

London Corresponding Society, 1792–1799

Edited by
Michael T. Davis



ROUTLEDGE


The Routledge logo, featuring a stylized 'R' shape to the right of the word 'ROUTLEDGE' in a bold, sans-serif font.

LONDON CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,
1792-1799

Volume 1



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

LONDON
CORRESPONDING SOCIETY,
1792–1799

Volume 1

Editor: Michael T. Davis

Advisory Editors:

James Epstein
Jack Fruchtman Jr
Mary Thale

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
LONDON AND NEW YORK

First published 2002 by Pickering & Chatto (Publishers) Limited

Published 2016 by Routledge
2 Park Square, Milton Park, Abingdon, Oxon OX14 4RN
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017, USA

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

Copyright © Taylor & Francis 2002

All rights reserved, including those of translation into foreign languages. No part of this book may be reprinted or reproduced or utilised in any form or by any electronic, mechanical, or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

Notice:

Product or corporate names may be trademarks or registered trademarks, and are used only for identification and explanation without intent to infringe.

BRITISH LIBRARY CATALOGUING IN PUBLICATION DATA

London Corresponding Society: publications, 1792-1799

1. London Corresponding Society – History 2. Radicalism – Great Britain – History – 18th century 3. Working class – Great Britain – Political activity – History – 18th century 4. Social movements – Great Britain – History – 18th century 5. Great Britain – Politics and government – 18th century

I.Davis, Michael T. II.Epstein, James III.Fruchtman, Jack IV.Thale, Mary
320.5 '3 '0941 '09033

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOGING-IN-PUBLICATION DATA

The London Corresponding Society publications, 1792-1799 / edited by Michael T. Davis.

p. cm.

Includes index.

Contents: v. 1. Pamphlets, 1792-1794 – v. 2. Pamphlets, broadsheets, and treasurer's accounts, 1792-1798 – v.3. Periodicals, 1794-1796 – v. 4. Periodicals, 1797 – v. 5.

Pamphlets relating to the London Corresponding Society, 1793-1797 – v. 6. Parliamentary reports and debates, 1794-1799.

1. Great Britain – Politics and government – 1789-1820 – Sources. 2. Working class – England – Political activity – History – 18th century – Sources. 3 London Corresponding Society. I. Davis, Michael T., 1969- II. London Corresponding Society.

DA520 .L65 2001

941.07'3-dc21

200136919

ISBN-13: 978-1-85196-734-6 (set)

New material typeset by P&C

CONTENTS OF THE EDITION

VOLUME 1

Acknowledgements	xv
Preface	xvii
Chronology	xix
Introduction	xxv
Abbreviations	xlix
Note on copy texts	1
Address from the London Corresponding Society to the inhabitants of Great Britain, on the subject of a parliamentary reform (1792)	1
Address of the London Corresponding Society to the other societies of Great Britain, united for obtaining a reform in parliament (1792)	11
Joint address to the French National Convention, 27 September 1792 (1792) [original English version]	27
Joint address to the French National Convention, 7 November 1792 (1792) [reprinted version issued in 1793]	31
Letter of Thomas Paine, to the people of France: Published and distributed gratis by the London Corresponding Society (1792)	37
Letter to the Right Hon. Henry Dundass, Secretary of State for the Home Department. By the London Corresponding Society, united for the purpose of obtaining a reform in parliament (1792; 2 nd edition 1794)	47
The London Corresponding Society's address and regulations (1792)	57
The London Corresponding Society's addresses and resolutions (reprinted and distributed gratis) (1792)	75
The London Corresponding Society to the nation at large (1792)	85
A letter of thanks addressed by the London Corresponding Society, to Philip Francis, Esq. M.P., for his able speech in parliament, on the 10 th of April, 1793, upon the Stockbridge Election Bill; together with his answer (1793)	95

Address to the nation, from the London Corresponding Society, on the subject of a thorough parliamentary reform ... held on Monday, the 8 th of July, 1793 (1793)	105
An explanation of the word equality (1793)	117
Extracted from the appendix of a pamphlet entitled Peace and Union, Recommended to the Associated Bodies of Republicans and Anti-Republicans, by William Frend (1793)	123
Extracted from the Morning Chronicle, June 1 st , 1793, the speech of John Wharton, Esq. M.P. in the House of Commons, on his motion on the constitution; printed by order of the London Corresponding Society and distributed gratis (1793)	129
The Englishman's right: a dialogue between a barrister at law and a juryman By Sir John Hawles Reprinted by the London Corresponding Society (1793)	139
Universal suffrage and annual parliaments. Report of the sub-committee of Westminster; appointed April 12, 1780, to take into consideration all such matters, relative to the election of Members of Parliament (1793)	189
A letter of thanks from the London Corresponding Society, to the Right Honourable Thomas Skinner, Lord Mayor of London. For His Lordships upright conduct in dispensing with military attendance on a late occasion (1794)	209
A reasonable caution from the London Corresponding Society, to their fellow citizens, and the public in general (1794)	213
Address of the London Corresponding Society, united for the purpose of obtaining universal suffrage and annual parliaments, to the various patriotic societies of Great Britain (1794)	215
An account of the seizure of Citizen Thomas Hardy, secretary to the London Corresponding Society; with some remarks on the suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act (1794)	221
At a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society ... on Monday the 14 th of April, 1794 ... the following letters were read (1794)	233
Constitutional maxims, extracted from A Discourse on the Establishment of a National and Constitutional Force. By Charles Lord Hawkesbury. London: printed 1757. Abridged and reprinted by order of the London Corresponding Society (1794)	243
Fast Day as observed at Sheffield (1794)	257

London Corresponding Society. General Committee, 5 th June, 1794 (1794)	273
London Corresponding Society. Nov. 19 th 1794. The Committee gratefully acknowledge the contributions (1794)	277
Reformers no rioters. Printed by order of the London Corresponding Society (1794)	287
Report of the Committee, appointed to revise and abridge a former report of the constitution, of the London Corresponding Society (1794)	297
The address published by the London Corresponding Society, at the general meeting, held at the Globe Tavern, Strand, on Monday the 20 th day of January, 1794 ... to the people of Great Britain and Ireland. To which are added, the King's speech at the opening of the present session of "His Parliament" (1794)	313
The report of the Committee of Constitution of the London Corresponding Society (1794)	331
The speech of Earl Stanhope, in the House of Peers, on February the 19 th , 1794. With the resolutions of the London Corresponding Society thereon (1794)	351
The speech of Earl Stanhope in the House of Peers on his motion to prevent His Majesty's ministers from interfering with the internal government of France. April the fourth, 1794 (1794)	359
Notes	373

VOLUME 2

A letter, &c. to the members of the London Corresponding Society (1795)	1
A letter from His Grace the Duke of Richmond, to Lieutenant Colonel Sharman, chairman to the Committee of Correspondence appointed by the delegates of forty-five Corps of Volunteers, assembled at Lisburn in Ireland. With notes by a member of the Society for Constitutional Information (1795)	11
Account of the proceedings of a meeting of the people, in a field near Copenhagen-House, Thursday, Nov. 12; including the substance of the speeches of Citizen Duane, Thelwall, Jones, &c. With the petitions to the King, Lords, and Commons ... on the subject of ... a convention bill (1795)	29

London Corresponding Society. Copy of a circular letter to all the patriotic societies in Great Britain (1795)	47
London Corresponding Society. Meeting in Mary-Le-Bone Fields (1795)	51
Narrative of the proceedings at a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society. Second edition, revised and corrected. ... on Monday the 29 th of June 1795 (1795)	65
Proceedings of a general meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held on Monday October the 26 th , 1795: in a field adjacent to Copenhagen-House, in the county of Middlesex (1795)	83
The correspondence of the London Corresponding Society revised and corrected, with explanatory notes and a prefatory letter, by the Committee of Arrangement ... published for the use of members (1795)	105
The state of the representation of England and Wales, delivered to the Society, the Friends of the People, associated for the purpose of obtaining a parliamentary reform Revised, compressed, and reprinted by the London Corresponding Society, 4 th May 1795 (1795)	195
Citizens, John Binns and John Gale Jones, the citizens we deputed to visit the popular society at Birmingham, are speedily to take their trial on a charge of seditious conduct (1796)	231
Citizens, we are eager to address you on the extraordinary occurrences that have recently agitated the nation (1796)	235
Debtor. The London Corresponding Society. Creditor (1796)	241
A narrative of the proceedings at the general meeting of the London Corresponding Society, held on Monday, July 31, 1797, in a field, near the veterinary college, St. Pancras, in the county of Middlesex. Citizen Thomas Stuckey, president (1797)	247
Citizens, we lay before you an abstract of the pecuniary transactions of the London Corresponding Society, from the 7 th of July to the 31 st of December last (1797)	281
The London Corresponding Society, in order to gratify the desire the public must naturally feel to know what are the particular accusations preferred against Citizens Jones and Binns ... present them with copies of the indictments found against each (1797)	291
Thoughts on Mr. Grey's plan of reform in a circular letter to the popular societies of Great Britain and Ireland (1797)	297

Address of the London Corresponding Society to the British Nation (1798)	305
Proceedings of the General Committee of the London Corresponding Society, on the 5 th , 12 th , and 19 th of April, 1798, relative to the resistance of a French invasion. Stated in a letter to a friend: intended to have been inserted in the Morning Chronicle (1798)	311
London Corresponding Society, held at the Bell, Exeter-Street, Strand (1792)	325
London Corresponding Society, Sir, it would be with considerable embarrassment, that we should address you (1793)	329
Reform in parliament. London Corresponding Society, April 11, 1793. A petition to be presented to the Honorable the House of Commons praying for a radical reform in the representation of the people; now lies for the reception of signatures (1793)	333
The Berry-bush. Written by J. Field, and sung on Monday July the 8 th , 1793 at the Crown and Anchor, Tavern, Strand. At the first general meeting of the London Corresponding Society (1793)	337
The following petition was presented to the House of Commons, by Phillip Francis, Esq. May 6, 1793, from the London Corresponding Society. Ordered to lie on the table (1793)	341
The London Corresponding Society addresses the friends of peace and parliamentary reform (1793)	345
To the London Corresponding Society, associated for effecting a free and equal representation of the people in parliament (1793)	349
A subscription is opened for the relief of the wives and children of sundry persons detained in prison by the late suspension of the Habeas Corpus Act (1794)	355
Citizens! The critical moment is arrived (1794)	359
London Corresponding Society, anniversary dinner, and general meeting, Globe Tavern, Strand, Monday 20 th Jan., 1794 (1794)	363
London Corresponding Society, Feb. 3, 1794. This Society having long supported with cheerfulness and ardour ... a radical reform in parliament (1794)	367
London Corresponding Society. July 25, 1794. To a humane and generous public no apology will be necessary (1794)	371
Articles for future regulations for the London Corresponding Society, recommended by the Executive Committee (1795)	375

