Chapter Six

BRITISH ATROCITIES

A button and two passenger jets. What have they to do with Napoleonic history? We shall now see…

On 'Nine Eleven' 2001 two planes sized by Islamic terrorists from Al-Qaeda crashed into the twin towers of the World Trade Center. It was one of the greatest atrocities of modern times and many people can recall where they were and what they were doing when they heard the terrible news. The shocking images repeated over and over again on TV screens around the world were seared into the brains of the horrified viewers - images never to be forgotten. The author was doing voluntary work deep in the basement archives of the Mappin Museum and Art Gallery in Sheffield, Yorkshire, England. He can still recall the stunned looks on the faces of colleagues as they talked about the tragedy the very next day.

Very few people know that the twin towers were built literally over a site linked to an even greater atrocity. In 2010 when the construction of a new high security park and garage was underway it was decided to make the entrance underground and this necessitated digging foundations much deeper than those of the earlier iconic towers. It was while this process was going on that some twenty two feet beneath the tarmac, the wreck of a very old ship came to light. Building stopped immediately and an archeological team headed by Warren Riess, the principal investigator, set to work.

The site was scanned with lasers and hi-res 3D data was transferred to the latest computers. Ground Zero had an entirely new story to tell. The flattened but well-preserved vessel was in the heart of Manhattan, five hundred yards from the current shoreline. As Riess said, the fifty foot long boat was 'not only rare, it was one of a kind'.[1] When the ships timbers were uncovered the tree rings showed that they had been felled in 1773 or soon after. In other words, it was a vessel dating from the American War of Independence.

'It was like a time capsule - a secret time capsule,'[2] said Riess. In 1773 New York had a population of 25,000 people and its sheltered harbours were of massive strategic and commercial consequence. When the Revolution against the British Government began in 1775 New York was a prime target for attack from the Royal Navy and the British Army. How do we know that the vessel belonged to the British? As well as the 327 pieces of ordnance found scattered amongst the ancient timbers, including cannon balls and 56 musket balls, a single button was discovered amidships between two of the planks. On the pewter button was stamped the number 52. That was a regimental number from the British Grenadiers - 'aggressive assault troops'.[3]

A fifty foot long boat with a beam of eighteen feet and a draught of only four feet was obviously not meant for the high seas. So what was it used for? It was ideal for the shallow coastal waters and the innumerable coves and bays that surrounded Manhattan at that time. It was a transport vessel used to cross two miles of the notorious waters of Wallabout Bay off the shores of Brooklyn to a number of old stationary ships. It was crewed by British grenadiers and its usual cargo was American prisoners of war who were being taken to the notorious and pestiferous hulks rotting in the bay. Riess adds: 'it was the most lethal place during the whole Revolution for the Americans'.[4]

Professor Robert Watson remarks that: 'New York City still has its secrets, its dark past, including the most grisly and bloodiest event of the entire revolutionary war'.[5] In an episode from *Drain the Oceans: Secrets of New York City*, the narrator says the place was called 'Hell afloat' and was: 'A flotilla of festering British ships, overcrowded, freezing cold, poorly supplied and run by brutal guards'.[6] The hulks were hotbeds of disease and infection and some 11,000 men are thought to have died on the infamous *HMS Jersey* alone. That is more than three times the death toll from Nine Eleven and yet most Americans have probably never heard of it. It was a forgotten secret that the

author only discovered after a lifetime of reading history at the age of sixty-five. To put the death toll in even greater perspective, twice as many Americans died on the *Jersey* than in the whole of the rest of the conflict. Professor Watson states: 'It is unimaginable'.[7] It is almost never mentioned in English history books!

On the *History* website the editors speak of *HMS Jersey* and: 'the obscenely high death rate of its prisoners', and says: 'One of the most gruesome chapters in the story of America's struggle for independence from Britain occurred in the waters near New York Harbor, near the current location of the Brooklyn Navy Yard. From 1775 to 1783, the British forces occupying New York City used abandoned or decommissioned warships anchored just offshore to hold those soldiers, sailors and private citizens they had captured in battle or arrested on land or at sea (many for refusing to swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown).'[8] Refusing to swear allegiance could thus amount to a death sentence and a very slow and agonising death at that.

The website adds that: 'More than 1,000 men were kept aboard the Jersey at any one time, and about a dozen died every night from diseases such as small pox, dysentery, typhoid and yellow fever, as well as from the effects of starvation and torture… At war's end there were only 1,400 survivors among the inmates of the entire prison ship fleet…'[9] One wonders what might have been said about the British Government afterwards had there been the equivalent of the Nuremberg Trials. It was a gross and wretched abuse of power.

Many of the survivors later wrote about their experiences in letters and memoirs. Ebenezer Fox was only seventeen when he was incarcerated in 1781. He states that the prisoners were: 'a motley crew, covered with rags and filth; visages pallid with disease, emaciated with hunger and anxiety, and retaining hardly a trace of their original appearance.'[10] Captain Alexander Coffin whose name must have tempted fate, suffered two stints aboard the *Jersey.* He recalled that the inmates existed in: 'the most deplorable situation, mere walking skeletons, without money, and scarcely clothes to cover their nakedness, and overrun with lice from head to feet'.[11]

The portholes of the vessel had all been sealed and breathing holes covered in iron bars ran the length of the ship. It was freezing in winter and like an airless oven in summer. Frostbite and suffocation claimed the lives of the prisoners depending upon the season. Captain Coffin remarked that: 'I can safely aver, that both the times I was confined on board the prison ships, there never were provisions served out to the prisoners that would have been eatable to men that were not literally in a starving situation.'[12]

This was hardly a question of winning the hearts and minds of His Britannic Majesty's American subjects. The enemy were seen as rebels, as less than men, and accordingly the captors did not give a damn for their lives or care about the intolerable and vengeful way that they were being treated. Fox remembered how: 'The bread was mouldy, and filled with worms. It required considerable rapping upon the deck before the worms could be dislodged from their lurking places in a biscuit'.[13]

An edition of the *Connecticut Gazette* from July 1778 relates the story of Robert Sheffield, one of the few survivors. He speaks of his time upon the Jersey: 'The heat was so intense that (the 300-plus prisoners) were all naked, which also served the well to get rid of vermin, but the sick were eaten up alive. Their sickly countenances, and ghastly looks were truly horrible; some swearing and blaspheming; others crying, praying and wringing their hands; and stalking about like ghosts; others delirious, raving and storming, all panting for breath; some dead, and corrupting. The air was so foul that at times a lamp could not be kept burning, by reason of which the bodies were not missed until they had been dead ten days. One person alone was admitted on deck at a time, after sunset, which occasioned much filth to run into the hold, and mingle with the bilge water…'[14]

In his book *Rebel Cities*, Mike Rapport gives more gruesome details: 'Conditions were appalling. According to General Gage, one-time British commander in North America, rebels were criminals, 'destined to the cord,' not prisoners of war, so were lucky to be alive at all. Moreover, the

challenges of feeding British troops meant that American prisoners received reduced rations: they would have lost one pound of their body weight a week, a gradual wasting away that took a terrible toll… Worst of all, with the city's gaols crammed with so much festering humanity, the British resorted to a solution that they had already tried on criminals back home: prison hulks… Conditions were so squalid aboard these vessels that the filth-smeared inmates were woken each morning by the gaolers' calls of 'Rebels, turn out your dead'. In all, it has been estimated that between 24,850 and 32,000 Americans were held prisoner in and around Manhattan, and of these somewhere between 15,575 and 18,000 died - maybe 11,000 in the prison hulks. This shocking figure dwarfs the American combat dead of 6,824 and even the 10,000 thought to have died from wounds or disease.'[15]

Such a cold and heartless policy was bound to antagonize the rebels and make them hate the British even more. As a result the Americans would fight all that much harder to avoid capture and almost certain death on the hulks. From the very start George III, his politicians and generals, had absolutely no understanding of or sympathy for their opponents who simply wanted some say in the policies that affected them very deeply and could lead both to their penury and abject misery. We have seen how William Hazlitt's father protested about the treatment of American prisoners in Ireland so this callous rejection of common humanity was obviously endemic within the British ruling class and their ever-expanding Empire. (Wellington for one couldn't give a damn for the ordinary soldier on his own side - leave alone that of his enemy). The later appalling treatment of Napoleon upon the island prison of Saint Helena only emphasizes that fact.

