I have just seen Mr. West, Mr. Hunt's friend, who has come down from London to afford him any assistance he may require in his present situation. He tells me, that on applying to see Mr. Hunt, he has been peremptorily refused admission.[2]

Ici, on nous fait comprendre que Henry Hunt n'avait toujours pas eu de réel procès. Et aucunes réelles informations au sujet de son arrestation et de sa libération n'ont été données. Nous pouvons relever dans la dernière phrase de ce passage que Henry Hunt continuait à déranger, même une fois le rassemblement dispersé. On nous informe que lors de sa détention, il lui avait été refusé de recevoir de la visite. Nous supposons que ce refus des Magistrats, de laisser Hunt prendre contact avec l'extérieur, était une façon d'éviter quelconque conspiration ou

[1] Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, *Manufacturing Districts,* 27 août 1819, voir Annexes p.141
[2] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.141

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organisation de rassemblement de réformateurs. Or, nous allons voir que ceci n'a pas empêché certaines personnes de continuer à vouloir se regrouper pour parler des réformes.

En effet, on nous parle à plusieurs reprises d'un esprit de vengeance qui s'est emparé de certaines personnes présentes lors du rassemblement. Les soldats de la Manchester Yeomanry principalement, étaient dans le viseur de ceux qui ont été victimes, de près ou de loin, de leur attaque sur la foule au St. Peter's Field. Le danger étant que ces soldats ont eu pour ordre de patrouiller dans les rues à la suite des évènements. C'est pourquoi nous comprenons que certains incidents ont pu être relevés. C'est ce qu'on nous souligne dans le *Saunder's News Letter* en écrivant : « The temper of the Reformers, though thus prevented from displaying itself in action, was strongly manifested by an unbounded license of expression ; and threats of revenge, directed more particularly against those Members of Manchester Yeomanry who were most active in the affair on Monday, and who, by residing in the town and being well known to the disaffected persons, became distinctly marked out as object of their hatred.[1] » Dans ce passage nous remarquons que les réformateurs sont décrits comme des ennemis des soldats. On nous fait comprendre qu'ils ont été affectés par les actes perpétrés sur la foule le lundi 16 août et que cette envie de vengeance pouvait se faire ressentir. Ce qui attire un peu plus notre attention dans cet aspect, c'est que l'envie de vengeance a été particulièrement relevé chez les femmes. Nous avons pu voir auparavant que de nombreuses femmes étaient présentes lors du rassemblement. Et il convient de mentionner qu'à cette période, même si les femmes n'étaient pas considérées comme actives dans le domaine politique, en revanche de nombreuses associations de femmes réformatrices existaient.

Nous pouvons le relever dans un article de Michael Herbert, dans le journal *The Guardian*, intitulé *Women's role at Peterloo revisited in Manchester anniversary walk*. Dans cet article, il nous rappelle qu'avant le rassemblement au St Peter's Field, il existait des 'Female Reform Societies' dans différentes villes du Nord Ouest de l'Angleterre. Pour en citer certaines, nous pouvons mentionner 'The Manchester Female Reform Society' ou la 'Blackburn Female Reform Society.' Nous remarquons également que ces femmes voulaient se battre tout autant que les hommes pour obtenir des réformes. C'est ce que nous pouvons lire ici, dans un extrait tiré du *Black Dwarf*, mais souligné ici par Michael Herbert : « "The radical newspaper Black Dwarf, produced by T.J.Wooler in London, warmly applauded the development: « *I have news to tell thee – news that will make thy heart leap with satisfaction; as I know thee to be to be an*

[1] Saunder's News Letter, *Manchester Meeting,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.116

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admirer of female heroism and a zealous advocate for the rights of women, as well as of the rights of man. Here the ladies are determined at last to speak for themselves; and they address their brother reformers in very manly language. »[1]. Nous comprenons que les femmes étaient prêtes à tout pour se faire entendre et soutenir leurs pères, frères, maris ou amis réformateurs. C'est pourquoi, nous ne sommes pas étonnés de savoir qu'après l'attaque de Peterloo, se sont les femmes principalement qui ont eu besoin de se regrouper pour exprimer leur mécontentement. Nous pouvons le relever dans le *Saunder's News Letter* à deux reprises. Dans les différentes communications diffusées par le journal, nous retenons ce premier passage : « The female part of the multitude were not less conspicuous than on Monday for the share they took in what was going on, and were more bitter and malignant in their invectives than their male associates.[2] » Une fois de plus nous pouvons voir le parti pris de l'auteur des informations qui va à l'encontre des idées des réformateurs, mais il nous souligne que les femmes semblaient avoir plus d'amertume que leurs collègues masculins. Ainsi, nous pouvons concevoir que celles-ci préparaient des activités pour venger les vies qui ont été touchées et perdues à Manchester. Nous relevons un autre passage de communications de certains reporters qui étaient sur les lieux. Ils nous disent : « On our entry intro the town, about ten at night, we were met by several women, who flung themselves on the way of our chaise, and entreated us for God's sake not to enter it, as murderous work was going on within it.[3] » Ils nous laissent entendre que les femmes étaient à l'origine d'activités douteuses, qui étaient à l'opposé des règles de bienséance du gouvernement. Cependant, il est important de rappeler que les journaux de l'époque étaient partagés entre la presse pro-gouvernementale et la presse populaire. De cette manière, nous ne pouvons pas être totalement sûrs de la vérité de ces faits. Les femmes réformatrices elles-mêmes ont mis en garde certaines personnes, comme William Cobbett, pour appeler à leur bienveillance et leur demander de ne pas croire en toutes les informations rapportées par la presse. C'est ce que nous rappelle Michael Herbert dans son article :

> At the end of November the Female Reformers of Manchester issued an address to William Cobbett, praising his endeavours on behalf of the reform movement and thanking him for his support when the women came under attack. "*It cannot be unknown to you, Sir, that our intentions have been vilified, and our characters*

[1] HERBERT, M., *The Guardian*, 15 août 2012 https://www.theguardian.com/uk/the-northerner/2012/aug/15/peterloo-women-massacre-manchester

[2] Saunder's News Letter, *Manchester Meeting,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.116

[3] *Ibid,* voir Annexes p.117

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> *traduced by the unprincipled scribes, of a venal and corrupt press. To you, in your excellent letter to the Female Reformers of Blackburn, we are indebted for a complete vindication of our motives, our conduct and our characters; you have refuted the calumnies of our enemies and proved our innocence and integrity. The days of chivalry are passed ; but in you the Female Reformers feel that they shall never want a sufficient advocate.*"[1]

Cet extrait relevé dans une lettre des 'Female Reformers of Blackburn' adressée à William Cobbett, nous comprenons bien que la presse pro-gouvernementale pouvait en effet diffamer autant au sujet des hommes que des femmes en faveur des réformes parlementaires. Cette caractéristique peut être prise en considération en s'attardant sur les communications transmises par le *Saunder's News Letter.* Les journalistes ont tenu à exposer les faits qui se déroulaient à leur arrivée à l'entrée aux abords de la ville après les évènements. Que la situation soit vraie ou non, toutefois elle est expliquée de manière subjective. Ils nous signalent qu'ils n'ont pas pu entrer dans la ville, prévenus par les officiers qu'il en allait de leur sécurité et de leur vie. Et ils ajoutent :

> They were emboldened in their villainy by the knowledge that there were only a few military men in the town, and that in the custody of these men, were 300 stand of arms, and several thousand rounds of ball cartridge. They were all persuaded on stand to their arms, and being aided by several respectable inhabitants of the town, assumed so formidable an appearance that the rioters thought it unwise to attack them. This disinclination on their part gave fresh courage to the friends of order and tranquillity; and in consequence they made an attack on the rioters, and took several of them prisoners.[2]

On retrouve le contraste entre les forces de l'ordre, considérées comme les amis du gouvernement, et les réformateurs, considérés comme des ennemis de l'État. Toutefois, ils nous font part des incidents qui se sont déroulés ce soir-là et qui rejoint l'esprit de vengeance qui planait autour de la ville. Certains émeutiers ont voulu s'en prendre à la Manchester Yeomanry mais ont été arrêtés et emprisonnés. Ils nous parlent également un peu plus tard d'une altercation qui aurait eu lieu entre des émeutiers et les officiers du côté de Macclesfield. Un rassemblement qui n'aurait pas causé de blessures conséquentes, mais d'où les manifestants sont repartis avec quelques blessures causées par les coups des soldats. Malgré ces incidents, lorsqu'ils ont quitté la ville, tout était redevenu dans l'ordre, comme le justifie la phrase

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[1] HERBERT, M., *The Guardian*, 15 août 2012 https://www.theguardian.com/uk/the-northerner/2012/aug/15/peterloo-women-massacre-manchester

[2] Saunder's News Letter, *From Reporters,* 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.117

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suivante : « When we left the town, which was at four o'clock in the morning, tranquility was perfectly re-established[1] ».

Le *Public and Daily Advertiser* nous informe également de certains regroupements qui ont pu avoir lieu après le 16 août. Le plus intéressant que nous pouvons relever est le passage suivant : « AUG. 24. — "The Yeomanry of this place are less officious than they have hitherto shewn themselves, consequently we have less turbulence than when you received my last communication. Yesterday I visited Ancots-lane Newton-lane, New Cross, &c. as those are the parts of the town where the Reformists and discontented people generally assemble.[2] » Nous comprenons que, comme les soldats ont arrêté de se comporter de façon à soupçonner des activités malveillantes à chaque regroupement de personnes, le désordre s'était peu à peu calmé. Mais il nous fait tout de même part de certains regroupements de réformateurs auxquels il a pu assister. Néanmoins, il ne relève aucun acte de rébellion ou de conspiration. Il nous dit simplement : « I was much amused during my stay with them with a sight that never before occurred to me, that was, the publicly burning of some of the obnoxious Ministerial Prints[3]. » Nous comprenons que ces papiers ont sûrement été brûlés parce qu'ils ne faisaient que donner une mauvaise image des manifestants, alors qu'ils ont été victimes d'une injustice.

Malgré cette atmosphère où régnaient à la fois des sentiments de vengeance, de mensonges et de recherche de vérité, nous avons pu remarquer lors de l'analyse de certains articles, que toute la presse n'était pas contre le peuple. Bien au contraire, un élan de solidarité a pu se faire ressentir à la suite des évènements, notamment de la part des journalistes.

[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.118
[2] Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, 27 août 1819, voir Annexes p.142
[3] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.142

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2. Union du peuple - Que justice soit faite

Si le rassemblement a pu se mettre en place le 16 août, c'est sans doute parce qu'il y avait une communion entre toutes ces personnes. Celle-ci peut se traduire par le besoin et par l'envie d'obtenir des réformes, des libertés communes qui manquaient à leur mode de vie. Et cette union s'est ressentie à nouveau, si ce n'est amplifiée, après l'attaque que ces personnes ont subie. En effet ils se sont retrouvés autour des mêmes idées, qui tournaient autour de la revendication de leurs droits et de la dénonciation à la fois des évènements tragiques et de leur manque de libertés. Dans le *Liverpool Mercury*, nous remarquons un passage qui englobe parfaitement ces sentiments qui ont poussé le peuple à s'unir et à continuer à se battre encore plus :

> That so this gross and wanton violation of the rights and liberties of the people may not be allowed to pass into an established precedent; and the several authors, actors, and abettors of this sanguinary military tumult and execution, may be brought to condign punishment. And we deem this measure to have been rendered absolutely necessary, because we have observed with astonishment and regret, that (obtained no doubt by false and wicked misrepresentations of the real nature and character of these proceedings) the distinguished honour of your Royal Highness's approbation has been bestowed on acts which the force of truth compels us to describe as illegal and unprovoked; disgraceful to the national character, and repugnant to all the feelings of humanity.[1]

Ici, le journaliste tient à préciser qu'en attaquant la foule, le gouvernement a violé les principes de liberté du peuple britannique. Et cette violation ne doit pas être considérée comme anodine. Au contraire, il déclare qu'il est important que le gouvernement dénonce ces actes commis sur la foule et que des sanctions soient prises à leur égard. Il s'adresse directement au Régent, dont plusieurs écrits ont indiqué qu'il approuvait et félicitait le travail des soldats. C'est pourquoi, la vérité devait être rétablie et le justice devait être faite. Ce sentiment exposé dans cet extrait a été partagé par une majorité de la population. À plusieurs reprises nous avons pu relever des revendications, du peuple en conséquence directes des évènements du 16 août. Ce fut le cas par exemple à Leeds, comme nous l'expose ce même journal du *Liverpool Mercury*. Les habitants de cette ville ont décidé de continuer à demander des réformes parlementaires afin que tout le monde soit représenté avec équité. Pour se faire, ils ont fait appel à un maximum de personnes légalement autorisées à voter, pour qu'ils signent une sorte de pétition. Cette pétition

[1] *The Liverpool Mercury*, 24 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.177

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était une manière pacifique de revendiquer leurs droits et de faire appel au gouvernement afin qu'il leur donne des réponses positives, en vue de réformer le système parlementaire. Ainsi, ils ont placardé des affiches pour exprimer leurs façon d'agir et attirer le plus de personnes possibles. Voici le passage qui nous souligne ces faits :

> Every sincere friend to Parliamentary Reform, and every well-wisher to his country, whose mind is sufficiently capacious to from a due estimate of the advantages of a well poised form of government, will learn with satisfaction, that a RECORD has been set on foot in Leeds, where every male inhabitant, of mature years, may peaceably and constitutionally record his opinion, that a necessity exists for a reform in our representative system. The record to which we allude forms the first page in a book, prepared for the reception of signatures, and is expressed in these terms:— "WE, THE UNDERSIGNED INHABITANT OF LEEDS, IN THE WEST RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK, BEING THE AGE OF 21 YEARS, OR UPWARDS, DO HEREBY RECORD OPINION PEACEABLY, BUT DECIDEDLY, THAT THE COMMON HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, AS AT PRESENT CONSTITUTED, DOES NOT FAIRLY AND FULLY REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNIED KINGDOM, AND THEREFORE, THAT A REFORM IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THAT HOUSE IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY."[1]

De cette manière, nous ressentons un mouvement de cohésion et un besoin de partager les mêmes idées. Un besoin d'unir leurs forces pour parvenir à leurs fins. Ce fut le cas également pour un groupe de réformateurs qui a décidé de se rassembler au 'Crown and Anchor' afin de discuter du Massacre de Peterloo, et d'exposer leurs revendications au sujet des réformes parlementaires. C'est ce que nous indique le journal *The examiner*. Le premier aspect qui attire notre attention lors de ce rassemblement, c'est cette envie que leurs réclamations se fassent de manière correcte et légale. Même si certains d'entre eux voudraient se rebeller et user de la violence, comme a pu le faire le gouvernement, pour prouver leur soutien aux victimes, les orateurs ont très vite indiqué que ce n'était pas le moyen le plus efficace pour parvenir à leurs fins. Cela se confirme avec l'information suivant : « Some voice in the course of the Meeting exclaimed, "We'll have blood for blood!" upon which Mr. Wooler said, "No: we have laws, and the laws will give us redress. Let no blood be shed but that which the law shall require as a sacrifice for the offence." (*Much Applause*.)[2] » Mr. Wooler, qui a été invité afin de s'exprimer face à l'audience ce jour-là, rappelle que des lois existent pour eux et qu'il fallait utiliser ces lois pour être pris au sérieux. Nous pouvons croire qu'il était important pour eux de retrouver

[1] *The Liverpool Mercury*, 24 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.178
[2] The Examiner, 23 août 1819, voir Annexes p.123

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une cohésion et de se rappeler qu'il était de leur droit d'avoir des opinions qui différaient de celles du gouvernement. C'est pourquoi, ils ont décidé d'énoncer leurs résolutions en plusieurs points. Dans ces résolutions nous pouvons relever le besoin de rappeler que le rassemblement du peuple à Manchester était légal et n'enfreignait pas les règles de la Constitution Britannique. Nous pouvons également voir qu'ils réclamaient une enquête autour des actes des soldats qui eux étaient illégaux et irrespectueux. Comme il n'y a eu aucune mise en garde avant le début de l'assemblée, rien ne laissait penser que ce rassemblement au St. Peter's Field était illégal. Les résolutions continuent sur le besoin de continuer à se rassembler dans le pays, particulièrement pour discuter de ces évènements. Ils font appel à l'unité populaire : « That it be immediately recommended to the Cities of London and Westminster to call public Meetings in Palace-Yard and Guildhall, to consider of the affair at Manchester.[1] » Enfin, nous pouvons parler du sixième point proposé qui met en avant le contraste entre les libertés du gouvernement et celles du peuple. Ce point expose « That the exemplary behaviour of the regular troops employed on that occasion, forms a humane contrast to the conduct of the Yeomanry Cavalry, and may be fairly construed into a pledge that the British regular force will not trample upon the rights, nor destroy the liberties of their fellow subjects.[2] » Il souligne le fait qu'il y avait des différences au sein même des forces de l'ordre. En effet, la cavalerie s'est comportée de manière injuste. Et dans ce comportement, elle a entraîné une violation des libertés à la fois du peuple et de ses collègues membres des forces de police qui surveillaient le rassemblement. Ainsi, nous pouvons remarquer qu'à cette période, les différences entre les classes existaient également au sein même de ceux qui travaillaient pour la sécurité du pays. En plus de ces revendications, nous pouvons remarquer le soutien particulièrement appuyé pour Henry Hunt et les autres personnes qui ont été arrêtées sans motif valable : « Mr. Jones submitted, that the meeting should in person and purse support the cause of Mr. Hunt and the other persons taken into custody, and that Mr. Harman the solicitor should be sent to Manchester to collect evidence.[3] » Ils montrent leur dévouement à la population et sont prêts à mener leur propre enquête pour que ces personnes soient libérées. L'union du peuple prévaut sur le gouvernement. Enfin, le journal nous transmet une dernière revendication exposée lors de ce rassemblement que nous pouvons citer :

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[1] *The Examiner*, 23 aout 1819, voir Annexes p. 123
[2] Ibid, voir Annexes p.124
[3] *Op. Cit.,* voir Annexes p.124

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> The following Placard was distributed at the Crown and Anchor : — "Universal Civil and Religious Liberty. A Public Meeting of the British Metropolis, in behalf of the People of the whole empire, will be held in SMITHFIELD, on Wednesday, August 25th, at Four o'clock in the Afternoon. The Surrey Committee have, at this awful and momentous crisis, determined to defer their Meeting at Kennington Common, to a future day, and join the People of Middlesex in an Appeal to the Prince Regent, to come forward to the People — to stay the hand of merciless and bloody-thirsty Tyrants—and to save the Country from Massacre and Murder!!! 'England expects every Man to do his Duty.' Sir C. Wolseley invited to Chair. "[1]

Ce soutien populaire se retrouve également dans *The Republican*, plus précisément dans la lettre de Joseph Filtch à Richard Carlile. Il commence par féliciter et apporter son soutien au journaliste radical. Mais surtout, il encourage la population à se soulever et à ne pas laisser le gouvernement les aveugler. Il motive le peuple en leur rappelant leur position dans la société de telle manière à ce qu'il ne subisse pas une fois de plus les conséquences d'un État où règne la tyrannie. Il écrit : « It is the duty of every well-wisher to his country, and every real friend to human happiness, to countenance and encourage that line of conduct which you, with so much credit to yourself and so much advantage to the public, have perseveringly pursued[2] ». Il affirme qu'il en vient du simple sentiment d'humanité et de l'ami du peuple de ne pas laisser le gouvernement empiéter sur leurs libertés. Dans sa demande, il prend l'exemple de la religion qui est souvent utilisée par le gouvernement pour duper le peuple. C'est-à-dire que le gouvernement utilise la religion comme outil pour justifier leurs choix, leurs décisions et leurs actes. Or, Joseph Filtch appelle la population à ne pas se laisser abuser par ce genre de déclarations qui essaient de leur faire peur. Le but du gouvernement étant d'avoir un peuple respectueux des lois. Nous pouvons relever ce passage pour confirmer cette idée : « And shall we retrograde from this sunny eminence of knowledge, to the cold and misty vale of ignorance and superstition ? Shall we forebear to get wisdom and understanding merely because the acquisition may be unpleasant to those who are in self assumed authority over us ? Base, and grovelling, and unworthy of the blessings of light and liberty, must be the slave who would subscribe to so diabolical a doctrine.[3] » Il invite le peuple à penser par lui-même et à ne pas se laisser soumettre à une pensée unique. Il était pour l'évolution et le changement, mais pour avoir la possibilité d'obtenir ce changement, il fallait que chacun y mette du sien et n'ait pas peur d'exprimer ce qu'il pensait. Il ajoute :

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[1] *Op. Cit*, voir Annexes p.124
[2] FILTCH, J. *The Republican*, 31 août 1819. Voir Annexes p.171
[3] FILTCH, J. *The Republican*, 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 172

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> To such persons I would say, arouse yourselves from your mental lethargy; take your talent from the napkin, and be no longer the voluntary dupes of priestcraft and corruption; read, like "the noble Bereans" of old-read and examine the scriptures, that is the writings, for yourselves; if they contain any thing contrary to reason and morality, reject and condemn them; but, if like the discourses of him whose authority you will not disregard, they breathe a spirit of glory to God, and peace and good will to all mankind, then retract your erroneous opinions, regard with suspicion the men who have endeavoured to rob you of the glorious privilege of reason, and boldly come forward and vindicate the characters and intentions of those who are suffering for the cause of civil and religious liberty.[1]

Nous pouvons donc dire que Joseph Filtch incarnait parfaitement ce besoin d'unité qui dominait l'opinion populaire. C'est grâce à ce genre de raisonnement que le progrès pouvait être atteint. Et c'est dans la prise de conscience de se dire que chaque membre de la société devait être libre d'avoir sa propre opinion qu'il pourra obtenir les réformes dont il avait besoin. D'une certaine manière, J. Filtch s'adresse certes aux réformateurs mais nous supposons qu'il essaie surtout d'obtenir le soutien de la population qui se complaît dans la société actuelle. Une fois cette unité générale du pays atteinte, entre les différentes classes sociales, le gouvernement n'aura pas d'autre choix que d'accepter les revendications des réformateurs.

Dans le journal *The Republican* toujours, il est également intéressant de s'attarder sur les paroles de Richard Carlile que nous pouvons considérer comme une plaidoirie en faveur du peuple. Comme nous avons déjà pu le souligner, dans cette édition du journal, R. Carlile accuse à la fois Lord Sidmouth et le Prince Régent pour leurs positions sur les attaques du St. Peter's Field. Nous avons l'impression d'assister à une sorte de procès. Et face à ces accusations, il se montre comme défenseur de la liberté du peuple. Il commence par demander des excuses au Régent en lui faisant comprendre que s'il ne le faisait pas, l'union du peuple saura prendre le dessus et se soulever pour obtenir à la fois ces excuses et leurs droits. Il écrit : « Oh! wipe away this stain, and wait not until an insulted People are determined to resent it. As yet, Sir, you have the opportunity to free yourself and family from this reproach. Delay not a day, lest you are a day too late. To-morrow might find the fever of a starving People heated into frenzy.[2] » Nous retrouvons ce côté théâtral dans la façon de s'exprimer de Richard Carlile, mais sa pensée n'en est pas moins ridicule. Si nous prenons en compte ce que nous avons pu mentionner au sujet de l'atmosphère pesante, nous pouvons confirmer les dires du journaliste. Le gouvernement

[1] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.172
[2] CARLILE, R., *The Republican*, 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p.163

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lui-même craignait que le peuple veuille se venger, c'est pourquoi il a envoyé des troupes afin de veiller à ce qu'aucun débordement ne se produise et disperser quelconque rassemblement qui voulait se former. Ainsi, si le gouvernement voulait éviter que la foule se déchaîne, il fallait essayer de calmer le jeu en considérant un minimum leurs revendications et en déplorant les actes de la Yeomanry Cavalry.

Il continue en donnant des conseils au Prince Régent et en profite pour dénoncer les failles du système judiciaire britannique en disant : « One of two things must be done. You, Sir, must replace Justice on her seat, and sweep away the corrupt and filthy influence that has of late surrounded her, or the People will recal that power, which to you by some means has been delegated, and acknowledge no sovereign but their own authority. Justice is all we ask—will you, Sir, dare deny it?[1] » Carlile laisse penser que c'est la corruption qui se trouve au sein même de la justice qui pose problème dans la société. C'est cette justice que le peuple réclamait. Alors, s'il ne l'obtient pas, tout laisse à croire qu'il fera tout pour l'obtenir. Si nous nous arrêtons sur la phrase 'and acknowledge no sovereign but their own authority' nous pouvons supposer qu'il imaginait le pire au sujet de la condition du roi. Richard Carlile, comme l'indique le nom de son journal, n'est pas un fervent supporter de la monarchie. Alors, dans ce passage il suppose que le peuple serait capable du pire, comme commettre le régicide afin d'obtenir leurs droits. Il ajoute « The time, my forbidding spirit tells me, is near at hand, when the traitors to their country's welfare will find their due elevation. Those traitors are to be found in your Cabinet ; they are the members of your Administration! Bring them to justice, fill their place with honest men, and you will see the prosperity of your country on its return.[2] » Ce qu'il tente de faire comprendre c'est, soyez honnête envers le peuple et le peuple sera reconnaissant. Une fois de plus, c'est la justice qui doit dominer le pays mais cette justice doit être juste. Richard Carlile se comporte également comme le porte-parole de la population. C'est ce que nous pouvons relever pour conclure sur cette plaidoirie :

> -whilst an immense standing army is kept up for the purpose of intimidation, and for the purpose of extracting half the profits of the Labourer to support the idle and the dissolute — whilst the extreme of luxury and dissipation is enjoyed by one portion of the community, at the expense and destruction of the necessaries of life for the other — whilst the laws are violated, and murders are committed in open day, by those in whose hands the sword of Justice has been placed—and whilst the violation of those laws, and those murders committed, receive the sanction of the constituted

[1] CARLILE, R., *The Republican*, 31 août 1819, voir Annexes p.163
[2] *Ibid,* voir Annexes p.165

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> authorities, I think I may safely affirm, that we have arrived to that stage of society, when every liberal and constitutional writer has argued the necessity and the justice of a People appealing to their dernier resort, an appeal to force, to annihilate the existing order of things, and to begin de novo. Reflect on this, Sir, ere it to be too late.[1]

En prenant le parti du peuple, il met en garde le gouvernement sur les conséquences que peuvent avoir certaines décisions. Il nous affirme qu'à ce moment dans l'histoire, la société britannique en était arriver à un stade où il n'était plus possible de continuer à subir. Toutes les conditions étaient présentes en 1819 pour encourager le peuple à se révolter. La Révolution Française n'était pas si lointaine, les évènements de Peterloo n'ont fait qu'aggraver ce besoin de réformer le Parlement. C'est pourquoi, il a été nécéssaire de rappeler au gouvernement que le peuple était uni et qu'il était prêt à tout faire pour que cessent les injustices qu'ils subissaient.

Il est vrai que le Massacre de Peterloo a permis de mettre l'accent sur de nombreux problèmes et de nombreuses failles qui étaient présentes dans la société britannique de l'époque. Que ce soit l'injustice, les inégalités ou le manque de liberté, plusieurs domaines étaient sujets de revendication, notamment pour les classes sociales plus démunies. Et nous avons remarqué que c'était particulièrement le manque de liberté d'expression qui était à l'origine de plusieurs de ces maux.

[1] *Op.Cit.,* voir Annexes p.165

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3. Une liberté d'expression menacée

Comme nous avons pu le sous-entendre à plusieurs reprises, il est évident que la liberté d'expression, avant et encore plus après Peterloo, était très réduite. En effet, plusieurs lois ont été imposées par le gouvernement, dès la fin du XVIIIe siècle, pour empêcher la population de s'exprimer. Avant d'énoncer quelques exemples, il est important de rappeler qu'en 1794, le *Act of Habeas Corpus* a été suspendu. Cette loi permettait d'offrir une liberté fondamentale au peuple, leur donnant droit à un jugement avant d'être emprisonnée, à avoir la possibilité de savoir les accusations qu'on lui reproche et lui offrir l'occasion d'être libéré sous caution[1]. En suspendant cette loi, le gouvernement a commencé à mettre une entrave à la liberté de la population. L'année suivante, en 1795, deux lois sont crées : *The Treasonable and Seditious Practices Act* et *The Seditious Meeting Act*. La première interdisait les écrits qui allaient contre le roi et son gouvernement. La deuxième les rassemblements de plus de cinquante personnes sans l'accord d'un Magistrat[2]. Plusieurs autres mesures ont été instaurées pour limiter la liberté d'expression, principalement des radicaux, comme élever les prix des journaux pour éviter leur accès, pour ne citer qu'un exemple. Après le Massacre de Peterloo, le gouvernement a fait passer les *Six Acts* qui se compose ainsi : « the Training Prevention Act, the Seizure of Arms Act, the Seditious Meetings Act , the Blasphemous and Seditious Libels Act, the Misdemeanours Act, the Newspaper Stamp Duties Act.[3] ». Cette loi donnait donc droit aux officiers de perquisitionner des lieux sans mandat. Cette loi a été utile notamment pour pouvoir fouiller les maisons de publications de différents journaux. Elle rendait également obligatoire la demande d'autorisation pour organiser des rassemblements de plus de cinquante personnes. Cependant, l'aspect qui nous intéresse le plus ici, c'est le droit à travers cette loi de saisir quelconques copies de pamphlets ou de livres considérés comme diffamatoires. Mais aussi le droit de mettre un frein aux publications radicales, voire de les stopper, en imposant des taxes. Cette loi a été créée comme conséquence directe des évènements de Peterloo. Nous pouvons

[1] LAROUSSE, Définition Habeas Corpus
https://www.larousse.fr/dictionnaires/francais/habeas_corpus/38752 [Dernière Consultation le 23 juin 2018]
[2] ENCYCOLPEDIA, Seditious Meeting Act
https://www.encyclopedia.com/history/encyclopedias-almanacs-transcripts-and-maps/seditious-meetings-act [Dernière Consultation le 23 juin 2018]
[3] BLOY, Marjie, The Six Acts 1819, 30 août 2003
http://www.victorianweb.org/history/riots/sixacts.html

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supposer que le gouvernement a pris les devants afin de rendre légal les différentes actions qui ont été faites le 16 août au St. Peter's Field.

Il est donc vrai que le premier domaine qui a vu sa liberté d'expression de plus en plus limitée, c'est bien celui de la presse. Dans les années 1810, la presse était le principal outil utilisé par les radicaux à la fois pour revendiquer leurs droits et pour soulever les problèmes présents dans la société. C'est pourquoi, si on leur enlever ou limiter leur seul moyen d'expression, il ne leur restait plus grand chose pour montrer leurs opinions, si ce n'est organiser des rassemblements pour parler directement à la population.

