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THE CHANGING REPUBLICANISM OF JAMES MONROE, 1787-1831: AN ESSAY IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

by

ARTHUR SCHERR

VOLUME I

A dissertation submitted to the Graduate Faculty in history in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, The City University of New York.

1999

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September 23, 1999
Date

Chair of Examining Committee

9/28/99
Date

Executive Officer

Ari Hoogenboom

Eli Faber

Martin J. Burke

Andrew Whitmore Robertson
Supervisory Committee

THE CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

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Abstract

THE CHANGING REPUBLICANISM OF JAMES MONROE:
AN ESSAY IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS, 1787-1831

by

Arthur Scherr

Adviser: Professor Jacob Judd

This is a study of James Monroe's political thought from 1787 to 1831, culminating in his participation in Virginia's constitutional convention of 1829-1830 and his little-known treatise, The People the Sovereigns, written after his retirement from the presidency. Monroe's preeminent concern was for the survival of his nation's inherently unstable "republican" form of government (representative democracy), which was constantly faced by the ever present threat of disruption by domestic factionalism, class conflict, and foreign intervention. To employ a terminology primarily the anachronistic invention of modern historians, Monroe finally found solace in a theoretical shift from his "classical republicanism" of the 1780s-1790s, when he stressed the dangers of centralized power, to "liberal republican" ideology after the War of 1812, upholding the view that the people's representatives might be trusted to act on behalf of a "publick [sic] good" closely linked to individual self-interest. In The People the Sovereigns, he reached the conclusion that the political economy of the United States, a society of widespread property ownership, social mobility, and economic growth lacking an ingrained socioeconomic class system or privileged social orders, precluded factionalism and guaranteed the republic's endurance over time.

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Acknowledgments

Although I have prepared this dissertation essentially in lonely isolation, there are a few individuals to whom I feel impelled to express my appreciation. My dissertation advisor, Professor Jacob Judd, has shown himself to be a man of great patience and understanding. He has supervised the preparation of this dissertation for many years, when there was no obligation for him to do so, and when it seemed that I had left *academe* forever for more profane pursuits. He has also helped me out of tight spots. To Professor Ari Hoogenboom, whom I have known for thirty years, I owe a great debt of gratitude. On the golden eve of retirement, he agreed to serve as a reader of this dissertation, and he perused it thoroughly and critically, even in the course of a European vacation. Although they had never met me, Professors Eli Faber, Martin J. Burke, and Andrew Whitmore Robertson kindly agreed to serve on the supervisory committee. In addition, Professors Robertson and Burke even showed some enthusiasm about the dissertation's topic and contents, and observed that it helped them in certain respects with their own research. For the writer of a doctoral dissertation, this is the apogee of praise.

Although I have received little in the way of financial assistance on this dissertation, perhaps I should mention that the Virginia Historical Society provided me with a bit of aid through a short-term resident research fellowship in 1993. If nothing else, I hope my work will stimulate further investigation into the life and ideas of James Monroe, whose career spanned half a century devoted to the "public good."

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THE CHANGING REPUBLICANISM OF JAMES MONROE, 1787-1831: AN ESSAY IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

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THE CHANGING REPUBLICANISM OF JAMES MONROE, 1787-1831: AN ESSAY IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

INTRODUCTION

Despite his prominence in the political life of the young republic, James Monroe (1757-1831) remains one of our most underrated and least studied presidents. Although most students are familiar with the Monroe Doctrine, his life and his ideas about politics and society have otherwise received little consideration. In fact, Monroe was one of the most active political figures of his time. He held such diverse offices as congressman, governor of Virginia, U.S. minister to France, England, and Spain, secretary of war, secretary of state, and finally president.

Scholars have ignored Monroe's political theories. However, he wrote several volumes, small-scale treatises which convey his beliefs concerning the strengths and weaknesses of republics. The manuscripts of these books, in Monroe's handwriting, are conveniently available at the New York Public Library manuscripts division. They have also been published: Observations on the Constitution (Petersburg, 1788); A View of the Conduct of the Executive, in the Foreign Affairs of the United States, Connected with the Mission to the

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French Republic, during the years 1794, 1795, and 1796 (Philadelphia, 1797); and, composed during his retirement from the presidency, the posthumously published statement of his political philosophy, The People the Sovereigns: Being a Comparison of the Government of the United States with those of the Republics which have Existed Before, With the Causes of their Decadence and Fall (Philadelphia, 1867).

The following study engages in an exegesis, similar to an explication de texte, of these "theoretical" writings by Monroe in the context of the times in which he wrote them. Unlike his squibs in the newspapers in defense of Jefferson in the early 1790s, these essays bore his name and he informed others of his authorship. In other words, they embodied his "official" political theory in the same way that John Adams's Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States epitomized his ideology and Thomas Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia expressed his views. However, although numerous books and articles have been written analyzing those works, none have thoroughly studied Monroe's comparable contributions in political theory. By taking Monroe's political works seriously, I hope to gain a clearer understanding of the nature of his republicanism and the ambiguity of his radicalism.

A Jeffersonian zealot in defense of representative government in an age when many other Americans were skeptical of a preponderant role for the people and most governments treated the idea of "government by the consent of the governed" with fear or disdain, Monroe in a sense occupied the left edge of the political spectrum of his era.[1] I hope my discussion of his attitude toward the Constitution in 1787-1788 and his later political views will further delineate the nuances and limits of this radicalism.

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Uncomfortably aware that scholars, ignoring the ideological context of Monroe's activities as American minister to France from 1794-1796, have granted his diplomatic endeavors priority, I have chosen to demonstrate that these years may provide a vantage point from which to amplify the analysis of his political thought. Several historians, notable Alexander DeConde's Entangling Alliance (Durham, N.C., 1958), Albert H. Bowman's Struggle for Neutrality, 1789-1801 (Knoxville, 1974), and Harry Ammon, Monroe's most competent biographer, in James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York, 1971), have carefully examined his diplomatic maneuvers and foreign policy objectives. But they have overlooked his response to domestic conflicts in Paris and the rest of France. Such upheavals as the Reign of Terror, the Thermidorian Reaction, and François Nöel ("Gracchus") Babeuf's Conspiracy of the Equals, a precursor of the Russian Communist Revolution, were ultimately of greater historical magnitude than Jay's Treaty and the ensuing undeclared war between France and the United States. Monroe observed and commented on these momentous occurrences in his diplomatic correspondence and letters to colleagues and friends in the United States. His understanding of them may contribute to our comprehension of his political ideology.

