

The Burke Newsletter

EDITORS

Peter J. Stanlis, Department of English, University of Detroit

C. P. Ives, *The Baltimore Sun*, Baltimore, Maryland

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James T. Boulton, Department of English, University of Nottingham, Nottingham, England

A General Announcement

This issue of the *Burke Newsletter* will be the last to be published in MODERN AGE. For almost two years Burkeans have enjoyed the privilege of appearing as a regular section of MODERN AGE. But necessary changes in editorial policy require that henceforth the *Burke Newsletter* will be published elsewhere. At a later date your editors will notify readers of the newsletter when and where publication will be resumed. To be certain of receiving this notice, readers of MODERN AGE who wish to subscribe to the *Burke Newsletter* should send their name and address to Peter J. Stanlis.

Burke's *Correspondence*, Volume Four

Dr. John A. Woods, editor of the fourth volume of Burke's *Correspondence*, has been working diligently all year in the Central Library, Sheffield, England, to bring order and light out of the mass of Burke manuscripts which will be included in this important volume. He has submitted the following account of his editorial discoveries.

The fourth volume of *The Correspondence of Edmund Burke* covers the period from July 1, 1778, to July 1, 1782, when Burke's political influence was at its height. Earlier he had been merely one of a group whose advice was sought by Lord Rockingham, and he was not always the most important member of the Rockingham Whigs. But in these four years Burke exercised the decisive influence on the mind of his patron. The volume ends with the tragedy of Rockingham's death within a few months of the formation of his second administration, when the fruit of the long years of intelligent opposition appeared to be within the grasp of his supporters.

Some 230 letters written by Burke will be printed in this volume. The selection of letters to him has not been finally made, but the policy of printing almost all the letters from Rockingham to Burke, with a full selection of those from other major political figures—Portland, Fox, Richmond and Baker—will be continued. This volume shows somewhat less of the variety of

Burke's intellectual interests than its predecessors, though it will contain the already well-known story of the assistance he gave to George Crabbe. There are few family letters, the chief exception being a number of letters to Juliana French at Loughrea. Burke remains as attentive as ever to the needs of the unfortunate, even when they do not really merit his assistance. A group of letters toward the closing months of 1781 relates his successful efforts to obtain the release of Henry Laurens, American Revolutionary statesman, from the Tower of London, in exchange for General Cornwallis. A smaller group reveals his vehement protection of the victims of Admiral Rodney's high-handed actions at St. Eustatius, which caused Burke to expound his convictions on international law in several speeches in the Commons.

For the first half of this volume Burke is Member of Parliament for Bristol. There is much correspondence with his constituents upon relatively minor matters arising from the American war, such as frequent requests for convoys, and a constant concern with the details of legislation which they wished him to modify or oppose. Most of this correspondence is unpublished. It is significant that no letters relating to the renewed attempt to abolish the restrictions on Irish trade survive. Apparently Burke's constituents regarded it as unprofitable to approach him, and he did not choose to elaborate the arguments which in April 1778 had failed to convince them. Although letters to and from Bristol frequently interrupt the flow of Burke's exposition of weightier matters, nevertheless, in conjunction with the similar correspondence in the third volume, they present an unusually complete example of the day-to-day work of an eighteenth-century member of Parliament in the service of his local interests.

Burke failed to retain his Bristol seat in September 1780. Most of his correspondence about the election, as also about the attempt of his friends to secure his nomination in the by-election of 1781, has not hitherto been published. These letters are almost the sole source for the details of his negotiations with his fellow constituent, Cruger. Despite indisputable evidence of the duplicity of Cruger and the damage he did to Burke's position at Bristol, and despite the local unpopularity of some of Burke's actions, the major reason for his defeat appears to have been the difficulty of securing the return of two Whig members. After his defeat Burke showed a

genuine wish to retire permanently from politics, and the Rockingham and Burke papers provide good evidence of the distress that such a wish caused even to those who disagreed with him. During his short period out of Parliament Burke turned with new vigor to Indian affairs. His unpublished correspondence about the cavalier treatment of the Maharatta agents is a striking example of his fusion of a public issue with his concern for the dignity and happiness of individuals.