Dans l'édition du 30 août 1819 du *Morning Chronicle*, nous pouvons relever une lettre d'un dénommé R. Phillips qui s'adresse à l'éditeur de ce même journal. Dans cette lettre, il relève l'injustice et la menace qui pèsent sur la presse, principalement depuis les évènements. Il fait référence notamment aux nouvelles lois contre les écrits séditieux, et il fait part de son mécontentement autour de celles-ci :

> SIR,
> Having been led, by a gross act of injustice, by which I suffered in the early part of my life, to bestow much consideration on the Law of Libel, and having, in various ways, submitted my opinions to the public on that branch of our jurisprudence, I feel it my duty to call attention to a novel practice, which I consider unconstitutional, and highly dangerous to the liberty of the Press.
> I allude to the cases in which, within the last week, the Magistrates of the Metropolis have required BAIL of persons charged with writing or publishing Libels, and who, in the practice of Alderman Atkins (the Lord Mayor), have not only been required to find Bail, but bail to a large amount, accompanied by formalities, which exposed the parties to a deferred and grievous imprisonment.[1]

Cette lettre a été envoyée le 25 août. Nous pouvons donc remarquer que le gouvernement a rapidement mis en place ces dispositions. Celles-ci ont eu pour but d'empêcher la presse d'un côté de trop développer les évènements de Manchester du 16 août, mais aussi pour empêcher de l'autre côté que les journalistes appellent la population à la rébellion. Pour R. Phillips, ces lois vont à l'encontre des valeurs de la Constitution Britannique et sont une entrave à la liberté de la presse. C'est pourquoi il pense que ces lois ne sont qu'une excuse pour le gouvernement afin d'éviter de devoir rendre des comptes à la population. R. Phillips ajoute : « It is also unlikely that any such authority could subsequently have been entrusted to Magistrates, because the jealousy which has been expressed by every intelligent patriot, in regard to the

[1] *Morning Chronicle*, 30 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 150

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concession to the Law Officers of the Crown, could not have failed to have animated all England, if such power had been proposed to be extended to every petty Magistrate.[1] » Il explique que les membres du gouvernement ont peur des écrits, doués de sens et d'intelligence, qui ont pu être rédigés par ces journalistes qui ont été arrêtés et dont il donne l'exemple dans le passage cité précédemment. Il en profite donc pour critiquer leurs décisions et leur façon de faire. Et il poursuit en remettant même en cause le système juridique : « It has hitherto been understood to be a great bulwark of our liberties, that the Press was under the guardianship of Juries, and that a man might write whatever he pleased, in the confidence that he was not liable to any punishment, until he was convicted of an evil intention by his country, as personified by twelve impartial men in a Jury-box.[2] » Ce qu'il critique ici c'est que la presse soit contrôlée par un jury qui pourra se permettre de modifier les écrits et faire en sorte que ceux-ci soient en faveur de leurs propres opinions. Par conséquent, la valeur et l'essence même de la presse est bafouée par de telles mesures. Le journaliste devrait être libre de faire son travail comme il le désire, sans qu'il n'y ait aucune censure sur ce travail réfléchi et construit. Et c'est ce qu'il reproche en ajoutant : « but if a writer is subject to be held to bail on the view or caprice of a single Magistrate, often ignorant, and often blinded by party feelings, and, is also liable to be committed to the common gaol for 48 hours, till the Bail be approved by the same Judge, then we may bid farewell to all free and useful discussion, and the Press can be exercised only under circumstances of terror and pending ignominy.[3] » Selon lui les journalistes ne devraient pas être soumis à une pression. Ils ne devraient pas ressentir de la peur et la crainte d'être emprisonnés dans l'exercice de leurs fonctions. De cette manière, il relève en quelques phrases les conséquences sur la liberté d'expression des journalistes. Des conséquences liées à l'instauration de lois comme le Six Acts mentionné ci-devant.

Cette liberté de parole n'a pas touché que les journalistes. Elle s'est exportée de manière générale à la population en elle-même. Le simple fait d'avoir interdit les rassemblements a imposé une limite à la liberté d'échanger des idées entre citoyens. Ils se sont retrouvés en situation de soumission, prêt à encaisser les décisions du gouvernement, qu'ils soient en accord ou non avec celles-ci. Leur liberté d'expression se limite d'abord aux niveaux des élections.

[1] *Morning Chronicle,* 30 août 1819, voir Annexes p. 150
[2] *Ibid,* voir Annexes p. 150
[3] *Op. Cit.*, voir Annexes p.150

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Une grande partie de la population, principalement la classe ouvrière, n'a pas la chance de pouvoir voter. Or, à l'époque, le moyen le plus légal d'exprimer son opinion était d'aller voter afin d'élire des personnes qui les représenteront au Parlement et qui leur permettront d'obtenir ce qu'ils réclament. C'est pourquoi, si on ajoute à cela l'interdiction de se rassembler afin de clamer leurs revendications, il ne reste plus grand chose au peuple pour s'exprimer. Nous comprenons donc pourquoi certaines personnes ont revendiqué cette liberté d'expression après le massacre. Dans le *Liverpool Mercury*, nous pouvons relever deux passages à ce sujet. Le premier réclame ce droit en rappelant au Prince Régent les droits dont ils pouvaient bénéficier grâce à la constitution :

> The very principle on which is formed and founded the title of your Royal Highness's illustrious house to the free crown of the kingdom, is brought to question and endangered by the outrages at Manchester. The bill of rights declares that it "it is the right of the subject to petition the King;" and it is indisputable, that upon the people's right to assemble publicly, and by petition to interfere in the administration of their affairs, is mainly depending all the rest of our constitutional liberties.[1]

Il souligne l'importance du respect des libertés de chacun. Et cette liberté commence là où la Déclaration des Droits leur autorise à faire des pétitions et à s'assembler publiquement. C'est donc le gouvernement qui agit, d'une certaine manière, de façon illégale en empêchant la population de disposer de ces droits. Et le deuxième passage confirme cet aspect :

> We believe this right of popular assemblage and petitioning, to be amongst the earliest, as it certainly is the most important, of our privileges. The preservation of it, in all the fullness of perfection, is essential to our existence as a nation of freemen. It has descended to us from our forefathers, is recognised in the great characters of our liberties ; and we hold it to be amongst the most sacred of our duties to transmit it to posterity uninjured and entire.[2]

Nous comprenons donc que dans l'esprit de l'époque, la liberté d'expression était une liberté fondamentale. Et nous pouvons ressentir que le peuple tenait particulièrement à ces différents droits. Dans ce passage, l'auteur utilise l'existence du statut d'homme libre, qui est à la base de la création de la société. Il tient à souligner que cette liberté a été acquise par leurs ancêtres et qu'elle se devait d'être respectée de telle manière à ce qu'elle soit transmise encore aux générations futures. Encore une fois, nous pouvons croire que le gouvernement ne pense pas

[1] *Liverpool Mercury*, 24 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p.177
[2] *Ibid*, voir Annexes p.177

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au bien-être de son peuple et fait passer sa propre condition en premier. Laisser le peuple s'exprimer viendrait à avouer qu'ils méritent d'être entendus. Par conséquent, cela sous-entendrait que leurs réclamations ont une part de vérité et remettent en cause des problèmes réels présents dans la société.

Dans *The Republican*, Richard Carlile remet en cause lui aussi la limitation de la liberté d'expression instaurée par le gouvernement. Il nous donne l'exemple de deux cas précis qui se sont déroulés peu de temps après les évènements de Peterloo. Et nous trouvons intéressant de s'arrêter sur ces deux affaires que nous considérons comme totalement représentatives de cette restriction.

Voici le premier incident dont Richard Carlile nous expose les faits :

> The first is, the man who was holding a show-board with a placard on it before the door of the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand announcing that a meeting was then holding there, to express an opinion of the Manchester Massacre. […] He is surrounded by five or six Police Officers from Bow-street, taken (it appears) without any warrant, before the sitting Magistrate (Mr. Farrant) and committed to the Cold Bath Fields Bastille, for (what they pleased to call) having published an unlawful, malicious, and seditious libel, is actually kept in confinement seven days, until bailed out, whilst they durst not touch or molest the real author, printer and publisher of that placard, who comes to the meeting, and addressed that meeting openly and publicly, in language of disapprobation and execration of the conduct of the actors in the Manchester Massacre, far more strong and pointed, than any thing inserted in the placard. How contemptible and disgraced must such a magistracy appear in the eyes of every liberal-minded and reflecting man ![1]

Dans ce cas, nous comprenons qu'un homme a été arrêté et mis en détention pour avoir tenu une pancarte annonçant le rassemblement de réformateurs qui allait se tenir à la 'Crown and Anchor tavern'. Or, cette personne en question n'était pas à l'origine de cette organisation. Il ne faisait que transmettre une information. Nous pouvons penser qu'il ne cherchait pas forcément à réunir lui-même un grand nombre de personnes pour assister au rassemblement, mais qu'il exerçait simplement ses fonctions. En effet, selon les conditions de l'époque, nous pouvons penser que de tenir une pancarte faisait office de travail pour les citoyens du début du XIXe siècle. Ainsi, Richard Carlile remet en cause l'ampleur de cette volonté de contrôler sa population. Il n'oublie pas de mentionner l'hypocrisie du gouvernement qui d'un côté censure la liberté d'expression, et de l'autre côté ne censure pas les actes criminels et

[1] CARLILE, R., *The Republican*, 3 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p 166.

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anticonstitutionnels commis par les militaires. Le deuxième incident mentionné est le suivant :

> A man is found standing on Kennington Common, with a board, on which is inscribed ORDER, ORDER, and on which is pasted a printed bill, announcing that a meeting, which was intended to have been held on that day and on that spot, was postponed, and that the inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark were requested to unite with the inhabitants of the county of Middlesex, and City of London, and to meet in Smithfield on a future day, on which placard an intention was also expressed, of making an appeal to the Prince Regent to stand forth and save the People from the massacre with which they were threatened by merciless tyrants. The man is first requested by the Police Officers to move on and not to congregate a crowd, when the very nature and object of his board was to disperse them, and to prevent their disappointment in expecting a meeting to take place. The man moves on, according to the request of the Police Officer, and after some deliberation on their parts, they seize him and his board, and take him off to Union Hall before the sitting Magistrate.[1]

Nous retrouvons la même situation que présentée juste avant, c'est-à-dire un homme arrêté pour avoir tenu une pancarte liée à un rassemblement. Or ici, l'homme ne faisait pas spécialement appel aux personnes de se regrouper, mais au contraire il annonçait que le rassemblement devait être remis à plus tard. De plus, il faisait appel à la bienveillance du Prince Régent pour 'sauver le peuple du massacre'. Nous supposons que cet appel faisait référence à sauver la mémoire des personnes décédées sous les coups des soldats et toutes les victimes qui ont été touchées de près ou de loin par cette attaque. Toutefois, Richard Carlile nous souligne que cet homme a été arrêté et présenté devant les magistrats. Nous apprenons par la suite que celui-ci a été relâché par manque de preuve et de réel élément à porter à sa charge. C'est pourquoi nous pouvons dire que toutes ces mesures, allant à l'encontre des libertés de la population, frisent le ridicule car elles apportent une surcharge de travail du point de vue juridique. En effet, si à la moindre présence d'affiches dans les rues les officiers arrêtent les personnes sans vérifier leurs sources, ou arrêtent les personnes qui ne sont pas à l'origine de celle-ci, cela accentue les failles relevées dans le domaine de la justice.

Tous ces éléments, que nous avons analysés pour parler de la liberté d'expression qui s'est vu réduire au fur et à mesure, sont pertinents. Mais nous ne pouvons pas terminer ce chapitre sans rappeler que, le moment où la liberté d'expression a vraiment été mise à mal, c'est au moment du rassemblement au St Peter's Field lui-même. Il est évident que le but

[1] CARLILE, R., *The Republican*, 3 septembre 1819, voir Annexes p 167

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premier de cette assemblée était de transmettre des opinions, des revendications et de s'exprimer simplement. C'est pourquoi nous devons prendre en compte l'attaque des soldats comme un besoin du gouvernement de limiter la parole de ces manifestants. Et le fait que ce rassemblement était organisé et présidé par des radicaux, le gouvernement avait tout intérêt à y mettre fin pour ne pas qu'un sentiment anti-gouvernemental ne s'installe. Mais nous pouvons nous demander pourquoi avoir usé d'une telle violence simplement pour empêcher des personnes de parler? Alors que le rassemblement aurait pris fin de manière organisée et sans conséquences, si tout avait été fait dans les règles de la législation de la part des militaires. Si le *Riot Act* avait été lu, Henry Hunt, qui était en train de s'exprimer au moment de l'arrivée des troupes, aurait sans doute demander aux manifestants de le respecter. Si nous nous permettons de supposer ceci, c'est simplement parce que nous partons du principe que Henry Hunt a été le premier à demander le calme et le bon comportement de ses spectateurs. Même s'il leur a demandé de rester ferme, il voulait que ce rassemblement se déroule dans la légalité. Pour lui, leurs revendications ne pouvaient être écoutées et prises au sérieux que s'ils le faisaient dans les règles. Or, le gouvernement n'a pas voulu les écouter ni leur laisser la moindre chance de s'exprimer en leur coupant la parole de la manière la plus cruelle qu'il soit.

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Conclusion

« Peterloo outraged every belief and prejudice of the 'free-born Englishman'- the right of free speech, the desire for 'fair play', the taboo against attacking the defenceless.[1] » Cette citation englobe parfaitement les thèmes sur lesquels cette étude a été consacrée. En effet, cette étude a été mise en place afin de comprendre les circonstances du Massacre de Peterloo et ses conséquences sur le fonctionnement de la société britannique. Nous avons réussi à établir un constat remettant en cause les problèmes qui pesaient sur le gouvernement. Ce premier constat s'attarde sur cette impression que le gouvernement était prêt à attaquer son propre peuple, pour se protéger et ne pas avoir à subir de changements. Nous avons pu relever parmi différents articles que les éléments les plus mis en évidence étaient ceux liés aux injustices subies par la population. Ces éléments se composent principalement du manque de représentation au Parlement, des problèmes liés au droit de vote ainsi que le massacre de Peterloo en lui-même. Il a ajouté le problème même du respect de la classe ouvrière et de leur intégration dans la société.

Nous avons donc compris que ces évènements du 16 août 1819 n'étaient qu'une conséquence directe d'un système qui ne correspondait pas à une partie de la population. Et ce système commençait à poser problème là où la liberté de ses citoyens était remise en question. Nous avons pu mettre en évidence que le gouvernement contrôlait les libertés de ses habitants, particulièrement lorsqu'il s'agissait de la liberté d'expression. Et ce contrôle s'est ressenti notamment dans le fonctionnement de la presse. Or, nous avons également pu constater que le rôle de la presse a été important à la suite de l'attaque au St. Peter's Field. Ce que nous pouvons ajouter c'est que, même s'il n'y a pas de vérité absolue, les journaux soulignaient principalement le massacre et réclamaient justice au gouvernement. Toutefois, en analysant le rôle de la presse sur ce sujet précis, nous nous sommes rendu compte que les dirigeants pouvaient écrire l'histoire qui leur convenait le plus.

Ce qui nous a particulièrement intéressé lors de cette analyse, c'est de voir le manque de considération porté sur les conséquences terribles de l'attaque de la Manchester Yeomanry.

[1] THOMPSON, E.P, *The Making of the English Working class*, Penguin Books, 1963. Format Kindle, emplacement *12943*.

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C'est-à-dire que le gouvernement n'a pas cherché à s'excuser, ni à déplorer le comportement des forces militaires. Au contraire, le gouvernement les a félicité et a déploré le rassemblement qui, d'après eux, allait à l'encontre du respect des lois. Alors, nous avons compris que si la presse n'avait pas dépassé les limites qu'on lui avait infligées, et si les journalistes n'avaient pas décidé de continuer à écrire sur le sujet, il se peut qu'aujourd'hui nous n'ayons, pour unique source de commémoration, que des écrits ministériels et pro-gouvernementaux. C'est pourquoi nous pouvons supposer que, la restriction de la liberté d'expression de la presse, aurait pu avoir un impact total sur l'histoire. Si nous n'avions eu pour preuve du passé que les articles comme ceux du Morning Post, notre regard aurait été différent, ainsi que notre avis qui aurait sûrement été moins tranché.

Par conséquent, nous trouvons utile de nous poser d'autres questions autour de cet évènement. La première chose que nous pouvons nous demander est : jusqu'à quel point pouvons-nous considérer que le Massacre de Peterloo, à l'époque, a-t-il été une sorte de déclencheur, d'une envie de changement au sein de la population ? Et de manière générale, est-ce que ce genre de rassemblement des radicaux de la classe ouvrière a prouvé son efficacité? Si l'on se penche sur ce que nous avons déjà pu lire dans la presse, nous comprenons d'après nos conclusions que c'est plutôt l'effet inverse qui s'est produit. D'une part de nombreuses personnes y ont laissé leurs vies, et d'autre part le gouvernement n'a pas cédé et a même fait passer des lois qui ont restreint un peu plus leurs libertés.

Cela nous mène à nous demander quelle était l'opinion des autres classes sociales au sujet des réformes parlementaires voulues par les radicaux. Le massacre de Peterloo a principalement touché la classe ouvrière, populaire, qui était la plus présente dans la région de Manchester. Si nous poussions notre étude un peu plus loin, nous pourrions nous pencher sur une autre catégorie de radicaux qui existait à cette période. Il s'agissait des 'Middle Class philosophical Radicals.' Cette catégorie de radicaux se composait de personnes venant de la classe moyenne et qui étaient considérées comme plus éduquées. Elles étaient en faveur d'un changement progressif, pour une liberté libérale. Parmi eux, nous pouvons parler de Jeremy Bentham et James Mill qui voulaient une réforme des institutions britanniques, pour qu'elles soient plus efficaces. Ils voulaient par exemple une réforme pour élargir le scrutin à un plus grand nombre de citoyens. Parmi ces radicaux de la classe moyenne, nous pouvons également

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mentionner William Wilberforce qui voulait mettre fin au commerce des esclaves de manière progressive. Sur le long terme, ce sont eux qui ont obtenu les meilleurs résultats, notamment grâce à cette envie de réformer progressivement le gouvernement. Ainsi, il serait important de faire une analyse autour de ces deux grands groupes de radicaux, afin d'établir un contraste et de comprendre les raisons qui les différenciaient. Ces raisons peuvent par exemple se trouver au niveau social et culturel.

Qu'en est-il de la presse? Il serait utile de voir jusqu'où le contrôle des journaux a été poussé, et quand la presse a réussi à se libérer de cette emprise du gouvernement. Nous savons qu'une certaine presse radicale s'est créée par la suite, comme cela fut le cas du *Manchester Observer*. Mais leur circulation se faisait parfois de manière clandestine, afin de passer au travers des différentes taxes imposées par le gouvernement. Mais aussi afin d'éviter d'être censurés pour leurs contenus jugés diffamatoires.

Par ailleurs, nous trouvons intéressant de nous demander comment le Massacre de Peterloo est commémoré aujourd'hui. Et surtout, est-ce que l'on continue à parler de ces évènements, qui ont été comme un tournant pour la classe ouvrière ? De nombreux articles sont effectivement sortis à l'époque, il serait donc nécéssaire de voir si cette diffusion s'est poursuivie au fil des années. Nous avons pu nous rendre compte que les caricaturistes, comme Georges Cruikshank, ont continué, jusqu'à deux ans après les évènements à dénoncer les attaques lors du rassemblement de Manchester. En discutant avec le Dr. Ian St. John, professeur d'histoire spécialisé dans l'histoire Britannique du XIXe siècle, nous avons pu nous rendre compte que cet évènement historique n'était pas majoritairement enseigné à l'école. En effet, aujourd'hui les jeunes générations, et mêmes les plus âgées, ne connaissent pas forcément ce point historique. C'est pourquoi, nous voulions nous demander s'il était important de continuer à en parler, que ce soit à l'école ou dans les différents médias. Si nous avons soulevé cette question, c'est notamment parce que l'année prochaine, en 2019, nous allons célébrer le bicentenaire du Massacre de Peterloo. Par conséquent, il sera intéressant de voir si la population britannique porte un quelconque intérêt sur ce sujet. Et si ce n'est pas le cas, comment les intéresser? Lors de nos recherches, nous avons pu remarquer qu'un film avait été tourné au sujet de Peterloo. C'est le réalisateur Mike Leigh qui a décidé d'adapter à l'écran « The story of the 1819 Peterloo Massacre where British forces attacked a peaceful pro-democracy rally in

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Manchester.[1]» Il précise ses intentions de réaliser ce film dans un article du journal *The Guardian* : «"There has never been a feature film about the Peterloo massacre," said Leigh. "Apart from the universal political significance of this historic event, the story has a particular personal resonance for me, as a native of Manchester and Salford."[2] » Ce film sortira en novembre 2018 au Royaume-Uni. Et si nous le mentionnons, c'est parce que nous pensons qu'il pourrait être à l'origine d'une nouvelle étude. En effet, établir une comparaison entre les articles d'époque et le film de Mike Leigh, permettrait de mettre en évidence les différents parti pris. Ainsi, nous pourrions voir quels éléments sont considérés comme les plus importants à retenir de cet évènement historique.

Enfin, il serait intéressant de comparer le Massacre de Peterloo à d'autres protestations populaires. En effet, depuis le XIXe siècle de nombreuses manifestations, pacifiques ou non, se sont déroulées au Royaume-Uni. Les mettre en évidence permettrait de voir si elles ont toutes été à l'origine d'amélioration au sein du gouvernement ou si comme Peterloo, elles se sont mal terminées. Mais le point le plus important que nous pourrions développer à travers les mouvements protestataires depuis le 16 aout 1819, serait celui de la présence des femmes au sein-même de ces mouvements. Comme nous avons pu le voir, de nombreuses associations de femmes réformatrices étaient impliquées lors du rassemblement au St. Peter's Field. Pourtant, à cette époque, elles n'avaient pas le droit de se mêler aux affaires politiques du pays. C'est pourquoi nous pensons que nous focaliser sur l'importance des femmes dans les mouvements radicaux, et leur évolution au fil des années, pourrait faire l'objet d'une étude très intéressante.

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[1] Peterloo (2018)
https://www.imdb.com/title/tt4614612/ [Dernière consultation le 23/06/2018]

[2] SHOARD, Catherine, The Guardian, *Mike Leigh to make movie of Peterloo massacre*, 17 avril 2015.
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I. Articles :

1. Morning Advertiser, August 17, 1819

STATE PROSECUTIONS

The following is a Copy of one of the Indictments against Mr. Wroe, Printer and Publisher of the Manchester Observer : —

"Lancashire to Wit. The Jurors for our Lord the King, upon their oath present, that James Wroe, late of Manchester, in the county of Lancaster, labourer, being a wicked, malicious, ill-disposed person, and wickedly devising and intending, as far as in him lay, to bring into public contempt, hatred and disgrace, the two Houses of Parliament, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, and the Members thereof : and also to bring into public contempt, hatred and disgrace, the administration of justice, within this realm : and to excite discontent and disaffection in the minds of the liege subjects of said Lord the King; heretofore, to wit, on the seventeenth day of July, in the fifty ninth year of the reign of our said Sovereign Lord George the Third, by the Grace of God, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, King, Defender of the Faith; with force and arms at Manchester aforesaid, in the said county, did wickedly and maliciously print and publish, and cause and procure to be printed and published, in a certain public newspaper, entitled Manchester Observer, or Literary, Commercial and Political Register, a *false*, *wicked*, and *malicious* Libel, of and concerning the two Houses of Parliament, of the said United Kingdom, and the Members thereof; and of concerning the administration of justice in this kingdom, containing amongst other things, the several false, scandalous, malicious, and seditious passage, words and matters following : that is to say, 'They next complain of the scandalous reflection upon the administration of justice,' Justice indeed! where is justice to be found?

"Was she in St. Stephen Chapel when the Corn Laws were passed (thereby meaning and insinuating, that the Lords and Commons Houses of Parliament, had been guilty of injustice in passing the said Corn Laws), which took the bread out of the mouth of millions, to increase the property of those who made those laws ? (thereby meaning and insinuating, that the Members of the said Houses of Parliament, unjustly and corruptly, passed the said Laws, for their own advantage and emolument.) Was she in the said Chapel, when the Combination Act was passed? Which put it in the power of employers to reduce workmen's wages at their pleasure; and sent such workmen as refused to comply with their reductions, to prison or starvation ? O no — (meaning and insinuating thereby, that the said two Houses of Parliament had been guilty of injustice and oppression, in passing the said last mentioned Act.) Was she in our Theatre, when Mr. Hunt and his three unoffending companions were so violently, so unprovokedly, and so wickedly assaulted; although in the presence of a host of Magistrates, constables, and other officers of the peace?

"Was she at the New Bailey, while Mr. Cross was examining Mr. Hunt? or did she preside when Pilkington, Wilson, and Kay, were sentenced to two years imprisonment, for attempting to obtain wages, which would enable them to earn about ten or twelve shillings a

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week — while the man, yes, the man who passed that sentence, took 50/. a week for his humble references? Did Justice preside at Liverpool, when the Grand Jury there refused to find a bill against those men, who had so wantonly and wickedly attacked Mr. Hunt and his three companions, in our Theatre? (meaning thereby that the said Grand Jury had been guilty of injustice, in refusing to find the said last mentioned bill.) Or was she present at Chester, when the maltreated Johnston, Dummond, and Bagguley, were accused of using improper expressions towards those who had previously torn them from their families and friends, and thrown them for months into solitary dungeons ?

"Did Justice appoint their excessive and unconstitutional bail; bail that could not be procured, although their alledged offence was merely words ?— Or, lastly, did Justice preside at their trial, when they were sentenced to two years' imprisonment, for only saying harsh things of those, who had done such harsh deeds towards them? (thereby meaning and insinuating that the said Johnston, Drummond, and Bagguley, had been oppressively and unjustly confined in solitary dungeons : and that great and excessive bail had been oppressively and and unjustly required from them the said Johnston, Drummond and Bagguley: and that an unjust and oppressive sentence had been pronounced against them). Is it possible for men whose conduct deserves such reprehension to be surprised to find they are not respected? — (meaning thereby and insinuating that the said Members of the said Houses of Parliament, and the said Magistrates and others so concerned in the administration of justice, as aforesaid, had been guilty of conduct which deserved reprehension, and were not respected.) In contempt of our said Lord the King, in violation of the laws of the realm, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his Crown and dignity."

The following is a copy of the indictment against Knight, Fitton, Mitchell &c.

"Lancashire; to wit. — The Jurors for our Lord the King upon their oaths present, that John Knight, late of Manchester; in the county of Lancaster, labourer; William Mitchell, late of the same place, labourer; and Mark Wardle, late of the same place, labourer; being persons of a turbulent and seditious disposition, and wickedly and maliciously devising and intending to excite tumults and insurrection within this realm, on the 5th day of July, in the 59th year of the reign of George the Third, of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland, being at Blackburn in the said county, together with divers other persons to the Jurors aforesaid unknown, to the number of one thousand and upwards, with force and arms, unlawfully did assemble and gather together, did, by seditious speeches and discourses, and by other unlawful and dishonest means, then and there endeavour to incite and stir up the people of the realm to hatred and contempt of the Government and Constitution thereof as by law established, in contempt of our said Lord the King and his laws, to the evil example of all others in the like case offending, and against the peace of our Lord the King, his Crown and dignity.

"And the Jurors aforesaid, upon their oath aforesaid, do further present that the said John Knight, William Fitton, William Mitchell, and Mark Wardle, together with divers other persons to the Jurors aforesaid unknown, on the same day and year aforesaid, at Blackburn aforesaid, in the said County, with force and arms unlawfully did conspire, combine, confederate and agree together, to disturb the public peace of this Kingdom, and to incite and stir up the people to hatred and contempt of the Government and Constitution thereof, as by law established, in contempt of our said Lord the King, and his Laws, to the evil example of

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all others in like case offending, and against the peace of our said Lord the King, his crown and dignity.

(Signed) "GORST"

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2. The Morning Chronicle, London, THURSDAY, AUGUST 19, 1819

We have this day to record the shocking catastrophe of the Meeting at Manchester. Instead of the Assembly of Radical Reformers being permitted to expend itself in vapour, as it would assuredly have done, if, as has always happened, there had been intemperance only on one side, our readers will see that the Magistrates interfered before any breach of the peace had occurred, and that several lives have been lost by the intemperance of those whose duty it was to watch, but not to act prematurely.

This dreadful tragedy on Monday last, must fill all who have the peace and character of the country at heart with the most profound grief. Our readers will find the various accounts which have reached us of this melancholy business in another part of our Paper.

It has hitherto been the peculiar boast of this country that its inhabitants were distinguished above those of every other by the horror in which they held the effusion of human blood. The transactions of Manchester constitute a new feature in our history.

On the continent of Europe, men read with amazement that bodies of 30, 40, 50 and 60 thousand people, suffering under the severest privations, could assemble together without proceeding to acts of violence. They were still more astonished to learn that a few unarmed constables could proceed through a large multitude of 70,000 thousand men, and in the face of that multitude lay hold of an orator to whom they had been listening, and consign him to prison; yet all this was done without even the slightest attempt at resistance!

But the cause of this proud distinction, of this aversion to the effusion of blood, this uniform deference to the laws, was well known to all reflecting persons here. It arose, in a great measure, out of this very privilege so long enjoyed by our people, of meeting when they chose for the purpose of giving free vent to their complaints. In a despotic county where a man dare not proclaim his real or imagined wrongs, he broods over them in silence, till he is almost inflamed to madness, and when the force is removed which constrained him, he plunges headlong into the wildest excesses. But in this country the angry feelings were not inflamed by compression, and for the most part evaporated in the ebullitions of a public discourse. The sort of triumph in which the people could in this manner indulge, left little room for vindictive feelings; and hence our public meetings were not only peaceable and orderly in themselves, but one of the great causes of peace and order throughout the country.

It is for this reason, among others, that the right of the people to meet and petition has always been held in such high regard by the wisest and best of our politicians.

In the case of the Meetings for Reform throughout the country, we can see nothing which should except them from the rule which we have laid down. The object of those who assembled at these Meetings was one of which we cannot approve. But the question is, can we, by preventing these Meetings, eradicate the feelings which give rise to them? And if we cannot, is it not then better that the people should give free vent to these feelings than that they should be obliged to suppress them. Now, with respect to the Meeting at Manchester, all the accounts which we have yet seen concur in stating the conduct of the immense multitude assembled

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together to have been marked by no outrage whatever. We are quite at a loss then to conceive on what grounds cavalry could be ordered to charge people conducting themselves in a peaceful manner. We are always supposing that no acts of violence had taken place, for on this, in our opinion, the whole will hinge. It is said, that previous to the Meeting several inhabitants deposed that they were apprehensive acts of riot and tumult might take place, and that in consequence of these depositions, the Riot Act was read ; but no overt act of riot did take place. It was quite clear that the Magistrates did not act on information against any particular individuals, for among others, a Gentleman who was taking notes for the *Times* Newspaper was arrested and conveyed to prison. It does not appear that the persons assembled had the slightest notice of the Riot Act having been read, for it was read before the meeting commenced, and the previous tranquillity could lead no one to expect the scene that ensued.

We are unwilling to prejudge the cause of any class of men, and till we hear the statement which the Magistrates will put forth, we shall abstain from any positive opinion. We must, however, observe in the mean time, that if any reliance is to be placed in the accounts hitherto received, there does appear to us, in this business, a singular indifference on the part of the Magistrates of Manchester to the safety of the people placed under their charge. Good Heavens ! To order regiments of cavalry to charge an unarmed and peaceable multitude, to hew down and trample on all who stood before them! Can this be possible? The whole country must be filled with horror at the very idea. The Magistrates of Manchester have indeed a serious account to render to their countrymen. We wait with impatience for their defence.

Of the sort of sanguinary feeling which has been indulged on this occasion, we cannot give a better illustration than is conveyed in the following sentence from *The Manchester Herald* quoted in *The Courier* :

"Had it not been for the interference of Mr. NADIN, the deputy constable whom these men have particularly calumniated, it is certain Mr. HUNT would not now have been alive, *for the military were determined to cut him to pieces*." And this is coolly committed to writing ! The military were determined to cut an offending individual to pieces ! Even the enemy who has thrown down his arms and sues for quarter is spared. The blood runs cold at this avowal of cool barbarity.

We tremble for the consequences of this awful business. We hope, however, for the character and honour of our country, that it will not lead to other outrages. We hope our countrymen will stop short on the brink of the abyss towards which they have been driven — that whatever they do, they will not imbrue their hands in the blood of each other. Let not this stain rest on our country.

It is said that Mr. HUNT, before the meeting, took place, repaired to the Magistrates to know whether they had any warrants against him, and that he was answered in the negative. It has been observed too, that the Magistrates declared the former meeting of Monday illegal, from which an inference was naturally drawn, that it was perfectly legal.

We subjoin the latest accounts which we have received from Manchester : —

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"We are glad to inform you that all is perfectly tranquil at Manchester, though not without the loss of several lives.
"Coburg Coach Office, two o'clock Tuesday."
"All is peaceable in Manchester at present. There was a little disturbance this morning, but nothing of any consequence.
"Defiance Coach Office, two o'clock Tuesday."

A rumour has, however, reached us, that three persons were shot in the course in the course of the disturbance which took place on Tuesday morning, and that crowds were assembling in various parts of Manchester towards the evening of Tuesday.

We learn that the member of the Manchester Yeoman Cavalry, who was shot, and who was stated in the Manchester Papers to have expired in the Infirmary, is on the contrary much better, and likely to recover.

[…]

MANCHESTER MEETING

PRIVATE LETTERS
"MANCHESTER MONDAY ONE O'CLOCK.

