

Abstract

This thesis is focused on the development of the English and Scottish radical reform movement in the 1790s and analyzes the relationship between the British government and the radical reformers who endeavored for introduction of universal suffrage and annual parliaments. The thesis also emphasizes the reaction of a large part of the public, and especially the wealthy, who in fear of spreading the ideas of the French Revolution, decided to suppress the activities of the reformers through the so-called loyalist movement. The result of fear of loyalists from the threat of domestic Jacobinism was a wave of persecution, which ended with great political trials in Scotland and England in 1793 and 1794. The thesis is also focused on the question of the influence of the French Revolution on the activities of the reformers and explains to what extent, the ideas of republicanism prevailed among the radicals. The work also emphasizes that not only thoughts of the French Revolution but also an effect of the domestic reform tradition and Glorious Revolution had an impact on the ideas of the radical reformers. In addition, this thesis analyses also the activities of the reformers themselves, who founded in 1792 a number of new societies whose membership base consisted mainly of the working class. British radicalism of the 1790s is therefore considered the forerunner of the later charter movement.