

A low-angle photograph of the Statue of Liberty, showing her head, crown, and raised torch against a cloudy sky. The statue is green and appears to be made of copper.

THE LITTLE BOOK OF NON-VIOLENT EXTREMISTS

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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.

The Government's Levelling Up Secretary, Michael Gove MP, has published a new definition of extremism. At its lowest threshold, it includes promoting an 'intolerant' ideology that aims to "negate or destroy the fundamental rights and freedoms of others".

Our little list of heroes could easily have been accused of breaching this threshold if it was in place in their day.

They stood firmly against violence, yet were 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 attacking others' rights or being subversive in some way or other.

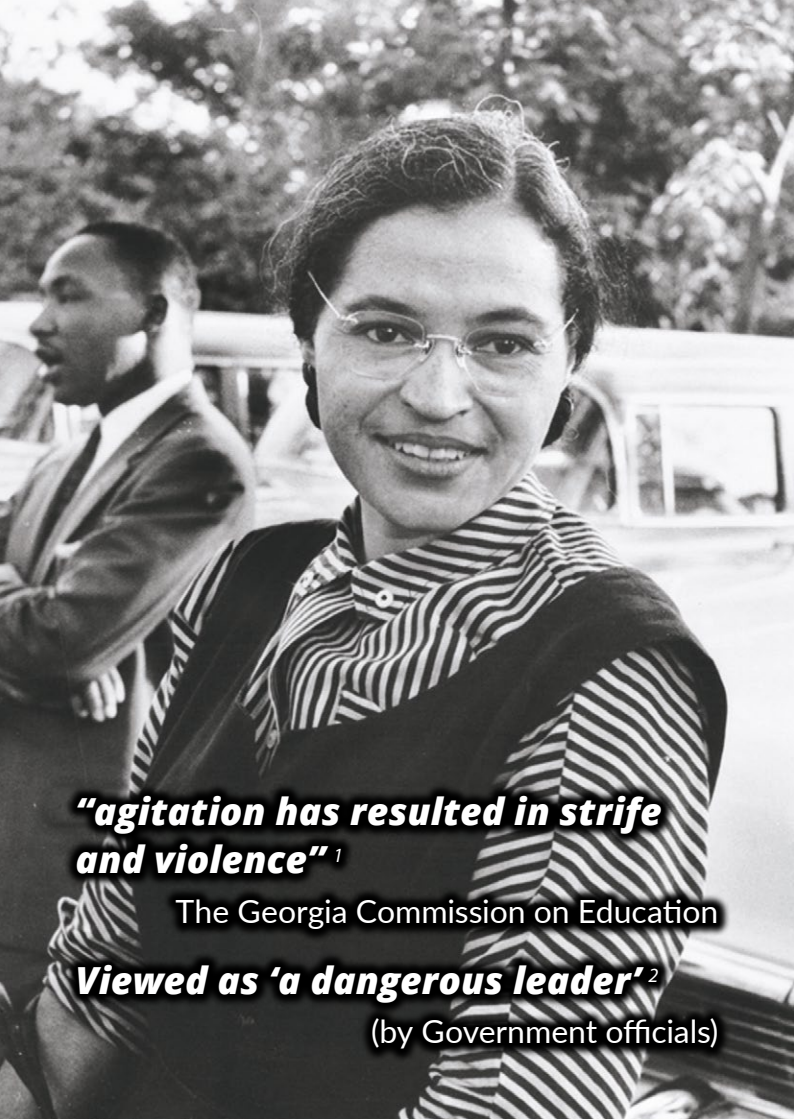
They were victims of the most appalling violence yet didn't hit back. They practised what they preached.

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 and Rosa Parks to overturn that consensus. But had the Gove plan to tackle extremism been in force in their day, no doubt both would have fallen foul of it.

