The Grenvillites and the British Press

The Grenvillites and the British Press:

Colonial and British Politics, 1750-1770

By

Rory T. Cornish

Cambridge
Scholars
Publishing

The Grenvillites and the British Press:
Colonial and British Politics, 1750-1770

By Rory T. Cornish

This book first published 2020

Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Lady Stephenson Library, Newcastle upon Tyne, NE6 2PA, UK

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library

ISBN (10): 1-5275-4186-X
ISBN (13): 978-1-5275-4186-3

To the memory of my mother,

Mary E. Logan-Cornish.

George Grenville, 1712-1770

Engraving by T.A. Dean after a 1766 portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds.

In the possession of the author.

CONTENTS

PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In September 1770, just two months before George Grenville's death on November 13, *The Monthly Review* appraised the first volume of Robert MacFarlane's *The History of the Reign of George the Third, King of Great Britain etc. to the Conclusion of the Session of Parliament, ending in May 1770* in a five page review. For a historian to comment upon the transactions of his own times, the reviewer reflected, was a difficult task for it was all too easy to be influenced by one's own "passions, or mislead by the information which he fancies to be just, frequently retails fiction for truth, and becomes the panegyrist of a faction." It would be only with the passage of time, the reviewer added, that a historian could with fidelity and exactness record the events of the first ten years of George III's reign and bestow a well-deserved "approbation on those worthy patriots and statesmen who have acted from public and constitutional views" while exposing and censuring "with candour and impartiality, those corrupt ministers who have proceeded only on venal and arbitrary principles."[1] This commentator, together with a colleague at the rival *The Critical Review*, concluded MacFarlane had nonetheless made an honest and creditable attempt to account for the turbulent nature of the past decade; a decade which had transformed the "glory and felicity" of the reign of George II into a period of confusion in which "discord rages throughout the land." It was a decade which had, these reviewers suggested, witnessed a decline in both British trade and prestige. As a critic of the Peace of Paris, MacFarlane blamed this rapid reversal of British fortunes upon "the impolitic and ungracious system of government" instigated at the accession of George III; it was this new system of government, he added, which had produced ministers whose character and conduct had "been such, that a man of any feeling, or soul, can hardly contain his indignation."[2]

The 1760's saw the rise of George Grenville to political pre-eminence and given the times it is hardly surprising that many of his contemporaries were, together with later historians, critical of his record as a minister. Grenville was responsible for the initial prosecution of John Wilkes, attempted, it was claimed, to muzzle the British press, and had planted the

[1] *The Monthly Review*, XLIII, 1770, 187-192: 187.
[2] *The Critical Review*, XXX, 1770, 130-136: 130.

seeds of eventual disunion with the American colonies. As a previous member of the administration of Lord Bute, Grenville had played an important role in concluding the Peace of Paris; a peace which had created an extended American territorial empire many thought Britain would never be able to afford, defend, or retain. As MacFarlane warned, once the North American colonies finally realized their own economic potential they "like all powerful colonies that ever existed (would) shake off its dependence and make us regret that we totally exterminated the French, and rendering our protection no longer necessary."[3] This present study is an attempt to further re-balance our interpretation of Grenville's career, especially regarding the Stamp Act and his attitude towards the American colonial empire, by investigating the Grenvillite involvement in the contemporary press.

The research for this volume was completed in The British Library in 2014 and the work finished following my retirement from teaching and the increasing, if often pointless, demands placed upon a modern academic by university administrators. Having taught Native-American history for over a decade I am aware that the use of language can often be controversial. Although the term Indian is now often seen as derogatory, I have nonetheless used this term in the text due to its frequent use in the cited sources. Similarly, eighteenth-century spelling and use of capitalization is at variance with modern usage. To be consistent I have followed eighteenth-century rather than modern diction, but as the titles of some pamphlets are excessively long I have occasionally abridged a title. Part of this study concerns the periodical and pamphlet press in the decades preceding the formation of the Grenville administration. This was completed to illustrate how Grenvillian political opinions, especially concerning the American colonies, were traditional, mainstream, and frequently discussed before 1763. George Grenville may have been the first minister to have attempted to tax the American colonies, but he did so within an established political framework which had long viewed the colonies as economically and politically subordinate to British national and commercial interests.

In completing this study I wish to thank two individuals who greatly aided me in bringing the project to its conclusion. Serena Kelly, a fellow contributor to the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, and presently the Records Manager of Schroder's in London, has been a friend for over forty years. She volunteered to read the entire manuscript and I have

[3] *The Monthly Review,* XLIII, 189.

greatly valued her help and comments. Her equally generous hospitality also allowed me to complete numerous research trips to The British Library, London. Of course, any remaining errors in this study are entirely my own responsibility. I must also thank my wife Rachael for her constant support in sustaining my academic career. I remain eternally grateful to her for persuading me to take early retirement and move to Prince Edward Island. If we had not done so I am sure this book would never have been completed. I must also thank her for being very patient with me over the last two years when it must have seemed I inhabited another planet as I obsessed over finishing the manuscript.

I would also like to acknowledge my debt to two past mentors. As an undergraduate at the University of East Anglia, Professor Roger F. Thompson sparked my interested in William Knox and George Grenville. Professor Thompson also proved unfailing in his support as I began my academic career in the United States. Professor Ian R. Christie of University College London influenced me more than he probably ever knew regarding British eighteenth-century history. His untimely death in 1998 was a great loss to all those who had the pleasure of knowing him. In 1992 I dedicated my first book on Grenville to Professor Christie and one can only hope this present study reflects the professionalism, attention to detail, and the need for solid research he gently instilled in all of his graduate students. Finally, I have dedicated this book to the memory of my mother, Mary Ellen Logan-Cornish. Kind-hearted and generous to a fault, her impish Irish humour was a delight to her children and grandchildren.

Prince Edward Island, July 2019.

