



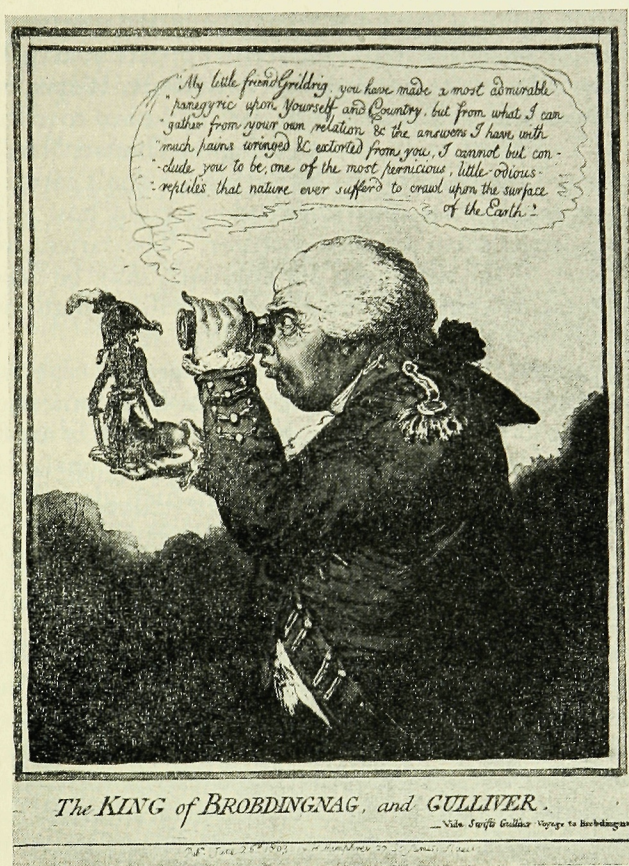
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THE CARICATURISTS' WAR AGAINST NAPOLEON

WHEN I was very young the productions of Hogarth, Cruikshank, and Rowlandson, far from entertaining me, filled my childish soul with something not far removed from horror. To my innocence they were nightmares of crudity, coarseness, and violence. Since then I have come a long way, and I can now approach the John Hay Library's Bullard Collection of Napoleonic caricatures without a tremor and indeed with a realization that it is a delightful assemblage of instructive historical documents.

Conscious as we are nowadays of the vital importance of propaganda in molding public opinion, we must recognize in the motivated topical drawing one of the most direct and universal appeals to action. Anyone who can see can take in the message of a caricature. It speaks to those who read, to those who can read but do not, and even to the illiterate. Boss Tweed of Tammany fame, commenting on Thomas Nast's famous cartoons, expressed the point neatly by saying, "I don't care a straw for your newspaper articles; my constituents don't know how to read, but they can't help seeing them damned pictures." The caricature appeals for the most part to the emotions. Its approach may be described as visceral, elemental, primitive. It touches the civilized man, but it also reaches deep within to our inherent savage nature.

Times of great and general excitement are therefore especially likely to produce a crop of caricatures, which at once feed upon and nourish the passions of the day. In the Napoleonic era this form of art flourished as never before. Particularly in England talent and national feeling combined to produce a great outpouring of fascinating, cleverly executed, and telling pictorial comments on events. Crowds gathered before the windows of the print shops. Publishers often found it worth while to have inscribed in the corner of the plates a notice that "folios of caricatures" would be "lent out for the evening."

The Bullard Collection, although confined to prints concerning Napoleon, gives a rich view of the times. While there are a number of striking examples from the continent, most of the specimens are English. Interestingly enough, aside from a number of prints which hardly fall into the category of caricature, they appear to be without exception hostile to Napoleon, though the object of their attack himself fostered an extensive counter-warfare with the same kind of weapons. At first sight the caricatures seem incredibly grotesque and often coarse and repulsive, but on closer study they reveal a skill of drawing and composition the equal of the best cartoons of our own day. As for the offenses to our

IRONS IN THE FIRE

The FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY has assisted a number of Library projects and hopes to assist others through gifts from individual members.

Memorial Book Funds — Every \$100 gift creates an endowment which provides that at least one new book every year will carry a bookplate inscribed in memory of the person designated by the donor. Several new funds have recently been established by FRIENDS.

Librarian's Fund — To be used at the discretion of the Librarian for general library purposes. This fund was initiated by a gift from a FRIEND.

Lincolnia Fund — To provide for the maintenance and increase of the McLellan Lincoln Collection. Gifts from FRIENDS since 1940 have numbered several hundred and have made possible the purchase of a contemporary portrait of Lincoln and some out-of-print books, broadsides, etc.

Latin American Fund — FRIENDS have contributed \$1176 for source material to round out the George Earl Church Collection.

Archives Collection — FRIENDS have contributed both for the purchase of books and, more significantly, for the preparation of want lists and for the solicitation of authors' copies from alumni.

Gifts of Rare Books — To be converted into funds for the benefit of the general working library. A FRIEND launched this project with a gift of 61 titles from his collection.