The high point of Burke's political career was reached during the first six months of 1780, when he devoted all his astonishing energy to the cause of "economical reform." There is little fresh information in the Burke papers about the origin of his program, and his letters during the parliamentary battles are chiefly polite acknowledgements of letters of appreciation from county committees; but there is much new material on the relation of the Rockingham party with the extra-parliamentary reform movements. In 1779 the party was patiently waiting for some new movement of public opinion upon which to base its attack on Lord North's government. This new movement began with the Yorkshire Meeting convened by Christopher Wyvil. The manuscripts at Sheffield show that Rockingham and his friends were in touch with Wyvil's associates from the very inception of the meeting. At the same time Burke and Rockingham vigorously opposed the raising of the divisive question of parliamentary reform and succeeded temporarily in reaching an agreement with Lord Shelburne to preserve the unity of the King's Opposition. The most important part of the political correspondence of Burke in this four-year period centers on these issues. It is surprising how few important political letters survive for 1781 and the first part of 1782. There is only one letter of real significance for the second Rockingham administration.

Finally, Burke's interest in religious toleration continues to show itself. The volume opens with the arrival in England of the Irish Bill for relaxing the Penal Laws, and a full account is given in Burke's letters of his part in persuading the Privy Council to accept it. In the next year there are important letters about the anti-Catholic riots in Scotland, including a long unpublished letter to Boswell. In 1780 the Gordon Riots operated powerfully upon his mind. In 1782 there is a long letter to Lord Kenmare on the further modification of the Penal Laws. In all these cases Burke

is in close touch with the Catholic community, and there are many drafts of documents to illustrate how the Catholics employed his pen.

Burke Studies in England

During the past six months a steady stream of scholars has passed through the "Burke Factory" in Sheffield, England, to do research for various writing projects. Among Americans recently in Sheffield were Professor James E. Bunce, St. John's University, working on the second Rockingham Administration; Professor George C. McElroy, Indiana University, on Burke and India; Miss Naomi Churgin, Ph.D. candidate, Columbia University, on Major John Cartwright; Sister Mary Claver, Ph.D. candidate, Fordham University, on Maynooth and British politics. Mr. J. Hill, Ph.D. candidate, Southampton University, is writing a thesis, "A Re-evaluation of the Principles and Policies of Edmund Burke." Mr. Roger Levick, Lincoln College, Oxford, is preparing a book on the relationship between the Pitt and Rockingham sections of the Whig Party. Mr. B. Donoghue, Nuffield College, is working on a study of English politics and the American Revolution.

Miss E. Gilberthorpe, Sheffield Library staff member, is doing research into the school founded by Burke in 1796 for the children of French emigrés at Tyler's Green House, near Penn, Buckinghamshire. Her work should supplement the recently published book by Margery Weiner, *The French Exiles, 1789-1815* (London: John Murray, 1960), which includes a section on Burke's relationship with the French emigrés living in London. Miss Weiner contended that of the 16,000 nobles who fled France, most were a serious and dedicated band of idealists. This thesis is challenged by the reviewer of her book in the *Times Literary Supplement*, August 19, 1960, p. 527. Her spirited reply (September 2, p. 561) is based upon Burke's letter to Philip Francis, who read the *Reflections* in manuscript and took strong exception to Burke's defense of chivalry, charging him with sentimentality. Miss Weiner's argument indicates that the conflicting viewpoints toward the value of a nobility, in sustaining a system of polished manners in civil society, is still a lively issue. Undoubtedly, Miss Gilberthorpe's and Miss Weiner's studies should be read in the light of the excellent work of Ralph W. Greenlaw, Jr., whose unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, "The French Nobility on the Eve of the Revolution: A Study of its Aims and Atti-

tudes, 1787-89" (Princeton University, 1952) is basic for an understanding of this important subject.

Professor Alfred Cobban has published a new edition of *Edmund Burke and the Revolt Against the Eighteenth Century*, with a new introduction. Professor James T. Boulton writes that he is comparing the pamphleteering efforts of Junius and Dr. Johnson with those of the early Burke. Junius' *Letters*, Johnson's *The False Alarm*, and Burke's *Present Discontents* will provide him with a wealth of materials toward his forthcoming study of Burke's rhetorical techniques.

Burke's relationship to France is receiving renewed attention from several scholars. Early this year Professor C. P. Courtney, lecturer in French at Sheffield University, completed a Ph.D. thesis, "The Influence of Montesquieu on Burke," under the supervision of Lucy Sutherland, at Oxford. Dr. Courtney is more familiar than any other Burke scholar with French MS collections relating to Burke. Recently, he discovered a new Burke letter in the manuscript division of the Amsterdam University Library. M. Robert Lacour-Gayet of Paris is writing a book on Calonne's relations with Burke; he has discovered a previously unlisted letter of Calonne to Burke.