ABBREVIATIONS

Add Mss	Additional Manuscripts
AHR	*American Historical Review*
BL	British Library
B&TP	*Bowdoin and Temple Papers*
CO	Colonial Office Papers
EHR	*English Historical Review*
GP	*The Grenville Papers*, 4 vols.
HJ	*The Historical Journal*
HMC	Historical Manuscripts Commission
HOC	*The History of Parliament: The House of Commons (1754-1790)*, 3 vols.
JBS	*Journal of British Studies*
JEC	*Journal of Economic History*
JICH	*Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History*
Knox Mss	The William Knox Papers, William L. Clements Library
NEQ	*The New England Quarterly*
N&Q	*Notes and Queries*
NY Col Docs	*Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, 15 vols.
ODNB	*Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 60 vols.
Shel Mss	The Shelburne Papers, William L. Clements Library
TNA	The National Archives, London
W&MQ	*William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series

CHAPTER ONE

GEORGE GRENVILLE: THE BRITISH PRESS AND THE HISTORIAN

Seven years after the fall of the Bastille in Paris, and fifteen years after Britain had recognized the independence of the United States, the bookseller and political journalist John Almon published his *Biographical, Literary, and Political Anecdotes* in three volumes. In a long career Almon had remained passionately partisan and remarkably consistent in his loyalties; he was proud of his attachment to the cause of John Wilkes, to William Pitt, Earl Chatham, and Pitt's brother-in-law, Richard Grenville, Earl Temple. As late as 1797, Almon continued to believe that Lord Temple had been the strongest, sometimes the only, supporter of the constitutional rights of the British people during the politically turbulent 1760's, a decade in which he and Temple had cooperated on the publication of a number of controversial political pamphlets.[1] Themes developed by later historians, the suspected autocratic tendencies of George III, the secret influence of the hated Lord Bute and his attempt to subvert the constitution, the heroic struggle of William Pitt in the cause of liberty, and even the dullness of George Grenville all found a prominent place in Almon's *Anecdotes*.

One would doubt today many historians would accept Almon's assessment that Temple was the political equal of William Pitt or even George Grenville, though some would agree that George Grenville had been a man of solid "integrity and unblemished honour." Largely remembered as the minister responsible for the unfortunate Stamp Act of 1765, Almon absolved Grenville of any sinister motivations behind his attempt to tax the American colonies. Grenville, he believed, had been interested in only raising revenue and had no part in a suspected plan to reduce both British citizens and the American colonials to the status of "absolute slaves to the minions of Lord Bute as the English were to the

[1] John Almon, *Biographical, Literary and Political Anecdotes of Several of the Most Eminent Persons of the Present Age,* 3 vols. (London: T.N.Longman and L.B.Selley, 1797), 2: 3-9.

soldiers of William the Conqueror."[2] Grenville's great mistake, Almon believed, was to have followed a career in politics for he lacked "a comprehensive mind" and could have achieved more if he had continued to follow his legal career: a profession in which he could have "committed to posterity a more honorable character than either Lord Hardwicke or Lord Mansfield."[3]

At the beginning of his journalistic career, however, Almon had been one of Grenville's harshest critics. Following the publication of his *A Review of Mr. Pitt's Administration* Almon began a long political association with Lord Temple who had joined Pitt in opposition in October 1762. A bitter family schism developed after Grenville refused to also resign office, and when he had formed his own adminiatration in April 1763 Almon, at Lord Temple's behest, virulently attacked Grenville's political and personal reputation in *A Letter to the Rt. Hon. George Grenville.* Critical of Grenville's role in the prosecution of John Wilkes, Almon accused Grenville of being a secret Tory and responsible for the "many nonsensical ministerial squibs and letters in all the papers (and) of the many hand-bills dispersed about the streets…"[4] Like many other aristocratic politicians, Grenville publically distanced himself from the political press yet he took the time to personally, if anonymously, reply to Almon's attack in *A Reply to the Letter addressed to the Rt. Hon. George Grenville* which defended his long career and denied ambition, avarice, or even factional interest had ever motivated his public service.[5] This exchange summarizes the main themes to be discussed in this study; why Grenville and his followers involved themselves in the British press, to what extent their press activities impacted the contemporary political climate, and how their involvement in the press encouraged the factional bitterness which characterized the first decade of the reign of George III. Furthermore, how did Grenville's resolute support for the claims of parliamentary sovereignty over the American colonies continue to influence British public opinion after his fall from office in July 1765? This last question is important for, as Eliga H. Gould has recently noted, the one surprising aspect of the firm British reaction to American

[2] Ibid., 96.
[3] Ibid., 75.
[4] (Almon), *A Letter to the Right. Hon. George Grenville* (London: Williams, 1763), 5-6.
[5] (Grenville), *A Reply to the Letter addressed to the Right Hon. George Grenville. In Which the Truth of the Facts are Examined, and the Propriety of the Motto fully considered* (London: Wilkie, 1763), 12-13.

opposition to colonial taxation was its early and lasting popularity.[6] Edmund Burke had no doubts concerning the effectiveness of the Grenvillian pamphleteers for he complained they continually turned the reader round in a perpetual circle of their own reasoning only to hand him "over from one of their own pamphlets to another."[7]

Press activity greatly increased in the middle decades of the eighteenth-century and there can be little doubt that John Almon, together with many of his contemporaries, considered this a reflection of the deep political divide which accompanied the continuing struggle in Britain between liberty and authority; a struggle exacerbated by the accession of George III in 1760. Many nineteenth-century historians would endorse this view, but a number of twentieth century historians, especially those associated with the research of Sir Lewis Namier, came to doubt that ideology, press activity, or even party politics had been dominant factors influencing the political development of the early 1760's. The attraction of Namier's approach, and of the historians who followed his lead, was the extensive research which accompanied their scholarship. Namier and his followers unquestionably made a major contribution to the reconstruction of British politics in the eighteenth-century but not all historians were convinced by their conclusions. As Herbert Butterfield perceptively noted, depth of research alone does not necessarily guarantee the correctness of a historian's propositions. If some historians have rejected Namier's conclusions few have rejected his research methods and this is especially true concerning the emphasis he placed upon in-depth archival research. As his biographer Linda Colley concluded, his methodology has continued to influence historians to such an extent that most of the historians concerned with the period are almost all Namierites now.[8] In 1976, however, John Brewer argued that the historiography of the period had rarely risen above the controversies aired in the eighteenth-century press and he likened the clash between Namier and Butterfield to the contemporary exchanges between the Pitts and the Foxes over the House of Commons dispatch box. Brewer's attempt to create a new synthesis by restructuring the ideological basis of mid-Georgian politics was both persuasive and influential, but

