

Name: Joseph Slater

Occupation: Publican/Landlord

Home: Manchester

Date: 20th March 1820

Source: Trial of Henry Hunt, 62-64

Summary: Witnessed Johnson discuss the meeting of the 16th and plans to travel to London to disperse the MPs there, in his pub, The Bay Horse

Done by: RH

Joseph Slater, examined by *Sergeant Cross*— I kept a public house in Manchester in August last. I recollect seeing *Johnson* in my house on the 6th of August. *Willey*, the last witness, was there also. I recollect having a conversation with *Johnson*. I began by saying I understood that he and *Nicholas Whitworth* were to be returned Members for Manchester. He said, "Nothing of the sort, it is all nonsense." I said if they were to elect them, they would not be allowed to sit in London. I then went to the bar, and when I came back, *Willey* was talking about the attack on *Cartwright's* mill by the Luddites, and I said that was the time when Horsefall was shot. *Mr. Johnson* said, Do you know *Mr. Slater*, that there were a number of men who had made their minds up to go armed to London, to disperse the Members of the House of Commons?" I ridiculed the idea, and said such a set of ragamuffins would not be allowed to come near the House of Commons, "Oh but" said he, "I know it for a fact, and it would have been done had the subscriptions been large enough to have kept their families while they were away, or in case they failed." I laughed at him, and ridiculed the idea. "Oh, but," said he, "do you recollect when *Bellingham* shot *Mr. Percival*, what confusion there was: there was *Lord Castlereagh* scrambling to get out of one window and *Mr. Canning* out of another, and so on; and when *Bellingham* was taken, they were all ready to tear him to pieces, and if one could frighten them so, I am sure it could be done." In saying this he stood up, and described by gesture; he manner in which *Lord Castlereagh* scrambled to a window, and also how *Bellingham* was seized and dragged. The conversation began about the meeting to be held on the 16th. —*Johnson* was at my house at Manchester on Saturday night week; I was going to bed, and I told him I, was coming here, aid he said, "you recollect, *Mr. Slater*, I said I heard it for a fact." I said no, You said you knew it for a fact.

Cross-examined by *Mr. Hunt*—I keep the Bay Horse public house. I cannot tell all that, was said about the 16th of August. I was backwards and forwards. I asked *Johnson* if there was to be a meeting, and he said there was. The conversation I have related was not about the 16th August. I turned what he said into ridicule and laughed at him. I do not know that *Willey* laughed; After *Johnson* went out, *Willey* asked me who he was; and, when told him, he observed, that if *Nadin* bad men there he would have had *Willey* was in company with *Johnson* all the time; he remained and must have heard more than I did, but he did not- tell me what had been said. He and I have had conversations on the subject since, but he never told me what had been said in my absence. We have met here, but he never told me what had got to prove as having been said while I was out of the room, I knew he was coming here to prove what *Johnson* said about the 16th of August, when I was not present. He told me that he was subpoenaed. I never heard that *Johnson* said they would; be ready for the soldiers on that day. I never asked him any questions about what he came to prove. I mentioned what *Johnson* had: said about House of Commons in my own parlour, before a public company that night. I did not think it necessary to inform the Police of it. I thought it, a very foolish and wicked story, both with respect to: *Johnson* and those who were to put it in execution. I have heard him say many foolish things before.

By the Judge – From this manner of speaking he certainly was in earnest. I related it to my company without thinking anything of it. I do not know that I am bound to communicate every foolish conversation that passes in a public-house I could do nothing else.

Cross examined by *Mr. Johnson* – The cause of your coming to my house was in consequence of my having a very good breed of pigs. You came to look at the sow, as you were to have one of them. I was passing your door, and you asked me how the sow and pigs got on? And I told you, you had better come and see them, which you did. When I rallied you about being returned to Parliament, you said it was nonsense. You added it was all false, and that you had no such intention. I knew you also had a good breed of pigs. I saw you last

Saturday week. You did not ask me what I was going to prove against you. You said that if I said nothing but what you said on the 6th of August I should be a good witness for you, I do not think you knew *Willey* before that day. He asked who you were when you were gone. I never heard you say directly that you would overturn the House of Commons, but you said you knew it for a fact, that it was intended. *Mr. Horsefall* was shot in 1812. I do not recollect bow you expressed yourself on the death of *Mr. Horsefall*, or that you expressed your abhorrence of that act, and of the burning of *Duncalf's* mill. There was much conversation, and you might probably have said so. I was once or twice with *Mr. Norris* and once or twice with *Nadin* since I made my depositions, but I did not get it, nor was it promised to me by *Mr. Milne* or anyone else.

Re-examined by *Sergeant Cross*. —I wished to see my depositions as it was so long since I had made them. *Mr. Johnson* spoke of the mi-tended overturning of the House of Commons, were it not for certain matters, as a thing which he himself knew to be a fact

(Through the *Judge*) I did not hear *Mr. Johnson* say that it was all nonsense, and that there was to be no election; but I will not swear he did not say so. I cannot say whether he ridiculed the election.