James E. Held in an article entitled: *British Prison Ship: A Season in Hell*, puts these terrible events into stark perspective. He states that: 'To the Crown, rebellious Americans were no better than the restless Irish and Scots - traitors to the realm, not prisoners of war.'[16] As he makes clear, there was no such thing as the Geneva Convention in those days. Many American troops did not were a uniform and used unorthodox tactics that bewildered their enemy: 'New World warfare against frontier warriors and Massachusetts Minutemen, who reputedly scalped British dead on the Concord Bridge and specifically targeted officers, exhibited a savagery and sordidness that most English troops never before encountered. The trauma of this war scarred the psyche of British fighting men, also affecting their treatment of prisoners.'[17] Washington himself was also often reluctant to exchange prisoners as most of his men were amateurs and not professional soldiers. On the other side, many Loyalists hated their opponents with a visceral intensity. William Cunningham who became Provost Marshal of New York was an Irish immigrant. He had been personally attacked and abused by 200 Sons of Liberty in early 1775 and this completely warped his sense of honour and corrupted his morals. Woe betide any rebels that fell into his bloodthirsty grip: 'Cunningham stole and sold the rations of 2,000 prisoners, and historian Henry Onderdonk documented his secretly hanging or poisoning hundreds of captives.'[18]

The *Long Island Genealogy* website also condemns his heinous policies: 'The most outrageous of all the crimes committed by Cunningham was the hanging of 275 American prisoners of war without trial and in utter repudiation of all existing articles of war. The ignominious and undercover hanging of war prisoners was a blot on the British military government.'[19] It goes further asserting that: 'There was obviously a conspiracy among Provost Marshal William Cunnigham, Commissary Joshua Loring, and Naval Commissary David Sprout, down to the lowly prison guards, to decimate the rebels… This extermination policy now appears to have been a deliberate conspiracy not only among the prison commissaries, but actually by the British High Command.'[20]

While all this abuse was going on during the American War of Independence, Napoleon, who was born in 1769, was just a boy. The French had suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of the British during the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763, long before he was even born. This was one of the reasons that the French had supported the Americans a decade or so later - they wanted to get

their own back. Even though the earlier fighting on a global scale from 1756-1763 had virtually bankrupted the French nation, their navy and temporary command of American waters was used at critical moments during the American Revolution to help the colonists gain eventual victory over their erstwhile masters. The French and the British were traditional enemies yet the conflict that came later after the French Revolution is always dubbed *The Napoleonic Wars*. A misnomer if ever there was one. The origin of that word comes from the Old French *mesnommer* - very apposite.[21]

State sponsored terrorism is usually thought of as a modern phenomenon, but William Pitt and the British Government were engaging in this activity over two hundred years ago. As George Orwell has said: 'Everyone believes in the atrocities of the enemy and disbelieves in those of his own side, without ever bothering to examine the evidence.'[22] We are now going to look directly at yet more evidence of heinous British action, this time against Napoleon himself.

The experienced Russian diplomat Voronzov, ambassador to London, sets the scene in 1803: 'The system of the English cabinet will always aim to destroy France as its sole rival, and to reign over the entire universe.'[23] Ben Weider gives a more panoramic view: 'At the accession of Bonaparte, Britain scarcely bothered to hide its ambition to dominate the world. She was in full colonial expansion. In this enterprise, she collided with Spain and the Netherlands but above all with France, which Britain wished to deprive of her remaining colonies in order to build an immense empire.'[24]

The British cabinet cared very little for its own people in the late C18th and early C19th as the tragedy of Peterloo demonstrated. Only the privileged politicians and aristocrats mattered. They certainly did not give a damn about the lives of ordinary French citizens as the Christmas Eve 'infernal machine' bomb plot of 1800, with its grisly toll of death and destruction proves emphatically.

When he became First Consul, Napoleon took the opportunity to write a Christmas message to George III asking for peace. What was the reaction of the British monarch whose bigotry and ineptitude had already cost him his colonies in America? Vincent Cronin sets this out in immense detail: 'The King England's first act on the first day of the new century was to seat himself at his desk in Windsor Castle at eight minutes past seven in the morning and write to Grenville about what he termed 'the Corsican tyrant's letter'. It was, he said, 'impossible to treat with a new, impious, self-created aristocracy', and he would not deign to reply personally. Grenville must make answer with a communication on paper, 'not a letter', and to Talleyrand, not the tyrant. Grenville thereupon delivered himself of a characteristically haughty and tactless letter, demanding the restoration of the Bourbons and a return to the frontiers of 1789.'[25]

Cronin states the reality baldly: 'Neither George III nor his Government wanted peace.'[26] The warmongers in Parliament and amidst the British aristocracy were truly in the ascendant. Cronin continues: 'In August 1800 William Wickham expressed the Pitt party's opinion in a letter Grenville: 'I cannot help considering the keeping France engaged in a Continental war as the only *certain* means of safety for us, and as a measure to be brought about by us almost *per fas et ne fas*, if the pushing from the plank to save oneself from drowning can in any case be called nefarious'.[27] A legion of British 'historians' have insisted over the ages in calling this period *The Napoleonic Wars*. Napoleon was a man clearly wanting peace while Britannia's over-mighty trident was being waved belligerently in all directions and would soon be covered in yet more fresh blood. England's wars against France and Napoleon had already cost her £400 million and forced her off the gold standard.[28] So bent was George III and his ministers on war that they thought nothing about adding millions to the National Debt (billions in today's money) in order to foment one war after another against the French and Napoleon.

After the Revolution many French royalists and aristocrats fled to England where they were given sanctuary. From that group came many future spies and assassins. England already had its own

massive and costly spy rings scattered around the courts of Europe and was happy to spend millions of pounds creating problems for the French government throughout the continent. Furthermore, the ruling class in London and the divine right monarchies of Europe saw Napoleon as a mere commoner, an upstart who needed to be put in his place. On his shoulders were heaped all the horrors of the French Revolution and he was seen as the leader of a nation of fanatics and lunatics. He was not legitimate; he was not 'one of them'; royal blue blood did not course through his veins. And to remove him they cared nothing about spilling the blood of countless innocent victims in order to rid the world of this one man.