London Corresponding Society. At a general meeting of this Society, held on Thursday, the 12 th inst. (1795)	381
London Corresponding Society. General meeting, June 29, 1795 (1795)	385
To the British nation. The reply of the London Corresponding Society, to the calumnies propagated by persons in high authority, for the purpose of furnishing pretences for the pending Convention Bill (1795)	389
To the inhabitants of London and its environs. Awake! Arise! Or be for ever fall'n! (1795)	395
To the members of the London Corresponding Society. Committee room, December 31, 1795. Citizens, after the resolutions of various divisions ... it appears to us inexplicable that a few individuals should attempt to dissuade particular divisions from meeting (1795)	399
To the parliament and people of Great Britain. An explicit declaration of the principles and views of the London Corresponding Society (1795)	403
Address of the London Corresponding Society to the country (1797)	407
Answer of the London Corresponding Society, respecting a general meeting to the friends of reform in Sheffield (1797)	411
Circular letter to the united corresponding societies of Great Britain. London Corresponding Society, sitting of the Executive Committee, July 17, 1797 (1797)	415
Fellow-citizen, your non-attendance at your division (together with other defaulters) has been of such serious disadvantage to the interests of our Society (1797)	419
London Corresponding Society. Notice is hereby given, that a general meeting of this Society, and other friends of parliamentary reform in London ... will be held on Monday, the 31 st inst. (1797)	423
London Corresponding Society. This Committee having read an advertisement, inserted in the public newspapers (1797)	427
London. Executive Committee, sitting of Thursday, March 23, 1797. Fellow citizens, for a long time, a despotic administration ... have enslaved our unfortunate country (1797)	431
Special sitting of the Executive Committee, June 29, 1797 (1797)	437
The London Corresponding Society's answer to a member of parliament's letter (1797)	441

To the united corresponding societies of Britain (1797)	447
Treasurer's accounts (1796–8)	451
Notes	503

VOLUME 3

The Politician, nos. 1–4 (1794–5)	1
The Moral and Political Magazine of the London Corresponding Society, Volume the first (1796)	35
Notes	379

VOLUME 4

The Moral and Political Magazine of the London Corresponding Society, Volume the second (1797)	1
Notes	241

VOLUME 5

[Youth, pseud.], An address to the London Corresponding Society, held at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand, Monday, July 8, 1793; being an answer to a pamphlet entitled An Address to the Nation, on the Subject of a Thorough Parliamentary Reform, &c. (1793)	1
[Anonymous], An address to the inhabitants of Great Britain and Ireland, in a reply to a printed report of the London Corresponding Societies (1794)	11
[James Parkinson], A vindication of the London Corresponding Society (1794)	83
[James Parkinson], Revolutions without bloodshed; or reformation preferable to revolt (1794)	101
[Society for Constitutional Information], Proceedings, &c. of the Society for Constitutional Information (1794)	107

[Anonymous], A congratulatory epistle to the London Corresponding Society, on their late general meeting, in St. George's Fields. By a friend to liberty (1795)	117
[Anonymous], Remarks upon the principles and views of the London Corresponding Society (1795)	123
[Edward Henry Iliff], A summary of the duties of citizenship! Written expressly for the members of the London Corresponding Society; including observations on the contemptuous neglect of the Secretary of State, with regard to their late address to the King! (1795)	147
[Anonymous], The decline and fall, death, dissection, and funeral procession of his most contemptible lowness the London Corresponding Society; who took his departure from this world on the 18 th day of December 1795 by the author of "The Funeral of Mrs. Regency" (1796)	177
Answer of the friends of reform in Sheffield, summoned to take into consideration the letter of the London Corresponding Society, on the subject of a proposed meeting, to petition the King to dismiss his ministers (1797)	241
Reply of the friends of liberty in Sheffield, summoned to take into consideration the answer of the London Corresponding Society, respecting a general meeting (1797)	247
[Hampden, pseud.], Ministers the cause of the miseries and disaffection of the people: addressed to the British nation. By Hampden. These thoughts occurred to the author on reading the reply of the people of Sheffield, to the London Corresponding Society (1797)	253
[Nottingham Corresponding Society], The proceedings at a general meeting of the Nottingham Corresponding Society, held in the market place, on the 31 st of July, 1797, in pursuance of a requisition from the London Corresponding Society, requesting "All the affiliated bodies to meet on the same day". Intended as an appendix to the London Society's narrative, &c. (1797)	263
Sampson Perry, The origin of government, compatible with, and founded on the rights of man, with a few words on the constitutional object of the Corresponding Society. The whole addressed to the common sense of every Englishman (1797)	273
Notes	307

VOLUME 6

First report from the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons respecting seditious practices (1794)	1
First report of the Lords' Committee of Secrecy respecting seditious practices (1794)	14
Second report from the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons respecting seditious practices (1794)	15
Second report of the Secret Committee of the House of Lords respecting seditious practices (1794)	115
Debate in the Lords on the report of the Secret Committee respecting seditious practices (1794)	125
Debates on the Treasonable Practices and Seditious Meetings Bill (1795)	129
Report from the Committee of Secrecy of the House of Commons relative to the proceedings of different persons and societies in Great Britain and Ireland engaged in a treasonable conspiracy (1799)	287
Debate in the Commons on the report from the Secret Committee relative to seditious societies (1799)	328
Report from the Lords Committee of Secrecy relative to a treasonable conspiracy (1799)	336
Notes	341
Appendix	353
Index	367



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The editing of over 120 individual texts in this collection has benefited from tremendous and unfailing support on several levels. Foremost, my Advisory Editors – James Epstein, Jack Fruchtman and Mary Thale – have each been a constant source of information and encouragement. Their willingness to deal with often tedious issues and their attention to detail have been an inspiration, and it is to them that I owe the greatest gratitude. In the initial stages of the project, Greg Claeys offered his support for the concept and I wish to thank him for his backing. Jenny Graham was also extremely generous in helping me locate sources. As the project developed it quickly became clear that Pickering & Chatto were the ideal publishers and working with the editorial team on this collection was an extraordinary pleasure. I have been fortunate in dealing with two successive Editors – Robert Langham and Anna Crago (both of whom have since moved on from Pickering & Chatto) – who displayed an unmatched enthusiasm and professionalism. Finally, Katy Hill has done a marvellous job of guiding this collection through the various stages of production. Her diligence, patience and industry are worthy of the highest praise. Finally, I wish to thank David Salmo for his efforts in taking control of this project at the most challenging time near the end.

The texts in this edition are reproduced by kind permission of Public Record Office, The British Library, Royal Irish Academy, National Library of Ireland, Nuffield College Oxford, University of London Library, Trinity College Library Dublin, Bodleian Library, Cambridge University Library and The Johns Hopkins University.



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

PREFACE

The publication of London Corresponding Society documents marks an important and thrilling moment in the historiography of the British political and social reform movement. While a selection of LCS documents, composed mainly of manuscript sources, appeared for the first time in 1983, never before now have scholars had the luxury of discovering so many LCS documents in a single location. Michael T. Davis's monumental achievement in assembling these documents and placing them in their contextual setting will stand for years as the definitive collection of LCS materials.

Inspired by the French Revolution, Thomas Hardy, a shoemaker, and several like-minded reformers founded the London Corresponding Society in early 1792 to promote universal manhood suffrage and annual parliaments. Hardy often worked cooperatively with John Horne Tooke, who had revitalised the Society for Constitutional Information, which had its origins in the earlier 1780's radical advocacy for parliamentary reform. Included among the LCS membership were artisans, craftsmen, mechanics, small businessmen and even labourers. Some of its most prominent members were drawn from the legal and medical professions, and over time it gradually claimed among its recruits several members of the middle class and even titled gentry. Aside from Hardy, among its leading spokesmen were Joseph Gerrald and Maurice Margarot, both propertied lawyers, and James Parkinson, a physician. The famous orator, radical and poet John Thelwall was also a leading spokesman for the Society.

As its name suggests, the London Corresponding Society was designed as an organisation based in the capital city with several links, like spokes from a wheel, throughout the country to other urban areas where its members 'corresponded' with one another about their ideas and plans for the future. To enhance this objective, the Society, like the Jacobin Club in France, was divided into divisions throughout the city of London. The size of each division was limited to thirty members, but once a division reached sixteen people, it could split itself into two divisions. The documents published by the LCS, which often represented the concerns of the Society's divisions and the burning issues of the day, include the major pamphlets, petitions, addresses, and periodicals produced between 1792 and 1798.

While the LCS began life primarily as a political educational organisation, it quickly evolved into an aggressive, even confrontational, group, which led many of its members to face arrest, trial, and acquittal for some, or, for others, transportation to Botany Bay. Hardy was acquitted after his trial, but the fate of Gerrald and Margarot was banishment to Australia for fourteen years. The establishment of the LCS occurred in the shadow of the French Revolution just as it was to become increasingly radicalised under the Jacobin leadership of Robespierre and St. Just and as British authorities began a serious and well-organised crackdown on radical political organisations. In the autumn of 1792, John Reeves, with government support, created the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property Against Republicans and Levellers to counter the political activities of the LCS. Habeas Corpus was suspended in 1794 so that political prisoners were jailed without trial, and, the following year, parliament passed the Treasonable Practices Act and the Seditious Meetings Act, which made it illegal for anyone to criticise the British government and constitution and forbade meetings of more than fifty people at any one time. Accordingly, readers will find in these volumes the parliamentary reports and debates recorded during the infamous state trials of 1794, the passage of the Two Acts through parliament the following year, and the proscription of the LCS in 1799 by law.