Fifth president of the United States, one of the leaders of the Republican party and a founder of the two-party system, Monroe's opinions are of greater relevance than previous historians have acknowledged in seeking to comprehend what Robert R. Palmer has called the "age of the democratic revolution." His reactions to the diverse phases of the American and French Revolutions progressively formulated and matured his ideology. Perhaps more distinctly than his contemporaries on the other side of the Atlantic, he was eligible to compare the two

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republican revolutions. His commentaries on the similarities and differences between the American Revolution and other historic revolutions furnish a microcosm for delineating his political views, and are worth treating in greater detail than the perfunctory depictions by his biographers and a few historians.

A thorough analysis of Monroe's theories in times of extremity like the debate over the United States Constitution in 1787-1788 and the Revolution in France in 1794 may bring into clearer focus the components of his ideology. For instance, Monroe's anxieties about the presence of "foreign influence" as he viewed the recurring riots and disturbances in Paris from 1794-1796 turns out on deeper analysis to be merely a more intense manifestation of the same fears he experienced during Virginia's debate over ratification of the United States Constitution. Using his formal treatises as key documents, supplemented by his published and manuscript correspondence, I have thoroughly analyzed his final, most comprehensive ideological statement, The People the Sovereigns, written after the momentous events in which he participated.

With a lifetime of political participation in view, Monroe gauged by means of comparative historical synthesis, as through a glass darkly, the uniqueness of the American experiment. With its perception of the larger social consensus behind popular, representative government, Monroe's political testament, The People the Sovereigns, presaged many of the emerging themes of Jacksonian Democracy. He composed this work after a term of office in which he strove to be "president of all the people." In the summer of 1817, shortly after election to his first term as president, he toured New England, seeking to rally his Federalist

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adversaries behind him in a government of national Republican unity. Afterward, he exuberantly wrote his son-in-law: "I wish to bring about an union of the whole population of our country, in support of our republican government, which can be done only, by an union of parties on republican principles."[2] At least in part, this was also the goal of his political thinking, which reached its culmination in The People the Sovereigns.

The study of ideology and its popular variant, "political culture," have become major preoccupations of scholars involved in understanding the Early Republic. Ever since Bernard Bailyn and Gordon S. Wood pioneered with their outstanding studies of Revolutionary popular thought in the 1960's, other historians have attempted to combine social and intellectual history, applying the "sociology of knowledge" to encompass elites and the poor alike: T.H. Breen, Robert E. Shalhope, Herbert G. Gutman, Eric Foner, David Montgomery, Simon P. Newman, and Sean Wilentz are some prominent examples.[3]

The social anthropologist Clifford Geertz has served as a catalyst for several of these historians. In his book, The Interpretation of Cultures (1973) and elsewhere, Geertz depicts ideology as "a science of symbolic behavior" with a "capacity to grasp, formulate, and communicate social realities that elude the tempered language of science." On another level, ideology constitutes an individual response to social desperation. In contrast to "interest group" theory, Geertz calls this the "role strain" theory of ideology.[4]

One aspect of the "role strain" interpretation of ideology seems especially relevant to Monroe's situation at the varied historical junctures when he felt compelled to expound his ideas: the "morale explanation," which Geertz defines as an ideology's ability "to sustain

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individuals (or groups) in the face of chronic strain, either by denying it outright or by legitimizing it in terms of higher values."[5]

Monroe utilized such forms of denial and legitimation in justifying both the policies France pursued during the Themidorian Reaction and, later, in explaining America's political evolution. At other times, as during the Constitutional debates of the 1780's and the Jeffersonian struggle against the Federalists in the 1790's, he was more cognizant of the presence of class and sectional antagonisms. In a statement apposite Monroe's insistence on the virtue of the French Government notwithstanding its suppression of public opposition and its failure to improve living conditions, Geertz notes: "Ideology bridges the emotional gap between things as they are and as one would have them be, thus insuring the performance of roles that might otherwise be abandoned in despair or apathy."[6] Was Monroe this type of ideologue? At several junctures in his political career, such as his reluctant acceptance of the ministry to France from 1794-96 and his attendance at the Virginia constitutional convention in 1829, such seems to be the case. This is one of the problems I will confront in the course of this study.

That Monroe considered the perpetuation of American republicanism the essential motive of his political career was evinced in the course of his final book, The People the Sovereigns, left unfinished at his death. As he reflected upon the events of his life from an ideological and philosophical standpoint, his conclusions reveal how closely he linked the prevalence of relative economic equality and the absence of violent class hostilities with the survival of representative democracy and the preservation of "republican virtue." Historians neglect the book, but it needs to be taken more seriously, not because it was a great original

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work of political thought (it was not), but because it represents the distillation and apex of the ideas of a major political figure and president during the American republic's formative years.

Although Monroe's opinions bear many similarities to those Gordon S. Wood delineates in his peerless elucidation of "representative democracy" in The Creation of the American Republic (1969) and The Radicalism of the American Revolution (1992), Wood virtually ignores Monroe, except for a few sentences in the former about his views of the Constitution in 1787-1788. Unfortunately, his remarks are in error, and indirectly evince historians' disdain for the fifth president.

Since Creation of the American Republic is perhaps the most highly regarded work on the early republic to have appeared in the last forty years, I will take the time here to note Wood's errors. On p. 455 he states that Monroe opposed national judicial review as an undemocratic innovation, citing as evidence a letter he wrote to James Madison on Nov. 22, 1788. However, in this letter Monroe is talking about *state* legislative debates concerning whether Virginia's courts had the power to declare congressional legislation unconstitutional under the new government. The legislature decided not to consider this matter, Monroe, at this time a member of the Virginia house of delegates, reported, concluding that it was "calculated to create heats & animosities that will produce harm." In this letter to Madison, Monroe's allusion to the amendment of a "district court law" refers to a *state* district court, since no national judiciary existed until passage of the Judiciary Act of 1789. Wood's only other mention of Monroe (p. 561) describes a speech he made in the state ratifying convention in 1788, in which Wood alleges that Monroe argued that there were no real checks and balances

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in the U. S. Constitution between the different branches of the national government because no social orders (monarchy, aristocracy, democracy) were formally represented in American society. However, Monroe was actually protesting that there was "not a third essentially distinct branch to preserve a just equilibrium, or to prevent such encroachments" of the *national* upon the *state* governments. "I have never yet heard, or read in the history of mankind, of a concurrent exercise of power by two parties, without producing a struggle between them," Monroe warned. He objected that there was no "third branch" of government to mediate and "check" conflicts between the state and national governments.[7] Thus Wood's less than painstaking consideration of Monroe in his *magnum opus* points up the need for more careful study of the Virginian's ideology.

