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The Politics of Henry Fielding: A Whig Journalist and Essayist

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The Politics of Henry Fielding:

A Whig Journalist and Essayist

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BY

Martha Ann Klestinski

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THE POLITICS OF HENRY FIELDING:

A WHIG JOURNALIST AND ESSAYIST

BY

MARTHA ANN KLESTINSKI

M. A. in Eng., Eastern Illinois University, 1972

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Charleston, Illinois

1972

The Politics of Henry Fielding:

A Whig Journalist and Essayist

Henry Fielding, an avowed whig, consistently professed political beliefs which had taken root in the soil of the Glorious Revolution, and all his political writings stem from the settlement of that revolution. The political writings subdivide distinctly into three periods corresponding to Fielding's attacks upon Sir Robert Walpole, his attacks upon the Jacobites, and his later and more general recommendations for improving English government. In the first period, Henry Fielding attacked Sir Robert Walpole through articles in Common Sense, the prefatory "Dedication to the Public" of The Historical Register for the Year 1736, his first newspaper The Champion (November, 1739-June, 1741), and political pamphlets later compiled in Miscellanies. When writing The Champion and the Miscellanies essays, Henry Fielding saw himself as a guardian of intellectual and moral standards in a world which seemed increasingly to ignore and distort those standards. In the second period, the threats of Roman Catholicism and tyranny introduced by the Pretender Charles Edward's return moved Fielding first to write articles in The Gentleman's Magazine and then to publish The True Patriot (November, 1745-June, 1746) and The Jacobite's Journal (December, 1747-November, 1748) as he smashed at the underpinnings of the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. In the third period of Fielding's journalism, he maintained a certain detachment from the heated political controversies of his past and recommended more general corrections to the English people. Only when the trial of

Bosavern Penlez sparked both Fielding's judicial and political interests did he move to support the stable government of the Pelhams by writing "A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez." Fielding's final journal, The Covent Garden Journal (January, 1752-November, 1752), likewise excluded politics in the narrow sense and aimed at broader and more sweeping corrections in the English political system than did Fielding's other journals. Closing the third period and his career with The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon shortly before his death, Fielding displayed a touching affection for England and a sincere concern for her future as a free and honest body politic.

The Revolution of 1688, the event which formed the foundations of Fielding's political beliefs, was intended to safeguard the religion and liberties of England--both of which Parliament felt had been endangered by a Stuart king. William and Mary then became joint sovereigns by social contract through an act of Parliament. John Locke provided the whigs with the necessary political thought: the sphere of government should be strictly limited and a man's belief his own concern. A Bill of Rights insured the individual's liberties; a Toleration Act afforded freedom of worship to all but remained silent on political disabilities of dissenters from the Church of England. A Mutiny Act secured for Parliament an annual meeting and control of the army. Parliament--not the King--for the first time guaranteed the national debt. These "Principles of '88" in addition to the Protestant Succession and the defeat of France were the basic tenets of the well-organized whig party to which Henry Fielding staunchly adhered.

Following this Bloodless Revolution, the ministers sought to increase their own power by reducing the king's executive authority and decreasing

his policy-making power.¹ In Queen Anne's reign, the whigs forced their way into the higher offices against the Queen's wishes. King George I's and King George II's disinterest in English domestic affairs enabled the ministers to claim greater and greater power, and in 1721, Sir Robert Walpole became the executive head of government and governed Britain unrivalled until 1741.

Walpole's policy aimed at "securing the Hanoverian succession, and at defeating Jacobitism."² Certainly Fielding could have had no complaints about that. Rather, his hatred of avarice and of overweening ambition, coupled with his regard for honesty and integrity in English government, largely accounted for Fielding's initial contempt and resultant harassment of Walpole, a fellow whig. Unable to overlook the devices by which Walpole ascended to power and the corruption which permeated his ministry, Fielding could not enjoy the twenty prosperous and stable years which Walpole's government provided. In an era when the prevailing political principle was self-interest, Sir Robert Walpole was in fact the grand wizard; Robert Walpole loved power and he loved the trappings of wealth. Having feathered his own nest while serving as Paymaster and Chancellor of the Exchequer, he exercised a vast patronage to sustain and extend his power. Walpole, selecting his friends carefully, always sought to exclude those who might rival his own supreme power.

As the number of excluded and discontented grew, the Opposition settled chiefly in London. In their midst was Henry Fielding--a leading London playwright shut out from the theatre by Walpole's Licensing Act of 1737. Yet even before this act's passage, Henry Fielding had commenced

¹ R. W. Harris, A Short History of Eighteenth Century England (New York: New American Library, 1963), pp. 72-73.

² Harris, p. 93.

journalistic attacks against Walpole's ministry through a weekly newspaper entitled Common Sense or The Englishman's Journal which was established by Fielding's friends Chesterfield and Lyttleton in February, 1737, as a supplement to The Craftsman.

In these letters to Common Sense, Fielding assumed the name of Pasquin, the title of Fielding's daring political satire which greatly contributed to Fielding's being barred from the stage. Pasquin's letter to Common Sense (May 21, 1737), written beyond a doubt by Fielding,³ replied to threats of censorship appearing in The Daily Gazetteer, Walpole's principal newspaper, by asserting that if the present ministry were innocent, it would be unaffected by ridicule: "For Ridicule, like Ward's pill, passes innocently through a sound Constitution; but when it meets with a Complication of foul Distempers in a gross corrupt Carcase, it is apt to give a terrible Shock, to work the poor Patient most immoderately; in the Course of which Working, it is ten to one but he bes--ts his Breaches."⁴ Pasquin denied having ridiculed ". . . Politicks, those Secrets of Government which . . . are improper to be beheld by vulgar Eyes, such as Secret Service, &c."⁵ on the stage since Pasquin could not have exposed what Pasquin himself had not found out. Furthermore, Pasquin denied having ridiculed patriotism, saying that he rather had endeavored ". . . to shew, that whoever gives up the Interest of his Country, in Fact gives up his own."⁶ Pasquin's letter began the four-year journalistic barrage of

³ Wilbur L. Cross, The History of Henry Fielding (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), I, 221.

⁴ Henry Fielding, The Criticism of Henry Fielding, ed. Ioan Williams (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1970), p. 26.

⁵ Fielding, Criticism, p. 24.

⁶ Fielding, Criticism, p. 25.

Fielding's bitter allegory, analogy and irony attacking the Walpole ministry. Pasquin's letter in fact introduced the essay containing Fielding's more virulent attack against Walpole. Pasquin informed the scribblers on the Gazeteer: "The Historical Register and Eurydice Hiss'd, being now publish'd shall answer for themselves what you are pleased to say concerning them."⁷

In the "Dedication to the Public" of The Historical Register for the Year 1736 and Eurydice Hiss'd, published in May, 1737, the readiness of the writers of The Daily Gazeteer to identify their patron with the devil called a story to Pasquin's mind. This "impertinent story"⁸ presents "Bob" Walpole as a short-sighted ass who believes his companion's exclamation, "Bob! Bob! Look yonder! Some impudent rascal has hung out your picture on a signpost."⁹ In the story, a bystander clears up the confusion by informing B b that "the sign hung out is the sign of an ass, nor will your picture be here unless you draw it yourself."¹⁰ Quidam, a surly character of The Historical Register for the Year 1736, the devil, and Robert Walpole are all synonymous in the dedication. In the dedication, the author explains, "I am aware that I shall be asked who is this 'Quidam' that turns patriots into ridicule and bribes them out of their honesty? Who but the Devil could act such a part? . . . Indeed it is so plain who is meant by this 'Quidam' that he who maketh any wrong application thereof might as well mistake the name of Thomas for John or Old Nick for Old Bob."¹¹

⁷ Fielding, Criticism, p. 25.