Gifts of Books in general — The FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY have, since their organization in 1938, brought in some 16,000 volumes.

Services — Through the FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY four firms in 1942 contributed \$185 toward the Library salary budget in recognition of facilities made available to them by the Divisional Library of Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Engineering.

Building and Equipment — The Executive Committee of the FRIENDS is alive to the urgent need of funds to provide, as soon as materials are available, certain physical equipment for the John Hay Library, particularly an elevator and new catalogue cases.

more prudish sensibilities, we must be satisfied to remember: *autres temps, autres mœurs*.

One of the earliest caricatures of the collection, dated May 12, 1792, comes before the British entrance into the recently begun war on the continent. It is entitled "Austrian Bugaboo, Funking the French Army," and shows the Austrian Army personified as a grotesque figure, all head and legs, smoking a pipe and blowing smoke at the French troops. The French are falling over each other in the terror of flight and one of them is crying, "*La Liberté, la Liberté — de s'en fuir.*" Verses in the upper left corner describe the bravery of the French before the encounter, and end derisively:

"A strange reverse, the Democrats display,
And prove the 'Right of Man' — to run away."

But the French revolutionary forces did not continue to assert the Rights of Man in this manner. Whipped into efficient, well-organized mass armies, the first in history, they embarked on a disturbing career of conquest which lasted, with slight interruption, for twenty-three years, and already by 1796 the British had to face the prospect of invasion from across the Channel. James Gillray, one of the most prolific of the anti-Napoleonic caricaturists, lampooned the rather sorry British militia who began to make preparations for repelling attack. A grotesque, puffy John Bull is shown marching belligerently at the head of a decidedly unmilitary militia, whose red coats do not conceal the workaday costumes of masons, tailors, artists, and the like. "The French invade us, hay?" he says, "damme, who'se afraid?"

Four Gillray caricatures of 1798 point the moral by depicting the "Consequences of a Successful French Invasion." One of these (with a note in the corner: "Price 6d., Coloured 1 sh. 3d.") shows a group of wretched Englishmen wearing sabots and hoeing a field of garlic under the whip of a leering overseer, while others in the background are harnessed to a plow. Another, picturing the French plunderers in the House of Lords, is entitled "We explain de Rights of Man to de Noblesse." Fierce French soldiers are tearing down and burning the rich hangings and carrying off the mace. On the table is a guillotine flanked by busts of famous assassins, and on the wall a motto proclaims: "*Solitudinem faciunt, Pacem appellant.*"

By this time British patriotism was well roused. The French revolution and all its works were to most Englishmen as hateful as a threatening Nazism at a later day. Gillray's pictorial version of "The French Consular Triumvirate settling the New Constitution" (1800) is anything but laudatory. Cambacères, Le Brun, "Seiyes," and "Bounaparte,"

wearing the faces of horrible villains under huge hats, are shown at a table conferring on their work. Bonaparte is filling out the list of officials, and is putting himself down for "Grand Consul," "*Tout en tout*," and everything else. On the floor his foot rests on the torn constitution of 1793 and the Rights of Man, while at the top of the plate is a tricolor ribbon bearing the pun, "*Vive le constitution une et invisible*."* Like the other Gillrays, this piece is cleverly and effectively done, and the equal of any cartoons of our day. It bludgeons, to be sure, but then, a caricature, when it is not a rapier, is a bludgeon.

With the advent of Bonaparte to power the epic struggle was on in earnest. Gillray presented it (1799) simply and directly as "Fighting for the Dunghill" and pictured a very belligerent British tar, astride the globe, dealing stout blows to a desperate Jacobin, who already bears, among his marks of battle, a bruise labelled "Nelson."

When the short peace of Amiens approached, the caricaturists did not fail to deride the newly benevolent attitude of the government. Charles Ansell in 1801 drew Pitt (easily recognizable by his long nose and the haughty air which caused it to be said of him "*orbem naso suspendit*") christening Bonaparte as "deliverer of Europe and pacificator of the world." Gillray, with less refinement and more gusto, hailed the treaty as "The First Kiss this Ten Years," and represented a lanky, sly-looking Bonaparte saluting a fat, gullible and sentimental Britannia. "Citizen Francois" vows his "everlasting attachment" to her, while she declares that "tho' you make me blush, yet, you kiss so delicately, that I cannot refuse you, tho' I was sure you would deceive me again!!!" A less amiable mood the same artist reveals in "Doctor Sangrado curing John Bull of Repletion," which depicts John Bull being bled by the government while Bonaparte receives in his hat most of the blood, marked Malta, Ceylon, West Indies, and the Cape of Good Hope.

Sure enough, the reconciliation proved short-lived and Gillray in June 1803 was already on the attack again with his "King of Brobdingnag and Gulliver." Here in a really admirable piece he has a striking half-length profile of George III examining through a field glass a tiny Bonaparte held in his hand. "I cannot but conclude you to be," says the king, "one of the most pernicious little-odious-reptiles, that nature ever suffered to crawl upon the surface of the earth."

