



Radicalism and Popular Protest in Georgian Britain, c. 1714–1832

User Guide

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Radicalism and Popular Protest in Georgian Britain, c. 1714–1832

Comprising **over 90,000** images, this collection charts the development of radical political thought and popular protest in Britain during the Georgian period. The sources that it contains offer valuable insight into the organisation of popular political activity and the contested nature of power in Georgian Britain. They likewise shed light on the diverse individuals and movements that challenged political authority and demanded constitutional and electoral reform.

The collection contains digital archival material from The National Archives (UK) and the Working Class Movement Library in Salford (UK).

All of the sources in this collection have been tagged by our editorial team. We employ a range of standard tags across all of our collections—“**Archive Reference**”, “**Contributor**”, “**Country**”, “**Date Range**”, “**Material Type**”, “**Region**”, “**Script**”, “**Sub Theme**”, and “**Time Period**”. We also develop more specific tags that are tailored to the archival material that a collection contains, including “**Key Figure**” (such as Charles James Fox and Edmund Burke), “**Town/City**”, and “**Periodical**” in the case of *Radicalism and Popular Protest in Georgian Britain, c. 1714–1832*.

Tags underpin our website’s excellent search function, which is present on any of our collection landing pages.

Content from The National Archives (TNA)

This volume contains a curated selection of over 1,600 sources from The National Archives (UK).

A note on organisation: BOA archive references mirror the cataloguing references found in TNA’s catalogue, Discovery (<https://discovery.nationalarchives.gov.uk/>). For this collection, this means that while in some cases folio numbers are given for individual letters or documents (for example, SP 35/10/25: Letter from the Mayor of Tiverton and Several Others Regarding Riots, 1717), in other cases, the cataloguing does not include individual folio identifiers. Here, a number of documents will be included under one archive reference (for example, HO 40/8/1: Papers Relative to Disturbances in London, 1817).

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TNA material in this collection can very broadly be divided into legal records (concerned with seditious libel, acts against societies etc.), and correspondence relating to popular protest, such as rioting etc.

TNA sources are grouped into **different series**.

Legal records from the **King's Bench (KB)** are concerned with state trials, libel suits, and criminal actions brought by the government against printers, writers, and others accused of high treason. They can provide information on such matters as local government, crime and public disorder, and trade union disputes.

- **KB 8**—The official records of many of the most important “state trials”, mainly for treason, held between 1477 and 1813 (for example, KB 8/90: Papers and Depositions Related to William Greenhough and Others, 1811–1812).
- **KB 33**—Precedent material from the Crown Side of the Court of King's Bench, including libel suits and criminal actions brought against printers and societies by the government for sedition (for example, KB 33/6/2: Papers Relating to the Trial of the London Corresponding Society Members, 1793–1794).

Papers of the **Treasury Solicitor (TS)** relate to legal proceedings regarding sedition cases, including against radical periodicals and papers of various societies that were concerned with parliamentary reform in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

- **TS 11**—Papers relating to state trials, acts against the public peace (riots, disturbances, and sedition), and action against publishers for seditious libel. Events and figures covered include the Jacobite Rebellion of 1745–1746; the Yorkshire Riots of 1812; Jeremiah Brandreth and the Pentrich Rising of 1817; the Cato Street Conspiracy of 1820; William Comstive and the Yorkshire West Riding Revolt of 1820; and the Bristol Riots of 1831–1832.

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- **TS 24**—Papers of seditious libel cases for the period 1757–1833. These feature official correspondence, printed pamphlets, tracts, newspapers, and other material relating to prosecutions for seditious libel. Included are the papers of Thomas Paine, as well as the papers of various political societies that were formed around the UK during the 1790s and that were concerned about parliamentary reform, such as the London Corresponding Society. Many of the late-eighteenth-century papers are annotated by Edward Lanzun, the King’s Messenger responsible for their seizure.

T 1—Treasury Board papers and in-letters. Original correspondence of the Board with reports and draft minutes (for example, T 1/440/173-174: The Case of the Silk-Weavers and of the Silk-Manufactures, 1765).

PC 1—Miscellaneous papers of the Privy Council and Privy Council Office. Contains correspondence relating to criminal matters, including appeals for mercy. Also includes papers relating to turnpike riots, weavers’ riots, the Gordon Riots in 1780, and to the London Corresponding Society and other political societies.

PRO 61—A series of royal proclamations, 1789–1832, on riots, rioters, seditious libel, illegal unions, rationing, speeches, and other concerns.

Radicalism and Popular Protest in Georgian Britain, c. 1714–1832, also includes government correspondence and secret service reports from the **Home Office (HO)**, alongside domestic **State Papers (SP)** relating to popular protests, rioting, disturbances, and disorder around the UK. Among matters covered extensively are Luddism, agricultural distress, and the introduction of power looms and other industrial machinery. The files likewise cover distress resulting from the introduction of power looms and other industrial machinery as the period progressed. They include letters, pamphlets, posters, “inflammatory” publications and depositions, as well as reports relating to disturbances, parliamentary reform, public meetings, political activities and writings, etc.

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Featured Files from the SP Series

- **SP 35**—State Papers Domestic relating to reign of George I, 1714–1727.
- **SP 36**—State Papers Domestic relating to reign of George II, 1718–1760.
- **SP 37**—State Papers Domestic relating to reign of George III, 1760–1783.
- **SP 46**—State Papers Domestic: supplementary (artificial collections of letters, etc.).
- **SP 54**—Secretaries of State: State Papers Scotland Series II, 1688–1783.

Featured Files from the HO Series

HO 33—Correspondence to the Home Office from the Post Office, from around the UK, from 1784.

- **HO 40**—Home Office: disturbances correspondence, 1812–1832.
- **HO 42**—Home Office domestic correspondence of the reign of George III, 1782–1820.
- **HO 44**—Home Office domestic correspondence of the reigns of George IV (1820–1830) and William IV (1830–1837) with some copies and drafts of outgoing responses. Some papers are grouped according to subjects of particular contemporary importance, among them the Cato Street Conspiracy of 1820 (HO 44/5); the case of Caroline of Brunswick, Princess of Wales; and the disturbances which accompanied her funeral in 1821 (HO 44/2).
- **HO 52**—Home Office correspondence from around the counties of the UK, 1820–1840.
- **HO 64**—Home Office criminal correspondence and Secret Service Reports. Seditious publications at HO 64/17, HO 64/18, HO 64/19.

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Content from the Working Class Movement Library (WCML)

Radicalism and Popular Protest in Georgian Britain, c. 1714–1832, contains a curated selection of over 600 sources from the archive and library of the Working Class Movement Library in Salford. The WCML is an independent library and archive founded in the 1950s which cares for collections that cover 200 years of working class history.

The majority of the printed **library material** begins with a “D” reference. Library sources include the works of Richard Carlile, Henry Hunt, and Thomas Paine, as well as those produced by other radical writers and publishers. Library sources also feature bound volumes of political pamphlets, radical periodicals, reports of meetings, accounts of state trials, speeches and addresses, records of strikes, and material relating to the Peterloo massacre in 1819.

The majority of the **archive material** begins with an “AG” or “AF” reference. Archive sources include loose political pamphlets, political addresses, handbills, letters, satirical poems, and songs.

A collection of **satirical prints and cartoons** begin with the reference “FRAMED”. The series includes the work of James Gillray, George Cruikshank, and other influential artists.

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