

THE WORKS  
AND CORRESPONDENCE OF  
DAVID RICARDO

VOLUME I

## PLAN OF THE EDITION

### VOLUME

- I. Principles of Political Economy and Taxation
- II. Notes on Malthus
- III. Pamphlets and Papers, 1809–1811
- IV. Pamphlets and Papers, 1815–1823
- V. Speeches and Evidence
- VI. Letters, 1810–1815
- VII. Letters, 1816–1818
- VIII. Letters, 1819–June 1821
- IX. Letters, July 1821–1823
- X. Biographical Miscellany
- XI. General Index

THE WORKS  
AND CORRESPONDENCE OF  
**David Ricardo**

---

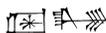
*Edited by Piero Sraffa*  
*with the Collaboration of M. H. Dobb*

---



VOLUME I

On the Principles of  
Political Economy and  
Taxation



LIBERTY FUND  
INDIANAPOLIS

This book is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., a foundation established to encourage study of the ideal of a society of free and responsible individuals.



The cuneiform inscription that serves as our logo and as the design motif for our endpapers is the earliest-known written appearance of the word “freedom” (*amagi*), or “liberty.” It is taken from a clay document written about 2300 B.C. in the Sumerian city-state of Lagash.

First published by Cambridge University Press in 1951.  
© 1951, 1952, 1955, 1973 by the Royal Economic Society  
Typographical design © 2004 by Liberty Fund, Inc.

This edition of *The Works and Correspondence of David Ricardo* is published by Liberty Fund, Inc., under license from the Royal Economic Society.

10 09 08 07 06 05 04 P 5 4 3 2 1

All rights reserved

Printed in the United States of America

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Ricardo, David, 1772–1823.

[Works. 2004]

The works and correspondence of David Ricardo / edited by Piero Sraffa; with the collaboration of M. H. Dobb.

p. cm.

Originally published: Cambridge: At the University Press for the Royal Economic Society, 1951–1973.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

Contents: v. I. On the principles of political economy and taxation—

ISBN 0-86597-965-0 (pbk.: alk. paper)

1. Economics. 2. Taxation. I. Sraffa, Piero.

II. Dobb, M. H. III. Title.

HBI61.R4812 2004

330.15'13'092—dc21 2002016222

ISBN 0-86597-976-6 (set: pbk.: alk. paper)

Liberty Fund, Inc.

8335 Allison Pointe Trail, Suite 300

Indianapolis, IN 46250-1684

Text and cover design by Erin Kirk New, Watkinsville, Georgia

Typography by Impressions Book and Journal Services, Inc.,

Madison, Wisconsin

Printed and bound by Edwards Brothers, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan

## CONTENTS OF VOLUME I

General Preface	<i>page</i> vii
Introduction	xiii
Table of Section-Headings of Chapter I in eds. 2 and 3	lxiii
Tables of Concordance for part of Chapter I in eds. 1, 2 and 3	lxiv

### ON THE PRINCIPLES OF POLITICAL ECONOMY, AND TAXATION *page* I

Preface	5
Advertisement to the Third Edition	8
Contents	9
Index	430
Table of corresponding pages in various editions	443

#### FACSIMILES

Pages of edition 1 showing double numbering of Chapters V and VIII (reduced)	xxvii, xxix
Title-pages of editions 1, 2 and 3	I-3

## GENERAL PREFACE

WHEN Ricardo's *Letters to Trower* were published in 1899 (the last of three similar collections) the editors of that volume remarked in their Introduction: "Two appreciable *desiderata* still remain—literary evidence of his long and close intimacy with James Mill, and the important "Notes on Malthus". They concluded that further knowledge of Ricardo would have to wait 'until some fortunate accident or more successful search' brought these to light. The *Notes on Malthus* have since been found and published; and the last big gap is now filled by the discovery of both sides of the extensive correspondence between Ricardo and James Mill which is here published for the first time.

Moreover, the letters of Malthus to Ricardo have been found and are first published in the present edition. Of these, long believed lost, Professor Foxwell had written in 1907 (when publishing in the *Economic Journal* a solitary letter which had survived): "The loss of Malthus' share in this correspondence may be ranked by economists next to that other literary disaster, the destruction of David Hume's comments on the "Wealth of Nations."'<sup>1</sup>

It is perhaps unique in economic literature for the writings, letters and speeches of one thinker to have such unity of subject matter (as is the case with Ricardo) that, although his works and correspondence are extant almost complete, they admit of publication virtually in their entirety as being all of them of interest to the economist. A certain amount of repetition is inevitable in the publication in full of this material. Nevertheless, to have the same doctrines presented at successive stages of their development, in varied contexts and to different audiences has evident advantages. At the same time so much of Ricardo's writing consists of discussion with contemporaries as to require the inclusion of much of their contribution in the form of letters and extracts from writings and speeches.