Researchers will also discover in the present collection essays and addresses in support of the reform ideas of Thomas Paine, congratulatory letters sent to the leaders of France, and materials relating to a British Convention, which eventually met twice in Scotland, once in 1792, and again the following year. The government viewed these two Conventions as direct challenges to its authority and cracked down even more harshly. Undeterred, the Society held huge meetings in London in 1794 and 1795, and it is said that Thelwall attracted crowds over 100,000 people in the fall of 1795 to hear him lash out against the war with France, high food prices and the corrupt political regime. Both Thelwall and Tooke were acquitted on treason charges in 1794. In 1799, with the passage of the Corresponding Societies Act, which outlawed such organisations, the LCS was ultimately and finally suppressed.

Dr Davis has performed an invaluable and vital service for all historians and political theorists of social and political reform movements. These six volumes provide a much-needed source of printed information about the London Corresponding Society for future scholars who wish to understand the origins, development and ultimately the demise of one of the most fascinating organisations of late-eighteenth-century Britain.

*Jack Fructman Jr.
Towson University*

CHRONOLOGY

1792

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| January | Formation of the LCS |
| 16 February | Publication of Part 2 of the <i>Rights of Man</i> by Thomas Paine |
| 2 April | First address of the LCS |
| 11 April | Formation of the Society of the Friends of the People |
| 20 April | France declares war on Austria |
| 21 May | Royal Proclamation against seditious writings |
| 24 May | LCS publishes its <i>Address ... to the nation at large</i> |
| 24 June | Prussia declares war on France |
| 10 August | Louis XVI imprisoned and the French monarchy suspended |
| 2–3 September | September Massacres in France |
| 20 September | Formation of the French National Convention
LCS decides to send an address to the French National Convention |
| 21 September | French republic declared |
| 1 November | LCS address to the French National Convention delivered |
| 20 November | Formation of the Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, founded by John Reeves |
| 29 November | <i>Address of the London Corresponding Society, to the other societies of Great Britain, united for the obtaining of a reform in parliament</i> |
| 1 December | Rumours of insurrectionary plans |
| 4 December | LCS composes a <i>Letter to the Right Hon. Henry Dundass</i> |
| 5 December | Arrest of William Carter, the bill-sticker |
| 11–13 December | Reform convention of the Scottish Friends of the People in Edinburgh |
| 18 December | Thomas Paine convicted of seditious libel for <i>Rights of Man</i> |

1793

- 7 January William Carter convicted
- 21 January Louis XVI executed
- 1 February France declares war on Britain
- 13 March LCS Division 12 secedes and forms the Society of British Citizens
- 30 April Opening of the second Scottish Convention
- 2-6 May Reform petitions presented to parliament
- 31 May-2 June Girondins overthrown in France
- July Committee of Public Safety established in France and Reign of Terror begins
- 8 July LCS general meeting at the Crown and Anchor Tavern, Strand. *Address to the nation, from the London Corresponding Society. On the subject of a thorough parliamentary reform* composed
- 30-31 August Thomas Muir tried in Edinburgh and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation to Botany Bay for sedition
- 2 September LCS general meeting and address to the King
- 12-13 September Thomas Fyshe Palmer tried in Edinburgh and sentenced to seven years' transportation to Botany Bay for sedition
- 16 October Marie Antoinette executed
- 24 October LCS outdoor meeting held and LCS delegates to the reform convention in Edinburgh elected. Thomas Brielat, a LCS member, arrested
- 29 October Start of the Edinburgh reform convention
- 7 November LCS delegates to the reform convention, Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald, arrive in Edinburgh
- 19 November Edinburgh reform convention reconvenes
- 5 December Maurice Margarot, Joseph Gerrald and William Skirving arrested
- 6 December Edinburgh reform convention disbanded

1794

- 6-7 January William Skirving tried in Edinburgh and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation to Botany Bay for sedition
- 13-14 January Maurice Margarot tried in Edinburgh and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation to Botany Bay for sedition
- 20 January LCS general meeting at the Globe Tavern and *Address to the people* composed
- 21 January Parliament opens

- 24 January LCS General Committee meets daily during the present session of parliament
- 27 January Public announcement of the landing of Hessian troops
- 30 January LCS Secret Committee established
- February LCS begins circulating a letter to reformers and reform societies proposing a convention
- 24 February Daniel Isaac Eaton acquitted of publishing a seditious libel
- 13 March Joseph Gerrald tried in Edinburgh and sentenced to fourteen years' transportation to Botany Bay for sedition
- 25 March In the wake of the conviction of the Scottish Martyrs, Henry Dundas suggests Scottish laws be adopted in England
- 2 April Manchester reformers tried and acquitted of an alleged attempt to subvert the constitution and to assist a French invasion of Britain
- 4 April LCS and the Society for Constitutional Information conference
- 7 April Reform meeting held in Sheffield
- 9 April LCS and the Society for Constitutional Information agree to call a convention of reformers
- 14 April LCS general meeting at Chalk Farm
- 2 May Maurice Margarot, Thomas Fyshe Palmer, Thomas Muir and William Skirving transported to Botany Bay
- 12 May Thomas Hardy and Daniel Adams arrested. George III's address concerning sedition
- 13 May John Thelwall arrested
- 14–23 May Other reformers arrested, including John Horne Tooke, John Lovett, John Ashley and Thomas Spence, in a nationwide campaign against leading radicals
- 15–16 May Insurrectionary plans of Robert Watt discovered in Scotland
- 16 May Report of the House of Commons Committee of Secrecy presented to parliament
- 17 May Suspension of Habeas Corpus passed by the House of Commons
- 22 May Suspension of Habeas Corpus passed by the House of Lords
- 22 May *Account of the seizure of Citizen Thomas Hardy* composed
- 23 May Suspension of Habeas Corpus to 1 February 1795
- 11 June Thomas Hardy's house attacked

- 11 July Duke of Portland Whigs join the government of William Pitt
- 27–28 July Robespierre overthrown and executed in France
- 15–22 August Crimping riots in London
- 27 August Lydia Hardy dies
- 3–6 September Robert Watt and David Downie tried in Scotland and sentenced to death for treason
- 27–28 September Arrest of suspects in the Pop-Gun Plot
- 6–21 October Indictments prepared in London for the Treason Trials
- 15 October Robert Watt executed
- 25 October Trial of Thomas Hardy commences
- 5 November Thomas Hardy acquitted of treason
- 4 November John Ashley discharged
- 16 November Trial of John Horne Tooke commences
- 25 November John Horne Tooke acquitted of treason
- 1 December Trial of John Thelwall commences
- 5 December John Thelwall acquitted of treason
- 13 December First issue of the *Politician* published by the LCS
- 1795
- 3 January *Politician* ceases publication
- 5 February Suspension of Habeas Corpus extended to 1 July 1795
- March LCS adopts a new constitution
- 30 March LCS Division 12 secedes and forms the London Reforming Society
- 6 April LCS Division 16 secedes and forms the Friends of Liberty
- June–July Food rioting throughout Britain
- 29 June LCS general meeting at St. George's Fields. Addresses to the nation and George III announced
- 6–14 July Crimping riots in London
- 15 July LCS address to George III delivered to the Duke of Portland
- 24 September LCS Division 27 secedes over the issue of religion
- 15 October Former members of LCS Division 27 form the Friends of Religious and Civil Liberty
- 26 October Largest LCS general meeting held at Copenhagen House
- 29 October Alleged attack on George III on his way to and from the opening of parliament
- 4 November Proclamation against seditious activities

- 6 November Treasonable Practices Bill introduced to the House of Lords
- 10 November Seditious Meetings Bill introduced to the House of Commons
- 12 November LCS general meeting at Copenhagen House. Petitions to the Lords, Commons and George III composed
- 12 November LCS correspondence published
- 7 December LCS general meeting at Marylebone Field
- 12 December LCS adopts new regulations to circumvent the restrictions of the Treasonable Practices Bill and Seditious Meetings Bill
- 18 December Treasonable Practices Bill and Seditious Meetings Bill become law
- 1796
- 14 January Suspects in the Pop-Gun Plot indicted
- 5–15 February John Binns tours Portsmouth
- 6 February–
2 March John Gale Jones tours Rochester, Gravesend and Maidstone
- 4 March John Binns and John Gale Jones deputed to Birmingham as LCS representatives
- 16 March John Binns and John Gale Jones arrested in Birmingham
- 16 March Joseph Gerrald dies at his home in Australia
- 24 March John Binns bailed
- 26 March John Gale Jones bailed
- 11–19 May Pop-Gun Plot suspects tried and acquitted
- 1 July First issue of the *Moral and Political Magazine* published by the LCS
- 19 August John Thelwall attacked at Yarmouth
- 22 December French fleet at Bantry Bay
- 1797
- February Bank crisis in Britain with the temporary suspension of cash payments by the Bank of England from 26 February
- 22 February French raid at Wales
- 30 March John Gale Jones tried and convicted of sedition but never sentenced
- 16–24 April First Spithead mutiny
- 7–14 May Second Spithead mutiny

12 May–15 June	Nore mutiny
1 June	Last issue of the <i>Moral and Political Magazine</i> published by the LCS
6 June	Bill preventing the subversion of the military passed
19 July	Bill preventing the taking of secret oaths passed
22–3 July	LCS general meeting at St. Pancras announced
29 July	LCS general meeting declared to be illegal
31 July	LCS general meeting dispersed and reformers arrested
2 August	LCS Division 10 prepares to secede
15 August	John Binns tried and acquitted of sedition
13 October	Thomas Hardy's house attacked

1798

30 January	LCS <i>Address ... to the Irish nation</i>
28 February	John Binns and four other Irishmen arrested at Margate on charges of high treason
18–22 April	United Englishmen and LCS members arrested
20 April	Royal denouncement of sedition in parliament
21 April	Suspension of Habeas Corpus
21–22 May	John Binns and others arrested at Margate on high treason tried at Maidstone. James O'Coigley convicted and sentenced to death; Binns and others acquitted
23–26 May	Irish rebellion begins
7 June	James O'Coigley executed
14 June	LCS <i>Address ... to the British nation</i>
22 August	French invasion of Ireland
8 September	French surrender