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

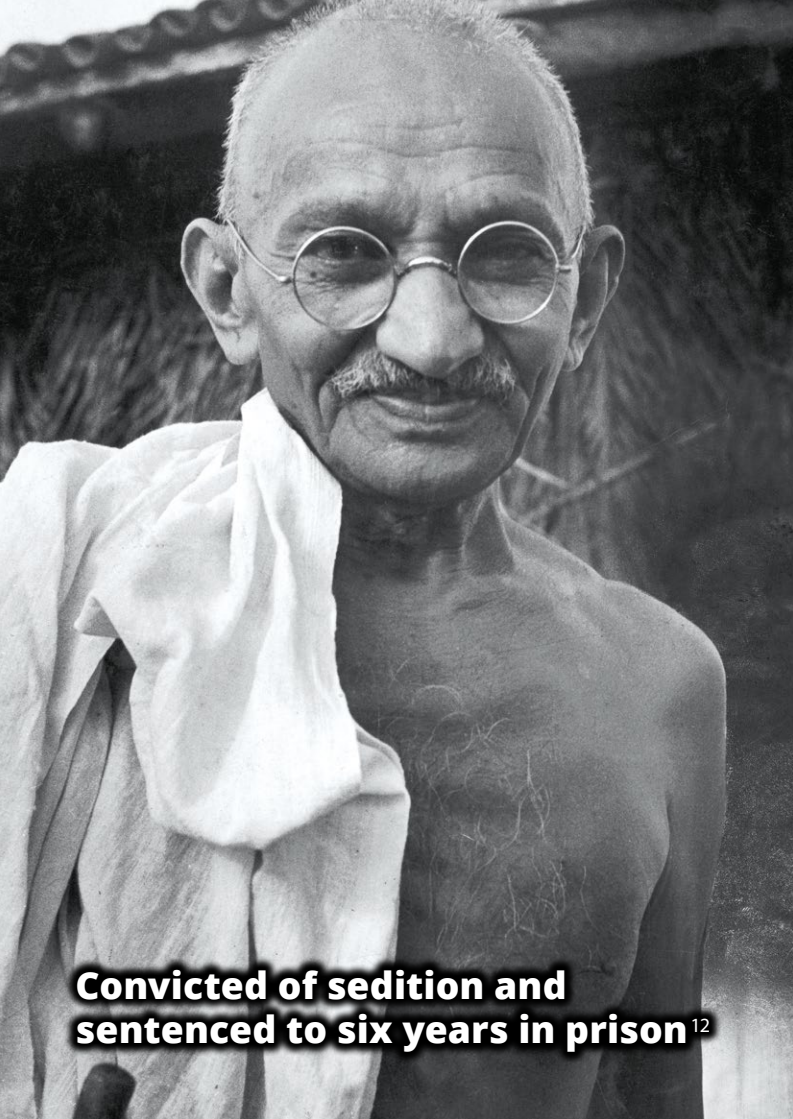
Alabama clergy

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

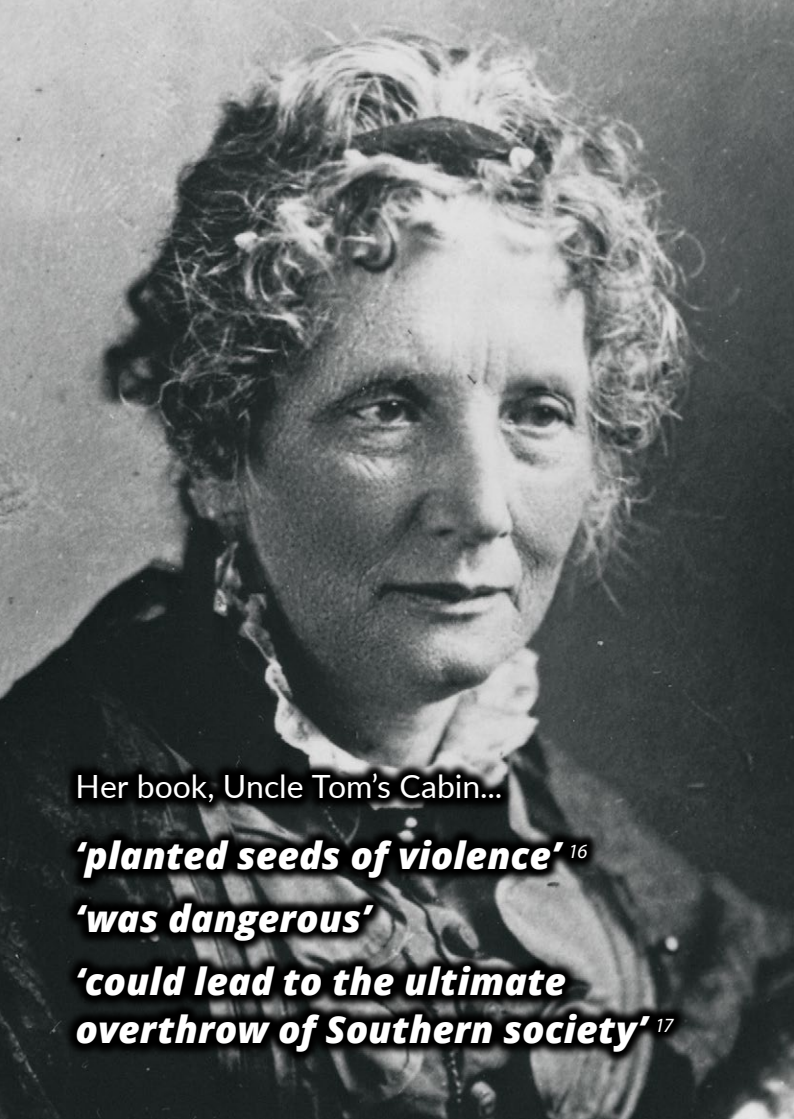
Jawaharlal Nehru,
India's first Prime Minister

