

Name: Robert Harrop

Occupation: Manager of a spinning concern (flagmaker)

Home: Lees

Date: 23rd March 1820

Source: *Trial of Henry Hunt* 128-9

Summary: Commissioned to make flags for the procession to SPF. Flags were white but later painted black with inscriptions added.

Done by: RH

Robert Harrop examined by Mr. Hunt—Was the manager of a spinning concern at Lees. Remembered directions being given to buy some bleached cambric to make a flag for the Manchester meeting. The colour was white. No instructions were given to put any motto on it, but a number of persons engaged to put on certain devices and inscriptions. A young man engaged to do them in black. This was done, and it did not answer. When he begun, the letters went through, so as to intercept the reading. It was then agreed, as they had no other paint, that the flag should be painted black; this was done, and the letters, &c. were painted white. The sole cause of this being done was that which he had stated. Nothing was said about a black flag being considered more offensive than a white one. Went to Manchester on the 16th, but not in procession. He described the peaceable conduct and unwarlike appearance of the people that he saw march into Manchester. Did not see that any alarm was manifested by the people of the town. Saw no insult or act of violence offered. At the meeting he saw the cavalry go towards the hustings.

By the *Judge*. —Did not see the people offer any resistance; did not see that any of the people had clubs or sticks with which they could have resisted.

Cross-examined by Mr. *Scarlett*. —“*No Boroughmongering.*” “*Unite and be Free;*” “*Saddleworth, Lees, and Mosely Union,*” “*Taxation without Representation is tyrannical;*” and “*Equal Representation or Death,*” were the inscriptions put on the banners. There were also the scales of Justice and two hands clasping each other, with the word “*Love.*”

A flag produced in Court, witness identified to be the same that he had described.

The fringe put round it was supplied by the women; different persons had supplied the mottos. Witness had suggested the inscription “*Unite and be Free*”. *Dr. Healey* had nothing to do with the flag.

Re-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—There was no bloody dagger on it.

Dr. Healey said, for fear the original had been lost, he had brought an exact model of it with him.

A small flag or banner, like the larger one, was then given in.

Mr. Scarlett compared the original flag with the model, and remarked, that in the latter words “*Death*” and “*Love*” were put in letters of the same size, while in the former, the word “*Death*” was put in larger characters.

Mr. Hunt said, the model had been done from recollection.

Witness described the banner to have been sustained by a Roman staff passed up it.