"The town is in great consternation and alarm, numbers pouring in from all parts of the surrounding country, principally Spinners and Weavers, both men and women. It is a new and alarming feature in these mobs that they do not assembled as old English mobs used to do, from motives of individual curiosity, or caprice, or fun, or idleness — they do not come in straggling singly or in little knots of two or three from every different direction; but literally advance in marching order, with all the form and regularity of military bodies. About half an hour ago I met, in Oldham street, an immense mass of men, marching in common time, five abreast, with two white flags, and a very respectable band of music consisting of not less than 30 performers. I counted these files until about 2000 men had passed, when the crowd became so great that, I could no longer pursue my reckoning, but I conceive that the whole party thus drawn ups and marching in order, could not be less than four or five thousand.

"Very shortly afterwards, a party of perhaps 8000 passed the Exchange. These also were military array, preceded by flags, red and black, with the *Cap of Jacobinism*. The former of the two parties came, I believe, from Bury, the latter from Royton. Similar parties came in from Stockport and the other towns in the neighbourhood.

"I have just been at the spot appointed for the Meeting. About 15,000 persons are already there, men and women. The Chair was not then taken, but the different parties had already arranged themselves very regularly round two carts, which they had brought with them, at about six yards distance. A sort of stage was formed on the carts, and around it were planted five banners, two red, two white, and one black. — Upon one side of the latter was a hand holding the scales of Justice, with the inscription, '*Taxation without Representation is unjust*

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and tyrannical.'— On the other side was at the top '*Love*,' and beneath, '*Unite and be free*.'— '*Equal Representation or DEATH!*' On some of the other flags were '*No Corn Laws.*'—'*Let's die like Men, and not be sold like Slaves*,' with other such violent inscriptions.— Whilst the mob were collecting round these standards, and waiting with some impatience for their promised leaders, they were addressed by a shabby-looking fellow, whose name nobody seemed to know. He exhorted them to be peaceable and quiet, and show their enemies that they mere not mad, as they wished to represent them. 'If we are mad,' said he, 'it is the most pleasant loss of senses I ever experienced, and hope it will never be extinct but with death. At this important crisis it behoves every freeborn Englishman to abstain from violence. We only desire our fair and just rights; let us demand them with steadiness and perseverance, and victory will be the certain result.'

"In the Market-place and Market-street the shop windows are closed. In the principal streets are immense numbers of country-people strolling about.— (You are aware, that for many miles round Manchester the manufacturing population is more numerous than in any other part of Great Britain; it is like walking among ant-hills, so crowded and so busy are the inhabitants). The more retired parts of the town are as silent as death. Altogether the impression which the scene creates on the mind of an observer is melancholy and awful. The Yeomanry Cavalry musters amazingly well. The Cheshire Yeomanry are near the town, as well as the First Dragoon Guards. The 15th Hussards are in the barracks, as well as two companies of Horse Artillery; and Besides these, the 88th and 31st Foot are also in town. In short, here is military force enough to crush ten such mobs."

Two o'clock.

"The Magistrates have dissolved the Meeting, and *taken Mr. Hunt and a dozen other Ringleaders into custody!* The circumstances have been terrific : I will give you as connected an account of them as I possibly can, but you must make allowances for the general state of confusion and alarm in which we have been the whole of the day. I will begin where I left off before, with the sort of desultory harangue which a casual Orator was making, apparently to while away the time till the principal Orator should arrive. After he had been talking some time in a loose disjointed manner, he was interrupted by a violent shout, which announced the approach of Hunt. It was within a few minutes of one o'clock when Hunt reached the Hustings. He was said to be accompanied by Wooler, but I could not see the *Black Dwarf*, nor do I believe he was there; but Johnson, Moorhouse, Saxton, and Swift, were in the barouche, on the box of which was seated a profligate Amazon, named Mary Waterworth, bearing the standard of the Stockport Female Reformers. Several others of the Stockport gang surrounded the vehicle.

"After the formality of proposing and seconding Hunt as Chairman, he rose and spoke to the following effect: —' Gentlemen, I crave your indulgence while I proceed to state the nature and object of this Meeting and I particularly request that no Gentleman will call *silence*, as it produces more disorder than any other circumstance, and perhaps will give our ennemies the opportunity they are seeking for to cause a further encroachment on our rights and liberties. Gentlemen, for the honour you have done me in electing me Chairman on this important

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occasion, I return you my sincere and heartfelt thanks, I am happy to see such an immense concourse of people assembled, and I fearfully regret that I shall not be able to make myself heard by all of you, but those who are able to hear me will I hope do so peaceably and quietly. It is useless to attempt to relate the proceedings that have occurred in your town for the last ten days, or to state to you the cause of the Meeting on Monday being postponed, you are all acquainted with it. Those wise Magistrates, who were the cause of preventing the Meeting on Monday last, fancied they had achieved a glorious victory, but their pusillanimous conduct since, and the presence of such an immense and respectable assembly as now stands before me, prove quite the contrary. A placard which nobody could understand had been posted up all over the town, signed by *Tom Long* and *Jack Short*, and some such contemptible beings.' He was about to proceed, but the appearance of the cavalry in the distance stopped him for a moment.

"The Yeomanry Cavalry arrived on the ground at the full speed. They took up a position under the wall of 'The Cottage,' (a well-known building so called) where they remained in a line about five minutes, during which time I believe the Riot Act was read, immediately after which they made a dash into the crowd, and surrounded the Hustings. Mr. Nadin then ascended and seized hold of Johnson first, then of Hunt, and afterwards of several others, whom he handed to his assistants, and the latter carried them immediately to the New Bailey. The banners were the next objects to which the Police Officers directed their attention, and with very little resistance they got possession of the whole of them. The scene that now ensued was truly awful ! The shrieks of women and the groans of men were to be heard at some distance. Every person who attended out of curiosity, finding his personal safety at risk, immediately fled.

"The crush was so great in one part of the field, that it knocked down some outbuildings, at the end of a row of houses, on which there were at least 20 or 30 persons, with an immense clash. As I was carried along by the crowd, I saw several almost buried in the ruins — others in their anxiety to escape had fallen down, and were trampled on by the populace. A feeling of *sauve qui peut* appeared now to fill the mind of every body, and the dreadful result is not yet known.

"The Yeomanry was supported by the 15th Hussars. Among the *spolia opima* they say are to be reckoned sixteen banners with seditious inscriptions *of the* six'Caps of Jacobinism; At the moment when Hunt was seized, there could not have been fewer then 5000 persons on the ground."

"Half past Two o'clock

"I have just ascertained that a dragoon and a […] have fallen victims. A man of the name of Ash[…] a special constable, is also dead.

"The accompanying is a list of the persons already in custody. Warrants have been issued against several others, but they are not yet taken : —

"Henry Hunt, Joseph Johnson, John Tyas, George […], John Thacker Saxton, Robert Wild, Thomas Taylor, Mary Waterworth, Sarah Hargreaves, Elizabeth Gaunt, V[…] Faulkner, James Johnson, William Billinge."

"Half-past Three o'clock

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"The military are parading the streets, and the populace have retired.
"Nearly the whole of the persons who were on building above mentioned that fell in, have been killed eleven at the least are named."

"Four o'clock

"KNIGHT has just been apprehended and is […] to the Police-office."

Half past Four o'clock

"MOORHOUSE has also this moment been apprehended and carried to the Police-office. The […] have again assembled at St. Peter's Church, and the military have again repaired thither."

ANOTHER LETTER

"Half past six"

"You are probably aware that the Meeting of E[…] formers which was to have taken place last Monday was postponed until this day. Accordingly, half past eleven o'clock this forenoon, a large body of people, attended by some music, and carrying flags […] the usual inscriptions, which have been exhibited *at* former Meetings, began to pass the Exchange on the way from Royton, Bury, &c., and proceeded to the place of meeting. Those were succeeded by other bodies of people from different parts of neighbourhood amongst whom I was sorry to see many females. The Cap of Liberty, placed at the top of a standard […] formed a conspicuous object in the insignia of […] body. They were five or six of them.

"The assembly continued increasing until about *few* minutes past one o'clock, when Mr. HUNT made appearance in a barouche, which contained a female, JOHNSTON, SAXTON, KNIGHT, and two or three other persons. The carriage moved slowly up to the hustings, and its arrival there was marked by long and loud cheerings. At this period it is probably an understatement to say that 50,000 persons were present. […] the body of the town many of the shops were closed and business was wholly suspended from an early hour of the forenoon; not, I believe, from any apprehensive of the proceedings of the Reformers, but from […] of undefined dread that violence would be used. Indeed, it was confidently asserted that HUNT would be arrested upon the hustings; but moderate men unusually concluded that the meeting would be allowed go off peaceably, provided no breach of the peace, committed by the people. Up to the period of arrival of the carriage, none of the military had been seen in the streets, though it was known that the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry were concentrated in Messrs. PICKFORD's (the carriers) yard. On mounting the hustings Mr. HUNT was immediately called to the Chair, and commenced his introduction Address to the Meeting. He exhorted the people to be firm but peaceable. 'And,' said he, 'if any man makes the slightest attempt to break the peace, *put him down and keep him down.*' Just as he had uttered those words, the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry came galloping down Morley-street and P[…] street, and ranged themselves in front of a row of houses on the South side of the area where the Meeting was, in one of which the Magistrates were assembled.

"The greater part of the persons who were at the outskirts of the assembly on that side instantly ran away; but the main body remained compact […] and finding the soldiers halt

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under the houses, faced round to and cheered them. But a few moments had elapsed, when some orders were given to the troops and they instantly dashed at full gallop amongst the people, actually hacking their way up to the hustings. A cordon of Special Constables was drawn from the house occupied by the Magistrates towards the […] and these fared as ill from the attacks of the soldiers as the people at large. A comparatively undisciplined body, led on by officers who had never had any experience in military affairs, and probably all under the influence both of personal fear, and considerable political feeling of hostility, could not be expected to act either with coolness or discrimination ; and accordingly, men, women and children, Constables and Reformers, were all equally exposed to their attacks. Numbers were trampled down, and numbers were cut down.

"When they arrived at the hustings, the standards were torn or cut from the hands of those who held them, and Hunt, Johnson, Saxton, and several other persons, including three or four women, were taken into custody. Hunt was taken along by the Constables to the house where the Magistrates were sitting, crying out 'Murder!'as he was every instant struck by the bludgeons of numbers of Constables who surrounded him. An attempt was made to knock his hat off, but unsuccessfully ; and, just as he was going up the *signs*, a person, who shall be for the present nameless, with a club of large size, struck him with the force of both hands a blow on the head, which completely […] his hat, and almost levelled him with the ground ; of this I can produce evidence on oath.

"The proceedings of the Manchester Cavalry were seconded by the Cheshire Yeomanry, and a detachment of the Dragoons stationed here. The people were pursued at full gallop through all the avenues leading from the place of meeting, and to distant parts of the town. What is the extent of the carnage that has taken place it is at present impossible to say ; but five or six are know to be dead. There are 26 in the Infirmary, several of whom cannot live, and at least as many out-patients severely wounded. There are men, women and children, constables, and also soldiers among them : and, in all probability, there are many wounded who have not been heard of at the Infirmary.

"Whether the Riot Act had been read, I am not enabled positively to say ; but I affirm, from actual observation, that not the slightest breach of the peace had been committed, or appeared, as far as I could judge, likely to take place ; and, most certainly, instead of an hour being allowed after proclamation, for the people to disperse, not twenty minutes had elapsed, after Mr. Hunt came upon the ground, before the carnage began.

"What are the charges upon which Hunt and the rest are arrested, I know not. Rumour says *High Treason*, of which carrying the Cap of Liberty is stated as an overt act!!"

PRIVATE LETTER

"Manchester , Monday Evening, Six o'clock.

"The public Meeting, so long talked of, took place this day, and it has not terminated, I regret to say, without bloodshed. So early as ten o'clock, immense numbers of people, many of them marching in […] order, with colours displayed, entered the town through its different avenues

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: but it is but correct to say, they carried no weapons — few of them even a stick. Hunt, attended by Johnson and others, in an open carriage, with a female supporting a flag, preceded and surrounded, by a great multitude, came to the place of meeting a a little after one o'clock. The assemblage was indeed immense— much more numerous than at any former meeting. The Reformers from the contiguous country — from Middleton, Royton, Oldham, Stockport, &c. each seem to have come in a body, with their peculiar flags. I counted to 16, and there were five or six *Liberty Caps*. Some ten minutes had elapsed, and Hunt had addressed the multitude for a very short time — all was certainly perfectly peaceable, when a body of cavalry rode up through the crowd, brandishing their drawn swords, surrounded the Hustings, and seized Hunt and his associates. It seems that, by some mistake, several of the Special Constables were rode over, wounded, and hurt. One of them, Mr. Ashworth, landlord of the Bull's Head Inn, is certainly dead! About 60 of the unfortunate multitude, many of them severely wounded , have been taken to the Infirmary. It is said that six of them are since dead.

"I pretend not to judge of the necessity of this serious measure ; many respectable persons certainly view it with disgust and dismay. I was myself a spectator, and the conduct of the crowd was quite peaceable. It is not believed that the Magistrates read the Riot Act — if they did, at least nobody was aware of it. There can hardly be a doubt if the Meeting had been permitted to take its course, it would have concluded as peaceably as they have always hitherto done; as it is, *blood has been shed!* and there is no knowing what we have to expect in this neighbourhood !"

"MANCHESTER, August 16.

"Monday, Half-past Five o'clock.

"Manchester as has this day witnessed such a scene as few could have expected. At least from 80 to 100,000 persons were assembled on the ground fixed upon by Hunt and Co. About a quarter after one o'clock he mounted the stage, surrounded by this immense number of favourers of his cause and spectators. The proceedings had scarcely commenced, when the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry, with the regular cavalry stationed here, made their appearance. In a few moments five Caps of Liberty, with eight or ten flags, bearing various inscriptions, were torn down, and hundreds of people trampled under the feet of the horses. Indeed the Special Constables shared a harder fate than tens of thousands on the ground : four persons died on the field, and one Special Constable in a half-an hour afterwards, at the Bull's Head, Market-place.

"Mr. John Hulme, of the Manchester Cavalry, it is said by several of the Faculty, will not live 24 hours, unless a very favourable change takes place this evening. Twenty-six persons have been received into the Infirmary, whose names and residences have been entered, four other persons have been received, but not entered, very dangerously wounded. Twenty-four other persons who were brought to the Infirmary, have since been sent home, not being very seriously injured. It is supposed that at least sixty or seventy have been taken from the ground by their friends. Several are reported to have died within the last two hours.

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“While writing a troop of horse are returning from the New Cross, with two prisoners, for having, with others, thrown stones, brick-bats, &c. at the military.

“One Constable, in this charge, has been severely cut on the head, not being discriminated by the military, and just taken to a druggist’s shop.

“It is reported that the Magistrates obtained signatures from a number of respectable inhabitants, signifying their opinion of the alarming situation in which the town was placed, by the thousands who flocked in from all quarters of the surrounding country. The Magistrates took up their situation in a Gentleman’s house, full in view of all that transpired.

“I have not heard that the Riot Act was read, excepting it was read by some of the Magistrates in the house alluded to, or in some other quarter of the ground which my informants did not visit. — Greatly in haste. “A PASSING TRAVELLER.”

“P.S. Six o’clock. — Mr. Hunt, with seventeen other persons, who were on the stage, have lodgings allotted to them in the New Bailey, and will be heard by a full Bench of Magistrates to-morrow. It is reported that Knight made his escape when the military came in sight.”

FROM THE MANCHESTER MERCURY

"It was not until near one o’clock that Hunt and his immense mob traversed the streets, by an indirect route, towards the place of Meeting, near St. Peter’s Field Church. The first notable object in the procession was a board exalted above the crowd, bearing the specious inscription “Order ;” next came a miserable band of musicians, and, in about the centre of the phalanx, the odious instigators of the day’s calamity, viz. Hunt, Johnson, Knight, and another *Worthy*, carried in an open hackney-coach; upon the box was displayed an amiable specimen of the female branch of these philanthropists, who was very busy buffeting the air as she went along with a white handkerchief. The Red Cap of Liberty held a prominent place in the procession, and several flags, with the usual inflammatory sentences, were displayed. They halted, as they have been accustomed, opposite the Exchange, whilst they astounded all ears with continued shouting and clapping of hands.

“About half-past one they arrived at the area appointed for their performances, and the leading characters ascending the hustings : Hunt was proposed and accepted as Chairman, and some preliminary business had been entered upon, altogether occupying about twenty minutes, when the bugle sounded, and the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry advanced in full charge through the multitude, and surrounded the orators upon their own stage, who were all taken into custody, and forthwith consigned to the New Bailey Prison. Hunt demurred, and said he would surrender to no one but Magistrate ; a gentleman in the commission then appeared, and the whole were given up to the special protection of Mr. Nadin. The 15th Hussars and the Prince Regent’s Regiment of Yeomanry Cavalry next approached, and routed the throng with the utmost dismay in all direction.

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"Now ensues a most painful and melancholy part of our recital : the necessary ardour of the troops in the discharge of their duty, has led, we lament say, to some fatal and some very serious accidents. A respectable innkeeper (Mr. Ashworth, of the Bull's Head), who was officiating as a Special Constable, was rode over and mortally wounded ; another young man, who is at present unknown, experienced the same fate. Mr. A. Tilford, innkeeper, has been most dangerously hurt ; another unfortunate sufferer lies dead in the Infirmary, and several are without hopes of recovery. There are eighteen in-patients there, and thirty-two out-patients. A considerable number have been taken, wounded, to their own homes. A most worthy and respectable young gentleman, a member of our Yeomanry, is bringing into the Infirmary — every moment expected to breathe his last. The extent of injuries received is truly hurt-rending. We fear what we have already stated will prove to be strictly within compass. Two pieces of artillery appeared upon the field, but were not used.

"Mercury Office, seven o'clock.

"The Riot Act has been just read at the New Cross, in consequence of the windows of Mr. Tate, grocer, being entirely demolished by stones, from the pavement."

"Eight o'clock.

"Our respected fellow-townsman in the Infirmary, we are just informed, is now hopelessly no more."

FROM THE MANCHESTER HERALD.

"Soon after twelve o'clock the Magistrates and a body of Constables repaired to the ground to which the Brigaded Reformers had marched, and in *consequence* of depositions made before several of his Majesty's Justices of the Peace by many of the most respectable inhabitants of the town of Manchester and Salford, in which they stated their apprehension of riot and tumult as the probable consequence of such an assemblage of persons from distant townships, marched thither under banners so explicit of rebellious intentions, the Riot Act was read, but it did not appear to be much attended to by the infatuated crowd, who continued to scowl and laugh at the Constables, &c. in attendance.

"We understand the Travelling Orator had begun to address the Reformers, when, an hour having expired after the reading of the Riot Act, the warrants of the Magistrates were carried into effect.

"In the course of the afternoon the following persons were taken into custody in addition to those taken up on the field : — Valentine Faulkner, James Johnson, William Billinge, William Bolton, Edward Perrins, Thomas Kesugh, James Moorhouse, John Knight, Isaac Murray, Thomas Ashton, Thomas Worthington, Abraham Whitaker, William Ashworth, &c. &c. and a great number of rioters, from various parts of the town, were escorted in the evening, by the cavalry, to the New Bayley."

PRIVATE LETTER.

" MANCHESTER, MONDAY NIGHT,

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Eleven o'clock.

"The town is now in peace and quietness for the moment, but threats of vengeance are predominant in a very great degree. Since my former communication I have visited the Infirmary of this town and ascertained, precisely, the number of victims who have fallen in this cause. the number of wounded men may be stated, at a moderate calculation, at Eighty. One unfortunate victim is a gentleman of the name of HULME, who is a resident of the town of Manchester, and an individual of great property as well as respectability, and has only been a few months married. He was in the charge that surrounded the Hustings, and some miscreant aimed a blow at him with a brick, which had effect, and levelled him with the ground — and in the fall he fractured his skull, which will ultimately be his death — he lingers at present in great agony. Three persons are already dead !

"After the Meeting the populace assembled in great numbers at New Cross, a place which is inhabited by the Irish, and of desperate character ; their conduct was such as to require the interference again of the military, whose presence proving ineffectual, they were compelled to have recourse to coercive measures, and fired on the deluded multitude : the consequence was, that one person was shot through the back part of the skull, the wound of which is mortal: another is this moment undergoing amputation of the leg ; and several other persons are carried to the Infirmary dreadfully wounded.

"The mob in New Cross proceeded to great lengths, and actually broke open a shop in the neighbourhood, and every respectable person who happened to be passing was stoned."

We learn by a Gentleman who arrived by the Mail yesterday morning from Manchester, that on the night of Monday all the roads leading from that town to Middleton, Leigh, Royton, &c., presented a distressing spectacle of men, women, and children, all hurrying homeward in the greatest disorder, some with their clothes torn, others lamed by the wounds they had received in the affray, &c. Tuesday morning several hundreds of persons were seen within fourteen miles of Manchester lying in the fields by the road-side, overcome by fatigue, or unable from the injuries they had received to reach their homes. The military and police continued, parading the streets of Manchester during the whole of Monday night.

3. Saunders's news-letter, August 23, 1819

LONDON, AUGUST 19.

Second Edition, Courier Office, 3 o'clock.

We have just had accounts from Manchester, three hours later than those we received in the early part of the day. Every thing was quiet ; troops had been sent off to Macclesfield.

The following placard was stuck up in some parts of the metropolis during the last night. Among other places, it was stuck up on the door of Lord Sidmouth's house :—

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TO ARMS
REVENGE

THE MANCHESTER MURDER.

Another placard was also stuck up, enforcing the necessity of a strong attendance on Monday, at Kennington Common.

It is understood that the Meeting will certainly be held on Monday either there or nearer the metropolis. The Chairman is not yet named.

Hunt and the others are not to be brought up again for examination, till the result of the Coroners Inquest is known.

We give this day further details of the late melancholy transactions at Manchester, down to one o'clock on Tuesday. They do not alter the impression made by the first reports. In reading the description of this sanguinary scene, we can scarcely credit that we live in England in a moment of a profound peace, and the mind is carried back to the most violent periods of the French Revolution. The legality of the Meeting, and the form of reading the Riot Act, we pass over : on the former, there may be diversity of opinion, and the latter is the subject of conflicting testimony. But there is one point on which all accounts appear to agree. We mean that the violence used on the present occasion was unnecessary for the attainment of its professed object. In framing the notice convening the Meeting, and in the whole spirit and conduct of the people, the greatest anxiety was shewn to avoid a breach of the laws or the peace. The experience of former Meetings of the same character must have taught the Magistrates and the military that there was nothing more dreaded by the people than an act of violence which might injure the character of their proceedings. If then Hunt and those other persons who are considered the principals in calling and conducting this Meeting, could have been arrested without force, how is this indiscriminate attack upon men, women, and children to be justified ? This is a question, however, to be decided upon a judicial process before a competent tribunal. The business cannot rest here, for as the case now stands, the man, who attends a public meeting to petition for the redress of grievances, must feel he does so at the risk of his life.— *Globe*.

Two o'clock.— Wo have just read a private letter, dated Manchester, Tuesday night. Mr. Hunt continued in prison. Te bail which he offered on that day was rejected by the Magistrates. He proposed to tender fresh bail yesterday. In the several blows made at him on the hustings by the yeomanry, he has received only one severe sabre wound. It is on the back of his right hand, while warding off the blows. All was quiet in Manchester on Tuesday.

(*Extract from a Correspondent.*)

The greater part of the persons who were at the outskirts of the assembly instantly ran away; but the main body remained compact and firm, and finding the soldiers halt under the houses, faced round to and cheered them. But a few moments had elapsed, when some orders were given to te troops, and they instantly dashed at full gallop amongst the people, actually hacking

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When they arrived at the hustings, the standards were torn or cut from the hands of those who held them, and Hunt, Johnson, Saxton, and several other persons, including three or four women, were taken into custody. Hunt was taken along by the constables to the house where the Magistrates were sitting, crying out "Murder!" as he was every instant struck by the bludgeons of numbers of constables who surrounded him. An attempt was made to knock is hat off, but unsuccessfully ; and, just as he was going up the steps, a person, who shall be the present nameless, with a club of large size, truck him with the force of both hands a blow on the head, which completely intended his hat, and almost levelled him with the ground; of this I can procure evidence on oath.

(*Extract of a Letter*.)

We remain comparatively quiet, but we are not without anxious forebodings. It is yet uncertain what the Reformers will do; whether their discomfiture on Monday will break up their nefarious system altogether, or whether they will rally for one desperate and decisive struggle. In all the towns and villages round Manchester they are numerous ; and if they were to unite, distressing consequences would follow. A few days will probably settle this momentous question; for it they allow themselves to cool upon the business, we may hope they will at least become converts to the only reform that can be of any service to them— the reform of themselves.

MANCHESTER MEETING

Accounts from Manchester, up to two o'clock on Tuesday afternoon, reached us last night. At that hour nothing had occurred of a nature sufficiently serious to disturb the peace of the town. Compared with the tumultuous proceedings of Monday, tranquility might be said to prevail; but indications of a forced submission on the part of the populace, of vindictive feelings suspended, but not suppressed, were too apparent not to cause alarm in those who carefully observed their motions, and listened to their discourse. The military who had patrolled the streets during the whole of Monday night, were equally vigilant on Tuesday morning; they were judiciously employed in checking before they could become formidable, the first symptoms of riot and disorder. Small parties of cavalry rode through the principal streets ; and if any of the populace were collected into a group, they were immediately dispersed. The shops and the lower part of the houses continued shut the whole morning. The temper of the

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Reformers, though thus prevented from displaying itself in action, was strongly manifested by an unbounded license of expression ; and threats of revenge, directed more particularly against those Members of Manchester Yeomanry who were most active in the affair on Monday, and who, by residing in the town and being well known to the disaffected persons, became distinctly marked out as object of their hatred. The female part of the multitude were not less conspicuous than on Monday for the share they took in what was going on, and were more bitter and malignant in their invectives than their male associates. New Cross, the place where the most dangerous rioting had occurred on Monday evening, was taken possession of during the morning of Tuesday, by companies of the 31st regiment of foot, who relieved each other in succession. An attempt was made by the very lowest of the populace to assemble there are at the early hour of seven, but they were soon put to flight, and by nine o'clock, every thing was tranquil in that quarter. — A report (which appears to have been spread with the view of diverting the attention of the military) was circulated early in the morning, that a large body of the disaffected, armed with pikes, amounting in number to 15,000, were advancing to Manchester by the Oldham road. A party of the 15th Light Dragoons, with two pieces of artillery, were immediately stationed in Oldham-street; and the Cheshire Yeomanry, who were previously on duty at St. Peter's green, were ordered to advance on the road to Oldham. This alarm proving to be unfounded, the troops and artillery ere withdrawn by two o'clock. — The exertions of the soldiery, though fully effectual in preventing any tumultuary assemblages, could not, however, so completely guard against individual outrage. A butcher in Oldham street is stated to have been attacked and desperately wounded in the head by a small arty of the mob, and carried to the Infirmary, with little hope of recovery. One of the Special constables, a watchmaker, was marked out for a similar species of revenge. The latter was fired at by a pistol, and wounded, but not dangerously. Mr. J. Hulme, the gentleman who fell in the first attack by the Manchester Yeomanry, was still alive when the accounts left the town ; but the fracture of the skull which he had sustained was so severe, as to leave little hope of his recovery. Hunt, together with Johnson, and Moorhouse of Stockport, are said to have been brought up for examination on Tuesday, b*ut none of them are to be admitted to bail*; and it was even circulated, though on what grounds we are unable to state, that these threes leading Reformers were under commitment to Lancaster Gaol on a charge of high treason. At all events they still remained in confinement.

At seven o'clock on Tuesday evening, all was quiet in the town. A report had, however, reached it that there was a serious riot at Oldham, and in consequence some troops of Chester Yeomanry were sent to quell it.

(From Reporters.)

In our road to Stockport, our attention was struck by the numerous groups of idle men, who were congregated along it. They appeared ready for any wicked or desperate purpose, and we have reason to believe, that before the evening was concluded, they were engaged in an attack upon the Magistracy of Stockport. About a mile from that place, some hundreds of them were

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assembled near a petty public-house. A new hat , a tea-kettle, and some other articles of little value, were displayed at the window, as is customary to display the prizes given at wakes or feasts in this part of the country. This was to serve as a pretext for their meeting together : but that it was only a pretext, we learned to a certainty during our stay at Macclesfield.

On our entry intro the town, about ten at night, we were met by several women, who flung themselves on the way of our chaise, and entreated us for God's sake not to enter it, as murderous work was going on within it. This was not, to be sure, pleasing information; but on consulting with our driver, he said there could be no harm in our proceeding on as far as the Royal Hotel, which lies nearly at the entrance of the town as you come from Manchester. On arriving there, our horses were seized by some special constables, and we were advised no to proceed further up the town, if we had any regard whatsoever for our lives. Of course we took their advice, and turned our horses into a yard, as they desired us. On inquiry into the cause of the anxiety which was depicted in all their faces, they informed us that the Reformers in their neighbourhood, irritated at the defeat which they had sustained at Manchester the day before, had assembled in a body of 2 or 3000 men, and had been committing the most abominable acts of violence in different quarters of the town. In the market-place they had broken very window which looked into it, and in various other places had done similar acts of atrocity. They were emboldened in their villainy by the knowledge that there were only a few military men in the town, and that in the custody of these men, were 300 stand of arms, and several thousand rounds of ball cartridge. They were all persuaded on stand to their arms, and being aided by several respectable inhabitants of the town, assumed so formidable an appearance that the rioters thought it unwise to attack them. This disinclination on their part gave fresh courage to the friends of order and tranquillity; and in consequence they made an attack on the rioters, and took several of them prisoners. In the meanwhile, an express was sent off to Stockport, desiring that one of the three companies of the 31st, who had marched from their quarters at Macclesfield to Stockport, might be send back to the former place, or else a company of the Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry, many of whom are inhabitants of the place, might be dispatched to the assistance of their townsmen. Whilst this scene was transacting in Macclesfield, it was said that bonfires had been lighted on all the hills which surround it, and it was surmised that these served as signals to the disaffected. The first lighted was on Bakeney-Hill; this was answered by similar fires on all the hills, from thence up to Northern Lancy, where it stopped ; but at another signal, fire-rockets were thrown up from it. Whether there was any meaning in these fires or not, we are unable to say, but shortly after they appeared, the rioters resumed heir attacks, having first taken the precaution to extinguish all the gas lights in the town. This was attended by two-fold advantage, inasmuch as it did not leave them so open to detection, and therefore gave them a better opportunity of continuing their devastations. Still, with all these advantages, they never durst meet the small but resolute band of special constables ; who, under the command of the Mayor, were every where ready to resist them. Some eight or nine gentlemen, who had mounted themselves on horseback, and armed themselves with swords, were of great utility in scouring the streets and bringing in prisoners, who were immediately

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placed in the custody of the soldiers of the 31st regiment. We are happy to say, that in the struggle between two parties, no serious personal injury was done either of them.— Some of the rioters got heavy blows from the staffs of the constables, and some of the constables awkward contusions from the brick bats hurled at them by their opponents; but no lives were either lost or endangered. When we left the town, which was at four o'clock in the morning, tranquility was perfectly re-established; 30 or 40 rioters were in custody, and the gentlemen who had gone with the express to Stockport, had returned with the intelligence, that, though a battle between the military and the rioters was momentarily expected, a troop of infantry had started from Stockport, and were when he left them within an hour's march of Macclesfield. At Stockport the Magistrates were assembled at the Warren Bulkeley Arms, before which the soldiery were drawn out, as that was the first point against which the rioters had declared their intention of making an attack. Similar riots were expected at other places, almost all the military being stationed at Manchester.

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4. The Examiner, August 23, 1819

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THE POLITICAL EXAMINER

Party is the madness of many for the gain of a few. POPE

No. 593.

DISTURBANCES AT MANCHESTER

THE long irritated sufferings of the Reformers, and the eagerness of power to avail itself of the first opportunity to attack them, have at length given rise to a disturbance at Manchester. The reader will see the particulars in our paper of to-day. Before we say a word further, we remind our readers of the taunts and provocations thrown out by the Government papers, in consequence of the peaceableness of the Smithfield meeting. That peaceableness was called cowardice. The grossest political ill-treatment, joined with starvation, was not enough for the poorer part of the Reformers. They were to be insulted with charges of *cowardice*, in proportion to their very *patience*. Never let this be forgotten, when the tumult is talked of.

