The problem of the active citizen: conservative reactions to the French Revolution in Britain

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> To enable men to act with the weight and character of a people, and to answer the ends for which they are incorporated into that capacity, we must suppose them … to be in that state of habitual social discipline, in which the wiser, the more expert, and the more opulent conduct, and by conducting enlighten and protect, the weaker, the less knowing, and the less provided with the goods of fortune. When the multitude are not under this discipline, they can scarcely be said to be in civil society.[1]

This paper seeks to summarise and comment on the main writings in English over the last two decades on conservative reactions in Britain to the French Revolution.

By the 1980s, significant work on the conservative reaction in Britain to the French Revolution had already been accumulated by historians. Ideology had been explored by H.T. Dickinson;[2] propaganda by Gayle Trusdel Pendleton;[3] the Church of England by Nancy Murray;[4] the Loyal Associations by Austin Mitchell, Eugene Black and Donald Ginter;[5] and the Volunteers by J.R. Western.[6] There was also, of course, a large body of published material

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[1] Edmund Burke, *An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs*, in *The Works of Edmund Burke* (Bohn: London, 1883), iii, p.85.

[2] H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977), ch.8.

[3] Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'English Conservative Propaganda During the French Revolution, 1789-1802', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Emory University, 1976).

[4] Nancy Uhlar Murray, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802', unpublished D.Phil. thesis (University of Oxford, 1975).

[5] Austin Mitchell, 'The Association Movement of 1792-3', *Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 56-77; E.C. Black, *The Association: British Extra-Parliamentary Political Organiszation, 1769-1793* (Oxford, 1963); Donald E. Ginter, 'The Loyalist Association Movement of 1792-93 and British Public Opinion', *Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), 179-90.

[6] J. R. Western, 'The Volunteer Movement as an Anti-Revolutionary Force, 1793-1801', *English Historical Review*, 71 (1956), 603-14.

discussing the opinions of Edmund Burke on the French Revolution.[7] Much of this work, disparate until then, was synthesised by H.T. Dickinson in 1985 in a chapter of his *British Radicalism and the French Revolution*. Since then, as Mark Philp and Kevin Gilmartin have suggested,[8] scholars working on British conservatives in the 1790s have responded to E.P. Thompson's call, previously taken up by students of British reformers and radicals, to pay attention to members of the middling and lower orders as participants in the political arena and not simply as objects of elite political discussion.[9] In general, therefore, there has been markedly more attention paid by historians to 1790s loyalism, and with more sympathetic interest, in the last twenty years.

Not surprisingly, this has resulted in the mining of a great wealth of new detail about Britain in the revolutionary decade in many respects. Various of these will be noted below but, in particular, more attention is for instance being paid to the Scottish experience in the 1790s. Till very recently, with a couple of notable exceptions,[10] it was either ignored in this field or, at best, treated largely as another English county, from which supporting examples might be drawn to buttress a line of argument. In terms of analysis of the loyalist response to the French Revolution, the trend has been towards discussing, in diverse ways, the problem of the active citizen. That is, historians have generally shown much more interest in loyalists below the level of the political and social elite than was the case until the 1980s; these men and women have been treated not just as objects of elite discussion, but as participants in the political process, *pace* Edmund Burke; Burke himself has consequently, despite the publication of major works of scholarship discussing his life and editing his writings, had *his* place in the political process of the 1790s queried and even reduced; and, finally, historians have been interested in the paradox of how the British state allowed and even encouraged the lower and middle orders to defend its elitist

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[7] For example, John MacCunn, *The Political Philosophy of Edmund Burke* (London, 1913); Alfred Cobban, *Edmund Burke and the Revolt against the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1929); Charles Parkin, *The Moral Basis of burke's Political Thought* (Cambridge, 1956); Francis P. Canavan, *The Political Reason of Edmund Burke* (Cambridge, 1960); R.R. Fennessy, *Burke, Paine and the Rights of Man* (The Hague, 1963); Carl B. Cone, *Burke and the Nature of Politics*, ii: *The French Revolution* (Kentucky, 1964); Gerald W. Chapman, *Edmund Burke. The Practical Imagination* (Cambridge, Mass., 1967); Frank O'Gorman, *Edmund Burke. His Political Philosophy* (London, 1973); Michael Freeman, *Edmund Burke and the Critique of Political Radicalism* (Oxford, 1980).
[8] Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 42-69; Kevin Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution: Loyalist Association and Conservative Opinion in the 1790', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), 291-328.
[9] Especially in *The Making of the English Working Class* (Harmondsworth, 1963, 1980), e.g. p.12.
[10] See notes 40 and 41 below.

constitution. As Kevin Gilmartin put it, 'how was public opinion mobilized in defense of a regime committed to limiting the political force of public opinion?'[11]

Despite the recent questioning of Burke's centrality to the British dispute in the 1790s, this article begins with a survey of the literature recently published on him, since until now he has been viewed as crucial to the debate. The paper then goes on to discuss recent historiographical advances and debates in the following areas of British loyalism in the 1790s: ideology, organisations and activities, the churches, the press and propaganda, and the question of the conservative masses.

I   *Edmund Burke*

The two major developments in Burke studies over the past two decades, both of which built upon the foundation laid by T.W. Copeland's edition of Burke's correspondence published between 1958 and 1970,[12] have been the production of another multi-volume work, still in progress — *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, under the general editorship of Paul Langford[13] — and two important scholarly biographies. The edited volumes of *Writings and Speeches* which have so far been published, like the earlier volumes of *Correspondence*, are already the standard scholarly references. The two volumes relevant to this discussion, edited by L.G. Mitchell and R.B. McDowell respectively, cover Burke's writings and speeches on the French Revolution and the subsequent war for the periods 1790-94 and 1794-97. They also include substantial introductions written by their editors, Mitchell arguing that Burke had little practical influence on the British government's policies, and McDowell suggesting that Burke's views on the Revolution in France were yet another manifestation of his opposition to the interference of the state in the lives of its subjects in most circumstances.

Conor Cruise O'Brien's *The Great Melody: A Thematic Biography and Commented Anthology of Edmund Burke* (London, 1992) is a lengthy but vibrant discussion of Burke's life and works which defends his consistency over time and subject matter. O'Brien discusses in turn Burke's activities and writings concerned with Ireland, America, India and France. He argues

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[11] Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', p.296; see also Mark Philp, 'Introduction', *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), ed. Philp, p.16.

[12] *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke*, eds Thomas W. Copeland, 10 vols (Cambridge and Chicago, 1958-70).