At first the Bourbons tried to regain the throne with mere flattery. After an approach to Napoleon made by the Count de Provence, the future Louis XVIII, via Hyde de Neuville, head of the Paris royalist agency, got no response, the Count wrote a gushing letter to the 'usurper':

> 'I have had my eye on you for a long time. For years it seemed to me that the victor of Lodi, of Castiglione, of Arcole, the Conqueror of Italy and of Egypt, would be the saviour of France … Today, when you combine power with talents, it is time that I reveal the ambitions I have cherished for you. If I were speaking to anyone other than Bonaparte, I would specify rewards. A great man may determine his own fate and that of his friends. Tell me what you desire for yourself and for them, and all your wishes will be satisfied at the moment of my restoration.'[29]

When there was no reaction to this missive, the Count sent a second letter via his secret agent in Paris, Abbot de Montesquieu. Napoleon made his famous reply:

> 'I have received the letters of His Royal Highness. I have always taken a lively interest in his misfortunes and those of his family. He need not give any thought to his return to France, something that could only occur over a hundred thousand dead bodies. Otherwise, I will always be happy to do whatever is possible to soften his destiny and to help him forget his woes.'[30]

Now, the gloves were off, and the exiled Bourbons were prepared to do a deal with the very Devil in order to regain the throne and the vast privileges that went with it. The Devil not being available, they turned to the British Government and its colossal hoard of gold stashed away in the Bank of England. There was to be no subtlety at all in the new policy they pursued. As Ben Weider says: 'Paid by the British cabinet with the approval of the Count d'Artois, future Charles X who was exiled in London, the royalists redoubled their attempts to assassinate the First Consul. Among these attempts, the most famous were the attack in the Rue Saint-Nicaise and the Cadoudal-Pichegru-Moreau conspiracy.'[31]

D'Artois was the leader of the so-called 'ultras', who would stop at nothing in order to restore their Bourbon masters to the throne. A portrait of him by Gerard is exhibited at the Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham, England. D'Artois' air of supercilious smugness is clearly discerned in this image. He looks haughtily down from the wall with consummate arrogance, bedecked in privileged affluence, a sense of entitlement almost emanating physically in waves from the canvas. A believer in divine right on the Charles Ist of England scale (and look where that got him - revolution and the axe), D'Artois became apoplectic when Napoleon crowned himself Emperor. Next to his portrait at the Bowes it states: 'As a young prince he acquired a rather notorious reputation at the French Court, which together with his strong belief in aristocratic rights and privileges made him a particularly hated figure by revolutionists, and in 1789 his brother Louis XVI, ordered him to leave France from whence he eventually settled at the Palace of Holyroodhouse in Edinburgh.'[32] So it was, that D'Artois spent some considerable time living nearer

to Barnard Castle in the North of England, where the Bowes would eventually be built, than he did to his native France.

Turning specifically to the Christmas Eve bombing, Jonathon North believes that there were wider ramifications to the plot other than the attempt to murder Napoleon: 'In 1800 a singular act of violence, designed not only to do away with the intended target but to kill and maim any innocent civilian in the vicinity, was perpetrated on the people of Paris. This attack, aiming to intimidate a population and to warn and destroy a government, was carried out by royalist gentlemen who had made cold-blooded killing for a cause a way of life… it was something new, something indiscriminate. And something terrifying.'[33] Many of the most fanatical supporters of D'Artois and the Bourbon cause came from Brittany in the west of France and were called Chouans. For years clandestine British vessels had ferried agents, counterfeit money, arms and ammunition from a secret base on the island of Jersey to the nearby French mainland. The might of the ubiquitous British navy ensured that these supplies got through.

Like Vincent Cronin, Jonathan North sees the British as the aggressors: '… these royalists had foreign backers intent on keeping the conflict alive for reasons of state. London was still at war with France, and her belligerent ministers, Pitt, Grenville and Windham were intent on making use of discord to weaken France.'[34]

The godfather of the cabal of assassins involved in this outrage was the Breton Georges Cadoudal, but it was his minions who perpetrated the deed. These men were François Carbon, Picot de Limoëllan and Robinault Saint-Réjant. They originally intended to shoot Napoleon, but as he always travelled in a closed carriage with a large armed escort, this was impossible. So on December 17th 1799 Carbon purchased a small black mare and a two-wheeled cart which he took to a stable at 19 rue Paradis. There he placed a large hooped barrel on the vehicle. On Christmas Eve Carbon and de Limoëllan turned up at the stable dressed as carters. Saint-Réjant joined them later and the three conspirators filled the barrel with gunpowder, flints, pebbles and pieces of sharp metal. Then they took the cart and its lethal cargo to the Place des Victoires where Carbon left the other two who proceeded to the rue Saint-Niçaise. Saint-Réjant made sure that the cart stuck out into the main road so as to impede oncoming traffic. He knew that at any moment, Napoleon would be passing by in his coach on the way to hear Haydn's oratorio *Creation* on its opening night at the Opera. He saw a girl nearby and he offered her twelve sous to hold the mare's bridle for a short while until he deemed it the right moment to secretly light the fuse of the bomb. She had no idea that her life would be over in a matter of minutes.

We know very little about this young girl and even her name varies according to different sources.[35] She certainly gets little mention in the history books. But she was a human being and her life was just as precious and as important as the lives of the so-called 'great men' who diced with the fortunes of Europe and the world. Did she have a sense of humour? What was her favourite colour? What did she like to eat and drink? What were her dreams and ambitions? We do know that she would never again feel the sun on her face or laugh with sheer joie de vivre. She would never fall in love, marry and have a family of her own. Her body was literally blown to pieces. Her young life was snuffed out without the merest qualm on behalf of her murderers. She had very little as it was and what she did have was taken from her in the most brutal manner.

The person ultimately responsible for this heartless outrage was William Pitt, the British Prime Minister. It was he who turned gold from the Bank of England into bloody carnage. And in the process he took the life of an innocent girl. And she was not alone.

The rue Niçaise was well-chosen for this horrendous plot and was guaranteed to facilitate as many deaths and injuries as possible. Close by were bars, grocers, boutiques and shops selling perfume and leather goods. It was full of excited Christmas shoppers hoping for a last minute bargain or something special to eat or drink over the festive period. There were also many Parisians and

foreign tourists milling around in the hope of catching a glimpse of the much-talked-about Man of the hour - the First Consul - on his way to the Opera. Those who survived the explosion and saw the destruction it caused would never forget that fateful day: 'The rue Niçaise was filled with ruins. Glass was shattered everywhere. Beams, tiles, windowsills and fragments of stone and brick were tossed all over the perimeter. Twisted, mangled corpses lay strewn about. Naked souls walked in a daze, their clothes stripped from their bodies. Pensol lay in the gutter, her arms slung on either side of the road. Two days later, her grief-stricken mother recuperated her charred remains.'[35] One woman had her breasts blown off as she stood in her doorway and another was blinded. Cronin says that nine people were killed and twenty-six injured.[36] Weider states that there were twenty-two dead and fifteen wounded. He adds that: 'The material damage was considerable and several dozen houses were destroyed. The monstrosity of this terrorist act was unimaginable. The life of the First Consul had dangled by a thread.' [37] Indeed, had it not been for his probably suspicious coachman whipping the horses past the obstruction, Napoleon himself might well have been a victim.

It *is* difficult to imagine the sheer horror of the scene just after the explosion. The street was full of billowing dust and smoke, victims were crying and shouting with pain, confusion and the utter incomprehensible nature of the event that had just occurred. Screaming horses were thrashing here and there in their death agonies, and the reek of blood and steaming viscera filled the air. Jonathan North says that: "A few of the wounded had lost fingers or hands, and legs were later amputated, but others had lost eyes, or had their faces damaged by the metal balls packed into the barrel. Still more were hit by splinters or shards of broken glass and an onlooker noticed a casualty with 'a piece of wood stuck in their chest, and another one in the arm'."[38] He then goes into great detail about the innocent victims whose stories and accounts are virtually nonexistent in most written histories. Jeanne-Elisabeth Hugaut, a twenty-two-year-old fishwife died, as did Agnès Adélaide Norris a piano and English teacher. Cléreaux the grocer bled to death in the street while a pregnant woman died on Christmas Day. The printer Boyeledieu was so hideously disfigured his pregnant wife could only recognise his body by his torn clothing: "I saw my husband laid out on the table, the face entirely sliced off. I could not believe this had once been a man. I recognised a fragment of grey cloth from his trousers that had stuck to his left leg. I threw myself onto the corpse of my dead husband, crying 'it is he!' "[39] An architect, Guillaume Trépsat had been out on the street when the bomb exploded. He had a leg amputated and later said: 'I am glad this has happened to me and not the First Consul, because where would we be if Bonaparte had been killed?'[40]

This was just one of the many attempts made upon Napoleon's life paid for by Pitt and the British cabinet and they did not stop even when the Peace of Amiens had been signed. This wicked and cowardly act of barbarity is an indelible stain upon our nation's history.