It was time to rouse the nation again. In Gillray's raw and brutal "Buonaparte 48 Hours after Landing!" John Bull as a militiaman has the enemy's head impaled on his pitchfork and triumphantly exclaims "Ha, my little Boney! what do'st think of Johnny Bull now?" David

* I accept no responsibility for Gillray's French grammar. — C. K.

Roberts at the same time vividly pictured the "Consular Games, the Game of Brag, the Game of Hazard" (1803). On the left a blustery Bonaparte in a huge hat exhorts his troops to accompany him over the Channel and share in the plunder; on the right is a frightful scene of destruction as the wretched French sink into their watery graves.

Napoleon, emperor from 1804, was now the universal enemy. When the Third Coalition was formed he was "Tom Thumb at Bay," surrounded by the enraged "sovereigns of the forest," as represented by the Russian bear, the Austrian eagle, and the British lion. But a year later he was "the great French gingerbread-baker" for whom Prince Talleyrand mixed up the dough to bake a new batch of puppet kings (1806). And so the caricaturists worked tirelessly on, never relaxing from their task of painting the enemy, now as a menacing monster, now as a coarse, blustering, contemptible fool. As the climax approached, the flow of folio sheets from the print shops swelled to a flood.

The breadth of this chaos is suggested by an anonymous caricature which bears on the origins of the American war of 1812. "Which drowns first, or Boney's improved bucket" (May 1, 1812) shows John Bull and Napoleon ducking into their respective "Treasury buckets," but Napoleon has ingeniously fitted his with a spigot labelled "British licenses," by which means he has lowered the level to a point of safety. In the background America, represented by a bearded man dressed in somber brown and a widewake hat, declares "You shall have no grain." To which England can only retort feebly, "You shall have neither mouse traps nor razors." Though the idea is not carried out too logically, this is on the whole a forceful description of the blockades and the American attempts at economic coercion.

The note of triumph naturally came to the fore at the time of the retreat from Moscow. "The Cossack Extinguisher," in the form of a huge and terrible Cossack, was busy putting out "Master Boney's little French farthing rushlight" (by Elmes, November 10, 1813), or, again, "The Corsican mad dog" was being pursued by an eager crowd representing the allies. George Cruikshank pictured a ludicrous court martial of Napoleon as a "cowardly deserter from the Grand Army."

For the triumph was savage and merciless. In "An Imperial vomit" we see a very sick Napoleon spewing forth the territories he had devoured while the Regent George IV expresses his hope that it will not be necessary to prescribe any further medicine. Once on Elba the erstwhile hero was a figure of fun to be laughed at for his tears. A particularly bitter caricature published in Germany at this time imagines his arrival in hell, where a demon leads him to this throne constructed of skulls and bones. The demon says with diabolical relish, "You have built your throne by

the murder of millions of souls; sit upon it now and receive your reward, which is forever in hell to — roast."

Waterloo and its consequences did not fail to produce a spate of lampoons on the theme of Napoleon's success in at last reaching England. Later numerous crayons kept up the attack on the exile of St. Helena. A French artist portrayed the captive writing his will ("Testament de Buonaparte"). He is sitting at his desk in *deshabille*, wearing a tri-colored nightcap. Among his bequests he leaves his word of honor to Marshal Ney (notorious for his welcome to Napoleon after swearing to put him into an iron cage), his humanity to the bloodstained Jacobins, and the example of his flights to his generals. A favorite conceit of the time painted St. Helena as infested with rats, which the Military genius conquered at the head of an army of cats, or endowed with a constitution, or organized into an army against the cats with a motto: "*Vivre libre ou — courir!*"

Yet all the scorn, raillery, and denunciation could not laugh Napoleon away entirely. George Cruikshank saw that he had left his indelible mark on his time and put the idea very cleverly in one of the best and most apt caricatures of the age. "Fast Colours," published October 26, 1815, shows Louis XVIII as a washerwoman industriously scrubbing out the tricolor. "Bless me," says the fat old Bourbon, "how *fast* these *colours* are. I'm afraid I shall not get them *white* [the Bourbon color] altho' I have got such *strong* Lather." The suds are allied troops and there is a bottle of "holy water" on the bench. Napoleon, sitting on a rock in the distance, exclaims, "Ha ha! such an old woman as *you* may rub a long while before they'll be all *white*, for they are *tricoloured* in *grain*."

Chester Kirby

ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF HISTORY

BULLARD COLLECTION

In the spring of 1942 Paul R. Bullard, '97 presented to the Library a number of volumes on Napoleon, a bronze bust by R. Colombo, a death mask, and 185 contemporary cartoons. The latter were the result of forty years of collecting by Mr. Bullard and are a choice lot of caricatures.

Checks should be made payable to

FRIENDS OF THE LIBRARY OF BROWN UNIVERSITY
and mailed to the John Hay Library, Providence, R. I.