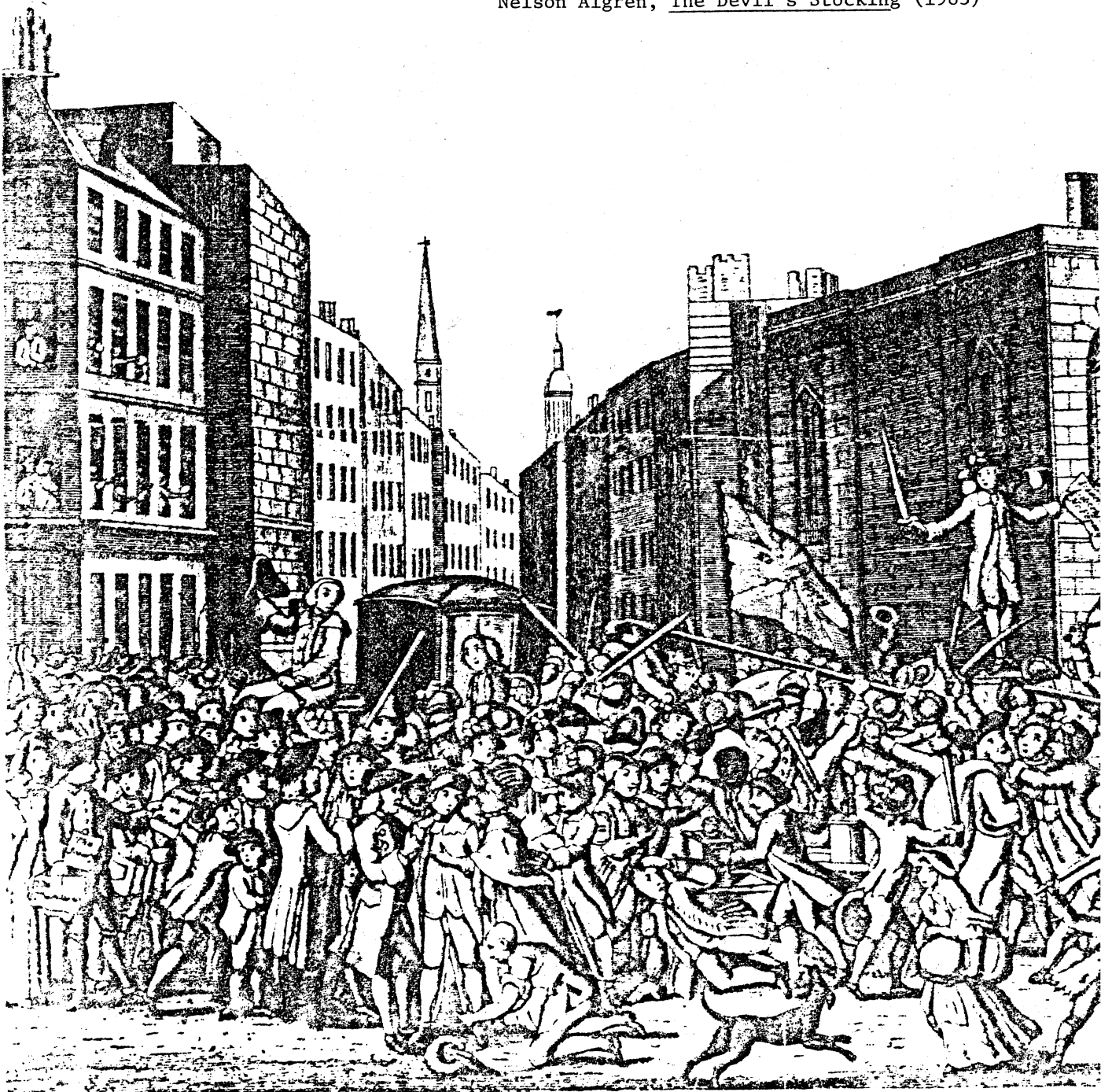


The Delivery

6 June 1780

*"Unscrew the locks from the doors!
Unscrew the doors themselves from their jambs!"*
Allen Ginsberg, Howl (1956)

