

A low-angle photograph of the Statue of Liberty, showing her head, crown with spikes, and the torch held high in her right hand. The statue is green and set against a cloudy sky.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF
NON-VIOLENT
EXTREMISTS

THE LITTLE BOOK OF
NON-VIOLENT
EXTREMISTS

Foreword

This little booklet makes the big point that some non-violent 'extremists' turn out to be heroic people of global significance. These were people willing to be in a minority of one. People who shook up the consensus of the day. How glad we are that they did.

Successive UK governments have sought to confront non-violent extremism. But without a clear, precise and well-understood definition this is a dangerous road to go down.

Our little list of heroes stood firmly against using force, even when they were themselves victims of the most appalling violence. They didn't hit back, but practised what they preached.

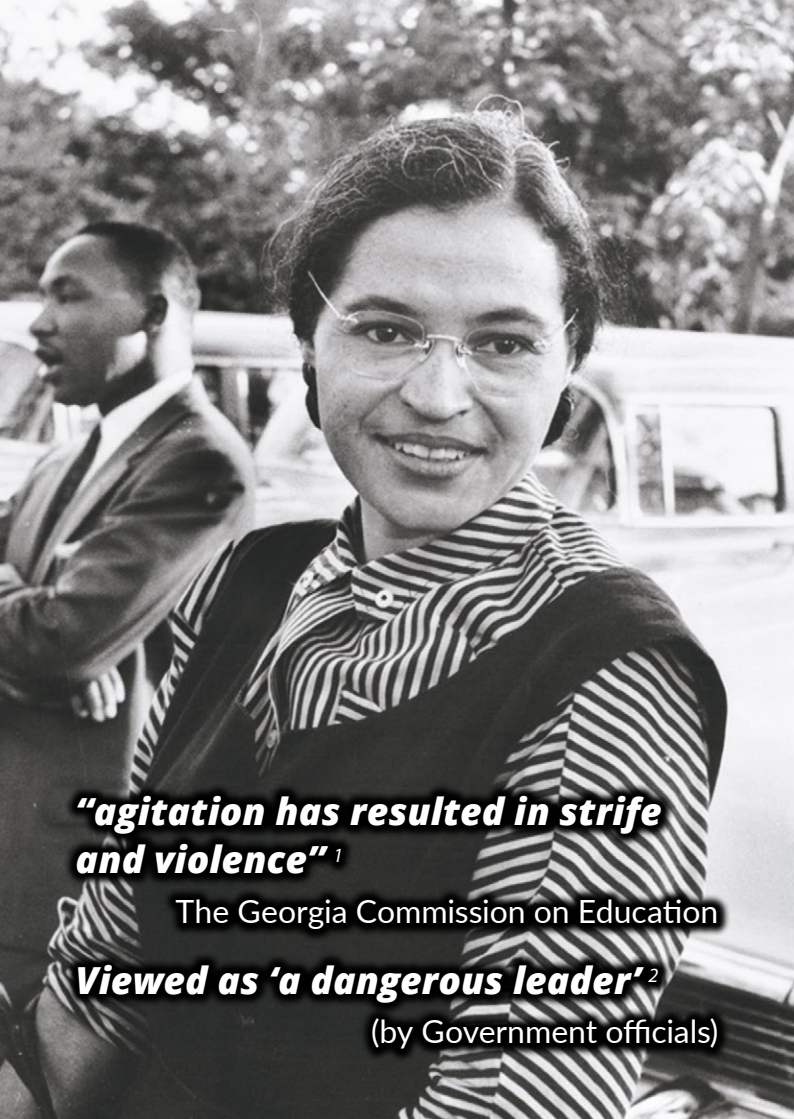
Yet they were still vilified as extremists who incited violence and revolution. Their beliefs were so out of kilter with the thinking of the time that all were accused of infringing fundamental values, attacking others' rights or being subversive in some way. They could easily have breached modern 'non-violent extremism' thresholds.

Most will agree that our society hasn't reached some golden age which is incapable of further improvement. In order for there to be positive social change, the social consensus has to be broken. Someone has to shake it up and face being insulted in the process.

This has happened time and again in our own land and throughout the world.

Abolishing segregation was fiercely unpopular in the southern US states. It took those like Martin Luther King Jr and Rosa Parks to overturn that consensus. But had plans to tackle non-violent extremism been in place in their day, no doubt both would have fallen foul of them.

Sometimes unpopular ideas are just what a society desperately needs. Ideas put forward by people once thought seditious, dangerous or just plain crazy have greatly blessed our land and others. Democracy needs dissent, and silencing it undermines its very foundations.



***"agitation has resulted in strife
and violence"¹***

The Georgia Commission on Education

Viewed as 'a dangerous leader'²

(by Government officials)

Rosa Parks

Parks became known as the “*mother of the civil rights movement*” in America.³

Her refusal to surrender her seat to a white passenger on a public bus in Montgomery, Alabama, was “*the spark that ignited the beginning of the end for segregation*”.⁴

Barack Obama

Awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1996) and the Congressional Gold Medal (1999).⁵