1799

9 January	Suspension of Habeas Corpus to 21 May
10 March	United Irishmen arrested at the Royal Oak
16 March	John Binns arrested and detained until 1801
9 April	United Englishmen arrested
20 May	Suspension of Habeas Corpus extended to March 1800
12 July	LCS, United Englishmen, United Britons, United Irishmen and United Scotsmen outlawed

1800

November	LCS meeting on Kennington Common
----------	----------------------------------

INTRODUCTION

By the late eighteenth century Britain abounded with a diverse range of voluntary associations. It was what one scholar has called ‘an associational world’ characterised by a kaleidoscope of institutions, including convivial, religious, social, cultural, educational, professional and scientific clubs.¹ While many societies were established to satisfy the interests and concerns of the expanding polite classes of urban Britain, still others catered to a more heterogeneous membership. Importantly, the Georgian era saw a marked increase in political consciousness among artisans, tradesmen and shopkeepers, which was in part facilitated by the growth of debating societies during this period.² Debating clubs existed for many years in provincial centres and in London they were often considered as a form of entertainment for residents and something of a tourist attraction for visitors. Although the number of metropolitan debating societies slowly declined during the 1780s and 1790s they remained an important forum for public discussion throughout the late eighteenth century.³ Debates were conducted in a rational and formal manner, and some clubs – like the Robin Hood Society – survived for many years on a mixture of social, economic, religious and political topics.⁴ During the 1790s, debates about politics were increasingly common in London debating societies and important links were forged with local reformers.⁵ Indeed the link between debating clubs and radicals endured well into the nineteenth century;⁶ and, as one observer wrote in 1810, the link was considered to be undeniably subversive: ‘The debating societies, which ... have [been] suffered to propagate the most seditious and mischievous notions among the lower classes of people in the metropolis, and its vicinity, without let or molestation, have dared to propose some discussions of a most dangerous and inflammatory nature.’⁷

Outside the walls of debating societies, radicals often found a safe haven for political expression in formal reform associations. In the late 1760s, for instance, the Wilkite Society for the Support of the Bill of Rights attracted mass popular support and engaged itself in disseminating political information to a working-class audience. The following two decades saw extra-parliamentary reform organisations flourish and it was the Society for Constitutional Information (SCI), founded in 1781 by Major John Cartwright, which led the campaign in the 1780s when electoral change, the repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts and the abolition of the slave trade

were the focus of the reform agenda.⁸ The growth of the reform movement over the course of the late eighteenth century saw the political nation progressively expand to include members of the working classes. The dominant public sphere faced a mounting challenge from what Terry Eagleton has described as a 'counter-public sphere' – an 'oppositional network of journals, clubs, pamphlets, debates and institutions'.⁹

It was during the last ten years of the eighteenth century that the challenge from this oppositional network reached its strength as the complexion of the reform movement changed immeasurably following the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. The events in France had a deep and resounding impact on the entire European world and, as one contemporary observed in 1793, 'every European is today part of this last struggle of civilization The Revolution being cosmopolitan, so to speak, ceases to belong exclusively to the French'.¹⁰ Although Clive Emsley has suggested that the French Revolution 'prompted little agitation or excitement in Britain',¹¹ it is however true to say few Britons could have escaped the pervading influence and polarising power of the Revolution.¹² Public opinion was increasingly separated over the virtues of the Revolution in the years following 1789. Edmund Burke commented in the month following the fall of the Bastille that Britain gazed 'with astonishment at a French struggle for Liberty and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud!'.¹³ The following year, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, Burke described how 'the most opposite passions necessarily succeed, and sometimes mix with each other in the mind; alternate contempt and indignation; alternate laughter and tears; alternate scorn and horror'.¹⁴ Contempt, especially among some Londoners with images of the Gordon Riots of 1780 still fresh in their memories, would have been understandable. Indeed, one reporter for *The Times* viewed the events in Paris as 'a crisis, which no man could have foreseen or supposed' – it was the act of 'an unlicensed populace'.¹⁵ Britons traditionally regarded the French as enemies and some of this initial hostility to the French Revolution could be attributed to franco-phobia.¹⁶ Anti-Gallicanism and anti-Catholicism were ideas which many Britons, especially the English, were imbibed with from youth: 'Before the English learn that there is a God to be worshipped, they learn that there are Frenchmen to be detested.'¹⁷

In general, however, most Britons responded with enthusiasm to the French Revolution. The literati wrote favourably about the events and dramatists presented re-enactments as 'Paris [came] ... to London and French liberty was all the rage' among theatre-goers.¹⁸ At a grass roots level, William Cobbett later recalled how the Revolution ushered in an 'enthusiastic season, when the sun of liberty bore with such violence on our skulls, as made us dance the whirligig, like ducks under the tropics'.¹⁹ Some of the enthusiasm

for the French Revolution, particularly among governing circles, may be attributed to a degree of *schadenfreude*, by which some politicians may have welcomed the Revolution believing that political turmoil, social unrest and economic hardship would weaken the diplomatic and military power of France.²⁰ For many more, however, the French Revolution was welcomed with a genuine belief that it brought with it a new enlightened era of European history as France broke free of monarchical tyranny and religious absolutism. The events of 1789 were seen to be something of a re-enactment of Britain's own Glorious Revolution of 1688 and it was believed that a constitutional monarchy based on the British example would soon be established in France. Yet, as one historian has noted, 'in England, even more than in France, the history of the French Revolution was being written before the story of it was completed Attempts at judgement and interpretation were made before the Revolution had shown the course it was to take.'²¹ As the Revolution turned increasingly bloody during 1792, British perceptions began to change. But it was not entirely, nor indeed primarily, reports of the September Massacres or the execution of the royal family and the Girondins which made some Britons renege their initial support for the Revolution. As David Bindman notes: 'To a large extent ... the story of the British response to the French Revolution is about British rather than French politics, and there seems to have been little curiosity outside the governing circles about events in France which did not impinge directly upon Britain.'²² It was only when the so-called 'French disease' threatened to spread to Britain and consume the country in a battle of liberty and equality against the establishment that antagonism towards those sympathetic to the French Revolution became a pronounced reactionary movement. After 1789 the French embarked on what was considered 'a crusade of universal freedom'²³ and an aggressive foreign policy aimed at encouraging 'other nations to establish their own *républiques soeurs*, dedicated to the same principles as *la grande nation* and in alliance with it. Within all such nations, the local *patriotes* will strive to establish such *républiques soeurs* under the general guidance of *la grande nation*.'²⁴ British reformers, who had in the preceding decades laboured against the state in what can be described as a closed and isolated environment, now found an international ally and example. Major John Cartwright insisted that the French 'are not only asserting their own rights, but they are advancing the general liberties of mankind'.²⁵ Richard Price went further in his sermon delivered to the Revolution Society on 4 November 1789 and warned that the reform campaign had reached a new level in light of the example in France: 'I see the ardour for liberty catching and spreading; a general amendment beginning in human affairs; the dominion of kings changed for the dominion of laws, and the dominion of priests giving way to the dominion of reason and conscience. Be

encouraged, all ye friends of freedom, and writers in its defence! The times are auspicious.'²⁶

For the most part, British reformers rushed to offer their support for the revolutionaries and their principles. While previous expressions of fraternity with France were barely questioned, in the wake of 1789 pro-French rhetoric assumed a more sinister overtone. Loyalists viewed the addresses to the National Convention and the Paris Jacobin Club in 1792, for instance, with alarmist fear, believing that those Britons offering a union with France were prepared to 'throw us all back into the state of naked, ignorant, distressed, and bloody barbarians.'²⁷ When war between Britain and France was declared on 1 February 1793, the crusading sentiments of the French and fraternal commitments of British sympathisers assumed an even greater significance. The war became as much a battle for ideological supremacy as one for military and political power.²⁸ The principles of the French Revolution were now viewed by conservatives as a dangerous contagion that showed signs of spreading and as Britain waged a war against this threat the divide between loyalists and radicals assumed an even greater prominence. As J. G. A. Pocock has observed: 'The right to think one's own country in the wrong, and even hope for its defeat in an unjust cause, became something which it was important to some to assert, and to others to contest.'²⁹ Nationalism and francophobia combined in the 1790s to produce a potent and powerful movement of loyalism in Britain against those regarded as British Jacobins.³⁰

One of the most enduring influences of the French Revolution in Britain was this polarising of political sentiments. As George Rudé points out: 'One early result of the French Revolution was to divide European society into two distinct and mutually hostile groups – its supporters or "patriots" on the one hand, and its opponents or "counter-revolutionaries" on the other.'³¹ This divide was accentuated during the course of the 1790s by the pamphlet debate that raged in Britain around the so-called Burke-Paine controversy.³² This 'war of pamphlets',³³ as one contemporary described it, began with the publication of Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France* in November 1790.³⁴ He denounced the French revolutionaries and their British sympathisers and as such *Reflections* 'became the almost unchallenged Bible of counter-revolution in every European country'.³⁵ It was not long, however, before Burke's treatise was responded to by reform writers like Joseph Towers, Capel Lofft, Joseph Priestley and Mary Wollstonecraft.³⁶ The most popular and politically influential rebuttal of Burke's *Reflections* was the *Rights of Man* written by Thomas Paine and published in two parts in March 1791 and February 1792.³⁷ Its pages were filled with instruction and encouragement for the lower orders in their quest for liberty and, as Paine wrote in the first volume, 'nothing of reform in the political world ought to be held improbable. It

is an age of revolutions, in which every thing may be looked for.³⁸ These were evocative words and it was language of this kind that established the *Rights of Man* as the buttress of the reform movement not only in Britain but also in Austria, Bohemia, Cuba and Hungary.³⁹ The working classes of Britain, who were maturing as political citizens when Paine's work appeared, were the recipients of cheap editions of the *Rights of Man* which were sold and distributed in unexpected numbers.⁴⁰

