

THE FOXITE PARTY AND FOREIGN POLITICS,

1806 - 1816

by

William B. Taylor



Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

in the University of London

1974



## ABSTRACT

This thesis is a study of the foreign politics of Charles James Fox and his political successors during the final decade of the Napoleonic wars. As such it is an account not only of the closing months of Fox's political life and the thought which moulded the foreign policy of his last government but also an evaluation of his legacy in foreign politics and its effect on the 'Whig' coalition which he willed to posterity. The thesis stops short of treating the mechanics of foreign policy. It is primarily a study of the effect which foreign developments had on the political fortunes of the Foxite-dominated Whig party.

I have not tried to sample the views of the ill-defined Whig party as a whole. Instead I have concentrated my efforts on the personalities who determined policy: on the peers who constituted the Foxite hierarchy; on frontbenchers in the Commons; on Fox's oldest supporters both in and out of Parliament; on political allies who disagreed fundamentally with traditional Foxite dogma; and to a lesser extent on those outside the party hierarchy who questioned and sometimes influenced the process of decision-making with their pens.

Within this framework, the thesis argues generally that Fox's fragile union with Grenville and Fitzwilliam was merely a tactical manoeuvre designed to reestablish systematic opposition to the Crown, gain office, promote Anglo-French accord, and therefore facilitate de facto Whig unity by neutralizing the issue which had caused the disintegration of the party during the debate on the French Revolution. It argues further that Fox's controversial behaviour in office was geared to the

attainment of this object; that his death and failure left his lieutenants burdened with the problems which arose from a tactical coalition with former antagonists; and that the resulting delicate equipoise of agreement which at once maintained and undermined the Grey-Grenville coalition until its collapse during the Hundred Days was a product of a fundamental contradiction in Foxite 'principles' which had arisen during the 1790's and which Fox had failed to remedy in 1806. This contradiction pitted the most identifiable feature of Fox's politics between 1803 and 1806--coalition on a principle of 'men before measures' for the purpose of reestablishing systematic opposition--against the unpopular Foxite concept of politics which had broken the Whig party during the 1790's.

These arguments, of course, are founded on a contention that Fox's general concept of the French Revolution and the European war continued to exert a powerful influence on Whig councils until the collapse of France's revolutionary government in 1815. The thesis therefore attempts to explain this concept, to display how it influenced the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents, and to establish its continuity by examining the reactions of key statesmen to the ups and downs of the European war, particularly the Spanish Revolution and the subsequent Peninsular War, the collapse of the French Empire, and the events of the Hundred Days.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT . . . . .	3
TABLE OF CONTENTS . . . . .	5
BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE . . . . .	6
CHAPTER I. PARTY REORGANIZATION AND THE ROAD TO OFFICE, 1803-1806 . . . . .	8
CHAPTER II. FOX AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, FEBRUARY - SEPTEMBER, 1806 . . . . .	50
CHAPTER III. THE SUPREMACY OF GRENVILLE: COMPROMISE AND COLLAPSE, SEPTEMBER 1806 - MARCH 1807 . . . . .	84
CHAPTER IV. REORGANIZATION AND DISUNION, MARCH - DECEMBER, 1807 . . . . .	124
CHAPTER V. THE ROUT OF THE COALITION, JANUARY - JULY, 1808 . . . . .	178
CHAPTER VI. HOLLAND VERSUS GRENVILLE: THE OPPOSITION AND THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, MAY 1808 - JANUARY 1809 . . . . .	216
CHAPTER VII. THE ATTACK ON THE WAR, 1809 - 1812 . . . . .	261
CHAPTER VIII. THE FINAL CRISIS: THE FALL OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE, 1812 - 1815 . . . . .	337
CONCLUSIONS . . . . .	417
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	443

## BIBLIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

In citing manuscripts I have been as brief as possible. Excepting documents in the William Roscoe Papers and the Samuel Whitbread Papers (whose assigned numbers are the only reliable means of identification) I have not cited folio numbers or other identification numbers unless a document is otherwise difficult to locate, either from faulty cataloging or the absence of a legible datemark. I have adopted this policy for two reasons. Firstly, so many collections (and especially the Holland House Papers) are in the process of constant re-arrangement that the citation of folio numbers is often misleading to the reader. Secondly, documents in the collections which I have used are otherwise easily located. All citations, however, identify the name of the collection in which a document is located, and references to material in the British Museum include manuscript numbers.

Generally I have used standard abbreviations in my notes. For example, B.M., Add. MSS. = British Museum, Additional Manuscripts; P.R.O. = Public Record Office, London; Parl. Deb. = The Parliamentary History (Parliamentary Debates), edited by William Cobbett to 1812 and by T. C. Hansard thereafter; and F.O. = Foreign Office, Public Record Office, London. In identifying manuscript collections I have used the following code:

Adam	- Blair - Adam Papers, Blair - Adam, Fife, Scotland
Allen	- John Allen Papers, British Museum
Auckland	- Auckland Papers, British Museum
Brougham	- Brougham Papers, University College, London
Broughton	- Broughton Papers, British Museum
Burdett	- Sir Francis Burdett Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford
Carlisle	- Carlisle Papers, Castle Howard, Yorkshire

- Creevey - Thomas Creevey Papers, University College, London
- Dacres Adams - Dacres Adams Papers, Public Record Office, London
- Fitzwilliam/Northants - Fitzwilliam Papers, Northamptonshire Record Office
- Fitzwilliam/Sheffield - Fitzwilliam Papers, Sheffield Central Library
- Fox - Charles James Fox Papers, British Museum
- Fremantle - Fremantle Family Papers, Buckinghamshire Record Office
- Grenville - Grenville Papers, Buckinghamshire Record Office
- Grey - Grey Papers, Durham University
- Heber - Richard Heber Papers, Bodleian Library, Oxford
- Holland - Holland House Papers, British Museum
- Horner - Francis Horner Papers, The British Library of Political and Economic Science, London
- Hunt - Leigh Hunt Papers, British Museum
- Huskisson - William Huskisson Papers, British Museum
- Mackintosh - Sir James Mackintosh Papers, British Museum
- Newport - Sir John Newport - Lord Grenville Correspondence, Bodleian Library, Oxford
- Pelham - Pelham Papers, British Museum
- Roscoe - William Roscoe Papers, Picton Library, Liverpool
- Southey - Robert Southey Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- Spencer - Spencer Papers, Althorp, Northamptonshire
- T. Grenville - Thomas Grenville Papers, British Museum
- Tierney - George Tierney Papers, Hampshire Record Office
- Wellesley - Wellesley Papers, British Museum
- Wickham - William Wickham Papers, Hampshire Record Office
- Wilson - Sir Robert Wilson Papers, British Museum
- Windham - William Windham Papers, British Museum
- Wynn - Charles Watkin Wynn Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth
- Wyvill - Christopher Wyvill Papers, North Riding Record Office

## CHAPTER I

### PARTY REORGANIZATION AND THE ROAD TO OFFICE,

1803 - 1806

In the summer of 1803 Charles James Fox began a steady march back into the spotlight of British politics. He was older, fatter, and some said wiser than the man who had abandoned Parliament in 1797; nearly seven years of political inactivity had given him a new image. In May Thomas Creevey dined with him in the company of Grey, Lauderdale, Whitbread, Lord Robert Spencer, and Lord John Townshend. 'You would be perfectly astonished at the vigour of body, the energy of mind, the innocent playfulness and happiness of Fox', reported Creevey. 'The contrast between him and his old associates is the most marvellous thing I ever saw-- they having all the air of shattered debauchees, of passing gaming, drinking, sleepless nights, whereas the old leader of the gang might really pass for the pattern and the effect of domestic good order ...'<sup>1</sup> This was a new image indeed! Fox had toyed with historical writing, absorbed the beauties of Homer and Virgil, and wallowed on the grass at St. Anne's Hill for years. Given respectability by righteous living and fading memories he now stood on the brink of a final confrontation with George III. Yet the last three years of his life would have profound effects upon the fortunes of the Whig party at least until 1815.

The reason for Fox's revival of interest in politics is debatable.

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Dr. Currie, 7 May 1803, Sir Herbert Maxwell, ed., The Creevey Papers (London, 1904), I, 13.

Grey attributed it to Mrs. Fox's social aspirations.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand, if Mrs. Fox's tedious journal depicts her true character one may surmise that her 'angel', though ever-devoted, was ready for a diversion.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, a visit to Paris in the fall of 1802 had whetted Fox's political appetite and bolstered his self-esteem. Napoleon had flattered him and accepted him at Court; Fox had returned to England convinced that he alone could stabilize Anglo-French relations.<sup>3</sup>

Probably of equal importance was the fact that sober reflection had made it impossible for Fox to escape from thoughts of the political failures of earlier days. While in retirement he had begun a serious effort to write a history of the early part of the reign of James II only to find himself bogged down in the perplexing constitutional questions of his own lifetime.<sup>4</sup> He deeply lamented the rashness which had disintegrated the Whig party a decade earlier, and he longed for a political reunion with old colleagues. But above all else Fox harboured a deep-seated hatred of his adversaries--a hatred that could not be separated from his concept of politics--and it had not been tempered by his retirement. The fall of Pitt's government in early 1801 had opened his eyes. This event and the subsequent appointment of Henry Addington's ministry had been a highly satisfying 'Whig' victory in the estimation of most

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 9 Jan. 1803 (Whitbread), 883.

<sup>2</sup>Diaries & Journal of Elizabeth Bridget Fox, B.M., Add. MSS. 51476-51483 (Jan. 1806 - Dec. 1816).

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Grey, 12 Dec. 1802, Lord John Russell, ed., Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox (London, 1853), III, 385. John G. Alger comments on Fox's visit to Paris in Napoleon's British Visitors and Captives, 1801-1815 (New York, 2nd ed., 1970), pp. 28-33.

<sup>4</sup>Henry, Lord Holland, ed., A History of the Early Part of the Reign of James the Second by the Right Hon. Charles James Fox (London, 1808). Also see the correspondence relating to this work in the Fox and Holland House Papers, B.M., Add. MSS. 47578 and 51510.

Foxites for it had opened gaps in the ranks of the hated Pittite coalition. Moreover, the conclusion of the Treaty of Amiens had been a great personal victory for Fox, and his initial reaction to it had revealed the extent of his bitterness. '... the truth is,' he had written to Grey, 'I am gone something further in hate to the English Government than perhaps you and the rest of my friends are, and certainly further than can with prudence be avowed. The triumph of the French Government over the English does in fact afford me a degree of pleasure which it is very difficult to disguise.'<sup>1</sup> Fox had predicted that such a treaty could be the only result of an attack on 'French liberties' at the beginning of the war, and he had paid a heavy price for his views. In his opinion the Peace of Amiens had discredited the Crown and vindicated his own attitude; now, since there was to be no political liberty in the world, Napoleon was 'the fittest person to be the master'.<sup>2</sup>

Since 1801 time and circumstances had moderated Fox's passions. Grey, Lauderdale, and Sheridan had grown wiser and more prudent with age, and, in striking contrast with their behaviour of the 1790's, they had refused to tolerate Fox's pique and immaturity. This had worked as a check on his traditional carelessness and impetuosity, and the hero-worship of his adoring nephew Lord Holland and other young Foxites had inspired in him calculations of political advantage. Fox had been reminded that Burke was dead, that Portland and Shelburne were lost forever, and that by a simple process of elimination he stood uncontested at the top. He had paused, feigned pessimism, encouraged Grey to act in his stead, and finally vented frustration by working on his book. Never

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 22 Oct. 1801, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 349.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to T. Maitland, 1801, ibid., 345.

in his life had he shown the willpower, the staying-power, and the grinding application which make for greatness.<sup>1</sup> His flights of genius had risen to the heavens, only to fall to earth gracelessly. The flame of his eloquence had attracted the attention of many, but it had flared and flickered; it had warmed a very narrow circle and invariably it had been stifled by its own smoke. Hitherto he had proved himself too talented, too vain to follow and yet too irresponsible to lead. The approaching campaign would be different. The events of the times had set Fox's mind in motion; he speculated on the means by which he could revive his party from the demoralizing effects of its rupture in 1792-1794 and the subsequent secession of 1797.

By 1803 Fox commanded a large personal following in Parliament. The forty men who had supported him during the dark days of the 1790's had been reinforced considerably by 6 June when Fox calculated his strength to be sixty-nine in the Commons and ten in the Lords.<sup>2</sup> This party was composed of four identifiable groups. The first of these consisted of Fox's oldest friends: Coke, Fitzpatrick, Francis, Sheridan, Adam, Thanet, Adair, North, Byng, Jekyll, Courtenay, Lord William Russell, Lord John Townshend, and Lord Robert Spencer. These men were bound to Fox by friendship, lifetime association, and a sense of consistency as Whigs; they formed a relatively conservative nucleus. Most of the debating strength of the party, however, came from the younger and more radical set of men who had rallied behind Fox's standard in the late 1780's or during the early debates on the French Revolution. Most prominent among this group were Grey, Lauderdale, Erskine, Whitbread,

---

<sup>1</sup>Ian R. Christie, 'Charles James Fox', History Today, VIII (Feb. 1958), pp. 110-118.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Holland, 6 June 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 222.

Tierney, Burdett, and William Smith. Throughout the 1790's, and especially after 1797 when Burke's death and the partial secession of the Foxites from Parliament had eased tensions, young Whigs who saw oppression at home and did not feel their father's fears of Jacobinism abroad had gravitated towards Fox. This group was composed of youngsters who either had recently taken their seats or would do so in the early nineteenth century. Lord John Russell, William Lamb, George Keppel, 'Little Joe' St. John, J. G. Lambton, and Holland had crawled round Fox's feet as children and had learned to regard his every word as gospel. Lord Althorp, the son of Pitt's First Lord of the Admiralty, was becoming an admirer of Foxite politics at Cambridge. The lectures of Dugald Stewart, the fire-eating of old Foxites like John Clark and James Gibson, and Pitt's extraordinarily harsh policies had made Edinburgh a Foxite stronghold and had given rise to a set of young men whose views would figure prominently in Whig politics.<sup>1</sup> Among these, Francis Jeffrey, John Murray, and John Allen would serve the party out of Parliament with their pens; Francis Horner, Henry Brougham, and Lord Henry Petty would soon move to the Foxite frontbench. And young men like Creevey, Lord King, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Henry Grey Bennet, Lord Ossulston, and William Roscoe, captured by the aura of Fox, had committed themselves to his cause. Finally, the Irish Whigs as well as Burke's old admirers had decided that an active role in politics could only lead them towards St. Anne's Hill. As Holland noted, the 'natural laws of political gravitation' had been at work in Whig circles for years and Fox had been the beneficiary.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>H. W. Meikle, Scotland and the French Revolution (Glasgow, 1912).

<sup>2</sup>Henry Edward, Lord Holland, ed., Memoirs of the Whig Party During My Time by Henry Richard Lord Holland (London, 1852), I, 77-80.



Notwithstanding this increasing strength, Fox was apparently convinced that only through cooperation with non-Foxite groups could opposition be effective. In this his motives are unclear. One may speculate that he was painfully aware that he could not claim the allegiance of powerful borough patrons. As an eighteenth century Whig who leaned heavily on traditional maxims of political manoeuvre, Fox was greatly disturbed by this fact and inclined to remedy it. 'No strong Confederation since the Restoration, perhaps not before, ever did exist without the accession of obnoxious Persons', he wrote. By 'obnoxious' Fox meant in regard to political principle. The Crown had ever been his real enemy, and abridging its power had almost become an end in itself. Therefore, Fox held that such coalitions were a necessary evil to which all Whigs must subscribe in their unceasing conflict with the king. A refusal of coalition on grounds of principle alone would 'make all resistance to the Crown more impossible even than it is'. The Whig could not afford such a luxury; to absorb the traditional supporters of the king was to weaken his influence.<sup>1</sup>

This traditional eighteenth century concept of political manoeuvre was a striking departure from Fox's tactics of the past. After the dismissal of the Fox-North ministry in 1783 Fox had placed a steadily increasing emphasis on the importance of Whig 'principles'. These were of two kinds, general and specific. Easily the most important general principle was the maintenance of a group of honest, loyal politicians acting upon 'systematic' opposition, opposition to men as well as to measures.<sup>2</sup> Pitt, the 'tool' of a nascent 'toryism', was the immediate target of

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 9 April 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 39-40.

<sup>2</sup>Frank O'Gorman, The Whig Party and the French Revolution (London, 1967), p. 29.

this united party because theoretically he stood as the guardian of all that was evil in the land.<sup>1</sup> The circumstances which accompanied the fall of the Foxite government had established these maxims firmly in a very short period of time. They could be seen in operation at the large and riotous meetings of the Whig Club during the 1780's, and Fox, posing as the last of the Romans, had utilized them fully in whipping together a group of men whose most identifiable 'principles' were fierce ethnocentrism and personal opposition to Pitt.<sup>2</sup>

After 1794, when Fox had found himself abandoned by traditional allies, these general 'principles' had assumed new significance. To excuse their own short comings the Foxites one and all had embraced a theory which held that all non-Foxite politicians were amenable to cabalistic corruption. Fox himself had refused to read anything published against him, and he had surrounded himself with fawning young admirers at Brooks's and the Whig Club.<sup>3</sup> With no hope of success in Parliament and little concern therefore for the responsibilities of political life, Fox and his friends had moved enthusiastically towards political isolation. In time they had resembled more a social club than a political clique. Many of them had revelled in their unpopularity, and most had been proud that theirs was a party of outsiders. They had gleefully swapped mistresses and carriages and journeyed to St. Anne's Hill to 'Charley it' whenever Fox had beckoned. At Brooks's rakes and dandies had sat silent

---

<sup>1</sup>Ian R. Christie, Myth and Reality in Late-Eighteenth-Century British Politics and Other Papers (Berkeley, 1970), pp. 27-54.

<sup>2</sup>This thesis is laboured throughout L. G. Mitchell's Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party, 1782-1794, (London, 1971).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Dorchester, ed., Recollections of a Long Life by Lord Broughton (London, 1909), I, 85.

as Fox stalked nightly among his wide-eyed lieutenants, delivering his political creed as law and watching his admirers codify it. The Foxites had been proud of their insularity. To set themselves apart from other politicians, Lord John Townshend, Coke, the Duke of Bedford, and many of the younger Foxites had worn their hair à la guillotine, short with neither powder nor pigtail. In the same spirit Fox had once declared with an oath 'that there was no address at this moment Pitt could frame, he would not propose an amendment to, and divide the House upon.'<sup>1</sup>

This exaggerated emphasis on group loyalty and systematic opposition to Pitt had left important marks on the party. Firstly, it had chased away moderates. For example, Ayscough Boucheret, the M.P. for Great Grimsby who had supported Fox for years, deserted him during the 1790's not on grounds of political theory but because of what he called a 'pure spirit of opposition ...'<sup>2</sup> The Duke of Somerset and many other Whigs who felt the necessity of abridging the power of the Crown had refused to abridge it on Fox's terms, and the situation had become so extreme that even Lady Holland noted that Foxite tactics had thrown 'an unfounded popularity upon King and Ministers'.<sup>3</sup>

The desertion of moderates had had the effect of consolidating group consciousness. Of the Whig Club of the 1790's, the Foxite Morning Chronicle noted 'the perfect harmony and entire confidence which a body of men, engaged in a good cause, and freed from the contamination of those who only joined them for a time, from interest, must ever feel in

---

<sup>1</sup>Quoted in Christie, 'Charles James Fox', p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>James Greig, ed., The Farington Diary (London, 1924), IV, 154-55.

<sup>3</sup>Earl of Ilchester, ed., The Journal of Elizabeth Lady Holland (New York, 1908), I, 177.

a moment like the present.'<sup>1</sup> The Foxites of the 1790's had been a select club presided over by a talented and 'wronged' champion. Thriving on unpopularity, they had spoken often and passionately of their sufferings, and this was a trait which would endure. Sheridan spoke the language of many of his colleagues when he addressed the electors of Westminster in 1807:

His [Fox's] friendship was the pride and honour of my days. I never, for one moment, regretted to share with him the difficulties, the calumnies, and sometimes even the dangers, that attended an honourable cause. And now, reviewing my past political life, were the option possible that I should re-tread the path, I solemnly and deliberately declare that I would prefer to pursue the same course; to bear up under the same pressure; to abide by the same principles; and to remain by his side an exile from power, distinction, and emolument ...<sup>2</sup>

By the dawn of the nineteenth century group loyalty and hatred of Pitt had been the first tenets of the Foxite creed for almost twenty years, and, more recently, the opposition of the 1790's had added a cutting edge.<sup>3</sup> These general principles, therefore, were fundamental in Foxite politics, and they stood in the way of coalition.<sup>4</sup>

Specific principles were yet another consideration. Prior to the debate on the French Revolution Fox had managed to dodge commitment on specific issues by promulgating ringing but adaptable generalities. However, the heat which had accompanied the schism in the Whig ranks after

---

<sup>1</sup>Note the interesting comments of E. Tangye Lean in The Napoleonists (London, 1970), pp. 223-24.

<sup>2</sup>F. Stainforth, ed., The Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan (London, 1879), p. 620. Also see Grey's Newcastle Speech, Morning Chronicle, 30 Sept. 1814. For Lauderdale's comments on this subject see his letter to Lady Holland of 30 Sept. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>For a good example of the continuing emphasis on the political maxims of the pre-1789 era see Lord Archibald Hamilton's Thoughts on the Formation of the Late and Present Administrations (London, 1804).

<sup>4</sup>Fox to O'Brien, 7 Aug. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47566 (Fox).

1792 had forced Fox's hand and left him branded as the champion of politically suicidal causes from which he could not retreat gracefully. One of these was parliamentary reform.

Generally Fox had approached the issue of reform with great caution until well after the desertion of Portland and Fitzwilliam in 1794,<sup>1</sup> but he had been discredited by his inability or unwillingness to control the rashness of the 'young ones' who supported him in Parliament. Then, too, though he had recognized and lamented the political indiscretions of Grey and Lauderdale,<sup>2</sup> pique, disappointment, and despair had led him towards a monumental tactical change after 1796. Isolated in Parliament, he had turned to 'the people' for support, and thereafter he had moved so progressively to the left that by 1797 reform had been represented as one of his leading 'principles'.<sup>3</sup>

There is ample reason to believe that Fox never considered the cry for reform as being more than a tactical manoeuvre in his crusade against Royal power.<sup>4</sup> If so, he and his friends had gone too far in 1796 and 1797. Much of their strength in the country at large hinged on their continued support of this issue. This was certainly the case in the

---

<sup>1</sup> Fox receives kind treatment on this subject from Erick Eyck, Pitt versus Fox (London, 1950), p. 320. Also see the anonymous pamphlet, Speech of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox Containing the Declaration of His Principles Respecting the Present Crisis of Public Affairs, and on Reforming the Representation of the People. Spoken at the Whig Club (London, 1792).

<sup>2</sup> Fox to Adam, 13 Dec. 1793 (Adam).

<sup>3</sup> Fox to Holland, 19 April 1801, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 190-91. Also see J. R. Dinwiddy, 'Charles James Fox and the People', History, LV, 185 (Oct. 1970), p. 343.

<sup>4</sup> Lauderdale to Lady Holland, n.d. [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 51697 (Holland), ff. 88-90. Of importance on this subject was Sir Herbert Butterfield's Raleigh Lecture of 1971 at the British Academy entitled 'Sincerity and Insincerity in Charles James Fox'. Also see J. R. Dinwiddy, 'Parliamentary Reform As An Issue In English Politics, 1800-1810', unpublished University of London PhD. thesis, 1971, p. 88.

strongly Foxite constituencies of Middlesex and Westminster, and for this reason Christopher Wyvill had exerted his considerable influence in defending Fox's sincerity before the nation.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, many of Fox's friends in the Commons, especially Whitbread, Coke, and the Russells, regarded parliamentary reform as a leading tenet of the Foxite creed, and others, such as Grey, Lauderdale, and Tierney, who were having second thoughts, had gone beyond the point of honourable retreat.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, on this subject the Foxites stood alone in Parliament.

Exaggerated group loyalty, hatred of Pittites, and commitment to reform were damaging skeletons in the closet, but they were as nothing when compared to Foxite commitment on the leading political issue of the day, Anglo-French relations. Fox's definition of the French Revolution and the subsequent continental war had necessarily become the axis on which his politics turned during the 1790's. He had worked incessantly to codify his beliefs; he had succeeded in presenting a reasonable argument; and the hallmark of the Foxite Whig had become a desire for peace with revolutionary France.

It was this maxim above all others that Fox had drilled into the minds of his followers during those long nights at Brooks's. He had rested his case upon two general arguments. Firstly, English constitutional balance was impossible so long as the government remained committed to the cause of despots. This, he had pointed out, was proved by the reign of reaction, the suspension of liberties, and the supremacy of the Crown which had coincided with the outbreak of hostilities. Pitt's duty had called for moderation and conciliation; instead he had added the

---

<sup>1</sup>C. Wyvill, Letter to John Cartwright (York, 1801), pp. 17-19.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 1797 (Whitbread), 866.

cant of wartime patriotism to an issue which was already straining the moral and religious fabric of the nation. Moreover, Fox had ruled, Pitt's policy had identified the cause of established power in England with the same cause on the Continent, a cause with which it had little in common.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, even if Pitt's foreign policy were successful--even if the allied powers succeeded in their campaign to restore the ancien régime--it could only end in the total disruption of the European balance of power for it was founded on faulty logic. 'However ... we may abhor the conduct of Frenchmen towards Frenchmen, whatever indignation we may feel against crimes at which humanity shudders, the hatred of vice is no just cause of war between nations', he had cried before the House of Commons. 'If it were, good God! with which of those powers with whom we are now combined against France should we be at peace?' Peace, he had stressed, would be as secure as any that had been made with Bourbon France at any other time, 'and more so than any that they, who would make no peace without the restoration of monarchy, can ever expect to make.'<sup>2</sup> In the event of the defeat of the French people and the restoration of the Bourbon Monarchy, he had speculated, would not Europe be returned to the former order in its entirety? Would not the good as well as the evil be destroyed? In short, would not England give succour to her 'natural' enemy, help destroy the march of human progress, and plunge Europe into reaction, revolution, and a century of darkness?

... can it seriously be supposed [wrote one Foxite lady], first that the French nation will ever receive a Monarch forced upon them at the

---

<sup>1</sup>See G. M. Trevelyan's excellent essay, 'Poetry and Rebellion', Clio A Muse and Other Essays (London, 1949), pp. 66-87.

<sup>2</sup>J. Wright, ed., The Speeches of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the House of Commons (London, 1815), V, 159 (Speech of 21 Jan. 1794).

point of the bayonet by the allied armies, knowing that the incentive that provokes those allies is the partition of France? And, 2ndly, admitting the restoration were practicable, would the Kings, whose object would be popularity, venture to dismember their country?<sup>1</sup>

The war was ludicrous in the opinion of Foxites, and the impossibility of a European settlement promoting both European and English interests had been the axis on which their arguments about foreign politics had turned since before the English declaration of war.<sup>2</sup>

The Foxites had promulgated an alternative policy. No war could be brought to a successful conclusion (indeed no conclusion at all), they had argued, unless a nation were motivated by just, clearly defined objectives which were announced to the world. Pitt's 'platitudes' on the necessity of maintaining the European balance of power would not suffice; England's objectives must be made clear so as to facilitate an eventual cessation of hostilities. Surely the British Minister did not plan to force a government on France against the will of her people. Surely he could not persist in his refusal to recognize a government which was clearly a fait accompli. If he did, the time had come for the 'pernicious doctrine of confidence' to loose its hold on Parliament; the time had come for the House of Commons to determine foreign policy.<sup>3</sup>

Peace, the Foxites had stressed, depended wholly upon the willingness of England and her allies to accept a situation which could not be altered by the force of arms. A war waged against ideas, against the

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 51-2.

<sup>2</sup>Robert Adair outlined these arguments in a pamphlet, A Whig's Apology for His Consistency, in a Letter From a Member of Parliament (London, 1795).

<sup>3</sup>There is a brief sketch of Fox's ideas on foreign policy in A.J.P. Taylor, The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939 (London, 1957), pp. 27-34. Also of importance is Alfred Cobban, ed., The Debate on the French Revolution, 1789-1800 (London, 1950).



desire of Frenchmen to improve their lot, against the force of a 'risen people fighting to be free' was both unprincipled and incapable of success. English history proved this maxim; American history confirmed it; common sense maintained it. Only after the French Republic were recognized could England hope to maintain the balance of power in Europe. French aggression and French internal politics were different matters altogether. The former was ever the business of England; the latter was not her concern. In the one case war was justifiable, in the second it was 'war without end', and if the continental monarchs could not separate these two considerations in their wartime objectives--if revolutionary France were their target--England should withdraw from the conflict.<sup>1</sup>

Thus Sir Philip Francis could ask the House of Commons:

Why is this island to be forever the victim of continental politics? The position that separates, ought to secure us. But systems are created to counteract nature. Our situation gives us no advantage. We are insulated in vain. I would warn this country ... against plunging, as we have done too often, into a labyrinth of continental politics.<sup>2</sup>

Isolationism, therefore, had assumed a position of importance in Foxite dogma.<sup>3</sup>

Unpopularity and removal from the mainstream of politics had given rise to no small amount of intellectual condescension. Fox and his friends had attempted to justify their failings by thinking of themselves as members of an international brotherhood of enlightened 'Whigs'. Of course, Hampden and Sydney had cast their shadows across this image, but of far more importance were the heroes of the American Revolution--heroes

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox Speeches, VI, 455-65 (Speech of 3 Nov. 1801).

<sup>2</sup>J. Parkes and H. Merivale, eds., Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis (London, 1867), II, 292-93. (Speech of 1 Mar. 1792).

<sup>3</sup>Erskine's letter to Wright of 1 May 1815, though tempered, biased, and retrospective, is the best statement of Fox's foreign views of the 1790's. Fox Speeches, I, v-xlvi.

of Fox's lifetime who had shared the glory of his greatest triumph. Washington, whose disinterestedness had in many ways vindicated Fox's views on 'American Whiggism', had epitomized all that was good to the Foxite.<sup>1</sup> Kosciusko also had been given praise,<sup>2</sup> and the cause of his native Poland had become Fox's own principally because the partition of the country by Austria, Prussia, and Russia served as a splendid example of the profligacy of England's allies.<sup>3</sup> In this spirit leading Foxites had opened a Mansion House Fund in 1792 to aid the Poles in their struggle against Russia.<sup>4</sup> Lafayette, the 'father of two worlds', also had been singled out for praise. The Foxites had argued his cause in Parliament, and in 1798 Fitzpatrick had raised money to pay the Frenchman's debts.<sup>5</sup> Along with these tributes to 'Whigs' the world over had been a new ingredient in Fox's concept of foreign politics. 'I am one of those who firmly believe, that the greatest resource a nation can possess, the surest source of power, is a strict attention to the principles of justice', he had told the Commons. 'I firmly believe that the common proverb, of honesty being the best policy, is as applicable to nations as to individuals ...'<sup>6</sup> There had been a touch of Rousseau--a hint of the spirit of the Enlightenment--in Fox's passionate speeches, and as men

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox Speeches, V, 172 (Speech of 21 Jan. 1794).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., V, 404 (Speech of 24 Mar. 1795).

<sup>3</sup>See Fox's speeches of 13 Dec. 1792, 18 Feb. 1793, 21 Jan. and 6 Mar. 1794, 24 Mar. 1795, 3 Feb. 1800, and 24 May 1803 for examples of his enormous emphasis on the partition of Poland. Ibid., IV, 457; V, 42-5, 159, 198, and 404; VI, 396.

<sup>4</sup>Stuart J. Reid, ed., Life and Letters of Lord Durham, 1792-1840 (London, 1906), I, 21.

<sup>5</sup>Lady Holland Journal, I, 208. Fox Speeches, V, 213 (Speech of 17 Mar. 1794).

<sup>6</sup>Fox Speeches, V, 408 (Speech of 24 Mar. 1795).

like Erskine and Whitbread nodded approval their leader had risen in defence of the rights of man and of nations. Well might William Roscoe have remembered Fox as the father of internationalism:

Champion of Freedom! whose exalted mind  
Grasp'd at the general good of human kind!  
Patriot! whose view could stretch from pole to pole,  
And, whilst he bless'd his country, loved the whole.<sup>1</sup>

Equally well might Fox's enemies have labeled him a traitor. Unfortunately for the political fortunes of the Foxites there had been more than a grain of truth in the rumour that they admired Napoleon. This admiration had not been personal, but instead based on the contention that the Corsican derived his strength from the spirit of the French people and the iniquities of kings.<sup>2</sup> Fox had paid him the ultimate compliment (while at the same time revealing what was probably the primary source of his creed) when he told the Commons that 'good, great, and unexampled as General Washington was, I can remember when he was not better spoken of in this House than Bonaparte is now.'<sup>3</sup> One must suspect that the Foxites had felt that Napoleon was fighting the same enemy on the Continent which they were fighting in England. Busts of Fox and the First Consul had been placed side by side in the homes of Foxites, and Lauderdale once had remarked that he looked to Bonaparte and expected 'redress from him at the head of 100,000 men'.<sup>4</sup>

The very unpopularity of this view of the war had been instrumental

---

<sup>1</sup>Roscoe's inscription adorned a temple built in Fox's honour on the banks of the Clyde. W. Whitten, Nollekens and His Times (London, 1829), II, 12. Possibly Erskine was closer to the truth when he noted that Fox's principles were 'a great legacy to the world--I say to the world, for as to John Bull I fear it is a lapsed legacy'. Erskine to Holland, 3 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>S. Parr to Holland, 16 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51651 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Lean, p. 216, has interesting comment on this statement.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland Journal, I, 164.

in making it the most fundamental tenet of what must be referred to loosely as the 'Foxite Creed'. It had complemented the image of martyred individualism which every Foxite had tried to project, and it had served as the most unifying principle of a group of men whose causes were many. Moreover, Fox's initial interpretation of the war (and his prediction of an increase of French power and a corresponding decrease of English liberties) had been hailed throughout the late 1790's in an 'I - told - you - so' manner by Foxites everywhere. Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, wrote in 1798:

Who, at one glance, took in the view of the French Revolution? Who saw its consequence and warned us of the inutility of opposing its progress? Will not posterity remember this and bless him? Will they not remember his merciful wishes on the condemnation of Lewis XVI, and the various times he would have checked (and it could have been done then) our wild career? Who has sacrificed even his darling popularity to his principles? His standard is in the hearts of men ... No, would I were a man, to unite my talents, my hopes, my fortune, with Charles's, to make common cause, and fall or rule, with him.<sup>1</sup>

Such testimonies were commonly heard at Brooks's, at the Whig Club, at the universities, and in Whig homes in the early years of the nineteenth century. Peace was more than a cause--one is tempted to label it the political raison d'être of the vast majority of Foxites--and it was a principle from which Fox and his friends would never escape, coalition or no coalition.

Between 1801 and the summer of 1803 Fox's emphasis on coalition had been neutralized by the lingering effects of his party's 'principles', both general and specific. Negotiations with Addington had never got off the ground in 1801, notwithstanding the new government's widely publicized preliminaries for peace. This was owing primarily to four factors.

---

<sup>1</sup>Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire, to P. Francis, 29 Nov. 1798, Francis Memoirs, II, 309. Also see R. Adair, The Letter of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox to the Electors of Westminster, With an Application of its Principles to Subsequent Events (London, 1802).

Firstly, though Fox remained uncommitted, his friends placed unrealistic emphasis on the necessity of coming into office as a group with a clear majority in the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, Addington had few admirers in the Foxite camp, and one must suspect that the character of the Addingtonian party was not to Fox's liking. It lacked identity (as was reflected by the absence of influential aristocrats in the ministry), and most Foxites probably agreed with Adam that the patch-work administration was merely 'locum tenens for Pitt'.<sup>2</sup> Thirdly, specific matters of principle probably held the parties apart. Thomas Grenville reported that Addington had rejected Grey's stipulation for repeal of the Treason and Sedition Acts of 1795,<sup>3</sup> and in explaining the rupture Grey referred to the necessity of 'the adoption of some great and leading measure' as part of a complete 'change of system'.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly, Addington's aversion to the Catholic claims also alienated leading Foxites. Fourthly, old personal rivalries surfaced. One Foxite snubbed Addington with the remark that it was 'quite impossible for anything that is Pittish to restore the country to peace', and Moira ended the flirtation by demanding that Portland be ousted from the Cabinet as the price of his support.<sup>5</sup> Three general conclusions can be drawn from the failure of the negotiations: the Foxites as a group were ill-suited for cooperation even with a party favouring a

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 31 Jan. 1802, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox). Grey to Tierney, postmarked 31 Dec. 1801 (Tierney).

<sup>2</sup>W. Adam to C. Adam, 18 Feb. 1801 (Adam).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Tierney, 16 Oct. 1801 (Tierney). T. Grenville to Grey, Dec. 1801 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Tierney, postmarked 31 Dec. 1801 (Tierney).

<sup>5</sup>O'Brien to Adam, 9 Mar. 1801 (Adam). Tierney to Moira, n.d., and Bute to Tierney, 18 Nov. 1801 (Tierney). F. Lawrence to Fitzwilliam, 25 Jan. 1802 (Fitzwilliam - Northants). Whitbread to Grey, 28 Jan., and Tierney to Grey, Feb. 1802 (Grey).

pacific system; Fox himself was not interested in union with the likes of Addington; and Foxite demands were considerably greater than their bargaining power.

The refusal to join Addington had left the Foxites in an awkward position. Most party leaders were reluctant to attack Addington for fear of forcing Pitt back into office and thereby endangering the peace. Until the renewal of the war in May 1803, therefore, Fox was forced to draw a distinction between supporting Addington's accommodation with France and his ministry as such, a dilemma which frustrated him greatly. 'All opposition seems to be out of the question, perhaps forever', he wrote dejectedly in May 1802.<sup>1</sup> His parliamentary support for Addington's peace strengthened a government which he had no intention of joining;<sup>2</sup> his parliamentary friends were showing signs of disunion; and a meaningful shift in political alignments appeared to be out of the question. Meanwhile Fox worked on his history as his friends tried to cheer him with yet another subscription for the payment of his debts.<sup>3</sup>

In late 1802 disputes on the wisdom of peace among Pitt's old supporters broke the political stalemate. While Pitt sat on the sidelines William, Lord Grenville, Earl Spencer, William Windham, and several of the more warlike Pittites and old Burkian Whigs crossed the floor of the House and formed what came to be known as the 'New Opposition'. This gave politics a new complexion altogether. There were now four parties in Parliament, and, more significantly, Pitt's old coalition was divided into three distinct groups, a development which left Fox with the largest

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, Mar. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 405. Fox to Grey, May 1802, ibid., 368.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grey, n.d. [early Dec. 1802], B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox), f. 65.

<sup>3</sup>Ld. R. Spencer to Adam, 1801 (Adam).

united personal following in the Commons. With his relative strength increased significantly, Fox saw the need to widen the breach in the Pittite ranks. Of course, the issue of peace continued to bind him to Addington, but now there was hope of securing more worthwhile allies. He summoned his lieutenants to London immediately, claiming to see 'at least a possibility, if not a probability, of a state of politics arising ... that may make our party, weak and disbanded as it is, of some consequence ...'<sup>1</sup>

Fox's first priority was to break Pitt's strength; his second was to place himself in a position to secure allies as soon as they became available. In this he was handicapped by two facts: his party would not act in concert with anyone who refused to support the peace, and many of his followers were averse to the idea of coalition altogether.<sup>2</sup> However, Fox was not discouraged. If Pitt joined Grenville for war the Foxites would support Addington and thereby drive the Prime Minister from the Pittites once and for all; if he joined Addington for peace the war controversy would die, and the Grenvilles could, 'like all oppositions, come at length to popular measures, and then you might act with them ...' Finally, if Pitt remained inactive the Foxites would support Addington only so long as the question of peace remained an issue, and this could be no long period of time. Above all else Fox had his eyes fixed on the Grenvillites, a group who 'among all their faults ... had one good quality, viz. that of being capable of becoming good party men'.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 26 Nov. 1802, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 372-73.

<sup>2</sup>At the Westminster election of 1802 Fox was greeted with cries of 'No Coalition!'. L. Reid, Charles James Fox: A Man for the People (London, 1969), p. 380.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Grey, 29 Nov. 1802, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 374-76. Also see Dinwiddy, 'Parliamentary Reform ...', p. 88.

The 'New Opposition' had other good qualities. As a body Grenville and his friends constituted the most important 'swing group' in British politics. Spencer, who had distinguished himself while serving as Pitt's First Lord of the Admiralty, was one of the most respected men in the country.<sup>1</sup> Windham, who had served Pitt as Secretary at War, was not only the eloquent parliamentary leader of the remnants of Burke's old party but the personal representative of Fitzwilliam, the heir of Rockingham. But Grenville himself was probably the brightest star. He was a cousin of Pitt; he had held office under him between 1786 and 1801; and he had resigned office with an unblemished political reputation. He was talented in both diplomacy and finance; he was logical and broad-minded; and his character and manners in polite society were so impeccable that an unbiased contemporary journalist once described him as 'the representative of the national aristocracy'.<sup>2</sup> Grenville had the enormous influence of his family at his disposal, and he and his brothers could rely on the support of important peers like Carlisle, Stafford, Carysfort, and Auckland. Fox calculated Grenville's strength in the Lords at fourteen; in the Commons at thirty-six.<sup>3</sup> The character of the 'New Opposition' was therefore most alluring to Fox. The thought of reunion with Windham and the Burkians brought him great personal satisfaction;<sup>4</sup> moreover,

---

<sup>1</sup>Of interest on this subject is J. S. Corbett and H. W. Richmond, eds., Private Papers of George, Second Earl Spencer (London, 1913-24).

<sup>2</sup>Anonymous, Historical Sketches of Politics and Public Men, For the Year 1812 (London, 1813), p. 26.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Holland, 6 June 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 222. Fox's estimate of Grenvillite strength in the Commons was inflated. Grenville could depend on Althorp, G. Berkeley, F. Lawrence, Sir J. Newport, W. Poyntz, Lord Proby, Lord Temple, W. Windham, C. Wynn, Sir W. Wynn, and Sir W. Young. Others supported this group from time to time.

<sup>4</sup>Fox to Windham, 24 Nov. 1804, The Windham Papers, (London, 1913), II, 242-45.



Grenville and his friends represented a huge proportion of what hitherto had been Pitt's 'weight in the country', a fact that was most important to a politician who was starved for aristocratic connexions.

There were solid reasons for optimism in late 1802. Firstly, Pitt's continued refusal to come back into politics would surely force Grenville to seek new allies. Secondly, Fitzwilliam and Windham had long since abandoned Pitt and begun a steady drift towards Fox on social if not political grounds. Thirdly, key Grenvillite peers (prominently Spencer, Carlisle, and Auckland) had stood with Fox against the Crown as young men, and in spite of political disagreement during the 1790's they had continued to admire him personally. Fourthly, Thomas Grenville had important connexions in the Foxite ranks, and in 1801 he had opened correspondence of a political nature with Grey. Finally, Foxites, Grenvillites, and Burkians were in agreement on the issue of Catholic emancipation, an issue which separated them from Pitt.

Notwithstanding these points, Fox was separated from the 'New Opposition' on matters of political principle. As a group Grenville's friends opposed all mention of reform and stood firm in support of the war; most Grenvillite peers and every Burkian had broken with Fox on these issues during the 1790's. Grenville himself had served as Pitt's Foreign Secretary from 1791 to 1801, and throughout that period he had championed war to the knife with revolutionary France and regarded Napoleon as an usurper and a militarist whose very character threatened the security of Europe.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, Grenville was ever loyal to Pitt. These considerations rendered coalition impossible so long as the issue of war and peace remained unresolved. 'With regard to men,' wrote Fox

---

<sup>1</sup>E. D. Adams, The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy 1787-1798 (Washington, 1904).

in November, 'you know my inclination would rather be to the Grenvilles, as men of some spirit, but the line they have taken with respect to war, and their professed desire of reinstating Pitt make any junction with them impracticable for the present.'<sup>1</sup>

As Anglo-French relations deteriorated in early 1803 Fox experienced very mixed emotions. His recent trip to Paris had convinced him that a renewal of war could only result from the stupidity of the British government,<sup>2</sup> so as war began to seem likely his support for Addington declined.<sup>3</sup> Fox was looking ahead towards union with Grenville. He expected a renewal of war to produce 'very unexpected jumbles in parties', so he practised a studied inactivity calculated to offend no one.<sup>4</sup>

This strategy brought chaos. Grey, who was leaning heavily toward the 'New Opposition', executed a complete about face on the issue of the war. He wrote that Napoleon

Appears to me to be determined to make us drink the cup of our disgrace to the very dregs: to omit no opportunity of studied aggravation and insult and to push us point by point til at last we shall be compelled to take some measure which may give him a pretence for the hostilities which he meditates. I hope I am mistaken in this opinion ... But I am very much afraid that even supposing a more favourable disposition in the Governr of France than appears to me to belong to it, there are circumstances in the state of the two countries with respect to each other, and still more in the state of Parties here which would render the Preservation of Peace nearly impossible at least for any length of time ...

The only caution I should recommend wd. be that of avoiding any appearance of indifference to the Power, still more of any thing

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 29 Nov. 1802, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 374-76.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Adam, 28 Dec. 1802 (Adam).

<sup>3</sup>F. Lawrence to Fitzwilliam, 9 Mar. 1803 (Fitzwilliam - Northants).

<sup>4</sup>Fox to Holland, 23 Mar. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 217. Fox to Fitzwilliam, 22 April (1803), (Fitzwilliam - Northants).

like approbation of the measures of the French Govern<sup>1</sup>.  
 Adair, upon whose foreign views Fox placed great importance, also refused to sanction talk of peace and argued that warlike bravado alone would discourage French encroachments.<sup>2</sup> These opinions presented Fox with the unenviable chore of refuting reports of French aggression (which he attempted),<sup>3</sup> but before he could lay out his arguments he was besieged by Sheridan, Tierney, and others who argued that the withdrawal of Foxite support would throw Addington into the arms of Pitt.<sup>4</sup>

The party was sadly divided. Petty noted that 'altho' the greater number are ... determined to oppose the war, and not the ministers, others wish well to the ministers, yet do not approve the war'.<sup>5</sup> 'Peace or war--some system must be adopted by us for the sake of our characters--', Fox emphasized to Grey, 'and I can adopt none, especially in case of war, without you. My belief, but it is only a belief, is that war might have been, may still be avoided ... In either event there will be a great cry ... against leaving the power in the present [Addington's] hands. How far we ought to join in that cry is a question quite open to us--and indeed I have been particularly cautious not to say a word that would preclude me from either joining it or resisting it.'<sup>6</sup> Fox's game, therefore,

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Fox, 5 Dec. 1802, copy (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Adair, 1802, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 384.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Grey [6] and 12 Dec. 1802 and 17 Jan. 1803, ibid., 380, 387-88, 396.

<sup>4</sup>F. Horner to T. Thompson, 23 May 1803, Leonard Horner, ed., Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P. (Boston, 1853), I, 220-21.

<sup>5</sup>Petty to Holland, 6 June 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 51686 (Holland).

<sup>6</sup>Fox to Grey, Mar. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 403.

was up. He continued to support peace, but this stance undermined his ideas on the subject of political allies. In the end he backed away from the dilemma and threw the question upon his lieutenants. In their hands only one result was possible. When war came, Grey and Adair swallowed their opinions and followed the will of the party in opposing the declaration upon the ground that peace could have been preserved. This stance alienated both Grenvillites and Addingtonians; when the smoke cleared in June Fox and his party were as politically isolated as they had been in 1794.

Between 1801 and the summer of 1803 Fox's political aspirations had been thwarted completely by the demands of his 'principles'. It was not surprising, therefore, to see both him and Grey temper their views. Grey's reversal on the issue of the war had been too extreme for Fox to countenance, but nevertheless Fox had stepped towards the middle ground. In December 1802 he had ruled that if England were driven to war, 'why then I say that, if we are driven to it by the enemy, we must support, and support it in earnest; but if, which is far more likely, we are driven into it by the folly of our own government, we must support it also, but with a constant advice of negotiation and peace.'<sup>1</sup> This opinion was a departure from those of the past, and it may be attributed to his desire for coalition with Grenville. The outbreak of hostilities with France in May 1803 furthered this moderation on the issue of war and peace.

Between June and December 1803 Fox's first priority was union with the 'New Opposition'. On 26 June he laid out his views in a letter to O'Brien:

You will not suspect me of denying that we have sufficient cause of complaint against the Grenvilles; but alas, against whom have we not?

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 12 Dec. 1802, *ibid.*, 387-88.

and is this the moment, when the Court is in direct and bitter hostility to them, and when moreover Pitt and They seem to be every day getting further distant from each other, --is this the moment for us to attack them? ... I am very far from wishing to make Coalition at this time, but neither would I throw unnecessary impediments in the way of any future one with any persons who are capable of acting in real opposition.<sup>1</sup>

This opinion was contested by many Foxites, primarily by Sheridan, Tierney, and the Prince. According to Fox, the fundamental problem was that 'the bias of many of our friends being more against Pitt than the Doctor [Addington], it is to be feared that many will follow Sheridan whom we should be sorry to lose'.<sup>2</sup>

For one of the few times in his life Fox refused to tolerate insubordination. In a letter of 6 June to Fitzpatrick he threatened 'to have it marked in the strongest manner, that the first step to a junction with or support of ... the present Ministry is an open breach with me'.<sup>3</sup> Though Tierney ignored the pressure from above and joined Addington's government (a decision which would cripple him for fifteen years) Fox's firmness proved effective. In July the Prince promoted a union with the 'New Opposition', and by August Fox was telling Grey that Grenvillite speeches were 'not against peace in general; and the very words of their resolutions ... are inconsistent with the notion of the sort of war talked of by some ...'<sup>4</sup> In October he stated firmly that the only alternative to inactivity was the formation of a 'party against the Court, composed of the old and new opposition ...' To effect this union he was prepared to dodge the question of the war for a time and to base his politics on

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to O'Brien, 26 June 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 47566 (Fox).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grey, 19 Oct. 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Fitzpatrick, end. 6 June 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 47581 (Fox).

<sup>4</sup>Fox to Grey, July and 9 Aug. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 417, 422.

Catholic emancipation, which he saw as the only issue capable of both uniting the various wings of opposition and holding Pitt at bay.<sup>1</sup> Fox was aware of his party's reluctance to merge officially with the Grenvilles so he dodged formal agreement in hope that concert would grow out of debate, rather than be antecedent to it.<sup>2</sup> He was delighted to find himself in agreement with Fitzwilliam, and he was determined 'to give Windham a lift, and Sheridan a rub, and deal very much in generals'. In December he put his views before his contacts in the Grenvillite camp and reported to Fitzpatrick that old prejudices prevented a formal union, 'but when public business is brought before us, we give similar opinions, which, if afterwards shaped into a question, must of course have the support of each party'.<sup>3</sup>

Fox's activity struck a chord in the camp of the 'New Opposition'. Grenville had waited for Pitt's return to politics for nearly three years. The former Prime Minister had disappointed him on numerous occasions during that period, and now Grenville was experiencing difficulty in justifying the existence of his party. Hitherto the cohesion of the 'New Opposition' had been assured by opposition to the Peace of Amiens and by a feeling that Pitt's return to power (which was anticipated daily) alone could assure British security.<sup>4</sup> Both tenets were under fire by late 1803.

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 19 Oct. 1803, *ibid.*, 430. Fox to Grey, 27 Nov. 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Fitzpatrick, 2 Dec. 1803, B.M., Add. MSS. 47581 (Fox). This tactic would be employed in every attempt to bring party harmony until 1815.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Fitzpatrick, 2 Dec. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 431.

<sup>4</sup>See Grenville's speech of November 1802 in William Cobbett, The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803 (London, 1819), XXXVI, 938-939.

The resumption of hostilities with France and the inactivity of Pitt had caused great frustration and disillusionment among the Grenvillites, and there was reason to fear either political isolation or the splintering of the group.<sup>1</sup> Fitzwilliam and Windham had one foot in Fox's camp. Grenville's brothers, Thomas Grenville and Lord Buckingham, believed that equivocal conduct on Pitt's part had destroyed his parliamentary influence,<sup>2</sup> and Temple, Grenville's nephew, detested Pitt.<sup>3</sup> By December 1803, therefore, Grenville faced a serious dilemma. He could ally with neither Pitt nor Addington; his party was disintegrating; and Fox, his traditional antagonist, was his only alternative.

On the last day of 1803 Grenville practically begged Pitt to come forward and promote 'an understanding between the considerable Persons in the Country, forgetting past differences, and uniting to rescue us from a danger which is not the less fearful because it may not be quite so immediate as those which we had the good fortune to escape this year'.

If we all remain looking at each other, and forbearing to act separately lest we should render future cooperation more difficult, or should contribute to the success of something that we may think not the best, the consequence must be that new circumstances will arise to make all cooperation impossible, and that in the end no man or description of men will find themselves strong enough to do the country any real service in or out of office.<sup>4</sup>

There was a hint of desperation in this letter. Grenville was eager to reconstruct a strong coalition under the leadership of Pitt for the purpose

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 20 Oct. 1802, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, ed., Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George III (London, 1852-54), III, 211-12. Grenville to T. Grenville, 25 Oct. 1802, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 19 July 1803 (Spencer).

<sup>3</sup>Ward to Mrs. Stewart, [late Jan. 1806], S. H. Romilly, ed., Letters to 'Ivy' From the First Earl of Dudley (London, 1905), p. 34.

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Pitt, 31 Dec. 1803, P.R.O. 30/58/4 (Dacres Adams).

of turning out Addington and forming a new ministry. What were his motives? Firstly, Grenville's patriotism is incontestable. He thought Addington was less competent than others to manage the war, and he was convinced that an amalgamation of parties under Pitt's banner could best serve the country.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, he probably shared his family's notorious love of offices and emoluments. Thirdly (and probably most importantly), the Grenvilles put great stock in the political respectability of the family name, and they were anxious to avoid almost certain political isolation. Three years in opposition had reduced the magical effects of Pitt's name at Dropmore and Stowe, and this was reflected by the new language of 'measures before men'.

How did Grenville propose to achieve this goal? Simple arithmetic (and probably the views of Fitzwilliam and Windham) rendered Fox's inclusion in the proposed coalition imperative. Thus one sees an ever-increasing emphasis on the necessity of 'forgetting past differences' for the sake of the country--noble language founded on the shaky assumption that the political polarization of the 1790's on the issue of the war could be overcome. Grenville's scheme became a Rockingham Whig. From the first it contested the rigidity of the balance of power which had characterized English politics for over a decade.

On 10 and 11 January 1804 Grenville laid his plans before Pitt in London. His hopes were dashed when Pitt refused to act not only with Fox but with the 'New Opposition'.<sup>2</sup> This forced Grenville to choose between

---

<sup>1</sup>'Lord Grenville's Narrative' (of a meeting with Pitt at Walmer), Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, III, 288. Grenville to Pitt, 16 April 1803, Historical Manuscripts Commission, Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortesque, Esq., Preserved at Dropmore (London, 1910) [hereafter cited as H.M.C. Dropmore], VII, 161.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 11 Jan. 1804, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).



political isolation and new allies. He did not hesitate. Immediately upon returning to Dropmore he suggested a meeting of the leaders of the 'New Opposition' at Stowe for the purpose of considering an overture to Fox. In late January Fox received an offer to participate in the formation of 'a systematic opposition, for the purpose of removing the Ministry, and substituting one on the broadest possible basis'.<sup>1</sup> Fox had been awaiting such an offer. As his friend Francis noted at a later day, after January 1804 Fox's march resembled that of 'a powerful horse over a ruined road; at all events ... there was no time to be lost ...'<sup>2</sup>

As late as 1801 Fox had maintained that opposition could gain strength only 'from movements out of doors and not in Parliament', and he had asserted that he and his party were bound to the cause of parliamentary reform. In early 1804 he argued that 'some bold measure, supported even tolerably, in point of numbers, in Parliament is the only chance', and to effect this new strategy he was prepared to coalesce with men who were opposed to reform and who were unpopular in the country.<sup>3</sup> In March 1803 he had told Grey that he was determined to be 'honourably distinguished from the other politicians and parties of the day, who so evidently make war and peace mere engines of attack upon a Ministry whom they dislike.'<sup>4</sup> After January 1804 he was determined to dodge his traditional views on the war for the sake of coalition with politicians who

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 29 Jan. 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 449-52. Also see Richard E. Willis, 'Fox, Grenville, and the Recovery of Opposition, 1801-1804', The Journal of British Studies, XI, 2 (May 1972), pp. 24-43.

<sup>2</sup>Francis Memoirs, II, 449-50.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Holland, 19 April 1801, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 190-91. Fox to Holland, 18 Jan. 1804, B.M., Add. MSS. 47575 (Fox).

<sup>4</sup>Fox to Grey, 12 March 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 397.

remained honourably distinguished for their consistency in opposing peace. Grenville assured Pitt that cooperation with Fox brought neither 'compromises of former opinions', nor 'engagements for future arrangements';<sup>1</sup> yet Fox criticized Lauderdale for being unwilling to compromise the 'principles' of the 1790's for the sake of a more important objective.<sup>2</sup> The explanation for these discrepancies lies in Fox's traditional concept of politics. He saw the political shuffle as a game of chess. His board strength had been increased greatly by the accession of Grenville, Spencer, Windham, and Fitzwilliam. Addington, who was deployed, and Pitt, who was in reserve, guarded the king. In 1804 the fall of Addington was his goal. 'Why then there is an inroad upon the power of the real Enemy, I mean the Court, happen what may afterwards. Give me for once a little credit, I am sure we are going right ...'<sup>3</sup>

Throughout early 1804 Fox climbed over the remonstrances of his dearest friends in his attempt to merge the various wings of opposition. Finally, on the Irish Militia Bill, Pitt's desire to appear consistent forced him to vote with Fox, Windham, and Grenville. Addington resigned, and by 7 May Pitt was forming his last government. Realizing his weakness, the Prime Minister was willing to include both Fox and the leaders of the 'New Opposition' in his Cabinet, but the king wrecked the scheme by refusing to admit Fox. As Fox had anticipated, Grenville stood firm against the prejudices of the king and refused to take part in any government that did not include 'all the talents' of the country. On this

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Pitt, 31 Jan. 1804, P.R.O. 30/58/5 (Dacres Adams).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 9 April 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 39-40.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 5 Mar. 1804 and 30 Sept. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47564 (Fox).

ground the old alliance between Pitt and Grenville was broken forever. Windham joined Fox in a triumphal shout: 'The division of parties and politics is made as it ought to be: Mr. Pitt and the persons of his creation, pure and unmixed, on one side, and all the rest of the public men on the other.'<sup>1</sup> Events had allowed Fox to deliver Pitt a crippling blow. A weakened Prime Minister alone guarded the Closet, and by December Fox was discussing, <sup>even if not yet visualizing</sup> what he called a 'checkmate'.<sup>2</sup>

Though Grenville had refused to take office under Pitt without him, Fox had not achieved de facto union among the various groups which sat on the opposition benches. Grenville and Spencer retained confidence in their old leader as a wartime minister; Windham and Fitzwilliam detested Pitt but agreed fundamentally with his view of foreign politics; and the Foxites, with the exception of Grey and Fox's oldest friends, distrusted Grenville and Windham and were reluctant to compromise.<sup>3</sup> Realizing that success depended upon his ability to mould a coalition on grounds of principle, Fox expressed interest in Windham's scheme for a complete reorganization of the country's militia while at the same time pushing Grenville on the question of Ireland. Over the cries of many he insisted on presenting the Catholic petition of early 1805 on the grounds that it was the 'great publick question on which the component parts of Opposition most consistently and cordially concur', and Holland recalled at a later date that it was Fox's and Grenville's 'authority and inflexibility, rather than their reasons ... which prevailed on their adherents

---

<sup>1</sup>Windham to Mrs. Crewe, 6 Jan. 1805, Windham Papers, II, 250-52.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Holland, 12 Dec. 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 66.

<sup>3</sup>For example, see Creevey to Dr. Currie, 21 Dec. 1803, Creevey Papers, I, 19-21.

to support the motion in Parliament.'<sup>1</sup>

All this achieved little. Fox himself had realized as early as October 1803 that <sup>even</sup> the Catholic question could not unite opposition,<sup>2</sup> and with Pitt in power this was certainly true. The war and the entire structure of Britain's foreign relations had been the most fundamental points of difference between Foxites and Pittites since 1792; these same issues represented both the key to opposition unity and the fount of what little strength Pitt enjoyed in 1804 and 1805. Positioned squarely between Grenville and Windham on the one hand and his own party on the other, Fox avoided past controversies and spoke generally of the need for 'a revolution ... in the system and principles of Government', without which Britain could 'never hope ... to be upon the whole equal to the French'. This system was formed 'with a view to very distant prospects' and it called for retrenchment, military reform, an end to continental subsidies, and strictly defensive warfare until national enthusiasm roused the nations of Europe to hostilities against France. British security demanded it; European independence hinged upon it; and the balance of power could not be maintained without it.<sup>3</sup> These views were consistent with those that Fox had laid down in Parliament between 1791 and 1794, but they were far removed from those which had crept into Foxite politics during the late 1790's. As such they were responsible and, with fifteen years of continental defeats as a footnote, they represented a realistic alternative to Pitt's idea of saving Europe by British

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 196-98.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grey, 19 Oct. 1803, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 430.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Holland, 9 Jan. 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, III, 233-34. Fox to Windham, 18 Nov. 1804, B.M., Add. MSS. 37847 (Windham). Fox to Adair, 6 Oct. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

example. However, rumours of Pitt's Third Coalition excited Windham and Grenville and crippled Fox's efforts. In this position Fox could do nothing but stand on his principles and wait on European developments to make or break him. He studied the continental situation closely, smiled broadly, and told Grey that it was 'full as well for the country, and infinitely better for us that Pitt should disgrace himself more & more: which he undoubtedly will do ...'<sup>1</sup>

Throughout 1805 Fox straddled the middle ground as Pitt swung his great effort into motion. In June, knowing full well that the king's prejudices prevented his inclusion in the government, he pleased Grenville by paying tribute in Parliament to 'the splendid talents' of Pitt, and by calling for the formation of a government to comprehend 'All the Talents' of the country.<sup>2</sup> When his followers protested against this obvious offer of coalition he professed himself mortified because 'it is hard after so many years of trial they should not have confidence enough in me to give me credit for not intending to do wrong until they see me do it'.<sup>3</sup> Fox's strategy was set. He realized that his political fate rode with his traditional view of the war, and he was satisfied with such a contest. In the meantime he made prodigious efforts to lay the foundation for a better understanding among the members of opposition.

In these circumstances Holland House became a catalyst for the merging of parties. Lady Holland's dinner books record the presence of old Foxites, young liberals, reformers, and the Foxite editor James Perry. Alongside these were the Grenvillites, Charles Watkin Wynn and Thomas

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 30 June 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

<sup>2</sup>J. W. Ward to Mrs. Stewart, 21 [June 1805], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 28-9.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to O'Brien, 23 June 1805, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 81.

Grenville, and Windham, who had long wanted 'a more extensive and permanent agreement'.<sup>1</sup> Fox was everywhere at once. He was at Brooks's soothing the ruffled feelings of Sheridan and Tierney; at the Whig Club promising to his more radical allies consistency in the principles of the 1790's; at Camelford House tempering very real points of difference with the Grenvillites; at Carlton House reassuring the Prince of his importance;<sup>2</sup> and, of course, at the home of his nephew delighting an audience composed of traditional enemies. The motive behind these activities is clear. As he told Wyvill, 'there should not appear too much either of Aristocracy or Democracy, but something between the two'. He aimed at returning the Whig party to the balance it had lost in 1793 and 1794.<sup>3</sup>

Strategically Fox's view of the war had not changed; tactically, he had adjusted that view to meet the demands of the political world around him. He admitted the necessity of checking French power while at the same time feeling privately that the crusade of kings had been solely responsible for its growth. Above all he retained his faith in the utility of peace. 'I do not know any thing we could do to prevent the other evils of the war,' he wrote, 'but we might, I still think, either get a peace, aye, and a peace to which the continental powers might be parties; or at least show all the world that we have done all in our power for that purpose.' Fox was no pacifist. Though by 1805 he doubted Napoleon's motives, he accepted his sovereignty as ruler of the French. As in 1792 he was willing to fight only after serious negotiation had

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland House Dinner Books, entries of 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 51950. Windham to Fox, 2 Feb. 1804, B.M., Add. MSS. 37847 (Windham).

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Dr. Currie, 2 June 1804, Creevey Papers, I, 28-9.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Wyvill, 23 Dec. 1805, quoted in J. R. Dinwiddy, Christopher Wyvill and Reform, 1790-1820, Borthwick Papers, no. 39 (York, 1971), p. 15.

clearly defined the objectives of war. But his tactics had offended the sensibilities of even his dearest friends, and his reputation in the country had been tarnished to some extent. This had been necessary. As he told Grey, 'Opposition seems now restored, at least to what it was before the Duke of Portland's desertion, and the other adverse circumstances of those times.' This had been his immediate goal. He now aimed at the destruction of Pitt, whom he regarded as the last bastion of royal strength, and he was sure the Prime Minister would sink with his continental allies.<sup>1</sup>

The march of the Austrian and Russian armies towards the little town of Austerlitz during November and early December 1805 brought on what was seen at St. Anne's Hill as the final confrontation of Pittite and Foxite theories. At stake was Pitt's scheme of British leadership in continental coalition; to be decided was the old issue of whether Britain would accept the accomplishments of the French Revolution and agree to negotiate for a lasting peace with Napoleon's government.

Seldom have men had more faith in their principles. Upon hearing that Austria had moved on the French army without the concert of her allies, Fox ended his hedging on foreign politics and told Grey that he regarded peace and the abandonment of Pitt's system of continental alliance as sine qua nons to coalition with Grenville. 'At any rate,' he wrote, 'however desirable union may be, these are points too important to sacrifice even for that object: at least I feel them so: and could not answer it to myself if I did not make some effort to stop a system which, if it goes on two years longer, must end in making Bonaparte as much in effect monarch of Germany as he is of France.'<sup>2</sup> But Fox reserved such

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Grey, 17 Dec. 1804, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 70-71.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grey, 3 Dec. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

language for his closest friends. Though he felt that Pitt's policy of goading Europe to war would destroy 'all possible means of continental resistance' and make Britain 'odious to all mankind', he was confident that Austrian defeat would mark the moment when Windham and Grenville would 'come nearly right'.<sup>1</sup>

He grew more vindictive daily. Upon hearing that the Prime Minister was desperately ill, he confided to Lauderdale that he 'should be very sorry to have Pitt escape in such a manner from the complete disgrace that must at last fall upon him.'<sup>2</sup> Anticipating that the disgrace of Pitt would also be a defeat for the wartime principles of Windham and Grenville, in early December he stressed to his followers that talk of peace was futile and that political prudence demanded that 'we ought more than ever to deal in retrospect rather than prospect.' With Grey he began serious efforts to win Windham and Tom Grenville. 'I am sure Fox cannot fear less than you do the power of France, or think differently with respect to Bonaparte's ambition', Grey assured Windham. 'He may think ... that the Continental war is more likely to destroy all future means of resistance than to set any limit to his power. Peace, therefore, must be his wish and mine. But it must not be inferred from this that we abandon all future resistance.'<sup>3</sup>

In early December Fox discussed wartime strategy with Windham and the Grenvilles at Dropmore. Windham reported:

I was at Dropmore on Saturday last & met Fox there to talk over, as far as can be done now, the course of our campaign ... We shall

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Holland, 21 Sept. and 7 Nov. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47575 (Fox).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 17 Dec. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47564 (Fox).

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Holland, 7 Dec. 1805, Russell, Memorials and Correspondence, IV, 124-25. Grey to Windham, 13 Dec. 1805, Windham Papers, II, 266-67.



have to move I think in somewhat separate columns, not less than three probably, but all supporting each other, & terminating I trust in the same point. Ld. Gr. supporting hostile confederacies, & slow to pronounce, notwithstanding the event, that this has been ill-formed. I equally a friend to hostile confederacies, & equally ready to admit, that one must not judge merely from the event, but inclined violently to suspect, that this has been ill-formed, & founding that suspicion less upon the event, than upon the characters of the persons concerned ... Fox equally disposed to this supposition, but having more disinclination to any attempt in resistance by force, and carrying that disinclination to an extent which I confess fills me with alarm.<sup>1</sup>

Being certain of allied defeat, Fox felt that his success depended upon his ability to represent the Third Coalition as a final test for the utility of continental alliance. For this reason he was pleased by the context of his differences with Grenville because Grenville's faith in Pitt's strategy was so unqualified that failure would disarm him completely. On the other hand Windham was by no means prepared to place all his eggs in Pitt's basket. Therefore, in the political manoeuvring of mid-December great pressure was exerted on the old Burkian to concede that, regardless of disagreement on this point, the failure of Austria and Russia would create a need for a period of recuperation in both Britain and Europe. It was in this spirit that Grey told him pointedly on 13 December that 'all questions respecting Continental alliances will be decided for us.'<sup>2</sup>

As Fox had anticipated, reports of allied folly had an enormous impact on the Grenville camp. By 15 December Tom Grenville became convinced that Fox's views would be made consistent with his own, 'either by any great reverse to the successes of the French, or by such a continuation of them as should close the contest upon the Continent by negotiations for peace.'<sup>3</sup> And during a conference at Dropmore he convinced

---

<sup>1</sup>Windham to Grey, 9 Dec. 1805 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Windham, 13 Dec. 1805, Windham Papers, II, 276-77.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 15, 18 Dec. 1805, H.M.C. Dropmore, VII, 321, 323.

Carlisle and Stafford, two of Grenville's leading adherents, of the logic of Fox's views.<sup>1</sup> By late December Fox had succeeded in reducing the question to the context he desired; his political fortunes rode with Napoleon.

On 2 December 1805 the French crushed the Austro-Russian armies at Austerlitz. Austria was left helpless, and on 6 December she signed an armistice which, by the 26th, became the humiliating Treaty of Pressburg. The linking point of Pitt's triple alliance had been smashed. Word of these events began to filter back to London during the days after Christmas, and it had the effect of a bomb on British politics. Nesselrode, the Russian Ambassador, wrote that 'All hope of effective resistance seems to me to be destroyed and lost forever.' General Stamford, an agent of continental coalitions, noted that 'God has forsaken this unhappy continent.' Pitt rolled up the map of Europe.<sup>2</sup>

Fox had succeeded in holding his young followers at bay during December, but the news of Austerlitz produced a spirit of vindictiveness that was difficult to check. Erskine was self-righteous in referring to 'stupid, undone Europe', as if he had played a part in the French victory, while Holland and Petty called for strong censure in Parliament and insisted that 'these events & their necessary & immediate consequence [of] a peace on the Continent change the whole state of the question ...'<sup>3</sup> Fox was equally anxious to step forward as the acknowledged saviour of his country, and his initial reaction was to throw all his strength

---

<sup>1</sup>Carlisle to T. Grenville, 25 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Herbert Butterfield, Charles James Fox and Napoleon. The Peace Negotiations of 1806 (London, 1962), p. 2.

<sup>3</sup>Erskine to Holland, 12 Jan. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland). Holland to Fox, 30 Dec. 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47575 (Fox).

behind a motion of censure.<sup>1</sup> However, he never lost sight of the feelings of Grenville and Windham. He thought that the magnitude of the allied defeat would end all controversy on Britain's role in continental crusades, and he favoured a strong amendment and division in Parliament 'unless we should have reason to know that a soft one will gain us a dozen or two in numbers.' 'I had a letter from Windham about a week ago and I was sorry to see a disposition in him upon any even slight appearance of Success, to form new hopes for the Coalition', he wrote on 1 January. 'However, that evil must be now quite done away, and his desire to blame Ministers is as strong I think as that of any of us.' Fox was prepared to wait until Pitt's total defeat was indisputable. In the meantime he advocated an attack on Pitt's failure to raise a respectable army, a point on which he knew the Prime Minister was vulnerable and one which was certain to appeal, not only to Windham and Grenville, but to Addington (now Lord Sidmouth) as well.<sup>2</sup>

On 3 January Fox wrote to Tom Grenville, whom he knew to be a weak link in Grenvillite resolution:

Perhaps you are now convinced that there might be something worse than even a rickety peace. However, I will not triumph too much on my foresight. But surely as ideas of encouraging or discouraging continental war, for the present, are not now in question, you can none of you have any objection to attacking the Ministry ... Pray, pray consider this question, all of you, abstractly, as far as you can, from former discussions. The cases are wholly dissimilar, and the more a man is inclined to continental alliances, the more resentment he ought to feel against those who have extinguished every hope of renewing them to any advantage; the more a man feels the desirableness of lowering the power of France, the more indignation ought he to feel against those who have so enormously aggrandized her.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 3 Jan. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 47564 (Fox).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Holland, 1 Jan. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 47575 (Fox). Fox's party almost to a man wanted a frontal assault on Pitt. Holland criticized his uncle severely. Holland to Fox, 3 Jan. 1806, ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to T. Grenville, 3 Jan. 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 6-7.

These were strong arguments, and by 6 January Tom Grenville and Windham desired to attack the government.<sup>1</sup>

By the 7th Lords Grenville, Buckingham, and Spencer were under attack in their own camps, for they stood practically alone in resisting Fox's ardour. Primarily because of hatred of Pitt, the Burkiens were firmly attached to Fox's view, and Tom Grenville was not alone among Grenvillites. Temple was violent in his denunciation of Pitt, and similar views were held by the Wynns, Stafford, Carlisle, Essex, and Ebrington. Grenville conceded that Austerlitz represented the 'final overthrow' of Bourbon pretensions to the French throne, and he admitted the logic of Fox's reasoning. But he saw no alternative to Pitt. A Fox-Grenville coalition would shatter on the issue of war and peace, he told Buckingham on the 7th, and a Fox-Sidmouth coalition would pursue peace and ruin the country.<sup>2</sup> Fox was immobilized by these doubts, and his difficulty in controlling his own party increased hourly. On the 10th he stressed to Grey that Austerlitz rendered an attack on Pitt unnecessary because the Burkiens and Grenvillites had abandoned the idea of continental campaigns. This fact guaranteed political coalition, he argued. Grenville only needed time to admit the error of his ways. Above all, hollow attacks on Pitt were to be avoided because they would only disgrace and infuriate Grenville.<sup>3</sup>

During January Fox pressed these views on his unhappy lieutenants at the Whig Club, at Brooks's, and at St. Anne's Hill. Finally, on 12 January, he met with Tom Grenville and conceded that, however much he condemned the origin and conduct of the war, he considered that the

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 6 Jan. 1806, *ibid.*, IV, 5-6.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 6, 7 Jan. 1806, *ibid.*, IV, 5, 8-10.

<sup>3</sup>Fox to Grey, 10 Jan. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 47565 (Fox).

interests and honour of Great Britain now required that it should be pursued with vigour and that all engagements with foreign allies should be strictly observed.<sup>1</sup> This concession was hollow at the moment it was made because Fox felt that Austerlitz had opened the door for a European settlement which Great Britain could not ignore. In spite of reluctance on the issues of peace and continental alliance Grenville gave way. Fox, Windham, and Tom Grenville had actually agreed on a strong resolution of censure when Pitt died on 23 January.

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 12 Jan. 1806 (Spencer). T. Grenville to Buckingham, 12 Jan. 1806, Court and Cabinets, IV, 10-12.

## CHAPTER II

### FOX AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE, FEBRUARY-SEPTEMBER, 1806

The defeat of the Third Coalition and the death of Pitt signalled the political triumph of Fox. Though the rump of Pitt's old party retained the support, if not the confidence, of a majority in the Commons, without Pitt it was unable to meet the attack of the coalition which had been raised against it in Parliament. The Pittite leadership thought that it would be foolish to go on, and the king, faute de mieux, summoned Grenville in early February 1806, and this time raised no objection to Fox. Thus was born the Ministry of All the Talents, a collection of hawks and doves which would hold office for little more than a year. Fox was to live only until September; this fact would profoundly influence the policies of the government and the character of the Foxite party.<sup>1</sup>

Fox's first priority was the consolidation of Whig power under his banner. In agreeing to coalesce with Grenville, he undoubtedly put great stock in the fact that the old Pittite's parliamentary strength lay in the Lords, and that Grenville was willing to leave the affairs of the lower house in the hands of the Foxites.<sup>2</sup> Fox looked to Petty, a young man whom he greatly admired, as his eventual successor in the Commons,

---

<sup>1</sup>The Ministry of All the Talents has been virtually ignored by recent historians. A. D. Harvey has outlined, though most inadequately, the accomplishments of the ministry in 'The Ministry of All the Talents: The Whigs in Office, February 1806 to March 1807', The Historical Journal, XV, 4 (1972), pp. 619-48.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to W. Wickham, 24 Mar. 1806 (Wickham). For Grenville's views on the Lords see Grenville to T. Grenville, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville), ff. 234-35.

and also as a symbol of Whig reunification. Supported by such powerful orators as Sheridan, Whitbread, and Tierney, Lansdowne's son would have little trouble dominating the small and aging Grenvillite party in the years ahead. Old Lord Grey was made an earl so as to give his son a more respectable title. The new Lord Howick, whose days in the Commons were numbered by the age of his father, was Fox's favourite and his choice for the lead of the party. Though he would be outnumbered temporarily by Grenville's adherents in the Lords, Howick was easily Grenville's superior in debate, and the age of most Grenvillite peers assured the Foxites of future dominance in the upper house.<sup>1</sup> It was for these reasons that Fox demanded the Exchequer for Petty over the remonstrances of Grenville, and the Admiralty for Howick.

Also paramount in his scheme was the strengthening of ties with Whig grandees. The desertion of Portland and Fitzwilliam in 1794 had left Fox largely unsupported by men of rank and influence, and the Whig leader was certain that union with Grenville would improve this situation. Grenvillite property holdings were immense and the family controlled eight seats in Parliament. Their political connexions were equally imposing. In alliance with Fitzwilliam, the Grenvillites mustered upwards of fifteen votes in the Lords, and as the kinsman and former Foreign Secretary of Pitt, Grenville could be expected to attract influential Pittites.

It was clear that the Grenvillite party was aristocratic in composition and that its political reputation promised to calm the fears and secure the support of the many aristocrats whom Fox had frightened during the previous decade. Consequently, Fox offered the odious Buckingham Cabinet rank, backed Fitzwilliam for the office of his

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to D. Stewart, 23 Jan. 1806 (Horner).

choice, and made a great production of offering the Duke of Devonshire carte blanche in the new administration. After short and astonishingly cordial discussion, it was agreed that Fox, Windham, and Spencer would be secretaries of state, Erskine Lord Chancellor, Howick First Lord of the Admiralty, Petty Chancellor of the Exchequer, Fitzwilliam Lord President of the Council, and, as a concession to the tender feelings of the Prince of Wales, Lord Moira Master of the Ordnance. Grenville nominally headed the government as First Lord of the Treasury, but Fox had the Foreign Office. As the strongest of the coalesced parties the Foxites got the lion's share of lesser offices in government. All things considered the Foxites had come to power on most advantageous terms.<sup>1</sup>

However, the demands of coalition narrowed the scope of policy. The views of the men with whom Fox took office were hardly consistent with the domestic policies he had advocated during the 1790's. Windham and most Grenvillites were violently opposed to parliamentary reform; Erskine and Sidmouth, who could soon join the government, rendered Catholic relief impossible; and Grenville, whose family fortune was largely derived from sinecures, took care to stress a policy of economy 'not in the little things only but much more in the great features of our Expenditure ...'<sup>2</sup> Then, too, Grenville was a hard pill to swallow on any terms. Fox could not disguise the fact that his new ally had been responsible for most of the arbitrary policies against which the Foxites had protested so passionately during the final decade of the eighteenth century. The same was true of Fitzwilliam and Windham, both of whom remained true to Burkian ideology.

Grenville's defensiveness about Pitt and his policies accentuated

---

<sup>1</sup>Anonymous, The British Cabinet of 1806 (Liverpool, 1807).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 17 May 1812 (Grey), recalling his language of 1806.



these problems. Upon coming to office, Grenville maintained that no good could be done unless the political animosities of the past were buried with his old chief. He warned of leading the country to 'great intestine divisions' and argued that an attack on past policies would reopen 'questions on which we should have differed in opposition, and during Pitt's life, and on which therefore there is no chance that we could agree now.' Grenville feared Fox's party and made it clear that he was prepared to resign if his allies could not show restraint.<sup>1</sup> This was a realistic stance and Fox knew it. The government was therefore formed upon a rigid agreement 'to administer the affairs of the country without retrospect to former differences ...'<sup>2</sup> Well might the Foxite William Strickland have noted that the coalition was 'devoid of any union of sentiment or principles' and 'replete with more political depravity than any struggle for power I have witnessed in my life'.<sup>3</sup> But older men had seen it before. Above all else, the Ministry of All the Talents represented an attempt to overcome deeply entrenched political and personal animosities by the same tactics which had formed the Fox-North coalition of 1783. Fox was well aware of the challenge; he was betting that his reputation and his accomplishments in office could overcome the effect of his tactics in getting there.

---

<sup>1</sup> Grenville to Fox, 19 April 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 107-08. Grenville to T. Grenville, 24 Jan 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup> Grenville to Windham, 4 June 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 174. Lady Bessborough to Ld. Granville Leveson Gower, 10 May 1806, Castalia, Countess Granville, ed., Lord Granville Leveson Gower Private Correspondence, 1781 to 1821 (London, 1916), II, 195-97. Memoirs of Sir Samuel Romilly, ed. by his son (London, 1840), II, 255-56.

<sup>3</sup> Dinwiddy, Wyvill and Reform, p. 13. Perry would not admit that the union of Fox and Grenville was a coalition. Ivon Asquith, 'James Perry and the Morning Chronicle, 1790-1821', unpublished University of London PhD. thesis, 1973, p. 187.

Upon entering the Foreign Office, Fox's political priorities were quite similar to those which he had voiced during the early stages of the French Revolution. He was displeased with the war because he felt that the spirit in which England had entered and pursued it was contrary to international law, the inalienable rights of man, and, most importantly, Whig interests. He remained convinced that Pitt's system of goading the 'lifeless despots' of Europe to war against the national zeal of France only enhanced French power; he was sure that Pitt's refusal to recognize the natural course of events in France promised war without end; he felt that the personal hatred of Napoleon which had led to an uncompromising stance in past negotiations for peace had only strengthened and corrupted the French Emperor and disgraced Britain in the eyes of the world; and he had been borne out in his prediction that such a war would subvert English liberties. Fox saw the war as an interruption of the natural growth of the constitution; so long as it raged on the terms to which Pitt's foreign policy had committed England liberality, toleration, and improvement were impossible. For this reason Catholic relief and reform were politically inexpedient and therefore should be delayed until the source of Britain's woes- the war- had been ended.

Accordingly, Fox pressed moderation on the reforming element of his party<sup>1</sup> and, over the strong protests of even his adoring nephew, told Catholic leaders that they must 'decide between a friendly ministry without immediate discussion of their claims, or an

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox pointed to peace as a prerequisite to reform in a letter to Wyvill and in turn Wyvill outlined this view in a letter to Lofft. Wyvill to Fox, 5 Feb., and Wyvill to C. Lofft, 24 Feb. and 15 April 1806 (Wyvill).

immediate discussion of their claims with a hostile ministry.<sup>1</sup>

Fox had seen at last that office, political respectability, and a united Whig party freed from the shackles which the war had placed on it alone could promote his ideas. Though Austerlitz had greatly increased the power of France, Trafalgar had hardly weakened Great Britain, and Fox was confident of peace. But whether war or peace was to be the policy of his government, he was determined to erase the guidelines of Pitt's foreign politics, to force Napoleon to stand on his own merits as a ruler whether in harmony or discord with Britain, to pursue either course with vigour towards a clearly defined object, and thus to restore constitutional balance to his country. These views had represented the covenant of Fox's political creed between 1792 and 1794; as Foreign Secretary in 1806, he would devote his every waking moment to their fulfilment.

On 18 January William Cobbett stressed to his readers that 'The questions of peace and war are now questions entirely new, to be discussed with reference to a set of circumstances entirely new.'<sup>2</sup> This was undeniable. By late January when Fox, Grenville, and Windham began to discuss seriously the structure of their government's foreign politics, news from the Continent had confirmed disasters which were unprecedented. Austerlitz on 2 December had been followed immediately by

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 213. Also see George Pellew, ed., The Life and Correspondence of the Right Honble Henry Addington (London, 1847), II, 435-36. There is reason to believe that Fox was reluctant to delay the Catholic question. He told Windham that the Catholic cause had been the only reason he had returned to Parliament in 1802. This testimony, however, conflicts with his statement of motives of November 1802, in which he pointed to nothing but the cause of peace. Fox to Windham, n.d. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 37843 (Windham), ff. 241-42. Fox to Duchess of Devonshire, 1 Nov. 1802, Earl of Bessborough, ed., Georgiana: Extracts From the Correspondence of Georgiana, Duchess of Devonshire (London, 1955), p. 254.

<sup>2</sup>Political Register, II, 96.

the retreat of the Russian Emperor, and the Treaty of Vienna between France and Prussia on 15 December and that of Pressburg between France and Austria on 28 December had laid Europe at Napoleon's feet. Pitt's lavish war expenditure had strained Britain's national credit; his recent policies towards the United States threatened an interruption of trade if not war; and his Irish policies had brought the Act of Union under attack to such an extent that rebellion was inevitable and French invasion possible. In this situation British relations with the Continent were non-existent, and Englishmen looked with anxiety to the coasts of Ireland and Kent whereas a year before they had focused their attention on the Danube. Fox's bargaining power at home was therefore greater than even he had anticipated, and in the conferences of late January and early February he got his way.

As Fox had hoped, events in Europe had settled the question of continental alliance, and Grenville was emphatic in calling for a husbanding, defensive system. 'To waste our means when others would not use theirs I thought both Quixotism & folly', he recalled at a later day.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Fox had little difficulty in pushing his European views through the Cabinet. It was agreed that Pitt's system of continental subsidy would be abandoned altogether, 'unless any particular nation was fighting out of its own territory for a common object in combination with our own & other states; but not to take upon ourselves the whole burthen of defending any state.'<sup>2</sup> Britain would not bribe or encourage a power to make war; in accordance with Fox's views of the 1790's, France would be allowed to dominate Europe so long as a lack of national spirit in Austria, Russia, and Prussia allowed her to do so.

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to C. W. W. Wynn, 16 Oct. 1813 (Wynn).

<sup>2</sup>Erskine to Spencer, 8 Jan. [1809] (Spencer), recalling the agreement of 1806.

The British Minister at Vienna was cautioned that his country was prepared to follow, but that she would no longer lead. The quarrel and the cause had to be Austrian, 'and if she were not, from a sense of her own wrongs and dangers, prepared to make a national war against France, it was neither our interest nor our wish to engage her in hostilities.'<sup>1</sup>

This shift in policy was accompanied by a new stance on potential negotiations for peace. Though Fox admitted that circumstances rendered a British offer of negotiation unwise, he succeeded in holding the door open. Grenville and Windham accepted the argument that an honourable peace would facilitate a plan of reorganization, retrenchment, and rebuilding, and it was agreed to secure the country 'by Peace if Peace be practicable, & if not by strictly defensive war, & by economy ...'<sup>2</sup>

Grenville envisaged a buildup of British strength in the Mediterranean; Windham toyed with plans for the expansion of British trade; Spencer placed emphasis on a policy of increasing British naval superiority; and all were agreed that conciliation and appeasement should be practised in Ireland and in relations with neutral nations, especially the United States, whose prosperity was 'Britain's own'. These policies were to be complemented by efforts to sooth political and religious animosities at home. Plans were also formulated for a long-range system of wartime finance and a reorganization of army recruitment. Generally, the Cabinet was willing to accept Austerlitz and to capitalize on Trafalgar, to withdraw from a continent which offered nothing, and to assure British security and prosperity by consolidating the strength of the British Empire.

Though Fox enjoyed a tactical victory in 1806, the Cabinet was

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 95. See also, Holland to Adair, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland), ff. 29-32.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 17 May 1812 (Grey).

by no means unanimous in its view of the ultimate goal of the war. Most of Fox's closest friends were prepared to accept Napoleon's sovereignty in France and desired a lasting peace on that basis. Thanet probably summed up the feelings of many Foxites when he applauded the new system and quipped that if the war could be made purely defensive, 'the people might grow tired of it - for the losses would remain without the victories ...'<sup>1</sup> This was far removed from the ideas of Pitt's old supporters. Windham and Fitzwilliam gave way to Fox only because there was no alternative, and both of them continued to see Napoleon as a usurper whose destruction was prerequisite to European stability. Moreover, though Fox gained Grenville's endorsement for a policy of peace with honour and the abandonment of continental alliances, he never convinced him to repudiate the goal of Pittite foreign policy: the overthrow of Napoleon and a return to the European balance of 1789. As the old Pittite noted later, 'we wished to reserve our exertions for that period which we were confident must arrive when the insolence of France would unite against Her all the Powers by whose disunion alone she had triumphed.' Fox got his way on wartime tactics, but the fundamental differences of the past were dodged altogether. As Grenville recalled, 'the most distinct reserve was expressed on both sides as to former opinions to which we still adhered respecting past transactions.'<sup>2</sup>

Fox was aware of this fundamental disagreement, and he found the division of the Cabinet between Pitt's old supporters (Grenville, Windham, Spencer, and Fitzwilliam) and those upon whom he could depend to echo his views in foreign affairs (Howick, Erskine, Petty and himself) unsatisfactory, for though Moira leaned towards the Foxites, he was a

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Roscoe, n.d. (Roscoe), 455.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 21 Oct. and 24 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

military man who could not be trusted. Fox therefore backed the inclusion of Sidmouth. This stance, though unprincipled in the eyes of both contemporaries and posterity, was sound. Fox had never disagreed with Sidmouth's view of foreign relations, and in 1804 he had restricted his criticism to charges of mismanagement. Both men agreed that Britain's adherence to justice was her greatest strength, and Sidmouth's administration, with its policies of peace, retrenchment, home defence, and conciliation of neutrals, had been almost identical to the scheme which Fox proposed for his own ministry.<sup>1</sup> There were other reasons for Sidmouth's inclusion. Both Fox and Grenville feared the king and were eager to disarm him by bringing either the Sidmouths or the Pittites into the government. Faced with a choice between the two parties, even Grenville favoured the former.<sup>2</sup> Not only were several of Sidmouth's supporters competent administrators who would be content with minor office, but also the party was far more compact and manageable than that of Pitt.<sup>3</sup> For these reasons Fox and Grenville defied the prejudices of practically every one of their supporters in bringing Sidmouth and his friend Lord Ellenborough into the Cabinet as Privy Seal and Lord Chief Justice respectively, the latter being a flagrantly unconstitutional breach of the independence of the judiciary. This exposed the ministry to a torrent of abuse,<sup>4</sup> but the addition of Sidmouth and Ellenborough gave Fox the mobility he needed in the field of foreign

---

<sup>1</sup>This opinion is Holland's. Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 210.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 24 Feb. 1806, Grenville Correspondence, II, 179-81.

<sup>3</sup>John Allen Journal, entry of 3 Feb. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.

<sup>4</sup>For example, see T. Grenville to Spencer, 7 Feb. 1806 (Spencer).

affairs. 'It will stop up all the earths', he confided to Holland.<sup>1</sup>

Fox found the Foreign Office in sad disarray. Auckland, a Grenvillite who was bound for the Board of Trade, noted that the diplomatic papers of Pitt's government were 'more observable for what they omit than for what they contain.' There was no way to determine what part of the Austrian and Russian subsidies had been remitted, or how much Britain was still bound to pay. In addition, there was in the papers neither trace of British influence in the alliance nor allusion to any plan of British cooperation.<sup>2</sup> In sorting this out, Fox was aided by only fifteen subordinates at the Foreign Office, and he was bound not to criticize Pitt's government. On the other hand, the continental wreck gave the new Foreign Secretary great latitude in the formulation of policy. Adair, who was given the legation at Vienna, was astonished by Fox's language when he reported to the Foreign Office for instructions. 'I have none to give you,' said Fox. 'Go to Vienna and send me yours.'<sup>3</sup> The death-like silence on the Continent gave Fox carte blanche in his relations with foreign powers; from the first the only restrictions on him came from the Cabinet and from the distrust of established power and middle class opinion. In this position he buried himself in work. One of his aides noted that 'whilst light remained Fox never seemed tired.'<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 209-10.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 10 Feb. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 26-7.

<sup>3</sup>George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle, Fifty Years of My Life (London, 1876), I, 228-29. This is the more surprising when one considers that Fox regarded Austria as a natural ally, and as the key to the establishment of the balance of power. Holland to Adair, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland), ff. 29-32.

<sup>4</sup>D. M. Stuart, Dearest Bess (London, 1955), p. 138.



With European diplomacy at a standstill, Fox's initial efforts went towards relaxing the alarming tensions in Anglo-American relations. Prior to 1805 British commercial regulations had been aimed at preventing only direct intercourse between enemy colonies and their mother country, and Sir William Scott's exposition of the law, which created 'neutralization' through the 'broken voyage' doctrine, had protected America's lucrative carrying trade. But even Scott's liberal regulations were evaded often enough to raise a furore in Britain, and these evasions led, in the spring of 1805, to an alteration in the practice of British law courts which damaged American trade greatly. In the case of the American ship Essex, the Prize Appeal Court of the Privy Council declared the vessel and its cargo forfeited, in spite of the fact that the ship had complied with established procedure. The precedent was adopted quickly by two others on the Admiralty Court, and the 'broken voyage' doctrine was therefore superseded.<sup>1</sup>

This new interpretation was not accepted gracefully in the United States. It joined with the already present indignation fostered by the British practice of impressing American seamen on the high seas to arouse a great deal of popular feeling, and this led eventually to an embargo of British imports. In Britain, the economist James Stephen fanned the fire of national self-righteousness with the publication on Trafalgar Day of his book, War in Disguise; or the Frauds of the Neutral Flags, a bitter but brilliant denunciation of American pretensions. In its struggle for political survival Pitt's government had increased this resentment. Young Pittite orators such as Canning, Perceval, and Castlereagh had made political capital with blistering, patriotic

<sup>1</sup>Eli Hecksher, The Continental System (Gloucester, Mass., 1964), pp. 105-08.

invective which appealed to the prejudices of country gentlemen and high Tories, and the editorials of Daniel Stuart, the editor of the Courier, had given these feelings what was considered generally as government approval. In January 1806 Anglo-American relations were at their lowest point since the trying days before the Jay Treaty of 1794.<sup>1</sup>

The new government found this situation intolerable. Fox had always stressed the importance of a firm Anglo-American bond, Sidmouth's ministry had acted on the same principle, and Grenville had proved in the past that he was capable of suppressing his disdain for republicanism in order to conciliate a nation which he regarded as an exclusively British market. 'With the friendship of America,' wrote the Prime Minister, 'we might rest a husbanding & defensive system on the basis of an extensive Commerce, & so might still survive the storm - Without such a resource what hope have we?'<sup>2</sup> With a semblance of unity in the Cabinet, Fox turned towards the west enthusiastically.

On 25 February James Monroe, the American Minister in London, appealed to Fox to 'heal the wound' caused by differences about impressment, neutral rights, and ill-defined boundaries. In a series of meetings over the next month the American was delighted to find the Foreign Secretary willing to discuss these problems without reserve. Simultaneously Auckland advocated an adjustment of the Navigation Laws to allow a 'natural' commercial intercourse between the British West Indies and the United States.<sup>3</sup> Inconsistency in British commercial policy in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Wilson H. Elkins, 'British Policy in its Relation to the Commerce of the United States of America From 1794 to 1807', unpublished Oxford University M. Phil. thesis, 1936.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 23 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Monroe to Fox, 25 Feb. and 31 Mar. 1806, P.R.O., F.O. 5/51. Bradford Perkins, Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1961), p. 103. Grenville to Auckland, 4 Mar. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 47-8.