***'The most dangerous Negro leader
in the country'***⁶

FBI memo

***'The most notorious liar in the
country'***⁷

J Edgar Hoover, FBI Director

***'inciter of hatred and violence'
'extremist'***⁸

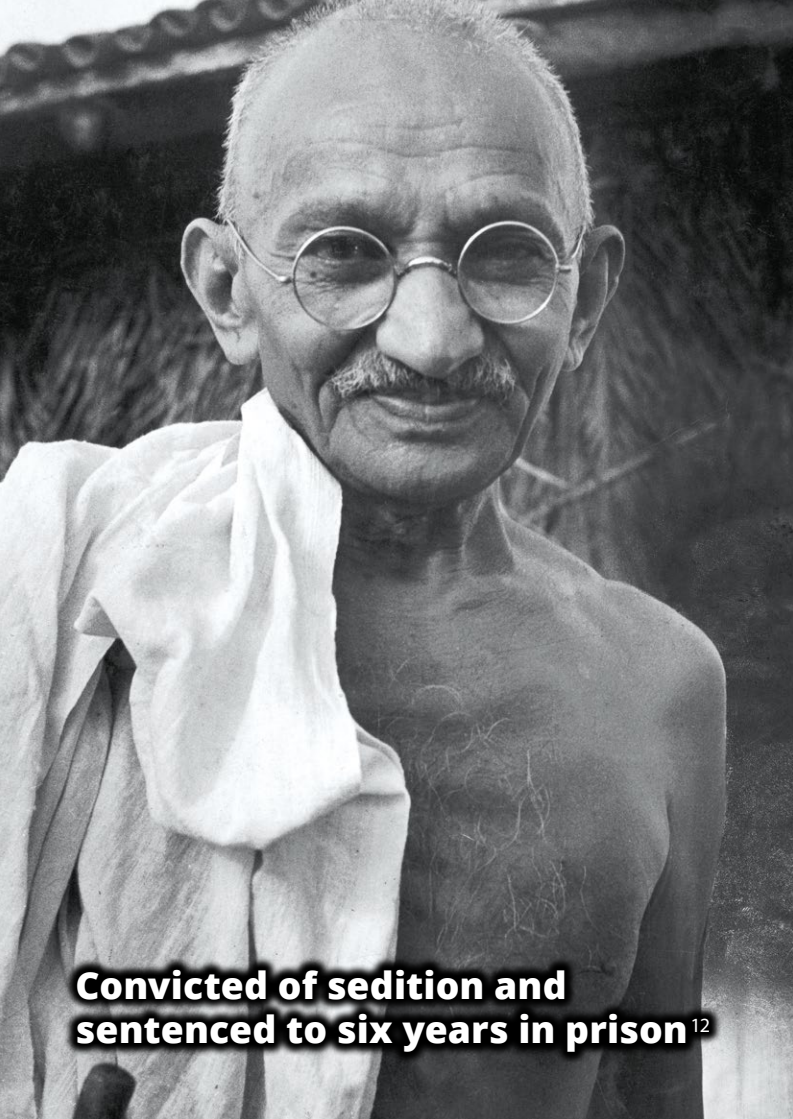
Alabama clergy

Martin Luther King, Jr

King's leadership of the civil rights movement was fundamental to its success, leading to civil rights reform and the end of racial segregation in the US.⁹

His movement transformed national politics to win the vote for black people.¹⁰

Awarded the Nobel Peace Prize (1964), the Presidential Medal of Freedom (1977) and the Congressional Gold Medal (2004).¹¹



**Convicted of sedition and
sentenced to six years in prison¹²**

Mahatma Gandhi

“Father of the Nation” ¹³

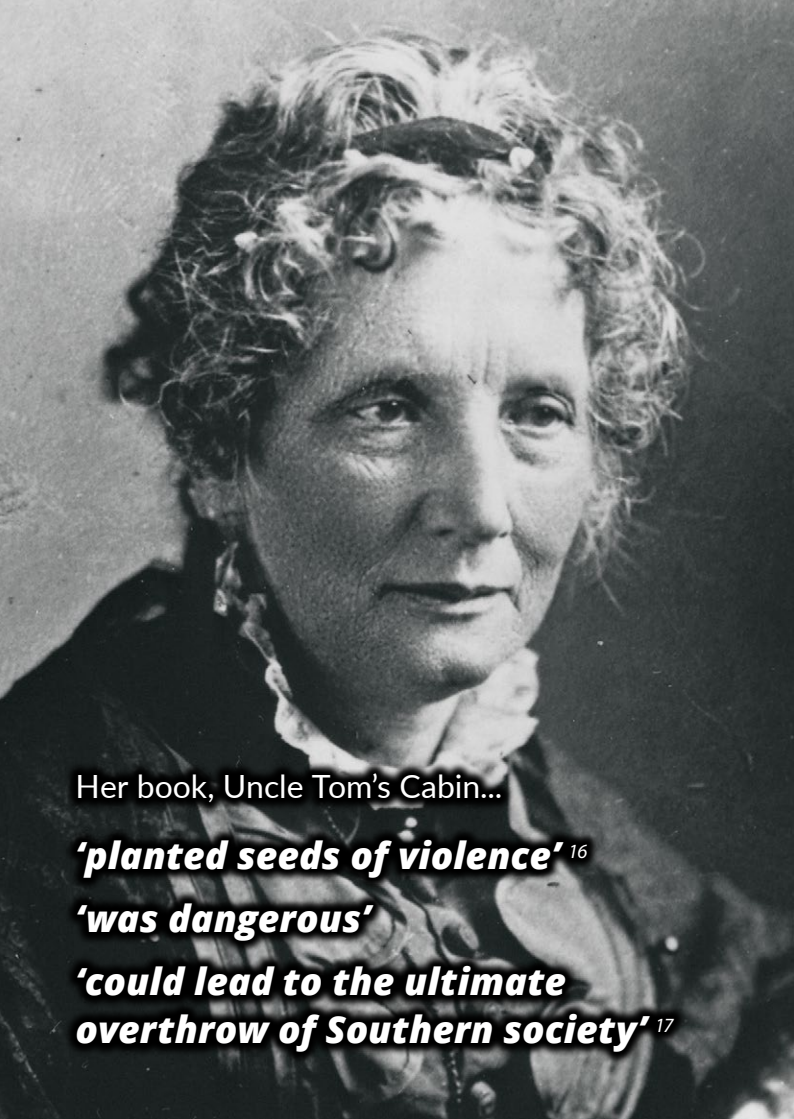
Jawaharlal Nehru,
India's first Prime Minister

Gandhi's “approach of non-violence will resonate forever as a positive legacy – not just for the UK and India, but the world over”. ¹⁴

David Cameron

“His example of non-violent protest is still revered throughout the world today.” ¹⁵

Professor David Hardiman



Her book, *Uncle Tom's Cabin*...