As the lower orders read Paine's words or listened to them at the local public house they began to acquire an unprecedented political enthusiasm and assertiveness which encouraged a 'new breed of man', as one scholar puts it, to enter the British political nation.⁴¹ Against a backdrop of the French example, popular reform societies formed with rapid suddenness during the height of Paine's influence in 1791–3.⁴² E. P. Thompson asserted that the *Rights of Man* was 'one of the two foundation texts of the English working-class movement'⁴³ and its appearance in the early 1790s – at a time when socio-economic stress made Britain a seedbed for reform – ensured it played a crucial role in energising and inspiring popular political enthusiasm.⁴⁴ It was in Sheffield that this enthusiasm manifested itself into the first popular reform society in Britain.⁴⁵ Established in late 1791, the Sheffield Society for Constitutional Information drew its support from a pool of disgruntled local cutlers and metal workers and was one of the more prominent provincial societies during the 1790s. It was not, however, the only regional reform society and many more soon appeared in places like Manchester, Norwich, Nottingham, Birmingham, Leeds, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Perth.⁴⁶

Despite the proliferation of regional reform groups, it was the London Corresponding Society (LCS) which was to assume a commanding role in directing the radical reform campaign between 1792 and 1799.⁴⁷ One scholar has indexed the LCS, rather contentiously, as the first British Labour Party and noted from 'it issued most of the ideas and men that made themselves conspicuous in popular movements up to the year 1820'.⁴⁸ E. P. Thompson, in *The Making of the English Working Class*, went further by declaring the objectives of the LCS to be 'one of the hinges upon which history turns'⁴⁹ and Gwyn Williams described the Society as 'the most celebrated of the artisan clubs'.⁵⁰ Its prominence within the reform movement of the 1790s and historical significance, however, could not have been guessed from the tenuous beginning of the LCS. At its first meeting at The Bell tavern in Exeter Street, Strand, on 25 January 1792, a mere nine men were in attendance.⁵¹ The proprietor of The Bell, Robert Boyd, along with George Walne and Thomas Hardy, were considered as the founders of the LCS and each 'had acquired, by long and close attention to political transactions, a thorough knowledge of the encouragement which they had to expect, and the difficulties they had to

encounter'.⁵² Although the Society's establishment was clearly the result of the collective efforts of several men, its conception relied heavily, if not entirely, upon the driving force of Thomas Hardy.⁵³

Hardy was born on 3 March 1752 in Stirlingshire, Scotland, the eldest son of a merchant seaman. His father died around 1760 and Hardy's education was entrusted to his grandfather on the mother's side of the family. It was under his grandfather's guidance that Hardy acquired the skills of a shoemaker and apart from a brief stint as a bricklayer in the industrial city of Carron he managed to carve out a modest existence for the rest of his life from his trade. In 1774, with a mere eighteen pence in his pocket, Hardy moved to London where his political awakening was typical of Britain's emerging artisan intelligentsia. He soon 'became acquainted with many of the middle and lower classes of Dissenters'⁵⁴ and against the backdrop of the American Revolution 'his heart always glowed with the love of freedom, and was feelingly alive to the sufferings of his fellow creatures'.⁵⁵ After reading Richard Price's *Observations on the Nature of Civil Liberty* (1776), Hardy 'became one of the warmest and most sincere advocates for the right cause'⁵⁶ and he acquired an insatiable taste for 'a dish of Chat about politicks [sic] Foreign or Domestic'.⁵⁷ His growing appetite for political information was sharpened in the wake of the French Revolution and was only satisfied by a collection of political pamphlets first published by the Society for Constitutional Information between 1779 and 1783 and which were presented to Hardy in late 1791 by Thomas Brand Hollis. Hardy re-read these works with eager enthusiasm and from *A letter from His Grace the Duke of Richmond, to Lieutenant Colonel Sharman*, first published in 1783, he came upon the idea for establishing a corresponding society.⁵⁸

Although Hardy's political consciousness was developing rapidly during the early 1790s, his socio-economic status remained relatively static. As Jennifer Mori recently pointed out: 'there is no hard evidence that the politicisation of artisan labour during the 1790s was a symptom of embourgeoisification'.⁵⁹ At much the same time Hardy was re-reading the political literature of the 1780s, his business affairs turned sour when his partnership as a leather cutter and currier was dissolved and he was burdened with the debts and taxes of the business. As Hardy endured a period of financial constraint and rising prices he determined that the monetary pressures under which he and other members of the working class laboured were the doing of government ministers. The LCS was thus conceived 'as a means of informing the people of the violence that had been committed on their most sacred rights, and of uniting them in an endeavour to recover those rights'.⁶⁰ This was rhetoric filled with the passion of class antagonism and as Hardy explained in 1792: 'The low and miserable conditions the people of this nation were

reduced to by the avaricious extortions of the haughty, voluptuous and luxurious class of beings who wanted us to possess no more knowledge than to believe all things were created for the use of that small group of worthless individuals'.⁶¹

It was indeed the unrepresented labouring classes who more than any experienced the economic and social miseries of late-eighteenth-century Britain and the LCS believed parliamentary reform, embodying annual parliaments, universal manhood suffrage and uncorrupted elections, was the means of redress. It was an ambitious, dangerous and provocative objective at the time and it was under the alluring banner of 'unite, persevere and be free' that the Society set about to achieve its goal.⁶² The ranks of the LCS quickly swelled after its first meeting: 'Next weekly meeting, nine more joined the Society The third meeting brought an accession of twenty-four new members.'⁶³ By mid-1792, Hardy proudly announced that the Society increased 'rapidly in number and respectability'⁶⁴ and spoke 'of the success of the London Corresponding Society'.⁶⁵ While the initial rapid growth of the Society is undeniable, its precise size remains difficult to accurately determine. The LCS certainly had a large pool of so-called 'political citizens', as Edmund Burke calls them, from which it could recruit.⁶⁶ Burke's estimate of the political citizenry including some 80,000 radical sympathisers could indeed be a conservative assessment if the number of spectators at LCS outdoor meetings is used to gauge the support for reform in the 1790s.⁶⁷ The Society regularly attracted thousands of people to its open-air gatherings, yet many were no doubt merely curious onlookers or even opponents of the Society, meaning that the actual active membership of the LCS was but a fraction of the numbers on display at such meetings.⁶⁸ Some contemporary estimates ranged from 28,000 to 80,000 members, however these would seem to be unrealistic figures with paid-up membership probably fluctuating throughout the Society's history between a peak of around 3,000 members in the latter half of 1795 to a trough of 250 members twelve months earlier.⁶⁹

The majority of those who joined the Society between 1792 and 1799 have remained completely unknown and another significant proportion known only by name and maybe also by occupation.⁷⁰ Of course such obscurity surrounding the personnel of this organisation is not entirely unexpected given the main target group from which the Society recruited. The Society's weekly subscription of one penny allowed working men, who were unable to afford the higher dues asked by the SCI and the middle-class Society of the Friends of the People, to join the LCS.⁷¹ As Hardy explained, the Corresponding Society was to be an open forum for 'tradesmen, mechanics, and shopkeepers'⁷² – those members of society who were 'but few in number and humble in situation and circumstances'.⁷³ Shoemakers, weavers and tailors made up the most

common occupational categories of known members and approximately half of the Society's leading protagonists were artisans.⁷⁴ To contemporary conservatives and loyalists these were the kind of men seen to have no right in discussing politics or organising themselves for the purpose of political reform. The LCS was viewed with disdain as a group of 'blackguards ... a motley crew of pick-pockets, seditionists, modern reformers, house-breakers, and revolutionists'.⁷⁵ The spy, John Groves, made a similar comment about the Society's membership in 1794: 'There are some of decent tradesmen-like appearance, who possess strong, but unimproved faculties There are others of an apparent lower Order – no doubt Journeymen, who though they seem to possess no abilities & say nothing, yet they appear resolute and determined The last description among them, & which is the most numerous, consists of the very lowest order of society – few are even decent in appearance, some of them filthy & ragged, and others such wretched looking blackguards that it requires some mastery over that innate pride, which every well-educated man must naturally possess, even to sit down in their company These appear very violent & seem ready to adopt every thing tending Confusion & Anarchy'.⁷⁶

While detractors of the LCS were happy to characterise the Society's members as vile hot-headed revolutionaries of the lowest social standing, a more apt vignette is that of a politically conscious and articulate artisan group. Within the LCS working men were able to ascend to authoritative positions and display the attainments of their emerging political maturity. Men like John Ashley, John Baxter, Francis Place and John Thelwall, drawn from the trades of a shoemaker, silversmith, tailor and shopkeeper, each rose to prominence within the LCS.⁷⁷ Yet, while it is true that these men were strictly speaking of the working class, Harry Dickinson suggests that 'there is no evidence that the LCS ever had much appeal for unskilled labourers or the very poor. The LCS was not a genuine proletarian society despite the accusations of its enemies and the claims of some historians'.⁷⁸ It could indeed be argued that the LCS was not the epitome of a genuine proletarian society based on the fact that the leading core of the LCS represented what one scholar has called 'relatively elite artisans'.⁷⁹ It is, however, fair to say that the group did 'include in their number some from among more "common" workers',⁸⁰ and with such a vast body of members about whom nothing is known it is possible the LCS attracted much greater support from among working men of the lower end of the scale than is suggested by existing evidence.