Now the multitude which assembled at Manchester could not forget, these reproaches when coming to the place of meeting. It was impossible. Every hostile look, —every face of sneering or threatening assumption, — every spot in which they had slaved to little purpose, till they were not even allowed to slave any longer, — must have reminded them of all they had borne and suffered, this last provocation included. If they made some counter-signs, who is to wonder? But they did nothing. They assembled peaceably ; and the speakers were proceeding as quietly as the ridiculed Meeting in Smithfield, when according to all accounts but one (which every succeeding account has contradicted), a body of military dashed through them sword in hand, trapped down opposition, bruised and wounded many, and bore off the flags and the speakers to the county jail. Some lives have certainly been lost. The sensation in the Metropolis is great and bitter. Not only the papers in opposition to Government, but every one, we believe, not actually committed with the seat-sellers in power, gave way to a burst of astonishment and indignation. Can any thing, in fact, on the face of the transaction, afford a more revolting specimen of impatient, violent, arbitrary feeling on the part of the retainers of Government? Or one more foolish as well as violent? For they talk of the revolutionary tendencies of the conduct of the Reformers; but how can revolutionary tendencies be more excited than by government's lawlessly drawing the sword, and being the first to shed blood systematically? We say lawlessly, and first; for every account we have seen subsequent to that of the *Courier* affirms that an hour had certainly not elapsed (one says not more than twenty minutes) between the reading of the Riot Act and the charge of the soldiery. And where after all, was the Riot Act read ? Who heard it? The account sent up to the *Times* newspaper by a

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gentleman who obtained a place for convenience sake on the hustings, and who in the infinite hurry of the government-officers was arrested with the leaders of the meeting, says that nobody knew any thing about the Riot Act ; and concludes it must have been read by the Magistrates to one another in-doors. Granted even for the sake of argument that the Riot Act was known to have been read, we have other questions to ask. Why was is not acted upon before ? If the meeting was illegal, why not have prevented it? If the inflammatory inscriptions on the flags are the plea for interference, why not have seized them on the road? By all accounts but the one before mentioned (which appeared in a paper notoriously violent in favour of the seat-sellers, and in the habit of publishing the most exaggerated statements about the Reformers), there does not seem to have been the last reason for the interference of the military; and if so, we leave our readers to judge of the dilemma with which the Government have hampered themselves, and of the dangerous provocation which such an *example* is likely to give to the Reformers.

Yet the *Courier* would have us overlook all these matters to dwell with shuddering sympathy on the wounds of constables and soldiers. Constables and soldiers, mind,— and such persons exclusively. A sort of hurrying regret, is expressed, is passing, for others that may have been wounded, but always mixed with insinuation that they got nothing but their sue. It is even affirmed in the *Courier*'s account, that had it not been for the deputy-constable, "it is certain Mr. HUNT would not now have been alive, *for the military were determined to cut him to pieces!*" These are the literal words. The military determined to cut a man to pieces for saying what they do not like! This may be a piece of thinking *a la Waterloo*; but we are sure it is not fit even for the imitators of a standing army in England; and we trust both the words and the determination will be well enquired into, as well as every the minutest circumstance of these apparent outrages. Suppose Mr. HUNT *had* been cut to pieces : — do we think that thousands and thousands of Englishmen would any longer have contented themselves with tamely looking on ; or with execrations, or with brick bats and staves ? No, most assuredly. They would have risen in the irresistible might of their numbers; and every soldier would have been dragged of his horse, and massacred on the spot. "People cannot bear every thing;" as a soldier himself was heard to say the other day in the streets.

Yet the *Courier* in calmly reporting this outrageous and sanguinary determination, did not the less call upon us to shed our exclusive tears over this wounded constable or that wounded soldier, —perhaps the very soldier who would have given the leading cut with his sabre at the devoted Reformist ! —A few words on this part of the subject. We will endeavour to forget for a few moments the circumstances with appear to have actually taken place, and suppose that instead of the outrages coming from the irritated soldiery, they came chiefly from the much more and longer irritated Reformers.

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We lament as much as any human being possibly can the effusion of human blood, and all those first causes of wilfulness and injustice which give rise to it; but the seat-selling

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violators of the British Constitution can see, with philosophy enough, whole oceans of blood shed for the security of their own guilty power, or the restoration of a tyrannical dynasty ; and the interested hypocritical howl raised by their hirelings at the fatal consequences of a disturbance to a few individuals, excites in us nothing but anger and disgust.

We write this article to tell them that their eternal begging of the question, always *against* the poor and the Reformers, *in favour* of the rich and the corrupt, form nothing but a provoking and disgusting contrast with the warrantable demands and the most unwarrantable sufferings of those calumniated poor. We will just give a few specimens of the matter, to shew how their flimsy pretences are seen through ; and how much additional bitterness and fever they must throw into the cup of their country's sorrow.

To repeat what we have just alluded to. With what feelings can these Men in the Brazen Masks of power dare to speak lamentingly of the wounds or even the death received by a constable or a solider or any other person concerned against an assemblage of Englishmen irritated by every species of wrong and insult, public and private ? With what feelings can they dare to speak of such things in such a tone, after they have so long been inciting the whole world under false pretences to shed their blood in the impudent cause of Divine Right ? After they have been halloing, and shouting, and clapping their "deluded countrymen" on the back, and *paying* them to make charge after charge upon their fellow-creatures with bloody swords and bayonets, not for poverty's sake and right, but that hereditary masters and their hirelings might wallow to all eternity at their pleasure in superfluities and wrong? Those masters *knew* their pretences to be false; —they knew them to be so, and tacitly avowed it, for when they had succeeded in their object, they came forward with an avowal of their real object. Yet though the pretexts of the war were false, the wants of it superfluous, the means of sustaining it exhausting, the modes most bloody and full of carnage, and the real object of it too infamous to be avowed, what despot; aristocratical or oligarchical, what slave, grinning or serious, prosing, poetical, or pathetical, ever scrupled to

Cry Havoc! and let slip the dogs of war!

Who said the human beings were not to be cut down, shot, and trampled upon?— that towns and districts were not to be thrown into the most horrible consternation? —that mothers were not to be deprived of their children, and children of their fathers and each other? —that mother's were not to be seduced away from their work, men pressed whether they wished it or not into the sea-conscriptions, and hearts broken at home as well as torn asunder abroad ? Who ever said that cities were not to be fired ? —that thousands of living human bodies were not to be blown up in the air ? —that arms and legs were not to be split off, bones shattered, bodies cut in two, faces carried away, bowels torn out, and dying men left to rave, and shriek cut "water!" and beg for God's sake to be put out of their misery? What canting hireling , even while pretending to shake something in his head at the "lamentable necessity" of war, ever thought of actually doing any thing but inflaming and carrying it on ? Nay, who ever thought of not doing his best to recommend the grace and glory of dying in war, of meeting one's fate upon "the field of honour," and of helping as many as possible of his fellow-creatures and even

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countrymen to meet them? So that it is an innocent, admirable, and desirable thing for thousands of human beings to slaughter and be slaughtered for the greater security of a corrupt Government ; but if the corruptions of that Government provoke a half-starved populace to the destruction of a single constable or a soldier, we are allowed to return to our abstract lamentations on the shedding of blood ! In the former case, "Carnage is GOD's daughter;"—so says a pathetic court poet. In the latter, a single fatal blow is all that is diabolical :—so says a grinning court buffoon.

O ye recommenders, in times like these, of the reconciling influence of the reading of Scriptures,— Scripture which tells us that "it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of GOD,"— is there not another text about a camel, that would be still less seasonable than this;—a text where it says, "Ye hypocrites! who strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel !"

The Corruptionists assume at every step that they are in the right, and at every step they stumble upon a betrayal to the contrary. In the ministerial paper which contains accounts of the proceedings at Manchester, there is an advertisement from a "loyal" meeting at Middlewich. The persons present at it, with a happy neglect of those aristocratical assumptions of good grammar which the loyal are so apt to contradict, talk of being "*convinced of*, and happy in, our happy and glorious Constitution in Church and State." What they mean by being convinced of a glorious Constitution, we leave them to explain. By the glorious Constitution in Church and State they of course mean Non-residence, Pluralities, and Seat-selling. But observe these loyal beggars of the question. They say that being "convinced of, and happy in, our excellent and glorious Constitution," they "hereby declare their willingness to come forward to the utmost of their power in support of his Majesty's Government."

Suppose then that they were not "convinced of, and" not "happy in, our excellent and Glorious Constitution," we are to conclude they would not willingly come forward. Now we do not know how many solid reasons these gentlemen may have for the blissfulness of their bad grammar, but the meeters at Manchester are certainly not convinced of, and happy in, said misnomer called the Constitution, and therefore according to these very loyalists, they are justified in not agreeing with them.

At the same meeting it was said to be "the bounden duty of every loyal subject to stand forth in defence of our *happy* and glorious Constitution" (they would call it a pea-green constitution, if the epithet would make a shew) "against *seditionists*, traitors, conspirators, who under THE SPECIOUS PRETEXT of Parliamentary Reform, are endeavouring to subvert all that is dear and valuable to us as Englishmen, and to bring about a national Revolution." This is the vague style in which any courtiers can write on any occasion. […]

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The last accounts from Manchester bring with them no explantation whatever of the conduct of the local Authorities. All that we are informed of is, that in the case of the three men

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who were killed in consequence of the charge of yeomanry, a verdict has been found of *Accidental Death !* and that a numerous meeting of the inhabitants was to take place for the purpose of thanking the Magistrates for their "judicious"—cultivation of massacre Scorn comes in relief to one's indignation at such mummery. Next week we hope we shall have to record what is pronounced by the other side of the question.

"Manchester,August 19.

"An Inquest has this morning been held by Mr. MILNE, the Coroner, and a Jury, on the bodies of

JOHN ASHWORTH,
CHARLES FIELD, and
JOHN ADAMS,

who came by their deaths in the course of the lamentable riot of Monday last. — Verdict — *Accidental Death*.

Mr. HUNT was brought up on Friday for Final examination. It was supposed that he would be sent immediately to Lancaster jail, and consequently that the Magistrates held his offence to be unbailable. If so, we have every reason to suspect, from all that is hitherto known, that they are as foolish in this measure as in their former ones. Unbailable offences may undoubtedly be committed on these occasions; and some, of which these worthies do not appear to dream at present. Their own conduct will of course be anxiously investigated.

Since the above paragraph was written, we have learned that on Friday the Magistrates informed Mr. HUNT that fresh evidence had come before them, and that he was remanded on a charge of High Treason, while this evidence was laid before the Law Officers of the Crown. The other prisoners were also remanded, among them *two women*, on the same charge! […]

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CROWN AND ANCHOR MEETING ; AND PROPOSED SMITHFIELD MEETING

Saturday there was a very numerous Meeting of the Reformers at the Crown and Anchor: Mr. Waddington in the Chair. — Major Cartwright, Mr. Wooler, Mr. Gale Jones, &c. spoke on the subject of Parliamentary Reform, and on the late outrage on the Reformists at Manchester.

Some voice in the course of the Meeting exclaimed, "We'll have blood for blood!" upon which Mr. Wooler said, "No: we have laws, and the laws will give us redress. Let no blood be shed but that which the law shall require as a sacrifice for the offence." (*Much Applause*.) — The following are the chief Resolutions passed : —

1. That the Meeting of the People at Manchester on Monday the 16th August, to consider of their grievances, was strictly legal and constitutional.

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2. That the conduct of the Magistrates, in not previously declaring the Meeting illegal, and the Yeomanry, in dispersing it by force, was in the highest degree reprehensible, and calls for *an* inquiry by his Majesty's Governemnt.
3. That it be immediately recommended to the Cities of London and Westminster to call public Meetings in Palace-Yard and Guildhall, to consider of the affair at Manchester.
4. That the people throughout the country ought to take speedy steps to procure the re-appointment of their own Sheriffs, as was the case before the time of Edward VI. and as is the case at present in the city of London.
5. That the jesuitical circular of Lord Sidmouth, so ably exposed by Mr. Jeremiah Bentham ; the obscure and indefinite proclamation of the Regent ; and the recent calumnies upon reform delivered from the sacred seat of justice, may have had a powerful effect in producing this lamentable outrage on the laws; and that it is much to be regretted that high birth and dignified situation should be lent to such an improper excitation of the angry passions of the ennemies of reform.—*Unanimously*.
6. That the exemplary behaviour of the regular troops employed on that occasion, forms a humane contrast to the conduct of the Yeomanry Cavalry, and may be fairly construed into a pledge that the British regular force will not trample upon the rights, nor destroy the liberties of their fellow subjects.
7. That this Meeting would have presented a Petition to the Regent, praying him to bring the authors of these atrocities to justice; but that the interceptions of Petitions to his Royal Highness by Lord Sidmouth, renders it hopeless to expect that any complaint of the people will reach his ear.

Other Resolutions were made and loudly applauded, complimenting Messrs. Hunt, Johnson, Baguely, &c., arraigning the circular Letter of Lord Sidmouth, and the Proclamation of the Prince Regent, and imputing much of what subsequently occurred to the influence of those documents upon the Magistrates. The Resolutions were unanimously carried.

Mr. Jones submitted, that the meeting should in person and purse support the cause of Mr. Hunt and the other persons taken into custody, and that Mr. Harman the solicitor should be sent to Manchester to collect evidence.

The following Placard was distributed at the Crown and Anchor : — "Universal Civil and Religious Liberty. A Public Meeting of the British Metropolis, in behalf of the People of the whole empire, will be held in SMITHFIELD, on Wednesday, August 25th, at Four o'clock in the Afternoon. The Surrey Committee have, at this awful and momentous crisis, determined to defer their Meeting at Kennington Common, to a future day, and join the People of Middlesex in an Appeal to the Prince Regent, to come forward to the People — to stay the hand of merciless and bloody-thirsty Tyrants—and to save the Country from Massacre and Murder!!! 'England expects every Man to do his Duty.' Sir C. Wolseley invited to Chair. " […]

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DISPERSAL OF THE REFORM MEETING AT MANCHESTER BY A MILITARY FORCE.

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[*From the Times*]

This meeting which has caused such universal anxiety and trepidation throughout the whole of the country, took place on Monday last at Manchester.

The place appointed for the meeting was a large vacant piece of ground on the north side of St. Peter's Church, which is well known in Manchester by the name of St. Peter's-place. At half-past ten o'clock about 250 idle individuals might be collected within it. About half-past eleven the first body of Reformers arrived on the ground, bearing two banners, each of which was surmounted by a cap of liberty. The first bore the inscription of "Annual Parliaments, and Universal Suffrage;" on the reverse, "No Corn Laws." The other bore the same inscription, with the addition of "Vote by ballot." After these flags had been paraded for some paraded for some time, a post was assigned to the bearers of them, to which shortly afterwards a dung-cart was brought, into which the standard bearers were ordered to mount, and from which all the standards arriving afterwards were displayed. Numerous large bodies of Reformers continued to arrive from this time to one o'clock, from the different towns in the neighborhood of Manchester, all with flags, and many of them drawn up five deep, and in regular marching order. A club of female Reformers, amounting in number, according to our calculation, to 156 came from Oldham; and another, not quite so numerous, from Royton. The first bore a white silk banner, by far the most elegant displayed during the day, inscribed "*Major Cartwright's Bill, Annual Parliaments, Universal Suffrage, and Vote by Ballot.*" In one compartment of it was Justice holding the scales in one hand, and a sword in the other ; in another, a large eye. On the reverse of this flag was another inscription : but in the hurry of the day we found it impossible to decipher what it was, and can only say that there were upon it two hands, both decorated in shirt ruffles, *clasped* in each other, and underneath them an inscription, "*Oldham Union.*" The latter (i.e. the females of Royton) bore two red flags, the one inscribed, "*Let us* (i.e. women) *die like men, and not be sold like slaves;*" the other, "*Annual Parliament and Universal Suffrage*." The Radicals of Saddleworth brought with them a black flag to the field, on one side of which was inscribed, " *Taxation without representation is unjust and tyrannical; equal representation or death*;" on the other side, "*Union is strength.—Unite and be free. Saddleworth and Mosley Union.*" The Reformers from Rochdale and Middleton marched to the sound of the bugle, and in very regular time, closing and expanding their ranks, and

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marching in ordinary and double quick time, according as it pleased the fancy of their leaders. They had two green banners, between which they had hoisted on a red pole a cap of liberty, crowned with laurel, and bearing the inscription, "*Hunt and Liberty*." Another band bore a banner, in which Britannia was represented leaning on a shield, upon which was inscribed the motto of Sir William Wallace, "God armeth the Patriot."

In this manner, the business of the day proceeded till one o'clock, by which time we should suppose that 80,000 people were assembled on the ground. During this period we found it impossible to approach the waggon, though very desirous to do so, as a young lad, not more than 17 or 18, was addressing the meeting with great vehemence of action and gesture, and with great effect, if we may judge from the cheers which he every now and then extracted from his audience, who were now beginning to be impatient for the arrival of Hunt, and the other orators who were to follow in his train, like the satellites which attend on some mighty planet.

The Reformers who had up to this time arrived in the field demeaned themselves becomingly, though a posse of 300 or 400 constables, with the Boroughreeve at their head, had marched in a body into the field about 12 o'clock, unsupported by any military body to all outward appearance. *Not the slightest insult was offered to them*. The people did indeed rush to behold them ; but this was probably occasioned by an idea that they were another body of Reformers. As soon as they saw who they were, they turned away from them with a smile; and, attracted by a crowd which was advancing from other corner of the area, went to meet it, crying, "Let us keep peace and good order, and go and welcome this body, which is one of ours."

As we stood counting the members of the Oldham Female Reform Club in their procession by us, and whilst we were internally pitying the delusion which had led them to a scene so ill-suited to they usual habits, a group of the women of Manchester, attracted by the crowd, came to the corner of the street where we had taken our post. They viewed these Female Reformers for some time with a look in which compassion and disgust were equally blended; and at last burst out into an indignant exclamation —"Go home to your families, and leave sike-like matters as these to your husbands and sons, who better understand them." The women who thus addressed them were of the lower order in life.

We had waited up to one o'clock on the field of action for the arrival on Mr. Hunt ; but as he had not then made his appearance, we determined to go and meet the procession, which it was said was to attend the orator. We met it just by the Exchange, where the people were cheering most loudly, and Hunt and Johnson joining in the cheers. They were seated in an open landau, along with Carlisle, Knight, and others, and had moved in grand procession from Smedley-cottage, past New-cross, and Shude-hill, preceded by a large body of male, and followed by scarcely less numerous body of female Manchester Reformers. Before them were carried two boards, on which were inscribed, "*Order, order*;" these were followed by two flags for Annual Parliaments and Universal Suffrage, and also by Hunt's old flag and Cap of Liberty, of Westminster notoriety, "Hunt, and Universal Suffrage." This latter was held by a female Reformer, seated on the *dickey* of the landau. It was now to be exhibited in the last of its fields.

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[It was just opposite to the Exchange, as was before mentioned, that the individual who furnishes this report met the procession in full march : from the numbers whom he had already seen collected on the field, and those whom he then saw proceeding to increase them, he felt convinced of the impossibility of getting into any position in which he could here the proceedings of the day, unless he received some personal accommodation from Mr. Hunt himself. He had never previously spoken to that individual, nor would he have thought of addressing him upon this occasion, had he not known that every gentleman connected with the London press had gladly availed himself of similar assistance at the Smithfield meeting. As to espousing the political principles, or advocating the wild doctrines of radical reform, supported by Mr. Hunt, it is the very last thing , if he knows himself, that he should ever be induced to do; he holds them in as utter abhorrence as the most loyal subject of his Majesty possibly can hold them, and will always be ready to express that disgust in the warmest and most indignant terms. Mr. Hunt, on this individual's asking to be admitted, if possible, on to the hustings, immediately acceded to his request. He desired him to stand as close as possible to the landau in which he was riding, and promised to take care that every accommodation in his power should be paid to his convenience. He followed in the train of the Orator till he arrived in the field of action.]

The enthusiasm excited among the crowd by the presence of the Orator was certainly beyond any thing which we ever before witnessed ; and the cheers with which he was hailed were loud and lasting. When he had taken his stand upon the hustings, which were formed of two carts lashed together, and boards spread over them, he expressed considerable disapprobation of the manner in which they were formed, and of the place in which they were situated. After the different persons who intended to address the multitude had taken their position upon them, and silence had been obtained, Johnson came forward, and proposed that Henry Hunt be appointed their Chairman. After a short pause, Johnson proceeded to call upon them to carry the question by acclamation. The meeting did so, and Henry Hunt was declared Chairman, amid cheers of three times three. The noise continuing longer than usual, Hunt found it requisite to entreat his friends to preserve tranquility. He commenced his address by calling the assembly "gentlemen," but afterwards changed the term to "fellow-countrymen." He had occasion, he said, to entreat their indulgence. (*Noise continued.*) Every man wishing to hear, must himself keep silence. (*Laughter, but no silence.*) "Will you," said he, addressing himself to the mob, "be so obliging as not to call silence while the business of the day is proceeding?" (*Silence was then obtained.*) He hoped that they would now exercise the all-powerful right of the people; and if any person would not be quiet, that they would put him down and keep him quiet. (*We will.*) For the honour which they had just conferred upon him, he returned them his most sincere thanks : and for any services which he either had or might render them, all that he asked was, that they would indulge him with a calm a patient attention. It was impossible for him to think that with the utmost silence he could make himself heard by every member of the numerous and tremendous meeting which he saw assembled before him. If those, however,

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who were near him were not silent, how could it be expected that those who were near him were not silent, how could it be expected that those who were at a distance could hear what he should say? [A dead silence now pervaded the multitude.] It was useless for him to recall to their recollection the proceedings of the last ten days in their town; they were all of them acquainted with the cause of the late meeting being postponed ; and it would be therefore superfluous in him to say any thing about it, except, indeed, it were this — that those who had attempted to pu them down by the most malignant exertions had occasioned them to meet that day in more than twofold numbers. (*Hear*.) (Knight here whispered something into Mr. Hunt's ear, which caused him to turn round with some degree of asperity to Knight, and to say, "Sir, I will not be interrupted : when you speak yourself, you will not like to experience such interruption.") They would have perceived, that since the old meeting had been put off, and the present one had been called —though their ennemies flattered themselves with having obtained a victory, they showed by their conduct that they had sustained a defeat. (*Loud and long applause*.) In the interval between the two meetings, two placards had been circulated, to which the names of two obscure individuals were attached : the first was signed by Tom Long or Jack Short, a printer in the town whom nobody knew.

At this stage of the business the Yeomanry Cavalry were seen advancing in a rapid trot to the area : their ranks were in disorder, and on arriving within it, they halted to breathe their horses, and to recover their ranks. A panic seemed to strike the persons at the outskirts of the meeting, who immediately began to scamper in every directions. After a moment's pause, the cavalry drew their swords, and brandished them fiercely in the air : upon which Hunt and Johnson desired the multitude to give three cheers, to show the military that they were not to be daunted in the discharge of their duty by their unwelcome presence. This they did, upon which Mr. Hunt again proceeded. "This was a mere trick to interrupt the proceedings of the meeting; but he trusted that they would all stand firm." He had scarcely said these words, before the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry rode into the mob, which gave way before them, and directed their course to the cart from which Hunt was speaking. *Not a brick-bat was thrown at them— not a pistol was fired during this period; all was quiet and orderly*, as if the cavalry had been the friends of te multitude, and had marched as such into the midst of them. A bugle-man went at their heard, then an officer, and then came the whole troop. They wheeled round the waggons till they came in front of them, the people drawing back in every direction on their approach. After they had surrounded them in such a manner as to prevent all escape, the *officer* who commanded the detachment went up to Mr. Hunt, and said, brandishing his sword, "Sir, I have a warrant against you, and arrest you as my prisoner." Hunt, after exhorting the people to tranquility in a few words, turned round to the officer, and said, "I willingly surrender myself to any civil officer who will show me his warrant." Mr. Nadin, the chief police officer at Manchester, then came forward and said, "I will arrest you ; I have got informations upon oath against you;" or something to that effect. The military officer then proceeded to say, that he had a warrant against Johnson. Johnson also asked for a civil officer, upon which a Mr. Andrew came forward, and Hunt and Johnson then leaped from off the waggon, and surrendered

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themselves to the civil power. Search was then made for Moorhouse and Knight, against whom warrants had also been issued. In the hurry oft his transaction, they had by some means or other contrived to make their escape. As soon as Hunt and Johnson had jumped from the waggon, a cry was made by the cavalry, "Have at their flags." In consequence, they immediately dashed not only at the flags which were in the waggon, but those which were posted among the crowd, *cutting most indiscriminately to the right and to the left* in order to get at them. This set the people running in all directions, and it was not till this act had been committed that any brick-bats were hurled at the military. From that moment the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry lost all command of temper. A person of the name of Saxton, who is, we believe, the Editor of the Manchester Observer, was standing in the cart. Two privates rode up to him. "There," said one of them, "is that villain, Saxton; do you run him though the body." "No," replied the other, "I had rather not— I leave it to you." The man immediately made a lunge at Saxton, and it was only by slipping aside that the blow missed his life. As it was, it cut his coat and waistcoat, but fortunately did him no other injury. A man within five yards of us in another direction had his nose completely taken off by a blow of a sabre ; whilst another was laid prostrate; but whether he was dead or had merely thrown himself down to obtain protection we cannot say. Seeing all this hideous work going on, we felt an alarm which any man may be forgiven for feeling in a similar situation : looking around us, we saw a constable at no great distance, and thinking that our only chance of safety rested in placing ourselves under his protection, we appealed to him for assistance. He immediately took us into custody, and on our saying that we merely attended to report the proceedings of the day, he replied "Oh! oh! you then are one of their writers— you must go before the Magistrates." To this we made no objection ; in consequence he took us to the house where they were sitting, and, in our road thither, we saw a woman on the ground, insensible, to all outward appearance, and with two large gouts of blood on her left breast. Just as we came to the house, the constables were conducting Hunt into it, and were treating him in a manner in which they were neither justified by law nor humanity, striking him with their staves on the head. After he had been taken into the house, we were admitted also; and it is only justice to the man who apprehended us to state, that he did every thing in his power to protect us from all ill-usage, and showed us every civility consistent with his duty. In the room into which we were put, we found the Orator, Johnson, Saxton, and some other individuals of minor note, among whom was another woman in a fainting condition. Nadin the constable was also there. Hunt and Johnson both asked him to show them the warrants on which they had been apprehended. This he refused to do, saying that he had information upon oath against them, which was quite sufficient for him. Hunt then called upon the persons present to mark Nadin's refusal. Shortly after this transaction, Mr. Hay, the chairman of the magistrates, came into the apartment, and asked Hunt if he was afraid to go down to the New Bailey; if he was, he himself wold accompany him, and look after his safety. Hunt, who we forgot to mention, had received a slight sabre wound on one of his hands, said, that he should have no objection to the Magistrate's company : he certainly did not like either a cut from a sabre or a blow from a staff, both of which had been dealt out to him in no small quantity. Mr. hay shortly afterwards

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went out, having first made a reply to Mr. Hunt, which some riot out of doors prevented us from hearing. On casting our eyes at the place where the immense multitude had lately been assembled, we were surprised in the short space of ten minutes to see it cleared of all occupiers, and filled by troops of military, both horse and foot. Shortly after this had occurred, a Magistrate came into the room, and bade the prisoners prepare to march off to the New Bailey. Hunt was consigned to the custody of Col. L'Estrange, of the 31st foot, and a detachment of the 15th Hussars; and under his care, he and all the other prisoners, who were each placed between two constables, reached the New Bailey in perfect safety. The staffs of two of Hunt's banners were carried in mock procession before him.

After these individuals had been committed to the custody of the Governor, they were turned into one common-yard where the events of the day formed the subject of conversation. Knight and Morehouse, who had been taken a short time after them, were afterwards added to their company. About five o'clock the Magistrates directed the Governor of the prison to lock each of them up in a solitary cell, and to see that they had no communication with each other. This was accordingly done.

The writer of this article was one of the parties thus imprisoned. Except that it was imprisonment, he has no reason to complain of the treatment which he received. He was in custody from two o'clock on Monday, till twelve o'clock on Tuesday. As soon as the Magistrates were acquainted with the circumstances under which his apprehension had taken place, they immediately ordered his release, and expressed in very polite terms their regret for the inconvenience to which he had been subjected. When we were once more allowed to enjoy that freedom of which we had been for a moment deprived, we took a walk through most of the principal streets of Manchester, and found that they were at that time (twelve o'clock) completely under military disposal. Soldiers were posted at all the commanding positions of the town, and were to be seen extended at full length on the flags in various directions. At three o'clock, they had, however, all of them returned to their quarters, and the town was to all outward appearance once more in a state of tranquility. […]

LETTERS FROM MANCHESTER

[*From the Star*.]

"*Monday, Aug.* 16.—*Half past Six*.

"You are probably aware that the meeting of Reformers which was to have taken place last Monday was postponed until this day. Accordingly, at half past eleven o'clock this forenoon, a large body of people, attended by some music, and carrying flags bearing the usual inscriptions, which have been exhibited at former Meetings, began to pass the Exchange on their way from Royton, Burry, &c., and proceeded to the place of meeting. These were succeeded by other bodies of people from different parts of the neighbourhood, amongst whom I was sorry to see many females. The Cap of Liberty, placed at the top of a standard pole, formed a conspicuous object in the insignia of each body. There were five or six of them.

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"The assembly continued increasing until about ten minutes past one o'clock, when Mr. Hunt made his appearance in a barouche, which contained a female on the dickey, and in the inside, in addition to Mr. Hunt, Johnson, Saxton, Knight, and two or three other persons. The carriage moved slowly up to the hustings, and its arrival there was marked by long and loud cheerings. At this period it is probably an understatement to say that 50,000 persons were present. In the body of the town many of the shops were closed, and business was wholly suspended from an early hour of the forenoon; not, I believe, from any apprehensions of the proceedings of the Reformers, but from a sort of undefined dread that violence would be used. Indeed, it was confidently asserted that Hunt would be arrested upon the hustings; but moderate men universally concluded that the Meeting would be allowed to go off peaceably, provided no breach of the peace was committed by the people. Up to the period of the arrival of the carriage, none of the military had been seen in the streets, though it was known that the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry were concealed in Messrs. Pickford's (the carriers) yard. On his mounting the hustings Mr. Hunt was immediately called to the Chair, and commenced his introductory Address to the Meeting. He exhorted the people to be firm but peaceable. 'And,' said he, 'if any man makes the slightest attempt to break the peace, *put him down and keep him down*.' Just as he had uttered those words, the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry came galloping down Morley-street and Peter-street, and ranged themselves in front of a row of houses on the South side of the area where the Meeting was, in one of which the Magistrates were assembled.

"The greater part of the persons who were at the outskirts of the assembly on that side instantly ran away; but the main body remained compact and firm, and finding the soldiers halt under the houses, faced round to and cheered them. But a few moments had elapsed, when some orders were given to the troops, and they instantly dashed at full gallop amongst the people, actually hacking their way up to the hustings! A cordon of Special Constables was drawn from the house occupied by the Magistrates towards the stage, and these fared as ill from the attacks of the soldiers as the people at large. A comparatively undisciplined body, led on by officers who had never had any experience in military affairs, and probably all under the influence both of personal fear, and considerable political feeling of hostility, could not be expected to act either with coolness or discrimination; and accordingly, men, women and children, Constables and Reformers, were all equally exposed to their attacks. Numbers were trampled down, and numbers were cut down.

"When they arrived at the hustings, the standards were torn or cut from the hands of those who held them, and Hunt, Johnson, Saxton, and several other persons, including three or four women, were taken into custody. Hunt was taken along by the Constables to the house where the Magistrates were sitting, crying out 'Murder!' as he was every instant struck by the bludgeons of number of Constables who surrounded him. An attempt was made to knock his hat off, but unsuccessfully; and, just as he was going up the steps, a person, who shall be for the present nameless, with a club of large size, struck him with the force of both hands a blow

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on the head, which completely indented his hat, and almost levelled him with the ground; of this I can produce evidence on oath.