[13] The two volumes relevant to this paper are *The Writings and Speeches of Edmund Burke*, gen. ed. Paul Langford, vol. viii: *The French Revolution*, ed. L.G. Mitchell (Oxford, 1989), and vol. ix: *Part 1. The Revolutionary War, 1794-1797; Part 2. Ireland*, ed. R.B. McDowell (Oxford, 1991).

that there was a *leit-motif* running through Burke's views on all four problems, and indeed his thinking about British politics, which shows that, contrary to the criticisms of many contemporaries and some historians,[14] Burke's political stance did not change over time. While his means may have changed (from supporting American revolutionaries to opposing French insurgents, for instance), his ends (the defence of the current balance of the British constitution) did not. O'Brien's book is a personal and emotive work, though a lively study which offers warmly argued opinions with which students engage profitably. F.P. Lock's biography is a more conventional, detached academic study,[15] although that does not mean that it is tedious or unsympathetic — rather, it is highly readable, as well as likely to become the standard and most comprehensive life of its subject. The volume covering the 1790s is still in progress, but since one of Lock's aims in writing his biography is to elucidate the author of the *Reflections on the Revolution in France*, the first volume, covering Burke's life to 1784, is nevertheless relevant here. He has elsewhere argued that '[t]he *Reflections* has always, and rightly, been regarded as the product of the whole of Burke's long experience in politics', as his esteem for constitutional forms and social hierarchies in different countries and continents developed and strengthened over the decades.[16] The past two decades have also seen a rising interest among eighteenth-century historians in graphic satires, and these biographical works have been complemented by Nicholas K. Robinson's *Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature* (1996), a beautifully produced collection of many of the satirical prints published of Burke throughout his career.[17]

In addition, many other books and articles have been published which discuss Burke's views on the Revolution in France. Although most agree with O'Brien's view that Burke's opposition to the French Revolution was not politically inconsistent with his stances on earlier issues, scholars such as John Whale and F.P. Lock have tended to move away from attempts to extract a whole political philosophy from the *Reflections*,[18] and have presented it instead as the work of an active and pragmatic politician 'whose writing [was] strategic and provisional rather than theoretical and systematic' and needs to be firmly grounded in Burke's historical context.[19]

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[14] E.g. Alfred Cobban, in *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1929).

[15] F.P. Lock, *Edmund Burke*, vol. 1 *1730-1784* (Oxford, 1998).

[16] F.P. Lock, *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France* (London, 1985), pp.31, 29-30.

[17] Nicholas K. Robinson's *Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature* (New Haven, 1996).

[18] E.g. Peter Stanlis, *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law* (Ann Arbor, 1958).

[19] John Whale, 'Introduction', in *Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France. New interdisciplinary essays*, ed. John Whale (Manchester, 2000), p.12. Cf. also Lock, *Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France*, pp.88, 98-9.

J.G.A. Pocock has extended the notion of Burke's historical context to argue that this is what Burke thought he was defending in the *Reflections*. Whether he was fulminating on manners and the treatment of Marie-Antoinette, or wading through legal and economic material on the seizure of church lands and the printing of *assignats*, Burke, Pocock suggests, was always objecting to the French revolutionaries' contempt for their *context* — their overturning of their civilisation (property, presumption, prescription) in any and every respect.[20]

Finally, historians have recently been particularly interested in Burke's relationships with French *émigrés*, and with questions of nationality. Colin Lucas details his considerable practical aid to *émigrés*, which has usually gone untrumpeted, while Harvey Mitchell argues that Burke was only willing to countenance the purest of French *émigrés*, those who were entirely untainted with contact with the Revolution. [21] James K. Chandler and Tom Furniss have explored Burke's ideas on nationality. Chandler noted Burke's opinion that France had lost the power of self-representation because it was embodied in the National Assembly by 'country clowns', whereas the British constitution, although less numerically representative, was none the less representative, because it adequately corresponded to the character and interests of the English people. Similarly, Burke presumed to speak for Englishmen in the *Reflections*, although 'the question of whether and in what sense Burke writes as an Englishman looms over [the] *Reflections* from the start.'[22] Furniss reminded us that Burke was concerned throughout his political career with the protection of local identities from metropolitan centralisation and imposition. This was true whether he was discussing Ireland, America or India, and with respect to the Revolution in France, too, he opposed what he saw as the revolutionaries' 'centrist and potentially totalitarian tendencies'.[23]

II   *Ideology*

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[20] J.G.A. Pocock, 'The Political Economy of Burke's Analysis of the French Revolution', *HJ*, 25 (1982), 331-49; idem, 'Edmund Burke and the Redefinition of Enthusiasm: the Context of Counter-Revolution', in *The French Revolution and the Creation of Modern Political Culture*, vol. iii: *The Transformation of Political Culture, 1789-1848*, eds François Furet and Mona Ozouf (Oxford, 1989), pp.19-43.

[21] Colin Lucas, 'Edmund Burke and the *Émigrés*', in *The Transformation of Political Culture, 1789-1848*, eds Furet and Ozouf, pp.101-114; Harvey Mitchell, 'Presentations', in ibid., pp.3-18.

[22] James K. Chandler, 'Poetical Liberties: Burke's France and the "Adequate Representation" of the English', in *The Transformation of Political Culture, 1789-1848*, eds Furet and Ozouf, pp.49, 45-6.

[23] Tom Furniss, 'Cementing the nation: Burke's *Reflections* on nationalism and national identity', in *Burke's Reflections*, ed. Whale, p.139.

However, in the last two decades there has been a shift away from seeing the British debate over the French Revolution as having been so heavily dominated by Burke and Paine as may previously have been assumed. Lock suggested that Burke and Paine shared too little common ground to be viewed as debating the issues between themselves in any meaningful sense;[24] Mark Philp questioned whether the outpouring of print can actually be termed a debate at all, so heterogeneous were the views expressed;[25] and Gregory Claeys and Kevin Gilmartin went so far as to query not only the typicality of Burke's views, as expressed in the *Reflections*, but also his very centrality to the dispute.[26] They argued instead, as did H.T. Dickinson and J.G.A. Pocock, that the conservative British response to the revolution in France was multi-layered and that it is too simplistic to reduce it to variations on a theme of Burke.[27] Gilmartin pointed out that Burke had written his tract for an elite readership and had never intended it to be a blueprint for a popular movement.[28] Claeys noted that most loyalists were preoccupied with defending economic inequality, and were concerned to oppose what they wrongly assumed to be Paine's support for total economic levelling; and he also observed that most loyalists were not prepared to go so far as Burke on many issues, such as his view that the British political classes had given up certain political rights in the Glorious Revolution of 1688.[29]

This is not to imply, however, that the strength of the conservative case in the 1790s has been minimised by historians in recent years. In a series of books and articles published between 1985 and 1995, H.T. Dickinson developed the work on conservative ideas at the end of the eighteenth century that he had presented in the last chapter of his *Liberty and Property* (1977).[30] An

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[24] Lock, *Burke's Reflections*, p.164.

[25] Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism', p.43.

[26] Gregory Claeys, 'Republicanism Versus Commercial Society: Paine, Burke and the French Revolution Debate', *History of European Ideas*, 11 (1989), 313; Kevin Gilmartin, 'Burke, popular opinion, and the problem of a counter-revolutionary public sphere', in *Burke's Reflections*, ed. Whale, pp.94-5.

[27] H.T. Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism, 1789-1815', in *Britain and the French Revolution, 1789-1815*, ed. H.T. Dickinson (Basingstoke, 1989), pp.104-5; J.G.A. Pocock, 'Introduction', *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (Indianapolis, 1987), p.xl.

[28] Gilmartin, 'Burke, popular opinion, and the problem of a counter-revolutionary public sphere', pp.99, 104.

[29] Gregory Claeys, 'The French Revolution Debate and British Political Thought', *History of Political Thought*, xi (1990), 59-80.