West Indies long had been a sore point in Anglo-American relations. The Navigation Laws forbade all trade in foreign bottoms to British colonies, but from 1788, when British statesmen first admitted that American shipping was necessary to supply the West Indies, colonial governors had been authorized to admit American ships whenever they felt that English bottoms could not handle the load. This arrangement had obvious disadvantages. Corruption and the inability of honest governors to control the cheaper American shipping made the Indies a virtual American monopoly. In such circumstances, some governors, who apparently felt endangered by the inconsistencies of English law, found it safer to exclude Americans altogether, and this policy infuriated the Americans. Convinced that in time of war British shipping could not be depended on to supply the colonies regularly, Auckland and Fox saw a way both to concede a point to America as a display of goodwill and to reform a situation which experience had proved to be disadvantageous.<sup>1</sup> Their solution was the American Intercourse Bill. By early March the Foreign Office and the Board of Trade were moving unmistakably towards concessions to the United States.

This drift met with immediate resistance. Grenville remained very uneasy about abandoning the Foreign Office to Fox and on 18 February he horrified Auckland with unbending language on American commercial claims. This unexpected attack was accompanied by Windham's strong objection to tampering with the Navigation Laws and a judgement from the Admiralty Court on 14 March which refuted American claims on the 'broken voyage' doctrine. Auckland's remonstrances calmed Grenville and Windham, but the stance of the court spread alarm at the Board of Trade and Foreign Office. Auckland warned of a 'strong sensation'

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., VI, 593-94 (31 Mar. 1806).

being aroused by the reaffirmation of the Essex decision and recommended 'an immediate and very solemn consideration.' But before further discussion Sir John Nicholl, the King's Advocate, assumed the offensive on 20 March by defending the Essex decision in a memorandum to the Board of Trade. At this point it became obvious to Fox and Auckland that the Admiralty Court stood between them and rapprochement with the United States. They accepted the challenge. After a Cabinet meeting of 31 March Auckland, in a burst of praise for the United States, brought the American Intercourse Bill before the Lords. Essentially, it proposed the transfer of the colonial governors' discretionary power to the seat of government in London. It was the first step in the ministry's effort to relax tensions with the United States.<sup>1</sup>

The bill was greeted by a storm of hostility. Public opinion, especially among the mercantile community, was adamantly opposed to the measure. Lord Hawkesbury protested solemnly that it was the first attempt to relax the Navigation Laws by a legislative act, and the right wing of the opposition rose up in arms. Castlereagh, Perceval, and Canning trumpeted Hawkesbury's views in the Commons and objected strongly to any unsolicited attempt to appease the United States. Lord Sheffield, a government supporter whom Fox was on the verge of appointing as his new minister to the United States, declared open opposition to the bill and it was reported that he was running about town with 'a long string of about thirty motions ...'<sup>2</sup> This resistance only hardened the resolve of ministers. Auckland represented the American question as 'the

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 18 Feb. 1806 and Auckland to Grenville, 15 Mar. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 36-37, 57-58. Perkins, Prologue to War, pp. 83-4.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., VI, 1038; VII, 339, 725-26. Auckland to Grenville, 23 April 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 112-13.

most important of the moment' and on 9 April he called for concessions 'as soon as possible, in the form of an avowed suspension of the general [commercial] system ...'<sup>1</sup> Fox agreed perfectly. On 20 April Erskine told the Speaker that Fox regarded the judgements of the Admiralty Court as mischievous, and that the Foreign Secretary was convinced 'that America must be made our friend ...'<sup>2</sup> Encouraged by Auckland and unfuriliated by the opposition's advocacy of mercantilist commercial theory, Grenville supported Fox vigorously.

Notwithstanding this resolution, the government backed away from an open conflict with both the courts and public opinion, and discussion centred around compromise in the Cabinet meetings of early May. Serious consideration was given to a scheme of establishing British consular tribunals in American ports before whom merchants could establish the legality of their cargoes, but it was dropped for fear of alienating the American government further. Finally, Fox and Auckland agreed on a plan of manoeuvre. On 16 May a strongly worded Order in Council declared a blockade of the entire northern coast of Europe from Brest to the Elbe but concluded meekly that it would be enforced rigidly only from the Seine to Ostend. Thus the ministry attempted to reassure Englishmen that the war was to be fought with vigour while at the same time delivering an open invitation to American merchants to visit enemy ports if they did not carry contraband or goods owned by the enemy, and if they neither came from nor were bound for other enemy ports. Grenville had doubts about the legality of such a sweeping, 'paper' blockade, and Nicholl, who was not amused by the manoeuvre, wrote

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 7 and 9 April 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 85, 87-88.

<sup>2</sup>Charles, Lord Colchester, ed., The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester (London, 1804), II, 51.

Auckland a terse letter which outlined the frauds of the neutral flags.<sup>1</sup> But the primary objective of government had been achieved. 'On a first view it appears to me highly expedient & useful - affording indeed the only satisfactory solution I have yet heard proposed', wrote Grenville. 'With respect to America ... you will see that you open to her for the carriage of Colonial produce (whether Enemy's or not, for after actual importation into the U.S. they are indistinguishable) not only the ports of the Atlantic & Mediterr'n but also those of Holland & Flanders - & I think in the present state of commerce it will be right to do so.'<sup>2</sup> In effect, the government had weakened the effects of the Essex decision without arousing the fears of public opinion.<sup>3</sup> Perplexed, Monroe reported to his government that the blockade 'imposed the suspension desired, but in a manner wh. seemed as if it intended to mask the object from view'.<sup>4</sup>

By early June Fox had succeeded in bolstering his position at home to such an extent that he could meet the Americans on comparatively favourable ground. The American Intercourse Bill was progressing smoothly and in no danger of defeat in Parliament; the neutral question had been placed in a proper perspective; impressment had been put under tighter control largely because British commanders were uncertain of Fox's views; and, owing greatly to the efforts of Auckland, the Cabinet

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 9 May 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 138. Auckland to Howick, 3 May 1806 (Grey). Nicholl to Auckland, 9 May 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 34456 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, n.d. [May 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), ff. 194-95. Also see Auckland to Grenville, 31 May 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 164-65.

<sup>3</sup>A. T. Mahan, Influence of Sea Power Upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812 (London, 1893), II, 269-70. Also see Hecksher, The Continental System, pp. 105-08.

<sup>4</sup>Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 106.

was united behind the Foreign Secretary. The spirit of Fox's government had not gone unnoticed in the United States. Monroe's despatches to Washington had been optimistic, and in May Jefferson had described Fox as one in whom he had 'more confidence than any man in England.'<sup>1</sup> Both governments looked forward to fruitful negotiation. In Britain, Fox found Selkirk's views on the neutral question incompatible with his plans, vetoed his appointment as minister to Washington, and sent in his stead young David Erskine, the Lord Chancellor's son, whose connexions, habits, and political views were consistent with a policy of conciliation. From the United States came a fellow negotiator for Monroe: the Federalist William Pinckney who had played an important role in the Jay Treaty twelve years before. When Fox fell ill in late June, he was preparing a revolution in Anglo-American relations.

These developments were paralleled by a new approach to continental affairs. On 20 February, shortly after the initial conferences with Monroe, Fox was approached at the Foreign Office by a Frenchman who proposed the assassination of Napoleon. After deliberation, Fox confined the would-be assassin and sounded the Cabinet on the propriety of reporting the matter to the French Government. This curious proposal surprisingly met with no opposition and Fox promptly communicated the plot to Talleyrand in most cordial terms. This opened correspondence of a pacific nature between the two ministers. Talleyrand sent Fox a copy of the French official gazette in which Napoleon expressed a wish to make peace with Great Britain on the basis of the Treaty of Amiens, and the British reply, which had the endorsement of the Cabinet,

---

<sup>1</sup>Jefferson to Monroe, 4 May 1806, Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, eds., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Washington, 1903-04), XII, pp. 4-5. Also see Russell King to Sir Francis Baring, 30 Sept. 1806, enclosed in Baring to Howick, 30 Nov. 1806 (Grey).

gave assurances of a desire to negotiate for peace, but only in concert with the Russian Emperor.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that these preliminaries produced no disagreement in the Cabinet. Though Fox's cordiality had opened the correspondence, talk of peace had come first from Talleyrand and neither Grenville nor Windham was prepared to thwart the Foreign Secretary. This was not the case with the king. The diplomatic correspondence with Talleyrand raised the ire of George III. 'His reply,' Fox told Grenville on 8 March, 'is as unpleasant as possible.'<sup>2</sup> But Fox's blood was up and throughout March he laboured to unite the Cabinet behind him. In this the compromises on foreign policy upon which the ministry had been launched proved invaluable. An honourable peace in no way threatened British security; indeed, peace would facilitate a system of retrenchment and home defence! Above all, Great Britain could not appear altogether averse to peace. These were points upon which Fox would not bend and he made it clear that he would resign if he did not get his way.

All this got results. Auckland told Grenville that the failure of the Austro-Russian Campaign seemed 'to reduce our speculations to the possibility of an insecure and expensive peace, on the ground of a mutual retention of conquests', and Tom Grenville argued that if peace could be made 'without present loss, I do not know that in abstaining from war, we lose upon the whole, any such advantage as justifies the cost and risk of it.'<sup>3</sup> As in December and January, Fox carried his argument by pointing to the

---

<sup>1</sup>H.M.C. Dropmore, VII, xx. Butterfield, Charles James Fox and Napoleon, p. 6.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grenville, 8 Mar. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 50.

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 9 April 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 87. T. Grenville to Buckingham, 15 July 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 49.



effects of Austerlitz and by appealing to the warlike prejudices of his new allies. 'My opinion of our prospects in War', wrote Grenville at a later date, 'is such that I should most cordially rejoice in the conclusion of a truce (for such of course it could alone be considered) that would give us a little breathing time & a chance of events to improve a state of things that hardly could be made worse.'<sup>1</sup> Windham, Fitzwilliam, and Spencer gave a silent nod to this logic, and though there was considerable disparity of motive, the Cabinet again presented a united front by 23 March.<sup>2</sup> On the 26th the king was assured that the principal object in opening negotiations was, on the one hand, 'to guard your Majesty's Government from the imputation, which the enemy endeavours to cast upon it, of being averse to peace on any terms; and on the other to shew that, in discussing that important subject, your Majesty will never be forgetful of the dignity of your Majesty's crown, of the honour and interests of your Majesty's allies, or of the general welfare of Europe.'<sup>3</sup> This language hardly expressed Fox's motives, but it opened doors for him. The king yielded to the unanimous advice of the Cabinet after it had become a question of his acquiescence or their resignation.

News of these developments aroused the deepest fears of British public opinion. Fox's language of the 1790's had branded him a pacifist, if not a traitor, and this reputation formed his greatest stigma upon coming to office. He was crippled by it in the early stages of the American negotiation, and he was forced to calm fears by his

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 18 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Grenville, 23 Mar. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 63-4.

<sup>3</sup>Cabinet minute by Grenville, 24 Mar. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 65-66.

strongly-worded blockading decree of 16 May. He faced the same problem in opening negotiations with France, but this time suspicion came from the king and Cabinet as well as from the public. Here the folly of Prussia allowed him to assert his virility. On 15 February Napoleon had forced Prussia into a defensive alliance through the Treaty of Paris, an agreement which guaranteed future Anglo-Prussian discord by closing the North Sea ports to British commerce and by ceding Hanover to King Frederick William. Though the Prussians represented these arrangements to the British Government as a sacrifice made for the patriotic purpose of excluding the French from north Germany and assured London that they were taken under compulsion, that they were contrary to the wishes of the king, and that they were quite temporary in nature, Fox showed uncharacteristic hostility.

On 5 April William Wilberforce visited the Foreign Secretary and noted that he appeared to be 'rather yielding to Grenville's foreign politics against peace'.<sup>1</sup> Fox refused to listen to the perfectly understandable Prussian pleas, and he called for an immediate declaration of war. Before the Commons on 23 April he argued that by a declaration of war government could 'avoid the giving our sanction to that principle which has been lately adopted, of transferring the subjects of one prince to another, in the way of equivalents, and under the pretext of convenience and mutual accommodation'.<sup>2</sup> He urged the Czar to punish Prussian bad faith by annexing Prussian Poland; he represented Hanover as being as dear to British hearts as Hampshire; and after the blockading decree of 16 May, British squadrons blockaded the mouths of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, The Life of William Wilberforce (London, 1838), III, 267.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., VI, 886-93.

Ems, Elbe, and Weser and captured 250 merchant vessels.

This behaviour was startling to those who looked on Fox as a man of peace and as a perpetual enemy of the king, and many Foxites were sadly disappointed. 'Plumb down he drops ten thousand fathoms deep', wrote one of his aides at the Foreign Office. 'Had he hunted for a place or a pension, he could not have taken up the defence of Hanover with more zeal ... or loaded his gracious sovereign with greater professions of attachment, and what did he gain by it? To be suspected, if not convicted, of insincerity by every man of sense and spirit in the kingdom.'<sup>1</sup> There was much truth in this. Though Fox's language against the system of annexation was true to past views, his defence of Hanover and his sycophantic tributes to the king alarmed men like Coke, Francis, Sheridan, and even Howick. Then, too, though the loss of Hanover and the closure of Prussian ports demanded strong protest, the circumstances behind these events hardly called for so violent a reaction. The explanation lies in Fox's precarious position at the Foreign Office and in the priorities of his foreign policy. His speech on Prussia quickly became the talk of society and it strengthened the ministry in public opinion. It disarmed parliamentary opponents; it soothed the injured feelings of the king; and it delighted the war faction in the Cabinet. Windham went from house to house expressing great satisfaction with Fox's 'war whoop' and even Buckingham caught the infection. But above all else, it strengthened Fox's position for negotiations with France, both at home and in the Tuileries.

Meanwhile, the British refusal to negotiate for peace without the concert of Russia had produced a hitch at Paris. Justifiably, Talleyrand had pointed out in early April that his government could

---

<sup>1</sup>Francis Memoirs, II, 444.

not prevent Britain from making alliances against it, but at the same time that Britain could not expect Napoleon to assist her in holding such combinations together. This stance had threatened to end the negotiation before it began because Grenville and Windham demanded Russian cooperation. However, in late April, before his speech on Prussia, Fox was both astonished and delighted to learn that Russia was involved in separate negotiations with France.<sup>1</sup> The Russian Chancellor was pursuing a policy of pacification independently of Great Britain for he feared French designs on the Ottoman Empire. He had developed counterplans which called for the establishment of a powerful, independent Balkan state under Russian protection to provide a barrier against French expansion. Paramount in this scheme was peace, or at least a truce with Napoleon, and the Russians were prepared to recognize French conquests to attain it, with or without Britain. However, by mid-May common interest had led to a semblance of Anglo-Russian accord, and the British Minister at St. Petersburg was informed that the Czar aimed at the independence of Naples and at the exclusion of the French from Istria, Albania, and Dalmatia. Uninspired by these objectives, Fox left the task of securing them to Russia, but found common ground on Sicily, the independence of which the two governments agreed to demand in negotiations with France.<sup>2</sup> In response to the Emperor Francis's appeal, in early June the Russian Chancellor sent d'Oubril to Vienna to discuss the whole question with the Austria Government. Meanwhile in Britain Fox studied these developments with interest and continued his

---

<sup>1</sup>Talleyrand to Fox, 16 April, and Fox to Talleyrand, 20 April 1806, F.O. 27/72.

<sup>2</sup>Ld. G. L. Gower to Fox, 17 May, 19 June 1806, F.O. 65/65. For Grenville's emphasis on Sicily see Grenville to Windham, 12 April 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 96-97.

warlike harangue against Prussia.<sup>1</sup>

At this point Talleyrand took the initiative. Improved relations had enabled Fox to obtain indulgences for British subjects detained as political prisoners in various depots throughout France. Among these was Lord Yarmouth, a close friend of the Prince of Wales and an old drinking and gaming colleague of Fox. Early in June Talleyrand sent this nobleman on a secret mission to London. Upon reaching the Foreign Office, Yarmouth reported enthusiastically that France had reconsidered and was ready to break her long silence. Not only was she prepared to begin joint negotiations with Britain and Russia; she also offered Hanover, expressed no desire for Sicily, and proposed what Fox and Grenville understood to be a basis of uti posseditis.<sup>2</sup> Of course, this offer was as unofficial as it was unbelievable and Lady Holland noted that 'much doubt was entertained of [Yarmouth's] accuracy in reporting.'<sup>3</sup> But it could not be ignored. Undoubtedly Fox realized that the diplomatic situation was unique and that fruitful negotiation hinged on personal as well as diplomatic finesse. At his insistence the Cabinet accepted the proposal immediately. Yarmouth, who had no diplomatic training or experience, who was personally unfit for the task, but whom Fox knew to be on friendly terms with Talleyrand and anxious for peace, was returned to Paris authorized to discuss informally terms of peace on the basis apparently offered. Though Yarmouth was instructed to consider nothing without the cooperation of Russia, Grenville's other ideas were overridden and not one word was said of obtaining a written avowal

---

<sup>1</sup>Fox to Adair, June 1806, F.O. 7/80.

<sup>2</sup>Communications made by Yarmouth to Fox, 13 June 1806, F.O. 27/72, printed in Parl. Deb., VIII, 109-10.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 164.

of the basis of negotiation.<sup>1</sup>

As soon as Yarmouth returned to Paris, Talleyrand demanded Sicily (pretending to have discovered its importance only recently) and offered the Hanseatic towns as compensation for the Sicilian monarch.<sup>2</sup> This development had an enormous impact on the British Cabinet. Prior to receiving Yarmouth's despatch of 1 July, Fox had been plagued by the reluctance of his political allies. Though his pleas for peace negotiations had gained the tacit approval of men like Grenville, his brother Tom, Windham, and Fitzwilliam, they had approved only reluctantly, and Grenvillite peers had not concealed their distrust. Stiff opposition had come from Grenville's own family. Buckingham's Bourbon sympathies had led him to threaten a political separation and Temple had predicted 'the probable ruin of the County, & the complete & certain destruction of the objects & interests of our family.'<sup>3</sup>

This pressure had led Grenville to advocate policies which resisted the spirit in which Fox wished to enter the negotiations. On 22 June, when there was every reason for optimism, Grenville had insisted on pushing uti posseditis to its very limit by including Spain; he had stressed British responsibilities to Russia after it was clear that the Czar had proceeded without consultation with Britain; and he had advocated garrisoning Sicily and placing Sardinia under British protection so as to 'make all these islands in the Mediterranean an important chain of stations highly useful to us in war and commerce.'<sup>4</sup> Only the

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Howick, 3 Jan. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Yarmouth to Fox, 1 July 1806, F.O. 27/72, printed in Parl. Deb., VIII, 114.

<sup>3</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 29 June 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 208-09. Buckingham to Temple, 26 June 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 36-37. Temple to T. Grenville, 10 May 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Fox, 22 June 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 195-96.

warlike stance towards Prussia, the reported liberality of the French Government, and the desire of Windham and Fitzwilliam to cooperate with the Foreign Secretary had given Fox latitude. But at a moment when Talleyrand's diplomacy signalled the opening of serious negotiations Fox fell so violently ill that he was put to bed at St. Anne's Hill. The character of the French negotiation changed overnight. Concurrently, the developing entente with the United States lost its momentum as Monroe and Pinckney found only confusion in Downing Street. After 1 July the Foreign Office was adrift.

Though diplomatic correspondence continued to be carried on in Fox's name, Grenville moved quickly to the position of de facto leader in foreign affairs. On 4 July Fox's proxy assured Cabinet unanimity by endorsing Grenville's plan which called for the despatch of 6,000 troops to Sicily and instructed Yarmouth to 'recall the French Government to the basis on which alone the negotiation was opened, in which Sicily was by express deliberation included, and with which its surrender would be wholly inconsistent; and, if he should find this impossible, that he should then return to England ...'<sup>1</sup> In a word, the Cabinet refused to negotiate. There had been no basis, indeed no formal negotiation prior to 4 July, primarily because Fox had held the entire matter to informal, low-key discussion. Thus the new instructions of the Cabinet completely ended Yarmouth's utility in Paris because it ended informal discussion; it contradicted the spirit of the entire affair; and it bound Britain to an avowed sine qua non, the one thing which Fox had studiously avoided.

However, Yarmouth adhered to his initial instructions and

---

<sup>1</sup>Minute of Cabinet (copy), 4 July 1806 (with enclosure), ibid., VIII, 217-18. The severity of Fox's illness on 4 July is open to debate, but his endorsement of Grenville's ideas leads to obvious conclusions.

continued discussions without producing his full powers. On 7 July he closeted with d'Oubril (who had proceeded from Vienna to Paris), found him less unbending than his own government, and hit upon a plan of surrendering Sicily in return for Albania and Dalmatia as compensation for the deposed king. Talleyrand cautiously approved of this scheme and shortly both Yarmouth and the Russian Minister in London were urging the Foreign Office to display more latitude.<sup>1</sup> They were unsuccessful, primarily because Grenville opposed any scheme which tore Albania from the Ottoman Empire.<sup>2</sup> Thus convinced that the British stance was incompatible with his own instructions and terrified by threats of French expansion to the east, on 20 July d'Oubril concluded a separate peace. This mortified Yarmouth. Fearing British isolation, he produced his full powers and entered into formal negotiations determined to sign a treaty within 48 hours. He found Talleyrand most obliging and when the Frenchman produced a draft Yarmouth eagerly began to scribble out various projets which ignored Sicily altogether.<sup>3</sup>

In London, both Foxites and Grenvillites became alarmed. The news of the Russian treaty angered Grenville considerably, and he and his brother were so sure of 'the total debasement of all European courts' that they saw no hope of the Czar refusing ratification. Buckingham blamed everything on the Foxites and pressed his brother to settle the question of peace and war quickly and finally before death robbed the ministry of Fox's sanction. In the end Grenville decided to

---

<sup>1</sup>Yarmouth to Fox, 9 July (with enclosure), F.O. 27/73.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Yarmouth, 18 July 1806, F.O. 27/73. However, Britain accepted the idea of compensation for Sicily, but only with the consent of the Sicilian monarch. Minute of Cabinet, 15 July 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 235-36.

<sup>3</sup>Yarmouth to Fox, 20, 21, 24 July, F.O. 27/73. Note Butterfield's comments on Yarmouth's labours in Charles James Fox and Napoleon, pp. 17-19.



send a second plenipotentiary to push the negotiation back to its original principle. Lauderdale, accompanied by Dugald Stewart, left England in late July with instructions to restrain Yarmouth.<sup>1</sup>

The events of July had convinced British public opinion and a majority of the Cabinet that peace was impossible. A Russian visitor noted that 'the great majority of people here are convinced that England will run less risk in continuing a purely naval war than in making peace with the Corsican.' And John Allen, who was well informed about Cabinet discussions, recorded in his journal that Bonaparte had been 'elated to more than his natural insolence by the Russian treaty.' Even Fox lost hope. 'It is not Sicily,' he told his nephew, 'but the shuffling, insincere way in which they act, that shows me they are playing a false game ...'<sup>2</sup> Most members of Government felt defeated and alarmed by their plight and Buckingham encouraged Grenville to desert the Foxites on their leader's death. Both Fox and Howick were very warlike, the latter being obsessed with fears of a French invasion of Portugal. In the face of all this Lauderdale and Stewart proceeded to Paris full of optimism, only to be embarrassed by the reception of the French Emperor: 'Comment! on m'envoie un ancien Jacobin.'<sup>3</sup>

Lauderdale never had a chance. He performed brilliantly in

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 167-68. 'Observations on Lord Yarmouth's despatches of 20 and 21 July', by Lord Grenville, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 244-46. Grenville to Buckingham, 26 July 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 54. Buckingham to Grenville, 23 and 27 July 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 240-42, 248. Fox to Yarmouth, 26 and 28 July 1806, F.O. 27/73. Allen Journal, entry of 28 July 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.

<sup>2</sup>Butterfield, Charles James Fox and Napoleon, p. 1. Allen Journal, entry of 28 July 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I. Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 257.

<sup>3</sup>Howick to Grenville, 30 July and 7 Aug. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 250, 259-60. Allen Journal, entries of 4 and 5 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.

recommending the recall of poor Yarmouth, but he soon found that his French, which was delivered in a heavy Scots brogue, produced snickers and winks at the conference table. Embarrassed by this and overanxious to correct his predecessor's errors, he insisted upon negotiation through the written word, a demand which brought protests from his hosts. At long last, he requested passports, only to be delayed further by a refusal and an apology. This made the Scotsman picture himself as a political prisoner and he meditated a magnificent protest in the name of international law. Talleyrand delighted in these delays, for it was in his interest to suspend negotiation until the final result of the Russian treaty were known. Meanwhile, Lauderdale was unpopular on both sides of the Channel. In Paris rumours spread that he had deserted Fox and adopted the warlike principles of Grenville and in England Buckingham hoped that Napoleon had locked him in the Temple. Nobody seemed to place any emphasis on his conviction that there was a sincere disposition for peace in Paris. Events in the world were making his mission ridiculous.<sup>1</sup>

Throughout August and early September the British Cabinet drifted towards unmistakably warlike views. Reports from France and Spain confirmed that Joseph Bonaparte was prepared to invade Portugal with the object of seizing the fleet, deposing the monarch, and partitioning the country. On 25 July, in the wake of the Franco-Russian treaty, the Cabinet resolved to defend Portugal. Howick, who was particularly embarrassed by events in Paris, showed great pugnacity in the days which followed. He told C.W.W. Wynn that he had lost all hope in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grenville, 7 and 11 Aug. 1806 (with enclosure), H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 273-75, 276-77. C. Goddard to Grenville, 11 Aug. 1806, *ibid.*, 268. Allen Journal, entries of 14 and 19 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I. Buckingham to Grenville, 11 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 316-18. For Burdett's reaction see his letter to Rev. R. N. French, 18 Aug. 1806 (Burdett).

negotiations with France and on 30 July he joined Windham in advocating the destruction of Portugal's coastal defences and the confiscation of the country's fleet.<sup>1</sup> This plan was adopted in early August over the strong protests of Sidmouth and Tom Grenville. A military force of 6,000 men was assembled at Portsmouth with orders to be prepared to sail at a moment's notice, while at the same time a powerful naval armament was sent with ambassadors to Lisbon for the purpose of coercing the Portuguese into either resistance or retreat to the Brazils.<sup>2</sup> These plans became meaningless when the French invasion failed to materialize, but unexpected news from the western hemisphere kept the fervour for war at a feverish pitch in the Cabinet.

In early September reports began to filter back to London that Buenos Aires had been conquered by a British army. Nobody was more surprised by this than the members of government. Admiral Sir Home Popham and General Sir David Baird had been despatched by Pitt in 1805 in command of an expedition against the Dutch colony at the Cape of Good Hope. In January 1806 the colony had surrendered and Popham, after persuading Baird to place a body of troops at his disposal, had proceeded without orders to Rio de la Plata. There he had had little trouble in capturing Buenos Aires in June. Adding insult to injury, he announced this feat in a manifesto addressed to Britain's trading corporations which vividly outlined the commercial advantages offered by a conquest of South America. In early September Popham put his

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 25 July 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I. C.W.W. Wynn Diary, entry of 1 Aug. 1806 (Wynn). Windham to Grenville, 30 July 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 251.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 6 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Grenville to Fitzwilliam, 27 Aug. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 296. Howick to Holland, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

case before the government and asked for reinforcements to attack Montevideo.<sup>1</sup>

These developments created mass confusion. Howick was adamant in insisting that the country had its hands full in Europe, that prior policy had been geared to bolstering British strength in the Mediterranean, and that Popham's violation of orders should be punished and not condoned. But he stood alone. Petty and Erskine, both of whom retained faith in the negotiations for peace, felt that Howick was too warlike. Many of the Grenvillites argued that Spanish American conquest would be an effectual means of damaging French resources; Sidmouth and Ellenborough paid heed to the popular cry of merchants; and Windham abandoned peace and advocated naval isolation from Europe and commercial expansion in South America.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, Fox was incapable of providing leadership.<sup>3</sup> In the midst of this mêlée one Foxite peer noted dejectedly that the country was 'not yet sufficiently pacific to approve of such a peace as can be procured & it will require two years' more suffering under the scourge of the chan of the exchequer to bring all the fools in the country to a right understanding.'<sup>4</sup> This was certainly the case. By early September the Cabinet had gone to pieces and Fox's foreign policy was dying with him.

Grenville rose above this confusion. Like his relatives, he felt that the capture of Buenos Aires opened new doors to Britain and he had little faith in the negotiation with France. However, he was

---

<sup>1</sup>Popham to Howick, 9 Sept. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Howick to Grenville, 14 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville). T. Grenville to Buckingham, 13 Sept. 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 70-72. Windham to Grenville, 11 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 321.

<sup>3</sup>Roger Fulford, Samuel Whitbread (London, 1967), p. 152.

<sup>4</sup>Ld. King to Holland, Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland).

sufficiently perceptive to see that the possibility of peace had to be disposed of once and for all before the government could unite behind vigorous measures of war. From Lauderdale came reports of a serious disposition for peace in Paris, and Petty, Erskine, Sidmouth, and many of Fox's friends in the Commons put great stock in them. With the future of his government in mind Grenville saw the need for serious negotiation before Fox's death, for he was unsure whether the Foreign Secretary had 'lived long enough to commit himself and his friends to the principles of negotiation that have been put forward ...' Consequently, while Howick encouraged espionage among the negotiating team in Paris and Windham clamoured for the conquest of sugar islands, Grenville stressed the need for following the negotiation to its logical conclusion. The Cabinet was discussing a plan of strengthening Britain's diplomatic posture by encouraging rebellion in Spain when news arrived that Fox had died at Devonshire's villa in Chiswick.<sup>1</sup>

Though the death of the Whig leader had been anticipated for several months, it had a considerable impact upon the councils of government. Grenville saw immediately that the foreign situation demanded that Fox should be succeeded by one of his followers and, satisfied by the events of August that Howick's view of the European situation was similar to his own, he pushed him forward as Foreign Secretary and leader of the House of Commons. He also felt that Holland, as Fox's nephew and political disciple, should be admitted to the Cabinet. These plans assured continued balance in the government, but they alienated Buckingham, who coveted the Foreign Office and the lead in the Commons for his brother Tom Grenville. Pressure from Stowe soon forced Grenville to a posture which roused considerable animosity: he advocated the accession

---

<sup>1</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 11 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 316-18. Goddard to Grenville, 19 Sept. 1806, ibid., 343-44.

of Tom Grenville at the expense of Windham, whom he offered a peerage in return for a letter of resignation. Windham refused curtly and turned to the Foxites for support. These events convinced many Foxites that Grenville was striving for ascendancy in the Cabinet. Howick wanted no part of the scheme to depose Windham, and Allen attributed the whole thing to the 'marked predilection' Windham had shown to the Foxites since coming to office. 'By removing him from the H. of Commons,' he noted jealously, 'they probably calculate that T. Grenville will take the lead as soon as Ld. Howick is removed to the H. of Lords.' Deprived of Fox's leadership, many in the party desired separation from the Grenvillites and rumours spread at Holland House that Grenville was secretly negotiating with the Pittites.<sup>1</sup>

Howick, who had assumed the lead of Fox's party, soon found great dissension in his ranks. Many Foxites were unhappy with him and made no secret that they preferred Holland. This group was led by Sheridan and the Prince, both of whom asserted that Howick was too unpopular to take the lead in the Commons and too unprincipled to guide the party in Fox's theories. Moreover, there were more ambitious men than places in government. Whitbread, who had been denied office in February, demanded attention and Holland insisted that Lauderdale should hold Cabinet rank. Howick became so frustrated that he talked of retirement, but a compromise was struck at last. Fitzwilliam magnanimously bowed out to make room for Tom Grenville, who became First Lord of the Admiralty. Sidmouth climbed from the office of Privy Seal to that of President of the Council so that Holland could assume the former. Howick became

---

<sup>1</sup> Buckingham to Grenville, 11 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 316-18. Grenville to Windham, 11, 19 Sept. 1806 and Windham to Grenville, 11, 19 Sept. 1806, ibid., 319, 320, 340-42, 242-43. Grenville to Howick, 18 Sept. 1806; Howick to Grenville, 19 Sept. 1806, ibid., pp. 337-38, 340. Allen Journal, undated entry [17 Sept. 1806?], B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I, f. 38.

Foreign Secretary and Leader of the Commons with the understanding that he would offer the Foreign Seals to Holland upon his removal to the Lords. Tierney succeeded Tom Grenville at the Board of Control and as yet another slap in the face of Sidmouth's enemies, Bragge Bathurst, the 'doctor's' brother-in-law, became Master of the Mint.<sup>1</sup>

The balance of the Cabinet was preserved but, like most compromises, the new arrangements pleased nobody. Whitbread and Lauderdale were left in the cold; the Prince was infuriated that Holland had not been given the Foreign Office; many were upset by the increase of Sidmouth's power; and Howick was unpopular with the party he led.<sup>2</sup> Though the Duke of Bedford summed up the feelings of many when he spoke of 'the vast chasm which the Death of Fox has left in our political strength and Consequence as a party', most Foxites agreed with Fitzpatrick that the new arrangements gave 'the appearance as well as the reality of a pacifick system in the Foreign Affairs ...'<sup>3</sup> This had been Grenville's goal. Only Sidmouth saw Fox's death as an event which would change the 'relation in which we stand to all foreign countries ...'<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entries of 2 Aug. and 19 and 25 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-1.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 185.

<sup>3</sup>Bedford to Howick, 29 Sept. 1806 (Grey). Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 53-61.

<sup>4</sup>Sidmouth Life, II, 433.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE SUPREMACY OF GRENVILLE: COMPROMISE AND COLLAPSE, SEPTEMBER 1806 - MARCH 1807

Fox's strategy upon coming to office had not taken into account the possibility of his own death within the year. His name alone had inspired confidence in Washington and Paris while Grenville's had been identified with that of Pitt. Then, too, the men Fox left behind him in the Cabinet were incapable of holding the ministry to the guidelines and the spirit of his foreign policy. Petty, a boy of twenty-five, scarcely said a word in Cabinet meetings. Holland, at thirty-three, was emotional, unrealistic, and lacking in resolve. Erskine, at fifty-six the only established statesman, was eccentric, erratic, often foolish, and seldom listened to. And Howick, at thirty-eight, was less devoted to traditional Foxite dogma than other party leaders and almost totally ignorant of the mechanics of foreign relations. These men had spent their entire political lives on the opposition benches and were aware that they were ill-prepared for the responsibilities of office. By contrast, Grenville was an established statesman who was better qualified in the field of diplomacy than any man in Great Britain. The result was catastrophic. Allen sensed the danger and warned that regardless of the friendship and cordiality which existed between Foxite leaders and Grenville, it was 'impossible that the body of the party can be ever made to look upon Ld. Grenville as their head'.<sup>1</sup> But Fox's lieutenants were ill-equipped for leadership. Grenville awed the

---

<sup>1</sup>John Allen Journal, entry of 26 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.



Foxites in the Cabinet, seized the reins of both the Exchequer and the Foreign Office, and assumed the position of dominance which Fox had held before him. After September the Ministry of All the Talents was clearly Grenville's government.

While the ministry was involved with new Cabinet arrangements word reached Paris that the Russian Emperor had disavowed d'Oubril and demanded not only that Sicily should be left to the Bourbons, but that the French should relinquish Dalmatia. Significantly, Alexander authorized Lauderdale to represent Russia as well as Britain in Paris. This news put the French in motion immediately. Seeing a new coalition in the making, Napoleon resolved to crush Prussia before negotiation could sooth Frederick William's differences with Britain. He demanded curtly that Prussia must disarm and within three days French troops in Germany were preparing for battle. Concurrently, Talleyrand cloaked these designs and expressed new interest in peace to the British plenipotentiary. Totally unaware of the French scheme, Lauderdale became convinced that Russia's new posture had brought the negotiation back to the position in which it had stood prior to d'Oubril's arrival in Paris. He reported enthusiastically to London that he was on the verge of success.<sup>1</sup>

In London the Cabinet was at first inclined to agree with the assessment of its plenipotentiary and on 14 September Grenville expressed moderation and told Lauderdale that he hoped the capture of Buenos Aires would facilitate peace.<sup>2</sup> However, these feelings were soon changed drastically as Prussia attempted to bring Russia and Great

---

<sup>1</sup>Butterfield, Charles James Fox and Napoleon, p. 25. H.M.C. Dropmore, VII, xxxi.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Lauderdale, 14 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 332-33. Cabinet Minute, 7 Sept. 1806, ibid., 312.

Britain to her side. On 19 September the Cabinet received a Prussian plea for assistance which confirmed that the Czar had placed all the resources of the Russian Empire at the disposal of his ally. The storm broke immediately. Howick urged war; Windham was equally warlike but opposed continental involvement in favour of South American schemes; Holland, Erskine, and Petty wanted to pursue peace negotiations with France; and Temple warned that Napoleon was 'so much in want of Peace that even under these circumstances he will offer terms which we shall not dare refuse'.<sup>1</sup>

Faced with the possibility of an open break in the Cabinet, Grenville again stood by the negotiations for peace. Allen noted that the Prime Minister was very pacific and that he viewed Buenos Aires 'in a proper light as an exchange for Hanover & is not dazzled as the public at large & some of his colleagues about the prospect of S. American conquests'.<sup>2</sup> But this moderation did not withstand family pressure. Harassed by Buckingham on both foreign affairs and Cabinet realignment, Grenville spoke of resignation on the 21st and then leaned towards cooperation with Prussia. On the 22nd he cast odium on the ministry by instructing Lauderdale to include Buenos Aires 'in our uti posseditis, or to ask its full value for it.'<sup>3</sup> Holland protested vehemently against cooperation with a power with whom Britain was officially at war, pointed out that the Prussian offer had included no guarantee of Hanover, and even opposed Grenville's plan of sending a

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 19 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I. Lady Holland Journal, II, 183, 187. Temple to Wynn, n.d. [Sept. 1806], (Wynn), 20.

<sup>2</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 19 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Howick, 21 Sept. 1806 (Grey). Grenville to Lauderdale, 22 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 352.

plenipotentiary to Berlin.<sup>1</sup> This calmed Howick somewhat and on 22 September, when Windham disclosed that it would cost £2,400,000 to send 10,000 cavalry to Germany, Grenville decided that South American conquest was not such a bad idea after all.<sup>2</sup> Such hedging placed Grenville in a double pinch. Lauderdale, who was sure that peace was at hand, objected to Grenville's instructions to include Buenos Aires in the British uti posseditis and the Foxite wing of the Cabinet (with the exception of Howick) was bitter on the point. Meanwhile, Fitzwilliam broke a long silence and told Grenville that Britain's interests lay with Prussia and Russia and that the peace negotiations should be abandoned.<sup>3</sup> And Fitzwilliam was not one to be ignored.

In Cabinet discussions of late September Howick and Grenville again moved towards compromise. Over the protest of Holland it was agreed that Morpeth, Carlisle's son, should be sent on a mission to the Prussian Court, and on 1 October Grenville instructed Lauderdale to present the Russian demands conjointly with those of Great Britain and to stress that if France obliged Britain to follow up her blow in South America, 'the Spanish empire there will be placed beyond the reach of being restored by any treaty that we could make, were we ever so much disposed to it.' The Prime Minister was sure that the increasing difficulties of France would bring a favourable answer from Talleyrand. He speculated on an even exchange of Buenos Aires for Naples, but above all else he wanted to force Napoleon's hand. Lauderdale was told that if the French refused his ultimatum he was to demand passports and

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 187.

<sup>2</sup>Windham to Grenville, 22 Sept., and Grenville to Windham, 23 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 353.

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grenville, 26 Sept., and Fitzwilliam to Grenville, 24 Sept. 1806, ibid., 358-59, 355-56.

return home immediately.<sup>1</sup> A similar stance was taken towards Prussia. 'If Prussia has compromised her differences with France she will certainly never restore Hanover till forced to it by that Power', wrote Grenville. 'If she goes to war with France her only hope of success must be in our assistance & she will then be too happy to accept it upon our terms.'<sup>2</sup> One way or the other British interests would be served. This language pleased everybody in the Cabinet but Holland, for it committed Britain to nothing. Smugly Grenville and Howick awaited word from Morpeth and Lauderdale.<sup>3</sup>

Early in October a Prussian minister arrived in London with a letter from Frederick William to George III. He assured Howick that his government would restore Hanover at the conclusion of a general peace and he proposed to renew negotiation for an alliance against France. At this stage the British Cabinet was aching for war. Howick was impressed by Prussian spunk and the old Pittite wing of the government was delighted by what they saw as French difficulty.<sup>4</sup> At Stowe Buckingham and a Bourbon prince plotted an invasion of Brittany.<sup>5</sup> Also there had been a shift in Foxite opinion. In late September General Walpole, a staunch Foxite and an under-secretary at the Foreign Office, dined at Holland House and entertained the table with an exposition of foreign affairs. 'I listened to his observations with attention and

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Lauderdale, 1 Oct. 1806, ibid., VIII, 368-69.

<sup>2</sup>Howick to Grenville and Grenville to Howick, 29 Sept. 1806, ibid., 365-66, 366-68.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Howick, 28 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Howick to Holland, 28 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Howick to Lauderdale, 1 Oct. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 28 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 362.

surprise, and could not help smiling to perceive how much six months of office enlightens the mind and clears the sight', wrote one guest.

'Buonaparte is no longer his Hero; he can believe that there may be something wrong in the Government of France, and that all its faults and errors do not arise from the misconduct of the English Ministers, and that one may, without hypocrisy or shabbiness, believe in a report of good news, and wish success to our Allies.'<sup>1</sup> Even Holland gave way to this spirit and wanted to coerce Spain to war against France by threatening to conquer her colonies.<sup>2</sup>

Nevertheless not one influential figure besides Fitzwilliam desired a Prussian alliance. Howick was not content with assurances 'when there can be [no] inconvenience of giving proofs' of a disposition to restore Hanover, and though Buckingham was up to his neck in schemes for the invasion of France he had no desire for cooperation with Prussia. 'The demand of immediate pecuniary succours, without even the formality of a treaty of subsidy, & with no further explanation about Hanover except that Prussia will do in that respect whatever she shall hereafter promise to do, is certainly not very modest', wrote Grenville, '& I imagine you will agree that in answering this letter I ought, in a civil way, to make it felt that such is our impression.'<sup>3</sup> With Russian troops still hundreds of miles away, Prussia stood alone.

During October the Cabinet completely disassociated itself from the European struggle. From Vienna Adair stressed that the Austrian Government was immobilized by British inactivity. From Weimar Morpeth,

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 29 Sept. 1806, Granville Correspondence, II, 216-17.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Howick, Oct. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Howick to Grenville, 3 Oct. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 371-72. Grenville to Howick, 3 Oct. 1806 (Grey).

who had left London without the slightest idea of his government's intentions, begged for powers to negotiate an alliance.<sup>1</sup> But Grenville and Howick would not be moved, even after the final rupture of peace negotiations with France early in the month. On the 13th Grenville advocated a dissolution of Parliament so as to commit the country to the principle of war, but he failed to mention with whom he wished to fight.<sup>2</sup> Howick refused Morpeth's plea 'to speak more specifically' and stressed that 'we cannot have confidence enough to act in anticipation of her [Prussia's] decision.'<sup>3</sup> On 10 October Napoleon engaged the Prussians and by the 15th the Prussian army was in ruins on the field of Jena.

Accounts of these events began to reach London in late October. Lord Darnley, a rather weak Foxite who seldom ventured an opinion on anything, decided that Britain now could have 'the glory of beginning the deliverance of Europe' and became persuaded 'that steady & uniform resistance can alone save us.'<sup>4</sup> Astonishingly this feeling was general. Certain that Morpeth's accounts of the battle were exaggerated, the Cabinet concluded that, after all, Prussia and Great Britain were common enemies of France and that aid would be forthcoming in spite of Anglo-Prussian differences.<sup>5</sup> This magnanimous gesture never reached

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Morpeth, 3 and 7 Oct., and Howick to Adair, 7 Oct. 1806 (Grey). Adair to Howick, 28 Sept. 1806, F.O. 7/80.

<sup>2</sup>The Cabinet considered landing Swedish troops in Brittany. Howick to Grenville, 4 Oct. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 373. Grenville to Buckingham, 13 Oct. 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Howick to Morpeth, 15 Oct. 1806 (Grey). Also see Grenville to Howick, 11 Oct. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Darnley to Holland, 26 Oct. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>T. Grenville to Morpeth, 28 Oct. 1806 (Carlisle).

Morpeth. Outraged by his government's procrastination and terrified by the stampede of French infantry, the Minister Extraordinary was on his way home before Napoleon could regroup for the push to Berlin. By early November Prussia was under the thumb of the French Emperor.

Upon reaching Berlin Napoleon turned his eyes towards Russia, Frederick William's tardy ally, whose armies in Poland were being strengthened daily by retreating Prussian troops. The French Emperor resolved at once to deal the Prussian monarchy the coup de grâce and he put the Grand Army in eastward motion. Simultaneously French pressure at Constantinople forced the Porte to abandon its treaty commitments to the Czar and a Turko-Russian war ensued. Russia foolishly invaded Turkey while her troops in Poland and the remnants of the Prussian army braced for the French onslaught. Frantically Alexander and Frederick William turned to Great Britain for help.

These pleas reached a divided Cabinet whose foreign policy was none too clear. The death of Fox and the rupture of negotiations with France had given the war faction in the Cabinet the upper hand but, as Temple noted, the 'continental game' was 'up & hopeless'.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of Jena only Howick, Sidmouth, and to a lesser extent Spencer favoured continental involvement. The result was further inactivity. Howick encouraged Russia and Prussia to resist French expansion and his ministers at St. Petersburg and Berlin promised general support while Adair courted the war faction at Vienna. These assurances, however, soon proved to be groundless. Upon learning of the dismal state of the Prussian armies the Cabinet stopped payment of a small subsidy to Frederick William. Russia had less luck. Alexander, who was straining all his resources in efforts to hold Prussian Poland against the Grand

---

<sup>1</sup>Temple to Auckland, 23 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

Army, applied urgently to Great Britain, not for a subsidy, but for the aid of British credit in raising a Russian loan while at the same time tactfully encouraging his ally to stop seizing Russian merchant ships in the Baltic and to help the 'common cause' by hostile expeditions to Constantinople, Holland, or even France. Charles Stuart, the British minister at St. Petersburg, was close to gaining a Russian guarantee of Hanover as well as the renewal of an advantageous commercial treaty which was about to expire and he pressed his government to cooperate with the Czar.<sup>1</sup>

Stuart's recommendations were supported only by Howick. The Foxites disapproved of the principle behind continental schemes; Windham and the Grenvilles distrusted Russia and Prussia because of bad experiences in the past; and it was felt generally that Great Britain had her own interests to consider. In this, fundamental disagreement on the goals of the war was paramount. When Howick tried to rally Cabinet support for an expedition to the coast of France Spencer refused to leave Althorp:

But if this were attempted, it appears to me that we must take up the whole question at once & make the attack avowedly for the object of restoring the legitimate Race of Princes to the Throne of France; and there are so many difficulties in the way of this, that I confess, I cannot bring myself positively to recommend such a Measure.<sup>2</sup>

Spencer's comment struck home. The Cabinet was seriously divided in opinion on the purpose of the war and it could not broach the fundamental question of Napoleon's sovereignty in France. The disagreements of October and November had shown clearly that the issue of war and peace continued to separate the former followers of Fox from those of Pitt

---

<sup>1</sup>Stuart to Howick, 19, 28 Nov. and 18 Dec. 1806, F.O. 65/65.

<sup>2</sup>Spencer to Howick, 30 Nov. 1806 (Grey).



and there was reason to believe that the government had been immobilized by these differences during the Prussian fiasco. Fox's death had stripped the ministry of an identifiable foreign policy and subsequent compromises had proved ludicrous. Had Spencer followed his reasoning to a logical conclusion he would have been forced to advocate the resignation of the government.

As in the days after Austerlitz, however, French supremacy on the Continent pushed fundamental differences of opinion into the background and talk of a new system of retrenchment and defensive warfare united men who otherwise had little in common. Howick's view of the war, which was hardly consistent with that of the majority of Foxites, and Grenville's renewed despondency for continental schemes combined to obscure the polarization of parties, and the ministry once again set out to bolster the defences of Great Britain. Grenville renewed work on a long-range wartime financial scheme and the Admiralty planned the construction of a breakwater across Plymouth Sound which would give smooth-water moorings to thirty-six sail-of-the-line.<sup>1</sup> As for foreign involvement, only one avenue remained open. 'The disasters in Germany, I find, exceed even the French reports;' wrote Fitzwilliam, 'these are only preparatory to the destruction even of the Russian empire; there is an end of the old world, we must look to the new.'<sup>2</sup>

From this frame of mind sprang renewed interest in accommodation with the United States. Fox's retirement from the duties of the Foreign Office in late June had paralyzed the developing Anglo-American entente. Both Pinckney and Monroe had been disappointed greatly by the loss of

---

<sup>1</sup>Abbot Diary, II, 285.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grenville, 3 Nov. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 421.

momentum and throughout July and August they had sat motionless as the British Cabinet pursued more important matters. However, in mid-August Fox's protests from St. Anne's Hill had sent Holland scurrying about Westminster with word that the American question should be given more attention. Looking over his shoulder, Grenville had asked Holland to join Auckland in discussions with Pinckney and Monroe. Though Holland entered these discussions with the same enthusiasm which his uncle had displayed two months previously, initial negotiation amounted to little more than British tokenism. Auckland and Grenville were engrossed with precarious business in Europe and they had no desire to provoke the prejudices of their countrymen or to foment further dissension in the Cabinet. London merchants and the East India Company looked on America jealously and Howick and Spencer were averse to any compromise on naval matters. Realistically the Cabinet concluded that American remonstrances on impressment and neutral commercial rights could not be given satisfaction without a general European peace. For these reasons Holland's boyish liberalism was discouraged and the negotiations of August and early September were far more social than political in nature.<sup>1</sup>

During September and October, however, Cabinet interest in American goodwill increased proportionately with the worsening of the European situation. The closure of Prussian ports alarmed the Board of Trade and by the early part of September the American embargo on British imports had proved to be an effective negotiating tactic. On the 6th Grenville had told Auckland:

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grenville, Aug., 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 297-98. Auckland to Grenville, 10, 20, 21, 27 Aug. 1806, ibid., 265-66, 288, 289-90, 296. Auckland to Holland, n.d. and 10 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland), ff. 1 and 28. Holland House Dinner Book entries of 20 July and 20, 30 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

The American question is of great uneasiness to me - they have taken a more effectual ground of annoying us than if they had like Prussia gone to war with us at once - But if the state of Prussia is to exclude us from every port South of the Baltic, & even to make it doubtful what is to be the situation of Denmark & Sweden, in that respect, how can we in the same moment for any interest, be it ever so great, risk even a temporary stoppage of our exports to America? This is a question which with all my aversion to humiliating concessions I feel it very difficult to solve. The stoppage would I am satisfied be only temporary because Am- wants to buy our goods at least as much as we want to sell them; but how can we meet the interval?<sup>1</sup>

This letter had sent Auckland to Dropmore immediately and on 7 September he had instructed Holland to encourage Pinckney and Monroe to suspend the embargo by assuring them that the British Cabinet was 'honorably disposed to remove all real causes of complaint, & to promote every practical measure of National Friendship & Conciliation.' The Americans had reported a major break-through to their government immediately and Jefferson had scrapped his unpopular embargo without delay. However, Howick, who was planning the increase of British naval power off Portugal and Sicily, had become alarmed by this stance and had made it clear that he would oppose major concessions.<sup>2</sup> This opposition, continental turmoil, the confusion which followed Fox's death, and the length of time required for trans-Atlantic correspondence had prevented the Cabinet from coming to grips with the American question until late October. At that time the rupture of peace negotiations with France and the defeat of Prussia rendered further delay impossible.

After discussing minor points with the Americans for a fortnight, Holland and to a lesser extent Auckland became convinced that the British practice of impressment on the high seas either should be

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 6 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Holland, 7 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland). Auckland to Grenville, 10 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 314-15.

abandoned or defended convincingly. Aware of Grenville's fears on the subject, on 1 November Holland prepared a memorandum for both Auckland and the Prime Minister in which he defended American pretensions vigorously. Ever true to his uncle's views, he suggested that if Britain were faced with a similar problem 'we should no doubt feel prepared to encounter the united navy of Europe than admit [such] a claim ...' Holland pressed his conviction that any arrangement with America had to be reciprocal; that possibly the problem stemmed from squalid conditions in the British Navy; and, above all, that before blocking a beneficial treaty the Admiralty should be asked to outline the 'practical importance' of the point in dispute. On the same day Auckland joined him in officially submitting to the King's Advocate a memorandum on the 'soundness of this pretension' in international law.<sup>1</sup>

The two negotiators stressed to the Cabinet that the Americans were prepared to give assurances; they developed projects to facilitate cooperation on the point; and they argued that the international situation rendered an 'experiment' necessary.<sup>2</sup> To Howick, whose views he feared, Holland stated that the point to be determined was 'whether our navy would be endangered by such an agreement & whether its security materially depends on a practice which no Neutral Nation will ever submit to but through fear, which if practised against us would be

---

<sup>1</sup>'Draft of a memorial on the Impressment of seamen prepared by Holland for Grenville & Auckland', [1 Nov. 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). 'Question submitted to Sir John Nicholl His Majesty's Advocate General by Lord Holland, Lord Auckland, Nov. 1, 1806', *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Grenville, n.d. [early Nov. 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). 'Notes on the Result of a Conference of Ld Hd & Auck wt Mr Monroe and Pinckney 30 Oct', *ibid.* 'Memorandum on Impressment', n.d. [early Nov. 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 51919 (Holland). 'Projet of an Article With Respect to Seamen', 4 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).

destructive to our carrying trade & which in every war tend [sic] to alienate the minds of a people whose geographical position renders them independant [sic] of France & whom language habits & mutual interests should unite closely with Great Britain'.<sup>1</sup>

These views were strikingly similar to those which Fox had put forward between 1783 and his death and Holland's pleading touched a nerve in many Foxites. Auckland

→ supported Holland unreservedly and he pressed Grenville on the subject. Petty spoke the language of his more famous father; Sheridan called for 'common sense & fair dealing'; and Erskine argued that the sacrifice was 'a cheap price for the cultivation of so many millions of people who walk about in our boots and shoes - Take off our Hats to one another; keep out every drop of rain with Cloth from Yorkshire, & who when they come hereafter to cut one another's throats ... will come to Birmingham and Sheffield for their weapons.'<sup>2</sup>

The Cabinet almost gave up impressment. It was with great reluctance that Howick, Tom Grenville, and Spencer opposed the concession and it was only the almost total dependence of Great Britain on her maritime supremacy in the wake of the battle of Jena that made Sidmouth and the Prime Minister side with them against Petty, Erskine, and Holland. With apologies and assurances of his government's desire for improved Anglo-American relations, on 4 November Grenville closed the door and the Admiralty began preparations for the 'possible case of war with

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Howick, 1 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Sheridan to Holland, 7 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51641 (Holland). Erskine to Holland, n.d. [3 Nov. 1806?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland).

America ...<sup>1</sup>

The firmness of the Cabinet, however, was soon qualified by threatening news from the Continent. Intoxicated by his unprecedented successes of the past 13 months, Napoleon sought to bring Great Britain to her knees by a plan which, as he phrased it, would 'conquer the sea by the land'. Accepting the theory that Britain's sophisticated system of division of labour and unique position in world commerce were the foundation of her economic life, he anticipated David Ricardo's thesis of a later day that the British Empire was especially susceptible to 'every sudden change in the channels of trade'. In mid-November he confiscated and burned British property at Hamburg, declared the port blockaded, and on the 21st issued the famous Berlin Decree. The proclamation placed the British Isles in a state of blockade and prohibited all trade and communication with them; it declared all British subjects in French controlled territory prisoners of war and their property fair prize; it declared war on British goods; and it stated that every vessel coming directly from British or British colonial ports or calling on either would be refused access to the Continent.<sup>2</sup>

Even before learning of the new policies of France Auckland had concluded that the entire downfall of the continental powers made it 'more than ever necessary to advert to interests which are merely British'. And he was quick to assert that the extension of British commerce was 'the most efficient measure of war'.<sup>3</sup> The Cabinet had

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Holland and Auckland, n.d. [5 Nov. 1806?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). Howick to Holland, 2 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Holland to Howick, 8 Nov. 1806 (Grey). Nicholl Memorandum, 3 Nov. 1806, F.O. 5/104. T. Grenville to Buckingham, 5 Nov. 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 91-2. Perkins, Prologue to War, pp. 126-28.

<sup>2</sup>Hecksher, pp. 71-90.

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 25 Nov. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 141-42.

agreed with this logic and Holland and Auckland had spent much time in negotiation with Pinckney and Monroe. Surprisingly the American negotiators had agreed to proceed with discussions in spite of the British decision on impressment and by 28 November the Cabinet was confident that soon a treaty of some sort would be signed. Only the question of neutral trading rights remained unanswered and most members of the government agreed with Auckland that the Essex decision should be abandoned in favour of a system of 'clogging the trade with landing, warehousing, reshipping, and proof (when required) of bona fide property'.<sup>1</sup>

News of the French confiscations therefore produced considerable disarray in the Cabinet. Howick acted before he thought and sent a letter to the Lord Mayor of London which promised strong economic retaliation. But cooler heads prevailed. Sir Francis Baring, to whom the government looked for advice in commercial matters, claimed not unreasonably that Napoleon's Government was 'ignorant of practical commerce', and that French commercial regulations were often founded on 'what they can collect from the English news papers, as most likely to prove injurious to this country'. 'The French are very alert to pronounce a guerre a mort against our Commerce which they very soon forget, unless their memory is refreshed', he wrote authoritatively.<sup>2</sup> Buckingham, whose influence over Grenville had grown enormously since Fox's death, assured his brother that British merchandise would 'find its way' and after meeting with the principal Hamburg merchants on 1 December Auckland agreed.<sup>3</sup> By the 2nd Grenville had decided to remain

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 28 Nov. 1806, ibid., VIII, 444-45.

<sup>2</sup>Baring to Howick, 30 Nov., and Howick to Baring, 2 Dec. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 30 Nov., and Auckland to Grenville, 1 Dec. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 449-50, 454.

quiet on French policy and to pursue the American negotiation with more vigour in spite of public clamour against both courses.<sup>1</sup> After counting his supporters in the Commons, on 6 December he instructed Auckland and Holland to renounce the Essex decision as well as the 'broken voyage' doctrine and to offer the Americans unrestricted re-exportation rights on the payment of a simple duty. This was an enormous concession and Pinckney and Monroe agreed enthusiastically. The subjugation of the continent of Europe had led Grenville to turn to the west for economic salvation.

Within three days this policy was seriously undermined by news of the Berlin Decree. The cry of the public and the parliamentary opposition was almost overpowering. Pubs and inns buzzed, public prints speculated on the possible consequences, and intellectual conversation centred on the bizarre statement of French policy. To a people who took great pride in their rule of the seas and whose security was founded on that rule, the Berlin Decree was as audacious as it was ominous. Consensus opinion was that Napoleon had dared the ultimate insult and that Britain's interests and honour demanded immediate retaliation. It was here that Grenville saw the brilliance of French policy: to reach France British retaliation would have to strike through the trade of neutrals.

The Cabinet divided on the issue. Sidmouth, Ellenborough, and

---

<sup>1</sup>For opposition opinion see both the Courier and the Morning Post of the first week of December. Also see Earl of Sheffield, Strictures on the Necessity of Inviolably Maintaining the Navigation and Colonial System of Great Britain (London, 1806), and Jerome Alley, A Vindication of the Principles and Statements Advanced in the Strictures of the Right Hon. Lord Sheffield (London, 1806). Even Baring and Grenville were disgusted by word of the Burr conspiracy and labelled the United States a 'mob government'. Baring to Howick, 30 Nov. 1806 (Grey). Lady Holland Journal, II, 191.



Howick opposed commercial concessions to the United States and Spencer, Moira, Windham, and Tom Grenville maintained a threatening silence.<sup>1</sup> Only Holland, Erskine, and Petty stood by the Americans. On 11 December Grenville considered scrapping the agreement of the 6th and asked Auckland to try to find an alternative source of corn that would accommodate a possible breach with the United States.<sup>2</sup> But again Buckingham exerted a strong influence on his brother. He was sure that French policy would force Russia and the Baltic powers into alliance with Great Britain and he advocated a 'wait and see' policy enforced by global conquest and a large fleet in the Baltic to encourage resistance.<sup>3</sup> The assurances of Monroe and Pinckney were equally important. When Holland and Auckland suggested that the signing of the treaty should be delayed until the reaction of Jefferson's government were clear, the Americans quickly promised resistance to France and expressed a wish to proceed as if nothing had happened.<sup>4</sup> By mid-December Grenville and Howick had concluded that the American market had to be opened at all costs.

Meanwhile, at the Board of Trade, Auckland waded through piles of correspondence from principal merchants and commercial towns in attempting to find a solution. On 18 December he and Nicholl suggested four possible courses of action to the Cabinet. Firstly, Britain could impose a blockade on enemy coastal trade as she had done earlier in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Sidmouth Life, II, 443. Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 5 Dec. 1806, Granville Correspondence, II, 330-32.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 11 Dec. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>3</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 11 Dec. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>Perkins, Prologue to War, pp. 132-33.

year. It was thought that such a measure would place severe pressure on France while promoting British trade with Europe. Secondly, she could do nothing at all. Auckland noted that British trade with north German ports had actually increased during the past week and he was inclined to feel that the strength of entrenched capital could weather the storm. Thirdly, she could restrict all blockades to southern Europe and thus damage France without angering anyone of importance. And fourthly, she could force all neutral trade through British ports. This policy would increase duties and exports and make Great Britain the warehouse of world trade, but it would almost certainly force Denmark into the arms of France and bring an American declaration of war.<sup>1</sup>

In discussing these alternatives with the Cabinet Grenville's first priority was the American treaty. Owing to Auckland's calculations, the firm support of the Foxites, and the unabashed ignorance of commercial matters among those who had doubts, the Prime Minister had little trouble in establishing this view as the guiding principle of discussion. Logically a desire for American goodwill should have ended all consideration of retaliation to the French decree. Most members of the Cabinet, however, feared that a policy of inactivity would raise a clamour in Parliament and in the mercantile community, and on 21 December Auckland warned the overzealous Holland against progressing too quickly.<sup>2</sup>

The following day brought compromise. The American treaty would be signed, but only after appending to it a 'forcing note' reserving the British right of retaliation in the event that the American Government

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 18 Dec. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 473-74.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to John Allen, 21 Dec. [1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen).

did not take effective action to resist the French decree. Immediately after the signature of the treaty an Order in Council would assert the right of retaliation in forceful language, impose a blockade on enemy coasting trade which could 'easily be modified ... as not to touch America', and promise stronger measures if subsequent developments made them necessary.<sup>1</sup> At a stroke the government would disarm its critics, sooth public fears, and offer major commercial concessions to America while at the same time giving Jefferson every opportunity to declare his good intentions at the point of a British bayonet.

This policy, which was reminiscent of that which had led to Fox's blockade of 16 May, was resisted by the Foxite wing of the government. Lauderdale and Tierney, whose grasp of economics was appreciated by Foxites in the Cabinet, warned that an assertion of the right of retaliation would be inconsistent with international law and that the very principle of blockading European coastal trade would infuriate the American Government. As a result Howick and Holland suggested that retaliation should not be made official, and that the plan of blockade should be concealed. But Grenville emphasized public discontent and the Foxites gave way.<sup>2</sup>

On 25 December Holland was instructed to broach the question with Pinckney and Monroe and to press on them that 'after the pains which we have taken to obtain the adoption of their suggestions to the utmost extent that our Circumstances would allow, we should be very sorry to be sent back to ... new discussions and difficulties'. In short, take it or leave it. The Americans took it. Fearing the worst Pinckney and

---

<sup>1</sup>Nicholl to Auckland, n.d. [Dec. 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), f. 198.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville). Auckland to Howick, 22 Dec. 1806 (Grey).

Monroe not only appreciated the Cabinet's difficulties but cheerfully offered to help Holland improve the wording of the 'forcing note'. On the last day of the year, after the Americans had edited the final draft to make it as inoffensive as possible, the treaty was signed.<sup>1</sup>

On 7 January the British Government swung the second phase of its plan into action with the announcement of its Order in Council. The public was assured by blustering talk of retaliation and rigid blockades that the outrages of Napoleon had not gone unnoticed.<sup>2</sup> Simultaneously Howick instructed his minister in Washington to explain his government's action with apologies and assurances of goodwill while at the same time warning that American acquiescence to the Berlin Decree would make stronger measures of retaliation necessary.<sup>3</sup>

Indecision reached ridiculous extremes among the Foxites. After studying the 'forcing note' more closely Howick decided that its wording might allow Jeffersonian Francophiles to represent it 'as a threat of hostilities to inflame the people against the treaty'. Under pressure from Lauderdale (who was furious about the whole affair) he wrote to Monroe and asked that the note be returned for revision, only to learn that it had been communicated officially and that Holland was chasing the Americans all over London. '... I shall cut a very foolish figure', understated Howick. All this alarmed poor Holland. After

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Holland, 25 Dec. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland). The government placed great emphasis on the wording of the 'forcing note'. Auckland to Grenville, 27 Dec. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 484-85. Auckland to Holland, 28 Dec. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland). Holland to Howick, 31 Dec. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Printed in Parl. Deb., X, 126-29.

<sup>3</sup>Howick to D. Erskine, 8 Jan. 1807, F.O. 5/52, printed in Parl. Deb., X, 558. Compare this despatch to the hostile explanation given to the Danish Minister. Howick to Rist, 17 Mar. 1807, Parl. Deb., X, 402-07.

searching for Monroe and Pinckney for two days, he learned that the American despatches had been sent sooner than had been expected. Almost frantically he wrote to Tom Grenville at the Admiralty and asked if the American ship could be overtaken. The reply was an overly emphatic negative.<sup>1</sup>

Meanwhile steps were being taken to mould public opinion. Upon signing the treaty Holland told Howick that, with regard to publicity, 'you must consider that the signature will be known & that the sooner the reservation is known also the better'.<sup>2</sup> Auckland, who was very proud of his labours, was sure that the declaration would 'make a good impression, both at home & abroad, if it should find its way into the newspapers'.<sup>3</sup> Talk of newspapers horrified Howick and when word broke that an editor somehow had obtained a copy of the treaty, he decided that the whole policy was wrong.<sup>4</sup> But there was no retreat. Opposition orators protested that government had done too little in the way of retaliation; Denmark, whose prosperous neutrality had been badly bruised by the prohibition of coasting trade, was no less declamatory in accusing Britain of doing too much; public opinion was hostile to the treaty; Lauderdale and Tierney screamed that the whole transaction lacked both principle and legality; and many in the government felt that the issue had been overcompromised. To be sure, though the treaty and its accompanying blockade were symbolic of the ministry's drift away from Europe,

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Holland, 2 Jan. 1807 and n.d. [3 Jan. 1807?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). T. Grenville to Holland, 7 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51534 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Howick, 1 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Holland, 9 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Howick to Holland, n.d. [8 Jan. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland).

they were far removed from what Fox had envisaged upon coming to office.

Napoleon's dominance on the Continent also brought emphasis on South American conquest during the last three months of 1806. The government's initial plan of commercial expansion and defensive warfare had turned heads towards Spain's rich colonial possessions from the first. Francisco de Miranda, the Venezuelan revolutionary who had been trying to gain the support of British sea power for over a decade, had been waiting at the door of the Admiralty when Howick made his entrance in February. After sporadic and veiled discussions the new government had given a cautious nod to Miranda's plan of landing an army of renegades on the shores of his native Venezuela. Howick outlined the Cabinet's feelings on 3 June in his instructions to the British naval commander who had been sent to observe Miranda's movements:

So long as the persons engaged in this undertaking shall conduct themselves in a manner not prejudiced to the interests of the British Government, You are to take care that they suffer no interruption from any part of the force under your command, and if, in the course of these transactions, any British ship should proceed for the purpose of Commerce, to the Ports occupied by the Insurgents, they will, of course, receive that protection which they are entitled to expect in every port of the World; but you are carefully to abstain from any measures which may tend to commit His Majesty's Government to the future support of an undertaking, in which it has hitherto taken no part.<sup>1</sup>

Though prepared to ride Miranda's expedition to commercial profit the government was deeply suspicious of the political implications. There appears to have been fear that an independent South America would gravitate towards the United States, and the Cabinet had been very reluctant to encourage a spirit of revolution which they had seen reduce Europe to ashes.<sup>2</sup> These feelings were strong and in July the Admiralty had

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Ld. Cochrane, 3 June 1806 (Grey). I have been unable to find this despatch among the Admiralty papers at the P.R.O.

<sup>2</sup>Col. Fullerton to Fox, 6 July 1806 (Grey), 52/21.

expressed great concern when reports indicated that the British squadron was cooperating too closely with Miranda.<sup>1</sup> However, commercial interest in the Spanish Colonies had never waned and the Board of Trade had been most liberal in secretly issuing licences to British merchants who were willing to accept the risk of trading in the area.<sup>2</sup>

Popham's surprising capture of Buenos Aires had made the question of South American conquest an issue of political importance in September. It had led both Holland and Grenville to believe that the threat of British dominance in the old Spanish Empire would facilitate peace with France and, eventually, the British stance at Paris had been hardened considerably by the addition of such a valuable bargaining point. Then, too, the commercial community had reacted enthusiastically to Popham's glowing reports and, blinded by visions of untapped riches, merchants and businessmen had cheered wildly at the stock exchange when it was learned that negotiations for peace had ended. But most importantly, Windham, the Secretary of State for War, grew disgusted with Europe and came to see the riches of New Spain as the hope of his country - a British El Dorado.

Others shared this opinion. From Paris Lauderdale suggested a naval armistice with France and the exchange of several British-held Dutch possessions for Cuba, a strategically located island around which British commercial and naval power could develop. Though this proposal was rejected, British statesmen cast covetous eyes towards the Caribbean island. 'In our hands it would not only afford great Supplies for building Ships, & a valuable Naval Arsenal,' wrote one Cabinet member, 'but it wd. be a great Protection for Jamaica, wd. furnish that Island

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Grenville, 7 July 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 225.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 14 Sept. 1806, ibid., 331-32.

with lumber & provisions, & Mexico, in any future War wd. be at our mercy.<sup>1</sup> Holland, Sidmouth, and Ellenborough agreed with these feelings for various reasons and joined with Windham to form a strong but minority grouping in the Cabinet which favoured reinforcing Popham and proceeding to bigger and better things.<sup>2</sup>

The failure of the peace negotiations, the annihilation of Prussia, and the accession of Tom Grenville to the Admiralty shifted this balance in the Cabinet. According to Courtenay, Fox remarked ~~shortly before his death~~ that 'if peace could not be had on tolerable terms, the war must be carried on vigorously, but chiefly in South America'.<sup>3</sup> Grenville, encouraged by both of his brothers and anxious to commit his government to the vigorous prosecution of the war, concluded that there was no other place to fight.<sup>4</sup> Temple summed up the feelings of the majority of the Cabinet when he wrote that projects in South America 'afforded the chance of something like a counterpoise to the vast weight with which Bonaparte has loaded the scale in this hemisphere'.<sup>5</sup> Thus, with the same spirit in which it turned to the United States, the government began developing plans of South American conquest at a rate which became more furious and in a manner which became more absurd with every report of Prussian disaster.

On 14 October Buckingham submitted a plan of attacking the West

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Lauderdale, 1 Oct. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Howick, 28 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 6 Dec. 1806, Granville Correspondence, II, 232.

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Lauderdale, 22 Sept., and Grenville to Windham, 23 Sept. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 352, 353.

<sup>5</sup>Temple to Auckland, 2 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).



Indies which called for a casual invasion of Senegal on the way and a day later he outlined an elaborate scheme of invading Panama. Always economy-minded, the Grenvilles seem to have desired conquest without committing British troops. Buckingham's plans for Senegal advocated the recruitment of blacks and in late October Grenville struck on the idea of invading Mexico from the western side so that a young officer by the name of Arthur Wellesley could recruit 5,000 Sepoys en route.<sup>1</sup> By early November Grenville wanted to strengthen Popham at Buenos Aires for an invasion of Montivideo. Flushed with victory, the army would cross the Pacific Ocean, join Wellesley's army of Sepoys for the conquest of Manila, and then re-cross the Pacific for an attack on the western shores of Panama! Such a preposterous expedition, which ignored distance and trade winds altogether, was opposed even by Windham. After much ado it was agreed that Wellesley would fall on Mexico from the western side while the reinforced army at Buenos Aires struck from the east. But this plan did not please Wellesley because it called for a division of the British force.<sup>2</sup> Sidmouth and Holland, both of whom favoured the principle of South American conquest, joined the cry against the projects of Windham and Grenville. The 'Doctor' was alarmed about the plight of Prussia and wanted to send all available troops to the north of Europe. Holland opposed any invasion which did not have South American independence as its goal. However, in spite of this resistance and warnings from the Admiralty that the navy was unfit for such undertakings, Grenville persevered.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 14, 15 Oct., and Grenville to Buckingham, 31 Oct. 1806, H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, 384-86, 386-87, 415-16.

<sup>2</sup>Windham to Grenville, 2 Nov. 1806, ibid., VIII, 418-20. For Wellesley's correspondence with Grenville see ibid., IX, 484-93.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grenville, 5, 7 Dec. 1806, ibid., VIII, 458-59, 460-61. T. Grenville to Buckingham, 14 Nov. 1806, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 93.

When the Spanish King mobilized his army and made an overture through the Russian Emperor of immediate peace and eventual alliance with Great Britain the Prime Minister refused to abandon his Mexican schemes, and Howick, whose role by this time resembled that of an errand boy, replied curtly through his minister at St. Petersburg that he wanted no part of Spanish scheming.<sup>1</sup> By December Grenville, Windham, and Wellesley had agreed on a plan of attack and Grenville had high hopes for an expedition which entailed the march of Sepoys, blacks, soldiers of fortune, and British regulars across hundreds of miles of mountainous and steaming jungles.<sup>2</sup> Luckily it never got off the ground. On 2 January 1807 word arrived that the British army had evacuated Buenos Aires in the face of annihilation.<sup>3</sup>

By the beginning of the new year the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents was under serious attack both at home and abroad. The obvious drift away from Europe had welded together an otherwise hopelessly divided opposition party in Parliament. Pitt's old supporters protested strongly against the administration's policy towards Prussia, and a strong body of commercial members, Pittites, and high Tories were incensed by the coddling of the United States. South American projects, which had been popular several months earlier, now were seen as symbols of an abandonment of European commitments and responsibilities. Moreover, the recapture of Buenos Aires excited talk of ministerial incompetence. European courts were aware of a marked shift in British policy. Stuart, who advocated continental exertions

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Stuart, 14 Nov. 1806, F.O. 65/64.

<sup>2</sup>Temple to Fremantle, n.d. [Dec. 1806], (Fremantle).

<sup>3</sup>Howick to Grenville, 2 Jan. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 2-3. Holland to Howick, 2 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

too strongly, had been replaced at St. Petersburg by the Marquis of Douglas, a devoted Foxite who was determined to set matters straight. Shortly after his arrival in the Russian capital rumour held that the British minister had announced that his country's policy 'would be regulated, rather upon the principle of Separation from foreign powers, than of Connection with them ...' These reports spread rapidly to Vienna and raised such fears that Adair protested vehemently to the Foreign Office at a later date.<sup>1</sup>

The ministry had little to say in answer to all this. Jeffrey, the editor of the Edinburgh Review, was encouraged to write a 'non-political' article on neutral rights stressing that Britain 'ought not to aid and abet Napoleon in his plans for extinguishing commerce and opulent industry' and similar language was used in the Morning Chronicle without noticeable effect.<sup>2</sup> As for America, the government found opposition so stiff that they tried to dodge the issue whenever possible. Morpeth, who was attacked for his role in the Prussian disaster, was discouraged from defending himself with the argument that 'by making a newspaper controversy of it you would be giving an importance to the accusation which it does not deserve but which might make Cobbett & other party writers take it up'.<sup>3</sup> Little was done to gain the support of the press. Upon coming to office Fox had refused to follow Pitt's precedent of employing journalists and nobody but Holland in the Cabinet saw the importance of journalistic propaganda.<sup>4</sup> But in spite

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Howick, 26 Dec. 1806, and Adair to Howick, 4 April 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 14 Jan. 1807 (Horner), Morning Chronicle, 16 Jan. 1807.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Morpeth, 25 Nov. and 26 Dec. 1806 (Carlisle). Also see Howick to Morpeth, n.d., ibid., 3/2.

<sup>4</sup>Richard Edgecumbe, ed., The Diaries of Francis Lady Shelley, 1787-1817 (London, 1912), p. 72.

of all this the ministry remained secure so long as its large majority in the Commons held together. It was therefore attacks from this quarter which caused the greatest alarm.

Fox's friends were by no means easy to manage. Sheridan and Erskine were unblushing prima donnas, the Prince demanded constant reassurance, Whitbread and many others guarded their principles closely, and many of the older Foxites felt loyalty to nothing and nobody but Fox. The old leader of the pack had held his friends together by a remarkably forceful personality and by an intellect which inspired confidence. In the months which immediately followed his death nostalgia and the absence of a leader had inflamed passions and stimulated uncompromising reverence to what each individual saw as Fox's creed. Understandably the policies (or lack of policy) which characterized the government after Fox's death caused serious dissension. During the last three months of 1806 several Foxites concluded that the coalition ministry was not responsive to their needs<sup>1</sup> and on a few occasions Sheridan and Whitbread displayed alarming independence.<sup>2</sup> In addition Horner, Thanet, and probably many others were dissatisfied with Windham's plan for the reorganization of army recruitment,<sup>3</sup> and the decision to continue Pitt's property tax, according to Creevey, had 'all the Air of the oppressive unfeeling policy of the Grenvilles'.<sup>4</sup> In foreign affairs most of the more important Foxites agreed with a policy of isolation from Europe but few were pleased by what was seen as 'milk & water'

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Howick, 3 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 61-7.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Ld. Webb Seymour, 29 Dec. 1806 (Horner). Thanet to Holland, n.d. [Dec. 1806], B.M., Add. MSS. 51571 (Holland), f. 21.

<sup>4</sup>Creevey to Petty, n.d. [mid-1806], (Creevey), 1806 role.

compromises by Howick and Grenville. But above all else the Foxites as a group were experiencing difficulty in explaining why the government had not acted on the principles of the 1790's. The Catholic question and parliamentary reform had been avoided and the ministry's failure to secure peace had caused much embarrassment. All this joined with Cabinet bickering to create considerable unhappiness and by the beginning of 1807 the Cabinet was sitting on a political powder keg. To the surprise of nobody Grenville and Howick found a match.

The vacillating policies of the Cabinet between July and October had raised much doubt as to whether the peace negotiations with France had been managed properly. The French Government promptly seized upon this fact and its well-oiled machinery of propaganda asserted that after Fox's death the British Cabinet had adopted a warlike stance in the negotiations. Similar feelings prevailed among many Foxites who had been suspicious of Grenville and Windham from the start. Yarmouth had returned from Paris in a rage and his claim that peace was prevented only by the inadmissible pretensions of the British Government was believed by several important men.<sup>1</sup> Of course the government was quick to argue that it had followed guidelines laid down by Fox, and the Foreign Secretary was quoted up to the hour of his death. The Gazette of 21 October published the official explanation and Howick took care to protect himself by sending copies of it to key members of the party.<sup>2</sup> This tactic calmed but it did not satisfy. Fox had been portrayed by caricaturists as John Bull in the weeks before his death and people of all political loyalties had concluded, as did the Marquis of Buckingham

<sup>1</sup>Capel Lofft to Roscoe, 9 Jan. 1807 (Roscoe), 2441. Holland to Adair, n.d. [Jan. 1807?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland), ff. 26-8.

<sup>2</sup>Rachel Leighton, ed., Correspondence of Charlotte Grenville, Lady Williams Wynn (London, 1920), p. 104.

later in the century, that 'the enthusiastic admirer of the Emperor Napoleon, and the ministerial coadjutor of Lord Grenville, proved two distinct persons'.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately this conclusion did not go down easily with devoted Foxites, and a large and important group led by Whitbread reserved judgement and called for the publication of diplomatic correspondence. After all, Foxite dogma held that the House of Commons should not only determine foreign policy but also sit in judgement of the Foreign Secretary.

After studying the despatches of Yarmouth and Lauderdale and comparing them to his own and those of Grenville, Howick saw a need to make them something less than an open book. Though Lauderdale's behaviour had been childishly bullish throughout the negotiation both of the British plenipotentiaries had been impressed by a desire for peace in Paris and had done everything in their power to reach accord. On the other hand the despatches from London were full of demands and indicative of an aversion to negotiation. Yarmouth's letter of 30 July 1806 had stated boldly that it was impossible to entertain any doubt of the intention of the French Government to adhere to their offers and after reading the despatches Francis concluded that the French stance, 'as far as it can be maintained by Inference and Implication ... appear[s] to me to be fair'.<sup>2</sup> There was also a striking contrast in the tone which Fox had employed prior to 1 July and that of Grenville thereafter. Understandably on 4 December Grenville discouraged publication of the correspondence. The Prime Minister saw that the peculiar manner in which Fox had opened the negotiation (without a written basis) and the outrageous behaviour of Yarmouth gave the papers a character which was

---

<sup>1</sup>Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 33.

<sup>2</sup>Francis to Howick, 18 Dec. 1806 (Grey).

misleading and politically dangerous.<sup>1</sup> Francis, who advised Howick on the matter, was in full agreement. 'At first sight, it looks like an Acknowledgement of their [French] sincerity, which they are not entitled to', he warned.<sup>2</sup> But Howick could not afford to suppress the correspondence altogether, and carefully selected documents were laid before Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

The explosion came quickly and violently. Yarmouth accused the government of discolouring the nature of his negotiations by the suppression of documents and many Foxites in Parliament expressed great dissatisfaction. 'I could wish you had told me that Lauderdale's share of the Correspondence had been forged', wrote Whitbread to Howick. 'I confess I have read it with astonishment and disapprobation ...' Whitbread refused to listen to Howick's defence that Fox's guidelines had been followed. He argued that illness had caused an 'unhappy supineness' in Fox which made him worthless and that Howick, as his successor, should have held the government to the spirit in which the negotiation had been launched.<sup>4</sup> Almost immediately opposition newspapers reported that Whitbread would arraign ministers, and the Courier went so far as to say that he would join Castlereagh.<sup>5</sup> The Independent Whig, a newly-incorporated weekly whose name depicted its political outlook, cried for peace and spoke of ministerial treachery.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Howick, 4 Dec. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Francis to Howick, 18 Dec. 1806 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Holland was also displeased. See Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 77.

<sup>4</sup>Fulford, Whitbread, p. 174.

<sup>5</sup>Courier, 3 Jan. 1807.

<sup>6</sup>Independent Whig, 4 Jan. 1807. The editor of this print, Henry White, had supported Fox since the early debates on the French Revolution. In most cases his political views coincided with those of Cartwright and Wyvill, but his financial backers are unknown.

In spite of the Morning Chronicle's firm denial of dissension in the administration,<sup>1</sup> on 5 January Whitbread and Yarmouth attacked the government from the left while the Pittites struck from the right. Whitbread openly accused the ministry of abandoning its initial eagerness, frankness, and simplicity in favour of 'unimportant forms' and he moved resolutions for peace in the same words that Howick had used at the time of the rupture of the Peace of Amiens. Yarmouth, who was infuriated by Grenville's blatant attempt to pin the blame on him three days earlier in the Lords, defended Talleyrand and accused the Cabinet of refusing an advantageous peace. Concurrently opposition orators claimed that France had 'procured the benefit of a truce, and used it to blind the Government', and Perceval showed no mercy in attacking Fox. In laying out his case Howick made a bad situation worse. He boldly stated his opinion that 'until the Government of France changed its principles and character, there was no hope of peace for this country.'<sup>2</sup> This testimony struck at the root of Foxite ideology and many important Foxites were appalled. Holland could not speak for fear of bursting into tears and Horner felt that Howick's language contained 'all the exaggerated declamation of the Pittite school'.<sup>3</sup>

Fox had come to office on terms which were unacceptable to most of his old supporters and he had held his adherents in line by skilful

---

<sup>1</sup>Morning Chronicle, 3 Jan. 1807. Perry's double-talk raised a cry of apostasy against him. Asquith, 'James Perry', p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>S. Whitbread, Substance of a Speech delivered in the House of Commons, on Monday, January 5, 1807 (London, 1807). Morning Chronicle, 6 Jan. 1807. The Speaker was so struck by Howick's speech that he recorded the key sentence in his diary. Abbot Diary, II, 88-89.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 194-97. Horner to Allen, 6 Jan. 1807 (Horner).



political manoeuvre and a promise of things to come, all of which depended on his ability either to obtain peace or to place France in the wrong by the attempt. The handling of the negotiations after he became ill had accomplished neither and Howick's language of 5 January let many people know why. The result was an enormous schism in the Foxite party in Parliament and particularly among those in the country at large who had admired Fox. Important men like Roscoe, Lofft, Coke, Whitbread, Burdett, Erskine, and even Holland developed deep suspicions of the men who were leading them and, as Bedford noted, Whitbread's behaviour was vexatious 'because it will hurt Grey, & our enemies will not fail to take advantage of it'.<sup>1</sup>

Foxites in Westminster saw the government's behaviour in the peace negotiations as being symbolic of a general abandonment of popular measures. Suddenly cries for reform which Fox had stifled nearly a year before grew louder. The death of the Foxite party of the 1790's was lamented in Peter Pindar's poem, 'The Tears of Westminster', which claimed that only 'A Butt of Whitbread's props her drooping form'. Henry White, the editor of the Independent Whig, declared open war. 'But is it in the hands of apostate Whigs that the people of England can confide the wreck of their liberties', he cried. Soon there was a cry against all parties and all public men. White commented that the adulation offered to Pitt, Burke, and Fox 'by their apostate adherents ... exhibits one of the most scandalous and dangerous features of the times we live in ...' At a meeting of the Middlesex freeholders Burdett toasted 'Our Sovereign the People' and 'The Downfall of all Parties and Factions' to the tune of thunderous applause.<sup>2</sup> In the

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Holland, 18 Jan. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Independent Whig, 11, 18, 25 Jan., 8 Feb. 1807. Political Register, X (1806), 389-92 and XI (1807), 442-47.

Commons many Foxites took a course of their own. Sheridan criticized the government; Whitbread and Creevey drifted towards popular politics; and a committee dominated by Foxites struck at places and pensions with a zeal that alarmed Ellenborough, Fitzwilliam, and Grenville.<sup>1</sup>

Both in the country and in Parliament many of those who had previously supported Fox used the same language they had employed during the 1790's to attack the government. It was only with difficulty that Fox had been able to hold his supporters together with pleas for patience, moderation, and a balance between aristocracy and democracy during 1806; differences concerning the conduct of the peace negotiations and Howick's language of 5 January signalled the beginning of the detachment of the Foxite Left. Howick, stiff and aristocratic by nature, was altogether incapable of stemming the torrent and Grenville was thrown into despair. His strength in the Commons was now precarious and new developments on the Continent threatened further disagreement in the Cabinet.

Battle reports from Poland had monopolized the attention of the country by the dawn of 1807, and protests over British inactivity had joined those of Whitbread's supporters. The Cabinet met for dinner at Camelford House on the 7th and Windham noted that 'The whole time till twelve o'clock [was] occupied with discussion, about loan or subsidy to Russia, and with that the general question of old or new world'.<sup>2</sup> Whitbread's language in Parliament on the peace negotiations and its alarming effect on some of Fox's friends hung ominously over the dinner, and probably every member of the Cabinet felt pressure to avoid rash continental commitment. Windham and Grenville continued to

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 28 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-1.

<sup>2</sup>Mrs. Henry Baring, ed., The Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham, 1784 to 1810 (London, 1866), p. 446.

advocate expeditions to South America in spite of the recapture of Buenos Aires, and the European views of Howick and Sidmouth were overridden by a majority composed of Grenvilles, Foxites, and Windham. Ellenborough and Moira apparently had little to say and Spencer, alarmed by the issue, had stayed in Northamptonshire. Probably at Howick's insistence, it was agreed to pay the remainder of Pitt's old Russian subsidy, but the Cabinet would not go one step further.

As the magnitude of the Franco-Russia war became known public opinion became alarmed and the opposition began to make a noise. At the same time many Foxites were angered by the decision to complete payment of Pitt's Russian subsidy. The government could only defend itself with double-talk. On 15 January the Morning Chronicle and the Statesman, both of which generally spoke the language of government, revealed the inconsistencies of British foreign policy. The Statesman ridiculed the idea that Russia would risk a general battle<sup>1</sup> while the Foxite editor of the Morning Chronicle displayed a fantastic shift of opinion by defending subsidies. 'They have not the means of keeping on foot great armies, except at home', wrote Perry, 'and a small Subsidy for the supply of stores, must be our contingent towards the great object of the league.'<sup>2</sup> This dallying got the reaction it deserved. 'I like not the dreadfully extravagant & unnecessary ... expense of our Government', wrote a former supporter of Fox. 'I like not our continental alliances, subsidies. Nor do I see any sound policy in attempting the conquest of South America ...'<sup>3</sup> Perched halfway between the new world and the old, the government pleased nobody. By

---

<sup>1</sup>Statesman, 15 Jan. 1807.

<sup>2</sup>Morning Chronicle, 15 Jan. 1807.

<sup>3</sup>W. Rathbone to Roscoe, 31 Jan. 1807 (Roscoe), 3057.

the end of the first week of February reports of fierce fighting in Poland had so alarmed public opinion and ministerialists in Parliament that Grenville was forced temporarily to shelve his advanced plans on South America and look towards Europe.

In a meeting of 11 February the Cabinet at last came to grips with the priorities of British foreign policy. Grenville and Windham came to the meeting with well-developed plans for an invasion of Mexico. The Secretary of War spoke of 'easy conquest' in the Spanish colonies and Grenville seconded this view, stressing that the new world would give Britain both strength in war and facilities for an advantageous peace, 'either in the shape of barter or compensation to the numerous kings whom our cause on the Continent was likely to ruin'. Great emphasis was also placed on the necessity of redeeming British honour which had been stained by the recapture of Buenos Aires. Holland supported these arguments but opposed any attack on South America except for the purpose of political emancipation. Finally Tom Grenville's arguments reduced the question to its ultimate form. He maintained that since Popham's unauthorized expedition had failed the question was no longer whether the Cabinet should be led by events beyond its control, but whether Britain's military strength should be directed towards the old world or the new. He shifted feet by calling for a total commitment to Europe and an enormous buildup of strength in the Mediterranean. He was supported enthusiastically by Howick who thought that further commitment to Buenos Aires 'would act as a drain on our military force & disable us from operations more important, more politic & nearer home'.<sup>1</sup>

Grenville was ready for these arguments. He recalled the

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 12 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I. Cabinet note by Holland, 11 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51917 (Holland).

Cabinet to the guidelines which had been agreed upon when the ministry was formed and asserted that there was no reason to believe that the present coalition was any more formidable than those of the past. He stated the continuing need for retrenchment and home defence and Auckland urged on him the view, that 'our season is past for continental campaigns ...'<sup>1</sup> Grenville adamantly opposed the despatch of British troops to Poland. The Order in Council of 7 January had alienated Denmark, he argued, and it was impossible to send an army to Poland with 'the key to the Baltic in hands so very equivocal ...'<sup>2</sup> He saw the commerce of South America and the United States as Britain's only salvation and he warned that Britain 'must be prepared by the Autumn to meet here or in Ireland, or both, the influx of this overwhelming tide.'<sup>3</sup> The Continent was in ruins, British trade was threatened, finance was strained, Ireland was again on the verge of revolt, and a British army stood disgraced at Buenos Aires. As in January 1806 there was cause for alarm and a need to adopt policies uniquely British in preparation for the day when Europe would rise with a hope of success. The present conflict in Poland was not such a time.

The force of Grenville's arguments proved overpowering. It was agreed over the strong protest of Howick<sup>4</sup> that an army would reinforce Popham, recapture Buenos Aires, and proceed to the conquest of Montivideo. To calm public clamour and dissenters in the Cabinet a

---

<sup>1</sup> Auckland to Grenville, 15 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 270.

<sup>2</sup> Grenville to Howick, 27 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup> Grenville to Buckingham, 24 Feb. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 126-27.

<sup>4</sup> Memorandum on Buenos Aires by Howick, n.d. [12 Feb. 1807], (Grey), 52/21.

shipload of rifles was sent to Poland, a British fleet was despatched to Constantinople with orders to frighten the Porte into honouring its treaty commitments to the Czar,<sup>1</sup> and, apparently without Cabinet approval, Tom Grenville and Windham transferred 5,000 troops from Sicily to Egypt.<sup>2</sup> These, however, were token measures with little chance of success; Grenville had carried the day.<sup>3</sup>

Though disagreement on both wartime tactics and strategy continued, the meeting of 11 February at least returned the government to the priorities it had established upon coming to office and committed Great Britain to an identifiable foreign policy. This policy was determined by Grenville's innate despondency and his lack of faith in European cooperation; by Foxite aversion to continental involvement; and, more importantly, by the fundamental disagreement on foreign politics which had crippled the government since its inception. Fox had been the catalyst of an artificial bond between men who disagreed on the issue of the war and his foreign policy had been geared solely to negotiations for peace. Even had he lived the rupture of negotiation and the renewal of the continental war would have produced insurmountable disagreement in the ranks of government for his policy was purely defensive. Old views had not been renounced, only tempered by Fox's personal attributes and by the reduction of wartime activity which followed the battle of Austerlitz. Foxites, Grenvillites, and Burkians

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Howick, 23 Feb., and Howick to Whitbread, 27 Oct., and Howick to Adair, 2 May 1807 (Grey). The expedition to Constantinople was undertaken reluctantly. As Charles Arbuthnot noted, 'Russia expects more from the Porte than I fancy our Government would acquiesce in'. Adair to Howick, 4 April and 29 May 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 209.

<sup>3</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 12 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add MSS. 52204A-1. Cabinet note by Holland, 11 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51917 (Holland).

were incapable of formulating a realistic scheme of offensive operations in Europe for they disagreed on the goals of the war. South American schemes dodged this issue altogether. After the meeting of 11 February the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents was prudently geared to an increase of 'purely British' interests in the new world.

This belated clarification of foreign policy was never put to the test. Frightened by the threat of rebellion of both Irish Catholics and Foxites and desirous of enlisting Catholics for duty in South America, Grenville boldly brought forward legislation to alter the Mutiny Act. In mid-March when Howick brought the Catholic Bill before the Commons George III dismissed the ministry with charges of duplicity.

## CHAPTER IV

### REORGANIZATION AND DISUNION, MARCH - DECEMBER, 1807

The dismissal of the government came at an awkward moment. Half-hearted pursuit of the peace negotiations with France after Fox became ill had assured the ministry of attacks from both right and left, and Cabinet disagreement during January and February 1807 had led to procrastination and eventually to the adoption of half-measures which displayed clearly that the government was singularly incapable of coping with the demands of the war. When the ministry fell a tardy and totally inadequate naval expedition was headed for failure and disgrace at Constantinople; a British army was approaching defeat at Alexandria; and the expedition to Buenos Aires, which represented the first priority of government, had departed so under-manned and ineptly commanded that soon it would be repulsed by an inferior force.

The Talents had also mismanaged Anglo-American relations. The American treaty, on which the Cabinet had been comparatively united, was seen by the Courier as 'a Treaty almost entirely in favour of America, with scarcely one stipulation favourable to the commerce of this country - nay, so far from it, that it contains stipulations hostile to it.'<sup>1</sup> Sadly, while the vast majority of Britons shared the feelings of the Pittite press, those who supported a policy of American conciliation found the principle of retaliation which had been asserted in the 'forcing note' and in the Order in Council of 7 January equally objectionable. In its effort to appease both American and British public opinion, the government had alienated both, while at the same time causing great disharmony in its own

---

<sup>1</sup>Courier, 11 Nov. 1807. Also see the Morning Post, 20 April 1807.



ranks. 'The American commission was an epitome of the Cabinet; in neither was there a combination, but a collusion of talents', judged a pamphleteer. 'Every measure was a compromise ... The result was a total want of principle.' Britons of all political persuasions agreed with Thomas Courtenay that the Talents' American policy was 'vexatious enough to continue the complaints of America, but too weak to secure the interests of Britain'.<sup>1</sup> Notwithstanding the ministry's good intentions, British trade was beginning to feel the pinch of the French decrees by March and the American government later would refuse to ratify the treaty.