Most of the new material in the present edition will be found in the four volumes of Letters (vols. VI–IX). Besides the correspon-

<sup>1</sup> But see vol. XI, p. xxvii.

dence with Mill and the letters from Malthus and other correspondents, these volumes include a number of new miscellaneous letters of Ricardo. Altogether well over half of the 555 letters have not been previously published. Several new papers and notes are appended to the volumes of Pamphlets and Papers (vols. III–IV): of these the one most likely to attract attention is the unfinished paper on ‘Absolute Value and Exchangeable Value’ on which Ricardo had been engaged in the last weeks of his life. The speeches in the House of Commons, hitherto scattered over eleven volumes of *Hansard*, have been collected in vol. V, which also contains his speeches on other occasions and his evidence to Parliamentary Committees. The *Notes on Malthus* in vol. II are accompanied by the relevant text of Malthus. For the *Principles* in vol. I the variants of the several editions are given in full in notes and are analysed in the Introduction. In general, editorial Introductions or Notes, which are prefixed to each of Ricardo’s works, are confined to an account of the immediate occasion from which that work arose and of the circumstances in which it was written.

When the search for unpublished manuscripts for the present edition started in 1930 a large box labelled ‘Papers of the late D. Ricardo, Esq. M.P.’ was discovered by Mr Frank Ricardo at Bromesberrow Place, near Ledbury, formerly the residence of Ricardo’s eldest son, Osman. This, which had lain untouched for nearly a hundred years, turned out to contain practically all the letters of permanent interest received by Ricardo as well as drafts and other papers of his own. It has been the largest single source of new material and it constitutes the bulk of what in the present edition is referred to as the ‘Ricardo Papers’ (abbreviated to ‘R.P.’). A bundle of similar papers, which had become separated from the main body, was found earlier by Mr Frank Ricardo and these were published by Professor J. H. Hollander while the present edition was in preparation, so that it was possible to include them as well. Other manuscripts were subsequently traced, among them being smaller groups of letters to John Murray, to Francis Horner and to J.-B. Say.

The result was that all the series of Ricardo’s letters to his chief correspondents and theirs to him were to hand, except his letters to

James Mill. Yet it was just these which, having presumably been inherited by John Stuart Mill, one might have expected above all to be preserved. There was, on the other hand, Bain's disquieting statement in the preface to his biography of James Mill (1882) that 'several valuable collections of letters have been destroyed.' Moreover, while the papers of John Stuart Mill, which were dispersed at auction in 1922, included a parcel containing letters addressed to James Mill, none of these when traced to their ultimate buyers proved to be from Ricardo. Years of systematic enquiry among the numerous descendants of Mill and their executors and friends in all parts of the world met with no success; and it looked as though this edition would have to appear with the last gap no more than half-filled.

Then, in July 1943, quite unexpectedly, a locked metal box was found by Mr C. K. Mill in the house of his father-in-law, Mr F. E. Cairnes, at Raheny, Co. Dublin; and on the box being opened by a locksmith the first thing to appear was a brown paper parcel addressed to J. S. Mill, Esq., India House, City, and inscribed 'Mr David Ricardo's Manuscripts'. This parcel proved to contain the whole series of letters to Mill as well as a number of new writings of Ricardo which also had belonged to James Mill. All the papers were promptly and generously placed at the disposal of the editor by the owners, through the good offices of Professor O'Brien and Professor Hayek. Reporting to Lord Keynes on the importance of this discovery, Professor O'Brien wrote from Dublin: 'It can almost be compared with the find of the Boswell manuscripts in the box at Malahide Castle. Curiously enough Malahide Castle and Raheny, where Mr Cairnes lives, are quite close together.'

The remaining contents of the box were papers of John Elliot Cairnes, the economist, who was father of Mr F. E. Cairnes. The Ricardo manuscripts had no doubt come to him from his intimate friend John Stuart Mill, either directly or more probably through the latter's literary executrix, Miss Helen Taylor.