[30] H.T. Dickinson, *Liberty and Property: Political Ideology in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (London, 1977), ch.8; idem, *British Radicalism and the French Revolution 1789-1815* (London, 1985); idem, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism 1789-1815', in *Britain and the French Revolution 1789-1815*, ed. Dickinson (Basingstoke, 1989), pp.103-27; idem, 'Popular Loyalism in Britain in the 1790s', in *The Transformation of Political Culture. England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, ed. Eckhart Hellmuth (London, 1990), pp.503-33; idem, 'Britain and the Ideological Crusade Against the French Revolution', in *Actes du Colloque international*, eds L. Domergue and G. Lamoine (Toulouse, 1992), pp.153-74; idem, 'The French Revolution and the Counter Revolution in Britain', in

important strand of his argument was to emphasise that the radicals not only lost the battle in Britain in the 1790s because of their weaknesses and the strength of government repression, as had largely been accepted earlier, but because the conservatives won the argument by the persuasiveness of their ideas and their tactics.[31] This was largely possible, he claimed, because they were able to appeal to widespread prejudices and deeply engrained opinions which were already held by many of the British middling and lower orders in favour of the traditional institutions and the existing constitution in church and state. They believed that their liberty and prosperity were protected by parliamentary monarchy, the rule of law and the prevailing social order. This conviction created an inherent distrust of British radicalism and French Jacobinism in the 1790s.[32] Professor Dickinson's reasoning reinforced Ian Christie's case in his Ford lectures of 1983-4, in which he had suggested that Britain had avoided revolution in the 1790s despite the French example because the British economy was fundamentally prosperous and because the British social order encouraged paternalism and beneficence towards the poor.[33]

The work of various other scholars supported this interpretation (though often, of course, following different agenda), to the extent that in 1991 John Dinwiddy labelled it 'the Dickinsonian consensus'.[34] Linda Colley's article, 'The Apotheosis of George III', had already shown the popular and growing appeal of the monarchy by the 1790s; and Marilyn Morris's book, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* went on to discuss the debate on monarchy in Britain in that decade, arguing that the French Revolution forced loyalists and radicals alike to modify their ideas on the British monarchy. While radicals generally eschewed a republican system in favour of reform within the monarchy, loyalists tended to incorporate republican virtues into their patriarchal image of monarchy.[35] In his examination of English conservative thought in the 1790s, Philip Schofield wrote that 'The attraction of conservative ideology might have been simply its defence of vested interests, but conviction united with

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Aspekte der Französischen Revolution, eds Hans-Christophe Schröder and Hans-Dieter Metzger (Darmstadt, 1992), pp.231-63; idem, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Basingstoke, 1995), ch.8.

[31] E.g. Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism', p.124.

[32] Ibid., p.104.

[33] Ian R. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford, 1984); see also Christie, 'Conservatism and Stability in British Society', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, ed. Philp, pp.169-87.

[34] John Dinwiddy, 'Interpretations of anti-Jacobinism', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, ed. Philp, p.38.

[35] Linda Colley, 'The Apotheosis of George III: Loyalty, Royalty and the British Nation', *Past and Present*, 102 (1984), 94-129; Marilyn Morris, *The British Monarchy and the French Revolution* (New Haven and London, 1998).

interest provided a much more stubborn opponent for radical agitation'.[36] Jonathan Clark's *English Society, 1688-1832* emphasised the continuing political and social power of the monarchy, the aristocracy and the Church of England at the turn of the nineteenth century, and argued that the conservative worldview which stressed order and obedience was still suffcently dominant that it was not greatly threatened by the relatively small number of political and religious radicals of the late eigheenth century: there was no unseemly haste to abandon the eighteenth century and arrive at the relative modernity of the mid-nineteenth century.[37] Stella Cottrell and Michael Duffy showed that a virulent gallophobia was another deeply rooted prejudice among the British people which was fruitfully exploited by the loyalists in order to win their case.[38] John Dinwiddy, however, disputed the strength of the conservative case, suggesting that, far from constituting an asset, the reiteration of familiar ideas and arguments was actually a sign of staleness and laziness in conservative propagandists; and that support for and disaffection with the government tended to appear and reappear in phases throughout the long military conflict with France, depending more upon circumstances than upon the quality of the conservative argument.[39]

Finally, work has recently been begun on the Scottish conservative / loyalist reaction to the French Revolution. More recent writing on British loyalism, such as that of Cookson and Gee,[40] has been careful to take Scotland into consideration, while specialist writing on Scottish loyalism followed behind work on radicalism, as did work on English loyalism.[41] Work on both

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[36] Thomas Philip Schofield, 'English Conservative Thought and Opinion in Response to the French Revolution', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1984), quotation from p.6; see also idem, 'Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution', *HJ*, 29 (1986), 601-22.

[37] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1688-1832* (Cambridge, 1985).

[38] Michael Duffy, *The Englishman and the Foreigner* (Cambridge, 1986); Stella M. Ní Ghallchóir Cottrell, 'English Views of France and the French, 1789-1815', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Oxford, 1991); idem, 'The Devil on Two Sticks: franco-phobia in 1803', in *Patriotism: The Making and Unmaking of British National Identity*, vol. 1: History and Politics, ed. Raphael Samuel (London, 1991), pp.259-74. See also Gerald Newman, *The Rise of English Nationalism: A Cultural History 1740-1830* (New York, 1987), which amply demonstrates widespread English gallophobia, although surprisingly it does not draw on much of the copious evidence available from the 1790s.

[39] Dinwiddy, 'Interpretations of anti-Jacobinism', pp.45-6, 48-9.

[40] J.E. Cookson, *The British Armed Nation, 1793-1815* (Oxford, 1997); Austin Gee, *The British Volunteer Movement 1794-1814* (Oxford, 2003).

[41] Work on Scottish radicalism in the 1790s has been led, in recent decades, by John Brims: see his 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1983), which has some interesting material on conservatives as well; 'The Scottish "Jacobins", Scottish Nationalism and the British Union', in *Scotland and England, 1286-1815*, ed. Roger A. Mason (Edinburgh, 1987), pp.247-65; idem, 'The Covenanting Tradition and Scottish Radicalism in the 1790s', in *Covenant, Charter and Party. Traditions of revolt and protest in modern Scottish History*, ed. Terry Brotherstone (Aberdeen, 1989), pp.50-62;

loyalism and radicalism in Scotland has followed Henry Meikle's seminal publication of 1912, *Scotland and the French Revolution*, but whereas a small but significant body of work on radicalism was built up in the 1980s and early 1990s, it took longer for interest to be taken in the conservatives,[42] and little so far has been published on the subject. Atle Wold's 2003 thesis, 'The Scottish Government and the French Threat, 1792-1802' makes the most substantial contribution so far, with two chapters devoted to a discussion of loyalist activities and ideology.[43] He found that the arguments put forward by conservative propaganda in Scotland were identical to those found in English loyalist propaganda, except for the extra case sometimes made for the benefits of the British union to Scots. Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts* were revised to fit a Scottish setting and 'translated' into a Scottish dialect shortly after they were published in England.[44]

III   *Organisations and Activities*

Here, the main trends have been the accumulation of work on the counter-revolutionary rallying of the people, and on pointing out the paradox of this mobilisation beside an ideology of the representation of property; a debate on how far the Volunteers were actually a loyalist organisation, as opposed to one chiefly concerned with military defence; and the collection again of some work on Scottish loyalism.

Earlier work on the Loyal Associations (the Association for the Protection of Liberty and Property against Republicans and Levellers, or the APLP) had discussed the extent, composition and nature of these groups of citizens who took a conservative view of the threat to the British state and constitution and who banded together to circulate loyalist literature and to quash local radicalism — or who, for one reason or another, believed it to be expedient that they should be

idem, 'From reformers to Jacobins: the Scottish Association of the Friends of the People', in *Conflict and Stability in Scottish society, 1700-1850*, ed. T.M. Devine (Edinburgh, 1990), pp.31-50; idem, 'Scottish Radicalism and the United Irishmen', in *The United Irishmen: Republicanism, Radicalism and Rebellion*, eds David Dickson, Dáire Keogh and Kevin Whelan (Dublin, 1993). See also Elaine W. McFarland, *Ireland and Scotland in the Age of Revolution. Planting the Green Bough* (Edinburgh, 1994).