---

[6] Eliga H. Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000), *xviii*.
[7] Cited in R. R. Rea, *The English Press in Politics, 1760-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1963), 140.
[8] Herbert Butterfield, *George III and the Historians* (London: Cassell, 1988), 201; Linda Colley, *Namier* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1989), 101.

historians have continued to remain divided on how to gauge the impact the press had on mid-century British politics.[9]

In his seminal work, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession of George III*, Namier did not even mention the press for he deliberately "refrained from discussing so-called parties and political groups, their meaning or lack of meaning" believing "the political life of the period could be fully discussed without ever using a party denomination."[10] In his second book published two years later, *England in the Age of the American Revolution*, Namier did consider the stream of pamphlets published in what has narrowly been described as the Canada V. Guadeloupe debate, but only to lament Clarence W. Alvord's attempt to link pamphlet publication to political party affiliations. To follow such a forlorn path through the wilderness of eighteenth-century politics, Namier concluded, had led Alvord into a *cul-de-sac* as no real formal division between men and measures into what could be classified by the terms Whig or Tory had then existed. Regarding the Canada V. Guadeloupe debate itself, Namier also suggested that the scope of the argument detailed by the press was not extensive "and, as is usual in such controversies, the stock was soon exhausted." He also believed that there was little evidence to suggest that the Duke of Newcastle, Lord Bute or any other parliamentary leader "held strong settled views on the choice to be made between conquests, still less that they tried to force any such views on their adherents."[11] Furthermore, he added, the leading politicians did not look to the pamphlet press for advice but to their friends or colleagues and within their circle their correspondence indicates an early consensus developed to retain Canada. In reality, Namier concluded, the only real debate among the political elite had been either to continue the war or seek peace terms, and if the press remained important, added Peter D.G. Thomas, it was not the pamphleteers but the politicians who made policy and after the "furor had died down, the political world was still dominated by the King and the Parliamentary factions."[12]

---

[9] John Brewer, *Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III* (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press, 1976), 26.

[10] Sir Lewis Namier, *The Structure of Politics at the Accession George III* (London: Macmillan, 1961), xi.

[11] Sir Lewis Namier, *England in the Age of the American Revolution* (London: Macmillan, 1966), 273.

[12] Peter D.G. Thomas, *George III: King and Politicians, 1760-1770* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2002), viii. Professor Thomas was Namier's last graduate research student.

Of course, the Namierites did not had the final word on how the high politics of the era developed and later historians continued to investigate the role factions played during the period; how administrations were formed, what topics Parliament debated and upon what issues alliances were fashioned. Their research has been just as valuable to our understanding of the 1760's as the Namierites and much of this later research has confirmed a Namerite viewpoint that continuity, and not constitutional and political change, was a characteristic of eighteenth-century politics. Of particular importance has been the rejection of the older nineteenth-century belief that George III had attempted to act the autocrat, a notion Professor Thomas dismissed as "complete nonsense."[13] Consequently, a number of historians now refer to a long eighteenth-century in which continuity instead of conflict became the dominant feature; that Britain remained essentially an aristocratic, patriotic, conservative society and one even more concerned with religion than previously thought.[14] The belief that Lord Bute was the leading agent in the king's attempt to re-establish the power of the royal prerogative has also been dismissed as largely a myth. Whatever the modern historian may now believe, however, does not detract from the fact that many in the 1760's thought they were witnessing a dramatic change in the political order and that Lord Bute was the devil incarnate.

Myth or not, contemporary concerns have to be taken into account for, as Ian R. Christie suggested, myth has always been a potent force within the human condition. When historians have to chose between reality and myth they have to choose the former, but in doing so they also ought to be aware that when "a people in a given historical situation firmly believed in a certain view of their circumstances and based their actions upon it" this has to be investigated. Certainly, the historian's main duty is to "unravel the truth of a situation as distinct from the myth" but one also has to

---

[13] Ibid., 3. For more resent research on these two monarchs see, Jeremy Black, *George II: Puppet of the Politicans?* (Exeter: University of Exeter Press, 2007); Andrew C. Thompson, *George II: King and Elector* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011) and Grayson Ditchfield, *George III; An Essay in Monarchy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002).

[14] Frank O'Gorman, *The Long Eighteenth Century: British Politics and Social History, 1688-1832*, 2nd Edition (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 2-3, 392-93. See also, J.C.D. Clark, *English Society, 1660-1832: Religion, Ideology, and Politics during the Ancien Regime*, 2nd Edition (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000).

"examine the repercussions of the myth upon the situation."[15] This brings the analysis back to the question of how important the press may have been in influencing the development of British public opinion during the mid-eighteenth century.