Monroe merits more detailed consideration, in a study which traces the evolution and basic premises of his political ideology. In an effort to delineate the transformation of Monroe's ideology at certain key points (1787-1788, 1794-1801, 1829-1831), as expounded in his writing, I seek to understand his views as the product of an intertwining of aspects of his personality with the republican ideology of his time. I am especially interested in the influence which the cyclical theory of history exerted on Monroe's ideas. Drew McCoy's The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (1980) has examined this widely-accepted tenet of thought in both Europe and America during the Enlightenment in its economic context. Although both McCoy and his intellectual mentor, Douglass G. Adair, have carefully studied the ideas of Monroe's famous contemporary, James Madison, on republics' decline into monarchy as commerce and industry developed and luxury and property became concentrated among

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few individuals, neither has treated Monroe's outlook on class conflict or cycles of historical progress and decline.[8]

With the notable exception of Richard Hofstadter's Idea of a Party System (1969), which examines Monroe's thoughts on a nonparty state; Stuart G. Brown's First Republicans (1954), which treats his ideas at some length but incohesively and apart from the era's political, social, and intellectual currents; and a recent doctoral dissertation, Steven W. Jolivette's "James Monroe and the Republican Revolution" (University of California at Irvine, 1994), which stops its coverage at 1801 and presents a disjointed survey, most scholars have ignored Monroe's political thought, unfairly presuming that his opinions lack value.[9]

Jolivette's dissertation is somewhat puzzling. Throughout his text he labels Monroe a "liberal" and a "professional politician" whose main interest was in his financial advancement, but his appendix, "Monroe and the Historians," stresses his devotion to public service.[10] Although one of the definitions of classical republicanism and civic humanism is devotion to public service, Jolivette says that for Monroe and others, this was really a symptom of selfishness and "liberalism." As he puts it, "Here then, surely, is one significant reason why the Virginians were so public-minded: politics was one of the few avenues in which they could fully exercise their talents. It is a relatively superficial kind of cause of public-spiritedness, not comparable to a deeply-held trait stemming from a powerful tradition of classical republicanism."[11]

This questionable logic pervades Jolivette's dissertation. Another example is his treatment of Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick's Age of Federalism. He cites their book to

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prove his case for Monroe's irrational Francophilia, along with Richard Hildreth's antiquated, neo-Hamiltonian History (1853), which, "because he focuses more on Monroe's extreme pro-French sympathies and draws them out more fully than the other historians, provides the best treatment of the subject after all these years." Nevertheless, despite Elkins and McKitrick's negative opinion of Monroe, in his historiographical appendix Jolivette writes: "Only a minority of historians are positive about Monroe. An exceptional recent book, which treats Monroe judiciously and positively while noting his flaws, is Elkins and McKitrick's The Age of Federalism."[12]

Employing a loose definition, he posits Monroe a "liberal" because of his optimism about the future of the American republic. But by that criterion only Alexander Hamilton, who in his last years despaired of America's future under the Jeffersonian Republicans, and who is generally considered an advocate of "individualism," material progress, and productivity, themselves aspects of liberalism, might not be termed a liberal.[13]

In many instances, such as in his assessment of Monroe's desire that only a small number of states be created out of the Northwest territory in the 1780s, Jolivette contradicts himself: "He [Monroe] hardly showed a liberal confidence in the will of the people and the beneficence of republican government; he saw instead the material interests of the North and West working against the South and the need to fight back."[14] One of his themes is that by 1793 Monroe was convinced that self-interest was a good thing, and that it motivated men's political behavior: Monroe "views self-interest in mankind as inherent, unchangeable, and in a properly structured system, beneficial." However, his sole "evidence" for Monroe's

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"improvement in political thinking" in this respect is a lengthy quotation in which Monroe argues that making the Senate's deliberations public will contribute to the realization of the will of the majority because under these circumstances even those senators who were corrupt and selfish would think twice before pursuing fraudulent or sinister schemes. If subjected to public surveillance in open proceedings, Monroe predicted that even the politician who secretly favored erection of a government based on "arbitrary power" (his Federalist opponents?) "would change his style and from motives of private interest [re-election], become the firmest patron of the public liberty." "I could wish for the honor of humanity that good actions might always proceed from good motives," he regretfully observes. "But to the public 'tis altogether immaterial--with them, the end only is important; and wise is that political arrangement, that so operates on the principles of human action, as to make even bad men, faithful public servants."[15]

Thus, this statement by Monroe actually demonstrates his civic humanism and regard for the priority of the public good, his distrust for men in power and belief in the need to curb their potentially nefarious activities, and a republican respect for the "public liberty." Nevertheless, Monroe shows a Benthamite, utilitarian facet of his classical republicanism in his identification with the greatest good for the greatest number and the priority of ends over means, again confuting Jolivette's claims.

Occasionally, Jolivette's reasoning and conclusions seem inane. He suggests that Monroe, Jefferson, and other Founding Fathers were not classical republicans because they did not at any time (like the Roman senator Cato) contemplate suicide: "They could risk their 'lives,

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fortunes, and sacred honor,' but then, they expected victory; one can hardly imagine them, like Cato in defeat, falling on their swords for the public good."[16] He adopts the view that in the 1790s Monroe was a fanatical Francophile eager to plunge the nation into war on the side of revolutionary France, whose victory against the European kings he considered essential to the preservation of America's freedom. He argues that like the rest of the Republican party Monroe blindly adhered to Jefferson's view that the Federalists were "monarchists" who wanted to overthrow the republic and imitate the British form of government. However, in his appendix he ignores his own prior position and praises Monroe's "essential independence of mind."[17] My study seeks to remedy this deficiency.