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'

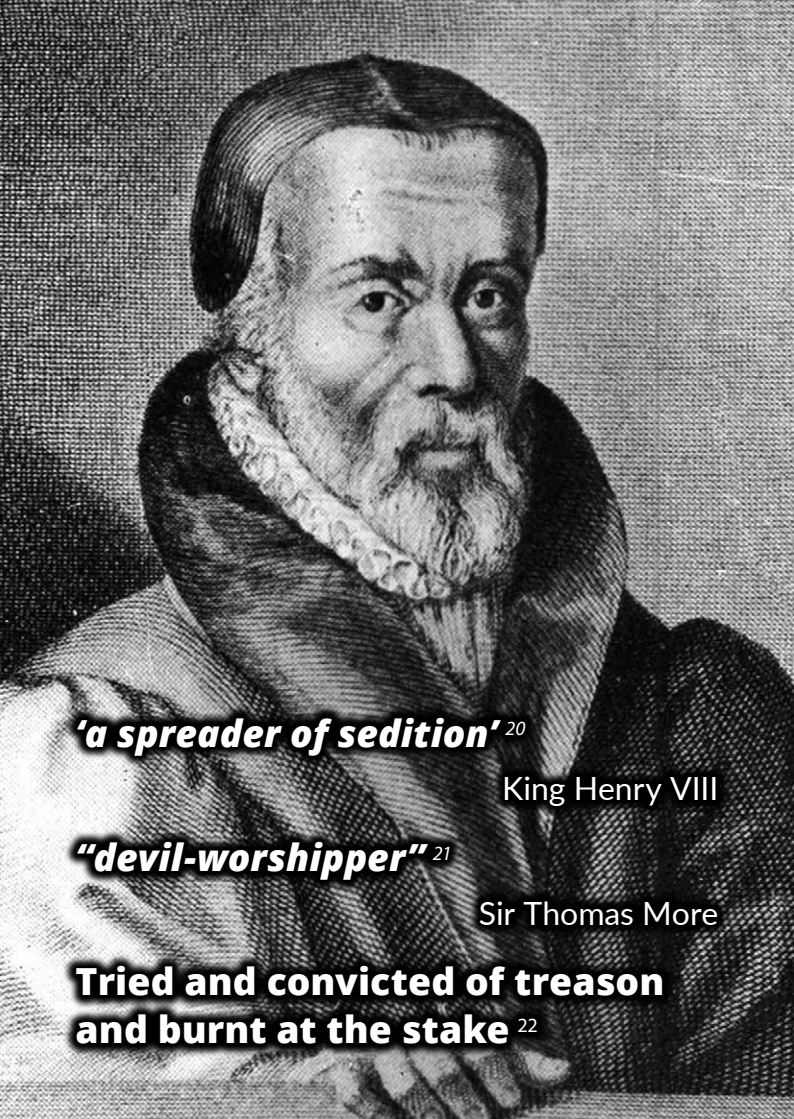
***'could lead to the ultimate
overthrow of Southern society'*** ¹⁷