'planted seeds of violence'¹⁶

'was dangerous'

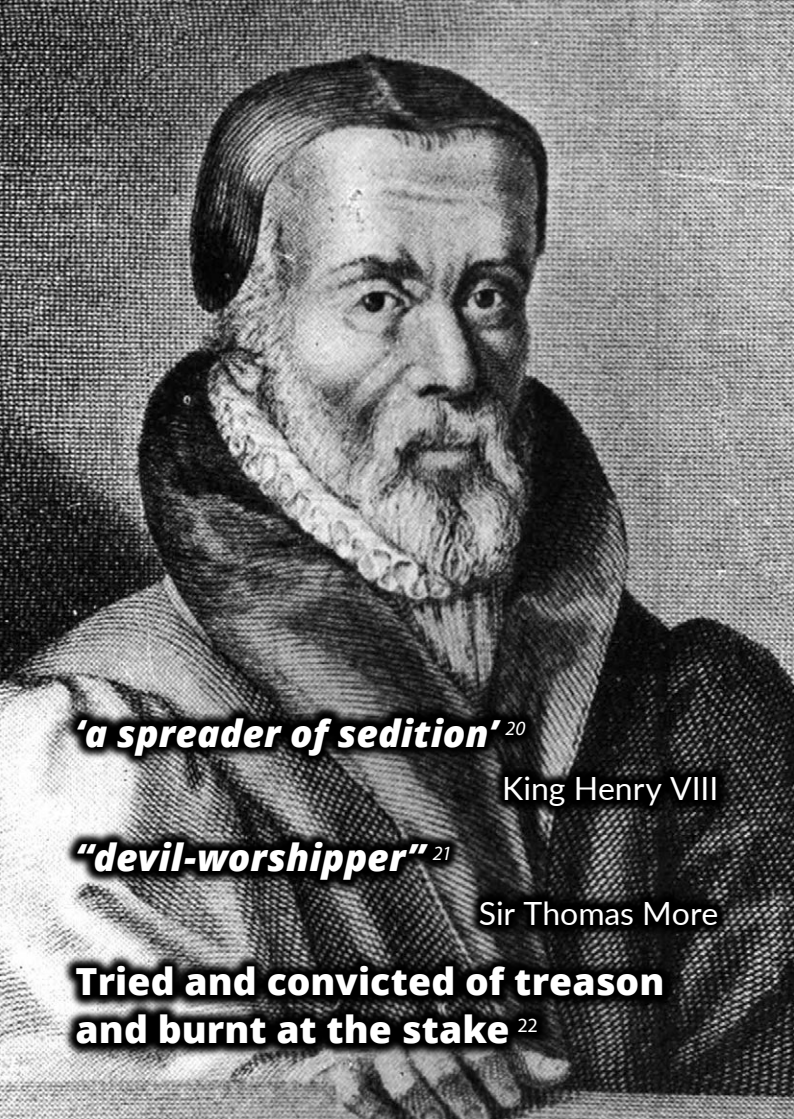
***'could lead to the ultimate
overthrow of Southern society'***¹⁷

Harriet Beecher Stowe

In her book, Stowe revealed the horrors of slavery to readers in the US and beyond.¹⁸

*"...in stating the reasons which led to the emancipation of the slave, it would be difficult to exaggerate the role played by this remarkable book".*¹⁹

Mary Church Terrell,
one of the first African-American
women to earn a US college degree



'a spreader of sedition'²⁰

King Henry VIII

"devil-worshipper"²¹

Sir Thomas More

**Tried and convicted of treason
and burnt at the stake**²²

William Tyndale

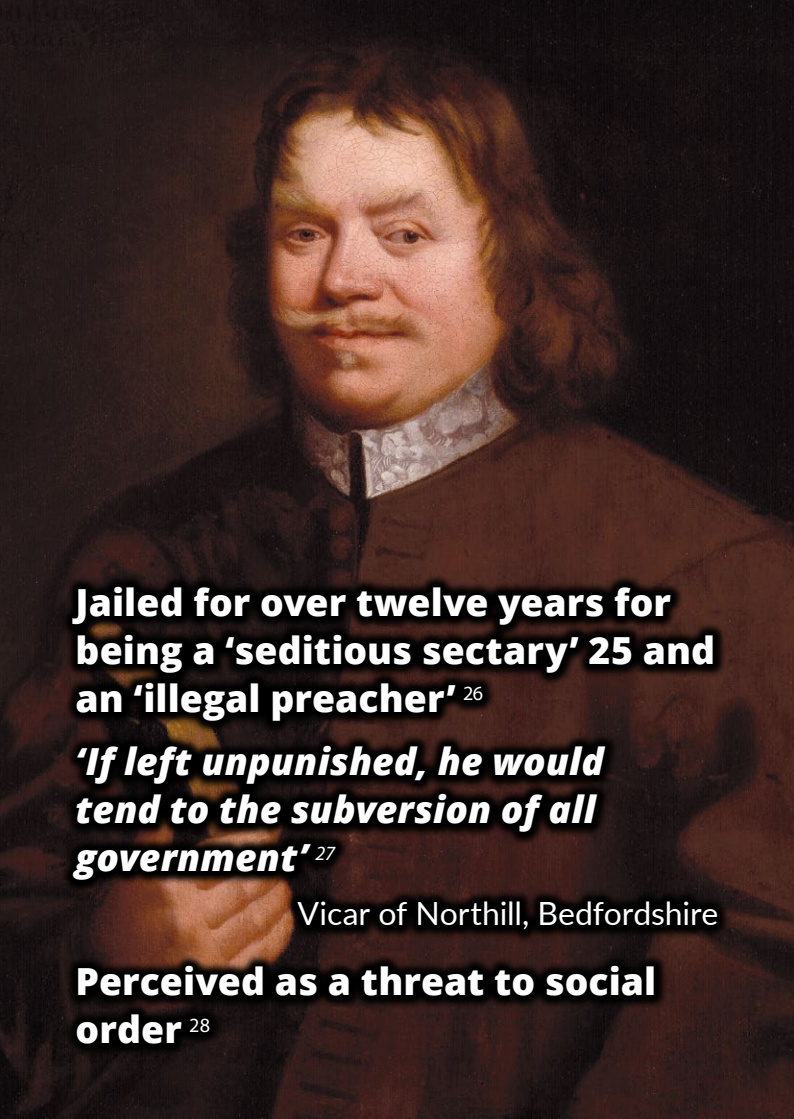
Tyndale pioneered the translation of the Bible into English so that it was accessible to everyone to read or hear.²³

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography

“...his genius, now acknowledged, makes him, alongside Shakespeare, one of the co-creators of the modern English language...”

