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978-1-107-13361-7 - Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism in the 1790s: The Laurel of Liberty

Jon Mee

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RADICALISM IN THE 1790S

Jon Mee explores the popular democratic movement that emerged in the London of the 1790s in response to the French Revolution. Central to the movement's achievement was the creation of an idea of 'the people' brought into being through print and publicity. Radical clubs rose and fell in the face of the hostile attentions of government. They were sustained by a faith in the press as a form of 'print magic', but confidence in the liberating potential of the printing press was interwoven with hard-headed deliberations over how best to animate and represent the people. Ideas of disinterested rational debate were thrown into the mix with coruscating satire, rousing songs, and republican toasts. Print personality became a vital interface between readers and text exploited by the cast of radicals returned to history in vivid detail by *Print, Publicity, and Popular Radicalism*. This title is available as Open Access at 10.1017/9781316459935.

JON MEE is Professor of Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of York and Director of the Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies. He has published many essays and books on the literature, culture, and politics of the age of revolutions in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. He is also author of *The Cambridge Introduction to Charles Dickens* (Cambridge, 2010).

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University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

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When citing this work, please include a reference to the DOI [10.1017/9781316459935].

First published 2016

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

*A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library**Library of Congress Cataloguing in Publication data*

Names: Mee, Jon, author.

Title: Print, publicity, and popular radicalism in the 1790s : the laurel of liberty / Jon Mee.

Description: Cambridge ; New York : Cambridge University Press, 2016. | Series: Cambridge Studies in Romanticism ; 112 | Includes bibliographical references and index.

Identifiers: LCCN 2016006099 | ISBN 9781107133617 (Hardback : alk. paper)

Subjects: LCSH: Mass media and public opinion--Great Britain--History--18th century. | Mass media and publicity--Great Britain--History--18th century. | Radicalism--England--History--18th century. | Politics and literature--England--History--18th century. | Popular culture--Great Britain--History--18th century.

Classification: LCC P96.P832 G736 2016 | DDC 302.23/2094109033--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2016006099>

ISBN 978-1-107-13361-7 Hardback

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For  
Marilyn Butler

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## *Acknowledgements*

And nothing starts in the archive, nothing, ever at all, though things certainly end up there. You find nothing in the Archive but stories caught half way through: the middle of things; discontinuities

(Carolyn Steedman, *Dust*)

My own strain of archive fever has driven this project forward for nearly three decades. The final periods of intensive research were made possible by an AHRC Fellowship that gave me invaluable time at the British Library, the National Archives, Kew, and in the Seligman Collection at Columbia University. I'd like to thank the archivists and librarians at these institutions and also the Bodleian Library, the Henry E. Huntington Library, the John Rylands Library, the Lewis Walpole Library, Nuffield College, Oxford, and Worcester College, Oxford. I am also grateful to the Leverhulme Trust for funding the 'Networks of Improvement' project. My work on associations in the late eighteenth century for the project has fed directly into this book.

I can easily recover the book's moment of inception. It came when reading E. P. Thompson's *The Making of the English Working Class* as an undergraduate in 1981, but my fascination with the subject matter was sealed when Marilyn Butler very kindly lent me the manuscript of Iain McCalman's *Radical Underworld* to read as a Ph.D. student. My debts to Marilyn, who is deeply missed by everyone, are many and varied, but few compare to this introduction to a lasting and inspiring friend. Soon afterwards, Marilyn also introduced me to Mark Philp whose encouragement and inspiration also pervade these pages. Near the end of the research, he and I spent some happy days in the Treasury Solicitor's papers hunting down radicals. I was lucky to have the fruit of his research, in the shape of *Reforming Ideas in Britain*, to see me through the final year of writing this book.

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*Acknowledgements*

Final preparation of the manuscript was completed at the Centre for Eighteenth-Century Studies at the University of York, where I followed in the footsteps of John Barrell and Harriet Guest. The staff have been highly supportive in all kinds of ways, not least in providing continual food for thought in relation to the material in this book. The centre has been an immensely stimulating environment to work in and I'd like to thank Mary Fairclough, Mark Jenner, Catriona Kennedy, Emma Major, Alison O'Byrne, Jane Rendall, Jim Walvin, and Jim Watt for directly contributing advice and ideas. Clare Bond has been a particular point of sanity. I look forward to drawing on their time and patience for years to come. I'd also like to thank the English Department at York, especially David Attwell, and the F. R. Leavis Fund for its help with illustrations.