[42] Though see David Brown, 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1989); idem, 'The Government of Scotland under Henry Dundas and William Pitt', *History*, 83 (1998), 265-79; and Michael Fry, *The Dundas Despotism* (Edinburgh, 1992), on the governing elite.

[43] Atle Libaek Wold, 'The Scottish Government and the French Threat, 1792-1802', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 2003).

[44] Ibid., pp.324-6.

identified with such a group.[45] In 1983, Robert R. Dozier published *For King, Constitution and Country: The English Loyalists and the French Revolution*, in which he examined in detail the Loyal Associations and also the later Volunteer movements. He showed that the strength of loyalist fervour and the popularity of loyalist activity tended to rise and fall with the course of the Revolution in France and the strength or otherwise of the perceived military threat from France. He also offered a great deal of detail about domestic political protest and the role of loyalists in suppressing dissent. Strikingly, Dozier already pointed out the problem for the state in waging a major war of ideas — that is, its need to involve and even invite the participation of ordinary subjects in suppressing domestic opposition and in defending an unrepresentative constitution which privileged property and high birth.[46]

As well as examining the ideology of British loyalists in the 1790s, Professor Dickinson also explored their activities and tactics.[47] He showed a rich vein of British political society and culture beneath elite level and a considerable spectrum of activity — a widespread willingness to accept and to act upon the political messages disseminated by the loyalist propagandists. He pointed out that conservatives adopted many of the same tactics as did radical and reforming politicians in attempting to rally popular support for petitioning campaigns, crowd demonstrations, and clubs and associations, and that loyalists in fact were much more successful in attracting large numbers of people to show support for their cause: that they won the battle, as well as the argument, with the radicals. On the other hand, he also argued that, while popular conservatism and militant loyalism were often incited by the elite, it is misleading to regard them as having been wholly under elite control. The very numbers of people who were drawn to express support for loyalist causes strongly suggests that it is impossible that they could all have been forced or manipulated into such support. Alan Booth also made this point: 'It is clear that many Church and King crowds were simply too large for the mercenary theory to be an adequate general explanation.'[48] In welcoming popular demonstrations in favour of the existing political

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[45] Austin Mitchell, 'The Association Movement of 1792-3', *Historical Journal*, 4 (1961), 56-77; E.C. Black, *The Association: British Extra-Parliamentary Political Organiszation, 1769-1793* (Oxford, 1963); Donald E. Ginter, 'The Loyalist Association Movement of 1792-93 and British Public Opinion', *Historical Journal*, 9 (1966), 179-90.

[46] Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country*, pp.48, 54-5.

[47] See note 26.

[48] Alan Booth, 'English Popular Loyalism and the French Revolution', in the *Bulletin of the Society for the Study of Labour History*, 54 (1989), 27; also idem, 'Popular loyalism and public violence in the north-west of England, 1790-1800', *Social History*, 8 (1983), 302.

system, Dickinson concluded, the governing elite 'had to accept that at times popular prejudices would get out of control'.[49]

David Eastwood focused attention on the dilemma for the governing elite of requiring to mobilise public support for the sake of domestic stability during the war, and yet not wishing to encourage permanent popular participation in the political process.[50] A prominent example of government ministers struggling to promote and yet retain control of public support was the Loyal Association movement. Eastwood pointed out that the *Charges* delivered to the Grand Jury of Middlesex in 1792 by Chief Justices Ashhurst and Mainwaring were influential in the formation of the Association, thus highlighting the importance of local government in its establishment.[51] Michael Duffy presented new evidence in 1996 on its origins, showing conclusively that the movement was the result of both government and outside activity. The responsibility for its genesis came from outwith the government — the original proposals, published on 23 November 1792, came from John Reeves and were previously unknown to ministers — but ministers seized upon Reeves's proposals and modified them to their own satisfaction before they were republished by Reeves on 26 November.[52] In response to Mark Philp's caution that any widening of legitimate political participation in the 1790s was problematic for the conservative elite, Kevin Gilmartin argued that the governing elite were always aware of the challenge of encouraging public support for the Loyal Association movement without losing control, and that 'the management of unintended consequences was no casual afterthought or latent effect but rather a constitutive feature of conservative enterprise, evident in the earliest efforts to manage a popular response to the French Revolution'[53] While conservative strategies mirrored radical tactics, as Dickinson had observed, this was necessary in order to prevent radicalism from occupying this territory. It was paradoxical to rally public support for political subordination, but none the less intentional, and 'the association worked to organize and police the terms within which reasoning about popular contentment, for ordinary

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[49] Dickinson, 'Popular Conservatism and Militant Loyalism', p.119; idem, 'Popular Loyalism in Britain', pp.516-7; idem, *Politics of the People*, pp.256, 284-6 (quotation from p.286).

[50] David Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State in the 1790s', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, ed Mark Philp (Cambridge, 1991), esp. p.150.

[51] Ibid., p.155.

[52] Michael Duffy, 'William Pitt and the Origins of the Loyalist Association Movement of 1792', *Historical Journal*, 39 (1996), 943-62.

[53] Mark Philp, 'Vulgar Conservatism, 1792-3', *English Historical Review*, 110 (1995), 42-69; Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', *Journal of British Studies*, 41 (2002), 291-328 (quotation from p.295).

readers, entered the discourse of public life … [and] the arena within which "the Labouring Part of the British Public" would be permitted to achieve political self-awareness'.[54]

An even more intense version of this difficulty arose with the emergence of the Volunteer Corps. As Austin Gee has pointed out, the recent American, Irish and French precedents of civilian military participation were not encouraging for the British elite.[55] (In fact, it would also need to be said that the mobilisation of the people was not necessarily welcomed by all of the masses, either, as recruitment rioting proved, together with protests against high war taxes.)[56] In an article published in 1956, J.R. Western had identified this amateur military defence organisation as having a fundamentally political role as well as its military *raison d'être*, that is, to form part of the loyalist strategy against domestic radicalism, and this was accepted by scholars such as Dozier and Dickinson.[57] Recently, David Eastwood and J.E. Cookson have emphasised the independent nature and the local preoccupations of many Volunteer units.[58] Eastwood argued that localism was both the principal strength and the major weakness of the movement. The impetus to establish a corps often arose from local concerns, and their initial funding frequently came from local subscriptions, but their local entrenchment often meant that Volunteer corps refused to serve outside their county, and finding continued funding was frequently problematic after the initial supply had been exhausted. Eastwood suggested, however, that 'this kind of patriotism operated at a subnational level perfectly consonant with the decentralised traditions of the English polity'.[59] Cookson also contended that the loyalty of the Volunteers to the state emerged from their local allegiance. He downplayed the role of the Volunteers in suppressing domestic radicalism and found their role as a bulwark against French invasion to be their principal function, so that they helped to establish an attitude of what he called 'national defence patriotism', which was able to unite people of widely differing political opinions in a way that counter-revolutionary loyalism could not. Linda Colley also argued that