The decision to pursue 'purely British' interests had not been a bad one but, like every other decision of the ministry, it had been compromised to such an extent that nobody was pleased. Clearly Britain was unsuccessful everywhere. One Foxite explained away all this folly by maintaining that 'had they remained in power much would have been accomplished ... but this it would have done slowly because it would have taken time to obtain the consent of some of the parties to all this good'.<sup>2</sup> This was nonsense. Foreign policy, necessarily the first priority of every government during the French wars, had been a knife in the side of the Fox-Grenville coalition from the start and the Cabinet had been unable to cope. Englishmen were aware of this in March and April. Crabb Robinson, reporting on foreign affairs for The Times, found the Talents reproached everywhere.<sup>3</sup>

The fall of the government also came at a moment when the Foxite

---

<sup>1</sup>Thomas P. Courtenay, Observations on the American Treaty (London, 1808), p. 92, and Additional Observations on the American Treaty ... (London, 1808), pp. 69-73.

<sup>2</sup>G. Coldham to Holland, 29 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>T. Sadler, ed., The Diary, Reminiscences, and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson (London, 1869), I, 124. Also see the anonymous pamphlets, Plain Facts; or a Review of the Conduct of the late Ministers (London, 1807), and The State of the Case. Addressed to Lord Grenville and Lord Howick (London, 1807).

Left was approaching open rebellion. The dispute on the peace negotiations had opened gaping holes in the party, and government propaganda, which stressed that everything had had Fox's approval, backfired. Many Foxites had concluded that Fox had deserted his principles upon coming to power and Fox's name, which had worked wonders on those who had followed him, lost some of its magic. 'I was one of the number that shouted in the train of Mr. Fox, that embraced every feeling of my soul in opposition to the principles of which Mr. Pitt carried on the war against France', wrote a Bedfordshire Foxite. 'I was one of those who was stopped in their full career at the very moment they thought themselves sharers in the glory of having conquered in the cause of justice and peace, by the very leader, who had inspired us with the desire to conquer and who had led us on.'<sup>1</sup> It appears that these feelings were almost universal among the popular wing of the party. Henry White claimed that Fox's behaviour in 1806 'blasted at a blow the sanguine expectations of my ardent youth'<sup>2</sup> and even the loyal Whitbread admitted that the last years of his hero's life had 'overset the Publick opinion with regard to Statesmen' and that the rump of his ministry had 'completed the job'.<sup>3</sup>

Fox's death had given rise to a stir for reform which had become serious by the time of the government's fall. In late 1806 two pamphlets had attacked Tierney for apostasy on the issue and Cobbett had lent his powerful pen to this cry.<sup>4</sup> Serious dissension had arisen among Foxites

---

<sup>1</sup>P. Payne to Whitbread, 6 Sept. 1812 (Whitbread), 2557.

<sup>2</sup>Independent Whig, 22 Nov. 1807.

<sup>3</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 20 Dec. 1808, Creevey Papers, I, 90-92.

<sup>4</sup>J. G. Jones, Five Letters to the Right Honourable George Tierney including reflections on his political character and conduct (London, 1806), and S. F. Waddington, Three Letters to that greatest of political Apostates, the Right Honourable George Tierney (London, 1806).

at the metropolitan election of 1806 and according to Holland, Burdett had succeeded in doing 'irreparable mischief by shaking the confidence which seemed to be so firmly established between the Whigs and Reformers-- and endeavoring as far as lay in him to diminish the popular influence and consequently the power of the former to carry their principles and plans into execution'.<sup>1</sup> This was undeniable. Perry's Morning Chronicle was not only under serious attack but on the verge of collapse due to its support of the Talents<sup>2</sup> and White's Independent Whig was daily gaining ground in Westminster and in the City of London. The dilemma faced by the party hierarchy had been defined succinctly by Gillray in January 1807 when he published a caricature which portrayed two parties trying to pull the Talents down: the Pittites and the patriots. These 'patriots' had been held in line almost solely by faith in Fox; his death had set them adrift.<sup>3</sup>

The rantings of reformers, however, were as nothing when compared to the excitement which had been raised by the Talents' Catholic Bill. The gesture itself had spread alarm everywhere, and the Cabinet had disturbed Englishmen further by being less than honest with the king in bringing it forward. Finally, when George III got wind of the scheme, his ministers had taken fright and backed away enough to assure the hostility of Irish Catholics.<sup>4</sup> With cries of 'No Popery' and 'Church and King' growing daily, the new government of the Duke of Portland dissolved Parliament and the deposed ministers were forced to endure an election at a time when their policies had engendered a storm of

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Roscoe, 11 Nov. 1806 (Roscoe), 2090. Also see Roscoe to Holland, 13 Nov. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51650 (Holland). Also see the anonymous pamphlet, History of the Westminster and Middlesex Elections in the month of November 1806 (London, 1807).

<sup>2</sup>Asquith, 'James Perry', pp. 192-93.

<sup>3</sup>Dinwiddy, 'Parliamentary Reform', pp. 124-25.

<sup>4</sup>Michael Roberts, The Whig Party, 1807-1812 (London, 2nd ed., 1965), pp. 13-26.

religious bigotry in England.<sup>1</sup>

In the end the members of the coalition could only count their blessings and breathe a sigh of relief that their government had not brought forward parliamentary reform. Backed by the power of Fitzwilliam's sterling, Lord Milton was elected along with Wilberforce in Yorkshire after a bitter contest with his Pittite opponent.<sup>2</sup> This triumph was accompanied by that of the old Foxite George Byng in Middlesex and the party hierarchy was delighted to capture seats in large, open constituencies. But all this could not disguise the fact that the election showed considerable public discontent with the deposed ministry. Fitzpatrick had won his seat by only fifteen votes in 'safe' Bedfordshire and he reported that old women 'had a spite at him, calling him paleface and buttermilk, and telling him one comfort was that ... he would not live to keep it long'.<sup>3</sup> Lord William Russell had been beaten convincingly in Surrey; Tierney had not been returned; and George Ponsonby, the Irish Chancellor, had been defeated in his native Ireland. Roscoe, a promising young Foxite, had been beaten at Liverpool and of great consequence was the defeat of Howick in Northumberland. Humiliated, the Foxite leader was forced to turn to one of Bedford's family boroughs.<sup>4</sup> The most symbolic defeat, however, came in Westminster, Fox's old constituency, where Sheridan, running on memories of days

---

<sup>1</sup>See the anonymous pamphlet, All the Talents in Ireland! A satirical poem with notes (London, 1807).

<sup>2</sup>E. A. Smith, 'The Yorkshire Elections of 1806 and 1807; a study in electoral management', Northern History, II (1967).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 28 May 1807, Granville Correspondence, II, 250.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Morpeth to Morpeth, 14 May [1807], (Carlisle). Tierney to Howick, 18 May 1807 (Grey).

gone by, was trounced.<sup>1</sup> Flaunting both his political independence and support for reform, Burdett was returned. Howick and Holland must have shuddered when the new 'Man of the People' was drawn through the streets in an enormous triumphal car, seated on a chair of state, and dressed in a blue coat and buff breeches.<sup>2</sup> Holland was forced to admit that 'if the Court had not gained, the Whigs had lost the people'.<sup>3</sup> Sadly, this feeling was mutual. The Foxite hierarchy was incensed by the 'perverse and illiberal manners' of the public.<sup>4</sup> 'So much for the substantial value of fame, which is purchased at so great an expense of comfort & of health', wrote Howick.<sup>5</sup>

The fall of the government had seriously damaged the coalition's parliamentary strength. Thanks to Buckingham's borough patronage Grenville's followers in the Commons remained firm but the Grenvillites had lost their fringe supporters in the Lords. Infuriated by the policies of the Talents, Egremont had refused further support without explanation and he had been followed by Kenyon, Oxford, Selkirk, Eglinton, and Northumberland. When the smoke cleared, Grenville found himself reduced to only his closest friends and the members of his family, all of whom were now unpopular in the country.<sup>6</sup> Sidmouth also

---

<sup>1</sup>Unsupported by Grenville and Howick, Sheridan turned unsuccessfully to Georgiana, Lady Morpeth for emotional support. Her mother had played a prominent role in the reelection of Fox in Westminster in 1784. Lady Morpeth to Morpeth, 12 May 1807 (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Albemarle, Fifty Years of My Life, I, 247-48.

<sup>3</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 227-32.

<sup>4</sup>Bedford to Howick, 23 May 1807 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Howick to Lady Howick, 13 May 1807 (Grey).

<sup>6</sup>Cassilis to Spencer, 30 April and 10 May 1807 (Spencer). Selkirk to Lauderdale and Lauderdale to Selkirk, n.d. [April 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland), ff. 98-103. Howick to Holland, 30 May 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Egremont to T. Grenville, 8 Nov. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville). T. Grenville to Spencer, 10 Nov. 1809 (Spencer).

posed a problem. Ever true to his principles, the 'Doctor' had not disguised his opposition to the Talents' Catholic Bill and his discussions with the king had cast on him the ugly imputation of apostasy among both Foxites and Grenvillites. Windham was also politically isolated. The Grenvillites loathed him because of his social connexions with the Foxites and the Foxites distrusted his political views.<sup>1</sup>

Possibly the most important consideration, however, was continuing animosity between Grenvillites and Foxites. Political coalition had not brought social union.

Grenvillite ladies, especially Lady Grenville and Lady Spencer, were great prudes who wanted nothing to do with the scandals of Devonshire House, the bawdiness of Woburn Abbey, the affairs of Lady Jersey and Lady Melbourne, the rudeness of Lady Holland, or the pious self-righteousness of Mrs. Fox, a former lady about town. Grenville himself looked with disdain upon the social character of Fox's old party. Fitzpatrick, Francis, Lauderdale, Lord Robert Spencer, and Lord John Townshend were hard drinkers, gamers, and skirt-chasers who appreciated a cock fight and who had been known to brawl on occasion. Of course the humble origins of Whitbread and Sheridan were equally objectionable and Grenville was deeply suspicious of the manner in which young Foxites had been raised. He once complained of Petty's 'prejudices & leanings (derived from his education & from the habits of society into which he happens to have been thrown) ... which ... by no means correspond with those which I have long since adopted & acted upon'.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Note Holland's views on party bickering in his Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 204-15.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 22 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville).

The loss of office accentuated political as well as social differences between Grenvillites and Foxites. There is good reason to believe that Grenville saw himself as the true successor of Pitt, for later he spoke jealously of Perceval and Castlereagh as the leaders of 'the party of the Tories, & the old Court & high Church'.<sup>1</sup> Grenville was bound to Pitt primarily by his rather poorly developed concept of Pittite foreign policy which, after all, had been his own. This was unfortunate for coalition harmony because, as J. W. Ward (later Earl of Dudley) noted, Pitt's real legacy was eternal war with revolutionary France, a principle which struck at the root of Foxite ideology.<sup>2</sup> In opposition Grenville insisted on the same reverence for Pitt's memory that he had demanded in office. This sensitivity brought problems. '... I hope I need not assure you that my opinion as to Pitt is much too deeply rooted, and formed upon too long an examination of the Arch-juggler's proceedings, to be at any time even in the least degree modified by any reason of party expediency or party concert', wrote Brougham. 'I need scarcely add that no other motive ... could ever reach me. Indeed, any notion of such sentiments giving offence in any quarter of our friends, could only have the effect of making one speak more loudly if possible.'<sup>3</sup>

These differences were serious in themselves, but where Grenville was willing to compromise, his family and friends were not. Buckingham, Temple, Glastonbury, Carysfort, Stafford, and Fremantle among the Grenvillites and Fitzwilliam, Windham, and Elliot among the Burkiens

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 17 May 1812, *ibid.*

<sup>2</sup>Ward to Whitbread, 4 Feb. 1808 (Whitbread), 2440.

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Creevey, 1810, *Creevey Papers*, I, 119-20. For Romilly's views on this subject see his *Memoirs*, II, 255-56.

were devoted to the restoration of the Bourbon Family to the throne of France, and Stowe was soon to become a second home for the princes of the blood. Foxites and Grenvillites disagreed fundamentally on European politics and though their ministry had done a remarkable job of avoiding this question, underlying discord had been ever-present. Much the same could be said of domestic politics. The Foxite hierarchy could not escape from the fact that much of their political reputation depended on continued support of Foxite principles of the 1790's. These principles called clearly for parliamentary and financial reform - projects which Grenvillites abhorred.

However, Grenville, Sidmouth, and the Burkiens were but appendages of the larger Foxite party. Grenville's strength in the Commons was insignificant - probably no more than twelve - and his power in the Lords was now eclipsed by that of the Foxites. Fitzwilliam had little more than his family name. He seldom attended Parliament and his friend Windham could count on personal support from nobody but Elliot and Lawrence. Sidmouth (ever a potential ally because of his feud with Canning) had been weakened considerably in the election of 1806 and he probably could depend on the support of no more than twenty men in the Commons.<sup>1</sup> In marked contrast the Foxites numbered well over eighty in the lower house and a year in office had swelled their ranks in the Lords. Moreover, as Allen noted, this group (which was regarded generally as the 'Whig' part of the coalition as opposed to the Grenvillite) could be expected to become larger with time for it was being

---

<sup>1</sup>Sidmouth's 'party' is a mystery. Grenville estimated it to number 'between 40 and 50' on 20 May 1807 but this is undoubtedly an inflated figure. I suspect that Sidmouth could depend on no more than fifteen or twenty but that several country gentlemen supported him on rare visits to London. His power was great on the Catholic question. Grenville to Holland, 20 May 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).



strengthened gradually by the accession of young men from aristocratic families.<sup>1</sup> The Foxites, however, were a divided party.

The splintering of Fox's old party was occurring not only in the popular wing but also among the Foxite hierarchy as well. The support of the Prince of Wales had been fundamental in Fox's concept of party politics. During the last two decades of the eighteenth century he had taken great care to flatter, pacify, and indoctrinate Prinny. After a break of several years these efforts had been resumed in 1804 and 1805 when Fox had become impressed by 'the slowly increasing but still increasing weight of Carlton House ...'<sup>2</sup> By the time the Talents came to power Fox had so boosted the Prince's sense of importance that the royal heir considered himself the leader of the Whig party, and Malmesbury noted disdainfully that he had assumed 'the size of a common party leader'.<sup>3</sup> In the vacuum which followed Fox's death Holland had re-emphasized Prinny's importance in stressing that 'unless the Foxite side of the Ministry have ... the sanction, support and favour of the Prince, they will have no weight at all, and will be merely employed under another party'.<sup>4</sup> This plea had fallen on deaf ears. Grenville detested Prinny and resented his influence in the government; Howick, an old rival of the Prince, for the favours of the Duchess of Devonshire, had a poor relationship with Carlton House. According to Holland, after Fox's death the government had treated the Prince 'with as continued and mortifying a slight as could have been exhibited towards the most

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen Journal, entry of 26 Feb. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 52204A-I.

<sup>2</sup>Fox to Lauderdale, 12 July 1805, B.M., Add. MSS. 47564 (Fox).

<sup>3</sup>Third Earl of Malmesbury, ed., Diaries and Correspondence of John Harris First Earl of Malmesbury (London, 1844), IV, 349-50.

<sup>4</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 244-45.

insignificant runner of a party'.<sup>1</sup>

Of course Prinny had been horrified and he had had little trouble identifying with Sheridan, who was disliked by Howick and Grenville and who had been politically isolated by Fox's death. By December 1806 Sheridan and the Prince had found much in common. At Carlton House they lamented Fox over gallons of port and were delighted when Howick and Grenville suffered a setback. When the ministry fell they pinned the blame squarely on Grenville, and Carlton House complained loudly that the government had deserted Fox's principles. This led to an open break between Carlton House and Dropmore. After talking to the Duke of Clarence Tierney concluded that 'someone had been at work to prejudice the Prince against Lord G[renville] and had succeeded'.<sup>2</sup> This was Sheridan. By summer Carlton House opposed Grenville and ignored Howick;<sup>3</sup> there was fear in the party that Sheridan and the Prince would raise a standard of their own.<sup>4</sup>

Then there was Whitbread. No man had shown more devotion to Fox and his principles than the brewer. Devoid of all rank and social standing, Whitbread had cast his lot with the public and had become one of the few genuine 'liberals' among leading Foxites. He not only spoke about, but believed in the necessity of helping the poor, of improving

---

<sup>1</sup>Ibid., II, 60-61.

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Howick, 29 Sept. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Note Lady Bessborough's comments on the poor relationship which existed between Howick and the Prince in her letter to Ld. G. L. Gower, 3 June 1807, Granville Correspondence, II, 250-51.

<sup>4</sup>Ld. John Townshend to Howick, 5 April 1807 (Grey). Prince of Wales to Spencer, 30 Mar. 1807 (Spencer). Prince of Wales to Tierney, 30 Mar. 1807 (Tierney). Bedford to W. Adam, 2 April 1807 (Adam).

prisons, of equalizing representation in Parliament, of reforming the abuses of government, and, above all, of bringing peace to Great Britain on almost any terms so as to insure liberty at home. His contempt for continental monarchs and British involvement in their war was so extreme that many people thought him inept in foreign affairs and unpatriotic in his views. The reverse was the case. Whitbread was a Foxite in the sense of 1793 and, unlike many of his friends, he refused to accept the context of a war which he felt threatened both British and French liberties.

Whitbread lived by the code he laid down in Parliament. He was active in Westminster and Bedfordshire politics and he dispersed the profits of his brewery so freely in his county that some people called it 'Whitbreadshire'. Unfortunately he identified so closely with Napoleon's struggle against the courts of Europe that a bust of the Emperor stood in his parlour, imperial eagles held up the curtains in his drawing room, and, like Holland House, Southill's decor was conspicuously French. Under Fox's bust in the library were the lines:

He pleads humanity's neglected cause  
And wins from after ages sure applause.

Bred and raised in the Commons under the watchful eye of Fox, Whitbread accepted the hostility of established power with a smile, confident that his principles would sweep him to political prominence when peace restored the balance of the Constitution. Understandably his following in the country was large and his reputation for consistency rendered him the party's best link with the people.<sup>1</sup>

He was, however, a difficult man to manage. 'Where a total surrender of Opinion on grounds of the first importance is demanded of me

---

<sup>1</sup>Fulford, pp. 73, 115.

as the price of cooperation, I cannot pay that price', he wrote. 'Fox never expected it of any man; nor did he conceive that he had a right to exact it of any man.'<sup>1</sup> Whitbread realized where his power was anchored and he once told Howick that 'having no Family to boast of, I ought to be and am more diffident as to my situation with the Public than if I were nobly born'.<sup>2</sup> Whitbread was acutely conscious of his social handicaps and when Fox and Howick did not find a place in government for him, he wrote that he had lost 'all the reputation my Consistency and Effort of fifteen years ... have procured for me'.<sup>3</sup> This slap in the face had been followed by ministerial behaviour which troubled him greatly and by Howick's failure to find him a place in the ministry after Fox's death. In September 1806 he had demanded office and though Howick had promised him the War Office (of all places) on Fitzpatrick's retirement, Whitbread in effect had broken with the government by attacking the management of the peace negotiations. From January 1807 the Grenvilles desired Whitbread's separation from the party.<sup>4</sup> And with good reason! Fox's old friend had nothing in common with the Grenvilles, either socially or politically. Piqued and horrified by what he saw as an abandonment of principle, Whitbread began to surround himself with fawning admirers who loathed Grenville and distrusted Howick. When the Talents fell Gillray drew the king as a farmer driving his pigs down a cliff to the sea. Whitbread was no more than a half-submerged barrel of beer in this print. The brewer,

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 9 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Howick, Mar. 1806, ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Fulford, p. 144.

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 23 Feb. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville). T. Grenville to Grenville, 23 Nov. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 148-50.

however, was ripe for rebellion and no man in Britain threatened the party hierarchy more than he.

Most of the party's problems can be traced to the absence of a leader. Fox was irreplaceable. His intellectual hold on the party had been so great that many Foxites had distrusted their judgement whenever they disagreed with him.<sup>1</sup> Unfortunately it appears that few Foxites had learned to think for themselves and that those who had done so, like Tierney and Sheridan, were shunned.<sup>2</sup> Howick's wife once admitted that her husband often formed political opinions solely on the basis of Fox's reasoning at a given time<sup>3</sup> and Adair worried constantly lest his behaviour would not show 'unshaken steadiness in the cause of Mr. Fox ...'<sup>4</sup> This vague but highly emotional reverence to the past seriously prejudiced the decisions of the present; according to Brougham, popularity in the party depended on a refusal to see 'Pitt & Fox & Burke in their graves'.<sup>5</sup>

On these terms Holland was the most popular man in the party, but Fox's nephew was young, idealistic, inexperienced, and disinterested in everyday politics.<sup>6</sup> De jure leadership fell on Howick. Ambitious, vain, and talented in debate, the young Charles Grey had closely resembled Canning in the 1780's and there is ample reason to believe that circumstances had far outweighed conviction in his gravitation towards

---

<sup>1</sup>S. Parr to Holland, 16 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51651 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>G. Olphin, George Tierney (London, 1934), pp.42-3, 74.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Grey to Adair, n.d. [early 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51611 (Holland), ff. 1-2.

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Adair, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland), ff. 34-5.

<sup>5</sup>Brougham to Allen, 26 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

<sup>6</sup>Lloyd Sanders, The Holland House Circle (London, 1908), p. 26.

Fox. Lady Holland felt that the charms of the Duchess of Devonshire had been the fount of his Whiggism and that he had been 'more seduced by his heart than convinced by his reason'.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the motive, once committed Grey had been zealous, indeed overzealous. His total disregard of convention and political prudence during the early stages of the French Revolution had been instrumental in Fox's separation from Burke, and he and his rude friend Lauderdale had been so vehement in their advocacy of parliamentary reform as to cause dissension among Fox's few remaining supporters. But for some inexplicable reason Fox had loved him above all others and had defended his indiscretions. In explaining Grey's attachment to Fox at a later date Holland admitted that the young man knew that 'much of the obloquy cast on the party was founded on measures of which he had been the author' and that Fox had 'supported him against the aspersions, even of some of his oldest friends'.<sup>2</sup>

Though Grey remained loyal to Fox throughout the 1790's his political principles, like those of Lauderdale, had not held firm under pressure. By 1797 he had lost faith in the people. 'It is but too plain that the public take no deep interest in our reforms or in any other public measure which does not affect their pockets', he had written. 'How often have we been told ... that if we would only speak out, if we would throw off the disguise, if we would only give a pledge which people could understand & depend upon, we should experience a degree of assistance & support which would be effectual ... This long desired pledge ... has been given, & where is the support?'<sup>3</sup> Convinced

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland Journal, I, 171.

<sup>2</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, I, 31.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 16 Oct. [1797], (Whitbread), 866.

of public profligacy, Grey had been a great force in the Foxite secession from Parliament in 1797 and afterwards at his home in Northumberland he had turned to social respectability and family life with a determination that would produce fifteen children. Between 1802 and 1805 Fox had experienced great difficulty not only in luring Grey to London but in reaching agreement with him on matters of foreign policy.<sup>1</sup>

Grey's behaviour in office had raised serious doubts about his political consistency among Foxites. He was easily the most warlike member of the Cabinet after Fox's death and his defence of the rupture of the peace negotiations had contradicted his sentiments of two years before. Brougham contended that Howick was decidedly 'Grenvillian';<sup>2</sup> Major Cartwright noted that Howick's friends had 'more reason than his enemies' to find fault with him;<sup>3</sup> and Sheridan described him as one of those who had been 'thrown by accident in the outset of his life into situations for which they are not fitted, become Friends of the People for a time, and afterwards, finding their mistake, desert the popular cause'.<sup>4</sup> This was a fair assessment. After Fox's death Howick's willingness to accept Pittite wartime policy had led to the obscurity of the Foxites in policy-making and Grenville had treated the Foreign Office as his own.<sup>5</sup> Though Holland, Bedford, and many other key members of the Foxite hierarchy looked to Howick for leadership, Howick himself looked to Grenville.

---

<sup>1</sup>See above, pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Rosslyn, n.d. [6 Jan. 1807], copy (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>F. D. Cartwright, ed., The Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright (London, 1826), p. 352.

<sup>4</sup>Fulford, p. 275.

<sup>5</sup>G. M. Trevelyan, Lord Grey of the Reform Bill (London, 1952), p. 149.

The net result of these difficulties was dissension and apathy among key party members in the wake of the government's fall. Brougham, who managed the party's press campaign,<sup>1</sup> got little support. Horner, Francis, Petty, and James Abercrombie refused to write articles for the press; the Foxite editor of the Globe would not cooperate; and Brougham reported that Perry had 'too much of an opinion of his own'.<sup>2</sup> During the election, party machinery in Surrey broke down because of internal squabbles, Yorkshire Foxites missed the poll by going to a horse race, and many candidates who had supported the Talents either deserted outright or prudently refused to identify with Howick and Grenville.<sup>3</sup> The short summer session of Parliament disclosed that initial estimates of party strength had been too optimistic. On 26 June the opposition mustered only 155 votes to the government's 350 and on a state of the nation vote of 6 July that number fell to 136.<sup>4</sup> The prorogation of Parliament found Howick and Grenville in despair; the party's strength was falling slowly but surely, dissension was rampant, and it was obvious that most independent members were hostile. Infuriated by Howick's inability to control his party, Grenville left for Cornwall immediately. Foxite leaders remained in London, aware of their difficulties but unsure of solutions.

'My first object is to contribute as much as I personally can towards keeping my Uncle's political friends together upon the same principles as they & he uniformly acted', wrote a disturbed Holland.<sup>5</sup> This

---

<sup>1</sup>A. Aspinall, Politics and the Press, 1780-1850 (London, 1949), pp. 284-91.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Allen, 25, 26, 27, 28, and 29 May 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52177 (Allen).

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Howick, 20 May 1807 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Abbot Diary, II, 123-25.

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Howick, 19 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).



feeling was general among Foxites. The timing of Fox's death, however, had left much doubt as to what his principles were and upon whom he looked as political friends. Howick, Holland, and Bedford faced the same basic dilemma which Fox had faced between 1801 and 1806, a dilemma which sprang from a conflict of 'principles'. On the one hand were the clearly established general principles of group loyalty and systematic opposition; on the other was the leading tactic of Fox's last years in politics: coalition with traditional enemies. Between these already contradictory maxims were the specific principles of peace and reform, principles which set Foxites apart from other politicians. Fox's precedent was clear. He had chosen coalition with 'odious' politicians and justified this decision by maintaining that a powerful party in the House of Commons backed by firm aristocratic connexions and acting upon systematic opposition to the Crown was the only manner in which peace and reform could be realized. This approach had implied only a tactical union with Grenville, a union to 'checkmate' the king, gain office, secure peace, and thereby restore the 'natural balance' of the Constitution.

The problem came from the fact that death had stopped Fox in mid-stream. This had led to serious disagreement among his successors. Generally Foxites in the government agreed with Grenville that peace had been prevented only by French duplicity. On the other hand there were grounds for a sound argument that the diplomacy of Grenville and Howick had prevented Anglo-French accord. In this argument Fox's views were battered to and fro like a shuttlecock with one prominent result: Howick and the party hierarchy were pushed towards the Grenville camp. This was the determining factor. Already a strong case could be made for the maintenance of the coalition. A return to the opposition

benches necessarily began a new campaign against the Crown, a campaign in which allies would be necessary, and Grenville had proved himself to be a reliable ally in such a contest. Holland noted that Grenville's decision to maintain the coalition after Fox's death 'secured him the affections of many, and should have dispelled the suspicions of all, who had been uniformly attached to Mr. Fox'.<sup>1</sup> Enraged by their dismissal and united with the Grenvilles by the attacks of Pittites, radical Foxites, and middle class opinion, the Foxite hierarchy maintained a connexion in opposition that had proved difficult in office.

Such a decision had enormous consequences. In all probability a majority of Fox's old admirers agreed with the moderate Horner that Fox's party and the old Whig faction had died with him and that circumstances demanded a popular party 'constituted by the opinions, interests, and habits of those numerous families who are characterized by moderate but increasing incomes ....'<sup>2</sup> Continued coalition with Grenville rendered the formation of such a party impossible. Because of this and the open hostility of the Prince, Sheridan, Whitbread, and many of the party's young men it is not surprising that Tierney found 'some amongst us who I think would not be sorry to get rid of him [Grenville] and who will be ready enough to put the worst interpretation upon whatever he does and to quote for the purpose of mischief any stray impression ... which in a sulky moment he may drop'.<sup>3</sup> This prediction was sound. Grenville's presence in the ranks of the opposition would prove disastrous.

The immediate consequence of cooperation with Grenville in

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 50.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 15 Sept. 1806, Horner Memoirs, I, 373-76.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Howick, 29 Sept. 1807 (Grey).

opposition was continuing emphasis on the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents. In July news arrived that the Franco-Russian war had ended in stalemate and that Alexander and Napoleon had signed not only a truce, but a treaty of alliance at Tilsit. This development had a great impact on British public opinion and it led to increased recrimination in Parliament. Whereas the supporters of the Portland ministry emphasized the importance of Europe, the need for continued British involvement, and the ruinous foreign policy of the former government, the opposition presented a united front in calling for home defence, retrenchment, and defensive warfare as they had done in office. As always, Lady Holland went overboard and 'gave up the whole country to destruction as unworthy to be nam'd among the nations of Europe', but her sentiments were not far removed from those of the party hierarchy.<sup>1</sup> Threatened by internal disagreement and infuriated by the grounds on which their government had fallen, Howick and Grenville represented Irish relief as the covenant of their wartime politics and Catholic emancipation as a sine qua non for their return to power. Grenville outlined this rationale:

Whoever has been obliged as I was for so many years to watch the course of events of a naval War must know that no maritime superiority can enable us to prevent an Enemy who has the command of the whole coasts & navies from Stockholm to Alexandria from landing troops in Ireland. No naval superiority could prevent this, nor can any reasonable man ensure that in the present state of Europe we can retain any naval superiority at all, for any considerable space of time.

If French troops are landed in Ireland ... a hostile neutrality is the utmost we can now hope, & more than we can reasonably expect from them.

Can we then defend Ireland by British troops alone, against the armies of France, & the wishes, if not the exertions, of the mass

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 23 July 1807, Granville Correspondence, II, 268-69.

of its own population? I am confident we cannot - The example of America is in point, & the case of Ireland is far more difficult than that ever was.<sup>1</sup>

These views were but a forceful restatement of Fox-Grenville logic in 1804 and 1805. Grenville was always a great friend of Irish claims in opposition and in times of national peril, and Tilsit rendered him so violent that the shade of principle which separated him from the Foxites on the subject disappeared altogether. 'But the real effect to be produced is by creating a belief among that very large body of men that the union with England has assured to them the affections & kindness of the British Government, Parliament, & people', he wrote. 'Unless this is done they will still believe that in resisting French invasion they are fighting your battle & not their own.'<sup>2</sup>

This approach was reasonable, but it was non-political. The fall of the Talents had made it clear that the king would not tolerate ministers who he felt espoused principles that were inconsistent with his coronation oath, and the election had shown that public opinion could not equate national security with Catholic relief. Then, too, Sidmouth, who was eager to oppose the new ministry, would never agree to such heresy. Also of great importance was the fact that the French Revolution had made Englishmen overly protective of the Church of England and distrustful of the Foxites on religious grounds.<sup>3</sup> The painter Farington expressed concern over the 'free-thinkers' at Holland House; George Rose recorded in his diary that Fox had been an enemy of the Church of England; and when Fox came to power in 1806 Wilberforce had noted that his 'chief fear of the party now in power, has long been grounded

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 26 July 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid. Also see Ld. Ponsonby to Whitbread, (Whitbread), 4270.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Wyvill, 11 Feb. 1808 (Whitbread), 4272.

rather on the loose, immoral principles of many of them.<sup>1</sup>

But though dangerous, the Catholic question was indispensable to the coalition. As one Foxite noted, the circumstances by which the Talents fell 'fixed that question upon them, and the universal impression of the public (whether favourable or not) has so identified their return to power with the success of that question, that they must carry it or lose the last remnant of character with the people ...'<sup>2</sup> Nobody felt this so much as Howick. 'This requires no consideration or consultation with my friends', he told Tierney at a later date, 'for if they were all to be unanimously of opinion that we ought to undertake the government subject to some condition, I would not agree to it.'<sup>3</sup> Then there was the question of party unity. The various wings of the Foxite party looked favourably on Catholic relief and, as Holland wrote, Ireland was 'the badge & standard of the party' primarily because it was the 'only means of keeping us permanently united - for on what other point do our friends all agree?'<sup>4</sup>

The importance which the opposition attached to Ireland in their general scheme of wartime policy was depicted clearly by the publication of The Letters of Peter Plymley, a series of stinging satires written by Sydney Smith under the auspices of Holland House and with the warm

---

<sup>1</sup>Farington Diary, VII, 94. Rev. Leveson Harcourt, ed., The Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose (London, 1860), II, 277. Wilberforce Life, III, 269.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Allen, 30 Sept. 1809, Horner Memoirs, I, 467-70.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Tierney, 3 Oct. 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Grey, 3 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Adair claimed that Catholic relief was, 'after the abolition of the Slave Trade, the object nearest Mr. Fox's heart, and that as such he had left it as a legacy to his friends.' Adair to Holland, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland), ff. 79-80.

approval of Grenville.<sup>1</sup> Portrayed as a series of letters from fictitious Peter Plymley, an enlightened Whig, to his bigoted and obviously Tory brother Abraham, Smith's argument rested upon Fox's assertion of the 1790's that 'if you are engaged in a war that is to last for years, and to require important sacrifices, take care to make the justice of your case so clear and so obvious, that it cannot be mistaken by the most illiterate country gentleman who rides the earth'. And in line with Grenville's ideas of national expediency Smith warned 'that if Bonaparte lives, and a great deal is not immediately done for the conciliation of the Catholics, it does seem to me absolutely impossible but that we must perish ...' Again and again he stressed that Ireland was nearly lost to England during the American War. He emphasized the growing strength of the French navy; he compared Napoleon's religious toleration to the bigotry of the British Government; and he maintained that 'No power in Europe, but yourselves, has ever thought for three hundred years past, of asking whether a bayonet is Catholic, Presbyterian, or Lutheran; but whether it is sharp and well-tempered'.<sup>2</sup> This publication won the opposition few friends in England and none in Ireland, but the logic behind it united them in defence of their 'much wronged' ministry and gave them identity as a coalesced party. The Catholic question became the rock upon which Howick and Grenville launched their wartime opposition and a critical J. W. Ward came to see <sup>emancipation</sup> it as the 'beau ideal' of Whiggism.<sup>3</sup> But here ideological agreement ended. The question remained whether the happy irresponsibility of opposition could overcome the

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland, ed., A Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith (London, 1855), I, 104.

<sup>2</sup>Sydney Smith, The Letters of Peter Plymley (London, 3rd ed., 1929), pp. 3, 17, 20, 50, 57.

<sup>3</sup>Ward to Helen Stewart, [Aug. 1813], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 212-17.

problems which had plagued the party in office.

Though they found it expedient to skirt the Irish question, the Portland Government reacted to the Treaty of Tilsit in much the same manner as their political antagonists. Upon receiving intelligence that Joseph Bonaparte was prepared to launch his long-delayed invasion of Portugal and that a secret clause of the Franco-Russian treaty had assured Franco-Danish naval cooperation, the Cabinet concluded that an invasion of the British Isles was imminent. Canning, the new Foreign Secretary, immediately displayed the decisiveness for which history would remember him best and the government acted with vigour. A large naval expedition set sail for Copenhagen with orders to confiscate or destroy the Danish fleet. At the same time a smaller force was despatched to Lisbon for the purpose of escorting the Portuguese Royal Family and their fleet to the Brazils.

The departure of the Copenhagen expedition set London ablaze with excitement and nobody was more favourably impressed than Tom Grenville and the knot of Grenvillite peers who advocated war to the knife: Spencer, Carysfort, Stafford, Cassilis, and Glastonbury. However, they stood alone among their political colleagues. Foxite leaders disapproved of the principle behind the attack on neutral Denmark and argued that mere suspicion did not warrant such extremism. Grenville, obsessed by fears of invasion and theories of home defence, was equally hostile. The risk, he maintained, outweighed the potential advantage, and the overall project 'resembled the dreams of a madman'. But ignorance of precisely what was transpiring kept these opinions private throughout August. The opposition press had little to say and Auckland and Grenville agreed that the political impact of the expedition would

be formed 'not on merits, but on the result, of the enterprise'.<sup>1</sup>

However, the party stance hardened in late August when Benjamin Garlike (the British Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary to Denmark) sent Tom Grenville alarming news. According to Garlike Canning had instructed him to report officially that the Danes were preparing for war against Britain and when he refused to fabricate such a charge the Foreign Secretary had removed him to Memel without further ado. Garlike, who owed allegiance to the Talents, presented his case as a martyr and he was accepted as one. Though Tom Grenville continued to support the expedition, he softened his tone considerably and told Buckingham that ministers had tried to 'revenge themselves upon poor Garlike, for speaking the truth, instead of saying what was agreeable to their wishes.'<sup>2</sup> Of course this intelligence was what the Foxites had been waiting for. Holland House expressed self-righteous indignation; Brougham was certain that the expedition would throw Danish seamen into the arms of France; and Howick was loud in abusing ministers. Windham joined this cry enthusiastically and Grenville sat in Cornwall brooding over the risk.<sup>3</sup> Significantly Sidmouth was infuriated by the attack on Copenhagen. Ignoring differences on the Irish question, two of his lieutenants began correspondence with Auckland on the subject.<sup>4</sup> But still the opposition was not prepared to make the Danish expedition a

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 6 Aug. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 25 Aug. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 200-01.

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Holland, 2 Sept. [1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51561 (Holland). Windham to Cpt. Lukin, 5 Sept. 1807, Windham Papers, II, 333-35. Grenville to Auckland, 27 Aug. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>4</sup>Buckinghamshire to Auckland, 22 Aug. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).



party question. 'Nobody seems to talk of the Expedition without a sort of complaint', wrote George Eden on 12 September. 'I believe people are ashamed of wishing it success, & yet cannot help it.'<sup>1</sup>

In mid-September word arrived that Admiral Gambier had silenced the Danish shore batteries, bombarded Copenhagen, forced the Danes to sign a convention, and made off with their entire fleet in tow. The Tower guns boomed and none could deny the unqualified success of Canning's project. The question for the opposition was whether British success was politic. Initially the Foxite leadership was impressed. In a complete about face Howick maintained that he had looked favourably on such an expedition for years.<sup>2</sup> Though Petty continued to chatter about principle, he confessed to Lady Holland that the project 'appears to have been judiciously as well as boldly conducted'.<sup>3</sup> Holland compromised. He was reluctant either to approve of the expedition or to express admiration for Canning's stroke and he somehow concluded that the affair had been effected so as to open peace negotiations with France.

But political recrimination soon prevailed. 'I do not believe that any such object [peace] was ever in view', wrote Lord King. 'It was rather intended to exhibit a strong contrast with your inactivity ...'<sup>4</sup> The contrast was striking indeed. Right or wrong, Canning had acted in a manner which re-emphasized the waffling of his predecessor and the Portland ministry took care to promote this truth. Soon Bedford

---

<sup>1</sup>G. Eden to Auckland, 12 Sept. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 25 Sept. 1807, Granville Correspondence, II, 286-87.

<sup>3</sup>Petty to Lady Holland, 22 Sept. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Ld. King to Holland, 8 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland).

held that Foxite honour and principle demanded open and bold opposition to the expedition and upon reflection Petty decided that the British occupation of Zealand, which had followed the bombardment, compounded injury with impolicy.<sup>1</sup> To these opinions was added the surprising outrage of Fitzwilliam and Windham and the remonstrances of Sidmouth's followers.<sup>2</sup> 'It was a coward's blow; it was aimed at Russia and Prussia, but it struck at Copenhagen!', cried the Independent Whig, and other opposition newspapers began to lament the expedition.<sup>3</sup>

All this completely ignored the fact that British pride was thrilled. The ministerial press sang Canning's praises and polite society followed suit. Many opposition ladies thought that Canning was marvellous and feminine chatter about the 'naughty Danes' frustrated more than one member of opposition. Lady Caroline Lamb was so vocal in her praise of Canning that William found it necessary to restrain her and similar scenes occurred at Castle Howard and Chatsworth.<sup>4</sup> By early October Tierney and Bedford were expressing serious reservations about raising the issue in Parliament and Whitbread, while demanding parliamentary exertion, warned Howick that ministers would defend themselves by pointing to the Talents' Portuguese policy.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, Windham and

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Holland, 1 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland). Petty to Howick, 9 Oct. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 17 Oct. 1807 (Grey). Sidmouth Life, II, 479-81.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 18 Oct. 1807. Morning Chronicle, 19 Oct. 1807. Statesman, 19, 20 Oct. 1807.

<sup>4</sup>William Lamb to Lady Caroline Lamb, 25 Sept. 1807, A. Aspinall and the Earl of Bessborough, eds., Lady Bessborough and Her Family Circle (London, 1940), pp. 163-64. Lady Spencer to Lady Morpeth, n.d. [Oct. 1807?], (Carlisle), 2/6 (incorrectly filed).

<sup>5</sup>Tierney to Howick, 7 Oct., and Bedford to Howick, 19 Oct., and Whitbread to Howick, 4 Oct. 1807 (Grey).

Erskine were trying to stir up the public in Norfolk and the Foxite Left was hot on the subject. Seeing this disarray, Howick maintained silence in Northumberland and confided to Lauderdale that the issue would be forgotten before the meeting of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

Animosities within the party kept the issue alive.

Auckland, who appears to have been motivated by a sincere desire to hold the coalition to the vague principles of the late government, maintained that the expedition had stained British character, closed the Baltic to British commerce, and strengthened Napoleon's hold on the Continent.<sup>2</sup> However, few Grenvillites agreed with him after the success of the expedition became known. Provoked by the views of the Foxite press and hostile to cooperation with Windham and Sidmouth, Tom Grenville set out to unite his brother's party in support of the expedition. 'The language of the Morning Chronicle & what I hear quoted of that wing of the opposing army ... is so little agreeable to my honest opinion, that I do not avoid any opportunity of making known my sentiments upon that subject lest they should seem to be included in the language of the majority of the opposition', he told Spencer. He maintained that opposition to the Copenhagen Expedition was hypocritical because of the Talents' Portuguese policy and he was determined to keep his family's name clear of Foxite views.<sup>3</sup>

His efforts had impact. Morpeth, who had criticized 'the folly, the injustice, the rashness, the impolicy ... of the measure' in early

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 2 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 23 Sept. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 137-38.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 15 Nov. 1807 (Spencer). T. Grenville to Grenville, 15 Nov. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 144-46. For the offending editorials see the Morning Chronicle, 13, 22, and 26 Nov. 1807.

September, wrote that 'One must not enquire too strictly into the justice of a measure that has had such brilliant success ...'<sup>1</sup> Temple and Spencer agreed and Buckingham, always sensitive to the necessity of family integrity and political independence, joined brother Tom enthusiastically.<sup>2</sup>

Lord Grenville's views, however, were the key to family and party unity and it was with him that Tom Grenville had most difficulty. On 2 October the former Prime Minister denied that there was similarity between Copenhagen and any aspect of his ministry's wartime policy and though he admitted that the Danes had been 'more than willing to be ravished' he criticized the Portland government for announcing its intention to 'meet Bonaparte with his own weapons'. Intelligence of the secret articles of the Treaty of Tilsit did not effect his opinion to any great extent, for as late as 10 November he wrote that the issue 'depended wholly on the case ministers could make out ...' But Grenville's neutrality deteriorated under fire from his family. On 18 November he told Tom Grenville that it was 'high time for us to fight Bonaparte with his own weapons. I certainly believe in the hostile mind of Denmark, & assuming that, I have no doubt that it was right for us to act while it was yet time for us to do so.' Significantly, he agreed that efforts should be made to 'mark that our sentiments on such questions are not to be pledged by the language of others held

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 25 Sept. 1807. Grenville Correspondence, II, 286-87.

<sup>2</sup>Spencer to T. Grenville, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville). Temple to Auckland, 2 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Buckingham to T. Grenville, 27 Sept. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville). Buckingham to Fremantle, 11 Oct. [1807], (Fremantle).

without any communication with us.'<sup>1</sup> By late November the Grenvillites were largely united in support of the government and many of them were openly hostile towards their political allies.

The emergence of this factionalism influenced Foxite opinion greatly. Those who opposed the continuance of the union with Grenville became more adamant in their hostility to the expedition and in spite of Fremantle's assurances that Lord Grenville did not share the views of his brother, Holland and Howick became furious. Holland attributed everything to Tom Grenville's hatred of Sidmouth and Windham, and Tierney showed disgust in telling Howick that Tom Grenville's foolish endorsement of the expedition in August had bound him to a stance which he regretted.<sup>2</sup> Howick, who had been instrumental in formulating the Talents' scheme for the invasion of Portugal, regarded Tom Grenville's analogy as a personal slur. He expressed deep suspicion of Grenvillite motives and wrote that he had 'always had a misgiving that it would be so'. Whereas he had shown great timidity on the subject only days before, he suddenly told Tierney that the bombardment of Copenhagen would render Denmark 'a French Dock-yard' and that Danish cooperation would allow Napoleon to 'secure himself against the only danger which threatens his alliance with Alexander, viz: the discontent which may be occasioned by the loss of the British Market'.<sup>3</sup> These views came largely from anger, but they

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 2 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Grenville to T. Grenville, 10, 18 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Howick, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Tierney to Grey, 26 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Howick, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Howick to Holland, 13 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Howick to Tierney, 8 Nov. 1807 (Tierney). For an example of Howick's rage see Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 30 Oct. 1807, Granville Correspondence, II, 302.

pointed the way for Foxite unity. The party rank and file endorsed Howick quickly, Fitzwilliam and Windham moved into the Foxite camp, and differences about the Copenhagen expedition became so intense among the opposition that public opinion was forgotten altogether.<sup>1</sup>

Disagreement on Copenhagen was accompanied by increased party divergence concerning the issue of war and peace. By 1807 the Foxites, on the whole, had come to see Napoleon in a more reasonable light. However, almost to a man they continued to identify Whig principles with those of the French Revolution and though they echoed national antipathy for the French Emperor intellectual contradiction left their ideology quite unclear. The 'legitimacy' of Napoleon's government was not questioned and it was no secret that many Foxites admired him as a military genius and as a political leader in comparison with his enemies. Horner wrote as late as 1809:

When one considers the French conquests ... it is impossible to deny that the civilized world is reaping immense benefits from it; and that while its own mischiefs and miseries are probably of short duration and may pass quickly off, it has swept away, and perhaps was alone of force enough to sweep away, evils of inveterate obstinacy, which depressed and degraded mankind, and by the extinction of all free spirit left the nations an easy prey to this freebooter, who deserves however to be classed with those heroes of mythology who run over the face of the earth to rid it of monsters.<sup>2</sup>

Feeling this way, many of Fox's friends had equated the cause of France with their own in England during the 1790's and Napoleon had been identified closely with Fox - as a champion of Whig principles. Much of this remained in 1807. Either portraits or busts of Fox and Napoleon stood side by side at Chatsworth, Hothfield, Woburn, Bowood, Southill, and Holland House, and John, the eccentric Marquis of Lansdowne, owned

---

<sup>1</sup>Windham to Fitzwilliam, 14 Nov. 1807 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>2</sup>Horner to J. Lock, 5 Aug. 1809 (Horner).

a tower at Southampton which was filled with portraits of his 'worthies': Robespierre, Marat, Massena, and Bonaparte. Among aristocratic Foxites, Thanet, his wife, and Lady Holland were vocal in their praise of the Emperor and many others expressed similar views more privately. The Whig Club continued to ring with Francophilia and the Independent Whig, which must be regarded as the voice of many democratic Foxites, openly championed the cause of France.<sup>1</sup> And there was a school of opinion in the country which continued to maintain that the war had been forced on a peace-loving French Emperor.<sup>2</sup>

It was felt generally among those who tried to define the Whiggism which Fox had willed to his party that national enmity was warranted only by a war which promoted international justice and liberty and that Napoleon was no more than an instrument of nature in the continuing improvement of man. His character as a ruler was in many ways to be lamented but that character had been formed by the folly of Pitt and the European despots in resisting the irresistible power of nationalism. Napoleon's power was as firm as the justice of his cause and British interests could not be promoted by war so long as the European struggle retained its original political context. Peace, therefore, was the only answer.

Whitbread's attack on the Talents' management of the peace negotiations had aroused the deepest passions of many Foxites and the wave of popular expression which followed had begun serious intellectual conflict among Fox's old friends. On the one hand were the members and beneficiaries of government who maintained that their efforts had

---

<sup>1</sup>White claimed that the circulation of his weekly was never under 2,000. White to Grey, 31 Aug. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Roberts, p. 32.

proved the impracticability of peace with Napoleon and on the other were those who argued that Fox's colleagues had either deserted their principles or fallen prey to Grenville. This latter group had grown stronger in the months which followed Whitbread's motion. 'We chose to rest a dispute, which was to involve everything near and dear to us, on a diplomatic ambiguity; on a technical question as to the manner how and to whom we were to give up a barren rock which was of no use to us, and to which we had resigned all pretensions', wrote William Hazlitt. 'It was not the danger of invasion which produced the taking up of arms, but the determination to take up arms which produced the fear of invasion.'<sup>1</sup> This interpretation agreed with that of Whitbread and it was echoed in an article in the Political Register by the old Foxite Capel Lofft.<sup>2</sup> The Independent Whig took care to stress maliciously 'that the hints we have given for some time past, that the most perfect unanimity of sentiments did not exist between the Grenvilles and the Foxites, are more than confirmed ...'<sup>3</sup> Though Howick and the Foxite hierarchy did everything possible to refute these accusations, it was impossible to deny that the issue of peace was one of fundamental disagreement in the ranks of government. Holland and Erskine remained quiet at the time of Whitbread's motion, but both of them had serious reservations about the conduct of Howick and Grenville, and many Foxites in the Commons were unhappy.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>P. O. Howe, ed., The Works of William Hazlitt (London, 1930-40), I, 96.

<sup>2</sup>Political Register, XI, 442-47.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 11 Jan. 1807.

<sup>4</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 75. Erskine to Roscoe, 4 Sept. 1810 (Roscoe), 1457. Coke to Brougham, n.d. [Feb. 1807], (Brougham). Whitbread was right when he claimed that he had 'the Hearts of many with me, altho' I should have had the voices but of very few'. Whitbread to Grey, 9 Feb. 1809 (Grey).



The fall of the Talents signalled the beginning of more serious agitation for peace among Foxites. In April an article in the Edinburgh Review on 'The Dangers of the Country' argued for peace by maintaining that the Continent was lost and that Britain had 'more foreign settlements already than we have any good use for ...' Simultaneously the Morning Chronicle, which had spoken the language of Howick and Grenville so long as the Talents were in, advocated peace and the Independent Whig redoubled its exertions against the war in peculiarly Foxite language: '... we cannot and we ought not to expect success; and ... as it [the war] was begun for the avowed purpose of crushing the infant liberties of another nation, there is too much reason to apprehend that it will terminate in the destruction of our own!'<sup>1</sup> All this joined with the first pains of French commercial restriction to produce a considerable movement for peace among other old allies of Fox, the industrialists and merchants of the North. Petitions to Parliament were prepared in Manchester, Bolton, and Oldham; a similar agitation developed in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

By October this movement had aroused great excitement among Foxites. Holland House and Southill were alive with enthusiasm; the party rank and file were cooperating with the petitioners; and to the delight of almost everyone Perry disclosed that Great Britain was on the verge of peace negotiations with France and Russia.<sup>2</sup> Though Howick maintained that the rumours of a French overture would be 'like Pitt's negotiations, merely to silence the clamours against the war', he felt that the maze of British and French commercial restrictions would 'force

---

<sup>1</sup>Edinburgh Review, X, 19-20. Morning Chronicle, 16 Mar. and 15 Aug. 1807. Independent Whig, 25 Oct. 1807.

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Howick, 5 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

both Governments, however reluctant, to a Peace'.<sup>1</sup> Lauderdale agreed and with unbounded optimism he represented the peace agitation in the North as the beginning of a movement which would restore the coalition to power.<sup>2</sup>

Invariably despair had a softening effect on Grenville. As had been the case in early 1806, the old warrior's fear of invasion and pre-occupation with schemes of retrenchment and home defence led him towards agreement with the Foxites. 'I hear there is much speculation in favour of peace,' he wrote, 'and placing so little hope as I do in the war prospects which seem to be afloat, I should look upon that event as a blessing, if it could be procured on any terms short of national disgrace and ruin ...'<sup>3</sup> However, this superficial agreement did not carry the impact of days when the succours of office had been the reward of compromise. Both Tom Grenville and Buckingham resisted their brother's views vigorously; Stafford, Carysfort, and Carrington screamed for war to the end; and Windham, whose personal relationship with Grenville had been strained since Fox's death, was concerned that the peace movement would make the new ministry strive for popularity by doing 'what Pitt was too apt to do: - defeat the injury which the cry was meant to effect against themselves by complying with it ...'<sup>4</sup> With Grenville isolated in Cornwall, his old war party drew together to combat Foxite pacifism without him.

'There is a large portion of those, with whom we are connected,

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Tierney, 8 Nov. 1807 (Tierney).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 2 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 25 Aug. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 200.

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 9 Oct. 1807, ibid., 205-07. Windham to Fitzwilliam, 14 Nov. 1807 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

who under the influence of impressions having nothing to do originally with the love of peace or war ... ~~and~~ have formed themselves into a sort of distinct sect as the supposed lovers of peace', wrote an alarmed Windham. 'Others again will think a cry for peace a fine way of annoying & overturning the Ministers. I see that it will be impossible to go on long without a necessity of combatting some opinions originating from one or other of these sources.'<sup>1</sup> Fitzwilliam agreed and he encouraged his son to resist the petitioning movement among his new constituents in Yorkshire. Without party coordination, Milton headed north immediately. Milton, like his father, epitomized the politics which had divided the Whig party during the 1790's. He worshipped Fox's memory, enjoyed a firm social bond with many Foxites, and, in domestic matters, he spoke the language of Whitbread.<sup>2</sup> But when any issue touched on the French Revolution or Napoleon he hardened in the style of Burke and gravitated towards Windham and the Grenvilles. In November 1807 he tried to strike a balance.

Representing himself as a spokesman for the Ministry of All the Talents, Milton stressed to the people of Yorkshire that peace was desirable indeed, but that petitions and public clamour would render it impossible. Napoleon, he argued, would never negotiate seriously so long as Britons expressed weariness; the British Government could not negotiate from a position of weakness.<sup>3</sup> This logic received the warm endorsement of opposition leaders. Windham, Fitzwilliam, and most Grenvillites felt they were making a major concession by approving of negotiation with Napoleon. Grenville, who had become more warlike owing

---

<sup>1</sup>Windham to Fitzwilliam, 24 Nov. 1807 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>2</sup>'Particulars Illustrative of the Family Character of Fitzwilliam', undated draft, (Fitzwilliam/Northants), 127/84/2.

<sup>3</sup>Morning Chronicle, 5 and 17 Nov. 1807.

to the success of the Copenhagen expedition, and Howick, who was frantic with fear of a party collapse, welcomed Milton's efforts as the embodiment of their policies in office and as a step towards party harmony. 'In the last War the opposition believed, or chose to believe, that we had at different times bound ourselves not to treat with the Fr. Republic, & their motions were directed to obtain satisfaction on that point', recalled Grenville. 'Now there is no such thing - the French Republic is as much destroyed as its bitterest Enemy could have wished, & the only question is about terms of Peace - which there is no reason to believe the Ministers would carry higher than the safety of the Country requires.'<sup>1</sup> When Milton succeeded in stifling the Yorkshire movement the opposition leadership congratulated themselves on the death of the issue.

However, many Foxites saw Milton's language as only another example of the former government's unprincipled compromises. The Independent Whig outlined the essence of these feelings on 22 November. Milton's arguments, it maintained, denied the people of Yorkshire their only mode of expression and thus their only means of participating in the decisions of government. The duty of an M.P. was not to influence his constituents, but to represent their grievances and interests in Parliament. As for party politics, if ministers were to be considered as the best judges on questions of great national importance, then 'why is your Lordship so hostile to them?' And White, like many people in the country, recoiled in defence of Foxite principle. 'Their [the Foxites'] great outcry has continually been against this war, which you so much applaud, and their deceased leader ... declared that, in point

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Dec. 1807 (Grey). Grenville to T. Grenville, 10 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

of absurdity, folly, and want of any reasonable cause ... it exceeded the former.<sup>1</sup> Obviously these views were intellectually fundamental to most Foxites. One old Yorkshire Foxite pleaded with Milton to rise above 'the illiberal policy of the Grenville faction' and to return to Whig principles:

When the late Ministry most unfortunately determined to sacrifice the interests of England for those of Russia and to carry on a War for Sicily and Dalmatia a general feeling of disgust and disappointment was excited ... At the time of the election the friends of Lord Milton here were also the friends of peace and hailed the choice of your Lordship as an event which gave them another Mr. Fox to plead the rights of Mankind and ease the wounds of suffering humanity. They feel little interest in the success or failure of the late administration ...<sup>2</sup>

It appears that many Foxites shared these views and were aware of a pressing need for party leadership. Whitbread, in distant Bedfordshire, was sent the Yorkshire petitions, and the Independent Whig appealed to Holland to throw off party factionalism in favour of his uncle's principles.<sup>3</sup> The Morning Chronicle, Holland House, and Southill maintained ominous silence.

At this juncture the government announced its decision to allow the Count de Lille and his Bourbon kinsmen to enter Great Britain. Prudently Canning made it clear that the ministry would offer the Frenchmen no personal assistance. This only emphasized differences between Bourbon sympathizers and Foxites. Practically every Grenvillite was upset by what he saw as Canning's ungracious treatment of royalty. With visions of uniting Grenville and Bourbon blood through the marriage of his ugly daughter to a prince, Buckingham promptly offered his mansion

---

<sup>1</sup>Independent Whig, 22 Nov. 1807.

<sup>2</sup>R. Bakewell to Milton, 13 Jan. 1808 (Fitzwilliam/Northants).

<sup>3</sup>R. Bakewell to Whitbread, 25 Nov. 1807 (Whitbread), 4179. 'Drafts of petitions for peace', ibid., 4180. Independent Whig, 22 Nov. 1807.

at Gosford and invited the entire coterie to Stowe.<sup>1</sup>

Foxite reaction was decidedly hostile. Lauderdale was furious and he, like many of Fox's friends, felt that the government could have opened the door to fruitful peace negotiations with Napoleon by refusing to admit the Bourbons.<sup>2</sup> When the Count de Lille applied to Devonshire for the use of his Chiswick villa (where Fox had died), the duke gave a hasty refusal.<sup>3</sup> The Independent Whig began a series of attacks on Pittite foreign policy while stressing that ministers should commit themselves, either by making common cause with the 'Pretender' or by recognizing Napoleon as the lawful ruler of France. The former course was represented as a 'visionary and obsolete idea' but emphasis was placed on the necessity of defining the goals of the war so as to make an end to it possible.<sup>4</sup> This argument had been fundamental in Fox's attack on Pittite wartime policy. By late November only Howick stood by Fitzwilliam and the Grenvillites on the issue of war and peace. Lauderdale and Tom Grenville argued the point; Holland House was so excited over the petitions and the rumours of negotiations that Fitzwilliam lectured Holland; and Whitbread told Howick bluntly that he was determined on 'some measure in Parliament for peace'.<sup>5</sup>

The coalition's disarray on the issues of war and peace and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 23 Nov. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 208-11. Henry W. W. Wynn to Lady W. Wynn, [Jan.] 1808, Lady Williams Wynn Correspondence, pp. 122-23. Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 234.

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 5 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Stuart, Dearest Bess, p. 158.

<sup>4</sup>Independent Whig, 22, 29 Nov. and 13 Dec. 1807.

<sup>5</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, [29 Nov.], 4 Dec. 1807 (Grey). Fitzwilliam to Holland, 13 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51593 (Holland). T. Grenville to Buckingham, 9 Dec. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 15-17.

Copenhagen expedition between June and November was accompanied by disagreement on a subject which had produced comparative harmony in office: Anglo-American relations. The American treaty was the only mark of potential permanence the Ministry of All the Talents had made on British foreign relations and Foxites, Grenvillites, and Fitzwilliams proudly saw their policies towards the United States as a clear departure from those of their predecessors. Undoubtedly the treaty was in many ways symbolic of the 'much wronged' ministry's entire scheme of foreign policy and in opposition, as in office, the question of America gave identity and purpose to a coalition whose members had little else in common.

In mid-March, when the Talents Government was considering the alternatives of resignation or compromise with the king on the Catholic Bill, Erskine had been quick to argue for the latter. 'With regard to America which touches us more nearly than our connection with all the nations upon earth put together, you are well acquainted with all the difficulties attending it from the manners & views & interests of that people', he wrote to Howick. 'You know that with all our moderation & management & prudence We are only just at peace with her and we know that from what our opponents avow publicly the system they would instantly pursue would lead to an instant exclusion of all our Manufactures & most probably a war under the wing of France ...<sup>1</sup> Others had agreed with the Lord Chancellor. Both Holland and Auckland had encouraged Howick and Grenville unsuccessfully to ratify the treaty before the Portland government could take office and on 1 April Temple had expressed regret that so much had been left to Canning, whose American system he dreaded greatly.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Erskine to Howick, 15 Mar. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Howick to Auckland, 22 Mar. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Temple to Auckland, 1 April 1807, ibid.

The former ministers could do little from the opposition benches. Auckland pleaded with his neighbour Lord Hawkesbury to follow up the Talents' American policies and he told Holland that they must try to cooperate with Canning. If the Foreign Secretary refused to be reasonable, he added, the opposition must convince the public that the new government was incapable of meeting the demands of Anglo-American relations.<sup>1</sup> But everything hinged on American ratification of the treaty and here the opposition was confident. Fitzwilliam, who apparently had good Federalist contacts, assured his friends of a favourable reaction to the treaty in the United States, and Holland House spoke the same language. Apparently few people even considered the possibility that Jefferson could let the late government down.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile, the 'friends of America' did their best to promote a lasting bond with Pinckney and Monroe. In this they were successful. Erskine entertained the Americans regularly; Auckland invited them to Eden Farm at least once; and Holland paid Monroe the ultimate compliment by giving him a bust of Fox.<sup>3</sup> This attention was reciprocal. In late April William Eden visited the Americans and found them hostile to the new government and in despair for the fate of the treaty. Monroe told him in confidence that he and Pinckney had been instructed to resume negotiations on the basis of the treaty but that Canning did not appear interested. 'Monroe wished much that you & Lord Holland could retain the [treaty] Commission & said that the Change of Ministry here had a very unfavourable effect in America', Eden reported to his

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Holland, n.d. [Mar. 1807], and 3 April 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland), ff. 22-23, 80-81.

<sup>2</sup>Fitzwilliam to Holland, 19 April 1807 (with enclosure), B.M., Add. MSS. 51593 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Monroe to Holland, 26 Mar. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland).



father.<sup>1</sup> Such talk filled Auckland with missionary zeal. After visiting the Americans he told Holland that Monroe felt that their resignation as commissioners would cause ill will between the two countries. Completely ignorant of the fact that Jefferson's government was unwilling to sign any treaty which did not end impressment, Holland and Auckland indignantly refused to resign and Howick encouraged William Eden to raise the issue in Parliament.<sup>2</sup>

In mid-July Pinckney and Monroe received word from Washington that if Britain wanted a treaty she must accept at least six changes in the unratified document, including abandonment of impressment and modification of the Talents' 'forcing note'. This was hardly a ringing endorsement of the late government's policy and Auckland was infuriated by the 'unworthy proceedings of Messieurs Jefferson & Madison ...'. Canning immediately applied to the commissioners for clarification of Monroe's contention that there had been an 'implied understanding of forbearance on impressment' and Auckland was so embarrassed that he dreaded going to town.<sup>3</sup> It was rapidly becoming clear that the American Government was as unappreciative of the Talents' labours as everybody else. But extraordinary events soon convinced the opposition that Jefferson's obstinacy was no fault of their own.

The despatch which related the American refusal to ratify the treaty was accompanied by news of the famous Chesapeake-Leopard Affair. On 22 June

---

<sup>1</sup>W. Eden to Auckland, n.d. [22 April 1807?], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), f. 286.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Holland, 7 April and 12 May 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland). W. Eden to Auckland, n.d. [May-June 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), ff. 305-06.

<sup>3</sup>Monroe and Pinckney to Canning, 24 July 1807, F.O. 5/54. Auckland to Holland, 28 July, 23 Aug. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51532 (Holland). Holland and Auckland to Canning, 28 July 1807, cited in Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 189.

H.M.S. Leopard, the flagship of the commander-in-chief of the American Station, had found the Captain of the U.S.S. Chesapeake unwilling to submit to search. One event had led to another and the Leopard had fired into the smaller American warship, boarded her, and carried away four seamen. Of course there was every reason to believe that the naval engagement had influenced the American stance on the treaty, a theory which Pinckney and Monroe used to sooth the injured feelings of Holland and Auckland. At any rate Holland House was buzzing about infringements of the right of search on the afternoon of 24 July and that evening, only minutes after Canning himself had learned of the one-sided battle, Holland embarrassed ministerialists in the Lords by asking for information on 'the report of hostilities having actually commenced'.<sup>1</sup>

Understandably the opposition initially showed indignation if for no other reason than that the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair excused them from blame for the American refusal to ratify their treaty. On 25 July Monroe and Pinckney discussed the matter over dinner at Holland House with Lauderdale, Windham, Petty, Romilly, Elliot, Fitzpatrick, and Holland.<sup>2</sup> Here discussion ended. Vice-Admiral Sir George Berkeley, the commander of the American Station whose orders had provoked the attack on the Chesapeake, not only owed his appointment to the Talents, but was a kinsman of the Grenvilles, a close friend of Buckingham, and an M.P. who voted with the Grenvillites between tours of sea duty.<sup>3</sup> All this immobilized the opposition leaders and only Lord Stanhope, who owed allegiance to no party, bothered to broach the question during the remainder of the session.

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., IX, 926-27.

<sup>2</sup>Holland House Dinner Book entry of 25 July 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>3</sup>Buckingham to Fremantle, 25 Oct. 1807 (Fremantle).

In the months after the prorogation of Parliament the leaders of the opposition seldom mentioned the American question. Neither British nor American policy was clear and political prudence dictated that the Chesapeake-Leopard affair should be ignored. However, there were undercurrents. Brougham continued to show interest in the question. After detailed research into the legality of searching ships of war he told Holland that the issue was clear enough to merit a crusade in Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Lauderdale agreed with Brougham<sup>2</sup> and their combined talents produced a strong article which was published in the Edinburgh Review.<sup>3</sup> From America the Foxite David Erskine, whom Canning had retained as his minister in Washington, sympathized openly with the United States and defended American claims in an official despatch.<sup>4</sup> Of course Lord Erskine shared his son's views and both he and Lauderdale urged Howick to show more interest in the issue.<sup>5</sup> Among Grenvillites the Eden brothers, their father, and Temple continued to distrust Canning's motives, while Grenville himself, though handicapped by family considerations, deprecated government behaviour.<sup>6</sup> Always of importance was the hatred of Canning among Sidmouth's followers. Both Buckinghamshire and Vansittart informed Auckland that they were prepared

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Holland, 2 Sept. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51561 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Edinburgh Review, XXI, 1-31.

<sup>4</sup>D. Erskine to Canning, 5 Oct. 1807, F.O. 5/52.

<sup>5</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 25 Oct. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>6</sup>W. Eden to Auckland, n.d. [Sept. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), ff. 358-59. Temple to Auckland, 2 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Temple to Grenville, 3 Oct. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 138-39. Grenville to Auckland, 6 Aug. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

to oppose a British assertion of the right of searching neutral ships of war.<sup>1</sup>

The haze which surrounded Anglo-American relations cleared in October. In his annual message to Congress Jefferson attacked Great Britain bitterly and the Talents' Order in Council of 7 January figured prominently in the charges he levelled. Representing it, the Chesapeake-Leopard Affair, and the British refusal to abandon impressment as justification, the American President asked the legislature for power to expel British warships from American ports and to enact the long-threatened Non-Importation Act. Congress endorsed his requests immediately and debated military preparations at length.<sup>2</sup>

These warlike measures forced the British Foreign Office to act. Canning, who had remained non-committal while American public opinion festered over the Chesapeake-Leopard affair, promptly refused to negotiate with Pinckney and Monroe on the basis of the rejected treaty.<sup>3</sup> Simultaneously he appointed George Rose, Jr., as special emissary to the United States and sent the young Pittite to Washington to discuss reparations for the Chesapeake-Leopard affair. The Foreign Secretary then issued a proclamation recalling British seamen to the Royal Navy which strongly reaffirmed the right of impressment while at the same time stating that Britain did not claim a right to search neutral warships. Canning would not be restricted by the former government's

---

<sup>1</sup>Buckinghamshire to Auckland, n.d. [Sept. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), ff. 352-54.

<sup>2</sup>James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents (Washington, 1897), I, 425-30. Courier, 7 Dec. 1807. For official American remonstrances to the Talents' Order in Council see Madison to Erskine, 20 Mar. 1807, enclosed in Erskine to Howick, 30 Mar. 1807, and Madison to Erskine, 29 Mar. 1807, enclosed in Erskine to Howick, 31 Mar. 1807, F.O. 5/52.

<sup>3</sup>Canning to Monroe and Pinckney, 22 Oct. 1807, F.O. 5/54.

concessions; he was eager to avoid a break with America on the basis of the Chesapeake-Leopard affair; and he had no intention of backing down on impressment. With the exception of the treaty, which even Auckland admitted had only 'postponed the principal difficulties to quieter times',<sup>1</sup> Canning's policy was fundamentally consistent with the American policy of the Ministry of All the Talents. But it lacked the hint of desperation and the phil-Americanism of the former ministry's exertions. Canning consequently succeeded where his predecessors had failed. Though it could be argued that his policy lacked the 'spirit' which had characterized that of the Talents, few could convict him of anti-Americanism and nobody could assert that he had conceded British maritime rights.

The policies of Jefferson and Canning produced confusion in the ranks of the opposition. The Times later criticized 'the sententious manner in which Mr. CANNING dismisses the ... mutilated deed,' but not even Holland was prepared to argue that the treaty should be resurrected.<sup>2</sup> And though the Independent Whig attacked Canning's stance on impressment,<sup>3</sup> the experiences of office had convinced men like Erskine, Auckland, and Holland that not only public opinion but their colleagues were averse to agitation on that point. Little could be said on the Rose mission. Auckland protested against the decision to send 'a young man without rank or commanding Talents, and the son of a person who has often affected to hold a Language hostile to the neutral trade of the United States' but even Foxites admitted that the purpose of the mission

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Abbot, 1 Jan. 1807, Abbot Diary, II, 87.

<sup>2</sup>The Times, 24 Feb. 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 18 Oct. 1807.

was good.<sup>1</sup> Generally the opposition's frustrations were directed towards Canning's proclamation. Lauderdale described it as hypocritical, tactless, vague, and illegal; Grenville, though less adamant, found the public declaration 'as undignified as it is foolish'.<sup>2</sup> Opposition leaders, however, backed away from a parliamentary attack on the government's policy.<sup>3</sup> If Canning's manoeuvres of October accomplished nothing else, they immobilized his parliamentary adversaries in Britain. The coalition's innate weaknesses soon made matters worse.

The hostile language of the United States had stirred the fighting blood of many important men. Windham, Spencer, Sidmouth, and Darnley, all of whom had supported a policy of American conciliation, spoke of Canning's 'concession' on the right of searching neutral warships and their views towards the United States hardened.<sup>4</sup> Windham told Fitzwilliam that he was 'by no means certain that the conciliatory system may not easily be pushed too far'.<sup>5</sup> Howick abandoned America altogether:

I disapprove very much of the conduct of our Government; & I think it was our policy to conciliate America as much as possible ... without absolute detriment to ourselves ... But from the spirit which appears in Jefferson's speech I doubt very much whether this

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 16 Oct. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 140-41. W. Eden to Allen, 24 Oct. [1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen), f. 78.

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Howick, 8 Nov. 1807 (Grey). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 14 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51695 (Holland). Grenville to Auckland, 24 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>3</sup>Ld. King acknowledged that Canning had stolen the opposition's thunder. Ld. King to Holland, 20 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland). Also see Holland to Auckland, n.d. [Oct. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), f. 204.

<sup>4</sup>Sidmouth to Abbot, 18 and 23 Oct. 1807, Abbot Diary, II, 132-33. Spencer to T. Grenville, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville). Darnley to Holland, n.d. [Oct.-Nov. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland), ff. 156-57.

<sup>5</sup>Windham to Fitzwilliam, 14 Nov. 1807 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

policy would have been successful; & we must be careful not to incur the charge of giving up the cause of the country. It would be very prejudicial to us now, & might prove extremely embarrassing to us hereafter. I must tremble at the result of a situation in which all neutrality will be banished from the world; but if placed in that situation we must make up our minds to meet all the difficulties it brings with it, which timidity will only increase.<sup>1</sup>

Betrayed by Jefferson, outmanoeuvred by Canning, and frustrated by the demands of political coalition, the opposition deserted a major aspect of Foxite foreign policy and one of the few points which had held them together in office.

By mid-November 1807 only the unpopular question of Ireland gave the coalesced opposition identity on public grounds, but such important men as Howick, Lauderdale, and Tom Grenville were against bringing even that issue forward in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> Lord Grenville had not corresponded with Foxite leaders since August and the old Pittite was outraged by what he saw as the ruinous measures of government and infuriated by the rashness of his political allies.<sup>3</sup> William Eden told Tierney that Grenville was so disgusted with politics 'as hardly even to take up a newspaper, and consequently to be pretty much in the dark as to all that is passing'.<sup>4</sup> The word at Holland House was that he would break with the Foxites<sup>5</sup> and rumour held that plans for a Grenvillite-Canningite

---

<sup>1</sup>Howick to Tierney, 26 Oct. 1807 (Tierney).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Holland, n.d. [Dec. 1807?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland), ff. 104-05. Lauderdale to T. Grenville, 6 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville). Grenville to T. Grenville, 18 and 26 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 28 July 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Howick, 29 Sept. and 31 Oct. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Petty to Lady Holland, 25 Oct. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

alliance were at an advanced stage.<sup>1</sup> But Grenville's impact on the Foxite leadership since the fall of the Talents nevertheless had been enormous and there were fears that many M.P.'s would not follow Howick. With both Sheridan and Whitbread threatening rebellion Howick's only remaining card was his influence as the leader in the Commons. But in mid-November, at the height of party disharmony, Earl Grey died.

Control of the House of Commons had been fundamental in Fox's reasoning on the utility of coalition in early 1806. His power there had been firm and growing and he had looked to Petty as the man who would lead after his own retirement and Howick's elevation to the Lords. But Fox's premature death and the events which followed it had made most people agree with Carlisle that there was nothing to stop the Commons from becoming 'as wild & as impracticable as a kennel of hounds without a huntsman, & more mischief arising from want of discipline in our friends, than [from] the exertions of our enemies'.<sup>2</sup> There was certainly reason for these fears in late 1807. 'The Hour that made you an Earl made the Power of the Crown, during the remainder of the present reign at least, complete', wrote Tierney to the new Lord Grey. 'If the Blow had come upon us in Office, office might have enabled us to recover from the shock. As it is I quite despair, and look upon the Party of the late Administration as split or soon about to be split into a thousand pieces.'<sup>3</sup> Windham and most Grenvillites saw the departure of Howick from the Commons with alarm, and within five days of Earl Grey's death Tom Grenville was plotting to separate Whitbread from the Foxite hierarchy

---

<sup>1</sup>Tierney to Howick, 24 Oct. 1807 (Grey). Grenville to T. Grenville, 18 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville). Independent Whig, 25 Oct. 1807.

<sup>2</sup>Carlisle to T. Grenville, 3 Aug. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 26 Nov. 1807 (Grey).



and undermine Foxite ascendancy in the Commons by the selection of George Ponsonby, the uncle of Grey's wife.<sup>1</sup>

Foxite leaders were equally concerned. Among Foxites in the lower house Petty and William Lamb were too young, Tierney was unpopular, Lord George Cavendish was a poor speaker, Sheridan was distrusted, Coke was unwilling, and Whitbread, whom both Grey and Bedford admitted to be the logical successor, was disqualified by his opposition to the Talents and by the prejudices of the Grenvillites. Lauderdale suggested bringing Brougham into Parliament, but the young man's connexions with the Edinburgh Review had alienated the aristocratic wing of the party. Astonishingly it appears that Holland, Grey, Bedford, and Lauderdale would have agreed to the appointment of Tom Grenville had not his hypochondria made him unwilling.<sup>2</sup> Finally Grey and Holland struck on the idea of an 'Opposition Cabinet' to include Petty, Whitbread, Sheridan, Tierney, Elliot, Windham, and Tom Grenville. But this compromise found no support and by early December, when the Grenvillites entered the fray, the coalition's leaders were divided in opinion. Grey, Bedford, Tom Grenville, Fitzwilliam, and Windham insisted that the Commons could be controlled only by the selection of a leader. Holland, Grenville, Lauderdale, and Petty argued that an effectual leader could not be selected arbitrarily. The former group soon came to agree with Tom Grenville and Grey that Ponsonby would be a good compromise candidate; the latter (with the exception of Lord Grenville) gave way to the contention that a leader was necessary, but they supported Petty. At

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 19, 22 Nov. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 147-48, 148-50. The Grenvilles had speculated on Lord Grey's death since June. Buckingham and Tom Grenville opposed both Whitbread and Petty. Buckingham to Fremantle, 21 June 1807 (Fremantle).

<sup>2</sup>Howick to Holland, 14 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Holland to Grey, [Nov. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland), ff. 148-57.

this juncture Holland showed uncharacteristic firmness in opposing Ponsonby and in demanding that a Foxite, preferably Petty or Whitbread, must lead his uncle's party and on 5 January Tom Grenville, fearing the selection of Whitbread, acquiesced in the selection of Petty.<sup>1</sup>

However, on the 6th fresh rumours of a French overture for peace negotiations circulated through London. Holland House came to life with excitement, Petty agreed with Holland on the necessity of laying the petitions for peace before Parliament, and Whitbread disclosed that though he would not incite petitions in Bedfordshire, he must attend any meeting called on the subject and 'think it his duty to ... hold then a very different language from that of Lord Milton ...'<sup>2</sup> Immediately Tom Grenville informed his brother that though Grey 'seems to agree with us on this point, Lord Holland is very strongly inclined to some measure in Parliament for peace, and however conciliatory he will be found in practice, his opinions in this respect come nearer to Whitbread than to Lord Howick.'<sup>3</sup> Tempers flared to such an extent that Tierney threatened retirement and Petty's appointment became impossible. Magnanimously Tom Grenville told Holland and Tierney that Ponsonby 'would be an atonement to you for the opposition which we felt it would be necessary to make ....' Fearing an open breach, the Foxites again compromised and Ponsonby, who did not know twenty members of the House of Commons, was agreed upon.<sup>4</sup> As Bedford observed, he was 'the person

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 6 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Petty to Holland, 10 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland). Grenville to Buckingham, 23 Nov. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 208-11. T. Grenville to Grenville, 5 Dec. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 155-56.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 9, 11 Dec. 1807, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 215-17, 217-19.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 8 Dec. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 156-58.

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Grey, 7 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

to whom the fewest objections can attach among the various interests of which the great body of the opposition is composed ...<sup>1</sup> The same logic had made Catholic emancipation the beau idéal of the coalition. Ponsonby was the compromise candidate of a compromising group of politicians. He was to become a lasting tribute to the weaknesses of the coalition.

'Never I fancy had a party so much to attack as our friends will have next session', wrote Brougham. Indeed the Portland Government had first ridiculed and then overturned almost every policy of the Ministry of All the Talents. Windham's system of army recruitment had been abandoned. South American operations had almost ceased. New emphasis had been placed on Europe. The bombardment of Copenhagen had violated what many saw as the Talents' policy of letting Europe shift for itself. A policy of firmness had been adopted in Ireland. The American treaty had been deserted. And in late November the government had issued proclamations which jeopardized the trade of the United States and threatened war. 'I never was so hurt', wrote Auckland. 'Many obvious projects of infinite importance are gone for ever.'<sup>2</sup> However, in a testimony to their unfitness as ministers, the opposition could not agree to disagree. The coalition was hopelessly divided on the issues of Copenhagen, peace, and America and the dangers which threatened the country from the Treaty of Tilsit had convinced many members of the party that this was not the time to divide the country with agitation on their raison d'être, the Catholic question.

Actually there was no ground for opposing the government, for the real battle raged in the ranks of opposition. Grenville admitted meekly

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Grey, 19 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Allen, 17 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen). Auckland to Grenville, 23 Sept. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 137-38.

that his views were not 'equally adapted to influence the conduct of younger men, such as some of our friends are, or of those whose public life has not been thrown into the same channels as mine has been'.<sup>1</sup> Tierney noted tactfully that the Grenvillites lacked 'that systematic eagerness without which no opposition can be effective' and confessed that he 'could see without very much concern our Ranks thinned by some 40 or 50, if the operation would bring the remainder into an united & manageable Phalanx.'<sup>2</sup> Holland saw no way to avoid a schism in the party on the first day.<sup>3</sup> The Foxite hierarchy was on precarious ground. Whitbread was known to be seriously piqued at the selection of Ponsonby as leader and he almost certainly would bring on a motion for peace.<sup>4</sup> Equally piqued, Sheridan threatened to move the Catholic question if Grey and Holland did not do so.<sup>5</sup> Burdett was determined to move parliamentary reform, upon which Grey admitted that 'we stand pretty much in the same situation, as in the Catholic Question.'<sup>6</sup> Peace, reform, and Catholic relief represented the meat of Foxite dogma but the demands of the coalition had tied the party's hands on each of these questions. Ever perceptive to the context of the disagreement among Foxites, the Independent Whig railed against aristocratic politicians.<sup>7</sup> Grenville prudently advocated a partial political secession; Tierney warned against

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Howick, 24 Oct. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grey, n.d. [Dec. 1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland), ff. 148-57.

<sup>4</sup>Whitbread to Tierney, 21 Dec. 1807 (Tierney).

<sup>5</sup>Tierney to T. Grenville, 28 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>6</sup>Tierney to Grey, 26 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>7</sup>Independent Whig, 27 Dec. 1807.

any meeting of the party before the opening of Parliament; Grey and Lauderdale delayed their departure for London.<sup>1</sup> Fox's strategy had backfired. '... I am inclined to think that those who were acting together in 1806 will be differing a good deal in 1808', wrote Spencer in the understatement of his day.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Dec., and Lauderdale to Grey, 31 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Spencer to T. Grenville, 8 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

## CHAPTER V

### THE ROUT OF THE COALITION: JANUARY - JULY, 1808

Grey and Grenville had assured themselves of almost every political handicap by the closing months of 1807. They had set out with an army composed of traditional enemies; they had disagreed on what they would fight; they had tried to unite their forces by raising a standard which frightened potential allies; and Ponsonby, the new leader of their attacking force, was a bumbling private whose chief attribute was his obscurity. The leader of the largest battalion was dead, and his troops were restless and unwilling to base future campaigns on the strategy of a lost battle. Captains threatened rebellion, privates demanded the marching orders of days gone by, and old soldiers stayed at home. The allied army was deficient in artillery and the lower ranks suspected espionage at headquarters. Many spectators doubted whether the army would reach the field of battle.

However, the Duke of Portland's own forces were far from strong and men who had no confidence in government flocked to London in December and January. Optimistically the friends of the coalition began repairs. Holland, Bedford, Tierney, Elliot, and Tom Grenville led the way in the promotion of Ponsonby. 'Upon the subject of Ireland', wrote Morpeth, 'he will necessarily speak with great authority, & that after all is the most serious subject of discussion.'<sup>1</sup> This unhappy delusion appears to have formed the strongest point in the promotion but it left

---

<sup>1</sup>Morpeth to Holland, 14 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51557 (Holland).

both friends and independent M.P.'s unimpressed. Country gentlemen did not like Irishmen and they harboured deep suspicions of any plan to decrease the comparative strength of the Protestant establishment.<sup>1</sup> In addition Ponsonby had done a miserable job as Irish Chancellor under the Talents and radicals and many moderates in Ireland trusted him no more than did the Archbishop of Canterbury. The few members of the House of Commons who knew Ponsonby agreed with William Lamb that he was the most unfit man imaginable.<sup>2</sup> Seeing in his clumsiness and slovenly appearance the likeness of a boorish farmer, Creevey nicknamed him 'Snouch'. William Anstruther writhed with laughter when he learned that Ponsonby would fill the shoes of Fox. But the nail was driven and the party hierarchy was determined to make it hold. Poor Ponsonby was represented as a tried and true statesman in letters to key party members, elaborate dinners were planned, and Lord George Cavendish came to town and tried to stir up support for the Irishman among incredulous country gentlemen.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile innate political differences continued to delay a decision on policy. The issue of peace hung ominously over Grey's head and on 28 December he finally mustered enough courage to broach the question with Whitbread. To his surprise the brewer was not as hostile as Lady Holland had reported. Not only did Whitbread express a desire to cooperate, but he promised not to move for peace in Parliament. This delighted Grey and he encouraged Tierney to open correspondence with Southill.<sup>4</sup> Hoping to appease the popular wing of his party Grey

---

<sup>1</sup>Note Tierney's comments in his letters to Grey of 14 and 26 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Lamb to Holland, 18 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51558 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland to Morpeth, 22 Dec. 1807 (Carlisle).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 28 Dec. 1807, and Whitbread to Grey, 3 Jan. 1808 (Grey). Tierney to Whitbread, 22, 24, and 28 Dec., and Whitbread to Tierney, 21 and 25 Dec. 1807 (Tierney). Tierney to Grey, 26 Dec. 1807 (Grey).

stiffened in his opposition to the Copenhagen expedition and told Grenville on 3 January that he could not compromise.<sup>1</sup> This was probably a good decision because Russian hostility towards Britain had given the bombardment of Copenhagen a new political context. As Auckland noted, 'the only point of anxiety on the Russian declaration is the party question: whether, on the other hand, it bears with crimination on the late Government for not having given ... a continental diversion after the battle of Jena, or whether, on the one hand, it bears heavily on the Danish expedition ...'<sup>2</sup> But on the 4th Tierney found the Grenvilles almost unanimous in support of the expedition.<sup>3</sup>

The Catholic question was another source of discord. Most supporters and potential supporters of the coalition felt that a motion on Ireland would do more harm than good but many Foxites, who saw the question as one of abstract right, and Grenville and Buckingham, who feared a French invasion, were eager to bring it forward in Parliament. Troubled by such disagreement Grenville backed away from exertions in Parliament altogether. So long as Irish relief were denied, he argued, 'all other measures must be ineffectual, and all other discussions superfluous.' A partial secession, therefore, was the remedy. By declaring such an intention in Parliament he could avoid differing 'from those with whom it is my most anxious & sincere desire to remain firmly united.' Without opposition the government would fall from within.<sup>4</sup> There was something ludicrous in this logic but it was supported by

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 6 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Also see T. Grenville to Grenville, 9 Jan. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 170-71.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 5 Dec. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 155.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 4 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Dec. 1807 (Grey). Buckingham agreed. Buckingham to Fremantle, endorsed 3 Jan. 1808 (Fremantle).



such important men as Norfolk and Carlisle, and Grey would have agreed if his friends had let him.<sup>1</sup> But Grey's friends were daily becoming more disillusioned with the demanding coalition and both they and the Fitzwilliams were eager for action in Parliament. Lauderdale was outraged by Grenville's views and Bedford was anxious to support Whitbread and Sheridan.<sup>2</sup> The result was frustration and further inactivity. 'Fox's friends are indifferent since his death', noted Lady Holland.<sup>3</sup>

There was, however, one potential source of agreement. The policies of the Ministry of All the Talents had been designed to facilitate commerce with the western hemisphere as compensation for the loss of that of Europe and a firm bond with the United States had been fundamental in this scheme. Jefferson's failure to appreciate the efforts of the Talents had angered the coalition's leaders but though men like Grey, Grenville, Windham, and Spencer lent silent support to Canning's policies of October 1807 they continued to feel that the American market was indispensable to British survival. This conclusion, which had nothing to do with any affection for the United States, complemented the more phil-American views of men like Holland, Erskine, Sheridan, Whitbread, and Petty. However, the American question lay dormant until mid-November when the government announced a revolutionary commercial system.

In a series of Orders in Council the Portland Ministry put forward the commercial code which its members had promised while in

---

<sup>1</sup>Norfolk to Holland, 28 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland). Carlisle to T. Grenville, 17 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Holland, 28 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland). Lauderdale to Grey, 29 Dec. 1807 (Grey). Bedford to Holland, 4 [Jan.] 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland), ff. 103-4.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 235.

opposition. Fundamentally the new policy prohibited all trade with French-controlled Europe that did not go first through a British port for inspection and taxation. To avoid this procedure merchants of all nationalities were invited to purchase a licence from the Board of Trade. Though founded on a principle of commercial control, as opposed to the French principle of commercial prohibition, the Orders in Council were justified in international law by the right of Britain to retaliate against the Berlin Decree. Through licences and the taxation of neutral trade the new system fed the exchequer, gave preferential treatment to British shipping, and brought Britain a monopoly of world trade with Europe.<sup>1</sup> Economically this approach was logical; politically and morally it was open to question. Standing behind British maritime supremacy the government in effect had denied the existence of neutral trading rights. It assured American ill will.

The principle of retaliation which disguised the effects of the Orders had a double purpose. Firstly, it justified a controversial system of commercial control. Secondly, it immobilized Grey and Grenville because the Talents' Order in Council of 7 January 1807 had put forward the same principle. Then, too, the ridiculously incongruous manner in which the new policies were announced dumbfounded all who read them and it appears that even economists such as Lauderdale, Auckland, and Tierney were unsure of their meaning until early December.<sup>2</sup> Nevertheless it soon became obvious that the new commercial regulations represented a striking departure from the policies of the Talents, for as Auckland

---

<sup>1</sup>Printed in Parl. Deb., X, 130-48.

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51695 (Holland). Lauderdale to Allen, 26 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52180 (Allen). Tierney to Howick, 7 Nov. 1807 (Grey).

noted, they removed 'one principal motive which the Americans might have had for remaining at peace with us.' Pinckney and Monroe were active in protesting to the opposition and the former told William Eden that the Orders in Council were tantamount to a declaration of war.<sup>1</sup>

All this gave new life to the American question and alarm was almost universal among the opposition's leading men. The Talents had considered a similar commercial plan in December 1806 but the Cabinet had backed away from it because of a desire to conciliate the United States and because it was felt that such a scheme would only enforce French policy. It was not surprising therefore to find genuine concern among those members of the opposition who accepted the Portland government's announced motive of commercial retaliation. Grenville felt that Great Britain was now 'cooperating with Bonaparte, & lending our navy in aid of his decrees, & are shutting from without those doors against ourselves which all the Laws in the world could not close against us from within.'<sup>2</sup> Tom Grenville, Auckland, and Lauderdale agreed with this assessment, and Horner, who understood the controlling effects of the Orders immediately, saw them as a reimposition of the policies of taxation against which Americans had struck for independence in 1776.<sup>3</sup>

The primary political importance of the Orders in Council to the coalesced opposition came with the fact that Grenville, Fitzwilliam, and the war faction saw them as measures which would foment discontent among

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 7, 25 Nov. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 143, 151-2. Grenville to T. Grenville, 30 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 18 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 28 Nov., and T. Grenville to Grenville, 5 Dec. 1807, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 152-53, 155-56. Lauderdale to Grey, n.d. [29 Nov. 1807], (Grey). Horner to Holland, 14 Nov. 1807 (Horner).

manufacturers and merchants and therefore stimulate the already alarming cry for peace in the industrial north.<sup>1</sup> This led to a relaxation of tensions in the party. Almost everyone agreed that the Orders in Council only gave effect to Napoleon's Continental System and assured industrial unrest in Britain; the loss of the American market was feared; and Grenville, who was greatly alarmed, told Holland on 5 December that he would support negotiations for peace.<sup>2</sup> By mid-December the issue represented a potential bridge to opposition unity. Brougham and Eden defended the late government's American treaty and blamed Jefferson's Anglophobia on the Rose mission and the new commercial code. Holland, Auckland, Erskine, Whitbread, Sheridan, Petty, and the Barings felt that Britain had no right to retaliate through neutral commerce.<sup>3</sup> Windham, Fitzwilliam, and the Grenvilles were concerned about the loss of both the European and American markets and frantic with fear of increased agitation for peace. Devonshire House, which had shown little interest in politics since the death of the Duchess in 1806, came to life with talk of motions in Parliament.<sup>4</sup> And the coalition's economists agreed that the Orders were not only illegal but also economically ruinous. All these views were codified somewhat by a feeling of defensiveness among the old supporters of the Ministry of All the Talents for a philosophy which they regarded as their own; the Orders in Council struck at the root of it.

Behind Lauderdale the Foxites took the lead in developing a

---

<sup>1</sup>Windham to Fitzwilliam, 24 Nov. 1807 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Holland, 5 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Eden to Allen, 16 Nov. [1807], B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen), ff. 79-80. Eden to Holland, 3 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland), ff. 121-2. Milton to Holland, 16 Dec. 1807, *ibid.*, ff. 123-4. Brougham to Allen, 22 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

<sup>4</sup>Lady Elizabeth Foster to Lady Morpeth, 12 Nov. 1807 (Carlisle).

case. From the first their greatest problem was the Talents' blockading decree of 7 January 1807 which as a concession to public opinion had put forward the principle of commercial retaliation. Lauderdale, who had opposed the assertion of this right at the time, noted on 2 December that it had been a 'horrid slip' but he nevertheless began efforts to rally the party against the new policy. He met with stiff opposition from Grey, who wanted nothing to do with the ungrateful Americans, but the Scotsman persevered. Lauderdale ignored personal differences and opened correspondence with Whitbread; he encouraged Allen to study the Orders and to research their effect on American trade; he emphasized the importance of the issue to Tom Grenville; and after studying the implications of the new code with Brougham for several days, he envisaged a parliamentary crusade against the Orders as a means of reconciling political differences in the party.<sup>1</sup>

The Copenhagen expedition and the new commercial code had similar effects, argued Lauderdale. Both drove neutrals into the arms of France and therefore damaged the British economy. Both were contrary to the policies of the late government because they increased the strength of France without bolstering British resources. And both were symbolic of the frame of mind which led Portland's government to deny England the active support of Irishmen. Lauderdale also saw parliamentary opposition to the Orders as a means of coming to grips with the dangerous issue of peace because it would 'turn the clamour of the manufacturers which I foresee must exist against the proclamations rather than against the war ...' Directed against the war, he wrote, this clamour would

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 24 and 25 Nov. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51695 (Holland). Lauderdale to Allen, 26 Nov. and 6 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 52180 (Allen). Lauderdale to T. Grenville, 6 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville). Lauderdale to Whitbread, n.d. [Dec. 1807?], (Whitbread), 3760/1.

divide the opposition while at the same time making it impossible for Britain to obtain advantageous terms of peace; directed against the Orders in Council, public protest would strengthen the opposition and 'equally dispose to Peace but it will not hamper in the course of Negotiation ...'<sup>1</sup>

These arguments were by no means unreasonable and they offered the opposition both a rallying point and firm ground from which a comprehensive, responsible, and united attack on government could be launched. Consequently Lauderdale found supporters. Whitbread and Erskine began research on the issue. The Holland House circle did the same and Pinckney ate Christmas dinner at Lady Holland's table.<sup>2</sup> Auckland, the Eden brothers, and Temple placed pressure on the Grenvillite leadership. The strength of Lauderdale's case was so strong that Tom Grenville expressed a desire to compromise somewhat on Copenhagen; Lord Grenville became quite eager for the plan; and as a bonus, Sidmouth agreed with Lauderdale completely.<sup>3</sup>

Though no comprehensive scheme was developed, by the beginning of 1808 the system pursued by Portland's government was a leading topic of conversation at Holland House, Brooks's, and Dropmore and the Morning Chronicle, which hitherto had tacitly defended the new commercial code, printed a strong editorial against it on 6 January. But at a time when the opposition was beginning to show the first signs of unity unexpected news produced chaos.