War, political controversy, rumour and the inevitable gossip these issues generated did help to stimulate the growth of the press and due to a miscalculation in the drafting of the 1757 Stamp Act newspapers had multiplied to such an extent by 1758 that Dr. Johnson observed "not many years ago the nation was content with one gazette, but now we have not only in the metropolis papers for every morning and every evening, but almost every large town has its weekly historian."[16] By 1763 Dean Josiah Tucker, one of the foremost economic and political writers of his day, complained that Britain was as "much news mad and press ridden as present, as it was Popery mad and priest ridden in the days of our Forefathers."[17] The Seven Years War did much to encourage the proliferation of British newspapers and by 1760 London had four daily newspapers; the *Gazetteer,* the *Public Ledger*, the *Daily Advertiser*, and Henry Woodfall's the *Public Advertiser*. Woodfall's newspaper usually followed a politically moderate line, had the largest daily circulation and was the only newspaper taken by George Grenville. In 1769 Woodfall's son, Henry Woodfall, founded the *Morning Chronicle* which became one of the first daily papers to venture into parliamentary reporting. London also boasted tri-weekly newspapers which served both the metropolitan and provincial markets. These were published on the post-days of Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. Among the tri-weekly papers were the *General Evening Post, the Whitehall Evening Post,* and the anti-government *London Evening Post*: in 1757 two similar papers were founded, the *London Chronicle* and *Lloyd's Evening Post.* The *St. James Chronicle*, which generally favoured the opposition, was launched in 1761 and the controversy over John Wilkes' re-election to Parliament in 1769 resulted in the creation of two other tri-weekly newspapers, the *Middlesex*

---

[15] Ian R. Christie, *Myth and Reality in Late Eighteenth Century British Politics and Other Papers* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), 27-28. Lord Bute still awaits a modern biographer but the beginning of a new assessment of his career can be found in Karl W. Schweizer, *Lord Bute: Essays in Reinterpretation* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1988)

[16] Cited in Rea, *The English Press in Politics,* 7.

[17] (Tucker), *The Case of Going to War for the sake of Procuring, Enlarging or Securing of Trade, Considered in a New Light* (London: Dodsley, 1763), 49.

Journal and the *London Packet.*[18] The metropolitan newspapers were also buttressed by approximately forty provincial newspapers and longer political editorials could also be found in the weekly essay newspapers of which the *Monitor* was the most influential. Founded in August 1755, the *Monitor* played a crucial role in creating the public image of William Pitt as a patriot minister. Other short lived newspapers, such the *Test* and the *Con-Test*, would also help generate political controversy in the 1750's, as would the *Briton* and the *North Britain* in the 1760's.[19]

Ephemeral publications, such as handbills, ballads and cartoons, were also popular and they often had a more immediate effect in temporarily shaping public opinion than newspapers. For example, the handbill *A Letter to a Gentleman in the City*, written by Edward Richardson in September 1762, went through an initial print run of two thousand, was handed out at the Royal Exchange, was extensively reviewed in the periodical press and was franked and posted all over the kingdom.[20] Similarly, the repeal of the Stamp Act in March 1766 was immediately accompanied by a cartoon drawn by the artist Benjamin Wilson, *The Repeal, or the Funeral Procession of Miss Ame-Stamp.* Lord Rockingham's political associates Edmund Burke and Grey Cooper had prompted Wilson to produce the cartoon which sold for a shilling and it proved to be so popular that it earned Wilson over £100 in just four days. Five days after its initial publication two other pirated editions appeared at half the price to be followed by a later fourth edition. Wilson later estimated that together the four editions sold sixteen thousand copies making it one of the most widely circulated cartoons of the period.[21]

As newspaper columns remained relatively undeveloped, letters to the editor, especially on controversial political issues, became important but their scope remained limited in comparison to the cheap and widely circulated pamphlet. The political pamphlet was to become a common feature in British politics by the time Grenville formed his administration

---

[18] Rea, *The English Press in Politics*, 139-60; Brewer, *Party Ideology*, 139-155; Marie Peters, *Pitt and Popularity: The Patriot Minister and London Opinion during the Seven Years War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), 19-22.

[19] Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 13-14, 65-79; Robert D. Spector, *Political Controversy: A Study in Eighteenth Century Propaganda* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1992), 5-7.

[20] Brewer, *Party Ideology*, 222-3; *The Gentleman's Magazine, xxxii* (1762), 404-406; *The London Magazine*, *xxxi* (1762), 503.

[21] E.I. Carlyle, 'Wilson, Benjamin (1721-1788)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, 2004: later cited as the *ODNB.*

and it is clear that from the time of Sir Robert Walpole governments had been active in cultivating their public image. Henry Pelham and his brother, the Duke of Newcastle, may have spent a great deal less on this than Walpole, but even they had employed and given secret service pensions to two historians turned political journalists, William Guthrie and the American born James Ralph. Guthrie began his career as a journalist reporting parliamentary affairs for *The Gentleman's Magazine* while Ralph had contributed to various opposition newspapers during the 1740's. As the private secretary to George Bubb Dodington he had also edited *The Critical History of the Administration of Sir Robert Walpole*, a compilation of anti-ministerial tracts from the newspapers and pamphlets published in 1743. Both of these writers were so successful, or unscrupulous, that they had their pensions renewed at the request of Lord Bute. Indeed, Ralph was about to begin editing a pro-Bute newspaper at the time of his death in January 1762.[22]

Lord Temple, unlike his younger brother, had both the wealth and love of faction to provide money and information to support opposition pamphleteers, but evidence linking Grenville to the press before he formed his own administration is limited. Lord Temple, however, undoubtedly instructed both Grenville and Pitt on its importance for Grenville's correspondence from the time of his premiership clearly indicates he closely supervised the political publications and pamphlets written by three of his closest followers; Thomas Whately, William Knox and Charles Lloyd. In the spring of 1767 Grenville and his followers also cooperated with Lord Temple and John Almon in the publication of a new monthly journal, *The Political Register*.[23] This popular magazine provided a useful political platform for the Grenvillites and, as William Knox later recalled, Grenville may have tried to distance himself from the press in public, but in private he was "far from being indifferent to the good or ill opinion of the public."[24] During the 1760's Charles Lloyd, Grenville's private secretary, kept him supplied with an endless stream of the recently published pamphlets and Augustus Hervey noted that after Grenville had read his *A Letter to the Earl of B---, relative to the late changes that have happened in the Administration* in manuscript form he had passed it onto Lord Sandwich for further amendment because "I had inserted no