After his Italian and Egyptian campaigns and his many peace treaties with major European powers, Napoleon was very popular in France. Indeed, he was seen as a saviour by the people. Colonel Jean-Nicolas-Auguste Noël in his book *With Napoleon's Guns* makes this point, even though he is often very critical of Napoleon: 'The rapid formation of the Italian republics, the skilful negotiations carried out in Italy and at Léoben by General Bonaparte, had added the character of an adroit politician and accomplished administrator to his reputation as a brilliant general. His successes in Egypt made him appear to be extraordinary, in fact a saviour. His return was longed for to rid the country of the ungovernable elements within it and to repulse and crush the foreign enemies.

This is what I observed and heard at Versailles, in Paris and everywhere.'[41] He adds that when Napoleon returned from Egypt: 'The troops and people were overjoyed.'[42]

Napoleon was sincere in his quest for peace. In his letter to George III he had written: 'Peace is the most basic of necessities and the first of glories.'[43] The French people wanted peace, so did the British people. Unfortunately, their government did not. As Vincent Cronin states: 'The war, never

popular with the English people, grew increasingly unpopular as Europe made peace, and Fox was not alone in describing it as an unjust interference in France's home affairs.'[44] Fox was indignant at the response made to the First Consul's offer of peace and in a barnstorming speech in the House of Commons on February 3rd 1800, he went much further, praising Napoleon:

> 'On his arrival in France, he found the government in a very unsettled state, and the whole affairs of the Republic deranged, crippled and involved. He thought it necessary to reform the government; and he did reform it, just in the way in which a military man may be expected carry on a reform. He seized on the whole authority for himself. It will not be expected from me that I should either approve or apologize for such an act. I am certainly not for reforming governments by such expedients; but how this House can be so violently indignant at the idea of military despotism, is, I own, a little singular, when I see the composure with which they can observe nearer home - nay, when I see them regard it as a frame of government most peculiarly suited to the exercise of free opinion, on a subject the most important of any that can engage the attention of a people. Was it not the system which was so *happily* and so *advantageously* established of late, all over Ireland, and which even now the government may at its pleasure, proclaim over the whole of that kingdom? Are not the person and property of the people left, in many districts, at this moment, to the entire will of military commanders?'[45]

Fox concluded with:

> 'Sir, I have done. I have told you my opinion. I think you ought to have given a civil, clear, and explicit answer to the overture which was fairly and handsomely made you. If you were desirous that the negotiations should have included all your allies, as the means of bringing about a general peace, you should have told Bonaparte so. But I believe you were afraid of his agreeing to the proposal.'[46]

However, there were many voices giving an opposing view. Burke said in a letter to Grenville: 'It is not the enmity but the friendship of France that is truly terrible. Her intercourse, her example, the spread of her doctrines are the most dreadful of her arms.'[47] Yet others were far more positive about Napoleon. Richard Brinsley Sheridan said in the Commons:

> 'we have seen religion obtain a tolerant exemption in her favour under the government of this atheist; we have seen the faith of treaties observed under the government of this perfidious adventurer; the arts and sciences find protection under this plunderer; the sufferings of humanity have been alleviated under this ferocious usurper… Such is the portrait of the man, with whom his Majesty's ministers have refused to treat!'[48]

Similarly, in his early, anti-establishment days, Coleridge wrote in the *Morning Post* that the peace proposal was 'extremely embarrassing to them, who wish to continue the war, with the grace of being desirous of peace.'[49] He took it for granted that they would stand by the Bourbons. Nevertheless, in February 1800 Coleridge once more supported Fox:

> ‘Mr. Pitt railed most bitterly at the character of Bonaparte… But the truth is Mr. Pitt knows Bonaparte to be sincere, and, therefore, will not negotiate, because that negotiation would lead to a peace, which peace would baffle the idle hope of restoring the French monarchy, which, spite of the document sent to Petersburgh, is and has been the real object of Ministers both in the beginning and continuing the war.’[50]

Before turning to the Peace of Amiens it is worth reflecting upon the view of the American military historian John R. Elting in his book *Swords Around A Throne*. He states that: ‘The English genius is erratic, eccentric, and indirect, however concealed behind everyday straightforwardness. It was England’s intention that the British should dominate the seas and the commerce thereof, and that no one power should dominate Continental Europe. To that first end, they bullied other maritime nations insufferably. To the second, they hired the kings and emperors of Europe as casually as they had hired mercenary regiments from minor German princelings during the American Revolution. Prussia, Austria, and Russia were more or less impoverished nations; only English subsidies enabled them to raise and pay vast armies for year after year of hard campaigning.’[51]

That is the backdrop behind the drama of the ‘Napoleonic Wars’: without funds from the Bank of England there would have been no ‘Napoleonic Wars’. The British Navy wanted complete domination of 71% of the Earth’s surface and they would suffer no other country to threaten their hegemony. We shall see later how this affected the Danish people in yet another massacre that took place in Copenhagen in 1807.

Many British historians accuse Napoleon of wanting to dominate the globe - he had left it a bit late - the British had already done it. John Strawson in his book *The Duke and The Emperor* adds his contribution to the ‘black legend’ concocted against Napoleon. The reference to Wellington comes first in the title and the British first and last in his assessment of the period. Napoleon is portrayed as an evil genius with a crazy and wicked ambition to create a world empire. Strawson claims that the British declared war in May 1803 because of dark machinations on Napoleon’s part when it was they who refused to abandon Malta despite having promised to do so in the Treaty of Amiens.[52] Side-stepping for a moment the fact that the British Ambassador to Paris, Lord Whitworth, was given the role precisely because he, like many other key players in or out of the British government, did not want peace in the first place, Strawson states that: ‘Lord Whitworth, was required to undergo some disagreeable exchanges with the First Consul. Like most men who had risen from relatively humble origins to positions of almost supreme power, Napoleon, when confronted with reasoned argument which contradicted his own *morally unsupportable ambitions (*my italics) and predetermined courses of action, resorted to the methods and manners of a bully.’[53] This is a bit rich as it concerns the representative of a nation that dismembered little girls and blew the breasts off women, and that was still plotting assassination attempts against the ‘evil Napoleon’ during the ongoing peace negotiations. Napoleon, despite the complicity of George III and Pitt in this reign of terror, refused to sink such bestial depths himself.

Strawson claims that Napoleon ‘wanted Malta in order to swing the scale of Mediterranean mastery in his favour, [and] he was willing to indulge in any sort of political manoeuvring or military threat to obtain his ends’.[54] Perhaps Whitworth was looking in the same mirror because that was exactly what he and his leaders with their ‘superior morals’ were doing. On the contrary, Napoleon simply expected the British to stick to the treaty they had already signed and evacuate Malta as they had agreed to do. For Strawson to claim that Napoleon wanted ‘Mediterranean mastery’ was utterly ridiculous after Nelson’s victory at the Battle of Aboukir Bay in 1798.

Napoleon himself was lucky to escape from Egypt with his life, leave alone having the opportunity to dominate the Mediterranean.