Previous to this, by the summer of 1940, six volumes of the present edition had been set up in page-proof, while the volume of *Speeches and Evidence* had reached the stage of galley-proofs. The discovery of these 'Mill-Ricardo papers' made it necessary,

when work on the edition was resumed after the war, to break up the three volumes of letters (since they were arranged in chronological order) and to expand them to four volumes. At the same time the additions to the volume of Pamphlets and Papers required its division into two volumes. The resultant nine volumes are now in course of publication; and it is hoped to complete the *Works and Correspondence* of Ricardo with a volume of biographical and bibliographical miscellany, and a General Index.

In 1948 Mr Maurice Dobb came in to assist with the editorial work, in particular being associated in the writing of the Introductions to vols. I, II, V and VI.

The fact that such a long time has elapsed since much of the early work on this edition was carried out has resulted in certain anomalies in editorial references. This will be specially noticeable in the case of references to persons who have died in the interim. Moreover, in some cases, manuscripts which are mentioned as being in the possession of a private owner have been transferred to public collections (and others may be before this edition is completed). It is hoped in the tenth volume to bring this type of information up-to-date.

It would be impossible to acknowledge in this Preface all the debts incurred in the preparation of the present edition. Help received in connection with particular points is mentioned in the appropriate places, and acknowledgement here must be confined to those persons to whom the greatest obligations have been incurred or whose help has extended to the edition as a whole.

The initiative in launching this enterprise was due to the late Lord Keynes, who to the end of his life showed the closest interest and lent his active support, particularly in the search for unpublished material and in advising on the planning and annotation of the volumes. His successor as Secretary of the Royal Economic Society, Professor Austin Robinson, has continued his interest and assistance to the progress of the edition. To both of them, as well as to the Council of the Society, a special debt must be acknowledged for their forbearance toward the delays and interruptions in the editing of these volumes.

Thanks are first of all due to the late Lt.-Col. H. G. Ricardo and to Mr Frank Ricardo for their generous cooperation and for permission to publish such of the writings of their ancestor as are copyright; in particular to the former for the loan of books and documents at Gatcombe, and to the latter for his fruitful search for manuscripts, for making available those in his possession and for much trouble taken in securing others. Acknowledgement must also be made to Mr C. K. Mill, to the late Mr F. E. Cairnes and to Mr Robert Malthus for making available important collections of papers in their possession and for waiving any copyright that might belong to them; to Sir John Murray for the loan of letters and for valuable information from the records of his publishing house; to the late Sir Bernard Mallet for permission to quote extensively from the unpublished Diaries of John Lewis Mallet in his possession; to Lady Langman, M. Edgar Raoul-Duval and Professor H. E. Butler for allowing access to letters in their possession; to the Delegates of the Oxford University Press, to The Johns Hopkins Press and to the American Economic Association for permission to reprint writings of Ricardo published by them; and finally, for valuable assistance, advice or information, to the late Dr James Bonar, Professor Jacob Viner, Professor F. A. Hayek, Professor George O'Brien, the late Professor Edwin Cannan, Sir Theodore Gregory, Mr Nicholas Kaldor and Dr R. Mattioli.

Indispensable help of a general nature (apart from what is acknowledged in particular places) has been given at various times in the capacity of editorial assistant by Dr Eduard Rosenbaum, Dr Karl Bode, Mrs Barbara Lowe and, for shorter periods, Miss Margery Seward and Mrs Lucy Munby.

Finally, the editor must record a particular obligation to the printers of the Cambridge University Press for the unfailing patience and sure judgment upon which he has been able to rely throughout the twenty years that this edition has been 'in the press'.

P. S.

TRINITY COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE  
*December 1950*

## INTRODUCTION

SUMMARY. I. *The Writing of the Principles*, p. xiii. II. *James Mill's Contribution*, p. xix. III. *Arrangement and Subdivision*, p. xxii. IV. *The Chapter On Value in Edition 1*, p. xxx. V. *Principal Changes in Chapter On Value in Eds. 2 and 3*, p. xxxvii. VI. *Edition 2*, p. xlix. VII. *Edition 3*, p. liii. VIII. *The Present Edition*, p. lx.