[22] Jeremy Black, *The English Press in the Eighteenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1987), 1-13, 102:
[23] Rea, *The English Press in Politics,* 28, 134-139.
[24] William Knox, *Extra Official State Papers Addressed to the Right Hon. Lord Rawdon,* 2.vols. (London: Debrett, 1789), 2: 34-35.

scurrilous language."[25] Similarly, Horace Walpole reflected that on having listened to Grenville complain in the House of Commons against libels published in the press he later witnessed Mrs. Grenville taking from her bureau and returning to its author a "rancorous pamphlet written against Lord Temple and Mr. Pitt, corrected by Mr. Grenville's own hand, and published immediately afterwards."[26]

Mid-century newspapers, political pamphlets, handbills, cartoons, and monthly journals, not to mention ballads and the theatre, all combined to create a vibrant political culture which often surprised visiting foreigners and at the centre of this often acerbic political dialogue remained the one shilling political pamphlet. This form of political journalism had increased so dramatically by 1766 that one anonymous observer thought the only way he could damn all pamphleteers was to publish his own pamphlet, *What Should Be Done: or Remarks on the Political State of Things.* Consequently, by the time of Grenville's death in 1770 there existed in both London and the provinces a widespread and plagiaristic web of publications generated by political controversy which the press itself had helped to perpetuate. This increase in publications ought not to be confused with a widening of the political spectrum for pamphlets were predominately written in haste, under pressure from the demands of the short parliamentary sessions and, as many commentators resorted to general shibboleths and accepted general principles to support their case, a paradoxical retrogression in outlook. Although a political debate would often seem outwardly complicated its content could often mask an unconscious consensus among the participants: as *The Monthly Review* noted in 1760, "It is amazing how projects multiply (for) no sooner has one man formed a visionary plan" than fifty others are ready "to destroy it, and to build their own on the same chimerical bottom."[27] Another reviewer in the same year complained that if the author under review had only written "I am of the opinion, for reasons alleged by former writers, that Guadeloupe ought not to be restored at a peace" he would have expressed in these few words "all that he has written in forty-six pages."[28] Long and controversial debates could also encourage ephemeral works written quickly for profit or to attract attention to its author. In 1763 *The Critical Review* remarked that whenever a debate attracted the attention of the

[25] Cited in Brewer, *Party Ideology*, 235.
[26] Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*, 4 vols., ed. Sir Denis Le Marchant (London: Bentley, 1845), 2: 8.
[27] *The Monthly Review*, XXII, (1760), 346.
[28] Ibid., 165.

public there immediately arose "a set of puny witlings who, from the love of fame, or want of a dinner "enter as volunteers on either side, or sometimes on both, to create a "heap of catchpenny pamphlets to amuse and divert this, our pamphlet loving age."[29] Whatever a reviewer wrote, or even complained about, the periodical press proved crucial to the development of the pamphlet press itself and by the time of his death in 1820 George III's library, now The King's Library housed in The British Library, London, contained approximately 19,000 pamphlets.

If a pamphlet was not a subsidized political manifesto the usual print run would be 500 copies. If the work proved popular it would quickly go into a second edition, but the number of printed copies should not be confused with actual circulation or readership. Many of the more noteworthy works were often abstracted or reviewed in the periodical press. Usually published on a monthly basis and then bound in yearly volumes, the first, and probably the best, of these was *The Gentleman's Magazine.* Founded in January 1731 by Edward Cave, who was the first to use the phrase magazine for a periodical, it carried articles, letters, summaries of the London newspapers and a monthly chronicle of the news; the December issue included a yearly index which made each bound volume a useful storehouse of collected opinion. Dr. Samuel Johnson found his first regular employment with the magazine and as periodicals evaded the newspaper tax they were relatively economical and circulated widely in the provinces, thus proving crucial in keeping the rural squirearchy informed. Each monthly edition could sell approximately 10,000 copies and its nearest rival in both quality of content and circulation was *The London Magazine*, founded in 1732.[30] The two leading review magazines were also popular and could sell up to 3000 copies every issue. Founded by Ralph Griffith in 1749, *The Monthly Review* regularly employed Oliver Goldsmith and Tobias Smollett, who later founded its more Tory-orientated rival, *The Critical Review*, in 1756.[31]

For every pamphlet or periodical published there were also numerous readers, or even a great many to whom the press was read. By the middle decades of the century it had long been the custom for coffee houses, inns, taverns and tea rooms to take the latest journal, important pamphlets, or newspapers. In London by 1739 there were 551 coffee shops, 207 inns and

---

[29] *The Critical Review,* XVI, (1763), 70-71.
[30] Brewer, *Party Ideology*, 147; Lennart C. Carlson, *The First Magazine: A History of The Gentleman's Magazine* (Providence: Brown University Press, 1938), 61-62.
[31] Jeremy Lewis, *Tobias Smollett* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2003), 165-174.

447 taverns. Not all would stock newspapers or periodicals but many did as it tended to encouraged trade.[32] Provincial towns increasingly had their own similar establishments, if not their own journals, and one could also take out a quarterly or annual subscription to a circulating or lending library.[33] Nonetheless, the revisionist historians of the 1980's have not only suggested that continuity and not political change remained a dominant feature of eighteenth century politics, but have also, if less persuasively, discounted the importance of the press. It neither reflected nor influenced public opinion, they have argued, for politics continued to remain the exclusive preserve of the landed classes.