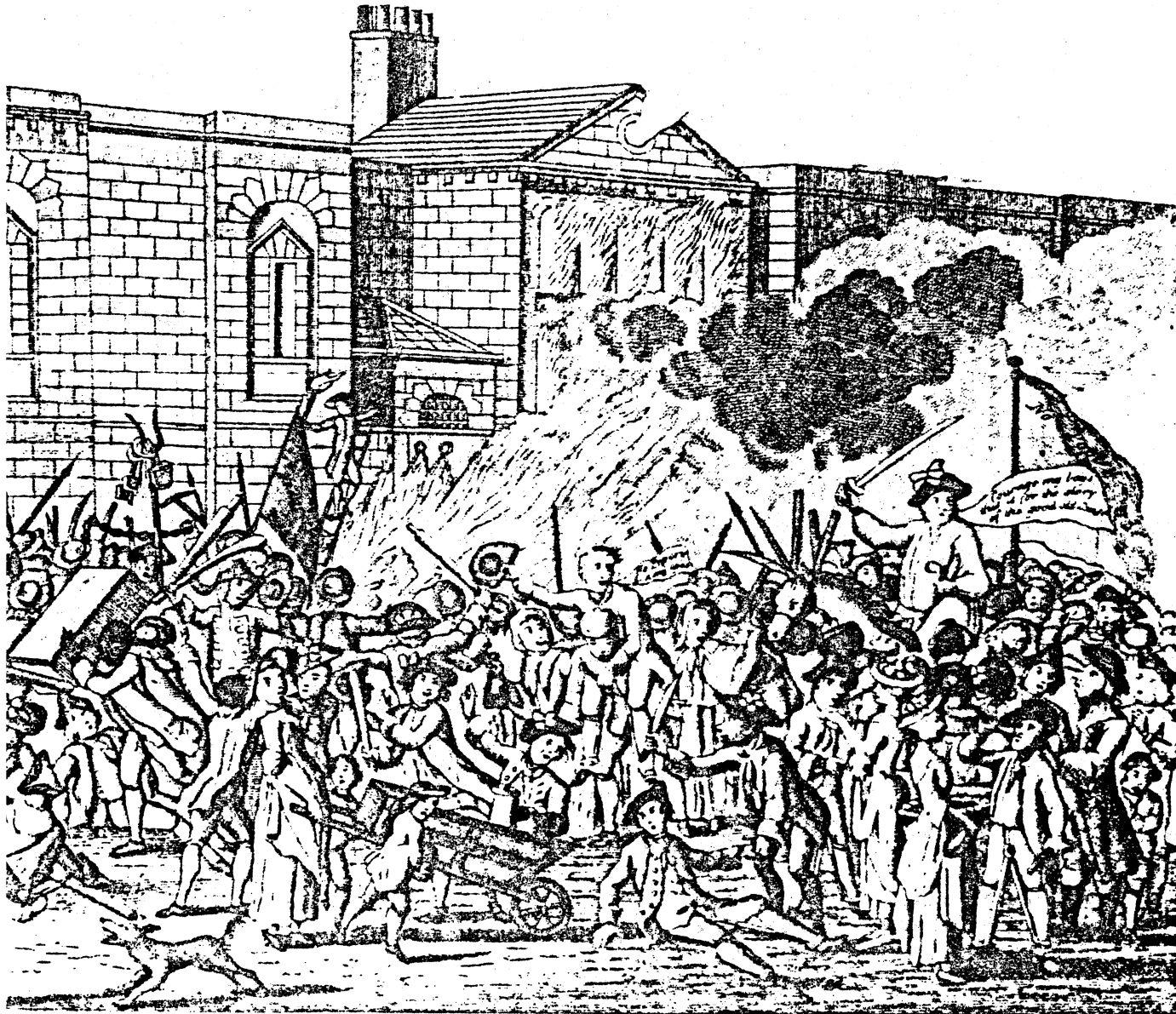
*"'What good is a man who never gets locked up?' Flash wanted to know.
'He just ain't living up to his human potential if he don't.'"*
Nelson Algren, The Devil's Stocking (1983)



of Newgate

We present here a short docu-drama about a neglected episode in what historians have called "The Gordon Riots" that transpired in London two hundred years ago. It raises themes of law, police, technology, and freedom that are more directly considered in other parts of this issue. The tale itself is based on documentary evidence that we would gladly supply

interested readers. We hope that readers may wish to enliven these pages by reading them aloud - for many English, American, African, and Afro-American accents would be quite suitable.



Introduction

As the English ruling class extended its rule to India, Africa, the West Indies, and Canada in the 18th century, ever vaster sums of wealth were hoarded into its hands. With greater wealth came greater misery. As the wealth of the conquerors increased, the rebellions of the miserable did likewise: Mutinies aboard slave ships, the "Sanyasin" revolt in Bangla Desh, the "Whiteboy" outrages among Irish cottiers, slave warfare among the maroons of Surinam, wage-struggles in English manufactories, anti-enclosure rioting in the English countryside, and a revolutionary war of Independence in the American colonies.

What the ruling class had sown around the globe, it would reap in a whirlwind that swirled into the metropolis of Great Britain in the first week of June 1780. Then, the aristocrats were insulted on their way to Parliament, and robbed in broad daylight. A furious mob attacked the Bank of England and ransacked the house of the Lord Chief Justice. Artillery was implaced to protect the stock exchange. 15,000 troops were mustered around the city. The prisons were burnt and the prisoners therein liberated. Not since the Peasant's Revolt of 399 years earlier had the people of London taken the law into their own hands and opened the prisons.

On a normal day in London, the streets would be full of the many cries of hawkers:

I'm come this afternoon to play
you a merry tune.
I'll make you all as merry as I can.
Pray give something to the poor man.

Buy all my eels
Buy a dish of great eels.