"The proceedings of the Manchester Cavalry were seconded by the Cheshire Yeomanry, and a detachment of the Dragoons stationed there. The people were pursued at full gallop through all the avenues leading from the place of meeting, and to distant parts of the town. What is the extent of the carnage that has taken place it is at present impossible to say; but five or six are known to be dead. There are 26 in the Infirmary, several of whom cannot live, and at least as many out-patients severely wounded. There are men, women and children constables, and also soldiers among them; and, in all probability, there are many wounded who have not been heard of at the Infirmary.

"Whether the Riot Act had been read, I am not enabled positively to say; but I affirm, from actual observation, that not the slightest breach of the peace had been committed or appeared, as far as I could judge, likely to take place; and most certainly, instead of an hour being allowed after proclamation, for the people to disperse, not twenty minutes had elapsed, after Mr. Hunt came upon the ground, before the carnage began.

"What are the charges upon which Hunt and the rest are arrested, I know not. Rumour says *High Treason*, of which carrying the Cap of Liberty is stated as an *overt act*!!"

"*Manchester, Aug*. 17.

"After my letter of yesterday was closed, the windows of a grocer named Tate, at whose shop one of the flags captured from the Reformers had been waved over their heads as they returned from the meeting, were broken. It is said also, that a Cheshire Yeomanry-man was killed by the people in the evening ; and that a publican, who was yesterday active as a special constable, had been killed this morning at Miles Platting, on the Oldham road.

"But now, after the tragedy comes the farce. About half-past ten o'clock this forenoon, a report was circulated that the Reformers were coming by thousands, armed with pikes, from Oldham, Royton, &c. This obtained no credit. However, about eleven, Mr. John Moore, jun., one of the constables, made his appearance on the Exchange, in the utmost agitation, and addressed the astonished merchants assembled there to the following effect :—"Gentlemen, I am sorry to inform you, that circumstances have occurred which render it necessary that this building should be instantly closed. All who are members of the military corps or of the civil power must instantly repair to their respective rendezvous; and other gentlemen are requested to close their warehouse, and look to the protection of their own property, as we are now obliged to declare the town in a state of OPEN REBELLION!'' In consequence of this address, the Exchange was instantly deserted, all the shops and warehouses were shut up, and the most fearful alarm was visible on every countenance. After waiting awhile, and finding no pikemen made their appearance, I proceeded towards the Oldham-road, where I found every thing quiet. I met several country tradesmen from that quarter, whom I knew, and from their information was assured every thing was perfectly quiet, and that there was not the slightest foundation for the alarm which had been created. On my return homewards, I found the following handbill posted up, by order of the municipal officers:—

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"*Same date.—Half-past* 11 *o'clock A.M.*

"The Boroughreeves and Constables of Manchester and Salford do hereby caution all the inhabitants to close their houses, shops, and warehouses, and to keep themselves and all persons under their controul within doors, *otherwise their lives will be in danger*. Carts and all other carriages must be immediately moved from the streets and other public roads.

" 'C. Wheeler and Sons, Printers.'

"By the time the putting up of this commenced, the house was discovered, and it was the jest of every one who read it. The activity of our municipal corps was now displayed in a manner different to what had before been witnessed, viz. *in tearing down these placards with the greatest rapidity* ; and so swift was the work of destruction that very few copies survive.

"Hunt, I understand, was to-day brought up for examination, which was comprised in the following questions:—

"Magistrate—Pray, Mr. Hunt, what did you come here for?

"Mr. Hunt—Pray, Gentlemen, what am I brought here for?

"Mr. Hunt was remanded.

"To-day a constable was arresting a poor lame vacrant, whom he treated ill. A respectable bleacher, named Wilson, interfered, by saying 'Don't use the man cruelly;' when the assistance of a Cheshire soldier was called, and instantly Wilson was charged with exciting a riot. The Yeomanry man's sabre was immediately drawn, and Wilson was marched to the Police-office, from whence he was taken to the New Bailey prison, in custody like a felon. There fortunately, he was known to one of the Magistrates, and after some hesitation was discharged. I mention this as one of the 'fantastic tricks' which the minions of authority are playing.''

[From another Correspondent.]

''*Same date.*

"All the roads leading from this town to Ashton, Stockport, Cheadle, Stratford, Liverpool, Rochdale, Oldham, Bury, Bolton, &c. are covered with wounded stragglers, ho have not yet been able to reach their homes after the events on Monday. I have ascertained, from pretty accurate information, that there are 17 wounded persons along the Stockport road; 13 or 14 on the Ashton road; at least 20 are on the Oldham; 7 or 8 on the Rochdale; besides several others on the roads to Liverpool, &c. *One woman* died last night at Eccles, five miles hence, of the wounds she received. Seven persons in all are said to be dead.

"Mr. Hulme is not dead, as at first reported : he recovered the use of his senses this morning, and told the surgeons who attended him, that he had a wound in his back. It was immediately examined, and a wound discovered, made apparently with a penknife, but fortunately in a favourable part.''

[From another Correspondent.]

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''*Same date*.

"The numbers assembled in the town, and at the place of meeting, were about four times as great as at the last meeting when Mr. Hunt presided; but had it not been for the uncalled for interference of the military, there can be no doubt whatever that every thing would have gone off as peaceably as it did before. *The great body of the people, though cut and trampled on in every direction, evinced no disposition to commit any sanguinary act*; and, with the exception of the young man belonging to the Yeomanry, who lost his life by falling from his horse and being trampled upon, *all the others were injured by the soldiery*. I dread to anticipate what will yet be the result of all these proceedings."

"*Manchester, Wednesday evening , Aug.*18.

"Nothing of particular importance has transpired since I wrote you yesterday. A deathlike stillness pervades the town, which looks more like a place besieged than the once busy capital of the first manufacturing district in the world. Tranquility has been re-established, but I fear much not on the most secure basis. Every body is under fearful apprehension that the state of extreme exasperation into which the populace have been universally thrown by the melancholy events of Monday, and which they are continually indicating in a hundred ominous ways, may yet burst forth in a manner too awful to be contemplated. The authorities here do not conceal their fears; they feel that their situation now is even worse than it was. Orders, I understand, from an authority on which I can rely, have been sent off in different directions for more regular troops. Yet where these troops are to be spared from I know not, for, according to every account which has reached us here, all the towns round about us, Stockport, Macclesfield, Oldham, &c. are even in a worse state than we are. In fact, it is from without that every body dreads most ; for, notwithstanding the hoax of yesterday, a reaction on the part of the country people, favoured as they are sure to be by the mass of the people in Manchester, is an event which the most reasonable and reflecting allow to be but too probable.

"Neither Hunt nor any of his fellow prisoners have as yet been brought up for a second examination. I understand that Hunt sent a strong representation through the keeper of the prison to the Magistrates, to be admitted to give bail; but that no answer, either negatively or affirmatively, has yet been made to it. Indeed, it is yet to be known whether the offence which he is charged with is a bailable one or not. The prisoners are all confined in separate cells, and are not suffered to have any communication with each other. The examination will, I understand, certainly take place to-morrow.''

[*From the Chester Chronicle, a Ministerial Paper*.]

"At five o'clock the streets of Manchester were not much more crowded than they generally are. Several hundred horse were drawn up in St. Anne's-square, and parties of them patrolled the streets. Every thing seemed to promise a continuance of quiet (or rather freedom from disturbance), as the military power was known to be so strong as to be able instantly to overpower any resistance. We must not omit, however, to state, that as the meeting was *orderly*

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and peaceable till the approach of the cavalry, *not the least shadow of resistance* was made by them to the attack.''

———

"*Leeds, Aug.*18

"About half-past 12 o'clock this day, an express arrived here from General Byng, ordering off the last troop of the 4th, or Irish Royal Dragoons, to Manchester; and in the course of half an hour, they were equipt in complete marching order, and shortly after set out for their destination ; the other troops had previously left this neighbourhood for the same quarter; so that, with the exception of a few recruiting parties, we have not a single regular soldier in our vicinity."

———

The following part is a copy of an address, which it was the intention of the Female Reformers of Manchester to have presented to Mr. Hunt, along with a new banner, on Monday last, had not the meeting been so suddenly dispersed by the irruption of the military:—

TO HENRY HUNT, Esq.,

CHAIRMAN OF THE REFORM MEETING IN MANCHESTER

SIR, —Permit the Female Reformers of Manchester, in presenting you with this flag , to state, that they are actuated by no motives of petty vanity. As wives, mothers, daughters, in their social, domestic, moral capacities, they come forward in support of the sacred cause of liberty—a cause in which their husbands, their fathers, and their sons, have embarked the last hope of suffering humanity. Neither ashamed or afraid of thus aiding you in the glorious struggle for recovering your lost privileges—privileges upon which so much of their own happiness depends—they trust that this tribute to freedom will animate you to a steady perseverance in obtaining the object of our common solicitude — a radical reform in the Common House of Parliament. In discharging what they felt to be an imperative duty, they hope that they have not ''overstepped the modesty of nature,'' and they shall now retire to the bosoms of their families with the cheering and consolatory reflection, that your efforts are on the eve of being crowned with complete success.

May your flag never be unfurled but in the cause of peace and reform; and then may a female's curse pursue the coward who deserts the standard.

Aug. 16, 1819.

[…]

5. MORNING POST, August 24, 1819

p.2

THE LATE PROCEEDINGS AT MANCHESTER

———

Although we have already given ample and various accounts, in the course of the preceding week, of the transactions as they occurred on Monday last at Manchester, yet we deem it

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expedient, for obvious reasons, to lay before our readers the following connected, impartial and authentic details, from *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle.* It places the whole scene in one unbroken series before us, and it will add its weight of testimony to what we have previously published, while it will serve to prove still more clearly, the malignant falsehoods, resorted to by the factious to distort all the circumstances of that unfortunate day.

Early in the morning the various responsible Authorities were on the alert. The Magistrates, the Boroughreeves and Constables of Manchester and Salford, an immense body of Special Constables, many of them men of the first consideration, and the various forces of military and artillery, were in motion for their appointed duties. The latter consisted of our own Yeomanry Cavalry, under Major TRAFFORD; the Prince Regent's Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry, under Lieut. Colonel TOWNSEND; the 15th Hussars, from the barracks under Lieut. Colonel DALRYMPLE; a detachment of the 88th Foot, now stationed in the King-street barracks, under colonel M'GREGOR; some pieces of Royal Horse Artillery, under Major DYNELEY; and a detachment of the 31st foot, under Lieutnant-Colonel L'Estrange, the able, intelligent, and active Officer who commanded the whole, and made all the necessary arrangements for the occasion.

At eleven o'clock in the forenoon the following Magistrates assembled at a Gentleman's house in Mount-street, which commands an immediate and uninterrupted view of the whole area of ground near St .Peter's Church, in which the Meeting was to take place, viz.— the Rev. Mr. HAT, the Rev. Mr. ETHELSTON, Mr. WRIGHT, Mr. MARRIOTT, Mr. NORRIS, Mr. TRAFFORD, the Rev. Mr. MALLORY, Mr. HULTON, Mr. TUTTON, Mr. FLETCHER, Mr. SILVESTER, and Mr. FEILDEN. The Special Constables assembled on the ground soon after : the Military were halted in various suitable stations, retired from the public ground.

The Radical Reformers now began to make their formidable appearance. *They marched in regiments under regular leaders*, and all the appalling insignia, *Caps of Liberty*, &c. which had been long preparing for what they considered to be a most glorious day. As they progressively advanced to the hustings, they were received with the loudest acclamations, with huzzas, and the clapping of hands.

At half-past eleven o'clock a strong party marched up in files of four and five abreast, with various colours and banners; one inscribed "No Corn Laws," surmounted with the *Cap of Liberty*. — This was from Stockport.

At a quarter before twelve, another body marched in from Deansgate, in files, with two colours, and a bugle, surmounted with the *Cap of Liberty*.

Another party followed from the same street, with women in single files, and men on each side in double files, with a flag inscribed with a motto, and "Union Female Society of Royton."

Another party marched in from St. Peter's Road, direct up to the hustings.

Another party marched in at twelve o'clock, with a band of music, and a flag, accompanied with a cart for the hustings, in which *women were riding*.

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At this time the hustings were filled with men, eight flags or banners flying, and several thousands standing round with *hats off*.

George Swift, a reform Orator, now addressed the meeting, and on ending his speech, for or five huzzas were given, by order.

At half-past twelve another cart, with planks, and a large CHAIR, were brought, to add to the hustings.

At a quarter before on o'clock a *Body of Women*, in treble files, marched in with music ; and soon after, a great number of men, four or five deep, marched in, with drum beating, music playing, a red pole, with the Cap of Liberty hoisted; a blue Flag, motto, "Unity and Strength;" and a green Flag, motto, "Parliaments Annual." Great shouts from the hustings welcomed this party. Two other Flags were then marched in. At this time *twelve Flags* appeared, and were so arranged as to form a road up to the hustings.

The whole had every appearance of military array, and were totally unlike that of a body of people *met for deliberation*.

At a quarter past one, a very large Procession advanced from Deansgate, headed by an open carriage, with a *Woman* in front, who bore and brandished a Flag with an inscription. In the Car were five persons, ones of whom gave a signal for a general shout, on approaching the hustings. Of these parties were *Mr. Hunt, Knight, Johnson*, and *Moorhouse*, who immediately mounted the hustings.

Amongst the numerous Flags were the Stockport, Oldham, Middleton, Royton, Rochdale, Ashton, and Saddleworth UNION FLAGS. That from the last mentioned place was of a shocking description. It was BLACK, with large tassels of the same colour ; the Inscription, in white characters, was "Taxation without representation is unjust and tyrannical ; Saddleworth, Lees and Mossley Union;" on the reverse, "Unite and be free! Equal Representation or DEATH!" — Several persons had already addressed the assemblage at different times from the partly-formed hustings, desiring them "to form in close order round the hustings, and *to lock their arms fast together*, in order to prevent their enemies from penetrating amongst them." After this another cart arrived with planks of timber, and more regular hustings were formed. A woman also exhibited a Deal Board, with the words "*Order! Order!*" painted upon it. When Hunt mounted the hustings, he commanded the different musical instruments which were piled upon them to be removed ; and in a very peremptory tone also commanded all persons to leave the hustings who did not intend to address the meeting. he was immediately called to the Chair, and addressed the immense congregated mass.

[The few words which he was permitted to deliver, we have already given.]

He was proceeding to make some indecent references to the Magistrates, when the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry suddenly appeared on the ground, and formed in line before the house in which the Magistrates were placed. Hunt turned to Johnson and said, "There's a treat for you." He then said to the people, "Stand firm, my friends: you see they are in disorder already : give them three cheers;" at the same time taking off his hat, and waving it

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above his head. The cheers were instantly returned by the Cavalry, and the whole of the Peace Officers, the former brandishing their sabres, whilst huzzaing.

A short consultation now took place amongst the Justices, and they immediately issued a warrant against Hunt, Johnson, Knight, and Moorhouse. Mr. NADIN, the Deputy Constable of Manchester, was appointed to execute it. THE RIOT ACT HAD BEEN TWICE READ : ONCE BY THE REV. MR. ETHELSTON, AND ONCE BY JOHN SYLVESTER, ESQ. The rebellious nature of the Meeting, its numbers, and threatening aspect, the warlike insignia displayed, the order of march and military arrangement, many of the Reformers having shouldered large sticks and bludgeons as representative of muskets, coupled with the depositions on oath of very many respectable inhabitants as to the consequences that must in their opinion unavoidably bow to lives and property from such an immense Meeting, assembled under such influences; and the Magistrates' own view of the whole of this tremendous scene—rendered it imperative to interfere. To have attempted it by the common means would have been preposterous, and could only have caused the loss of a great number of lives without a chance of completing the object. Mr. Nadin therefore took the warrant, attended by a host of Special Constables, Mr. Trafford, a highly respectable Cheshire Magistrate, headed the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry, and an order was given for the whole to advance and take their prisoners. This was done in a steady and masterly style; but the Cavalry had not advanced many yards before they were assailed with heavy volleys of stones, shouts of defiance, and the most coarse and insulting language. Till thus assailed, no Yeomanry-man used his sword, each man having confined himself to waving it over his head. Now the duty of self-preservation obliged them to strike, but in very few instances to cut. The Manchester and Salford Corps in a moment surrounded the whole hustings, and the Civil Officers proceeded to seize their prisoners. Immediately, the Cheshire Yeomanry galloped on the ground; to them succeeded the 15t Hussars, and the Royal Artillery Train, whilst all the various detachments of infantry also advanced. On every side the soldiers were attacked with the most determined resolution : many of the Cavalry were struck to the ground, and the Reformers attempted to knock out their brains with large stones (previously provided) and sticks, whilst lying on the ground. Our [..] youth, Mr. JOHN HULME, was struck in the face with a brick. It took away his senses, and he checked his horse so suddenly, that the both fell together. A man had also stabbed him in the back with a sharp instrument, and whilst in this deplorable state, a fellow with a club was about to finish him, when a foot soldier bayoneted the villain, who sprang high from the earth, and fell down dead. Another Yeomanry-man was unhorsed at the same moment, and his life with great difficulty saved. This was near the Quaker's Meeting-house, where a furious battle raged. In the burying-ground, there, many persons committed murderous work from the inclosed walls, till the gates were burst open by a private soldier with te butt-end of his musket. Many innocent spectators had also been there during the whole of the day, as a place of security. At length it was necessarily cleared by force; and one of our Yeomanry leaped his horse over the wall after a Reformer who had been particularly active. This man, it is believed, paid a severe penalty for his desperate conduct. To the front of these premises a considerable quantity of timber was

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laid, which unfortunately sheltered the refractory from direct approach. *Not a single shot was fired by any of the military, although they were fired upon several times by the Reformers and their abettors*.

A scene of confusion and terror now existed which defies description. The multitude pressed one another down, and in many parts they lay in masses, piled body upon body. The cries and mingled shouts, with the galloping of the horses, were shocking. Lieut-Colonel L'ESTRANGE, the Commander of the troops, received a tremendous blow on the forehead from a brick, which for a moment deprived him of sense, and he had nearly fallen from his horse. Many of the most respectable Gentleman of the town were thrown down, ridden over, and trampled upon. One special constable, Mr. ASHWORTH, of the Bull's Head, in the Market-place, was killed dead on the spot. Another, Mr. PETTY, was borne home, laid on a door by four men, dreadfully hurt. Major-General CLAY, assisting the civil power in his private dress of a citizen; Mr. JOHN MOORE, the constable; Mr. CHARLES RIDER, of Collyhurst; Mr. THOSSHARP, &c. &c. &c. were all forced to the ground by the cavalry. Under the circumstances these accidents were unavoidable; not the smallest blame is attached to the military by those who were the temporary sufferers. It was scarcely to be anticipated that great numbers of the Reformers would come to the Meeting prepared with offensive weapons; but it was the case. A class of them were dressed as brewers' servants usually are, with long brats that contain pockets. These pockets were all filled with stones. Therefore it is manifest, that is THE LAW found occasion to interpose, a regular system of prevention had been arranged to defeat its object.

The whole of this serious affray lasted not many minutes. The ground was cleared as if by magic. During the first few moments, the GREAT delinquent, the monster in human shape, to whom all these evils must be attributed, was dragged by NADIN and others to the Magistrates, admidst the execrations and hisses of every good subject. *Johnson*, the brushmaker, was brought up at the same moment. *Knight* and *Moorhouse* escaped. Shortly two *Females*, who had come to the meeting under such ideal pomp, and with a demeanor the reverse of every thing that man delights to see in woman, were brought forward. One of them, *Elizabeth Gaunt*, had borne a standard in the carriage of *Hunt*; the other was much bruised, having received a contusion in the face.

The Rev. Mr. HAY came forward : He said he respected the feelings of the good and the loyal; but as *Hunt* was now a prisoner, and in the hands of the law, he hoped that no expression would be given which could endanger the man's personal security, but that they wold be satisfied to let him pass to the New Bailey Prison with their silent contempt. This address was highly applauded, and its purport assented to; but still, when this destroyer of the poor man's comfort was handed out by the Beadles, a *general hiss* could not be repressed. Mr. HAY also said with much manliness, "I will go down with the prisoner as a protection to him. Shall we put him upon a horse, a place him in a coach?" The general cry was, "No! d— the brute, let him *walk*!" To this the Magistrate assented. A cavalcade of troops and constables

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were formed, and the demi-god was soon safely lodged in a suitable habitation, where he might have "a season for reflection."

The condition of the desperate and infatuated multitude that had scoffed over these towns but a few hours previously, was now very much changed. They scampered away in every direction. Those who meant to go north, ran to the southward. Fear and derangement marked their sudden flight, and they knew not whether they were tending. Some went two or three miles on a wrong road before they dare to make an inquiry, and then had to retrace their steps. Their consternation was excessive; and we have no doubt they experienced a lesson for their future contemplation, that no *argument*, from their best friends, could have enforced with any effect. They were from all quarters, and from considerable distances, and must in many instances have sacrificed *three whole days* on expenses in coming to, being at, and returning from this, *the last meeting before a Revolution was to break*, *and they were to divide he property of the country amongst them*. Their leaders have so deeply impressed them them with this ridiculous expectation, that they have had great difficulty for some time in keeping them down. Many were from Darwen and from Blackburn. They were elated at their numbers, which seemed to make them feel conscious of strength. They declared on the ground "*that this was the proudest day England ever saw, and that it would live in the pages of history to the latest generations!*"

The utmost exertions of the Boroughreeves and Constables both of Manchester and Salford were for the rest of the day and the whole the evening till midnight required in many parts of the town, but most particularly at the New Cross. The disaffected had fixed their rendezvous there, and the peace was broken continually by a very large mob. Betwixt seven and eight o'clock the Riot Act was read, and three or four persons were wounded by a few shots from the Military, whom the mob defied and insulted grossly. One of these had his leg amputated at the Infirmary by Mr. Ainsworth, and another of them was so dreadfully wounded that he is since dead. *The Military have had the greatest merit in their forbearance*, so little firing has taken place if compared with the circumstances under which they have been called to duty. Strong bodies of cavalry and Special Constables patrolled the streets, and the town had very appearance of being in a state of complete insurrection. Sudden alarms from different quarters, the escorts of prisoners down to the New Bailey, occasional reports of fire-arms, the sound of horses' feet, the rattling of the drum, and the strains of the trumpet, kept the inhabitants in constant trepidation, and it was not till at an early hour on the Tuesday morning that these things ceased, and temporary quiet restored. […]

THANKS TO THE MILITARY FOR THEIR HUMANE AND FORBEARING CONDUCT ON MONDAY LAST.

In the course of our duty we have felt it necessary to obtain every species of information on this momentous subject, documentary or oral, that could tend to the use and advantage of the public. The Officer who had the command of the troops, and whose range of service here has been wide, intricate, and arduous, has executed the whole of his functions in a way that

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secures to him the approbation of all the judicious and thinking part of the inhabitants. We mean of course, Lieut-Colonel L'ESTRANGE. For the expression of all that can satisfy an honourable mind, we refer our Readers to the Resolutions inserted, and also to the following official letter: —

"*New Bailey Court House, Aug 17, 1819*.

"The Magistrates of the two Counties of Lancaster and Chester assembled at Manchester, request Colonel L'ESTRANGE will accept, for himself, and convey to the Officers. Non-commissioned Officers and Privates of the Garrison under his command, their best and sincerest thanks for the energy, tempered by the greatest humanity, displayed in their conduct yesterday:— a conduct peculiarly characteristic of the British Soldier.

"W.M. HULTON, Chairman."

With respect to Sir John Fleming Leycester's Regiment of Cheshire Yeomanry, the same Resolutions convey with the highest praise that can be bestowed by towns, to whose rescue they have come at a moment of such imminent peril; and that, for the third time. When their relative situations in life are considered, the private sacrifices they must have made, and the no little peril to which they have been subjected, the inhabitants must feel assured that their obligations to the spirited readiness of this distinguished regiment are truly great.

The Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry, our spirited and humane Fellow-townsmen, have deserved well of those townsmen. The Radical Reformers have cherished a marked repugnance to them, and the most unfounded, shameful aspersions have been loudly expressed to them in the open streets. Even printed labels have been placarded on the walls of the streets, ascribing the most odious of all characters to them, that of "Assassins." But let *facts* speak for themselves : *No death has been occasioned by any shot or sabre wound given by the Manchester Yeomanry*; and they did not strike with their sabres till they were to danger, from the stones, &c. thrown at them. — The following official letter will wipe away any stigma attached to them on the score of *Humanity* :—

"*New Bailey , Court House, Aug 17, 1819*.

"The Magistrates of the two Counties of Lancaster and Chester, assembled at Manchester, request Major TRAFFORD will accept for himself and convey to the Officers, Non-commissioned Officers and Privates of the Manchester and Salford Yeomanry Cavalry, their best thanks for the exemplary conduct of that Corps, during the trying events of yesterday. The Magistrates remarked with peculiar gratification the *extreme forbearance exercised by the Corps, when insulted and defied by the Rioters*; thus affording another proof, that humanity, as well as courage, stamps the character of the British soldier.

"W.M. HULTON, Chairman. "

The thanks of the same numerous and highly respectable Meeting of the inhabitants of Manchester and Salford and their neighbourhood are also conveyed to the Magistrates ; to the Boroughreeves and Constables of both towns ; and to the whole body of Special Constables, whose services were perhaps on no former occasion ever so eminently useful as at the present crisis. The whole our Civil Establishment has been most anxiously, and unceasingly, employed

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by night and by day through the whole of this harassing week ; besides the labour entailed upon them in preparing for it and its probable consequences.

To the Right Hon. the Earl of DERRY, as Lord Lieutenant of the County, great duties have devolved : and his Lordship has evinced an alacrity and feeling on the occasion which will not soon be forgotten. The same meeting of the inhabitants has been sensible of, and has acknowledged its obligations to his Lordship, in a suitable manner.

Probably the newt point to which the public will bend its attention is, the opinion of his Royal Highness the PRINCE REGENT, and of the Government of the Country, upon the momentous transactions of Monday last :— We have the pleasure to be able to give some information relative to this. A statement of all the proceedings has been laid before that high ordeal : and the PRINCE REGENT, with the Government, gives his most unqualified approbation to all the measures adopted and executed by the Magistrates the Civil Officers , and the Military ; and both the Government and the PRINCE REGENT have expressed the sense they feel of the moderation of the troops, and the great humanity with which, under the circumstances, they have conducted themselves. — *Manchester Chronicle*. […]

6. Public Ledger and Daily Advertiser, August 27 1819

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MANUFACTURING DISTRICTS

MANCHESTER.— The following is an extract of a letter received yesterday, from a Gentleman who left London a few days since for Manchester : —

"Manchester, Aug 24, 1819.

"I safely arrived here on Monday night, and find all things quiet. I have been refused to see Mr. Hunt ; he and all the other prisoners are kept very close, on a charge of High Treason. The Magistrates do not know what to do, till orders are received from London. Mr. Hunt's servant is down here with him. I cannot collect any more particulars than the Newspapers have already given. It is generally expected that the prisoners will liberated this week. Mr. Hunt is perfectly well."

We subjoin some passages of several other communications from the same quarter.

MANCHESTER.— *Tuesday Evening*.— We still continue perfectly quiet. Nothing has yet been decided on as to Mr. Hunt, or any of the other prisoners. A general expectation prevails that they will be liberated before the week is over. I have just seen Mr. West, Mr. Hunt's friend, who has come down from London to afford him any assistance he may require in his present situation. He tells me, that on applying to see Mr. Hunt, he has been peremptorily refused admission.

The gaoler referred him to the Magistrates for an order, and the answer of the Magistrate's Clerk was "No.— Mr. *West* (emphatically) cannot be admitted." Other

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individuals have, however, been allowed interviews with him. I mentioned yesterday two, but I was of course mistaken in supposing one of them to be Mr. West.

AUG. 24. — "The Yeomanry of this place are less officious than they have hitherto shewn themselves, consequently we have less turbulence than when you received my last communication. Yesterday I visited Ancots-lane Newton-lane, New Cross, &c. as those are the parts of the town where the Reformists and discontented people generally assemble. You can more readily conceive than I can describe the feelings I possessed at the sight of such a motley and numerous assemblage. I remained in that quarter from five o'clock until about half-past nine, during which time he greatest order prevailed, and it has continued peaceable up to this period. I was much amused during my stay with them with a sight that never before occurred to me, that was, the publicly burning of some of the obnoxious Ministerial Prints. About eight o'clock the persons most prominent amongst them, collected on and about the steps of the New Cross, and were almost instantaneously surrounded by thousands of their followers, when one of them held up a Newspaper, which was loudly announced (lough enough, I could almost imagine, to have been heard through this vast township) to be *The Courier* ; he then ejaculated some sentences, but which I was not near enough to hear, and almost instantaneously a light was applied to it, and consumed : *The Manchester Chronicle*, and several others, went through the same ordeal, to the great mirth of the spectators. A more solemn ceremony was now performed, which was the *internment* — the ashes being carefully preserved, were enclosed in paper or linen (which of these I could not distinguish), and deposited in the earth, in the cross-roads, on the site where the Cross stands, when threes of the most hideous yells were given I ever heard. They then formed themselves into different bodies, and paraded the streets."

The town is perfectly quiet this morning, and business is going on as usual on a Tuesday. Yesterday evening passed off very well, though great numbers of persons of the lower orders assembled in the afternoon on the New Bailey Bridge, and in Bridge-street. Some mischief-making fellow had reported that Hunt had been ordered to be liberated from the New Bailey, but that he had refused to go until 5000l. had been paid to him for damages!! No argument could convince the credulous multitude of the absurdity of the tale, and many of them waited for hours in momentary expectation of seeing the gates opened, and Hunt walking out in triumph. About seven o'clock the streets in the vicinity were completely full, and some few shopkeepers were so alarmed as to close their shutters. It became a measure of prudence to disperse the people, and a few constables, with three or four soldiers from the barracks close to the prison, kept the crowd quiet; though they were scarcely driven out of the streets at one end, than they appeared at the other. No act of outrage was committed ; they gradually left it as it got dark.

A little after seven a slight alarm was occasioned in Market-street, by an explosion of gunpowder. It proved to have taken place in the shop of Mr. Styan, a gunsmith. Mrs. Styan had imprudently been striking a light in the shop ; a spark fell on some loose powder, which took fire, and communicating with a quantity in some scales, the whole exploded. Every pane of glass was shattered to atoms, and the materials blown across the street. Mrs. Styan ran out in

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flames, and was much burnt. A great crowd, consisting mostly of persons who had been attracted to the lower part of the town by the report concerning Hunt, flocked to the place, but they were soon dispersed.

May respectable persons attended at the New Bailey Court-house, on Monday morning, in expectation that Hunt would be again brought up, but were disappointed. He will probably not be examined before the return of Mr. Hay and Mrs. Hardman from London; they are expected to-morrow. Mr. Bouchier, with an assistant, has been sent down by Government, and has been busily employed in taking examinations.

Mark Wardle, one of the late Editors of *The Observer*, was bailed on Friday.

An infamous hand-bill was posted about the town yesterday, handed "Peter-loo Massacre", printed at *The Observer Office*.It announces an intended publication, the first number to be printed on Wednesday, price 2d. containing the particulars of the "Murders" on Monday by a band of "Armed Ruffians."

It does not appear any drill meetings were held by the Reformers on Sunday morning, though they were frequent on the Sunday before the late dispersion.