Strawson continues his one-sided diatribe: 'On and on the argument went, until it became plain to the British government that there was no dealing with Napoleon. In the first place he was unreasonable. In the second place no reliance could be placed on his honouring any agreement, reasonable or not. On 18 May 1803, therefore, Great Britain declared war. It had come too soon for Napoleon. Although he wanted war, he wanted it at a time of his own choosing…'[55]

As we have seen, Napoleon wanted peace - it was the British who not only wanted war they were determined to get it.

Let us now consider the British Ambassador himself - he was certainly no paragon of virtue. For years he was Britain's Envoy Extraordinary and Minister Plenipotentiary in Saint Petersburg, the Russian capital. Carlos De La Huerta in his book *The Great Conspiracy* comments that: 'His service, however, was not entirely creditable or honourable to himself or his country. It is supposed that he misappropriated government funds, which he complained were unequal to his needs… and, having quitted that court on account of the hostile policies and intemperate conduct of the late and not entirely same Emperor Paul I, had discreetly disbursed secret service funds to Count P.A. Pahlen, the same military governor of St Petersburg who, leading a gang of inebriated noblemen and officers, invaded the Tsar's palace and squeezed out the Emperor's last breath on the night of 11 March 1801. Indeed, Whitworth was so satisfied on learning of the death of 'that arch fiend Paul' that he vowed to celebrate the day as a festival so long as he should live.'[56]

So the whiter-than-white British government appointed a regicide to the post of Ambassador to Paris. The same government that decried the execution of Louis XVI and which had promised to restore the Bourbons to the French throne and restore all those French émigrés to their privileges and perquisites after they had killed or deposed Napoleon. Unbelievably, (or maybe not), '… his services nevertheless pleased King George III, who, in recognition of them, conferred on France's new ambassador the Order of the Bath and the barony of the kingdom of Ireland.'[57] On that score, Vincent Cronin adds: '… England had united Ireland to the crown against the wishes of the Irish people, and there, as at home, excluded Catholics not only from office but from voting.'[58] So much for the 'land of the free' in its make-or-break fight with the Corsican dictator. The sickening hypocrisy and bare-faced treachery of the British monarch and the ministers in his gangster state beggars belief.

The first official British comment about Napoleon was made by Lord Malmesbury in November 1796. He called Napoleon: 'a clever, desperate Jacobin, even terrorist.'[59] When Whitworth became Ambassador he continued in the same fashion. Even before he met the First Consul he: "was writing to London about Napoleon's rancour and indignation, his envy and hatred. In the face of all the evidence… Whitworth declared that: 'The conduct of the First Consul is as strongly reprobated by nine people out of ten not immediately connected with Government in this country as it is in England.' "[60] When he arrived in Paris Whitworth claimed that the French would try to seize Egypt again.[61] This comment was used by the war party in England to persuade Prime Minister Addington to delay the evacuation of British troops from Malta in a flagrant breach of the Treaty of Amiens.

French involvement in Piedmont and Switzerland, neither of which countries were covered by the Treaty, were also used to fan the flames of war. Napoleon's Act of Mediation in Switzerland is still the basis of the Swiss Federation today and was warmly welcomed by them. However: 'The English Government sent Wickham to Constance with more guineas and orders to stir up the aristocrats against Napoleon's constitution.'[62] Not surprisingly, Napoleon saw this unfriendly act as an attempt by the British to set up another hostile base, like Jersey, from which to foment trouble and strife in France itself. Vincent Cronin goes into these matters in great detail and states that: 'George III and the oligarchs had never reconciled themselves to Amiens. They were planning to rupture the peace

by retaining Malta before, not after, Napoleon lifted a finger to extend French influence in Europe.'[63]

The influence of King in this aggressive policy should not be underestimated: 'behind the scenes George III was influencing the Cabinet. "I have reason *to be sure*," Buckingham wrote to Grenville: "that the language of the King has from the first moments of this alarm been *extremely eager* for the war." '[64] The King called for the activation of the militia and for another 10,000 sailors for the Navy. He justified this by saying there were: " 'very considerable military preparations… in the ports of France and Holland.'[65] In fact, there were no such preparations." Meanwhile, even Whitworth admitted that: 'I can say with absolute certainty that no armaments of any consequence are carrying on in the French ports.'[66]

Napoleon summoned Whitworth on February 21st 1803 to talk about the British failure to honour the Treaty and why British troops were still in Malta and Alexandria. Commenting on Napoleon's reaction, Whitworth instanced a remark that: 'was too trivial and vulgar to find a place in a dispatch, or anywhere but in the mouth of a hackney coachman'.[67] No wonder that Cronin says: 'Whitworth's sanctimonious comment represents the final stage in the British ruling class's characterization of Napoleon. This Corsican, this Jacobin, this ambitious conqueror was to a gentleman. And so he could not be trusted.'[68]

As 'gentlemen' could kill, maim and assassinate with impunity - Napoleon was far better off not being one.

As well as trying to murder Napoleon, the British went big on character assassination. In his book *This Dark Business - The secret war against Napoleon*, Tim Clayton illuminates this policy with stark clarity:

> 'The campaign to vilify 'the Corsican Usurper' was extraordinary. It was hardly unprecedented - William Pitt knew what it was to be picked on, as did George III - but it is difficult to think of anybody in the entire history of the world that had ever previously suffered quite such an intense, extensive and unscrupulously mendacious attack.'[69]

This tide of verbal slurry flowed from the top, from Pitt to the lowest depths. Cronin reminds us that: 'Pitt who had publicly supported the peace, in private denounced Napoleon as a military despot.'[70] On January 18th 1803 *The Times* reviewed Sir Robert Wilson's book, a *History of the British Expedition to Egypt*. Wilson said that Napoleon was a " 'man of such Machiavellian principles', exulting in bloodshed, who with an overdose of opium murdered 580 of his sick troops at Jaffa.' "[71] Naturally, these lies which tainted not only him, but the Consulate and France itself, infuriated Napoleon.

However, Mary Berry, who knew France well, commented on: 'the abuse which is daily vomited forth in all the ministerial and soi-disant impartial papers against Bonaparte and this new order of things. Formerly they said we were fighting and aiding the other side because it was impossible to make peace with an absolutely democratically government; now that an absolutely aristocratical government is established, what is it to us whether Louis Capet or Louis Bonaparte is at its head?'[72] In other words, what right had the English to involve themselves in the internal politics of France? The answer is, of course, none.

Once again, the psychology behind all this is clear: give a dog a bad name and associate him with a pack of lies.

The religious historian Karen Armstrong explains this very succinctly: 'Human beings are irrational creatures. We are not creatures who can make our psyches, our emotions, our fears, our neuroses, subordinate to the dictates of pure reason. We are filled with fears and phobias which we project out of ourselves onto other people.'[73]

Let us remind ourselves where the responsibility for the renewal of war between Great Britain and France rests. In his book *Dreams of Empire*, Paul Fregosi, who is often very critical of Napoleon, states that: 'on May 16, 1803, Britain broke the twenty-month-old Treaty of Amiens, the truce with France. She refused to evacuate Malta, as stipulated in the Treaty…'[74] Frank McLynn, in his biography *Napoleon* says: 'Responsibility for the resumption of hostilities in 1803 is usually laid at Bonaparte's door, but the facts do not bear out this judgment. The fact that the war party in England, led by Pitt but also including the other two of the 'three Williams', Pitt's cousin Grenville and Windham, was out of office, did not significantly alter the basically bellicose thrust of British foreign policy.'[75] Weider in *The Wars Against Napoleon* pulls no punches: 'The resumption of war resulted solely from the deliberate will of the British government. One has only to consider the comment made in person by Prime Minister Addington on the day after the signing of the peace. In front of Parliament, he felt the need to excuse the treaty in these terms: "For the moment, our duty is to preserve our forces. We will conserve them for future occasions, when it will be possible to resume the offensive with hopes of success." These few words summarize the entire warlike philosophy of Britain. Everything else was part of a deceptive rhetoric.'[76] Weider goes on to quote Tsar Alexander: "the British conduct appears to be contrary to the letter of the Treaty of Amiens. What could have motivated them to retain Malta in contravention of solemnly-contracted agreements?"[77] Even the arch Prussian Francophobe Karl August Hardenberg wrote in his memoirs that: "it would have been desirable if England had demonstrated as much goodwill for peace as did Napoleon."[78]