Buy a broom
A birch broom or a heath broom

Buy my shrimps
Come buy my shrimps

Buy beef, a good fat piece of beef
Hooa!

On the night before Newgate was "delivered" His Britannic Majesty, George III, celebrated his birthday, and those close enough to his palace may have heard the civilized sounds of the harpischord, the tinkle of crystal, the swish of silk, or the laughter of courtiers. Newspapers reported on this agreeable occasion:

Amongst the ladies...Lady Parker attracted the eyes of every one: she was dressed in a lilac and silver superbly trimmed with variegated silver gauze interspersed with tiffany and foil. The gentlemen's dresses were for the

greater part chiefly spring silks, flowered and plain, with tissue waistcoats...

Their majesties came into the ball-room last night soon after nine o'clock and after paying their compliments to the foreign ministers and the nobility around the circle, the minuets began. About 20 minuets were danced, which were succeeded by country dances and cotillions.

Across town, in Newgate dungeon, many hundreds had to celebrate the birthday - if inclined to do so at all - in utmost misery, yet they had their sense of humor. They dwelt in "the King's Head Inn." They were said "to polish the King's iron with their eyebrows." Their "vulgar tongue" had many names for this famous prison: the Whit or Whittington's College, City College, the Boarding School, the Sheriff's Hotel, the Chequer Inn, the Old Start, Little Ease, Nask, Queer Ken, Quod, Limbo, Trib(short for tribulation), the Repository, the Stone Jug, the Stone Tavern.

On the following day, the notable 6 June 1780, the prison was attacked, the prisoners freed, and the place burnt down. Such a shocking sight drew the attention of many eminent people, such as Jeremy Bentham, and a handful of poets, such as Sam Johnson, William Cowper, and George Crabbe whose description begins with the attack upon the goal-keeper's adjoining house:

They set fire to Akerman's house, broke in, and threw every piece of furniture into the street, firing them also in an instant. The engines came, but were only suffered to preserve the private houses near the prison . . . By 8 o'clock Akerman's house was in flames. I went too close to it, and never saw anything so dreadful. The prison was a remarkably strong building, but, determined to force it, they broke the gates with crows and other instruments, and climbed up the outside of the cell part, which joins the two great wings of the building, where the felons were confined: and I stood where I plainly saw their operations. They broke the roof, tore away the rafters, and having got ladders they descended. Not Orpheus himself had more courage or better luck: flames all around them, and a body of soldiers expected, they defied and laughed at all opposition. The prisoners escaped. I stood and saw about twelve women and eight men ascend from their confinement to the open air, and they were conducted through the street in chains. Three of these were to be hanged on Friday. At Akerman's house, now a mere shell of brickwork, they kept a store of flame for other purposes. It became red-hot, and the doors and windows appeared like the entrance to so many volcanoes. With some difficulty they then fired the debtor's prison, broke the doors, and they, too, all made their escape . . . Newgate was at this time open to all: anyone might get out.

I did both; for the people were now chiefly lookers on. The mischief was done, and the doers of it gone to another part of the town.

Another poet was there, William Blake, but he was young (23) and wisely chose to withhold the publication of his views of the scene until many years afterwards. It was a year of freedom for him. He had finished his apprenticeship and was in love. He also took part in the storming of the goal, a participant, not an observer. When he did write up his views, he adopted mythic and prophetic tones:

*I know thee, I have found thee, & I will not /
let thee go:*

*Thou art the image of God who dwells /
in darkness of Africa,
And thou art fall'n to give me life /
in regions of dark death.*

*On my American plains I feel the /
struggling afflictions
Endur'd by roots that writhe their arms /
into the nether deep.*

*Friends of America! Look over the /
Atlantic Sea
A bended bow is lifted in Heaven, & a /
heavy iron chain
Descends, link by link, from Albion's cliffs /
across the sea, to bind
Brothers and sons of America till /
our faces pale and yellow,
Heads deprest, voices weak, eyes downcast, /
hands work-bruis'd,
Feet bleeding on the sultry sands, and the /
furrows of the whip
Descend to generations that in future times /
forget.*

*The King of England looking Westward /
trembles at the vision.*

Certainly, he was right to place the subject in a trans-Atlantic setting, because the inhabitants of Newgate, as well as their deliverers, were from the four corners of the ocean.

The Delivery

Many hundreds were freed from Newgate. Many hundreds of others were freed in the days following from other prisons, King's Bench, the Fleet, Marshalsea, and other places of confinement, crimping houses and debtor's lock-ups. Most of those freed from Newgate, about whom we have sparse but exact knowledge thanks to trial records, had been incarcerated for crimes against property. They were Have Nots found guilty for trying to have what the Haves had. True, some were in for murder, like, Albert Lowe who lived in Shadwell. He was a jealous husband. At 3:00 AM when the "gold finders" or "tom turd men" came to empty the necessary houses, an occasion known as the "wedding," he quarrelled with his wife. "Don't believe him," she appealed to a neighbor, "for

he is a savage." He kicked and stamped upon her, and she expired from these wounds.