⁸ Henry Fielding, The Historical Register for the Year 1736 and Eurydice Hiss'd, ed. William W. Appleton (Lincoln: Univ. of Nebraska Press, 1963), p. 7.

⁹ Fielding, Historical Register, p. 7.

¹⁰ Fielding, Historical Register, p. 7.

¹¹ Fielding, Historical Register, p. 8

The dedication also announced Fielding's intention to answer attacks from The Daily Gazetteer by publishing a paper ". . . in defense of the ~~say~~ against the wicked, malicious and sly insinuations conveyed in the said paper."¹² Two and a half years later, The British Champion or The Impartial Advertiser (November, 1739-June, 1741), Fielding's first newspaper fulfilled this intention. Barred from the post office, The Champion was forced to pass into the country by stage. As The Champion reported, book-sellers and other newspaper publishers acted to keep The Champion from being accessible to the public. Paid hawkers even affirmed upon any inquiry about The Champion that the paper had never actually existed. Nevertheless, The Champion eventually prospered and provided Fielding with further opportunities to expose and ridicule the prime minister.

Fielding assumed the military pen-name of Captain Hercules Vinegar of Hockley-in-the-Hole, a cudgel player who intended to smash every vice and protect the innocent with his club. Such a preposterous name, a trademark of Fielding personae, heightened the distance between reader and author--a distance Fielding preferred to maintain in his journalism and political writings. Captain Vinegar presided alone over his Court of Judicature and brought before the law those who heretofore had apparently lived above it.

Fielding no longer called Sir Robert Walpole by name; but replying on a most subtle approach as was customary of Fielding, The Champion implemented allegory and analogy to expose and harass "Old Bob." In an ironic comment on the uselessness of a Classical background (December 25, 1739), Fielding alluded to Walpole as a quack of eminent success who had

¹² Fielding, Historical Register, p. 9.

"pilled the nation in a very extraordinary manner, without any assistance from either Latin or Greek."¹³ Fielding repeatedly ridiculed the many who actually believed that Walpole was a "great" man. The following analogy (April 22, 1740) identified Walpole with Caligula: ". . . it is probable not a few of the more ignorant Romans . . . looked on Caligula as a real conqueror; a circumstance, which, if we consider the several tricks played since by ministers and statesmen, will not appear so strange or incredible."¹⁴ Influenced by the dialogues of Lucian, Fielding envisioned a very fat gentleman, the arch briber Walpole, boarding Charon's boat at the River Styx (May 24, 1740). In the analogy, Charon informs the passengers of the necessity of leaving absolutely everything behind them. Although in the dream the fat gentleman's titles and dignities fall with great ease, a bank bill is found enclosed in his fist when Mercury searches his hands, "the present seat of politics."¹⁵ The fat gentleman begs very hard to keep the bill since he intends to bribe the devil. The author then dreams that the fat man is bid to "put off his generosity,"¹⁶ but when Mercury takes away his fear, "his generosity immediately burst with a vast crack, and dissipated itself into the air, leaving a great stink behind."¹⁷ Fielding devoted entire articles of The Champion to such clever allegories against Sir Robert Walpole. For example, Mr. Van der Bruin's letter to the editor (April 1, 1740) informs the citizenry that he has several bears

¹³ Henry Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," in The Complete works of Henry Fielding, ed. William Ernest Henley (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1967), XV, 120.

¹⁴ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 289.

¹⁵ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 320.

¹⁶ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 320.

¹⁷ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 320.

baited at his Majesty's Beargarden in Hockley-in-the-Hole. In the letter, Van der Bruin writes that his largest bear, though often pinned down by a mastiff, defends itself marvelously well. The letter announces that the old bear will show sport one more season and is prepared to defend itself to the last, as the mastiffs have repeatedly experienced:

"[He] lets them know at their own cost,
That he intends to keep his post."¹⁸

What else could this allegory be but an allusion to Walpole's tenacity of power, to the increasing power of the Opposition, and to Walpole tottering to his fall? The ingenious story of Cardinal Wolsey (May 8, 1740) afforded a well-camouflaged but daring attack on the prime minister. According to Captain Hercules Vinegar, the first politicians framed their governmental schemes on a mechanic's theory of a machine, which "by a subordination of an infinite number of wheels, a child might move the whole globe."¹⁹ Captain Vinegar wrote that any politician would gladly demonstrate this machine to the public if only the public would find a place for him to stand while he performs the experiment. In the story, Cardinal Wolsey represents one such politician who had found a place to stand: "Having been advanced by "a conflux of fortunate accidents"²⁰ above his sovereign, the Cardinal sells his master and country for the pay of half the princes of Europe and presently stands on the backs of the English people who fear his standing army and the fools who serve him. Another effective anti-Walpole allegory proceeded from Philalethes' letter to the editor (January 10, 1739-40)

¹⁸ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 268.

¹⁹ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 301.

²⁰ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 302.

accusing the editor, sole judge of his Court of Judicature, of the same vices Walpole exhibits. Thus indirectly Henry Fielding asked Robert Walpole, "Have you really had the modesty to set up your family as men of genius, and to dispose such parts of your undertaking to their province as require great abilities?"²¹ "Would it not have been wiser in you . . . to have disposed the several parts of your undertaking to men of suitable qualifications?"²²

Etymological studies harbored insults for Walpole. The study of the derivation of "trunk" (May 31, 1740) concluded that any minister who might convey himself to the guts of the trunk, the middle part of the body, might speak what he pleases to petitioners who believe that the king himself speaks so. Thus Captain Vinegar illustrated how a minister gains authority and asserts his opinion in place of the king's opinion. The disquisition of "Robert" (June 7, 1740) uncovered Robert's sauce, a product of repugnant ingredients; Bobtail, a profligate mob; and Robin Hood, the head of a gang of thieves. Captain Vinegar did not venture to determine whether "robbery" came from "Robin" or "Robin" from "robbery."²³

Although the general populace itself condoned corruption in this era of extremely low morals, to Fielding Sir Robert Walpole represented the seat of all corruption. Boroughs continued to send constituencies to Parliament even after they had virtually ceased to exist: Sarum had become a sheep walk and the greater part of Droitwich had become an abandoned salt pit. Buying such a "rotten borough" provided the cheapest and

²¹ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 148.

²² Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 148.

²³ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 329.

easiest way into Parliament.

Captain Hercules Vinegar blasted such an unprincipled atmosphere so influenced by the power of money in his Swift-like voyage among the Ptfighsiumski (March 20, 1739-40). The Ptfighsiumski attributed all honor and respect to "Mney" and valued those most "who (to use their country's idiom) have most Mney."²⁴ When in the story Captain Vinegar expresses surprise at seeing the great adoration the Ptfighsiumski show to some obviously inferior person, the Ptfighsiumski or the Inconstants answer, "Ah! sir . . . such a one hath a great deal of Mney."²⁵ The Champion (December 18, 1739) seriously called upon the people of London to refuse a bribe while electing the House of Commons, the security of their liberties. In the article, Fielding warns that corruption, once admitted, will "rush downwards like a torrent, and overwhelm the nation."²⁶

Mocking the corrupt English magistrate election, Fielding hilariously presented the two standards for electing Ptfighsiumskian magistrates: weight and measure. No man could be elected until he was of such an exact weight in his country "for which reason, they [the Ptfighsiumski] have two phrases to express their highest opinion of their countrymen, viz: 'He fills his post with great ability,' or, 'He is a man of great weight in his country.'"²⁷ Henry Fielding's admiration for Jonathan Swift is nowhere more evident than in this voyage.

Many whimsical articles regarding the art of politics recalled

²⁴ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 251.

²⁵ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 251.

²⁶ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 109.