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

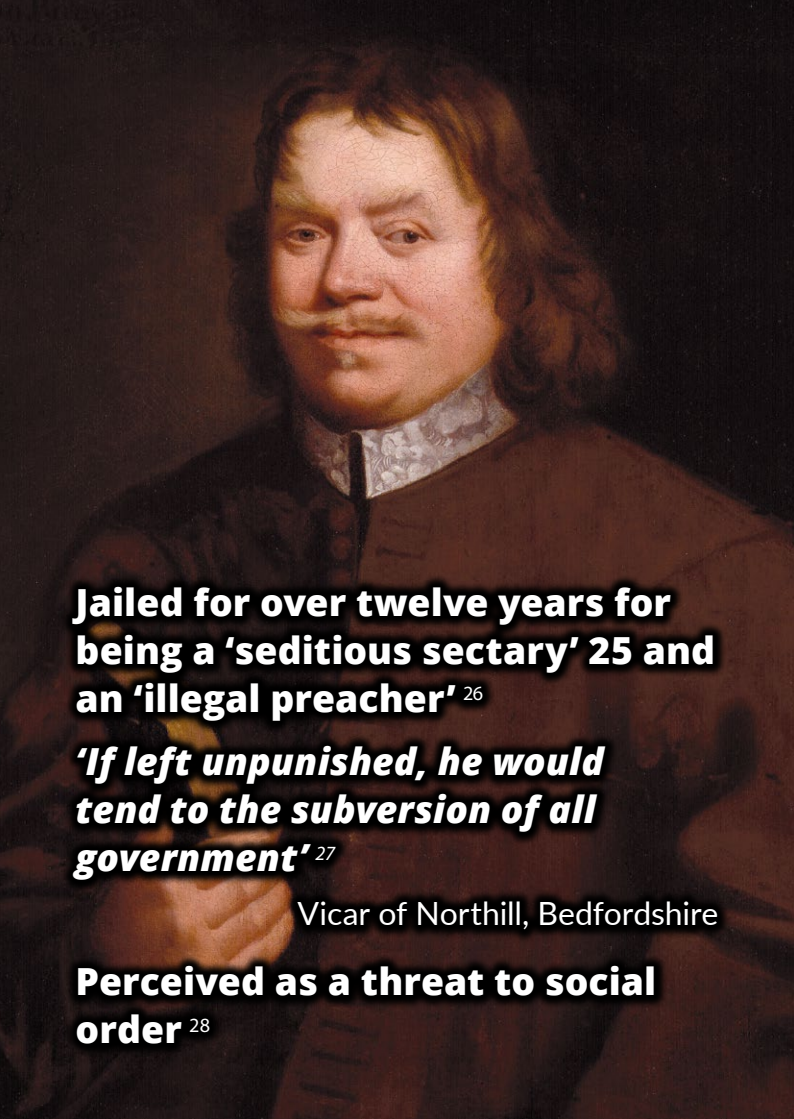
Tyndale pioneered the translation of the Bible into English so that it was accessible to everyone to read or hear.²³