There were many kinds of property crimes. Some were highwaymen, the most glamorous of offenders. Two of the highwaymen, Humphreys and Sparrow were soldiers, who in London had deserted their regiments. One robbed a tripe-and-offal shop-keeper of his silver watch and chain. "Money or your life" was the terse command. Three of the highwaymen were Irish. Pat Doyle robbed the 18 year old son of the Earl of Denbigh as he was going from dinner in Soho Square to the playhouse.

Quite a few were housebreakers or burglars who practised either the "dub law," gaining entrance to places of private property by means of keys, or the "crack lay," achieving the same goal by means of force. As the wealth of the London bourgeoisie or middle class increased in private consumption hoards (silver, silks), rum dubbing increased accordingly, as Parliamentary committees noted. These cracksmen were refined technicians of appropriation.

William Bagnall was a watch-spring maker who had been in constant employment for six years. He was found guilty of many indictments, generally breaking and entering tailors' shops. The wife of one victim and the judges at Old Bailey were astonished to find the door of her house locked and the key still on the inside after the lock had been picked and the shop robbed. Sarah Stilwell was the servant to a wealthy silk mercer. She stole from him 19 yards of black silk, some was bombazeen and some were remnants. She was caught with a number of keys, keys that would unlock boxes kept out of doors and to tea chests that were kept below stairs. She was sentenced to death.

William Trubshaw, William Million, and James Steward were rum dubbers. They robbed an attorney in Lincoln's Inn, successfully picking the locks to his front door and to each room in his house. When the police searched Trubshaw's lodgings they found 30 keys, a dark lantern, a strong screw driver, and a tinder box. Trubshaw sold a dozen picklock keys to Steward. Steward was a watch-maker by trade who passed the idle moments of his evenings by filing keys. Million was found with fifty different pick lock keys in his possession.

James Penticross stole 36 yards of silk ribbon and 48 yards of silk gauze from a Smithfield warehouse. The doors of the warehouse were found open, and the owner's key would not work the locks. "I keep a key to go in in the morning," he said, "I do not book the goods over night." Penticross was found with three picklock keys "one of which fitted the lock very well." He had worked at an old iron shop.

It is obvious from the trial records that a lot of people took things that didn't belong to them because they had no choice. Some were

hungry, such as Mary Dyer, who found a door open one evening to a house in Charing Cross. The mistress of the household discovered her upon all fours underneath the kitchen table with a loaf of bread under each arm. She was taken to Justice Hyde's (whose house was destroyed 6-7 June 1780).

Others had had a hard time meeting the demands of the landlords, like Mary Jones, who worked in a slum "in making umbrellas." She did not earn enough "to make up her rent." She robbed a fellow lodger of her linen gown and sold it to an old clothes dealer. Or Alice Bellamy, who used to carry a sedan chair. She had been out of work. She too had "a great deal of distress" to pay her rent. She stole a pottage pot.

Quite a number were locked up for 'crimes' arising from trade disputes or disputes with particular employers. Thus, after James Naylor was dismissed over a wage dispute with a master grocer he took 41 lbs. of sugar from him. Or, Andrew Breeme who destroyed his master's tailoring workshop, because his master had become an "advertizing tailor" and paid impossible wages to the journeymen.

The most common trade dispute resulting in imprisonment had to do with "the oldest profession." Many prostitutes were freed from Newgate on 6th June, including Mary Cunningham ("I am a misfortunate girl of the town") who was paid in bad shillings by a "gentleman," and she was imprisoned for passing them off. A salesman at Leadenhall Market testified against Sarah Lynch: "I went in after my hat; they shut the door, and pulled up their clothes, and wanted me to have to do with them, and the prisoner unbuttoned my breeches, and took the bag of money out of my pocket." A recruiting sergeant lost his Colonel's money in these circumstances: Esther Hale "came and stood by me, and unbuttoned both the buttons of my breeches, and took my purse out." "They were very roomy breeches, made two years ago when they wore them very large; macaroni breeches I believe they call them." She fled to the Magpie where there were "many kind of ruffian-men" who were no friends to a recruiting sergeant.

Abigail Perfect went with a man who was the steward to the captain of a man-of-war, to her lodgings where he lost his silver watch and a pair of silver shoe buckles. The watchman named Tankard would not credit the theft. In court the steward said that she swore "as much ever I heard a sailor in my life time." When Mary Riley was asked by her landlady why she not robbed James Moore, a frequent visitor to her bed, previously, she said it was because he was a "particular friend." Later, she did rob him of his silver shoe buckles. In court he refused to testify against her: "I do not wish to hurt her she did her business so well; I love her too well to think of hurting her."

She was found "Not Guilty" but had not been released from Newgate, because she could not pay the exit fees.