²⁷ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 249.

Fielding's talent for laughing his contemporaries out of their follies. In one of his many articles on politics (February 14, 1739-40), Captain Vinegar dates the origin of politics on the same day as the building of Babel because attempting to build a tower up to heaven bears such an exact resemblance to most political schemes. The art of politics, Captain Vinegar's article pointed out, is not unlike the art of fishing, and the politician may properly be called a fisher of men (December 15, 1739). Captain Vinegar proceeded to name the several kinds of fish which a politician should angle for and the baits by which different species of fish are taken in.

The Champion berated the vice of favoritism. Fielding exposed the propensity of men in power to provide for their relatives by bestowing on them places of profit or trust for which their birth, education and capacity rendered them eminently unfit (February 19, 1739-40). Captain Vinegar reported that a reputation about town was the prize of the undeserving (March 4, 1739-40). Roman life everywhere abounded with instances of this observation: in eighteenth century England, nothing was commoner than to hear men extolled for virtues and perfections which they were utterly devoid of, Captain Vinegar recorded.

Henry Fielding mistrusted the use of lengthy circuitous logic, a faculty very much in fashion with Walpole and writers of The Daily Gazetteer. Sir Robert Walpole, a great parliamentarian always ready to give the cool overly reasoned point of view, no doubt galled Fielding on many occasions. In The Champion Fielding ironically salutes "these excellent reasoners, the authors of The Daily Gazetteer,"²⁸ and acknowledges Walpole's

²⁸ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 139.

particular phrases "for which some people imagine to have a meaning . . . such are, upon my honour, believe me, depend on me, I'll certainly serve you another time, this is promised, I wish you had spoken sooner; and some hundred other of this kind, very frequent in the mouths of the said great men."²⁹ To Fielding, however, these phrases conveyed no more idea to others than the unintelligible grunts which beasts utter. In the place of such misrepresented reason which puzzled and darkened the truth rather than explained or enlightened it, Fielding supported the argument of brute force, the "argumentum baculinum". The author noted that Alexander and Nero more effectively had silenced their antagonists than Aristotle and Seneca. The young men already preferred being educated in the amphitheatre where the "argumentum baculinum" reigned rather than in the universities where men were taught to defend whimsical philosophies but not their own person and purse. Furthermore, the "argumentum baculinum" proved self-sufficient and rendered needless the "argumentum pecuniarum," which sometimes must be called to assist reason. Writing with the people of the universe in mind, he concluded that he would rather see the people "well threshed, than gulled, or tricked, and cheated, and laughed out of their liberties."³⁰

The myriad of charges, insults and slanders of The Champion did not pass unnoticed by the Walpole ministry. In fact The Champion's complaints encompassing the total policy of Walpole, domestic and foreign, could have initiated nothing less than an open paper war to the bitter end. The post office distributed The Daily Gazeteer, the principal vehicle of Walpole's

²⁹ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion." p. 161.

³⁰ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion." p. 141.

policy, to all parts of the country "gratis" to refute The Champion. The paper engaged writers such as Theophilus Cibber and Thomas Pitt, "a master of vituperation"³¹ and former ally of the Opposition, in answering Fielding's charges with the same kind of abuse.³² For its hired scribblers, the government doled out 50,000 pounds from Walpole's Secret Service money. Opinions differed as to the victor, if any, of this two-year paper war which ended in 1741.

While many attacks against Walpole's ministry were facetious and without consistency, a genuine controversy over policy, especially foreign policy, confronted the prime minister. In 1738, the fabulous wealth of the Spanish empire in America became too great a temptation for the British sailors well aware of the enfeebled Spanish state. Hundreds of miles of coastline were left virtually undefended from the British smugglers who took full advantage of the situation. To put down smuggling, Spain appointed "Garda-Costas." But as the crews of these war ships were unpaid and lived off the ships they seized, the "Garda-Costas" seized every foreign ship whether it was smuggling or not. Early in 1739, a Captain Jenkins, returning with his ears in a box, spread rumors of Spanish terrorism and became a hero of London merchants. The Anglo-Spanish colonial conflict grew from the Spanish grievances against British smuggling and the British grievances against the illegal seizures and cruelties of the "Garda-Costas." War enthusiasts, especially strong in London and port cities, eventually pressured the Walpole ministry into declaring war in October, 1739.³³

³¹ Cross, I, 267.

³² Cross, I, 267.

³³ Harris, pp. 120-22.

The Champion attacked Walpole's foreign policy from two contradictory angles. When Walpole sought to avoid European commitments by working in harmony with France and pursuing peace with Spain, Henry Fielding harangued the prime minister's subservience to France, his neglect of British prestige and commercial interests in America, and his stagnation of trade in England. Yet, when Walpole increased the scanty armed forces in order to pursue a major land engagement, The Champion denounced the buildup as an attempt to maintain a standing army and alarmed its readers to the rising tyranny of Walpole's growing military state.

Henry Fielding forthrightly informed Walpole that no one had ever bungled foreign affairs so wretchedly (January 10, 1739-40), that foreign matters were jumbled "together into such a confusion that, not one of us know what to rely on."³⁴ Fielding further wrote that ". . . the whole town complain of your [Walpole's] extreme ignorance, and are so far from believing you to have any private correspondence abroad, as you have insinuated, that they rather believe you are unacquainted with even the geography of the several countries."³⁵ A correspondent urged Captain Vinegar not to be silent on politics at this season (February 14, 1739-40) ". . . when poverty like a deluge seems breaking in on the whole nation, when trade is almost at a stand, and our manufactures at an end; when the poor are a greater burthen than the land tax was last year on our estates, and yet are but scantily provided for . . . when a prodigious debt, a useless army, an immense fleet, and dreadful taxes to support them, when a dilatory war, formidable enemies, and suspicious allies hover

³⁴ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 149.

³⁵ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 148.

over us."³⁶ In his reply to the correspondent, Captain Vinegar declined commenting on politics because he had great regard for keeping his own ears intact and saw no reason to write on politics at a time when matters were obviously settled and concluded. Besides, Captain Vinegar further explained that the vast number of heads employed in that excellent political newspaper, The Daily Gazetteer, left no room or occasion for any other writer. Since Captain Vinegar claimed to know nothing of the matter, he admonished correspondents not to solicit him to solve political quandaries such as, "What is the intention of keeping up so large land-forces? What is the design of our encampments? When and where our marines are going? In what ships? Where are the ships which are to bring our invaders over? How long we shall maintain all these forces by sea and land? What shall we do with them? How we shall pay them?"³⁷ Similarly, Captain Vinegar desired the citizens not to trouble him with letters concerning trade, "viz . . what will become of the customs when we have no trade? How will that branch of the revenue be supplied? How shall we breed our sailors for the future without trade? How shall we keep the dominions of the seas without sailors? Will not those sailors, who cannot find employment at home, seek it elsewhere? Will trade, if once turned out of our channel, be easily brought back? Is it not to trade that we owed the figure which we have supported in Europe? Our affluence at home? The provision for a great part of our people? How will we provide for them without it? Is not this declined? Why is it declined? Is it recoverable?"³⁸

³⁶ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 198.

³⁷ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 201.

³⁸ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 202.

To all these inquiries, Captain Vinegar repeatedly answers, "I cannot tell," and declares himself far from even guessing "what we are about, what we intend to do, or what we shall be able to do."³⁹ Thus Henry Fielding subjected every possible facet of Walpole's policy, foreign and domestic to doubt and suspicion so that the reader's mistrust in Walpole was instilled, whatever Walpole's course of action.

