

HO42/192 f. 217-120. Thomas Jackson JP, 17 George St, Manchester to HO 16 Aug 1819 7 pm.

Manchester Augt. 16<sup>th</sup>  
7 o'clock PM

Dear Sir,

Since my last, Hunt has been stationary at Johnson's house at Smedley about two miles distant, occasionally visiting some of the neighbouring Townships, receiving delegates of others most days. On Wednesday evening he issued a Hand Bill addressed to the Inhabitants of Manchester, a copy of which has already appeared in some of the London papers. It was in his usual style of caution requiring his Friends to attend him at the Meeting on Monday 16<sup>th</sup> "armed with no other Weapon than an approving Conscience."

The peaceable & well disposed, notwithstanding these canting words, have been greatly alarmed for the issue of the Meeting, being well convinced that thousands have been practising the Military Marching & discipline for some months past, but within the last Fortnight with additional Effrontery, assembling at least once a day for several Hours, under the superintendence of drillers.

Yesterday a large posse was exercising at a place called "White Moss". They had a numerous quantity of Spectators both Men, Women and Boys. Curiosity had some loyal persons at the spot in order to view the manoeuvres & to form some just opinion of their Force. 2 Men who happened to be recognised looking on were quickly pointed out as being spies. About 100 instantly rushed from the Ranks & violently assaulted & maltreated them, so much as to endanger their lives which are now despaired of. These two unfortunate men (named Shawcross & Murray) the former one of the Clerks in the police office, the other was a Special Constable. The Magistrates have taken their deposition & the greatest Endeavours have since been made to discover the perpetrators.

Our Municipal Officers anticipating a great assemblage at the meeting issued hundreds of the enclosed large posting Bills. At an early hour to day, the Magistrates & our Town Officers were at the Police Office & received information on Oath, that Thousands were marching in Military Array along the high Roads to the Town with Flags & Music. Orders were given for the Military to be in readiness. The Magistrates went to a House on the very ground of the Meeting.

About 11 o'clock Thousands upon Thousands Men & Women paraded down Mosley street – 3 & 5 abreast – mostly with large sticks, which they stamped triumphantly against the flag'd Causeways as they passed any respectable House or Buildings.

The Flags were extremely numerous of various Colours – some too, of Silk – most of them bearing the usual mottoes of these Occasions, several of them surmounted with the Color'd Caps of Liberty, or else the red cap was carried on a Pole surrounded with Laurel between 2 of their Emblems. Indeed the numerous Concourse at 12 o'clock exceeds my bounds of Calculation. But at one, the hour when Hunt arrived in an open Carriage (a Woman too, supposed to be Mrs Johnson, on the Box) a great addition poured in with Banners flying & bands of Music playing. The whole area of the Ground was literally crammed full from well informed persons, at least it is said to be 10,000. Hunt with the Lady mounted the platform with several other known Reformers, Johnson, Knight, Saxton & the Coachman Moorhouse &c. &c. They were immediately enveloped with Caps of Liberty & other Revolutionary Emblems. The Meeting was then addressed by the Several Orators, shewing much menacing attitude & the shouts seemed to rend the very air & shake the very foundation of the ground.

The Constables were tauntingly insulted wherever they were observed to stand, Sticks & Hats always waving on each acclamation. About half past one the Magistrates deemed it expedient to read the Riot Act, and instantly after the platform

was surrounded in a Masterly manner and the whole posse above with all their Emblems, taken into Custody. The Parties except Moorhouse who escaped, are now safely lodged in our New Bailey Prison.

The whole of this Grand Manouvre would have taken place without bloodshed, had not the Mob assailed the Military & Civil authorities with every Resistance in their power & particularly with Missiles. Consequently the Cavalry charged in their own Defence not without first being Witnesses to a Pistol shot from the multitude against one of the Gentlemen in our Yeomanry who now lies in imminent danger. Also Ashworth a Special Constable was killed on the spot and I regret to say that many other Loyal Special Constables have been hurt in the conflict.

The soldiers forebore with great humanity from firing, but several of those infatuated persons have felt their Sabres, as many have been taken into the Infirmary wounded. Great difficulty remained afterwards in clearing the streets & avenues from the lingering Mob. At 6 o'clock the streets were more free from Intruders than this immense crowd could have justified us to expect possible. The Military from Cheshire (viz Sir John Leicester's corps) are billeted in the Town. The rest in Barracks with the exception of our own Yeomanry who are still on duty. Great praise is due to them for their unexampled manly conduct on this occasion. Necessary precautions of every kind are thought of for the night, & Heaven grant that no more Blood must be shed to convince the Reformers that such assemblies will no longer be able to insult the Constitution of the Realm with impunity.

I am well aware that all Quarters are looking having been looking with anxiety to the decision of the Manchester Meeting & I trust the Reformers are now taught, & that feelingly too, the important lesson, which this day is calculated to give.

You are at Liberty if you like to insert this as an anonymous letter in any of your Town papers, and you may confide in it as being a just & impartial detail, having been myself an Eye Witness. I have &c.

(signed) Thos. Jackson

17 George St.