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[54] Gilmartin, 'In the Theater of Counterrevolution', p.328. The reference is to William Paley, *Reasons for Contentment. Addressed to the Labouring Part of the British Public* (1792).
[55] Gee, *British Volunteer Movement*, p.4.
[56] See Emma Vincent Macleod, *A War of Ideas: British Attitudes towards the War against Revolutionary France, 1792-1802* (Aldershot, 1998), pp.187-95.
[57] J.R. Western, 'The Volunteer Movement as an Anti-Revolutionary Force, 1793-1801', *EHR*, 71 (1956), 603-14; Dozier, *For King, Constitution and Country*, pp.138-9, 154; Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, p.282; see also Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, pp.70-2.
[58] Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State in the 1790s', pp.158-161; Cookson, *British Armed Nation*, ch.3.
[59] Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English state', p.159.

the main reason for men volunteering was the desire to protect home and hearth against a possible French invasion.[60]

There is much truth in this argument, and it seems undeniable that many individual Volunteers were not always highly motivated by ideological hostility to the French Revolution. Some, as both Cookson and Colley had earlier shown, used membership of a corps to promote their own personal status in the local community, especially before the encouragement of mass enlistment in 1798, and the preoccupation with local and personal concerns over national concerns identified by them accords with the more general argument put by Paul Langford in 1991.[61] Most recently, Gee, in presenting the fullest account and analysis yet of the British Volunteer movement, has also taken issue with Western's approach and has soft-pedalled the militant loyalism of the Volunteers in favour of their role as military defenders of the British state.[62] He argued that the Volunteers were loyal to the crown in a general sense, and that they were responsible to act as a force of order, but that few saw themselves as an actively political, anti-radical or counter-revolutionary force.[63]

Yet the Volunteering movement itself was nevertheless certainly closely identified with the defence of the British constitution, even if it originated in the desire to boost the military defences of the country, and even if individual Volunteers were often not committed to the anti-radical cause. Loyalist ideas were integrated in the constitutions, propaganda and even the names of Volunteer companies (such as the Loyal Warrington Volunteers).[64] Moreover, some Volunteers must have been aware that they were being steered in a loyalist path. Members of the Edinburgh Volunteers, at least at the inception of the corps in June 1794, had to sign a declaration including the following words:

> We reprobate the doctrine of universal suffrage, and Jacobin or French political principles. We disapprove of all those Societies which have been formed, and those meetings which have been held in Britain, during these two last years, under the title of *Friends of the People*, *British Convention*, and similar appellations;

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[60] Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, pp.73ff., 237ff.; cf. Linda Colley, *Britons. Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven, 1992), pp.302, 305-8.

[61] Idem, 'The English Volunteer Movement of the French Revolutionary Wars, 1793-1815: Some Contexts', *Historical Journal*, 32 (1989), 867-91; Colley, *Britons*, pp.301-2; Paul Langford, *Public Life and the Propertied Englishman* (Oxford, 1991).

[62] Gee, *British Volunteer Movement*.

[63] Ibid., p.10.

[64] Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, pp.71-2.

and we oblige ourselves to prevent, by all lawful means in our power, such Societies being formed, and such meetings from being held in future, and to use our endeavours to counteract the efforts of those who either avowedly, or under the pretext of Parliamentary Reform, endeavour to subvert the British Constitution.[65]

Moreover, the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers (as they became) heard a sermon preached to them every New Year's Day, which often contained overtly loyalist, anti-radical ideas. In 1795, their chaplain, Principal George Baird of Edinburgh University, 'remarked upon the French Constitution, and expatiated in very animated terms upon the miseries of that unhappy nation. This he contrasted with that happy constitution under which we enjoy so many blessings, and in defence of which the Royal Edinburgh Volunteers had stood forth with so much alacrity.'[66] In 1798, he preached from Deuteronomy 23:9: 'When the Host goeth forth against thine enemies, then keep thee from every wicked thing'.[67] Perhaps, however, the Edinburgh corps was unusual in its overtly loyalist window-dressing. Gee concluded that 'the volunteers were more a constitutional than a partisan force, supporting the existing system' rather than the current administration.[68]

On Scottish loyalist activity, John Brims's 1983 thesis on Scottish radicalism necessarily took some notice of the loyalists in Scotland;[69] and David Brown's 1989 thesis on 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland' was wide-ranging and also offered some exploratory work on the loyalists.[70] Atle Wold's 2003 thesis included a chapter discussing loyalist activities,[71] in which he concluded that Loyal Associations were not so strong in Scotland as they were in England, but that various other expressions of loyalism were more forceful or relatively more voluminous in Scotland than they were further south, such as resolutions, advice to government ministers, personal military service (including the Volunteers), and financial contributions. Emma Macleod's article 'A City Invincible? Edinburgh and the war against Revolutionary France', reinforced the conclusions of Eastwood, Cookson and Gee in arguing

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[65] *Caledonian Mercury*, 16 October 1794.
[66] *Caledonian Mercury*, 3 January 1795.
[67] Ibid., 4 January 1798.
[68] Gee, *British Volunteer Movement*, p.264.
[69] John Brims, 'The Scottish Democratic Movement in the Age of the French Revolution', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1983).
[70] David Brown, 'Henry Dundas and the Government of Scotland', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1989).
[71] Atle Libaek Wold, 'The Scottish Government and the French Threat, 1792-1802', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 2003).

that loyalism often grew from primarily local rather than national considerations, as did Andrew Mackillop's discussion of Highland Volunteering in '*More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815*.[72] A forthcoming volume on *Scotland and the French Revolution*, edited by Bob Harris,[73] includes a chapter by Wold on 'Scottish Attitudes to Military Mobilization and War in the 1790s'; but the lack of any local or regional studies of Scottish loyalism based on material held by local archives, let alone a more general synthesis of such work in this forthcoming volume or elsewhere, is striking.

IV   *The Churches*

There has been a steady historical interest in the churches of the late eighteenth century over the past two decades, some of which has extended to their political ideas. Nancy Murray's 1975 thesis had already established the clergy as having taken a prominent position in the propaganda struggle over the French Revolution, and had carefully analysed the opinions on the Revolution expressed by clergy in different English denominations and parties within the Church of England, and the impact of the revolutionary decade upon the fortunes of these parties and denominations. She showed that, by their staunch opposition to the French Revolution and to domestic radicalism, and by their equally solid support for the government and its war against France, the orthodox clergy of the Church of England bolstered the Church's place as the right hand of the secular state and lessened the chances of the Test and Corporation Acts being repealed in the near future.[74] She also argued that Evangelicals within the Church of England likewise opposed the Revolution in France and supported the war, as did Evangelical Dissenters.

Deryck Lovegrove, writing in 1983, agreed with this view of Evangelical Dissent, though he showed that Evangelicals in fact tried where possible not to discuss political matters, in an effort to prove themselves politically reliable.[75] David Hempton's work on Methodism (which

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[72] Emma Vincent Macleod, 'A City Invincible? Edinburgh and the War against Revolutionary France', *British Journal of Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 23:2 (2000), 153-66; Andrew Mackillop, '*More Fruitful than the Soil': Army, Empire and the Scottish Highlands, 1715-1815* (East Linton, 2000), ch.7.

[73] To be published by Birlinn: Edinburgh, for Tuckwell Press.

[74] Nancy U. Murry, 'The Influence of the French Revolution on the Church of England and its Rivals, 1789-1802', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Oxford, 1975). On the struggle over the Test and Corporation Acts before the Revolution in France, and explaining Church anxieties over its relationship with the State in this regard, see also G.M. Ditchfield, 'The Parliamentary Struggle over the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts, 1787-1790', *English Historical Review*, 89 (1974), 551-77.