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 2 Nov. and n.d. [29 Nov.] 1807, (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Petty to Holland, 10 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland). Also see the entry of 25 Dec. 1807 in the Holland House Dinner Books, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, n.d. [29 Nov.], and Grenville to Grey, 27 Dec. 1807 (Grey). Sidmouth to B. Bathurst, 1 Dec. 1807, Sidmouth Life, II, 487.

On 6 January word broke that Napoleon had agreed to Austro-Russian mediation in negotiations for peace with Great Britain. Almost immediately rumours spread among the opposition's war party that the British government had accepted a humiliating basis of negotiation. Tom Grenville reported that not only Sicily but Gibraltar would be the price of peace. Alarmed by this reactionary nonsense, men like Carysfort, Stafford, Temple, Windham, and Buckingham drew together in defence of British honour.<sup>1</sup> Many Foxites also found the news of the French offer most interesting. Sheridan departed for Southill immediately, Creevey worked to unite Whitbread and Burdett, the Independent Whig cried for peace, and it appears that by 8 January many old Foxites in the Commons felt that peace should form the basis of their parliamentary campaign.<sup>2</sup>

The French overture reopened deep wounds in the ranks of the coalesced opposition and Grey and Grenville moved to avert an open schism. On 7 January Grenville told his excited brother that peace, even at the cost of Gibraltar, was necessary for British security and on the 8th Grey reemphasized the need for moderation to Whitbread. Simultaneously the Morning Chronicle tried to appease both extremes by representing the French overture as merely a ministerial ploy designed to stifle talk of peace among manufacturers.<sup>3</sup>

All this had little effect. On the 11th party animosities were increased by the arrival of the Bourbons at Stowe. With the exception of Tom Grenville, who prudently stayed in London, the Grenville hierarchy

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 6 Jan. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 167-8. Temple to C.W.W. Wynn, 7 Jan. 1808 (Wynn).

<sup>2</sup>Fulford, p. 191. Creevey to Whitbread, 8 Jan. [1808] (Whitbread), 373/7. Independent Whig, 10 Jan. 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 7 Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville). Grey to Whitbread, 8 Jan. 1808 (Grey). Morning Chronicle, 8 Jan. 1808.

company,

every body changes his manner towards you; one sneers, another expresses an incredulous astonishment, a third shrugs his shoulders in a corner with a sort of piteous patience at your ignorance, while a fourth spills his tea and almost choaks himself with swallowing his toast to make you an answer full of bitter violence ...<sup>1</sup>

This frame of mind was most threatening to the coalition with Grenville and on the evening of 11 January a disturbed Grey arrived at Dropmore.<sup>2</sup> Frightened by reports that Whitbread would take a line of his own, the Foxite leader supported Grenville's plan for a parliamentary secession so warmly that his host became alarmed. '... I find in him much less expression of a disposition to moderate & to controul that I expected', wrote Grenville. 'All this makes it still more necessary that I should keep in my own hands the thread of our own conduct.'<sup>3</sup>

Grey and Grenville travelled up to London on the 16th. After much ado a meeting of party leaders was scheduled for the 18th at Camelford House. Grenville did not include Whitbread on the invitation list and it was only the insistence of Holland and Grey that led to his presence at the dinner.<sup>4</sup> Grey's motives at this point were clear. Above all else he wished to surround his unmanageable friend with men who were willing to compromise on the issue of peace in the hope that he would adhere to more moderate views. This tactic failed miserably. Midway through the dinner Grey condemned the large and unruly demonstrations for peace at Leeds. After several seconds of uncomfortable silence Whitbread exploded with anger and lectured Grey on the duties

---

<sup>1</sup>Examiner, 17 Jan. 1808.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 11, 14, and 16 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 12 Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 236-37.



was in full attendance. Lord Grenville, Buckingham, Temple, Carysfort, Proby, Fremantle, Ebrington, the Wynns, and the Nevilles toasted, 'The True Peace of Europe founded on a strict alliance between the two Sovereigns', and the orchestra played O Richard O Mon Roi.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile in London it was learned on the 12th that the British government had refused the Austro-Russian offer of mediation.

In a terse letter to Grey Whitbread defended the right of the people to petition for peace.<sup>2</sup> Leigh Hunt's Examiner, which only recently had joined the Independent Whig as a whiggish but non-party weekly, called for naval based isolation from Europe.<sup>3</sup> As always the Independent Whig raised the banner of Fox and begged Holland to assert himself. 'We were the instigators of the famous combination of kings;' wrote White, 'every monarch on the European Continent flew to arms, and divided in imaginary partitions the territories of France; in the dread of democracy we forgot our favorite balance of power, and abandoned our support of the long defended continental equipoise to our horror of a republic.'<sup>4</sup> Reflecting the fears of the party hierarchy, the Morning Chronicle defended the decision of government in a shuffling editorial.<sup>5</sup> But Perry stood almost alone. The proceedings at Stowe, the peace movement in the north, the refusal to negotiate with France, and the absence of leadership made Foxites rally round the principles of days gone by. After visiting St. James's Street in the wake of the government's refusal to negotiate Leigh Hunt reported that if a man praised Pitt in Foxite

---

<sup>1</sup>Henry W. W. Wynn to Lady W. Wynn, 12 Jan. 1808, Lady Williams Wynn Correspondence, pp. 119-20.

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 12 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 24 Jan. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Independent Whig, 24 Jan. 1808.

<sup>5</sup>Morning Chronicle, 13 Jan. 1808.

of a Foxite.<sup>1</sup> 'Old Grenville seemed dumbfounded & hardly spoke a word', reported Grey.<sup>2</sup> This exchange ended the meeting. Afterwards Whitbread approached Holland and Grey and stressed the necessity of 'maintaining a clear distinction between the Foxite part of the Party from the Grenvilles.'

As would be the case for the next eight years, Whitbread's ability to discomfort the party hierarchy rested entirely on the soundness of his politics in the eyes of leading Foxites. Many thought them sound in mid-January. On the 19th Erskine, Tierney, and Whitbread visited Lord Hutchinson, who had just returned from Tilsit. As soon as the three entered his parlour the old diplomat exclaimed. 'There is but one sound man among you by God! and that is Whitbread.' A few minutes of discussion converted Erskine. 'Damme,' he said emphatically, 'I always thought with him and every body knows it.' Tierney left in alarm.<sup>3</sup>

Grenvillite leaders also disagreed on the subject. Though he opposed petitions for peace Grenville was unhappy with the government's refusal to negotiate and Spencer horrified Tom Grenville by condemning Canning's punctilious and outrageous demands on France.<sup>4</sup> Count Stahremberg, the Russian minister, strengthened these opinions. Before leaving London he gave Grey copies of the official correspondence which contained the French offer of negotiation. Grey was stunned by their content. 'It is a pity that everything could not appear which passed of a Confidential Nature', he lamented. 'In these I think stronger proofs

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Memoirs of the Whig Party, II, 240-42. Also see Fulford, p. 192.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 19 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Fulford, p. 193.

<sup>4</sup>Spencer to T. Grenville, 15 Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

of a desire for Peace on the part of the French Government are contained than anything that has appeared at any former period. On our side, on the contrary everything that has passed seems to breathe a spirit of interminable war.<sup>1</sup>

It appears that a majority of opposition leaders shared these views by 20 January when the party hierarchy met at Holland House to discuss political strategy. Of the men who attended, Holland, Erskine, Bedford, Petty, and Whitbread wanted peace and felt that the party should champion it in Parliament. Grey, Grenville, Spencer, Lauderdale, Tierney, and Morpeth were equally pacific but opposed petitions and parliamentary agitation on the subject. Only Tom Grenville, who spoke the language of most Grenvillite peers, and Elliot, who represented Fitzwilliam and Windham, remained intensely warlike. Ponsonby, who had just arrived, was willing to follow the majority. But with the opening of Parliament less than 24 hours away the subject was dodged altogether. Grey was far more concerned with avoiding further disagreement. Grenville, obviously uncomfortable in the presence of Lady Holland, refused to open his mouth. The dinner ended with no more than polite conversation and a few whispers in the drawing room about Whitbread's jealousy.<sup>2</sup> Nothing solid was decided on the Catholic question, America, the Orders in Council, or peace.

That evening Ponsonby called a meeting at his house to discuss the Copenhagen expedition but few M.P.'s attended. Temple's attitude was typical. Grenville reported that his nephew had 'so strong an opinion of his own against that measure [opposing the expedition], & so fully satisfied me of the impossibility of reconciling our friends to

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 19 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Holland House Dinner Book entry of 20 Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951. Grey to Lady Grey, 21 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

it that I was glad to find him inclined not to attend the meeting, but rather to make previous communication of his sentiments, to Ponsonby ... <sup>1</sup> Faced with internal disagreement Grey and Grenville concluded meekly that there would be no amendment to the Address on opening day; party harmony could be preserved best by generalities.<sup>2</sup>

Surprisingly the meeting of Parliament on 21 January brought a convincing display of opposition power. Unhampered by the fear of a division Grenville delivered a vague but impressive harangue against ministers. Sheridan and Whitbread made every effort to cooperate with their leaders and both of them shone in debate. Though Abbot thought that Ponsonby's speech was 'short and cold', the new opposition floor leader was well-received by back-benchers.<sup>3</sup> The only hitch came in the Lords when Gloucester and Sidmouth grew angry at a favourable reference to the Copenhagen expedition in the King's speech. As Grey and Grenville held their breath Sidmouth declined to approve of it before seeing relevant papers and several opposition peers entered a Protest upon the journals of the House.<sup>4</sup> A division was happily avoided but it was now obvious to most people that Grey and Grenville had to commit themselves on the issues of the day. An opposition dinner was held at Erskine's on the 23rd but nothing was accomplished. Neither Spencer, Tom Grenville, Whitbread, nor any of the Fitzwilliams attended, and Erskine, whose phil-Americanism had reached imprudent extremes, invited Pinckney. The presence of the American minister made the dinner

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, [21] Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>See Romilly's comments in his Memoirs, II, 239.

<sup>3</sup>Abbot Diary, II, 137. Grey to Lady Grey, 22 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb., X. 14-16, 58-9. J. T. Rogers, ed., Protests of the Lords (Oxford, 1875), II, 384.

no more than a social occasion. Erskine entertained his guests with Home and Cline, two pet leaches which he kept in a glass of water, and Romilly left the dinner in disgust.<sup>1</sup>

At this juncture the Foxite zeal of William Roscoe rocked the party. In late 1807 this Liverpool Whig had published a pamphlet, Considerations on the Cause, Objects and Consequences of the present War, and on the Expediency, or the Danger, of Peace with France. Succinctly and forcefully it outlined the essence of Fox's old arguments for peace and concluded with an attack on the peace efforts of the Ministry of All the Talents. Copies of this pamphlet were sent to old members of the Foxite party in late January and the clash between political consistency and loyalty to the Talents government came to the surface once again. Francis and Derby agreed with Roscoe, and Creevey chastized the author for 'your too great forbearance on my late Masters ...'<sup>2</sup> Brougham and Thanet were reluctant to condemn the former government but both of them advocated a motion for peace in Parliament and the former encouraged Jeffrey to 'preach a lecture on peace' in his next review.<sup>3</sup> Poor Holland was caught in the middle. He told Roscoe: 'Every thing that you write must give me pleasure in point of style & principle but I will confess to you that it gave me much concern to find you differed so entirely with our friends & with my Uncle upon the late negotiation.'<sup>4</sup> Holland, like many others, refused to admit that Fox or the rump of his government had compromised the principles of

---

<sup>1</sup>Romilly Memoirs, II, 239-41.

<sup>2</sup>Francis to Roscoe, 7 Feb., Derby to Roscoe, 9 Feb., and Creevey to Roscoe, 5 Feb. 1808 (Roscoe), 1584, 1192, and 1054.

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Roscoe, n.d. [27 Jan.], and 28 Jan., and Roscoe to Brougham, 9 Feb. 1808 (Roscoe), 455, 458, and 459.

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Roscoe, 30 Jan. 1808 (Roscoe), 2093.

the 1790's.

Roscoe's stature as a Foxite, however, was as firm as the principles he championed, and the timing of his pamphlet undermined the temporising of the party hierarchy. On 26 January Whitbread gave notice in Parliament of a motion on the Austro-Russian offer of mediation. Roscoe immediately offered his services to the brewer; young Whigs like Lord John Russell, Althorp, Creevey, and Ward hailed Whitbread as Fox's successor in foreign politics; and old Foxites cast reflective eyes towards Southill.<sup>1</sup> As Belsham noted, Whitbread's motion would 'bring the Politics of the Grenville Party to the Test, & I fear that they will not endure the experimentum crucis.'<sup>2</sup> Most Foxites were ready for the air to be cleared; Robert Southey predicted the dissolution of the Whig party.<sup>3</sup>

Roscoe's attack on the Talents and Whitbread's notice of what was surely going to be a motion for peace placed the coalition's leaders in a difficult position. Though Grey, Grenville, and most of the party hierarchy were in fundamental agreement with Whitbread on the Austro-Russian offer of mediation, the renewed attack on the Talents' peace negotiations gave them much in common with Canning. The Fitzwilliams and most Grenvillite peers continued to support the government stance, and the publication in early February of a pamphlet which openly accused the opposition of treason did nothing to stimulate interest in motions for peace.<sup>4</sup> But action of some sort was necessary and Grenville placed new emphasis on Lauderdale's scheme for a comprehensive assault on the

---

<sup>1</sup>Ward to Whitbread, 4 Feb., and Roscoe to Whitbread, 10 Feb. 1808, (Whitbread), 2440 and 4179.

<sup>2</sup>Belsham to Whitbread, 21 Feb. 1808 (Whitbread), 4183.

<sup>3</sup>Southey Diary, MSS. 4812 (Southey), f. 199.

<sup>4</sup>Anonamous, Letters to a French Spy; or, Five Original Letters found in the Bureau of a Foreigner (London, 1808).

new system of government. This entailed a three-pronged attack on the Copenhagen expedition, the Orders in Council, and the refusal of government to meet the demands of Irish Catholics. Individually, each of these heads was a source of party disharmony; collectively, they were symbolic of a 'new morality' which undermined the resources of the British Empire, increased French power, and most importantly, overturned the policies of the Ministry of All the Talents. By late January most party leaders apparently agreed with Lauderdale that such a comprehensive attack on government could bring a semblance of unity and relieve party tensions on the issue of peace. The question was whether Temple, Tom Grenville, and the Grenvillite war faction would compromise their views on Copenhagen enough to facilitate the broader scheme.

The authoritative opinions of Hutchinson and the persistence of the wronged Garlike joined with Canning's unnecessarily harsh condemnation of the late government and his failure to justify the attack on Copenhagen to alter Tom Grenville's views considerably. Under pressure from both his brother and Foxite leaders, he wrote C. W. W. Wynn on 30 January:

I had been inclined to believe that ministers would make out a case to justify their expedition, instead of which they have manifested such a total disregard of all grounds necessary to their justification as leaves them in my mind without any excuse or apology for a measure of so unusual a description. I am told that L<sup>d</sup> Hutchinson (who was at Tilsit with Alexander) disclaims all belief of any hostile intention on the part of Denmark, & entre nous Garlike has told me he knows it to have been the determination of the Prince Regent [of Denmark] to burn the Danish fleet rather than let it fall under the controul of France!!!! These two evidences are the best upon the subject, & appear to me to be unanswerable.<sup>1</sup>

But Tom Grenville had committed himself to support the expedition at an

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Wynn, 30 Jan. 1808 (Wynn). Canning's attitude disturbed even his supporters. Lady Jackson, ed., The Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson (London, 1872), II, 236.

earlier date. Moreover, he continued to admire the successful expedition and he appreciated Canning's reluctance to disclose his sources of information. This defence of the doctrine of confidence was enough in itself to infuriate most Foxites and the compromise which was adopted on 2 February was precarious indeed. Censure would centre on the government's refusal to justify measures of such an unusual nature. Plagued by doubt the opposition would refrain from passing judgement on the utility of the expedition and merely press the need for the publication of papers by educating the House on the potential ill effects of Danish hostility.

With only superficial unity in the party, on 3 February Ponsonby divided 108 against the government's 253.<sup>1</sup> This defeat hardly soothed differences in the party. On the 5th Canning's attack on the foreign policy of the Talents so frustrated Tierney that he took an unbending stance on the censure of Copenhagen and the compromise came unravelled. Whitbread accused Tierney of wanting to be 'Viceroy' over Ponsonby and Tierney retorted that Whitbread was eager to ruin Ponsonby so he could take the lead. As the ministerial benches rolled with laughter Ponsonby somehow managed to calm tempers enough to arrange a meeting at his house. At this point Grey intervened.<sup>2</sup>

On the evening of the 5th the Foxite leader met with Garlike and Tom Grenville and convinced the latter that Canning was guilty of 'deliberate falsehood in a way & to a degree that must expose him

---

<sup>1</sup>This debate is published in the Parl. Deb., X, 182. According to Abbot forty M.P.'s paired off. Windham refused to temper his criticism of the expedition and his speech was so hostile that even Henry White was impressed. Abbott Diary, II, 137. Independent Whig, 7 Feb. 1808.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 5 Feb. 1808 (Grey). Also see Creevey to Roscoe, 5 Feb. 1808 (Roscoe), 1054.



completely, if we can only get the necessary papers before the House'.<sup>1</sup> This led to a second assault against the expedition by Whitbread on 8 February which attracted only 75 votes.<sup>2</sup> The reason for this poor showing was continued party disagreement for on the 9th opposition leaders were still arguing about the manner in which they would oppose ministers.<sup>3</sup> But winning divisions was of secondary importance. The motion of the 8th found Whitbread, Tierney, Petty, Windham, and Tom Grenville on cordial terms and in the days which followed, Canning's invective increased unity on the opposition front bench. By the 18th, when Petty delivered what was probably the finest oration of his career, Copenhagen was actually a source of party harmony and Grey was full of optimism.<sup>4</sup>

The Copenhagen expedition was only part of a much broader scheme of opposition which centred on the Orders in Council and their effect on Anglo-American relations. The new commercial code was most symbolic of what opposition leaders represented as the 'new morality' and by mid-January even Grey had become alarmed about the possibility of a ruinous American war.<sup>5</sup> Stressing the precedents of the Talents, Auckland backed Lauderdale's ideas emphatically and on 18 January the former President of the Board of Trade told Grenville that the principle of the Orders in Council branched 'into all the more important interests external and internal; and we have many advantages in it.' By the 24th he had grown

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 6 Feb. 1808 (Grey). Also see Grey to T. Grenville, 5 Feb. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 310. For further comment on this debate see Sir Henry L. Bulwer, The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston (London, 2nd ed., 1870), I, 79-83.

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 9 Feb. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 176.

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 12, 19 Feb. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 16 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

disgusted with the inactivity of his superiors and wrote that the Orders were 'so inseparably connected with the great objects of our American negotiation which I am desirous to explain, and also with the order of the 7th January, 1807, in the issuing of which I had some share of responsibility, that I feel myself personally called upon.'<sup>1</sup>

There were, however, solid reasons why Grey and Grenville held back. Firstly, the ministerial press had succeeded in raising a popular cry against the 'giveaway' American policies of the Talents.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, though Pinckney had shown a willingness to cooperate with the party, his government had failed to acknowledge a distinction between the policies of the Talents and those of its successor. Thirdly, the principle of retaliation which had prefaced the Talents' response to the Berlin Decree had proved embarrassing. Fourthly, word of Napoleon's Milan Decree, which announced the commencement of French seizures on the high seas, reached London in January and increased support for the policies of the British government. Lastly, Grey doubted whether any measure could conciliate the Americans.<sup>3</sup> But Whitbread's threatened motion on the Austro-Russian offer overcame all else and while Grey and Tom Grenville grappled with the question of Copenhagen Holland House and Dropmore turned to the Orders in Council.

Shortly after Whitbread's speech of 26 January Holland wrote to Frederick Lawrence (who had been an under-secretary at the Foreign

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 18, 24 Jan. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 173, 173-4. Auckland forced the issue in the Lords on 27 January. Grenville and Holland supported him with reference to the policies of the Talents, but the debate was short, and there was no division. Parl. Deb., X, 149-54.

<sup>2</sup>Party leaders were concerned over this. Romilly Memoirs, II, 140.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Grenville, 3 Jan. 1808, C. Grey, ed., Life and Opinions of Charles, 2nd Earl Grey (London, 1861), p. 190.

Office under the Talents) and requested an analysis of the late government's official correspondence on the subject of blockade. Three days later Lawrence reported that these despatches were 'at best evidence of the negative kind' but that there was ground for a strong argument that the Orders in Council of November 1807 had forced the French to extend their blockade to the high seas. Affidavits from prominent merchants were at the Foreign Office and they contended that the Berlin Decree had not begun maritime captures. In addition American newspapers proved that up to 18 September there was doubt as to whether the French blockade would do any more than prohibit the importation of British goods. One might argue convincingly that a clearly illegal British blockade had led Napoleon to desert a clearly legal program of commercial prohibition which was recognized in international law even during peacetime.

Lawrence concluded:

Have Ministers then any intelligence to produce showing a single instance of the practical application of the rules of blockade to any neutral vessel bound to or from this country between the 18th of September & the 11th of November, the date of their orders? If not, the whole ground of their retaliation, which consists in a blockade without a blockading force, is cut from under them. Your Lordship will remember that the preamble of your order of the 7th of January 1807 is in direct contrast with theirs of the 11th November. You menace the retaliation of an actual blockade by our superior force.<sup>1</sup>

This fragile interpretation was accepted by Holland, and he and Allen worked feverishly to depict the differences between the commercial policies of the Talents and those of the Portland government.<sup>2</sup>

Meanwhile many members of the opposition concentrated their efforts on the importance of Anglo-American friendship. Probably at the instigation of Southill (and clearly with the money of someone else)

---

<sup>1</sup>Lawrence to Holland, 29 Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>See Holland's pencilled comments on an American publication of pertinent diplomatic correspondence in *ibid.*, ff. 151-54.

Creevey commissioned a merchant to report on the potential effects of an American war on trade and industry in the Wakefield area.<sup>1</sup> Auckland grew emotional and told Grenville that he wanted to close his career in defence of the same principles with which it had begun.<sup>2</sup> Horner and Lauderdale developed arguments which magnified the importance of the American market and pointed out the inconsistencies of the Orders in Council.<sup>3</sup> Roscoe and Alexander Baring attempted to mobilize the mercantile communities of Liverpool and London. And Grey, Whitbread, Tierney, and Brougham worked closely with the small deputations of merchants and manufacturers which had gathered in London to lay their grievances before Parliament.<sup>4</sup>

All this was accompanied by a remarkably well-oiled press campaign. The Times, which was usually neutral or ministerial in political comment, attacked Canning's American policy and stressed that the French decrees did not affect the interests of Great Britain. The Morning Chronicle, the Statesman, and the Independent Whig warned of the effects of an American war. And when word arrived that the United States had reacted to the French and British blockades with an embargo on all European trade the Examiner, the Morning Chronicle, and the Independent Whig defended America and emphasized that the embargo should not be interpreted as an act of war.<sup>5</sup>

Alexander Baring's pamphlet, An Inquiry into the Causes and

---

<sup>1</sup>M. J. Naylor to Creevey, 6 Jan. 1808 (Creevey).

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 15 Feb. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 176.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Allen, 4 Jan. 1808 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Mr. and Mrs. W. Rathbone to Roscoe, 29 Feb. and 5 Mar. 1808 (Roscoe), 3061.

<sup>5</sup>Examiner, 24, 31 Jan. 1808. The Times, 4 Jan., 24 Feb. 1808. Morning Chronicle, 9, 13 Jan. 1808. Independent Whig, 10, 31 Jan. 1808. Statesman, 9, 14 Jan. 1808.

Consequences of the Orders in Council; and an Examination of the Conduct of Great Britain towards the Neutral Commerce of America, argued that jealousy of America had led the British government to adopt ruinous commercial measures. Brougham's pamphlet, Orders in Council; Or, An Examination of the Justice, Legality, and Policy of the New System of Commercial Regulations, put forward a convincing case. And a second pamphlet by Brougham, An Enquiry into the Causes and Consequences of Continental Alienation, attempted to give the case against the Orders in Council a proper political context. In a forceful attack on Pittite foreign policy the author asserted that the alienation of Europe and America, indeed the source of all Britain's woes was the

rigorous maintenance of what we assume to be our maritime rights, and to a system of policy the evident end and object of which were the attainment of our own immediate interest; an extravagant preference of ourselves and every thing connected with us, and to a consequent relative and active contempt of the rights and interests of others.<sup>1</sup>

The opinions of journalists and pamphleteers who had no faith in government by no means sprang from a rigorous campaign by the leaders of opposition; far from it, in most cases these were individual efforts which merely complemented and possibly influenced the formulation of opposition policy. Brougham's arguments were important primarily because they attempted to channel these opinions into a united course of general remonstrance to the 'new morality' which was undermining British security. These were the grounds on which Grey and Grenville had chosen to base their politics in opposition.

By 30 January Grenville had developed a plan of parliamentary opposition to the Orders in Council. He would move for a Committee of the House to investigate the different leanings of the commercial code

---

<sup>1</sup>A. Aspinall, Lord Brougham and the Whig Party (Manchester, 1927), p. 16. Also see Brougham to Allen, [22] Jan. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

on the Constitution, international law, the state of trade, and the pending negotiations with the United States. If refused the opposition would bring on each of these heads in separate resolutions.<sup>1</sup> The main attack would come in the Lords where the party leadership could exercise better control. In the Commons, where the government was to bring forward legislation on the commercial code first, opposition would be purely defensive and thus less divisive and dangerous. This strategy was a direct reflection of the opposition's problems: Grey and Grenville would neutralize a disunited party in the Commons by attempting to lead from the Lords. Of course the overwhelming strength of the government in the upper house rendered an opposition victory impossible but Grey and Grenville had other priorities.

On 5 February Grenville opened the attack with a long discourse in defence of neutral maritime rights which stressed the importance of American goodwill. At the same time Petty, Lawrence, Windham, Piggott, and Eden voiced identical sentiments in the Commons. After being denied papers on the 11th Grenville sent an eager Auckland forward on the 15th. Auckland argued that the Orders in Council were illegal, unnecessary, and ruinous and moved for a Committee of the House. He was defeated 48 to 106. After Grenville caught the government unprepared with a motion for papers on the 18th St. John moved resolutions on the 26th which defended American rights and asserted that the French blockade had not been maritime prior to 11 November 1807. This was beaten 47 to 137. Meanwhile in the Commons Petty's motion of 15 February for the production of the American despatches of the Ministry of All the Talents backfired when the government successfully used them to support its policy. On 18 February the Orders in Council Bill passed its second reading by

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 30 Jan. 1808 (Grey).

214 to 94 and on the 26th Whitbread's amendment was beaten 78 to 165.<sup>1</sup>

The crux of the government's defence was most disheartening.

'It was extraordinary', argued Perceval, 'after the example set by the late administration, that the noble lord [Petty] condemned in opposition what he had as a minister sanctioned and approved.'<sup>2</sup> As Lauderdale had warned in December 1806, the principle of commercial retaliation laid down by the Talents came back to haunt the coalition. By 26 February it was obvious that independent voters saw no great distinction between the policies of the two governments, that most M.P.'s felt the attack on the 'new morality' was no more than poorly disguised political re- crimination, and that further exertions against the Orders in Council would be a waste of time.

Nevertheless it was impossible to deny that Grey and Grenville had succeeded in uniting their divided party to a great extent. The attacks on the Copenhagen expedition and the Orders in Council had brought harmony in the Lords where convinced Foxites like Holland, Erskine, St. John, and King had stood side by side with Carlisle, Carysfort, and Fitzwilliam. Whitbread's wounded pride had been greatly repaired by close cooperation with Ponsonby, Tierney, Temple, Windham, and Tom Grenville in the Commons. A spirit of cooperation was in the air and on 20 February Whitbread sent Ponsonby, Grey, and Grenville copies of his resolutions on the Austro-Russian offer of mediation and expressed willingness to compromise for the welfare of the party .

At first glance Grey was afraid to discuss the issue but Tom Grenville, who had been impressed by Whitbread's recent efforts in the Commons, encouraged the party's leaders to cooperate. Lord Grenville

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 312, 314-39, 431-33, 465-86, 641-42, 665-84, 726-32, 780-86.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 321, 5 Feb. 1808.

responded enthusiastically to this proposal. Seeing that the coalition's harmony depended on compromise, the old Pittite accepted the basis of Whitbread's resolutions and merely added a paragraph which expressed disapprobation of the entire basis of Canning's foreign policy. He objected to the bombardment of Copenhagen and to 'the whole spirit & tendency of the late Orders in Council' in which could be seen 'strong indications of a disposition on the part of His Majesty's Ministers rather to extend & even to render universal the War in which we are engaged, than to adopt any proper & dignified measures for ascertaining whether it is Possible to bring it to a just & honourable conclusion.'<sup>1</sup> This language was not only a concession to Whitbread; it represented a comprehensive plan of opposition and the only possible chance of uniting the coalition. On 26 February Lauderdale carried the revised draft to Whitbread. 'He ought & I hope he will adopt it', wrote Grey. 'If he does not I shall be obliged to believe that he aims at distinguishing himself from us, as entertaining more pacific dispositions & thus recommending himself to the People whom he believes increasing distress will make more clamorous for peace.'<sup>2</sup>

Grey's suspicions were ill-founded. Whitbread and his circle were delighted with Grenville's views for, as Thomas Belsham noted, 'It has brought Ld. Grille sincerely to the test & the result is highly honourable to him.'<sup>3</sup> Whitbread opened a warm correspondence with Grenville, accepted the revised resolutions, and even suggested further alterations which tended to soften the emphasis on peace. Grey was astonished and

---

<sup>1</sup>This draft has survived. See Whitbread MSS., 4184. Also see Grenville to Grey, 23 Feb. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 22 Feb. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Belsham to Whitbread, 4 Mar. 1808 (Whitbread), 4185.



admitted to his wife that Whitbread's desire to cooperate had gone far beyond his wildest dreams. By 28 February agreement was so complete that a meeting was held at Ponsonby's house. When the proposed resolutions were read, however, Windham, Elliot, and several others objected strongly. At this point Ponsonby lost control. Whitbread promptly read his original resolutions and a majority of those present, led by the much respected Lord George Cavendish, supported him completely. Windham and Elliot stormed away in a huff and practically every Foxite left Ponsonby's prepared to second Whitbread on the morrow.<sup>1</sup> Grey and Grenville soon made matters worse. Fearing the formal separation of the Fitzwilliams, they instructed Ponsonby to resist Whitbread.<sup>2</sup>

On 29 February there was mass confusion on the opposition benches as Whitbread rose to speak. In proposing three resolutions he repeated Foxite dogma of the 1790's; he protested against the personal hatred with which the British government pursued Napoleon; and he concluded on a note which moved the deepest of Foxite emotions:

Having mentioned the name of Mr. Fox, I willingly acknowledge myself his true and genuine disciple. I am only feebly urging the sentiments which he would have forcibly uttered, if he had not been unhappily taken from us. I trust that I am treading in his footsteps; would to God that his countenance were now upon me! would to God, this humble effort over, I could feel myself as I have often done, secure under the impenetrable aegis of his eloquence!<sup>3</sup>

With these words Sam Whitbread summarized the feelings of Fox's directionless friends and captured the imaginations of many. H. A. Herbert, a firm Foxite, seconded Whitbread, and Ward, Lord Mahon, Sheridan,

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 29 Feb. and 1 Mar. 1808 (Grey). Also see Grey, Life and Opinions, p. 180.

<sup>2</sup>Grey summed up the source of his difficulties when he wrote that Grenville disagreed with most of his traditional supporters on the issue of war and peace. Grey to Holland, n.d. [28 Feb. 1808], B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland), ff. 57-9.

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 801-56.

William Adam, and John and William Smith, all of whom had followed Fox, spoke in favour of all three resolutions.

Supported by Ponsonby, the first two resolutions, which repro- bated the government's refusal to accept Austro-Russian mediation, drew 70 and 67 votes respectively. But the crisis came on the third resolu- tion which asserted 'That there is nothing in the present state of the war, which ought to preclude his majesty from embracing any fair oppor- tunity of acceding to, or commencing a negotiation with the enemy on a footing of equality for the termination of hostilities on terms of equity and honour.' This language captured the essence of Foxite ideology because it advocated the acceptance of Napoleon's government 'on a footing of equality ...' Grey and Grenville found it far too realis- tic for the maintenance of their precarious union. Milton joined Ponsonby in opposing it and Tierney and Petty maintained silence. But Whitbread had struck a chord and 58 men practically walked over Ponsonby in accompanying the brewer to the lobby.<sup>1</sup>

On 29 February twenty-one of the men who had supported Fox's anti- war address of December 1792 remained in the Commons.<sup>2</sup> Ten of these voted for Whitbread's third resolution.<sup>3</sup> Of the remaining eleven pro- bably only six were in town (but possibly not in the House) and two of these, Fitzpatrick and Dudley North, were firmly attached to Holland House and friendly with Grey. Other old supporters of Fox who voted

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 856-69. Grey, Life and Opinions, pp. 181-2. Roberts, pp. 111-12.

<sup>2</sup>W. Adam, W. Anthonie, Sir John Aubrey, G. Byng, G. Bouverie, J. Curwen, R. Fitzpatrick, W. Howard, W. Hussey, T. Jekyll, Sir William Milner, D. North, Lord William Russell, R. Sheridan, W. Smith, B. Tarleton, M. A. Taylor, T. Thompson, Lord John Townshend, C. C. Western, S. Whitbread.

<sup>3</sup>Adam, Anthonie, Aubrey, Bouverie, Byng, Jekyll, Lord W. Russell, Sheridan, Smith, Whitbread. L. G. Mitchell, p. 265.

with Whitbread were H. C. Combe, W. Madocks, and the former Jacobin Sir Oswald Mosley. Of prominent second generation Foxites, Abercromby, Biddulph, Brand, Burdett, Colborne, Creevey, Horner, W. Lamb, R. J. Lambton, Lyttelton, H. Martin, Piggott, and Ward followed Whitbread. Also of significance was the fact that the Dundas brothers, who sat for Fitzwilliam boroughs, and the three Cavendishes, who represented the Whig centre, ignored Ponsonby. Petty, Tierney, Fitzpatrick, and North were the only genuine Foxites present who abstained and it may be surmised from subsequent developments that they acted against their better judgement. In total only about a dozen members of the opposition stood by the coalition's leaders. Clearly, Whitbread carried the Foxite centre with him.<sup>1</sup>

For all practical purposes the division of 29 February ended the coalition's parliamentary campaign for the year. The party continued to push against the Copenhagen expedition and the Orders in Council, and

---

<sup>1</sup>Roberts, p. 112, argues that Whitbread's strength sprang from the fact that the party was 'particularly irritated just then by Ponsonby's mismanagement' and he concludes that 'it would be incorrect to see in the 58 the partisans of a wholehearted peace policy.' Such statements constitute the only real weakness of Robert's excellent book. He repeatedly ignores the effects of the political polarization of the 1790's in treating a period in which political consistency was closely watched. In this case he is unsupported by fact. Well over three-fourths of those who voted for the third resolution had supported Fox's definition of the European struggle all their political lives; the party had been firmly united prior to the meeting of 28 February; and personally Whitbread was none too popular among those who supported him. Only Sheridan showed pique but if he had not supported the resolution it would have revealed glaring inconsistency with the politics of his lifetime. Roberts also notes that Horner, Abercromby, Piggott, and Sheridan, 'who were by no means of Whitbread's group', supported the third resolution. Whitbread had no 'group' of parliamentary supporters at this time. His strength was in the country and that which he enjoyed in Parliament sprang from the views he put forward on a particular occasion. 'I would go even further', wrote Bedford, 'I would have a frank & manly offer of negotiation made & renewed by this country year after year, till peace is procured ...' Bedford to Whitbread, 5 April 1808 (Whitbread), 4191. For similar views see Roscoe to Whitbread, 23 Mar. 1808, ibid., 4189.

in May Grattan drew 128 votes in the Commons while Grenville secured 74 in the Lords by moving the Catholic question.<sup>1</sup> But though Foxites journeyed up to town to support a cause with which they identified they showed little interest in the other concoctions of their leaders.

Richard Sharp's motion of 21 March against the Copenhagen expedition rallied only 64 votes (six more than had supported Whitbread's third resolution) and when the party opposed the vote of thanks to the commanders of the expedition their division sank to 19.<sup>2</sup> The campaign against the Orders in Council also floundered. Grenville rose in defence of the Talents' treaty with the United States and claimed that Canning seized everything 'that could stir up a spirit of animosity against America, and prepare the public mind for hostilities with that country ...'<sup>3</sup>

The Barings, whose commercial house was losing a fortune by the interruption of Anglo-American trade, tried to stimulate interest among the party rank and file. But as Tierney noted, the American question was one 'which does not now excite the least Interest ...'<sup>4</sup>

On 8 March Erskine's ridiculously long and boring discourse on the illegality of the Orders was crushed 61 to 127; on the 16th Grenville's motion to reject the Orders in Council Bill secured only 52 votes; divisions of the 22nd and of the 25th drew 21 and 19 respectively; and Holland's resolutions of 29 March, which denied that the American government had been angered by the policies of the Talents, were supported by

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XI, 643-94. The division of 25 May drew no less than 40 Irish members, and Grattan was pleased. Henry Grattan, ed., Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Rt. Hon. Henry Grattan (London, 1849), V, 381. Morning Chronicle, 28 May 1808. Roberts, pp. 42-3.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 396-97, 1235, 19 Mar. 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., X, 927, 8 Mar. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Grey, 16 May 1808 (Grey).

good ... that yet remains', he judged, 'consists in my opinion in the preservation of the union between Fox's friends & Lord Grenville's, & the discretion of the latter as Leader of the Party.'<sup>1</sup> Immobilized by this opinion, Grey stayed in London only long enough to determine that he had no control over the House of Commons. Begging the ill health of his wife he set out for Northumberland in late March. From his northern stronghold he flooded London with pessimistic correspondence and fell prey to paranoia. He planned legal action against the libels of newspapers; he wrote nasty letters to Whitbread; and when Holland became excited about the Catholic question Grey dampened enthusiasm by asserting that 'the overwhelming torrent of Bonaparte's power will come upon us before we have raised the dams and mounds that are necessary to risk it.'<sup>2</sup> Grey lacked the temperament necessary for his demanding role and in his absence what was left of Fox's party went to pieces.

The most distinguishable breakdown came between Foxites in the Lords and those in the Commons. Grey's emphasis on the necessity of maintaining the coalition was supported by Holland, Lauderdale, Bessborough, Albemarle, Derby, Jersey, St. John, and Darnley, a group which represented the most politically active Foxite peers. Other active Foxites like Bedford, Erskine, King, Crewe, and Thanet had mixed emotions on this point but their doubts were in most cases overcome by social factors and by their very presence in the upper house. Therefore the House of Lords represented the fount of the coalition's strength. The views of the Foxite hierarchy were voiced in the Commons by Ponsonby, Tierney, Petty, Abercromby, and Anstruther, a group which

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 2 Mar. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Piggott to Grey, 9, 10 Sept. 1808 (Grey). Grey to Whitbread, 22 May, and Whitbread to Grey, 6 and 16 June 1808 (Grey). Grey to Lady Holland, 3 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland).

25 peers.<sup>1</sup> Canning, Perceval, and Castlereagh made fools of the opposition in the Commons. Sir William Scott was brought forward to refute Tierney's interpretation of international law and ministers continued to justify themselves by referring to the principle of commercial retaliation established by the Talents. On 3, 10, and 11 March the opposition drew 80,<sup>2</sup> 59, and 68 votes respectively and then decided to avoid further divisions.<sup>3</sup> Few M.P.'s understood what they were opposing; Baring's arguments only excited a cry of self interest;<sup>4</sup> Ponsonby, Petty, and Tierney foolishly refused to oppose the Orders except with reference to the policies of the Talents; and Whitbread had no patience with the commercial schemes of either ministry. Based on the policies of the Talents, the basis of the opposition's arguments against the Danish expedition and the new commercial code was faulty. Their ministry was unpopular with both sides of the House and, of equal importance, many of Fox's friends saw little reason to debate these issues so long as Grey and Grenville refused to define the objectives of the European war.<sup>5</sup>

Disagreement on the issue of peace left the large Foxite wing of the party without even token leadership. Grey was disheartened by the peace motion and on 2 March he told his wife that his greatest wish was 'to have nothing more to do with Politicks & Parties.' Regrettably the Foxite leader had learned nothing from experience. 'But any chance of

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb. X, 929-76, 1148-54, 1236-42, 1254-55, 1270-83.

<sup>2</sup>This division was to determine whether the Liverpool petition against the Orders would be accepted. It had the support of commercial members.

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., X, 889-95, 1056-66, 1072-6.

<sup>4</sup>Political Register, XIII, 273-4.

<sup>5</sup>See White's plea to Holland in the Independent Whig, 14 Feb. 1808.

made every effort to cooperate with the Grenvillites and Fitzwilliams.

Beyond this stratification, however, party allegiance was unclear. Albemarle noted in May that many Foxites continued to distrust Grenville 'without a shadow of reason' and Whitbread told Creevey that he refused to be 'a slave to a Party in the Lords.'<sup>1</sup> Grenville's behaviour in the days before the motion for peace had only compounded problems. Most Foxites were pleased with Grenville because of his desire to compromise but at the same time they were aware of the imposition of political restraint from above. Belsham blamed Grey, Tierney blamed Whitbread, others blamed Ponsonby, and everyone was aware that something was amiss. However, the problem was so perplexing that there were no distinguishable splinter groups of Foxites in Parliament during 1808.

Burdett refused to cooperate with Ponsonby but he had little personal influence in the House. Among Fox's old supporters in the Common Council of London, Combe, Sir William Curtis, and Robert Waithman, whom White described as a 'time-serving Foxite',<sup>2</sup> made efforts to identify their politics with those of the 1790's but they generally showed a studied contempt for parties and public men.<sup>3</sup> Whitbread's spirit of independence and stature in the Commons had been boosted by his peace motion and he was anxious to increase his influence. After a trip to Southill in July Lady Holland noted that the brewer had surrounded

---

<sup>1</sup>Albemarle to Holland, 18 May 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51593 (Holland). Fulford, p. 199.

<sup>2</sup>Independent Whig, 10 April 1808.

<sup>3</sup>See Leigh Hunt's comments in the Examiner, 3 April 1808. For an account of Foxite activity in the Common Council see J. R. Dinwiddy, "'The Patriotic Linen-Draper": Robert Waithman and the Revival of Radicalism in the City of London, 1795-1818', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, XLVI, no. 113 (May 1973), pp. 72-94.

himself with a 'remplissage of the very worst sort, fulsome flatterers, and disgusting dependants.' Prominent among these was Belsham, who extolled Whitbread and criticized Grey.<sup>1</sup> Several M.P.'s - Creevey, Brand, Bennet, and Lord Folkstone - were beginning to move in Whitbread's circle. But Whitbread had little personal influence among members of Parliament for, as Brougham once noted, he was 'good for execution, but nothing for council ...'<sup>2</sup> Besides, Whitbread had been impressed by Grenville's views on peace and in Grey's absence he opened a cordial correspondence with Dropmore and expressed a desire to cooperate.<sup>3</sup>

The restlessness of the cunning Brougham was almost as potentially dangerous as the vanity of Whitbread. Disappointed by the attitude of Grey, he considered the formation of a third party in support of peace, reform, and traditional Foxite dogma during the summer. But when Jeffrey, whose pen was important in his scheme, turned a deaf ear<sup>4</sup> Brougham dropped the idea and instead cooperated with him in a blistering attack on aristocratic government in the Edinburgh Review.<sup>5</sup> The Prince of Wales headed the only force which could be considered even remotely as an identifiable Foxite splinter group in Parliament. In his fit of despondency Grey concluded that he could never please

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 244-45. Also see Belsham to Whitbread, 4 Mar. 1808 (Whitbread), 4185.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Creevey, 6 April 1813, Creevey Papers, I, 181.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 26 May and 12 July 1808 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Jeffrey to Brougham, 25 July 1808 (Brougham).

<sup>5</sup>Edinburgh Review, <sup>no.</sup> XIII, 219-31. <sup>Jeffrey's and</sup> Brougham's 'Don Cevallos' article disturbed both ministerial and opposition leaders. Aspinall, Brougham and the Whig Party, pp. 19-20. H. J. C. Grierson, ed., The Letters of Sir Walter Scott (London, 1932), II, 106. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 19 Nov. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).



Prinny<sup>1</sup> and by May the independent power of Carlton House was growing. Sheridan, Moira, and Yarmouth were firmly attached to the Prince, and such old Foxites as Adam, Taylor, and the Duke of Norfolk were spending much time in Pall Mall. But the Carlton House party had not formed.

These groups had only their Foxite heritage in common. Denied Fox's leadership, they by no means agreed on politics. It appears that the issue of peace with France was the only potential catalyst. Roscoe continued to advocate peace motions;<sup>2</sup> the threat of such a motion hung over Grenville's head until the end of the Session;<sup>3</sup> and Waithman kept the issue alive in the Common Council.<sup>4</sup> This issue, however, was jaded by its general unpopularity with the public and by the compromises of the Foxite hierarchy.

The Whig Club, Fox's great forum, represented the greatest organized threat to those Foxites who clung to the coalition. It was there alone that young men like Ward, Althorp, Creevey, and Folkstone rubbed elbows with old Foxites like Coke, Francis, Lord John Townshend, Sheridan, William Smith, and the likes of Burdett, Waithman, Cartwright, and the radical Lord Cochrane. It was also there that Fox's memory brought a semblance of political unity. Whitbread exerted such a powerful influence at these meetings during the months which immediately followed his peace motion that Tierney labelled the Whig Club a 'pedestal' for the brewer<sup>5</sup>, and Bedford, whose political principles were badly

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Lady Holland, 18 April and 4 May 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Roscoe to Whitbread, 23 Mar. 1808 enclosing a draft of a resolution for peace (Whitbread), 4188 and 4189.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 12 July 1808 (Grey). Grenville to T. Grenville, 12 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>The Globe, 26 Mar. 1808.

<sup>5</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 30 April 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

confused, advocated its dissolution.<sup>1</sup> But the effects of these meetings were not far-reaching. The Westminster radicals frightened old Foxites, parliamentary reform was a subject of great disagreement, and personal rivalries prevented a complete union of sentiment. Political loyalties were so confused that the violent toasts of the Whig Club had no immediate political consequence; in most cases they were no more than a means for Foxites to vent their frustrations.

Though these undercurrents produced no third party in Parliament they completely undermined the efforts of the mainline opposition. Whitbread, Sheridan, Burdett, and Windham butted heads frequently, many M.P.'s left London and, caught in the middle, poor Ponsonby was helpless. By late summer Grey could count on few Foxites to follow his dictates. As Tierney wrote on 16 May:

As a Party (in the House of Commons at least) we are completely disbanded and that word conveys all I mean to say for I know of no disposition ... in any quarter to desert ... We have numbers sufficient to make two or even three very respectable Oppositions but it is impossible ... to mould us into one. We have neither Leader nor concert, nor, on the whole, the means of obtaining either.<sup>2</sup>

Of course Ponsonby, who tripped over his own feet in trying to maintain harmony, became the scapegoat. Grey, Lauderdale, and Tierney wanted him to resign but none of them was prepared to broach the subject.<sup>3</sup> Towards the end of the Session when Petty tried to assert himself a ministerial pamphlet ridiculed the lack of leadership on the opposition front bench.<sup>4</sup> The unity of the Foxite wing of the coalition was the key to a strong parliamentary opposition. By the summer it was obvious

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Grey, 14 April 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Grey, 16 May 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 11 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland). Tierney to Grey, 12 July 1808 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Rev. Charles Edward Stewart, Charles's Small Clothes: A National Ode (London, 1808).

that Grey had failed as its leader and that the demands of coalition had thwarted the party's sense of purpose.

## CHAPTER VI

### HOLLAND VERSUS GRENVILLE: THE OPPOSITION AND THE SPANISH REVOLUTION, MAY 1808 - JANUARY 1809

By the summer of 1808 England had been at war with revolutionary France for fifteen years. Trade and industry were geared to a wartime economy, law had been adjusted to meet the demands of wartime unity, and national prejudices had developed accordingly. The war had long since become the common denominator of British politics. Portland's government had come to grips with this fact. Its members bickered over who would hold Pitt's standard but they were always behind it in dogged pursuit of Napoleon. The views of their parliamentary adversaries were less identifiable. Grey and Grenville had laid their 'husbanding, defensive system' before the nation during the early months of 1808. Their ideas were not unreasonable and their 'system' represented a clear alternative to what appeared to be rather directionless activity on the part of the government. But opposition arguments lacked credibility. The Ministry of All the Talents had proved that even the originators of the defensive system could not apply it successfully and the parliamentary session of 1808 had confirmed that the various wings of the coalesced opposition disagreed fundamentally on the goals of the war. The result had been a thumping defeat for the ideas of Grey and Grenville and an unenthusiastic endorsement of what Canning represented as Pittite wartime tactics. Such was the political situation in Britain when Spaniards rose in bloody rebellion against the rule of Joseph Bonaparte in late May. Two questions arose immediately. Would the government commit British troops to a revolutionary struggle with republican

overtones in the Iberian Peninsula? Would the opposition unite behind a constructive wartime scheme?

There was never much doubt about the reaction of the government. Ministers were anxious to carry the war to the Continent and Pitt himself had pointed to the Peninsula as an ideal spot for British intervention. Portland's government quickly despatched a fleet and a small army to aid the Spaniards, and the king closed Parliament with promises of further support for Spain's 'legitimate' sovereign. The opposition's old war party promptly divided on the issue. Upon hearing of Spanish successes Fitzwilliam noted:

These Spaniards are a fine people - by their own energy they will emancipate themselves. But the business does not rest here: Can B. [onaparte] return to Paris, defeated & disgraced .... Must he not go forward - then comes the question - will the French go forward with him - will another 100,000 Frenchmen go forth, not that France may direct the Councils of Spain, but that one of B's family may wear a crown - not the Nation's cause, but an upstart family's - Will they cling to him in defeat & disgrace as they have done in victory and glory - impossible - this then may be, & probably it will turn out the beginning of his downfall.<sup>1</sup>

So wrote a man who had agreed with Pittite wartime objectives for sixteen years and his colleague Windham echoed his sentiments and called for total military commitment.<sup>2</sup>

Grenville disagreed. 'It would appear incredible to one who was not an eyewitness to it', he scoffed, 'that after sixteen years of uninterrupted disappointments the People of this Country should be just as ready to believe in the Spanish insurgents as they ever were in Lord Hawkesbury's march to Paris.'<sup>3</sup> Grenville had never recovered from Austerlitz and Jena and looking to European history he saw no reason to

---

<sup>1</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grey, 22 July 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XI, 893-95, 15 June 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 15 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

think that inspired peasants posed a threat to French power. He was pleased that turmoil in Spain would open South American trade but the thought of a British commitment to Ferdinand's cause disturbed him greatly. The reports of his colleague Auckland stiffened his views. No member of the opposition had better sources of information in government than old Auckland and his friends at the War Office sent him copies of official correspondence and assurances that the Spanish cause was bleak.<sup>1</sup> These were passed on to Grenville without delay and by mid-July he and his brother Tom were certain that the French would defeat the Spaniards and the tiny British army within days. Grenville clung to his 'husbanding, defensive system', pushed his views on Grey, and upon hearing rumours that Austria would declare war on France he predicted the total destruction of the Austrian monarchy. Europe was not ready to rise against Napoleon, he stressed. Austria, like Britain, should conserve her strength and await the first signs of dissension in the French high command.<sup>2</sup> But Grenville did not speak for his party. Carysfort, Stafford, and Spencer agreed with Fitzwilliam. Temple was riding on the southern beaches in a light infantry jacket talking of cutting off the retreat of the French; Ebrington wanted to accompany his regiment to Spain; and the ever-scheming Buckingham was preoccupied with yet another plan for the invasion of Italy.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 12 July and 4 Aug. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 208-09, 210-11.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 23 July 1808 (Spencer). Grenville to Auckland, 20 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). R.H.M.B. Atkinson and G. A. Jackson, eds., Brougham and His Early Friends: Letters to James Lock, 1798-1809 (London, 1908), II, 314.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Lady Holland, 22 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland). Grenville to Auckland, 10 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Buckingham to T. Grenville, 12 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville).

News of the Spanish revolt found the large and divided Foxite wing of the coalition groping for leadership and intellectual identity. Holland had recently published his uncle's History of the Early Part of the Reign of James II, a vindication of Foxite Whiggism and for all practical purposes a delayed, indirect reply to Burke's Appeal From the New to the Old Whigs.<sup>1</sup> Jeffrey, reviewing it in the Edinburgh Review, stated bluntly that Fox's book was worthless as history but that it contained principles which his successors could not ignore.<sup>2</sup> The overall effect of the book on Foxite leaders was considerable for it served to remind many important men of their political heritage. In response to Pittite criticism several friends of Fox put their pens in motion in defence of their hero's theories and by early summer these theories were being debated in Whig circles.<sup>3</sup>

In June the delegates of the Asturias arrived in London to ask for help. Within two weeks Sheridan forced the issue in Parliament. Convinced that the time had finally arrived when the unpopular political principles of his lifetime could be applied to the vigorous pursuit of the war, Fox's old lieutenant drank his fill at Brooks's, stumbled down Whitehall to the House of Commons, and raised the Foxite banner in support of the salvation of Europe:

... since the first burst of the French Revolution, nothing of so favourable a nature has occurred as the present enthusiasm ... in the province of Asturias, and if that enthusiasm should become general throughout Spain, such an opportunity of striking a decisive blow had never happened ... Bonaparte had hitherto fought with Princes who had been misled and infatuated, and Ministers, who had been most mistaken, if not corrupt, but all of whom seemed destitute both of foresight and fortitude. He had never yet fought

---

<sup>1</sup>J. R. Dinwiddy, 'Charles James Fox as Historian', The Historical Journal, XII, I (1969), pp. 23-4.

<sup>2</sup>Edinburgh Review, XII, 271.

<sup>3</sup>Dinwiddy, 'Charles James Fox as Historian', pp. 31-3.

with a people, much less with a people who felt themselves roused by a noble indignation ...<sup>1</sup>

These arguments rested firmly upon Foxite theory. Fox had used them during the American and French revolutions and his recently published observations on the reign of James II had identified nationalism and popular revolution with the long and continuing march of Whiggism. But Sheridan's speech left Fox's friends unmoved for several important reasons. Firstly, Sheridan's independence and connexions with Carlton House rendered him odious. Secondly, political recrimination led Whitbread and others to the conclusion that Sheridan's warlike language was the product of cooperation with Canning. Thirdly, the patriotic, non-partisan character of the speech struck at the policies of the Talents as well as those of Pitt's governments. And fourthly, Sheridan was drunk. Grey and others used this fact to discredit a man whom they loathed. Whitbread and Ponsonby scolded Sheridan before the House, Windham scared away others with a cry for Napoleon's throne, and Castlereagh clouded the issue with a blistering attack on the Talents' foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> However, Holland agreed with Sheridan's interpretation of events in Spain and soon began efforts to unite Fox's friends.

Holland was an important man. Not only was he the nephew of Fox and the owner of Henry Fox's magnificent house in Kensington; he also resembled his uncle in appearance and demeanour. His interests were broad, he was well-travelled, and his conversation was coveted by all who knew him. His devotion to what he saw as Fox's principles was complete and his house, in which his uncle's spirit was kept alive, was

---

<sup>1</sup>Examiner, 19 June 1808.

<sup>2</sup>Idem. Grey, Life and Opinions, p. 219. Holland to Grey, 22 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Whitbread to Grey, 16 June, and Grey to Whitbread, 19 June 1808 (Grey). Also see R. Coupland, Wilberforce (London, 1945), p. 292.



the party's focal point. Many wanted him to take the lead of the party 'as a mark to all the world of the Esteem & honour in which poor Fox's memory was held by his Colleagues'.<sup>1</sup> John Wishaw was right when he observed that no man was 'so well qualified, both from his principles & situation, to be a mediator between the aristocratic & democratic Whigs as Lord Holland'.<sup>2</sup> After the election of 1807 old Foxites had refused to attend Parliament without a prior invitation to Holland's dinner table and Grenville felt that Grey's hold on the party was only as firm as Holland's support.<sup>3</sup>

But Holland was young, idealistic, something short of an intellectual leader, and plagued by political disqualifications. He saw himself as a child of the Enlightenment and like Whitbread he identified too closely with the cause of France. Like Fox he felt contempt for established ecclesiastical and political power and disdain for middle class morality. Though he genuinely felt the sufferings of humanity it is not unfair to suspect that his bond with the people was only as strong as public willingness to see things like he saw them. These political weaknesses were reflected in the characters of those who surrounded him. The Fox family appreciated good repartee and wit at the expense of others and here Holland followed his uncle's precedent closely. Wishaw (impiously nicknamed the 'Pope' of Holland House) and Sydney Smith were easily a match for Fox's old circle, and Fitzpatrick, Tierney, Bouverie, and occasionally Sheridan, all of whom were hold-overs from 'better days', continued to mock and gibe at the folly of

---

<sup>1</sup>Derby to Holland, 20 Sept. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51566 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Wishaw to Lady Holland, 22 Dec. [1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 51658 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Holland, 6 June 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51584 (Holland). Grenville to Sidmouth, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51823 (Holland), f. 130.

the world around them. These men were joined by the talented but slightly radical young Whigs of the 'Edinburgh set' - Horner, Brougham, and Allen - who gave Holland House a controversial connexion with Jeffrey and the Edinburgh Review.<sup>1</sup> 'Monk' Lewis, a 'little toad' who hopped around the drawing room, had a heart that was 'not quite wide enough for Patriotism' and Allen, Holland's librarian, physician, marriage counsellor, and confidant, mocked Christianity so enthusiastically that one visitor, hearing not a word of wit at the expense of religion, concluded that he was depressed.<sup>2</sup> Then there was Lady Holland, whose idiosyncrasies gave Holland House politics a cutting edge.

Lady Holland's petty tyrannies represent one of the more amusing facets of an amusing age but they had dire political consequences. Divorced, vulgar, and thus shunned by polite society, her sense of social inadequacy was so intense that she delighted in mocking everything English. Her journal abounds with disdain for English gardens, architecture, values, and manners and she once mortified Lady Stafford by proclaiming respect for high rank and then coupling her with Nelson's Lady Hamilton to whom she thought great deference due from her exalted station in life.<sup>3</sup> As a defence mechanism Lady Holland represented herself as a superior continental. In Glenarvon Lady Caroline Lamb portrayed her as the odious Princess of Madagascar: 'She spoke of her own country with contempt; and even in her dress, which was magnificent,

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Holland, 23 and 29 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland). Of interest on this subject is the pamphlet by 'MENTOR', The Dangers of the "Edinburgh Review"; or a brief Exposure of its Principles in Religion, Morals, and Politics (London, 1808).

<sup>2</sup>M. Lewis to Lady Holland, n.d., 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51641 (Holland), ff. 131-32. Broughton Recollections, I, 85.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, n.d., Granville Correspondence, II, 311.

attempted to prove the superiority of every other over it.<sup>1</sup> By 1808 Lady Holland had decided that she had much in common with Napoleon and her praise of the Emperor led to some embarrassing scenes at Holland House.<sup>2</sup> This behaviour did Holland's political reputation no good because many Englishmen saw his wife's lack of patriotism, piety, and manners as further proof of Foxite radicalism.<sup>3</sup> The painter Farington wrote contemptuously of Allen being 'Lady Holland's atheist'<sup>4</sup> and it was not coincidental that no Grenvillite lady set foot in Holland House and that Grenville himself appeared only twice during his long connexion with the Foxites.

Lady Holland was a political force in the party. In 1806 she browbeat Holland into disclosing Cabinet secrets.<sup>5</sup> Determined to profit from her husband's station, she pumped him mercilessly, scolded Lauderdale for speaking of 'nothing but gowns', undertook a great part of Holland's political correspondence, and told a friend pompously that 'all women of a certain age and in a situation to achieve it should take to Politics - to leading and influencing'. This was what many Foxites feared most. Her hold on Holland was so strong that many people thought she influenced his political views. Cruikshank once sketched Holland entering 10 Downing Street in a dress; his wife followed in breeches with Napoleon under her cloak. As Lady Bessborough noted, this imputation

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Caroline Lamb, Glenarvon (London, 1816), p. 243.

<sup>2</sup>For some interesting but highly controversial comment on Lady Holland's Bonapartist leanings see Lean, pp. 12, 127-30, 135-36, 229-30, and 240-41.

<sup>3</sup>Note Ward's comments on this subject in his letter to Helen Stewart of 21 October 1808, Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 57-60.

<sup>4</sup>Farington Diary, VII, 94.

<sup>5</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 28 Sept. 1806, Granville Correspondence, II, 216-17.

gave 'ridicule to Lord Holland and I know does him harm'.<sup>1</sup> Little wonder that Holland had remained in the political background during the two years which immediately followed Fox's death! But in June 1808 the editing of Fox's book had roused his interest in politics and he saw the beauties of Foxite theory unfolding in the march of the Spaniards. With Grey in Northumberland Holland stepped over his wife into the political spotlight.

Holland had long admired the Latin character. His extended Grand Tour had been sidetracked in Italy and Spain where he had cultivated valuable political contacts and he and Allen were active members of London's Spanish Club. In October 1806 he had pointed out the advantages of weakening Napoleon through a British-instigated Spanish revolt and in late 1807 he had assured Spanish leaders of British support in the event of a 'popular revolution'.<sup>2</sup> Beginning in late 1807 Holland and his circle had interpreted political confusion in Spain as the early stages of a liberal awakening and correspondence with leading Spaniards had increased. The Duc d'Infantado, an important grandee, had visited Holland in April and the Spaniard had been hailed as a talented, benevolent aristocrat, a Whig and a Washington rolled into one, and therefore the future champion of Spanish liberties.<sup>3</sup> Holland House was primed and cocked in early June when Count Florida Blanca and Don Gaspar Melchior de Jovellanos reported the revolution to Holland and

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 24 Dec. 1807, B.M., Add. MSS. 51695 (Holland). Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 29 Sept. 1806, Granville Correspondence, II, 215.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Howick, 19 Sept. and Oct. 1806, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Holland to Grey, 3 Dec. 1807, ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Allen to Horner, 26 April 1808, Horner Memoirs, 422-23. Horner to Allen, April 1808 (Horner).

asked him to convey the news to the British government.<sup>1</sup>

Holland, Horner, and Allen had worked together in editing Fox's History of the early part of the Reign of James II and they and other Foxite leaders regarded it as a codification of Whiggism.<sup>2</sup> Their reaction to events in Spain followed accordingly. Most of Holland's circle<sup>3</sup> saw the Spanish revolution as an event with significance only to Spain and one that was removed from the context of the broader European war. They were not interested in the fact that a rebellious Spain offered Britain an ally and a foothold in Europe and they did not see events in Spain as the beginning of a crusade for the restoration of 'legitimate' monarchs.

The events in Spain [wrote Horner], great as their consequences must be in improving the political prospects of the West of Europe, carry me no further, for they cannot tend to make coalitions of Austria & Prussia a whit more practicable. It will be time enough when we see a free insurrection of the people of Italy or the North of Germany for England to give them the succour they may deserve: if they should ever attempt what the Spaniards have done we shall of course feel for them in the same way.<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Lord Stavordale, ed., Further Memoirs of the Whig Party, 1807-21, by Henry Richard Vassall Third Lord Holland (London, 1905), pp. 13-14.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to J. Lock, 13 June 1808, Horner Memoirs, I, 423-25. Erskine to Holland, 3 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Holland's closest friends were Allen, Horner, Whishaw, Marsh, Lewis, Petty, King, Fitzpatrick, and Sydney Smith. He had no borough patronage but at this time his home was frequented by the most politically promising young Whigs, all of whom professed loyalty to Foxite principles in varying degrees. These included Brougham, William and Frederick Lamb, Abercromby, Morpeth, Piggott, Tavistock, William and Frederick Eden, and Lord Archibald Hamilton. Older Foxite regulars at Holland House were Erskine, Sheridan, Francis, Lord Robert Spencer, Cowper, North, Bedford, Lord William Russell, Lauderdale, Upper Ossory, Tierney, Jersey, Derby, Bessborough, and to a lesser extent Romilly. Windham, Elliot, and Tom Grenville were also frequent guests, and several of Canning's friends, notably John Hookham Frere and Lord Granville Leveson Gower, were regulars. The dinner book is an important reference. B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Whitbread, 21 Oct. 1808 (Whitbread), 4203.

As Cartwright noted, it was immaterial whether a Bonaparte or a Bourbon sat on the Spanish throne 'but whether the Spanish liberties shall or shall not be recovered, is not immaterial'.<sup>1</sup> This goal, which resisted the original and continuing objectives of Pittite wartime policy, was the only concern of many old Foxites. In endorsing British involvement in the Peninsular War Whitbread displayed marked defensiveness with regard to a broader assault on Napoleon's throne.<sup>2</sup> As early as April Lady Holland assured Grey that her husband favoured British aid but only for securing Spanish liberties and certainly not for the restoration of Ferdinand, and Holland made it clear that much of his admiration for Infantado sprang from the Spaniard's unpopularity at the Bourbon court.<sup>3</sup> Above all else British aid could have no strings attached.<sup>4</sup> Horner even opposed British military involvement as a threat to Spanish liberties, and Lady Holland, who advocated the despatch of a British army, doubted whether the Spaniards would want one.<sup>5</sup> While Fitzwilliam, Windham, and the government visualized a blow which would undermine Napoleon's power Holland House toyed with constitutional theory, discussed the pros and cons of republicanism and mixed monarchy, lauded the 'spirit and magnificence' of Spanish ballads and literature, and denied that the Spanish cause had relevance to the so-called deliverance of Europe.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Cartwright Life, p. 359.

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 17 Sept. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 29 April and 28 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland). Holland to Grey, 11 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 28 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland). The Morning Chronicle, 16 June 1808, adopted this view.

<sup>5</sup>Horner to J. Lock, 13 June 1808, Horner Memoirs, I, 423-25. Lady Holland to Grey, 2 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland). Also note the editorial comment in the Examiner, 17 July 1808.

<sup>6</sup>Horner to J. Lock, July 1808 (Horner). Lady Holland to Grey, 9 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

In a narrow sense Holland and his circle saw the Spanish Revolution as a test for Foxite principles. 'It is quite a new experiment, in which the powers are for the first time to be tried of a vast regular army, and of an enthusiastic people', wrote Horner. 'The one result would revive our original persuasion, in its first ardour, that the people are not to be subdued by foreign troops ... The latter would sink me in final despair ...'<sup>1</sup> Spain appealed to what was seen as the international applicability of Foxite principles. Popular revolution against arbitrary power was to be applauded and aided in the spirit of Chatham and Fox.<sup>2</sup> Consequently Foxite leaders compared events in Spain to those of the American and French revolutions. Both Fitzpatrick and Grey placed emphasis on the American example in formulating schemes of government for revolutionary Spain, and Horner argued for an extension of hostilities 'upon the very same principle which condemned the original hostilities ... when this long war [with France] commenced'.<sup>3</sup> Popular revolution was the key. Events in Spain represented only another step in the march of human progress which had begun in 1688 and had been carried on by the revolutions of 1776 and 1789. After reading a proclamation of the new Spanish government Holland noted proudly that the 'tone & temper of the publication ... is more liberal & more truly in the spirit of thorough Whiggish doctrines than I expected ...' Fitzpatrick felt that Spain would be an ideal training ground for young Whigs; Holland, Petty, Bedford, Adair, and young Lord

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to J. Lock, 8 July 1808, Horner Memoirs, I, 427-28.

<sup>2</sup>Note White's comments on this head in the Independent Whig, 15 May 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Lady Holland, 16 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Fitzpatrick to Holland, 11 Oct. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51799 (Holland). Horner to Jeffrey, 18 Jan. 1811, Horner Memoirs, II, 68-75.

John Russell planned journeys to the 'land of liberty' a la mode de Lafayette; and Horner noted that the events of the summer had made him 'more Whiggish than ever ...'<sup>1</sup>

Continuing their emphasis on Fox's theories Holland and his friends felt that the triumph of liberty abroad would assure the triumph of liberty in Britain. Horner told a ministerialist that the Spanish struggle would popularize constitutional principles even among Pittites and tories.<sup>2</sup> Brougham, who saw little hope of Spanish success, nevertheless agreed with Holland House that events in the Peninsula would revolutionize British politics:

One thing to me is clear - that the success of the Spands is the downfall of our own govt constituted as it now is - There is an end to the high aristocratic tone of the upper orders - & the whole discredit brought on democracy by the Reign of Terror is wiped away - Even already enough has been done to secure somewhat of this great benefit - but whoever hates the ruling system & especially the secret cabinet influence, should pray cordially for the Spands.<sup>3</sup>

Building castles in the air, Holland and his friends took the lead of what rapidly became an explosion of Foxite passions.

'Spain! Spain! I am in a fever till I hear more about Dupont and the passes of Sierra Morena', cried one of Lady Holland's regulars.<sup>4</sup> But Holland did not wait to hear more: as early as 11 June he described the Spaniards as good Whigs.<sup>5</sup> The drawing room at Holland House soon

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Fitzpatrick, 7 Nov. [1808], and Fitzpatrick to Holland, 16 Nov. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland). Bedford to Holland, 3 Oct. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland). M. G. Lewis to Lady Holland, 30 Oct. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51641 (Holland). Horner to Murray, 27 Oct. 1808, Horner Memoirs, I, 434-37.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Gray, 21 Sept. 1808 (Horner).

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Allen, n.d. [July 1808?], B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen), ff. 79-82.

<sup>4</sup>Horner to J. Lock, 8 July 1808, Horner Memoirs, I, 454.

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Grey, 11 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).



resembled a military headquarters. Maps stretched across mahogany tables, Spaniards and Foxites stood wide-eyed around them, young Whigs dashed in and out with battle reports from Spain, and Allen sat at his desk and scribbled instructions for the patriots at a furious rate. Holland became so involved with his epistles to Spanish leaders that his wife undertook his British correspondence and Lady Holland once became so excited by the arrival of news that she ended a letter in mid-sentence. By July Holland House was distinctly Latin. Spanish generals and politicians, whose absence from their country was not questioned, filled the dinner table. The Morning Chronicle was flooded by Holland House propaganda, Holland had practically composed a Spanish constitution by the end of the month, and Lady Holland told Grey: 'We sat out half the night basking in the Moonbeams listening to Spanish Sequidellas on the guitar & Drinking cooling liquors.'<sup>1</sup> Pessimism was not tolerated. When Tierney dared to suggest that impassioned peasants were no match for French infantry he was reminded of Lord North's later career and Lady Holland recorded that he had 'gone beyond his usual narrow views in respect to foreign politics.'<sup>2</sup> Even an attack of gout failed to dampen Holland's enthusiasm: Spain was to him what America had been to his uncle.

Though the dreams of the Holland House circle were far more visionary than those of the party as a whole, Holland's enthusiasm gave Foxites a semblance of intellectual leadership and during June and early July Fox's old party displayed remarkable unity. Grey, who had

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 2, 3, 5, 17, and 28 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland). Also note the entries in the Holland House dinner books for the months of June and July. B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 18 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

threatened retirement only two months earlier, spouted Foxite doctrine and predicted that French atrocities would 'kindle a flame more formidable to Bonaparte than any opposition that combined Courts or kings could make ...' In June he stressed the necessity of sending British troops to the Peninsula and told Whitbread that Spain afforded 'perhaps greater means for successful resistance than any country in Europe except this'. By July he was too excited to sleep. Uncharacteristically he wished for the reins of government.<sup>1</sup> Whitbread, though reluctant to believe in Spanish success, was equally pleased with the revolution.<sup>2</sup> Godwin, whom historians continue to label a Bonapartist, stated candidly that 'the goodness of the cause changed sides'.<sup>3</sup> The Independent Whig maintained that the Spaniards were fighting for the same principles which had seated the House of Brunswick on the English throne and the Morning Chronicle spoke the same language.<sup>4</sup>

Holland, Brougham, and Wilberforce cooperated to send abolitionist propaganda to the revolted provinces.<sup>5</sup> Cartwright and Holland discussed the wisdom of initiating agitation for parliamentary reform in

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 6 Dec. 1807 and 19 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Grey to Whitbread, 3 June 1808 (Grey). Grey to Lady Holland, 2 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Henry Lord Brougham, The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham (Edinburgh, 1871), I, 413.

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 6 and 10 June 1808 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lean, p. 65.

<sup>4</sup>Independent Whig, 15 May 1808. Perry's editorial comment in the Morning Chronicle on the subject of the Spanish Revolution during June and July was more genuinely Foxite than at any other period between 1806 and 1815. We know that Holland House 'inmates' sent him more propaganda than he could print. Lady Holland to Grey, 2 and 3 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Wilberforce. Life, pp. 371-72. Lady Holland to Grey, 18 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

Britain as a means of influencing the patriots of Spain.<sup>1</sup> Infantado, whose character and views were closely akin to those of an old Rockingham Whig, must have been horrified by the language of Holland and his friends. Like everyone else Horner was 'dreaming wild' and republican dogma was on every lip.<sup>2</sup> One cannot escape the impression that many important men regarded the British government's decision to aid Spain as a victory for Foxite wartime principles. 'How strangely do nations as well as individuals sometimes change their Sentiments and desert their energies to different objects', wrote the radical editor James McCreery; ' - who could have supposed ten years ago that France should this day be employed in fighting the battles of a Tyrant, & Spain, with her whole Sects of Saints contending with her for the freedom of the world - Or what is still more wonderful, that the same British Ministers who leagued against the Liberties of France, should be the encouragers of the Patriots of Spain.'<sup>3</sup>

Within four months of Whitbread's catastrophic motion for peace Foxite leaders were largely united in support of war in the Peninsula. Holland, Grey, Erskine, Bedford, Petty, Whitbread, and Sheridan called for military involvement. In Westminster and Middlesex, where Fox's name had once performed magic, large meetings adopted warlike resolutions.<sup>4</sup> The Morning Chronicle printed satirical poems about 'Boney' and

<sup>1</sup>Holland refused to commit himself to Cartwright's schemes but he probably agreed with the old reformer's logic. Perry represented Holland at a reform meeting in Hackney which was attended by many lesser lights from the Whig Club. Cartwright to Holland, 12, 20, and 27 July 1808, and Holland to Cartwright, n.d. [July 1808], B.M., Add. MSS. 51824 (Holland). Perry to Holland, 30 Aug. 1808, ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Allen encouraged the friends of Holland House to read a recently published book on the republics of Italy. Lady Holland to Grey, 9 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>J. McCreery to Roscoe, 8 Aug. 1808 (Roscoe), 2504.

<sup>4</sup>B.M., Add. MSS. 27838, ff. 325-26.

'Nap'.<sup>1</sup> Carlton House followed suit. Moira<sup>2</sup> joined Sheridan in championing war. At his birthday dinner Prinny 'sported nothing but the most Whig opinions and Toasts' and was prevented from toasting Fox only by the presence of a Spanish admiral.<sup>3</sup> Lady Holland went so far as to open correspondence with Lady Elizabeth Whitbread<sup>4</sup> and St. Anne's Hill once again became an important meeting place for old Foxites.<sup>5</sup>

These views, of course, brought unity of action without unity of purpose. The Spanish deputies were feasted at Spencer's Wimbledon estate in late June and Windham and William Smith called for the despatch of a British army of liberation while apparently holding conflicting opinions on why troops should be sent.<sup>6</sup> Fitzwilliam and Holland eagerly lent their support to the government; the former aimed at France, the latter at Spain. Holland seems to have ignored traditional differences of opinion on the goals of the war against Napoleon in championing the Spanish cause. Possibly he agreed with Brougham that the party could 'gain a great deal of popularity at present & be really

---

<sup>1</sup>Morning Chronicle, 25 July 1808.

<sup>2</sup>Sir John Sinclair, The Correspondence of the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair (London, 1831), II, app. ii, p. 8.

<sup>3</sup>Lock to Allen, 18 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen).

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 28 June 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>For those who could stomach Mrs. Fox's piety St. Anne's Hill apparently represented a political symbol. During the ten years which immediately followed Fox's death the number of those who visited the shrine rose and fell proportionately with events which reminded Foxites of their political heritage. In June and July 1808 Lord Robert Spencer, Adair, Holland, Lauderdale, King, Bouverie, Fitzpatrick, Whitbread, St. John, Albemarle, and Sir Francis Vincent called at least once. Ebrington and Fortesque, Grenvillites who agreed with Holland on the issue of Spain, also called. Diaries and Journal of Elizabeth Bridget Fox, entries of June and July, B.M., Add. MSS. 51478.

<sup>6</sup>Farington Diary, V, 85.

doing a right & just thing, by appearing fairly & heartily to favour the Spaniards - without an attack on Ministers'.<sup>1</sup> But whatever the case Foxites could never support the objectives of the war which ministers were planning for Spain. In early July the first of several key events started a movement of the party towards the views of Grenville.

The king's address to Parliament in early July promised military aid in restoring 'legitimate' monarchs to their thrones and it was followed by a wave of popular clamour against Napoleon. As Brougham reported:

People are busy fortifying the Pyrenees agt new invasions of the enemy - contriving terms of peace which he [Napoleon] may not be able to accept, & which will lead to a campaign in France - raising a fifth coalition in Germany - & bringing back the Bourbons. The first act of the piece, the defeat [of France] in Spain, is of course never doubted - I really believe at this moment there are scarcely 10 men in London who would give Bpte £ 100 a year of half pay to retire to Ajacio & live as an invalid officer the rest of his life.<sup>2</sup>

The announced objectives of the British government and the cry of the public caused many Foxites to reevaluate their view of the Spanish war. The Examiner cooled immediately<sup>3</sup> and later Hunt made his opinion clear: 'In short ... if the deliverance of Europe means the destruction of all tyranny, that is, not only Bonaparte's tyranny, but the whole pandemonium of corrupt courts, interests, and factions, I coincide with all my soul in the honest ardour of those who cry so loudly for it: but if it merely means the restoration of the noble race of Potentates ... I really think that Europe is already delivered as much as she can be ...'<sup>4</sup> The Independent Whig was less moderate: 'But what, in the name

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Allen, n.d. [July 1808], B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen), ff. 75-6.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Grey, 2 July 1808 (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 10 July and 14 Aug. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 11 Sept. 1808.

of reason and common sense, can be traced in the old government of Spain or Portugal, that renders the restoration of either of them equivalent to the valuable blood of the best officers and soldiers that can be culled out of the British army.'<sup>1</sup> As had been the case of Fox and his friends in 1792 and 1793, Hunt and White were willing to tolerate the excesses of revolutionary France rather than support a war with an objective of restoring the ancien régime.

Of course old Foxites could not ignore this point. On 17 July Bedford expressed uneasiness about the whole affair and in early August, at the height of Spanish successes, Petty suddenly questioned the abilities of the patriots.<sup>2</sup> Lady Holland was sadly disappointed that 'they talk of loyalty to the Bourbons more than that of the Justice of the Cause in Spain'.<sup>3</sup> On 9 July she recorded that some of her friends were disposed to let Spain sink and soon rumours were spreading that Lady Holland herself had deserted the cause.<sup>4</sup> The reasons for this shift in opinion were twofold. Firstly, the opposition found it difficult to promote Canning's foreign policy. Secondly, as Lauderdale pointed out, victory in Spain would only stimulate nonsensical cant against Napoleon and the 'legitimacy' of his regime.<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Independent Whig, II Sept. 1808. Also see the issues of 10 and 24 July and 4 Sept. 1808.

<sup>2</sup>Bedford to Holland, 17 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland). Petty to Lady Holland, Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 2 July 1808, B.M., MSS. 51540 (Holland). Also see the Morning Chronicle, 3 July 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 9 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland). Lady Caroline Lamb to Lady Bessborough, 21 Aug. 1808, Lady Bessborough and Her Family Circle, pp. 170-71. Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 26 Aug. 1808, Granville Correspondence, II, 323.

<sup>5</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 26 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

Holland, Horner, and Allen stood by the Spaniards, retreated from their earlier emphasis on a republican government, and pointed out the advantages of a constitutional monarchy under Ferdinand.<sup>1</sup> But this ignored a fundamental point - the right of the Spanish people to choose their own form of government<sup>2</sup> - and consequently the Holland House circle became daily more isolated from the mainstream of Foxite opinion. Sydney Smith found Horner so serious on the issue that he was 'forced to compose my face half a street off before I meet him'.<sup>3</sup> Tierney, Abercromby, and Piggott agreed with the despondent Grenville while Lauderdale, Whitbread, and many others advocated peace.<sup>4</sup> Intellectual conflict was developing rapidly.

As always Whitbread's views were important. In June he had despaired for the Spaniards but wished them success and in early July (according to Wilberforce) he maintained that the king's speech 'was the place to which men ought to look for the opinions and feelings of the country on Spanish affairs'.<sup>5</sup> This was not to say that he agreed with the opinions and feelings of the country. Concerned over the war-like, pro-Bourbon clamour of the public, he immediately stressed to

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to J. Lock, July 1808, and Horner to Allen, n.d. [Aug.] 1808 (Horner), III, ff. 284-85 and 305-06.

<sup>2</sup>By making this decision Holland retracted his earlier reasons for supporting the war. On 11 June he had assured Grey that 'the feeling in Spain is entirely national & unmixed with any attachment or enthusiasm to any family or person' and that the Spaniards did not 'affect to act from any principle of loyalty to him [Ferdinand] but from a determination not to have Frenchmen in Spain'. B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Sydney Smith to Lady Holland, 8 Oct. 1808, Lady Holland, Sydney Smith, II, 38.

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Lady Holland, 22 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland). Grey to Lady Holland, 22 July 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Piggott to Grey, 24 Sept. 1808 (Grey). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 15 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Wilberforce Life, p. 370.

Holland the necessity of qualifying the grounds upon which Foxite support for Spain was based. After gaining the endorsement of Holland, Tierney, Fitzpatrick, and other leading Foxites<sup>1</sup> he published a pamphlet entitled A Letter to Lord Holland:

If Mr. Fox were alive and had power commensurate with his ability, I see a bare possibility that his genius might turn this crisis to such great account. Nothing should be done but in concert with the Spaniards, and the complete evacuation of Spain by the French armies, the abstinence from all interference in her internal arrangements, the freedom of the royal family might be conditions of the negotiation. There is no humiliation in such a proposal. I should be desirous of conveying these terms to the court of Bayonne, and of proclaiming them to the world. If they should be accepted, is there a statesman who could doubt of their propriety, of their justice, of their honour? If rejected, is there a free spirit in the universe that would not join in applauding the justice and moderation of Great Britain - in condemning the violence, the injustice and the ambition of the Emperor of the French?<sup>2</sup>

Whitbread's pamphlet was an honest effort to hold the party to its traditional view of the war but the author's concluding statements destroyed its purpose. Whitbread would never let Grey forget his behaviour as Foreign Secretary and in stating his case he represented the peace negotiations of 1806 as an occasion 'when the Whigs themselves manifestly deserted their ancient tenets, and, betrayed by the false hopes of Continental victories ... adopted the language and view of their ancient adversaries'.<sup>3</sup> Holland had not seen these remarks prior to publication and he, Grey, and Tierney were infuriated.<sup>4</sup> Lingerin

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 14 July 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>I have been unable to find Whitbread's pamphlet. I have quoted here from another rare pamphlet found in the Wickham Papers at Winchester. Brief Memoir of the Life of Mr. Whitbread (London, 1815), p. 31.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted by the Edinburgh Review in its review of the pamphlet, XII, pp. 435 et seq. According to Lauderdale, however, the pamphlet flattered Grey. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 12 Nov. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 14 July 1808 (Grey). Tierney to Grey, 12 July 1808 (Grey).



memories of the Ministry of All the Talents would divide the Foxites for years to come. In the summer of 1808 these memories diverted the party from the only course which could have united them on the question of the Spanish war. One must wonder what the reaction of the party as a whole would have been had not the prorogation of Parliament scattered its members in early July. Other Foxites were not so concerned for the reputation of the Talents as Grey. Even Petty chose to overlook the slur on the late government and represent the pamphlet as being 'manly, gentlemanlike, & what is best of all convincing'.<sup>1</sup> But few read it and those who did so saw it as only another source of discord. Prudently Lauderdale told Lady Holland that wartime objectives were 'not a subject on which I would speak to the Spaniards at present'.<sup>2</sup>

Party bickering on wartime objectives ceased in mid-August when the astonishing news of Dupont's surrender to Castanos at Baylem reached London. The sagging spirits of Brougham and Lauderdale were uplifted; Grey expressed fear that Spanish liberties would be won too easily; and the Morning Chronicle entertained extravagant hopes that the British army could soon be moved to Italy where it would assist Austria and simultaneously emancipate the Italians.<sup>3</sup> The victory of a Spanish army obscured every other consideration at Holland House. Cartwright scolded Whitbread in a letter to the Political Register.<sup>4</sup> Even the despondent

---

<sup>1</sup>Petty to Lady Holland, 2 Nov. [1808], B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 20 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Lady Holland, 14 and 15 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 15 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland). Lady Holland Journal, II, 245. Morning Chronicle, 11 Aug. and 9 Sept. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Political Register, XIII, 110-15.

Grenvilles revived. Convinced that the Spaniards had set an example for all Europe Lord Grenville praised the character of Spanish troops and predicted that Junot, Dupont's coadjutor, would suffer a similar fate. Auckland agreed enthusiastically; Stafford, Carysfort, Spencer, and Fremantle felt that their dreams had materialized; and Tom Grenville told Carlisle that Spanish valour and perseverance would 'protract the contest till the other powers of Europe shall find means & courage enough to take their part in it ...'<sup>1</sup> Castanos gave the British opposition superficial unity. Grenvillites and Fitzwilliams hailed Baylen as a blow which would rouse all Europe against Napoleon; Holland House saw it as another Saratoga; radicals felt that it would boost the cause of reform in Britain; and the peace party expected the battle to open negotiations for a general armistice. But in mid-September the Convention of Cintra brought things back to earth.

Sir Hew Dalrymple's convention was not all bad but Sir Hew was careless in delaying his despatches to England. The first news came from the indignant Portuguese who naturally reported that Junot had been saved only by British folly.<sup>2</sup> Following on the heels of Baylen, news of the Convention on Cintra had a considerable impact on the opposition. Ebrington, who was in Portugal, sent his family reports which lambasted both Portuguese cowardice and the foolishness of British commanders.<sup>3</sup> Lord Grenville, forgetting his earlier excitement, claimed that his views had been vindicated. Without hesitation he called for the

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 18 and 28 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Grenville to Newport, 29 Aug. 1808 (Newport). Auckland to Grenville, 13 Aug. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 213. T. Grenville to Carlisle, 28 Aug. 1808 (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Roberts, p. 120.

<sup>3</sup>Ebrington to T. Grenville, 17 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

withdrawal of the British army and reemphasized his earlier wish for a negotiated peace.<sup>1</sup> Those Foxites who had had doubts before Baylen now agreed with him. The Edinburgh Review, reviewing Whitbread's pamphlet of July, deprecated the renewal of coalitions or the declaration of war on France by other European powers.<sup>2</sup> The Independent Whig doubted whether the Peninsula was worth defending and called for increased expenditures at home.<sup>3</sup> The Examiner deserted the Spaniards altogether and Perry, who wanted to support the government, could only express astonishment in the Morning Chronicle.<sup>4</sup> Many Foxites had had second thoughts on the wisdom of British involvement in the Peninsula since early July and Cintra strengthened Grenville's stand against continental involvement.<sup>5</sup>

Even the members of the opposition who advocated war to the death with Napoleon began to despond. Holland House tried to hold the middle ground with a dinner for the lingering Spanish deputies on 18 September but Holland's views had lost much of their charm. If the dinner book reflects party interest Holland was almost reduced to his intimates, Fitzwilliams, Sheridan, and a sprinkling of Canningites after the middle of the month.<sup>6</sup> Tierney, Piggott, and Abercromby openly opposed the maintenance of an army in the Peninsula, Lauderdale was anxious for peace and isolation, and Whitbread, who continued to demand clarification

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Holland, 5 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). Grenville to Auckland, 19 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Grenville to Grey, 5 Nov. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Edinburgh Review, XII, 435 et seq.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 18 Sept. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Examiner, 18 Sept. 1808. Morning Chronicle, 19 Sept. 1808.

<sup>5</sup>Bedford was so upset by the public cry against Napoleon that he expressed fear of even capitalizing on the prevailing indignation against the Convention. Bedford to Whitbread, Oct. 1808 (Whitbread), 5479.

<sup>6</sup>B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

of the party's wartime goals, leaned towards the views of Grenville. Grey cautioned Holland against committing himself to views he could not retract and Lady Holland criticized the Spaniards behind her husband's back.<sup>1</sup>

These developments quickly assumed political importance. Delighted by the cry against ministers on the streets of London, Temple told his father that 'Our crimes are now forgotten, and the indignation of the public is now solely directed against government ...'<sup>2</sup> The Prince of Wales did much to stimulate this opinion. Carlton House spread word that the king would summon Grey and Grenville, and the Prince expressed a wish to visit Buckingham, 'not as Prince of Wales but as his best and most sincere friend'. In October Sussex, Downshire, and the Carletons accompanied the royal train to Stowe, and Buckingham was assured of the king's newfound esteem for Lord Grenville excepting, of course, his views on Roman Catholics.<sup>3</sup> During the month which followed the news of Cintra the line between opposition to the war and outrage against the management of it was thin indeed. Only Holland stood between the two but in October he ignored the protests of his friends and set off for Spain. As he told his sister later, 'If I cannot be a Whig in England I certainly shall be in Spain.'<sup>4</sup> Holland would school

---

<sup>1</sup>Tierney to Grey, 25 Sept. 1808 (Grey). Tierney to Lady Holland, 22 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 20 and 22 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland). Whitbread to Grey, 17 Sept. 1808 (Grey). Grey to Lady Holland, 16 Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51550 (Holland). Lady Holland to Grey, Sept. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Temple to Buckingham, 7 Nov. 1808, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 277-78.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 8 Oct. 1808 (Spencer). T. Grenville to Grenville, 7 Oct. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 221-23.

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Caroline Fox, 20 May 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51738 (Holland).

the Spaniards in the fundamentals of Whiggism.

There was mass confusion in the party during November and December as General Sir John Moore's British expeditionary force marched through Portugal to engage the French. Moore was a greatly admired man with strong Whig connexions and his presence in the Peninsula held many Foxites to Holland's view of the war. Brougham, writing in the Edinburgh Review, abandoned insularity and encouraged Englishmen to rally to the cause.<sup>1</sup> Perry's editorials were so pro-Spanish until Christmas that the Grenvilles raised objections.<sup>2</sup> And as late as 3 December Horner told Murray that such a people as the Spaniards could not be vanquished.<sup>3</sup> But the cry against the war was loud in those quarters where Holland had no influence. On 11 September the Independent Whig had represented foreign expeditions as a plot by aristocrats to subdue the lower classes and in the months which followed White championed isolation and peace.<sup>4</sup> The Examiner, while expressing general support for the Spanish cause, attacked Jovellanos for praising the Bourbons and chided the British government for directing its foreign policy towards the restoration of despotism.<sup>5</sup> Political recrimination led even warriors to attack the government's military strategy. Brougham's article in the Edinburgh Review denied that Portugal was relevant to Spain, and Fitzwilliam was angry because British troops had not been sent to Biscay.<sup>6</sup> Grey and Lauderdale had long since decided that Holland's views were somewhat visionary and

---

<sup>1</sup>Edinburgh Review, XIII, 219-31.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 30 Dec. 1808 (Spencer).

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Murray, 3 Dec. 1808 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Independent Whig, 11 and 25 Sept. and 13 Nov. 1808.

<sup>5</sup>Examiner, 16 Oct. and 4 Dec. 1808.

<sup>6</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grey, 7 Dec. 1808 (Grey).

both of them maintained calculated silence on the issue of the war. All this added up to mass confusion and in London Tierney dreaded the opening of Parliament. 'He states himself to be overwhelmed with puzzling reflections', reported Lauderdale. 'He describes at length the grounds on which he plainly sees the present Government cannot exist, and then with equal force and ingenuity he states the reasons why there cannot possibly be a change, & thus having made out that the Ministry neither can exist nor Die, he professes his total incapacity to say what will happen.'<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Grey tinkered with the Catholic question in Northumberland.<sup>2</sup>

By early December reports from the Peninsula had confirmed that Moore's advance was precarious. Colonel Willoughby Gordon, who was friendly with Foxite leaders, assured both Grey and Whitbread of Spanish cowardice and predicted that Moore would be cut to pieces.<sup>3</sup> Tierney's nephew was also in Portugal and his accounts verified those of Gordon.<sup>4</sup> Auckland's friends at the War Office continued to give him alarming reports of the danger that threatened the British army and as early as 7 November he concluded that all was lost.<sup>5</sup> From Spain Holland tried to keep the home fires burning with a steady stream of optimism but his

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 19 Nov. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Ponsonby, 28 Oct., copy, and Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 Oct. 1808, *ibid.*

<sup>3</sup>Gordon's accounts were frequent and always dismal. See the Grey Papers, box 19. Also see Gordon to Whitbread, 15 Dec. 1808 (Whitbread), 5482. For the effects of these reports see Whitbread to Grey, 3 Dec. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Grey, 2 Dec. 1808 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 7 and 8 Nov. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 239.

opinions were undermined by no small degree of inaccuracy.<sup>1</sup> Then, too, Allen, who had accompanied Holland, sent back reports of a lack of enthusiasm and Whiggish principles among Spaniards.<sup>2</sup> The Examiner slammed the Spanish Junta for its corruption and arbitrary policies.<sup>3</sup> Tierney and North opposed the war unreservedly as early as 4 December, Petty was under pressure to agree, and Brougham gave up the cause in the middle of the month.<sup>4</sup> Disgusted by the whole affair Sydney Smith urged Lady Holland to come home: 'Linendrapers and shoemakers might perhaps save Spain, - in the hands of dukes and bishops it is infallibly gone.'<sup>5</sup>

In mid-December word arrived that Moore was in full retreat with Napoleon biting at his heels.<sup>6</sup> Much of Holland's support in Britain collapsed overnight. Fitzpatrick's shift of opinion was disgraceful. He denied that he had ever been able to 'imbibe an atom of Id. Holland's Quixotism'. 'The enthusiasm of the Spanish Patriots', he wrote disdainfully, 'I have always believed to consist in the national antipathy of the lower orders to the French, excited by the fears of their Bishops, Priests, & Monks, alarmed for the enormous wealth of the Church.'<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 31 Dec. 1808, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 292-94. Grey to Grenville, 26 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 274.

<sup>2</sup>S. Smith to Jeffrey, Dec. 1808, Lady Holland, Sydney Smith, II, 46-7.

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 6 Nov. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>Sarah Spencer to Robert Spencer, 4 Dec. 1808, Mrs. Hugh Wyndham, ed., Correspondence of Sarah Spencer Lady Lyttelton, 1787-1870 (London, 1912), pp. 50-1. Brougham to Grey, Dec. 1808 (Brougham).

<sup>5</sup>S. Smith to Lady Holland, Dec. 1808, Lady Holland, Sydney Smith, II, 47-8.