Henry Fielding favored the traditional whig foreign policy pursuing a full engagement in continental affairs. Impatient for action, he found incomprehensible the pitifully slow conduct of the war which had begun at the unanimous request of the whole people to vindicate their usurped rights and revenge the enemy's most inhuman and insolent behavior. Taunting Walpole's failure to carry on the war vigorously while The Daily Gazetteer's writers scribbled profusely about war encounters, Fielding wrote that the journal of a war proved meagre sustenance for an impoverished people who gave their last shilling to raise a strong army and fit out a fleet, for a legislature who resolved to support an actual war vigorously and for his Majesty who implored the divine blessing on the British arms in the Anglo-Spanish conflict by setting aside a day of solemn fast. In an article of The Champion (January 8, 1739-40), Fielding again instructed the people how to execute their duty properly in this season and requested a certain person (Walpole), who ought to be hanged, to volunteer for sacrifice—one that, Fielding promised, would certainly procure all imaginable success to British arms, and enable Britain again to walk forth terrible among nations.

The political pamphlet, "The First Olynthiac of Demosthenes," which

³⁹ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 202.

also appeared in a series of articles in The Champion (March, 1739-40), described the 1739-40 political conditions between England and France. This allegorical tale of Demothenes, inspiring the people of Olynthus, a city of Thrace, to revolt against the treacherous Philip in order to wage war effectively against the Athenians, illustrated the British fear that France would take advantage of the Anglo-Spanish conflict and invade England, and the whig desire to pursue the war vigorously onto the continent. In the allegory, King Phillip represents the King of France; Demothenes, the whig Opposition favorite, William Pitt; Olynthus, the city of London; the Athenians, the Spanish people. In an effort to arouse the Olynthians to unite and expel the war from their borders, Demothenes's speech admonishes, "You must resolve to raise supplies with the utmost alacrity; to muster yourselves; to omit nothing; for no longer can a reason be assigned, or excuse alleged, why you should decline what the present exigency requires . . . how pernicious it is to neglect the least article of what ought to be done; . . . Good gods! is there any of you so infatuated, that he can be ignorant that the war will come home to us, if we neglect it?"⁴⁰

The strained foreign conditions touched the nerve endings of the basic fears of the English people -- tyranny, Catholicism, loss of sea power and trading colonies -- and, therefore, proved strong enough to pull Sir Robert Walpole down. A movement against him in the House of Commons forced Walpole's resignation early in 1741. Unable to maintain in war the power which he had attained in peace, Walpole fell; the excellent

⁴⁰ Fielding, "The First Olynthias of Demothenes," in The Complete Works, XVI, 68-71.

peacetime minister simply did not prove a successful wartime minister.⁴¹

True to The Champion's purpose, Captain Vinegar not only criticized Walpole and corrected English vices but also protected the innocent, who usually turned out to be members of the Opposition. Undoubtedly behind the undertaking of The Champion stood Fielding's friends in Parliament, paying Fielding well for his efforts.⁴² The Champion highly praised the honesty and integrity of George Bubb Dodington, Duke of Richmond, Argyle of Chesterfield, "learned Lyttelton" and Carteret, and the patriotic writings of Addison, Steele and Swift.⁴³ A fictitious bookseller of The Champion suggested that Bolingbroke, who recently had returned to England as a member of the Opposition, be named as author of The Champion instead of Captain Vinegar.⁴⁴ Praise of Bolingbroke and the Duke of Marlborough warmed many pages of The Champion.

The Champion did more than report symptoms and effects of the age's indifference to honesty, probity and decency, and encompassed more than a regular newspaper because of its moral outlook. Fielding assumed that man in society must be raised individually before society as a whole can improve, and his journalism resulted from the conviction that "whatever is wicked, hateful, absurd, or ridiculous, must be exposed and punished before this nation is brought to that height of purity and good manners to which I wish to see it exalted."⁴⁵ In The Champion Fielding

⁴¹ Harris, p. 99.

⁴² Cross, I, 250-51

⁴³ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 136.

⁴⁴ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 226.

⁴⁵ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 113.

set down his formula of human nature and encouraged his countrymen to bring about this improvement. Humane Henry Fielding never looked upon human nature as a "mere sink of iniquity."⁴⁶

For him human nature, whether good or evil, was decided individually on the battleground of each person's mind. Each man struggled against his own army of obstinate passions which stole imperceptibly into the mind and seldom declared themselves until certain of victory. Fielding's theory emphasized that man must force his reason to reign and must subdue his passions with labor and resolution to win a virtuous crown (February 2, 1739-40).⁴⁷ Hence, vice resulted from ungoverned passions. Excessive ambition and avarice, the same vices Fielding doggedly attributed to Walpole, tended most to corrupt man and nation. Ungoverned ambition, such as Walpole's, which consisted of nothing more than a desire of fame and esteem in the minds of men, was the chief motive of all great villainy.⁴⁸ On the other hand, reined ambition coupled with virtue raised men, such as Dodington, Marlborough, Lyttelton and Carteret to the highest dignities in state, in the army and in the law. Acquired by virtue, preferment granted security of mind, safety and honor while place without virtue was always uncertain and generally sure to end in ruin and dishonor. Thus Henry Fielding urgently explained to his readers that vice cheats with the appearance of good while virtue grants a genuine delight in doing good (January 24 1739-40).⁴⁹ These articles discussing human nature and charity

⁴⁶ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 94.

⁴⁷ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," pp. 177-81.

⁴⁸ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 238.

⁴⁹ Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," pp. 167-68.

eclipsed all other Fielding entries in offering instructions to the individual in an effort to upgrade English public life and government. The Champion ceased publication in June, 1741, when Sir Robert Walpole, the personification of all villainy and ungoverned passion to Fielding, lost control of the English government.

During these years of The Champion (1739-41), Fielding published additional pamphlets also attacking Walpole's corrupt politics and defending the virtuous citizens. One of these pamphlets "Opposition, A Vision," published in December, 1741, relied on common Fielding devices of an allegorical tale and a dream. In the pamphlet, the dreamer unfolds his vision of the previous night. The narrator, while walking in the highway, meets his political enemy (Walpole's ministry), a heavy-laden wagon drawn by ill-matched asses. The wagon is full of passengers, seated back to back with no two of them looking the same way. When the wagon sticks in the mud of the abominable ways which the wagon is obliged to pass, the driver whips the asses and throws out a trunk of grievances containing only a few newspapers entitled The Champion and the box of Public Spirit stocked with each passenger's private goods—ambition, avarice, malice and pride. All these measures to dislodge the wagon are fruitless; the wagon moves on only when the passengers themselves quit the wagon. The noise and horrid stench, caused by the angry passengers returning and turning the moving wagon, awaken the narrator and put an end to his dream.

The essay "Philosophical Transactions for the Year 1742-1743" satirized the powers of money, especially at election time. The matter of this jest was found in naturalist Abraham Trembley's advanced experiments in regeneration, which were indeed ridiculous to men like Swift and Fielding who knew little of science and cared nothing for it. Trembley had cut and split a fresh water polypus and found that each severed section regenerated

its missing part and grew into a whole and perfect polypus. When he turned a polypus inside out, the stomach turned into outside skin and the outside skin turned into stomach, and it thrived. Particularly interesting to this original scientist was the polypus's great adherescent quality: polyps attached themselves so closely to the hand that it was difficult to make them quit their hold.⁵⁰ All Trembley's findings were published in Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society. (November, 1742).