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

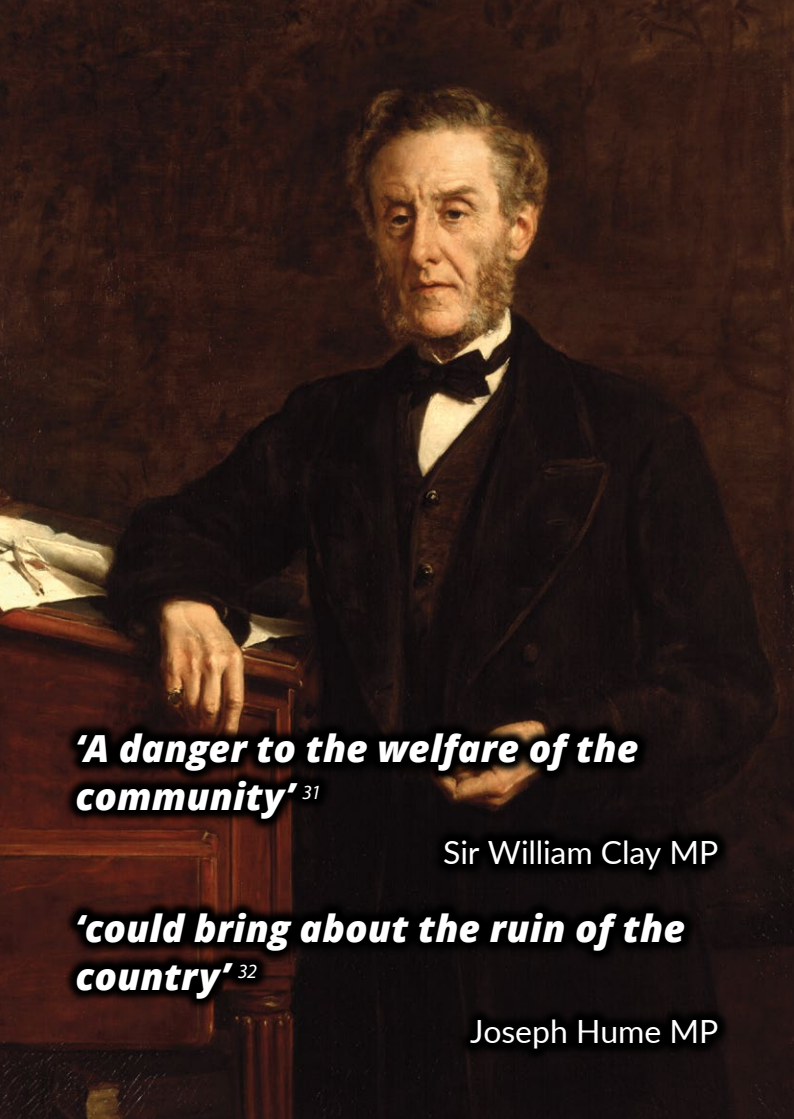
**Perceived as a threat to social
order ²⁸**