<sup>6</sup>Auckland became so alarmed that he wrote the king and warned him that the country was heading for disaster. Auckland to Grenville, 10 Dec. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 247-48.

<sup>7</sup>Fitzpatrick to Whitbread, 17 Dec. 1808 (Whitbread), 5483.

These were strange words from a man who a month earlier had represented Spain as an ideal training ground for young Whigs. But Fitzpatrick was not alone. Grey, who had maintained silence since Cintra, confessed that he had been wrong about Spain.<sup>1</sup> The Examiner noted immediately that the revolution had failed and Hunt's 'Retrospect of the Year' on 25 December lamented that Britain had pursued measures which would have ruined the best of causes.<sup>2</sup> The Independent Whig launched a brutal attack on both the Spanish Junta and British policy<sup>3</sup> and the Morning Chronicle, the Statesman, and the Edinburgh Review soon followed.<sup>4</sup>

Grenville was the somewhat reluctant beneficiary of this Foxite stampede. He saw a good case against ministers, and the retreat of Moore's army vindicated his earlier gloominess. But Grenville was patriotic and felt 'a strong reluctance to these wordy wars, at a moment when the country itself has not, perhaps two years more of existence ...'<sup>5</sup> There were reasons for Grenville's disinterestedness. It appears that he was seriously disturbed by reports that an attack would soon be launched on the alleged corrupt practices of the Duke of York. In the spring of 1808 an anonymous pamphlet, A Plain Statement, had slandered the Duke and asserted that enquiry had already begun. This

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to T. Grenville, 16 Dec. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Examiner, 11 and 25 Dec. 1808.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 25 Dec. 1808 and 8 Jan. 1808.

<sup>4</sup>The Times, 12 Jan. 1809, noted the striking shift of opinion in the editorials of opposition prints and deprecated their attack on constituted authorities, British commanders, and the Spanish nation. The Examiner, 15 Jan. 1809, defended the views of the Edinburgh Review, the Morning Chronicle, the Statesman, and even the Political Register but denied any connexion with them.

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 28 Dec. 1808, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 290.



pamphlet had caused great alarm at both Howick<sup>1</sup> and Dropmore during August, and Grenville and Fremantle had persuaded Perry to refute its allegations in the Morning Chronicle.<sup>2</sup> But on 30 October the attack had been reopened when the Independent Whig published a leader entitled 'Corruption and undue influence on the promotion of military officers the source of national disgrace'. By December rumours were flying that an attack would soon be launched on corrupt practices in government and Grenville was unnerved. His family had much to lose in a successful campaign for economical reform,<sup>3</sup> and the Foxites had pestered him on this subject repeatedly since 1806.<sup>4</sup> The parliamentary session of 1808 had shown him that he could not control the House of Commons and prospects for 1809 looked even worse. Holland was in Spain and both Grey and Lauderdale had announced that they would be unable to attend the opening of Parliament.<sup>5</sup> Grenville was eager to challenge the policy of involvement in the Peninsula but he feared the rashness of the Foxites and he was unwilling to lend support to an attack on the government's

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 26 and 27 Aug. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Fremantle, 27 Aug. 1808 enclosing paragraphs for communication to Perry (Fremantle). Morning Chronicle, 2 Sept. 1808.

<sup>3</sup>The sinecures of Grenville and his brothers defy computation. By Buckingham's own account his Joint Tellership of the Exchequer brought him } 209, 671 between 1783 and 1805. His deputy made } 34,000 during the same period. 'Mutual Release between the Marquis of Buckingham and William Henry Fremantle Esq.', 1 Aug. 1806 (Fremantle), 47. The Examiner of 10 May 1812 estimated Buckingham's earnings in 1806 at } 55,000. As Auditor of the Exchequer Grenville drew enough to make him refuse to relinquish the office to become First Lord of the Treasury in 1806, 1809, 1811, and 1812. For further information on this 'Venetian Oligarchy' see Roberts, pp. 175-76.

<sup>4</sup>For an account of party differences on this score see H.M.C. Dropmore, VIII, xii.

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 28 Dec. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

foreign policy which could easily have far-reaching domestic implications. As he told Auckland later: '... the truth is that while we are disputing whether the Ship be well steered or not, others are at work to destroy its whole frame: & it is very difficult to resist the blunders of the Pilot, without assisting the mutinous part of the crew.'<sup>1</sup> For these reasons he hedged.

On 20 December Grenville told Grey that he wished to state his views on opening day and then abandon exertions in Parliament. This statement would question the initial decision to send an army to Spain, point out the government's mismanagement of Moore's campaign, stress the continuing need for a program of national retrenchment and rebuilding and an end to continental expeditions, and conclude by announcing a reduced level of opposition activity in the House of Lords. Above all he wanted to condemn 'the rash and desperate act of pledging the public faith to the Spanish cause now for the first time, when it is become completely hopeless, and binding ourselves by a public declaration not to treat with France, without obtaining as a preliminary to negotiation the acknowledgement of Ferdinand the seventh'.<sup>2</sup> Grenville wanted to proceed along two fronts. Firstly, he was anxious to unite the coalition behind his 'husbanding, defensive system' for an open assault on the fundamentals of British foreign policy. Secondly, he wanted to delay this assault until events had assured him of a united party. According to his brother he feared 'that some of the new discussions will not fail to suggest new matter of division among ourselves'. A motion of censure on the initial decision to send an army to Spain would reduce the Grenvillites to a small minority at the present time and a similar

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 1 April 1809, ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 20 Dec. 1808 (Grey).

motion on the Convention of Cintra would excite no interest. The Fitzwilliams, Holland's friends, and independent voters would support the government until Moore's defeat or possibly even the capture of his army disarmed ministers. The rumours concerning the Duke of York were possibly a larger consideration. There were too many reasons to fear that an open confrontation with the government would only give rise to an attack on 'all public men'. Delay, therefore, was necessary at least until the nature of the charges of corruption was discernable. Moreover, Grey's presence was essential and a delay until his scheduled arrival in mid-February would be prudent. Meanwhile Grenville would put his views on record in the Lords and reprobate the rumoured decision of government to bind the country to the restoration of Ferdinand.<sup>1</sup>

Reports from the Peninsula became more alarming daily and with the opening of Parliament less than a month away the list of those who advocated an attack of some sort on the government grew. Grenville, the only opposition leader in the vicinity of London, was put under great pressure to assert himself but he stubbornly refused to sanction a parliamentary crusade. In early January, however, he grew eager on the subject of Spain and noted vindictively that the 'silly notion that Don somebody with the Peasants of Galacia was to overturn Bonaparte & beat the whole French army ... is beginning to give way to a juster view'.<sup>2</sup> But still Grenville could not unite the coalition's leaders behind his views. Grey and Lauderdale, who agreed with Grenville in principle, backed away from an attack on the initial decision to send

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 21 Dec. 1808, enclosing Grenville to Grey, 20 Dec. 1808, copy (Spencer). Also see T. Grenville to Grenville, 14 Dec. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 249-50.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, n.d. [2 Jan. 1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

troops to the Peninsula in deference to Holland. On 2 January Lauderdale exhorted Grey 'rather to dwell on the management of our Ministers in relation to sending our force to Spain than to dwell on the measure of sending a force there; because ... Holland ... publicly encouraged them to it towards the close of the Session ...'<sup>1</sup>

Fitzwilliam and Windham questioned the wisdom of mixing British troops with a foreign army and had doubts about 'sending Moore in at the time & in the way they did', but though they favoured parliamentary enquiry they were 'fearful of saying boldly & generally, that they [ministers] should in no case ... have employed a large army in the interior of Spain ...'<sup>2</sup> Both Foxite and Burkian leaders, then, were prepared to base a motion of censure on the management of the war but opposed, for different reasons, to Grenville's emphasis on the necessity of broaching the broader question of continental expeditions. This situation was further confused by Grenville's aversion to active exertions in Parliament. The Foxites and particularly the Burkiens were anxious to move for enquiry on the first day of the session.

On 2 January these conflicting opinions surfaced during a meeting of party leaders at Dropmore. Probably alarmed by strong reports that the Duke of York case would soon break, Grenville opposed any amendment or division on opening day but demanded a systematic attack on the theory of continental expeditions. He met with stiff resistance on both counts. Petty and Ponsonby thought that it was impossible to avoid a division in the Commons and they refused to censure the policy of military

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 2 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Windham to T. Grenville, 7 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

involvement in the Iberian Peninsula. Tierney and Bedford<sup>1</sup> supported Grenville, Fitzwilliam agreed with Ponsonby and Petty, and soon the issue was complicated by disagreement on the Catholic question. This bickering led to ludicrous compromises. Petty and Ponsonby agreed to condemn the decision to send troops to Spain only if it could be ascertained if Spain had requested military aid and if competent judges had ruled that the British army could sustain a campaign. Fitzwilliam refused even to consider these conditions, Tierney called for a dissolution of the coalition, and to Grenville's delight it was decided that the party would not be summoned to Parliament by the customary circular letter.<sup>2</sup>

Upon hearing of Grenville's views and the result of the meeting Whitbread became disgusted and tried to rally the Foxites behind a motion for peace.<sup>3</sup> He found little support. Creevey, while warning of being 'seduced' by Grenville and Tierney, wanted parliamentary enquiry and an attack on Arthur Wellesley.<sup>4</sup> Roscoe clung to the Spanish cause.<sup>5</sup> Horner, writing at a later date, summed up the feelings of many of those who had supported Whitbread's peace motion of 29 February 1808: 'Upon the question of peace, I parted company with some of my best advisers ... at the moment of the Spanish insurrection; thinking that the circumstances of that event recommended an extension of hostilities,

---

<sup>1</sup>As early as October Bedford had wanted peace and a reduction of activity in Parliament. Thus he embraced Grenville's views. Bedford to Whitbread, Oct. 1808 (Whitbread), 5479. Bedford to Holland, 3 Oct. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Ponsonby to Grey, 2 Jan. 1809 (Grey). Ponsonby to Fitzwilliam, 7 Jan. 1809 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>3</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 11 Jan. 1809, Creevey Papers, I, 94.

<sup>4</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 4 and 13 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 373/9, 10.

<sup>5</sup>Roscoe to Whitbread, 9 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 2448.

upon the very same principle, which condemned the original hostilities ... when this long war commenced.<sup>1</sup> The Foxites were hopelessly confused. Tierney, Piggott, Abercromby, North, Fitzpatrick, and Bedford wanted a return to isolation; Petty, Erskine, Horner, and probably the bulk of the party supported the war but criticized the management of it. Whitbread was somewhere between these groups with his desire for peace, and Grey and Lauderdale were afraid to commit themselves.<sup>2</sup> Ill blood flowed in London. To Tierney's chagrin Whitbread refused to discuss the issue. Relations between Fitzwilliam and Grenville were strained to the breaking point and rumour held that Grenville and Melville would unite for an attack on the war.<sup>3</sup>

Stimulated by word that Moore would be cut off before reaching Coruna the Grenvilles and those who agreed with them began a serious effort to rally the coalition behind a policy which called for an end to continental involvement and a return to the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents. Auckland and Tierney encouraged Grey to desert the undeserving Spaniards,<sup>4</sup> Tom Grenville tried to whip up support in London, and Lord Grenville pushed his views on Fitzwilliam and others.<sup>5</sup> On 5 January Grenville struck at Foxite dogma

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 18 Jan. 1811, Horner Memoirs, II, 68-75. For a conflicting Foxite opinion see Rev. J. C. Banks to Whitbread, 22 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 4205.

<sup>2</sup>Grey feared that a debate and a division on Spain would lead many members of the coalition into the ministerial lobby. Roberts, p. 124.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 7 Jan. 1809 (Grey). T. Grenville to Grenville, 7 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 263. Sydney Smith to Lady Holland, Dec. 1808, Lady Holland, Sydney Smith, pp. 47-8. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 17 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Auckland to Grey, 2 Jan. 1809 (Grey). The utmost discretion was exercised in this effort for, as Tierney noted, 'the newspapers ... have one and all so poisoned the public mind that even to doubt of the greatest success is considered as proof of Jacobinism.' Tierney to Grey, 6 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Fitzwilliam, 9 Jan. 1809 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield). Grenville to Newport, 5 Jan. 1809 (Newport).

in a letter to Grey: 'The opinion that enthusiasm & love of independence (even if those sentiments had been universally prevalent in Spain) can enable an undisciplined People to resist a great & regular Military Power, is such as one must wish were true, but it is contradicted by all History, without (as I think) one single exception ...' The commitment of a British army to the cause of Ferdinand, he argued, was a gross violation of 'that defensive & husbanding system which alone I am convinced can, if any thing can, carry us safely to the end of this contest ...'<sup>1</sup> These were strong arguments but Grey refused to desert Holland. However, he made it clear that his resolve rested on the fate of Moore's army.<sup>2</sup>

The Grenvilles were more successful in other quarters. Elliot abandoned Fitzwilliam, Anstruther joined the Grenville camp,<sup>3</sup> and on the 8th Erskine, one of Holland's warmest supporters, gave way. Moore's retreat, noted the former Lord Chancellor, had discouraged the Spaniards to such an extent as to destroy their initial enthusiasm. The Peninsula was lost and the time had come to return to the policies of the Talents. Ministers could not stand 'unless we shall be as dilatory in our attacks upon them as they have been in theirs upon the Armies of France'.<sup>4</sup> The alarming news of Spanish cowardice and Moore's plight before Coruna undermined the theoretical grounds on which Foxites had supported the Spanish cause. By 10 January the only remaining questions were whether British interests could be served by continued exertion in the Peninsula

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 5 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Auckland, 6 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland). Auckland to Grenville, 15 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX. 269-70.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 8 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 264.

<sup>4</sup>Erskine to Spencer, 8 Jan. [1809], (Spencer).

and whether 'obviously guilty' ministers should be censured for sending an army there in the first place. The Fitzwilliams and several Holland House regulars stood virtually alone on both points. The Grenvillites were largely united behind their system of defensive warfare. The Foxite rank and file were leaderless and being drawn towards Grenville by traditional support for peace and isolation. It appears that opposition leaders in the Commons either agreed with Grenville or remained prudently silent. Tierney, Piggott, Anstruther, Abercromby, Tom Grenville, Elliot, Fitzpatrick, North, and Morpeth were with Grenville. Petty and Milton were young, confused, and non-committal. Windham was not in London. Whitbread was for peace and isolation and separated from Grenville only by his desire to attack the government and divide the House on the first day of the session. Ponsonby supported the war in the Peninsula but was anxious to compromise for the sake of party unity. Only Horner remained true to Holland without reserve but he was on the legal circuit. On the 9th a frustrated Petty wrote to Lady Holland: 'I will only say that I hope your absence affords you both a great deal of pleasure, because it certainly does us at home a great deal of mischief.'<sup>1</sup>

Tom Grenville, Petty, Elliot, and Anstruther met at Tierney's house on 10 January and concluded that Lord Grenville's idea of a half-secession could not be enforced in the Commons because the party was eager for a strenuous attack on the government.<sup>2</sup> News of this decision placed Grenville in a difficult position. It was now clear that most of the nonsense about the 'universal Spanish nation' had been undermined by

---

<sup>1</sup>Petty to Lady Holland, 9 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 10 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 266-67.



reports from the Peninsula; that Grey, Lauderdale, and those in the Commons who clung to past views did so primarily from fear of alienating Holland and Fitzwilliam; that the opposition press had almost deserted the Spaniards and the British government altogether;<sup>1</sup> that Moore was headed for a disaster that would greatly influence public opinion and waverers in the party;<sup>2</sup> and that therefore the ball was in Grenville's court. An almost identical political situation had existed in December 1805 and January 1806 and Fox had capitalized fully on the battle of Austerlitz to form the coalition behind the 'husbanding, defensive system'. But the talents and reputation of Fox had excited the interest and the support of even those who disagreed with him. In January 1809 the absence of such a leader was felt. Grey, Lauderdale, Holland, Fitzwilliam, and Spencer were not in London and their absence rendered a definitive party stance impossible. Moreover, Fox had been sure of his objectives in the days before and after Austerlitz; in early 1809 Grenville was not. His worse fears had been realized in early January when it became clear that the Duke of York stood accused by his mistress of illegally using public money for procuring commissions and hastening promotions, and rumours of an open assault on sinecure places and corrupt practices were everywhere. Again Grenville hedged.

Obviously after much deliberation Grenville agreed to support a campaign in the lower house if he could be assured on several key points. Firstly, could the front bench hold the party rank and file to an attack solely on foreign affairs? Secondly, was the party prepared to abstain from an amendment and division on the opening day of Parliament?

---

<sup>1</sup>Independent Whig, 8, 15, and 22 Jan. 1809. Examiner, 8, 15, and 22 Jan. 1809. Morning Chronicle, 9-14, 16-21, 23-4 Jan. 1809.

<sup>2</sup>Buckingham to T. Grenville, 15 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville).

Thirdly, could Whitbread be persuaded to accept these terms?<sup>1</sup> Grey approved this plan and urged Tierney to cooperate fully with Whitbread and Ponsonby in the formulation of policy.<sup>2</sup> On the 14th Fitzpatrick reported from Southill that Whitbread was cooperative and disposed to await events in the Peninsula.<sup>3</sup> A meeting was scheduled without delay.

On 18 January, only a day before the meeting of Parliament, forty three members of the Commons assembled at Ponsonby's house. Whitbread came to the meeting with resolutions in his pocket which reemphasized the need for Great Britain to establish reasonable wartime objectives so as to form a basis for negotiations with France.<sup>4</sup> He wanted to amend the king's speech on this basis but he was cooperative and promised to abstain from moving his amendment 'unless it was called for by the sense of the meeting'. According to Tierney eight or ten of those present were prepared to support Whitbread<sup>5</sup> but the brewer never opened his mouth. Possibly Whitbread saw wisdom in Grenville's tactics; possibly he was simply in a good mood; maybe he looked around him and saw that his resolutions had no chance of success. But whatever the case Ponsonby introduced Grenville's plan, Petty and Tom Grenville supported it, and there

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 12 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville). Grenville to Grey, 13 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Tierney, 13 Jan. 1809 (Tierney). Tierney to Grey, 16 Jan. 1809 (Grey). Creevey to Whitbread, 13 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 373/10.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 14 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 269. T. Grenville to Spencer, 14 Jan. 1809 (Spencer).

<sup>4</sup>I have been unable to find this draft but it is safe to assume that Whitbread's resolutions were no more than a restatement of the opinions he had put forward in A Letter to Lord Holland. Creevey probably helped Whitbread write this amendment. Whitbread to Creevey, 14 Jan. 1809 (Creevey).

<sup>5</sup>These men were probably Adam, A. Baring, Combe, Creevey, Hibbert, Jekyll, Ossulston, Ld. William Russell, Ward, and possibly Romilly and Western.

the meeting ended.<sup>1</sup>

The meeting of 18 January gave Grenville little reason to feel comfortable. Attendance was scant; Windham, the Dundas brothers, Sheridan, and Horner, all of whom continued to support the war, were not present; and Whitbread's silence was probably an anti-climax. Therefore further steps were taken to control the party. As had been agreed earlier the front bench would attempt to stifle discussion of any subject that did not deal with foreign affairs. In that field the party would harass ministers but avoid divisions. Realizing that this strategy would not go down easily with backbenchers, Grenville divided responsibilities among frontbenchers to assure maximum control. Ponsonby would specialize on Spain, Petty on Portugal, and Tierney - no, on second thought Whitbread - on America.<sup>2</sup> Grenville would state his views candidly in the Lords but avoid divisions and neutralize the party in the Commons until the ultimate fate of Moore and every implication of the charges against the Duke of York were known. Bedford, Tierney, Petty, and Ponsonby, all of whom put great stock in the presence of Grey and feared an open break with Holland and Fitzwilliam on the question of the war, accepted Grenville's plan as a prudent compromise.

Parliament convened on 19 January. The king's speech generally approved of the Convention of Cintra and announced that a treaty of alliance had been concluded with Spain, that Sweden had been given a subsidy, that the country's militia would be mobilized and increased, and that a Franco-Russian offer of peace negotiations had been refused because Napoleon would not treat on a basis which guaranteed the

---

<sup>1</sup>Tierney to Grey, 19 Jan., enclosing a list of the M.P.'s who attended the meeting, and Piggott to Grey, 18 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

restoration of Spain's 'legitimate' sovereign.<sup>1</sup> Had foreign affairs been the only consideration of opposition leaders this summation of British policy would have inspired a great deal of party unity for it overturned the fundamentals of the wartime system to which the coalition had paid lip service since 1806. Moreover, the treaty with Spain ignored the obvious implications of Moore's retreat and opened the possibility of another disaster, and the refusal to negotiate with France was justified on grounds which displeased the vast majority of party regulars. Among the more influential members of the coalition only Horner supported the decision to stand by the restoration of Ferdinand and even he objected to the curt refusal to negotiate for peace.<sup>2</sup> The Independent Whig and the Examiner represented this decision as fatal to the Spanish cause,<sup>3</sup> and Whitbread, Bedford, Fitzpatrick, and Erskine felt that the war could be supported only if a negotiated peace assuring Spanish independence (leaving political arrangements to the Spaniards) and the withdrawal of British troops were the announced objectives of Great Britain. On the 16th Lauderdale had come round to this opinion and a day later he had confessed to Lady Holland that he could no longer support the maintenance of a British army in the Peninsula.<sup>4</sup> Grey, Horner, and Petty therefore were clinging to Holland's views by their fingernails.

The bulk of the opposition's war party was also angered by the king's speech. 'We never had cause with them [the Spaniards], excepting checking B [onaparte]', wrote the warlike Carlisle. 'We were not to

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 1-4. Also see Abbot Diary, II, 163.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Murray, n.d. [Jan.] 1809 (Horner), IV, ff. 27-9.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 15, 22 Jan. 1809. Examiner, 22 Jan. 1809.

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 16 Jan. 1809 (Grey). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 17 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS, 51696 (Holland).

fight for their Church or their Princes ...<sup>1</sup> Auckland, who had opposed British involvement in Spain from the beginning, agreed with the Foxites that the vague reference to 'legitimate' sovereigns should be challenged in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> The Swedish subsidy also alarmed the bulk of the coalition. Both Foxites and Grenvilles were on record as being opposed to the principle of subsidizing continental powers.<sup>3</sup> The opposition press therefore criticized the announcement and later when Sweden moved into the French sphere of influence Grenville expressed satisfaction because 'if it lessens the demands on this country for money, troops, and ships it will rather be for our advantage than otherwise ...'<sup>4</sup> But these views were not welded together to form a systematic attack on the government's foreign policy. Fear of internal division led coalition leaders to spike their guns and a promise of more forceful language after the fate of Moore was known apparently pacified an eager party.

Ponsonby backed away from an amendment and division in the Commons and delivered a long, boring speech which was devoid of constructive criticism. In the Lords Grenville showed little restraint in condemning the theory of continental expeditions (to the horror of Grey and Horner) but made no effort to unite opposition peers behind an intelligible argument or to divide the House.<sup>5</sup> Of course the refusal of party leaders to take a definitive party stance on the question of the war led

---

<sup>1</sup>Carlisle to Morpeth, n.d. [Jan.-Feb. 1809], (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, n.d. [Feb.-April 1809], H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 303.

<sup>3</sup>Erskine to Spencer, 8 Jan. [1809], (Spencer).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Mar. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 11-21, 38-54. Whitbread to Grey, 31 Jan. 1809 (Grey). Horner to Jeffrey, 21 Jan. 1809 (Horner).

to ludicrous and irresponsible speeches. As Fox's career exemplifies, parliamentary opposition to the wartime policies of government is always difficult, even when those in opposition are united behind a forceful leader and a clear alternative policy. The coalition had neither of these redeeming characteristics in early 1809. Everywhere was disorder and cross-purposes as amateur strategists and disgruntled military men put forward conflicting observations; nowhere was there responsible criticism. Denied of a goal by the fears of the party hierarchy opposition spokesmen harped on the past inadequacies of ministerial planning and disgusted the House with trivia.<sup>1</sup> As Ward noted, 'Of a few broad features we may perhaps be able to judge, but with regard to details and points disputed, even among professional men, we neither have nor deserve to have, the smallest authority.'<sup>2</sup> This folly would have continued indefinitely if Grenville had had his way but on 21 January word of Moore's death reached London.

This event had an enormous impact on the opposition in itself but soon reports of Spanish cowardice were everywhere. Horner, who had promised to write a favourable account of the Spanish cause for the Edinburgh Review, promptly withdrew:

I have been deterred from reducing my notions upon the subject to writing, in consequence of the uncertainty which has been thrown upon what I built on all along as my fundamental fact, the disposition & zeal of the people of Spain; an uncertainty which has been increasing by every account latterly received from that country. In addition to this, the case has now assumed that shape in which it becomes impossible to separate, in the discussion of it, the conduct of the English Ministers from the other causes which have cooperated in producing the disappointment of our hopes in Spain: and all examination of their conduct would be improper in the Review.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 4-91.

<sup>2</sup>Ward to Helen Stewart, [1 Feb. 1809], Letters to 'Ivy', p. 63.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 21 Jan. 1809 (Horner).

The cause of Moore carried everything before it.

Lauderdale mocked Holland openly and told Grey that there was 'something ridiculous in the abuse of Moore which forms a part of a dream about one half of the Spanish nation laying down their lives rather than submit to a Man you will see them cherish'.<sup>1</sup> Grey shared this opinion and on 26 January he surrendered to Grenville. 'I must confess that, as things have been managed, it is much to be regretted that your opinions, against sending troops to Spain at all, did not prevail.'<sup>2</sup> The Foxite leader continued to fear an open break with Holland but he was ill, confined to his bed, and not disposed to resist the ardour of both his lieutenants and allies. 'This is the only period in which we ever had a chance, or rather the certainly of driving out Ministers by Parliamentary Exertions', Tierney wailed from London.<sup>3</sup> On the 29th Grey, now fearful of an invasion of Ireland, finally sent Grenville his proxy, saying that he could not be in London in time for the motion.<sup>4</sup> Whitbread soon followed. After hearing Grenville condemn the theory of continental expeditions and criticize a war in Spain for the restoration of Ferdinand he concluded logically that the old Pittite was prepared to support peace. On 1 February he told Grey:

Of Lord Grenville I entertain the highest opinion personally and politically: the latter perhaps is strengthened a great deal by the similarity I think I discover between his Sentiments & my own in the principal points .... If there should at any time be a division of party, which in the House of Commons is not connected at present by any strong ties, I will venture to say that there will be no

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 28 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Grenville, 26 Jan. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 274.

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in Lauderdale to Grey, 16 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Grenville, 29 Jan., and Grey to Rosslyn, 1 Feb. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 275, 276.

disunion of Sentiment, between Lord Grenville & those ... who are still attached to the Memory & Principles of Fox.<sup>1</sup>

British military disasters on the Continent had produced similar opinions among Foxite leaders for over three years. The disillusionment of Grenville and his war party in the wake of Austerlitz had made coalition with Fox possible. The same disillusionment after Jena had soothed serious dissension on the question of continental alliance, and continuing pessimism had facilitated a certain degree of cooperation during early 1808. The drift of the coalition towards opposition to the Peninsular War had been no different. By late January 1809 Grenville's predictions had been verified by the event. The intellectual struggle between party leaders had virtually ended with the defeat and death of Moore, and Grenville was in a strong position among his peers within the coalition. But the Duke of York case had broken. The question was whether Grenville would lead.

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 29 Jan. 1809 (Grey).



## CHAPTER VII

### THE ATTACK ON THE WAR 1809 - 1812

'I hear nothing talked of but the maddest prospects of sending all that remains to us of army, to do for the Spaniards which all men now see they cannot do for themselves, & to outnumber Bonaparte's troops on the Continent of Europe', wrote Grenville on 1 February 1809. 'That such an experiment if tried, will ultimately produce the loss of Ireland, & the destruction of this country is my sincere & deliberate opinion.'<sup>1</sup> This opinion was not overly pessimistic at the time it was stated. The British army had been cut to pieces; the country's most reputable general had been slain; report held that the Spaniards and Portuguese had proved themselves almost worthless as allies; British finance was strained; Ireland was boiling with discontent; the American and north European markets were officially closed to British shipping; and the Portland government was weak, divided, and incapable of inspiring the nation. Well might Grenville point to his predictions; well might he argue that the salvation of Europe depended on either dissension in the French command or the revival of spirit in the northern powers. Britain should await these events, conserve her strength, and refrain from squandering her resources. In strikingly similar circumstances Grenville and Fox had embraced these views in early 1806. In January 1809 they represented a reasonable alternative to the policies of the British government.<sup>2</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Godfrey Davies, 'The Whigs and the Peninsular War, 1808-1814', Royal Historical Society Transactions, 4th series, II (1919), pp. 113-31.

While the once controversial Convention of Cintra had been half-forgotten by the public<sup>1</sup> the Coruna tragedy demanded parliamentary enquiry. Moore had been unhappy with his mission from the start and the British government had insulted and slighted the general at every turn. It had been an effort to advance Arthur Wellesley and jockey Moore that had sent four successive commanders to Portugal in 1808 and at last when Moore had assumed the supreme command he had found nothing but confusion.<sup>2</sup> His ill-fated advance to Sahagan had been undertaken in spite of practically every military disadvantage<sup>3</sup> and there was reason to believe that Canning's friend John Hookham Frere and his ill-chosen agent Charmilly had handicapped Moore seriously.<sup>4</sup> The sight of the survivors of Coruna returning to English soil undoubtedly made a great impression on the public, and the dismal tales of these veterans undermined what remained of dreams concerning a 'universal Spanish nation'. It can be argued validly that Moore's advance was a successful diversion<sup>5</sup> but the questions before British statesmen in early 1809 were more fundamental. Could the country afford such diversions and, if so, could further

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Jackson, ed., The Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson (London, 1872), II, 345.

<sup>2</sup>Grenville had procured official correspondence which formed his views on this subject. Grenville to Fremantle, 25 Nov. 1808 (Fremantle). Also see J. C. Moore, The Life of Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore (London, 1834), II, 104-06.

<sup>3</sup>Supported by information from his friends at the War Office Auckland had outlined these disadvantages in a letter to Grenville of 28 Oct. 1808, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 231. Also see Grenville to T. Grenville, 27 Nov. 1808, B.M., Add. MSS. 41852 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Mrs. D. Stewart, 25 Jan. 1809, Horner Memoirs, I, 442-44. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 17 April 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland). T. Grenville to Spencer, 12 April 1809 (Spencer). For Frere's defence see John Hookham Frere, The Works of John Hookham Frere (London, 1874), I, 99.

<sup>5</sup>Roberts, p. 131.

exertions in the Peninsula serve British interests? These points alone were where the strength of Grenville's case rested.

The coalition's leaders had long since committed themselves to defensive warfare and opposition to the policy of continental expeditions. This had been the announced (though ill-administered) policy of the Ministry of All the Talents, and during the session of 1808 Grey and Grenville had defended their administration and opposed ministers with a cry for a 'husbanding, defensive system'. Coruna provided them with an excellent opportunity to display political consistency at a crucial moment. Moore had agreed with Grenville that the Peninsula was no place to base a British campaign and his official despatches and private correspondence strengthened the case against the war. Shortly before his death Moore had written officially from Coruna:

I was sensible, however, that the apathy and indifference of the Spaniards would have never been believed; that had the British been withdrawn, the loss of the cause would have been imputed to their retreat, and it was necessary to risk the army to convince the people of England, as well as the rest of Europe, that the Spaniards had neither the power nor the inclination to make any effort for themselves. It was for this reason that I had to march to Sahagen.<sup>1</sup>

This explanation did little for Moore's military reputation but it gave Grenville the evidence he needed to call for the withdrawal of British troops from the Iberian Peninsula. Even after Moore's defeat, however, there were reasons to hesitate. Fitzwilliam and Windham were very quiet on the subject but both of them were disinclined to retract former opinions. Holland was having second thoughts on the utility of a British army in Spain but he remained committed to the Spanish cause and his wife flooded England with letters that defended the Spaniards at the

---

<sup>1</sup>Moore to Castlereagh, 13 Jan. 1809, J. Moore, A Narrative of the Campaign of the British Army in Spain (London, 1809), app. E.E. This despatch was also published in the Independent Whig, 16 April 1809.

expense of Moore.<sup>1</sup> Of most significance, however, was the fact that Grenville's views were threatened by the impetus of those who were most eager to attack the government. While nodding approval to Grenville's emphasis on the withdrawal of British troops from the Peninsula the rank and file M.P. was far more concerned with the vindication of Moore's memory. As Holland remembered at a later date:

Sir John Moore was in habits and opinions more connected with the Whigs than with their opponents. He was sincerely lamented by that party; and in vindicating his memory, sometimes from reasonable criticism, at others from malevolent aspersions, many members of it were hurried into desparaging a cause in which they thought he had been sacrificed by Ministers.<sup>2</sup>

This was certainly the case with Foxite leaders. In response to criticism of Moore Lauderdale reminded Lady Holland curtly that the general had been a Whig.<sup>3</sup> Grey built his entire case against ministers on a defence of Moore which he thought 'invincible in argument',<sup>4</sup> and Horner probably summed up the feelings of most of his colleagues in the Commons by professing heartache 'when I think of the flippant sneers we shall have from Canning, and the cold malignity of Castlereagh, both of whom hated Moore, and intrigued against him in the basest manner.'<sup>5</sup>

These opinions threatened difficulty. The opposition's strength rested on its traditional aversion to continental expeditions; a game of party generals would do it no good. A defence of Moore would steal

<sup>1</sup>Earl of Elchester, ed., The Spanish Journals of Elizabeth Lady Holland (London, 1910), pp. 233, 280. Lauderdale to Grey, 18 Jan. 1809 (Grey). Petty to Lady Holland, 28 Feb. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland). Horner to Murray, 31 Jan. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>2</sup>Holland, Further Memoirs, p.25.

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 17 Jan. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 12 April 1809 (Spencer).

<sup>5</sup>Horner to Mrs. D. Stewart, 25 Jan. 1809, Horner Memoirs, I, 442-44.

thunder from the broader and more valid scope of Grenville's arguments and by implication it would endorse the theory of continental expeditions. It would entail a discussion of the mechanics of Moore's campaign, a subject on which the party had no source of reliable information, and it would seriously alienate Holland by unnecessarily attacking the Spaniards, whom Moore had criticized severely. Holland would not make common cause with Moore. He had always separated the cause of the Spaniards from that of the British government and its armies; he, like Horner, felt that it was 'quite a separate question whether the troops have been sent in sufficient numbers, or to the proper places, or with due combinations and method.'<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly the views of Holland and Grenville were reconcilable. British military involvement in Spain was the key issue and Moore's behaviour had made Holland grow cold on the idea. On the other hand Grenville felt that the only hope of success lay in Spanish guerilla warfare with British logistical support.<sup>2</sup> There was a pressing need for leadership but Grenville hesitated. The facts were not yet before him and he was still the only member of the coalition's hierarchy in London. Moreover, the Duke of York case was gradually rising to national importance. Grenville therefore instructed his front bench to hold the party at bay and it was probably no coincidence that on 28 January the Morning Chronicle found the charges against the Duke incredible.

It quickly became clear that front benchers in the Commons could not hold the party in check. Most M.P.'s thought that Moore's defeat and death had formed an impregnable case against ministers and they were

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 21 Jan, 1809 (Horner).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Newport, 5 Jan. 1809 (Newport),

disgusted by the restraint imposed by their leaders.<sup>1</sup> When Perceval proposed a vote of thanks to Wellesley for his victory at Vimiero the opposition went to pieces. Frustration led Whitbread to demand the inclusion of Sir Harry Burrard, an officer who had not come ashore until the battle was over, and this absurdity exposed the opposition to Canning's 'best jokes and manner'.<sup>2</sup> On another occasion back benchers rose up in arms when Petty and Tierney tried to thwart a division on a bill which called for increasing the army:

... before we and some others could make our Escape into Bellamy's [wrote Tierney], the door was locked and we could get no further than the Passage. There our Fellows came to look for us, and, having been present when the question was put, we were obliged to vote in the House, that is against giving leave to bring in the Bill. The consequence was that because the House was resumed Petty felt himself obliged to declare that he had been made to vote against his inclinations, & I, Calcraft, & others, did the same!<sup>3</sup>

Grenville was exposed to enormous pressure during early February.

Buckingham observed that the cry against the Duke of York in the Commons resembled scenes in FRANCE at the beginning of the revolution and told his brother that it was 'now of little consequence to us whether in this matter [the war] we were right or wrong, for the next French battle will be fought in Ireland, or perhaps in Kent.'<sup>4</sup> On the other hand Fremantle was anxious to capitalize on the growing cry against corruption to attack the government's foreign policy, and Temple stressed that the reports of returning officers had brought the public

---

<sup>1</sup>Note the retrospective opinion of Western in his letter to Creevey, n.d. [Oct. 1809], (Creevey). Also see Lauderdale to Grey, 16 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Temple to Buckingham, 3 Feb. 1809, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 313-14. Parl. Deb., XII, 145-67.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, [2 Feb. and 25-31 Jan.] 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 273-74, 277-78.

round to Grenville's views.<sup>1</sup> Grey was exposed to similar pressure. Rosslyn sent him dismal accounts of Spanish incompetence<sup>2</sup> and in London Tierney found his position untenable. 'Nothing you have ever experienced enables you to form an idea of the irksomeness of holding a place in the Front row of such an Opposition as now exists', he protested.<sup>3</sup>

Whitbread soon tried to rally the party to a specific, identifiable attack on the government's Spanish policy. He had opposed Grenville's idea of restraint in Parliament from the start and the king's speech had led him to obvious conclusions. He was disturbed by the Cabinet's refusal to negotiate for peace on any basis that did not restore Ferdinand to the Spanish throne and he felt that a majority of the party agreed with him.<sup>4</sup> Upon hearing Grenville say distinctly on 26 January<sup>5</sup> that he opposed continental expeditions and favoured a negotiated peace assuring the withdrawal of both British and French troops Whitbread concluded that the party was ready to define its stance on the war.<sup>6</sup>

Around 25 January Whitbread and Creevey circulated a proposed motion among leading Foxites. Once again they found that lingering intellectual conflict on the issue of Spain immobilized the party. Creevey

---

<sup>1</sup>Temple to Buckingham, 3 Feb., and Fremantle to Buckingham, 16 Feb. 1809, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 313-14, 318-21.

<sup>2</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 30 Jan. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>In late January Whitbread received a letter from Grey which expressed a wish that all British troops would be recalled. Grey to Whitbread, 16 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 905.

<sup>5</sup>Papers relative to the negotiation at Erfurt were laid before Parliament on 20 January and six days later Grenville expressed unhappiness over the stance of the British Government while Whitbread sat in the gallery, Parl. Deb., XII, 169-70.

<sup>6</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

reported that Sheridan was 'foolishly warlike' and that the men who had supported Whitbread a year earlier were only 'luke warm about any stir for peace.'<sup>1</sup> Roscoe, like many others, completely ignored Whitbread's emphasis on 'legitimate' sovereigns and supported the government's refusal to abandon Ferdinand in the negotiations with France.<sup>2</sup> Burdett, who was anxious for peace, had infuriated Whitbread by attacking the Whig aristocracy a week earlier and apparently there was no communication between the two.<sup>3</sup> Undeterred by these setbacks Whitbread laid his case before the coalition's leaders in the Commons. Here he found men who appreciated his motives. Tierney, who was unsure of Grenville's views, agreed with the proposed motion but advised Whitbread to await Grey's arrival. Fitzpatrick endorsed the motion enthusiastically. Ponsonby, who was harassed on all fronts, read it without comment and asked for a copy.<sup>4</sup>

On 31 January Canning proposed a vote of thanks to the king which approved of the government's behaviour in the short negotiation with France. Whitbread promptly moved an amendment which called for the publication of Moore's despatches and challenged the grounds on which Canning had broken off negotiations. He received no support from the opposition front bench. Grenville and Grey continued to fear a definitive stance on the war in general and on Spain specifically. Consequently Ponsonby, Petty, and Lord Porchester opposed the amendment while Tierney and Fitzpatrick remained silent. Supported by only Burdett, Whitbread grew angry, pointed out the moderation of the French government,

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 30 Jan. 1809 (Whitbread), 373/12.

<sup>2</sup>Roscoe to Whitbread, 5 Feb. 1809 (Whitbread), 3777.

<sup>3</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 22 Jan. 1809 (Creevey).

<sup>4</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 9 Feb. 1809 (Grey).



and concluded with yet another attack on the Talents' peace negotiations.<sup>1</sup> Unpopular even with Foxites, he left the House in a huff.

Opposition front benchers regarded Whitbread's failure as a victory for the coalition. 'I am not without hope', wrote Petty, 'that the effect produced may have been good, as the number of persons determined to vote for peace in any shape, appeared to be so small, as to prevent a division which had certainly been intended so that no encouragement is given to a repetition of the experiment.'<sup>2</sup> Tierney, who was guided by more personal considerations, was equally pleased.<sup>3</sup> Only Bedford stood by Whitbread. 'I am but a fire side Politician, and know little of passing events but what I learn from the Newspapers', he wrote on 3 February, 'yet I confess I am unable to comprehend why we who contended for Peace and Reform during the whole of the last unfortunate war, should not equally contend for them now .... I am old fashioned in my politicks, and am for old Principles ...'<sup>4</sup> Others should have asked this question in early 1809 but the Foxites as a party were drifting, blinded by other considerations.

The events of 31 January had sad implications. 'My Ears failed me if Lord Grenville did not say in the Ho: of Lords that Negotiation ought to have been accepted & the Independence of Spain made an object of that Negotiation', explained Whitbread to a ruffled Grey.<sup>5</sup> His ears had not failed him. Both Grey and Grenville had expressed opinions

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 221-40.

<sup>2</sup>Petty to Grey, 3 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 1 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Bedford to Whitbread, 3 Feb. 1809 (Whitbread), 2455. Cartwright also endorsed Whitbread's views in a letter to the Independent Whig, 5 Feb. 1809.

<sup>5</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 9 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

which could only lead to such conclusions and there was reason for Whitbread to be concerned over their refusal to act. The coalition's leaders had refused once again to come to grips with the elementary question of war and peace. Whitbread had tried to resolve a pressing issue and his failure had left the coalition without direction as it drifted towards factious opposition to the Peninsular War. Grenville's desire to advocate the withdrawal of British troops was also ignored. The bulk of the party wanted to defend 'poor Moore' and concentrate solely on the management of the war. Undoubtedly Grenville saw the weakness of this approach. He, however, was backpeddling and little disposed to exert himself. Not only the Duke of York enquiry but the views of Fitzwilliam, Windham, and Holland frightened him. The game of party generals would be yet another prudent compromise.

By mid-February the coalition's opportunity to challenge the government's foreign policy with any semblance of unity had passed. Wellesley had been given orders for another expedition, legislation for the maintenance of a war in the Peninsula had passed Parliament without a serious challenge, and the Duke of York scandal had virtually monopolized the attention of the nation. Nevertheless the opposition front bench was experiencing increasing difficulty in holding backbenchers at bay. Young men were disgusted with the temporizing views of Ponsonby and Tierney.<sup>1</sup> Folkestone, Creevey, Madocks, the much respected Romilly, and many others were daily showing more interest in Wardle's charges of corruption. This situation was explosive in itself but the weakness of the government and the restraint of opposition leaders only increased

---

<sup>1</sup>Note Spencer's explanation of Althorp's feelings in Spencer to T. Grenville, 4 April 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville). Also see Denis Le Marchant, Memoir of John Charles Viscount Althorp Third Earl Spencer (London, 1876), pp. 111-17.

pressure.<sup>1</sup> The need for political activity of some sort was intense in the Commons and, according to Rosslyn, opposition peers were so eager to attack the government's Spanish policies that a motion for the production of official correspondence could be delayed no longer.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, Grey had again alienated Whitbread by censuring his peace motion of 31 January and the brewer's violent reaction had given party leaders ample reason to fear that he would soon take an independent line in Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Grenville could hold the line no longer. His own family disagreed with his policy of political inactivity and Auckland was pressing him to bring the American question forward.<sup>4</sup> He therefore changed his tactics.

Grenville allowed Petty to go forward with a motion censuring the Convention of Cintra on 21 February and three days later Ponsonby opened the question of Moore's campaign.<sup>5</sup> Simultaneously Grenville expressed fear that the Duke of York case would obscure the question of Spain, urged Grey to come to London immediately, and agreed to delay a motion in the Lords only with great reluctance.<sup>6</sup> The reasons for this new approach were two-fold. Firstly, party leaders had remained inactive for

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Murray, 25 Mar. 1809, Horner Memoirs, I, 453-55.

<sup>2</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 24 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 13 Feb. 1809 (Grey). Grey to Tierney, 17 Feb. 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>4</sup>Buckingham to T. Grenville, 7 Mar. 1809, B.M., Add, MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville). Buckingham to Grenville, 14 Mar., and Auckland to Grenville, 15 Feb. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 280-82, 278-79.

<sup>5</sup>This was obviously a sudden decision. Ponsonby gave notice of the motion on Cintra and one on the American question for the same day and later had to rearrange dates. Auckland to Grenville, 15 Feb. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 278-79.

<sup>6</sup>Grenville to Grey, 25 Feb. 1809 (Grey).

as long as possible and they were now aware that their case against ministers was evaporating.<sup>1</sup> Secondly, the Grenvilles probably felt that an attack on foreign affairs would release pressure and divert attention from Wardle, Mrs. Clarke, and the Duke of York. Grey's views undoubtedly represented those of Grenville. 'But even suppose them [ministers] beaten, what is to become of it? There is such a maze of difficulties that I cannot at all see my way thro' them, even if events were placed at my own command.'<sup>2</sup> This opinion was important. The coalition's leaders were not ready to attack the government broadly and openly. They actually feared success in Parliament because the party was divided to such an extent that it had no alternative policy. It is almost certain that opposition leaders in the Commons were instructed to concentrate on ministerial incompetence in the management of the war and to dodge the controversial questions of continental expeditions and wartime objectives. This assured chaos.

The ever-increasing cry against corruption enabled Petty to secure an extraordinarily good division of 153 to the government's 203 in spite of the fact that he did not prove his case. He displayed profound ignorance of military operations and Sir Arthur Wellesley himself completely refuted his arguments.<sup>3</sup> Ponsonby's motion was supported by equally shallow observations. Obviously relying almost exclusively on the opinions of returning veterans and the biased case which had been

---

<sup>1</sup>Petty to Lady Holland, 22 Feb. [1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Tierney, 17 Feb. 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 897-917, 928-36. Also see Roberts, pp. 126-27, for a good explanation of the weaknesses in Petty's military views.

put together by Moore's indignant family,<sup>1</sup> opposition orators represented the advance to Sahagan as a sacrifice of military orthodoxy to political necessity and slammed ministers for forcing Moore to make such a decision. Ponsonby's arguments reflected the tactics of his leaders. He contradicted himself at least three times; he completely ignored Moore's tactical errors; he failed to point out that Moore's advance had been a successful diversion; and he professed himself willing to fight to keep the French out of Spain but unwilling to fight to expel them.<sup>2</sup> Denied a goal by the fears of the party hierarchy, opposition spokesmen harped on the inadequacies of ministerial planning and on the shabby treatment of Moore. This dismal performance set the tone for the remainder of the session but it probably made little difference. In March the dikes broke and the bulk of the party in the Commons followed Whitbread's lead against corruption in government. Confusion in the Commons would obscure the issue of Spain between mid-March and early summer while Wellesley took his first steps towards fame in the Peninsula. The opposition had not challenged the government's foreign policy, only its alleged failure in administering it. The crucial parliamentary session of 1809 had been lost.

The summer of 1809 brought important developments on the Continent. Austria declared war on France in the spring and the question of wartime strategy was reopened in Great Britain. Those who were not opposed to the principle of continental expeditions but disinclined to

---

<sup>1</sup>Moore's Narrative, which appeared shortly after his death, probably became the bible of outraged Whigs. Creevey read it. John Gore, Creevey's Life and Times (London, 1934), p. 43.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XII, 1057-1119, for this debate.

risk another army in the Peninsula saw the Austrian declaration as an excellent opportunity to venture a diversion in the north of Germany. Others felt that increased activity in the Peninsula would best serve Austria. Of course the leaders of the coalition were not unanimous in their opinions for the summer's campaigning. Moira was loud in calling for a north German expedition<sup>1</sup> while Holland, encouraged by the Austrian declaration, shifted his emphasis and pointed out that a campaign in Spain would divert French resources.<sup>2</sup> Grenville remained rigid in his support for purely defensive war. His fears for the security of the country had been doubled by the Duke of York enquiry and he saw political confusion in England as yet another reason why continental expeditions should be abandoned.<sup>3</sup> The opinions of the Foxite centre were cloudy. Undoubtedly many agreed with Caroline Fox that the war in Spain and Portugal had done 'a great deal more towards rooting out the hatred between the French & English nations than perhaps in the present circumstances could be wished.'<sup>4</sup> Whitbread certainly held this view and Lauderdale adopted it in May.<sup>5</sup> But still the Grenvilles were unwilling to include support for peace negotiations in their theories of isolation from the Continent.

The government was more decisive. Reluctant to give up the game

---

<sup>1</sup>Roberts, p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>This was the first time that Holland rose above his preoccupation with Spanish liberties and looked to the advantages of the Peninsular War in the broader European struggle. Holland to Morpeth, 6 May 1809 (Carlisle). Holland to Grey, 27 April 1809, enclosed in Grey to Grenville, 25 May 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 308-11.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 Mar. 1809 (Grey). Grenville to Fitzwilliam, 30 Mar. 1809 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>4</sup>Caroline Fox to Holland, 20 April 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51738 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 3 May 1809 (Grey).

in the Peninsula and doubtful about the prospects in Germany, Portland's ministry despatched Wellesley to Portugal at the head of a small army and sent an enormous expedition to the Scheldt with orders to capture Flushing, Antwerp, and the French fleet which was shut up in the estuary. Neither of these expeditions helped Austria. The battle of Wagram had practically ended the Franco-Austrian war by the time the large force under the joint command of Sir Richard Strachan and Lord Chatham left England. Once at Flushing a series of blunders led to the abandonment of the invasion of Antwerp and the army fell prey to disease on the island of Walcheren before returning to Great Britain in disgrace.

Though Wellesley's campaign in the Peninsula contrasted strikingly with that of Moore it also ended on a sour note. After capturing Oporto and chasing Soult out of Portugal Wellesley advanced into Spain too hastily. Threatened with destruction at Talavera the British army fought valiantly but was forced to retreat so abruptly that British wounded were left on the field. In the final analysis British military activity during the summer of 1809 left little reason for rejoicing at home.

Bickering among opposition leaders increased as these events unfolded. Wellesley's presence at the head of the British army complicated matters seriously. The game of party generals which had been begun by the defeat and death of Moore had become fundamental in the views of many Foxites, regardless of their opinion of the Peninsular War. The Morning Chronicle stopped at nothing in promoting the opinion that Sir Arthur was the cypher of a corrupt, inefficient government<sup>1</sup> and when Lord Wellesley succeeded Frere in Spain he had to contend with a great deal of misrepresentation in the Foxite press.<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately for the

---

<sup>1</sup>Morning Chronicle, 26 Mar. 1809.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Knighton, Memoirs of Sir William Knighton (London, 1838), I, 126-27.

cause of party harmony the Grenvilles were very friendly with the Wellesleys and Sir Arthur was always a favourite with Windham.<sup>1</sup> The Austrian war and the operations of Wellesley revived support for the cause of the Spaniards among Holland's friends. Grey's speech of 21 April in defence of Moore<sup>2</sup> offended Holland so deeply that during May and June serious tension developed between the two Foxite leaders.<sup>3</sup> Meanwhile Whitbread reprobated the Austrian declaration of war as perfidious to France, Ponsonby challenged him, and a nasty scene occurred in the House.<sup>4</sup> Holland encouraged his friends in Britain to resist the opinions of their leaders;<sup>5</sup> Lauderdale came out in support of Holland's view of the war in June;<sup>6</sup> and Grey became so frustrated that he chased away potential allies. Sidmouth, who was prepared to reprobate the management of the war, met Grey in St. James's Street in late April. 'I am convinced', announced the Foxite leader, 'that in six weeks' time there will not remain a single British soldier in the Peninsula except as a prisoner.' 'Though that should be the case,' replied Sidmouth, 'I still should prefer it to our retiring from Portugal without making any further efforts.' 'Then', said Grey haughtily, 'we cannot talk on the subject.' And he stormed away.<sup>7</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Roberts, p. 134.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XIV, 121-73.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grey, 20 May 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Grey to Holland, 13 June 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Holland to Caroline Fox, 20 May 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51738 (Holland). Grey to Tierney, 21 June 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>4</sup>C.W.W. Wynn to H. Wynn, 14 May 1809, Lady Williams Wynn Correspondence, pp. 146-48.

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Horner, n.d. [June 1809], and Horner to Holland, 16 July 1809 (Horner), IV, ff. 89-91, 96-7.

<sup>6</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 18 June 1809 (Grey).

<sup>7</sup>Sidmouth Life, II, 504-05.



As always British operations on the Continent led to fierce disagreement within the ranks of the coalition; as always the failure of such operations produced a certain degree of unity. News of Talavera reached London in August. The Grenvilles, of course, were ready to believe the worst, notwithstanding their connexions with the Wellesleys. Tom Grenville immediately represented the battle as the 'second act of the tragedy of Coruna' and Lord Grenville told Adam that 'Few defeats have ever been so disastrous in themselves or in their consequences as Talavera - From any more such victories heaven preserve us.'<sup>1</sup> The propaganda of the government added outrage to this pessimism. There was deep resentment among the Grenvilles when the Tower guns sounded in celebration of Talavera and Auckland expressed contempt when it was announced that Wellesley and several of his officers would be awarded peerages for their efforts.<sup>2</sup> When it became obvious that Wellesley's position was not critical several Grenvillites had second thoughts. Temple and Buckingham actually joined other Britons in hailing the bravery of the army at Talavera<sup>3</sup> and Tom Grenville took care to guard himself by maintaining absurdly that even if Wellesley defied logic and regained the offensive it would be owing solely to Napoleon's preoccupation with Austria.<sup>4</sup> But Lord Grenville's views were a gauge for those of the rest of his clan and in mid-August he summed up the stance which the Grenvillites eventually assumed:

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 15 Aug. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 313. Grenville to Adam, 4 Sept. 1809 (Adam).

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 30 Aug. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 314. Also see T. Grenville to Fremantle, 15 Aug., and Grenville to Fremantle, 19 Sept. 1809 (Fremantle).

<sup>3</sup>Temple to Fremantle, 15 Aug. 1809 (Fremantle).

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Holland, 31 Aug. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51534 (Holland).

I am not at all surprized at the result of this farfanned expedition - To suppose that we can meet Bonaparte with an army on the Continent is an imagination so extravagant that the only wonder is how any men should be found mad enough to entertain it.

The only good news I have seen from our armies for a long while is that paragraph of Wellesley's letter in which he says that he has suspended his forward move[ment]. I hope it will soon be followed by another to say that he is retreating to his transports as fast as he can - You see Moore expressly says that Portugal cannot be defended agst a superior force, & so I always thought.<sup>1</sup>

The reference to Moore was important. The views of the dead general had not formed Grenville's opinion but they had strengthened his already well-developed concept of the war. Unfortunately both Grenville and Moore were wrong. As Arthur Wellesley wrote:

The great disadvantage under which I labour is that Sir John Moore, who was here before me, gave an opinion that this country could not be defended by the army under his command ... I have as much respect as any man can have for the opinion and judgement of Sir John Moore; and I should mistrust my own, if opposed to his ... But he positively knew nothing of Portugal.<sup>2</sup>

Neither Wellesley's brilliance nor the terrain of Portugal, however, could be seen from the opposition benches. There Moore's opinions had taken hold and the publication of the dead general's correspondence only days before news of Talavera reached London led to extraordinarily intense hatred of Spaniards. 'They [the despatches] present a lamentable picture of the affairs of Spain, the evils of which are apparently without remedy: for they seem to consist in nothing less than a total want of energy & talents civil & military', wrote one of Holland's most devoted supporters.<sup>3</sup> This opinion was strengthened by personal correspondence from the Peninsula. Young John Bouverie sent dismal accounts of Spanish cowardice and his mother, a notorious gossip;

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Fremantle, 16 Aug. 1809 (Fremantle).

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in Roberts, p. 141.

<sup>3</sup>Whishaw to Brougham, Aug. 1809 (Brougham).

spread the word indignantly.<sup>1</sup> Lord John Russell, Holland's most devoted 'Spaniard', confessed sheepishly that several Spanish regiments at Talavera had been so frightened by their own gunfire as to throw down their weapons and run.<sup>2</sup> Ward was also in Spain. 'Now after all that has been said', he wrote, 'this cannot be a very violent feeling in a nation which allowed itself to be bequeathed with almost as little ceremony as an old woman would bequeath a china jar, to the great grandson of the King of France only [a] century ago, and has continued ever since in most loyal obedience to him & his descendants.'<sup>3</sup> But possibly the most important correspondent was Sir Charles Stewart, a disaffected officer and an acquaintance of Brougham who had few connexions with the opposition. Stewart was outraged by the management of the war and disgusted that the British ministers were delaying the formation of a Spanish government. He put these views before Brougham in a letter of early August and it was in Grey's hands in a matter of days.<sup>4</sup>

As early as 16 July Horner had noted that though Holland's closest friends remained prudently silent on the question of Spain Holland was alone among Foxites in his support for continental expeditions.<sup>5</sup> This silence was broken when word of the smashing French victory at Wagram followed on the heels of Talavera. Fitzpatrick, whose wisdom on military matters always showed in retrospect, agreed with the Grenvilles

---

<sup>1</sup>Henrietta Bouverie to Brougham, n.d. [Aug. 1809], and Brougham to Grey, 11 Aug. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>Ld. John Russell to Lady Holland, 2 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51678 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Ward to Brougham, 14 Sept. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Brougham to Grey, 11 Aug. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>5</sup>Horner to Holland, 16 July, and Horner to J. Lock, 5 Aug. 1809 (Horner).

that Talavera was a disaster.<sup>1</sup> Bedford, whose views also fluctuated with events, noted that 'the imbecility of our own Gov't may keep pace with Spanish Treachery and Cowardice.' '... we ought to think of nothing but bringing our army home in safety and be content to pocket the disgrace', he wrote.<sup>2</sup> Lord King shared this opinion<sup>3</sup> and Erskine lamented 'the frantic joy of the people of this besotted country when they read of the destruction of nearly 6000 of their fellow men & subjects, fighting for Spain whilst Spaniards can only look on & without any possible chance of an ultimate result from whence our country can reap any advantage.'<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly the defeat of Austria joined with Grenville's pessimism to form an unrealistically bad opinion of Wellesley's operations in the Peninsula. This was a second blow to those who leaned towards Holland's view of the war.

Indignation was almost universal in Foxite circles, especially among men who had formerly supported the Spaniards. The Spanish general Cuesta became a leading target for abuse. One Whig lady attributed the Talavera 'disaster' to the alarming rumour that the general kept a mistress at his headquarters<sup>5</sup> and the Independent Whig censured his refusal to fight on Sundays.<sup>6</sup> When Allen attempted to exonerate the Spaniards by blaming their folly on the prejudices of English soldiers Lady

---

<sup>1</sup>Whishaw to Brougham, 27 Aug. [1809], (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>Bedford to Holland, 3 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51661 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>King to Holland, n.d. [Aug. 1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland), ff. 24-5.

<sup>4</sup>Erskine to Grey, 27 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Lady Sarah Napier to Lady Susan O'Brien, 25 Oct. 1809, Countess of Ilchester and Lord Stavordale, eds., The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox (London, 1901), II, 225-30.

<sup>6</sup>Independent Whig, 13 Aug. 1809.

Caroline Lamb turned on him with biting satire:

It is true there is such a strong prejudice against running away in our Armies that though perhaps it may be more useful than many other military movements, I doubt they will never get over their contempt for it and whether it is jealousy or any other motives which actuate the Spanish troops the effect is weakness, fright and want of energy. I cannot but feel the deepest regret that all our Men should be sacrificed for them.<sup>1</sup>

Of course contempt for Wellesley (now Viscount Wellington) increased.

Whitbread had decided by November that Moore's successor was 'thoroughly obnoxious to the Country'<sup>2</sup> and rumours spread that General Hill, who had not been mentioned in Wellington's field report, alone had saved the British army from disaster. Whishaw reported that Holland's friends were furious because Hill had not been given 'any share of the honours which have been so lavishly bestowed upon the Commander in Chief.'<sup>3</sup> As was to be expected Hill had strong Whig connexions. Horner preferred to cling to Moore. 'Though I think highly of Wellington,' he noted with objectivity, 'when I compare his campaign to that of Sir John Moore, Moore's conduct is elevated.'<sup>4</sup>

Even Holland, who had stood by the Spaniards in the wake of Moore's death, began to have doubts after the rout of Austria was confirmed. Upon his return to England in August he and Allen conceded that Napoleon would overrun and hold Spain if events in Germany released the Grand Army for operations in the south.<sup>5</sup> Though Holland continued to champion the Spaniards' quest for liberty he and his closest friends

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Caroline Lamb to Allen, n.d. [Sept. 1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen), ff. 171-72.

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Lady Holland, 20 Nov. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Whishaw to Brougham, 19 Sept. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Murray, 11 Sept. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>5</sup>F. Horner to J. Horner, 30 Aug. 1809 (Horner).

were now opposed to the presence of a British army in the Peninsula. According to Horner, Holland maintained that Moore had 'treated the Spaniards with excessive reserve and haughtiness, and thereby not only deprived himself of information and facilities which were within his reach, but continued to the last to misunderstand the real nature of the Spanish character and their peculiar spirit and mode of resistance in this struggle.' Obviously Holland saw no reason to think that Wellington would do better. Like Fitzpatrick he felt that 'the Military Men of France & England always agree in a cordial contempt of all other nations', and one may surmise that it had finally occurred to Holland that his emphasis on the reestablishment of Spanish liberties was not consonant with the views of the British government. With these considerations in mind it is not surprising that Holland, Allen, and Horner decided that a British army would only retard the progress of the Spaniards.<sup>1</sup> But Holland and his circle could not hide their disappointment at the performance of the patriots at Talavera. Both Brougham and Horner began to look towards the revolted American colonies of Spain as a brighter horizon<sup>2</sup> and Holland confessed to Mackintosh in early November that the slowness of the Spaniards in civil and military matters had 'ruined a good cause'.<sup>3</sup> 'But the cause of Spain is hopeless', wrote Whitbread on 20 November. 'Even at Holland House I hear it is given up & there was its last Refuge.'<sup>4</sup>

Like Talavera, the Walcheren expedition was seen as yet another

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Murray, 11 Sept. 1809 (Horner). W. Eden to Auckland, 25 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, n.d. [7 Dec. 1809], (Horner), IV, ff. 182-87. Brougham to Grey, 17 Sept. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Mackintosh, 4 Nov. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51653 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Whitbread to Lady Holland, 20 Nov. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

reason why British activity on the Continent should be abandoned. In July there was a disposition in some members of the opposition to look on the expedition as a cheap and easy road to success<sup>1</sup> but a majority of opposition leaders were hostile from the first. Of primary importance was the fact that the Ministry of All the Talents had investigated the utility of an invasion of the Scheldt only to decide that the risk was too great.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, the government's choice of commanders hardly pleased the leaders of the coalition. Strachan had no political identity but both Popham and Chatham were stained by association with Pitt's name. Moreover, Popham, who commanded Chatham's flagship, was unpopular with the opposition because of his behaviour at Buenos Aires in 1806. Rosslyn, who had sound contacts at the War Office, maintained that Popham had 'put forward his plan [for the expedition], & then prepared & collected Intelligence to support it; and I suspect that in like Manner Ministers believed anything that favoured their views.'<sup>3</sup> Horner echoed this opinion<sup>4</sup> and Lauderdale told Grey that 'the whole scheme is a project of that rash adventurer Sir H: Popham, in whose ship Lord Chatham has sailed for the purpose of receiving the advice of this fellow, who may be thus said tho' a Captain in the expedition to have the command of the Fleet & of the Army.'<sup>5</sup> Such criticism sprang primarily from political recrimination but the opposition's observations on the appointment of Chatham were more responsible. As early as 28 June Grenville told his brother that the news of the expedition was 'frightful to those who

---

<sup>1</sup>Morning Chronicle, 19 July 1809. Brougham, Life and Times, I, 444.

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 22 Oct. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 28 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>F. Horner to J. Horner, 18 Sept. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>5</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 3 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

know Lord Chatham such as I do.<sup>1</sup> Undoubtedly Chatham was a poor choice and opposition leaders (many of whom were eager to discredit Pitt's brother) seized on this fact immediately. Tom Grenville was spreading rumours concerning Chatham's incompetence, even before the expedition set sail<sup>2</sup> and Grey probably summed up the feelings of most of his colleagues on 24 July when he laid his views before Tierney:

It is now all over with Austria, with the Continent & I fear with us. Whether the expedition will proceed or not I know not. The object was never worth so great a risque. Whilst there were hopes on the Continent it was most impolitic as tending to make it as odious to the inhabitants of the Country where we were to act. Now that objection is in a great degree removed, but I am sorry to see so large a portion of our remaining resources risked for such a purpose & under such Commanders. If such a force could be spared there was not common sense in sending it to any quarter but Spain, where 60 to 70,000 British ... might have expelled the French from the Peninsula.<sup>3</sup>

There was much good sense in this assessment and from the first the Walcheren expedition stimulated unity among the leaders of the coalition. Holland was seeking both common ground with Grey and Grenville and an opportunity to explain away failure in the Peninsula; his indignation grew with every report from the Scheldt.<sup>4</sup>

These reports were plentiful. Rosslyn, who commanded a regiment under Chatham, had formed a poor opinion of the expedition before it departed from England and throughout the affair he was far more interested in waxing prophetic in his gloomy correspondence to Foxites in Britain

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 28 June 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 28 July 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 312-13.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Tierney, 24 July 1809 (Tierney). Also see T. Grenville to Spencer, 27 July 1809 (Spencer), and Buckingham to Fremantle, 30 Aug. 1809 (Fremantle).

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Morpeth, 13 Sept. 1809 (Carlisle).



than in making the most of a bad situation.<sup>1</sup> Lauderdale's son also accompanied the expedition and his reports added credibility to those of Rosslyn.<sup>2</sup> Holland and his friends placed unrealistic emphasis on the jaded intelligence of Yarmouth and Lowther, both of whom returned from Flushing in late August.<sup>3</sup> It appears that there was little doubt in opposition circles concerning the ultimate failure of the expedition. Poor Chatham was easily the primary target of their abuse. Lady Holland found great pleasure in circulating rumours of the commander's incompetence<sup>4</sup> and Horner reported that Chatham kept 'such hours in Walcheren as suit Boodle's & White's; never being visible to any body on business, till eleven or twelve o'clock. He is said to be the scorn of the whole army ...'<sup>5</sup> Soon poetry was circulating in Whig society:

Great Chatham's son, with his sword drawn,  
Was waiting for Sir Richard Strachan;  
And Strachan, as eager to get at 'em,  
Was waiting for the Earl of Chatham.<sup>6</sup>

Another poem was printed in the Independent Whig:

Chatham and Nap, Oh! how they sound;  
A Penny, and a Thousand Pound!  
A Cock-Boat, and a Man of War;  
A Glow-Worm, and a Blazing-Star!<sup>7</sup>

Horner tried to believe that Chatham had set sail opposed to his mission

<sup>1</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 26 July and 28 Aug. 1809 (Grey). Brougham to Grey, 10 Aug. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 7 Sept. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Murray, 23 Aug. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 21 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Horner to Murray, 23 Aug. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>6</sup>'Lines dropped on board the Venerable previously to the sailing of the expedition against Flushing, 1809', Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 364.

<sup>7</sup>Independent Whig, 20 Aug. 1809.

and that the government had kept the news of the Austrian armistice from him.<sup>1</sup> Lauderdale, who followed the movements of the expedition on an outdated map, was convinced by 17 August that the expedition had been 'dreadfully mismanaged'.<sup>2</sup>

Reports of the failure of the expedition began to filter back to London shortly after word of Talavera and Wagram had arrived. Not since Austerlitz had the cause of continental exertions looked darker. Brougham, who had opposed further involvement in Spain for nine months, told Grey that if Chatham's army had been at Talavera 'one might have had considerable hopes for Spain being saved - Now this seems out of the question.'<sup>3</sup> Apparently this retrospective opinion was shared by every opposition leader, regardless of former views on the wisdom of war in the Peninsula. The Grenvilles were sure that 'it would be impossible for any Government to make any effort now for the assistance of any power in Europe.'<sup>4</sup> The Morning Chronicle<sup>5</sup> and the Independent Whig actually hailed the dual defeats as a triumph for the policy of isolation. 'Every man of reflection', wrote White, 'must admit that we can much more easily cope with a French army on our own shores than in distant kingdoms; - and does not the same apply equally to Buonaparte?'<sup>6</sup>

This gloating took a new direction in mid-September when it was learned that Chatham's army had been retained on the island of Walcheren and that serious feuding had erupted in the Cabinet. Rosslyn returned to England early in the month, went to Northumberland to confer with

---

<sup>1</sup>F. Horner to J. Horner, 18 Sept. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 1 and 17 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Grey, 11 Aug. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Carlisle, 30 Sept. 1809 (Carlisle).

<sup>5</sup>Morning Chronicle, 2 Sept. and 28 Oct. 1809.

<sup>6</sup>Independent Whig, 20 Aug. 1809.

Grey,<sup>1</sup> and thereafter spread alarming reports of disease riddling both Chatham's and Wellesley's armies.<sup>2</sup> Soon rumours were spreading that British troops were being held on Walcheren solely 'to prepare the public for total failure'.<sup>3</sup> The cry against government was especially loud among the former supporters of Fox, all of whom found great delight in the discomfiture of Castlereagh and Canning. Grey and Holland accepted Canning's contention that Castlereagh's incompetence had foiled the scheme but both Foxite leaders affected outrage over Canning's failure to air his feelings before the expedition set sail.<sup>4</sup> The views of the extreme left wing of Fox's old party were probably summed up by an editorial in the Independent Whig:

Viewing the crusades in which the policy of our government are now engaged, but as the frantic and visionary pursuits of treachery and folly, every success which may accompany the valour of our armies we can consider but as HUMAN BUTCHERY, perpetrated for the PERSONAL SPLEEN AND VINDICTIVE RAPACITY of the British Ministry!<sup>5</sup>

As always White's opinions were extreme and politically imprudent but it appears that few opposition leaders disagreed with his general outlook. Grey, Holland, Fitzwilliam, and the Grenvilles were mortified by the events of the summer and all of them were aware that the government stood vulnerable to an attack on the management of its wartime policy, if not on the fundamental concept behind it. Brougham called for 'open war' and Erskine was sure that the government would fall if the opposition could be rallied behind an amendment and a division on the opening

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Grey, 17 Sept. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>Roslyn to Grey, 12 Nov. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Fitzwilliam to T. Grenville, 17 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Holland, 3 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).  
Holland to Grey, 25 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Independent Whig, 20 Aug. 1809.

day of Parliament.<sup>1</sup> In this, however, the leaders of the coalition faced seemingly insurmountable problems.

Events at Talavera and the Scheldt had been accompanied in England by the enquiry into the alleged corrupt practices of the Duke of York. This enquiry had given rise to a cry for reform which had caused important realignment within the ranks of the opposition. Above all else the events of the spring and early summer had pitted the fears of the aristocratic wing of the coalition led by Grenville against the reforming zeal of the popular wing which included most Foxite M.P.'s and many of the younger and more idealistic Grenvillites and Burkians. Grey and Lauderdale had divided with the former. Their outrage had been unqualified; their efforts to soothe differences in the party had been as desultory as in the early 1790's when their own intemperance on the issue of reform had helped lead Fox to disaster.<sup>2</sup> The net result of this behaviour had been the weakening of their already precarious hold on the House of Commons.

The reactionary behaviour of the coalition's leaders had undermined Ponsonby and Tierney. Petty had felt such contradiction that he had refused to assert himself<sup>3</sup> and Horner obviously spoke for many others when he told Ward that he could not 'find men and measures together.'<sup>4</sup> This dilemma had been the inevitable result of the contradictions inherent to Foxite 'principles' and Whitbread alone had dared to step between the

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Holland, n.d. [Oct. 1809?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51561 (Holland), ff. 63-4. Erskine to Lady Holland, 22 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Note the comments of Tom Grenville and Spencer. T. Grenville to Spencer, 28, 30 Mar. 1809 (Spencer), and Spencer to T. Grenville, 28 Mar., 4 April 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Caroline Fox to Holland, 4 June 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51738 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Ward, 24 May 1809, Horner Memoirs, I, 461-62.

extremes. He had spoken alongside Burdett at Westminster Hall and had bowed to the cheers of the same electors to whom Fox had bowed before him. At the Crown and Anchor tavern he had braved the abuse of both extremes by defending the Whig aristocracy and Britain's party system while championing a moderate reform of Parliament as a compromise between aristocracy and democracy.<sup>1</sup> Such a stance had placed Whitbread in a most demanding position. Bedford had accused him of furthering the dissolution 'of that Party, the union of which poor Fox urged as his dying hope and left as his last legacy to his surviving friends'; Creevey had warned him to cling to peace and reform and 'to be cautious how you give your assent to a course of procedure which has no other object than a party one, that of putting upon their legs again ... the shabby leaders of the Whig interest ...'<sup>2</sup>

Whitbread had managed to resist both of these extremes and his behaviour had increased his influence in the Commons and brought to his side a number of men who in varying degrees looked to him for leadership. This group, which had become known as the 'Mountain', was by no means a conventional party. Whitbread exerted personal influence over a larger but still narrow set of men who justifiably represented Grey as an apostate and who desired separation from the Grenvilles. These men were Creevey, Bennet, Folkstone, Maxwell, Owen Williams, Hutchinson, Ossulston, Lord Kensington, and probably Western. But this group had no strong extra-parliamentary connexions with the many more who supported its measures in the Commons.

Of those who divided with the Mountain from time to time ,

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 31 Mar. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Bedford to Whitbread, 4 April, and Creevey to Whitbread, 4 April 1809 (Whitbread), 2462, 373/13.

'radicals' like Burdett, Brand, Cochrane, Wardle, and Madocks championed peace and reform but refused to make common cause with Whitbread primarily because of his emphasis on moderation as a bridge to Whig unity. Others like Romilly, Horner, Ferguson, Calcraft, Abercromby, and Coke were restrained somewhat by the now confusing Foxite 'principle' of group loyalty: they desired cooperation with Grey and Grenville, they ridiculed Whitbread's bad manners and poor oratory, but invariably they found themselves in the division lobby with the brewer. 'For my own part,' wrote one Foxite, 'I know, if I should happen to be in Parlt. with Whitbread leading an opposition, I could not help being very soon one of his followers; with all his fatal defects of manner, there is no politician whom I find so often in the right ...'<sup>1</sup>

One cannot resist comparing the Mountain to the Foxite party of the latter 1790's. The Mountain's strength, though varying from division to division, was founded almost exclusively on loyalty to traditional Foxite causes, primarily peace and reform. Then, too, Whitbread was surrounded by familiar faces. Coke, Smith, Byng, Western, Jekyll, Taylor, Adam, and Lord William Russell often divided with him. Moreover, as had been the case with Fox's opposition, young men flocked to Whitbread's standard. Ward, W. Lamb, Lyttelton, Brougham, Lord Archibald Hamilton, and even William Eden, Milton, Althorp, and George Ponsonby, Jr. looked to Whitbread for leadership. The biographer of Althorp wrote:

Here alone he recognised the sentiments of Mr. Fox; and finding, as he thought, in Mr. Whitbread, during the proceedings against the Duke, many of the qualities which he admired in Mr. Fox and could see in no other living statesman, he determined to adopt him henceforth as his leader.<sup>2</sup>

Of course Whitbread's new stature threatened Grey, Grenville, and the

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Allen, 16 Jan. 1811 (Horner).

<sup>2</sup>Le Marchant, Memoir of Althorp, pp. 11-12.

coalition's hierarchy. According to Glastonbury the events of the spring and summer had washed Grey clean of his 'Whitbread & other impurities' and had bound him to Grenville with a cement that 'will not be easily dissolved'.<sup>1</sup> This bond was under serious attack from quarters other than the Mountain. Both the Examiner<sup>2</sup> and the Independent Whig<sup>3</sup> slammed the union between Grey and Grenville and in all probability most of the former supporters of Fox in the country agreed with the assessment of the old Foxite Peter Payne:

If Lord Grey was to take a Minister's place without determining to be governed by principles more evidently Foxite than he lately displayed that place would kill him ... But how can the Foxites act under Lord Grenville unless Lord Grenville renounces those feelings, which dictated that infamous letter to Bonaparte, which Mr Sherridan [sic] said ought never to be forgiven or forgotten ...<sup>4</sup>

Grey faced the opening of the session of 1810 with little hope of holding the party in the Commons to his dictates. Lord King felt that the Foxite leader had lost all of his strength in the country<sup>5</sup> and Horner observed on 28 September that 'The same persons, who never mention Mr. Fox's name but with reverence, speak of Lord Grey as a man only desirous of office; and the Grenvilles are still more unpopular.'<sup>6</sup> Moreover, the failing health of Lansdowne raised the possibility that Petty, Grey's last hope in the Commons, would be elevated to the Lords before the end

<sup>1</sup>Glastonbury to T. Grenville, 30 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Examiner, 16 April 1809.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 18 June, 17 Sept. 1809.

<sup>4</sup>Payne to Whitbread, 1 Oct. 1809 (Whitbread), 2483. Here Payne refers to Grenville's official refusal of a French offer of peace negotiations in 1800.

<sup>5</sup>Ld. King to Holland, n.d. [June 1809?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51572 (Holland), ff. 24-5.

<sup>6</sup>Horner to Allen, 28 Sept. 1809 (Horner).

of the year. In this situation the return of Holland from Spain had occupied the thoughts of practically every member of the coalition since the spring.

By mid-September there was ample reason to believe that Holland would abandon Grey and Grenville and join Whitbread in rallying his uncle's old followers. His differences with the leaders of the coalition had been accentuated by the Duke of York affair. His friends in England had urged him to return and take the lead of the Foxites,<sup>1</sup> and both he and Allen had criticized Grey and lauded the popular party in letters from Spain.<sup>2</sup> As early as May there had been fear among Grenvillites that Holland would unite with Whitbread,<sup>3</sup> and in June Grey had been glad that Holland was abroad.<sup>4</sup> Holland's behaviour since his return had increased these fears. With the exception of one visit by Elliot, Lady Holland had entertained only devoted Foxites between 12 August and mid-September<sup>5</sup> and, according to Whishaw, Holland and Allen admitted 'in their fullest extent, the party divisions which exist among the Whigs and the Grenvilles.'<sup>6</sup> Grey complained later that Holland had stopped corresponding with him,<sup>7</sup> and Fox's nephew was so adamant in his support for popular politics that Tierney became alarmed. 'My guess is that before the next Session is a month old he will be in the thick

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Holland, 16 July 1809 (Horner).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Caroline Fox, 12, 17 June 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51738 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>C.W.W. Wynn to H. Wynn, 14 May 1809, Lady Williams Wynn Correspondence, pp. 146-48.

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Tierney, 21 June 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>5</sup>Holland House Dinner Books, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>6</sup>Whishaw to Brougham, 27 Aug. [1809], (Brougham).

<sup>7</sup>Grey to Tierney, 2 Dec. 1809 (Tierney).



of the reformers though without meaning the least hostility to his old Friends', Tierney reported. 'As a party he considers us as completely disbanded.'<sup>1</sup>

This situation rendered offensive operations in Parliament almost impossible. The right wing of the coalition was content to remain inactive. Windham felt that Whitbread's behaviour threatened anarchy, and the old Burkian was so isolated from his political allies in the Commons that he opposed any serious attempt to unseat the government.<sup>2</sup> The views of the Grenvilles were equally despondent. They affected to see in the 'disasters' of Talavera, Wagram, and Walcheren the final ruin of the nation. Discouraged by the situation in the Commons they chattered about the impossibility of any ministry resolving the dilemma.<sup>3</sup> Grenville himself was absorbed in preparations as a candidate for Chancellor of Oxford University and apparently he had virtually stopped his political correspondence. Foxite leaders who continued to support Grey could only take a similar stand. Rosslyn noted that 'never was a time when Office would be less acceptable',<sup>4</sup> and when Holland encouraged Grey to assert himself the latter expressed astonishment: '... you speak of a party, as if there were still a party in existence', he wrote. 'It was by the events of last Session, completely broken up in the House of Commons, and I do not see the means, (more especially if your apprehensions concerning Lord Lansdowne are well founded) of forming it anew; not indeed do I feel any disposition to join in such an attempt. I shall therefore ... make my appearance at the opening of the Session, but as for a regular

---

<sup>1</sup>Tierney to Grey, 30 Aug. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Windham to Grey, 29 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 37847 (Windham).

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Morpeth, 23, 30 Sept. 1809 (Carlisle).

<sup>4</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 20 Sept. 1809 (Grey).

Parliamentary opposition afterwards you must excuse me.<sup>1</sup>

The problems of the coalition became clear in late September when Portland, Castlereagh, and Canning resigned from the Cabinet and Perceval applied to Grey and Grenville to join with him in forming a coalition government.<sup>2</sup> Grey refused to come to London, and though Grenville displayed more interest, the thought of office disturbed him greatly.<sup>3</sup> Both Foxites and Grenvillites had had their fill of coalitions and, as Tom Grenville pointed out, the nation had too many troubles and the Foxites in the Commons were too uncontrollable for party leaders to 'encounter all these dangers with a gag in one's mouth & with fetters on one's arms & legs ...'<sup>4</sup> Accordingly Perceval's apparently sincere offer came to nothing. The leaders of the opposition were completely immobilized by the demands of their coalition. Both Grey and Grenville were depressed and unable to control the House of Commons. Petty was about to move to the Lords. Whitbread, whose influence undermined Ponsonby and Tierney, was nevertheless incapable of uniting Foxites without the sanction of the coalition's hierarchy. Men as well as measures were at the bottom of these problems and the public detested both. 'So,' wrote Cobbett, 'belike, the Whigs, the haughty Whigs, who licked the boots of the Grenvilles, will leave us to perish in the hands of the Walchereners, as a just punishment for our blindness

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 3 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>For a thorough account of these negotiations see Roberts, pp. 347-59.

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grey, 28, 30 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51544 (Holland). Grenville to T. Grenville, 21, 22, 23 Sept. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville). T. Grenville to Spencer, 25 Sept. 1809 (Spencer).

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 3 Oct. 1809 (Spencer).

in not being able to discover their superior patriotism.'<sup>1</sup> Cobbett was wrong; in all probability Grey and Grenville would have been unable to form a government even if they had been offered carte blanche.

Holland found this situation intolerable. Though his sympathies were with the popular wing of the party he had returned from Spain determined to reunite the coalition. He blamed Grey for the schism of the summer and he believed that the government's mismanagement of the war had given rise to a set of circumstances which could stimulate party harmony. 'Sir Arthur's situation is certainly very critical,' he had written shortly after his return to England, 'but I own I have not a worse opinion of the condition of the combined armies there than I am inclined to form of those in the House of Commons - but time & chance ... may do much & at least we have no Bonaparte to contend with at St. Stephens.' During August and September Holland tried to soothe differences between Foxites. Like his uncle in 1804 he stressed that the Catholic question was 'at this moment particularly advantageous in a party view because one of the surest means of keeping our friends from starting questions on which they are likely to differ is to occupy them with those upon which they must of necessity agree.'<sup>2</sup> He was prepared to temper his opinions on Spain to complement this effort and he set out in an attempt to buy an evening newspaper through which he could promote his views.<sup>3</sup>

Initially Holland felt that a united party stand on the Catholic question could compensate for the lack of leadership in the Commons<sup>4</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Political Register, XVI, 755.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to T. Grenville, 24 Aug. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grenville, 19 Oct. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 340-41.

<sup>4</sup>Holland to T. Grenville, 24 Aug. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville).

but he was forced to reassess this opinion in October when it became clear that Lansdowne's rapidly failing health would soon elevate Petty. The prospect of the loss of Petty stimulated serious debate within the party on the question of political alignment. Several Grenvillites and a small number of Foxites led by Sheridan and apparently Perry desired coalition with Canning, who had only recently resigned from the Cabinet.<sup>1</sup> This group was motivated by both dislike of Whitbread and continuing support for the Peninsular War. On the other hand many M.P.'s favoured Whitbread. Grenville found that his opinions immobilized him in this matter because he despised Whitbread and yet opposed Canning's view of the war. He therefore supported the status quo: he wanted Petty to delay his elevation (on the grounds of possible pregnancy in Lady Lansdowne), and he told his brother that he was 'far from sure that we shall not want Ponsonby in the H. of C. even if a new Govt. were formed.'<sup>2</sup> These were not the views of the party as a whole. Young men in the Commons refused to act under Ponsonby. For want of a better Foxite candidate most of them favoured Whitbread.<sup>3</sup> Holland also felt that the wholehearted support of either Canning or Whitbread was necessary. Apparently, of the two he leaned towards Canning, whose view of the Peninsular War and the Catholic question was similar to his own.

The prejudices of Lady Holland assumed importance at this point. Influenced by her burning hatred of Canning she pushed her husband towards Whitbread. Her campaign stopped at nothing. Soon there were false

---

<sup>1</sup>The Morning Chronicle defended Canning's behaviour in the Walcheren fiasco throughout late September. Also see Grey to Holland, 5 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 27 Nov., 26 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 13 Oct. 1809 (Grey). T. Grenville to Grenville, [12 Jan. 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 5.

rumours circulating that Holland had met with Canning at St. Anne's Hill to discuss coalition, and loyal Foxites raised bitter objections.<sup>1</sup> By early November Holland had seen the error of his ways. Creevey was astonished by the shift of opinion at Holland House. He reported to Whitbread:

Lord Grey & Mr. Whitbread are again precisely of the same opinion on every possible subject & of course the best friends possible, that this circumstance is to the greatest degree fortunate for that no government to be formed by Lords Grenville & Grey could have been carried in the House of Commons without the assistance of Mr. Whitbread, much less had he been opposed to it, that Lord Ponsonby is gone down to Southill to confirm this happy reunion & to feel how Mr. Whitbread is inclined on the Catholic question, that on Tuesday Mr. Tierney is to attend with the Duke of Bedford & Mr. Giles with Lords Carrington & Essex & that the happiest political results are expected from these visits to Southill - don't laugh at all this, upon my life & soul every atom of it is true, that is such is the statement from Holland House, so I write to you to beg you will suit your deportment to your elevated situation ...<sup>2</sup>

Creevey did not exaggerate. Whitbread entertained Bedford and several Grenvillite peers on 8 November,<sup>3</sup> and on the 16th several of Whitbread's admirers ate with Holland, Grenville, and Tierney at Derby's home.<sup>4</sup> During December this activity increased. Holland planned a visit to Southill; he encouraged the Grenvilles to conciliate Whitbread; and he told Tom Grenville on 5 January that 'without Whitbread you will do nothing for years in the Hse of Commons.'<sup>5</sup>

The efforts of Holland and his wife disgusted the Grenville

<sup>1</sup>Ld. John Russell to Lady Holland, 19 Oct. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51678 (Holland). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, n.d. [Oct. 1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 51696 (Holland), ff. 113-16.

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 8 Nov. 1809 (Whitbread), 373/15.

<sup>3</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 8 Nov. 1809, Creevey Papers, I, 99.

<sup>4</sup>Creevey Journal, entry of 16 Nov. 1809, ibid., 144.

<sup>5</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 27 Dec. 1809, H.M.C. Dropmore, IX, 436-38. Holland to T. Grenville, 5 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville).

brothers and frightened Grey, who had feared a Holland-Whitbread alliance since October.<sup>1</sup> During December Tierney appraised Grey of Lady Holland's designs and when word broke that the Hollands would visit Southill he predicted sarcastically that 'a Treaty of Alliance will be signed and a grand scheme settled by which we are to be united and drive the world before us.'<sup>2</sup> Grey and Tierney, however, were virtually alone among Foxites in opposing such a union. Lauderdale, like many others, was worried about the possibility of a coalition with Canning and he therefore encouraged Grey to visit Southill on his way to London.<sup>3</sup> Many Grenvillites and Burkians also agreed with Holland. Young men like Milton, Althorp, the Edens, and Ebrington supported Whitbread; Essex admired the brewer; Carrington felt that he was the key to success in Parliament; and Auckland (probably influenced by his sons) told Grey bluntly that he would not hesitate to give Whitbread Cabinet office.<sup>4</sup>

This movement towards Foxite reconciliation became important at a time when Grey was beginning to show renewed interest in an attack on both the Walcheren expedition and British involvement in the Peninsula. In mid-November he had felt that the public was not interested in these issues<sup>5</sup> but the accounts of his military experts Rosslyn and W. Gordon

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Tierney, 10 Oct. 1809 (Tierney). Tierney to Grey, 26 Oct. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Grey, 5, 9 Dec. 1809 (Grey). This visit was prevented by a fever among Whitbread's servants. Whitbread to Lady Holland, 13 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 26 Nov. 19 Dec. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Auckland to Grey, 26 Dec. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Grey to Tierney, 17 Nov. 1809 (Tierney).

raised his indignation by the end of the month.<sup>1</sup> In early December he actually grew excited when Waithman and Combe pushed resolutions calling for enquiry into the failure at the Scheldt through London's Common Council. On the 9th he told Brougham that 'a motion for inquiry must be carried in the House of Commons, against the effects of which I think it will be very difficult to guard by the common expedients of delay, a multitude of documents and a garbled committee.'<sup>2</sup> This, of course, meant that Grey had to come to grips with the question of leadership in the lower house.

Encouraged by his friends, in late November he ended a long break in correspondence with Whitbread. The brewer's friendly reply delighted Grey. Immediately he asked Ponsonby if he would be willing to assume his old position as Irish Chancellor in the event of the coalition coming to office. Concurrently he encouraged Tierney to placate both Whitbread and Ponsonby until his arrival in London. So as to dodge the controversial question of leadership in the Commons M.P.'s were summoned to Parliament by an anonymous circular letter.<sup>3</sup>

Meanwhile in London the death of Lansdowne had stimulated new vigour in Holland. During the final two weeks of the year he worked to bridge the gap between Dropmore and Southill. In this effort he was guided almost exclusively by Fox's precedents of 1804 and 1805. He continued to contend that the Catholic question was the 'standard round

---

<sup>1</sup>At this time Grey received most of his pessimistic information about Portugal from Gordon. Rosslyn was considered as an authority on the Walcheren expedition. See the Grey Papers, boxes 19 (Gordon) and 51 (Rosslyn). Also note the comments on this subject in Rosslyn to Brougham, 3 Jan. 1810 (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Brougham, 9 Dec. 1809 (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Holland, n.d. [Dec. 1809], B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland), ff. 72-3. Grey to Tierney, 30 Nov. 1809 (Tierney), and Tierney to Grey, 9 Dec. 1809 (Grey).

which we must rally the band'<sup>1</sup> and he stressed the similarities between the present foreign situation and that which had followed the battle of Austerlitz. He rose above his traditional blind support for the Spaniards, he accepted Grenville's emphasis on defensive warfare, and he told Whitbread on the 17th that he doubted 'that any peace will be or can be made & still less that Bonaparte would be at all disposed to conduct himself in a way that any government preserving the appearance of independence would be able to keep peace - but this is no reason for not trying.'<sup>2</sup> This small concession was all-important. The simple expression of a willingness to negotiate for peace in the Peninsula did much to facilitate cordial political relations with Whitbread.

Holland's efforts at compromise, however, secured only partial success. Whitbread was eager to cooperate with him and Grenville raised no objection when the two Foxites began deliberations on the subject of an amendment to the Address. But Holland soon found serious problems in his own backyard. Ponsonby had no intention of relinquishing the lead. He was sure that Walcheren and Talavera had formed a strong case against ministers; he was tired of compromises; and he was eager to assert himself on the opening day of Parliament.<sup>3</sup> Consequently he refused to give Grey a firm answer. This threw Grey into despair once again. He backed away from cooperation with Holland and Whitbread, a development which raised the ire of Lauderdale.<sup>4</sup> Meanwhile it became obvious that Tierney was doing everything in his power to alienate both

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to T. Grenville, 3 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>He placed strong emphasis on Fox's precedent in the wake of Austerlitz in this letter. Holland to Whitbread, 17 Dec. 1809 (Whitbread), 4208.

<sup>3</sup>Ponsonby to Fitzwilliam, n.d. [Nov. 1809], (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield), 127/89.

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 21 Dec. 1809 (Grey).



Ponsonby and Whitbread in an attempt to claim the lead for himself.<sup>1</sup>

These problems were accompanied by serious disagreement on the issues of the day. Practically every member of the coalition was eager to attack the management of the Walcheren expedition, and opposition activity was beginning to centre at Rosslyn's London home, a virtual military headquarters complete with maps and indignant officers who posed as experts.<sup>2</sup> The mode of attack, however, was a source of discord. Temple, Holland, Whitbread, and many young M.P.'s agreed with Tom Grenville that 'the old humdrum of candid enquiry' would 'serve for nothing but to give ministers time, & time will be strength.' They advocated a frontal assault, a direct motion of censure on opening day. On the other hand Grenville and most of the older and more experienced politicians opposed a motion of censure and pointed out that such a course would 'lose some votes among the country-gentlemen & the Candids.'<sup>3</sup> Then, too, controversy on the issue of the Peninsular War had been increased by favourable reports from the lines of Torres Vedras. Bedford and Spencer had relatives in Wellington's army and both of them were experiencing difficulty in containing their enthusiasm.<sup>4</sup> Temple did not share Grenville's despondent view of Talavera,<sup>5</sup> and Buckingham refused to sanction a parliamentary attack on his friend Wellington.<sup>6</sup> In

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread had become furious with Tierney on this score as early as 13 November. Whitbread to Tierney, 13 Nov. 1809 (Tierney). Also note Lauderdale's sagacious analysis of this situation. Lauderdale to Grey, 22 Dec. 1809 (Grey). Also see Holland to T. Grenville, 3 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 31 Dec. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to C.W.W. Wynn, 29 Dec. 1809 (Wynn).

<sup>4</sup>Bedford to Grey, 24 Aug. 1809 (Grey). Lady Lyttelton Correspondence, p. 71.

<sup>5</sup>Temple to Fremantle, 15 Aug. 1809 (Fremantle).

<sup>6</sup>Temple to T. Grenville, 24 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

striking contrast the moderate Ponsonby labelled Talavera a defeat and was contemptuous towards Wellington's new title.<sup>1</sup> Creevey went further in his condemnation of Wellington and grew angry when Whitbread promised Holland that he would not attack the general.<sup>2</sup> Windham and Grenville clashed on the broader question of continental expeditions. The former favoured the despatch of a larger army to Portugal while Grenville wanted to use Walcheren and Talavera as references in calling for the withdrawal of the army and the institution of marine warfare on the coasts. Disagreement on this head grew so violent that Sir John Hippisley wrote to Grey in alarm.<sup>3</sup> Finally, Holland had been forced to abandon the controversial question of parliamentary reform in his plan for the session and even Horner was livid on this point.<sup>4</sup>

Notwithstanding these difficulties Holland managed to arrange a meeting at Ponsonby's house on 21 December. Apparently most of those present agreed fundamentally with the compromise amendment formulated by Holland and Whitbread. This amendment, which was to be moved by Lord Gower and seconded by Ward, included firm support for the Catholic claims and censure of both the Walcheren expedition and the management of the Peninsular War. Tierney, however, continued to resent Whitbread's role in the formulation of policy and he raised objections to both Gower and Ward. Consequently the meeting ended on a sour note. Tierney refused to speak to Whitbread, and Creevey spread word that the proposed motion was not strong enough and that the Mountain would sponsor one of

---

<sup>1</sup>Ponsonby to Fitzwilliam, n.d. [Nov. 1809], (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield), 127/89.

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 3 Jan. 1810 (Whitbread), 375.