A letter from Manchester, of the 24th inst. says—"The assertions of the Ministerial Prints concerning the reading of the Riot Act, the tumultuous conduct of the Meeting before the cavalry appeared on the ground, and the preparations which the Reformers had made for resistance, and the resistance they offered, though they have now perished in their contradiction and absurdity, were at first: so boldly advanced, and repeated from such a variety of quarters, as to command a momentary belief. accordingly, when I wrote you on Thursday last, I took it for granted that some of them were true. I assumed the reading of the Riot Act on three grounds: —first, because many persons told me that it was read (though neither my informants, nor any one of their acquaintance, had heard it) ; secondly, because persons had sworn a riot against the Meeting, and the only use the Magistrates could make of their depositions, was to act on them by reading the Proclamation for dispersing it; and thirdly, because they were seen frequently to look at their watches for the expiration, it was supposed, of the hour after which they might legally apply force. These two last circumstances, which I had from a Gentleman who was present, and could speak from personal knowledge, are, it will be allowed, by no means conclusive; for this significant examination of watches might manifest an impatience for the appearance of Hunt, as well as for the expiry of the Riot Act hour; and the affidavits of riot might be considered by these wise men as freeing them from the responsibility of following the usual ceremony of reading the Act. But is it not lamentable to think, that in a matter which ought to have been so public and obtrusive to have warranted the subsequent proceedings, we are left to infer the occurrence of the act from reasoning, instead of hearing it proclaimed by the almost universal testimony of those who were present ? The secrecy with which the proclamation was readers no effectual compliance with the law. In order to satisfy myself whether the ceremony had been gone through, even in the quiet tranquil manner, that so ill-comported with the alleged nature of the Assembly to which it was addressed, I have procured the testimony of individuals from every part of the area, and they all concur in saying, that they

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heard no Riot Act read, and that it was impossible it could have been read in their respective quarters, without being heard or noticed. The inhabitant of Windmill-street overlooked the Meeting and the Hustings. — They heard nothing read. Many of them were near the place where the Magistrates had fixed their headquarters : they saw no demonstration of an attempt to read. These people are no Reformers, and therefore their testimony cannot supposed to be biased in favour of the Meeting. They are ready to give their oaths in a Court of Justice, that no Riot Act was read so as to *be heard by any portion* of the Assembly. When told that the Riot Act was certainly read, for the Magistrates had said so, one of them replied, "Then it must have been read by one of the 13 in Mr. Buxton's house, for the edification of the rest, or in the Police Office, to instruct the Constables; or in their own houses, to settle some domestic tumults." These people are the best witnesses to determine whether the Reformers came armed to te field, and to set at rest for ever the stupid report that their sticks were pointed and fitted to receive pike-heads. Two hundred sticks were collected in the area by the inhabitants of Windmill-street and the Police, and they all assure me that no one of them was so constructed. I have myself seen several collections of those weapons, and I yesterday examined the grand police depot of them in the Infirmary. This latter arsenal contains 45, but not one them is pointed or fitted for a pike-head. The whole of the sticks are just like the ordinary sticks of country people, and of the ordinary size, and with no appearance of having been prepared for the purpose of attack or defence; and all of them shew that the hedges on the road, or the neighbouring thickets, were the only magazine of arms from which the Reformers were supplied with the alleged means of resisting horse, foot, and artillery. That no attack by sticks, bricks, stones, or otherwise, was made on the cavalry before they began their work of destruction, is more positively and universally maintained than any of the above statements. The inhabitants of Windmill-street, who were so near as to hear much, and see every thing that was going forward, are all ready to swear, that not a stone was thrown, a stick raised, or a hiss uttered, before the Yeomanry rushed in among them. No Resistance was offered to the execution of their purpose in arresting the orators. Some shots were said to have been fired by the mob when the cavalry began to act; but this is entirely false, and allowed to be so by the Yeomanry themselves. There were only three or four shots fired in the area, and two or three of these were by foot soldiers at a house near Deansgate, and one by a dragoon at the Quaker's Chapel. Not a pistol, or any other fire-arm, was found on any of the Reformers, or seen in their hands. Twelve of the patients who were in the Infirmary have gone out cured; 15, who were more severely wounded, still remain in the establishment." […]

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7. Morning Chronicle, 30 August 1819

MANCHESTER

The alarming treason at Manchester has terminated in the commitment of Mr. Hunt and several others for a conspiracy. We subjoin the particulars of their examination and the decision of the Magistrates from *Wheeler's Manchester Chronicle*, a paper which, as most of our readers know, is devoted to the ruling party.

NEW BAILEY COURT-HOUSE, Friday, August 27.

Mr. Hunt and his fellow prisoners, it was understood, were to be brought up for a final examination this day. In consequence there was great anxiety in the public to be present. A crowd gathered about the gates of the prison, and it became necessary to restrain a sudden rush into the Court. Constables and military were actively employed for the purpose. At length the Magistrates presented themselves on the Bench, and Mr. Marriott directed the gates to be opened. The court was immediately filled to excess, and as the proceedings occupied between four and five hours, the heat became almost intolerable. The decorum of the Court was well preserved by those present, although it was evident a great many of Hunt's supporters were there. In one instance this rule was departed from, and Mr. Norris, the presiding Magistrates, interfered. Indeed, to his sensible, judicious, and unimpassioned conduct, too great a compliment cannot be paid. And the firmness which he evinced at its peculiar use : it was called for and was excellently enforced. Wherever Reformers make their appearance, the usual suavities of personal communication are generally denied. It was so on the present occasion. Mr. Hunt's feelings and style of arguing hurting on by times to a mode of enforcing his conclusions, which is somewhat contrary to the characteristic propriety of a Court of Law. In several instances he bowed to the decisions of Mr. Norris, and in one or two he apologised for his abruptness.

The adresses from the Bench, the examination of witnesses by Mr. Hunt, the observations, and the replies to those observations, which occurred during the proceedings, went to a great length. They would, if fully reported, fill a great proportion of a Newspaper. — We can only attempt, from the pressure of time, such a sketch as would give our readers some view of the circumstances. Of the evidence, for obvious reasons, we shall say nothing. Mr. Hunt was so peremptory and enforcing to them, that Mr. Norris had frequently to interfere ; and Hunt's whole demeanour was bold to an extreme. He insisted on knowing the names, characters, the situations in life, and the residence of the witnesses ; but in several of those respects, he was not allowed to be fully gratified. He was allowed to know every thing, nevertheless, which in the remotest degree related to his necessary condition as a prisoner.

Present: — James Norris, Esq. in the Chair ; Ralph Wright, Wm. Hulton, Wm. Marriott, Thos. Wm. Tatton, Esqrs.; C.W. Ethelston, Clerk; Mr. Bouchier, the Solicitor to the Treasury, sat under the Bench. The prisoners, Henry Hunt, Joseph Johnson, J.T. Saxton, John Knight, James Moorhouse, Samuel Bamford, John Healey, George Swift, Thomas Taylor, Robert

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Wilde, and Elizabeth Gaunt, were brought up together. Elizabeth Gaunt was agitated, and not able to stand at the Bar; she was placed in a chair behind. Moorhouse kissed his hand to the people behind, kept his white hat on, and in a short time refused to take it off. A great confusion prevailed for some time in the Court. Mr. Norris was commencing to address the prisoners; Hunt said in a peremptory tone, "I can't hear, there was more order at the Meeting the other day than here!"

Silence being at length obtained, Mr. Norris addressed the prisoners to the following effect: — Henry Hunt, and you all severally, you have been remanded on a charge of High Treason ; and you ere informed that the whole evidence had been sent up to London, to be laid before the Law Officers of the Crown, and in the mean time you were to be detained. It was not until this morning that a communication was made from Government ; not to me, but there is a gentleman present (Mr. Bouchier), and he attends with orders to proceed upon a less charge. The charge of Treason is not to be gone into at present.

Hunt — Is the charge of murder then abandoned ? I understood I was remanded until the Coroner's Inquest had sat; and a Magistrate told me I was to be tried for murder as well as treason.

Mr. Hulton, from the Bench, said, I did not tell you so; but that before the charge against you could be ultimately shaped, the Coroner's verdicts must be know.

Moorhouse — This then turns out to be a farce.

Mr. Norris — Moorhouse, I shall feel it my duty to remand you, unless you conduct yourself properly.

Mr. Milne called over the names of the witnesses, whose written depositions he held. On putting the book into the hand of the first, Hunt desired he might be examined alone, and the rest ordered to leave the Court. Mr. Bouchier said he should not object at this.

Many questions were put by Hunt to another of the witnesses ; several of which the Court overruled.— On one being objected to, Hunt said, in a loud energetic voice — I demand it as an act of justice. — Mr. Norris : When you make a request, we understand that you make it as a demand, and as a British subject. The same attention will be paid to you as to any other, if you treat the Court with respect. — Hunt : I have been told I have treated the Court with disrespect : I do not wish it. It would not become me.

Hunt was examining one of the witnesses and Mr. Oswald Milne put a question to him at the same time. hunt was very passionate with Mr. Milne at the interruption. Mr. Norris stopped him, and he said he would allow no intimidation. To a question which Hunt put to the same witness, the witness said he did not choose to answer. Hunt to the Bench: Here's a witness does not choose to answer : what will you do ? — Mr. Norris : He is not obliged to answer it. — Hunt : How are you to get at the truth ? — Mr. Norris : He had made oath to it already. — Hunt put some other questions to the witness, to one of which Mr. Norris observed, you can put that on your trial not now. — Hunt : Then you are determined to send me to trial, whatever the evidence is ! — This sort of conduct he fell into frequently.

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As the evidence of one of the witnesses related to Elizabeth Gaunt only, she was brought to the front of the dock. After it was read, she stated that she was amongst the crowd at the meeting ; that in the confusion some one had put her into Hunt's carriage, but did not know who put her there. She had no right to be in the coach, but was put in by two persons [from motives of humanity, it appeared] for safety; — she fainted away, and when she came to herself she found she had got a blow; — she threw herself afterwards into a private house, and remained there for some time, and might have got away.

Mr. Bouchier here requested she might be discharged, as the evidence was so slight; and the Bench ordered her to be discharged. — The Chairman, Mr. Norris, addressed her with great humanity.

Hunt — This, after twelve day's solitary confinement !

After the whole of the evidence had been read, Hunt said to the Bench : May I be permitted to ask who is the prosecutor?

— Mr. Norris : The Crown.

— Hunt : In person?

— Mr. Norris : The Solicitor of the Treasury is here.

— Hunt : Your name.

— Mr. Bouchier : Bouchier.

— Hunt : I must know the name of the prosecutor, as I may have occasion to bring an action !

— Mr. Norris : Mr. Bouchier has been sent by the Crown.

— Hunt : i wish to know who is the responsible person, in order that if it should turn out that after being eleven days confined, that I have committed no offence, some one may be made responsible.

Mr. Norris : I take it, that those who have sworn to the particular facts are in the present instance responsible.

Hunt : But it is not necessary that there should be a prosecutor?

Mr. Norris : The Crown prosecutes: if there be any particular prosecutor, it must be the Attorney-General.

Mr. Hunt then addressed the Bench to the following effect: —"I know that I am now addressing the same Magistrates who took the first depositions against me ; but after that evidence, and the amended evidence, has been read, it is for them, sitting as his Majesty's Justices, to administer justice. — I hope, and do not doubt, they will dismiss from their minds all prejudice, and act upon the evidence. Some witnesses say that those bodies which came from the country came in military array, but they could not explain hat they meant by military array. Some say they came with sticks. One says, they were so far in military array as to have clubs at their left breasts, similar to muskets. But all agree, that none of them did any act to intimidate. Can the Magistrates say we should be committed on such evidence for a misdemeanour, after eleven days' confinement? Is not this a sufficient punishment for any offence that we may have committed? The eyes of all England are fixed upon this matter. I stand here with the conviction that I have acted rightly ; but it is doubtful whether those who hear me have that conviction.

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The country is in a very agitated state, and will be in a more agitated state till this question is settled. Are you upon this evidence to send us back to solitary confinement? (Mr. Norris : No.) One of the Magistrates whom I do not now see told me all the blood that had been shed must be set to my account. After having been remanded for treason — after having been held up to the country as a traitor — and after having been committed on that charge, and now there being no evidence offered to support it, I appeal to you to lay aside all private feelings. — (Here there was applause in Court).

Mr. Norris. No tumult shall be made ; if there is I shall commit the parties guilty of it.

Hunt. There is no attempt on my part to make tumult — the man who makes any disturbance is my personal enemy.

Hunt resumed. I expected to have stood here on a much greater charge — on a charge of High Treason ; and I have also been charged with murder. I submit to you there has not been one particle of evidence of these. Many of these prisoners I never saw till they came into the box. I admit that I did attend the meeting for the purpose of addressing it, considering the laws of the country allowed me. I did not consider it as a matter of pleasure, but on the contrary, a painful duty. Having had the honour to present to the Secretary of State Remonstrances from other meetings, thro' him to be laid before his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, it was intended a Remonstrance of a similar nature should be sent from this meeting. It was the unanimous opinion of those concerned in this meeting, that we should not imitate Birmingham. The proclamation had pronounced that object illegal ; and though I did not think it at first illegal, yet in my opinion it was foolish.

Without three months' notice given to all the inhabitants, I, as Chairman, would not have put such a question : and it was entirely given up, even if the meeting on the 9th had been held; and we have most respectable evidence of it, from men of as much property and respectability as any in this Court. The resolutions intended to have been proposed, were lost in the late battle. But it will be proved it was intended to convey, certainly, a most strong vote of censure on Lord Sidmouth for refusing to present the petitions from Manchester and Stockport ; and then a solemn appeal to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent, to take into consideration the distressed state of the country, and renew the connexion between the people and the throne.

I shall not trust to my feelings as to what took place on dispersing the meeting; it would be much better if a great portion of that were buried in oblivion. Upon this evidence, I beg that you will not commit. Will you throw down the apple of discord for perpetual contention, and continue the people in agitation? (here the Bench interrupted him).

Mr. Norris : your language is now improper. — What account of this you have to make must be conveyed to Powers higher than ourselves. If the Country were in unfold the agitation you speak of, I, and my Brethren, should do our duty.

Hunt resumed : I did not mean to throw out any imputation, nor ask any thing as a boon, but I demand notice ; nor will I accept any favour. I certainly did ask the Governor whether I

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might be permitted to walk in the garden, but the moment I knew. Johnson had been refused by the Magistrates I would have [..] off my right hand before I would have gone into it!

Mr. Norris — Directions were given to a surgeon, a most respectable man, to see Mr. Johnson : and if necessary for him to walk out, that he should have permission to do so.— (Johnson admitted this).

Hunt resumed : I must say I suffered much bodily pain from the blows of the constables and from sabres. They are visible. I scorned to tell the Doctor of it. My health certainly has, by my apprehension and confinement, been preserved : the exertions should have made to keep that meeting quiet, would have affected me for years. I have slept on a bed such as I would not have put my servants to ; but, thank God, I slept well and have suffered nothing, but from the recollections of my fellow prisoners, and the mangled creatures put to death. I have no complaint to make against the jailor, nor of the are of the jail.

Moorhouse — As the law presumes persons innocent until convicted, I beg to say we ought to be used as well as possible, while we are kept in prison.

Mr. Norris : You may all of you have bail.

Moorhouse : When brought up here before, I was warm, and conducted myself in a way for which, I am neither sorry.

The Magistrates then withdrew.

On their return, Mr. Norris said : Henry Hunt, and I and you all : we sent for Mr. Bouchier in order that we might again carefully peruse the depositions. — It is a most painful duty to me to commit you for a Conspiracy. We can, however, lay our hands on our hearts and say, "we have done our duty." As to the charge of Conspiracy, though you might not have been altogether previously to the Meeting, yet in the [..] of the law all those who commit separate acts, pending to one illegal object, are guilty of that crime. […] the two Meetings together, taking into consideration the manner in which the last was assembled, with such insignia, and under such demonstrations, with the black flag., the bloody dagger, the words with representation, or death — the coming in a threatening manner under these manners — these were a direct […] that the overthrow of the Government was unavoidably contemplated. No discussion could be add, where that flag was; intimidation was its direct act. The charge now is, "that of having […] to alter the law by force and threats." It is an old procedure sufficiently made out; and calls upon […] to commit you for trial before a proper tribunal. It is now my painful duty to commit you to Lancaster Castle.

Last night bail not being produced, Henry Hunt, Robert Jones, Joseph (Dr.) Healey, George Swift, J.T. Saxton, Samuel Bamford, Robert Wild, and John Knight, were sent off to Lancaster Castle, committed to take their trial at the ensuing Assizes. Joseph Johnson was admitted to bail, himself in 1,000l. and two sureties in 500l. each. The same bail was demanded for Hunt ; half that amount for the others. Johnson was borne home on men's shoulders, followed by a rabbled of women and boys. Moorhouse is also bailed.

The lower classes had got hold of some very curious notions about Hunt and expected not only that he would be immediately liberated, but that the Magistrates were anxious to

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induce him to walk out of the prison. So far did this view prevail, that many said he would not leave its walls without a premium of thirty thousand pounds! Others said the Duke of York was coming down to set him free. So little right apprehension had the populace of Hunt's actual condition, and what a sober-minded, tenacious thing the law of the land is. They could not understand that the crime of Conspiracy has any terrors in it.

To the EDITOR of the MORNING CHRONICLE.

SIR,

Having been led, by a gross act of injustice, by which I suffered in the early part of my life, to bestow much consideration on the Law of Libel, and having, in various ways, submitted my opinions to the public on that branch of our jurisprudence, I feel it my duty to call attention to a novel practice, which I consider unconstitutional, and highly dangerous to the liberty of the Press.

I allude to the cases in which, within the last week, the Magistrates of the Metropolis have required BAIL of persons charged with writing or publishing Libels, and who, in the practice of Alderman Atkins (the Lord Mayor), have not only been required to find Bail, but bail to a large amount, accompanied by formalities, which exposed the parties to a deferred and grievous imprisonment.

This practice, in its mildest form, is unquestionably a novelty ; and therefore, unless it be supported by some clause of some NEW Statute, of which I am not apprised, and of which the public at large seem as ignorant as myself, must be unconstitutional. We all remember, that, a few years since, at a late period of a Sessions, a Statute was passed, which conferred on his Majesty's Attorney-General a power of holding persons to bail, against whom, under extraordinary circumstances, he judged it necessary to file informations ; and the necessity which was alleged to exist for obtaining this dangerous stretch of power, could not have existed, if any ordinary Magistrate had held the same power. It is also unlikely that any such authority could subsequently have been entrusted to Magistrates, because the jealousy which has been expressed by every intelligent patriot, in regard to the concession to the Law Officers of the Crown, could not have failed to have animated all England, if such power had been proposed to be extended to every petty Magistrate.

I infer, therefore, that no obscure clause of any obscure Statute can have conferred such power; but if I am mistaken, I crave information from some of your legal readers; and I trust the clause itself will find a place in your Paper, for the benefit of the public, and of all persons connected with the Press, as Writers, Printers, or Publishers.

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It has hitherto been understood to be a great bulwark of our liberties, that the Press was under the guardianship of Juries, and that a man might write whatever he pleased, in the confidence that he was not liable to any punishment, until he was convicted of an evil intention by his country, as personified by twelve impartial men in a Jury-box. He also had an assurance, that he could not even be questioned, and called to answer, except on the presentment of twelve voices on a Grand Jury (though he questioned proceeding by information *ex officio* is an anomaly) ; but if a writer is subject to be held to bail on the view or caprice of a single Magistrate, often ignorant, and often blinded by party feelings, and, is also liable to be committed to the common gaol for 48 hours, till the Bail be approved by the same Judge, then we may bid farewell to all free and useful discussion, and the Press can be exercised only under circumstances of terror and pending ignominy.

I assure you, Sir, that if I thought such really was the law, and that I might be liable to be dragged before some Justice of the Peace, and in his capricious discretion and incompetent judgement held to bail, and sent to gaol for 48 hours, till my bail was approved, I would not hazard even this appeal and remonstrance against the new practice.

In this statement, I trust I do not evince any want of the courage of a freeman to assert the truth : but courage would be unavailing, if the great questions connected with human inquiry were so far to be decided by many persons in Magistracy, as to expose me to be held to bail and imprisonment on their individual judgment of the sense and tendency of my composition. And my feelings would be those of ninety-nine in every hundred of persons accustomed to write for the Press.

It follows, that if such is not the law, and is a practice unknown, or not recognised by the Constitution, that the persons who have thus been apprehended and held to bail have been falsely imprisoned : and that to prevent their case from being drawn into a precedent, they are bound to appeal to a Jury for compensation and damages. Such proceeding is a duty which they owe to themselves, the public, and the sacred rights of the Press, to our constitutional use of which we are indebted for most of our advances in civilization.

Of course, this argument has no reference to the particular Libels charged on this occasion. I have not seen them ; nor would it be a sufficient ground for dispensing with the wholesome forms of law, if it proved that they were the wickedest Libels ever published. It usually happens, that innovations are kept in countenance, by prejudices connected with particular cases; but we ought to put the circumstances of a case wholly out of sight, and scrupulously hold to the laws, if through law we would enjoy civil liberty.

I am, Sir, your very humble servant,

Brighton, Aug. 25.

R. PHILLIPS

[…]

MR. HUNT.

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(From the Statesman of Saturday.)

Mr. West, of the Strand, who is bail for Mr. Hunt in several actions, and who left town on Sunday for Manchester, returned this morning. It seems that Mr. Hunt has not been re-examined, nor is it known with certainly when he will be. On Tuesday Mr. West, in company with Mr. Chapman, of the Observer Office, applied to see Mr. Hunt, and was refused. In consequence, he served Mr. Dunstan, the keeper of the New Bailey prison, with a written demand of a copy of the warrant of commitment against Mr. Hunt. Mr. Dunstan was in Court at the time, and immediately handed the notice to Mr. Milne, the Magistrates' clerk. Mr. Milne observed, that Mr. Hunt had himself demanded a copy, which he had obtained, therefore Mr. Dunstan was not obliged to give another to the parties then applying.

On Wednesday Mr. West applied to Mr. Norris and some other Magistrates then sitting, who informed him that there would be a meeting of the whole Bench the next day at the Star, when his application should be taken into consideration.

Mr. West attended accordingly, but no Meeting of the sort took place! He quitted Manchester the following morning. When our Paper was going to press he was engaged in procuring a writ of Habeas Corpus for Mr. Hunt. There are no letters to day from that Gentleman.

The following is a copy of Mr. West's demand : — "TO THE GAOLER OR KEEPER OF THE PRISON OR GAOL OF THE NEW BAILEY, IN SALFORD.

"I hereby demand of you, pursuant to the Statute in that case made and provided, a Copy of the Warrant or Warrants of detainer or commitment by which Henry Hunt, Esq. is kept and detained a prisoner in your custody, as witness my hand this 24th day of Aug. 1819.

"WAL WEST ,

"For and on behalf of H. Hunt , Esq."

8. Morning Chronicle, 31 August 1819

MANCHESTER

New Bailey, AUGUST 27.

FINAL EXAMINATION OF HUNT.

(FURTHER PARTICULARS)

The solicitor for the Crown, Mr. Bouchier, took his place at the table immediately below the Chairman. Mr. Pearson, the prisoner's solicitor, was now likewise accommodated with a place at the table near his clients.

The first witness whose deposition was proposed to be read was John Shawcross, clerk to the police. Mr. Hunt asked his name, and demanded that he might be examined in open Court before he heard his former deposition read. The Magistrates objected to this demand, and

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overruled it. The deposition was read. This witness merely deposed to the documents published respecting the Meeting.

Matthew Cowper (an accountant), another witness's deposition, was then read at the table. He deposed to the nature of the meeting, gave a history of proceedings, and produced his notes of the commencement of a speech purporting to be Mr. Hunt's. So far as we could collect it, it did not differ materially from what has been published in the newspapers. Witness further deposed, that he attended at 12 at noon; that by that time half of the assembly had collected; that most of the persons who composed it carried large sticks, more like flails than walking-sticks; that they advanced in military array, with flags and music : the witness here enumerated several flags, and the inscriptions upon them; that one of these flags had upon it "No Corn Laws," and on the other side a bloody dagger. The flags were in all 16, and he saw five caps of liberty.

When the deposition had been read, the witness who swore it was examined by Mr. Hunt.

Hunt— Where do you reside, Sir?

Witness — In Manchester.

Hunt — Would you favour me with you particular address?

The Bench, through its Chairman, again interfered, and would not allow the witness to answer the question. It was sufficient for the witness to declare that he lived in Manchester.

Hunt — I demand, as an act of justice, to know the residence of this man. It will be observed, that he is a very material witness, and that his evidence may deeply affect us all. I am entitled to know where to find him, that if, after the trial of the question, it shall be found there was no ground for this charge, I may have my remedy against him by prosecuting him for perjury, or obtaining redress in some other way. I demand, therefore, as a right, to know his residence. — [Mr. Hunt uttered this with considerable violence of voice and gesture.]

The Magistrates consulted for a minute, and then decided against complying with his demand through their Chairman, who said there was no use for Mr. Hunt to use intimidating language; it was not necessary to reiterate the word demand, to obtain that justice to which every British subject was entitled, and which might be obtained by a simple request. He further stated, that he did not think it was treating the Court with sufficient respect to talk of demanding, as there was no disposition to refuse what was right, and no chance of obtaining what was wrong, by the use of strong terms. The request of the prisoner would go as far as his demand. The Court had considered the nature of the question put to the witness, and did not think it necessary that he should give his particular address; the description that he lived in Manchester, and was an accountant, was quite sufficient.

Hr. Hunt begged leave to reply to the observations of the Chairman.

Chairman—The Court will not be replied to.

Hunt—I was merely going to state, that I had no intention of offering any insult to the Court-

Chairman — The Court takes it for granted that you did not, and requires no apology.

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Hunt again began with stating— I offered no insult to the Court; when the witness refused to answer the question, I appealed to the Court, and requested that he might be ordered to answer. I put this question in the shape of a demand, because I will accept of nothing as a favour. (Then addressing himself to the witness)— Now, of what profession are you?
Witness — I am called an accountant.
Hunt — Is that your only occupation ?
Chairman to witness — Don't answer that question.
Hunt — Were you a special constable on Monday the 16th at the Meeting?
Chairman to witness — Don't answer that question.
Hunt, with great vehemence and apparent surprise — Not answer that question! Have you any other employment than that of an accountant? Are you not sometimes employed as a short-hand writer?
Witness — I sometimes take reports of speeches.
Hunt — For the public newspapers, or for your own private amusement?
Chairman to witness — Don't answer that question.
Hunt — Then you say that you took my speech on the day of the meeting; did you take it in short-hand or otherwise?
Witness — I took extracts from it on the ground, and afterwards wrote it out at length. I took only te leading words. I do not mean to swear to all the words.
Hunt — Are you sure that you did not misplace the words, putting some of them which you had in one sentence in another ?
Witness replied in the negative.
Hunt — How did you make out the remainder of the speech from these extracts and leading words of yours ?
Witness — I filled it up from memory.
Hunt — When did you write out this speech from memory ?
Witness — In the evening.
Hunt — At what time was it delivered?
Witness — About one o'clock.
Hunt — At what hour, then, did you reduce your short notes into long sentences ?
Witness — About five o'clock at night.
Hunt — Be so good as to state how you were employed in the interval.
The Chairman here interfered, and would not allow the witness to answer the question.

Hunt remarked with considerable asperity on this interference, saying that it was extremely important that an answer should be obtained. The witness had stated, that a very considerable interval had intervened between the delivery of the speech and the preparation of his version of it; and that in the meantime he had intrusted a considerable part of it to his memory. The retentiveness of his emory would of course be affected by the importance of the other events in which he had been engaged, and therefore it was but just that he should state how he had been employed.

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The Court over-ruled this demand.
Hunt — You state that you saw certain flags and colours, and that there was one of them with a bloody dagger; now, what else was there besides the bloody dagger?
Witness — I observed nothing else.
Hunt — Did you observe no figure of Justice, with the scales in one hand, and a dagger, which you call a bloody dagger, in the other?
Witness replied in the negative.
Hunt — Well, will you swear that there was nothing else ?
Witness said that he could not swear to there being nothing else.
Hunt — Now, you said that you saw military array; what do you mean by military array?
Witness — Why, I mean people marching in regular order, as regiments march.
Hunt — Have you no benefit societies in Manchester? and have you not Orange clubs in Manchester?
Witness — I never heard that the were Orange clubs in Manchester.
The Court here interfered and, and said these questions were quite irrelevant. Hunt, on the other hand, contended that they were quite to the purpose; for when the witness spoke of regular order being military array, it was proper to call to his mind instances in which the former might occur without the latter. (Then addressing himself to the witness, he asked) — Did you never see benefit clubs marching with music and banners?
The witness answered in the affirmative.
Hunt — Have you not seen them marching in regular order?
The Court here interfered, and declared the question irrelevant. The Chairman mentioned, that, in interrupting the prisoner in these various questions, he and the other gentlemen acted on their best discretion.
Hunt, with great courtesy — And, gentlemen, I must bow to that discretion. (Then addressing the witness)— You stated that the sticks you saw in the hands of the persons who came to the meeting were more like threshing-flails than walking sticks; pray what do you mean by a flail? and what is the difference between it and walking stick?
The Magistrates here interfered, and prevented the witness from answering the question.
Hunt — I was anxious to obtain an answer, because, had I been allowed to go on, I should have drawn from the witness that there was nothing more common to the country people than to use their old flails for walking sticks. (Addressing himself to the witness)— Pray how were they held?
Witness — They were shouldered like muskets.
Many other questions were put to this witness, but from the rapid manner in which the conversation was carried on, and the little importance of some parts of it, it would be impossible, and indeed superfluous, to report it.

The deposition of another witness.

Richard Owen, a pawnbroker, was then read. He deposed to the military array in which the different parties advanced to the meeting : he deposed to the having seen Hunt in the cart,

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to the having heard a command given by one of the party in the cart "to league together and to keep their enemies out," with several other circumstances. The witness then appeared, to be examined on his deposition.

Hunt— Where did you make this deposition ?

Witness— On the field.

The Clerk here interfered to correct the witness, and was supported by the Chairman, telling him that he could not have sworn it on the field. Hunt objected, in an animated manner, and in a very indignant terms, at this interference. "I want the answer of the witness from himself, and not from you. You are interfering, to correct him, and to set him right in a matter which he had already sworn."

The Chairman endeavoured to explain, and to show that the witness must have misapprehended the question.

Mr. Hunt continued to declare that it was most indecent in the clerk to interfere.

The Chairman said it was well done on the part of the clerk to interfere.

Mr. Hunt bowed to the Court, and continued his examination. — You said you made this deposition on the field?

Witness — Yes; I made the first part of it on the field. I swore on the field that I saw you entering it in a carriage.

Hunt — Did you swear that you saw nothing more than you saw me entering it in a carriage?

Witness — I swore that the town was in alarm, and that the meeting ought to be put a stop to.

Hunt — You did not swear the whole of this deposition then?

The Magistrates here interfered, and said that it was not at all necessary for the witness to say when the deposition was first sworn, as it was supposed to be sworn to now.

Mr. Hunt commenced a reply, when the Chairman interrupted him, by telling him, that the Court would hear nothing more upon the question. The Chairman at the same time desired that the deposition might be read over a second time.

Hunt— No. I strongly object to the refreshing of the witness's memory by hearing his deposition read over a second time.

Chairman — The Court intended it as a favour to you.

Hunt— Oh, my memory is very good ; I seldom find that it fails me. I beg that on the present occasion I may not be indulged: (then addressing the witness)— Did you not say that the men came in military array on your first deposition.

Witness— No, I did not observe it.

Hunt— You were so much alarmed that you did not then state it to the Magistrates.

The Court again interfered.

Hunt— When did it occur to you to state these facts upon oath?

Witness of his own accord refused to answer this question. Hunt appealed to the Bench, saying, "Here is a witness who refuses to answer a material question, what shall I do with him?"

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The Court decided that the witness was not bound to answer the question. Hunt on this, as on several other occasions, requested Mr. Pearson, his solicitor, to take particulate notice, and to mark down what had occurred. — Did you see me in the car?
Witness would not answer the question.
Mr. Hunt again begged Mr. Pearson to mark down that it had been overruled by the Magistrates; that a witness was bound to give his residence, and to furnish a knowledge of where he could be found in case of a prosecution for perjury, being instituted against him founded upon the evidence to which he had sworn.
Hunt— What do you mean "by military array?"
Witness— I mean marching order, with flags flying and music playing.
Hunt— How ? Does one man walking after another make military array?Did these people observe the lock-step?
Witness did not know what the lock-step was.
Hunt— What did you consider as the dreadful part of the array?
The witness was desired not to answer the question. The Chairman observed, that it was not necessary to be so particular now; all that the Magistrates wanted was to know whether there were grounds for committal. Such an examination might be entered upon at this rial, if he thought it conductive to his interest. "Then," said Mr. Hunt, "with great readiness, I am to understand that my trial is decided upon, and that I may be committed without examination and without evidence."
Hunt— Were you alarmed?
Witness replied in the affirmative.
Hunt— Were other persons alarmed?
Witness— Yes.
Hunt — Would you mention who they were ?
The witness was not allowed to answer this question.
Hunt— Had these imaginary soldiers muskets ?
Witness— No; they had things nearly as large as muskets.
Hunt— What did they do with them?
Witness did not observe any thing particular.
Hunt— Did they shoulder their clubs?
Witness— No; I observed no shouldering.
Hunt— Mark down that, Mr. Pearson; that is very important.
Saxton asked if he should know the man who desired the multitude to keep their enemies out.
The witness replied in the negative.
Saxton— When was it ? Was it before Mr. Hunt came to the field?
Witness— Yes, it was.
One of the prisoners — Did you observe Mr. Hunt speak to any of the parties who, as you said, were marching in military array ?
Witness— No, I did not.