A more definite case against the LCS as a proletarian organisation could be made on the grounds that its membership was not exclusively working class. The Society was a heterogeneous group that united like-minded men of varying social standing. It was, as Hardy originally stated, to be a group based on

the maxim that 'the number of our Members be unlimited'.⁸¹ Given this, the presence in the LCS of men of higher social and educative attainments is to be expected. The late-eighteenth-century world of radicalism was a relatively fluid environment where polite and plebeian reformers frequently came together.⁸² Lord Basil William Daer, for instance, a Scottish aristocrat and landlord, whom Hardy affectionately referred to as his 'fellow labourer in the same glorious cause',⁸³ was an early recruit of the LCS.⁸⁴ Of even greater prominence within the LCS were the well-educated recruits Maurice Margarot and Joseph Gerrald.⁸⁵ The radical careers of both men were aborted when they were arrested in Edinburgh on 5 December 1793 for their involvement in the British reform convention and subsequently convicted of sedition and transported to Australia as part of the group known collectively as the Scottish Martyrs.⁸⁶ Until that time, however, Margarot and Gerrald were leading members of the Corresponding Society, and while they 'were not perceived by their fellow members as belonging to a higher class', as Mary Thale points out, they were nevertheless men of superior intellectual achievement.⁸⁷ Gerrald was the son of a wealthy West Indian planter and was educated under the tutelage of the eminent Samuel Parr. He was also a trained lawyer as well as a proficient pamphleteer, as indicated by his work on *A Convention the Only Means of Saving us from Ruin* (1793), and was throughout 1793 one of the most active members of the Corresponding Society.⁸⁸ As to Margarot, his involvement with the LCS – next to that of Hardy – was undeniably the most influential in the first two years of the Society. Although most often referred to as a wine merchant, he was educated at the University of Geneva and at some stage apparently gained qualifications as an attorney. After joining the LCS in early 1792 he became a constant companion to Hardy and was affectionately recalled as 'a man of a strong philosophical understanding, ready wit, undaunted courage, and incorruptible integrity'.⁸⁹ Margarot quickly rose to prominence within the LCS, serving as its first president and entrusted with a large part of the Society's transactions, including the composition of its first public address.⁹⁰

Margarot, Gerrald and Daer were certainly not the only well-educated men to assist the LCS at a time when the Society was 'scarcely out of leading strings'.⁹¹ Indeed, Felix Vaughan, a young barrister and nephew of the veteran reformer, John Horne Tooke, played an often underestimated role in the Society's early days. He joined the LCS in April 1792 offering 'to assist at the committee appointed to form a constitutional code of laws for the government of the corresponding society'⁹² and was responsible for authoring an LCS address in late 1792 refuting charges of levelling made by the loyalist Association for the Preservation of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers.⁹³ On another level, the origins and development of the

Corresponding Society benefited from the advice of educated and experienced reformers who were not formal recruits of the Society. Before the LCS was instituted, Hardy apparently had become acquainted with Thomas Brand Hollis, a wealthy and influential member of the SCI and Friends of the People, and following the Society's formation he soon became known to middle-class reformers like John Cartwright, John Frost and Daniel Stuart.⁹⁴ It was Horne Tooke, however, who became the Society's most important external advisor.⁹⁵ Despite never becoming a formal member of the LCS, Horne Tooke was sometimes forwarded manuscripts of the Society's publications for his improvement and approval,⁹⁶ and was in close contact with Hardy through the formative period of the Corresponding Society. He was even sighted by an anonymous informer in October 1792, alongside Thomas Paine and Felix Vaughan, lending 'no small assistance towards exciting the people to rebellion by visiting the different [LCS] divisions'. The informant goes on to explain that 'there are many other popular demagogues who from their superior abilities attract the attention of the multitude'⁹⁷ – an observation confirming Hardy's later declaration that 'much political information [was] frequently received from gentlemen experienced in the cause of Reform which was communicated to the Society and received with great approbation'.⁹⁸

Apart from obtaining reassurance and validation from experienced and well-educated reformers, the advice that the LCS received from these men in the early stages 'was of much use in regulating their conduct as a society'.⁹⁹ While the concept of a corresponding society was derived from the publication of the Duke of Richmond's letter to Colonel Sharman in 1783,¹⁰⁰ it was Horne Tooke who suggested to Hardy that the organisational structure of the Sheffield SCI based on divisions was worth copying.¹⁰¹ With the rapid growth of the LCS in 1792 it was not long before such advice was heeded as a practical necessity. The meeting room at The Bell tavern soon proved too small to accommodate the LCS and in April 1792 the Society was split into nine divisions. In theory each division was to consist of thirty members and when forty-six men were registered a separate division was to be formed.¹⁰² In practice, though, some divisions prior to the passing of the Seditious Meetings Act in December 1795 consisted of much larger numbers, including Hardy's own Division 2 which reputedly had up to 700 members. Every three months each division elected a secretary to handle administrative and financial matters as well as a delegate to attend weekly meetings on a Thursday evening of the Society's governing body, the General Committee.¹⁰³ The first General Committee of 3 May 1792 – then called a Committee of Delegates – elected Margarot president of the Society and appointed Hardy as treasurer and secretary.¹⁰⁴ From early 1794, an Executive Committee made up of six elected members from the ranks of the General Committee was established to deal with the Society's publications and correspondence.¹⁰⁵

The first basic constitution of the Corresponding Society was drawn up by Hardy and presented to the Society's inaugural meeting on 25 January 1792.¹⁰⁶ As the structure of the LCS became more complex a new set of regulations became necessary and was introduced in late 1792.¹⁰⁷ The constitution remained basically unchanged until March 1795 when a slightly altered set of regulations was adopted and then, in an effort to manage the geographical expansion of the Society, four District Committees were introduced later that year as the representative body between the divisions and the General Committee.¹⁰⁸ This hierarchical structure of the Corresponding Society and its system of electing representatives not only served the practical purpose of regulating the activities of such a large group, but also gave the Society an internal system of democracy as well as the resemblance of legitimacy and an element of formality. Moreover, the strict protocol observed at LCS meetings – which included the removal of hats and standing when addressing the chairman – was perhaps learned from the debating societies of which many LCS members were a part and is testimony to the overall respect for the Society's rules which its members possessed.¹⁰⁹

While it is true, as Mary Thale states, that 'a good deal of LCS energy was spent on constitutions',¹¹⁰ the underlying commitment of the Society was to educating the people in their political rights. The Corresponding Society literally took their message to the streets by staging outdoor meetings and financing in 1796 the missionary tours to the provinces of John Gale Jones and John Binns. Reading and discussion groups were an equally important part of the educative programme for LCS recruits. Sunday evenings were regularly put aside for these meetings that were held in the private houses of members. As Francis Place recollected, for those in attendance the reading and discussion groups 'opened to them views which they had never before taken. They were compelled by these discussions to find reasons for their opinion and to tolerate others.'¹¹¹ Cheap democratic literature formed the basis upon which these meetings were based and the publishing programme of the LCS between 1792 and 1798, which at times was restricted by financial constraints, included around 80 separate pamphlets and broadsides as well as the periodicals, *The Politician* (1794–5) and *The Moral and Political Magazine of the London Corresponding Society* (1796–7). Issued as part of the grand 'moral force' campaign of the Society, these works advertised the aims, ideology and activities of the LCS and were often distributed in vast quantities. As extensive as the distribution of LCS works was at the time it is not surprising to find the democratic societies in Philadelphia reading LCS proceedings,¹¹² nor the revelation in 1798 'that the publications of this society have made their way into the closest dungeons of Russia'.¹¹³

The publications of the LCS were not, however, merely used to spread the message of reform, but at times presented the main public defence of the Society against allegations of subversion and illegality.¹¹⁴ Virtually from its inception the LCS was accused of being a revolutionary body intent on overturning the government and the extent to which these allegations were true remains a contentious issue among historians.¹¹⁵ Whether through truth, fabrication, paranoia or fear, the LCS – or at least some of its members – was at various times implicated in subversive episodes such as the planning of an insurrection in London in late 1792; the conspiracy to assassinate George III in 1794, known as the Pop-Gun Plot; the perceived attack on the King in 1795, which paved the way for the repressive Two Acts; and the naval mutinies of 1797.¹¹⁶ Not unexpectedly, the publications of the LCS tried distancing the Society from anything considered subversive, but circumstantial evidence suggests that the Corresponding Society moved progressively closer to more violent and conspiratorial tactics from the mid-1790s onwards. The Loyal Lambeth Association, for instance, which came to light in 1794, was a shadowy armed society which drilled its recruits in the use of weapons and maintained significant overlaps in membership with the LCS, including Thomas Spence; the Pop-Gun Plotter, John Smith; and the assistant secretary of the LCS in 1793, John Philip Franklow.¹¹⁷ In the years following, the LCS was increasingly penetrated by staunch physical force activists like John Ashley, John Binns, John Bone, Thomas Crossfield, Thomas Evans, Alexander Galloway and Robert Watson. Each of these men had been prominent LCS members and in the late 1790s were all patrons of the clandestine United Englishmen.¹¹⁸

Plots and rumours of insurrection, however, did not go unnoticed. Through an intricate network of spies and informers the government kept a close watch on the LCS and instituted what has been arguably described as a 'reign of terror' to check sedition and subversion in Britain.¹¹⁹ Thirteen repressive pieces of legislation were passed between 1792 and 1800 to suppress the burgeoning reform movement and more specifically to stop the London Corresponding Society.¹²⁰ Royal proclamations, the suspension of Habeas Corpus in 1794 and 1798, and the Two Acts of 1795 were a sample of what Malcolm Thomis and Peter Holt identified as 'a formidable array of repressive legislation'.¹²¹ Trials for libel increased dramatically during the 1790s as the authorities tried suppressing the spread of cheap political literature;¹²² and the treason trials of 1794, at which Hardy, Horne Tooke and Thelwall were acquitted, amount to the most deliberate and perhaps most elaborate attempts by the government to purge the radical movement of its leading figures.¹²³

The 1794 treason trials in fact mark a decisive point in the history of the LCS. Although the arrested radicals were either released without trial or acquitted, the events had already had an effect on the metropolitan reform movement. The SCI became defunct and former leaders within the LCS, like Hardy and Thelwall, withdrew from the frontline after the trials. Still others distanced themselves from the LCS through fear or disillusionment as membership numbers fell to their lowest point in the latter half of 1794.¹²⁴ The Society recovered by late 1795, but the passing of the Two Acts in December of that year effectively pushed the LCS into a state of retrogression from which it would never recover. Internal schisms, which had manifested themselves throughout 1795 with the formation of three splinter groups,¹²⁵ were now widened as members of the Corresponding Society disputed the most appropriate means of tackling the government's repressive legislation. The Society's finances also fell into disarray in 1796 through a combination of declining membership revenue; legal expenses associated with the defence of Binns and Jones who had been arrested in March during their political tour in Birmingham; and the increasingly unprofitable publication of *The Moral and Political Magazine*. While the Society managed to struggle on through its internal problems for a further two years, the government once more made concerted and, this time, definitive steps to quash the LCS. In April 1798, mass arrests of LCS and United leaders in London crippled the Corresponding Society with some of their leading activists detained until 1801 under the suspension of Habeas Corpus. The Society was in a failing and degenerative position, but it was only with the passing of one final piece of repressive legislation on 12 July 1799, which proscribed the LCS and United societies by name, that the Corresponding Society was forced to cease operating.¹²⁶