<sup>3</sup>Hippisley to Grey, 7 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Allen, 28 Dec. [1809], Horner Memoirs, II, 16-17. Allen to Horner, 4 Jan. 1810 (Horner).

its own. Ward promptly refused to second the proposed motion without Whitbread's approval. C.W.W. Wynn, who agreed with Creevey that Wellington should be attacked, predicted an 'open rupture between the two parties in opposition.' Most significantly, Wynn did not refer to Grenvillites and Foxites but instead to those who supported Whitbread and those who did not. 'There never was such a set of fools as those we are connected with in the House of Commons, & I am seriously sick of the whole concern', wrote Lauderdale.<sup>1</sup>

Dissension in the party led Holland to take yet another step towards Whitbread. The two met at Amthill during the last week of December and devised a second amendment. On the 31st they presented a united front in calling for a motion which would pledge the House to enquiry into Walcheren, advocate punishment for the guilty parties, stress the need for retrenchment and economical reform, and champion the Catholic cause. Apparently they were prepared to dodge the question of the Peninsular War altogether so as to assure party harmony. Holland felt that both Grey and Grenville would accept this amendment, and both he and Whitbread saw it as a compromise between the aristocratic and popular wings of the coalition.<sup>2</sup>

The question of leadership in the Commons remained unclear. On 1 January 1810 Grey arrived at Southill and found his host ready to cooperate on every public issue.<sup>3</sup> But Whitbread demanded de jure leadership as the price of his cooperation.<sup>4</sup> After a two-day visit Grey travelled up

---

<sup>1</sup>C.W.W. Wynn to T. Grenville, 23 Dec. 1809, B.M., Add. MSS. 41857 (T. Grenville). Lauderdale to Grey, 22, 23 Dec. 1809 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Tierney, 31 Dec. 1809 (Tierney).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 2 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 7 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 117-18.

to London impressed by the brewer's cordiality, and the idea of an opposition cabinet was revived in discussions at Holland House. According to Whishaw the objective of Foxite leaders was to conciliate Whitbread and 'leave Ponsonby the nominal leader without any substantial power.'<sup>1</sup>

At this point the Foxites were close to unity. Holland had managed to throw himself between Grey and Whitbread, and Grey was so excited about the strength of the case against ministers that on the 6th he told Fitzwilliam that with a good attendance 'we shall beat them at once.'<sup>2</sup> Ponsonby soon brought things back to earth. Tom Grenville reported on the 10th that 'Snouch' had 'suddenly sprung up in Arlington Street, with his sceptre in his hands, which he is ready to lay across the shoulders of any man who shall withhold all due allegiance.'<sup>3</sup>

Ponsonby's unexpected refusal to share the lead in the Commons alarmed Foxite leaders. Embarrassed at the prospect of alienating his wife's uncle, Grey refused to promote Whitbread at the expense of Ponsonby. On the 11th he abandoned the idea of a comprehensive amendment to the address, agreed with Bedford and Holland that Grenville and Whitbread should move the Catholic petition simultaneously in the two houses of Parliament, and told the brewer that both he and Grenville would be 'comparably injured if it is not done ...'<sup>4</sup> This appeal to a principle upon which Foxites 'must of necessity agree' was no more than an attempt to force Whitbread to cooperate. On the following day, however, it became clear that even the Catholic question was a source of discord.

---

<sup>1</sup>Whishaw to Lady Holland, 10 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51658 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Fitzwilliam, 6 Jan. 1810 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Buckingham, 10 Jan. 1810, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 417-18.

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 11 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

The behaviour of the democratic party in Ireland had embarrassed the coalition's leaders during the autumn. This, combined with Grenville's election to the chancellorship of Oxford University, had given rise to new considerations. During the campaign Grenville had tried to stifle his opponents' propaganda with assurances that his view of the Catholic claims did not endanger the security of the English Church.<sup>1</sup> Such prudence, of course, had alarmed Foxites,<sup>2</sup> and in early January Whitbread had told Grey that Grenville's success at Oxford would be seen as proof of the party's great change of opinion on Catholic emancipation.<sup>3</sup> These fears were justified on 12 January when Grenville (who hitherto had had little to say on the question of tactics for the approaching session) suddenly told Grey that opposition could be successful only if the party could be held to the questions of Walcheren and the Peninsular War.<sup>4</sup> Grenville's attitude towards the Irish Catholics was cool and he resented the fact that the uncooperative Irish had taken his support for granted. Moreover, he was being pressed by his friends to make his opinions on the issue public and he had already begun work on a pamphlet - A Letter to Lord Fingal - in which he would decline to make any exertion in Parliament on behalf of the Irish Catholics until they should conform to his views as to what safeguards were necessary for the protection of the Establishment.<sup>5</sup> On the question of leadership in the Commons Grenville stood by Ponsonby.

This stance and Ponsonby's refusal to cooperate completely

---

<sup>1</sup>Roberts, pp. 67-8.

<sup>2</sup>S. Smith to Lady Holland, 8 Dec. 1809, Lady Holland, Sydney Smith, II, 65-6. Holland, Further Memoirs, p. 41.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 12 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Grey, n.d. [12 Jan. 1810], (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Roberts, pp. 70-1.

undermined Holland's campaign for Foxite unity, and soon the party was faced with another crisis. Petty (now Lord Lansdowne) agreed with Grenville on both the Catholic petition and the retention of Ponsonby but he was eager to include the question of India in an amendment to the Address. On the other hand Holland, Bedford, Spencer, and Fitzwilliam thought that an abandonment of the Catholics would be fatal to the coalition.<sup>1</sup> The party in the Commons was equally divided. A majority of M.P.'s desired to support the Catholic petition (pointing to the fact that such support was a great part of what had been represented as the coalition's wartime strategy) but Abercromby and several others threatened to desert if it were moved.<sup>2</sup> Horner complained of 'temporising and balanced views'<sup>3</sup> and Windham backed away from an attack on the government. 'The great danger of the time,' he noted, 'great as the external dangers are, appears to me to proceed from within, & from causes that admit of no control, at least of none that we appear capable of applying, were we in office tomorrow.'<sup>4</sup> Obviously Tom Grenville agreed; on the 16th he applied for the Chiltern Hundreds.<sup>5</sup>

Seeing that Grenville had no intention of altering his views Grey revised his tactics accordingly. On the 11th he had lectured Whitbread on the importance of consistency on the Catholic question; at a meeting

---

<sup>1</sup>Lansdowne to T. Grenville, 4 Jan., and Fitzwilliam to T. Grenville, 14 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville). Spencer to T. Grenville, 11 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville). T. Grenville to Fitzwilliam, 12 Jan. 1810 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield). Grey to Lady Grey, 8 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Horner, 9 Jan. 1810 (Horner).

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Holland, 15 Jan. 1810 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Windham to T. Grenville, 4 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>5</sup>T. Grenville to Perceval, 16 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville).

at Holland House on the 12th he wanted to drop the question from the proposed amendment. On the morning of the 12th Elliot told Fitzwilliam that Ponsonby would step down as leader in the Commons; on the 13th Grey confused the old Burkian by contradicting this report and asking for the support of Milton in reconciling the party's young men to the retention of Ponsonby.<sup>1</sup> Suddenly all emphasis was placed on a parliamentary crusade against the management of the war; as Grenville pointed out, debate on other subjects would detract from the leading issues of the day.<sup>2</sup> On the 15th Grey displayed alarming tactlessness in laying these views before Whitbread, explaining that the party was practically unanimous in favour of Ponsonby and that he had decided against the comprehensive amendment to the Address on opening day.<sup>3</sup>

Whitbread must have been perplexed. Prior to this time he had resisted the radicalism of his admirers<sup>4</sup> in favour of compromise with the leaders of the coalition. Now, however, he heard nothing from Holland; he saw in Grey and Grenville no sign of a willingness to compromise on the issue of economical reform; he suspected a complete abandonment of the Catholic question; and he knew that the party was not unanimous in desiring Ponsonby to retain the lead. Grenville's emphasis on a parliamentary attack exclusively on the wartime policies of ministers was clearly an attempt to sweep party differences under the carpet until the government could be brought down. This approach was not novel to older Whigs but Whitbread's reputation in the country was based on

---

<sup>1</sup>Elliot to Fitzwilliam, 12 Jan., and Grey to Fitzwilliam, 13 Jan. 1810 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, n.d. [12 Jan. 1810], (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Whitbread, 15 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 3 Jan. 1810 (Whitbread), 375.

considerably more than Grey and Grenville were willing to discuss. Not surprisingly he grew angry when Grey sent him an amendment to the Address which was based solely on censure of the Walcheren expedition and the management of the Peninsular War. 'In my opinion it does not contain half enough', he wrote angrily on the 16th. As for Ponsonby, Whitbread showed nothing but disgust. 'If Mr. Ponsonby can take the lead Nobody can prevent it. Neither can any body confer it upon him.'<sup>1</sup>

But still Whitbread was willing to compromise for the sake of party unity. On the 17th, when Grenville sent him a second amendment and requested his presence at Camelford House, the brewer departed for London immediately.<sup>2</sup> On the 18th Grenville reported to Grey that Whitbread was 'extremely conciliatory & amiable in manner nor was there in substance anything that passed between us that marked strong difference of opinion.' Grenville obviously succeeded in convincing Whitbread that his stance on the Catholic question was tactical and not strategic. However, Whitbread was reluctant to compromise his views on economical reform and he refused not only to act under Ponsonby in the House but to attend a meeting which had been scheduled for the 22nd at Ponsonby's home.<sup>3</sup>

After talking with Grenville, however, Whitbread had second thoughts and discussed the question with his friends. Brand, who had never cooperated with Grey and Grenville, advised him to 'avoid anticipating that which their conduct will ... ultimately force you to, viz. an avowed political separation', and he saw no harm in trying to influence the councils of the mainline party.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand Creevey

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Grey, 16 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Whitbread, 17 Jan. 1810 (Whitbread), 2499.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 18 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Brand to Whitbread, [20] Jan. 1810 (Whitbread), 2500.



desired a formal separation. It appears that Whitbread was indecisive at this point. His vanity had been injured greatly and he felt that his public reputation hinged on continued support for economical reform. However, his contempt for the government and his desire to attack its wartime policies were strong. Then, too, he probably saw wisdom in Grenville's contention that an amendment which included support for reform and the Catholic claims would weaken an otherwise firm case against ministers. Moreover, later developments suggest that Grenville had expressed a willingness to open negotiations for peace in the event that the coalition came to power. On the 20th, after two days of deliberation, Whitbread accepted Grenville's amendment. While refusing to attend Ponsonby's meeting himself, he encouraged his supporters to do so.<sup>1</sup>

Delighted by Whitbread's acquiescence, on the 21st the party hierarchy began efforts to rally support for an attack on the wartime policies of the government. In this they faced an important decision. Grenville and many of the more experienced politicians continued to feel that a motion for enquiry into the management of the war would best attract independent voters. This opinion was confirmed when Sidmouth (to whom Grenville had sent a copy of the proposed amendment) informed Grenville that he would support enquiry but vote against any measure which tended to prejudge the question of Walcheren.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, the Peninsular War was so controversial that censure on this head would probably detract from the stronger case against the Walcheren expedition. Apparently, however, a great majority of Grenvillites and Foxites in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 20 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 121.

<sup>2</sup>Sidmouth Life, III, 20.

Commons were eager for a direct motion of censure aimed at both theatres. Against his better judgement Grenville gave way to this cry and Foxite leaders set out to sell their product. At Brooks's Grey and Lansdowne flashed smiles, slapped backs, cornered an incredulous Creevey, and railed against the government's management of the war.<sup>1</sup> On the 22nd eighty M.P.'s, including most of Whitbread's friends, met at Ponsonby's. Though the absence of Whitbread, Sheridan, and Brand disturbed at least one young politician a mood of confidence and harmony prevailed.<sup>2</sup>

Parliament convened on the following day. In the Commons Castlereagh opened the debate with spirit but, according to Creevey, 'When he came to his expedition, he fell a hundred fathoms lower than the bogs of Walcheren.' Canning was also poorly received and the opposition benches came to life when Whitbread delivered a stinging denunciation of the government. In the Lords Grey concentrated on the Peninsula and was stout in calling on Lord Wellesley to justify his brother's 'victory' at Talavera. Nevertheless the divisions in both houses were disappointing. The government's majority in the Commons was a surprising 96 while Grenville, with the coalition fully mobilized, secured only 92 votes in the Lords. As Creevey observed, the opposition did not attract 'floating' votes.<sup>3</sup> The reasons for this failure were obvious. The amendments which had been put forward had reprobated the

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 21 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 121-22.

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 22 Jan. 1810, ibid., 122. W. Lamb to Lady C. Lamb, 23 Jan. 1810, Lady Bessborough And Her Family Circle, pp. 201-02.

<sup>3</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 23 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 122-23. According to Abbot the opposition had expected to divide 200. Abbot Diary, II, 225, 230.

Walcheren expedition and described the exploits of Wellington at Oporto and Talavera as 'marked only by a repetition of former errors'. A majority of M.P.'s had not agreed with these views. Sidmouth's entire party had voted with the government. Sidmouth told his brother that 'had the amendment been worded with judgement and fairness, Opposition would have divided more than 100, instead of 92, in the House of Lords, and government would not have had even a majority of 50 in the House of Commons.'<sup>1</sup>

The loss of momentum occasioned by this setback on opening day was followed by a brilliant offensive on the part of ministers. Obviously playing on the patriotism of the House, on 25 January Perceval gave notice of a vote of thanks to Wellington for his victory at Talavera. Opposition leaders saw immediately that this issue would split their ranks so they countered with a motion which experience had shown to be their strongest card. On the 26th they ignored the Peninsular War and moved for a committee of enquiry on the Walcheren expedition. This manoeuvre brought victory by a vote of 195 to 186 when Castlereagh and four of his supporters, anxious for the truth to be known, dramatically walked into the opposition lobby.<sup>2</sup>

Such an unexpected victory had a great effect on the sinking morale of the opposition. Fremantle reported that the division had united the coalition, and Grey told his wife that the young men who had been disillusioned and uncooperative were now ready to work with party

---

<sup>1</sup>Sidmouth Life, III, 20-1. For a good outline of opposition arguments see Abbot Diary, II, 230.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XV, 161-210. Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 26 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 124.

leaders.<sup>1</sup> Of paramount importance in this development had been the stunning performance of Ponsonby. According to Lady Holland his extraordinarily sharp and sarcastic speech of 26 January 'produced a considerable effect and reconciled those who had snouched most at him.'<sup>2</sup>

Party unity, however, was based solely on the question of Walcheren. The coalition was by no means united in opinion on the subject of the Peninsular War, and the proposed vote of thanks to Wellington caused utter confusion on the 28th. As a concession to the left wing of the party the coalition's leaders had agreed to strong censure of Wellington and his campaign in the amendment of 23 January. Ward had defied ministers 'to produce the name of a single officer of rank or character in the service who had advised the second campaign to Spain.' Other speakers had censured Wellington's operations, saying that in so doing they condemned ministers who, 'having awarded him with a Peerage, must stand or fall with him.' Moreover, they had asserted that his successes 'resembled defeats' since they had been followed by retreats.<sup>3</sup> This strong language had not been popular in the House and several key members of the opposition had disapproved of it. Holland and Fitzwilliam had remained quiet on the subject while Buckingham and Temple had objected strongly to personal attacks on Wellington. On the 28th, therefore, when Ponsonby sent around notes calling for a division on the vote of thanks Grenville instructed him to recall them. This raised the ire of Whitbread's set. On the 29th Creevey noted that 'Rank mutiny has broken out, and it is now said we are certainly to divide. Milton,

---

<sup>1</sup>Fremantle to Buckingham, 29 Jan. 1810, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 420-21. Grey to Lady Grey, 26 Jan. 1810 (Grey). Also see Grenville to Grey, 29 Jan. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Lady Holland Journal, II, 253-54.

<sup>3</sup>Abbot Diary, II, 230.

Folkstone, Lord J. Townshend, George Ponsonby, junr. - in short all the Insurgents.' Creevey and Milton went so far as to draw up an amendment and, in spite of Temple's threats, the Mountain decided to bring the question to a division.<sup>1</sup> Whitbread alone prevented an embarrassing scene. After discussing the matter with Grey and Grenville (and probably gaining concessions on economical reform) he set out to moderate the views of his friends and succeeded in preventing a division.<sup>2</sup> 'All our indignation against Wellington ended up in smook [sic]', reported a disgusted Creevey. 'Opposition to his thanks was so unpopular, that some of the stoutest of our crew slunk away; or rather, they were dispersed by the indefatigable intrigues of the Wellesleys and the tricks of Tierney ... In short he and our more ostensible leaders cut the ground from under our feet in deference to Lord Grenville.'<sup>3</sup>

This crisis did not slow the opposition's momentum. Perceval was experiencing enormous difficulty in luring his supporters to the House and on 31 January he suffered three successive defeats in the selection of a committee to study offices in reversion.<sup>4</sup> On 3 February the Walcheren enquiry began. Porchester took the floor as the coalition's prosecutor, and his examination of witnesses during February was accompanied by events which stirred optimism. On the 16th the government carried a division on the appointment of a committee to consider a pension for Wellington by the breathlessly close vote of 213 to 206.<sup>5</sup> Four

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 29, 30 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 125, 125-26.

<sup>2</sup>Fremantle to Buckingham, 29 Jan. 1810, Buckingham, Court and Cabinets, IV, 420-21.

<sup>3</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 1 Feb. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 127.

<sup>4</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 31 Jan. 1810, ibid., 126. Abbot Diary, II, 231.

<sup>5</sup>Parl. Deb., XV, 467. Abbot Diary, II, 234.

days later the opposition's morale reached a peak when Whitbread carried a motion for Chatham's narrative of the Walcheren expedition by 177 to 171. It had been established that the commander had secretly submitted such a narrative to the king and that it had been returned to him for revision. Whitbread contended that such behaviour was unconstitutional, and his success made a great impression on the party.<sup>1</sup> Creevey was probably right when he observed that 'people did not consider the fatal blow it gave to the King, but they voted as against the rascality of Chatham and in favour of Strachan.' Whatever the motive, however, the victory brought wild rejoicing. St. James's Street and Pall Mall became the scenes of triumphal parades<sup>2</sup> and on 5 March Whitbread reopened the question by moving two resolutions, one declaring facts, the other censuring Chatham's conduct. He carried the first resolution by a majority of 33, the second without a division after Canning had softened its language.<sup>3</sup>

These successes gave rise to almost unbounded optimism. Grenville, who had been amazed by the strength of the case which had developed, felt that the division of 5 March 'put totally out of the question all idea of the continuance of the Government',<sup>4</sup> and only the reluctance of Porchester discouraged him from initiating impeachment proceedings.<sup>5</sup> As the final trial of strength in the Commons neared, however, opposition leaders became daily more aware of a perplexing problem: their difficulties in

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XV, 587.

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 23, 24 Feb. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 131-32.

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., XVI, 7\*. Abbot Diary, II, 238.

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 17 Feb., 6 Mar. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland).

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Grey, 7 Mar. 1810 (Grey).

forming an alternative government.

Windham had pointed to this dilemma as early as 4 January and party dissension on the vote of thanks to Wellington had made Holland conclude that the formation of a Whig government was both impossible and undesirable.<sup>1</sup> The coalition was bound together most precariously by opposition to an unsuccessful military expedition. Party leaders had taken care to restrict the issue of Walcheren to one of management primarily because they could not hope for unity if they broached the broader question of wartime strategy. Both Grenville and Lansdowne had continued to advocate a 'defensive, husbanding system', a neat argument against continental expeditions which stopped short of direct censure of Wellington and his operations.<sup>2</sup> Beneath them, however, party polarization on the issue of the Peninsular War had worsened daily. Whitbread had joined with Grenville and Lansdowne in reprobating continental expeditions but his insistence on the necessity of concluding peace had set him aside from other party leaders.<sup>3</sup> Then, too, many M.P.'s had condemned the Peninsular War on the basis of Moore's contention that Portugal was indefensible,<sup>4</sup> and the Foxite Left in the Commons had attacked Wellington so viciously that the Speaker had been appalled.<sup>5</sup> Creevey and Waithman had drawn up a petition against Wellington's annuity which the latter had managed to carry in the Common Council, and which had been

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Caroline Fox, 30 Jan. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51739 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XV, 514, 532 (21 Feb. 1810).

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 84 (23 Jan. 1810).

<sup>4</sup>Note the comments of Roberts, pp. 141-42.

<sup>5</sup>Abbot Diary, II, 231.

received by the House of Commons.<sup>1</sup> This activity had opened gaping holes in the ranks of the opposition. Ministerialists had put forward an accusation of unpatriotic behaviour against their antagonists, and the right wing of the coalition had stood by Wellington and his campaign stoutly as a result. Windham had gone so far as to compare Talavera to Crecy; pressure from Stowe had caused Grenville to swallow his opinions and voice a more modest tribute; Fremantle, who wanted to attack Wellington, had decided that his seat in Parliament was more important to the nation than criticism of the general.<sup>2</sup> Temple and Buckingham were prepared to sanction a parliamentary attack on the meagre logistical support given to Wellington but they disapproved strongly of opposition to the war itself.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Sidmouth refused to cooperate with the opposition so long as an attack on the Peninsular War were bound to the question of Walcheren.<sup>4</sup>

All this had been accompanied by continuing divergence on the issues of economical reform and Catholic emancipation. Whitbread had refused to forget the former and party disharmony on the latter had been stimulated in late January by the publication of Grenville's A Letter to Lord Fingal.<sup>5</sup> Steps had been taken to compromise on these issues. The party hierarchy had not resisted the Mountain's motion of 31 January

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 22 Feb. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 130-31.

<sup>2</sup>B. Tarleton, Substance of a Speech intended for the Vote of Credit Bill for 1810 (London, 1810), pp. 15-16. W. H. Fremantle, 'Sketch of a Speech on the the Thanks to Sir Arthur Wellesley - very different from what I said-', (Fremantle), box 51.

<sup>3</sup>Buckingham to Grenville, 15 Feb. [1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 11-12.

<sup>4</sup>Sidmouth to Grenville, 18 Feb. 1810, ibid., 12. Also see Sidmouth Life, III, 22-3.

<sup>5</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 3, 5 Feb. 1810 (Grey).



against offices in reversion and Windham had presented the moderate petition of the English Catholics in late February.<sup>1</sup> But these measures had done little to relax tensions. Bitter animosity existed among Foxites in the House of Commons. Tierney would not speak to Whitbread; past differences between Grey and the brewer had left ugly scars; and the Walcheren enquiry had only delayed discussion on the dangerous question of leadership in the lower house. These factors rendered a united stance on even the Walcheren expedition difficult: opposition leaders were experiencing great difficulty in agreeing on the mode of proceeding in Parliament.<sup>2</sup> 'I can hardly bring myself to wish for the success of our labours', noted Grenville on 8 March.<sup>3</sup>

On the 24th, only two days before the conclusion of the Walcheren enquiry, Grenville received a 'reliable' report that he would be asked to form a government within a week.<sup>4</sup> This intelligence filled him with uneasiness but on the morning of the 26th he met with his old friend Auckland and laid out a scheme which he thought capable of uniting the coalition. Grenville agreed with Holland that the formation of a government would be impossible without the support of Whitbread. To gain this support, he concluded, a 'plain, simple, and very short proposition to Napoleon for peace' was necessary. Auckland supported this idea and felt that upon coming to office it should be announced distinctly in both houses of Parliament and justified by the expense of further war

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XV, 262. Grey, Life and Opinions, p. 238.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 5 Mar., and T. Grenville to Grenville, [17 Mar. 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 17-18, 20-1.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 8 Mar. [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland), ff. 51-2.

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 24 Mar. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland).

and the hopelessness of continental alliances. If peace were obtainable it would be accompanied by fundamental changes in the British system of finance. These plans were moulded by three facts. Firstly, Grenville felt sincerely that the Peninsular War was hopeless. Undoubtedly he also felt that a negotiated settlement with France was less dishonourable than either defeat or a sudden withdrawal of troops. Secondly, experience had shown that united Foxite support was impossible unless party leaders were willing to endorse the principle of peace with Napoleon. Thirdly, the desire for office was strong. It is significant that Grenville concluded that such a stand on the war would be impossible if the few remaining Burkians were admitted to the proposed Cabinet. Fundamental in his plan was the retirement of Windham, who had shown on numerous occasions that he could not adapt his foreign views to the demands of party unity.<sup>1</sup> Grenville expected victory, and the foreign policy which he visualized for his new government was identical to that which he and Fox had embraced in 1806.

On the afternoon of 26 March Porchester rose before a packed House. His speech laid the failure of the expedition squarely at the feet of ministers who, he contended, had sent their servants on an impossible task. He showed that it was faulty and tardy planning instead of sluggish execution that had assured failure; he quoted the unfavourable opinions of five military experts consulted by the Cabinet; and he demonstrated that the campaign had lacked both rhyme and reason. He also pointed to the disgraceful lack of medical preparation and to the fatal delay in evacuating the island of Walcheren. He then moved two sets of resolutions - fifteen in all - each of which was of a declaratory

---

<sup>1</sup>Apparently Grenville did not discuss this arrangement with anyone but Auckland. Auckland to Grenville, 26 Mar. 1810, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 23-4.

nature except the last, which censured ministers. His speech was a complete exposé of the factors which had caused the disaster, and when he took his seat it was clear that the opposition had almost everything in their favour: an enthusiastic party, strong allies in Parliament, even stronger support outside of it.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, on the main question of culpability Porchester had laid out an impregnable case. Not Strachan, not Chatham, but the men who had planned and despatched the expedition alone were to blame. During the next four days, however, opposition leaders looked on helplessly as their hopes evaporated. When the crucial divisions were taken on 30 March they were beaten by majorities ranging from 51 to 23.<sup>2</sup>

The factors behind this extraordinary development require examination. Opposition to the wartime policies of government (even when those policies are poor ones) is always difficult, and by the spring of 1810 the nation probably looked on the opposition as a whole as Lady Bessborough looked on the editorials of Perry. The Morning Chronicle, she noted, 'too dull to be read at other times, expands at the prospect of any disaster; give but the hope of failure in an expedition or any army being lost, and it sparkles with wit from one end to the other ....'<sup>3</sup> Even if this assessment were unfair it must be admitted that the opposition's tactics during the Walcheren enquiry had done little to inspire confidence. Frontbenchers had been unable to hold the party behind manageable, clearly-defined objectives. Catholic petitions and motions for economical reform had probably disgusted many of those who

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XVI, 79. Also see Roberts, pp. 145-46.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XVI, 421-22.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, [Sept.?], 1809, Granville Correspondence, II, 347.

wished to censure the management of the expedition. Moreover, the controversial question of the Peninsular War had surfaced in practically every debate, and undoubtedly many M.P.'s had identified censure of the Walcheren expedition with an attack on the more popular operations of Wellington. This had been assured by the game of party generals played by most opposition spokesmen. The ability to dodge commitment on controversial issues - the goal of every opposition - was therefore lacking from beginning to end.

There was also ample reason to charge the opposition with a lack of patriotic spirit. The language of the Independent Whig probably mortified more than a few M.P.'s, and the imprudent personal attacks on the popular Wellington which Creevey and Ward in the Commons and Walthman in the Common Council had been unable to resist had raised a cry of treason. Whitbread, whose moderation was admirable, had been compared to Hanno attacking Hannibal in one pamphlet<sup>1</sup> and the entire party had been accused of harbouring treasonable designs by another writer.<sup>2</sup> This charge had been given additional credibility by the behaviour of the Foxite Left during February and March on the question of John Gale Jones's commitment to Newgate for contempt. On 24 March, only two days before Porchester's resolutions, Burdett had attacked the government on the question of parliamentary privilege in a letter to the Political Register. Many Foxites had agreed with his controversial arguments and this issue had hung over the divisions of the 30th.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>'BRITANNICUS', Letter to Samuel Whitbread, upon the military conduct of Lord Wellington (London, 1810).

<sup>2</sup>The Patriots and the Whigs, the Most Dangerous Enemies of the State (London, 1810).

<sup>3</sup>The Morning Chronicle, 28 Mar. and 5 April 1810, accused ministers of using this issue to hinder the enquiry. For an account of these events see Roberts, p. 265.

On the other hand Ward felt that the opposition had not proved its case, and Holland, pointing to mismanagement, agreed.<sup>1</sup> But Holland was wrong in placing the blame on leaders in the Commons. Neither Porchester's poor oratory nor Ponsonby's absurdity nor Brougham's scheming had seriously handicapped the cause. The problem had come with the fact that the ground upon which the Walcheren expedition was being attacked had not been made clear prior to the time of Porchester's resolutions. The resignation of both Castlereagh and Canning before the opening of the enquiry had placed opposition leaders in the unenviable position of attacking ministers who had played only small roles in the disaster.<sup>2</sup> Indeed the opposition would not have carried the vote for enquiry in the first place without the support of Castlereagh, the guiltiest of the guilty. Whitbread's successful motion for Chatham's narrative in late February had aided government indirectly by making the commander a target for abuse. Foxites had enjoyed discomforting Pitt's brother, and Canning and Castlereagh had joined this cry as a means of covering themselves. Perry had stressed the facility and certainty with which Antwerp might have been taken under a more capable commander. This, as Brougham had pointed out, was an argument which both lightened the charges against ministers and confused the members of the coalition. 'The attacks of the M. Chronicle are really not indifferent', Brougham had written in early March. 'I find they induce a general belief among our friends of the party, especially in the country, that that is the line to be pursued - & accordingly they make up their mind & commit themselves.'<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Ward to Helen Stewart, [31 Mar. 1810], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 95-100. Holland, Further Memoirs, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Murray, 4 Dec. 1809 (Horner).

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Allen, Mar. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

It was probably significant that the ministerial press had run circles around the few newspapers which were identified with the opposition. Anchored by the Courier and the Morning Post, Perceval's government had fairly good journalistic machinery behind it. On the other hand opposition leaders had little influence with newspapers indeed. Of the prints who opposed the government on the question of Walcheren the Political Register, the Examiner, and the Independent Whig also opposed Grey and Grenville; the Globe and the Statesman were timid; and the Morning Chronicle, which had been Fox's mouthpiece, was now the mouthpiece of Perry and Perry alone.

Somehow overconfidence had emerged from all this and very little had been done to attract 'floating' votes. Whitbread and Tom Grenville had been insistent that the resolutions should not be 'pared down to try to catch votes',<sup>1</sup> and party leaders had ignored Sidmouth's feelings altogether.<sup>2</sup> But in the final analysis Horner probably summed up the primary reason for failure:

In the late vote on the Walcheren question, there were many members, I doubt not, who voted with ministers, though they condemned the whole of their conduct in that fatal expedition, yet from a sincere conviction of the superior fitness & excellence of the present set of ministers for holding the government in the present circumstances above any other set of public men.<sup>3</sup>

This was incontestible. Ministers had carried the day on neither their public record nor their personal popularity but because they represented

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 7 Jan. 1810, Creevey Papers, I, 117-18. T. Grenville to Grenville, [17 Mar. 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 20-1.

<sup>2</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 25 Feb. and n.d. [24 Mar. 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 14, 22-3. Buckinghamshire to Auckland, 29 Feb. [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 34457 (Auckland), ff. 396-97.

<sup>3</sup>Horner, 'Note of April 3, 1810', Horner Memoirs, II, 36-8.

the lesser of two evils. All the bickering, all the compromises, and all the vague generalities on the question of the war which had characterized the opposition's activities had not gone unnoticed by the independent members of the House. Ward tried to push the blame on the unpopular Grenvilles but he was deluding himself.<sup>1</sup> Neither Foxites nor Grenvillites had the confidence of a majority of M.P.'s. Their views on the leading issue of the day were unpopular and, as the Independent Whig once pointed out, the work sheet of the Ministry of All the Talents was the greatest ally of Pittite ministries.<sup>2</sup> 'I am sorry that I must continue to vote in hostility to you,' an unidentified peer had written to Auckland on 19 January, 'but I think it a sacred duty to protect our venerable monarch against a combination of men who would avail themselves of public misfortunes not justly attributable to his present Minister, to lord <sup>it</sup> over him, and to bind him in chains.'<sup>3</sup>

The defeat of March 1810 produced overwhelming disappointment. Some saw it as the nadir of the party. Others were inclined to reassess their views. The vast majority of Foxites, however, considered their defeat as disgraceful to the House of Commons. Even before the question had been decided the Edinburgh Review had judged that a government victory would tarnish the reputation of Parliament.<sup>4</sup> Of course the extreme reformers had embraced this view. After the division, when the arrest of Burdett led to violence in the streets, many moderates agreed with Holland that the defeat of the opposition 'was the strongest

---

<sup>1</sup>Ward to Helen Stewart, [31 Mar. 1810], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 95-100.

<sup>2</sup>Independent Whig, 17 Sept. 1809.

<sup>3</sup>Auckland to Grenville, [19 Jan. 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 5-6.

<sup>4</sup>Roberts, p. 147.

practical argument ever furnished for a reform of Parliament; for the House of Commons ... spoke neither the sense of the people whom it represented, nor even of the individuals who composed its body.'<sup>1</sup> This shallow assessment, which helped produce the surprisingly popular reform bill of May, reopened deep wounds in the party because the cry for reform brought the entire structure of not only government but opposition into question. The Independent Whig and the Examiner had long contended that the aristocratic character of the Foxite-Grenvillite coalition resisted the demands of the nation but now the more reputable and widely-read Edinburgh Review encouraged opposition leaders to join with moderate reformers against the Court.<sup>2</sup> As in the previous year Whitbread acted on this advice, and his activity in the City was so strenuous that the Grenvilles became alarmed.<sup>3</sup> Apparently Auckland was the only friend of Grey and Grenville who had learned from experience. He stressed the importance of moderation to his superiors and he warned Grenville that it was 'bad generalship to leave an army in a state of inactivity after a great and unexpected check.'<sup>4</sup> But Grenville had had enough. In late April he delivered ultimatums to Foxite leaders.<sup>5</sup> Prudently Grey decided that the true policy of opposition was 'to watch the acts of Government rather than to originate any measures of our own.'<sup>6</sup> Again the coalition was immobilized.

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Further Memoirs, p. 47.

<sup>2</sup>Edinburgh Review, XV, 504.

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 20-23 April 1810, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 26.

<sup>4</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 5, 12 April 1810, ibid., 24, 25-6.

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Grey, 27 April 1810 (Grey).

<sup>6</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 30 April 1810, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 29.



Developments in the Peninsula during the summer were almost more than Grey and Grenville could bear. Wellington's campaign of 1810 marked what was probably the nadir of British fortunes in Portugal. In May there was a great feud between Perceval and Wellesley because Wellington was not getting the financial support his brother considered essential. Then, too, reports of the consolidation of French troops under Massena were very disappointing to those who followed the progress of the campaign on a map,<sup>1</sup> and in June rumour held that the British army would be withdrawn.<sup>2</sup> Grenville was seriously ill and had little to say about all this but Grey, tormented by the behaviour of the reformers and outraged by the situation in the Peninsula, became convinced that the leaders of the coalition 'should mark by some distinct and intelligible measure the principles on which we act' so as to distinguish 'between us and the Ministers on the one hand, and those who are urging these popular questions ... on the other.'<sup>3</sup>

On 14 June he closed the session with a strong speech supporting the 'husbanding, defensive system' which he and Grenville held out as their alternative to the wartime policies of the government. Wellington was not censured but continental expeditions were denounced vigorously. Most significantly, all present prospect of peace was deemed illusory. And to this was attached strong censure of the reformers of the day.<sup>4</sup> Undoubtedly a concise statement of policy was needed, but Grey's attitude on the war is astonishing.

---

<sup>1</sup>Note Grenville's comments on this subject. Grenville to Auckland, 16 Oct. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland).

<sup>2</sup>Roberts, pp. 149-50.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Grenville, 26 April 1810, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 27-8.

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb., XVII, 535.

The events of the spring had shown clearly that the party could not unite in opposition to the Peninsular War; indeed party leaders had done everything in their power to avoid the question. While Grenville and Grey continued to oppose the presence of a British army in the Peninsula, Buckingham, Spencer, Temple, Holland, and Bedford now looked on Wellington's operations with favour and Fitzwilliam had never wavered in his opinion that the Peninsular War would lead to Napoleon's fall.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, it appears that Holland's friends were once again beginning to rally behind the Spanish cause by the time of Grey's speech. Allen's interest in Spanish politics was reviving and Horner was only months away from calling for larger armies and greater efforts.<sup>2</sup> Pilgrimages to Spain had again become popular. Adair was in Cadiz and his favourable reports on the proceedings of the Cortes were beginning to make an impression on Whig opinion.<sup>3</sup>

On the other hand Grenville had already seen the necessity of carrying his isolationistic views to their logical conclusion of a negotiated peace with Napoleon and both he and Grey were fully aware that cooperation with Whitbread depended on such a view of affairs. Moreover, Grey's declaration against peace is the more surprising when one considers that outside Parliament the agitation for peace, which had died down in 1809, was reviving alongside reform. Jeffrey, Brougham, and Thanet could not separate these two causes.<sup>4</sup> Roscoe, who had

---

<sup>1</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grey, 25 Sept. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Allen to Lady Holland, 28 July [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 52172 (Allen), ff. 17-18. Horner to Jeffrey, 18 Jan. 1811, Horner Memoirs, II, 68-75.

<sup>3</sup>Adair to Holland, 25-27 Sept. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Lord Cockburn, Life of Lord Jeffrey (Edinburgh, 1852), pp. 189-92. Roscoe to Brougham, 6 Oct. 1810 (Brougham).

supported Holland's definition of the Spanish Revolution until the turn of the year, had been collecting tracts which he had published at different times since 1793 on the subject of the war and he was about to publish a pamphlet supporting peace when he learned of Grey's speech.<sup>1</sup>

Grey's comments sent a wave of shock through Foxite circles. Lansdowne and Lauderdale supported them stoutly but apparently they were alone among party leaders. Erskine condemned Grey on the floor of the House; Lord Douglas and Gloucester refused to vote; and Holland, in Tom Grenville's opinion, was 'not above half right upon the question.'<sup>2</sup> One old Foxite assured Whitbread that he now had 'the honestest part of the Foxites sincerely attached to you', and Creevey probably summed up the views of the left wing of the party when he wrote that Grey was 'bona fide Insane'.<sup>3</sup> Young Whigs were badly disillusioned by Grey's performance. Lord John Russell, a devoted student of Foxite theory, made no effort to hide his feelings. From Woburn Abbey he wrote to Holland:

I am now in great doubt what to believe of Lord Grey, for he still seems to think himself a Whig, & I am afraid the Tory Opinions which he wears under that cloak will bring the name into great discredit. The more I reflect on his speech, the more I wonder at, both at the aristocratical notions & vague arguments which it abounds with ... They say Ld Grey has made Ld Grenville a Whig, but it seems to be a Whiggy-Toryish mixture between them.<sup>4</sup>

Reformers were outraged. Attacks on Grey were so serious that the Morning Chronicle undertook a defence and it rapidly became clear that few Foxites were prepared to follow the dictates of their ostensible

---

<sup>1</sup>Roscoe to Erskine, 26 Aug. 1810 (Roscoe), 1455.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, [16 June 1810], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 44.

<sup>3</sup>P. Payne to Whitbread, n.d. [July-Aug. 1810?], (Whitbread), 2522. Creevey to Roscoe, 14 Sept. 1810 (Roscoe), 1057.

<sup>4</sup>Ld. John Russell to Holland, 7 Aug. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51677 (Holland).

leader.<sup>1</sup> Grey found solace in the fact that Milton and several Grenvillites supported his views on reform, but he could not claim the affection of even moderates like Holland. Jeffrey, Whitbread, Coke, Creevey, Horner, and William Smith disagreed with him completely.<sup>2</sup>

Grey's overall view of the war was contested effectively from both right and left in the months which followed his speech. Roscoe was positively indignant and his pamphlet, Brief Observations on the Address to His Majesty proposed by Earl Grey on 14 June 1810, thoroughly denounced the British government's wartime objectives in the Peninsula, argued convincingly for a negotiated peace assuring Spanish territorial sovereignty, and skilfully refuted Grey's logic. Of importance was the fact that Roscoe's arguments closely paralleled those which Whitbread had put forward in 1808 in his pamphlet, A Letter to Lord Holland. Apparently Roscoe's work was widely read. He sent copies of it to most of his colleagues and received a favourable response;<sup>3</sup> even Sir Walter Scott read it and asked Southey for his opinion.<sup>4</sup> Of course the Independent Whig was always ready to join a cry for peace<sup>5</sup> and Leigh Hunt endorsed Roscoe's arguments in the Examiner.<sup>6</sup> By the end of the year the Foxites were once again hopelessly divided on the issue of the war. The peace party was far from insignificant and Holland was deterred

---

<sup>1</sup>Morning Chronicle, 29 June 1810.

<sup>2</sup>Roberts, pp. 276-79, gives an excellent account of Foxite views on reform at the end of the session.

<sup>3</sup>Gloucester excepted. Gloucester to Roscoe, 23 Aug., Erskine to Roscoe, 4 Sept., Creevey to Roscoe, 14 Sept., Francis to Roscoe, 27 Nov. 1810, and G. Hibbert to Roscoe, 22 Mar. 1811 (Roscoe), 1768, 1457, 1057, 1587, 2011.

<sup>4</sup>Scott Letters, II, 174.

<sup>5</sup>Independent Whig, 15 June 1810.

<sup>6</sup>Examiner, 7 Oct. 1810.

from championing the war in Parliament only by the fear of falling under 'the great Sledge hammer of Ld. Grenville's eloquence'.<sup>1</sup> Grey, Grenville, and the mercurial Morning Chronicle<sup>2</sup> stood somewhere between the two, watching their strength slowly evaporate. Not surprisingly, there would be no more frontal attacks on the military policies of the government.

After the session of 1810 opposition to the war was factious. Little was said about military strategy in Parliament and the trickle of criticism which came from the opposition benches centred on details. The conflicting views of opposition leaders, however, go far in explaining their continuing discomfiture as a party. Holland and his friends displayed almost comical inconsistency. Holland simply did not know what to think after Grey's forceful statement of policy in June 1810, and for several months he had little to say on the issue of the war. His stand on the question of peace was curious indeed. In August he defended Grey by arguing that war with France had 'nothing to do with the principles of general liberty or the tenets of the Whig party in England.' In the same letter, however, he cited his uncle's theories and eventually re-affirmed his support for peace.<sup>3</sup>

The meeting of the Cortes late in the summer of 1810 revived interest in Spanish political fortunes and Lady Holland dared to send an account of the proceedings to Grey.<sup>4</sup> Holland House regulars, however, were having second thoughts on the political implications of British

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 24 Dec. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Morning Chronicle, 14 Feb. 1811 (hankering for sugar islands).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Ld. John Russell, 13 Aug. 1810, Rollo Russell, ed., Early Correspondence of Lord John Russell (London, 1813), I, 131-39.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 26 Oct. [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland), f. 114.

policy in Spain. The formation of the Spanish regency reopened controversy and as early as July Allen expressed an opinion that the Cortes would never thrive under Ferdinand.<sup>1</sup> The policies of the British government and the mood of the public also caused concern. Late in the year one of Holland's friends concluded that there was considerable disparity between the views of Holland and those of others who supported war in the Peninsula.<sup>2</sup> This tardy but valid conclusion, of course, did not stimulate support for the war and the Holland House circle became furious in the autumn when the Cortes made it clear that the movement for independence in Spanish South America would be resisted with force. 'I suppose you have seen the rash decree of the Regency against the Caraccas', wrote Allen's friend Blanco White. 'It appears to me almost evident that they will be guilty of exciting a civil war in the American Colonies, which will end in favour of Bonaparte. What can be done in favour of a country committed into hands so ignorant and so violent, not to say, wicked?'<sup>3</sup> This opinion was shared by others. Charles Vaughan, hitherto a firm supporter of Spanish liberties, became cold in his opinion of the Cortes.<sup>4</sup> Allen, who feared the independence of Spain's colonies, lost much of his faith in the political future of Spain.<sup>5</sup>

In September Miranda and several newly-elected South American deputies were honoured at a dinner in London which was attended by at least one of Allen's friends.<sup>6</sup> The democratic doctrines which were

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen to Lady Holland, 28 July [1810], B.M., Add. MSS. 52172 (Allen), ff. 17-18.

<sup>2</sup>C. Vaughan to Allen, 19 Dec. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen).

<sup>3</sup>B. White to Allen, 5 Sept. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen).

<sup>4</sup>Vaughan to Allen, 2 Aug. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 52193 (Allen).

<sup>5</sup>Allen to Horner, 22 July 1810 (Horner).

<sup>6</sup>B. White to Allen, 19 Sept. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 52194 (Allen).

associated with the revolutionary cause presented a striking contrast with the drift of the Cortes and conversation at Holland House centred on this subject in late 1810. Holland was prepared to raise the question in Parliament and in September he speculated on a Foxite coalition with Wellesley, who shared his opinion on South America.<sup>1</sup> A visit from the widely acclaimed Spanish commander the Duc d'Albuquerque probably added to the already foul taste in the mouths of Holland's friends. 'If he is a fair specimen of the rest, nobody need wonder that the Spaniards have not made a better figure', wrote one of Lady Holland's dinner guests. 'It was quite ridiculous to hear a little fellow (less than Monk Lewis) talking of the ... courage & strength required in a Bullfight & then State with an affected air "qu'il avait fait cette folie."<sup>2</sup>

During 1811 and early 1812 Foxites found themselves the victims of contradiction. The accomplishments of Wellington and the Spanish armies virtually silenced the cry for peace. Holland and his circle were delighted by these military victories but their joy was neutralized by steadily increasing disaffection with political developments in Spain. Of course this confused the Foxite view of the war considerably. At Devonshire House in early 1811 Sheridan and Whitbread perplexed the Cavendishes with paradoxical assessments of the value of the Spaniards as allies. Lady Bessborough noted afterwards that 'both seem'd to me to argue in contradiction to the conclusions they meant to draw ...'<sup>3</sup> But the views of Whitbread and Sheridan could have been no more confusing than those which Horner expressed to Jeffrey in January 1811. He praised

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Fitzpatrick, 23 Sept., and Fitzpatrick to Holland, 30 Sept. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51799 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Grey, 26 Nov. 1810 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, [Mar.] 1811, Granville Correspondence, II, 386.

Whitbread's last peace motion and yet claimed that Spain had given him a 'warlike disposition'; he proclaimed peace with Napoleon impossible and yet advocated a continental settlement based on France's retention of her satellite kingdoms; and he concluded with a call for the reinforcement of Wellington's army.<sup>1</sup>

Though Grey's opinions fluctuated with events, he generally clung to Grenville's pessimistic view of the war. From the beginning Grey had placed faith in the opinions of disgruntled 'Whig' officers. Moore had convinced him that Portugal was indefensible and the accounts of Gordon and Rosslyn had given him an overly pessimistic picture of Wellington's campaign. In the autumn of 1810 the dismal reports of Sir Robert Wilson began to arrive at Howick with astonishing frequency. These reports, which were given credence by the fact that the author had actually commanded in the Peninsula, included meticulously drawn maps of Portugal designed to prove that the Torres Vedras position was a poor one.<sup>2</sup> Wilson shared his wisdom with other opposition leaders. Holland and Gloucester were on his mailing list<sup>3</sup> and by October Grey was enjoying the exchange of indignant remarks with a variety of interested parties. A low opinion of Wellington and the Spanish soldier, an inflated one of Massena, and a conviction that guerilla warfare was the only solution characterized the opinions of Wilson's audience.<sup>4</sup>

British public opinion had little patience with the view of the

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 8 Jan. 1811, Horner Memoirs, II, 68-75.

<sup>2</sup>See this Wilson-Grey correspondence in the B.M., Add. MSS. 30118 (Wilson).

<sup>3</sup>Gloucester to Grey, 5 July 1813 (Grey). Lady Holland to Grey, 7 Oct. 1811, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Holland, 8, 19 Oct. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Grenville to Grey, 1 Nov. 1810, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 61-2. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 Oct. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51697 (Holland).



war which was associated with the coalition. At best one could assess the situation like one independent gentleman of Lower Berkeley Street, Manchester Square: 'Every prediction on the part of the Opposition with respect to the issue of the campaign - that we should lose our whole army, be obliged to embark in six weeks, etc., etc., - said much too heedlessly and too frequently, has been successively refuted by the event, and given people a poor opinion of their sagacity ...' Ministerial and even independent writers accused the opposition of considerably more than a lack of foresight. Coleridge baited them unmercifully in the Courier. He charged them with rejoicing at British reverses in Spain and he once remarked that the Morning Chronicle 'seems never to conceive the possibility of any accidents occurring to Buonaparte, as thinking him, perhaps, especially entitled to the favour and protection of Providence.' Cruikshank's caricatures suggested that the opposition was eager to sacrifice British interests for the sake of peace, and anonymous pamphlets like The French Spy (1808) and The Patriots and the Whigs the Most Dangerous Enemies of the State (1810) were unscrupulous in their accusations of treason.<sup>1</sup>

Young Foxites, of course, were unhappy with the stance of Grey and Grenville. There was considerable fear during late 1811 that the young Duke of Devonshire would attach himself to Sheridan, Adam, Taylor, Yarmouth, Moira, Norfolk, and the Prince for by that time Carlton House had established a Foxite-oriented political identity of its own.<sup>2</sup> Harry, Erskine's youngest son, also caused concern among his elders. He was vocal in his support of peace, and at a party dinner of late 1810 he

<sup>1</sup>Roberts, pp. 151-52, 168-69.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Allen, 14 Aug. 1811, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

raised eyebrows with an unexpected toast to Burdett.<sup>1</sup> William Lamb refused to accept Bedford's generous offer of a seat in Parliament on the grounds that none of the coalition's leaders seemed to allow 'for the exigency of the time and state of Europe, but are all guided by the regular old rules and tacticks from which they would not depart one tittle to save the Empire ...'<sup>2</sup> Ward, a traditional supporter of peace who by 1812 saw no alternative to endorsing Wellington's campaign, announced his desertion of Grey and Grenville. He felt that the 'only reasonable choice' on the question of the war was between Canning and Whitbread. In joining Canning he explained that the Pittite 'was not a greater warrior than Lord Grey', only a more efficient one. To Ward it seemed that Grey and Grenville were contending for 'an unseasonable and unattainable object'.<sup>3</sup> 'Our friends, as might be supposed, are much divided - but suspicions and fears predominate', wrote Brougham. 'Indeed, do all one can, there are such staggering circumstances as make it very difficult to continue in the faith.'<sup>4</sup>

These problems were not restricted to the Foxite wing of the coalition. The Grenvillite and Burkian parties never had been large but by mid-1812 they had almost lost their identities. Young men like Milton, Althorp, Ebrington, and the Wynns were closely aligned with the popular politics of the Mountain, and Temple refused to attend Parliament. 'I positively will not come up merely because Tierney or Mr. Ponsonby wish to see the Opposition benches crowded, to cry 'hear, hear' to detestable

---

<sup>1</sup>Allen to Lady Holland, n.d. [17 Aug. 1811?], B.M., Add. MSS. 52172 (Allen), ff. 47-8.

<sup>2</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 29 Sept. 1812, Granville Correspondence, II, 462-63.

<sup>3</sup>Ward to Brougham, n.d. [July 1812?], (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Brougham to Grey, 23 Dec. 1811 (Brougham).

speeches, and then to be sent back again with a further adjournment for my pains', he explained.<sup>1</sup> Windham died in late 1810; Carlisle grew angry with Grenville and refused to leave Yorkshire;<sup>2</sup> Spencer announced his retirement;<sup>3</sup> Elliot disclaimed all interest in a return to office in 1811;<sup>4</sup> and Fitzwilliam, who never had agreed with Grey and Grenville's view of the war, avoided Parliament, became interested in local politics, and used his borough patronage to return personal friends who offered the party nothing.<sup>5</sup> Buckingham, who would die in 1813, found the trip up to London too demanding as early as 1810 and Tom Grenville, who would out-live everybody, was such a hypochondriac that he had little to do with politics after the Walcheren enquiry. As early as June 1811 Grenville noted that his interest in politics was 'completely dead'.<sup>6</sup>

By mid-1812 the once powerful coalition had practically ceased to exist. During the spring and summer Grey and Grenville discussed the formation of a ministry with first Wellesley and then Moira without being sure that they could depend upon the support of a party in the House of Commons. Finally when they took a stand on their traditional view of the war the possibility of office vanished and the few remaining peers who supported them raised objections. Bedford practically begged Grey to adopt a more realistic view<sup>7</sup> and Buckingham, arguing on Grenville's

---

<sup>1</sup>Temple to T. Grenville, 28 May 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>2</sup>Carlisle to T. Grenville, 24 Jan. 1811, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Spencer, 11 Jan. 1811 (Spencer).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Grey, 28 Jan. 1811 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Note Brougham's interesting comments. Brougham to Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

<sup>6</sup>Grenville to Temple, 4 June 1811, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 145.

<sup>7</sup>Bedford to Grey, 26 May 1812 (Grey).

terms, stressed that 'an offensive war on the Peninsula saves Ireland & perhaps our own coast as well as our Colonies all which would be immediately & heavily endangered by the French occupation of the Spanish & Portuguese Ports.'<sup>1</sup> But Grey and Grenville refused to bend. They had stood by the unpopular foreign policy of a rejected ministry almost constantly for six years; they would cling to the 'husbanding, defensive system' until Wellington's guns drove Soult across the Pyrenees.

[The following text is extremely faint and largely illegible, appearing to be a continuation of the historical narrative.]

<sup>1</sup>Buckingham to T. Grenville, 23 Feb. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 41851 (T. Grenville).

## CHAPTER VIII

### THE FINAL CRISIS: THE FALL OF THE FRENCH EMPIRE 1812 - 1815

In the autumn of 1812 several Foxite leaders momentarily grew excited about the prospects of success on the Catholic question. Lady Oxford, who seldom minced words, found this development amusing. '... I am sincerely sorry the Catholics have succeeded so ill for two reasons', she wrote to Holland. 'First because it is melancholy to see the majority on the side of prejudice and illiberality ... and [secondly] because if this Catholic business were once over, you Whiggs [sic] would have nothing to do, but to dispose your minds to stronger measures of Legislation.'<sup>1</sup> This was not an isolated opinion. In a series of abortive negotiations for office which had stretched over the first half of the year Grey and Grenville had displayed that they were incapable of coming to grips with the political world around them.<sup>2</sup> Once again the demands of coalition had prevented them from putting forward a realistic alternative to the foreign policy of the government. Dating from 1807 they had harped, they had spoken vaguely of a need to conserve the resources of the nation, but never, even in office, had they embraced an identifiable philosophy on the leading issue of the day. Their widely ridiculed pessimism had sprung as much from fear of each other as from fear of French power and their every effort had gone towards neutralizing

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Oxford to Holland, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51826 (Holland), ff. 181-82.

<sup>2</sup>Roberts, pp. 371-405.

the internal disagreements which had arisen with the ups and downs of the struggle on the Continent. Fully aware of their differences on the war, Grey and Grenville had never discussed European politics fully; while opposing peace they had studiously avoided commitment on the all-important question of wartime objectives. During the period which began with Wellington's victory at Salamanca and ended with the battle of Waterloo the coalition was rocked by crisis as this question was forced on them.

Throughout the spring of 1812 the attention of the nation was focused on the unprecedented march of Napoleon's army towards Russia and as early as July the ministerial press reported confidently that logistical weaknesses would force the Grand Army into a disastrous retreat from the north of Europe. Simultaneously Wellington was making rapid strides in the Peninsula and in late July word of his blow at Salamanca reached London. These events perplexed several important Foxites. 'I am ... rather alarmed for our friend Napoleon', Thanet wrote to Holland. 'I think he must have a tumble from too much confidence some day or other. The reestablishment of Poland is a capital job which I hope he will accomplish before his fall.'<sup>1</sup> Others were less fatalistic. On 21 July when Sheridan applauded ministers for shunning Napoleon's peace overtures of April Whitbread and Hutchinson found it necessary to re-emphasize the necessity of a European settlement based on the recognition of Napoleon's government. The brewer censured Castlereagh's refusal to negotiate, questioned the wartime objectives of ministers, and warned that if the spirit of British foreign policy remained unchecked, 'it would be impossible even to treat for peace between the two countries as long as Buonaparte lived.' Hutchinson was more specific.

---

<sup>1</sup>Thanet to Holland, July 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51571 (Holland).

He pointed to the lessons of the past in outlining the folly of British cooperation with continental powers and he rose in defence of Napoleon's right to the French throne. 'No conquerer', he observed, 'had ever established a better, or to all appearance, a more secure one.'<sup>1</sup> A week later Burdett expressed similar sentiments in the House.<sup>2</sup> Whishaw, alarmed by the warlike views of the Morning Chronicle, encouraged Perry to display more moderation.<sup>3</sup>

These views were unpopular among party regulars during the summer but by autumn Lord Cathcart's reports of French difficulty in Russia had joined with the news of Salamanca to increase the cry for a negotiated European settlement. Alarmed by the warlike mood of the British public, Holland suspected that the Cabinet aimed at the restoration of the Bourbons in France. 'The offer of moderate terms of peace in concert with the Spaniards would in my opinion be the wisest measure', he wrote to Grey. '... I suspect that the Prince is as warlike as his father & has very little notion of the moment of victory being the season of moderation.'<sup>4</sup> By 6 September Whitbread and Holland had discussed the matter fully and they agreed that the time had come for Franco-British negotiations based on the independence of Spain.<sup>5</sup>

However, the Foxites were still far from unity on the question of the war. Salamanca caused Grey to embrace an unmistakably warlike view of affairs in late August and Perry's editorials in the Morning

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XXIII, 1124-46.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., 1266-67.

<sup>3</sup>Whishaw to Brougham, 28 July [1812], (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Grey, 26 Aug. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Whitbread to Holland, 18 Aug., 6 Sept. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

Chronicle continued to echo the language of the ministerial press.<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne and Bedford would not commit themselves. Other Foxite leaders saw no reason to abandon the call for a defensive system. Though Wilson reported that Napoleon would have his hands full in Russia, Adair was certain that the French would carry all before them and Rosslyn felt that it would be wise 'to back the Veracity of the French bulletin agt the Russian Acct.'<sup>2</sup> Even after Salamanca Gordon furnished party leaders with preposterous overestimates of French strength, and the dismal performance of Spanish troops in the battle did not go unnoticed.<sup>3</sup> Lauderdale, who had spent the last year writing articles on the economic ills of the country, was certain that 'our Glorious exertions may without much difficulty be shewn to be the direct cause of our misery.'<sup>4</sup> Rosslyn made excuses for Marmont, criticized Wellington, and, while stating that Salamanca would be of no consequence, rejoiced that the victory would 'strengthen the Ministers & keep Canning down a little.'<sup>5</sup> Erskine was vehement in denouncing Cathcart's 'lies', and Tierney was sure that Napoleon would soon dictate a peace from Moscow.<sup>6</sup> Of importance in the formulation of these opinions was the fact that ministerial writers used Russian successes to attack the timid foreign

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 19 Aug. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Morning Chronicle, 17, 18 Aug. 1812.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Holland, 5 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Grey to Adair, 9 Sept. 1812 (Grey). Rosslyn to Brougham, 9 Oct. 1812 (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>Gordon to Grey, 27 Sept. 1812 (Grey). Thanet to Grey, 23 Aug. 1812 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, n.d. [Aug. 1812], B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland), ff. 207-14.

<sup>5</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 6, 17 Aug. 1812 (Grey).

<sup>6</sup>Erskine to Holland, n.d., B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland). Tierney to T. Grenville, 19 Sept. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 41858 (T. Grenville).



policy of the Ministry of All the Talents.<sup>1</sup> Then, too, Salamanca hardly vindicated the 'husbanding, defensive system', and Yarmouth's stinging denunciation of the Talents' peace negotiations in a pamphlet of August threw a wet blanket on the hopes of those who wanted the coalition to rally around a motion for an immediate European settlement.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the stubbornness of Grenvillite leaders discouraged enthusiasm for both war and peace. Grenville had little to say on the subject of the northern war but he insisted that Salamanca would only delay the expulsion of the British army from the Peninsula. Eden was not only sure of the defeat of Russia but excited that Poland would get her independence. Tom Grenville was equally pessimistic and Auckland found Cathcart's glowing reports comical.<sup>3</sup> Predictably, by October Grey had despaired of success in both Spain and Russia but he said nothing of peace.<sup>4</sup> All this was nothing new. However, there were now currents beneath Grey that could not be ignored.

Henry Brougham's successful campaign against the long-contested Orders in Council had coincided with the unsuccessful efforts of Grey and Grenville to form a ministry earlier in the year. Though devoid of any immediately recognizable political result, it had nevertheless been an important triumph. Castlereagh, whom Brougham had backed to the wall with the threat of a division, noted astutely that the defeat of the Orders in Council was the first victory of the industrial interests over

---

<sup>1</sup>Adair to Grey, 22 Dec. 1812 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>I have been unable to locate this pamphlet but Grey refers to it in his letter to Holland of 29 August 1812. B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 23 Aug. 1812 (Grey). Eden to Auckland, 30 July [1812], B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland). Auckland to Grey, 1 Nov. 1812 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Brougham, 20 Oct. 1812 (Brougham).

the government and that further instances of their growing supremacy over the landed aristocracy could be expected.<sup>1</sup> Others had been impressed by Brougham's brilliant personal performance on the floor of the House. Horner, who detested Brougham, nevertheless felt that his performance had been 'unexampled in the modern history of Parliament' and Ward noted that the young man had been hailed as one of the greatest parliamentarians in English history.<sup>2</sup> But above all else Brougham's victory was important because it had been a clear departure from the parliamentary tactics of the past. He had relied on a well organized press campaign, firm contacts in the country at large, and a wave of petitions to bring great pressure on a weak government. Significantly, he had received little support from the leaders of the Whig coalition. Grey had opposed the campaign from the start; Bedford had shown no interest; and Holland had gone fishing on the day of the crucial division.<sup>3</sup> Tom Grenville had refused to be led by what he saw as the left wing of the party; Thanet had thought that Whitbread was drunk when the brewer suggested that the issue could unite the party; and the Speaker had been struck by the absence of Ponsonby, Tierney, and all of the Grenvillites on an important division.<sup>4</sup> Moreover, Brougham recalled that Tierney and many others had resented his exertions.<sup>5</sup> But he had

---

<sup>1</sup>Aspinall, Brougham and the Whig Party, p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Brougham, 25 July 1812, Brougham, Life and Times, II, 23. Ward to Helen Stewart, July 1812, Letters to 'Ivy', p. 167. Also see Chester New, Life of Henry Brougham to 1830 (Oxford, 1961), pp. 60-8.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Brougham, 20 Oct. 1812 (Brougham). Bedford to Grey, 23 Feb. 1812 (Grey). Holland House Dinner Book entry of 15 June 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51951.

<sup>4</sup>T. Grenville to Lady Grenville, 24 April 1812, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 240-41. Thanet to Holland, 9 June 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51571 (Holland). Abbot Diary, II, 369.

<sup>5</sup>Brougham to Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

succeeded in pulling the mainline party behind him and in the process he had proved clearly that well organized movements out of doors could promote a great deal of unity among Foxites in Parliament.

Roscoe, whose pen had been employed in the pursuit of this objective since 1807, was greatly impressed by Brougham's accomplishment, as was Brougham himself.<sup>1</sup> In the wake of the repeal of the Orders these two men visualized a second campaign, a campaign which would unite the Foxites behind their old principles of peace and parliamentary reform. With the aid of Roscoe's political machinery Brougham and Creevey would challenge Canning and the incumbent Gascoyne in the Liverpool election of October.

Roscoe had high hopes of reuniting the former supporters of Fox. He realized from the start that Grey would be a tough nut to crack and that in all probability the support of other Foxite peers would depend entirely on Grey's approval. For these reasons he pushed the idea that the campaign would not give way to 'every popular impulse' because such a course would do 'essential injury to the cause.'<sup>2</sup> He felt that an endorsement of moderate reform was necessary to achieve his ends but, as Creevey told one radical, it would be unwise to represent a reformation of Parliament as the cure for all the country's ills.<sup>3</sup> Support for the conclusion of a general peace would be the leading plank of the campaign. War with America had broken out during the summer and this had alarmed the trading interest in Liverpool. Moreover, the conflict on the Continent was growing more expensive daily and those who were not concerned over the war's political implications were certain that

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham, Life and Times, II, 1-23.

<sup>2</sup>Roscoe to Brougham, n.d. [Sept. 1812], (Brougham).

<sup>3</sup>Creevey to Rev. William Shepherd, 17 Sept. 1812 (Roscoe), 1064.

British finance could not stand the strain. Quoting Fox verbatim, Roscoe, Brougham, and Creevey represented a general peace as the prerequisite of reform. '... if peace comes', wrote Brougham at a later date, 'reform must sooner or later come with it - for there is an end of the gag that has been used since 1793 to stop our mouths - viz - don't talk of changes while the enemy is at our gates.'<sup>1</sup> Gloucester endorsed this concept and, at Roscoe's suggestion, encouraged Grey and Grenville to follow suit. This, in Roscoe's opinion, would conciliate 'the great body of the people with their natural leaders, the nobility & proprietors of the land; the union of whom is indispensably necessary to resist the influence of the crown ...'<sup>2</sup>

Madison's unrealistic demand for British abandonment of the right of search as the price of peace crippled the campaign from the start.<sup>3</sup> Canning was quick to point out that even the Ministry of All the Talents had stoutly refused a similar demand in 1806 and Brougham got nowhere in his feeble attempt to rally Foxite leaders against impressment.<sup>4</sup> The net result was that the Foxite candidates were forced to concentrate heavily on the European war in an attempt to emphasize their differences with Canning. On 4 September a dinner in honour of Brougham was attended by a large group of supporters including Bennet, Stanley, Derby, and even Sefton. Brougham's speech set the stage for his campaign:

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Roscoe, 30 Nov. 1813 (Roscoe), 505.

<sup>2</sup>Roscoe to Gloucester, 17 Sept. draft, and Gloucester to Roscoe, 14 Nov. 1812 (Roscoe), 1781, 1783.

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Roscoe, n.d. [Aug. 1812], (Roscoe), 524. Brougham to T. Thornley, 1 Aug., and Brougham to Grey, 9 Sept. 1812 (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Abercromby to Brougham, 1 Aug. 1812 (Brougham). Brougham to Allen, 25 Sept. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen). Allen to Brougham, 29 Sept. 1812 (Brougham).

A general peace is our true policy: upon a general peace the actual prosperity of the kingdom must be speedily placed... It is in this light that, with joy and expressions of sincere congratulation, I mention the late glorious victory of Salamanca. In that victory ought to be placed an earnest expectation of peace... We may now ask what are our real interests and those of Europe; for the false delicacy of concession is completely obliterated; because after this victory, who shall say that we cannot concede with honour? Glorious in many ways - in this it is truly advantageous, that it offers us the means of peace.<sup>1</sup>

In London Hunt's Examiner endorsed these sentiments and soon Hutchinson, who was considered to be an authority on foreign affairs, was at Brougham's side with dismal accounts of the northern war which contradicted those of Canning.<sup>2</sup> Even old Major Cartwright came to Liverpool and campaigned for Brougham and Creevey.<sup>3</sup>

By late September it was clear that Roscoe's attempt to unite the Whigs with 'the people' behind Fox's standard was meeting with a great deal of success. Astonished by this spectacle, Brougham reported to Allen that the love of Fox, 'even among the most violent Burdettites (of whom there are swarms) has never for a moment wavered - in so much that at all their large & violent reform meetings, his memory is uniformly among the first toasts.'<sup>4</sup> Of course Canning met all this by raising the standard of Pitt against both peace and reform, and Liverpool rapidly became a battleground for the politics of the 1790's. The cry for peace was loud among the supporters of Brougham and Creevey, and Brougham did everything in his power to use it as a bridge to the reconciliation of the party. He flattered and reported his progress to

---

<sup>1</sup>Examiner, 20 Sept. 1812.

<sup>2</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 11 Oct. 1812, Creevey Papers, I, 170.

<sup>3</sup>Brougham to Grey, 9 Sept. 1812 (Brougham).

<sup>4</sup>Brougham to Allen, 25 Sept. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen).

Grey almost daily<sup>1</sup> and he tried to induce Whitbread to come north by assuring him that he was seen by the public as Fox's successor in foreign politics.<sup>2</sup> Finally, after losing a close election, Brougham closed his campaign with a tribute to Fox, to the great Whig families, and to the principles of peace and reform which, according to Creevey, 'shook the very square and all the houses in it from the applause it met with.'<sup>3</sup> After defeat was known 'an immediate and cordial reunion took place ... [in Liverpool] between the high & low Whigs.'<sup>4</sup> This reunion was based primarily on a common opinion of the desirability of an immediate continental peace. From it sprang an agreement to prepare petitions and to solicit Holland and Whitbread to lay them before Parliament.

The campaign at Liverpool aroused great controversy within the ranks of the party. Perry refused to print Brougham's speech. Allen, too, was displeased and in a gross violation of confidence he circulated among outraged party leaders one of Brougham's letters which expressed a desire to cooperate with radical organizations in the north.<sup>5</sup> Grey looked on Brougham's flirtation with the reformers most suspiciously and, though he was prepared to sanction a simple expression of a wish for peace, he continued to oppose any attempt to force it on the government. Moreover, he was not happy about the open confrontation between

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham's correspondence with Grey during September and October is in the Brougham Papers.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Whitbread, n.d. [Sept. 1812], (Whitbread), 1954.

<sup>3</sup>Creevey to Mrs. Creevey, 17 Oct. 1812, Creevey Papers, I, 172. This speech was printed in the Liverpool Mercury, 16 Oct. 1812.

<sup>4</sup>Brougham to Grey, Nov. 1812 (Brougham).

<sup>5</sup>Brougham to Allen, 28 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen). Lansdowne to Allen, 1 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 52174 (Allen).

Foxite and Pittite 'principles'.<sup>1</sup> Grenville's prejudices were at the bottom of this. The old Pittite remained pessimistic about the war; he felt that peace was desirable but unobtainable; and he wanted to avoid the extremes of both Whitbread and Canning. He made it clear that he would expect Foxite leaders to resist a motion for peace and as a precaution he mobilized his own forces in the Commons.<sup>2</sup> By the middle of November Grey and Bedford were once again frantic with fear that Whitbread would divide the party with a motion for peace.<sup>3</sup> Lansdowne, who also felt that such a motion would be embarrassing, wanted to avoid foreign politics in favour of redoubled exertions on the Catholic question.<sup>4</sup>

This was now the opinion of a minority of Foxites. Whitbread, of course, was trying desperately to transfer the spirit of Liverpool to Westminster. His own contacts in the north were splendid and he was utilizing them fully to encourage petitions. He was also trying to stimulate support in the City of London. The Examiner and the Independent Whig were behind him completely and Rosslyn had set out 'to put Perry upon a proper footing ...'<sup>5</sup> In mid-November (to the horror of Tom Grenville) Whitbread carried his plea to the Crown and Anchor.<sup>6</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 25 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Rosslyn to Grey, 1 Jan. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Holland, 12 Nov., n.d. [14 Nov.], and 17 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). Grenville to Grey, 10 Nov. 1812 (Grey). Grenville to T. Grenville, 13 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Holland, 14 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland). Bedford to Holland, 22 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51662 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Lansdowne to Holland, 16 Nov. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Examiner, 1, 8, 22 Nov. 1812. Independent Whig, 15, 22 Nov. 1812. Rosslyn to Brougham, 9 Oct. 1812 (Brougham).

<sup>6</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 15 Nov. 1812, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 309-11.

Whitbread aimed at forcing Grey's hand. He was already certain of a great deal of support in the Commons and like Roscoe he felt that the active cooperation of Holland (which had been promised) would enable him to break the iron grasp of Grey and Grenville.

While Whitbread laid the ground work Holland attempted to bring the other leaders of the coalition around. As early as 6 October he told Grey that Foxite M.P.'s were pressing hard for the adoption of a definitive stance on the war and that he saw no alternative to clinging to peace.<sup>1</sup> Receiving little encouragement from Grey, he concluded that the endorsement of Grenville was the key to success. In early November he boldly put his views before his incredulous ally. Holland felt that there was ample reason for the party to advocate the immediate opening of Anglo-French negotiations. In the event of victory, he argued, the enemies of France would almost certainly imitate Napoleon and act on principles which would destroy the independence of nations. Had they not partitioned Poland? Had not a desire to partition France motivated them in the early stages of the French revolutionary wars? Could British interests be served through total victory in concert with such powers? Could Britain participate in forcing a new monarch on the French people? The only point in question was the moment when peace should be offered and there was ample cause to suspect that the government would push too far. Why not advocate peace now? The tide of battle could turn any day. Wellington's victories were confirmed and if Cathcart's reports were even remotely accurate Napoleon had lost much of his military reputation. The time was therefore ripe for a settlement guaranteeing the reestablishment of a European balance of power. These views, which by implication argued for the acceptance of the French revolutionary

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grey, 6 Oct. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).



government, were identical to those which Fox had voiced during the 1790's as well as to those which had recently been put forward at Liverpool. Of course Grenville disapproved violently.<sup>1</sup>

Grey was perplexed by the currents which were moving beneath him. Whitbread's supporters were increasing in number daily and it looked as though Holland would join them in raising a cry for peace in Parliament. Derby, Thanet, Sefton, and probably Albemarle and Coke were cooperating with the peace faction and Bedford was wavering. Rosslyn, one of Grey's closest friends, was also in the thick of it and even the reliable Ponsonby had caught the infection. In the House on 1 December the hitherto timid opposition floor leader caused quite a stir when he stated bluntly that if he had been in Parliament in 1793 he 'would have voted for Mr. Fox's motion to send an ambassador to Paris, to prevent the breaking out of war ... because the whole question was, whether the government of France, as then constituted, was fit to be treated with ...' With a reference to the present conflict he concluded by voicing the opinion that 'one independent state should not interfere in the government of another ...'<sup>2</sup> Ponsonby was right. This was the question and its reemergence threw party leaders into disarray. Horner, who was inspired by the 'nationalistic rise' of the Muscovite people, nevertheless felt that Whitbread was the only 'asserter of Whig principles' and he warned that a break with the brewer on the question of peace would be 'dividing with him the popular adherents of the party throughout the country.'<sup>3</sup> In view of the importance which Grey attached

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to [Holland], n.d. [14 Nov. 1812?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland), f. 8.

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb. XXIV, 131-32.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Allen, n.d. [Nov. 1812], (Horner), V, 389-90. Horner to Murray, 8 Dec. 1812, Horner Memoirs, II, 135-8.

to the connexion with Grenville and Fitzwilliam there is little mystery about why he wanted to retire in favour of Holland at this time.

Alarmed by the situation in London, he refused to come to the meeting of Parliament.<sup>1</sup>

The confirmation of French disasters in Russia during December had an enormous effect on the growing movement for peace. By the 11th even Thanet admitted that Napoleon was in trouble and both Grey and Holland felt that Grenville's pessimistic speech in the Lords sounded foolish.<sup>2</sup> Whitbread grew extremely emotional, opposed the Russia subsidy, and blatantly praised the valour of French troops.<sup>3</sup> Ponsonby and Burdett also spoke against the subsidy, and Holland, while voting for it, preached moderation and discouraged attacks on French territory.<sup>4</sup> Brougham refused to attend the great public rally in support of the war because he thought it 'would look like acting by the Party à la Sheridan', and Grey's great hope, Mackintosh, who had recently returned from India, abandoned the middle ground on the 25th.

Mackintosh was looked on as a sorely needed intellectual leader by many Foxites and by December he had devised a scheme for the resettlement of Europe. Poland would be placed under a Russian king; Norway would go to Sweden as compensation for Finland; Denmark would be compensated by the annexation of Westphalia; Tirol and Venice would compensate

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 10 Nov. 1812 (Grey). Grey to Grenville, 17 Nov. 1812, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 311-14.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Grey, 10, 11 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland). Grey to Holland, 13 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb. XXIV, 213, 332 (7 and 18 Dec. 1812). Whitbread to Lady Holland, 27 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb. XXIV, 328-30 [Ponsonby], 334 [Burdett], 322-23 [Holland], 18 Dec. 1812. Holland to Grey, 19 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

Austria for the loss of Galicia; Prussia would get nothing; and France would retain Italy, the petty German states, and the Low Countries.

'If wishes were Dictatory,' added Mackintosh, 'I should unite the Peninsula into one Monarchy & give a great South American Monarchy to the Braganzas.' Apparently his only sine qua non was the independence of Spain and Portugal; he wished to send a declaration to Russia and Austria of the British desire to negotiate a general peace and he was anxious to encourage petitions in Britain. Such a preposterous plan for the reorganization of Europe sprang from peculiarly Foxite dogma:

Will our Ministers offer peace [he asked Grey]. There are rumours that they will - It is a favourable moment & it may be the only moment - For he [Napoleon] may quickly retrieve his Fortune - & if he were to be crushed a series of Counterrevolutionary Convulsions may ravage the World for twenty years - From this Moment to the opening of the Campaign in Spring may be the only Period during which it will be possible to give a chance of repose to Europe. - The very next steps of the Russian army bring them into independent Poland. They must frighten Denmark & alarm Sweden which cannot wish them to be too successful. Every step of their progress will kindle some new jealousy if not dissension.<sup>1</sup>

Apparently these opinions were put forward in conjunction with Holland.<sup>2</sup>

Grey began to weaken as early as 10 December when he told Auckland that it was 'morally impossible' to legislate new taxes for the continuance of the war. He pointed out that the American war and British 'reverses' in Spain neutralized the effects of French losses in Russia and he maintained that Napoleon was far from beaten.<sup>3</sup> This was double-talk. According to Rosslyn, Grey was convinced by 30 November that the French army was in danger of destruction on all fronts.<sup>4</sup> Apparently the

---

<sup>1</sup>Mackintosh to Grey, 25 Dec. 1812 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Mackintosh to Holland, 27 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51653 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Auckland, 10 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland).

<sup>4</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 30 Nov. 1812 (Grey).

would be 'a premature and improper interference with the discretion which must be allowed to the Executive Government.'<sup>1</sup> In the final analysis such a motion could be justified only by the weight of petitions but in January Whitbread and Holland were deserted by many of the petitioners upon whom they had depended. Feeling that the momentum of the Russian army had reduced the popularity of a campaign for peace, the influential Josiah Wedgwood asked Whitbread to discourage petitions.<sup>2</sup> Richard Spooner, a Liverpool merchant who had taken a leading role in Roscoe's campaign, confessed that the war interest in Liverpool was now too strong.<sup>3</sup> The industrialists of Northamptonshire suddenly refused to let Whitbread present their petitions and those in Birmingham soon followed.<sup>4</sup> The British government apparently was instrumental in this development. One Birmingham industrialist claimed that the government had threatened that petitions for peace would insure the renewal of the East India Company's charter. Another maintained that after Loughborough industrialists had adopted resolutions and a petition for peace thousands of copies of the government's threat were distributed by means of a frank.<sup>5</sup> In London Leigh Hunt was thrown into Newgate prison on a conviction for libel.<sup>6</sup>

These blows were accompanied by Adair's highly regarded decision that Russia was incapable of assuming offensive military operations and

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 3 Jan. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Wedgwood to Whitbread, 29 Dec. 1812 (Whitbread), 4231.

<sup>3</sup>Spooner to Whitbread, 9 Jan. 1813 (Whitbread), 4235.

<sup>4</sup>D. Griffiths to Whitbread, 20 Jan. 1813 (Whitbread), 4239.

<sup>5</sup>Webster to Whitbread, 23 Jan., and E. Higginson to Whitbread, 1 Mar. 1813 (Whitbread), 4232, 4257.

<sup>6</sup>Examiner, 3 Jan. 1813.

Foxite leader was still trying to strike a balance between the rapidly developing divisions in the coalition. While approaching the issue of war and peace on financial grounds in his correspondence with the pessimistic but warlike Grenvillites he reassured the Hollands that Napoleon's armies remained strong enough to force negotiations.<sup>1</sup>

Grey's game was up by the end of the month. New reports of French disasters stimulated a passionate plea from Holland on the 27th and this joined with the almost universal cry of the Foxite front bench to weaken Grey's resolve.<sup>2</sup> On 1 January 1813 he told Adair that he favoured a negotiated European settlement because the Liverpool ministry had 'no settled view or system ...' '... even if at this moment they desire Peace,' he wrote, 'I can have no security that some new speculation, founded on nothing better, perhaps, than idle rumour of some disturbance in France, wd. not entirely alter their inclination.'<sup>3</sup> A day later he applauded Whitbread's resistance to the Russian subsidy and told Lady Holland that a motion for peace would have a favourable effect on the European situation.<sup>4</sup> By the 7th Holland stood as a bridge between the long-estranged Grey and Whitbread.<sup>5</sup>

At this juncture Foxite leaders were undermined by developments in the industrial north. Though Grey was worried about continental developments and willing to be led by his colleagues in London he continued to agree with Grenville that a motion calling for negotiations

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 14 Dec., and Grey to Lady Holland, 27 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Grey, 27 Dec. 1812, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Adair, 1 Jan. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Lady Holland, n.d. [2 Jan. 1813?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Grey, 7 Jan. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

that therefore a Franco-Russian treaty could be expected any moment.<sup>1</sup> Tierney, who had earlier supported Whitbread and Holland, now opposed a motion for peace. He called for a public declaration that peace and not the destruction of Napoleon's government was the goal of the party, 'and there, for a time, leave it.'<sup>2</sup> Under new pressure from Grey, Holland concluded that silence would best deter Grenville from sounding a 'war whoop' in Parliament and in late January he laid his views before Whitbread:

If I thought there was the slightest reason to imagine that the Court entertained any romantic & impracticable projects of wresting all of her conquests from France & were preparing to enter into negotiations for that purpose I would then move for an address to negotiate a general peace; still more, if any project so wicked & absurd as well as impracticable was suspected to be conceived here as that of altering the Government of France I should think it my duty to rouse the attention of Parliament & the Country to so ruinous & preposterous an undertaking but till I believe such notions to be entertained I think a Parliamentary resolution for peace might be productive of more mischief than good.<sup>3</sup>

Here it ended. Holland's opposition could not be resisted. In early 1813 he feared a schism with the Grenvillites; he was afraid that a cry for peace would adversely affect negotiations already under way; he had faith in the moderation of Sidmouth, Liverpool, and Castlereagh; and he felt that his exertions could possibly strengthen the war faction in the Cabinet.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout 1813 Foxite leaders studied European developments closely. The absence of reliable information continued to discourage activity in Parliament but fears for the ultimate outcome of the war were ever-present. In January Whitbread succeeded in reestablishing a

---

<sup>1</sup>Adair to Grey, 20 Jan. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Grey, 28 Jan. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Whitbread, n.d. [late Jan. 1813], (Whitbread), 4250.

<sup>4</sup>Holland, Further Memoirs, pp. 169-81.

relationship with Sheridan and the following month found him at Tierney's house soliciting support for a peace motion.<sup>1</sup> By late March Whitbread had succeeded in gathering enough petitions to reopen the question. On the 30th he reported his intentions to Holland House, suggested that he and Holland should present the petitions to Parliament on the same day, and even expressed a desire to cooperate with Grenville.<sup>2</sup> Holland, who was alarmed by Joseph's unexpected evacuation of Madrid, agreed once again to cooperate.<sup>3</sup> Apparently with the tacit approval of Grenville, on 2 April the two Foxite chiefs presented their petitions and warned against [as Holland put it] a 'chimerical notion of wresting from France what she had acquired during the last twenty years, or of humiliating the great prince who now ruled that country.'<sup>4</sup>

These views, however, were pushed in neither House. Foxite leaders were now fully aware of the real nature of the coalition's internal divisions. Notwithstanding Holland's moderation Grey had to use great diplomacy in calming a ruffled Fitzwilliam and in May, when Grey sounded Dropmore on the wisdom of a moderate proposal for negotiations, Grenville tactfully discouraged the idea.<sup>5</sup> In response to Holland's request for support Lauderdale cited the lack of reliable information as a reason to maintain silence on foreign politics and Tierney agreed.<sup>6</sup> Then, too,

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Holland, 30 Jan. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland). Tierney to Grey, 11 Feb. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Whitbread to Holland, 30 Mar. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Holland, Further Memoirs, p. 180.

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb., XXV, 517-18 (Holland), and 533-34 (Whitbread).

<sup>5</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grey, 4 April 1813 (Grey). Grey to Fitzwilliam, 9 April 1813 (Fitzwilliam/Northants). Grenville to Grey, 28 May 1813 (Grey).

<sup>6</sup>Lauderdale to Holland, 7 April 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland). Tierney to Lady Holland, n.d. [1813], B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland), ff. 111-13.

personal animosities discouraged the cooperation of Foxite peers and the more active members of opposition in the Commons. Burdett drove away even the members of the Mountain with his intemperate remarks on the war and in mid-May when Althorp and Bennet organized a 'party' dinner to celebrate a good division on the Catholic question most Foxite peers apparently agreed with Lauderdale that Whitbread's supporters were not 'the people by whose determination it is fit that my conduct shall be regulated.'<sup>1</sup>

Long-standing faith in the military skill of Napoleon also discouraged activity in Parliament. Grey was extraordinarily rigid in his opinion that the French would reverse the tide of battle.<sup>2</sup> In early April he noted that a man's schemes of invading France had to 'rest on calculations equally erroneous both of the means which this country has at its disposal, & those which he supposes to be left to the enemy.'<sup>3</sup> Indeed in May Grey was so sure of his sagacity that he distributed maps which depicted the superiority of the French positions.<sup>4</sup> Initially even Wellington's victory at Vittoria failed to awaken most Foxite leaders. Both Holland and Grey felt that the victory would facilitate the opening of negotiations, and the French performance at the battle of Lutzen, which roughly coincided with Vittoria, was hailed as a major step towards a European settlement.<sup>5</sup> Deluded by sadly exaggerated accounts

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 25 May [1813], B.M., Add. MSS. 51697 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Holland, [May] 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51584 (Holland), f. 42.

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Adair, 4 April 1813 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Gloucester to Grey, 3 May 1813 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Grey, 19 May 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland). Gloucester to Grey, 5 July 1813 (Grey). Grenville to Holland, 25 July 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).



from Wilson and Douglas Kinnaird, Lansdowne interpreted the battle as being conclusive proof 'of Bonaparte's superior skill if any were wanting' and Grey was extravagant in his praise of Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> According to the Duchess of Devonshire the Foxites were betting on Napoleon during the spring.<sup>2</sup>

When faith in French arms wavered the void was filled by faulty intelligence, old prejudices, and an inclination to believe the worst. In early July Liverpool told Lauderdale that financial considerations would eventually dictate a European settlement. Within two weeks this disclosure had mushroomed into strong rumours at Holland House that ministers were deterred from concluding peace only by the Regent.<sup>3</sup> In August Rosslyn reported authoritatively that Wellington had been stopped in his tracks by Soult's reinforced army and by mid-September Brougham was predicting that the British army would be forced to retreat and that a separate Anglo-French treaty would be concluded by Christmas.<sup>4</sup> Confidential reports from the north of Europe were also astonishingly inaccurate. Rosslyn was confident on 31 July that the 'Basis & most essential points' of a European settlement had been agreed upon. He founded this opinion on the nomination to the Austrian Cabinet of a man who was 'notoriously devoted to the French interests.'<sup>5</sup> Wilson's reports confirmed that Austrian jealousy of Russia would lead to a Franco-Austrian

---

<sup>1</sup>Lansdowne to Holland, 25 May 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland). Grey to Holland, 25 May 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Stuart, Dearest Bess, p. 194.

<sup>3</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 10 July 1813 (Grey). Holland to Grey, 23 July 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 2 Aug. 1813 (Grey). Brougham to Creevey, 15 Sept. 1813. Creevey Papers, I, 106.

<sup>5</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 31 July 1813 (Grey).

alliance and they convinced Gloucester that the Poles would join Napoleon en masse.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand Roscoe was led to believe that Russia and France would sign an arrangement similar to the treaty of Tilsit.<sup>2</sup> The experiences of the Ministry of All the Talents, which had formed a poor opinion of the northern powers, were also of importance. Whitbread, who apparently searched for signs of Allied dissension, was very critical of the Russians.<sup>3</sup> Gloucester refused to attend a chapter of the Knights of the Garter because the Regent was going to extend the honour to the Czar.<sup>4</sup> '... we should never forget of what materials the confederacy is composed', wrote Grey in late September.<sup>5</sup>

This pessimism for the cause of the Allies facilitated continued cooperation with the Grenvillites for a considerable period of time because few in the old war party thought that there was a chance of total victory. During the spring and summer Grenville had no faith in either Wellington or the possibility of Allied cooperation in the north. In June he was sure that a treaty would be signed and as late as 31 August he complained bitterly of Perry's support for the war in the Peninsula.<sup>6</sup> In July Tom Grenville lamented that the 'drunken and inflamed enthusiasm of London is at this moment for eternal war' and the following month found him laughing at the thought of invading France.<sup>7</sup> Auckland, who

---

<sup>1</sup>Gloucester to Grey, 26 July, 13 Sept. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Roscoe to Gloucester, 10 Aug. 1813 (Roscoe), 1784.

<sup>3</sup>Whitbread to Holland, 8 Aug. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Gloucester to Grey, 26 July 1813 (Grey).

<sup>5</sup>Grey to Holland, 24 Sept. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>6</sup>Grenville to Wickham, 11 June 1813 (Wickham). Grenville to Auckland, 6 July, 31 Aug., 28 Sept. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland).

<sup>7</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, n.d. [July 1813], and 4 Aug. 1813, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 348, 349.

agreed with the Foxite interpretation of Lutzen, was certain as late as 20 September that Englishmen were being 'comforted and encouraged by lying reports and absurd misrepresentations.'<sup>1</sup>

Of course the drift of events on the Continent daily increased animosities within the coalition. In June Holland saw Castlereagh's treaty with Bernadotte as a step towards an odious 'continental system' and even Grey felt that the British guarantee of Norway announced views 'which make one look with absolute terror at the continuance of a war audited by such men ...'<sup>2</sup> But when Holland and Whitbread advocated a broad attack on British foreign policy Grenville balked and Grey revised his views.<sup>3</sup> The result was a poorly managed motion of censure which failed miserably.<sup>4</sup> Grattan, Newport, and many others refused to attend; opposition leaders failed to coordinate the motion with the considerable number of independent voters who disliked the treaty; and Ponsonby (according to Ward) read the motion from what was obviously a hastily prepared draft that was 'so blotted and interlined that poor Snouch blundered in every other sentence as he read it ...' In addition the motion was 'insufferably long, utterly despicable in point of composition, and full of propositions to which no man playing a great game in politics could be expected to assent ...'<sup>5</sup> This was the result

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 21, 30 May and 20 Sept. 1813, *Ibid.*, 338-39, 342-43, 350-51.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Grey, June 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland). Grey to Adair, 4 April 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 12, 13 June 1813 (Grey). Grey to Holland, 16 June 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVI, 715-42, 746-82 (18 June 1813).

<sup>5</sup>Horner to Holland, [22 June ] 1813 (Horner), V. 399-400. Ward to Helen Stewart, [24 June 1813?], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 206-08.

of compromise between Holland and Grenville, and it left a bad taste in the former's mouth. From June 1813 Holland and Grenville found it increasingly difficult to be rational when discussing foreign politics.

In early June the two opposition leaders clashed on the issue of South American independence.<sup>1</sup> Shortly after the motion on the Swedish treaty Lauderdale and Holland ignored Grenville's objections, demanded negotiations, and accused the government of acting 'as recruiting serjeant to the emperor of the French ...'<sup>2</sup> Whitbread duplicated this performance in the Commons, claiming that the Allied powers did not have at heart 'the real benefit of mankind, or a sincere desire to establish peace on the continent.' Of importance was the fact that Tierney's friend Abercromby supported Whitbread in debate.<sup>3</sup> By early July Holland made no secret of his support for any settlement which would guarantee the security of Austria and the independence of Spain and the Baltic. When Grey tried to moderate these views by expressing a simple wish for Allied victory in Germany he learned that Holland would no longer bend. 'On the whole', wrote Fox's nephew, 'I am satisfied that Bonaparte's resistance & successes in Germany are more favorable to the conclusion of peace than if he had been beat & war carried to the frontiers of France.' In mid-August Holland felt that any peace with Napoleon would bring Britain more security than continued war.<sup>4</sup>

In late September word reached London that the fragile armistice

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Holland, 11 June 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Holland, 20 June 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland). Parl. Deb., XXVI, 956-58.

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVI, 999-1002 (30 June 1813).

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Grey, 3, 6 July and 13 Aug. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

between the combatants in Germany had been broken by the Allies' rejection of a French proposal for peace. This news sent Holland into a fit of rage against Alexander and Frederick William. 'I heartily hope they may be damnably beaten', he exclaimed on the 27th.<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne, too, was disturbed and he admitted that he was 'almost glad our victories are so expensive to us, as it may incline [us] to be satisfied with a few of them & leave off.'<sup>2</sup> Once again M.P.'s demanded an intelligible party stance on the war. Mackintosh, who was greatly alarmed, probably outlined consensus opinion in a letter to Grey on 1 October:

The Question must substantially arise on the very first day of the Session whether the War ought to be supported with vigour. Perhaps either Subsidies or another measure proposed for that end may be ... resisted. I am disposed to think that you will consider the worst of all Parts for the Whig Party on such an occasion to be silence, faint support or timid resistance. It is true that by no conduct they can gain any present object. But general reputation, public confidence, internal union & Spirit, the authority of leaders in short all the means of future strength seem to me to depend upon our appearing to have a system adopted to so great an occasion & upon our acting upon that system with boldness, concert & (as a natural consequence I hope) with unanimity. All long silence on great subjects accustoms the Public to look to others. On this occasion it might be maliciously misrepresented in various forms. It might be ascribed to a plan of lying in wait for the errors & misfortunes incident to extensive operations. It dispirits all the followers of a Party & tends gradually to alienate them. It appears to be an abdication of the functions of an opposition ... Secession in Principle may be justifiable in extraordinary Circumstances as the most vigorous means of protesting against a pernicious system. But this is no reason why the Leaders of a great Party should sink into activity through weariness & disgust. Least of all would this be wise when their antagonists appear to be triumphant.<sup>3</sup>

In effect Mackintosh argued for Grey to assert himself against Grenville.

In London party leaders argued vehemently. On 5 October Whitbread sounded Holland on the question and later in the day Holland called for

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grey, 27 Sept. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Lansdowne to Lady Holland, 28 Sept. [1813], B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Mackintosh to Grey, 1 Oct. 1813 (Grey).

public meetings, petitions, and motions for peace and reform in Parliament.<sup>1</sup> Morpeth, to whom Holland applied for support, resisted his opinions stoutly.<sup>2</sup> Horner, who had recently been returned to Parliament through Grenville patronage, argued that the 'insurrection of national spirit' in Germany formed 'a new conjuncture, in which the Whigs ought to adopt the war system upon the very same principle which prompted them to stigmatise it as unjust in 1793 and as premature in 1803.'<sup>3</sup> Controversy on this issue permeated Whig society. Madame de Stael, the celebrated authoress of De l'Allemagne, became the figure upon whom this debate centred.

