

HO42 192 f.261. Letter from Thomas Jackson, Manchester, to Francis Freeling, GPO London,
21 August 1819

(Transcribed by Peter Castree)

Copy

Manchester 21 Augt 1819
Saturday Evening

Dear Sir

I have noted the several Articles in the Courier & other London Papers daily since the Monday Meeting but I have not many new facts to relate in addition to those published.

The Town certainly is outwardly tranquil but that tranquillity is the effect of fear, not of principle, the Authorized powers constantly patrolling the Streets, and I lament to state such is the disposition of individual revenge that stones are thrown & shots fired at the nightly Patrol from the ends of alleys by unseen Hands. No relaxation has taken place in our Police Officers. They are ever anxious to guard their fellow Townsmen against any Evil & have therefore, most judiciously published the enclosed large posting Bill to be circulated in all directions.

I wish it may have its effect by Keeping our overgrown Population in some degree of Order, for at present they are much the reverse & annoy every loyal & peaceable Passenger. These Groups of levelling Reformers herd together about Hydes Cross, New Cross, Newton Lane, Ancoats Street, Oldham Street, London Road, Bank Top, Deansgate & Knot Mill, & consist generally of young Men with several Women.

I do not remember to have seen it recorded that a double Line of special Constables was stationed from the House in which the Magistrates were assembled to view the Meeting, up to the Hustings, & thus a free space for Communication was preserved.

Their Transactions were, therefore, open & visible to the Orators as well as others. This, in my opinion, most assuredly removes the imputation of blame so illiberally attached to the Conduct of the Magistrates in the discharge of their arduous & important duties on Monday last. Of all the Flags which were then exhibited (when it may be fairly reckoned that 40,000 took an active part in cheering the Orators), that from the Saddleworth Union was of a most shocking Cast. It was black with 4 Tassels at the Corners – the characters white – Inscription “Taxation without Representation is unjust & tyrannical”. The reverse Side had “Unite & be free”! “Equal Representation or Death”. In another party on the Ground, was observed a bloody or red Coloured Pike, fixed at the End of a long Pole.

Notwithstanding the loyal declarations entered into & the addition of numerous special Constables in our Townships & Neighbouring Towns, yet it is surprizing to hear of Multitudes still assembling together at an early Hour, practising Military Exercise, in defiance of the Civil Authorities (see Bill enclosed). The information from the Neighbourhood also states that instruments of Agriculture have been stolen from Farms & other Premises, no doubt for sinister designs. Many of the Country Gentlemen have had their Lives & Properties threatened on Charges of their having excited the Animosity of the Military against the People. In one instance, a respectable Professional Gentleman whose Office is in the Town, was obliged to undergo the Ordeal of an investigation before some delegates of these infuriate Reformists, in the presence of 2 or 3 of his Friends & had he not complied & had not the Charges proved to have originated in mistake, most probably his Life would have been sacrificed and his House (which is near Bury) destroyed.

Hunt, with 9 others, was yesterday brought up before a very full Bench of Magistrates & each severally remanded upon a Charge of High Treason.

It is with peculiar pleasure, I am enabled to say upon medical Authority that our Gallant Yeoman Mr John Hulme (who was struck with a Brick Bat) is removed from the Infirmary to his Father's House & is much better than any human Hopes could at first, have expected, nor is his Recovery altogether despaired of. I conclude with the pleasing intelligence that the loyal Papers published here this day, have been sought after with the greatest Eagerness, & the General Feelings of the Inhabitants of these Towns are expressed by public Resolutions of a respectable Meeting held on Thursday, inserted therein, of their entire Approbation & approval of the whole of the Measures which have been adopted & acted upon by the Magistrates, Municipal Officers & Military. A Deputation was named at the same Meeting to wait upon the Lord Lieutenant & to thank his Lordship for his early & watchful Attention of the Peace of this County.

(signed)

Thos. Jackson