*“William Tyndale is one of the greatest men in English history...”*²⁴

Melvyn Bragg



**Jailed for over twelve years for
being a 'seditious sectary' ²⁵ and
an 'illegal preacher' ²⁶**

***'If left unpunished, he would
tend to the subversion of all
government' ²⁷***

Vicar of Northill, Bedfordshire

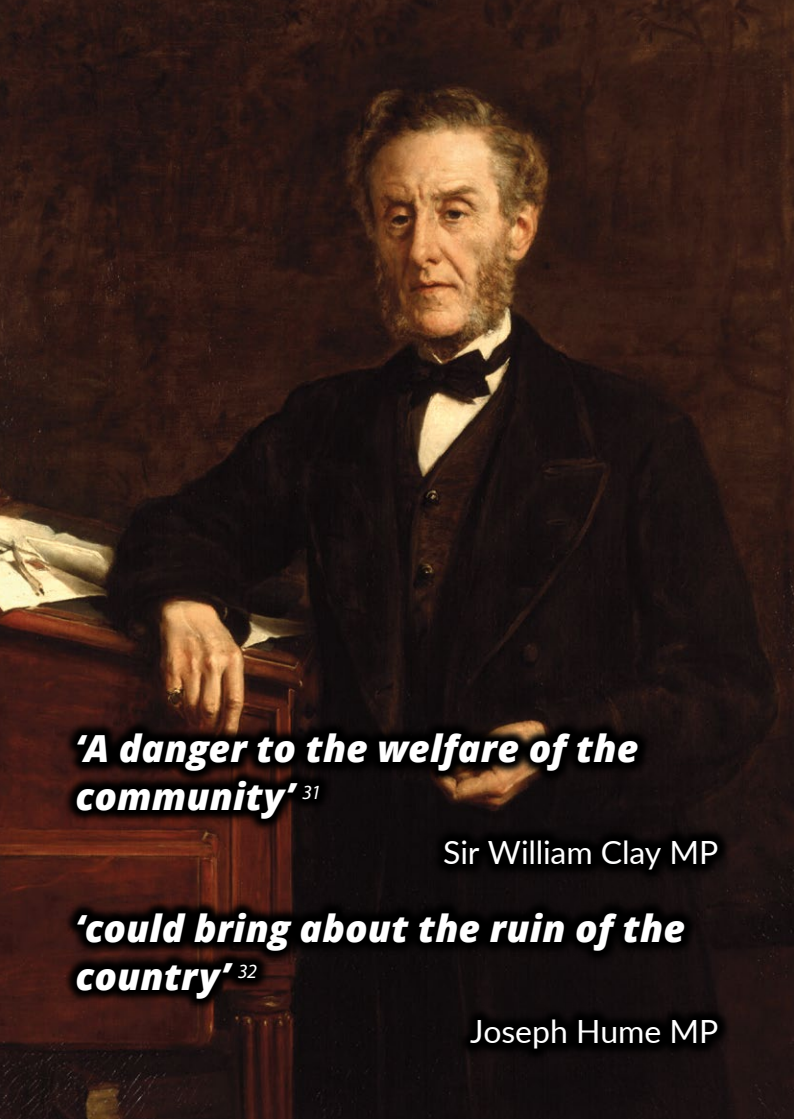
**Perceived as a threat to social
order ²⁸**

John Bunyan

“John Bunyan is known throughout the world as the author of The Pilgrim’s Progress, one of the greatest classics in the English language.”²⁹

Professor W R Owens

The 1689 Act of Toleration, which finally permitted freedom of religion for non-conformists, would have been unthinkable without the determined efforts of dissidents like Bunyan.³⁰



'A danger to the welfare of the community' ³¹

Sir William Clay MP

'could bring about the ruin of the country' ³²

Joseph Hume MP

Lord Shaftesbury

"...one of our country's most effective and successful politicians". ³³

William Hague

"No man has in fact ever done more to lessen the extent of human misery, or to add to the sum total of human happiness." ³⁴

Biographer

"Few statesmen have served the poor and marginalized in their day more than Lord Shaftesbury". ³⁵

Professor David Bebbington



'irresponsible rabble-rouser'³⁶

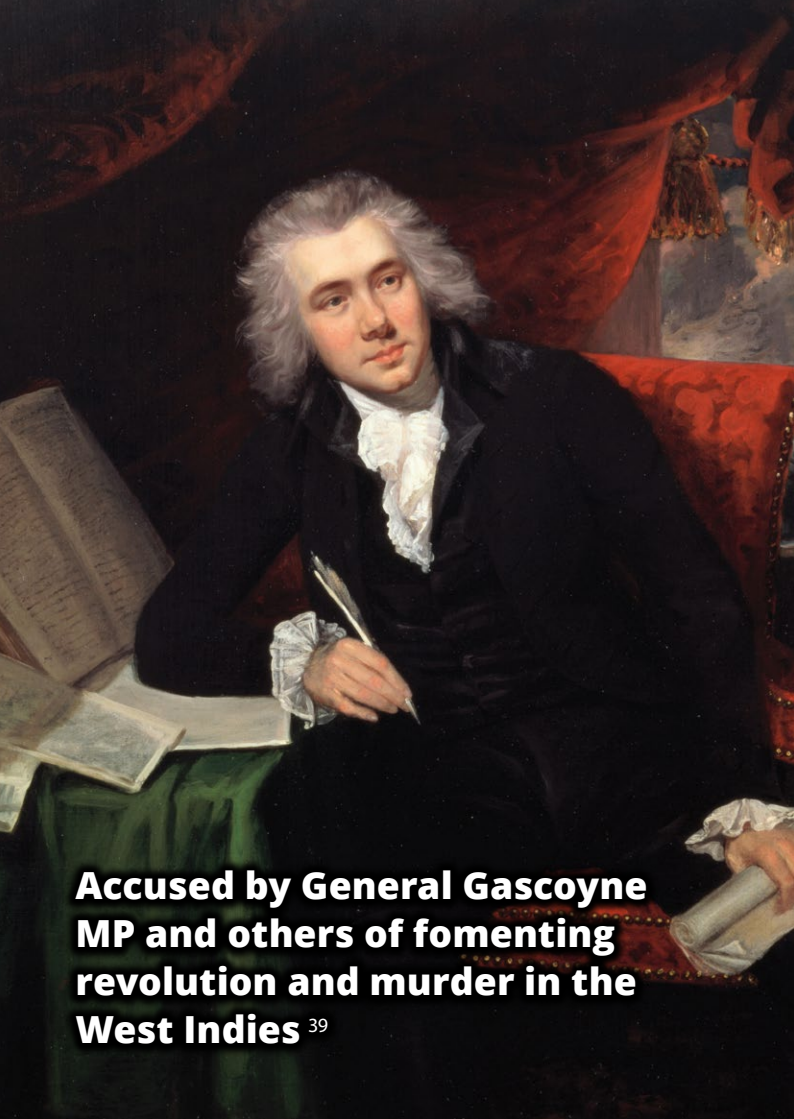
'fouler of the minds of children'³⁷

Josephine Butler

“Britain’s first anti-prostitution campaigner and remains one of our greatest social reformers...