We can conclude our description of the gaol-proletariat by mentioning the name of Lucy Johnson, or "Black Lucy" as she was known, owe to her color. She had robbed a Suffolk Schoolmaster. He was in Chick Lane looking for a second-hand waistcoat. "Black Lucy" invited him to accompany her to an Irish lodging house, run by Hannah Doyle. He accepted. No sooner was he inside than "Black Lucy" threw him to the floor, virtually throttled him, ripped open his breeches, and robbed him of a guinea and 8 half crowns. She was apprehended, gaoled, and when she sent word to him to "make it up" he refused. There were other nationalities in Newgate, Italians and Jews for instance, the Irish have been noted, but of most significance were the Africans. Your bleached history of England ignores this, yet people of color are decisive in British history, as ought to be known. Another Black woman, Charlotte Gardiner, was most forward on the 7 June in pulling down a house in Tower Hill. She led a mob with two men carrying bells and frying pans in a noisy procession. She was heard at this house shouting,

Huzza, well done, my boys, knock it down, down with it. Bring more wood to the fire.

and she was seen taking two brass candlesticks out of the dining room.

Let us turn from the 'delivered' to the 'deliverers.' These were led by Afro-Americans. The Afro population of London in 1780 comprised about 7% of the population. Already its influence on London talk, drinking, and club life was felt.

Contributions to talk included "scavey" for knowledge, "Kickerapoo" for dead, and some sayings directly relevant to the theory of justice and property, such as, "takee no stealee," "no leevée, me takee," and "catchee no havee." Brandy, water, and sugar, or "bumbo," was an Afro contribution. The people of Newgate, as those of London as a whole, can be likened to another popular drink, called "All Nations," since it was a composition collected in a single vessel into which all the dregs and drainings of a dram shop's pots and bottles were emptied.

The London African population, perforce, organized its own clubs. A newspaper reported: Among the sundry fashionable routs or clubs, that are held in town, that of the Blacks is not least. On Wednesday night last, no less than fifty-seven of them, men and women, supped, drank, and entertained themselves with dancing, and music, consisting of violins, and other instruments, at a public house in Fleet-Street, till four in the morning. No Whites were allowed to be present, for all the performers were Blacks.

Benjamin Bowsey and John Glover, two leaders of the attack on Newgate, were in fact Afro-Americans, experienced in slavery, ship-life, insurrectionary and "revolutionary" politics. They came to London as servants. The chief magistrate of London kept an eye on the Afro-American population. He summed up his experience thus:

Black servants no sooner arrive here than they put themselves on a footing with other servants, become intoxicated with liberty, grow refractory, and either by persuasion of others or from their own inclinations, begin to expect wages according to their own opinion of their merits; and as there are already a great number of Black men and women who made themselves troublesome and dangerous to the families who have brought them over as to get themselves discharged, these enter into societies and make it their business to corrupt and dissatisfy the mind of every Black servant that comes to England.

Benjamin Bowsey left America in 1775. At Newgate he was called the "bell weather," a term denoting in farmer's talk the lead sheep. Bowsey, several witnesses averred, was the leading speaker before the actual attack began. He was seen in Akerman's house, going through drawers and bundles. Later in the day he returned to his lodgings that he shared with Ann Lessar. She removed Akerman's initials from a pair of stockings and instead embroidered "B.B." He also took from the Gaol keeper a small, leather-bound volume with a silver clasp. That night, Bowsey returned to a former employer in whose servant's hall he slept. The servants remembered and welcomed him. It was after he departed that Ann Lessar noticed the key that Bowsey placed on the shelf.

"Was it there when he left the lodging?" The judges asked her.

"I believe it was there: I saw it once or twice. I never knew the meaning of the key."

John Glover was an Afro-American, variously described as "Black," "copper coloured," or "tawney," who worked as a manabout for an attorney. He was heard shouting to a crowd on Snow Hill,

"NOW NEWGATE!"

and leading a contingent to the prison, where others noted that he took the lead both in piling up combustibles and in dealing with the guards, whom he addressed as follows:

"Damn you, open the gate or we will burn you down and have everybody out."

Afro-Americans led the delivery of Newgate. They led hundreds of others, not all of whom were nameless. George Sims, for instance, worked for a tripe seller. Immediately preceding the formation of contingents to attack the prison he "had words" with his wife, she "being out of work." He had had sailing experience, and was heard shouting continuously,

"NEWGATE AHOY!"

Francis Mockford was a waiter at a tavern. He obtained the "great keys" to the prison. He held them aloft upon a pitchfork, a trophy of victory. When he returned to his lodgings, he threw the keys on the table, announcing to his fellow lodgers,

"I have got the keys to Newgate."

His landlord refused to come near them, for fear of contamination. Subsequently, Mockford disposed of the keys by walking out to the middle of Westminster Bridge and tossing them into the middle of the Thames.

If everything in history has its material and its ideological side, Mockford in possession of the keys was the materialist of the delivery. Thomas Haycock, or "Mad Tom," was its ideologue. He was the first into the prison and he boasted that he "let out all the prisoners." His neighbors regarded him as mad. They said to him,

"Tom you have no property to lose, when you have lost that coat on your back, you have lost all you are worth."