[75] Deryck Lovegrove, 'English Evangelical Dissent and the European Conflict 1789-1815', *Studies in Church History*, 20 (1983), 263-76.

was not, of course, necessarily Dissent until 1795) claimed that they were often more preoccupied by the internal wranglings of Methodism than with preaching political sermons.[76] William Stafford's 1982 article on 'Religion and the Doctrine of Nationalism' pointed out that, while Evangelical Dissenters were usually loyal to the state, they tended also to berate their country for its sinfulness and to urge its need for moral reformation — that is, 'Their strong sense of sin work[ed] for obedience but against nationalism'.[77]

Robert Hole examined political sermons and tracts written by the clergy as conservative propaganda in the 1790s.[78] Like loyalist pamphlets written by secular journalists, he insisted, these were certainly not mere adaptations of Burke to suit their situations, although many clergymen argued along counter-revolutionary lines. Rather, they were expressed in terms of political theology, relating events in France and elsewhere to the evidence of Scripture and to existing discussions about the proper relationship between Church and State and about the duties of subjects — in particular, to the issues of hierarchy, order and obedience. In any case, conservative political sermons, like other conservative writings, took two or three years to reach the position that Burke had reached in the *Reflections* at the end of 1790.[79]

On Scotland, Richard Sher's seminal *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment* (1985) is a study of leading members of the Moderate (non-Evangelical) party in the Church of Scotland, as its subtitle makes clear. He claimed that the hostility of Moderate preachers to the French Revolution was substantially more forthright than was their opposition to the American Revolution.[80] He showed that their opposition to the Revolution in France was often expressed in convenantal terms: that is, by reminding the hearers and readers of their sermons of God's sovereignty and frequent intervention in the world's affairs, of the penalties

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[76] David Hempton, *Methodism and Politics in British Society* (London, 1984) — see pp.57-8.

[77] William Stafford, 'Religion and the Doctrine of Nationalism in England at the Time of the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars', *Studies in Church History*, 18 (1982), 381-95. See also M.J.D. Roberts, 'Making Victorian Morals? The Society for the Suppression of Vice and its Critics, 1802-86', *Historical Studies*, 21 (1981), 157-73; 'The Society for the Suppression of Vice and its Early Critics, 1802-1812', *HJ*, 26 (1983), 159-76; Joanna Innes, 'Politics and Morals: The Reformation of Manners Movement in Late Eighteenth-Century England', in *The Transformation of Political Culture. England and Germany in the Late Eighteenth Century*, ed. Eckhart Hellmuth (London, 1990), pp.57-118.

[78] Robert Hole, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order in England, 1760-1832* (Cambridge, 1989); idem, 'English Sermons and Tracts as Media of debate on the French Revolution 1789-99', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.18-37. Both discuss the writings of clergy from across the political spectrum.

[79] Idem, 'English Sermons and Tracts', pp. 24, 31-2; idem, *Pulpits, Politics and Public Order*, p.102.

[80] Richard B. Sher, *Church and University in the Scottish Enlightenment: the Moderate Literati of Edinburgh* (Edinburgh, 1985), pp.208, 305.

that befell nations which rebelled against Him, and of the necessity of national repentance and moral reformation, to which God had promised to respond by lifting His wrath and the calamities He sent. This was relevant even to Britain, whose subjects were culpably ungrateful to God for the blessings of the British constitution (especially radicals and reformers, but also those who 'abused' the religious privileges of the British constitution — the irreligious and schismatics), and who also indulged in the sins of commercial greed and self-interest. The British, therefore, ought to unite in supporting the war against France wholeheartedly, and in upholding the British constitution and 'true religion'.[81] John McIntosh, writing on the Evangelical, or 'Popular' Party in the Church of Scotland, argued that the Established Church Evangelicals were also strongly opposed to the French Revolution. While presumably they would not have disagreed with the doctrines taught by Moderate preachers on the subject, McIntosh argues that they tended to approach it from the angle of original sin and universal depravity. These made civil government necessary as a restraint on people's tendency to evil, and therefore it was a divine institution, to rebel against which was an act of sin.[82] Evangelicals in the Church of Scotland did not necessarily carry their support for the government and the constitution so far as to defend them in every respect – some acknowledged that moderate political reform was needed, even though this ought to be postponed until a more opportune time.[83] Seceding and Dissenting churchmen in Scotland generally opposed the revolution in France, too, particularly for its persecution of Christians, although those who were sympathetic to it and to political reform in Britain were more likely to belong to those churches.[84]

V   *The Press and Propaganda*

As early as 1976, Gayle Trusdel Pendleton argued that the old image of the loyalist press in the 1790s as 'Burke and a handful of incompetent supporters at bay against radicalism and revolution' was inadequate, and that a more accurate description of conservative publicists in the decade is 'those who were properly Burke's fellows, not his followers, in the cause'.[85] Two of

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[81] Ibid., pp.209-10.
[82] John R. McIntosh, *Church and Theology in Enlightenment Scotland: The Popular Party, 1740-1800* (East Linton, 1998), pp.227-8, including note 243.
[83] Emma Vincent, 'The Responses of Scottish Churchmen to the French Revolution, 1789-1802', *Scottish Historical Review*, 73 (1994), 205.
[84] See also Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, ch.6.
[85] Gayle Trusdel Pendleton, 'English Conservative Propaganda during the French Revolution, 1789-1802', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Emory University, 1976), p.256.

the main developments in writing on the conservative press in the 1790s more recently have been the reinforcement of this contention and the mining of much greater detail. The third followed the lead taken in a 1982 article by Herbert M. Atherton, in investigating graphic satire, which in general has become a fruitful area of exploration for students of the eighteenth century more broadly, building on the work of M. Dorothy George in the mid-twentieth century.[86]

Professor Dickinson described the loyalist press in the 1790s as pouring forth 'a veritable flood of conservative and loyalist propaganda', and scholars working on the conservative press in the 1790s in the last two decades have opened up to view various of its branches.[87] Philip Schofield has written on conservative thought on the Revolution, the war and the British constitution at the level of fairly weighty political pamphlets, showing that attitudes to the Revolution dominated British domestic and foreign politics during the 1790s, and that conservatives, at least in the first half of the decade, agreed that everything had to be subjugated to the defence of the constitution and the war against revolutionary France.[88] Emily Lorraine de Montluzin has analysed the contributors to the *Anti-Jacobin Review* during the years 1798-1800.[89] The *Anti-Jacobin Review* was a leading monthly review propagating counter-revolutionary views. It was edited by John Gifford, and some very able journalists wrote for it, including John Reeves, John Bowles, William Jones, John Taylor and William Cobbett; but although twenty of the seventy contributors who wrote for it during these first two years of its existence were journalists or professional writers, most of its writers laboured in other fields. Thirty-eight were clergymen, another fifteen were schoolmasters or university lecturers, and the others were a miscellany of politicians, lawyers, physicians and retailers. About a third of them lived in London; another third, mainly clergy, were based all over England; and the others either

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[86] Herbert M. Atherton, 'The British Defend Their Constitution in Political Cartoons and Literature', in *Studies in Eighteenth-Century Culture*, vol. 11 (Madison and London, 1982), ed. Harry C. Payne, pp.3-31. Cf. Mary Dorothy George (ed.), *Catalogue of Political and Personal Satires Preserved in the Department of Prints and Drawings in the British Museum*, 7 vol.s (London, 1935-54); idem, 'Pictorial propaganda, 1793-1815: Gillray and Canning', *History*, 31 (1946), 9-25; idem, 'America in English Satirical Prints', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 10 (1953), 511-37; idem, *English Political Caricature*, 2 vol.s (London, 1959).
[87] Dickinson, *Politics of the People*, p.269.
[88] Thomas Philip Schofield, 'English Conservative Thought and Opinion in Response to the French Revolution 1789-1796', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of London, 1984); idem, 'Conservative Political Thought in Britain in Response to the French Revolution', *Historical Journal*, 29 (1986), 601-22; idem, 'British Politicians and French Arms: The Ideological War of 1793-5', *History*, 77 (1992), 183-201.
[89] Emily Lorraine de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800: The Early Contributors to the 'Anti-Jacobin Review'* (London, 1988).