In effect, this inquiry consists of four parts: (1) Monroe's ideology as it manifested itself during the Revolutionary and constitutional debates of the 1780's; (2) Monroe's attitude toward the Thermidorian Reaction in France and its reflection in the domestic American political scene in the 1790's, when the "spirit of party and faction," so ominous for new republics, appeared rife on both continents; (3) an exegesis of Monroe's political thought in mature form, as it manifested itself during his presidency, his commentaries on national and world affairs during his retirement and his brief attendance at the Virginia constitutional convention in 1829-1830, and (4) finally as he elaborated it at relative length in The People the Sovereigns (1829).

Two central themes are discernable in Monroe's republican ideology:
(1) his fear that the volatile situation which prevailed in new republics like France and the United States in the 1790's, with their potential for anarchy, might recapitulate the "cyclical" threat of civil war, an inevitable byproduct of what David Hume called the "constant and

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universal principles of human nature." The oft-cited theory of class war and the concomitant decline of democratic governments toward anarchy followed by despotism had been propagated by such classical thinkers as Aristotle, Cicero, and Polybius, and later by Machiavelli, Bolingbroke, James Harrington, Hume, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. (2)Monroe's enthusiasm for other nations' attempts to emulate the "American model" of government (e.g., a bicameral legislature, separate executive and judicial branches).

In his conviction that history repeats itself, Monroe was akin even to his unfriendly political contemporaries John Adams and Alexander Hamilton, with whom he disagreed on disparate policies if not on general theories. Each expected, in accord with his reading of Graeco-Roman historians like Thucydides, Xenophon, and Polybius, that Europe and inevitably the United States would undergo the cyclical conflicts and governmental upheavals engendered by the eternal struggle between the rich and the poor. Adams's famous Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States (1787-1788) makes this dogma especially clear.

Monroe's philosophical dilemma was to reconcile the principle of popular sovereignty with the requirements of a strong but stable executive power, a problem he struggled with in his writing as well as in public life from the 1780's to his attendance at the Virginia convention in 1829. Surprisingly, considering his undeserved reputation as a "do-nothing president," Monroe was never an enemy of a strong executive per se. He had supported an absolute veto for the president in 1788, for example, and even his indignation at Napoleon Bonaparte's usurpation of power in France in 1799-1800 was short-lived.

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Until a few years ago, Monroe's status as a slaveholder went unremarked among his biographers and historians. Unlike Jefferson, whose relationship with his slaves (sexual and otherwise) has received a great deal of attention, Harry Ammon ignored Monroe's slaves. Only Gerard W. Gawalt, a librarian at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division, has shed light on his career as a slaveholder. As a member of the Virginia gentry, Monroe was aware that large slave holdings buttressed social and economic prominence. He increased his slave regiment from a single inherited bondsman named Ralph in 1774 to more than seventy-five after 1820. In 1830, a year before his death, Monroe owned 70 slaves, the result of both natural increase and purchase, despite his having sold at least 27 slaves to pay his debts over the years. Monroe also employed the labor of free whites and German indentured servants. His attitude toward slavery was generally impersonal and businesslike. Gawalt, author of a recent excellent article on Monroe's slaveholding practices, says he "managed his slave force in response to the development of his plantation and his personal needs."[18]

Surprisingly, scholars have ignored such pertinent topics as the impact of James Monroe's ideology on the Monroe Doctrine. The study of James Monroe's ideology is a significant undertaking. Monroe stands as a crucial figure in the history of American foreign policy. Whether he or his secretary of state, John Quincy Adams, was most responsible for the Monroe Doctrine's formulation, it is one of the most creative and original statements about America's external relations. Its influence has persisted for nearly two centuries. Although I do not intend to investigate the Monroe Doctrine per se, my study illuminates diverse aspects of its evolution. For instance, Monroe's dread of "foreign influence," inspired by American insecurity

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in the late 1780s and expressed at the Virginia ratifying convention in 1788, was greatly exacerbated in Paris from 1794-1796, when he felt the French were threatened by an identical menace. This insight provides the intellectual background and perspective, hitherto largely undetected, for the making of the Monroe Doctrine in the 1820's.

Surprisingly few full-scale narrative biographies of Monroe have been written. Daniel C. Gilman's James Monroe (1883) is a brief study of limited value. George Morgan's Life of James Monroe (1931) contains some useful material on his personal life, but avoids serious discussion of his political views and ideology. Arthur Styron's The Last of the Cocked Hats: James Monroe and the Virginia Dynasty (1945), semi-scholarly and sparsely footnoted, tends toward verbose melodrama, but is lacking in serious research. William P. Cresson's James Monroe (1946) is well-written and relatively uncritical. By contrast, Lucius Wilmerding, Jr.'s James Monroe: Public Claimant (1960), whose concerns are narrow, acridly portrays Monroe as a pathetic, dishonest official trying to pilfer from the government following his retirement from the presidency. Philip M. Marsh's various essays on Monroe's literary style are also pertinent. In one of these, he notes that Monroe's writing was characterized by "a deep seriousness, a conviction of righteousness, and a dogged persistence."[19]

Among neo-Hamiltonian historians, whose number has recently increased, Monroe has gained an undeserved reputation for empty-headed Antifederalism. They have depicted him as an unassimilated opponent of the Constitution, which is certainly stretching the truth, since he was actually quite nationalistic. Other historians, like James Roger Sharp in his recent synthesis, American Politics in the Early Republic, are guilty of sins of omission and belittlement relating to

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Monroe. For instance, in his discussion of Monroe's contest with Madison for a congressional seat in 1788, which Monroe lost, Sharp misleadingly depicts Monroe as the Antifederalists' sacrificial lamb "Even the seat Madison eventually won in the House was closely contested by James Monroe, who had been brought forward by those hostile to the Constitution to run a losing race against his old friend."[20]

Aside from Steven Jolivette's aforementioned "James Monroe and the Republican Triumph" (1994), which we discussed earlier because of its concentration on Monroe's political ideology, two other doctoral dissertations about aspects of Monroe's career deserve notice: Charles Ellis Dickson, "Politics in a New Nation: The Early Career of James Monroe" (1971), and Edward Angel, "James Monroe's French Mission, 1794-1797" (1979).[21]

Angel perceives Monroe as a moderate nationalist at the outset of his political career in the 1780s, acceptable to both Federalists and Antifederalists. Indeed, William Grayson, a leading Virginia Antifederalist congressman, was Monroe's cousin. Despite Monroe's nationalistic course in the Confederation Congress, where he advocated congressional control of interstate and foreign trade, Angel notes Monroe's misgivings over the calling of the Constitutional Convention in 1787. He kept his hostility secret from his friend Madison for a time. Unlike Madison, whom Antifederalists-turned-Republicans distrusted for his early leadership of the Federalists, Monroe was in good repute with all components of the emerging Republican party. Angel stresses that Monroe was more effective than Madison and Jefferson as a Republican leader because he was on good terms with the Virginia Antifederalists. He comments, "If many of the old antifederalists viewed Jefferson with suspicion and Madison with

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distrust, Monroe had an intimacy with this circle that proved priceless in securing a broad base of support from the Republicans."[22] Thus, at least in domestic affairs, Angel regards Monroe as a temperate individual.