Led by Jonathan Clark, the revisionists have almost exclusively concentrated on high politics and they have characterized Hanoverian Britain as a political society almost bereft of ideology and its politicians mainly concerned with the pursuit of power. Repudiating many of the ideas generated by historians in the 1960's and the 1970's, the revisionist thesis rest upon the notion that eighteenth-century politics cannot be understood if one assumes that it differed from modern party politics merely in its actors and its issues. A failure to realize this has led many historians, revisionists have claimed, misguidedly to create an alternative structure of eighteenth-century politics which had mobilized the lower orders. This alternative view of eighteenth-century British politics, it has been further claimed, fails to fully comprehend the conventions governing eighteenth-century political action and surely, Jonathan Clark noted, the historian ought to be aware of what the political structure entailed before an alternative structure is reconstructed based upon the pronouncements of the press and the activities of the mob.[34] Thus, any attempt to relate what men wrote and said to what they actually did in politics would continually hinder, Clark concluded, our grasp of the true nature of Hanoverian politics, especially at the accession of George III. If this sounds like an extension of the Namerite view it is, for Jonathan Clark's self-proclaimed mission was to complete the destruction of the remaining edifices of the Whig interpretation of history left standing by Sir Lewis Namier.

---

[32] Brewer, *Party Ideology*, 147-150; Bryant Lillywhite, *London Coffee Houses* (London: George Unwin & Allen, 1963), 23.

[33] For example, see John Money, *Experience and Identity: Birmingham and the West Midlands, 1760-1800* (Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1977), 52-80, 98-121; Paul Kaufman, *Libraries and their Users: Collected Papers in Library History* (London: Library Association, 1969), 192.

[34] J.C.D. Clark, *The Dynamics of Change: The Crisis of the 1750's and English Party Systems* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 3-4.

Dismissing the all too often accepted contemporary belief in British exceptionalism, revisionists portray Britain as essentially part of the *ancien regime* and although Britain was hardly an "oriental despotism" in that public interests also concerned the elite, they only mattered practically "in so far as, and in the way, in which they were brought into the political arena by politicians."[35]

Public opinion, the revisionists added, was manipulated and used as an excuse for political action by the elite and as a result the press generally had no separate life of its own apart from that allotted to it by its political masters. As a product of the political game, pamphlets were largely written by politicians, or under their political patronage, and thus "failed to carry independent weight precisely because they were often assumed to be instigated by the leaders…and that the root of popular dissension is to be found in their own body", that is, within Parliament itself. Thus, the out-of-doors political controversies were all too often merely a reflection of the struggles between the parliamentary factions for power and it was the politicians themselves who sowed "the factious seeds of sedition among the people" who in turn were unwittingly "made the blind instrument of vile ambition."[36] Not surprisingly, no other political career has been so distorted by past historians, Clarke has suggested, as that of William Pitt, Lord Chatham, and he suggested that there existed a need to completely reinterpret Pitt's career. If other historians have followed this theme, that Hanoverian Britain remained essentially a hierarchical society for longer than previously thought, few have followed Jonathan Clark's lead in so thoroughly dismissing the impact popular culture had on British politics.[37]

To argue that the long eighteenth-century was dominated by an Anglican-aristocratic hegemony is one thing, it is quite another to concentrate on high politics at the expense of the political and social context in which it operated. Myth or not, many believed at the time that

---

[35] Ibid., 3.

[36] Ibid., 12-13. For a criticism of this revisionist position see, H.T. Dickinson, *The Politics of the People in Eighteenth Century Britain* (London: Macmillan, 1994), 2-3, 7-8.

[37] Clark, *The Dynamics of Change*, 8. For a more tempered revisionist view of eighteenth-century politics and the forces of conservatism which held change in check see, John Cannon, *Aristocratic Century: The Peerage of Eighteenth-Century England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) and Ian R. Christie's 1983-1984 Ford Lectures published as *Stress and Stability in Late Eighteenth Century Britain: Reflections on the British Avoidance of Revolution* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984), especially pages 54-93.

Britain's achievements were generated by her ancient Anglo-Saxon constitutionalism, her exceptionalism, and to a commercial expansion which lacked the centralism evident in the continental monarchies, especially France and Spain. Britain's lively political culture and the vast growth of the printed word remains crucial in understanding the relationships between the landed elite, other men of property, and even the middling sorts whose taxes and willingness to serve in Britain's modernizing state bureaucracy or armed services underwrote Britain's mid-century success.[38] That the elite dominated both the British Court and Parliament is undoubtedly true, but increasingly non-elite commentators attempted to influence their decisions; decisions which would affect their own lives and prosperity. Within Parliament, as with any representative assembly, relatively few members gain expertise in any given field and many members were therefore dependent upon debates, their colleagues, or printed works to gain information. Thus pamphlets were published to not only to fuel controversy, but also influence politicians and the inexpensive pamphlet proved to be an effective vehicle with which to lobby politicians as well as keeping interested parties and supporters in the provinces informed.[39] A case in point was the widely read pamphlet *Considerations on the Present German War* written by the then relatively unknown Israeli Mauduit, a former dissenting minister who had become a prosperous London woolen draper with an extensive trade to Virginia.

Published in November 1760, this pamphlet did not initially owe its origins to any political faction nor was it sponsored by any politician. Instead, it seems to have been published largely independently even though its author did have personal economic interests in extending the naval and colonial war against France at the expense of continuing the war in Germany. He may have also wished to attract the attention of Lord Bute who privately agreed with the pamphlet's main propositions. Grenville also publically agreed with most of the sentiments aired in the work and the pamphlet attracted favourable reviews in both *The Critical Review* and *The Monthly Review*, was abstracted in *The Gentleman's Magazine,* was given extraordinary attention in the newspapers, especially the *London*

[38] Dickinson, *The Politics of the People*, 7-8. For the growth of Britain's bureaucracy and its growing professionalism see, John Brewer, *The Sinews of Power: War, Money and the English State, 1688-1783* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989), 64-69, 79-86.

[39] Black, *The English Press*, 50, 102; Ian R. Christie, "The Historians Quest for the American Revolution," in *Statesmen, Scholars and Merchants*, ed. Anne Whiteman, J.S. Bromley and P.G.M. Dickson (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1973), 194-196.