Despite what many British historians say, the whole of Europe knew that it was England that was hellbent on war. And it was also time for more assassination attempts…

A very disgruntled Cadoudal left France after the failed bomb plot with a price of 24,000 Francs on his head.[79] He slunk back across La Manche with more assassination plans up his sleeve to channel his demons in Blighty. When England declared war on France in May 1803 he was running a terrorist training camp at Romsey funded by the British Government in liaison with Windham. Like Talleyrand, Cadoudal's twisted mind was mirrored by a misshapen body. Jonathan North describes him as 'a gigantic Breton' and 'enormous'.[80] Tim Clayton says he was 'built like a bull'.[81] He was squat and stocky and immensely powerful - 'Goliath' to his friends. His ugly head included a broken nose, lurid red sideburns and one grey eye bigger than the other. He was not married; no surprise there then. He was body and soul King Louis XVIII's man - one of the few people who was even more revolting to look at than Cadoudal himself. But Georges loved his Bungy, all twenty stones of him.

Louis had written an unctuous letter to his personal assassin from Mitau which the killer received in London in July 1800:

> 'General, I have learnt with the greatest satisfaction that you have finally escaped from the clutches of the tyrant who so underestimated you that he even offered you a position with him. I was overcome with grief that you were forced into negotiations with him but I never once doubted you. The will of my loyal Bretons, and most particularly yours, is so well known to me. Today, you are free, you are at my brother's side, and my hopes are rising. I need not say more to a true Frenchman such as yourself. Be assured, general, of my esteem, my trust and my high regard. Louis.'[82]

There is no sign here of any regret for the most brutal murder of French citizens in the Christmas Eve bombing. It also reveals, between the lines, Napoleon's magnanimity and generosity to his enemies because he had been prepared to forgive Cadoudal's earlier transgressions if he joined him.

At first Georges had been viewed with suspicion by the authorities in London but he was soon feted and made much of in order to flatter his ego. He was introduced to the great and the good, the movers and the shakers, undoubtedly 'gentlemen' all, and was soon aping the manners and habits of polite society. Georges bought himself fancy clothes and stayed at the best hotels. However, Cadoudal was a man of action and he longed to get back to his killing fields.

In August 1803 he boarded a Spanish vessel and crossed the Channel in the dead of night. Captain Wright, the English commander of the brig *El Vancejo*, transferred Cadoudal and four companions to a rowing boat and they landed near Biville. They stayed at a well-established system of royalist safe houses on their way to Paris. Cadoudal returned to Biville to welcome General Charles Pichegru who, in 1797, had been exiled to French Guiana after a plot to restore the King. His job was to rally disaffected generals to their cause.

Napoleon was well aware that some of his highest ranking officers disliked both the Consulate and the peace treaties he had signed. One of them was 'Pretty Legs' Bernadotte whose nickname betrayed his vanity and the high opinion he had of himself. The First Consul and later Emperor Napoleon continued to be far too lenient with him because he had married Désirée Clary, Napoleon's former sweetheart. Napoleon always had a soft spot for former lovers and as a result of his affection for his old flame he allowed Bernadotte to persist in making inflammatory and incendiary remarks. General Simon, Bernadotte's chief of staff put out divisive and reactionary tracts such as: 'Soldiers! You no longer have a *patrie*; the Republic is dead… Set up a military federation! Let your generals step forward! Let their glory and the glory of their armies command respect! Our bayonets are ready to wreak our vengeance.' [83] Simon was arrested but the hopes of the would-be rebels turned to yet another Breton, Victor Moreau. Moreau vacillated, unwilling to commit himself and it was Pichegru's job to put some iron into his spine.

Cadoudal's plan was for sixty men to dress in hussar uniforms and join Napoleon's next parade at the Place du Carrousel where one of the men would present a petition giving the others the opportunity to stab Napoleon to death like Caesar before him. On February 14th 1804 Réal, the acting head of police, informed Napoleon of the plot. He was shocked to hear that Pichegru was now in Paris and had already met Moreau. Cadoudal's right hand man Bouvet de Lozier had been arrested and had spilled the beans. Bouvet said that Cadoudal and Moreau could not agree on how to proceed and that Moreau did not want a royalist restoration but preferred to replace Napoleon himself. With this impasse it appeared that the conspirators were now waiting for the arrival of a Bourbon prince to head their insurrection. It was imperative to arrest Cadoudal and find out just what he knew. On March 9th Cadoudal was recognised by a policeman while in the process of changing his hideout. Shortly afterwards three policemen tried to arrest him. One was killed and another wounded in the process. Upon being questioned he replied: 'I was to attack the First Consul only when a prince came to Paris. And the prince hasn't yet arrived.' [84]

So it was that the name of the Duc d'Enghien was soon on everyone's lips. We have already covered in detail the events prior to his execution. In essence, he got what he deserved and he must have known of the dangers that his own actions would expose him to.

Napoleon could hardly believe what he was reading as the reports came in to him. A French double-agent called Captain Rosey had visited the British agent Francis Drake in Munich on March 4th and pretended to be involved in yet another plot against the life of the First Consul. He was given £10,117 17s 6d to support this scheme - an absolutely stupendous sum slung around like confetti by a British agent who had about as much attachment to morality, decency and fair play as his illustrious Elizabethan namesake. [85] This largesse occurred when vast numbers of the British poor were virtually starving and lived lives of abject misery.

No wonder Napoleon was staggered by the sheer depravity of it all: 'Let them lead all Europe against me in arms, and I'll defend myself. An attack like that is legitimate. Instead, they try to get

me by blowing up part of Paris and killing or injuring a hundred people; and now they've set forty brigands to assassinate me. For that I'll make them shed tears of blood. I'll teach them to legalize murder.'[86]

Turning to Britain's attack on Copenhagen in 1807, Baron Claude-François De Méneval, Napoleon's secretary, states that: 'One of the most iniquitous and most barbarous acts of English politics, committed shortly after the Treaty of Tilsit, excited general indignation in Europe. An English fleet, freighted with an army of thirty-five thousand men, under the command of General Cathcart, suddenly appeared off the coasts of Denmark, although the Danish government had done nothing whatever to furnish England with a pretext for an attack.'[87] Méneval adds that an English agent simply told the Danish government to hand over its entire fleet to the British Admiral or else see Copenhagen burnt to the ground. He goes on: 'So insolent an ultimatum could not be accepted. Accordingly, on September 2, 1807, a day of sinister memory, there began, without any other formality, the bombardment of the Danish capital, which lasted with horrible intensity for three days. A great part of the city was reduced to ashes, and on the 7th the governor capitulated to avoid its entire destruction.'[88] The British commandeered sixty ships and destroyed everything that they could not steal. Méneval summarises this atrocity with the statement that: 'The general feeling in Europe was one of indignant reprobation for this act of savage violence.'[89]