“...instrumental in the campaign to raise the age of consent from 12 to 16 to protect girls from sexual abuse. She helped expose the scandal of children trafficked between Belgium and Britain, and the trade in underage virgins on the streets of London”.³⁸

Julie Bindel, feminist and journalist



**Accused by General Gascoyne
MP and others of fomenting
revolution and murder in the
West Indies ³⁹**

William Wilberforce

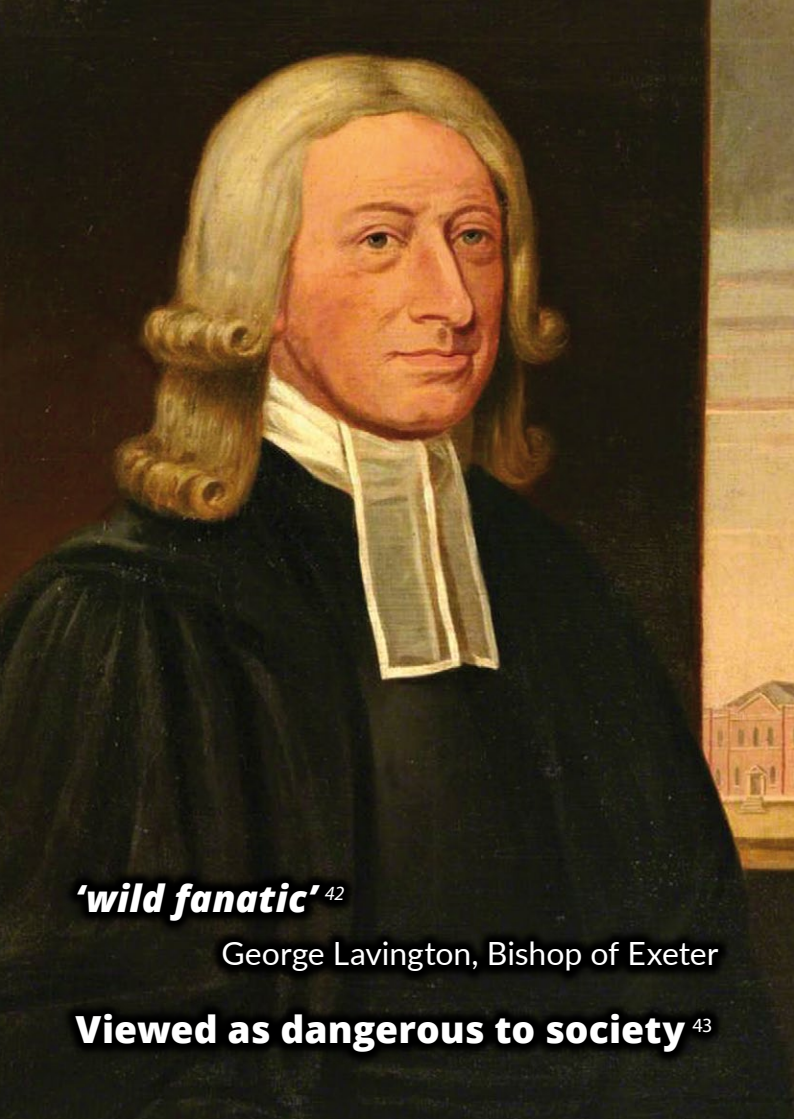
The architect of ending slavery in the British Empire.

“...his extraordinary combination of humanity, evangelism, philanthropy and political skill made him one of the most influential Britons in history”.⁴⁰

William Hague

“...a leader who stirred the conscience of the nation and upheld the human rights and dignity of the slaves”.⁴¹

Oxford Dictionary of National Biography



'wild fanatic' ⁴²

George Lavington, Bishop of Exeter

Viewed as dangerous to society ⁴³

John Wesley

Founder of Methodism.

Early opponent of slavery.

"...the poor were neglected and Wesley sought them out". ⁴⁴

Woodrow Wilson



TOLPUDD

"the safety of the country was at stake" ⁴⁵

Judge Baron Williams, explaining why he sentenced the six farm labourers to transportation to Australia

Trade Unions are...

"the most dangerous institutions that were ever permitted"