### I. *The Writing of the Principles*

THE plan from which the *Principles of Political Economy, and Taxation* originated had taken shape soon after the publication of the *Essay on the Influence of a Low Price of Corn on the Profits of Stock* in February 1815. At first Ricardo's intention (at James Mill's suggestion) had been merely to produce an enlarged version of the *Essay*. As he writes to J.-B. Say from his country house, Gatcomb Park, in August 1815: 'Mr. Mill wishes me to write it over again at large', adding immediately, 'I fear the undertaking exceeds my powers'.<sup>1</sup> Mill, however, as he tells Ricardo in the same month, is determined to give him no rest till he is 'plunged over head and ears in political economy'.<sup>2</sup> Six weeks later (on 10 October) the larger book is already being treated by Mill as a definite commitment: 'I expect you are by this time in a condition to give me some account of the progress you have been making in your book. I now consider you as fairly pledged to that task'.<sup>3</sup> On the 29th of the same month Ricardo is writing to Trower of his determination to 'concentrate all the talent' he possesses upon the subject on which his opinions 'differ from the great authority of Adam Smith, Malthus &c.<sup>a</sup>', namely 'the principles of Rent, Profit and Wages'. 'For my own satisfaction I shall certainly make the attempt, and perhaps with repeated revisions during

<sup>1</sup> Letter of 18 August 1815, below, VI, 249. Cp. Grenfell's reference in a letter of 1 August 1815 to 'the work which you have in Contemplation on the Corn Trade' (below, VI, 242), which was no doubt an allusion to an

enlargement of the *Essay* (whose full title refers to the 'Price of Corn' and 'Restrictions on Importation').

<sup>2</sup> Letter of 23 August 1815, below, VI, 252.

<sup>3</sup> Below, VI, 309.

a year or two I shall at last produce something that may be understood.<sup>1</sup> On 9 November we find Mill, in reply to a discouraged letter from Ricardo ('Oh that I were capable of writing a book!'<sup>2</sup>), assuming the role of 'schoolmaster' and commanding Ricardo 'to begin to the first of the three heads of your proposed work, rent, profit, wages—viz. *rent*, without an hours delay'.<sup>3</sup>

Throughout this period Ricardo was held back by difficulties of composition. As he later complained to Malthus, 'I make no progress in the difficult art of composition. I believe that ought to be my study'.<sup>4</sup> Trower's help consisted in the not very practical advice to consult Dr Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*.<sup>5</sup> Mill, however, sent detailed instructions for the writing of the '*opus magnum*';<sup>6</sup> by 22 December 1815 he is waiting 'in anticipation of the MS' which he expects 'soon to receive, as part of the great work'; and in giving further instruction as to the mode of writing he insists always that Ricardo should consider his readers 'as people ignorant of the subject'. Mill also sets him a 'school exercise': to give a proof, step by step, of the proposition which he (Ricardo) had often stated, 'That improvements in agriculture raise the profits of stock, and produce immediately no other effects.' 'For as you are already the best *thinker* on political economy, I am resolved you shall also be the best writer.'<sup>7</sup>

It is remarkable that in these letters of October and November 1815 which give the main headings of the proposed work (Rent, Profit, Wages) there is no reference to Value. This is mentioned for the first time, as a separate subject with which it occurred to Ricardo that he would have to deal, in a letter to Mill of 30 December. 'I know I shall be soon stopped by the word price,' he writes, 'and then I must apply to you for advice and assistance. Before my readers can understand the proof I mean to offer, they must understand the theory of currency and of price.'<sup>8</sup> From this time onwards the problem of Value increasingly troubled him. On 7 February 1816 he

<sup>1</sup> Below, VI, 315–16.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 314.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 321.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Malthus, 7 Feb. 1816, below, VII, 19.

<sup>5</sup> Below, VI, 326.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 330.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 338–40.

<sup>8</sup> *ib.* 348.

writes to Malthus: 'If I could overcome the obstacles in the way of giving a clear insight into the origin and law of relative or exchangeable value I should have gained half the battle.'<sup>1</sup>

In February 1816 he moved to London, whither he brought his papers, some of which he read to Mill while he was there.<sup>2</sup> But in town the work made no progress. 'I may continue to amuse myself with my speculations, but I do not think I shall ever proceed further. Obstacles almost invincible oppose themselves to my progress, and I find the greatest difficulty to avoid confusion in the most simple of my statements.'<sup>3</sup> A month later he is writing: 'My labours have wholly ceased for two months;—whether in the quiet and calm of the country I shall again resume them is very doubtful.'<sup>4</sup>