On the other hand, Angel argues, Monroe hated Great Britain, partly because he was wounded at the Battle of Trenton, where a musket ball permanently lodged in his shoulder. His "lifelong complaint of rheumatism served as a constant reminder of the struggle to free America from British tyranny." Angel believes that this is responsible for what he regards as Monroe's excessively pro-French policy as minister to France from 1794-1796. At the same time, Angel notes other reasons for what he considers Monroe's lifelong support of France and distaste for England: he was inspired by the cause of the French Revolution, grateful for the support that France rendered to the U.S. during the American Revolution, and resented Britain's postwar refusal to evacuate its Midwestern military and fur trading posts on American soil and its failure to return slaves who had escaped behind British lines. Angel asserts that Monroe was influenced by the enmity for Great Britain he observed among Americans when he went on a fact-finding tour of the Northwest as a freshman congressman in 1784. This was one of the reasons for his zeal in advocating congressional power over interstate trade as a means to extract a commercial treaty from the British: "If Monroe had entered the Congress already none too well disposed to the former Mother Country, three years of frustration did nothing to ameliorate his views."[23]

For reasons of domestic as well as foreign policy, during the 1790s Monroe became convinced that the Federalist enemies of the French Revolution within the United States were

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traitors and general enemies of republicanism. In Angel's words, "His [Monroe's] excessive suspicion of Federalist leaders was an important determinant in his behavior." Angel stresses that Monroe's opposition to Hamilton did not crest until late 1791, when the French Revolution emerged as a topic of disagreement.[24] But his dissertation, though competent, emphasizes the partisan backbiting of both Federalists and Republicans rather than dealing with the ideological marrow of Monroe's vehemence, what Angel at one point terms his "characteristically emotional outburst" in connection with his attack on the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty in 1786.[25]

Angel ignores the truism that Monroe eventually lost his reputation for Anglophobia: he negotiated the pro-British Monroe-Pinkney Treaty with Great Britain in 1806, was evenhanded with the British after he became secretary of state in 1811, and during his presidency even considered an alliance with them in 1823, at the time he and John Quincy Adams composed the Monroe Doctrine.[26]

Dickson's study is actually a brief biography of Monroe which ends with his embarkation on his mission to Paris in 1794. Valuable for its examination of his personal and political relationships, especially with Jefferson and Madison, its approach is similar to that of Adrienne Koch's popular biography, Jefferson and Madison: The Great Collaboration (1950). Dickson's first chapter is notable for its description of Monroe's poor reputation for intellect and acuteness of thought and action among both his contemporaries and historians. Although he provides some original information on this topic, much of the rest of his study is a straightforward factual narrative. On the question whether Monroe was a "civic humanist" or a "liberal," his discussion extends little beyond the following: "Monroe had a real desire to serve

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the public and his personality traits encouraged many people to help advance him in his political career."[27] On the other hand, Dickson demonstrates the interjection of personal self-interest into Monroe's political activities, as in his opposition to Kentucky's separation from Virginia as an independent state out of fear that his land grants there might be endangered.

By far the most scholarly and detailed biography, despite annoying typographical errors, is Harry Ammon's James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (1971). Although extremely valuable, Ammon's book is far from definitive, paling before such massive works as Douglas S. Freeman's Washington, Dumas Malone's Jefferson, Irving Brant's Madison, and Page Smith's Adams. Encompassing under six hundred pages of text, Ammon's work necessarily fails to do justice to Monroe's ideas. While his discussion of Monroe's ministry in Paris is the best available, it is less than forty pages long, concentrates on his diplomacy, and fails to discuss Monroe's reaction to France's domestic tumults like the bread riots and the Babouvist movement, which help illuminate his general ideology. Nevertheless, I have relied heavily on Ammon's excellent work.

In an article published in 1973, "Executive Leadership in the Monroe Administration," Ammon made some valuable observations about Monroe's presidential style. He noted Monroe's tendency to consult his Cabinet before making routine decisions, in an attempt to preserve harmony between its members and the sections of the country they represented. He also makes some astute observations about Monroe's personality, e.g.: "For all his outward amiability, he was not one to give up easily where fundamental issues were involved."[28] In his works on Monroe, Ammon stresses that he acknowledged "the wisdom of inaugurating an era

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free from party conflict." Monroe perceived the President not as the leader of a party, but as a national symbol. Ammon notes that in most cases Monroe accepted congressional oversight. He failed to wield the patronage power to assert his will or make personal appeals to the people to repudiate congressional measures. He even violated his belief in separation of powers, at least to a degree, by tempting congressmen with federal office, because that was an accepted part of the political culture.[29] His reliance on personal contacts with congressmen stood him in good stead, at least in matters of international affairs, where the legislature, acknowledging his greater access to information, allowed the executive to formulate foreign policy.[30]

The most insightful brief analysis of Monroe's views and personality is Ernest R. May's The Making of the Monroe Doctrine (1975). May stresses Monroe's belief that European countries must learn to respect American power. He succinctly summarizes Monroe's foreign policy objectives: "For Monroe, the prudential rules for American statecraft were:(1) to conciliate all sectional and economic interests; (2) to play European powers against one another: and (3) to build up national power to the end of making the United States in European eyes an enemy to be feared and an ally to be desired." Unlike Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick's recent work, The Age of Federalism, May understands that, far from being a dyed-in-the wool Francophile, Monroe's diplomacy invariably put American self-interest first. Indeed, May points out, after 1800 Monroe preferred England rather than France: "By the time Napoleon dominated Europe, he [Monroe] had begun to think that American safety might best be protected by a connection with the English, despite their untrustworthiness and hostility."[31]