The Morning Post, London

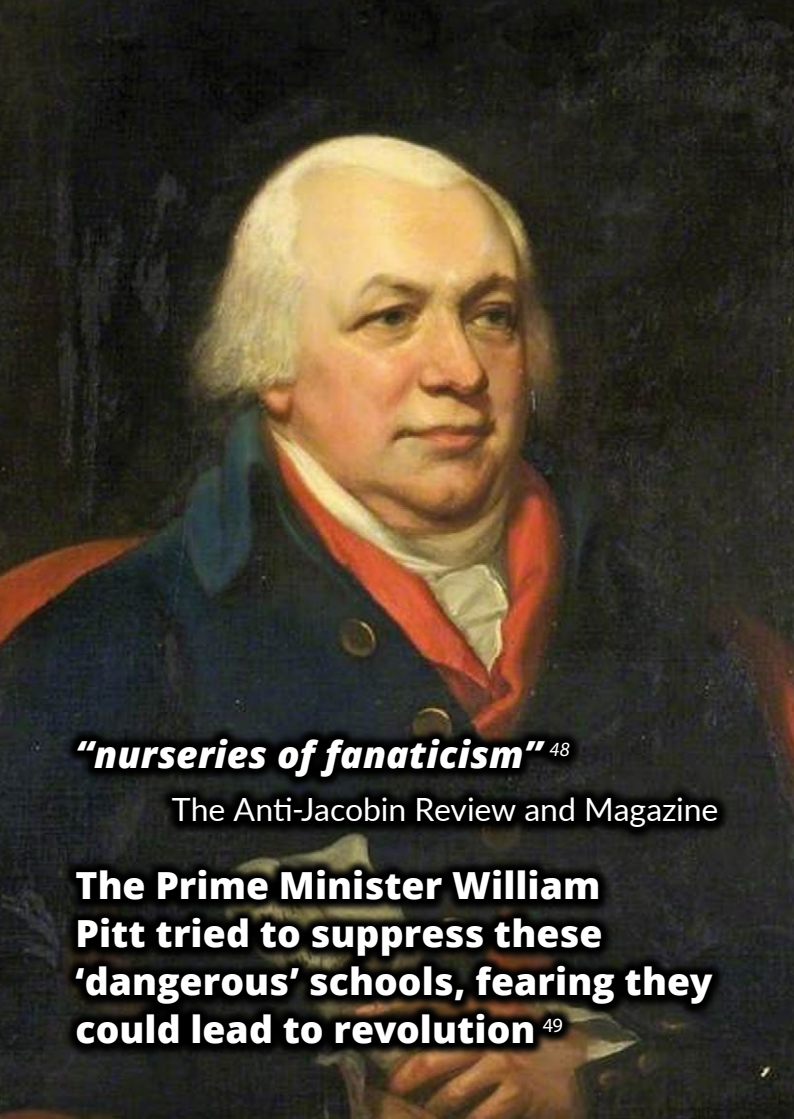
"evil" ⁴⁶

King William IV

Tolpuddle Martyrs

“The Tolpuddle Martyrs were a group of agricultural labourers who were tried and transported to Australia for the ‘crime’ of trying to form a union. Their story is key to the formation of modern trades unionism.” ⁴⁷

The Trades Union Congress



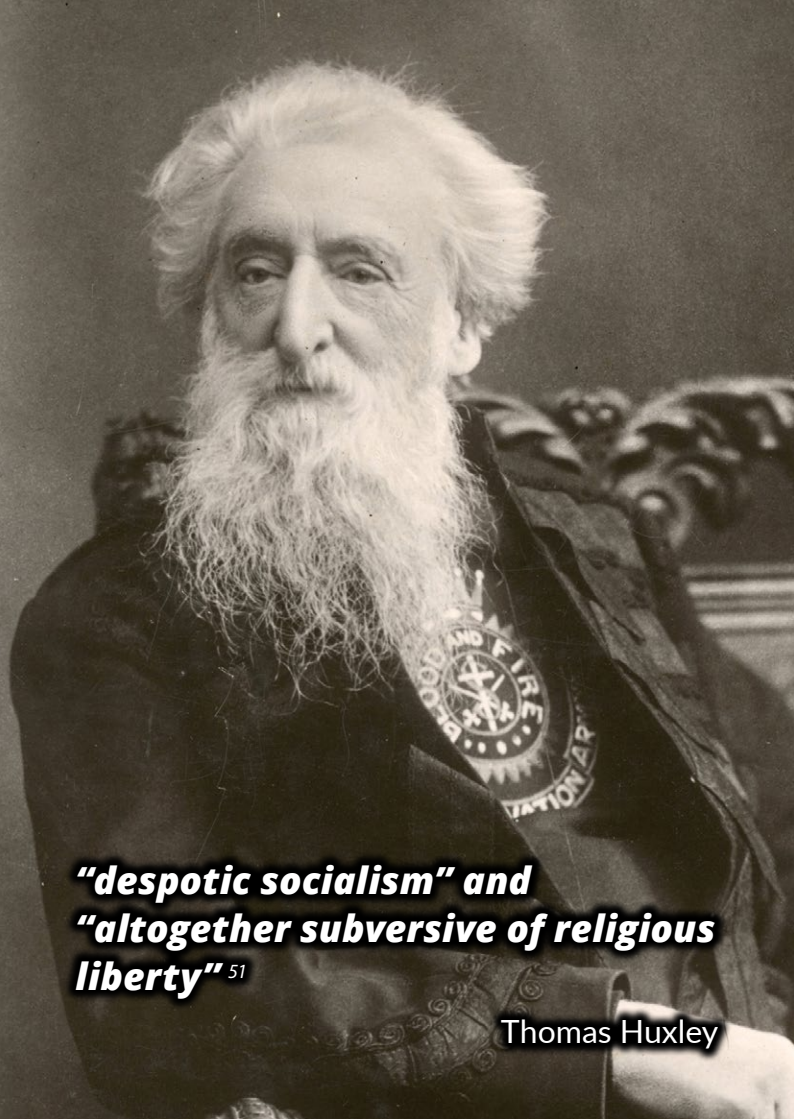
"nurseries of fanaticism" ⁴⁸

The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine

The Prime Minister William Pitt tried to suppress these 'dangerous' schools, fearing they could lead to revolution ⁴⁹

Sunday schools

Robert Raikes (pictured) and others founded Sunday schools to help teach children to read, especially those from a poorer background.⁵⁰



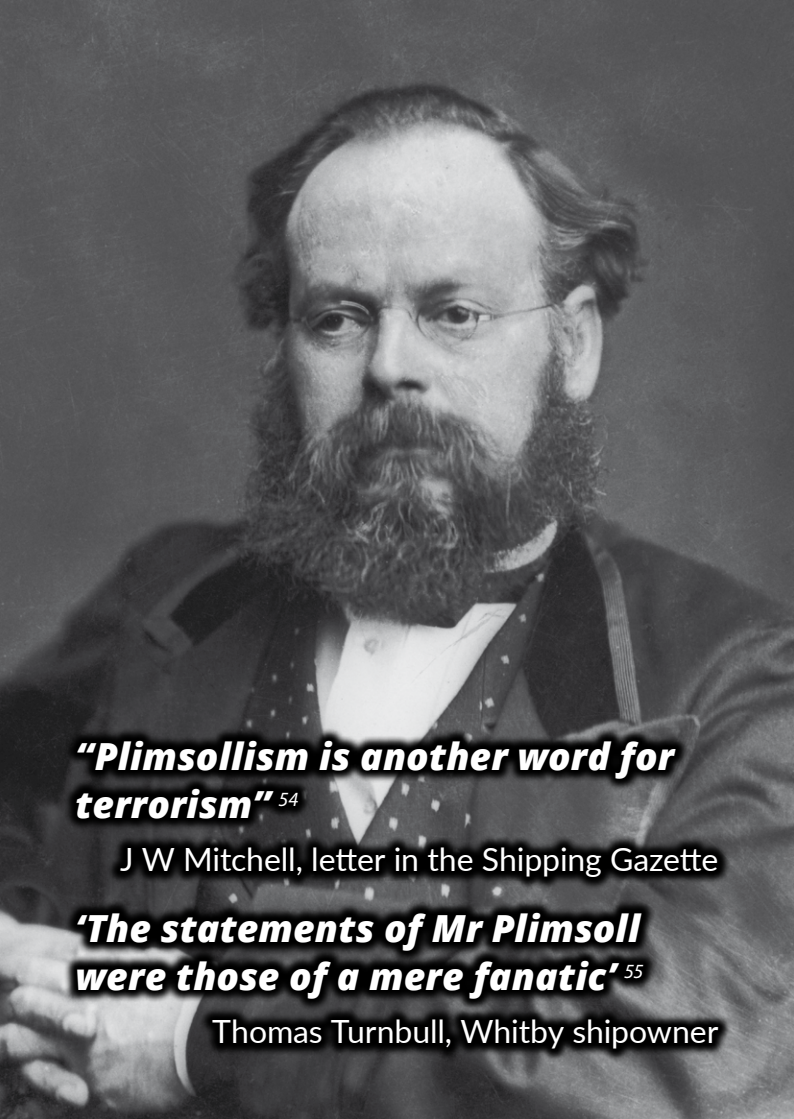
***"despotic socialism" and
"altogether subversive of religious
liberty" ⁵¹***

