

ASSOCIATION  
FOR PRESERVING  
LIBERTY AND PROPERTY  
AGAINST  
REPUBLICAN LEVELLERS.

*At a Meeting of Gentlemen, at the Crown and  
Anchor Tavern, November 20, 1792.*

*JOHN REEVES, Esquire, in the Chair.*

*The following Considerations were entered into  
and agreed upon.*

**C**ONSIDERING the danger to which the Public Peace and Order are exposed by the circulating of mischievous opinions, founded upon plausible but false reasoning; and that this circulation is principally carried on by the industry of Clubs and Societies of various denominations in many parts of the kingdom;

It appears to us, That it is now become the duty of all persons who wish well to their Native Country, to endeavour, in their several neighbourhoods, to prevent the sad effects of such mischievous industry; and that it will greatly tend to promote these good endeavours, if Societies were formed in different parts of the kingdom, whose object should be to support the Laws, to suppress seditious Publications, and to defend our Persons and Property against the innovations and depredations that seem to be threatened by those who maintain the mischievous opinions before alluded to.

These opinions are conveyed in the terms, The Rights of Man—Liberty and Equality, No King—No Parliament—and others of the like import; all of them, in the sense imposed on them, expressing sentiments in direct opposition to the Laws of this Land, and some of them such as are inconsistent with the well-being of Society under any laws whatsoever.

It appears to us, the tendency of these opinions is, that we are voluntarily to surrender every thing we now possess, our Religion and our Laws, our Civil Government and Civil Society, and that we are to trust to the formation of something new, upon the principles of Equality, and under the auspices of speculative men, who have conceived ideas of perfection that never yet were known in the world: and it appears, that the Missionaries of this Sect are aiming at effecting the overthrow of the present system of Government and Society, by infusing into the minds of ignorant men causes of discontent adapted to their various stations, some of which causes are wholly imaginary, and the rest are such as inseparably belong to civil life; have existed, and ever will exist, under all forms of government; cannot be removed by any change, and will be aggravated and multiplied, a hundred fold, by the change proposed.

It appears from History and Observation, that the inequality of rank and fortune in this happy country, is more the result of every man's own exertions, than of any con-

trouling institution of the State. Men become great, who have greatly distinguished themselves by the application of talents natural or acquired. Men become rich, who have persevered with industry in the application to Trade and Commerce, to Manufactures, and other useful Employments. How many persons now of great rank and fortune, who were born without either! How many rich Merchants and Traders, who began their career in the lowest employments of the shop and counting-house!

In their progress to this advancement they have all, in their stations contributed their share towards the shew of opulence, both public and private, which is to be seen in every part of this Island. It is by the effects of this industry, that the gentleman is enabled to support his rank and station, and the Merchant and Tradesman to employ his Clerks, Journeymen and Apprentices.—Hence comes the price of the Farmer's corn, and the wages of servants of every description. By this happy inequality, and dependance of one man on another, employment is found for all, in their several vocations, to which they have been called by design or accident. This inequality and dependance is so infinitely diversified in this country, that there is no place upon earth where there are so many ways, by which a man by his talents and industry may raise himself above his equals. This has hitherto been thought a pre-eminent happiness that was peculiar to our elves, and ought to be cherished; it has been ascribed to the protecting influence which property has always enjoyed under equal laws; and it has increased of late years in a wonderful degree, by the prosperity which was caused, and can only be continued by the same influence.

We are, upon the fullest deliberation, of opinion, that proposing to pull down this goodly fabric, which has been gradually reared by the successive virtue and industry of all the great and good men who have lived in this Island for centuries, and to submit to begin afresh upon a new system of Equality, as it is called, seems a proposition that can be suggested only by the most undisguised wickedness, and entertained by the grossest folly.

Because, if so wild a plan was to be carried into execution, and all men were made equal, they would, from that moment begin to struggle, who should first rise above his equals; and it is beyond all question, if there was any industry, or any virtue; if there was peace, and public prosperity; if there was private happiness and public, in such new formed Society, there would gradually arise an inequality of rank and fortune.

We foresee, from recent experiment in a neighbouring Country, that in the operation of bringing to pass such a transition, the lives and properties of all persons in this Island would be exposed to the arbitrary disposal of self-opinionated Philosophers, and a wild and needy Mob, deluded and in-

stigated by them: That, with the introduction of Equality in Rank and Fortune, an expectation would be raised in the Lower Orders, which must first be gratified with plunder, and afterwards would sink into a state of disappointment and abject poverty. When all are equalized, there would no longer be a superfluity to pay the hire of Servants, or purchase the production of Art or Manufacture; no Commerce, no Credit, no resource for the active, but in robbery, and all those public disorders which make life miserable. Thus would the present generation be certainly ruined; that which is to follow could not propose to itself a remedy, but in pursuing the same Arts of Peace which had been so capriciously abandoned; and the more they prospered in that pursuit, the more they would contribute to re-produce the Inequality which had been before condemned and exploded.—Where then are the blessings of this Reform? and to what purpose is misery to be brought on the present Generation?

It is with grief we see, that, in a neighbouring Country, the carrying into practice of this wild doctrine of Equality, and the Rights of Man, has already produced these evils, and others ten thousand times greater. It is not yet publicly known, nor can it enter into the gentle heart of a Briton to conceive, the number of atrocious crimes against God and Man, that have been committed in support of these opinions. Murders and assassinations have been deliberately planned, and justified by some of these pretended Philosophers, as the means to attain their ends of reform. With all their pretences and promises, they have proceeded to violate every right, Civil and Natural, that should have been observed towards their equals; the people, who have only changed their masters, groan under new tyrannies of which they never heard or dreamed, and are subjected to the chastisement of one desperate Leader after another. The excesses of these ruffian Demagogues have no bounds: they have already surpassed the wildest phrenzies of Fanaticism, Superstition, and Enthusiasm, plundering and murdering at home, and propagating their opinions by the sword in foreign countries, imposture, fallacy, falsehood, and bloodshed; their Philosophy is the idle talk of School-boys, and their actions are the savage ferociousness of Wild Beasts.

Such are the new Lights, and the false Philosophy of our pretended Reformers; and such the effects they have produced, where alone they have unfortunately been tried.—But, however, these poor pretences may have imposed on the understandings of men, in a neighbouring Country, bred in ignorance, oppression, and poverty, they can have no influence on the good sense and gravity of Britons, who have been used to the enjoyments of true Liberty, and every day feel the blessings of abundance, derived from a productive industry, protected by equal laws, and a Free Government.