lived in Scotland or Ireland, or their residence has not been identified. Five were French *émigrés* living in England.[90]

Robert Hole reviewed more popular propaganda.[91] Like Pendleton, he concluded that these conservative journalists were not simply parroting Burke for the masses: 'In general, Burke influenced not so much the direct arguments of the tracts as their general way of thinking. In a few pamphlets at the more "intelligent' end of the popular market, Burke's flavour and tone dominate and his specific arguments can be traced.… But these … are uncharacteristic.'[92] This judgement also applies to the genre studied by Matthew Grenby, the *Anti-Jacobin Novel*, a neglected but useful literary source for the British conservative response to the French Revolution in Britain. These were not publications with any claim to literary quality, and they came from a tradition (the popular novel) which had previously been ignored by literary critics because their attraction was chiefly to young women and the lower orders, but they acquired a degree of literary respect in the revolutionary decade as authors, publishers and critics recognised their potential as a vehicle for conservative values with an audience of some breadth.[93]

Jeremy Black, Bob Harris and Hannah Barker extended investigation of the newspaper press to the provincial papers as well as the London press, and all discussed the reaction of this influential genre to the Revolution in France.[94] Barker pointed out that the newspaper press was in a prime position to take advantage of the British public's voracious appetite for a constant flow of information about the Revolution in France, and that therefore 'its version of events was extremely influential'.[95] Harris's work begins to end the dearth of modern published writing on the Scottish political press in the eighteenth century altogether.[96] The Scottish loyalist press

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[90] Ibid., pp.2, 26, 30-32, 35. On John Bowles, see also Emma Vincent, '"The Real Grounds of the Present War": John Bowles and the French Revolutionary Wars 1792-1802', *History*, 78 (1993), 393-420.

[91] Robert Hole, 'British Counter-revolutionary Popular Propaganda in the 1790s', in *Britain and Revolutionary France*, ed. Colin Jones, pp.53-69;

[92] Ibid., p.66.

[93] M.O. Grenby, *The Anti-Jacobin Novel. British Conservatism and the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 2001).

[94] Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (London, 1987); idem, *The English Press 1621-1861* (Stroud, 2001); Bob Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press. Britain and France, 1620-1800* (London, 1996); Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and Public Opinion in Late Eighteenth-Century England* (Oxford, 1998).

[95] Hannah Barker, *Newspapers, Politics and English Society 1695-1855* (Harlow, 2000), p.176.

[96] Bob Harris, 'Scotland's Newspapers, the French Revolution and Domestic Radicalism (c.1789-1794)', *Scottish Historical Review*), forthcoming (April 2005); and also idem, 'Print and Politics', in *Scotland and the French Revolution*, ed. Bob Harris, forthcoming (East Linton, 2005); though see, too, John Dwyer, 'The *Caledonian Mercury* and Scottish National Culture, 1763-1801', in *Politics and the Press in Hanoverian Britain* (Lewiston, 1989), eds Karl Schweizer and Jeremy Black, pp.147-69. On the press in the 1790s in Britain generally, see also Harris, *Politics and the Rise of the Press*, pp.37-52, *passim*.

reflected the general tendency of British conservatives to turn against the French Revolution in autumn 1792, and it bore many similarities to its counterpart in England during the decade. It ignored domestic radicalism, except when reporting its defeat, and it gave substantial space to printing conservative resolutions and addresses from trade incorporations and loyal associations, as well as reports on loyalist activities. It supported the war against revolutionary France, puffing victories and minimising defeats. In Scotland, even more clearly than in England, the radical press was vanquished by 1794, and any resistance to government in the newspaper press was represented only by the liberal Whig opposition, such as the *Scots Chronicle*, which emerged in 1796. The magnitude of the French Revolution as a political phenomenon also galvanised the Scottish newspaper press into various technical advances, such as the greater use of headlines, political editorials, and different typefaces for such things as 'atrocity stories'.[97]

In the realm of graphic satire, Michael Duffy's and H.T. Dickinson's volumes in the Chadwyck-Healey series of volumes of eighteenth-century caricatures published in 1986 are those relevant to the current discussion.[98] Dickinson's volume reprinted many caricatures which defended the constitution, as well as many which criticised it, and argued that the satirical artists generally found it much more difficult to depict the virtues of the British constitution than they did to express visually the failings of their radical and reformist opponents and their plans for political change. Duffy claimed that the printmakers offered an absurdly distorted view of the Revolution in France as falling rapidly under the control of the non-propertied masses, which was nevertheless 'widely disseminated and immensely successful'.[99]

Diana Donald and David Bindman directly discussed the impact of the French Revolution on the print-making industry. Donald argued that graphic satire followed the rule that loyalism employed most weapons used by reformers for its own purposes. While the publishers and vendors of radical prints were pursued and harassed by the APLP, therefore, loyalists also commissioned prints to advocate their own cause. These played on traditional English gallophobia, pictured the guillotining of Louis XVI, and contrasted the wretchedness of republican France with the happiness of Britain. Donald agreed that it was often easier for loyalist prints to attack the Jacobin enemy than it was to depict the blessings of Britain — for

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[97] Harris, 'Scotland's Newspapers', pp.16-17.
[98] Michael Duffy, *The Englishman and the Foreigner* (Cambridge, 1986); H.T. Dickinson, *Caricatures and the Constitution* (Cambridge, 1986).
[99] Dickinson, op. cit., pp. 24-5; Duffy, op. cit., p.38.

instance, the cap and staff of liberty traditionally borne by Britannia could easily be mistaken for the new French revolutionary symbols, and these were quietly dropped from images of Britannia by the mid-1790s. Bindman argued that, by late 1793, most satirical artists and publishers were only producing pro-British, loyalist prints (although they reserved the right to criticise Pitt for his domestic policies and to make fun of the King).[100] Alexandra Franklin's and Mark Philp's *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain*, however, reprinted 92 images and texts, many of which were gallophobic and supportive of the British government, until those which were produced in the years following the invasion scare, when satires against the British government again became popular.[101] It contrasted the divided state of British society which faced the threat of invasion from France in 1798 with the much greater unity which opposed the menace of Napoleon between 1803 and 1805.