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

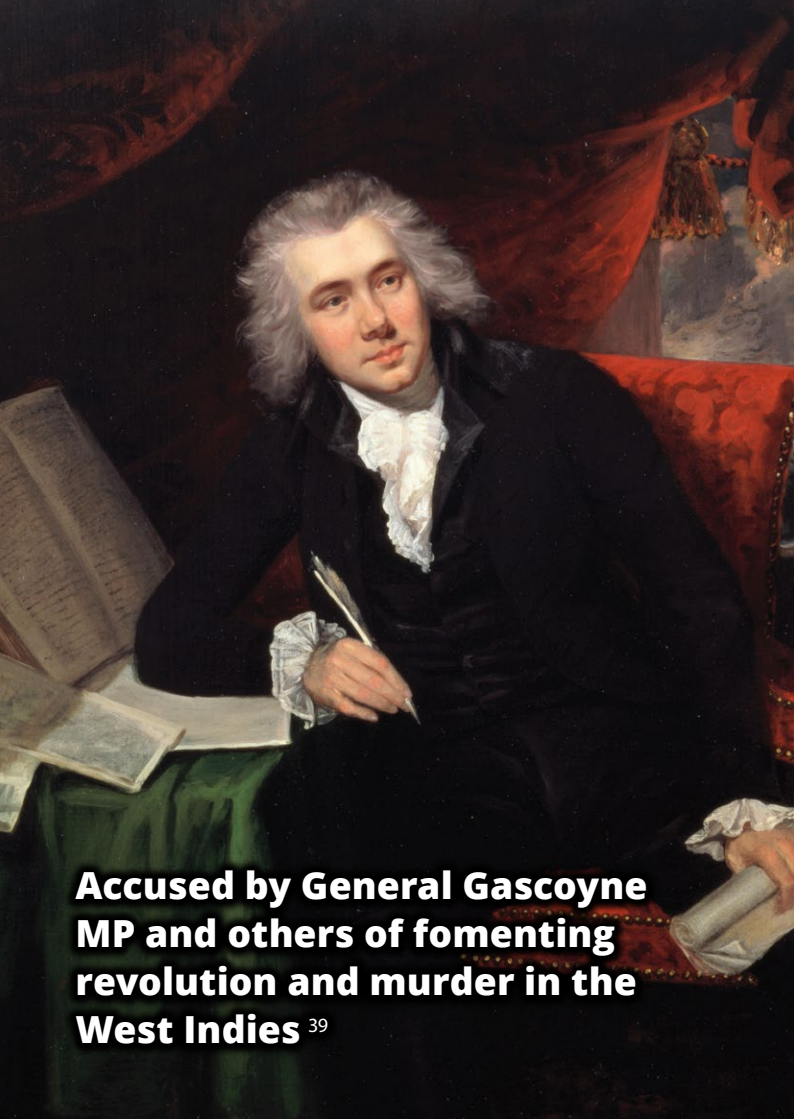
'fouler of the minds of children'³⁷

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

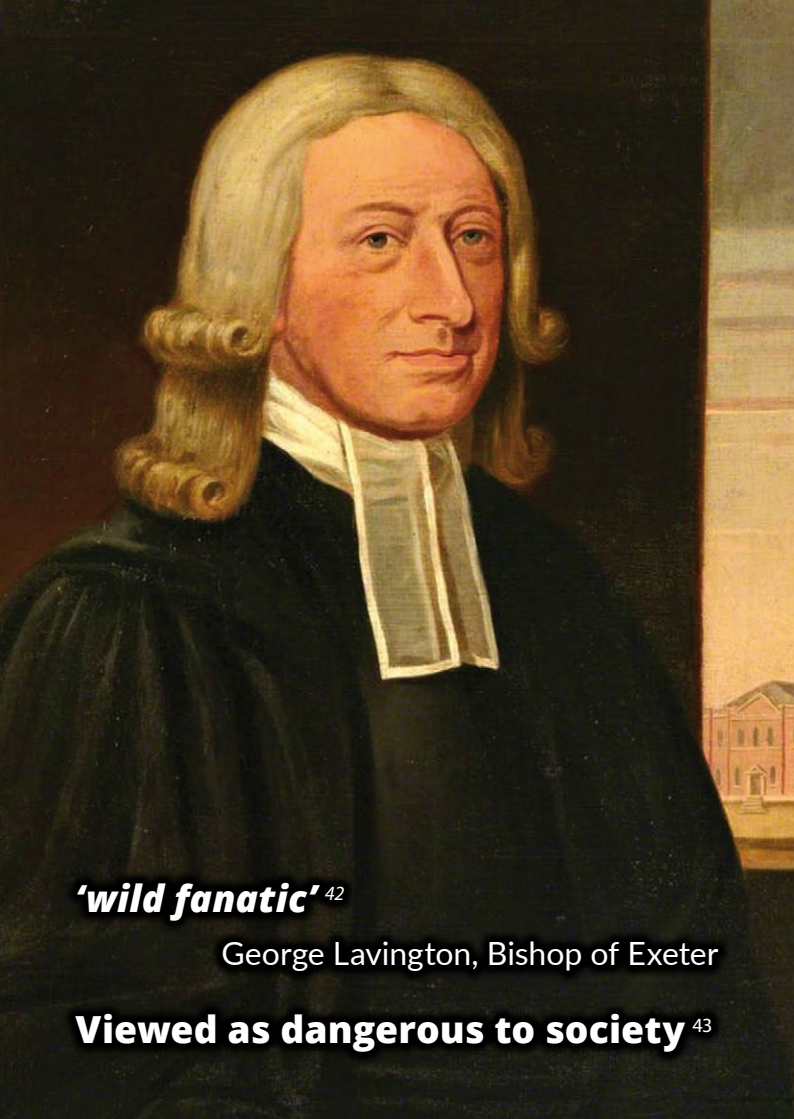
The architect of ending slavery in the British Empire.