Thomas Huxley

The Salvation Army

William Booth (pictured, founder of the Salvation Army) helped the destitute in society in practical ways. Through educational and training schemes he offered prostitutes, homeless and migrants a chance to create a better life.⁵²

The Salvation Army established mission stations to house and feed the poor. It spread quickly over Britain and internationally.⁵³



"Plimsollism is another word for terrorism" ⁵⁴

J W Mitchell, letter in the Shipping Gazette

'The statements of Mr Plimsoll were those of a mere fanatic' ⁵⁵

Thomas Turnbull, Whitby shipowner

Samuel Plimsoll

MP who campaigned to make merchant ships safer by pushing for a law which obliged shipowners to mark their ships with a safe load-line. Facing a storm of litigation from shipowners, he was forced to sell his mansion near Sheffield to cover the legal fees.⁵⁶

“...in the teeth of fierce opposition from influential shipowners, [he] championed the cause of improved safety at sea”.⁵⁷

Dr Sam Willis, historian and presenter

References

- ¹ *Highlander Folk School*, Georgia Commission on Education, 1957, see <http://dlg.galileo.usg.edu/highlander/efhf003.pdf> as at 14 March 2024
- ² Theoharris, J, *The Rebellious Life of Mrs. Rosa Parks*, Beacon Press, 2013, pages 147-148. The context for this quote refers to “white officials and citizens” and the “Georgia Commission on Education”. This was because of the perceived communist connection to the bus boycott.
- ³ ‘Rosa Parks’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica online*, see <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Rosa-Parks> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁴ *Death of Rosa Parks Senate Floor Statement*, Barack Obama, 25 October 2005
- ⁵ ‘President Clinton presents Rosa Parks with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in the Oval Office’, *Clinton Digital Library*, see <https://clinton.presidentiallibraries.us/items/show/101701> as at 14 March 2024; *Congressional Gold Medal Recipients*, United States House of Representatives: History, Art and Archives, see <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Gold-Medal/Gold-Medal-Recipients/> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁶ FBI Memo, 1963, as quoted in *CNN online*, 29 December 2008, see <http://edition.cnn.com/2008/US/03/31/mlk.fbi.conspiracy/> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁷ Hoover, J E, quoted in Hack, R, *Puppetmaster: The Secret Life of J Edgar Hoover*, New Millennium Press, 2004, page 343
- ⁸ Statement by Alabama Clergymen, 12 April 1963, see https://ibs.cru.org/files/7814/9063/9009/Letter_Birmingham_Jail.pdf as at 14 March 2024
- ⁹ Lewis, D L, ‘Martin Luther King, Jr’, *Encyclopaedia Britannica online*, see <http://www.britannica.com/biography/Martin-Luther-King-Jr> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹⁰ Branch, T, *At Canaan’s Edge: America in the King Years 1965-1968*, Simon & Schuster, 2006, page xiii
- ¹¹ Nobel Prizes and Laureates, Nobel Peace Prize 1964, see http://www.nobelprize.org/nobel_prizes/peace/laureates/1964/ as at 14 March 2024; ‘Presidential Medal of Freedom Announcement of Award to the Rev. Martin Luther King, It., and Dr. Jonas E. Salk’, *The American Presidency project*, see <https://www.presidency.ucsb.edu/documents/presidential-medal-freedom-announcement-award-the-rev-martin-luther-king-it-and-dr-jonas-e> as at

- 14 March 2024; *Congressional Gold Medal Recipients*, United States House of Representatives: History, Art and Archives, see <http://history.house.gov/Institution/Gold-Medal/Gold-Medal-Recipients/> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹² *National Geographic Education*, see <https://education.nationalgeographic.org/resource/gandhi-arrested-sedition/> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹³ Jawaharlal Nehru in MacArthur, B, *The Penguin Book of Modern Speeches*, Penguin, 2015
- ¹⁴ British High Commission New Delhi, *Gandhi Statue to be unveiled*, 22 February 2015, see <https://www.gov.uk/government/world-location-news/gandhi-statue-to-be-unveiled-in-parliament-square-on-14-march> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹⁵ BBC, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20150703194849/http://www.bbc.co.uk/timelines/zpdqmp3> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹⁶ George F Holmes, 1852, *Southern Literary Messenger*, quoted in Ammons, E, *Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin*, Oxford University Press, 2007, page 3
- ¹⁷ *Richmond Daily Dispatch*, 25 August 1852, referenced in Reynolds, D S, *Essential Civil War Curriculum, Uncle Tom's Cabin*, September 2014, page 7
- ¹⁸ Spark Notes, *Uncle Tom's Cabin: Context*, see <http://www.sparknotes.com/lit/uncletom/context.html> as at 14 March 2024
- ¹⁹ Terrell, M, *Harriet Beecher Stowe: An Appreciation*, Murray Bros. Press, 1911
- ²⁰ The British Library, *William Tyndale's New Testament*, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20151029015805/http://www.bl.uk/collection-items/william-tyndales-new-testament> as at 14 March 2024
- ²¹ Needham, N, *2000 years of Christ's Power, Part Three: Renaissance and Reformation*, Grace Publications Trust, 2004, page 381
- ²² BBC History, see https://web.archive.org/web/20151215154709/http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/people/william_tyndale/ as at 14 March 2024. The two charges of heresy and treason were at times indistinguishable, see Melton, J, *Encyclopaedia of Protestantism*, Facts On File, 2005, page 540
- ²³ Daniell, D, *Tyndale, William*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2011
- ²⁴ Bragg, M, *The Most Dangerous Man in Tudor England*, 30 May 2013, see <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p019rn3q> as at 14 March 2024
- ²⁵ McKelvey, R J, *Histories that Mansoul and Her Wars Anatomize: The Drama of Redemption in John Bunyan's Holy War*, Vandenhoeck and Ruperecht, 2011, pages 75-76; Greaves, R L, *Bunyan, John (bap. 1628, d. 1688)*, Oxford

Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2004

²⁶ Loane, M, *Makers of Puritan History*, Banner of Truth, 2009, pages 120, 124, 128, 133; Greaves, R L, *John Bunyan and English Nonconformity*, Hambledon Press, 1992, page 144; and Cook, F, *Fearless Pilgrim*, Evangelical Press, 2008, pages 339, 345, 352-353

²⁷ Edward Fowler (Vicar of Northill, Bedfordshire) quoted in Cook, F, *Op cit*, page 109

²⁸ Owens, Prof W R, *Introducing Bunyan*, International John Bunyan Society, see <http://johnbunyansociety.org/about-bunyan/> as at 14 March 2024

²⁹ *Loc cit*

³⁰ Greaves, R L, *Op cit*, page viii

³¹ Sir William Clay MP, speaking on the Factories Bill, House of Commons, Hansard, 22 March 1844, col. 1388

³² Joseph Hume MP, speaking on the Ten Hours Factory Bill, House of Commons, Hansard, 29 January 1846, col. 402

³³ William Hague, quoted on the cover of Turnbull, R, *Shaftesbury: The Great Reformer*, Lion Books, 2010

³⁴ Georgina Battiscombe, quoted in Stott, J, *Issues Facing Christians Today*, Marshall Pickering, 1990, page 4

³⁵ David Bebbington, visiting Distinguished Professor of History, Baylor University, quoted on the cover of Turnbull, R, *Op cit*

³⁶ Jordan, J, *Josephine Butler*, John Murray Publishers, 2001, page 114

³⁷ *Saturday Review*, quoted in Jordan, J, *Op cit*, page 140

³⁸ *Guardian online*, 21 September 2006, see <http://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2006/sep/21/art1> as at 14 March 2024

³⁹ Hague, W, *William Wilberforce*, Harper, 2008, page xvi and 433; Bryan Edwards MP, quoted in Furneaux, R, *William Wilberforce*, Regent College Publishing, 2005, page 180

⁴⁰ Hague, W, *Op cit*, page xviii

⁴¹ Wolfe, J, *Wilberforce, William*, Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, Oxford University Press, 2009

⁴² Bishop Lavington, *Enthusiasm of Methodists and Papists Compared*, Second edition, London, 1749, preface

⁴³ Plumb, J H, *England in the Eighteenth Century*, London, 1950, pages 95-96; cited in Himmelfarb, G, *The Roads to Modernity*, Vintage, 2008, page 118

⁴⁴ Wilson, W, *John Wesley's Place in History*, The Abingdon Press, 1915, page 41

- ⁴⁵ *BBC Magazine online*, 16 July 2010, see http://news.bbc.co.uk/local/dorset/hi/people_and_places/history/newsid_8827000/8827532.stm as at 14 March 2024
- ⁴⁶ *The Morning Post*, 29 March 1834, and King William IV, 30 March 1834, quoted in Evatt, V H, *The Tolpuddle Martyrs: injustice within the law*, Sydney University Press, 2009
- ⁴⁷ Trades Union Congress, *Tolpuddle Martyrs*, see <https://web.archive.org/web/20140116054551/https://www.tuc.org.uk/about-tuc/union-history/tolpuddle-martyrs> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁴⁸ *The Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine*, Volume 3, 1799, page 180
- ⁴⁹ *BBC Magazine online*, 2 July 2008, see <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/magazine/7484282.stm> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁵⁰ *Loc cit*
- ⁵¹ *Letters to The Times*, 29 and 20 December 1890
- ⁵² 'William Booth Biography', *Biography Online*, see <http://www.biographyonline.net/spiritual/william-booth.html> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁵³ 'Salvation Army', *Encyclopedia Britannica online*, see <http://www.britannica.com/topic/Salvation-Army> as at 14 March 2024
- ⁵⁴ Jones, N, *The Plimsoll Sensation*, Abacus, 2007, page 101
- ⁵⁵ *Loc cit*; *The Northern Echo*, 24 April 1873
- ⁵⁶ Jones, N, *Op cit*, pages xiii, xiv and 42
- ⁵⁷ Willis, S, *Shipwreck*, Quercus, 2014, page 174

List of images

- Page 4: Rosa Parks by Ebony Magazine © Public Domain
- Page 6: Martin Luther King, Jr. by Dick DeMarsico, World Telegram © Public Domain
- Page 8: Leader of India, Mohandas Gandhi © Wallace Kirkland, Getty Images
- Page 10: Harriet Beecher Stowe © Public Domain
- Page 12: William Tyndale, Foxe's Book of Martyrs © Public Domain
- Page 14: John Bunyan by Thomas Sadler © National Portrait Gallery, London
- Page 16: Anthony Ashley-Cooper, 7th Earl of Shaftesbury by John Collier © National Portrait Gallery, London
- Page 20: William Wilberforce by John Rising © Wilberforce House, Hull City Museums and Art Galleries
- Page 22: John Wesley by Thomas Horsley. Reproduced with the permission of the Trustees of Wesley's Chapel and the Museum of Methodism
- Page 24: The Tolpuddle Martyrs © People's History Museum
- Page 26: Mr Robert Raikes, the Younger (1736–1811) © Gloucester Museums Service
- Page 28: William Booth © Salvation Army International Heritage Centre
- Page 30: Samuel Plimsoll © Hulton Archive, Getty Images



Copyright © The Christian Institute 2024

Published by The Christian Institute
Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park,
Newcastle upon Tyne, NE12 8DG

The Christian Institute is a Company Limited by Guarantee,
registered in England as a charity. Company No. 263 4440, Charity No. 100 4774.
A charity registered in Scotland. Charity No. SC039220.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF
NON-VIOLENT
EXTREMISTS