Fieldings burlesque, "Philosophical Transactions for the Year 1742-1743," paralleled Trembley's work with Swift's and Defoe's fascination for accuracy and detail. In the burlesque, Mynheer Petrus Gualterus, a tenacious miser, experiments with the terrestrial chrysipus or English guinea. Mynheer Gualterus intends to set down in his pamphlet only the English guinea's chief qualities. In the burlesque, Gualterus claims that all guineas cling to the hand with tenacity equal to the polypus, but when subdivided, guineas unlike the polypus had been reported to lose their adherescent quality. The English guinea differs from the polypus in that the English guinea becomes a prey to the insect rather than making the insect its prey. If the guinea's insect (man) makes any resistance (which seldom happened), the chrysipus or English guinea summons other chrysipti to its aid which seldom ever fail to subdue the insect (man) and to get into his purse. Fielding's burlesque includes the abilities of chrysipus or the English guinea: 1) A single guinea may make a man talk for an hour or remain silent—whatever the person who stuck it on desires. Likewise it would make a man deaf or blind. 2) It has the power of turning black into white, or white into black. 3) It is the strongest love potion

⁵⁰ Cross, I, 391-92.

and so excellent a medicine that doctors seldom visit a patient without a dose of it. The burlesque's postscript, ridiculing election bribes, announces that these animals swarm like locusts all over England once every seven years (election time) and like locusts too, cause much mischief and greatly ruin the country in which they swarm.⁵¹

Fielding's father had served under the Duke of Marlborough, and Fielding always regarded the Duke as one of the greatest military heroes. Recalling his hero and England's ingratitude for the Duke's glorious military victories, Henry Fielding naturally moved to defend Marlborough's widow when at eighty she was besieged for publishing in her memoirs an extended account of the quarrel with Queen Anne which had precipitated the Duchess's dismissal from court. Pamphlets, burlesques, and a book assailed the Duchess's politically controversial book and the Duchess's character. Fortified by patriotic ardor and a belief that the court was a soil wherein a plant of virtue, such as the Duchess of Marlborough, seldom grew to any great height,⁵² Fielding let fly A Full Vindication of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough, which analytically defended the Duchess's conduct and her memoirs.

The most startling charge of the pamphleteers against the Duchess, interpreted by Fielding, was no more than the repetition of the old false charge of conspiracy hurled against the Duke and Duchess of Marlborough without author or proof. Any such conspiracy was wholly a highly improbable plan of action for a man who had done and sacrificed so much that England's

⁵¹ Fielding, "Philosophical Transactions for the Year 1742-1743," in The Complete Works, XV, 67-74.

⁵² Fielding, "Articles in The Champion," p. 170.

religion and liberty might be preserved, Fielding retorted. Throughout this vindication, whig Fielding stood firmly on his belief in a limited crown bound by a social contract and nowhere else in his political journalism defended this belief more clearly: in defense of the people's right to elect a king, Fielding pointed out that William and Mary's reign was an "instance of the people's electing a King . . .; and if a precedent could establish a right, I think that right of election could never hereafter be called in question."⁵³

Fielding's political essays ("The First Olynthiac of Demosthenes," "The Opposition; A Vision," "Philosophical Transactions for the Year 1742-1743," and "A Full Vindication of the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough") with additional social essays were collected in a book appropriately entitled Miscellanies, which reached the public in April, 1743. One small book included in Miscellanies, A Journey from this World to the Next, reflected a few Fielding ideas on the right to rule. In the book, the narrator rides down to Hades in an English stagecoach for conversations with Greek and English heroes. In the book, the stagecoach stops to admire the wheel of fortune presided over by an ugly woman allotting occupations, and the travelers learn that Chance thus decides whether a man be king, cobbler or "a damned miserable poet."⁵⁴ In the Elysian Fields, Cromwell explains to the narrator that he was allowed into Elysium only after having suffered a second life as a cavalier of James the Second and after having felt acutely the misfortunes of that House he had so bitterly

⁵³ Fielding, "A Full Vindication of Her Grace the Duchess Dowager of Marlborough," in The Complete Works, IV, 17.

⁵⁴ Henry Fielding, A Journey from this World to the Next, in Miscellanies, Vol. VI of The Works of Henry Fielding (New York: Haskell House, 1890), 38.

attacked in his first life. Anna Bolyn gained entrance into Elysium since anyone who had suffered being a queen for four years and being sensible of the real misery which attended that exalted station during all that time ought to be forgiven whatever she had done to obtain it.⁵⁵

No political papers of Fielding followed this publication of the Miscellanies for two and a half years because of Fielding's increasing gout, the death of his wife, and his total dedication to law. Likewise the Opposition remained quiet. Although the new ministry initiated none of Fielding's war plans, such as pressing the war onto the continent, and the Anglo-Spanish conflict dragged on till 1750, and the Anglo-French conflict till 1763, the Opposition was content enough with being rid of Walpole. The new Broad-Bottom Administration of the Pelham brothers contained a sufficient number of the Opposition to make life peaceful and to gain support of London. The government of the Pelhams rested upon the skilled management of the Commons, the seat of Walpole's fall, support of the King, sound administration and especially a sound financial policy.

It was the Jacobite Rebellion of '45 that enlisted again the foremost whig journalist of the day to arouse the English people to defend their liberties and that thus initiated the second period of Fielding's political journalism. In 1745, Prince Charles Edward landed in Scotland with only seven servants, occupied Edinburgh, and then with 5,500 recruits set out for England. Although this Jacobite success was more apparent than real, the whigs were not slow to understand that a victory by the Stuarts would jeopardize the religious and political liberty of England. Fielding wrote

⁵⁵ Fielding, A Journey, in Miscellanies, VI, 54.

to obliterate the lethargy and apathy of English citizens, whom the whigs felt did not realise the grave danger. Henry Fielding first alarmed the citizenry through anonymous articles in The Gentleman's Magazine. "A Serious Address to the People of Great Britain" depicted the horrors of the Inquisition and French slavery in an effort to convince the people that the late rebellion must no longer be disregarded and ignored. Fielding, standing firmly on the Principles of '88, showed that cruel calamities were brought upon the country by James the Second, and he denounced both of the Stuart Pretenders. "A Calm Address to All Parties" in The Gentleman's Magazine emphasized the theory of social contract and freedom of individual conscience and logically enumerated in what ways the reign of the Pretender would prove disadvantageous to the civil interest and commerce of all Great Britain. A Pretender, if returned to the throne, must be granted his throne by indefeasible hereditary rights. Therefore, the anonymous author concluded that the subject would be only property and the King would disregard all liberties as things the citizens had no right to, as encroachments upon the King's rights. In gratitude to France and Spain, the Pretender would no doubt endanger trade and national defense by giving the King of Spain the important fortresses of Gibraltar and Mahon, and the King of France Cape Breton and lower wine tariffs. In the address, the author predicts that under these conditions the number of discontented citizens would increase and a revolt would no doubt result. Squelching such a revolt would require a large standing army to be supported by increased land taxes, and by the importation of French army divisions stationed permanently in Flanders. The address concluded that it would be impossible for the Pretender to be a good King for England: "We have nothing to expect from him but misery and ruin to ourselves and our

posterity."⁵⁶

The True Patriot, a vehicle written entirely by Fielding supporting the King and government, sought to insure that "every good and worthy Protestant in this nation, who is attached to his religion and liberties, or who hath any estate or property . . . is concerned, in the highest degree, to oppose the present rebellion."⁵⁷ When Prince Charles Edward commenced his triumphal march south on November 5, 1745, Henry Fielding began publishing this weekly newspaper. Fielding's friends in the ministry clearly encouraged the endeavor and made Fielding privy to trustworthy political news. Yet, as was characteristic of a Fielding newspaper, The True Patriot dealt very little in general news, political or otherwise. Even the war news from the North, as Wilber R. Cross has observed, was reshaped by Fielding himself.⁵⁸ Fielding called his news page the "Arocrypha" which consisted of paragraphs burlesquing the news of other papers.