“...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



TOLPUDDLE

"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

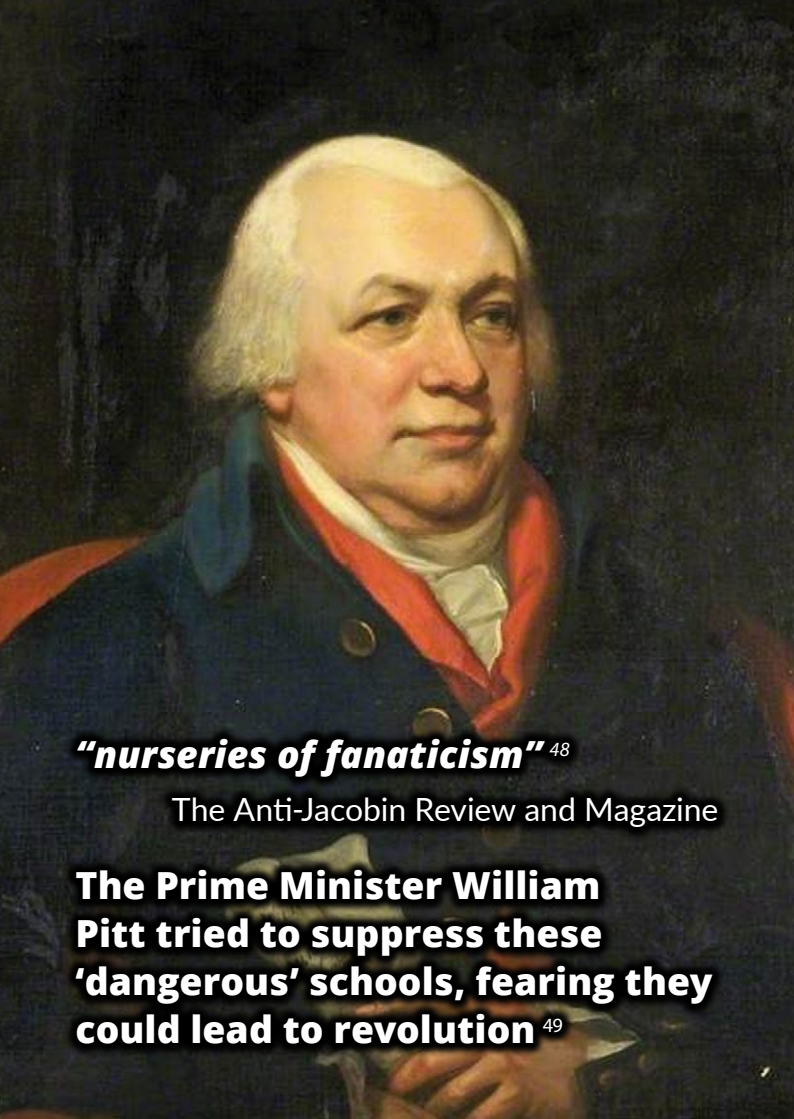
"evil" ⁴⁶

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



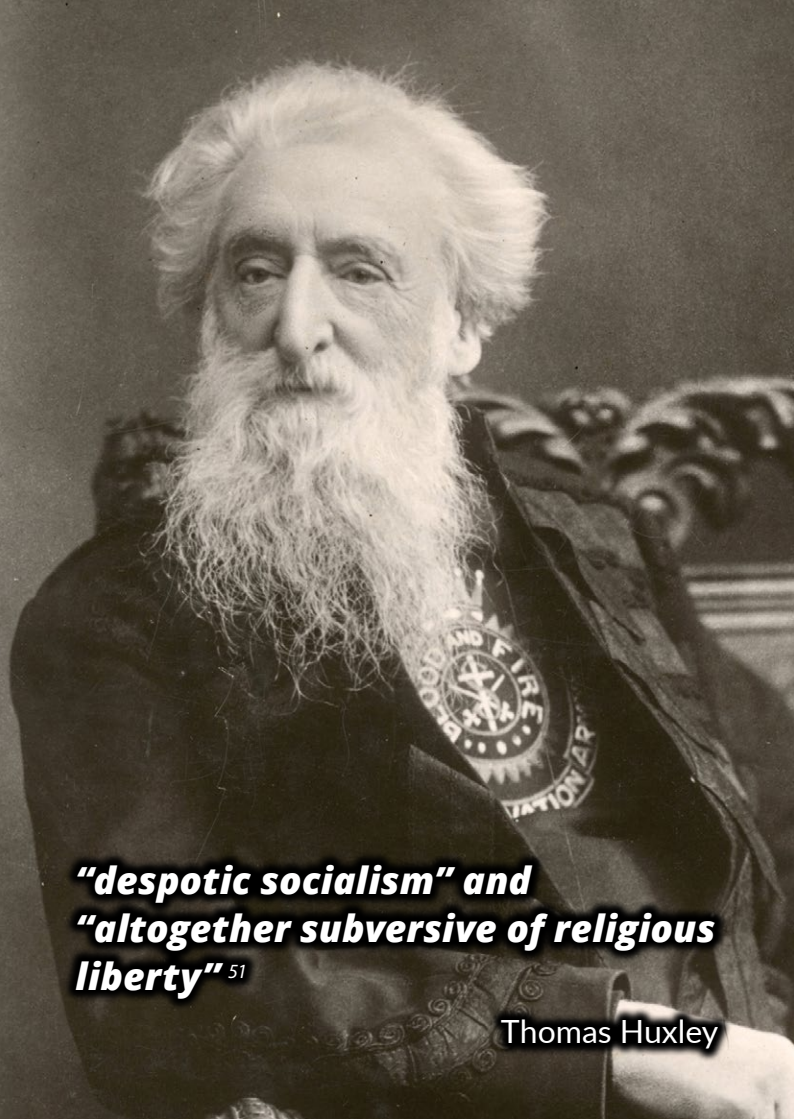
"nurseries of fanaticism" ⁴⁸

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



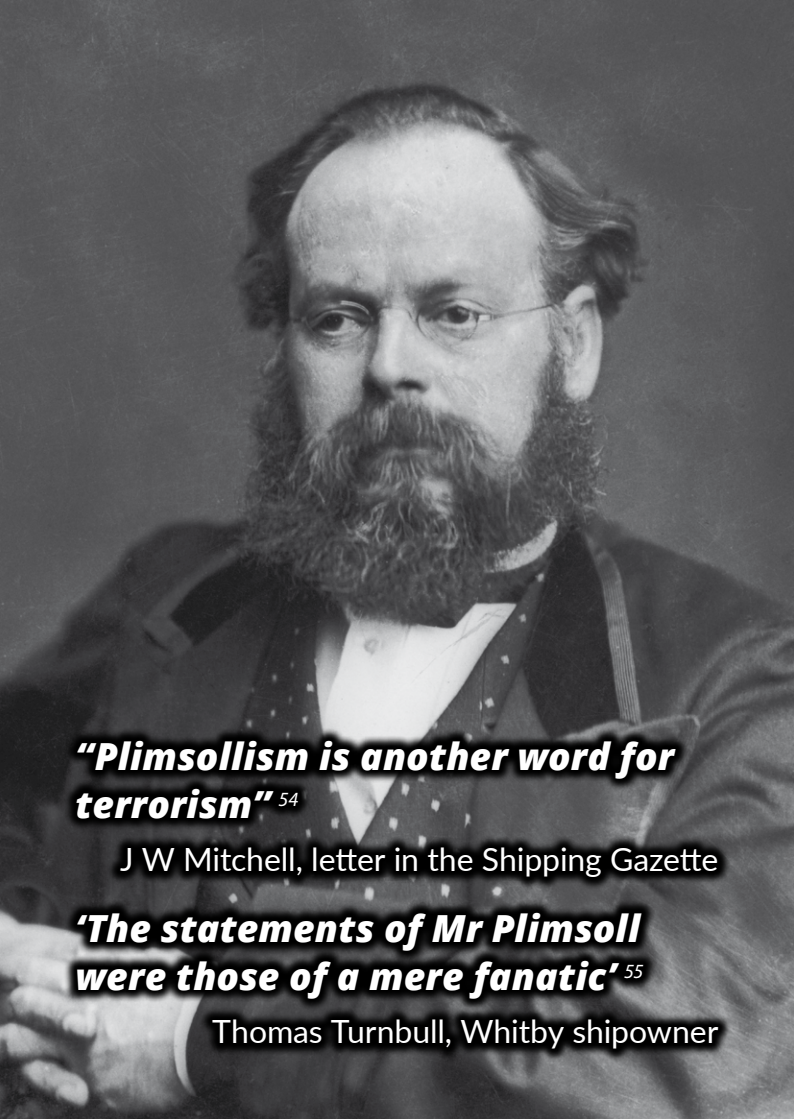
***"despotic socialism" and
"altogether subversive of religious
liberty" ⁵¹***

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

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Published by The Christian Institute
Wilberforce House, 4 Park Road, Gosforth Business Park,
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*"We need to unite to fight extremism
everywhere it exists."*

Rt Hon Michael Gove MP