Madame de Staël's arrival in London had been widely publicized. Having recently returned from the courts of Alexander and Bernadotte, she was entertained lavishly by ministers and members of the royal family. Soon after her arrival the publisher John Murray parted with 1,500 guineas to obtain the manuscript of her book, and its publication in early October made her the rage of the day. Madame de Staël's political views instantly made a great impression on Whig society. According to Byron 'she interrupted Whitbread [a daring move] ... she misunderstood Sheridan's jokes for assent; she harrangued, she lectured, she preached English politics to the first of our English Whig politicians, the day after her arrival in England ...' At Bowood Foxite peers and their ladies climbed on tables and chairs to see her. What was her charm? First and foremost she was a bitter enemy of Napoleon who could not

---

<sup>1</sup>Whitbread to Holland, 5 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland). Holland to Morpeth, 5 Oct. 1813 (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Morpeth to Holland, 7 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51577 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Allen, 25 Oct. 1813, Horner Memoirs, II, 157-58.

understand why many men who professed loyalty to Whig principles identified their own cause with that of Bonaparte. She clashed with Godwin, who defended Cromwell while championing Napoleon.<sup>1</sup> Holland was forced to forbid his wife to see her because Lady Holland grew violent in her presence.<sup>2</sup> Bedford wrote her a long defence of peace with Napoleon only to be refuted.<sup>3</sup> She had no patience with traditional Foxite views on the war; she praised Burke; and one observer noted that nobody's ideas could 'move at the rate of her tongue.' She wanted to discuss politics with Dugald Stewart, and Ward saw her as a 'jealous Pittite' who had set out to convert Grey.<sup>4</sup>

On the other hand, while Madame de Stael's hatred of Napoleon put her at variance with those Foxites who could support their traditional view of the war with no intellectual criteria, her defence of French liberties gave her much in common with many party leaders. Sheridan, Lansdowne, Brougham, and Mackintosh saw in her a reflection of their own frustrations; the last reported that she was upset because the war 'was a contest between a man who was the enemy of liberty, and a system which was equally its enemy.'<sup>5</sup> Madame de Stael soon understood the intellectual grounds upon which Fox had called for peace and her deep discussions with Foxite leaders undoubtedly were important. Soon they

---

<sup>1</sup>J. Christopher Herold, Mistress to An Age (London, 1959), pp. 427-30.

<sup>2</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 17 Oct. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lansdowne to Lady Holland, 26 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Maria Stewart to Mrs. D. Stewart, 2 Nov. [1813], and Ward to Helen Stewart, [24 June 1813], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 219-21, 208.

<sup>5</sup>Robert James Mackintosh (ed.), Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh (London, 1835), II, 267.

combined with word that Wellington was on French soil to determine policy.<sup>1</sup> By mid-October Whitbread was preparing yet another motion for peace and other Foxite leaders were ready to confront Grenville.

Holland asked Grenville if he would support a settlement which would leave Napoleon in possession of the Low Countries, Italy, Switzerland, and Germany. Grey, who for five months had been afraid to mention the war to Grenville, asked him if he would endorse a motion for immediate negotiation. These proposals spread alarm in the Grenvillite camp. Fitzwilliam told Grey flatly that the party should support the government's foreign policy.<sup>2</sup> Hearing rumours that Whitbread and Holland would move for peace regardless of his opinion, Grenville prepared a speech and asked Wynn to contest the Foxites in the Commons.<sup>3</sup> On the 16th he was moderate in telling Holland that a peace leaving French power intact would not 'last so long as that of Amiens did.'<sup>4</sup> After conferring with Fitzwilliam, however, he sent a wave of shock through the coalition with his reply to Grey:

... when we advised a defensive & husbanding system it was not because we had reconciled our minds to give Europe over to the despotism of France. It was because we wished to reserve our exertions for that period which we were confident must arrive when the insolence of France would unite against Her all the Powers by whose disunion alone she had triumphed. That period has now arrived.<sup>5</sup>

These remarks were accompanied by a promise to speak in Parliament against peace, and several days later Grenville emphasized that it was absurd for the party to encourage moderation because the Allies 'stand

---

<sup>1</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 19 Oct. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Fitzwilliam to Grey, 17 Oct. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Wynn, 16 Oct. 1813 (Wynn).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Holland, 16 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51827 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Grenville to Grey, 21 Oct. 1813 (Grey).



even yet ... much more in need of the spur than of the bridle ...'<sup>1</sup>

These views angered the Holland House circle considerably. Allen wailed about contradictions in Grenville's opinions. 'He is against any overtures for peace and yet seems not sanguine about the success of the war. He rejoices over the advantages that have been lately gained over France & yet laments over the sacrifices made in support of Spain ...'<sup>2</sup> Primarily through pique the Hollands took a diametrically opposing view and Lady Bessborough was astonished to find that Holland 'would defeat Buonaparte in Spain, and let him defeat the allies in Germany.'<sup>3</sup> On the 28th Lady Holland warned that Grenville was scheming to 'drag all the Whigs after him again to support his old rants in favour of the cause of Monarchs ...'<sup>4</sup> On the 30th Holland, for the first time since the formation of the coalition in 1806, questioned the wisdom of further cooperation with Grenville.<sup>5</sup>

All the ravings of Holland House, however, could not disguise the fact that Grenville's warning had proved amazingly effective in checking the aggressiveness of Foxite leaders. Lansdowne had had enough. After receiving Tom Grenville's threat 'to buckle on ... parliamentary armour' he decided that the war had been 'placed on the very best foundation by the christian manifesto [Declaration of Frankfurt], & there I think we

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 1 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Allen to Horner, 20 Oct. 1813 (Horner).

<sup>3</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, [24 Oct. 1813], Granville Correspondence, II, 485.

<sup>4</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 28 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Grey, 30 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

should do well to leave it.<sup>1</sup> Grey also retreated. On 24 October he had argued strongly for a parliamentary resolution in favour of peace; on the 27th, after hearing from Dropmore, he spoke of Grenville's reasonableness and congratulated himself or 'qualifying at least the language which he seemed disposed to hold, and in preventing his speaking as he has written ...'<sup>2</sup> Holland, too, grew timid. On the 30th he confessed to Grey that 'the nearer the time comes the less inclination I feel to speak - for I do not see what I can say that will assist my friends & if I said all I think on Germany & Spain I should say much they would disapprove.'<sup>3</sup> By the end of the month it appeared that Grenville's firmness had carried the argument.

News of Leipsic reached London on 3 November, the eve of the meeting Parliament. Such an extraordinary turn of events had not been anticipated by Foxite leaders. Convinced that they had succeeded in moderating Grenville's views,<sup>4</sup> Grey, Lansdowne, Lauderdale, and Bedford had seen nothing to be gained by an amendment to the Regent's Address and consequently they had not come up to London. The net result was that Holland found himself confronted by a fully mobilized Grenvillite party. In spite of prior Foxite timidity Leipsic had prompted Tom Grenville to 'buckle on his parliamentary armour' and he had come to the Commons with Elliot, Wynn, and Fremantle hoping that Whitbread's pacifism would give him the opportunity to bring matters to an open rupture. Lord Grenville was swelled with pride because of what

---

<sup>1</sup>Lansdowne to Lady Holland, 26 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Holland, 24, 27 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Holland to Grey, 30 Oct. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Mackintosh to Holland, 3 Nov. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51653 (Holland).

he saw as a victory for his and Pitt's wartime system, and to Holland's chagrin he had the draft of a speech in his pocket. In the Commons Castlereagh's moderate speech prevented a nasty scene on the opposition benches for Tom Grenville actually expressed disappointment when Whitbread gave the government his support. In the Lords, however, Grenville and Holland were at daggers drawn. Seeing an explosive situation, other opposition peers wished to be as brief and unprovocative as possible. Sussex led off with a perfectly harmless speech but Wellesley, who spoke second, gave the eager Grenville an opening by mentioning the desirability of a speedy negotiated peace. When Wellesley sat down Grenville told him that such pacific language forced him to speak. At this Holland threatened to contest Grenville or to leave the House in protest. This threat had little effect. Grenville promptly took the floor, stated that the independence of Holland should be made a British sine qua non, and concluded with a cry for war which placed him far to the right of ministers. Poor Holland found that he was faced with the unenviable task of speaking for ministers in opposition to the views of his ally. To avoid such an appearance he gave a silent vote for the Address and left the House.<sup>1</sup>

Grenville's speech rapidly became the talk of London. Upon reading it Lady Bessborough thought that she had 'blunder'd upon a Minister instead of a discontented Lord ....' 'Nothing', she wrote, 'can be wiser than his Speech, nothing ... sounder policy, but surely it is new language, or rather returning to old language, for him.'<sup>2</sup> Others agreed

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland, Further Memoirs, pp. 183-84. For Grenville's apparently poorly-reported speech see Parl. Deb., XXVII, 13-19, (4 Nov. 1813).

<sup>2</sup>Lady Bessborough to Ld. G. L. Gower, 5 Nov. 1813, Granville Correspondence, II, 489.

with this assessment. Holland was mortified because Grenville 'took to himself & Pitt's Government the merit of having always maintained the system he was recommending.' He also disapproved of Grenville's contention that (because of the initial attack of the French revolutionary armies) British honour demanded the expulsion of the French from Holland.<sup>1</sup> Rosslyn was also greatly disturbed by the speech and Lauderdale was furious because nobody had contested Grenville's endorsement of subsidies.<sup>2</sup> From Northumberland Grey practically scolded Holland for walking away from a fight and stated menacingly that if he [Grey] had been present he could not have avoided 'throwing a little water in Grenville's wine.'<sup>3</sup> Grenville's reference to the issues of the 1790's, he told Adair, was the real point of contention:

I am not sorry that I was not present on the first day. For I should no doubt have been thought too pacific; & if I had spoken, I should have been under the necessity not only of putting some guards on what Grenville said about Holland, but of disclaiming the support of the present Confederacy, as being the result of the policy of Pitt's Gov't in the original war against France. Perhaps if I had heard Grenville I might not have felt the difficulty which appears in the report of his Speech, but if we are to talk about the questions of 1792, I must shew that the present Alliance is supported by me upon the ground that it is directly contrasted with the Coalition of that period. The fact is, that the Allies have now been placed by France in the situation in which France was originally placed by the Allies. The success of both has been occasioned by the spirit of resistance produced by injury & oppression; & my great hopes of the present Confederacy were chiefly derived from this, that it has arisen rather from the feeling of the People than [from] the policy of the Govt which it embraces.<sup>4</sup>

Grey, then, was prepared to support the war but unwilling to tolerate Grenville's frame of reference. He, like Horner, would support the

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grey, 5 Nov. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland). Also see Grenville to Newport, 6 Jan. 1814 (Newport).

<sup>2</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 27 Nov., and Lauderdale to Grey, 8 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Grey to Holland, 8 Nov. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Adair, 11 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

'risen people' of Russia and Germany as he had initially supported those of France and those of Spain at the time of their revolutions. He would never accept a thesis that Pitt's foreign policy had produced positive results in Europe.

Grey's indignation on this question is perfectly understandable. Placing the maintenance of the coalition above all other political considerations, Grey had for years turned a deaf ear to Whitbread's demands that the party should return to the principles of old. Grey, like Fox in 1806, had been willing to disregard such a demand for the sake of what he thought was the greater consideration: coalition. Through thick and thin he had tried to neutralize the prejudices of the 1790's and now Grenville himself had violated the agreement of 1806! Even while laying his foreign views before Adair he requested the strictest confidence and expressed fear that Grenville's speech would dispose many Foxites 'to mark & to widen any difference which there may be between Ld. Grenville & me.' Feeling betrayed, the Foxite leader sounded his ally on this subject. Grenville's reply cleared the air considerably:

With respect to former opinions about the origin of the War I can only say that I wish you had heard what I did say on the first day. But I ought on every account to be explicit on that subject. When it was first considered between Fox & myself whether the public circumstances of the Country, & the state of our opinions as to future measures would admit of our cooperation, the most distinct reserve was expressed on both sides as to former opinions to which we still adhered respecting past transactions. And if any necessity for such discussions should have arisen (as might easily have happened when we were nearer to those times) I should have felt as little hurt myself by his expressing his adherence to his opinions, as I should have thought he could be, if I declared, as I ever must, when called upon to speak at all upon the subject, that my original opinions in favour of the necessity & wisdom of the measures of 1792 & 3, have been confirmed by every succeeding event.

But while I acted with him, the esteem & respect with which his character inspired me, & since his death the cordial friendship which I hope I may say has been established between yourself & me has made me desirous of avoiding to the utmost of my power every subject or topic on which it was probable we might differ. On the

particular point of the origin of the War my own personal character & conduct are in a most essential manner involved ...<sup>1</sup>

Grenville's candour left Grey with a simple decision. It was established that he and Grenville could not agree on foreign politics. The question was whether this difference of opinion should be allowed to dissolve their union. In office it would demand a formal separation. At the moment, however, there was no reason for alarm. The Regent's speech had been moderate, the public declarations of the allied powers had expressed a willingness to negotiate with Napoleon, and Grenville was as incapable of promoting war as were the Foxites of promoting peace. Moreover, Parliament would soon be prorogued. For these reasons Grey concluded that inactivity was the best policy.

Meanwhile in London the search for a party stance on the war continued to frustrate Foxite leaders. Jersey scolded Grey for his inactivity and promoted a motion calling for negotiations. Francis was inclined to agree and though he felt that the Bourbon family was 'burnt into the socket' he feared that the allies wanted to 'feed the lamp...'. Even Adair was unnerved by the thought of a passage of the Rhine and the Hollands were alarmed by reports that a British expedition to Antwerp was under foot.<sup>2</sup> The Holland House circle was in disarray. The news of Leipsic had been entered in the dinner books as a guest and thereafter the ledger had fallen into confusion. Both Lord and Lady Holland preferred to believe that all was well with Napoleon. They assured their friends that the Emperor had survived Leipsic with his strength unimpaired and in mid-November Holland dampened the spirits of everyone at

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 24 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Jersey to Grey, 27 Nov. 1813 (Grey). Francis to Ld. Bristol, 7 Nov. 1813, Francis Memoirs, II, 376-77. Adair to Grey, 5 Nov. 1813 (Grey). Lord and Lady Holland to Grey, 13 Nov. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

a garden fete in Chiswick by belittling the successes of the allies.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding these opinions it is clear that the vast majority of party leaders were averse to a confrontation with either Grenville or the government. Adair argued that there had been nothing in Grenville's speech 'at variance with the sentiments which we have all heard Fox a thousand times repeat as his own.' 'I confess', he wrote to Grey, 'that I wish you had made that speech (with some alterations) or that the general sense of it had been supported by some of the Fox part of the Union.'<sup>2</sup> Horner was equally displeased with the 'reserve' shown by Foxite leaders and told Murray that 'the opposition ought to have adopted the war of the allies, and to have marked on the first day the sentiments which belong to the new conjuncture in which affairs are placed.'<sup>3</sup> According to Marsh, Napoleon's speeches to the French Senate made even the Holland House circle grow cold on the Emperor.<sup>4</sup> Holland lamented that Napoleon preferred 'the cant & nonsense of a regular sovereign to the language which would become the military chief of a free Nation' and he was especially dismayed 'to hear him whose power grew out of the revolution ... describe the rights for which Frenchmen fought in 92 & 93 as Anarchy & misery.' 'I feel like Madame de Stahl [*sic*]', he wrote dejectedly, '- it is difficult to know what to wish - I hate & detest Bonaparte more than ever & yet I am not sure if he were to fall that the legitimate sovereign would not be restored & that in my mind is

---

<sup>1</sup>Stuart, *Dearest Bess*, p. 202. Holland to Caroline Fox, n.d. [Nov. 1813?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51739 (Holland), ff. 161-62.

<sup>2</sup>Adair to Grey, 8, 21 Nov. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Murray, 5 Nov. 1813 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Marsh to Morpeth, 21 Feb. 1814 (Carlisle).

the last of misfortunes ...<sup>1</sup>

Grey's studied inactivity, Holland's intellectual confusion, and the warlike views of the Grenvillites and many Foxites rendered a united front in Parliament impossible. Other circumstances checked the enthusiasm of those who were willing to support resolutions for peace. Brougham was correct when he observed that Leipsic had made the government so 'nearly absolute' that there was 'no one measure that might not be carried thro' both houses by acclamation.'<sup>2</sup> Rosslyn, who was eager to challenge ministers, nevertheless admitted that French disasters appeared 'to support and justify every thing that could be said [by ministers]; & the tide seems to set in with such violence that it is impossible to speculate upon what will be the State of Europe in a few weeks ...'<sup>3</sup> Foxite leaders were on the defensive and many of them felt that they could best promote a negotiated settlement by applauding the moderate language of ministers while at the same time recommending that peace should be concluded at the first opportunity. This opinion sprang from strong rumours that the Cabinet was divided on the question of the war. It was supposed that a peace faction composed of Liverpool, Sidmouth, and Castlereagh was opposed by a war faction led by Eldon and the Regent. 'I suspect a large portion of the Ministry are clearly peaceable', wrote Holland. 'As a party measure is it not judicious to foment their differences by expressing our ... opinions? And in justice to the country is it not right to shew the peaceable what support they

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Roscoe, 4 Dec. 1813 (Roscoe), 2098. Holland to Caroline Fox, n.d. [Dec. 1813?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51739 (Holland), ff. 222-23.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Roscoe, 30 Nov. 1813 (Roscoe), 505.

<sup>3</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 27 Nov. 1813 (Grey).



are likely to find in Parliament?'<sup>1</sup> So strong was this feeling that Holland actually speculated that Liverpool would resign.<sup>2</sup> Later Tierney predicted a negotiated settlement and a subsequent realignment of political factions similar to that which had existed at the time of the Peace of Amiens: Castlereagh, Sidmouth, and the bulk of the Foxites opposed by Canning, Grenville, Fitzwilliam, Eldon, and the Regent.<sup>3</sup>

The last week of the session found Foxite leaders hopelessly divided on the stance to be taken in Parliament. Holland, Lansdowne, Horner, Tierney, and Whitbread's friends were determined to support ministers.<sup>4</sup> On the other hand Grey, who felt that parliamentary exertions of some sort were necessary, was eager to assault ministers on grounds that Grenville would endorse. After gaining the tacit approval of Grenville, Grey and Mackintosh tried to raise support for a resolution censuring ministers for their role in the revolution which had recently expelled the French from Holland and placed the Prince of Orange on the Dutch throne. This led to violent disagreement. Holland and Grey exchanged heated arguments on the question of opposing ministers.<sup>5</sup> Lauderdale, who wanted to attack the government, nevertheless felt that Grey's arguments against the Prince of Orange would place Castlereagh

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grey, 11 Dec. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Holland, n.d. [Jan. 1814?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland), ff. 12-15.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 3 Mar. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Lady Holland, 20 Nov., and n.d. [Dec. 1813], B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland), ff. 97-8, 103-04. Horner to Mrs. D. Stewart, n.d. [Nov. 1813], (Horner), V., 404-05. Lansdowne to Holland, 10 Dec. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland). Creevey to Whitbread, 14 Dec. 1813 (Whitbread), 5725.

<sup>5</sup>Holland to Grey, 4, 11, 13, 18 Dec. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland). Grey to Holland, 8, 22 Dec. 1813, and Grey to Lady Holland, 10, 15 Dec. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

'upon the Whig ground, & the Opposition may be held to maintain the wildest of Tory doctrine - That a People & a Sovereign cannot alter the form of a Government.'<sup>1</sup> Grenville, who wanted to cooperate with Grey, retreated from fear of 'objecting to the details of measures when I approve the general course pursued.'<sup>2</sup> Finally, on the last day of the session when Mackintosh brought the issue before the Commons, Tierney refused to vote, Whitbread sided with the government, many members of the Mountain displayed their general contempt for the maiden speech of Grey's friend by walking out of the House, and Perry almost attacked Mackintosh personally in the Morning Chronicle.<sup>3</sup>

Holland closed the session by applauding the government's conduct of the war. At the same time he stated the doctrine which had been at the bottom of his conflicts with Grenville:

... who can rationally dispute the sacred truth, that a government is not made for its own interest, but for that of the governed; and that it is contrary to the laws of God and nature for any power to interfere with the arrangements which a people may think proper to make for their own government. The utmost, therefore, which any foreigner can legitimately do to such arrangements, is to offer advice or to express regret ...<sup>4</sup>

This statement, which went to the heart of the traditional Foxite interpretation of the French Revolution, did not arouse party leaders in December 1813. Many of them were captured by the momentum of the allied push towards the Rhine; some continued to place unrealistic faith in the

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 18, 21 Dec. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 15 Dec. 1813, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland). Grenville to Grey, 24 Nov., 15 Dec. 1813 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVII, 303-22 (20 Dec. 1813). Mackintosh to Grey, 28 Dec., and Tierney to Grey, 14 Dec. 1813 (Grey). Ward to Helen Stewart, 8 [Jan. 1814], Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 230-33. Morning Chronicle, 21 Dec. 1813. Mackintosh to Allen, Jan. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 52182 (Allen), ff. 53-4.

<sup>4</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVII, 293-94 (20 Dec. 1813).

French armies; others were afraid of a rupture with Grenville; and still others were anxious to undermine Grenville by supporting what they thought was a peace faction in the British Cabinet.<sup>1</sup>

There is little doubt that the extended prorogation of Parliament during the early months of 1814 prevented an open rupture between the Foxite and Grenvillite wings of the coalition.<sup>2</sup> Within days after the prorogation in late December Grey grew uneasy about the progress of the allies and sounded Tierney and Ponsonby on the possibility of moving resolutions for peace as soon as Parliament reconvened.<sup>3</sup> He later made similar proposals to both Auckland and Lauderdale, and by 6 February he had decided that Castlereagh was 'the most profligate and unenlightened politician that I ever read or heard of ...'<sup>4</sup> On 1 March he was so enraged that he prepared to join Holland in London for an attack on British foreign policy and he wrote emotionally that he would 'be stout against the War-Makers, be they who they may.'<sup>5</sup>

Of course the Hollands endorsed Grey's views completely. The passage of the Rhine convinced Holland that his confidence in ministers had been misplaced and on 24 January one observer reported that Fox's nephew was accusing the allied powers of bad faith 'upon no other ground than because Buonaparte accused them of having refused to treat

<sup>1</sup>Note the interesting comment of the Examiner, 5 Dec. 1813.

<sup>2</sup>Austin Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830 (London, 1967), p. 81.

<sup>3</sup>Tierney to Grey, 5, 13 Jan., and Ponsonby to Grey, 23 Jan. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grey to Auckland, 11 Jan. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 34458 (Auckland). Lauderdale to Grey, 8 Feb. 1814 (Grey). Grey to Holland, 6 Feb. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>Grey to Holland, 1 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

upon the basis they had themselves proposed ...'<sup>1</sup> Fearing a Bourbon restoration, Holland searched for contacts in Paris to allay his fears.<sup>2</sup> Lady Holland wished for the rout of the Allied armies in the presence of ten people and she became so frantic that she injured herself by 'jolting over the streets' spreading malicious gossip.<sup>3</sup> Holland's views caused him great frustration. 'I cannot but hate Bonaparte but I cannot but admire him', he wrote to Grey in early March. 'Oh, that he would but coalesce with the old constitutionalists & republicans ...'<sup>4</sup> But though Holland could not decide which combinations of French political factions could best serve the country he was vehement in his denunciation of the Allied powers. Tom Grenville found Holland House 'unapproachable' by mid-March because it was 'the only house in London where our success is disparaged and our allies abused.'<sup>5</sup>

The politics of Holland House were too unpatriotic to appeal to the bulk of the party<sup>6</sup> but after mid-January very few Foxites would have voted against a resolution calling for peace. Brougham, who initially felt that reports of a passage of the Rhine were no more than a 'stock-jobbing trick' by the ministerial press, noted after the passage was confirmed that 'the notion of saving Europe by such means is a neat kind of

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 24 Jan. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 371. .

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Lady Holland, 3 Feb. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 5 Feb. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 380. Holland to Grey, 2 Feb. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Holland to Grey, 5 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51545 (Holland).

<sup>5</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, Mar. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 384.

<sup>6</sup>Lady Holland to Grey, 4 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51549 (Holland).

Bull.<sup>1</sup> Jersey was also vocal in his denunciation of the violation of French territorial sovereignty;<sup>2</sup> Ponsonby was extremely displeased by what he saw as Allied duplicity; and Hobhouse noted that several Foxites were delighted when Napoleon temporarily gained an advantage over Blucher.<sup>3</sup>

Aversion to the restoration of the Bourbons was almost universal. Horner, who was most warlike until the Allied armies were on French soil, defended Napoleon's reign passionately in mid-February.<sup>4</sup> Bedford opposed a Bourbon restoration in both France and Spain.<sup>5</sup> Rosslyn was appalled when the Regent voiced support for the deposed royal family.<sup>6</sup> 'It will be a melancholy end of the Revolution that promised so much to see the Bourbons returned', wrote Thanet.<sup>7</sup> The most indignant Foxites were those who had joined Holland in praising ministers during December. Whitbread was 'full of indignation against the Allies' in late February.<sup>8</sup> Creevey praised Napoleon's 'glorious' struggle for survival and was quite emotional in wishing for a successful defence of Paris.<sup>9</sup> Horner and Bennet, both of whom had placed faith in the moderation of the Austrian

---

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Grey, 5, 15 Jan. 1814 (Brougham).

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 24 Jan. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 371.

<sup>3</sup>Ponsonby to Grey, 3 Jan. 1814 (Grey). Broughton Recollections, I, 87.

<sup>4</sup>Horner to Jeffrey, 12 Feb. 1814 (Horner).

<sup>5</sup>Bedford to Lady Holland, 3, 20 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51665 (Holland).

<sup>6</sup>Rosslyn to Grey, 3 Feb. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>7</sup>Thanet to Holland, 14 Jan. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51571 (Holland).

<sup>8</sup>Whitbread to Creevey, 23 Feb. 1814 (Creevey).

<sup>9</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 21 and [27] Mar. 1814 (Whitbread), 416, 417.

and British Cabinets, felt betrayed by both.<sup>1</sup>

The Foxite press united behind similar language. The Independent Whig never wavered in its abuse of the Allies. After the passage of the Rhine Perry reversed engines and called for peace with Napoleon's government so firmly that Tom Grenville expressed concern.<sup>2</sup> The Examiner, too, railed against a Bourbon restoration, and the Statesman, which hitherto had been comparatively timid on the subject of the war, championed Foxite dogma of the 1790's. On 2 February it censured Pitt; a day later it branded Burke a 'renegade of liberty'; and on 30 March it compared the mayor of Bordeaux (who had recently announced his support of the Bourbons) to Benedict Arnold.

An extraordinary number of Fox dinners were held during January to celebrate the birthday of the Whig champion and these meetings invariably produced unanimity of opinion on the war. The Bristol dinner was probably typical. A Mr. Elton, who disclaimed any connexion with Grey's party, censured the old Bourbon court of Louis XVI and observed that, 'It was in the downfall of this system, that Mr. Fox rejoiced, and honoured be his name.' Of course this led to personal attacks on Pitt, and one gentleman took pride in pointing out that the dead Prime Minister's views on European affairs 'were as regularly falsified, as the predictions of Mr. Fox were regularly fulfilled.' 'Gentlemen', he concluded, 'all that we have attained, we might, in fact, have possessed if we had followed the advice of Mr. Fox, and not gone to war at all. We have returned precisely to the point from which we set out ...'<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Murray, 13 Mar. 1814 (Horner). Bennet to Whitbread, Feb. 1814 (Whitbread), 5728.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 24 Jan. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 370-72.

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 6 Feb. 1814.

Grey's supporters paid a more modest tribute. In mid-January many Foxite leaders including Lansdowne (who opposed political dinners in principle) hailed Fox and his principles at the British Coffee House.<sup>1</sup> The members of the Mountain, who were excluded from this function, held their own Fox dinner on 26 March and Holland attended.<sup>2</sup>

The Grenvillite reaction to continental developments was diametrically opposed to that of the Foxites. Like Fitzwilliam most of them found great pleasure in the 'whining of Bonaparte', and Wynn noted that the entire party was 'in the dumps' in late February when rumours spread that the allies would come to terms with Napoleon.<sup>3</sup> Of course they were not happy about the views of their Foxite allies, and Tierney, looking ahead to the meeting of Parliament, became alarmed. 'If I could conceive the possibility of war being of much longer continuance, I should prepare for a return of the scenes in 93', he wrote on 13 February.<sup>4</sup>

Much of this tension eased with the conclusion of peace. London was alive with excitement. White cockades, tokens, and flags of the Bourbons were displayed everywhere. Fleurs de Lys sprouted all over Carlton House when Priddy invested fat, old Louis with the Order of the Garter and on 20 April The Times lauded the efforts of Louis and Priddy by claiming that each had 'done their duty before God and man.' There was wild rejoicing from Windsor to the Crown and Anchor; parade after

---

<sup>1</sup>Romilly Memoirs, III, 126. Lansdowne to Holland, 16 Jan. [1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland), ff. 84-5.

<sup>2</sup>Brougham to Creevey, [7] Feb. 1814 (Creevey). Holland House Dinner Book entry of 26 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51952.

<sup>3</sup>Fitzwilliam to Sidmouth, 9 Jan. 1814, Sidmouth Life, III, 115. C.W.W. Wynn to H. W. Wynn, 28 Feb. 1814, Lady Williams Wynn Correspondence, pp. 168-69.

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Grey, 13 Feb. 1814 (Grey).

parade brought thousands to Hyde Park; and when Louis departed for Paris half the rank and fashion of England followed him.<sup>1</sup> Byron's Ode to Napoleon, a bitter denunciation of the emperor's failure to commit suicide, gained instant popularity; the new gods of the day were Wellington and Alexander, the 'Czar Philosophe' who had seen the hand of God at work on the blood-stained fields of Russia.

This spirit was difficult to resist. 'Whether one likes Bourbons or not', wrote one Foxite, 'it is impossible not to rejoice at the lesson which conquerors have received ...'<sup>2</sup> Others were astonished by the liberality of the allies, and even Wilson confessed that he had not foreseen 'so glorious a triumph for the Welfare & liberty of France ...'<sup>3</sup> Possibly the most curious development was the stance taken by Whitbread. At a meeting of the Artists' Benevolent Society several days before the abdication the painter Farington was puzzled when he heard Whitbread praise Wellington for restoring to the nations the art works which the 'usurper of France' had seized.<sup>4</sup> On 10 April the brewer explained his views to Sheridan:

A Limited Monarchy in France, with Religious Liberty, a Free Press and Legislative Bodies such as have been stipulated for before the Recognition of the Bourbons, leave their Restoration without the possibility of Regret in the Mind of any Man who is a Lover of Liberty and a friend to his kind. Paris safe, Bonaparte suffered to depart, after the experiment had been fully tried of effecting a Peace with him, upon terms such as he was mad to reject - 'Tis more than I dared to hope!<sup>5</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>J. B. Priestley, The Prince of Pleasure and His Regency, 1811-20 (London, 1971), 114-16.

<sup>2</sup>J. N. Fazakerly to Lady Holland, 1 May 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51576 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Wilson to Grey, 16 April 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 30120 (Wilson).

<sup>4</sup>Lean, p. 101.

<sup>5</sup>Whitbread to Sheridan, 10 April 1814, Creevey Papers, I, 191.



Whitbread's political colleagues agreed. Creevey and Bennet were delighted by the liberality of Alexander and they hailed the Restoration as a blessing for Great Britain. Brougham, of course, was more specific. He saw the removal of the crippling issue of war and peace as the first step towards Whig unity and he was certain that peace would end the long reign of political reaction which had stifled the movement for parliamentary reform. 'No murders, no Torture, no conflagration. How will the pretty women of London bear it', wrote Whitbread.<sup>1</sup>

The leaders of the Mountain were willing, indeed eager to forget the past. Their emphasis was on the political advantages of peace: a return to normalcy and a subsequent restoration of constitutional balance in Britain. Early in the summer an address was proposed in the House of Commons which congratulated the Regent on 'the restoration of so many ancient and legitimate authorities on the continent ...' Most Foxites absented themselves on this occasion but Whitbread could not be kept away from the House. He admitted that ministers had pursued a system superior to his own in obtaining his goal of peace. He spoke as if he were talking to himself. He asked whether he could 'tamely submit to it as a fact' that all which had been 'said or thought, and still thought' was founded in error. He praised Castlereagh for his part in the negotiations with Napoleon; he hailed the restoration of the Bourbons; and he accepted the Treaty of Paris completely. He twice called Napoleon a madman and when £ 50,000 was proposed for Wellington Whitbread called for more.<sup>2</sup>

Other Foxite leaders refused to go this far but most of them were

---

<sup>1</sup>Creevey to Whitbread, 12 April 1814 (Whitbread), 418. Bennet to Creevey, n.d. [April 1814], and Brougham to Creevey, 15 April [1814], (Creevey). Whitbread to Sheridan, 10 April 1814 (Creevey).

<sup>2</sup>Lean, p. 101. Parl. Deb., XXVIII, 454-57 (29 June 1814).

pleased by the turn of events on the Continent. Lansdowne was especially delighted and both he and Lady Lansdowne attended the coronation. Bedford, who was ecstatic about the 'triumph of the Spanish Whigs', had 'no fears of Kings and Princes being tempted to oppress their subjects or betray their trust.'<sup>1</sup> But Grey, who had seen the issue of the war tear his party apart since 1806, was the happiest of them all. He was eager to strengthen his bond with Grenville and in mid-March, when it was clear that Napoleon would be beaten, he compromised his views to such an extent as to call for the restoration of the Bourbons on the ground that 'it would probably disable France for the next 20 years at least.'<sup>2</sup>

Grenville was also anxious to cooperate with Foxite leaders, and an extraordinary development had made him willing to dodge the controversial issues of the past. While favouring the restoration of the Bourbons between January and March he had become greatly frustrated by the thought of foreign powers forcing a monarch on the French people. Apparently his pessimism had formerly prevented him from fully evaluating the difficulties inherent in this development for on 22 March he confided to Auckland that 'how Ld. Castlereagh & Ld. Wellington are to settle which Gov't they acknowledge in France I leave to other politicians to decide - to me it seems a little [absurd?] to treat with the Emperor & to proclaim his rival.' The whole scene sickened him; he was relieved that he was not in office; and he had no desire to discuss the issue in Parliament.<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Holland, 25 May [1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51662 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Holland, 12 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland). Also note Grey's comments in the Lords of 19 April 1814. Parl. Deb., XXVII, 454.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Auckland, 19, 22 Mar. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 34459 (Auckland). Grenville to Wickham, 12 Mar. 1814 (Wickham). Tom Grenville also had qualms. T. Grenville to Grenville, Mar. 1814, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 383.

This shabby acknowledgement of the wisdom of traditional Foxite arguments troubled Grenville greatly for he slowly realized that the success of what he considered to be his own foreign policy pushed him away from Whig ground. Clearly his past arguments had implied support for peacetime policies which he could not approve: the taxation of British subjects for the purpose of maintaining a standing army on the Continent. Of course a contented French public would remove this difficulty, he speculated, and during April he displayed a marked shift to the left in disagreeing with Auckland on the wisdom of retaining the revolutionary legislative bodies and all the titles, commissions, grants, and pensions of Napoleon's government.<sup>1</sup> Reports of discontent in France naturally mortified Grenville and in early May he expressed alarm at seeing unhappiness 'in a country so recently delivered from so terrible a scourge.'<sup>2</sup> 'It is as if these Emperors & Kings had conspired to impose impossibilities upon us', he told Grey indignantly.<sup>3</sup>

These views facilitated a certain degree of cooperation between the hitherto divided wings of the coalition. Whitbread approved of the Treaty of Paris but was anxious to oppose ministers on specific questions related to the final settlement of Europe. With some embarrassment Grenville was prepared to cooperate with the Foxites in opposing the maintenance of a peacetime army on the Continent but he insisted that this theme had to be 'most carefully seperated [sic] from all disputable points of Policy.'<sup>4</sup> The only disputable point was the

---

<sup>1</sup>Auckland to Grenville, 12 April [1814], H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 385-6. Grenville to Wickham, 19 April 1814 (Wickham).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Buckingham, 9 May 1814, Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, ed., Memoirs of the Court of England During the Regency, 1811-1820 (London, 1856), II, 74-6.

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 10 June 1814 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Grenville to Lansdowne, (copy) n.d. [June 1814?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland), ff. 92-3.

restoration of the Bourbons, and Grey, Lansdowne, and Bedford (all of whom were anxious for party unity) were fully prepared to dodge a question which parliamentary opposition could not alter. It was therefore with some wisdom that most Foxite leaders buried the hatchet and looked towards the difficulties which would face Castlereagh at Vienna as a result of his successful foreign policy. Grey was delighted that 'the nature of the times & correspondence of sentiment would make Whitbread more accommodating...'<sup>1</sup> Holland and Erskine, who were more anxious to attack Castlereagh than to please Grenville, agreed that 'Nothing could be better timed than to stop all considerations of difference of opinion in other times upon subjects to be agitated shortly.'<sup>2</sup>

During the spring and summer months the party presented a united front in opposing the continuing British blockade of Norway.<sup>3</sup> The independence of Poland, a subject which had its roots deep in Foxite dogma, was also agitated,<sup>4</sup> and Whitbread spoke against the rumoured transfer of Genoa to Sardinia stoutly enough to earn a letter of thanks from the Genoese mayor.<sup>5</sup> Then, too, opposition leaders were so eager to ride Wilberforce's cry for a general abolition of the European slave trade to political advantage that the 'Great Emancipator' grew alarmed. Norfolk presided and Grey, Holland, Lansdowne, and Whitbread spoke alongside

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 13 Sept. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Erskine to Holland, n.d. [May-June 1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51533 (Holland), f. 44.

<sup>3</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVII, 768-807 (10 May 1814); 835-64 (12 May 1814).

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., 455 (Grey, 19 April 1814); 860-61 (Ponsonby, 12 May 1814); XXVIII, 453 (Ponsonby, 29 June 1814).

<sup>5</sup>Serra to Whitbread, 26 Oct. 1814 (Whitbread), 5742. Parl. Deb., XXVIII, 454-57 (29 June 1814).

Wilberforce at the great public meeting at Freemason's Hall on 17 June. An attempt to bind Castlereagh on this point continued until the end of the session in July.<sup>1</sup>

Lady Holland's dinner book suggests that peace in Europe also facilitated a great deal of social intercourse among the various wings of the opposition. On 23 April Bennet, Jersey, Mackintosh, King, and Lord William Russell dined with Tom Grenville, Elliot, Ebrington, and Eden. On 2 May Fremantle and Dudley North sat at the same table; on the 8th Erskine, Creevey, and the Whitbreads were entertained; and in an astonishing development on the 21st Coke of Norfolk put aside his distaste of Lady Holland long enough to dine with Hardwicke, Newport, and Fitzwilliam, the latter of whom had avoided Kensington since Fox's death. Finally, on 26 May Elliot and young Henry Wynn dined with the old Foxites Adair, Jekyll, and Byng.<sup>2</sup>

Underlying this facade of unity, however, were fundamental weaknesses. Party leaders continued to be frustrated in their attempts to formulate identifiable stands on issues. The conclusion of peace had undermined the grounds on which the opposition had traditionally supported Catholic emancipation and the coalition was therefore stripped of what had hitherto been its only unifying cause. Lauderdale, in arguing against the promotion of the Catholic claims, outlined the opinion which eventually prevailed:

... we were then at war: - Bonaparte was known to have designs upon Ireland: Grattan had stated that ... there was a French party in

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XXVII, 570 (28 April), 637-42 (2 May), 656-62 (5 May), 1078-84 (6 June); XXVIII, 55 (10 June), 267-97 (27 June), 299-351 (27 June), 365-71 (28 June), 384-413 (28 June), 437-66 (29 June), 466-70 (30 June), 655-58 (11 July), 803 (20 July), 846-47 (26 July). Wilberforce Life, IV, 186-213. Romilly Memoirs, III, 138-40. Gloucester to Roscoe, 15 May 1814 (Roscoe), 1789. Grenville to Holland, 22 May 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51530 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Holland House Dinner Books, B.M., Add. MSS. 51952.

Ireland who were in constant correspondence with France; under such circumstances such a measure surely might be right which cannot be indicated now that we have obtained peace ...<sup>1</sup>

Upon this logic Donoughmore, 'with a reluctance, not over well acted', abandoned the idea of bringing on the question.<sup>2</sup>

Easily the most ominous consideration, however, was the fact that several important Foxites were unwilling to accept the restoration of the Bourbons. Leigh Hunt probably outlined the primary reason for this in an editorial of 10 April:

It is not for this man or the other that they [the allies] are concerned, whatever may be their personal dislike to Bonaparte as an enemy; it is for the re-establishment of an old dynasty as an old one, - for the restoration of the old privileged classes and the high aristocratic race, - for the return of prejudice, and mediocrity, and all sorts of dull super eminences, which are once more to consider themselves as taking natural place of desert; - in short, for the few as distinguished from the many, - for the family of crowned heads as opposed to the infinitely greater family who ought to have the disposal of crowns, - for power as opposed to the people. It is upon this point that we make our stand against mere restoration. If Bonaparte be allowed by the French people to retain the throne, he will exhibit to posterity the spectacle of a private gentleman raised to sovereign power in consequence of the corruption of a former dynasty; and the people, in consequence, will feel a degree of self-respect, and will recollect the power they possess where they chuse to exercise it.<sup>3</sup>

Hunt's view of affairs hardly coincided with the explosion of romanticism which was sweeping through Europe. His was the language of the Enlightenment - unpopular language in the spring of 1814 - but language which struck a chord in some of Fox's old friends. From the first Wilson was adamant in opposing British cooperation with 'legitimates' and he took care to stress that post-war Europe was a political vacuum in which the 'partial interests of thrones' could not be pushed to 'justifiable

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 8 July 1814 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Wynn to Grenville, 26 May 1814 (Wynn). Grenville to Grey, 30 May 1814 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 10 April 1814.

pretensions.'<sup>1</sup> Thanet saw the restoration of the Bourbons as the first step in a journey towards feudal darkness. Sussex amused Bennet at a political dinner by comparing the Bourbons to the Stuarts. Madame de Stael delighted Dugald Stewart's daughter with a tirade against the Bourbons. Old Philip Francis was eager for the Foxites to embrace the cause of the deposed emperor, and Rosslyn, who predicted the total destruction of French liberties, fell prey to the Napoleonic Legend. 'He [Napoleon] has no road to fame open but excessive Devotion and I do not despair of his being a candidate for canonization', he wrote upon hearing of the abdication. 'He has at least done right in taking Elba rather than Corsica for I think his Country men would have murdered him from shame at his meanness.' Even Lansdowne, who applauded the restoration, reported dejectedly from Paris that 'Whigs are as much out of fashion here as elsewhere.'<sup>2</sup>

Holland House was the centre of disaffection during the spring and summer. Holland had been incapable of decisiveness while the result of the war remained in question but the Bourbon restoration eased much of his intellectual confusion. He was unbending in his views at Ossory's home on 20 April, opposing the Restoration and remarking that it would be a comfort to him if the French king were forced to take the title of Louis XVII and to declare 1814 the first year of his reign.<sup>3</sup> Later he

---

<sup>1</sup>Wilson to Holland, n.d. [April 1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51617 (Holland), ff. 124-27. Wilson to Grey, 14 May 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 3012 (Wilson).

<sup>2</sup>Thanet to Holland, n.d. [April 1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51571 (Holland), ff. 42-3. Bennet to Creevey, n.d. [April-May 1814], Creevey Papers, I, 191-92. Maria Stewart to Mrs. D. Stewart, 7 April 1814, Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 236-37. Francis to Whitbread, 12 May 1814 (Whitbread), 2576. Rosslyn to Grey, 10 April 1814 (Grey). Lansdowne to Lady Holland, 15 May [1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51689 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>T. Grenville to Spencer, 21 April 1814 (Spencer).

vented his frustrations by trying to undermine a motion by C.W.W. Wynn. Grenville, feeling that other Foxite leaders supported Holland, actually asked Lansdowne 'whether any change had taken place in his general disposition to adhere to former connections.'<sup>1</sup> In all probability Holland would have looked on such a separation favourably during April and May.

Other Holland House regulars shared these opinions. Elizabeth Vernon censured the Parisian press for attempting 'to persuade a perverse public that the peace is not worse than might have been expected.'<sup>2</sup> Whishaw was also very critical. In late April he wrote that the Restoration was 'a conquest, and that there is a considerable anti-Bourbon party [in Paris].' When one of Lansdowne's letters contested this opinion he noted that Lansdowne had 'received his impressions from Talleyrand and the Corps diplomatique, and has been too much employed in going about with Lady Lansdowne to see sights, than in making inquiries and observations during the short time he has been there.' Later when Jeffrey printed an optimistic account of the state of Europe Whishaw observed that it was 'too favourable to the present order of things, and far too complimentary to the Ministers ...'<sup>3</sup>

Lady Holland promoted these feelings. She bet Lansdowne ten guineas that within five years the Bourbon king would dispossess Frenchmen of their property, and when Tierney praised the new French constitution she treated him as a dupe. 'All a humbug, my dear Tierney', she said authoritatively.<sup>4</sup> Lady Holland actively tried to influence her

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 17 May 1814 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>E. Vernon to Lady Holland, 30 May [1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51800 (Holland), ff. 166-69.

<sup>3</sup>Whishaw to S. Smith, 30 April, 19 May, and 9 Aug. 1814, Lady Seymour, ed., The 'Pope' of Holland House (London, 1906), pp. 55-6, 57, 59-60.

<sup>4</sup>Lansdowne to Holland, April 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland), f. 86. Stuart, p. 204.



husband's political colleagues. She treasured Creevey's report that French soldiers were still loyal to Napoleon, and in June she told Allen that Austria and Russia regretted the restoration of the Bourbons and that a French regiment on review had recently cried out 'Vive L'Empereur'.<sup>1</sup> Lansdowne grew so disgusted by her malicious exaggerations that he protested to Holland.<sup>2</sup>

The views of the Hollands and the small number of Foxites who agreed with them would have meant little if Grey and Grenville had been capable of taking a firm stance on European politics. They were not. The coalition's leaders began to wrestle with the formulation of policy in early October. From the first it was obvious that there was a great divergence of opinion as to what language should be employed when Parliament convened. Understandably Grenville and Fitzwilliam were not eager to agitate on European affairs. Their plan for the session ignored the Continent altogether. While timidly referring to the need for a low peacetime establishment both Grenville and Fitzwilliam placed great emphasis on the folly of continuing the expensive American war.<sup>3</sup> On the other hand, though a number of Foxites expressed interest in the American question few of them were willing to dodge the interesting developments on the Continent.<sup>4</sup> This was owing largely to the lingering effect of former opinions. Bedford found delight in the suspicion that Castlereagh was 'no match for either Talleyrand or Metternich and he will be tossed to and fro like a shuttlecock ...'

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland to Allen, 25, 26 June 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 52172 (Allen).

<sup>2</sup>Lansdowne to Holland, 13 May [1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 13 Oct., and Fitzwilliam to Grey, 22 Oct. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>4</sup>Tierney to Grey, 15 Oct. 1814 (Grey).

Grey doubted whether the Congress of Vienna would get off the ground and Lauderdale felt that war would result if it did.<sup>1</sup> Foxite leaders simply could not ignore the fact that they had predicted such a dilemma since 1792. Grey called for 'the hottest Opposition that has been made for years' and he reminded those present at a Fox dinner in Newcastle that his former opposition to the war had been founded on a belief that the European monarchs were incapable of peaceful co-existence.<sup>2</sup>

The differences within the coalition had Tierney in despair by mid-October and even Lauderdale saw the need for 'a quiet performance of our duty without any over strained activity.' Though Brougham regarded the closure of Holland House as a plus (the Hollands went abroad in early August) he felt that nothing good could come from continued cooperation with Grenville.<sup>3</sup> The bond was too weak. Opposition based on financial considerations was a good idea but the party could accomplish nothing without pointing to Castlereagh's foreign policy as the source of the country's woes. Moreover, the American war was popular. Rosslyn offered a temporary solution. The party should delay parliamentary activity until Castlereagh returned from the Continent with a 'settled peace' in his hand, he argued. Only then could party leaders fully discuss an avenue of attack.<sup>4</sup> Grey reluctantly agreed to this strategy and stayed in Northumberland. Grenville came up to London

---

<sup>1</sup> Bedford to Lady Holland, 4 Sept. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51665 (Holland). Lauderdale to Holland, n.d. [Aug. 1814], B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland), ff. 208-13.

<sup>2</sup> Morning Chronicle, 30 Sept. 1814. Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 30 Sept., and 30 Oct. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland). Edward Hughes, ed., The Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh (London, 1962), I, 40.

<sup>3</sup> Tierney to Lady Holland, 11 Oct. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 30 Oct. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland). Brougham to Creevey, n.d. [Oct. 1814?], (Creevey).

<sup>4</sup> Rosslyn to Grey, 2, 20, 28 Oct. 1814 (Grey).

full of bluster on the American question but found so little support that he returned to Dropmore. Meanwhile Tierney harassed ministers and speculated on the chances of success after Christmas.<sup>1</sup>

Developments on the Continent did nothing to facilitate harmony within the coalition. The French opposition party was small but extremely active. At its head was the talented Benjamin Constant; behind it was the social and intellectual power of Lafayette, Madame de Stael, Madame de Coigny, Madame d'Aquesseau, Sebastiani, Maubourg, and Madame de Souza, a group which one English visitor saw as 'the Whigs of France'.<sup>2</sup> According to Mackintosh, the most agreeable rendezvous for Bonapartists was at Madame de Souza's, and Captain Gronow reported that Lady Oxford's hotel in the Rue de Clichy was a haven for Orleanists.<sup>3</sup> But it was Madame de Stael's salon at Clichy which most attracted visiting Foxites. Her Considerations on the Principal Events of the French Revolution had become the bible of French liberals, and her soirées were attended by Lafayette, Constant, and the dashing Flahaut.<sup>4</sup> Francis noted that Englishmen flocked to her chambers 'as if she were a boa constrictor, or an orang-outang, whose antics they watched, to make a story of them for the next company.' 'How profound! How true! How fine! How original!', cried the awed spectators as the oracle spoke.<sup>5</sup> And the oracle was not happy with the state of France. She agitated for the abolition of the

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 21 Oct., 4, 23 Nov., and Tierney to Grey, 12 Nov. 1814 (Grey). T. Grenville to Spencer. 8 Nov. 1814 (Spencer). Tierney to Lady Holland, 4 Nov. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Ld. G. L. Gower to Lady Bessborough, 28 Sept. 1814, Granville Correspondence, II, 500.

<sup>3</sup>Mackintosh to Lady Holland, 6 Feb. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51654 (Holland). The Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow (London, 1900), I, 91.

<sup>4</sup>Herold, pp. 438-39.

<sup>5</sup>Francis Memoirs, II, 405.

slave trade, she criticized Wellington and the armies of occupation, and she secretly intrigued with Murat.

The clique which had surrounded Madame de Stael in England had followed her to Paris. Horner, Ward, Kinnaird, Rogers, and Mackintosh were at her side constantly and they were deeply involved with Constant and the French opposition in agitating for the freedom of the press. Constant actually used Mackintosh's name in one of his pamphlets, and in all probability the pens of Foxites were employed in producing the wave of propaganda against the slave trade which poured from Clichy.<sup>1</sup> The Hollands, too, were on the scene during August and September, and their soirées became famous for politically-oriented decorations. Stone lions of different sizes - an obvious reference to their own stature as British liberals - stood in their salon; Lafayette and Talleyrand, of different sizes themselves, attracted curious visitors.<sup>2</sup>

Though Holland was pleasantly surprised by the liberties which Frenchmen had gained with the Restoration he encouraged his friends in London to visit Lafayette, whom he described as 'truly a Veteran of the good old cause ...'<sup>3</sup> Other veterans of the old cause were present. Kosciusko moved from salon to salon with his pleas for Polish independence and the Duc d'Orleans resumed his role of the early days of the revolution. Brougham moved in these circles during October. Not surprisingly he returned to England convinced that the new régime in France could not last, and he encouraged Grey to go to Paris and see for himself. Holland contended that every time a 'legitimate' king was

---

<sup>1</sup>Mackintosh Memoirs, II, 296. Mackintosh to Horner, 12 Dec. 1814, Horner Memoirs, II, 220-24.

<sup>2</sup>Tierney to Grey, 26 Sept. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lord and Lady Holland to Horner, 17 Sept. 1814, Horner Memoirs, II, 194.

restored 'every sprig of Royalty <sup>in Europe</sup> becomes more insolent and insufferable'. 'The hostility of the parties grows visible, and the party of Napoleon certainly gains strength', wrote an excited Mackintosh late in the year. 'Some sort of catastrophe seems to be approaching ... The recall of Buonaparte is not so improbable an event, as it seemed when I came here in August.'<sup>1</sup>

Other centres of political disaffection in Europe attracted Foxites. Bedford and his sons had gone to Spain in the spring and by autumn they were spreading dismal accounts all over Europe. Creevey was in Brussels and his cause was Belgian independence.<sup>2</sup> Anstruther, Ward, Somerset, Byng, Rogers, Bedford, Lord John Russell, Allen, and the Hollands meandered through Italy en route to Murat's Naples late in the year. In Florence Lady Holland found a way to send Napoleon a consignment of newspapers and in return she received specimens of iron ore from Elba. In Rome Lucien Bonaparte sent her poetry, and soon the Hollands moved into Louis Bonaparte's mansion on the Corso. Ebrington, Vernon, Fazakerly, Frederick Douglas, and Lord John Russell visited Napoleon on Elba and returned to Rome with glowing reports of his liberality and wisdom.<sup>3</sup>

Holland tried to project a semblance of patriotism in his correspondence of the autumn. At first he denounced both Napoleon and the 'legitimates'. Next he expressed excitement for the cause of Italian

<sup>1</sup>Brougham to Grey, 1 Nov. 1814 (Brougham). Holland to Creevey, 17 Oct. 1814, Creevey Papers, I, 206. Mackintosh Memoirs, II, 324.

<sup>2</sup>Bedford to Holland, 5 June 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51662 (Holland). Holland to Morpeth, 26 Nov. [1814], (Carlisle). Creevey to Whitbread, 5 Nov. 1814 and 3 Feb. 1815 (Whitbread), 430, 433.

<sup>3</sup>Lady Holland to Whishaw, 17 Dec. 1814, The 'Pope' of Holland House, pp. 75-80. Allen to Horner, 17 Jan. 1815 (Horner). Lean, pp. 144-48.

independence and noted that Napoleon had done less harm than might have been expected.<sup>1</sup> Finally he openly expressed the feelings of those around him:

Travellers are hardly impartial judges of Bonaparte's government, but the excellence & magnificence of the roads, the abolition of turnpikes, & the various publick works which attract their attention must put them in some sort of good humour with him to whom they owe them - & those who have listened to the lying exaggerations of our newspapers, Ministers & chief [illegible], after ceasing to consider him as a Monster begin to ascribe to him virtues he did not possess & to his government those benefits which flowed rather from the events which preceded him than from the system which he established.<sup>2</sup>

Holland was still experiencing difficulty in separating his beloved French Revolution from Napoleon. His assessment, however, went far in explaining the criteria behind the blossoming Napoleonic Legend. In January the English colony in Rome moved to Naples; Holland and Allen immediately rose in defence of King Joachim.<sup>3</sup>

Correspondence from Foxites on the Continent reached politicians in England at a time when reports from Vienna were most disheartening. Wilson remained Grey's primary source of information. Beginning in August, when he predicted a counter-revolution in France, the disaffected general exerted powerful influence in the moulding of Foxite opinion. Wilson detested Metternich and championed the independence of Norway, Poland, Belgium, Italy, and Saxony. At first he aligned with the 'Czar philosophe'. After Alexander disappointed him he embraced France as 'the advocate of independent states.' From first to last Wilson was positively vicious in his criticism of the British government and its representatives in Paris and Vienna. He reported that Castlereagh was the

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Caroline Fox, n.d. [Aug. 1814?], 20 Sept. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51740 (Holland), ff. 14-15, 18-19. Holland to Morpeth, 10 Oct. 1814 (Carlisle).

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Grey, 20 Sept. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Allen to Horner, 17 Jan., and Holland to Horner, 1 Mar. 1815 (Horner).

guiding force behind the annexation of Saxony by Prussia; he blamed Wellington for the overthrow of the Spanish constitution; he ridiculed Liverpool; he criticized the manners of Lady Castlereagh and Lord Stewart; and on one occasion he reported that Stewart had been whipped by a coachman, jailed, and released on a plea of drunkenness. In December, when word broke that Soult had assumed the supreme command of the French army, Wilson told Grey that French soldiers were being recalled from leave and that France and Russia would cooperate in a French seizure of Belgium.<sup>1</sup>

Wilson's alarming intelligence was accompanied by the equally dismal reports of Adair and by the gossip of Foxites on the Continent.<sup>2</sup> Of course the vindictive spirit which had been largely dormant in the spring and summer blossomed with every report. Norfolk publicly toasted 'the success of the Spanish Insurgents', and Whitbread prepared to attack the British government for arresting Spanish 'patriots' who had escaped to Gibraltar and returning them to the agents of Ferdinand.<sup>3</sup> Criticism of Wellington was almost universal and rumours concerning his conduct at Paris spread rapidly. Lauderdale was sure that the field marshal's unpopularity with the French people was worse than was reported, and Foxite ladies censured his want of decisiveness and morals.<sup>4</sup> Castlereagh was also greatly abused. Wishaw spread rumours that the

---

<sup>1</sup>Wilson to Grey, 1, 10, 13, 22 Aug., 31 Oct., 5, 9, 14, 17, 21, 26 Nov., and 1, 11, 12 Dec. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 30120 (Wilson).

<sup>2</sup>Adair to Grey, 1 Jan. 1815 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Mrs. A. Romilly to Caroline Fox, Nov. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51965 (Holland). See Whitbread's copy of The Times, 28 Feb. 1815, in the Whitbread Papers.

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Grey, 10 Dec. 1814 (Grey). Caroline Fox to Holland, 24 Nov. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51740 (Holland). Mrs. A. Romilly to Caroline Fox, 21 Nov. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51965 (Holland).

Foreign Secretary had been turned against the abolition of the slave trade by one of his aides. A large gathering at Jersey's home censured the British stand on Poland and Saxony, and Lady Jersey noted contemptuously that 'Castlereagh makes success very unpopular.' Lauderdale predicted immediate war in Germany.<sup>1</sup>

Bonapartist sympathies mounted with this growing disenchantment. The Hollands and their circle of friends in Naples openly compared the blessings of Napoleon's reign with the wickedness which had followed the abdication. In England Elizabeth Vernon, whose son had recently visited Elba, described the deposed emperor as 'a most wonderful person.' Lauderdale and Grey exchanged enthusiastic accounts of Ebrington's conference with Napoleon, and at Woburn Whitbread spoke warmly of the emperor's character and genius. 'Napoleon has lost his empire but I continue his friend and admirer as before', wrote Whitbread's neighbour Peter Payne. 'He is great in his fall. Posterity will benefit by him, both in what he intended good and in the bad which was forced upon him.'<sup>2</sup>

Reports from the Continent stimulated a great deal of conversation about Fox and his concept of foreign politics. The Bishop of Chester told Caroline Fox that if her uncle had ever been in office under a wise and honest king 'the English statesman & the French Conquerer would have done better for Europe than the Ambassadors & potentates will do at the Vienna Congress.'<sup>3</sup> Noting the appearance of

---

<sup>1</sup>Whishaw to Lady Holland, 12 Oct. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 51658 (Holland). Lady Jersey to Grey, Dec., and Lauderdale to Grey, 5 Dec. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>E. Vernon to Lady Holland, 5 Jan. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51800 (Holland). Lauderdale to Grey, 24 Dec. 1814 (Grey). Broughton Recollections, I, 175-77. Payne to Whitbread, 6 Jan. 1814 [sic 1815], (Whitbread), 2569.

<sup>3</sup>Bishop of Chester to Caroline Fox, 29 Jan. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51968 (Holland).



a weekly newspaper entitled The William Pitt, Henry White envisaged a rival print, The Charles James Fox, through which the wisdom of Fox's foreign views could be promoted. During the summer and autumn he failed in his efforts to secure the financial aid of Foxite leaders but in November he opened shop with the support of Grey, Coke, Albemarle, and probably Whitbread and Bedford.<sup>1</sup> It was difficult to avoid Fox's predictions. At a dinner at Douglas Kinnaird's house Peter Moore, Scrope Davies, Perry, and the poet Edward Smedley were entertained by Sheridan's anecdotes about his old leader. Midway through the evening the old Foxite's nostalgic mood ended abruptly. Rising from his chair with uncharacteristic energy he inveighed in strong terms against the Vienna Congress: 'crowned scoundrels cutting up Europe like carcass - butchers, and cruelly maltreating their subjects who rescued them from Napoleon, and silencing us by the dirty bribe of the crown of Hanover ...'<sup>2</sup> This was strong language for a Carlton House man, but it was echoed by other Foxites who had something to lose. 'I never expected anything from this congress of sovereigns but the plunder of Europe: they have exceeded all my expectations in the shameless effrontery of their proceedings', wrote Horner (who sat for one of Buckingham's boroughs).<sup>3</sup>

Great interest was shown for Fox's old cause of Polish independence and probably for the same reason: Poland stood as a symbol of the power politics of the European monarchs. As early as June Polish leaders had encouraged Foxites to embrace their cause. Prior to the

---

<sup>1</sup>White to Grey, 24, 31 Aug., 16, 27 Sept., 3, 10 Oct., n.d. [late Oct. 1814], and Grey to White, 4, 10, 21 Sept., 18 Nov. 1814 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Broughton Recollections, I, 198-206.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Auckland, 17 Nov. 1814 (Horner).

departure of the Hollands for the Continent Polish nationals were frequent guests at Holland House, and Lady Holland was quite interested in their pleas.<sup>1</sup> Apparently Brougham was the warmest advocate of a semi-independent Poland. During the summer he wrote a pamphlet, An Appeal to the Allies and the English Nation on Behalf of Poland, and then heaped lavish but anonymous praise on it in the Edinburgh Review.<sup>2</sup> Brougham corresponded regularly with Prince Sierakowski (who was anxious to unite the Foxite press behind the cause) and he arranged meetings between Poles and Foxites. Both he and Bennet encouraged Whitbread to step forward as the leader of a national movement, and on one occasion Brougham actually succeeded in bringing Grey together with Whitbread, Bennet, Romilly, and Ossulston to meet Sierakowski and Radzivil.<sup>3</sup> Grey, who doubted whether an independent Poland could emerge from the Congress of Vienna, was nevertheless active on the question. Mackintosh corresponded with Kosciusko; Romilly encouraged Ponsonby to speak on the subject in the Commons; and Wilson's prolific correspondence probably helped defeat Castlereagh's plans for Poland at Vienna.<sup>4</sup> Through Sierakowski Bennet obtained the memorials of Fouché, a letter from Alexander to Pozzo di Borgo which censured the French Bourbons, and other suppressed documents which illustrated Castlereagh's folly.<sup>5</sup> Later these became a large part

---

<sup>1</sup>Lady Holland to Allen, 24 June 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 52172 (Allen).

<sup>2</sup>Edinburgh Review, XXII, 293-331. Taylor, The Trouble-makers, p. 33.

<sup>3</sup>Sierakowski to Brougham, 31 July, Aug., and 31 Aug. 1814 (Brougham). Brougham to Grey, n.d. [June 1814], (Brougham). Brougham to Whitbread, June 1814, and Bennet to Whitbread, 19 July 1814 (Whitbread), 3323, 5739. Romilly Memoirs, III, 141.

<sup>4</sup>For Grey's views on Poland see the Grey Papers, box 47, file 7. Grey to Adair, 19 Jan. 1815 (Grey). Kosciusko to Mackintosh, 14 Aug. 1814, Mackintosh Memoirs, II, 273-74. Romilly Memoirs, III, 143. Wilson to Grey, 10, 13 Aug., 21, 29 Oct., 5 Nov. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 30120 (Wilson).

<sup>5</sup>Brougham to Grey, n.d. [late 1814], (Brougham).

of the opposition's attack on the Foreign Secretary.

As a result of all this there was a considerable cry for an attack on the European politics of the British government during the early months of 1815. Grey was very eager 'without seeming to have any distinct notions of what ought to be done.'<sup>1</sup> Out of deference to Grenville he had discouraged activity earlier in the year. In June he had stopped Adair from publishing a concise statement of traditional Foxite dogma on European affairs but now he regretted his timidity. 'We would have formed an excellent record to which we might have referred with the greatest advantage', he lamented. But Grey was still anxious to cooperate with Grenville, and Adair himself saw 'no reason why an opposition might not be formed upon the old plan, and with the old views.'<sup>2</sup> When Grey's son became desperately ill in January the father refused to leave Northumberland, and Grenville assumed the direction of policy.

Grenville was not a happy man in early 1815. Every report from the Continent suggested that his and Pitt's concept of wartime objectives had been poorly-developed from the start. He undoubtedly felt Castlereagh's pains, and he was not anxious to give Foxite leaders a free hand in Parliament. He saw the appointment of Soult as a 'bad omen'; he feared that Belgium would be ceded to France; he doubted if Great Britain could retain Hanover; he was disturbed because a British army remained in the Netherlands; and all the while he knew that he could do no better if the reins were in his hands.<sup>3</sup> His fundamental

---

<sup>1</sup>Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 6 Feb. [1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Adair, 19 Jan. 1815 (Grey). Adair to Lady Holland, 7 Jan. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51611 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 10 Dec. 1814, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville). Grenville to Grey, 12 Dec. 1814 (Grey).

concept of foreign politics did not differ from that of Castlereagh and yet not only his political allies but also many of the younger members of his family were eager to attack the entire structure of British foreign policy. Ebrington was in Naples discussing Napoleon's attributes with Holland; Wynn was ridiculing Castlereagh and Stewart; Buckingham was questioning the advantages of Napoleon's fall; and even Tom Grenville agreed with the Foxites on the subject of Poland.<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile Grenville was doing everything in his power to avoid embarrassing discussions.

In mid-January he met with Tom Grenville, Buckingham, Elliot, Newport, and Ponsonby at Stowe and emphasized that the recently-concluded treaty of Ghent was the subject upon which the coalition should concentrate in Parliament. Several days previously Grenville had lamented that the conclusion of peace with America had disarmed the party. Now he was emphatic in calling for an attack on the management of the American war and a motion for parliamentary enquiry so as to determine why the conflict had been prolonged at such enormous expense if ministers were to be content with status quo ante bellum. Grenville succeeded in carrying this point, and Ponsonby asked Horner (who was known to be hot about the Congress of Vienna) to open the American question in mid-February.<sup>2</sup>

With it firmly established that the treaty of Ghent would be the first priority of the coalition it was decided that specific questions relating to Europe would be dodged in favour of general comment on the necessity of a low peacetime establishment. According to Tom Grenville

---

<sup>1</sup>Wynn to Grenville, 28 Dec. 1814 (Wynn). Buckingham to Wynn, 13 Nov. and 14 Dec. 1814 (Wynn). T. Grenville to Spencer, 12 Dec. 1814 (Spencer).

<sup>2</sup>Buckingham, Memoirs of the Court, II, 107. Grenville to T. Grenville, 3 Jan. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville). Ponsonby to Horner, 25 Jan. 1815, Horner Memoirs, II, 225-26.

the plan was 'to refer to Pitt's peace establishment of 1791, & to require from his friends now in office either to adopt that, or to justify in detail the points in which they propose to exceed it.'<sup>1</sup> In addition Grenville wanted the party to oppose the retention of the property tax. As one Foxite observed incredulously, the battle plan which was adopted evaded foreign politics and simply called for opposition to the taxes which would be required to enforce the Vienna settlement.<sup>2</sup> Apparently Foxite leaders appreciated Grenville's difficulties and were willing to work around them. Grey approved the plan; Lauderdale told Lady Holland that Grenville's views were adopted 'for the sake of mere display'; Tom Grenville assured Tierney that the only real point of difference was the restoration of the Bourbons; and Mackintosh, though pessimistic, expressed hope that the opposition could avoid disagreement in Parliament by using different language but dividing together on motions of a general nature.<sup>3</sup>

In early March Napoleon landed on the beach of the Gulf of Juan near Cannes. As the world watched in stunned silence the French Emperor marched north unresisted and entered Paris at the head of 40,000 men on the 20th. Bourbon attempts to rally the western provinces failed; the people of Bordeaux and Auvergne rose en masse; the tricolour was hoisted in the communes of Dauphiné; and the Bourbon army at Marseilles broke rank in disorder and wept for joy at being captured. The Duc d'Angouleme

---

<sup>1</sup>T. Grenville to Wynn, 25 Jan. 1815 (Wynn).

<sup>2</sup>Mackintosh to Holland, 6 Feb. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51653 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Grey, 31 Jan. 1815 (Grey). Lauderdale to Lady Holland, 6 Feb. [1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51698 (Holland). Tierney to Lady Holland, n.d. [Feb. 1815?], B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland), ff. 134-35. Mackintosh to Lady Holland, n.d. [Feb. 1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51654 (Holland), ff. 27-9.

was captured outside Valence; Louis XVIII, the Duke of Bourbon, Talleyrand, and the royal train departed for England; and Massena raised the tricolour in Provence after a short civil war. On 20 April 100 guns from Les Invalides announced to Paris and salvoes from the coastal batteries and frontier fortresses announced to foreign nations Napoleon's almost bloodless reconquest of France. Trying desperately to contrast his behaviour with that of the European sovereigns, Napoleon magnanimously freed Angouleme, accepted the territorial settlement of the treaty of Paris, employed Benjamin Constant to draft a constitution, abolished the French slave trade, and despatched overtures for peace to Great Britain.<sup>1</sup>

These events brought an explosion of Foxite passions. 'Vive L'Empereur', wrote Lady Holland while her husband predicted that Murat would 'set Italy in a flame'. 'As an Englishman one must wish him to fail', observed Ward as he witnessed the mobilization of Murat's spirited Neapolitans. 'And yet the actions of the greatest captain that ever lived have been so glorious and astonishing, and the traces of his power, directed to objects of the highest public utility ... are so much more striking than those of any other individual that ever lived ... that I cannot help harbouring some feelings with respect to him which are neither very reasonable nor very patriotic.'<sup>2</sup> Romilly was captured by the contrast between Napoleon and the Bourbons; Horner found the spectacle 'wonderful and frightful'; Bedford immediately planned to return to England and raise a cry for peace; and Thanet, who was bedridden

---

<sup>1</sup>Somerset De Chair, ed., Napoleon's Memoirs (London, 1858), pp. 475-77.

<sup>2</sup>Holland to Caroline Fox, 5 Mar. [1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51740 (Holland). Ward to Helen Stewart, 24 and 27 Mar. 1815, Letters to 'Ivy', pp. 278-83.

with the gout, wrote to Grey:

Gout in the hand but Napoleon for ever. No interference in the affairs of France, no continental alliances. Napoleon will revolutionize the World if attack'd upon the horrid barbarous principles of the Declaration of Congress; if such a congress is to govern or Napoleon, my choice is made in an instant. Beasts Brutes & Savages over an Austria, Prussia & Russia ... What better practical application of our Principles, than the result of the March to Paris? I would not give up one Iota of those principles on any account, or for the sake of any support. They are as strong & well-grounded in policy as in honesty ... Save us from War if you can, but if not let us have a good & sound exposition of our Principles. Why are we to be the paymasters of all the Russian Banditti in the world? Who can be elected King if Napoleon is not?<sup>1</sup>

Several Foxites saw the hand of the supernatural at work. Henry Thompson contended that Grey felt strongly that Napoleon was 'formed for great purposes' and that he considered the emperor 'as Being of a nature above the general standard of mankind, as one in great degree above comparison.'<sup>2</sup> Whitbread was deeply moved. 'Learn Justice, and do not despise the Gods', he cried in the Commons.<sup>3</sup>

Initially many Foxites felt that Grenville's language of late 1814 and early 1815 indicated that he would not look unfavourably on developments in France. Then, too, Tierney was certain that Englishmen would not support a war to restore the Bourbons and that therefore the coalition was safe. As late as 21 March Whishaw told Sydney Smith that both Grey and Grenville were 'entirely averse to any interference in the internal government of France, or even to a war for the possession of Belgium ...' In mourning for the death of his son and convinced from recent conversations that Grenville would concur in a policy of

---

<sup>1</sup>Romilly Memoirs, III, 161. Horner to L. Horner, 17 Mar. 1815 (Horner). Bedford to Lady Holland, 18, 24 April [1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51665 (Holland). Thanet to Grey, 31 Mar. 1815 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Farington Diary, VIII, 12.

<sup>3</sup>Lean, p. 103, has interesting comment.

non-interference Grey remained inactive.<sup>1</sup>

Until 20 March Ponsonby managed to hold the line in the Commons. On the 10th tempers flared when Whitbread and Tierney demanded information but the opposition front bench did not push the issue. On the 16th Whitbread warned against 'any measure which might implicate Great Britain in the civil war which might now have begun in France' but Ponsonby discouraged a motion. On the 20th, however, Whitbread opened the door to party friction with a defence of Napoleon, an attack on British policy at Vienna, and a motion for official papers.<sup>2</sup> Grenville did everything in his power to cooperate with the Foxites. Grey arrived in London on the 21st, and after lengthy discussions at Camelford House he joined with Grenville, Buckingham, and Wellesley in demanding official correspondence on the proceedings at Vienna.<sup>3</sup> Tension mounted as reports of Napoleon's progress reached London. On the 26th, when word of the emperor's entering Paris arrived, Grenville drew the line. 'His [Napoleon's] Government is military', he wrote to his brother. 'He can maintain it only by feeding his troops with conquest & plunder ... With such a man we must be at War, & if we can now unite with us the rest of Europe I had much rather take that chance now, inconvenient as it is, than wait till he has again by partial intimidation & by corruption disunited them from us & each other ...' Late in the afternoon he met with Grey and got nowhere with this argument. 'There is no hope of bringing him to view this matter in this light', he lamented. 'It clashes too much with old opinions & prejudices. I grieve for this,

---

<sup>1</sup>Tierney to Lady Holland, 27 Mar. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51584 (Holland). Whishaw to S. Smith, 21 Mar. 1815, The 'Pope of Holland House, pp. 96-7. Grey to Holland, 26 June 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XXX, 114-15, 229-31, 265-305.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., 305-06 (21 Mar. 1815).



but after all I must act from my own conclusions.<sup>1</sup>

In letters of 28 and 30 March Grenville told Grey that the experience of twenty years had convinced him that real peace with Napoleon was impossible and that the continental alliance of 1814 had to be resurrected to remove the French Emperor from his throne. Grey was stout in his reply. He stated that the behaviour of the allies at Vienna and the obvious attachment of Frenchmen to Napoleon led him to other conclusions. As in 1792 he argued that military cooperation with the continental allies should be purely defensive, that Britain had no right to impose a government on the French people, and that attacking France for the avowed purpose of altering her government was not only unprincipled but impolitic, as past events clearly showed. He expressed faith in the possibility of peace but he stressed that if Napoleon wanted war another crusade of kings would only give him the means to wage it. 'As to the Bourbons,' he concluded, 'if it is to them you look ... can you believe that all Europe, cordial and united, could replace them on the throne of France; or if it could, that it would maintain them there? A family which in the whole country could not muster a dozen musquets in its defence!'<sup>2</sup>

For the first time Grey tried to rally the Foxites at the expense of the coalition. In late March he circulated copies of his correspondence with Grenville among Fox's oldest colleagues, encouraged them to come to London, and requested help in the formulation of policy. The

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 26 Mar. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 ((T. Grenville). Also see Grenville to Newport, 28 Mar. 1815, copy (Horner), and Grenville to Wickham, 20 April 1815 (Wickham).

<sup>2</sup>Grenville to Grey, 28, 31 Mar., and Grey to Grenville, 30 Mar., 1 April 1815 (Grey). Copies of this correspondence are in the Holland House Papers, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551, ff. 1-25.

response was astonishing. Lansdowne had no faith in Napoleon but he was ready to break with Grenville before supporting a war to restore the Bourbons. Horner, Tierney, and Whitbread's friends felt that a schism with Grenville would be unavoidable. A group of 'honest Whigs' met at Lord King's house and were 'gloomy' because of what was seen as a second disintegration of the party.<sup>1</sup> On the other hand there was a great deal of excitement about a reunion of Fox's old colleagues around the principles of the 1790's. '... I try to flatter myself there can be no defection of any considerable name from the old Fox party', wrote Horner, 'and if they keep together, they know what it is to maintain a high name with small minorities in parliament.' Fox's oldest friends were most enthusiastic. William Poyntz, who was crippled by old age, wanted to leave his bed and travel up to London; Coke, Thanet, Lord Robert Spencer, Lord William Russell, Norfolk, Tierney, Western, Byng, Taylor, William Smith, and Whitbread were also eager; and Francis encouraged Grey to ignore Grenville. Lord John Townshend, who was too ill to attend Parliament, gave Grey an enthusiastic vote of confidence. 'I quite agree with you that the absence, that is to say the wilful [sic] absence of one of Fox's oldest personal friends wd. be terrible, but I am too old & steady a Foxite to fear the possibility of misconstruction.'<sup>2</sup>

Editors who had agreed with Fox during the 1790's rallied around the standard of peace enthusiastically. The Morning Chronicle led this crusade, and one must suspect that Perry leaned heavily on his editions

---

<sup>1</sup>Lansdowne to Grey, April, Horner to Grey, 28 Mar. 1815 (Grey). Caroline Fox to Holland, 23 Mar. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51740 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Grey, 2 April, Thanet to Grey, 2 April, Ld. William Russell to Grey, 28 Mar., 6 April, Francis to Grey, 31 Mar., and Ld. John Townshend to Grey, 21 May 1815 (Grey). Bennet to Creevey, 3 April 1815, Creevey Papers, I, 215-16.

of the 1790's in writing his editorials of the spring and early summer.<sup>1</sup> The Independent Whig also revived the arguments of the 1790's, and the Globe and the Oracle cried for peace with uncharacteristic firmness.<sup>2</sup> The Examiner called for British neutrality, and as the country moved towards war Hunt joined other Foxite editors in praising Napoleon and his ally Murat.<sup>3</sup> It was the Statesman, however, which put forward the most truly Foxite arguments for peace. The spirit of a risen people could not be resisted, it maintained. Napoleon might well be a militarist but the context of European affairs was such that the emperor stood as the defender of British constitutional principles. Consequently,

He is the best friend to the House of Brunswick who cautions them to avoid that rock on which the Stuarts split, and which we now behold covered with the wreck of the Bourbons. On the contrary, he is their most dangerous enemy who seeks to entangle them with that sinking Monarch, whose destruction is inevitable, and whose cause is foreign to England. - Let it be well considered that to make common cause between the House of Bourbon and the House of Brunswick might involve both in one common fate.<sup>4</sup>

These arguments were not unreasonable, and they had a considerable effect on those who had heard Fox's passionate speeches. They were accompanied by the letters of private citizens to Foxite editors. Capel Lofft described Napoleon as the sole defender of the principles of the Enlightenment in a series of letters to the Statesman, and Godwin sent two letters to the Morning Chronicle.<sup>5</sup> 'In a question like this,' wrote Godwin, 'I feel that we cannot succeed and indeed I frankly confess I do

---

<sup>1</sup>Asquith, p. 371, has brief comment.

<sup>2</sup>Independent Whig, editions of mid-March to early June, especially that of 2 April 1815. Globe, 4, 7 April, 3, 8, 26 May 1815. Farington Diary, VIII, 10.

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 12, 19 Mar., 30 April, 7, 14 May 1815.

<sup>4</sup>Statesman, 24, 25, 28, 31 Mar., 1, 3, 26 April 1815.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., 26, 27 April 1815.

not even wish we should succeed.'<sup>1</sup>

Waithman managed to carry resolutions through the Common Council which censured the allied powers, British involvement in the affairs of Europe, and any attempt to interfere in the internal politics of France.<sup>2</sup> The electors of Westminster met in Palace Yard and applauded as Burdett and Cartwright raised Fox's banner. Cartwright argued that France was 'endeavoring to transplant a scion from our tree of liberty', and Burdett slammed the enemies of Napoleon. According to the Independent Whig only two or three electors opposed the petition which was adopted. The electors of Southwark also adopted resolutions against the war.<sup>3</sup>

The naked question of war and peace tore at the political factionalism which had divided Fox's old party since 1807. Never before had Grey found his views endorsed unanimously by the Foxite press; by Waithman and the Common Council; by Burdett, Brand, and Cartwright; by Whitbread and his friends; and by Foxites in the country at large. Even the Regent was having trouble holding his Foxite friends in line. Peter Moore and Taylor refused to support Prinny's call for war; Yarmouth preached peace all over London; Adam, Moira, and Sheridan (who could not afford to disagree with Prinny) remained prudently silent. Only Erskine contended publicly that Fox would have supported war in the present circumstances.<sup>4</sup> Other old friends of Fox were confused by the question, and several of them went to St. Anne's Hill to seek inspiration. Grattan reminisced with Mrs. Fox for two days in late March, and Fox's wife must have been astonished when Lord and Lady Fitzwilliam and Lady Milton

---

<sup>1</sup>Lean, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Political Register, XXVII, 566-75.

<sup>3</sup>Independent Whig, 21 May 1815.

<sup>4</sup>Erskine to J. Wright, 1 May 1815, Fox Speeches, I, v-xlviii.

called for the first time since Fox's death. She soon grew accustomed to such surprises. Coke, who had never acknowledged her existence, visited the shrine with Albemarle and the confused Adair.<sup>1</sup>

Notwithstanding acknowledged disagreement on the question of war and peace the effects of a decade of political cooperation exerted a powerful influence on both Foxite and Grenvillite leaders. After his strong stand of late March Grey grew timid in early April and tried desperately to temper Grenville's views in an effort to weather the storm. Grenville, too, was anxious to avoid an open break, and he encouraged his supporters to be moderate.<sup>2</sup> Apparently both men felt that once war was declared the coalition could unite to support it. Grenville noted that both he and Grey were anxious to preserve their bond: a formal separation would become necessary only through the 'zeal and intemperance of others' and 'if we can avoid it I think we shall.'<sup>3</sup> Accordingly every effort was made to delay a confrontation in Parliament.<sup>4</sup> On 6 April Grenville brought his entire family to a meeting at Ponsonby's house, expressed a willingness to cooperate and compromise for the sake of the coalition, and joined with Ponsonby in discouraging a division on the Regent's call for military preparations. The following day saw Ponsonby, Elliot, Plunket, and Newport argue that a vote for military preparations was not a vote for war, and they stood on this ground in resisting an amendment for peace which was supported by every Foxite on

---

<sup>1</sup>Elizabeth Fox Journal, entries of 28, 29 Mar., 16, 29 April, and 2 May 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51481 and 51482.

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Holland, 26 June 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland). Grenville to Fitzwilliam, 30 Mar. 1815 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).

<sup>3</sup>Grenville to Wickham, 19 April 1815 (Wickham).

<sup>4</sup>Horner to his father, 10 April 1815, Horner Memoirs, II, 245-46.

the opposition front bench.<sup>1</sup> Afterwards Grey and Grenville assumed the offensive with motions in both Houses which were designed to hold the opposition together. On the 12th Grey and Rosslyn joined with Grenville and Buckingham to censure the lack of precaution shown by the British government, and three days later Abercromby, Mackintosh, Elliot, Ponsonby, and even Whitbread cooperated on the same subject in the Commons. Then in rapid succession the opposition divided 94 in resisting the proposed civil list, 58 against the income tax, and 62 against the transfer of Genoa to Sardinia.<sup>2</sup> Every effort was made to promote harmony. Horner, the only Foxite who sat for a Grenville borough, offered to vacate his seat because of his support for peace. Buckingham promptly refused to hear of it, and his kind reply reflected the spirit which the coalition's leaders were trying to project.<sup>3</sup>

These efforts only delayed the inevitable. The Allied proclamation calling for the dethronement of Napoleon caused Whitbread to include a vicious denunciation of Wellington in his attack on the 'foul crusade of despots', and the Foxite press rose in defence of the brewer.<sup>4</sup> Lafayette and probably Madame de Stael tried to rouse the Foxites through the medium of the American minister William Crawford. Hobhouse,

---

<sup>1</sup>Romilly Memoirs, III, 161-62. Horner to his father, 18 April 1815, Horner Memoirs, II, 246-49. Grey to Wellesley, 6 April 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 37297 (Wellesley). Statesman, 8 April 1815, for a division list and a report of the debate.

<sup>2</sup>The Statesman was excellent in its reports of debates and division lists during the Hundred Days. See the editions of 13, 17, 20, 28 April 1815.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Buckingham, 28 April, Buckingham to Horner, 29 April, and Horner to his father, 3 May 1815, Horner Memoirs, II, 251-54.

<sup>4</sup>Independent Whig, 9 April, Examiner, 2, 9 April, Statesman, 5 April, Morning Chronicle, 5, 6, 7 April 1815. Lean, p. 104.

who was in Paris, sent back highly emotive letters to his colleagues.<sup>1</sup> Holland and Allen (who allegedly wrote a constitution for Murat which was intercepted by the Austrians) encouraged their friends in England to stand firm.<sup>2</sup> Then, too, Whitbread was undoubtedly infuriated by the nationalistic chauvinism of the ministerial press and by the accusations of treason from the pen of Cruikshank.<sup>3</sup> But with all this aside few Foxites could ignore the striking parallel between present events and those of the early 1790's. 'The times too sadly remind me of 1793', wrote Caroline Fox. 'London is as full of Europeans as it was in 1792, all holding the same language & actuated by the same motives & the same extravagant hopes ...' Yes, replied her brother. '... the French will beat them all as they did in 1793 - have they not the same cause?'<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly, in late April Whitbread ignored Grey, moved for peace, and secured 73 votes, not including two tellers and five M.P.'s who paired off.<sup>5</sup>

By early May Grey and Grenville could no longer restrain their supporters. Lady Jersey had replaced Lady Holland as the Foxite hostess and her home was the scene of great political activity. One observer noted on 9 May:

At present there is an armistice and a constant interchange of Civilities between the two divisions of the Opposition Forces, but

---

<sup>1</sup>Herold, p. 449. Broughton Recollections, I, 256.

<sup>2</sup>T. Grenville to Grenville, 3 July 1815, H.M.C. Dropmore, X, 403-04. Holland to Grey, 12 June 1815 (Grey).

<sup>3</sup>Lean, pp. 104-05.

<sup>4</sup>Caroline Fox to Holland, 24 April 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51740 (Holland). Holland to Caroline Fox, 14 June 1814 [sic, 1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51739 (Holland), ff. 229-30.

<sup>5</sup>Political Register, XXVII, 564-74, for the debate and division list.

each Party is busied in beating up for recruits against the day of attack. Reinforcements however come in but very slowly to the War Standard. In the Lords Gen<sup>l</sup> Lord Grenville will not muster more than seven or ten at the utmost, and in the Commons Brigadiers Elliot & Plunket will not command a detachment of above twenty-two or three.<sup>1</sup>

The Foxites were indeed capturing the coalition's ranking members. They scored a major victory when Spencer, influenced by Althorp and his brother-in-law Lyttelton, came out for peace.<sup>2</sup> He was followed by Grenville's kinsmen Ebrington and Nugent, and by Essex, Sussex, Newport, and Macdonald, Stafford's nephew.<sup>3</sup> But easily the most rewarding accession was the unexpected support of Lord George Cavendish and the young Duke of Devonshire, who hitherto had shown no interest in politics. Desertions were few. Of those who were generally considered to be aligned with the Foxite wing of the coalition only Erskine, Ossory, Grattan, and the Barings leaned towards the war party. Though Lord George Cavendish failed in an attempt to lure Fitzwilliam from the Grenvillite standard Grenville was reduced to a party which was smaller than that which had divided against the peace of Amiens. This was galling to the family, and rumour held that Tom Grenville would come out of retirement so as to give the party more character in the Commons.<sup>4</sup>

Grey and Grenville held an austere silence in the Lords until 22 May when the announcement of the renewed coalition against France forced activity. Grenville almost backed down. On the 18th he retreated and

---

<sup>1</sup>A. Raymond to Lady Holland, 9 May 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland).

<sup>2</sup>Grey to Spencer, [April] 1815, and Grenville to Spencer, 7 April 1815 (Spencer).

<sup>3</sup>Whishaw to S. Smith, 18 Feb. 1816, The 'Pope' of Holland House, pp. 142-43.

<sup>4</sup>A. Raymond to Lady Holland, 9 May 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51585 (Holland). Ld. G. Cavendish to Fitzwilliam, 31 Mar. 1815 (Fitzwilliam/Sheffield).



confided to his brother that he could never agree with the Allied declaration which made peace depend on the exclusion of Napoleon and his descendants from the French throne. But Grenville had gone too far: a refusal to take a distinct line in favour of war would be a 'betrayal of the cause', he added almost whimsically. Grey was also very reluctant. He professed that he was overpowered by the prospect of the approaching debate; he told Spencer that he would remain silent without his support; and it was only when Spencer sent Cowper his proxy that Grey regained a semblance of composure.<sup>1</sup>

At the last minute Ponsonby stepped into the Foxite camp and delivered letters summoning M.P.'s to a meeting at Devonshire House.<sup>2</sup> Over seventy politicians answered this call.<sup>3</sup> An amendment was adopted which urged concert with the European powers on a defensive basis and condemned a war for proscribing the ruler of France. Enthusiasm was high when this was moved by Grey on 23 May, but the Foxite leader lost his nerve when he took the floor. Gone was the fire, the firmness, the commitment to fixed intellectual principle which had characterized his correspondence with Grenville of late March. His defence of the doctrine of national self-determination was so weak that Caroline Fox found it 'destitute of argument'.<sup>4</sup> However, Grey did succeed in tempering Grenville's speech for the old Pittite announced his support for ministerial policy and said little else. Each echoed the other in lamenting

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to T. Grenville, 18 May 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 41853 (T. Grenville). Grey to Spencer, 22 May 1815 (Spencer). Spencer to Grey, 22 May 1815 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Stirling, Coke of Norfolk, II, 107.

<sup>3</sup>Horner to Murray, 24 May 1815 (Horner).

<sup>4</sup>Caroline Fox to Holland, 26 May 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51470 (Holland). Later Grey denied this charge. Grey to Holland, 23 Dec. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51552 (Holland).

their differences. In the division the Foxites counted 44 and were beaten by 112. In this majority were Grenville, Buckingham, Stafford, Carrington, Cassilis, Bulkeley, Erskine, Ossory, and St. Vincent. The vote was most notable for the absence of opposition peers.<sup>1</sup>

In the Commons ministers sat by and watched opposition spokesmen disagree. Stating firmly that Fox himself would never support the proposed amendment, Grattan absolutely dominated the debate. His remarks silenced the House to such an extent that the Speaker almost called for a vote.<sup>2</sup> The replies of Burdett, Ponsonby, and Tierney made no impression; Whitbread did not even take the floor; and Milton, whom most M.P.'s associated with the Mountain, concluded the debate with a convincing argument for war.<sup>3</sup> Notwithstanding this debacle; the presence of many Foxites on the Continent; the ill-timed Epsom races; the refusal to vote by Grenvillites who disagreed with Grenville; the prudent absence of Sheridan, Mackintosh, and Adam; and the loss of every floating vote and the borough strength of Fitzwilliam, Stafford, and Buckingham the amendment secured 92 votes. According to Bennet only 19 M.P.'s followed Grenville.<sup>4</sup> This in itself was a tribute to the continuing hold of Fox's fixed intellectual principles on the Whig party. 'Perhaps our

---

<sup>1</sup>Horner to Murray, 24 May 1815 (Horner). Examiner, 28 May 1815, for the debate.

<sup>2</sup>Farington Diary, VIII, 3. Caroline Fox to Holland, 16 June 1815, B.M., Add. MSS 51470 (Holland).

<sup>3</sup>Examiner, 28 May 1815, for the debate.

<sup>4</sup>A. Baring, Sir T. Baring, Balem, Calvert, Carew, Fremantle, Gower, Grattan, Knox, Lewis, Malle, Milton, Pelham, Plunket, Smith, S. Smith, Wrottesley (!!), C.W.W. Wynn, and W. Wynn. Bennet to Creevey, 31 May 1815, Creevey Papers, I, 215-16. It is worth noting that Grattan had never agreed with Fox on the war, and that Plunket was soon to be made Chief Justice of the Court of the King's Bench in Dublin.

opposition to the war was too much delayed & weakened by a hope of some accident which might hide our difference with the Grenvilles & by consideration in itself largely due for Lord G [renville]'s honourable conduct', recalled Mackintosh.<sup>1</sup> This consideration had been largely responsible for the discomfiture of the party since 1806.

The days which preceded the final collapse of Napoleonic France represented the nadir of Whig hopes. The divisions of 23 and 25 May had given Fox's reconstructed Whig party a death-blow, and great animosity existed between Foxites and Grenvillites. Moreover, Grey's hedging and Grattan's mastery in the Commons had practically extinguished enthusiasm. Most Foxites left London, and those who attended Parliament should have gone home. Four days before Waterloo Tierney lectured the House on the impossibility of victory, and on the night that the news of Wellington's great victory reached London Grey and Wilson were pointing out to an audience at Brooks's that Napoleon had 200,000 men across the Sambre. Just as Wilson was reading a report that the English were filing out of Brussels a shout drew the crowd to the windows. 'Horrible news!', exclaimed Sefton. 'They have gained a great victory.'<sup>2</sup>

Even after Waterloo many of those who had voted for peace could not believe that the war would end.<sup>3</sup> Whitbread was not among this group. During the Hundred Days he had delivered over one hundred speeches in defence of the principles of his lifetime. 'My public life is extinct', he said upon hearing of Waterloo. On a trip to the Vauxhall pleasure

---

<sup>1</sup>Mackintosh to Allen, 9 June 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 52182 (Allen).

<sup>2</sup>Parl. Deb., XXXI. 815 (14 June 1815). Bennet to Creevey, July 1815, Creevey Papers, I, 240. Fulford, p. 249.

<sup>3</sup>Spencer to T. Grenville, 23 June 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 41854 (T. Grenville). Derby to Grey, 27 June 1815 (Grey).

gardens he thought a group of footmen were jeering him. 'They are hissing me', he told his wife. 'I am become an object of universal abhorrence.' On the opposition front bench he bent forward and nodded his head as ministerialists taunted him. On 5 July news arrived that Paris had fallen. The next morning Whitbread cut his throat. As Hazlitt noted, the brewer's fortitude failed him 'when the last fatal blow was given to himself and his party.'<sup>1</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup>Lean, pp. 108-09.

## CONCLUSIONS

The striking feature of most Whig politicians during the final decade of the Napoleonic wars was loyalty to the principles and memory of Charles James Fox. This reverence for a dead statesman was nothing new for the Whig. A vague sense of intellectual continuity, a sense of loyalty to the principles and wronged patriots of days gone by had been the outstanding generalization of intellectual Whiggism since the Glorious Revolution. Never before, however, had a generation of Whigs been more retrospective, indeed more timid to step forward without a glance over the shoulder. This development is understandable. Never before had young men come up through the ranks under the guidance of a statesman more intelligent, more charming, more loveable, more dominant, and more opinionated than Charles Fox; never before, it was said, had young minds fallen under the sway of such a 'magician'.

Fox was peculiarly adept at awing young men, and the image he had laboured to project during the 1790's had had an enormous impact. Young Whigs had felt the sense of martyrdom inherent in the old Whig creed; they had identified with the spirit of Hampden and Sydney; and it had been the wronged Fox, the last of the Romans, who had pointed the way through it all. Fox's 'principles' had therefore become the political frame of reference for the generation of Whigs which succeeded him, and Leigh Hunt was correct when he observed in April 1809 that the word Whig was little more than the name of the Foxite party.<sup>1</sup> In many ways this accounts for the party's dismal performance between the death of Fox in

---

<sup>1</sup>Examiner, 16 April 1809.

1806 and the abdication of Napoleon, for the closely-guarded 'Foxite Creed' was riddled by contradiction.

The formation of the Ministry of All the Talents in January 1806 was a new departure for the Foxites. It was part of an extraordinary effort by Fox to restore the Whig party to the position of power it had enjoyed during the 1780's. In this he was guided by what he felt were the principles of Whiggism. On the one hand was Fox's continuing loyalty to the Whig myths of the early part of the reign. These called for systematic opposition to the evils of a renascent 'Toryism' which was said to lurk behind the throne. After 1784 personal opposition to Pitt the Younger had been added to this dogma for it was maintained that the Prime Minister had gained power on the strength of this evil force. To effect systematic opposition great emphasis was placed on the maintenance of a group of loyal and honest politicians who could steadfastly oppose both men and measures in Parliament. As Lord Archibald Hamilton's pamphlet, Thoughts on the Formation of the Late and Present Administrations (1804), pointed out, Fox alone among the eighteenth-century Whig chiefs had remained loyal to this concept of political manoeuvre. Indeed it was the raison d'être of his political life.