As Prince Charles advanced nearer and nearer, however, Fielding's entries assumed a more serious tone; his visions and dreams presented horrifying scenes. For example, dreams of a London editor portrayed the brutal Highlander's savage invasion of London (November 19, 1745). The editor in one of a series of dreams sees his son's throat cut and then envisions him sprawling in his own blood; the editor imagines his daughter prostituted by a lusty ruffian and then sacrificed. His imaginary journal

⁵⁶ Fielding, "A Calm Address to all Parties," The Gentleman's Magazine, 15 (Oct. 1745), 541.

⁵⁷ Fielding, "The True Patriot," in The Complete Works, XIV, 18.

⁵⁸ Cross, II, 541.

following the aftermath of this massacre reads (January 7, 1746):

"January 4, 5, 6. The cash, transfer-books, &c., removed to the Tower, from the Bank, South Sea and Indian houses, which ('tis reported) are to be turned into convents

March 1. The French ambassador is made a duke

March 2. Seven more heretics burnt."⁵⁹

Popish priests and Highlanders could be the only gainers in the rebellion, Fielding insisted. The Protestant Jacobites, those who professed the Protestant religion while they wished well to the design of a Popish Pretender, and the Free-Thinkers, those who regarded neither religion or liberty, would be also devoured by a "vast army of Highlanders and a larger number of as hungry priests."⁶⁰ The editor presumed that Protestant Jacobitism existed only because of ignorance. In an effort to educate, he summed up all arguments which had been used on the behalf of Jacobitism in order that an informed citizen might be able to recognize sophistry and combat it with common sense (Apr 1 15, 1746): "As to taxes, we must expect them, while the government is in such hands and the true King in banishment but how can that be a parliament which wants one part in three of its constituents; nay, and that the head? Is not the head superior to the body? And consequently, has not the king a better right to impose taxes than the lords and commons without a king."⁶¹ The

⁵⁹ Fielding, "The True Patriot," pp. 35-38.

⁶⁰ Fielding, "The True Patriot," p. 55.

⁶¹ Fielding, "The True Patriot," p. 57.

True Patriot enlightened the Free-Thinkers about the rigors of "Popery . . . one religion not inconsistent with free thinking, but indeed with any thinking at all"⁶² through rhetorical questions. For example, 1) How can a man too superior to worship the Creator of the Universe have adored a rabble of saints whom one would have justly been ashamed to have kept company with when alive? 2) ". . . how would a genius who cannot conform to the little acts of decency required by a Protestant church support the slavish impositions of auricular confession, penance, fasting, and all the tiresome forms and ceremonies enacted by the Church of Rome?"⁶³ In this manner, the article included all the faults Fielding found in the Roman Church because of its doctrinal excess, rigid discipline, and auricular confession which made men puppets to clerical ambition.

The Gentleman's Magazine reprinted many less rampant and more pragmatic articles of The True Patriot, such as "A Further Apology for Scotland" (December, 1745) and "A Letter to the Jacobites" (December, 1745). The letter asked Jacobites of all breeds why the Jacobites would attempt a rebellion at this time when the true king of England was so strong with 60,000 men.

In fact, the Highland army of a tentative 5,500 men could not have threatened even a weak king. Only the Pelham's initial unpreparedness allowed the Pretender to seize Edinburgh. The Act of Union with Scotland in 1707 had provided Scotland with great benefits which that nation was even more conscious of in 1745. From being a poor country in 1740, Scotland had made great strides toward industrialization and enjoyed a cultural

⁶² Fielding, "The True Patriot," p. 19.

⁶³ Fielding, "The True Patriot," p. 19.

renaissance; this progress a vast majority of Scots would not have gambled in 1745 by rebelling against their benefactor. The Pretender's Scots deserted on the march very quickly and only an additional 300 joined. In actuality, the revolt owed even the small success which it enjoyed to the continental war.⁶⁴

After the crisis, Fielding defended the government against criticism for allowing the Highland army to advance as far south as it did, for the prolonged English-French conflict, and for the slow trade. The True Patriot heaped praise on the Pelham's foreign and domestic policies. Yet compassionate Henry Fielding declined to defend the atrocities at Culloden, where the Duke of Cumberland finally shattered the Highland army and earned the title of "butcher" by hanging eighty men on the masts of English ships and cutting out their bowels with hot irons before they died.⁶⁵ (Because of his silence, the ministry overlooked Fielding for a preferment.) Nor did clear-sighted Henry Fielding support the severe Disarming Act forbidding kilts and other Highland dress, and abolishing clans, which were thought to have been the cause of the trouble. On the contrary, Fielding defended Scotland. In his opinion, the Highland army consisted only of "the bandetti," "a set of poor naked, hungry, disarmed slaves abiding there [a most desolate corner], with impunity, til . . . collected into a kind of army, or rather rabble."⁶⁶ "A Further Apology for Scotland" explicitly stated in The Gentleman's Magazine that the revolting army was composed of only ruffians, and perhaps one or two younger brothers, but no man of any name in Scotland (December, 1745). Fielding praised the

⁶⁴ Harris, pp. 104-05.

⁶⁵ Cross, II, 37.

⁶⁶ Fielding, "The True Patriot," p. 24.

Scot clansmen, clergy and Lowland commoners who deserted their homes and land rather than join with Prince Charles Edward; Fielding especially admired the Sympson of Glasgow and the Earl of Loudon.

The True Patriot, having outlived its cause, ceased publication in June, 1746. Since everyone was now a true patriot, the editor ironically noted, there was no reason for continuing a newspaper by that name.

The whig journalist remained silent until December, 1747, when at the behest of the Pelham brothers, he answered the adverse criticism of the Pelham ministry, which had been growing since the hideous executions at the Battle of Culloden. The ministry dissolved the antagonistic Parliament on June 18, 1747, and moved to sway the public to the ministry's point of view. For such a task Henry Fielding was needed more than ever to champion the government's policies and ridicule its critics.

Henry Fielding, writing in the character of Jacobite John Trott-Plaid Esq., resorted to weapons of sarcasm and bitter satire in The Jacobite's Journal, which first appeared on December 5, 1747. Since Jacobitism had become a fashion among the people who had no real interest either in the Stuarts or the Hanoverians, Fielding proclaimed himself a Jacobite in order that he might more effectively ridicule the country out of its folly. Fielding's third newspaper bore throughout the unmistakable mark of his hand; its format and style closely resembled The True Patriot. Both newspapers contained many paragraphs which were tainted with abusive language, which by its excess defeated its own purpose. At best, Fielding's work concerning Jacobitism must be looked upon as overstated and onesidedly colored, as newspaper articles generally were.

Fielding had already attempted to laugh the Protestant Jacobites and Free-Thinkers out of their fashionable folly of Jacobitism in The True Patriot. In The Jacobite's Journal, Fielding attacked more specifically

the rural folk and country squires (March 12, 1748): "Ignorance is the mother of Jacobitism. Hence the rural sportsman and fox-hunter will fall an easy pray; and the country will afford sufficient plenty of younger brothers whose eyes their good mothers have kept betimes from poring on Greek and Latin authors; those Greek and Latin authors which have been the bane of the Jacobite cause, and have inspired men with love of Athenian liberty and old Rome, and taught them to hate tyrants and arbitrary governments."⁶⁷ In addition, the cities could supply game from their large number of whores and rogues. John Trott-Flaid, Esq. instructed these groups in "De Arte Jacobitica" (March 12, 1748). The "black art of Jacobitism"⁶⁸ included the arts of lying, misrepresenting and sophistry. John Trott-Flaid recommended, too, a tear for the holy martyr's reign and silly words of virtue and honor which never fail to work wonders.

