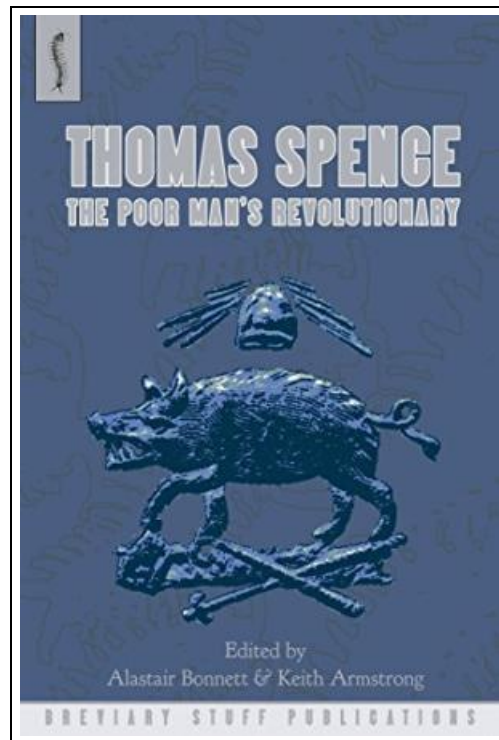


Thomas Spence: The Poor Man's Revolutionary



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THOMAS SPENCE: THE POOR MAN S REVOLUTIONARY



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Breviary Stuff Publications, United Kingdom, 2014. Paperback. Book Condition: New. 234 x 156 mm. Language: English . Brand New Book ***** Print on Demand *****.2014 marks the 200th anniversary of the death of an important and original voice in the history of radicalism: Thomas Spence. Spence described himself as the poor man s advocate but he may equally be described as the poor man s revolutionary , for what he advocated was a dramatic over-turning of the existing social order. Spence wasn t interested in compromise, with reforms and half-freedoms. Spence s story is a rags to rags tale of defiance and ingenuity. Today Spence s name is little known but this in no way reflects his significance. In the first two decades of the nineteenth century it was synonymous with ultra-radical opinion. Thomas Spence was the subject of four contemporary biographical memoirs. Moreover, three years after his death an Act of Parliament was passed prohibiting All societies or clubs calling themselves Spencean or Spencean Philanthropists . Spenceanism appears to be unique: it has a good claim to be the only political ideology to have ever been outlawed by the British Parliament. Spence s scheme for local and democratic ownership of the land found a receptive audience within sections of the labouring poor. In 1817 Thomas Malthus observed that, an idea has lately prevailed among the lower classes of society that the land is the people s farm, the rent of which ought to be divided equally among them . This, in a nutshell, is Spence s Plan . It sounds simple but it carried profound economic claims. It was a message spread more by way of tavern meetings, chalked graffiti and ballads than by published treatise. In 1787 Spence moved to London, setting up a bookshop on Chancery Lane....



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