Why did he participate in the delivery, the court asked. "The cause," he replied. And what was that? "There should not be a prison standing on the morrow in London." He led a contingent or a column to the gaol (not so mad that others would not follow him). He explained in succinct words that can be pondered by critical theorists of law:

"From thence they proceeded to Newgate, and gave them five minutes law."

Blake, the poet, remembered these five minutes of law. He wrote,

*The morning comes, the night decays, the/
watchmen leave their stations
The grave is burst, the spices shed, the/
linen wrapped up;*

*The bones of death, the cov'ring clay, the/
sinews shrunk & dryd*

*Reviving shake, inspiring move, breathing,/
awakening,*

*Spring like redeemed captives when their/
bonds and bars are burst,*

*Let the slave grinding at the mill run out/
into the field, /*

*Let him look up into the heavens & laugh/
in the bright air:*

*Let the chained soul, shut up in darkness/
and in sighing,*

*Whose face has never seen a smile in thirty/
weary years,*

*Rise and look out; his chains are loose, his/
dungeon doors are open;*

*And let his wife and children return from the/
oppressor's scourge.*

An Interlude

Today there is one familiar everyday item in most homes that remains essentially the same as it was 200 years ago.

That seemingly simple device: the toothbrush. The modern toothbrush as we know it today,

was invented in London in 1780. In that year 40,000 took to the streets in what were known as the Gordon riots. One of these people was William Addis, stationer.

Because of his involvement in the riots, William Addis went into hiding. To avoid the fate of seventy-five others who were executed, he and his companions hid in barns and stables. One of the places he also hid was a slaughterhouse.

To while away the waiting hours, William Addis practised the art of carving in bone, a popular diversion of the time. It seems that, as he was working on his carving, he noticed horse hair on the floor from a slaughtered hide.

William Addis then realized that on one hand he had horse hair and on the other hand his bone carving, and that there must be a way to combine the two to help clean his teeth. He bored several holes in the bone, inserted the hair into one end, leaving the other as a handle; and invented the world's first toothbrush.

So reads a poster called "The Toothbrush," published by the Addis Co., Ltd., Ware Road, Hertford, England.

Conclusion

The English gentleman was not safe, his property was insecure, his civilization might crumble: these were inescapable lessons of the delivery of Newgate. He therefore took counter-measures. Some were ideological and some were material. We'll discuss the ideological first, by reference to two English gentlemen, the Earl of Mansfield and Jeremy Bentham.

After Newgate was burnt, the mob turned up-town to attack the house of William Murray, Earl of Mansfield, Lord Chief Justice of His Majesty's Court of King's Bench, the highest judicial and legal officer of the empire. Indeed, it was an easy walk to his door.

This Scotsman had adopted English law to "the needs of a rapidly expanding commerce and manufacture." He made law of insurance, promissory notes, insurance bills and marine freightment. He also personally caused 29 people to be branded, 448 to be transported, and 102 to be hanged.

Whenever he smiled, one writer felt "an involuntary emotion to guard myself against mischief." Judges were not kindly talked about by the London people. They were "fortune tellers" because they divined a person's fate. They were "lambskin men" because of the ermine they wore. In belonging to one of the Inns of Court, they created "gentlemen of the three ins" - indicted, in gaol, and in danger of being hanged. The vicious chevaux de frise that topped the walls of the prison was called "Lord Mansfield's teeth."

The "levelling spirit" of the mob led it to

attack his house, his paintings, books, clothing and liquor. Some people got in trouble for this action, to wit:

John Gray, a man who walked only with the aid of a crutch, was seen that evening in Bloomsbury Square with a bottle of the Judge's booze. The court sentenced him to death.

Elizabeth Trimmings, an Irish woman, was tried for possessing sundry articles of kitchen and table ware of Lord Mansfield, whose cook recognized particularly five China dishes.

Sarah Collogan was sentenced to a year imprisonment because she was found wearing a printed cotton gown of Elizabeth Murray, his Lordship's niece.

Letitia Holland was sentenced to death for having in her possession two petticoats, one black the other green, that had belonged to Lady Mansfield.

Lord and Lady Mansfield escaped by the back stairs. Their skins were safe. But they were enraged by the loss of waistcoats and petticoats, and they would have had some of the most lovely of the age, silk and lace, important parts of their personages. So, they caused the hanging of those who dared to play "dress up." Mary Gardiner bragged about it. She was caught wearing a white petticoat and apron belonging to Lady Mansfield. At her trial she said,

"She thought she had a right to wear them as she had got them."

Oh, at this the court's ears pricked up. She had to repeat her meaning, and again, she said she had a "right" to wear them. The theorist of English law was William Blackstone. His many columned Commentaries on the Laws of England were all about "rights" and "wrongs." He died in 1780, so others had to consider this new "right." Gardner was sentenced to hang, sus. per col.