Gillian Russell has been crucial to this book as a friend and colleague. I'd like to thank her for including me on her Australian Research Council grant. Gillian and Kate Horgan generously shared their discoveries from the archives of the London Corresponding Society (LCS). The grant allowed me to visit Australia more than once and I am grateful to John and Mary Ann Hughes for their hospitality in Sydney. Deirdre Coleman, Susan Conley, and Clara Tuite always make Melbourne a wonderful place to visit. Michael T. Davis's work on the LCS has been an important source for this book. I am grateful to him for all the help he has given. I look forward to his forthcoming study of Daniel Isaac Eaton. John Seed gave me lots of useful tips, not least in relation to Lord Gordon and the Protestant Association. He alerted me to the name 'Thomas Hardy' on the petition of the Protestant Association. David Worrall's work on radical culture and more recently on the theatre has always been illuminating. Most recently, Susan Snell, Archivist at the Library and Museum of Freemasonry, gave me some fascinating pointers to relations between the LCS and the masons. The topic deserves further study than was possible in this book. Working on the 1790s has produced a lot of happy collaborations and a genuine sense that the material discussed in this book will be developed and taken forward by a number of younger scholars who have already been gracious in discussing their research with me. David Fallon, James Grande, Georgina Green, Ian Newman, David O'Shaughnessy, and Yasmin Solomonescu have been especially helpful. No one can work in the archive of the Royal Literary Fund without benefiting from Matthew Sangster's help. Penelope Corfield and Amanda Goodrich have given me thoughtful advice on the material in this book more than once. Colin Jones and Simon MacDonald generously shared some of their discoveries relating to Robert Thomson in Paris. Joanna Innes has often said things

*Acknowledgements*

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that made me think twice. Rachel Rogers was very helpful on the British in Paris more generally, not least in relation to Robert Merry's writing about the French constitution. Pamela Clemit has always been helpful, especially with Godwin's letters. Amy Garnai has regularly shared her version of the Merry bug with me in conversation. Thanks also to Robert Jones and David Taylor for finally explaining the 'arrows' in Merry's hat.

I am also grateful to Tom Mole and the other participants in the 'Interpersonal Print' conference at McGill in 2013 who helped clarify some of my ideas around 'print magic'. See <http://interactingwithprint.org/> for an account of the full breadth of the ongoing 'Interacting with Print' project. Various trips to California have also allowed me to present papers and discuss ideas over the past two decades. Usually these have been hosted either by Kevin Gilmartin or Saree Makdisi. I'm grateful to both for providing such enlivening contexts for me to discuss and present my work. Returning to Kevin's writing on popular radicalism after 1815 in the later stages of preparing this book provided a great stimulus for my thinking about radical culture in the 1790s. Helen Deutsch has always been hospitable and encouraging. Michael Meranze was always just about tolerant of the detail. Roxanne Eberle generously shared her knowledge of Amelia Alderson with me. Sarah Knott alerted me to Pigott's involvement in Coghlan's memoirs, and gave me the chance to read a draft of her article on 'female liberty'.

Some of the material, especially in Part II, has been discussed in essays and articles published over the past twenty years or so. I am grateful to the editors in each case for their advice and support; details can be found in the bibliography. Thanks also to James Chandler, Linda Bree, and Anna Bond for shepherding me through the press. I'm also grateful to the readers who provided the reports that enabled me to focus my argument more clearly through the last stage of writing. Most of all I am grateful to Jane, Sharmila, and the rest of my family, not least for putting up with my mind being on the Treasury Solicitor's papers, when it should more often have been on them.

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Where manuscripts are reproduced in Mary Thale's *Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society*, then I have used it as a reference to make access easier for the reader. Otherwise I have referred to the original manuscripts in either the British Library or National Archives. See notes and bibliography for details of the individual manuscripts.

Bibliographical references to printed materials are given in short form in the notes with full details in the bibliography, newspapers and periodicals excepted, where details are provided in the relevant note, or sometimes simply by date in the main text in the case of eighteenth-century newspapers.

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AUM	<i>American Universal Magazine</i>
Barrell and Mee	<i>Trials for Treason and Sedition, 1792–1794</i> , ed. John Barrell and Jon Mee. 8 vols. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2006–7
IKD	John Barrell, <i>Imagining the King's Death: Figurative Treason, Fantasies of Regicide 1793–1796</i> . Oxford University Press, 2000
LCS	London Corresponding Society
LT	Thelwall, Mrs [Henrietta Cecil], <i>The Life of John Thelwall, by his Widow</i> . Vol. 1, London: 1837
MPM	<i>Moral and Political Magazine of the LCS</i> . 2 vols. London, 1796–7
SCI	Society for Constitutional Information
<i>Selections</i>	<i>Selections from the Papers of the London Corresponding Society 1792–1799</i> , ed Mary Thale. Cambridge University Press, 1983