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Perceiving that the United States should be connected with a strong power, it mattered little to him by 1807 whether its patron were England or France.[32] On the other hand, Monroe was generally silent on the matter of Napoleon's dictatorship, which had undermined the French Revolution. His lack of indignation was no doubt owing to his feeling that, after the fiasco of the Reign of Terror and the Directory's ignominious demise in a morass of corruption and disorganization, one-man rule might be the most viable option for France at the time.[33]

Although Elkins and McKitrick's recent study of the 1790's, The Age of Federalism (1993), has been highly praised by historians, the authors actually do little more than narrate events and speculate about the participants' motives from an Hamiltonian Federalist perspective.[34] In their discussion of Monroe's French ministry, for example, they argue that he supported the entry of the United States into the European war in defense of "the French cause," as if he proposed to send American troops to Europe. Elkins and McKitrick are both aware that Monroe only advised the use of force to evict Great Britain from the Northwest posts and to force Spain to allow free navigation of the Mississippi River, at a time when these countries were preoccupied with fighting the French in Europe. Like contemporary Federalists, they blame Monroe for the deterioration of relations with France, accusing him of "blunders, indiscretions, and bad judgment" which "terminated in Monroe's being peremptorily recalled, in sufficient disgrace that his career came close to being ruined then and there, and with relations between America and France in a worse state than ever." They object to what they perceive as Monroe's excessive fawning toward the French Government, and disparage his efforts to utilize French power and prestige on behalf of U. S. interests as evincing his "wild

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anxiety" and insane "ravings."[35] While Elkins and McKitrick grant that in his later career, Monroe exhibited "honest patriotism and devotion to duty," they impute unduly ambitious motives to him for the 1790s when they remark that he "embraced the French mission with alacrity," although he was actually reluctant to take on the assignment.[36]

At one point, briefly altering the target of their attack, Elkins and McKitrick condemn Secretary of State Edmund Randolph for the rupture of Franco-American relations in 1796. They adopt the self-contradictory stance that Randolph was both an ardent Francophile and that he deceived Monroe about Jay's instructions and the terms of Jay's treaty with Great Britain to trick Monroe into defending the treaty, thus making a fool both of himself and the French. On the other hand, deriding French policy as inconsistent, they believe that the French Government perceived both Monroe and the United States (aside from its republican symbolism) as totally insignificant factors in world affairs. At times France wanted the United States to enter the war as a co-belligerent, at other times it thought Americans could be more useful as neutral suppliers of food to France and its colonies. Since Elkins and McKitrick's conclusions about French motives rest more on conjecture than hard facts, it is difficult to determine their validity.[37]

On the other hand, Elkins and McKitrick reiterate Federalist charges in stating that the French Government was guided and manipulated by the Jeffersonian Republican party in the United States when it attacked Jay's Treaty. This view may be refuted by noting the timing of French complaints to Monroe, which were simultaneous with the Treaty's appearance in the French newspapers. Elkins and McKitrick make the questionable assertion that the Directory itself had no opinion one way or the other about the Treaty's terms. They confidently assert

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that the French reissued their decrees authorizing attacks on neutral (primarily American) shipping, not out of pique at Jay's Treaty but merely because they were short of cash and needed provisions, which the confiscated cargoes would supply. In many instances the two scholars merely restate Federalist charges against the Democratic-Republicans, which they accept as historically accurate.[38]

In general, Elkins and McKitrick show little respect for or understanding of Monroe's views, which were rooted in Democratic-Republican nationalism more than Francophilism.[39] They vaguely comment, "The man [i.e., Monroe] was bound to an ideological stake from which he was able to view events, and his own part in them, in one way only--and to do, say, and believe things that he would not otherwise have imagined." Monroe's basic premise, they find, was that "Great Britain was fundamentally corrupt, inherently weak, and in all likelihood on the point of collapse." He was certain that it would be a fatal mistake for the U. S. to return to the British orbit. They claim that Monroe believed that the United States and France would both gain by Great Britain's defeat. More importantly, he despised the Federalists and Jay's Treaty for nearly ruining his career.[40]

Although Elkins' and McKitrick's account may contain the proverbial grain of truth, the factors they emphasize are secondary to Monroe's consciousness of national and personal honor and his belief that the American republic could only survive with dignity if its rights were respected by other nations. That was why he insisted on British evacuation of the posts in accordance with the Treaty of 1783 and Spain's granting free navigation of the Mississippi River. Thus Elkins and McKitrick fail to adequately comprehend Monroe's motives during the

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brief period of his ministry to France from 1794-1796. They also seem to indulge an anti-Jeffersonian animus throughout Age of Federalism.

One of the standard works about Monroe's generation, George Dangerfield's popular monograph The Era of Good Feelings (1952), contains a helpful analysis of Monroe's personality, although it does not discuss Monroe's ideology. Dangerfield shrewdly evaluates the origin of the term, "Era of Good Feelings," in the process illuminating Monroe's naivete: "The phrase 'Era of Good Feelings' was originally compounded of Federalist Boston's belief that James Monroe was a good man and its hope that he was not a party man. Whether or not non-partisan goodness would be an efficient substitute for creative principle--this was a question the next few years would have to decide." For Dangerfield, Monroe's presidency represents an "interim" between the agrarian and urban-commercial eras of American history.[41]

On Monroe's presidency, Noble E. Cunningham, Jr.'s recent survey, The Presidency of James Monroe (1996) offers diverse insights. Despite his stature as an outstanding scholar, Cunningham's purpose is an examination of the events of Monroe's presidency, and he glosses over his ideology. Nevertheless, he makes the important point that Monroe wished to undermine the position of the Federalist party by such modern political methods as tours of the country, which he undertook in 1817 in New England and the Middle States and in 1819 in the South and West. He attributes to Monroe more skill as a politician, and gives him more credit for the formulation of such policies as the Missouri Compromise and the Monroe Doctrine, than have previous scholars.[42] In more candid terms than most historians, Cunningham views Monroe as a party tactician. "Ever the politician," he comments regarding Monroe's southern

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tour in the summer of 1819, "Monroe missed few opportunities to bolster his political position." He considers Monroe a political sophisticate: "Neither an ideologue nor a leader with a grand vision, he was a political person who sought to achieve specific, attainable objectives."[43]