Mansfield and Blackstone were ideological practitioners of the law who are still venerated by modern Tories. They took a long, imperial view, and were not afraid of blood, even in day time. Jeremy Bentham developed a new theory of crime-punishment-law, and he did this at the time of the Gordon riots. He was a hypocrite, but he was also a materialist of a kind. He tried to shut himself off from the cries of the London streets:

Oars, oars, do you want a boat for the evening to Vaux Hall.

To light your lamps I have command
Pray in my way then do not stand.

The Ordinary of Newgate, His Account of the Behaviour, Confession and Dying Words of the Malefactors Who Were Executed at Tyburn.

I am the bell-man for the night
To ring my bell is my delight

To let you know Christmas is near
And when it comes it brings good cheer
Past one o'clock, good morrow my masters

all good morrow.

Jeremy locked himself away in his study. On the 6th of June, he stayed up late to write about the flames. His hairdresser had told him about the armed mob. Jeremy armed himself against the mob; "I was a military hero for a night," he thought. It was also at this time that he had a feverish dream "that I was a founder of a sect; of course a personage of great sanctity and importance. It was called the sect of utilitarians."

Jeremy had been staying up late at night working on a cost-benefit analysis of crime and punishment. Where Mansfield turned accounting and merchandizing into law, Bentham turned law into merchandizing and accounting. Just before the delivery of Newgate, he wrote his tract The Rationale of Punishment, in which on paper he opposed capital punishment. Only on paper though.

The man servant who used to serve him coffee in his study was named John Franks. John had damaged a couple of silver spoons. John became connected with an "infamous woman," grounds for dismissal. John returned the day after Christmas, 1779, when servants customarily got their "boxes." Jeremy returned from the opera:

It is my method to take a servant with me round the house to see if every thing is safe. I went that night particularly into the study, which has some windows toward the garden, and one door only which opens into the house; that study lies remote from the other part of the house. I saw the windows fast; I locked the door myself. The servant that warms my bed brings up the keys at night; and she comes up in the morning for them to distribute to the rest of the servants.

John took some money that night, plus he took the spoons. He was caught, and said in a European accent,

This is all the money me got, me swear a robbery against you if you take my money away."

Jeremy and Mrs. Bentham went several times to the Old Bailey to secure a conviction against their servant. 12 April 1780 he was hanged. The papers said:

The venerable appearance of Franks with his grey hairs peculiarly attracted the attention of the spectators. He was just 65 years of age, and read his last repentant prayers with spectacles.

After 6 June, the property holders of London turned their attention to physical and technical means of preserving their silver spoons, silk petticoats and money boxes, and to restraining the activities of those of the world's have-nots who were closing in. Bentham was something of a technician in this way. He re-designed prisons in such a way to avoid any repetition of 6 June. He even thought he could create a space that would do away with locks.

As more things needed to be locked up, more

people were locked up too. The materialist lesson of 6 June was taught by a man named Joseph Bramah, the genius who made the first technological innovation in locksmithery since Etruscan times. After 6 June 1780, he published a book, called,

A Dissertation on the Construction of Locks. Containing, FIRST - Reasons and Observations demonstrating all LOCKS, which depend on FIXED WARDS, to be erroneous in Principle, and defective in Point of Security. SECONDLY - A Specification of a LOCK, constructed on a new and infallible Principle, which, possessing all the Properties essential to Security, will prevent the most ruinous Consequences of HOUSE ROBBERIES, and be a certain Protection against Thieves of all Descriptions.

Moreover, Joseph Bramah quite explicitly tells us what got his mind working on this problem to begin with:

The idea of constructing a Lock that might resist every application, and effort of art, was first suggested to me...by the alarming increase of HOUSE ROBBERIES.

More especially, he was interested by preventing in this technical way, the inside job, that he expresses in the language of class warfare:

The hasty execution of a midnight robbery in which servants of the family do not act a part, will not allow sufficient time (if proper instruments were at hand) to overcome the difficulties which ingenious locksmiths have opposed to foreign invaders; my chief attention, therefore, was applied to contrive a security against the advantage, which a domestic enemy possesses, in the opportunity of executing his purposes at leisure.

The lock he invented was based on moving internal parts, instead of fixed wards, and it was capable of an infinitude of variations. It was the progenitor of our Yale lock. At a stroke, it made obsolete the rum dubbars tools - the "chives," the "gilts," the "Kates," the "Bettys" and the "Bessies." Its secrets could no more be ascertained "than a seal be copied from its impression on a fluid, or the course of a ship be discovered by tracing it on the surface of the waves."

We hope, dear reader, that you have been at least amused by this true tale. It is a curious concatenation of events that leads us to think of Benjamin Bowsey, Lucy Johnson, John Franks, and John Glover next time we brush our teeth or insert a key into a lock. These events, however, are not only curious. If you wish also to be instructed by them, recollect your history well enough to know that 6 June 1780 prefigures the pattern of events in the revolutionary 1790's - attacks on prisons, Afro-American autonomy, re-organization of police, and mechanization. Besides amusement and instruction, you may have questions. We wonder why homes become prisons of things, and why prisons become homes for people.