British despatches from Copenhagen are coldly clinical and ignore with blithe insouciance the deaths and suffering they caused to innocent Danish civilians. Brigadier General Von Der Decken in a report to the Honourable Lord Cathcart dated from Head-Quarters, before Copenhagen, September 2, 1807, states that: 'I left Friedericksweerk this Morning at Five o'Clock, and found myself soon after attacked almost in all the villages by Peasants armed with Forks, delivered for that Purpose by the Danish Government, the greater Part on Foot, but some on Horseback. The Dragoons took about Fifty of these Peasants and Five Horses without any Loss on our Side. On receiving Information that all the roads in the Woods before and behind Friedriskswerk were full of peasants (some of which were armed with Rifles), I changed my Road by marching to the left, where the Ground is open, and I discharged the Peasants after explaining to them the Object of our being in this Country.'[90]

Wellington wrote a despatch from Head-Quarters before Copenhagen, September 3, 1807, recalling that: '…I found the Enemy in Force on the North Side of the Town [Kioge] and Rivulet, and they commenced a Cannonade upon the Patroles of Hussars in my front… The Enemy soon retired to an Entrenchment which they had formed in Front of a Camp on the North Side of Kioge… and forced the Enemy to retreat into the Town in Disorder. They were followed immediately in the most gallant Style by Col. Reden and his Hussars…The Loss of the Enemy has been very great, many have fallen, and there are nearly Sixty Officers, and One Thousand One Hundred Men Prisoners…I can't close this Letter without expressing to your Lordship my Sense of the good Conduct of the Troops…'[91]

All this talk of the 'Enemy' came from a man attacking a neutral country without even a declaration of war. Perhaps he was 'just obeying orders'… As Wellington glorifies his victory over mainly clog-wearing peasants bravely doing their best to protect their home and families from this egregious attack, the sheer immorality of the whole episode stinks to high heaven.

Munch-Petersen reminds us early on in his book *Defying Napoleon* of 'the three partitions of Poland of 1774, 1793 and 1795, which had incrementally wiped one of the largest states in Europe off the map and divided its territories between Austria, Prussia and Russia.'[92] So we must take the assertions of those historians who try to portray these nations as mere victims of Napoleon and France with a large pinch of salt. However, Munch-Petersen calls him: 'that past master of double dealing and bad faith'[93] - so he is certainly not beneficently disposed towards Napoleon from the start. Yet, only two pages later, in regard to the build-up to the Treaty of Tilsit in 1807, he states

that: ‘Napoleon signalled during the armistice negotiations that no surrender of Russian territory would be demanded…’ [94] That, in itself, was extremely lenient treatment for a Russia crushed by the French at Friedland and with thousands of French troops on the Russian border. Time after time, as we have seen, Napoleon allowed the kings and emperors who had *attacked* him to remain on their bloodstained thrones despite their warmongering and their duplicitous double-dealing which inevitably came to an inglorious end upon the battlefield. He was far too soft for his own good.

It was as if King George III had had a premonition, because when he was informed of the plan to attack Copenhagen, for once he gave some sound advice. Castlereagh the Secretary of War had by now taken over the detailed planning of the operation and on July 17th 1807 he had sent a report to the monarch. George's reply on July 18th took everyone by surprise. The King was: ‘confident that his ministers will see with him the necessity of proceeding with temper and caution and of avoiding any violent step adopted towards Denmark, which may appear unprovoked, to force that power into the arms of France and give weight to the attempts of France to induce Russia to join with her in a league of northern powers against this country’.[95]

Prime Minister Portland met with the King on July 20th and emphasized the importance of seeing the mission succeed. George seems reluctantly to have bowed to pressure and agreed. Yet Munch-Petersen says that: ‘George remained opposed to the assault on Denmark.’[96] However, after a conversation with Canning in August, the Foreign Secretary wrote to his wife: “Good knobs! He is really very respectable with all his scruples. ‘I am afraid Your Majesty is still shocked at the immorality of the measure.’ ‘Yes-yes-I have not altered my opinion. It is a very immoral act. So immoral that I won’t ask who originated it. I have determined not to ask that question.’ But all this in the most perfect good humour, laughing even at his own difficulties - but determined honestly to declare his opinion.”[97]

So George III allowed himself to be ‘persuaded’ against his better judgment. It was as if Canning was some sort of secular priest and the King had salved his conscience by confessing that he had sanctioned the mass murder of countless innocent civilians in a neutral foreign state.

Writing in 2007, Munch-Petersen draws parallels between the bombardment of Copenhagen in 1807 and the Iraq War of 2003.[98] Bush and Blairs’ illegal war led to the deaths of well over 100,000 Iraqi civilians. Thankfully, there is no record of Canning claiming that the Danish fleet could attack Great Britain in ‘45 minutes’ - although the claims he did make in Parliament after listening to a ragtag group of agents, spies, envoys and ambassadors, were just as fanciful.

Concerning the bombardment itself, the statements of many eyewitnesses leads to grim reading. Lieutenant-Colonel George Murray, the deputy quartermaster-general, wanted nothing less than widespread slaughter and utter devastation. In a report he sent to Cathcart, he concluded: ‘…that our principal reliance must be upon the effect of a bombardment, and that we must either endeavour by that means to destroy the Danish fleet, or force the government to surrender it into our hands’.[99] His report contains lurid details: ‘If it is found by experience that the destruction of the fleet is actually not within the power of our mortar batteries, we must then of necessity resort to the harsh measure of forcing the town into our terms, by the sufferings of the inhabitants themselves. But to give this mode of attack its fullest effect, it is necessary completely to invest the place, and oblige by that means, all persons of whatever description, to undergo the same hardships and dangers’.[100]

In his book *The Two Battles of Copenhagen 1801 and 1807*, Gareth Glover gives many eyewitness accounts of the bombardment. When it began at 7.30 p.m. on September 2nd: ‘The Danish populace were caught completely by surprise, people were enjoying the evening warmth and strolling in the King’s Garden whilst the bands played and children frolicked in the streets. All of a sudden, shells and rockets streaked through the sky, causing instant horror and panic.’ He gives telling detail when he says: ‘One of the tactics used by the British gunners was to shell the areas

where fires had taken hold, specifically to hamper Danish attempts to extinguish the fires and caused the deaths and injuries of many of the Danish firefighters who were trying to prevent their spread.' Such specific cruelty should be borne in mind when we look at the subsequent remorse expressed by those doing the killing.

Captain Leach felt that: 'Callous and insensible must he have been who could have walked through the streets and witnessed the horrors occasioned by the bombardment, and the misery inflicted on thousands of the unoffending inhabitants, without bitterly regretting that our government should have considered it necessary to adopt such rigorous measures.' Captain William Gomm remarked that: 'The sight was dreadful, but it was truly magnificent…Do us justice to believe that we felt the horror of this scene in all its extent; and imagine us at the same time redoubling our exertions as the calamity increased, and throwing showers of shells towards the parts where the fire raged most to render ineffectual the means employed to extinguish it.'

Not only was the Danish fleet stolen but, according to Glover, naval stores to the value of £320,000 or £15 million in 2018 value, were pillaged by the British: 'The general naval stores were loaded on ninety-two merchant vessels allocated for this purpose. The weight of the stores exceeded 20,000 tons, a remarkable feat. Wellesley, had claimed 'every stick' and it appears that they took him at his word, taking even the stoves, the office furniture, books and maps.' It was literally daylight robbery.

The prize money given out to the thieving band of British brothers was incredible. Cathcart got £4,800 (worth £150,000 in 2018), and Gambier £2,720 (£100,000). An ordinary private got £6 (£250) and an able seaman £3 8 shillings (£150). Not a bad reward for the mass terror bombing of a peaceful civilian population. If we had the detailed personal accounts of the hundreds of victims and what they suffered as we have for the victims of the Christmas Eve bombing in Paris, these harrowing facts would be even more horrific. Every human life is precious but to the British pirates who spilt gallons of Danish blood over a nightmare three day period, they were paid a fortune for their butchery.