The whig party suspected the Roman Catholics of fanning the flames of discontent and dissatisfaction, and especially mistrusted priests and Jesuits, who were thought to impose upon the people by trying to make them believe that the Pretender was a Protestant from whom they had nothing to fear. The whigs believed that the priests undermined the state and won over simple minds by sophistry. An entertaining story, involving a government-employed husband, his wife and a visiting clergyman, dealt with such an infiltration (July 23, 1748). As soon as the clergyman from Oxford in the story turns the wife's head politically, the gradual decay of contentment begins. Although the family in the story owes its entire sustenance to a government post, the poor husband is compelled every day at table to

⁶⁷ Fielding, "The Jacobite's Journal," in The Complete Works, XIV, 63.

⁶⁸ Fielding, "The Jacobite's Journal," p. 61.

hear that government abused. At the government-employed husband's objection to this talk, the clergyman carefully explains, "That neither religion nor conscience required me [the husband] to refuse favours from the hands of those whom it was my duty to detest."⁶⁹ This story reaches its nadir when the husband loses his post because of his Jacobite intrigues and when his wife, saying, "Bad practices . . . were no proof of bad principles,"⁷⁰ turns to writing in the London Evening Post, the principal vehicle of the Opposition.

Henry Fielding never hesitated to hurl the name "Jacobite" against anyone who criticized the Pelham ministry. Applied generally, the charge meant that all antagonists of the whigs and any remnant of the old Tory party were but Jacobites in disguise. An unknown pamphleteer borrowed this device from Fielding and employed it to dupe the author of The Jacobite's Journal quite soundly. The anonymous pamphlet "An Apology For the Conduct of a late Celebrated Second-rate Minister" charged the late Thomas Winnington, a favorite politician in the court and Pay-Master General of the Forces, with Jacobitism. In the pamphlet, the charge generalizes to include most of the whig leaders and claims that these whig leaders presently awaited an opportunity to restore the Old Constitution, that was, the relation between King, Lords, and Commons which existed under the Stuarts. The sensational pamphlet indeed made a plausible case against the party leaders who had practiced expedient negotiations with the Jacobites.⁷¹

Henry Fielding had no special concern for the memory of Winnington.

⁶⁹ Fielding, "The Jacobite's Journal," p. 66

⁷⁰ Fielding, "The Jacobite's Journal," p. 69.

⁷¹ Cross, II, 74-75.

Fielding's pamphlet, "A Proper Answer to a Scurrilous Libel," answered the anonymous pamphlet's arraignment against the whig party's and the Church of England's activities since the Revolution of 1688, and the insinuation against certain members of the ministry. The meticulously planned pamphlet by Fielding asserted a permanent independence from the chains of Popery, France, and the House of Stuart since these forces' fortress of arbitrary power was "totally overturned by the Revolution; and to overturn it was the whole end and design of that revolution."⁷²

"A Proper Answer to a Scurrilous Libel" individually weighted charges of exaggerated concern for continental affairs, of increased debts, of the fondness for war, of the loss of civil liberties, of exorbitant foreign debts and obligations, and of coercive laws; the answer in the end pronounced them all falsehoods--certainly not the deeds of the most honest government" under which their religious as well as civil liberty is secured, and the Church of England flourishes in all its just and legal privileges."⁷³

A too carefully documented rebuttal was "A Proper Answer to a Scurrilous Libel"; the master of satire had swallowed his own bait.⁷⁴ Readers of Fielding's answer only wondered why the defense of Fielding's own party read so perfunctorily, so analytically if Fielding really believed in its principles, and his readers became more suspicious. Thus it was intimated that Henry Fielding might be a Jacobite at heart as much as his

⁷² Fielding, "A Proper Answer to a Scurrilous Libel," in The Complete Works, XV, 348.

⁷³ Fielding, "A Proper Answer," p. 362.

⁷⁴ Cross, II, 74.

political friends.⁷⁵

Henry Fielding endured much coarse wit of this kind as the popularity of The Jacobite's Journal declined and the journal ceased publication on November 5, 1749. In Fielding's opinion, he had done his best to stay the growth of Jacobitism during a crisis in the nation's history, though he had never hoped to eradicate political principles founded upon heredity and folly. Trott-Plaid's parting words (November 5, 1749), however, still warned the Jacobites that the Powers that be ". . . will most certainly continue to be, in defiance of all which the Courts of Rome or Hell can devise against them."⁷⁶

At last, Henry Fielding received his deserved reward for all his services to the whig party and the Hanoverian kings; his close friend Lyttelton obtained for him a place in the Commission of Peace for Westminster, a lucrative and honorable position, on July 30, 1748. No justice of the peace of this time proved as competent in or as dedicated to this office as did Henry Fielding. Whenever services demanded it, Fielding kept his court open all night. Only political circumstances which were relevant to his work as a justice could have aroused Fielding to write political papers again.

The circumstances surrounding a controversial case from the Riots of 1749 involved both these judicial and political interests, and initiated Fielding's entrance into his third period of political journalism. The Riots of 1749 were triggered when prostitutes robbed three sailors visiting

⁷⁵ Cross, II, 74-75.

⁷⁶ Cross, II, 92.

a brothel. The sailors returned the next evening to burn and pillage the house while spectators cheered them on or shared in the plunder. At the riot's height, the mob was apprehended against the wishes of the on-lookers. Fielding sent several ringleaders to Newgate to receive further sentence. One ringleader, Bosavern Penlez, was found guilty under an obsolete and forgotten Riot Act and sentenced to execution. Many citizens, considering Penlez only an innocent outsider drawn into the practical joke of pulling down a brothel, stirred up great turmoil against the verdict and its execution. This heated case even gained political importance when it threatened to defeat Lord Trethan, a government candidate for re-election, who had refused to grant clemency to Penlez.

Thus "drawn forth to do an act of justice,"⁷⁷ Fielding wrote a politically oriented legal pamphlet, entitled "A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez." In the essay, Fielding reminded the public that Penlez was indeed a malefactor to society and that the passage of the Riot Act was a principal step for the public welfare in 1739. English lawmakers would not have placed the strongest precautions against riots if such precautions were not badly needed to safeguard against so dangerous a political disease and one which so often had produced fatal effects, Fielding insisted. The essay then proceeded with documented riot accounts from which he drew five conclusions. The final conclusion defended the actions of the government in riot control: "To say the truth, the government is here injudiciously attacked in its most defensible part. If it be necessary, as some seem to think, to find fault with their superiors, our administration is more liable to the very opposite censure."⁷⁸

⁷⁷ Fielding, "A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez," in The Complete Works, XIII, 259.

⁷⁸ Fielding, "A True State," p. 285.

Fielding's final paper, The Covent Garden Journal, made its appearance on January 4, 1752, and was published every Tuesday and Saturday till November 24, 1752. Assuming the name of Sir Alexander Drawcansir, a fearless character in Buckingham's The Rehearsal who attacked not individuals but whole armies, Fielding similarly planned to discuss politics only in the broader sense or to take up questions of public interest with which political writers never bothered. The main motive of The Covent Garden Journal and the third period of his journalism was to reform the manners and morals of the age and to remedy the defects in administering justice to those Englishmen whom the pernicious influences of the age had perverted. Social and legal questions arising out of his office as justice of the peace continued to be uppermost in his mind in his third journalistic period. Previously he had spoken on these subjects through pamphlets; now he had a medium through which he could address the public twice a week if he so desired.

Among Fielding's severe critics, William Kendrick, a scurrilous pamphleteer, tried hard to make out that the new periodical was an organ of the Pelham ministry, but no harassment could have lured Fielding into the political arena again. He had no desire to fight over, as Kendrick urged him to, the political controversies of 1747-1748. Although the editor of The Covent Garden Journal facetiously entreated all ministers of State to send in their secret transactions and negotiations, and begged the Opposition to inform him occasionally of their private schemes and modus operandi, Fielding remained detached from politics.