More impressed with Monroe's active role as an executive than previous scholars, Cunningham considers him a "hands-on president" who devoted himself to his duties and held tightly to the reins of final executive authority. Cunningham depicts Monroe as a powerful president who instituted direct supervision over his department heads from the outset, and gave closest attention to foreign policy. Displaying a surprising amount of initiative in policy-making, Monroe ardently supported increased naval spending, and in 1820 created the "Pacific Station," a permanent deployment of vessels off the Pacific coast as a means of supporting U.S. commerce and fisheries there. Monroe also took over a small Pacific island (called Graham Land) off the coast of South America to prevent the British from seizing it and to uphold the American seal- and whale-hunters' interests. More impressed than other scholars by Monroe's eagerness to advance America's imperial interests, Cunningham asserts: "The president's prompt actions to proceed in taking possession of the polar land and the subsequent establishment of the Pacific station contradict the view that Monroe was indifferent about American expansion to the Pacific."[44]

Cunningham stresses Monroe's personal interest in making appointments to office. Perhaps even more than his predecessors, despite his nonpartisan public veneer, Monroe appreciated the significance of party affiliation as a factor in choosing officeholders. Cunningham emphasizes, "At the outset of his administration, Monroe had made it clear that he

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would not ignore party affiliation in making appointments," especially since the struggle for office in some states revealed that party competition was still keen.[45]

On the other hand, demonstrating that he still thought the president should transcend partisanship, Monroe was determined not to get involved in the competition among his Cabinet members to succeed him. If he had taken advice with regard to patronage from any of the presidential contenders in his Cabinet, he observed, the presidency "in my hands...would have sunk to nothing."[46] Thus Monroe maintained his personal independence throughout his presidency, the climax of his turbulent political career.

Although Cunningham generally ignores Monroe's ideology, the topic of this dissertation, he makes valuable contributions to the study of Monroe's administrative practices, which he earlier explored for his predecessor in The Process of Government under Jefferson (1978). Going beyond the earlier surveys of Leonard D. White and Harry Ammon, Cunningham argues, "Monroe's administration of the presidential office was hampered by the lack of adequate staff." He was especially frustrated by Congress's failure to provide funds for a private secretary.[47] Because he paid low salaries to his private secretaries, who were usually his personal confidants, they left after a short time.

Although numerous historians have carefully examined the Missouri Compromise and Monroe's role in it, most scholars have ignored Monroe's final confrontation with slavery at the Virginia constitutional convention in 1829, and his recommendation that the state request federal assistance in emancipating and deporting the slaves. This was his "last hurrah," as I have called it, and his mildly antislavery comments aroused the wrath of William B. Giles and

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other hidebound delegates. I discuss Monroe's participation in the state convention at greater length than other historians have done, since it was his last opportunity to voice his political philosophy and to influence government deliberations. He showed himself to be a moderate, politically astute individual, who, like his more renowned colleague Madison, finally succumbed to the pressure of the wealthy, conservative delegates for a constitution that largely ignored the demands of the Valley and Western counties for greater equality and preserved Tidewater domination. He did this mainly to preserve peace and harmony and avert possible civil war within his state.

Unlike Jolivette, who stresses Monroe's "optimism and liberalism," I view Monroe as a statesman plagued by anxieties regarding the tenuousness of the American experiment in self-government--its "Machiavellian moment," as J. G. A. Pocock might call it--and its susceptibility to the dreaded cyclical decline into anarchy followed by absolutism.[48] At the outset of Monroe's national career in the 1780s, the republic's survival was called into question by congressional weakness, which he sought to rectify by giving it powers over commerce and external taxation.

Intent on successfully incorporating the West into the nation, in 1786 Monroe had adamantly opposed John Jay's compromise with Spain over the free navigation of the Mississippi. Although Monroe had never been a localist, he gained an unjustified reputation for Antifederalism in 1788 because he supported convoking a second convention to adopt a bill of rights and elimination of a national power of direct taxation except in emergencies.

Nevertheless, from the outset he relied on a powerful president to implement national

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objectives and transcend party warfare. That was why Washington's ostensible dereliction from this responsibility in turning to the Hamiltonian Federalists later caused him great pain. He voiced his disappointment when he returned to the U. S. in 1797 in his attack on Washington's foreign policy, A View of the Conduct of the Executive, after the Administration petulantly recalled him as minister to the Revolutionary republic. In the course of our narrative we will discuss Monroe's ministry to France and his diplomatic positions, as he espoused them at the time and in his introduction to A View (whose text consists mainly of his diplomatic correspondence).

Constantly aware that the new republic faced internal and external threats to its survival, throughout his career Monroe was hyperconsicous that American independence was imperiled by foreign powers. In the course of the 1780s and 1790s, Great Britain, Spain, and France aroused his anxieties and, during his presidency, the Holy Alliance of Europe's monarchies inspired his Monroe Doctrine. Concomitantly, his suspicion that his Federalist political opponents constituted a dangerous "faction" in collusion with the British to overthrow the U. S. Government was never entirely assuaged. Even at the outset of the "Era of Good Feelings," after his election as president, Monroe eschewed conduct that, by seeming to grant priority to former opponents, threatened the harmony of his Republican party. He rejected advice from Andrew Jackson and others to appoint Federalists to government posts, although he never discouraged Federalists (and there were many of them after the endless defeats their party suffered in national elections after 1812) who converted to Republicanism.[49]

And, although the issue of slavery had long been the proverbial specter at the feast,

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Monroe, who generally was silent about it, during his presidency had to face the most dangerous manifestation of the sectional and moral antinomies imploded by the "peculiar institution." He played a major role in settling them at least temporarily, putting his support behind the Missouri Compromise, which had been devised in the Senate.[50]

In addition to his diplomatic activities while U. S. minister to France, Monroe simultaneously played the role of observer of the internal cataclysm taking place in France in the course of the Reign of Terror (he arrived in Paris a few days after Robespierre was guillotined) and the Thermidorian Reaction. Monroe's opinion of events in France--his praise of the undemocratic form of government set up by the Constitution of 1795; his enmity at the lower-class rioters in Paris whose actions were often precipitated by the *sans-culottes*' near-starvation living conditions; his rancor at Babeuvist communism, and his charge that left-wing revolutionaries were actually British *agents provocateurs*--reveals much about the inherent differences between the American and French revolutions. The latter encompassed a far more extreme, antagonistic and wider spectrum of political opinion--feminists and communists, for example--who could have attained little recognition in Monroe's Virginia. And, despite his reputation at home, at least among Hamiltonian Federalists, for "Jacobin radicalism," Monroe beheld these extreme patterns of ideology and behavior with shock and abhorrence. I will discuss his view of the Thermidorian Reaction at length.