In July, back at Gatcomb, he resumed work; having (as he writes to Mill) 'little temptation to desert my work for the pleasure of walking or riding, as the weather has been almost uniformly bad', yet not able 'wholly to seclude myself'.<sup>5</sup> But although Ricardo's letters continued 'so much in the old desponding tone',<sup>6</sup> by the middle of August Mill could infer that he must have by that time 'a pretty mass of papers, written first and last upon the subject': papers which Mill asked to have sent to him, arranged by subjects if possible, with 'some indication of what each subdivision is about', or else 'higgledy-piggledy all together'.<sup>7</sup> Despite Mill's insistence, Ricardo delayed sending the manuscript for two months, under the pretext that he must copy it out.<sup>8</sup> Eventually, on 14 October 1816 he sent an extensive draft, covering the ground of the first seven chapters, or the whole of the 'Principles of Political Economy' proper; adding in the letter to Mill in which he announced their despatch, 'I shall now consider the subject of taxation'.<sup>9</sup>

The real reason for the delay was that he had 'been very much impeded by the question of price and value' (as he wrote to Malthus),<sup>10</sup> and that (as he informed Mill) he had 'been beyond measure puzzled

<sup>1</sup> Below, VII, 20.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 60.

<sup>3</sup> Letter to Malthus, 24 April 1816, *ib.* 28.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Malthus, 28 May 1816, *ib.* 36.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* 54.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 58.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 60.

<sup>8</sup> Ricardo to Mill, 8 September, and Mill to Ricardo, 6 October 1816, *ib.* 65–6, 73.

<sup>9</sup> *ib.* 82–4.

<sup>10</sup> *ib.* 71.

to find out the law of price.' 'I found on a reference to figures that my former opinion could not be correct and I was full a fortnight pondering on my difficulty before I knew how to solve it.'<sup>1</sup> This important change was evidently connected with the 'curious effect' (to which he called Mill's attention in the same letter) of a rise of wages in *lowering* the prices of 'those commodities which are chiefly obtained by the aid of machinery and fixed capital'.<sup>2</sup>

A letter from Mill of 18 November 1816 written immediately after reading the MS and making 'marginal contents' for his own use, enables us to reconstruct the contents of that MS with the help of the text of the first edition; for Mill's comments touch on the main topics in the order in which they were treated under four heads.<sup>3</sup>

1. 'Your explanation of the general principle that quantity of labour is the cause and measure of exchangeable value, excepting in the cases which you except, is both satisfactory, and clear.'

2. 'Your exposition and argumentation to shew, in opposition to A. Smith, that profits of stock do not disturb that law, are luminous. So are the exposition and argumentation to shew that rent also operates no such disturbance.'

Up to this point Mill finds the argument 'clear, and easily understood'. He continues his comments on the MS as follows:

3. 'At page 79 you begin the enquiry concerning the causes of alterations in the state of wages; and from this to p. 105, I think the topics are somewhat mixed together...I consider the inquiry in these pages as an inquiry not into the causes of change in the rate of wages alone, but the causes of changes in the wages, profits, and rent all together.' This is undoubtedly the part which underwent the greatest alteration before publication; and probably included discussion of that 'curious effect' which had cost Ricardo so much time and thought during the summer and which eventually appeared in the chapter On Value in edition 1. Ricardo no doubt had these pages in mind when he wrote to Mill: 'They are worse than they otherwise would be in consequence of my becoming better acquainted

<sup>1</sup> Below, VII, 83–4. Cp. Trower's reference to the 'two months' lost by Ricardo in ascertaining the error of his own theory (*ib.* 95). <sup>2</sup> *ib.* 82. <sup>3</sup> *ib.* 98–9.

with the subject as I have proceeded. Much of what is said in the beginning should be left out or altered to agree with what I think the more correct views which I afterwards adopted.<sup>1</sup>

4. Mill goes on to deal with 'the inquiry concerning foreign trade, which commences at p. 106, and continues to the end'. The propositions which he mentions are: 'That foreign trade augments not the value of a nations property: that it may be good for a country to import commodities from a country where the production of those same commodities costs more, than it would cost at home: that a change in manufacturing skill in one country, produces a new distribution of the precious metals'.

Of the four parts of this draft all but the third can easily be identified in the *Principles* in a form which, from its agreement with Mill's description, appears to be substantially unchanged in the first edition.

Thus the first part, consisting of the statement of the law of value, with its exceptions (rare statues, etc.), will be found below, p. 11 to p. 22.