Chronicle, and attracted a number of rejoinders to the extent that *The London Magazine* carried extracts from the replies every month from November to the following March.[40] In just three months the *Considerations* sold 5750 copies in five editions leading Horace Walpole to claim that this shrewdly-written work had "more operation in working a change on the minds of men than perhaps ever fell to the lot of a pamphlet."[41] It may have said nothing new on the subject but it lent an original cogency to the well-established arguments which refelected the rising anxieties of many who were increasingly burdened by the taxes which financed the war. It certainly influenced parliamentary debates for in December 1760 Sir Francis Dashwood Bt., an influential independent member of the House of Commons, used passages of it verbatim in opposing Pitt's policy of continuing to subsidize Prussia and during the parliamentary session of 1762 various lords, including the Duke of Bedford, also used its language to support a motion for the immediate recall of British troops serving in Europe.[42] Indeed, its success led William Pitt to complain that a "certain little book that was found somewhere or other, has made a great many orators in this House" and Mauduit would later claim with some justification in December 1762 that "twenty times I heard myself speaking through other men's mouths in the House of Commons."[43]

The *Considerations* may have eventually gained Mauduit a sinecure in the customs at Southampton, but its achievements were far greater than this for its popularity, like many of the other leading pamphlets of the decade, performed multiple functions. Its rhetoric attracted high level support and proved an interpretation, or a line of reasoning, politicians could use in discussing government policy but it also contributed to the political education of the pamphlet's extensive readership, thus enabling those outside of Parliament to become better informed about the dynamics of government policy. In short, Mauduit had "played a small part in the widening, and thus changing the context, in which political decisions were

[40] Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 182-183. This pamphlet is discussed more fully in the second chapter of this study.
[41] Horace Walpole, *Memoirs of the Reign of George the Third*, 2: 33-34.
[42] Peters, *Pitt and Popularity*, 182. Also see, Karl W. Schweizer, "Israel Mauduit: Pamphleteering and Foreign Policy in the Age of the Elder Pitt," in *Hanoverian Britain and Empire: Essays in Memory of Philip Lawson*, ed. Stephen Taylor, Richard Connors and Clyve Jones, (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, 1998), 207.
[43] Ibid., 207.

made."[44] Mauduit later developed a career as a successful polemicist, lobbyist and placeman who played an important, if secondary role, in colonial affairs. Grenville later used his talents in 1763 to defend his first budget speech, a service for which Mauduit was rewarded with the crown agency of Newfoundland, Cape Breton and Nova Scotia, a sinecure worth £300 annually.[45] There may have been little in George Grenville's patrician background to suggest that he would become interested in either the activities of the press or become a colonial reformer but the temper of the times, together with what is known of his character, would lead him to take both paths.

George Grenville was born in Westminster on October 14, 1712, the second son of Richard Grenville of Wotton-Underwood, Buckinghamshire, and Hester Grenville, the daughter of Sir Richard Temple Bt. of Stowe, and the favourite sister of Sir Richard Temple, fourth baronet, later Viscount Cobham. The Grenvilles were a well-to-do family who had occasionally occupied county offices and whose main characteristic was a mania for buying and improving land. The 2,500 acre Grenville estate at Wotton produced revenue of approximately £4000 annually and it was not immediately apparent that Richard Grenville's marriage would greatly alter the settled pattern of his family life.[46] In 1718, however, Hester's brother was created a viscount and in a remainder to his new title the

---

[44] Ibid., 208. Also see Karl Wolfgang Schweizer, 'Mauduit, Israel (1708-1787)', *ODNB*.

[45] Michael G. Kammen, *A Rope of Sand: The Colonial Agents, British Politics and the American Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1968), 80-81.

[46] The finances of the Temple and Grenville families have been well-documented by John Beckett in, *The Rise and Fall of the Grenvilles: Dukes of Buckingham and Chandos, 1710-1921* (Manchester: University of Manchester Press, 1994). To cover the details of George Grenville's life and political career is beyond the scope of this study which is mainly concerned with the Grenvillites and the press. Two biographies have refocused attention on his entire career: Philip Lawson, *George Grenville: A Political Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984) and Allen S. Johnson, *A Prologue to Revolution: The Political Career of George Grenville (1712-1770)* (Lanham: University Press of America, 1997). The political careers the Grenville cousins has also been well covered in Lewis Wiggin, *The Faction of Cousins: A Political Account of the Grenvilles, 1733-1763* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1958) while the manuscript, printed primary, secondary sources to 1770 and the pamphlets associated with Grenville's career have been documented in Rory T. Cornish, *George Grenville, 1712-1770: A Bibliography* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1992).

childless Cobham arranged that his title would pass to his sister and her male heirs. His fortuitous marriage in 1715 to Anne Halsey, a brewing heiress whose settlement brought £20,000 into his estate, finally helped Cobham to bring order to his finances and later break the restrictive entail on Stowe itself. This allowed him to pass both his peerage and the estate solely on to Hester Grenville. In 1722 he also arranged that his brother-in-law be returned for the borough of Buckingham, a family pocket constituency whose thirteen electors had been controlled by the Temple family for over sixty-five years. The unified estates of Wotton and Stowe, together with the Temple peerage and its parliamentary interest, were inherited by Richard Grenville as second Earl Temple following his mother's death in 1752. By his own careful land and financial management, together with his own fortuitous marriage in 1737 to Anna Chambers, a granddaughter of the second Earl Berkeley who brought a further £50,000 into the Grenville family, Richard Grenville was able to increase his annual income to £21,000 which persuaded many that he was the richest man in England. As his only daughter died in infancy, Lord Temple's vast estate would eventually pass to George Grenville's eldest son.