Britannia ruled the waves and waived the rules and it is sad to say that there were no adverse consequences for the British Government other than that their already bad reputation across Europe was left in the meanest gutter. Denmark never recovered from this attack and her economy was left in ruins.

Not surprisingly, and just as George III had feared: 'Denmark signed a formal treaty of alliance with France at Fontainebleau on 31 October 1807…' All this was the result of an asinine and vindictive foreign policy enacted by callous, self-important idiots, who managed to 'achieve' the exact opposite of what they had intended. The Danes now hated the British and who could blame them?

The Opposition in Westminster were quick to condemn the bombardment: "The gain in ships, argued Grey, was but 'a poor compensation' for the loss of national character and the enmity of every other power in Europe 'which, I fear, must be the result of this act of violence and injustice'." In a debate devoted to the expedition against Copenhagen on February 3rd 1808: '…George Ponsonby, delivered a robust defence of Denmark. The Danes would have chosen war with France rather than with Britain, he claimed, 'if the rashness and precipitation' of the British government in presenting Jackson's insulting ultimatum had not forced them to take the contrary path'."

Incompetence and ineptitude stalked the halls of Whitehall from the royal palaces to the Houses of Westminster. Never in the field of human politics has so much been given to so few for so little. Rank privilege ruined our country. As to the man who sat at the very top, an American historian Richard B. Morris gives us a telling summary: 'After ascending the throne in 1760, George III proved notably different from early Hanoverians. He wanted to rule as well as reign, but had neither the temperament nor capacity for the role. His kingly manner concealed inner tension and a

smoldering temper. Moralistic, snobbish, censorious, he combined a mulish inflexibility with an almost pathological conscientiousness in performing his duties. Moreover, a liver ailment caused his to suffer periods of insanity.'

C. 2025
John Tarttelin

British Atrocities - Notes

1. ‘Drain the Oceans: Secrets of New York City’ TV Series 2 Episode 7. Dr. Warren Riess (Maritime archaeologist, University of Maine).
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid. Professor Robert Watson (Historian, Lyon University, Florida). See *The Ghost Ship of Brooklyn: An Untold Story of the American Revolution (Da Capo Press 2017).*
6. Narrator on ‘Drain the Oceans’ Series 2 Episode 7.
7. Professor Watson ‘Drain the Oceans’ Series 2 Episode 7.
8. https://www.history.com/topics/american-revolution/the-hms-jersey
9. Ibid.
10. Ebenezer Fox quoted in the *Journal of the American Revolution* March 11, 2019 *Walking Skeletons:Starvation On Board the Jersey Prison Ship*. By Katie Turner.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid.
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17. Ibid. James E. Held
18. Ibid. James E. Held
19. Long Island Genealogy: *Martyrdom of thirteen thousand American Patriots aboard the monstrous Jersey and other British prison ships in New York Harbor.* Originally appearing in “New York State - The battleground of the Revolutionary War” by Hamilton Fish c. 1976 Vantage Press.
20. Ibid.
21. Compact Oxford English Dictionary (OUP Third Edition 2008) p. 650
22. Orwell George *A Collection of Essays* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 1970) p. 191
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24. Ibid. p. 9
25. Cronin Vincent, *Napoleon* (Penguin Books, Harmondsworth, 1982) First published 1971. p. 278
26. Ibid. p. 278
27. Ibid. p. 278
28. Ibid. p. 278
29. Weider op.cit. p. 24
30. Ibid. ps. 24-25
31. Ibid. p. 25
32. Bowes Museum, Barnard Castle, County Durham, England DN12 8NP. Tel: 01833 690606 www.thebowesmuseum.org.uk
33. North Jonathan, *Killing Napoleon*, (Amberley, Stroud, 2019) p. 18
34. Ibid. p. 36
35. De la Huerta Carlos, *The Great Conspiracy*, (Amberley, Stroud, 2016) p. 126 calls her Pensol; Weider op.cit., just mentions a ‘little girl’ p. 25; Jonathan North op.cit., says she was ‘Marianne

Peusol' p. 142; Vincent Cronin op.cit., also calls her 'Pensol' p. 293. In the TV programme '*Bloody Tales From History*' first shown on the Discovery History Channel on April 8th 2013, the presenter Suzannah Lipscomb looked at the original police reports kept at the Prefecture Archives in central Paris. Case notes still exist in a series of massive files containing eye-witness statements, post-mortems and crime scene analysis: 'amazing files, the sort of detective work you'd expect today'. She adds that: 'The murdered girl was called Alexandrine from her mother's statement.'

36. Cronin, op.cit. p. 295
37. Weider, op.cit. p. 25
38. North, op.cit. p. 154
39. Ibid. p. 173
40. Ibid. p. 176
41. Noël Colonel Jean-Nicolas-Auguste *With Napoleon's Guns* (Frontline Books, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, 2016) p. 36
42. Ibid. p. 37
43. Weider op.cit. p. 11
44. Cronin op.cit. p. 279
45. bartleby.com Great Books Online *The World's Famous Orations Great Britain II* (1780-1806) IV. On the Refusal to Negotiate with France (1800) Charles James Fox (1749-1806)
46. Ibid.
47. Cronin op.cit p. 279
48. Clayton Tim *This Dark Business* The secret war against Napoleon (Little, Brown, London, 2018) p. 116
49. Ibid. p. 116
50. Ibid. p. 117
51. Elting John R. *Swords Around A Throne* (George Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1989) ps. 504-505
52. Strawson John *The Duke and The Emperor* (Constable, London 1994) p. 82
53. Ibid. p. 83
54. Ibid. p. 83
55. Ibid. p. 83
56. De La Huerta op. cit. p. 147
57. Ibid. p.147
58. Cronin op.cit. p. 283
59. Ibid. p. 277
60. Ibid. p. 282
61. Ibid. p. 282
62. Ibid. p. 285
63. Ibid. p. 285
64. Ibid. p. 287
65. Ibid. p. 288
66. Ibid. p. 288
67. Ibid. ps. 286-287
68. Ibid. p. 287
69. Clayton op.cit. p. 201
70. Cronin op.cit. p. 281
71. Ibid. p. 283
72. Ibid. p. 281

73. Karen Armstrong quoted in the TV film The Devil - The Unauthorised Biography. Series I Episode 2 *Hell on Earth* First shown March 29th 1998.
74. Fregosi Paul *Dreams of Empire* (Hutchinson, London, 1989) p. 216
75. McLynn Frank *Napoleon* (Pimlico, London, 1998) p. 264
76. Weider op.cit. p. 93
77. Ibid. p. 94
78. Ibid. p. 94
79. Huerta op.cit. p.130
80. North op.cit. p. 26 and p. 28
81. Clayton op.cit. p. 87
82. North op.cit. p. 68
83. Cronin op. cit. p. 297
84. Ibid. p. 298
85. Ibid. p. 299
86. Ibid. p. 299-300
87. Méneval Baron Claude-François, *Working With Napoleon* (Enigma Books, New York, 2011) p. 222
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95. Ibid. p. 111
96. Ibid. p. 111
97. Ibid. ps 111-112
98. Ibid. p. ix
99. Ibid. p. 195
100. Ibid. p. 195
101. Glover Gareth *The Two Battles of Copenhagen 1801and 1807* (Pen And Sword Military, Barnsley, South Yorkshire, 2018) p. 151
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110. Munch-Petersen op. cit. p. 234
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