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The deposition of James Olatt, constable, was then read over. It related to the military array, and to the presence of the so called Dr. Healey, at the head of a party marching to the field.

Hunt— What are you?

Witness— A constable and a beadle.

Hunt— Did you earn your livelihood in that way ?

Witness answered in the affirmative.

Hunt— Did you observe any clubs shouldered?

Witness— No, I observed none.

Hunt— Did you observe any insult offered to any person by the marching parties?

Witness— No—I neither saw nor heard of any.

The deposition of Robert Derbyshire, the younger, was then read. He deposed that he attended the Meeting, and saw George Swift active in arranging the crowd. He deposed also that he saw the boy, Robert Wylde, on the hustings.

Mr. Hunt— Are you a constable? Did you see the people advancing in military array? Witness said he observed them coming, but did not notice their array.

Hunt— Did you run to the Magistrate, and express your alarm at the state of the Meeting?

Witness— No, I had seen similar Meeting before.

Swift, an ingenuous-looking man, with a strong Lancashire dialect— You say that you heard me address the Meeting— what did I say?

Witness— You said, "Fall back, league firm together, and keep your enemies off."

Hunt— Did you see the Yeomanry Cavalry come in at this time?

The witness was desired not to answer the question.

Moorhouse— Did you see me on the hustings?

Witness— Yes.

John Barlow, another witness, deposed to the presence of Elizabeth Gaunt upon the cart.

The prisoner came, or rather was carried, from behind the dock, where she had a seat to the front of the bar to be identified. She looked pale, emaciated, and almost fainting from weakness, in consequence of the wounds she had received at the Meeting, and her subsequent solitary confinement. Being unable to support herself, the Magistrates desired a chair to be brought: had she been sent to Lancaster to stand her trial, it is certain she would not have survived her journey. On a proposition being made to alter the deposition of the witness against her in Court, Mr. Hunt strongly objected to it, and when the Clerk was proceeding with the alteration, assured him that he would call him as a witness.

Mr. Milne, the Clerk— You had better not, Mr. Hunt, I shall be against you.

Mr. Hunt, with a smile of contempt, and in a very significant tone— "I have no doubt of that, Mr. Clerk: Mark down his words, Mr. Pearson." Then addressing the witness, "When did you sign that deposition ?"

Witness— This forenoon.

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Hunt— Did you know you were signing a deposition?
Witness— Yes.
Hunt— Who wrote it?
Witness was desired not to answer the question.
Hunt— Did you see Mrs. Gaunt commit any offence?
Witness— No, I only took her out of the carriage; she was then fainting.
Hunt— Did you not think it your duty to protect a defenceless woman?
Hunt— How could you allow her to go and be treated in the cruel manner she was?
Witness— Other constables came up and took her from me.
The prisoner then gave her own statement. As we mentioned yesterday, she was discharged.
This was the whole of the evidence for the prosecution. The speeches of Hunt and what was stated by the Chairman of the Bench, we gave yesterday.
Mr. Norris, the Chairman, said, on account of the seriousness of the charge, we shall require you, Henry Hunt and Joseph Johnson, to give bail yourselves in 1,000l. and two sureties in 500l. each ; and all the others, themselves in 500l. and two sureties in 250l. each.

The prisoners then left the bar. Johnson and Moorhouse immediately procured bail, and were liberated. Johnson was attended towards Shude-hill by an immense multitude, shouting and applauding. He passed Deansgate, supported on the shoulders of the mob. Moorhouse was equally the object of popular favour; he was accompanied likewise by his mob through the market-place. We understand that notices of bail were given for Hunt and Knight. Hunt complained when he was asked by the Magistrate in Court, whether he had provided bail, that he was not allowed to be visited by a respectable Solicitor in town whom he had sent for some days ago. The Chairman mentioned that he would now be sent for, if he desired it. "No, no," said Mr. Hunt, pointing to Mr. Pearson, "here is now my solicitor." After consulting with his solicitor, it was understood that he said to the Magistrates that he would not give bail, even though no more than a farthing were required. In consequence of this determination, and the near approach of the Assizes at Lancaster, he was sent off to the Castle at that place, at six o'clock in the evening in a coach, guarded by a troop of 30 of the 15th Hussars. Knight, Saxton, Bamford, Wylde, Swift and Healey, were dispatched in the same carriage (a stage coach), and under the same escort. The shouts and huzzas of the people were even greater than when he entered on Monday the 9th of August.

The examination commenced about half-past one, and ended about half-past four.

MANCHESTER, August 28.

Hunt was bailed to-day about one o'clock. The bail are, Edmund Grundy, of Ringley, and James Chapman, of Manchester, fruiterer (formerly Proprietor of *The Manchester Observer*). Two persons left Manchester, at two o'clock this afternoon, with Hunt's liberature, and he is expected here to-morrow. A great concourse of persons are expected to greet his arrival,

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particularly so, as it is known that he will then return, and the day (Sunday) affording an opportunity for additional numbers to assemble.

ANOTHER LETTER, AUGUST 28.

When the Magistrates were waited upon in the course of yesterday evening with bail, they excused themselves on some ground or other from attending to business that night, and fixed twelve o'clock this day for receiving the bail. Accordingly, about that time, Mr. Edmund Grundy, of Pilsworth, and Mr. Thomas Chapman, of Manchester, were received as his sureties, with the approbation of Mr. Bouchier. When that Gentleman had quitted the Court, I understand Mr. Hunt's friends applied for an order for his discharge, which the Magistrates refused, under the pretext, that they could not grant it without the sanction of the Solicitor to the Treasury, who had then quitted the Court. Mr. Pearson was therefore under the necessity of going in quest of him; and having obtained his consent for Mr. Hunt's discharge, the Magistrates acceded to it, and Mr. Chapman, I hear, set off to Lancaster with the order, at two o'clock this afternoon.

LANCASTER.

Gazette Office, Saturday, Five o'clock, A.M.

We stop the press to announce the arrival and committal to our Castle of Hunt and seven others. They were in the custody of Mr. Nadin, and escorted by a troop of the 18th Hussars.

LETTE FROM HUNT TO LORD SIDMOUTH.

(*From the Manchester Observer.*

"New Bailey Prison, Manchester, Aug. 17 1819.

"My Lord, — From the hostility that I have conscientiously shewn to most of of the measures of your Lordship's administration, as well as a general opposition to the corruption of all parties in the practice of bribery at elections, and the buying and selling of seats in particular, I know that I am not entitled to claim any indulgence from your Lordship, yet I am induced to hope that you will not deny an act of justice, when demanded, even to a political enemy.

"Your Lordship is aware, before this time, that I came to Manchester in consequence of an invitation to take the Chair at a public Meeting intended to have been held on Monday the 9th, 'to take into consideration the most legal and effectual means of obtaining a Reform of Parliament,' in consequence of which, all hostilities to the holding of the Meeting appeared to have been withdrawn by the Magistrates; and I was prevailed upon, much against my inclination, to stay here to preside at the Meeting to be held yesterday, the 16th; and I did it under the firm conviction that it would have been conducted with perfect decorum, and have ended peaceably on the part of the People. On my arriving there, I was confirmed in my opinion, by the very orderly conduct of those assembled, by far the greatest number I ever witnessed together, and the least disposed to commit any breach of the peace. But, just as we were proceeding to the business of the day, and before I had taken the Chair, the hustings were surrounded by a military force of horse soldiers, who charged through the multitude with sabres, cutting and trampling all under foot, and particularly a body of special constables, who

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suffered very severely. The soldiers cut at me, and those who were upon the hustings; and upon my demanding what they wanted, the commanding Officer said he had a warrant against me; upon which I instantly surrendered. This was all done without any previous notice, and without one hand being lifted to oppose it. I saw one man with his nose cut off, and I received several blows with a sabre on my head myself. I was brought here by the Magistrates under a military guard, at two o'clock yesterday, and I have been kept here without the means of sending to procure bail, not having had any copy of the warrant, or having any charge made against me, till after I had been kept in custody upwards of 24 hours, when that which is enclosed was given me by the Governor. I am sorry to hear that many lives have been lost in consequence of such violent, and, as I conceive, illegal conduct of the military towards an unarmed and peaceable people, met for the purpose of exercising what they thought they had a perfect right to do. I therefore trust that your Lordship will not sanction the keeping me here a close prisoner, unless there be some specific charge made out against me. I know not if the other prisoners be still in custody or not . I am, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient servant,

H. HUNT.

"There are 100,000 witnesses to prove the truth of what I have stated.

"To Lord Viscount Sidmouth, Home Department, London."

———

COPY OF HUNT'S LETTER TO THE MANCHESTER MAGISTRATES.

"New Bailey Bailey Prison, Wednesday Noon, Aug. 18, 1819.

"Gentlemen— As I was informed by the Magistrates, before whom I was taken yesterday, that a Coroner's Inquest would sit to-morrow (Thursday) on those persons who lost their lives on Monday last, in consequence of the dreadful attack of the military upon an unarmed and peaceable multitude, and as I was present, and saw the commencement of this illegal and unconstitutional act of violence, and can identify some of those who first committed a breach of the peace, I demand, as an act of common justice, that I may be permitted to be present at such inquest, in order that the Coroner, if he thinks proper, may interrogate me before the Jury ; also, I beg to suggest the propriety of the gentleman, who is the reporter toe The Times London Newspaper, being also present at the said inquest, as he was an eye-witness of the whole; and being altogether unconnected with those who called the meeting, or meant to take any part in the proceedings of the day, will be a peculiarly important, because a disinterested, evidence.

"And as I have seen quite enough already to convince me that the real murderers are endeavouring to wipe the bloody stain from their remorseless, guilty souls, by casting imputations and suspicions upon others that they know had no hand, directly or indirectly, in the foul and cowardly deed, I am bold to say, that such inquest will be esteemed in the eye of God and man, worse than suspicious, unless all the parties who are imprisoned, or said to be instrumental in the act, be permitted to be present, and interrogated before the Jury by the Coroner. You will recollect, Gentlemen, that you have no common case in hand, and that the

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eye of the whole country will shortly be fixed with a scrutinizing penetration upon every step you take in this bloody affair.

I am, Gentlemen, your Prisoner,

"HENRY HUNT.

"To J. Norris, Esq., the Rev. W.R. Hay, Chairman, or any of the Magistrates of Manchester.

"Be you assured that there are thousands of witnesses, and many of them of the first respectability and fortune, in this town, who will prove that not one finger was raised against the peace officers, the military, or the magistrates, upon the ground where the Meeting was held; and that no resistance whatever was made to the bloody murderers, till the Yeomanry had driven individuals to the wall, and they resisted to protect their own lives. As for the Manchester Yeomanry, they were all in disorder before the charge; and if the people had chosen to resist, the men who had the flag staves would have unhorsed and taken them every one prisoners, if they thought proper. But the people had been instructed not to resist. Whether this were wise advice or not remains to be proved.

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9. The Republican, Friday, Sept. 3, 1819.

A LETTER TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE REGENT,
On his thanking the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester for MURDERS COMMITTED *by them on the 16th of August last.*

———

London, August 30, 1819.

SIR,

THE general indignation and disgust excited the public mind, in consequence of the *atrocious Murders* committed by the Yeomanry Cavalry, at the instigation of the Magistrates of Manchester, on the bodies of the inhabitants of that town, assembled in a legal and peaceable meeting, for the purpose of discussing the best means to obtain a redress of their grievances, and a radical reform of the representative system, could have been exceeded by nothing but the Chief Magistrate of the Country sanctioning, and actually returning thanks to the *murderers!!!*— This, Sir, it appears you have done through the medium of your Secretary of State for the Home Department, the ever-memorable SIDMOUTH ; and as the document cannot be too generally read, or too much known, I shall here insert it, and make such observations upon it, as to me seem necessary.

"Whitehall, August 21, 1819.

"My Lord,—Having laid before the Prince Regent the accounts transmitted to me from Manchester, of the proceedings at that place on Monday last. I have been commanded by his Royal Highness to request, that your Lordship will express to the Magistrates of the County Palatine of Lancaster, who attended on that day, the great satisfaction derived by his Royal Highness from their prompt, decisive, and efficient measures, for the preservation of the public tranquility ; and likewise that your Lordship will communicate to Major Trafford, his Royal Highness's high approbation of the support and assistance to the civil power afforded on that occasion by himself and the officers, non-commissioned officers, and privates, serving under his command.

''I have the honour, &c.

(Signed) ''SIDMOUTH .

''To the Earl of Derby, &c. Knowsley.''

———

R. Carlile, Printer, 55, Fleet Street, London.

It would appear, Sir, from this Letter, that the instigators of those murders committed on the 16th of August, by the persons whom I have before alluded to, have been allowed to communicate with Administration and Executive, on their own crimes, and that their account of the proceedings has alone been attended to. This, Sir, is not acting on the principles of

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English jurisprudence. It is one of the grossest violations of moral decency ever placed on record. Hundreds of disinterested persons were assembled to witness the proceedings of that day, who were competent to give an unbiassed and unprejudiced evidence of the murders committed, and of the conduct of both parties; namely, the People assembled, and the Cavalry who sabred them. Yet no one individual has been sought after to elucidate any one circumstance, or any tittle of evidence ; and the offenders are allowed, by our *virtuous*, *sanctified*, and *sapient* rulers to exculpate themselves by telling their own tale, without being confronted with any honest man who witnessed the conduct of both parties.

His Lordship is further made to say, that your Royal Highness derived great satisfaction from the prompt, decisive, and efficient measures pursued by the Yeomanry Cavalry on that day, and expressed your high approbation of the conduct of Major Trafford in leading them on —To do what?—To cut down with their sabres a peaceable and defenceless People. What language can be found sufficiently strong to mark this with a due reprobation ? How shall the future impartial historian record, with the necessary effect, that a Prince of the House of Brunswick, whose ancestors ascended the throne on the condition of keeping it only by their good behaviour, or as our Judges are presumed to hold their authority (*quamdiu se bene gesserint*) as long as they behave themselves well, that the Regent of Great Britain has publicly sanctioned the slaughter of several hundred of his unoffending subjects, and has not taken one step to satisfy himself of the facts of the case, or shewn the least disposition to protect any other portion of his People from a similar slaughter, but, on the other hand, has given every encouragement to it? Will he not rank him as a *competitor* with the most ferocious and cruel of the Deys of Algiers? Will he not enclose the page within a black border, which records the sanction of an English Prince to such a bloody deed? Reflect, Sir, on what you have done, and make to your indignant countrymen the necessary atonement. Let those be brought to justice who have advised you to this act. Suffer not your name to be branded with further infamy, by lending it to such infamous purposes. The blood of your murdered countrymen cries aloud for vengeance. To you, Sir, the People look. It was under the fatally supposed mildness of your regime, that the People exposed themselves defenceless in a public meeting, and became the slaughtered victims of a brutal armed force—inhuman beings, cowards, that would have shrunk from half their number of soldiers; and such men have found the thanks of their Chief Magistrate ! Oh! wipe away this stain, and wait not until an insulted People are determined to resent it. As yet, Sir, you have the opportunity to free yourself and family from this reproach. Delay not a day, lest you are a day too late. To-morrow might find the fever of a starving People heated into frenzy.

One of two things must be done. You, Sir, must replace Justice on her seat, and sweep away the corrupt and filthy influence that has of late surrounded her, or the People will recal that power, which to you by some means has been delegated, and acknowledge no sovereign but their own authority. Justice is all we ask—will you, Sir, dare deny it? My mind is dubious on this point, and cannot yet resolve. Thus much I would affirm, that if you do deny it, the fate of Charles, or James, is inevitably yours. And justly so. The time has come, when hostile

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feelings between the oppressor and the oppressed have been brought to hostility indeed. The irritated feelings of an injured and insulted People cannot subside. Increase they may, and increase they will, unless conciliation and redress are given. To you Sir, an opportunity has been offered, and is still held out to restore the fading pride and liberty of your country. Many are they, who, blinded with the liberal expressions of your younger days, have still held hopes, that you might be roused from that lethargic state, into which a luxuriant disposition had involved you, and brought to perform the important duties of your office, with a vigour consonant with your early promises. But this appears to have been a vain delusion; and should this last opportunity be permitted to escape you, you are lost for ever in the good wishes of your most sanguine friends.

Build not on that idle maxim, "that a King can do no wrong." A King may do wrong—a King has done wrong—and a King may, and has been, punished for wrong-doing. Those who advise you to proceed on this maxim, are urging you to danger; whilst they make your name an instrument for their nefarious purposes. I say, they make your name an instrument, because it is impossible, in the case on which I now address you, that you could have examined, or deliberated, on the conduct of the Magistrates and Yeomanry Cavalry on the 16th of August. The intelligence of that proceeding could not have reached the Home Department Office until the Evening of the 17th. You, Sir, were then at a distance of at least one hundred miles from the metropolis, and could not have been apprised of this affair until the 18th, or, if a few leagues at sea, until the 19th; and yet on the 21st, we find Lord Sidmouth thanking the murderers, in your name, and expressing your high approbation of the deed. This becomes another proof, that all communication between yourself and the People is cut off; it is a proof that Sidmouth is really invested with that power he lately boasted of; namely, to anticipate your wishes and opinions, to stamp with your sanction his own will and determination. For what, do the people groan under the enormous salary you extract from them, and squander in such shameless profusion? A continuation of such conduct will make them all REPUBLICANS. Reflect, Sir, that a less expensive monarchy than yours could never be shaken from its hold in this country; such an adherence is there in the minds of the People to ancient and established institutions—so little are they disposed to change. But I feel convinced, that if your life is preserved a few years longer, you will teach even an English People the necessity of Republican Governments. A timely warning has been given you. Your future fate, and that of your family likewise, depends on the line of conduct you now pursue. A spirit is arising amidst the inhabitants of this country, that will not be trifled or tampered with. You, Sir, may be now enjoying all the profusion a prodigal mind can desire, whilst reposing in the lap of luxury and pleasure. But recollect, Sir, your imagined security may be fatal, as it keeps you unprepared to meet the storm that is fast gathering around you, which you may find will unexpectedly burst upon you, and which all the congregated force of your wickedly-devising Ministers may not be able to repel, and screen you or themselves from its destructive power.

One important thing must have already impressed your mind, if you pay the least attention to the affairs of the country you are so amply paid for superintending. The

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Magistrates, for whose murderous conduct you have expressed a decided approbation, have vainly attempted to institute a charge of High Treason against those who were prominent at that meeting, and who had the good fortune to escape the sabre; and yet, with all that perjury and villainy could do, they could not, with the approbation of your Ministers, trust the charge before a Jury ; and all this treason is at length softened down to a Conspiracy and Misdemeanor, which is a vague, unmeaning, and pitiful charge, for any Administration to lay before a Jury. The time, my forbidding spirit tells me, is near at hand, when the traitors to their country's welfare will find their due elevation. Those traitors are to be found in your Cabinet ; they are the members of your Administration! Bring them to justice, fill their place with honest men, and you will see the prosperity of your country on its return. But whilst the fund-holder is supported by the labour of the wretched and miserable artisan and agriculturist — whilst an immense standing army is kept up for the purpose of intimidation, and for the purpose of extracting half the profits of the Labourer to support the idle and the dissolute — whilst the extreme of luxury and dissipation is enjoyed by one portion of the community, at the expense and destruction of the necessaries of life for the other — whilst the laws are violated, and murders are committed in open day, by those in whose hands the sword of Justice has been placed—and whilst the violation of those laws, and those murders committed, receive the sanction of the constituted authorities, I think I may safely affirm, that we have arrived to that stage of society, when every liberal and constitutional writer has argued the necessity and the justice of a People appealing to their *dernier resort*, an appeal to force, to annihilate the existing order of things, and to begin *de novo*. Reflect on this, Sir, ere it to be too late.

RICHARD CARLILE.

A SECOND LETTER TO LORD SIDMOUTH,

Secretary of State for the Home Department,

On the conduct of the Magisterial and Yeomanry Assassins of Manchester, on the 16*th August,* 1819; *and on his Lordship's conduct as subsequently connected with that Assassination*.

London, September , 1, 1819.

MY LORD,

ON the 18th of August, I addressed a public letter to your Lordship, and endeavoured through the medium of that letter to give the public a narrative of the proceedings at Manchester, on the 16th, having been a spectator of the horrid massacre, committed on that day, by your faithful servants the Yeomanry Cavalry. The letter produced that effect, which I had both desired and anticipated, and I have to return you y sincere thanks for the benefit you have conferred on me, by the notice you have taken of it at Downing Street, and at the Home Department. There is no question, but that the instructions given to *Morris* the Police Officer, to go and make oath of its being an unlawful, inflamatory, and seditious libel, before your worthy coadjutor the Lord Mayor (Atkins), emanated from your office, and that his sapient

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worship the Mayor, was the mere mouthpiece of your will and intention. Oh! what a gratifying moment it would have been, to have occupied a secret place, in that conclave of imbecility, and folly, where my Lord Viscount Sidmouth, Secretary of State for the Home Department, Member of the Society for the Suppression of Vice, High Steward for the Dean and Chapter of the Holy Church of St. Peter, Westminster, &c.&c. &c. : his Honour and Worship Sir John Silvester, Knt., Recorder of the City of London, the terror of the innocent, and the scoff of the guilty, &c. &c.: and the Right Honourable John Atkins, expectant Baronet, Mayor of the City of London, and Lord of Finsbury, late Member of Parliament for the said City, &c. &c., and others, their fellows, sat cutting up this said letter by piecemeal, analysing its different parts, and endeavouring to make it a compound of constructive treason ! The "wise saws," the starts, the fits of mingled fear and imbecile indignation, would have formed a fine subject for the pencil of Hogarth. Four full days and nights it took this sapient junto, to come to some decision, and not even then, would they have decided, had not the Attorney General shewn more with and prudence, and sent their worships home to take the bail. But to be serious, my Lord, and to call your attention to your conduct, as connected with the Massacre at Manchester, I will say no more of his worship the Mayor in this letter, but devote another to the purpose, and address it to him.

In my last, I stated to your Lordship, that I should wait and see, what farther steps would be taken by the Executive and the Administration in this horrid affair at Manchester. I could not at that moment have imagined, that without any fair and candid examination of the matter, and within five days of the Massacre, you would have been found the instrument of the Executive, in expressing its *high approbation*, in conjunction with your own, of the conduct of the MURDERERS. Experience, and close observation of your general character, had induced me to give you credit for being prepared to pursue desperate measures against the advocates of a fair and equal representation; but I could not, I did not imagine that my Lord Sidmouth, who affects to carry a mind and disposition tempered with religion, should have first prepared the minds of the Yeomanry Cavalry, to commit this act and having broken the peace, violated the law, and committed murder in a wanton, deliberate and uncalled for attack, on a peaceable and legal assemblage of the inhabitants of Manchester, that he should have unhesitatingly, and even without enquiring into the facts of the case, have expressed his *high approbation* of such murderous conduct, on the part of the Manchester and Cheshire Yeomanry Cavalry. 'Tis done. It cannot be recalled. But yet I still have hopes that the time is not far distant, when this act with many others, will form sufficient grounds for your impeachment, and I doubt not your conviction. Do not smile my Lord, I have no idea that such will be the case under the present state of things ; a change is apparently at hand, when you, and each of you must answer for the bloody deeds that have met your *high approbation*.

Nothing can exceed the contempt shewn for the existing laws, by those who are paid large salaries to enforce them. The People have been ever ready to appeal to those laws, but their oppressors have at all times shewn the disposition to act as if they were exempt from their influence. The magistrates of the metropolis have of late been chiefly employed with their

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Police Officers in watching the walls, to see what placards have been stuck against them, and whenever they find any that are objectionable to their minds, they are busily employed to demolish them. They dare not meet the principal, whose name is attached to the bill, as the act of parliament requires, but give vent to their spleen by the demolition of the placard, after it has been stuck up ; or perhaps, illegally arrest the man who obtains an honest shilling by sticking them. Several cases of this kind have of late occurred, which reflects the highest disgrace on the Police establishments, at the head of which your Lordship stands. There are two instances which have come under my cognizance and which I shall hear narrate. The first is, the man who was holding a show-board with a placard on it before the door of the Crown and Anchor Tavern, in the Strand announcing that a meeting was then holding there, to express an opinion of the Manchester Massacre. It has been invariably the practice, when any meeting of importance has been holden at that, or any other tavern, that a man has been employed to stand at the entrance of the house, with a placard announcing the intention of such meeting ;— such was the case at this time, a man who perhaps could not read the placard, was standing at the entrance of the tavern, with it on a show-board. He is surrounded by five or six Police Officers from Bow-street, taken (it appears) without any warrant, before the sitting Magistrate (Mr. Farrant) and committed to the Cold Bath Fields Bastille, for (what they pleased to call) having published an unlawful, malicious, and seditious libel, is actually kept in confinement seven days, until bailed out, whilst they durst not touch or molest the real author, printer and publisher of that placard, who comes to the meeting, and addressed that meeting openly and publicly, in language of disapprobation and execration of the conduct of the actors in the Manchester Massacre, far more strong and pointed, than any thing inserted in the placard. How contemptible and disgraced must such a magistracy appear in the eyes of every liberal-minded and reflecting man !

Another instance worthy of record in these eventful times, has occurred in the Borough of Southwark; but there, I am aware your Lordship has not so much influence as in the county of Middlesex. A man is found standing on Kennington Common, with a board, on which is inscribed ORDER, ORDER, and on which is pasted a printed bill, announcing that a meeting, which was intended to have been held on that day and on that spot, was postponed, and that the inhabitants of the Borough of Southwark were requested to unite with the inhabitants of the county of Middlesex, and City of London, and to meet in Smithfield on a future day, on which placard an intention was also expressed, of making an appeal to the Prince Regent to stand forth and save the People from the massacre with which they were threatened by merciless tyrants. The man is first requested by the Police Officers to move on and not to congregate a crowd, when the very nature and object of his board was to disperse them, and to prevent their disappointment in expecting a meeting to take place. The man moves on, according to the request of the Police Officer, and after some deliberation on their parts, they seize him and his board, and take him off to Union Hall before the sitting Magistrate. The Magistrate takes the word of the man for his appearance the next morning. The man accordingly appears — the Magistrate openly declares that he finds no charge against him, but puts him in a coach in the

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custody of an Officer, and sends him off to the Lord Mayor, that is out of one county into another, to see if the Lord Mayor can find any charge against him. The Lord Mayor finds no charge against him, and sends him back to the Magistrates of Union Hall, who, at length, venture to commit him for publishing that they call a seditious libel, namely, holding a board in his hand with Order inscribed on it. The man is imprisoned six days, the Quarter Sessions comes on, an indictment is laid before the Grand Jury containing three counts, and charging the man with sedition, a severe contest takes place with the Grand Jury, as it appears a few honest men happened to be amongst them, they cannot agree over night to find the bill, they break up, and the next morning after some warm conversation, a majority of them find the bill. The man is called on to put off his trial until the next Sessions, he refuses and demands trial *instanter ;* he is put before the Jury. A Counsel on the part of the Crown, makes a long, raving, ranting speech. The man tells his own tale for about a quarter of an hour, when the Jury become disgusted to see the time of a Court of Justice wasted in this manner, and almost immediately acquit him, and the man carries off his obnoxious board and placard in triumph, laughing at the fools, his prosecutors.

This, my Lord, is the manner in which the Magistrates of the Metropolis employ themselves; they are becoming the scoff and jest of every man possessing common sense, and your Lordship in your Magisterial capacity, does not cut a much better figure. Take shame to yourselves. Your Police Officers but ill accord with the old English regulation of constable and beadle. They are become the nurseries of crime, they never prevent, whilst there is hope of further profit being made of the criminal. Having sufficiently noticed the Magistracy and Police establishments of the metropolis, I would draw the attention of your Lordship to those of Manchester, where both Magistrates and Police display such a want of feeling, such a want of legal knowledge, and such an evident brutality, that they appear adapted to preside only over a horde of savages. How contemptible have they been made to appear ! Whenever Mr. Hunt has stood before them, they are ready to shrink into themselves, and almost afraid to utter an expression lest they should commit some blunder. Dressed up in a “little brief authority,” they inflict a terror on the minds of those over whom they have some influence; bring before them a man bold and honest, who knows the extent of their duty and authority, and who is bold enough to correct them when they exceed either, and they sink into all their native littleness.

The annals of this Country have been more disgraced within the last month than within any month during the reign of James the Second. His Chief Justice Jefferies, and his General Kirk boldly attacked any and every person that was opposed to them. With the Judges and Magistrates of the present day all is evasion. We find them in country-towns, and before country juries, strongly condemning in the conduct of the agent, what in London they are compelled to countenance in the principal. Almost every judge that has been engaged on the summer circuit, has been found preaching to the grand jury a sermon, either on what they call sedition or blasphemy. At Exeter, Judge Best disgraced himself and the seat he sat on, by pointing out an individual to the notice of the Grand Jury, which Jury, parrot-like, echoed, back his charge by immediately finding a bill against that individual for seditious and blasphemous

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publications. It might be naturally expected that the individual was the original publisher of such pamphlets, but no such thing; they were published in London, two years since, and three London Juries have found them to be no offence; and Mr. Justice Best has had an opportunity of seing them publicly exposed for sale during the last two years. The Attorney General has been compelled, from motives of fear, to withdraw three informations that had been filed against the present publisher, and many complete editions of them have been sold since that time.

Before an enlightened Jury they durst not try a political question. Perhaps they have hopes of finding Juries at Exeter of the same stamp as the Warwickshire Jury, who lately tried Russell, of Birmingham; when the Lord Chief Justice (Abbott,) with a contempt for all judicial and moral decency, told he Jury that the publication, in his opinion, was a profane and seditious libel ; although his Lordship had presided at one of the trials of Mr. Hone, where the Jury convinced his Lordship of the contrary. The Jury echoed back the charge, and the foreman of the Jury, who was the only special juror, and appeared to be the only man amongst them that knew his letters, after having pronounced the verdict Guilty, ludicrously recommended the defendant to mercy, which is as much as to say he should not be punished ; and actually slept in the same room, at the same inn with the defendant, and candidly told him, that he did not know they had a right to giver a verdict contrary to the judgement of the Judge. The defendant stands virtually acquitted, for nothing but the subtle and wily conduct of the Judge could have drawn from them a verdict of guilty. They had no idea of the man being guilty, it was their ignorant fear of the Judge that induced them to pronounce it. Those men are guilty who have ruined him with the expence of this persecution, and the guilt hangs heavy on their minds.

This, my Lord, should impress on the minds of future defendants in cases of libel, that a puerile courtesy and submission to the dictate of the Judge, may be fatal to them. In a case of libel, the man who presides in the court is at such time no Judge; he is a mere officer of the court to enforce order and regularity of proceeding. The Jury are the sole Judges : and I for one would rise and interrupt the man who presided, if he dared to give an opinion that would tend to prejudice my case. Had Russell elevated the minds of the Jury by pointing out to them the importance and extent of their authority in his case, and at the same time pointed out, to them the extent of the authority of the man presiding in the court, they would have most assuredly pronounced him *not guilty*. The contrary verdict arose entirely from their ignorance of the forms of the law, and the extent of their own authority.