During his own lifetime, however, Grenville remained a second son whose country residence, Wotton House, and his Buckingham parliamentary seat remained the property of his elder brother. Indeed, following the death of his father in 1727, it was the elder brother who managed the £3000 annuity left to Grenville and who later paid for Grenville's legal education while also carefully noting its cost alongside the annual £120 income his brother's annuity produced. Called to the bar in 1735, Grenville's main activity as a lawyer was to manage the legal business of the Temple estate, a service for which his brother paid him £80 semi-annually on Lady Day (March 15) and at Michaelmas (September 29). The two salient features dominated Grenville's early career; that he did not fully control his own destiny and thrift tended to influence his own personal attitude towards finance.[47] Few details regarding Grenville's early life remain known and it is unclear if it was even his decision to follow a legal career. It is also uncertain whether he was happy to leave the profession in 1741 when his uncle decided to bring him into the House of Commons to join the family parliamentary group known as the Cobham Cubs; a family group strengthened by William Pitt's marriage to Grenville's sister in November 1754. The marriage, a Pitt biographer has suggested, suited both parties for "the Grenvilles were immensely rich and Pitt was a great genius, and the coalition of wealth and genius is ever a

[47] Johnson, *A Prologue to Revolution*, 7-10, 74: Lawson, *George Grenville*, 3-4.

potent force. It is safe to say, that Richard and George (Grenville) were quick to see the advantages of the association…."[48] Nonetheless, it could not have been easy for Grenville, a man of strong opinions, to have had his own political interests subordinated to the wishes of a domineering, but less talented elder brother, and a more talented, if erratic and capricious, brother-in-law.

Three younger brothers joined Grenville and his Lyttelton cousins in the House of Commons; James Grenville was elected for Old Sarum in 1742, to be followed by Thomas Grenville who was elected for Bridport in 1744, and later by Henry Grenville who became the member for Bishop's Castle in 1759.[49] Grenville strengthened his own political base by marrying Elizabeth Wyndham in May 1747 for she was a daughter of the important Tory politician, Sir William Wyndham Bt., and a granddaughter of Charles Seymour, the immensely proud sixth Duke of Somerset. Elizabeth's grandfather disapproved of the marriage and consequently displayed his disapproval by leaving her only £100 per annum at his death in 1748. Elizabeth Grenville proved to be, however, a great personal asset to her husband as a staunch supporter in his career and their happy marriage produced four sons and five daughters. It also forged a political alliance with Elizabeth's two brothers; Charles Wyndham, Earl Egremont, and Percy Wyndham O'Brien, later Lord Thomond. Grenville may have appeared aloof and cold in public, but in his private family life at Wotton he proved to be a faithful husband and an affectionate father to his children.[50]

Three of Grenviile's sons were to follow him into the House of Commons. The eldest, George, later third Earl Temple and Marquis of Buckingham, was a lord lieutenant of Ireland and a foreign secretary; Thomas, the second son, was both a parliamentarian and diplomat, while the youngest son, William Wyndham Grenville, later Lord Grenville, became a speaker of the House of Commons, both a foreign and home secretary and also prime minster in 1806. Grenville's political dynasty has been favorably compared to that of William Pitt, and his family's activities likened to the persistent annals of the hive: they represented, Daniel O.

---

[48] Sir Tresham Lever Bt., *The House of Pitt: A Family Chronicle* (London: John Murray, 1947), 104.

[49] The careers of the Cobham Cubs are reviewed in, *The History of Parliament: the House of Commons, 1754-1790,* 3vols, ed. Sir Lewis Namier and John Brooke (London: Boydell and Brewer, 1964). These volumes are now online.

[50] Peter Jupp, *Lord Grenville, 1759-1834* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1985), 7.

Maddyn suggested in 1859, "more strongly than any other family some of the chief qualities which mark the highest kind of patrician ambition in our limited monarchy.[51] By the standards of the eighteenth-century English landed aristocracy, the Grenville's were an extraordinary family whose members remained close to the centre of British political power until the 1840's and, as John Beckett has reminded us, even William Pitt the Younger had a Grenville mother. Grenville also proved to be a loyal colleague to his friends and political supporters and if many historians have noted his stubborn inflexibility a political associate saw this as a virtue; Grenville, Edward Thurlow later recalled, could be "so damned obstinate that he would go to hell with you before he would desert you."[52]

For the first fifteen years of his career Grenville remained a loyal member of the family parliamentary group and was largely content to follow the political lead of his brother and William Pitt, even when their wishes conflicted with his own best interests. He quickly established a reputation for hard work and became a forceful speaker, if no orator; as Richard Glover recalled in 1743, "I met with Pitt, (George) Lyttelton, and George Grenville, who I believe will make the most useful and parliament man of the three, though not of equal eloquence with Pitt."[53] Grenville quickly gained preferment when Henry Pelham brought him into the administration as a lord of the Admiralty in December 1744, later advancing him to the Treasury Board in 1747. Grenville held his seat at the Treasury for nearly seven years but following Pelham's death in March 1754, the Duke of Newcastle, Pelham's elder brother and successor, appointed him as treasurer of the Royal Navy. Grenville and Newcastle disliked each other and although his new office may have increased his salary Grenville viewed it as a demotion. Pitt's attacks on Newcastle's foreign policy led Grenville to lose office in November 1755, only to be reappointed by the Duke of Devonshire. In April 1757, however, he resigned in support of Pitt and Lord Temple after they were removed from office, but when Pitt rejoined the administration in June, Grenville again

---

[51] Daniel O. Maddyn, *Chiefs of Parties, Past and Present: with Original Anecdotes*, 2vols. (London: Charles J. Skeet, 1859), 1: 100-101. The careers of Grenville's children have been more recently explored by James J. Sack, *The Grenvillites, 1801-29: Party Politics and Factionalism in the Age of Pitt and Liverpool* (London: University of Illinois Press, 1979).

[52] Cited in Knox, *Extra-Official State Papers*, 1: 125.

[53] Richard Glover, *Memoirs of a Celebrated Literary and Political Character. From the Resignation of Sir Robert Walpole in 1742, to the Establishment of Lord Chatham's Second Administration in 1757* (London: Murray, 1768), 16.