In a feature review article, the *Times Literary Supplement*, June 17, 1960, pp. 377-378, devoted eight half columns to Burke, and in reviewing the recently published volumes of the *Correspondence*, and books by T.H.D. Mahoney and F. P. Canavan, noted that Burke is "in the centre of the philosophical/political arena of the mid-twentieth century."

The Burke Revival in Austria

During the past decade there has been a marked revival of interest in Burke's political philosophy in Austria, particularly among conservative political thinkers and scholars. In a recent article by Johann Christian Allmayer-Beck, "Der Konservatismus in Osterreich," Burke was called "a great classic of conservatism in Austria, though he never set his foot on the soil of this country." Frederick Gentz' translation of Burke's *Reflections* continues to be widely read in Austria. Articles on Burke have been appearing in leading Austrian magazines, such as the *Salzburger Nachrichten*, edited by Dr. René Marcic, professor of law at the University of Vienna. The monarchist weekly, *Die Krone*, has published a series of articles on the importance of Burke's thought for a sound understanding of central

European politics and has had extensive analytical reviews of such recent studies as Peter Stanlis' *Edmund Burke and the Natural Law*. Russell Kirk's *The Conservative Mind* has recently been published in German and is being widely read in Austria by university students.

The work in progress by Dr. Thomas Chaimowicz, of Salzburg, shows the practical political nature of the renewed Austrian interest in Burke. Dr. Chaimowicz has completed a manuscript of four long essays on Burke's political philosophy and practice, which he hopes to publish in the near future. The first essay is centered in Burke's conception of the statesman as "the philosopher in action." It consists of an analysis of Burke's basic political principles in the light of the historical conditions now existing in Austria. Dr. Chaimowicz writes of this essay: "It deals with the fact that most modern nations live under constitutions drawn up by theoreticians without practical knowledge, and are governed by pragmatists without a theoretical basis for their actions. This will be found true of the constitutional, political and economic activities of many political leaders, and it accounts for some of the major disasters of recent history." The second essay, centered in Burke's conception of "the Commonwealth of Europe," emphasizes "the importance of the classical tradition as the common basis of Western thought . . . from Cicero's 'Res Publica' to Burke's 'Commonwealth of Europe.'" This tradition, writes Dr. Chaimowicz, is very much alive in Austria, and is among the strongest reasons for the recent revival of interest in Burke: "The way of life, the habits of Austrians, are very conservative, in the sound sense of that word; respectful of tradition, yet looking into the future with the spirit of unbroken faith and optimism." In the course of the centuries the rule of the House of Hapsburg has built up "the framework of an empire," in which many nationalities lived side by side under one

rule of law and one imperial sovereignty. Dr. Chaimowicz' third essay makes use of Burke's conceptions of historical continuity and the constitution, and examines the constitutional changes which monarchical government underwent under the pressures of democratic movements. The fourth essay extends these points and examines them in the light of some of Burke's political prophecies. These essays, together with other work in progress on Burke in Austria, should command the respectful interest of American and British Burke scholars during the next few years.

Two New Burke Anthologies

In May 1960 Professor Walter J. Bate, Harvard University, published *Selected Writings of Edmund Burke*, in a Modern Library edition. The excellent thirty-seven page historical introduction is followed by 536 pages of judicious selections of Burke's writings on America, Ireland, economic reform, India, and France. In September 1960 appeared *The Philosophy of Edmund Burke*, edited by Professors Louis I. Bredvold and Ralph G. Ross, published by the University of Michigan Press. This unusual anthology, which contains the essence of Burke's thought, is arranged according to the great themes and principles of Burke's political philosophy, and is ideal for a "history of ideas" approach to literature and political science.

A Burke Newsletter Announcement

The *Burke Newsletter* will resume publication as an independent quarterly in June, 1961. Individual and library subscriptions of \$1.00 should be sent to Dr. Peter J. Stanlis, Department of English, University of Detroit. First year subscribers will receive copies of the first seven numbers of the *Burke Newsletter* which have appeared in *Modern Age*. These numbers will be bound in a hard cover notebook which is suitable for holding all future numbers of the newsletter.