On the other hand was Fox's devotion to the concept of foreign affairs which he had formulated during the debate on the French Revolution. This concept, too, was deeply-rooted in what Fox saw as Whig theory of the early part of the reign, and it could not be separated from his emphasis on systematic opposition. Standing squarely between the excesses of royal power and the rashness of an unenlightened public, Fox had always seen the Whig as a guarantor of English liberties, as a protector of the Contract Theory, indeed as a reflection of the Constitution itself. Parliament had been his fortress, a bastion of strength for the

cause of constitutional balance. On several occasions he had advocated its sovereignty, unfettered by the extremes of the world outside, and Burke himself had maintained that the first duty of the Whig was to stand by the balance of the Constitution in all weather. It was therefore with a certain degree of intellectual consistency that Fox had resisted Burke's clarified definition of Contract as well as England's commitment to a European struggle the context of which he felt was responsible for the subversion of not only English constitutional liberties, but also the Whigs' crusade against Pitt and the Crown. A firm 'northern man' prior to 1789, Fox had totally realigned his concept of European politics in defence of what he saw as Whiggism. As during the American Revolution he had argued that a war necessarily waged against the principle which had placed William and Mary on the English throne--the principle that a people were free to choose their own ruler--would fail miserably and in the process upset the precarious theory of Contract in England. A defence of the Low Countries, indeed a check on the expansion of republican France was not worth such a price.

These concepts--systematic opposition to the Crown and personal opposition to Pitt and his wartime policies--were the twin pillars of the Foxite Creed of the 1790's, and this creed was never stronger than during the opening years of the nineteenth century. The fact was, however, that Fox's views continued to separate him from the nation, and even the most loyal Foxite was forced to admit that the two fundamental tenets of his political creed had proved woefully incompatible since 1794. In following the theory of systematic opposition to its logical conclusion Fox had fallen prey to a conflict between Whig theory and what were seen as Whig interests. His definition of the French Revolution and his cry for peace (accompanied by the intemperance of his young admirers) had led to

the desertion of the landed element of the party, and consequently Fox had found himself incapable of challenging the Crown with any hope of success. In desperation he had turned to the people for support. This, too, had proved ineffectual. From the vantage point of the early nineteenth century Fox could see clearly that a serious flaw had formerly plagued his concept of politics. Above all else the Ministry of All the Talents was important as Fox's attempt to remedy this flaw and lead the Whig party out of the abyss into which the debate on the French Revolution had cast it.

Behind Fox's brilliant political manoeuvring between 1803 and 1806 had been a desire to reestablish a strong party acting in systematic opposition to the Crown. In this he had been successful. One by one Pitt's traditional supporters had found themselves cooperating with Fox at crucial moments, and by the time of Pitt's death the king had been disconcerted to learn that the Whig leader had cornered the market in the country's professional politicians. Upon entering office, however, Fox was the first to realize that his efforts had secured no long-range benefits for his concept of Whiggism. His coalition with Grenville and Fitzwilliam placed men before measures; the rock upon which the Whig party had split in 1794--the question of the war--remained clearly visible. The removal of this barrier had been a leading aspect of Fox's scheme from the first. The reestablishment of a systematic opposition had been necessary for a successful assault upon the Closet, but office alone gave Fox the tools by which he could deliver his 'good, stout blow to the influence of the Crown'. These tools were the Foreign Seals. Fox's conversation with Napoleon in late 1802 had convinced him that he could secure a lasting peace with France. Such a peace would end the reign of reaction in Britain, he speculated, and it would restore the



long-departed balance of the Constitution. Consequently it would also bring de facto unity to the Whig party; it would rob the Crown of the national chauvinism which had hitherto assured its supremacy; and it would open the door to constitutional improvement, specifically Catholic emancipation and parliamentary reform, causes to which Fox was committed through his former flirtation with the 'people'.

Fox's campaign was launched most successfully. He had no difficulty obtaining the Foreign Office, and he secured a majority for peace in the Cabinet by luring Sidmouth and Ellenborough into the government. Then, too, Pitt's policies had received a serious setback on the field of Austerlitz and in the vacuum Fox was able to carry through the Cabinet a scheme of foreign policy which was prerequisite to meaningful negotiation with France. The policy of goading European powers to war by means of subsidies was abandoned. Emphasis was placed on a 'husbanding defensive system' which at once conciliated warriors and guaranteed a British withdrawal from European affairs. And as a final coup Fox secured the approval of Fitzwilliam and Grenville for the opening of Anglo-French negotiations. Of course beneath these decisions was a great deal of disagreement on questions which went back to 1792 and 1793. The war faction in the Cabinet visualized an armistice by which Britain could conserve her strength until a new opening appeared. Fox felt that he could lay a foundation for peace firm enough to overcome the prejudices of his colleagues. He approached Napoleon's government promptly and cordially, and he went to great extremes to add a personal touch to his diplomacy. Fox was confident that the context of Anglo-French relations in the wake of Austerlitz and Trafalgar could bring him the treaty he so desperately wanted.

Simultaneously the Foreign Secretary began discussions of a

conciliatory nature with the American minister, James Monroe. This was a secondary aspect of his broader objectives. Firstly, from the early years of his political career Fox had felt that he personally had a stake in the success of what he saw as a nation founded on the best of Whig principles. Consequently he had championed Anglo-American accord consistently since 1783, contending that American political independence had not altered firm economic and social bonds and that therefore ground existed for a 'natural alliance'. These feelings had assumed political significance during the 1790's when Fox represented the economic prosperity and political stability of the United States as being a direct result of her isolationistic policies, policies which he advocated for England. Moreover, as Fox's arguments on European affairs led him towards the cause of republican France he had defended himself by pointing out that America was living proof that a republican government could prosper and remain at peace with the world. Secondly, since the source of his views was the Whig interpretation of the American Revolution--an interpretation which had preceded the rupture of the 1790's--Fox was by no means misguided in feeling that American affairs represented a potential source of harmony for his coalition government of 1806. Both Grenville and Fitzwilliam looked towards the reestablishment of a firm Anglo-American bond with great favour, and it is not insignificant that this was a point which separated Grenville from his old Pittite colleagues. Thirdly, Fox undoubtedly felt that a rapprochement with republican America would facilitate a relaxation of his countrymen's prejudices against accord with republican France. He therefore represented American friendship as a major aspect of his 'husbanding, defensive system' and he pursued negotiations with both Washington and Paris relentlessly until sickness forced him to his deathbed in late June.

It is idle to speculate on whether a healthy Fox would have been able to secure meaningful treaties. Great allowances must be made for his powers of persuasion and his reputation abroad but one may state without reserve that the Whig leader was pursuing an unobtainable object during the last years of his life. On the one hand his foreign policy rested on a contention that the accomplishments of the French Revolution, good and bad, could not be destroyed by the force of arms; that steel could not suppress ideas; that European affairs could not be restored to their context of 1788; and that therefore an Anglo-French settlement recognizing these realities would be in the best interest of all concerned. On the other hand Fox's party politics aimed at overcoming the results of the political revolution in England which had coincided with events in France; at restoring British politics to their context of 1788; and at overturning an existing political structure for the sake of a concept of Whiggism that was at best questionable. As during the 1790's these contradictory goals were most elusive. Fox deserves credit for trying to resolve the dilemma which plagued his concept of Whiggism. But his objectives ignored the world around him; they were clearly beyond his reach in 1806.

The timing of Fox's death only compounded the problems of his party. A vacuum--a total absence of intellectual leadership--quite naturally followed the death of such a man. This situation was worsened by the contradictions inherent in Foxite dogma and by the unbecoming political situation which Fox willed to his successors. Disagreeing fundamentally on European politics, the rump of Fox's government was incapable of coming to grips with European affairs. Fox's death hardened both the British and French governments; Grenville assumed the direction of foreign policy; and the peace negotiations were mismanaged to such an

extent that both pacifists and warriors rose in opposition to the government. Primarily because they wished to avoid disagreement on European politics the British ministers stood by idly as Napoleon punished Prussia at Jena and Russia in Poland. For the same reason wild schemes of conquest in South America were formulated and pursued half-heartedly. And as a result of this confusion Fox's promising rapprochement with the United States was compromised to such an extent that it fell to the ground. Talleyrand ran circles around the divided British ministry. Finally the government fell in a manner altogether undignified when it attempted to conciliate Fox's disenchanted followers with a foolishly compromised concession to Roman Catholics.

From the fall of the Ministry of All the Talents in March 1807 until the collapse of revolutionary France in the summer of 1815 the large Foxite party, a party which was for all practical purposes synonymous with Whig, remained frustrated by the same contradictory theories which had frustrated it since 1794. Fox's emphasis on a united Whig party pursuing systematic opposition to the Crown had been the leading aspect of his politics between 1803 and his death. In pursuing this objective he had given new impetus to the sagging myths of eighteenth century Whiggism, and the circumstances in which the government fell--a direct confrontation with the Crown--entrenched them. It is therefore not surprising that most Foxite leaders regarded the preservation of the union which had been effected with Grenville and Fitzwilliam as the first priority of Whig politics.

Led by Fox's acknowledged successor Grey, who had learned to pledge himself 'to as little as possible whilst in opposition', the ostensible leaders of the party stood firm on the fundamental Whig maxims

of the pre-1790 era.<sup>1</sup> This assured a concept of men before measures or, more accurately, a concept by which measures were moulded from the consensus opinion of the group. Unable to agree on anything else Grey, Grenville, and Fitzwilliam embraced Catholic emancipation as the beau ideal of their coalition. It was a tribute to the myths of eighteenth century Whiggism. It directly challenged the king and, as the question on which the Talents had fallen, it was the only acceptable emotional issue--the only parallel to Fox's old India Bill--capable of facilitating the maintenance of a group of honest, loyal, wronged politicians acting in systematic opposition to the evils which lurked behind the throne.

The assault on the king was weakened considerably by questions relating to foreign politics. In office the coalition had been largely united behind Fox's concept of Anglo-American relations but in opposition the question was by no means a source of harmony. This was owing greatly to the behaviour of the American government. Washington's rather foolish refusal to concede that the Talents had been more reasonable than Pitt's former governments joined with Jefferson's diatribes against the British practice of impressment to alienate even the warmest supporters of Anglo-American accord. Then, too, support for a policy of American conciliation did not have a broad base among those Whigs who did not qualify as professional politicians. This stemmed from a distrust of democracy, a feeling that Jeffersonians were pro-French, American attacks on the Navigation Laws, reluctance to cooperate in promoting the interests of the rising merchant classes, and probably a certain degree of enmity which dated from 1783. Though Grenville, Fitzwilliam, Auckland, Holland, and Erskine continued to advocate the conciliation of the United States,

---

<sup>1</sup>Grey to Holland, 19 Mar. 1811, B.M., Add. MSS. 51551 (Holland).

Grey and Windham usually opposed agitation on the subject, and motions in Parliament seldom secured good divisions. By the spring of 1809 the question had completely lost its utility as a bridge to unity within the coalition.

The question of European affairs, of course, was not easily compromised. Fitzwilliam and Windham were firm in feeling that European stability was impossible without the total destruction of everything which stemmed from the French Revolution. From the first they made it clear that their object was the overthrow of the 'usurper' Napoleon and the restoration of France's 'legitimate' monarch. Grenville's views, which were less identifiable, were a lasting tribute to the weaknesses of Pittite foreign policy. As the former Foreign Secretary of Pitt, Grenville was very concerned for the reputation of his political consistency. The fact was, however, that Grenville had lost faith in Pitt's system of saving Europe by British example. Personal experience had convinced him that Russia, Prussia, and Austria could not be helped; Austerlitz had caused him to conclude that Britain had her own interests to consider. Moreover, there is ample reason to believe that cooperation with Fox had led Grenville to suspect that his traditional concept of foreign politics had been geared to secure a questionable object. It is clear that he had serious doubts about a crusade to force a monarch on the French people and that he was none too eager to cooperate with the courts of Europe. These, however, were admissions that he would make neither to the public nor to his traditional allies and supporters. Grenville was no leader; his foreign politics were compromised; and it was almost whimsically that he wrote after the war:

The opinions of those who supported the War [in 1793] led I think by inevitable consequence to a most earnest desire that its result should be the restoration of Louis 18.--Not actually as a sine qua

non of Peace in extreme, & even in supposable cases, but on that which, fairly speaking, could alone have given one any satisfaction in success, or any confidence in Peace.<sup>1</sup>

Thus in effect Grenville and the Burkians stood as one on the fundamental issue. Grey, who diametrically opposed their reasoning, had nevertheless had a bad experience with Napoleon while in office, and a well-documented charge of mismanagement (if not apostasy) had been raised against him by many who continued to feel that peace had been obtainable. It was therefore impossible for the Foxite leader to attack ministers for refusing to do what he and his colleagues had proved incapable of doing. On the other hand his traditional concept of foreign policy and the views of the Foxites as a group prevented his endorsement of the war. Added to these considerations were the opinions of Fitzwilliam and Grenville, men with whom Grey was determined to cooperate. It was therefore with a great deal of prudence that Grey wished to neutralize the question of foreign politics. Motivated by innate pessimism, no small degree of intellectual confusion, and a sincere desire to maintain the coalition, Grenville quickly echoed this wish.

Some stance on the war was of course necessary for, after all, it was the leading question in British politics. In this Grey and Grenville were ever aware of their fundamental disagreement--disagreement which was accented by the Burkians--and the leaders of the coalition were therefore loathe to fully discuss the issue. Instead they drifted back to the agreement which had formed the coalition in early 1806. This was the pursuit of a 'husbanding, defensive system', a system which renounced continental expeditions and subsidies as concessions to the Foxites and left open the more important question of wartime objectives as a

---

<sup>1</sup>Grenville to Grey, 10 Feb. 1816 (Grey).

concession to the Grenvillites and Burkiens. Formed in the days which immediately followed the battle of Austerlitz (when the prospects of ultimate victory were poor), this system advocated neither war nor peaceful co-existence with Napoleon. It had been the product of Fox's tactics; designed to placate everyone by delaying discussions until the government could be committed to a treaty of peace. Though a compromise, it was ill-suited for the purposes of the coalition after 1806. Firstly, the period in which it had been formulated had been one in which military and diplomatic activity were practically non-existent. Accordingly its greatest weakness after 1806 was its inability to bend with the ups and downs of developments on the Continent. Secondly, the 'husbanding, defensive system' had been designed by Fox as a preliminary to negotiations with France. Therefore, by following the tenets of the system (retrenchment, military and financial reform, no subsidies, purely defensive warfare, and withdrawal from Europe) point by point to a logical conclusion it was impossible not to argue that a negotiated peace was in the best interests of the country. This the coalition's leaders could not do: from the first they were doomed to cut a miserable picture.

Unable to advocate either offensive war or the opening of negotiations for peace, Grey and Grenville could support the 'husbanding, defensive system' only on the uniquely Foxite contention that British financial and military involvement on the Continent was pointless so long as the monarchs of northern Europe remained divided and incapable of meeting France with her own weapon of nationalism. In itself this was by no means an unreasonable theory and, while stimulating a certain degree of unity within the coalition, it provided a potentially firm base for opposition to the tactics of ministers until the close of the session of 1808. During this period, however, the coalition's leaders aroused the



ire of many Foxites by refusing to carry their cry for defensive warfare to its logical conclusion of peace with France.

Fox's concept of the war had been seen by many Foxites as the raison d'être of systematic opposition to the Crown during the 1790's, and though Grey and his colleagues rejected this view of affairs there can be no doubt that between 1806 and 1815 support for a negotiated peace with revolutionary France was the common denominator of the political views of most of those who had formerly supported Fox. In this the 'party' alignments of the period mean little. The radical leaders of the City--Cartwright, Waithman, John Gale Jones, Cochrane, and Burdett--had no patience with Whig leaders (or with Fox's behaviour in office for that matter) but to a man they stood by Fox's concept of the war. The same was true of every London editor who opposed the government except Cobbett. The old Foxite Perry remained a great friend to Fox's foreign politics, as did Leigh Hunt and Henry White, both of whom were in other respects critical of Fox and the Whig leaders. Old supporters of Fox in the country--Capel Lofft, Christopher Wyvill, Peter Payne, Thomas Belsham, Samuel Parr, Dugald Stewart, William Roscoe, and even Hazlitt and Godwin--echoed these sentiments. In the Commons Coke, Byng, Western, Francis, and most others who had stood with Fox in 1794 consistently supported the foreign politics of old, as did the younger generation of Whigs, prominently Althorp, Brougham, Creevey, Ossulston, Bennet, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Lambton, Ward, and Lord John Russell. Many Whig peers shared these views, especially Albemarle, Bedford, Derby, Douglas, Bessborough, Erskine, Jersey, Lansdowne, Lauderdale, Norfolk, Sefton, St. John, Thanet, and Holland. Then, too, of primary importance was the strong emphasis placed on peace by the resolutions of the Whig Club and the Common Council and by the petitions which were adopted in Fox's old

constituency of Westminster.

In the opinion of these men the context of European affairs was unaltered by the appearance of Napoleon for the war continued on the same fundamental basis as before. There was something peculiarly Whiggish about supporting a military genius who had risen to power on the strength of the French people, who was opposed by the forces of absolutism, and who carried the tricolour and the principles it represented to the darkest corners of feudal Europe. In addition it was difficult to escape from a feeling that Napoleon, whether good or evil as an individual, was the child of the Revolution, the man who had consolidated its principles, and as such the last defender of the Enlightenment on the Continent. Moreover, an unbalanced hatred of the British government stemming from the 1790's led several important men towards blatant Bonapartist loyalties. Many old Foxites felt that France's revolutionary armies were invincible.

Beyond these generalities, however, alignments within the Whig, or more accurately among the opposition forces, on the issue of the war were at once determined and confused by the contradictions inherent in Foxite dogma. Two extremes existed. The first of these was represented by Grey and by those who firmly supported his contention that measures should be sacrificed to the maintenance of a united Whig party acting in systematic opposition to the Crown. The second embraced the 'radicals' of the period who argued that in sacrificing measures to men Whig leaders were sacrificing the principal to the accessory. At the bottom of 'radical' opinion was continuing faith in Fox's theory that peace was a necessary prerequisite to reform. Based on Foxite dogma of the 1790's neither group stood on middle ground. Young Lord John Russell, a serious student of Fox's views, captured this ground in a letter to Holland of

August 1810:

It seems to me that a long war is of all things the most favourable to arbitrary power, & to it I chiefly attribute the great increase of the influence of the Crown. When there is no danger of encroachment from the King, a Whig may safely go to war, but with so hardened a K[ing] & so large an Expenditure I think a Whig would be very cautious how he gives his vote ... As it is not the K[ing]'s interest to make peace so it cannot be the Minister's.<sup>1</sup>

Peace, then, continued to be an inseparable part of systematic opposition in Foxite dogma.

The history of the Whig party between 1806 and the summer of 1808 is therefore at once a comedy and a tragedy with Grey resisting a demand for peace by men who were in fundamental agreement with his emphasis on maintaining a strong systematic opposition. Grenville and Fitzwilliam, ornaments who collectively mustered less than twenty votes in the Commons, were important in the production only for the check they placed on the unity of the large Foxite wing of the coalition. Holland, Fox's nephew and the most popular man in the party, bounced back and forth between the extremes, and most of Fox's highly-respected older friends bounced with him. The man whose misfortune it was to divide Foxite theory with Grey was the brewer Samuel Whitbread, who at once became Fox's successor in foreign politics and an apostate of Whiggism.

In this situation success was possible for neither extreme. Fear of a schism on the issue of peace led Grey and Grenville to erect every possible barrier. In January 1807, when Whitbread censured the Talents' peace negotiations with France, Grey went so far as to state publicly that the nature of the French government rendered peace impossible. Later in the year, after the government had fallen, Grey joined with Fitzwilliam, Windham, and the Grenvillites to stifle a movement for peace in the industrial north. Finally, in February 1808, when the British government

---

<sup>1</sup>Ld. John Russell to Holland, 7 Aug. 1810, B.M., Add. MSS. 51677 (Holland).

rejected a French overture for negotiations, the coalition's leaders went to ridiculous extremes to head off Whitbread's threatened motion of censure. Measures designed both to placate Whitbread and undermine his support in the Commons (motions of censure on the Copenhagen Expedition, the management of Anglo-American relations, and the government's inactivity on the Catholic question) were agitated. Ironically even these compromised measures gave rise to great dissension while failing to produce the desired result. In late February Whitbread sent an embarrassed Grey scurrying home to Northumberland by carrying the Foxite centre in the Commons with him on a direct motion for negotiations. Sadly, all this occurred while the 'husbanding, defensive system' was in its heyday, before prospects on the Continent improved.

The outbreak of the Spanish Revolution in the spring of 1808 destroyed any chance that might have existed of Foxites uniting behind either men or measures. Napoleon's attempt to place Joseph on the Spanish throne was a gross violation of the doctrine of national self-determination, the very doctrine upon which Foxites had formerly supported the 'legitimacy' of the French revolutionary governments. Led by Holland and Sheridan, many Foxites therefore drew the line and supported the British government's commitment to war in the Peninsula. This group displayed remarkable shortsightedness, if not a desire to escape from former opinions. Concerned only for Spanish liberties, they ignored the broader context of the European war, a war which was being waged to destroy revolutionary France. Alarmed by the cries of the British public for Napoleon's throne and by official proclamations calling for the restoration of 'legitimate' monarchs, other Foxites remained true to the policy of isolation and peace. Whitbread was the only party leader who took a realistic view of affairs based on traditional Foxite dogma. He

advocated war in the Peninsula for the clearly defined objective of restoring to the Spanish people the right to choose their own form of government, and he was eager to negotiate with Napoleon on that basis. Unfortunately this view of affairs was not endorsed by other party leaders.

After a brief spurt of enthusiasm in the summer of 1808 Grey and Grenville embraced a concept of the Peninsular War which amounted to nothing but blind pessimism. In this Grenville was apparently guided by both extraordinary hardheadedness and a sincere belief that the British army had no hope of success in the Iberian Peninsula. On the other hand, it is safe to say that Grey's foreign views were moulded primarily to facilitate agreement with Grenville. On numerous occasions between 1808 and 1814 he wrote letters which reveal that he knew better, but he stifled these opinions by surrounding himself with 'Whig' generals who for various reasons maintained that Wellington was incompetent and doomed to destruction. The defeat and death of the 'wronged' General Sir John Moore and the publication of the misguided military opinions of this martyred 'Whig' general undoubtedly had an enormous impact on Grey's concept of operations in the Peninsula (for all the wrong reasons). But the warped views of Grey's later correspondents--Rosslyn, Wilson, and Gordon--were important primarily because they furnished the Foxite leader with information that he wanted to believe. Grey built what he saw as an impregnable case against the war. He built it on faulty information. He built it because of his passionate desire to agree with Grenville. All the while he refused to commit himself on the fundamental question of war and peace.

These views were maintained as part of what Grey regarded as the 'fixed principles of the Constitution' in the face of mounting unpopularity

both within the ranks of the coalition and in the nation.<sup>1</sup> Beneath Grey the Foxite party was torn by intellectual contradiction. Young men joined with 'radicals' to raise a serious cry for both parliamentary and economical reform during 1809 and 1810 and this led, as the inevitable result of the restraint imposed by party leaders, to the formation of a splinter group of Foxites in the Commons which became known as the Mountain. There was striking similarity between this group and the small Foxite party of the 1790's. Led by Whitbread, the Mountain championed peace and reform; it secured roughly forty votes on most divisions; and those who formed it were old Foxites and young Whigs who professed loyalty to Fox's 'principles'. However, while the Mountain greatly discomforted Grey's men in the Commons, few of those who supported its measures were willing to do so at the expense of their relationship with the Foxite hierarchy. Whitbread himself continued to place great emphasis on the importance of cooperation with the Whig aristocracy. Moreover, he backed away from parliamentary reform, arguing that peace was its antecedent. These views cost the brewer the steady support of men like Burdett and Brand, both of whom advocated a clear distinction between measures and men, and a political division on that basis. In the final analysis the Mountain never developed a meaningful political identity; it was neutral ground where pressure was released, ground where measures came before men but never at the expense of men.

The coalition's failure to carry resolutions censuring the management of the Walcheren expedition in the spring of 1810 was an important juncture. The disaster at the Scheldt created a clear-cut case against the wartime policies of ministers. At the same time the expedition was

---

<sup>1</sup>Parl. Deb., XVII, 504 (13 June 1810).

in itself unrelated to the coalition's difficulties on foreign policy. It was therefore a situation similar to that of January 1806, a situation conducive to cooperation in advocating a defensive wartime system. Grey and Grenville at once concluded that the event was one capable of restoring their power of 1806, and this optimism produced an enormous effort to bring the united weight of opposition to bear on the government. Catholic emancipation, hitherto the beau ideal of the coalition, was neutralized so as to attract votes; party leaders did not resist motions for economical reform in the Commons; and, in a tribute both to his awareness of Whig problems and to the absurdity of his former opinions, Grenville secretly planned to buy Whitbread by including negotiations for peace in the defensive scheme of foreign policy which he visualized for a new Whig government! What was seen as an identical situation to that of 1806 therefore led to the formulation of identical policies. These policies alone could secure unity; the divisions on Walcheren represented the last attempt to overcome the contradictory maxims of Foxite dogma.

It was too late. The campaign in the Peninsula had captured the imaginations of many important men. Fitzwilliam, Windham, many Grenvillite peers, and even Grenville's brother, Buckingham, thought that the concept of defensive warfare was now absurd. Holland, Sheridan, Horner, and many other Foxites who were excited about the 'risen people' of Spain agreed with this assessment. On the other hand, those Foxites who were upset by the crusade to restore Ferdinand imprudently criticized Wellington, and Whitbread, who tried to be reasonable, nevertheless mortified everyone by emphasizing the wisdom of a negotiated peace. Consequently it became clear to a majority of M.P.'s that the opposition had no clear-cut alternative policy, and an impregnable case against the management of the Walcheren expedition fell to the ground.

The defeat had enormous repercussions. Firstly, it seriously weakened the concept that measures should be secondary to men in Whig politics because it was now obvious that measures alone could promote any semblance of effective opposition to either the king or his ministers. Arguing on this basis Jeffrey pointed out that Grey and Grenville stood 'without popularity, power or consequence of any sort; with great talents and virtues; but utterly inefficient ...' This was undoubtedly true. After the vote on Walcheren measures surged to the front and Whig leaders stood by helplessly as 'radicals' ran amok during the remainder of the session. Economical reform received steady support from Foxites who had hitherto been inhibited by the views of Grey, and on 21 May Brand's uniquely Foxite motion for parliamentary reform--the first of its kind since 1797--secured an astonishing 115 votes. For all practical purposes this vote was a rally of the men Grey would have been able to unite had he chosen the measures of the 1790's instead of the men who had come together in 1806. Together in the division lobby were Whitbread, Tierney, and Burdett, each of whom had represented separate divisions of Foxite opinion between 1807 and 1810; remaining outside were Milton and Wynn, whose Burkian and Grenvillite origins are incontestable. This clear division of the opposition on the basis of a measure of the 1790's would have been impossible a year earlier. Well might Jeffrey have concluded that there was no hope for the Whigs so long as their ostensible leaders continued to 'maintain themselves at an equal distance from both the prevailing parties ...'<sup>1</sup>

What effect did these developments have on the more controversial question of foreign politics? The defeat on the question of Walcheren

---

<sup>1</sup>Edinburgh Review, XV, 504.



altogether undermined the 'husbanding, defensive system'. It therefore undermined the only means by which Grey and Grenville could prevent an open confrontation between their respective parties on the issue of the war. How, then, did Whig leaders delay this confrontation? Firstly, the popularity of Wellington's operations in the Peninsula and the support of many Foxites for war to reestablish Spanish liberties frustrated serious movements for peace at least until the time of the battle of Salamanca. Activity in Parliament amounted do no more than grumbling. There were no more assaults on ministers, and the only semblance of policy came with the absurd but infrequent arguments of Grey and Grenville that success was impossible. Secondly, when movements for peace developed (as during the Liverpool election of October 1812 and immediately after the battle of Leipsic) they were discouraged by Grey, Holland, and Whitbread because of a lack of information on foreign developments, the popularity of the war, confidence in ministers to resist the reactionary demands of the European monarchs, faith in the military skill of Napoleon, and a lingering desire to cooperate with Grenville and Fitzwilliam if at all possible. Though these factors discouraged activity in Parliament long enough to see the restoration of the Bourbons go unchallenged, one thing became increasingly clear after the unsuccessful divisions on Walcheren: the concept of men before measures had been given a fatal blow, and Grey stood virtually alone among Foxites with his emphasis on eighteenth century maxims of political manoeuvre.

The schism in the coalition during the Hundred Days was therefore the logical conclusion to an irrepressible conflict which had raged within Fox's reconstructed 'Whig' party since 1806. It was the direct result of a contradiction in Foxite dogma which had developed during the debate on the French Revolution and which could not be remedied until the conclusion

of the French revolutionary wars. This contradiction pitted Fox's concept of political manoeuvre--the basis of Whig theory of the early part of the reign of George III--against the fundamental maxim of Lockian theory: the right of even the people of England's 'natural enemy' to choose their own form of government.

One historian has observed correctly that the Foxite concept of foreign politics was a factor in Whig affairs until well into the nineteenth century.<sup>1</sup> This was owing greatly to considerations which were distinctly practical. Firstly, after the departure of Grenville Whig leaders represented traditional Foxite dogma as a fixed code and used vague references to it as a means of regulating the conduct of the party's rank and file. This appeal to tradition (the absence of which had undermined Whig leaders during the decade which followed Fox's death) was the surest way of justifying any action whenever questions of orthodoxy arose, and Fox Clubs were organized on a large scale throughout the country.<sup>2</sup> Secondly, the isolationistic drift of British public opinion after 1815 enabled Whig spokesmen to appear sagacious, consistent, and fully justified in attacking Castlereagh with arguments that had been politically suicidal so long as Napoleon had been at the gate.

Continuing loyalty to Fox's foreign views, however, was probably determined by considerations which were more theoretical than practical. William Lamb was wrong when he implied in late 1815 that the foreign views of Foxite leaders were a 'heap of modern additions, interpretations, fancies, & fictions' which departed from the 'Whig principles of the revolution ...'<sup>3</sup> Though Fox was always handicapped by his ill-conceived

---

<sup>1</sup>L. G. Mitchell, Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>A. Mitchell, The Whigs in Opposition, pp. 44, 54-5, 128.

<sup>3</sup>Lamb to Holland, 10 Dec. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51558 (Holland).

maxims of political manoeuvre, it is safe to say that the common denominator of his general concept of politics was an exaggerated emphasis on the 'lessons' of the Glorious Revolution. Furthermore, though one can argue that Fox abandoned the Whig tradition in foreign affairs in 1789, and even that his foreign views were to some extent geared to facilitate systematic opposition to Pitt and the king, it is difficult indeed to contend that his concept of foreign politics abandoned the principles which were associated with the accession of William and Mary. In large part this explains the magic of Foxite dogma after 1815.

It was not practical for Fox's successors to challenge the fundamentals of Castlereagh's foreign policy during the parliamentary session of 1816. Whig leaders made every effort to silence old arguments about the origin of the war; emphasis was placed on financial considerations; and, as Tierney noted, the amendment which was proposed left 'room enough for every man to run in any direction he likes best ...'<sup>1</sup> Consequently, Whig language in Parliament seldom reflected the fact that many important men continued to identify Fox's foreign politics with the most elementary tenets of Whiggism, and that they objected to Castlereagh's foreign policy on that basis.

Generally Fox's views had been international to the extent of seeing in a foreign struggle for liberty a parallel to the struggle of the Whig in England. Moreover, he had argued that English cooperation in the suppression of such a struggle by a foreign people could only result in a catastrophic political backlash at home. In this light it is hardly surprising that in 1816 many Whigs were horrified by a treaty which they

---

<sup>1</sup>Lansdowne to Holland, 19 Dec. [1815], B.M., Add. MSS. 51686A (Holland). Brougham to Grey, 11 Jan. 1816 (Brougham). Brougham to Allen, Nov. 1816, B.M., Add. MSS. 52178 (Allen). Tierney to Grey, 22 Jan. 1816 (Grey).

felt was designed to rally the monarchs of Europe against popular expression.

'It is not a mere interference of a Conquerer with the affairs of the Conquered country', wrote Holland, 'but it is, disguise it as they will, a conspiracy of the Governments of Europe against the people, an agreement to render the Kings the sole judges of other Kings ... & to deprive the governed of that Right which nature & reason have given them, the choice by whom they will be governed.'<sup>1</sup> 'In the former age,' added Horner, 'this was called divine right; the world has somehow or other got into a state of thinking, that will not admit of that particular mode of expression; but ... the principle, seems to be just the same.'<sup>2</sup> Other old Foxites shared these views. Dugald Stewart asserted that the Vienna settlement expelled Locke from the English Constitution, and Grey argued that it was an admission that the family on the English throne 'sat there by a usurped title.'<sup>3</sup> Even the moderate Lansdowne embraced these opinions; Lauderdale reported that Whitbread's death had not altered the foreign politics of his friends; and Lord Douglas, who distrusted Grey, warned that his proxy could be used only 'upon the thorough Foxite principles.'<sup>4</sup> Fox's every word had opposed British involvement in such a treaty, and Bedford undoubtedly summed up the opinions of most of his colleagues when he attributed both the treaty and all of the country's ills to a short-sighted 'system' which had originated with Pitt's initial

---

<sup>1</sup>Holland to Grey, 9 Jan. 1816 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Horner to Ld. W. Seymour, 18 July 1815 (Horner).

<sup>3</sup>Stewart and Grenville sparred on this point. Grenville to Horner, 6 Dec. 1815, Horner Memoirs, II, 280-81. Grey to Grenville, 14 Feb. 1816 (copy), B.M., Add. MSS. 51531 (Holland).

<sup>4</sup>Lauderdale to Holland, 16 May [1816], B.M., Add. MSS. 51691 (Holland). Douglas to Holland, 2 Mar. 1816, B.M., Add. MSS. 51828 (Holland).

decision to enter the war.<sup>1</sup>

Though Foxite views on foreign affairs sprang from a concept of Whiggism, party leaders by no means felt that their theories were inconsistent with the traditional Whig concept of European affairs. They equated popular revolution with progress by defining it as the natural and inevitable response of men to the abuses of arbitrary power. As such many Whigs felt that European concert on the principle of legitimacy destroyed the ancient balance of power. Under the old system, they argued, nations were aligned by mutual political interest, and peace was preserved by the maintenance of two equal, or nearly equal parts. But under the new system, peace depended on the union of Europe and on the continuance of that union in spite of diverging political interests. Robert Adair despaired of peace. He wrote: 'Formerly it depended on the territorial ascendancy aimed at by an ambitious monarch; now, it depends on the reformation or improvement which may be attempted by a People within their own boundaries.'<sup>2</sup> To the Foxites this threat of eternal war was guaranteed by the sacrifice of national self-determination at Vienna. They regarded France, Spain, Italy, Greece, Poland, Norway, and Belgium as suppressed states, and they pointed out that Castlereagh's policy called for British cooperation in the suppression of European nationalism. With memories of the 1790's still afloat the Foxites concluded quickly that suppression in Europe would lead to suppression in Britain. They maintained that the European settlement assured Britain of large standing armies in time of peace--always a threat to English liberty--and in time of war, a return to the reactionary policies of Pitt's day, for every war

---

<sup>1</sup>Bedford to Grey, 2 Jan. 1816 (Grey).

<sup>2</sup>Adair to Holland, 29 Jan. 1815, B.M., Add. MSS. 51609 (Holland).

would be a revolutionary one.

The general feeling was that Castlereagh's foreign policy was narrow; that it ignored twenty-seven years of European history; that it was inconsistent with the English Constitution; that it destroyed the European balance of power and assured universal war; and that it was a serious threat to English liberty. These views, which sprang not only from traditional Foxite dogma but also from the most fundamental tenets of intellectual Whiggism, guaranteed no small amount of loyalty to the foreign politics of the martyred Fox during an era when the world was rocked by revolutionary movements.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

The importance of a sense of intellectual continuity among those who composed the large Foxite wing of the Whig coalition between 1806 and 1815 is yet to be adequately stressed by historians. The role of traditional Foxite dogma in the formulation of policy during the short tenure of the Ministry of All the Talents has been virtually ignored and Michael Roberts, the historian of the Whig party of the early nineteenth century, has placed little emphasis on the all-important political principles, loyalties, and animosities of the years 1784 to 1806 in his book, The Whig Party, 1807-1812 (London, 1939). This may be because Roberts did not have access to relevant manuscript collections which have prompted later authors to suggest that continuing loyalty to Fox and his principles was a force in Whig politics for years after his death. John R. Dinwiddy's 'Charles James Fox and the People' (History, LV, October 1970, pp. 342-59), while contending that Fox's name held little magic for early nineteenth century reformers, nevertheless points out that Fox's principles remained useful to Whig leaders primarily because 'they could be interpreted in so many ways.' The concluding chapter of L. G. Mitchell's Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party, 1782-1794 (London, 1971) is the best general account of the durability of Foxite principles, and the unpublished doctoral dissertation of Ivon Asquith, 'James Perry and the Morning Chronicle, 1790-1821' (University of London, 1973), also sheds light on this subject. Finally, Richard E. Willis's article, 'Fox, Grenville, and the Recovery of Opposition, 1801-1804' (The Journal of British Studies, XI, 1972, pp. 25-43), is an

excellent assessment of Foxite politics at the dawn of the nineteenth century.

Notwithstanding these recent contributions, little of a specific nature has been written to illustrate the impact of Foxite principles on the fortunes of the Whig party in the years which immediately followed Fox's death. Like Gladstone's Liberals the Foxites of the 1790's had pointed to 'Peace and Reform' as the twin pillars of their political creed. Dinwiddy's doctoral dissertation, 'Parliamentary Reform as an Issue in English Politics, 1800-10' (University of London, 1971), is superb in its evaluation of Whig discomfiture on the issue of reform but the equally important question of foreign politics remains virtually untouched. A. J. P. Taylor's The Troublemakers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939 (London, 1957) contains only glib comment on this subject. E. Tangye Lean's The Napoleonists (London, 1970) approaches the mainstream of Foxite opinion but is undermined by a most questionable thesis based on speculation of a sociological nature. Godfrey Davies' article, 'The Whigs and the Peninsular War, 1808-1814' (Royal Historical Society Transactions, 4th series, ii, 1919, pp. 113-31) traces events without commenting on the forces behind them. Roberts' chapter on foreign politics is a solid factual account but it is not analytical. Finally, Austin Mitchell's excellent book, The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830 (Oxford, 1967), establishes the continuity of Foxite beliefs in the post-war period while necessarily making only vague reference to the preceding decade.

Generally, biographers have either avoided, summarized, or misrepresented the foreign views of Whig leaders. H. K. Olphin's George Tierney (London, 1934), Roger Fulford's Samuel Whitbread (London, 1967), Chester New's Life of Henry Brougham to 1830 (Oxford, 1961), Arthur



Aspinall's Lord Brougham and the Whig Party (London, 1927), G. M. Trevelyan's Lord Grey of the Reform Bill (London, 1920), A. M. W. Stirling's Coke of Norfolk and His Friends (London, 1912), Patrick Medd's Romilly (London, 1968), and the many biographies of Fox are often alarmingly shallow in their treatment of opinions relating to foreign politics during the years in question.

In approaching this virtually untouched subject I have been handicapped somewhat by problems which have obviously handicapped others. Firstly, primary source material shedding light on the factors which both determined and undermined the foreign policy of the Ministry of All the Talents is not abundant. Fox's preoccupation with the preliminaries of peace between March and June 1806 greatly reduced his private correspondence as well as the number of despatches which passed between the Foreign Office and ministers abroad. Then, too, confusion stemming from Fox's death, Howick's mismanagement at the Foreign Office, disagreement in the Cabinet, dismissals and appointments in the diplomatic service, and military operations on the Continent joined with the general isolationistic drift of the Cabinet to reduce the number of official despatches as well as the importance of the content of those which were exchanged. The most informative correspondence relating to Adair's mission at Vienna and Morpeth's escapade in Germany is found in private letters (many of which were written after the fall of the Talents) and not in the Foreign Office despatches. Moreover, there are large gaps in the private correspondence of key men for the years 1806 and 1807.

As a result of these problems, the currents beneath the Talents' foreign policy have not been understood by historians. Practically every standard history of British foreign policy glides over the failures of the Talents with unbecoming ease, and the few authors who have

produced work of a specific nature have done little better. Herbert Butterfield managed to write Charles James Fox and Napoleon: The Peace Negotiations of 1806 (London, 1926) without displaying that he understood the thought behind Fox's foreign policy. Walter Fitzpatrick's introductory remarks on the foreign policy of the ministry in volume nine of the Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortescue Esq., Preserved at Dropmore (Historical Manuscripts Commission, London, 1908) is probably the best general account. However, Fitzpatrick's observations are based almost entirely on the opinions of Lord Grenville's correspondents and an imperfect understanding of Foxite thought. Possibly A. D. Harvey's 'The Ministry of All the Talents: The Whigs in Office, February 1806 to March 1807' (The Historical Journal, XV, 1972, pp. 619-43) best illustrates the mystery which continues to surround the foreign policy of the government. This mystery has greatly undermined the work of those who have attempted to explain Whig views on foreign politics in the decade which followed the fall of the Talents: the one cannot be understood without the other.

A second major problem comes with my discovery that, with but few exceptions, the published lives and letters, diaries, and journals of Foxites are of minimal value in such a study. I attribute this to the fact that the opinions, observations, and predictions of Whigs on matters relating to foreign affairs between 1806 and 1815 did them little credit. Consequently, Victorian editors (most of whom were related to the statesmen whose correspondence or papers they were publishing) were little disposed to publish incriminating material. Probably the best example of this is Francis Horner's *Memoirs*, edited by his brother. By comparing Horner's published correspondence with the much larger unpublished collection of Horner correspondence at the London School of Economics one can see that the editor failed to publish the bulk of that material

which best depicted his brother's unpopular foreign views. Much the same can be said of the closely edited memoirs of Holland (edited by himself, his son, and Lord Stavordale), those of Grey (edited by his son), those of Brougham (edited by himself), and those of Romilly (edited by his son).

My attempt to shed light on the foreign politics of the Foxite party is therefore based primarily on manuscript sources. By far the most important collections for the purposes of this study have been the Holland House Papers in the British Museum and the Grey Papers at Durham University, both of which contain correspondence from practically every professional politician associated with the Whigs. Of secondary but still considerable importance have been the papers, memoranda, and correspondence of other influential Foxites, particularly the Whitbread Papers at the Bedfordshire Record Office; the Roscoe Papers in the Picton Library at Liverpool; the Brougham Papers and the Creevey Papers at University College, London; the Tierney Papers at the Hampshire Record Office; the Horner Papers at the British Library of Political and Economic Science; and the Allen Papers, the Wilson Papers, and of course the Fox Papers in the British Museum.

The unpublished correspondence of Grenvillites and Burkians has also contributed greatly. The Auckland Papers and the Thomas Grenville Papers in the British Museum have been of enormous importance, and the Spencer Papers at Althorp, the Carlisle Papers at Castle Howard, the Fremantle Papers at the Buckinghamshire Record Office, the Wickham Papers at the Hampshire Record Office, the Wynn Papers at the National Library of Wales, the Fitzwilliam Papers at both the Sheffield Central Library and the Northamptonshire Record Office; and the Windham Papers in the British Museum have been most useful. I have also seen several smaller

collections (notably the Newport-Grenville Correspondence at the Bodleian Library, Oxford) which have been less important.

I was not permitted to see the Devonshire Papers at Chatsworth or the Lansdowne Papers at Bowood. The first of these collections is not of great importance to my study for the Cavendishes drifted away from active politics after the death of Georgiana in 1806, and it was not until after the war that interest revived. A failure to see the Lansdowne Papers is probably more lamentable, though Lansdowne did not assert himself politically until after the battle of Waterloo.

Primarily because I feel that the editorial comment of the Morning Chronicle (1790-1816), the Independent Whig (1807-1815), the Edinburgh Review (1808-1816), the Examiner (1808-1816), The Charles James Fox (1814-1815), and the Statesman (1807, 1808, 1814, and 1815) is an important reflection of Foxite views on foreign politics, I have examined these sources closely. In some cases The Times, the Political Register, the Morning Post, the Courier, the Liverpool Mercury, and contemporary magazines have also been useful. Pamphlets written by leading Foxites such as Adair, Lord Archibald Hamilton, Brougham, Roscoe, Francis, Whitbread, and Waithman have contributed greatly. Finally, the conclusions which I have drawn from a thorough examination of The Parliamentary History (Cobbett and Hansard) for the years 1806 to 1815 have been of the first importance in the formulation of my general arguments.

## A. MANUSCRIPT SOURCES

## Althorp, Northamptonshire

SPENCER MSS.: Papers and Correspondence of George John, Second Earl Spencer. This collection is important primarily for the large number of politically-oriented letters from Thomas Grenville. Other major correspondents are Lords Grenville, Grey, Erskine, and Cassilis.

## Bedfordshire Record Office, Bedford

WHITBREAD MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of Samuel Whitbread, M. P. Whitbread's political correspondence is disappointing. It is said that Grey was allowed to destroy those letters which he felt were incriminating shortly after the death of his brother-in-law. If so he failed to destroy a great deal of valuable correspondence between Whitbread and his lieutenants in the Commons, primarily Creevey and Bennet. Several of Grey's letters remain and other important correspondents are Holland, Tierney, Brand, Belsham, Folkstone, Ossulston, Horner, Ward, Payne, and Foxites throughout the country who looked to Whitbread for leadership after 1806. Press clippings, petitions, official proclamations, pamphlets, and drafts of speeches with Whitbread's notations are plentiful. Many of these relate to foreign affairs, especially to Anglo-American relations.

## Blair-Adam, Fife

BLAIR-ADAM MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of William Adam, M.P. This collection is important primarily for the letters of Fox and his colleagues in the pre-1806 period. Adam's drift towards Carlton House after Fox's death weakened his relationship with his old friends. Consequently, with the exception of several letters from Bedford, Adair, and Lord Grenville the collection is disappointing for the purposes of this study.

## Bodleian Library, Oxford

BURDETT MSS.: Correspondence of Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., M.P. Except for a curious poem by Erskine relating to the battle of Waterloo and several letters of a very general nature this collection has been of little importance.

NEWPORT-GRENVILLE CORR.: Correspondence of Sir John Newport, M.P., and William, Lord Grenville. This small collection is important primarily for Grenville's comment on Irish affairs and an occasional reference to the war.

HEBER LETTERS: General Correspondence of Richard Heber. This small collection contains letters from Mackintosh and Lords Grenville, Grey, Milton, and Holland. There is very little political comment.

British Library of Political and Economic Science, London

HORNER MSS.: Papers, Correspondence, and Memoranda of Francis Horner, M.P. Of those who qualify as political philosophers, Horner was easily the most devoted supporter of Foxite theory on foreign politics. Consequently this large collection, which contains not only correspondence from Horner's important friends but also many letters written by Horner himself, has been absolutely essential for the purposes of this study. Major correspondents are Lord and Lady Holland, Mr. and Mrs. Dugald Stewart, Lord Webb Seymour, James Lock, Jeffrey, Murray, Allen, and members of the Horner family. Horner's political papers, many of which record unbiased opinions on events, are also most useful.

British Museum

ALLEN MSS.: Add. MSS. 52172, 52177-80, 52182, 52193-94, 52204A-I. Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of John Allen. This large and important collection is temporarily catalogued with the Holland House Papers but I am assured that soon it will be given a separate identity. Major correspondents are Abercromby, Brougham, Lauderdale, Lock, Lady Holland, Horner, Mackintosh, Sydney Smith, and Whishaw. Of particular interest is Allen's journal which sheds light on the Cabinet deliberations of 1806 and 1807, the negotiations for office in 1812, and the opinions of key politicians.

AUCKLAND MSS.: Add. MSS. 34457-59. Correspondence of William Eden, First Baron Auckland. Major correspondents are Bulkeley, Carlisle, Buckinghamshire, Grey, Lord Grenville, Holland, Temple, and Auckland's sons William and George Eden. The collection is of primary importance. It contains valuable material relating to the American negotiation of 1806 as well as a large number of most revealing letters from Lords Grey, Grenville, and Buckinghamshire, the latter being the coalition's best contact with Sidmouth.

BROUGHTON MSS.: Add. MSS. 47222-26. Correspondence and Memoranda of John Cam Hobhouse, later First Lord Broughton. Major correspondents are Burdett, C. P. Mathews, D. Kinnaird, and others who were identified with the Foxite Left. The collection is important primarily because of correspondence which reflects Foxite opinion in the country at large.

FOX MSS.: Add. MSS. 47564-66, 47575, 47578, 47581. Correspondence and Papers of Charles James Fox, M.P. Though this collection contains a great deal of Fox's correspondence with Grey, Lauderdale, O'Brien, and Holland it is generally disappointing. Fox simply did not write many letters during the last three years of his life (especially after coming to office) and most of those which he wrote have been published.

HARDWICKE MSS.: Add. MSS. 35394, 35424, 35646-49. General Correspondence of Philip Yorke, Third Earl of Hardwicke. This

collection is of minimal importance in this study. It contains some correspondence of Grenvillites but little of it is of a political nature.

HOLLAND HOUSE MSS.: Add. MSS. 51476-83, 51524-26A-C, 51528-34, 51544-45, 51549-52, 51558, 51561-62, 51566, 51570-74, 51576-77, 51584-85, 51593-95, 51609, 51611, 51617, 51639, 51641, 51644, 51651-54, 51656-58, 51661-62, 51665-66, 51676-78, 51686A, 51689, 51691, 51695, 51697-99, 51723-24, 51728, 51738-40, 51745-46, 51796, 51799, 51800, 51811, 51813, 51820, 51823-28, 51847-48, 51894-95, 51917-19, 51933, 51950-52, 51965, 51968, 52311C. Memoranda, Papers, Journals, and Correspondence of the Fox Family; particularly Henry Richard, Third Baron Holland, his wife Elizabeth, and his sister Caroline. Major correspondents are Adair, Auckland, Bedford, Brougham, Erskine, Fitzpatrick, Fitzwilliam, Thomas Grenville and William, Lord Grenville, Horner, King, Lansdowne, Lauderdale, M. G. Lewis, Mackintosh, Morpeth, Parr, Lord John Russell, Sheridan, Thanet, Tierney, Whishaw, and Whitbread. Holland's general correspondence reflects Foxite opinion throughout the country; his Cabinet notes of 1806 and 1807 are most revealing; and his notes and various projets from the American negotiation of 1806 are invaluable. The Holland House dinner books and the diaries and journal of Mrs. Charles James Fox are important in identifying men with events. Holland's notes on Spain and his correspondence with Jovellanos and other Spanish leaders are significant, and Mackintosh's MS. history of Holland House may be the best of its kind. Notes of the conversations of Ebrington, Lyttelton, and Hall with Napoleon on Elba are interesting, and poetry relating to Fox and Napoleon is plentiful.

HUNT MSS.: Add. MSS. 38108-11. Correspondence of Leigh Hunt. This collection is important as a reflection of the disenchantment of men who had championed Foxite dogma of the 1790's. No man was more devoted to Fox's concept of the war than Hunt. Of special interest is the correspondence of Brougham and Hunt.

HUSKISSON MSS.: Add. MSS. 38738. Correspondence of William Huskisson, M.P. This collection is useful because it contains the comments of Canningites on Whig affairs. Of special interest are the letters of Canning, Wellesley, and Arbuthnot.

MACKINTOSH MSS.: Add. MSS. 52436-45, 51451-52. Correspondence of Sir James Mackintosh, M.P. Mackintosh was ever devoted to the Foxite concept of foreign politics and his correspondence with party leaders throughout the French wars is a good chronicle of Foxite opinion. He became important in the formulation of policy only after his return from India in 1812, and his correspondence with both Grenvillite and Foxite leaders between 1813 and 1816, though not plentiful, is worthy of note.

PELHAM MSS.: Add. MSS. 33112. General and Official Correspondence of Thomas Pelham, Second Earl of Chichester.

This collection is significant only for the comments of those who observed the behaviour of Whig leaders.

THOMAS GRENVILLE MSS.: Add. MSS. 41851-54, 41856-58, 42058. Correspondence and Papers of Thomas Grenville, M.P. This is a large and important collection. Major correspondents are Buckingham, Carlisle, Lord Grenville, Fox, Spencer, Temple, and Windham. Of equal importance is Thomas Grenville's general correspondence which includes highly valuable letters from Bedford, Braybrooke, Elliot, Fitzwilliam, Fremantle, Benjamin Garlike, Glastonbury, Grey, Holland, Lauderdale, Morpeth, G. Ponsonby, Stafford, Tierney, and the Wynns.

WELLESLEY MSS.: Add. MSS. 37295-97. Correspondence of Henry Colley, First Marquess Wellesley. This collection is of secondary importance but it contains several interesting letters from Grey, Grenville, and Holland relating to Catholic emancipation and foreign affairs.

WILSON MSS.: Add. MSS. 30108, 30118-21, 30129, 30136, 30141. General Correspondence, Political and Military Papers of General Sir Robert Wilson, M.P. This collection is of the first importance primarily because of the large number of letters from Wilson to Grey on the subject of European affairs. Also of interest are Wilson's papers relating to Spain and South America.

WINDHAM MSS.: Add. MSS. 37842, 37846-49, 37886-88, 37906-09. Papers and Correspondence of William Windham, M.P. Though much of Windham's private correspondence has been published, many important letters remain in MS. only. Of special interest is Windham's correspondence with Elliot, Fitzwilliam, Fox, Grenville, and Grey.

#### Buckinghamshire Record Office, Aylesbury

FREMANTLE MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of Sir William Henry Fremantle, M.P. Major correspondents are Buckingham, Temple, Thomas and William, Lord Grenville. Financial accounts, interlined press clippings, and drafts of speeches are of great importance.

GRENVILLE MSS.: General Correspondence of the Grenville Family. This small collection is of minor importance because most of the correspondence dates from 1816. However, letters from Buckingham and Lord Grenville to Thomas Grenville contain interesting retrospective comment.

#### Castle Howard, Yorkshire

CARLISLE MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of the Howard Family; particularly Frederick, Fifth Earl of Carlisle and his son, George, Viscount Morpeth. This enormous collection is arranged awkwardly in boxes by correspondent, and letters are sometimes misfiled. This does not diminish the



importance of the papers of a family which had excellent connections with the Cavendishes, the Lambs, the Foxes, the Grenvilles, and also with the Canningites. Major correspondents are Thomas Grenville, Fox, Holland, and Canning; there is a great deal of correspondence from the pens of Whig ladies, especially Lady Morpeth; and letters relating to Morpeth's ill-fated diplomatic mission to Germany in late 1806 are of the first importance.

Durham University Library, Durham

GREY MSS.: Correspondence and Papers of Charles, Second Earl Grey. This large collection is second in importance only to the Holland House MSS. It is arranged in boxes by correspondent, and Grey's papers relating to Spain, South America, Portugal, the United States, and Poland are filed separately. Major correspondents are Adair, Bedford, Erskine, Francis, Gloucester, Gordon, Lord Grenville, Holland, Lansdowne, Lauderdale, Rosslyn, Tierney, and Whitbread; but practically every important M.P. corresponded with Grey from time to time. Of secondary importance is the correspondence of old Foxites like Adam, R. Colbourne, Derby, Jersey, Lord Robert Spencer, M. A. Taylor, Thanet, and Lord John Townshend as well as that of non-Foxite allies like Auckland, Carlisle, Fitzwilliam, Newport, Spencer, and Windham. Grey's extensive correspondence with his wife (who was ever kept in Northumberland by illness and pregnancy) is possibly the single most important source for evaluating his views, his character, and his political role when Parliament was in session. Very little from this collection has been published.

Hampshire Record Office, Winchester

TIERNEY MSS.: Correspondence of George Tierney, M.P. This collection contains the remnants of Tierney's valuable correspondence with Gordon, Grey, Grenville, Sir Thomas Maitland, Sussex, George Prince of Wales, and Whitbread. Many letters are badly damaged, and one must suspect that several of them have disappeared over the years.

WICKHAM MSS.: Diplomatic and Political Papers of William Wickham. Wickham was probably Lord Grenville's most treasured friend, and the collection contains several letters from Grenville relating to foreign affairs and political alignments which are of the first importance. Other correspondents are Hardwicke, Mahon, and Plunket. Unaccountably there is a good deal of rare printed material relating to the death of Whitbread.

Liverpool Central Library, Liverpool

ROSCOE MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of William Roscoe, M.P. Roscoe was a bridge between the various factions of the old Foxite party. Important correspondents are Brougham, Coke, Creevey, Derby, Erskine, Francis, Gloucester,

Holland, Lofft, Parr, McCreery, and leading Liverpool merchants who paid lip service to Fox's principles and memory.

National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth

SOUTHEY MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of Robert Southey. This collection is of little political importance except for Southey's correspondence with Sir Walter Scott, which contains political comment of a general nature.

WYNN MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of Charles W. W. Wynn, M.P. This collection is large and important. Wynn received valuable letters from his uncles Thomas Grenville and William, Lord Grenville, from his cousin Temple, and from Spencer. Wynn's own letters detail interesting events in the Commons, as does his ill-kept diary notations. Letters from Peter Elmsley are important for comment on Irish affairs.

North Riding Record Office, York

WYVILL MSS.: Papers and Correspondence of Christopher Wyvill. With the exception of several key letters from Fox and Lofft relating to parliamentary reform at the time of the formation of the Talents little of importance exists.

Northamptonshire Record Office, Northampton

FITZWILLIAM MSS.: Correspondence and Papers of William Wentworth, Second Earl Fitzwilliam and His Son, Charles Lord Milton, M.P. Major correspondents are Carlisle, Carysfort, Grenville, and Grey. Letters to Milton from Foxites residing in his constituency of Yorkshire are interesting.

Public Record Office, London

DACRES-ADAMS MSS.: 30/58/4 and 30/58/5. Correspondence of William Pitt, M.P. This collection contains several letters from William, Lord Grenville to Pitt which are of importance in assessing Grenville's motives in drifting towards coalition with Fox.

FOREIGN OFFICE MSS.: All countries, Feb. 1806 to May 1807.

Sheffield Public Library, Sheffield

FITZWILLIAM MSS.: Correspondence of William Wentworth, Second Earl Fitzwilliam. Important correspondents are Lord George Cavendish, Elliot, Thomas Grenville and William, Lord Grenville, Holland, G. Ponsonby, and Windham. Of special importance are the letters of opposition leaders during the Hundred Days which go far in depicting the division of opinion on the question of war and peace.

University College Library, London

BROUGHAM MSS.: Memoranda, Papers, and Correspondence of

Henry Lord Brougham. Brougham was a prolific writer, an extraordinarily perceptive young politician, and an intriguer of the first order. His correspondence is therefore of enormous importance. His extensive correspondence with Grey is easily the most important part of the collection. Other valuable letters are those from Abercromby, Allen, Alexander Baring, Creevey, Jeffrey, Roscoe, Rosslyn, Sefton, Ward, Whishaw, the Polish leader Count Joseph Sierakowski, and several northern merchants. The collection has suffered in the past from faulty cataloguing, and one must suspect that many key letters have been misplaced. Particularly lamentable is the absence of Lauderdale's extensive correspondence with Brougham.

CREEVEY MSS.: Correspondence of Thomas Creevey, M.P. (microfilm). Many important unpublished letters are available. Major correspondents are Bennet, Folkstone, Ossulston, Roscoe, Whitbread, and others associated with the Foxite Left in the Commons.

B. BIOGRAPHIES, AUTOBIOGRAPHIES, AND PRINTED DIARIES, JOURNALS, MEMOIRS, AND LETTERS.

ABINGER, LD.

A Memoir of the Right Hon. James, First Lord Abinger, by P. C. Scarlett, London, 1877.

ALBEMARLE, EARL

Fifty Years of My Life, by George Thomas, Earl of Albemarle, London, 1876.

ALTHORP, VISC.

Memoir of John Charles Viscount Althorp Third Earl Spencer, by Denis Le Marchant, London, 1876.

AUCKLAND, LD.

The Journal and Correspondence of William, Lord Auckland, ed. by the Bishop of Bath and Wells, London, 1862.

BESSBOROUGH, LADY

Lady Bessborough and Her Family Circle, ed. by A. Aspinall and the Earl of Bessborough, London, 1940.

BONAPARTE, NAPOLEON

Napoleon's Memoirs, ed. by Somerset De Chair, London, 1858.

BROUGHAM, H.

Brougham and His Early Friends: Letters to James Lock, 1789-1809, ed. by R. H. M. B. Atkinson and G. A. Jackson, London, 1908.

Historical Sketches of Statesmen Who Flourished in the Time of George III, by Henry, Lord Brougham, London, 1839.

Life of Henry Brougham to 1830, by Chester New, Oxford, 1961.

Lord Brougham, by G. T. Garrett, London, 1935.

Lord Brougham and the Whig Party, by A. Aspinall, London, 1927.

The Life and Times of Henry Lord Brougham, by himself, Edinburgh and London, 1871.

BUCKINGHAM AND CHANDOS, DUKE OF

Memoirs of the Court and Cabinets of George the Third, ed. by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, London, 1853-55.

Memoirs of the Court of England During the Regency, 1811-1820, ed. by the Duke of Buckingham and Chandos, London, 1856.

BURDETT, SIR F.

Sir Francis Burdett and His Times, 1770-1844, by M. W. Patterson, London, 1931.

The Public Career of Sir Francis Burdett, 1796-1815, by Joseph S. Jackson, Philadelphia, 1932.

CANNING, G.

The Political Life of George Canning, by Augustus G. Stapleton, London, 1831.

CARTWRIGHT, J.

The Life and Correspondence of Major Cartwright, ed. by F. D. Cartwright, London, 1826.

CASTLEREAGH, VISC.

Correspondence, Despatches, and Other Papers of Viscount Castlereagh, Second Marquess of Londonderry (second series), ed. by Charles William Vane, Third Marquess of Londonderry, London, 1851.

COCKBURN, LD.

Henry Lord Cockburn, Memorials of His Time, London, 1909.

COKE, T.

Coke of Norfolk and His Friends, by A. M. W. Stirling, London, 1912.

COLCHESTER, LD.

The Diary and Correspondence of Charles Abbot, Lord Colchester, ed. by his son, London, 1861.

CREEVEY, T.

The Creevey Papers, ed. by Sir Herbert Maxwell, London, 1904.

Creevey's Life and Times, by John Gore, London, 1934.

CREWE, LD.

Lord Crewe, by James Pope-Hennessy, London, 1955.

- CROKER, J. W.  
The Correspondence and Diaries of John Wilson Croker, ed.  
 by L. J. Jennings, London, 1885.
- CURRAN, J.  
Recollections of Curran and Some of his Contemporaries, by  
 Charles Phillips, London, 1818.
- DEVONSHIRE, DUKE OF  
A Sketch of the Character of the Late Duke of Devonshire,  
 by R. Adair, London, 1811.
- DEVONSHIRE, GEORGIANA DUCHESS  
Georgiana: Extracts From the Correspondence of Georgiana,  
 Duchess of Devonshire, ed. by the Earl of Bessborough, London,  
 1955.
- DUDLEY, EARL  
Letters to 'Ivy' From the First Earl of Dudley, ed. by  
 S. H. Romilly, London, 1905.
- DURHAM, LD.  
Life and Letters of Lord Durham, ed. by Stuart J. Reid,  
 London, 1906.
- ELDON, LD.  
The Public and Private Life of Lord Chancellor Eldon, by  
 H. Twiss, London, 1844.
- FARINGTON, J.  
The Farington Diary, ed. by James Greig, London, 1924.
- FOSTER, LADY ELIZABETH  
Dearest Bess, by D. M. Stuart, London, 1955.
- FOX, C. J.  
Characters of Charles James Fox, by S. Parr, London, 1809.  
Charles James Fox, by J. H. Hammond, Clifton, N. J., 2nd  
 Ed. 1970.  
Charles James Fox: A Man for the People, by L. Reid,  
 London, 1969.  
Fox, by Christopher Hobhouse, London, 4th Ed. 1964.  
History of the Political Life and Public Services of the  
 Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox, by Dr. F. Lawrence, London, 1783.  
Life of Charles James Fox, by Edward C. Lascelles, New  
 York, 1936.  
Life of the Late Charles James Fox, by J. Cundee, London,  
 1807.

Memoirs of the Late Years of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox, by his private secretary, J. B. Trotter, London, 1811

Memorials and Correspondence of Charles James Fox, ed. by Ld. John Russell, London, 1853.

The Life and Times of Charles James Fox, by Lord John Russell, London, 1859-66.

The Speeches of the Right Honourable Charles James Fox in the House of Commons, ed. by J. Wright, London, 1815.

FRANCIS, SIR P.

Memoirs of Sir Philip Francis, ed. by Joseph Parkes and Herman Merivale, London, 1867.

The Francis Letters, ed. by B. Francis and C. F. Keary, London, n.d.

FRERE, J.

The Works of John Hookham Frere, London, 1874.

GEORGE III.

The Later Correspondence of George III, 1783-1810, ed. by A. Aspinall, Cambridge, 1962-67.

GEORGE IV.

The Correspondence of George, Prince of Wales 1770-1812, ed. by A. Aspinall, London, 1963-71.

The Letters of King George IV. 1812-1830, ed. by A. Aspinall, Cambridge, 1938.

GLENBERVIE, LD.

The Diaries of Sylvester Douglas, Lord Glenbervie, ed. by F. Bickley, London, 1928.

The Glenbervie Journals, ed. by Walter Sichel, London, 1910.

GODWIN, W.

William Godwin, his Friends and Contemporaries, by Paul C. Kegan, London, 1876.

GRANVILLE, LD.

Lord Granville Leveson Gower Private Correspondence, 1781 to 1821, ed. by Countess Granville, London, 1916.

GRANVILLE, LADY

Letters of Harriet Countess Granville, 1810-1845, ed. by F. Leveson Gower, London, 1894.

GRATTAN, H.

Henry Grattan, by J. G. MacCarthy, Dublin, 1886.

Memoirs of the Life and Times of the Rt. Hon. Henry Grattan, by his son, Henry Grattan, London, 1849.

GRENVILLE, LD.

Report on the Manuscripts of J. B. Fortesque Esq., Preserved at Dropmore, ed. by Walter Fitzpatrick, Historical Manuscripts Commission, IX and X, London, 1908.

GREY, EARL

Life and Opinions of Charles, 2nd Earl Grey, ed. by C. Grey, London, 1861.

Lord Grey of the Reform Bill, by George M. Trevelyan, London, 1920.

GRONOW, CPT.

The Reminiscences and Recollections of Captain Gronow, London, 1900.

HAZLITT, W.

The Works of William Hazlitt, ed. by P. O. Howe, London, 1930-40.

HOBHOUSE, J. C.

Letters written by an Englishman resident in Paris during the last reign of the Emperor Napoleon, by J. C. Hobhouse, London, 1816.

Recollections of a Long Life by Lord Broughton, ed. by Lady Dorchester, London, 1909.

HOLLAND, LD.

Foreign Reminiscences, by Lord Holland, London, 1850.

Further Memoirs of the Whig Party, 1807-1821, by Henry Richard, Lord Holland, Ed. by Lord Stavordale, London, 1905.

Memoirs of the Whig Party During My Time by Henry Richard Lord Holland, ed. by his son, London, 1852.

HOLLAND, LADY

Elizabeth, Lady Holland to her Son, 1821-1845, ed. by the Earl of Ilchester, London, 1946.

The Journal of Elizabeth Lady Holland, ed. by the Earl of Ilchester, New York, 1908.

The Spanish Journals of Elizabeth Lady Holland, ed. by the Earl of Ilchester, London, 1910.

HORNER, F.

Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Horner, M.P., ed. by L. Horner, Boston, 1853.

HUNT, L.

Leigh Hunt, by E. C. Blunden, London, 1930.

The Autobiography of Leigh Hunt, ed. by J. E. Morpugo, London, 1949.

The Correspondence of Leigh Hunt, ed. by Thornton Hunt, London, 1862.

HUSKISSON, W.

The Huskisson Papers, ed. by Lewis Melville, London, 1931.

JACKSON, SIR G.

The Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson, K.C.H., ed. by Lady Jackson, London, 1872.

The Bath Archives. A Further Selection from the Diaries and Letters of Sir George Jackson, 1809 to 1816, ed. by Lady Jackson, London, 1873.

JEFFERSON, T.

The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, ed. by A. A. Lipscomb and A. E. Bergh, Washington, 1903-04.

JEFFREY, LD.

Life of Lord Jeffrey, by Lord Cockburn, Edinburgh, 2nd Ed. 1952.

KNIGHTON, SIR W.

The Memoirs of Sir William Knighton, ed. by Lady Knighton, London, 1838.

LEINSTER, DUCHESS OF

Emily, Duchess of Leinster, by B. Fitzgerald, London, 1949.

LENNOX, LADY S.

The Life and Letters of Lady Sarah Lennox, 1745-1826, ed. by the Countess of Ilchester and Lord Stavordale, London, 1901.

LEWIS, M. G.

Life and Correspondence of M. G. Lewis, London, 1939.

LOSH, J.

The Diaries and Correspondence of James Losh, ed. by Edward Hughes, London, 1962.

LIVERPOOL, EARL OF

Memoirs of the Public Life and Administration of the Rt. Hon. the Earl of Liverpool, London, 1868.

Life of Lord Liverpool, by C. D. Yonge, London, 1868.

LYTTELTON, LADY

Correspondence of Sarah Spencer Lady Lyttelton, 1787-1870, ed. by Mrs. Hugh Windham, London, 1912.

MACAULAY, Z.

The Life and Letters of Zackery Macaulay, ed. by his grand-daughter, Viscountess Knutsford, London, 1900.



MACKINTOSH, SIR J.

Memoirs of the Life of Sir James Mackintosh, ed. by Robert James Mackintosh, London, 1835.

MALMESBURY, EARL OF

Diaries and Correspondence of John Harris First Earl of Malmesbury, ed. by the third Earl of Malmesbury, London, 1844.

A Series of Letters of the 1st Earl of Malmesbury, his family, and friends, from 1745 to 1820, ed. by his grandson, London, 1870.

MELBOURNE, VISC.

Lord Melbourne's Papers, ed. by L. C. Sanders, London, 1889.

Memoirs of the Right Honourable William Second Viscount Melbourne, ed. by W. Torrens, London, 1878.

The Young Melbourne, by David Cecil, London, 1939.

MELVILLE, VISC.

The Life of Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville, by C. Matheson, London, 1933.

MILES, W. A.

The Correspondence of William Augustus Miles on the French Revolution, 1789-1817, ed. by C. P. Miles, London, 1890.

MINTO, EARL

Life and Letters of Sir Gilbert Elliot First Earl of Minto, ed. by the Countess of Minto, London, 1874.

MIRANDA, FRANCISCO DE

The Life of Miranda, by William S. Robertson, Chapel Hill, 1929.

MOORE, SIR J.

The Life of Lieutenant-General Sir John Moore, by J. C. Moore, London, 1834.

NOLLEKENS, J.

Nollekens and His Times, by Wilfred Whitten, London, 1829.

PALMERSTON, VISC.

Lord Palmerston, by Herbert C. F. Bell, Hamden, Conn., 2nd Ed. 1966.

The Life of Henry John Temple, Viscount Palmerston, by Sir Henry Lytton Bulwer (Lord Dalling), London, 2nd Ed. 1870.

PARR, S.

The Works of Samuel Parr, ed. by John Johnstone, London, 1828.

- PERCEVAL, S.  
Spencer Perceval, The Evangelical Prime Minister 1762-1812, by Denis Gray, Manchester, 1963.
- PLACE, F.  
The Life of Francis Place, 1771-1854, by Graham Wallas, London, 4th Ed. 1925.
- PLUNKET, LD.  
The Life, Letters, and Speeches of Lord Plunket, ed. by David Plunket, London, 1867.
- ROBINSON, H. C.  
Diary, Reminiscences and Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, ed. by T. Sadler, London, 1869.  
The Correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson with the Wordsworth Circle, 1808-1866, ed. by Edith J. Morley, Oxford, 1927.
- ROGERS, S.  
Recollections of the Table-Talk of Samuel Rogers, ed. by Rev. Alexander Dyce, London, 1856.  
Rogers and his Contemporaries, by P. W. Clayden, London, 1889.
- ROMILLY, SIR S.  
Memoirs of the Life of Sir Samuel Romilly, ed. by his son, London, 1840.  
Romilly, by Patrick Medd, London, 1968.
- ROSCOE, W.  
The Life of William Roscoe, by Henry Roscoe, London, 1904.
- ROSE, G.  
The Diaries and Correspondence of the Right Hon. George Rose, ed. by Rev. Leveson Vernon Harcourt, London, 1860.
- RUSSELL, LD. JOHN  
Early Correspondence of Lord John Russell, 1805-40, ed. by Rollo Russell, London, 1913.  
Lord John Russell, by J. Prest, London, 1972.  
Recollections and Suggestions, 1813-1873, by Lord John Russell, London, 1875.
- SCOTT, SIR W.  
The Letters of Sir Walter Scott, ed. by H. J. C. Grierson, London, 1932.
- SHELLEY, LADY F.  
The Diaries of Francis Lady Shelley, 1787-1817, ed. by Richard Edgecumbe, London, 1912.

- SHERIDAN, B.  
Betsy Sheridan's Journal, ed. by W. Lefanu, London, 1825.
- SHERIDAN, R.  
Memoirs of the Life of the Rt. Hon. Richard Brinsley Sheridan, by Thomas Moore, London, 1825.  
Memoirs of the Rt. Hon. R. B. Sheridan, ed. by J. Watkins, London, 1817.  
Sheridan, by Walter Sichel, London, 1909.  
The Letters of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, ed. by C. Price, Oxford, 1966.  
The Works of Richard Brinsley Sheridan, ed. by F. Stainforth, London, 1879.
- SIDMOUTH, VISC.  
Addington, by Philip Ziegler, London, 1965.  
The Life and Correspondence of the Right Hon<sup>ble</sup> Henry Addington, First Viscount Sidmouth, ed. by George Pellew, London, 1847.
- SINCLAIR, SIR J.  
The Correspondence of the Right Honourable Sir John Sinclair, London, 1831.
- SMITH, S.  
A. Memoir of the Reverend Sydney Smith, By Lady Holland, With a Selection from his Letters, ed. by Mrs. Austin, London, 1855.
- SPENCER, EARL  
Private Papers of George, Second Earl Spencer, ed. by J. S. Corbett and H. W. Richmond, London, 1913-24.
- SPENCER-STANHOPE, LADY E.  
The Letter-Bag of Lady Elizabeth Spencer-Stanhope, ed. by A. M. W. Stirling, London, 1913.
- STANHOPE, EARL  
The Life of Charles, Third Earl Stanhope, by G. Stanhope and G. P. Gooch, London, 1814.
- ST. VINCENT, EARL  
Life and Correspondence of John, Earl of St. Vincent, ed. by E. P. Brenton, London, 1838.
- TIERNEY, G.  
George Tierney, by H. K. Olphin, London, 1934.
- WARD, R.  
Memoirs of the Political and Literary Life of Robert Plumer Ward, Esq., ed. by E. Phipps, London, 1850.

WELLESLEY, MARQUESS

The Marquess Wellesley, by W. Torrens, London, 1880.

WHISHAW, J.

The 'Pope' of Holland House. Selections from the Correspondence of J. Wishaw and His Friends, 1813-40, ed. by Lady Seymour, London, 1906.

WHITBREAD, S.

Samuel Whitbread, by Roger Fulford, London, 1967.

WHITE, J. B.

The Life of J. Blanco White, ed. by J. H. Thom, London, 1845.

WILBERFORCE, W.

Private Papers of William Wilberforce, ed. by A. M. Wilberforce, London, 1897.

The Life of William Wilberforce, by Robert Isaac Wilberforce and Samuel Wilberforce, London, 1838.

Wilberforce, by R. Coupland, London, 1945.

WILSON, SIR R.

Life of General Sir Robert Wilson, ed. by Rev. Herbert Randolph, London, 1862.

Private Diary ... of ... Sir Robert Wilson, ed. by H. Randolph, London, 1861

WINDHAM, W.

Some Account of the Life of the Right Honourable William Windham, by Thomas Amyot, London, 1812.

The Diary of the Right Hon. William Windham, 1784 to 1810, ed. by Mrs. Henry Baring, London, 1866.

The Windham Papers, London, 1913.

WYNN, LADY W.

Correspondence of Charlotte Grenville, Lady Williams Wynn, ed. by Rachel Leighton, London, 1920.

#### C. PAMPHLETS

Adair, R., A Whig's Apology for His Consistency, in a Letter From a Member of Parliament, London, 1795.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Letter of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox to the Electors of Westminster, With an Application of its Principles to Subsequent Events, London, 1802.

Alley, Jerome, A Vindication of the Principles and Statements Advanced in the Strictures of the Right Hon. Lord Sheffield, London, 1806.

Anonymous [an Elector of Westminster], Adultery and Patriotism, London, 1811.

\_\_\_\_\_, A Letter to Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., with a Criterion proposed to ascertain his Patriotism, and some Reflections on the Subject of Reform; by a Country Gentleman, London, 1810.

\_\_\_\_\_, A Plain Statement, London, 1808.

\_\_\_\_\_, [Scrutator], All the Talents in Ireland! A satirical poem with notes, London, 1807.

\_\_\_\_\_, Brief Memoir of the Life of Mr. Whitbread, London, 1815.

\_\_\_\_\_, Fox Against Fox: Or Political Blossoms of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox, London, 1788.

\_\_\_\_\_, Fox's Martyrs or a New Book of the Sufferings of the Faithful, London, 1784.

\_\_\_\_\_, History of the Westminster and Middlesex Elections in the month of November 1806, London, 1807.

\_\_\_\_\_, Anonymous ['BRITTANNICUS'], Letter to Samuel Whitbread, upon the military conduct of Lord Wellington. London, 1810.

\_\_\_\_\_, Letter to William Roscoe, Esq., containing strictures on his late publication, etc., Liverpool and New York, 1808.

\_\_\_\_\_, Mr. Pitt, the great political delinquent, London, 1812.

\_\_\_\_\_, Notice of the Evidence given in the Committee of the House of Commons, during the Inquiry into the Conduct and Policy of the late Expedition to the River Scheldt; with Observations, London, 1810.

\_\_\_\_\_, Observations on the System of War of the Allies in the Spanish Peninsula, London, 1811.

\_\_\_\_\_, Operations of the British Army in Spain, involving Broad Hints to the Commissariat; by an Officer of the Staff, London, 1809.

\_\_\_\_\_, Parallel Between the Conduct of Mr. Burke and that of Mr. Fox, in their late Parliamentary Contest, London, 1791.

\_\_\_\_\_, Plain Facts; or a Review of the Conduct of the late Ministers, London, 1807.

\_\_\_\_\_, Short Remarks on the State of Parties at the close of the year 1809, London, 1809.

\_\_\_\_\_, Speech of the Rt. Hon. C. J. Fox Containing the Declaration of his Principles Respecting the Present Crisis of Public Affairs, and on Reforming the Representation of the People. Spoken at the Whig Club, London, 1792.

- \_\_\_\_\_, ['Mentor'], The Dangers of the 'Edinburgh Review'; or a brief Exposure of its Principles in Religion, Morals, and Politics, London, 1808.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Faction Detected and Despised, London, 1810.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The French Spy; or, Five Original Letters found in the Bureau of a Foreigner, London, 1808.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Patriots and the Whigs, the Most Dangerous Enemies of the State, London, 1810.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The State of the Case. Addressed to Lord Grenville and Lord Howick, London, 1807.
- \_\_\_\_\_, [A True Englishman], The War As It Is, and the War As It Should Be, London, 1806.
- Atcheson, Nathaniel, American Encroachments on British Rights, London, 1808.
- Baring, Alexander, An Inquiry into the Causes and Consequences of the Orders in Council; and an Examination of the Conduct of Great Britain towards the Neutral Commerce of America, London, 1808.
- Belsham, Thomas, A Discourse, occasioned by the death of the Right Hon. Charles James Fox, delivered at the Unitarian Chapel in Essex Street, London, 1806.
- Brougham, H., An Appeal to the Allies and the English National on Behalf of Poland, London, 1814.
- \_\_\_\_\_, An Inquiry into the Causes and Consequences of Continental Alienation, London, 1808.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Orders in Council; or, An Examination of the Justice, Legality, and Policy of the New System of Commercial Regulations, London, 1808.
- Cartwright, J., The State of the Nation; in a series of letters to the Duke of Bedford, Harlow, 1805.
- Combe, W., A Letter from a Country Gentleman to a Member of Parliament, on the Present State of Public Affairs, London, 1789.
- Courtenay, Thomas P., Observations on the American Treaty, London, 1808.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Additional Observations on the American Treaty ..., London, 1808.
- Dinwiddy, J. R., Christopher Wyvill and Reform, 1790-1820, Borthwick Papers, 39, York, 1971.

- Francis, Sir Philip, Letter From Sir Philip Francis, K. B. to Earl Grey, London, 1814.
- Green, W., Portraits of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, etc., London, 1808.
- Grenville, Lord, Letter From ... Lord Grenville to the Earl of Fingall, London, 1810.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Substance of a Speech delivered in the House of Lords, March 26, 1807, on the change on Ministry, London, 1807.
- Hamilton, Ld. Archibald, Thoughts on the Formation of the Late and Present Administrations, London, 1804.
- Jones, J. G., Five Letters to the Right Honourable George Tierney, including reflections on his political character and conduct, London, 1806.
- Leckie, G. F., An Historical Survey of the Foreign Affairs of Great Britain; Parts I and II, London, 1808.
- Marryat, Joseph, Concessions to America the Bane of Britain, etc., London, 1807.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Hints to Both Parties; or Observations on the Proceedings in Parliament upon the Petitions against the Orders in Council, London, 1808.
- Medford, Macall, Oil Without Vinegar, and Dignity Without Pride; or, British, American, and West India Interests, considered, London, 1807.
- Milburne, H., A Narrative of the Circumstances attending the Retreat of the British Army under the Command of the late Lieut.-Gen. Sir John Moore, London, 1809.
- Phippen, F., An authentic Account of the late Mr. Whitbread, etc., London, 1815.
- [Place, Francis and Richter, J.], An Exposition of the Circumstances which gave rise to the Election of Sir Francis Burdett, Bart., for the City of Westminster, London, 1807.
- Ranby, John, An Inquiry into the supposed Increase of the Influence of the Crown, London, 1811.
- Romilly, S., Memoir of the Life of that Illustrious Patriot Sir Samuel Romilly, London, [1818].
- Roscoe, W., Brief Observations on the Address to His Majesty proposed by Earl Grey to the House of Lords on June 13, 1810, Liverpool, 1810.
- \_\_\_\_\_, Considerations on the Causes, Objects, and Consequences of the Present War; and on the Expediency, or the Danger of Peace with France, London, 1808.

Rose, George, Observations Respecting the Public Expenditure and the Influence of the Crown, London, 1810.

Sayers, J., Hints to J. Nollekens, Esq., R. A., on his modeling a Bust of Lord G\*\*\*\*\*e, London, 1808.

Sheffield, Earl of, Strictures on the Necessity of Inviolably Maintaining the Navigation and Colonial System of Great Britain, London, 1806.

Stewart, Rev. Charles, Charles's Small Clothes: A National Ode, London, 1808.

Tarleton, B., Substance of a Speech intended for the vote of Credit Bill of 1810, London, 1810.

Waddington, S. F., Three Letters to that greatest of political Apostates, the Right Honourable George Tierney, London, 1806.

Waithman, Robert, War Proved to be the Cause of the present Scarcity, and enormous high Price of every Article of Consumption, with the only radical remedies, London, 1800.

Whitbread, S., Substance of a Speech delivered in the House of Commons, on Monday, January 5, 1807, London, 1807.

#### D. GENERAL STUDIES

Adams, E. D., The Influence of Grenville on Pitt's Foreign Policy, 1787-1798, Washington, 1904.

Airlie, Mabell Countess, In Whig Society, London, 1921.

Alger, John G., Englishmen in the French Revolution, London, 1889.

\_\_\_\_\_, Napoleon's English Visitors, New York, 2nd Ed., 1970.

Anonymous, Historical Sketches of Politics and Public Men for the Year 1812, London, 1813.

\_\_\_\_\_, The British Cabinet of 1806, Liverpool, 1807.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Whig Club Rule Book, London, 1784.

Ashton, John, Social England under the Regency, London, 1899.

\_\_\_\_\_, The Dawn of the 19th Century in England, London, 1886.

Aspinall, A., Politics and the Press, London, 1949.

Bemis, Samuel Flagg, Jay's Treaty. A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy, New York, 1923.



- Blease, W. L., A Short History of English Liberalism, London, 1913.
- Brougham, Henry Lord, Aristocracy, Democracy and Mixed Monarchy, London, 1844.
- Brown, P. A., The French Revolution in English History, London, 3rd Ed., 1965.
- Bullock, Alan and Shock, Maurice, The Liberal Tradition from Fox to Keynes, London, 1956.
- Butterfield, Sir Herbert, Charles James Fox and Napoleon. The Peace Negotiations of 1806, London, 1926.
- Cecil, A., British Foreign Secretaries, 1807-1916, London, 1927.
- Chardon, A., Fox et la Revolution Francaise, Paris, 1918.
- Christie, Ian R., Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth Century British Politics and Other Essays, Berkeley, 1970.
- Clive, J., Scotch Reviewers: The Edinburgh Review, 1802-1815, London, 1957.
- Cobban, A. (ed.), The Debate on the French Revolution, 1789-1800, London, 1950.
- Cone, Carl B., The English Jacobins, New York, 1968.
- Coquelle, P., Napoleon and England, 1803-1813, London, 1904.
- Crouzet, Francois, L'Economic Britannique et le Blocus Continental, 1806-1813, Paris, 1958.
- Deschamps, Jules, Les Iles Britanniques et al Revolution Francaise, Paris, 1949.
- Eeles, Henry S. and Spencer, Earl, Brooks's 1764-1964, London, 1964.
- Eyck, E., Pitt versus Fox, London, 1950.
- Feiling, Sir Keith G., The Second Tory Party 1714-1832, London, 1938.
- Foord, A., His Majesty's Opposition, 1714-1832, Oxford, 1964.
- Fortesque, Sir J. W., British Statesmen of the Great War, 1793-1814, London, 1911.
- Fox, C. J., A History of the Reign of James the Second, ed. by Henry, Third Lord Holland, London, 1808.
- Grego, J., History of Parliamentary Elections, London, 1886.
- Herold, Christopher, Mistress to An Age, London, 1959.

- Harris, W., History of the Radical Party in Parliament, London, 1885.
- Hecksher, Eli F., The Continental System, Gloucester, Mass., 1964.
- Hudson, Derek, Holland House in Kensington, New York, 1967.
- Hutcheson, William, Whigs and Whiggism, London, 1913.
- Ilchester, Earl of, Chronicles of Holland House, London, 1937.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Home of the Hollands, 1605-1820, London, 1937.
- Kaufmann, William W., British Policy and the Independence of Latin America, 1804-1828, New Haven, 1951.
- Kebbel, T., A History of Toryism, London, 1886.
- Lamb, Lady Caroline, Glenarvon, London, 1817.
- Lean, E. Tangye, The Napoleonists, London, 1970.
- Leichtenstein, Princess Maria, Holland House, London, 1874.
- MacCunn, F. J., The Contemporary English View of Napoleon, London, 1914.
- Mahan, A. T., Influence of Sea Power upon the French Revolution and Empire, 1793-1812, London, 1893.
- Meikle, H. W., Scotland and the French Revolution, Glasgow, 1912.
- Mitchell, A., The Whigs in Opposition, 1815-1830, Oxford, 1967.
- Mitchell, L. G., Charles James Fox and the Disintegration of the Whig Party, 1782-1794, London, 1971.
- Moore, J., A Narrative of the Campaign of the British Army in Spain, London, 1809.
- Mowat, R. B., The Diplomacy of Napoleon, New York, 2nd Ed., 1971.
- Nicholls, J., Recollections and Reflexions on Public Affairs During the Reign of George III, London, 1820.
- Noble, Iris, Rivals in Parliament: William Pitt and Charles James Fox, New York, 1970.
- O'Gorman, F., The Whig Party and the French Revolution, London, 1967.
- Oman, Sir Charles, A History of the Peninsular War, London, 1902-1930.
- Pares, R., George III and the Politicians, London, 1953.

- Parkinson, C. Northcote (ed.), Trade Winds, A Study of British Overseas Trade During the French Wars, 1793-1815, London, 1948.
- Perkins, Bradford, Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812, Berkeley, 1961.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The First Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1795-1805, Philadelphia, 1955.
- Priestley, J. B., The Prince of Pleasure and His Regency, 1811-20, London, 1971.
- Read, Donald, Press and the People, 1790-1850, London, 1961.
- Richardson, James D. (ed.), A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, Washington, 1897.
- Roberts, Michael, The Whig Party, 1807-1812, London, 1939.
- Sanders, Lloyd, The Holland House Circle, London, 1908.
- Seton-Watson, R. W., Britain in Europe, 1789-1914, London, 1937.
- Smith, Sydney, The Letters of Peter Plymley, ed. by C. G. Heseltine, London, 1929.
- Stout, George D., The Political History of Leigh Hunt's Examiner, St. Louis, 1949.
- Taylor, A. J. P., The Trouble Makers: Dissent over Foreign Policy, 1792-1939, London, 1957.
- Temperley, H. W. V. and Penson, Lilian M. (eds.), Foundations of British Foreign Policy from Pitt, 1792, to Salisbury, 1902, London, 1938.
- Thistlethwaite, Frank, The Anglo-American Connection in the Early Nineteenth Century, Philadelphia, 1959.
- Trevelyan, G. M., Clio A Muse and Other Essays, London, 1949.
- Villiers, Marjorie, The Grand Whiggery, London, 1939.
- Ward, Sir A. W., Great Britain and Hanover, London, 1899.
- Ward, Sir A. W. and Gooch, G. P. (eds.), The Cambridge History of British Foreign Policy, 1783-1919, (Vol. I, 1783-1815) Cambridge, 1922.
- Webster, Sir Charles, British Diplomacy, 1813-15, London, 1921.
- \_\_\_\_\_, The Foreign Policy of Castlereagh, London, 1925-31.
- Williamson, Victor A., Memorials of Brooks's From The Foundation Of The Club 1764 To The Close Of The Nineteenth Century Compiled From The Records Of The Club, London, 1907.

Willson, Beckles, America's Ambassadors to England, 1785-1928, London, 1928.

E. ARTICLES

Aspinall, A., 'The Canningite Party', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, xvii, 4th series (1934).

\_\_\_\_\_, 'The Cabinet Council, 1783-1835', Proceedings of the British Academy, xxxviii (1952).

Bulloch, John M., 'James Perry, our greatest bibliophile', Aberdeen University Review, x (1923).

\_\_\_\_\_, 'James Perry, Editor', Aberdeen Book Lover, v (1927).

Butterfield, Herbert, 'Charles James Fox and the Whig Opposition 1792', Cambridge Historical Journal, ix (1949).

Christie, Ian R., 'Charles James Fox', History Today, viii (1958).

Daniels, G. W., 'American Cotton Trade with Liverpool under the Embargo and Non-Intercourse Acts', American Historical Review, xxi (1915-16).

Davies, Godfrey, 'The Whigs and the Peninsular War, 1808-1814', Royal Historical Society Transactions, 4th series, ii (1919).

Dinwiddy, J. R., 'Charles James Fox and the People', History, lv (1970).

\_\_\_\_\_, 'Charles James Fox as Historian', The Historical Journal, xii (1969).

\_\_\_\_\_, "'The Patriotic Linen-Draper": Robert Waithman and the Revival of Radicalism in the City of London, 1795-1818', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, xlvi (1973).

Fetter, Frank W., 'Authorship of Articles in the Edinburgh Review', Bulletin of the Institute of Historical Research, xxx (1957).

George, Mrs. E., 'Fox's Martyrs: the General Election of 1784', Transactions of the Royal Historical Society, 4th series, xxi (1939).

Harvey, A. D., 'The Ministry of All the Talents: The Whigs in Office, February 1806 to March 1807', The Historical Journal, xv (1972).

Hilt, Douglas, 'Madame de Stael: Emotion and Emancipation', History Today, xxii (1972).

Hughes, E., 'The Scottish Reform Movement and Charles Grey, 1792-1794', Scottish Historical Review, xxxv (1956).

- Kern, J. D., 'Brougham's Early Contributions to the Edinburgh Review: a new list', Modern Philology, xlii (1945).
- \_\_\_\_\_, 'Early Edinburgh Reviewers', Modern Philology, xliii (1946).
- Parker, R. A. C., 'Coke of Norfolk and the Agrarian Revolution', Economic History Review, 2nd series, viii (1955).
- Main, J. M., 'Radical Westminster, 1807-20', Historical Studies, xiii (1966).
- Mohl, Raymond A., 'Britain and the Aaron Burr Conspiracy', History Today, xxi, 3 (1971).
- Sellers, Ian., 'William Roscoe, the Roscoe Circle and Radical Politics in Liverpool, 1787-1807', Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire, cxx (1968).
- Smith, E. A., 'The Yorkshire Elections of 1806 and 1807: a study in electoral management', Northern History, ii (1967).
- Steel, Anthony, 'Impressment in the Monroe-Pinckney Negotiations', American Historical Review, vii (1954).
- Willis, Richard E., 'Fox, Grenville, and the Recovery of Opposition, 1801-1804', The Journal of British Studies, xi (1972).

## F. NEWSPAPERS

## DAILY

Courier, 1806-1815  
Globe, 1808, 1810, 1815

Liverpool Mercury, 1814-1815  
Morning Chronicle, 1790-1816  
Morning Post, 1806-1815  
Statesman, 1806-1807, 1814-1815  
The Times, 1806-1815

## WEEKLY AND PERIODICAL

Annual Register, 1806-1815  
Cobbett's Political Register, 1806-1815  
Edinburgh Review, 1808-1816  
Examiner, 1808-1816  
Gentlemen's Magazine, 1806-1815  
Independent Whig, 1807-1815  
The Charles James Fox, 1814-1815

## G. REFERENCE MATERIAL AND PARLIAMENTARY SOURCES

A Biographical Index to the House of Commons, by J. Wilson, London, 1808.

A Full View of the British House of Commons as Constituted in the Nineteenth Century of the Christian Era, London, 1821.

Catalogue of Parliamentary Papers, 1801-1900, by H. Vernon Jones, London, 1901.

Dictionary of National Biography, Revised edition, London, 1908-09.

Encyclopedia Brittanica.

Protests of the Lords, ed. by J. T. Rogers, Oxford, 1875.

The Complete Peerage, ed. by V. Gibbs and others.

The Elector's Remembrancer, or a Guide to the Votes of Each Member of the House of Commons, London, 1822.

The Parliamentary History (Parliamentary Debates), ed. by W. Cobbett to 1812 and by T. C. Hansard thereafter.

The Parliamentary History of England, from the Earliest Period to the Year 1803, ed. by W. Cobbett, London, 1819.

#### H. UNPUBLISHED STUDIES

Asquith, Ivon. 'James Perry and the Morning Chronicle, 1790-1821', University of London, PhD. thesis, 1973.

Brunsdon, P. J. 'The Association of the Friends of the People, 1792-1796', University of Manchester M. Phil. thesis, 1961.

Dinwiddy, J. R. 'Parliamentary Reform As An Issue in English Politics, 1800-1810', University of London PhD. thesis, 1971.

Elkins, Wilson H. 'British Policy in its Relation to the Commerce of the United States of America From 1794 to 1807, Oxford University M. Phil. thesis, 1936.

Fraser, Peter. 'The Conduct of Public Business in the House of Commons, 1812-1827', University of London M. Phil. thesis, 1927.

Horsman, Reginald. 'British Opinion and the United States of America, 1806-1812', University of Birmingham M. Phil. thesis, 1955.

Oxley, J. E. 'English Political Satire, 1800-1830', University of London M. Phil. thesis, 1941.