

HO42/192 f.390. Henry Hunt, New Bailey Prison, Manchester, to Sidmouth, 17 Aug. 1819.

Transcribed by Yvonne Jez and Peter Trumper

New Bailey Prison, Manchester  
August 17<sup>th</sup> 1819

My Lord

From the hostility I have consistently shewn to some of the measures of your Lordship's Administration, as well as a general opposition to the corruption of all Parties in the practice of bribery at Elections and the buying and selling of seats in particular, I know that I am not entitled to claim any indulgence from your Lordship, yet I am induced to hope that your Lordship will not deny an act of Justice when demanded, even to a Political Enemy. Your Lordship is aware before this time that I came to Manchester in consequence of an invitation to take the Chair at a Public Meeting intended to have been held on Monday the 9<sup>th</sup> Instant, but in consequence of the Magistrates having declared the object of that meeting to be illegal, it was abandoned by those who signed the Requisition for calling it, and another Requisition signed by upwards of 1,000 householders appointing a Public Meeting to be held on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> "to take into consideration the most legal and effectual means of obtaining a Reform in Parliament" in consequence of which all hostility to the holding of the meeting appeared to have been withdrawn on the part of the Magistrates and I was prevailed upon ~~very reluctantly~~ much against my inclination to stay here and preside at the Meeting to be held yesterday the 16<sup>th</sup>, and I did it under the firm conviction that it would have been conducted with perfect decorum & have ended peaceably on the part of the People. On my arrival there I was confirmed in my opinion by the very orderly conduct of those assembled, by far the greatest number I have ever witnessed together and the least disposed to commit any breach of the peace. But just as we were proceeding to the business of the day and before I had taken the Chair the Hustings was surrounded by a Military force of horse soldiers who charged through the Multitude with drawn sabres cutting and trampling all under foot & particularly a body of Special Constables who suffered very materially. The soldiers cut at me & those who were on the Hustings and upon my demanding what they wanted the Commanding officer said he had a Warrant against me, upon which I instantly surrendered. This was all done without any previous notice & without one hand being lifted to oppose it. I saw one man with his Nose cut off & I received several blows with the sabre on my own head. I was brought here by the Magistrates under a Military Guard at 2 o'clock yesterday and I have been kept here without the means of sending to procure Bail, not having had a copy of the Warrant or hearing any Charge against me till after I had been in Custody 24 hours, when that on the other side was given me, by the Governor. I am very sorry to hear that many lives have been lost in consequence of such violent and as I conceive illegal and unjustifiable conduct of the Military towards an unarmed and peaceable People met for the purpose of exercising what they thought to be a perfect right to as[semble] I therefore trust your Lordship will not sanction the keeping me here a close prisoner unless there be some specific Charge made out against me I know not if the other Prisoners be still in custody or not. I am my Lord your Lordship's etc. H. Hunt.

[Added on cover]. There are 100,000 witnesses to prove the truth of what I have written.

Copy of the Warrant

Lancaster to wit. To the Constables of the Townships of Manchester in the county of Lancaster, & also to all other Constables and Peace Officers within the said County.

Whereas Richard Owen hath this day made oath before us his Majesties Justices of the Peace in and for the said county of Lancaster, that Henry Hunt, John Knight, Joseph Johnson and \_\_\_\_\_ Moorhouse, at this time (now a quarter past one o'clock have arrived in a Car[riage] at the area near to St. Peter's Church & that an immense mob is collected and that he considers the Town in Danger, and the said Party moving thereto.

These are therefore in His Majesties Name to require you forthwith to take and bring before us or some other of His Majesties Justices of the Peace in and for the said County, the bodies of the said Hunt, Knight, Johnson and Moorhouse, to enter into recognizances with sufficient sureties, as well for their personal appearance at the next General Sessions of Assizes to be holden in and for the said County, then and there to do & receive as by the said Court shall be enjoined, & also in the mean time to keep the Peace towards his said Majesty and all his liege subjects. Herein fail not.

Given under our Hand and Seals in the year of our Lord one thousand Eight Hundred and Nineteen.

L S Wm. Hulton	J Silvester	L S
L S W. R. Hay	Thos. Wm. Patton	L S
L S R. Wright	W Marriott	L S
L S Robt. Fielden	J Norris	L S
L S C W Ethelston	Ra Fletcher	L S

[Endorsed: 'Opened 19 Augt 8 a.m. by H. H. [Henry Hobhouse]. Augt the 19<sup>th</sup> 1819 S.[Sidmouth]]