In the end, the LCS had failed to achieve its objective of parliamentary reform. For over seven years its members laboured for that one goal that proved so elusive. Yet, while the Society itself may have disappeared its impact on the working class was enduring and substantial. As Francis Place explained: 'The moral effects of the Society were considerable. It induced men to read books, instead of wasting their time in public houses It gave new stimulus to an immense number of men who had been but in many instances incapable of any but the grossest pursuits.'¹²⁷ The working classes were now well versed in their political rights and the lessons learnt from the 1790s continued to inform the reform movement of the early nineteenth century which built upon the foundations laid by the London Corresponding Society. It was indeed a justice of time that Thomas Hardy himself lived just long enough to see political reform once more take hold in England. As he reflected in April 1831, with the pride of a founding father, on the 'grand and beneficial change which has taken place in this country' he could not resist referring to it as a

'revolution'. Probably to his astonishment, history had come full circle in his lifetime and in the end *'The King, and his Ministers ... turned Parliamentary Reformers'*.¹²⁸

Notes

- 1 See Peter Clark, *British Clubs and Societies, 1580–1800: The Origins of an Associational World* (Oxford, 2000), esp. pp. 94–140.
- 2 See *ibid.*, pp. 118–21; Don Herzog, *Poisoning the Minds of the Lower Orders* (Princeton, 1998), pp. 63–5; T. Fawcett, 'Eighteenth-Century Debating Societies', *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 3 (1980), pp. 217–29; and Donna T. Andrew, 'Popular Culture and Public Debate: London, 1780', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), pp. 405–23.
- 3 *London Debating Societies, 1776–1799*, ed. Donna T. Andrew (London, 1994), p. x, n. 9.
- 4 On the Robin Hood Society see *The History of the Robin Hood Society* (London, 1764); and Mary Thale, 'The Robin Hood Society: Debating in Eighteenth-Century London', *The London Journal*, 22 (1997), pp. 33–50.
- 5 Mary Thale, 'London Debating Societies in the 1790s', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), pp. 57–86.
- 6 See Iain McCalman, *Radical Underworld: Prophets, Revolutionaries and Pornographers in London, 1795–1840* (Cambridge, 1988), pp. 89–90, 113–27.
- 7 *Anti-Jacobin Review*, 36 (1810), p. 106.
- 8 On the reform movement in this period see Ian R. Christie, *Wilkes, Wyvil and Reform: The Parliamentary Reform Movement in British Politics, 1760–1785* (London, 1962); John Cannon, *Parliamentary Reform from 1660 to 1832* (London, 1972), pp. 86–95; J. Seed, 'Gentleman Dissenters: The Social and Political Meanings of Rational Dissent in the 1770s and 1780s', *Historical Journal*, 23 (1990), pp. 299–325; G. M. Ditchfield, 'The House of Lords and Parliamentary Reform in the 1780s', *Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research*, 54 (1981), pp. 207–25; E. A. L. Moir, 'The Gloucestershire Association for Parliamentary Reform', *Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society*, 75 (1956), pp. 179–86. On the abolition of the slave trade see Roger Anstey, *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760–1810* (London, 1975); James Walvin, *England, Slaves and Freedom* (Basingstoke, 1986); and J. R. Oldfield, *Popular Politics and British Anti-Slavery: The Mobilization of Public Opinion against the Slave Trade, 1787–1807* (Manchester, 1995).
- 9 Terry Eagleton, *The Function of Criticism, from the Spectator to Post-Structuralism* (London, 1984), p. 36. On the public sphere see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society*, ed. Thomas Burger and Frederick Lawrence (Cambridge, Mass., 1989); Geoff Eley, 'Nations, Publics, and Political Cultures: Placing Habermas in the Nineteenth Century', in *Habermas and the Public Sphere*, ed. Craig Calhoun (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), pp. 289–339.
- 10 J. Mallet du Pan, *Considérations sur la nature de la Révolution de France, et sur les causes qui en prolongent la durée* (London and Brussels, 1793), p. v.
- 11 Clive Emsley, 'The impact of the French Revolution on British Politics and Society', in *The French Revolution and British Culture*, ed. Ceri Crossley and Ian Small (Oxford, 1989), p. 33.
- 12 For a discussion of the influence of the French Revolution on Britain see Clive Emsley, *Britain and the French Revolution* (Harlow, 2000); Jennifer Mori, *Britain in the Age of the*

- French Revolution 1785–1820* (Harlow, 2000); Seamus Deane, *The French Revolution and Enlightenment in England 1789–1832* (Cambridge, Mass., 1988); Stephen Prickett, *England and the French Revolution* (Basingstoke, 1989); *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789–1815*, ed. H. T. Dickinson (Basingstoke, 1989); and *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991). Also see David Bindman, *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London, 1989); H. T. Dickinson, 'The impact of the French Revolution on Britain', *Contemporary Review*, 255 (1989), pp. 20–6; and Samuel Bernstein, 'English Reactions to the French Revolution', *Science and Society*, 9 (1945), pp. 147–71. On the Scottish, Irish and Welsh responses to the French Revolution see Henry W. Meikle, *Scotland and the French Revolution* (Edinburgh, 1912); Richard Hayes, *Ireland and Irishmen in the French Revolution* (London, 1932); Liam Swords, *The Green Cockade: The Irish in the French Revolution* (Dublin, 1989); *Ireland and the French Revolution*, ed. Hugh Gough and David J. Dickson (Dublin, 1990); Dáire Keogh, *The French Disease: The Catholic Church and Irish Radicalism, 1790–1800* (Dublin, 1993); David Oswald Thomas, *Ymateb I chwyldro – Response to Revolution: How the Opening Events of the French Revolution were Perceived by Some Prominent Welshmen* (Cardiff, 1989); and D. Davies, *The Influence of the French Revolution on Welsh Life and Literature* (Carmarthen, 1926).
- 13 Edmund Burke to Earl of Charlemont, 9 August 1789, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, ed. T. W. Copeland, Alfred Cobban and Robert A. Smith, 10 volumes (Cambridge, 1958–70), VI: 10.
 - 14 Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, ed. Conor Cruise O'Brien (1790; rpt. Harmondsworth, 1968), pp. 92–3.
 - 15 *The Times*, 20 July 1789, p. 2.
 - 16 See Jeremy Black, *Natural and Necessary Enemies: Anglo-French Relations in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1986); Michael Duffy, "'The Noisic, Empty, Fluttering French": English images of the French, 1689–1815', *History Today*, 32 (1982), pp. 21–6; and Gerald Newman, 'Anti-French Propaganda and British Liberal Nationalism in the Early Nineteenth Century: Suggestions Toward a General Interpretation', *Victorian Studies*, 18 (1975), pp. 385–418.
 - 17 J. L. Fougeret de Montborn, *Préservatif contre l'Anglomanie, 'à Minorque'* (1757) p. 52, cited in Derek Jarrett, *The Begetters of Revolution: England's Involvement with France, 1759–1789* (London, 1973), p. 18.
 - 18 On the literary response to the French Revolution see *Revolution in Writing: British Literary Responses to the French Revolution*, ed. Kelvin Everest (Milton Keynes, 1991). On the French Revolution and British theatre see George Taylor, *The French Revolution and the London Stage, 1789–1805* (Cambridge, 2001); Jeffrey N. Cox, 'Ideology and Genre in the British Antirevolutionary Drama of the 1790s', *Journal of English Literary History*, 58 (1991), pp. 579–610; Jeffrey N. Cox, 'The French Revolution in the English Theater', in *History and Myth: Essays on English Romantic Literature*, ed. Stephen C. Behrendt (Detroit, 1990), pp. 33–52; and Jeffrey N. Cox, 'Introduction', in *Seven Gothic Dramas 1789–1825* (Ohio, 1992), pp. 15–32.
 - 19 [William Cobbett], *Porcupine's Works*, 12 vols. (London, 1801), VIII: 131. For a discussion of Cobbett's thoughts on the French Revolution see: A. J. Sambrook, 'Cobbett and the French Revolution', *The Yearbook of English Studies*, 19 (1989), pp. 231–42.
 - 20 Although France was shaken by internal turmoil during the 1790s it continued to achieve external victories, which has led one scholar to describe the *schadenfreude* of British politicians as one of 'two grand misconceptions' of the French Revolution – the other misconception being the belief of reformers that the Revolution would result in reform in Britain. See Maurice Hutt, 'The Impact of the French Revolution on English politics', *Franco-British Studies*, no. 6 (1988), pp. 3–10. Also see Jeremy