William Blake possessed the gift of prophecy. He continued his poem inspired by 6 June 1780:

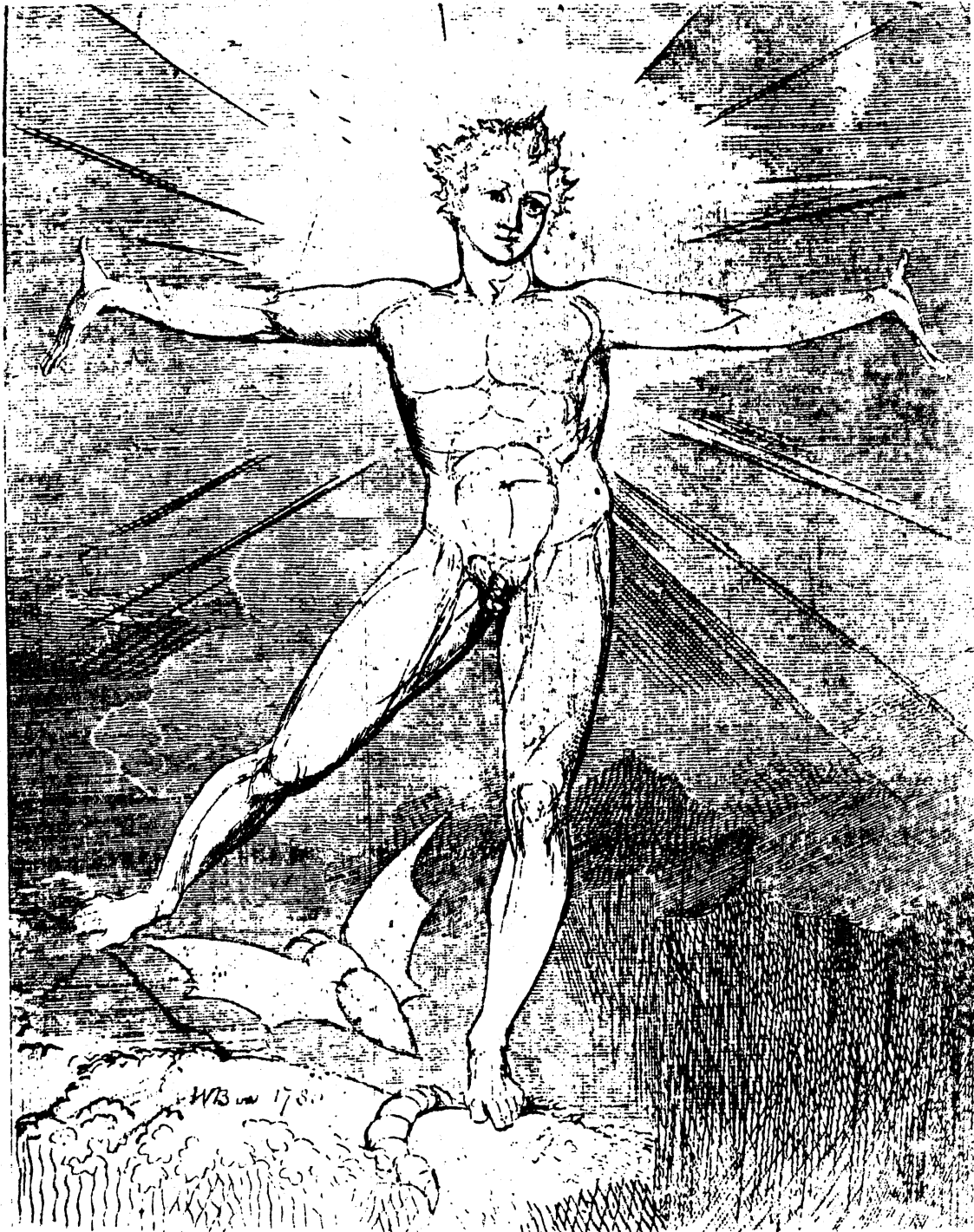
*They look behind at every step & believe/
it is a dream,
Singing: "The sun has left his blackness &/
has found a fresher morning
And the fair moon rejoices in the clear and/
cloudless night;
For empire is no more, and now the lion & wolf/
shall cease.*

Blake also engraved an image of 6 June 1780 called "Albion rose from where he labored at the mill with slaves," which we reprint. But lest you, dear reader, think that we have

been overcome by the spirit of revolutionary prophecy, to show that our tastes remain herbal and our feet on the ground, we conclude as we began, with the street cries of London two hundred years ago:

I nothing say
But here attend
Apply to me
Your feet I'll mend
Corns to Cut.

Rue a farthing a bunch
Sage a farthing a bunch
Thyme a farthing a bunch
Mint a farthing a bunch



Thanks to Bryn, Dan, Dave and Mike.

BLAKE