Of the second part, the statement in opposition to Adam Smith that the law is not disturbed either by the payment of profits or by the payment of rent appears in the passage of edition 1 given below, p. 22–3, note 3; the full argument regarding profits is on pages 22 to 26 (first paragraph) in the chapter On Value; that regarding rent is on pages 67 to 78 (first paragraph) in the chapter On Rent.<sup>2</sup>

And of the fourth part (the enquiry into Foreign Trade) the points noted by Mill will be found, in the same order, as follows: (*a*) that Foreign Trade does not add to value, below, p. 128 to p. 133 (second paragraph); (*b*) the theory of comparative costs, below, p. 133 to p. 137 (first paragraph); (*c*) the redistribution of the precious metals following a change of skill in one country, below, p. 137 to p. 141

<sup>1</sup> *ib.* 82.

<sup>2</sup> So much material (the last part of the chapter On Value) was inserted between the two arguments on profits and on rent that the connection between them was obscured. Indeed, in edition 3 the passage establishing that connection (p. 22–3, n. 3) is

omitted altogether; while, somewhat incongruously, the opening sentence of the chapter On Rent, which presupposes that connection ('It remains however to be considered'), is preserved in all editions. Cp. also p. 78, n. 1.

(third paragraph). This covers rather more than half of the chapter On Foreign Trade in the *Principles*.

On the other hand, the enquiry into wages (occupying page 79 to page 105 of the MS draft), which Mill considered confused with the enquiries into profits and rent, has no exact counterpart in the published work. No doubt the material which it contained, greatly expanded, was partly embodied in the chapter On Value and for the rest distributed over the chapters On Natural and Market Price, On Wages and On Profits.

Having despatched the first parcel of MS and having set to work on taxation, Ricardo by 17 November 1816 had completed and sent to Mill the 'inquiry into the subject of Taxation' (as Mill described it).<sup>1</sup> This part, Mill thought, would require more work than the first one before it was ready for the press: 'you have followed the order of your own thoughts,' and the matter would need re-arrangement so as 'to facilitate introduction into the minds of your readers'.<sup>2</sup>

Up to this point what Ricardo had done was (as he wrote to Malthus) 'rather a statement of my own opinions, than an attempt at the refutation of the opinions of others'.<sup>3</sup> Having finished taxation, he proceeded 'to read Adam Smith once more, to take note of all passages which very much favor, or are directly opposed to my peculiar opinions';<sup>4</sup> he also re-read Say's *Traité d'Économie politique* and Buchanan's commentary on the *Wealth of Nations* and made notes of his own criticisms.<sup>5</sup> These criticisms formed the basis of the group of controversial chapters which follows the chapters on taxation. Finally, at the end of January he read again Malthus's pamphlets on rent and corn, and early in March, while printing was in progress, he sent to Malthus the MS of his last chapter, which contains his comments upon them.<sup>6</sup>

The printing of the *Principles* began at the end of February 1817. At first it went on briskly at the rate of a sheet a day, as Ricardo wrote to Malthus, and by 9 March eleven sheets, out of a total of thirty-eight, had been corrected.<sup>7</sup> In the *Monthly Literary Advertiser* of

<sup>1</sup> Below, VII, 87–8, 106.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 107.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 115.

<sup>4</sup> Letter to Mill, 17 Nov. 1816, *ib.* 88.

<sup>5</sup> *ib.* 100–1, 115.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 120 and 139–40.

<sup>7</sup> *ib.* 140.

10 March it was included in Murray's list of works 'in the Press'. On 26 March, when Ricardo put the last part of his manuscript into the printer's hands, he complained that the latter did 'not proceed regularly at the same even pace'.<sup>1</sup> But he still hoped that it would be out on Monday, 7 April, which appears to have been the date originally fixed for its appearance.<sup>2</sup> However, publication was delayed, and the final date was announced in *The Day and New Times* of Wednesday, 16 April, where the book was advertised by Murray under the caption, 'On Saturday will be published'. The date was confirmed in the same paper of Saturday, 19 April, with an advertisement opening 'This Day will be published' and giving the price, 14s. Since Trower on 28 April wrote to Ricardo from Godalming thanking him for the book 'which arrived a few days ago',<sup>3</sup> it could not have been sent much later than the 19th. We can therefore take this (19 April 1817) as the date of publication.