I have been led into a digression from the subject of this letter, in consequence of the disgraceful conduct of the Judges and Magistrates both in town and country, within the last month. They are become the veriest tools of corruption, whilst Justice has neither share nor lot amongst them. The very Home Department over which your Lordship presides is the mere receptacle of spies and informers, of frivolous and idle charges which you and your coadjutors are daily striving to magnify into something terrible. Your sole aim and object is to impress on the minds of the few who possess property in the country, that there is a conspiracy on foot to deprive them of that property. That conspiracy exists, but not amongst the people. That

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conspiracy is in the cabinet. And it is much to be feared that too many will be led away by false alarms until they are hoodwinked into the snare.

I shall conclude this, my Lord, with and endeavour to impress on your mind, that no effort on your part can wipe away the blood that has been spilt at Manchester; nor the stains that have fallen on the seat of Justice. Both cry aloud for redress. Redress or revenge must and will be had, and I would earnestly advise your Lordship to hasten to the stool of repentance.

R. CARLILE.

A LETTER TO JOHN ATKINS, ESQ.

Lord Mayor of the City of London.

My Lord,

THE late acquaintance that has arisen between us, requires that some explanation should be given to the public of the motives by which you have been actuated. In the first place, there is no doubt, but that you received orders to issue your warrant from the Home Department, to the *chief* of which, the obnoxious letter was addressed. And your Lordship, eager to display your servility, contrived to put the warrant in force that period, when it would become most offensive, being the Saturday afternoon. At the time of my arrest, you were not to be found, and I had the satisfaction of being deprived of your Lordship's presence until Monday. I would contrast this conduct with that of the common Sergeant, at the time when Mr. Hunt laid a bill before the Grand Jury, charging Stoddart, Quin, and Mitchell, with publishing a malicious libel in their paper, called the New Times, in which libel he was held up as a fit person for assassination. The Grand Jury without hesitation, found the bill on Saturday. Mr. Hunt applied to the court then sitting at the Old Bailey for a warrant—a warrant was granted but to prevent those worthy gentlemen from being molested on the Saturday, the Common Sergeant ordered the execution of it to be suspended until the Monday, and this is what you call equal justice. I am arrested on the Saturday, on the Monday morning I rise from my *straw bed* and find myself surrounded with military, the first communication made to me is, that your Lordship has ordered no one to see me but in the presence of the Governor. Although this to me, was a mere matter of indifference and proved nothing but your Lordship's malignity towards me. And likewise, that in his presence no political conversation should take place —very pretty my Lord—I suppose your Lordship was of opinion, that I should have leisure to contrive the burning of the city, the destruction of the church and state, or some very important thing, and therefore your Lordship was determined that I should do all myself, as you took care not to allow me any agents to concert with, out of the prison. —A very prudent caution, my Lord, to save yourself from the hysterics.—However, to proceed, I had the honour to meet your Lordship on the Monday, your Lordship is not quite certain whether I can be bailed or not, but your Lordship in the mean time, very condescendingly offers to fill up the time in enquiring after the persons I offer as bail. The bail would have been unobjectionable before an honest

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Magistrate. I have only to regret that I have disgraced one of them, by putting his responsibility in competition with your Lordship's.

Tuesday comes, I again appear before your Lordship, and you affect to be dissatisfied with one of the bail. But the fact was, that your Lordship, and your Lordship's friend, the learned and accomplished Recorder, combined your legal knowledge, and found, that in writing and publishing this letter, I had committed HIGH TREASON; and I had to enjoy safe custody 48 hours longer. Quickly your confirmed evidence is laid before the Attorney General, and he —impudent upstart—treats with contempt and derision, the deliberate and well-weighed opinions of two such eminent civic civilians. Never forgive him, my Lord; depend on it, that the Attorney General is a REPUBLICAN and a DEIST, or he would have acquiesced in your honest wishes. I hope your Lordship will report the case at the *next levee,* and get so dangerous a man dismissed from that office. For whilst he remains there, I fear your Lordship will have no trials for HIGH TREASON, BLASPHEMY, SEDITION. It was a most unfortunate circumstance for your Lordship, that your old friend, *Sir Samuel Shepherd*, had not remained in that office, he, *poor fellow*, was the ready tool of such sapient advisers ; he blundered on right or wrong, and shrunk neither from disgrace nor calumny. However, your Lordship finding your definition of High Treason contemptuously treated, you were then so obligingly condescending as to take the proposed bail, and never shall your Lordship had anticipated my docile disposition, and felt justified in not exercising your dire and dread authority. So strong are the obligations your Lordship has conferred on me, that I have resolved to publish a *brief memoir* of your Lordship's valuable life, as soon as your friends have furnished me with necessary and promised information. In consequence of my good intentions towards your Lordship, I trust, that if Sidmouth should this week order you to issue another warrant, you will have the goodness to give me due notice, that I might bring some dozen gentlemen as bail, that your Lordship might have good choice; until then, I bid your Lordship farewell.

R. CARLILE.

TO MR. CARLILE

Sir,

PERMIT me, as your fellow-countryman to thank you for the patriotic firmness with which you have encountered the exactions and tyrannical measures that have been adopted towards you, by our present short-sighted Rulers. It is the duty of every well-wisher to his country, and every real friend to human happiness, to countenance and encourage that line of conduct which you, with so much credit to yourself and so much advantage to the public, have perseveringly pursued. It is not simply a question whether you shall be allowed to follow your own peaceable avocations, or waste the prime of your years in a dungeon ; it is a question between the present Government and the People of the British Empire;—between a hypocritical "Vice Society," and a liberal-minded public; —between boroughmongering despotism and universal liberty.

The verdicts of the Juries to which, *perhaps*, your string of persecutions will be submitted, will decide the important question, whether Englishmen have a right to speak and

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publish the honest dictates of their consciences, or whether they shall become a band of hypocritical and contemptible slaves, crawling about, like the reptiles of Spain, at the feet of their oppressors, and depending upon the favour of police officers and the mercy of priests. I confess, however, I have no fear of the result. I cannot imagine that a London Jury will consent to become the instruments of bigotry and intolerance : that they will rear an Inquisition upon the ruins of Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights: that they will say to the inhabitants of Great Britain, at the enlightened era of science and civilization, you shall not read or promulgate opinions that may militate against the decrees of the Council of Nice!

With what shadow of consistency can Protestants forbid the dissemination of opinions that may not happen to square exactly with their own? Have they forgot the blood which, at the epoch of the Reformation, their ancestors shed in defence of their civil and religious rights ? Was it laudable and praise-worthy *then* to overturn a system which had existed, "as by law established," nearly a thousand years, and shall the senseless cry of heresy and sedition *now* be raised against those who calmly and dispassionately endeavour to point out the errors and absurdities of that which has not only scarcely existed three hundred, but is so divided and subdivided by the arts of "fishers of men," and the folly of human gudgeons, that it has become a thing of shreds and patches, a tattered garment scarcely containing a piece of the original, and barely sufficient to hide the nakedness of priestcraft?

Let us remember, too, that at the period of the Reformation, the press, that glorious palladium of the Rights of Man, was yet in its infancy, that the means of information the possessed by the mass of the People were few and imperfect; that if they wished for either religious or political instruction, they were obliged "to submit themselves lowly and reverently to their *spiritual pastors and masters,*" and remain content with, or at least unable to dispute the *dictum* of the man whose interest it was to keep them in ignorance and superstition. But that little grain of mustard-seed is now become a goodly tree; the sources of knowledge have been opened to all classes of the community; and the philanthropy of Lancaster, and the defensive, but short-sighted, policy of the patrons of Bell, have enabled almost every child in the kingdom to partake of the advantages resulting therefrom.

And shall we retrograde from this sunny eminence of knowledge, to the cold and misty vale of ignorance and superstition ? Shall we forebear to get wisdom and understanding merely because the acquisition may be unpleasant to those who are in self assumed authority over us ? Base, and grovelling, and unworthy of the blessings of light and liberty, must be the slave who would subscribe to so diabolical a doctrine.

Nor can I conceive how the sincere Christian—the man who wishes to regulate his life according to the precepts of the virtuous Founder of Christianity, can bring himself to support a bigoted and vindicative spirit of persecution. Can he fail to remember that his great master pronounced such subjects not cognizable before human tribunals; that he warned his disciples no to boast of being the children of Abraham, nor to explain "the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord;" but to do Justice, to love Mercy, and hate Hypocrisy : that he commanded them to "prove all things" and "hold fast to that which is good:" and forbade them to rest their hopes

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of pleasing the Deity, upon the observance of rights and ceremonies, or the adherence to particular creeds; for, said he, "the time will come when men shall neither worship God in this temple or upon that mountain, BUT IN SPIRIT AND IN TRUTH."

Do not imagine, Sir, that because I argue in this manner, I believe your persecutors to be actuated by any, ten the most erroneous sens of Religion. The chief priests and scribes of Jerusalem, made long prayers and enlarged the phylacteries of their garments, not for the purpose of glorifying God, but that they might "devour widows' houses!"

But I know there are many well-meaning, and estimable persons in private life who really believe that the writings to which you have given increased publicity, are really of an immoral and blasphemous tendency. They believe this because they have heard them condemned in the most unqualified manner, by persons whose reverend garb, and sanctimonious demeanour, precluded the suspicion of insincerity and injustice. Alas! that we should be thus duped and misled by the artifices of men who fatten upon our fears, and laugh at our credulity. To such persons I would say, arouse yourselves from your mental lethargy; take your talent from the napkin, and be no longer the voluntary dupes of priestcraft and corruption; read, like "the noble Bereans" of old-read and examine the *scriptures*, that is the *writings*, for yourselves; if they contain any thing contrary to reason and morality, reject and condemn them; but, if like the discourses of him whose authority you will not disregard, they breathe a spirit of glory to God, and peace and good will to all mankind, then retract your erroneous opinions, regard with suspicion the men who have endeavoured to rob you of the glorious privilege of reason, and boldly come forward and vindicate the characters and intentions of those who are suffering for the cause of *civil and religious liberty*. JOSEPH FITCH.

Old Road Academy, Stepney, Aug. 31, 1819.

R. Carlile, Printer, 55, Fleet Street, London.

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10. The Liverpool Mercury, Sept. 24 1819

NEWS, FOREIGN & DOMESTIC
COMMON COUNCIL ADRESS and ANSWER

On Friday , the Lord Mayor, attended by the Recorder, Mr Aldermen Waithman, the Sheriffs, City Officers, and about fifty members of the Court of Common Council, proceeded from Guildhall t eleven o'clock, to Carlton-house, when the following address was presented to his Royal Highness the Prince Regent : — "TO HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS THE PRINCE OF WALES, REGENT OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN AND IRELAND.

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"The humble Address and Petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen, and Commons, of the City of London, in Common Council assembled.

"May it please your Royal Highness,

"We, his Majesty's most dutiful and loyal subjects, the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons of the City of London, in Common Council assembled, humbly approach your Royal Highness with feelings of the most serious alarm and regret, at the extraordinary and and calamitous proceedings which have taken place at Manchester.

"We humbly represent to your Royal Highness, that under the free principles of the British constitution, it is the undoubted right of Englishmen to assemble together for the purpose of deliberating upon public grievances, as well as on the legal and constitutional means of obtaining redress.

"That, for exercise of this right, a meeting was held at Manchester, on the 16th of August last, and without entering into the policy or prudence of convening such assembly, it appears to us from the information which has transpired, that the said meeting was legally assembled, that its proceedings were conducted in an orderly and peaceable manner, and that the people composing it were, therefore acting under the sanction of the laws, and entitled to the protection of the Magistrates.

"We have, nevertheless, learnt, with grief and astonishment, that while the meeting was so assembled, and when no act of riot or tumult had taken place, the Magistrates issued their warrants for the apprehension of certain persons then present ; for the execution of which, although no resistance was made on the part of the people, or those against whom the warrants were issued, they immediately resorted to the aid of the military; when, without any previous warning of their intention, the Manchester Yeomanry Cavalry suddenly rushing forward, opened a passage through the multitude, furiously attacking, by force of arms, peaceable and unoffending citizens, whereby great numbers of men, women and children, and even peace-officers, were indiscriminately and wantonly rode over, and many inhumanly sabred and killed.

"We feel ourselves called upon to express to your Royal Highness our strongest indignation at these unprovoked and intemperate proceedings, which we cannot view but as highly disgraceful to the character of Englishmen, and a daring violation of the British constitution.

" That from your Royal Highness's known and declared attachment to the constitution and the laws, we feel the most decided conviction that your Rosa Highness never could have been induced to express your approval of the conduct of the abettors and perpetrators of these atrocities, had not your Royal confidence been abused by interested and misrepresented statements of the illegal and fatal transactions.

"We humbly submit to your Royal Highness, that at a time when the great body of his Majesty's subjects, are suffering under the severest privations, however erroneous may be their ideas as to the means of redress, a kind and conciliating attention to their complaints is equally called for by policy and justice ; and that depriving them of the means of expressing their grievances by cruelty and despotism, can only tend to increase the present discontents, destroy public

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confidence in the pure and equal administration of justice, excite disaffection, and lead to acts of open violence or secret revenge.

"We therefore humbly pray, that in order to avert the calamities, to maintain the authority of the law, and to protect the lives and liberties of the subject, your Royal Highness will be graciously pleased to institute an immediate and effectual inquiry into the outrages that have been committed and cause the guilty perpetrators thereof, to be brought to signal and condign punishment.

"Signed by order of the Court,
"HENRY WOODTHORPE."

To which his ROYAL HIGHNESS was pleased to return like following answer : —

"I receive with feelings of deep regret, this address and petition of the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and Commons, of the city of London, in Common Council assembled.

"At a time when ill-designing and turbulent men are actively engaged in inflaming the minds of their fellow subjects, and endeavouring, by means the most daring and insidious, to alienate them from their allegiance to his Majesty and the established constitution of the realm, it is on the vigilance and conduct of the Magistrates that the preservation of the public tranquillity must in a great degree depend; and a firm, faithful, and active discharge of their duty cannot but give them the strongest claim to the support and approbation of their Sovereign and their country.

"With the circumstances which preceded the late meeting at Manchester, you must be unacquainted; and of those which attended it, you appear to have been incorrectly informed.

"If, however, the laws were really violated on that occasion, by those to whom it immediately belonged to assist in the execution of them, the tribunals of this country are open to afford redress; but to institute an extra-judicial inquiry, under such circumstances as the present, would be manifestly inconsistent with the clearest principles of public justice."

REMONSTRANCE OF THE LIVERY ON THE LORD MAYOR'S REFUSAL OF A COMMON HALL

A deputation of nine Liverymen waited upon the Right Honourable the Lord Mayor, at the Mansion-house, on the morning of the 16th inst. They were, agreeably to the usual etiquette, ushered into the private parlour, and, upon being introduced to his Lordship, respectfully presented to him a remonstrance, signed by upwards of fifty Liverymen, of which the following is a copy:—

To the Right and Honourable the Lord Mayor of the city of London,

MY LORD— We, the undersigned Liverymen of London, respectfully beg leave to expostulate with your Lordship, on your refusal to call a Common Hall, to take into consideration the late violation of the law at Manchester, although a requisition was presented to your Lordship, signed by nearly 100 of the Livery of London, who were desirous of giving expression to their sentiments, on transactions too momentous to be passed over in silence; too

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mournful to allow of those sentiments being suppressed by any authority whatever, and least of all, by that of your Lordship, who, by virtue of your office, are bound to protect and give effect to the rights, liberties, and privileges of the Livery of London.

That the Livery of London possess the right, which they have exercised from time immemorial, of expressing their opinions on public affairs in Common Hall, it is superfluous to remind your Lordship; but should that right ever become subject to controul from the political opinions or private views of the Lord Mayor, for the time being, it would cease to exist in any thing but name.

That the subject, for the consideration of which the requisition of the Livery was presented to your Lordship, was suited to public consideration, is manifest from your Lordship's having held a Court of Common Council for its discussion.

That your Lordship's refusal cannot have been dictated by an anxious and over-scrupulous regard for the preservation of the public peace is apparent, from the knowledge your Lordship must possess, that where the Magistrates have presumed to deprive their fellow-citizens of the means of meeting in that orderly and convenient way provided by their municipal constitutions, they have uniformly assembled together under circumstances less favourable to the maintainance of the public peace.

Unwilling as we are, my Lord, to put any unfavourable construction on the conduct or motives of the Chief Magistrate of the City, we confess ourselves unable to interpret your Lordship's rejection of a requisition for a Common Hall on so important an occasion, in any way which shall not imply an indifference to, or contempt of, the wishes and opinions of the Livery, by whom you were appointed to your high office.

Resolved, however, as we are, not to surrender the Rights of the Livery of London, we venture respectfully, yet firmly, to request your Lordship to re-consider your answer, and to appoint an early day for the holding a Common Hall, in compliance with the requisition presented to your Lordship on the 1st inst.

September 16, 1819.

The Lord Mayor listened to the reading of the remonstrance with profound attention; and, on its being concluded, said, he was at all times ready, and felt it his duty, to attend to any remonstrance of the Livery; that he had well considered before he made up his determination with respect to the last requisition; that he thought all public discussion, on the subject mentioned, could only tend to prejudge the case, and to prejudice the minds of the Jury, all of which he considered very unfair. He, therefore, in polite but very decided terms, repeated his determination not to call a Common Hall upon the occasion.

The Livery, we learn, intend to persist in obtaining a positive answer from his Lordship to the question, whether he will oppose the holding of a meeting in the Guildhall, if a magistrate of the city should consent to take the chair on the occasion?

NORWICH ADDRESS

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At a most numerous and respectable meeting of the inhabitants of Norwich, held on the 16th instant at St. Andrews Hall, the Mayor of that city being in the chair, the following address to the Prince Regent relative to the recent atrocities at Manchester, was passed with only one dissentient voice : —

"*To his Royal Highness the Prince Regent.*

"The humble and dutiful address of the citizens and inhabitants of Norwich, in Common Hall assembled, on Thursday the 16th of September, 1819.

"We, the citizens and inhabitants of the city of Norwich, duly assembled under the authority and in the presence of our Chief Magistrate, beg leave most dutifully to address your Royal Highness on a subject which we deem of equal and vital importance to the interests of Prince and people.

"We humbly represent to your Royal Highness, that it is impossible for us, as Englishmen, and the free born subjects of that limited Monarchy which is the constitutional and rightful government of these realms, to avoid feeling and distinctly expressing our shame, and grief and indignation, at the cruel outrages which have lately been committed at Manchester ; where an armed force, acting under the direction of a local magistracy, in defiance of all law, has done military execution on a defenceless multitude of our countrymen, assembled for a lawful purpose, and peaceably exercising an important public right. And independently of the urgent motives for this our humble representation and remonstrance, arising from the harsh nature and destructive tendency of the transactions to which we refer, we are so much the more earnest to express our feelings on this occasion, because we have long observed on the part of the King's ministers, a settled and systematic purpose to deny, harass, and suppress the petitioning of the people ; and by thus intercepting the current of their complaints, in its lawful and direct channel to the Throne, to prevent the voice of a suffering nation from reaching the ears of a generous Prince.

"In a language, therefore, the most respectful, and at the same time most firm, we earnestly entreat from your Royal Highness an indulgent attention to our address. The subject yields to none in interest and importance. One of the greatest of our rights ; rights expressly recognised when the throne of these realms was settled on the present august family; the right to petition to the King has been violated, and by means the most odious. Blood has been shed, bodies have been mangled lives have been destroyed. The very principle on which is formed and founded the title of your Royal Highness's illustrious house to the free crown of the kingdom, is brought to question and endangered by the outrages at Manchester. The bill of rights declares that it "it is the right of the subject to petition the King;" and it is indisputable, that upon the people's right to assemble publicly, and by petition to interfere in the administration of their affairs, is mainly depending all the rest of our constitutional liberties.

"We believe this right of popular assemblage and petitioning, to be amongst the earliest, as it certainly is the most important, of our privileges. The preservation of it, in all the fullness of perfection, is essential to our existence as a nation of freemen. It has descended to us from our

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forefathers, is recognised in the great characters of our liberties ; and we hold it to be amongst the most sacred of our duties to transmit it to posterity uninjured and entire.

"Confiding in the natural mildness and generosity of your Royal Highness's disposition; relying also on the efficacy of those liberal and beneficient principles of government, which, imbibed in early life, cannot fail to be deeply rooted in the heart of your Royal Highness, we persuade ourselves that measures will at once be taken for holding a solemn inquest into the causes and circumstances of the cruel conduct of the magistrates at Manchester, on the 16th day of August. That so this gross and wanton violation of the rights and liberties of the people may not be allowed to pass into an established precedent; and the several authors, actors, and abettors of this sanguinary military tumult and execution, may be brought to condign punishment. And we deem this measure to have been rendered absolutely necessary, because we have observed with astonishment and regret, that (obtained no doubt by false and wicked misrepresentations of the real nature and character of these proceedings) the distinguished honour of your Royal Highness's approbation has been bestowed on acts which the force of truth compels us to describe as illegal and unprovoked; disgraceful to the national character, and repugnant to all the feelings of humanity.

"Yielding to none of his Majesty's subjects in dutiful and affectionate attachment to your Royal Highness's illustrious house and person; and sincerely and equally devoted to the preservation of the constitutional rights and liberties of the people, we venture humbly and dutifully to petition your Royal Highness to displace, for ever, from your Royal Person and councils, those equally weak and violent ministers who have presumed on this occasion to connect your Royal Highness's noble nature with the Massacre at Manchester ; and in whose general maxims and measures of government we have long caused to perceive the faintest traces of the mild qualities and attributes of English law."

PARLIAMENTARY REFORMS

(*from the Leeds Mercury*)

Every sincere friend to Parliamentary Reform, and every well-wisher to his country, whose mind is sufficiently capacious to from a due estimate of the advantages of a well poised form of government, will learn with satisfaction, that a RECORD has been set on foot in Leeds, where every male inhabitant, of mature years, may peaceably and constitutionally record his opinion, that a necessity exists for a reform in our representative system. The record to which we allude forms the first page in a book, prepared for the reception of signatures, and is expressed in these terms:—

"WE, THE UNDERSIGNED INHABITANT OF LEEDS, IN THE WEST RIDING OF THE COUNTY OF YORK, BEING THE AGE OF 21 YEARS, OR UPWARDS, DO HEREBY RECORD OPINION PEACEABLY, BUT DECIDEDLY, THAT THE COMMON HOUSE OF PARLIAMENT, AS AT PRESENT CONSTITUTED, DOES NOT FAIRLY AND FULLY REPRESENT THE PEOPLE OF THE UNIED KINGDOM, AND THEREFORE, THAT A

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REFORM IN THE CONSTITUTION OF THAT HOUSE IS INDISPENSABLY NECESSARY."

Amongst the signatures already affixed are some of the most respectable inhabitants in the town, and that number, now the document is made public, will experience daily augmentation. Such a record may be subscribed by every one who feels, as candid men of all parties generally do, that in the lapse of ages our representative system has fallen into decay, and that it wants that timely renovation, without which all human institution fall to ruin. It could never be intended that, in the scale of representation the village of Alborough and the county of York should stand upon the same footing. That a Cornish Borough, without inhabitants, should return two members to Parliament, and that Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, and Sheffield, the two former with their 100,000, and the two latter with their 40,000 inhabitants, should not have a single voice in the great council of the nation. Our forefathers, when they established a house of representatives, for what has now grown to a population of near twenty million of souls, could not have contemplated such a monstrous state of things, as that about 200 peers and wealthy commoners should send to that assembly one half of its members. There can be no equity in the landed interest forming nine-tenths, at least of our representatives; while the commercial and trading interest, which is quite equal in magnitude and importance, is sunk into insignificance. The natural fruits of such a defective system of representation are our Corn and Wool Bills; and if the interests of our great landed proprietors require it, further measures will be taken, and carried through parliament, constituted as it is at present, to keep up the price of land at the expense of our manufacturing and commercial prosperity.

To obtain some counterpoise against this overwhelming influence is certainly a *desideratum* in all commercial places, and the plan here proposed is so peaceable and unobjectionable as not to alarm the most timid. To be useful, however, it must become general, and we strongly recommend to every town and populous village in the Kingdom, to set on foot a similar Record. Ministers often said, that they refuse to entertain any plan of reform, because the people, properly so called, have never yet expressed their dissatisfaction with the present state of representation. Here the declaration that the present constitution of the House of Commons is inadequate to the representation of the people is distinctly made, and and the consequent necessity of reform is insisted upon, without embarrassing the question with any specific plan, upon which those who are fully aware of the necessity of the proceeding might probably differ. If these Records should, as, we confidently hope they will, become general, the ulterior proceeding may be a petition to parliament, of such a nature as to become irresistible. Whatever maybe the event of this measure, every man, who signs the Record, with a conscientious conviction that the reform it contemplates is necessary to the public weal, will have the satisfaction of feeling that he has discharged an imperious duty ; and that he has, by this effort, endeavoured to arrest the progress of that overwhelming system of profuse expenditure which is daily sinking the middle into the lower ranks of society, and reducing the labouring classes to the degrading and demoralizing situation of paupers.

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For a few days the Book of Record will remain at the Office of this Paper, and afterwards it will be placed in situations to receive more general signatures.

State of Manchester ;— We copy the following paragraph from the *Lichfield Mercury*.
"Private letters, addressed to us from Manchester convey a dreadful picture of the condition of society in that town. Every man appears to sit like a malignant spy on his neighbour. It is expected, that the corps of yeomanry will be broken up. Lists of the corps, containing the exact names and residences of all the members of it, with their rank, are printed and hawked about at one halfpenny each! Trade has become a perfect conspiracy, in favour of particular persons, and to the prejudice of others."

MANCHESTER POLITICS

We make the following extract from an intelligent letter in the *Morning Chronicle* of Thursday se'nnight :—
"Manchester and its vicinity, contains a population of about 120,000, and, from all that I can learn, I am led to believe that 100,000 of that number are not satisfied with things as they are. But the same degree of dissatisfaction extends to *all the manufacturing districts in this quarter of the kingdom*, and something must be done to allay their discontent. It is absurd to speak with disdain of the intelligence of these men, or with indifference of their power. They know very well what they have a right to demand, and they seem resolutely bent to persevere in the pursuit of it. But I do not find that Universal Suffrage and Annual Parliaments are so much desired among them, as some politicians profess to think ; and my opinion upon this subject is not to be influenced by those banners or flags which may be fabricated by a few and unnoticed by the many. I sincerely believe that a reasonable abridgement of the duration of Parliaments, with an extension of the right of voting to householders, would satisfy the bulk of the people in this country."
The *Manchester Mercury* states, that John Lees, the person on whose body the inquest is still to be held at Oldham, did not die in consequence of the wounds he received in the area of St. Peter's Church, on the 16th ultimo; but that his death was occasioned by his subsequent debauchery and revelling, which produced a fever that terminated his existence. On this matter we can only say, that it seemed to be the opinion of the Deputy-coroner and the Jury, both of whom *had seen the body*, that Lees did die of his wounds, and there is a strong impression, not only that he died of those wounds, but that a British jury will return a verdict of wilful murder against those that inflicted them. —*Leeds Mercury*.

Mr. Milne, the coroner who refused to enter into the inquest at Oldham, and who presided at the five inquests which have taken place upon the victims of the outrage on the 16th, has a brother in the yeomanry cavalry, while another is the clerk of the magistrates, and Mr. Marriot, the magistrate, is his brother-in-law. — *Morning Chronicle*.

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The Deputy Coroner of Oldham.— The *Courier*, with a view to throw an air of ridicule on that which it was not able to contradict, a few days ago insinuated that some *theatrical* exhibitions of a coroner's inquest had appeared in one of the morning papers. This has produced the following answer from a correspondent of the *Morning Chronicle*. After citing various authorities of persons present at the inquest, to their correctness, he says — "I can also refer to the testimony of Messrs. Ernshaw and Basnett, surgeons, the former of whom attended the deceased since he was wounded, as well as to Messrs. Harmer and Denison, the Attorneys, and several other gentlemen, who were present at Oldham. The *Courier* calls my report 'theatrical,' but if I had given the very words of Mr. Battye, spelt according to his peculiar pronunciation, it would really *appear so*. He spoke quite in the low *Lancashire dialect* : for instance, when Mr. Harmer complained of the delay of the inquest until Friday, Battye thus expressed himself—'*I dunna care, yo mun cun agen a Friday*.' This expression Mr. Edwards has just called to my recollection, as well as the following, addressed to myself and others, while taking notes :—'*If think'n propper to publish ony thin that's been sed lilst I allow it, I wil move a rule agen sum on ye. I larnt your neames before I coond heer — Moind, if yee sa ony thin bout me, yo'll been ensered sharply.*'— But since the inquest, this Mr. Battye has been heard at Rochdale to boast in these words : 'I've been to Ouldham on that chap's inquest that dide, and ther was sitch a lot of fellers fro' Lunnan and Manchuster that coom'd ur evdens, and I'd sitch a bout wi'em but I let'em knaw that the munna cum heer to meddle wi'other fawk's bizeness—I tacked 'em so much till the had na word to sa for thirselves.' Such was the person chosen to hold the inquest, and whom I am charged with caricaturing !"

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II. Images :

1. THE MANCHESTER HEROES, G. CRUIKSHANK, SEPTEMBRE 1819
2. MASSACRE AT ST PETER'S OR "BRITONS STRIKE HOME"!!!, GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, 1819

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3. THESE ARE THE PEOPLE ALL LATTER'D AND TORN, GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, DÉCEMBRE 1819

4. THE LAW'S DELAY, GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, 21 JANVIER 1820,

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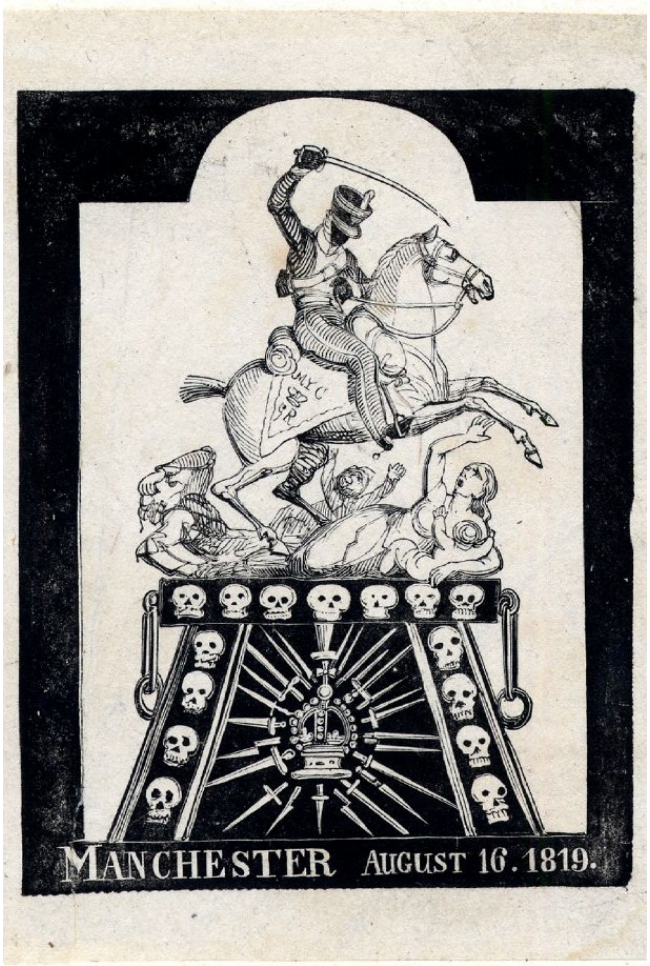

5. VICTORY OF PETERLOO, GEORGE CRUIKSHANK, 02 AOÛT 1821

NERO VINDICATED.

Look on the present; search for equal crime,
Why dost thou start, why hesitate? Oh Time!
Within thy breast what angry passions gush,
Thy furrowed cheek is mantled with a blush;
Confess the truth, to seal the avenging curse,
Another despot reigns, and yet is *worse*.

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170, ALDERSGATE STREET.

PRICE SIXPENCE.

6. BRANSTON, A.R., NERO VINDICATED, DÉCEMBRE 1820

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7. TO HENRY HUNT, ESQR. AS CHAIRMAN OF THE MEETING ASSEMBLED ON ST.. PETER'S FIELD, MANCHESTER ON THE 16TH.. OF AUGUST, 1819
8. THE MASSACRE OF PETERLOO ! OR A SPECIMEN OF ENGLISH LIBERTY, AUGUST 16TH, 1819, JOHN LEWIS MARKS, 1819

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