Nevertheless, well-aware that the press gave publicity to ideas, Fielding urged anew all his ideas on the penal code while Parliament was in session and considering reformatory in the penal code. Several of Fielding's recommendations did in fact pass into statutes.

The Covent Garden Journal was doubtless the most charming of all his periodicals since Fielding was now a seasoned journalist and was free from external restraints of pressing national obligations and loyalties. Fielding pointed out ironic shortcomings of the English government with Swift-like travel observations on that most extraordinary system of politics, the government of the stage (February 22, 1752). In the editor's observations, this Theatrical State seems the compound of a monarchy, an aristocracy and a democracy, and undergoes numerous revolutions without disorder or interruption. In Garrick's Theatrical State, the title of King seems to be of no great repute; except for King Richard and King Lear, the most inconsequential person can fill the office. The Theatrical State is "the only State perhaps in which the talents of men are considered, and applied to what they are most fit for, and seemed directed by Nature."⁷⁹ These observations from the editor's travels among this extraordinarily famous people close with a wish that all Monarchs of Europe would govern as well as Mr. Garrick.

Fielding's annoyance at an arbitrary system of granting favors continued in The Covent Garden Journal. Sir Alexander Dracansir complained (April 28, 1752), ". . . all our Abilities will be thrown away, and all our Time and Labour lost, unless we have other Ingredients to recommend us. Unless we have some powerful Friend or Relation, or some beautiful Wife or Sister, we shall never procure an Opportunity of shewing the World what we are."⁸⁰ Irritating, too, was the powerful man who desired to avoid

⁷⁹ Henry Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, ed. G. B. Jensen (New York: Russell and Russell), I, 227.

⁸⁰ Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, I, 334.

the least suspicion of partiality (January 7, 1752). According to Fielding's article, these men commonly fill up ". . . all Vacancies with such Persons, that it would be in the highest Degree absurd to imagine they were the Objects of any Man's particular Liking or Favour."⁸¹

The Covent Garden Journal revealed a political attitude heretofore more obscure since Fielding was intensely earnest in his desire to see an improvement in the conditions which made the life of the poor such a hardship. Fielding was always eager to lend a helping hand to the work of improving existing conditions, and his intimate knowledge of the slums of eighteenth-century London could only have been acquired by constant visits to the localities in which life presented that tragic spectacle.⁸² Nevertheless, Henry Fielding was born to the aristocracy and never kindled any torches for democracy. To the three estates of the English constitution--the King, Lords, and Commons--Dr. Johnson introduced a fourth estate, the Mob (June 13, 1752). Though unassigned power in the constitution, the Mob has "so often exercised it, and so clearly asserted their Right to it by Forces of Arms; to wit, by Pistols, Staves, Knives, Clubs, Scythes, and other such offensive weapons."⁸³ The Mob "have from Time immemorial been used to judicial Capacity in certain Instances wherein the ordinary Courts have been deficient for Want of Evidence."⁸⁴ Among other privileges mentioned in the article, the Mob possesses exclusive right to the Thames and portions of the street set aside for foot passengers and is beginning

⁸¹ Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, I, 144.

⁸² H. K. Banerji, Henry Fielding (New York: Russell and Russell, 1964), p. 256.

⁸³ Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, II, 23-25.

⁸⁴ Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, II, 23.

to assert their right to the whole street, highways, and St. James Park (June 20, 1752). Drawcansir stated three causes contributing to the rise of the Mob to ". . . . that exorbitant degree of Power which they at present enjoy and which seems to threaten to shake the Balance of our Constitution."⁸⁵

1) The Act of Parliament granting the Mob a yearly payment if the Mob leaves the estates free from molestation; 2) Members of estates raising the power of the Mob in order to avail themselves to it and employ it against their enemies; 3) A mistaken idea of the word "Liberty."

The Covent Garden Journal ceased publication in November, 1752, but Henry Fielding during his last years continued his struggle against crime and misery through his work as a justice. This hard work that he had undertaken, particularly that of examining criminals who were apprehended, resulted in the complete breakdown in his health. When at last he retired to the country, he was a victim to many diseases and past recovery. Fielding, advised to find relief in a warmer climate, left for Lisbon in June, 1754. The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, a small book published in 1755 after his death and later compiled in editions of Miscellanies, told of this wearisome voyage. In spite of the gout and discomforts on board the "Queen of Portugal," the indomitable gallantry of Fielding's spirit surfaced as if his only care in the world was the prosperity of his country and the conduct of man as a social animal. The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon provided the proper definition of liberty, which Fielding had promised in The Covent Garden Journal.

Liberty, Fielding noticed, is "commonly understood to be the power of doing what we please and it is to pervade in an equal degree,

⁸⁵ Fielding, The Covent Garden Journal, II, 34.

and be with the same extent enjoyed by every member of society."⁸⁶ Yet Fielding insisted that no such polity had ever been found; that the only one who is possessed of absolute liberty is the lowest member of society; that "the lowest class of our people having shaken off all the shackles of their superiors . . . become not as free, but even freer, than most of their superiors."⁸⁷

Many sights on the voyage thrilled the elder Englishman. For example, Fielding noted in his journal, "It is true, perhaps, that there is more of ostentation than of real utility, in ships of this vast and unwieldy burthen, which are rarely capable of acting against an enemy; but if the building of such contributes to preserve, among other nations, the notion of the British superiority in naval affairs, the expense, though very great, is well incurred, and ostentation is laudable and truly patriotic."⁸⁸ Upon seeing ships of various size between Chatham and the Tower, Fielding wrote, ". . . the whole forms a most pleasing object to the eye, as well as highly warming to the heart of an Englishman, who has any degree of love for his country, or can recognize any effect of the patriot in his constitution Nor do I believe that in any country they visit (Holland itself not excepted) they can find a parallel to what daily passes on the river Thames."⁸⁹ Many pages of this journal, the most humane of all the documents Fielding left behind him, testified to his patriotism; many passages conveyed the equanimity of Fielding's noble spirit ". . . sufficiently

⁸⁶ Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, in The Complete Works, XVI, 239.

⁸⁷ Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage, p. 240.

⁸⁸ Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage, p. 209.

⁸⁹ Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage, pp. 210-13.

satisfied in having finished my life, as I have probably lost it, in the service of my country, from the best of motives, tho' it be attended with the worst of success."⁹⁰

In his journals and essays, Fielding considered it his function to bring the powers of judgment and intelligence to bear on human behavior. In his first newspaper, The Champion, which Fielding wrote from November, 1739 to June, 1741, he attacked the corruption of the Walpole government. Fielding's idea of political rectitude had been founded on the principles of the Glorious Revolution of 1688, and he revealed himself as a staunch supporter of the House of Hanover and of the Church of England in The Champion and essays of the Miscellanies.

Following two and a half years of silence, Fielding in the second period of his political journalism conducted The True Patriot from November, 1745, to June, 1746, in an effort to alarm the English at the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745. After the Jacobite Rebellion, Fielding defended the "Patriot" administration against the attacks of the Jacobites and malcontents in the columns of The Jacobite's Journal between December, 1747, and November, 1748.

In the third and final period of Fielding's political journalism, he excluded politics in the narrow sense and suggested broader recommendations for improving English government. Motivated by the political and judicial aspects of Bosavern Penlez's case, Fielding wrote "A True State of the Case of Bosavern Penlez" to calm a wave of riotous protest. The Covent Garden Journal, which Fielding kept up almost single-handed from

⁹⁰ Fielding, The Journal of a Voyage, pp. 263-64.

January to November, 1752, afforded a final opportunity to purify society and the whole political system weekly. A Journal of a Voyage to Lisbon, published posthumously in 1755, revealed the love and sincere regard Henry Fielding bore for England at his death.

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