## II. James Mill's Contribution

John Stuart Mill says in his *Autobiography* that Ricardo's *Principles* 'never would have been published or written, but for the entreaty and strong encouragement of my father; for Ricardo, the most modest of men, though firmly convinced of the truth of his doctrines, deemed himself so little capable of doing them justice in exposition and expression, that he shrank from the idea of publicity'.<sup>4</sup> In a similar strain the obituary, probably written by Ricardo's brother, says that he was 'very reluctant, first to write, and afterwards to publish this work; and it was only by the successive urgings of some of his most confidential friends, but particularly through the influence of Mr. Mill, that he was at length prevailed upon to do so'.<sup>5</sup> These statements, if they are taken to refer to James Mill's influence in stimulating and encouraging Ricardo, are fully borne out by the

<sup>1</sup> *ib.* 145.

<sup>2</sup> *ib.* 147.

<sup>3</sup> *ib.* 148.

<sup>4</sup> *Autobiography*, 1873, p. 27.

<sup>5</sup> *Annual Biography and Obituary, for the Year 1824*, p. 374. McCulloch

makes a similar statement, probably derived from the above, in the numerous versions of his *Life and Writings of Mr. Ricardo* (omitting in the later ones any reference to Mill).

correspondence between Ricardo and Mill.<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, they are open to misunderstanding. For they have given rise to the view, first advanced by Professor Dunbar, that 'Ricardo's book was written, not for the public eye, but as a statement of opinions made for his own purposes, and that its publication was an afterthought of his friends.'<sup>2</sup> Through its acceptance by Marshall<sup>3</sup> this belief has gained general currency. The Ricardo-Mill correspondence now makes it certain that this opinion is unfounded, and that from the very beginning the idea of publication was present in Ricardo's mind, although from time to time he was beset by doubts as to his ability to achieve his object (as has been shown in several passages quoted above). A typical statement is the following which he made in a letter to Mill when he was in the middle of composition in November 1816: 'I have an anxious desire to produce something worth publishing, but that I unaffectedly fear will not be in my power.'<sup>4</sup>

At the same time it is clear that Mill's contribution to the making of the *Principles* was less than might have been expected from his promises and encouragement. On the theory there is little doubt that his influence was negligible; he had been out of touch with Political Economy for some time<sup>5</sup> and his letters to Ricardo contain little discussion of theoretical issues. Mill's letters of this period are full of advice relating to 'the art of laying down your thoughts, in the way most easy of apprehension'.<sup>6</sup> But despite his repeated assurances that he would see to the order and arrangement ('if you

<sup>1</sup> His obligations to Mill in this respect are summed up by Ricardo in a letter of 2 Dec. 1816: 'If I am successful in my undertaking it will be to you mainly that my success will be owing, for without your encouragement I do not think that I should have proceeded, and it is to you that I look for assistance of the utmost importance to me—the arranging the different parts, and curtailings what may be superfluous.' (Below, VII, 101.)

<sup>2</sup> C. F. Dunbar, 'Ricardo's Use of Facts', in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, July 1887, vol. 1, p. 475.

<sup>3</sup> 'He was with difficulty induced to publish it; and if in writing it he had in view any readers at all, they were chiefly those statesmen and business men with whom he associated. So he purposely omitted many things which were necessary for the logical completeness of his argument, but which they would regard as obvious.' A. Marshall, *Principles of Economics*, Appendix on 'Ricardo's Theory of Value', 8th ed., p. 813 and cp. p. 761 n.

<sup>4</sup> Below, VII, 88.

<sup>5</sup> Below, VI, 320–1.

<sup>6</sup> *ib.* 321.

entrust the inspection of it to me'<sup>1</sup>) it seems likely that in the main the sequence of topics was left as Ricardo had originally worked through them. In detail however Mill probably did a good deal of work. Here and there a phrase unmistakably characteristic of Mill (such as 'It is a truth which admits not a doubt',<sup>2</sup> 'the nature of the evil points out the remedy',<sup>3</sup> or 'none but the prejudiced are ignorant of its true principles'<sup>4</sup>) provides evidence of his hand. His touch can also be recognised in the polished wording of the Preface<sup>5</sup> and in the long passage on the 'pernicious tendency' of the poor laws.<sup>6</sup>

Among Mill's more humble tasks was probably the compilation of the Index, which in method and clarity of expression is strikingly similar to the Index of his *History of British India*, published later in 1817. It is noticeable that several entries exhibit misunderstanding of the text or radical change of emphasis such as to suggest that they cannot be by the author of the book.<sup>7</sup> At any rate contemporary critics of Ricardo seized upon the contrast between the language of the text and that of the Index, to the disadvantage of the former. Thus, one of them says that Ricardo 'relied for a correction of his deficient perspicuity on his Index, which is clear and minute'.<sup>8</sup> Another, Samuel Bailey, notes: 'the only place in Mr. Ricardo's work, where I have been able to find the expression of the general rule properly qualified, is the Index. He there says, "the quantity of

<sup>1</sup> *ib.* 321.