On the issue of mass participation in the consumption of graphic satires, Donald pointed out that the fact that some prints were adapted for the decoration of ceramic goods, at a cost to manufacturers (and, presumably, their customers), is a good indicator of their popularity, where the subsidy and free distribution of other prints leaves their impact a matter of doubt. Eirwen C. Nicholson, however, who argued that the audience for most graphic satires was considerably more limited than has often been assumed, noted that loyalist prints (like the newspapers) took very little notice of British radical societies, preferring instead to appoint Charles James Fox and his acolytes the embodiment of the Jacobin threat, which may suggest that the prints were sold chiefly to MPs and the governing elite.[102] Although Timothy Clayton's book argued that prints were central to national culture in the eighteenth century, this was really the higher end of culture. He noted that Gillray was persuaded to sell prints of his *Consequences of a Successful French Invasion* (1798) for sixpence each in order to increase its sales, but that he found that "'there has hardly been one sold but to people who would have paid Half a Crown as willingly as sixpence'".[103]

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[100] Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: Satirical Prints in the Age of George III* (New Haven and London, 1996), pp.147-57; David Bindman, 'Introduction', *The Shadow of the Guillotine: Britain and the French Revolution* (London, 1989), ed. David Bindman with Aileen Dawson and Mark Jones, pp.33-4.
[101] Alexandra Franklin and Mark Philp, *Napoleon and the Invasion of Britain* (Oxford, 2003).
[102] Eirwen C. Nicholson, 'English Political Prints and Pictorial Political Argument *c*.1640 – *c*.1832: a study in historiography and methodology', unpublished Ph.D. thesis (University of Edinburgh, 1994), ch.9. Cf idem, 'Consumers and Spectators: The Public of the Political Print in Eighteenth-Century England', *History*, 81 (1996), 5-21.
[103] Timothy Clayton, *The English Print, 1688-1802* (New Haven, 1997), p.232.

Finally, three studies of the work of individual artists and two books on satirical representations of individuals have filled out our knowledge and understanding of the field — Robert Patten's work on George Cruikshank, David Alexander's study of Richard Newton and Richard Godfrey's book on James Gillray in the first category, and Nicholas Robinson's book on graphic satires of Edmund Burke and Vincent Carretta's volume on George III in the second.[104] However, although Gillray was certainly paid by the government to produce anti-revolutionary prints, his work was not consistently loyalist, and otherwise none of these works concentrates on conservative publications.

VI The conservative masses?

The question, however, as Mark Philp noted in 1995, is to what extent all this conservative propaganda made any difference to the views and activities of its consumers. In other words, outwith the ranks of the activists, how loyalist was the body of ordinary Britons? Were they persuaded by the propaganda, whether they read it for themselves or had it read to them? Or, as Philp claimed, may it frequently have had no more than entertainment value for them?[105] He suggested, as others have done, that many other motives may have combined with some genuine loyalty — chiefly, the desire for the social and political status which could be acquired by commitment to a Loyal Association or some form of loyalist activity[106] — and he argued that the strength of the conservative ideological case alone cannot have been sufficient to persuade the masses to refrain from radical protests and campaigning, and that it is unwise to lay too much emphasis on the 'natural loyalty' of the British people. The British government might not have been guilty of a Pittite 'Reign of Terror',[107] but the repressive policies it did pursue might still have been sufficient to defeat the radicals and quieten the rest of the population.[108]

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[104] Robert L. Patten, *George Cruikshank's Life, Times and Art*, vol.1 1792-1835 (London, 1992 — vol. 2, 1996); David Alexander, *Richard Newton and English Caricature in the 1790s* (Manchester, 1998); Richard Godfrey, *James Gillray and the Art of Caricature* (London, 2001); Nicholas Robinson, *Edmund Burke: A Life in Caricature* (New Haven and London, 1996); Vincent Carretta, *George III and the Satirists From Hogarth to Byron* (Athens, Georgia and London, 1990).

[105] Mark Philp, 'The Fragmented Ideology of Reform', p.70.

[106] Ibix., pp.52-9.

[107] A contemporary, Foxite charge conclusively laid to rest by Clive Emsley in the early 1980s in two articles: 'An Aspect of Pitt's Terror: prosecutions for sedition during the 1790s', *Social History*, 6 (1981), 155-84; idem, 'Repression, "terror" and the rule of law in England during the decade of the French Revolution', *English Historical Review*, 100 (1985), 801-25.

[108] Mark Philp, 'Introduction', *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics*, ed. Philp, p.13.

Ian Christie had argued, as we have seen, that alongside the conservative campaigns, the relative strength of the British economy, combined with sufficient elite paternalism towards the poor, explains why there was no serious threat of a British revolution in this period.[109] Roger Wells rejected Christie's claim, amassing a wealth of evidence showing the economic straits faced by many British people throughout the 1790s and early 1800s. He supported E.P. Thompson's earlier suggestion that the British government were fortunate not to have experienced insurrection during the 1790s, so desperate were so many people, and he argued that his evidence nullified the claim for any remarkable surge in popular loyalism and that it proved that general public opinion was unreliable as a source of government support.[110] David Eastwood agreed that 'the most serious threat to the conservative order in Britain in the 1790s would have come from a radical politicization of the plight of the poor', but, like Christie, he proposed that a very substantial increase in the poor rates, together with such initiatives as the establishment in 1796 of the Society for Bettering the Condition and Increasing the Comfort of the Poor, were deliberately implemented to combat the political problem of poverty and were effective.[111] Surely some middle ground is likely to hold truth: that active loyalists, persuaded by and to some extent persuasive in conservative propaganda, were no more than a sizeable minority in the country; that otherwise, what existed was not so much mass loyalism as mass acquiescence for enough of the time to ensure broad stability, interpersed with moments of considerable stress and tension as well as moments of mass patriotism.[112] For some, this acquiescence may have been born of ignorance, lack of interest, or a sense of weakness; for others, it may have been bought by economic good fortune or well-placed philanthropy; while others may have been sufficiently enthused by military or naval victories when they occurred, and convinced or intimidated by conservative propaganda or demonstrations, to remain quiescent. Public opinion, in other words, was volatile — apt to protest when economic circumstances were rough or when victories were not forthcoming, but tending to show support or to remain quiet for enough of the time that no

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[109] Ian R. Christie, *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford, 1984); idem, 'Conservatism and Stability in British Society', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), ed. Mark Philp, pp.169-87.

[110] Roger Wells, *Wretched Faces: Famine in Wartime England, 1793-1801* (Gloucester, 1988); idem, *Insurrection: The British Experience, 1798-1803* (Gloucester, 1983???); idem, 'English society and revolutionary politics in the 1790s: the case for insurrection', in *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (Cambridge, 1991), pp.188-226.

[111] Eastwood, 'Patriotism and the English State', pp.162-5.

[112] See Macleod, *A War of Ideas*, ch.8.

serious threat of insurrection ever arose; and this quiescence may have been partly natural and partly the economic and propaganda work of government and loyalists.

Conclusion

Over the past twenty years or so, historians have uncovered the vitality of conservatism and loyalism throughout British society. They have certainly debated its extent and its power; but, as David Eastwood has remarked, historians of eighteenth-century Britain have generally worked fruitfully together rather than taken polarised positions from which fierce debates have been conducted.[113] In this period a great deal of information has been collected about British loyalism and conservatism in response to the French Revolution, much of which has made available understanding about loyalism at a local level and in social strata well below those of the governing elite, though it remains the case that this kind of regional and local study in Scotland awaits research. And while the question of how the mobilisation of an active citizenship, whose loyalty could not be guaranteed, was reconciled in the minds of the governing elite has been raised by various historians, it is not clear that it has yet been answered. Perhaps this is because it was not, in fact, so reconciled in the minds of the powerful. It continued to constitute a live anxiety for them while the Loyal Associations and, later, the Volunteers were required, after which government support for these organisations and toleration of other public intrusions into political life was quietly withdrawn.[114]

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[113] David Eastwood, review of Dickinson, *Politics of the People*, in the *British Journal for Eighteenth-Century Studies*, 20 (1997), 86.
[114] Cookson, *The British Armed Nation*, ch.3; Gee, *British Volunteer Movement*, ch.7 and conclusion.