- Black, 'Anglo-French Relations in the Age of the French Revolution 1787–1793', *Francia*, 15 (1987), pp. 407–33.
- 21 Hedva Ben-Israel, *English Historians on the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1968), p. 3.
- 22 Bindman, *Shadow of the Guillotine*, p. 27.
- 23 Jacques-Pierre Brissot de Warville, 31 December 1790, cited in Georges Lefebvre, *The French Revolution*, 2 volumes (London, 1962–4), I: 217.
- 24 Conor Cruise O'Brien, 'Nationalism and the French Revolution', in *The Permanent Revolution: The French Revolution and its Legacy, 1789–1989*, ed. Geoffrey Best (London, 1988), pp. 36–7.
- 25 Cited in H. T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977), p. 236.
- 26 Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country* (London, 1790), reprinted in *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy*, ed. Marilyn Butler (Cambridge, 1984), p. 32. On Price's political ideology see David Oswald Thomas, *The Honest Mind: The Thought and Work of Richard Price* (Oxford, 1977); Jack Fruchtman, *The Apocalyptic Politics of Richard Price and Joseph Priestley: A Study in Late Eighteenth-Century English Republican Millennialism* (Philadelphia, 1983); and Stuart Andrews, "'Insects of the hour": Dr Price's 'Revolutions'', *History Today*, 41 (1991), pp. 48–53.
- 27 William Eden to W. W. Grenville, 26 November 1792, in *The Manuscripts of J. B. Fortesque, Esq., Preserved at Drogheda* (London, 1894), I: 342. On the radical addresses to France see Albert Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty: The English Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1979), pp. 244–61, 501–12. The joint address of the LCS is reproduced *infra*, volume 1, pp. 27–36.
- 28 See Emma Vincent Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes to the Wars against Revolutionary France, 1792–1802* (Aldershot, 1998); Thomas Philip Schofield, 'British Politicians and French Arms: The Ideological War of 1793–1795', *History*, 77 (1992), pp. 183–201; H. T. Dickinson, 'Britain and the Ideological Crusade against the French Revolution', in *Après 89. La Révolution modèle ou repoussoir*, ed. L. Domergue and G. Lamoine (Toulouse, 1992), pp. 153–74. Also see Michael Duffy, 'British Policy in the War against Revolutionary France', in *Britain and Revolutionary France: Conflict, Subversion and Propaganda*, ed. Colin Jones (Exeter, 1983), pp. 11–26; and Michael Duffy, 'British Diplomacy and the French Wars, 1789–1815', in Dickinson, *Britain and the French Revolution*, pp. 127–45.
- 29 J. G. A. Pocock, 'Political Thought in the English-Speaking Atlantic, 1760–1790. Part 2: Empire, Revolution and the End of Early Modernity', in *The Varieties of British Political Thought, 1500–1800*, ed. J. G. A. Pocock (Cambridge, 1993), p. 308.
- 30 On British nationalism in the 1790s see Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740–1830* (New York, 1987), pp. 227–44; J. G. A. Pocock, 'England', in *National Consciousness, History and Political Culture in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Orest Ranum (Baltimore, 1975), pp. 98–117; Linda Colley, 'Whose Nation? Class and National Consciousness in Britain 1750–1830', *Past and Present*, no. 113 (1986), pp. 97–117; John Dinwiddy, 'England', in *Nationalism in the Age of the French Revolution*, ed. Otto Dann and John Dinwiddy (London, 1988), pp. 53–70; Hugh Cunningham, 'The Language of Patriotism', in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, ed. Raphael Samuel (London, 1989), pp. 57–89; and Anne E. Brownlow, 'Eighteenth-Century English Patriotism and the French Revolution', *History of European Ideas*, 15 (1992), pp. 289–96. The best account of the loyalist movement is Robert R. Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution* (Lexington, 1983). Also see E. C. Black, *The Association: Extra-Parliamentary Organization, 1769–1793* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963), pp. 233–74; Austin Mitchell, 'The association movement of 1792–3', *The Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), pp. 56–77; D. E. Ginter, 'The loyalist association movement of 1792–3', *The*

- Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), pp. 179–90; Thomas Philip Schofield, 'Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution', *The Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), pp. 601–22; Trevor McGovern, 'Conservative Ideology in Britain in the 1790s', *History*, 73 (1988), pp. 238–47; Alan Booth, 'English Popular Loyalism and the French Revolution', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 54 (1989), pp. 26–31; H. T. Dickinson, 'Counter-Revolution in Britain in the 1790s', *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis*, 102 (1989), pp. 354–67; H. T. Dickinson, 'The French Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Britain', in *Aspekte der Französischen Revolution*, ed. Hans-Christoph Schröder and Hans-Dieter Metzger (Darmstadt, 1992), pp. 231–63; and H. T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1995), pp. 255–86.
- 31 George Rudé, *Revolutionary Europe 1783–1815* (London, 1964), p. 180.
- 32 An excellent collection of texts with a useful editorial introduction to the pamphlet debate is provided in *The Political Writings of the 1790s*, ed. Gregory Claeys, 8 volumes (London, 1995). A selection of texts are also reproduced in *The Debate on the French Revolution 1789–1800*, ed. Alfred Cobban (London, 1950); and Butler, *Burke, Paine, Godwin and the Revolution Controversy*. For an analysis of the Burke-Paine controversy see R. R. Fennessy, *Burke, Paine and the Rights of Man: A Difference of Political Opinion* (The Hague, 1963); James T. Boulton, *The Language of Politics in the Age of Wilkes and Burke* (London and Toronto, 1963), pp. 75–271; Francis Canavan, 'The Burke-Paine Controversy', *The Political Science Reviewer*, 5 (1975), pp. 389–420; and Gregory Claeys, 'The French Revolution Debate and British Political Thought', *History of Political Thought*, 11 (1990), pp. 59–80. For a quantitative analysis of this debate see Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'English Conservative Propaganda during the French Revolution, 1789–1802', PhD thesis (Emory University, 1976); Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'The English Pamphlet Literature of the Age of the French Revolution Anatomized', *Eighteenth-Century Life*, 5 (1978), pp. 29–37; and Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'Towards a Bibliography of the *Reflections* and *Rights of Man* Controversy', *Bulletin of Research in the Humanities*, 85 (1982), pp. 65–103.
- 33 Philip Francis to Edmund Burke, 19 February 1790, in *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, VI: 86.
- 34 For an analysis of Burke's political philosophy see Alfred Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1929); Peter Stanlis, *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law* (Ann Arbor, 1958); Francis Canavan, *The Political Reason of Edmund Burke* (Durham, N.C., 1960); Burleigh Taylor Wilkins, *The Problem of Burke's Political Philosophy* (Oxford, 1967); Frank O'Gorman, *Edmund Burke: His Political Philosophy* (London, 1973); Isaac Kramnick, *The Rage of Edmund Burke: Portrait of an Ambivalent Conservative* (New York, 1977); Frederick Dreyer, *Burke's Politics: A Study in Whig Orthodoxy* (Waterloo, Ont., 1979); Michael Freeman, *Edmund Burke and the Critique of Political Radicalism* (Oxford, 1980); F. P. Lock, *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1985); and Iain Hampshire-Monk, *The Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke* (London, 1987). Also see Anders Iversen, 'Burke and the Debate on the Revolution', *The Dolphin*, 19 (1990), pp. 9–23; and Harvey Mitchell, 'Edmund Burke's Language of Politics and his Audience', *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century*, 287 (1991), pp. 335–60. For a biographical study of Burke see Conor Cruise O'Brien, *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography of Edmund Burke* (London, 1992); Nicholas K. Robinson, *Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature* (New Haven and London, 1996); and F. P. Lock, *Edmund Burke* (Oxford, 1998).
- 35 Rudé, *Revolutionary Europe*, p. 182. One scholar claims that 'Burke was scarcely read in revolutionary France. His influence elsewhere on the continent was only gradual'. George Steiner, 'Aspects of Counter-Revolution', in Best, *The Permanent Revolution*,

- p. 139. Also see W. B. Todd, 'The Bibliographical History of Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France*', *The Library*, 6 (1951), pp. 100–8.
- 36 See Boulton, *The Language of Politics*, pp. 265–71; Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty*, pp. 99–135.
- 37 For a discussion of Paine's ideology see Gregory Claeys, *Thomas Paine: Social and Political Thought* (London, 1989); Mark Philp, *Paine* (Oxford, 1989); and Jack Fruchtman, Jr., *Thomas Paine and the Religion of Nature* (Baltimore, 1993). Also useful are the following works: Olivia Smith, *The Politics of Language 1791–1819* (Oxford, 1984), pp. 35–67; Linda Kirk, 'Thomas Paine: A Child of the Enlightenment?', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 52 (1987), pp. 3–13; Gary Kates, 'From Liberalism to Radicalism: Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*', *Journal of the History of Ideas*, 50 (1989), pp. 569–87; and H. T. Dickinson, 'Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* 1791–92: A Bi-Centenary Assessment', *Historian*, 21 (1991), pp. 18–21. For a bibliographical listing of some scholarship on Paine see Michael T. Davis, 'A bibliography of Writings on Thomas Paine, 1975–1993', *Bulletin of the Thomas Paine Society*, 2, 3 (1994), pp. 10–20. For a biographical study of Paine see Jack Fruchtman, Jr., *Thomas Paine: Apostle of Freedom* (New York, 1994); and John Keane, *Tom Paine: A Political Life* (London, 1995).
- 38 Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man*, ed. Gregory Claeys (1791–2; rpt. Indianapolis, 1992), p. 112.
- 39 Horst Ihde, 'The Heirs to Paine's Democratic Tradition', in *Life and Literature of the Working Class: Essays in Honour of William Gallacher*, ed. P. M. Kemp-Ashraf (Berlin, 1966), p. 96. Paine's work maintains a certain relevance in the contemporary political world, as Harry Dickinson points out: 'The notion that all mankind possesses natural and inalienable rights, and that these should include the right of all to participate in public affairs and the claim of poor citizens to social benefits from the state, continues to live on to the present day. Indeed, it is still at the centre of contemporary discussions on human rights and so the *Rights of Man*, which remains in print, deserves to be read today and to be regarded as relevant to some of our current problems.' Dickinson, 'Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* 1791–92', p. 21. On the issue of contemporary relevance see Claeys, *Thomas Paine*, p. 216; and Jim Herrick, 'Thomas Paine's 250th Anniversary', *New Humanist*, 102 (1987), pp. 12–13.
- 40 On the British reception of the *Rights of Man* see Claeys, *Thomas Paine*, pp. 110–38; and Edward Royle, 'The reception of Paine', *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 52 (1987), pp. 14–20. Horst Ihde claims that 'during the author's lifetime there were printed and sold more than one and a half million copies of parts one and two of *Rights of Man*'. Ihde, 'The Heirs of Paine's Democratic Tradition', p. 93. Cf. Claeys, *Thomas Paine*, pp. 111–12; and R. D. Altick, *The English Common Reader: A Social History of the Mass Reading Public 1800–1900* (Chicago, 1957), pp. 69–73. The *Rights of Man* was sometimes sold in unexpected places, as Francisco del Miranda (1750–1816), a Venezuelan, discovered in 1792: 'while on a visit to the House of Commons he saw placed on sale there with sandwiches the second part of Tom Paine's *Rights of Man*.' William Spence Robertson, *Life of Miranda* (Chapel Hill, 1929), I: 119.
- 41 Gwyn A. Williams, *Artisans and Sans-Culottes: Popular Movements in France and Britain During the French Revolution*, 2nd ed. (London, 1989), p. 66.
- 42 For a general discussion of the reform movement and popular radicalism in the 1790s see Walter Phelps Hall, *British Radicalism 1791–1797* (New York, 1912); Robert Birley, *The English Jacobins from 1789 to 1802* (London, 1924); George Stead Veitch, *The Genesis of Parliamentary Reform* (London, 1964), esp. pp. 126–242; E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1968); Carl B. Cone, *The English Jacobins* (New York, 1968); Goodwin, *The Friends of Liberty*, esp.