<sup>2</sup> Below, p. 106. The old-fashioned use of the negative is a peculiarity of Mill, as Bain points out (*James Mill*, p. 426). Another passage in which it occurs (below, p. 64: 'if wages par-took not...') shows also other signs of, at least, revision by Mill.

<sup>3</sup> Below, p. 107.

<sup>4</sup> *ib.* 352.

<sup>5</sup> That the first three paragraphs of the Preface are stamped with Mill's 'tone and style' has been noticed by Simon N. Patten, 'The Interpretation of Ricardo', in *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, April 1893, vol. VII, p. 338.

<sup>6</sup> Below, pp. 105–9.

<sup>7</sup> Compare *e.g.* the following entries with the passages referred to: 'Population, increase of, no cause of the rise of rent, 410, 411.' 'Labour, Adam Smith's theory of productive and un-productive labour, considered, 76–77, notes.' 'Value, Effects of payment of rent on value, 64, 65.' 'Smith, Strictures on his doctrine relative to labour being the *sole* ultimate standard of the exchangeable value of commodities, 16, 17, 416.' The same applies to additions to the Index made in ed. 3: *e.g.* under *Taxes*, entry stating that a tax on rent 'discourages cultivation, 173–5.' (Page-references are to the present edition.)

<sup>8</sup> 'Ricardo on Political Economy', in *Monthly Review*, Dec. 1820, p. 416.

labour requisite to obtain commodities the *principal* source of their exchangeable value.”<sup>1</sup>

The accurate yet free translation of the passages quoted from Say is probably also due to Mill, who had advised against quotation in French.<sup>2</sup>

### III. *Arrangement and Subdivision*

Thus Mill’s promises that, once Ricardo had set down his thoughts on paper, he himself would attend to their proper arrangement may in the event have fallen short of fulfilment. In any case, the result is not such as to do much credit to Mill’s passion for system; and the apparent defects in the arrangement of the work as a whole have often been noted by Ricardo’s critics.<sup>3</sup>

This arrangement was the direct result of the manner in which Ricardo proceeded in his work. As his letters show, he wrote according to the sequence of his own ideas, without any more elaborate plan than was implied in the heading, ‘Rent, Profit and Wages’. Mill, indeed, had instructed him to ‘proceed, without loss of time... thinking nothing of order, thinking nothing of repetitions, thinking nothing of stile—regarding nothing, in short, but to get all the thoughts blurred upon paper some how or another’.<sup>4</sup> ‘When we have the whole before us, we will then lay our heads together, to see how it may be sorted and shaped to the best advantage.’<sup>5</sup> The three parts in which Ricardo composed it and which he sent separately to Mill correspond to the three groups into which the chapters of the

<sup>1</sup> *A Critical Dissertation on the Nature, Measures, and Causes of Value*, London, Hunter, 1825, pp. 213–14.

<sup>2</sup> Below, VII, 108.

<sup>3</sup> A number of commentators, from De Quincey to Marx, have suggested ways of rearranging the chapters in a logical order. (See ‘Dialogues of Three Templars’, in De Quincey’s *Works*, ed. Masson, vol. IX, p. 53, and Marx’s *Theorien über den Mehrwert*, vol. II, 1, pp. 5–6. For several other attempts see J. H. Hollander, *David Ricardo, A Centenary Estimate*, Baltimore, 1910, p. 82.)

<sup>4</sup> Letter from Mill, 14 August 1816, below, VII, 60.

<sup>5</sup> Letter from Mill, 16 Dec. 1816, *ib.* 108–9. It is interesting that it was only at this late stage in the preparation of the book (December 1816) that Mill put to Ricardo the question whether he would ‘chuse to include in it a view of the *whole science*’: ‘Or, whether you will content yourself with those parts of the science which you yourself have improved.’ (*ib.* 107.) To which Ricardo replied that it would be easier for him to publish only those parts which had ‘particularly engaged’ his attention; adding that, if this were favourably received, he might later ‘take a view of the whole science.’ (*ib.* 112.)