In more general terms than Ammon and Cunningham, who concentrate on the specifics of Monroe's policies, Richard Hofstadter's Idea of a Party System (1969) contains the best account of Monroe's antiparty ideology, but fails to proceed to a further discussion of his

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republicanism. Ralph Ketcham's Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789-1829 (1984), recapitulates Hofstadter's findings. Each of these works reminds us that nonpartyism or antipartyism was characteristic of American political culture as late as the 1820's. They demonstrate that it comprised an important facet of Monroe's republicanism, notwithstanding his ardent Jeffersonian zeal.[51]

On the other hand, it is difficult to regard such "anti-party party builders" as Monroe, Jefferson and Madison as entirely authentic in their negation of the idea of partisanship, since they insisted on freedom of speech and the press and considered their Republican party as a valid expression of the popular will.[52] The crux of the matter was, that they convinced themselves that their political opponents were a treasonable "faction" manipulated by, or colluding with, "foreign influences" and alien governments. I will attempt to consider the nature of this conundrum in the course of this study.

As both a paradigmatic thinker and patriotic republican symbol, Monroe represented the nationalistic and democratic ties which bound mainstream Americans together. These bonds would not be sundered till the nation was wracked by the bloody strife of civil war over the institution of slavery, an explosive problem both he and his contemporaries dared not confront, except with such ad hoc measures as the Missouri Compromises, passed during his presidency. New facets in the intellectual history of Jeffersonian Democracy may be uncovered through a detailed study of the ideology of one of its most eminent adherents, James Monroe.

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INTRODUCTION: ENDNOTES

1. A recent, verbose essay which concurs with my interpretation of the intrinsic dichotomy between the United States and Western Europe concerning America's priority in the "liberal tradition," is Asher Horowitz and Richard K. Matthews, "'Narcissism of the Minor Differences': What is at Issue and What is at Stake in the Civic Humanist Question," Polity, 30 (Fall 1997), 1-27, esp. p. 26: "When the central crisis arrived, and the drafters of the new national political constitution had to decide whether to recognize an organically conceived polity naturally differentiated by political function into leadership and deference or to express the essential liberal notion of fundamental equality, the answer was a foregone conclusion despite all of the wrangling between Federalists and Antifederalists about the nature and degree of representation. Where else but in a liberal civilization would this have been possible?" The intellectual inspiration for Horowitz and Matthews, and for myself, is of course Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York, 1955), as well as Robert R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution (2 vols., Princeton, 1959-1964). For a preliminary fructification of my undertaking, see Arthur Scherr, "The Limits of Republican Ideology: James Monroe in Thermidorian Paris, 1794-1796," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 79 (Winter 1997), 5-45.

2. Monroe to George Hay, Aug. 5, 1817, in "Letters of James Monroe, Part 4, 1812-1817," New York Public Library Bulletin, 6 (June 1902), 228.

3. T.H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tobacco Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, 1985); Robert Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 39 (April 1982), 334-56, and "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History, 42 (Nov. 1976), 529-56; Herbert G. Gutman, Work, Culture, and Society in Industrializing America (New York, 1976); Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York, 1976); David Montgomery, Workers' Control in America (Cambridge, Eng., 1979); Simon Peter Newman, "American Popular Political Culture in the Age of the French Revolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1991, and Parades and the Politics of the Street: Festive Culture in the Early American Republic (Philadelphia, 1997); Sean Wilentz, Chants Democratic: New York City and the Rise of the American Working Class, 1788-1850 (New York, 1984).

4. Clifford Geertz, "Ideology as a Cultural System," in Geertz, The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays (New York, 1973), 209-10, 213-14, 205.

5. Ibid., 205.

6. Ibid.

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7. Gordon S. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York, 1993), 209, 298, 301; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969), 455, 561. In Creation, 455, Wood cites Monroe to Madison, Nov. 22, 1788, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, I, 196-97, which is not annotated. The annotated William T. Hutchinson, William M. E.Rachal et al., eds., Papers of James Madison (Chicago and Charlottesville, 1962--), XI, 360-62, which was unavailable to Wood, shows that Monroe was writing about the state judiciary's power of review, not the national courts. For Monroe's warning that the separation of powers on the national level would not alleviate the anticipated conflict between state and national governments (which Wood misinterprets), see Monroe's speech to the Va. ratifying convention, June 10, 1788, in John P. Kaminski et al., eds., Documentary History of the Ratification of the Constitution (18 vols., Madison, 1976--), IX, 1112-13. See also Ammon, Monroe, 74-75. For the unique status of Wood's Creation of the American Republic in American historiography, see "Forum: The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787: A Symposium of Views and Reviews,"William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 44 (July 1987), 549-640.

8. McCoy, Elusive Republic; Douglass G. Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy: Republicanism, the Class Struggle, and the Virtuous Farmer" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1943).

9. Richard Hofstadter,The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), 22-23, 190-204; Stuart G. Brown, The First Republicans: Political Philosophy and Public Policy in the Party of Jefferson and Madison (Syracuse, 1954), 28-30, 106-21; Steven W. Jolivette, "James Monroe and the Republican Triumph" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 1994).

10. Jolivette, "Monroe and the Republican Triumph," 167-68, 402-14.

11. Ibid., 175.

12. Ibid., 276n., 426-27.

13. See Forrest McDonald, Alexander Hamilton: A Biography (New York, 1979).

14. Jolivette, "Monroe and the Republican Triumph," 91.

15. Ibid., 189. Monroe is quoted ibid., 188.

16. Ibid., 168. Indeed, in his old age Jefferson wrote favorably about self-murder when one's faculties and intellect were deteriorating. Describing various poisonous plants, particularly one used by Condorcet to kill himself during the Reign of Terror, Jefferson observed: "Could such a medicament be restrained to self-administration, it ought not to be kept secret. There are ills in life as desperate as intolerable, to which it would be a rational relief, i.e., the inveterate cancer." He disparaged political motivations for suicide as masochistic, arguing that he would sooner stick his dagger into the tyrant's

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breast than his own! "As a relief from tyranny indeed, for which the Romans recurred to it in the times of the emperors, it has been a wonder to me that they did not consider a poignard in the breast of the tyrant as a better remedy," he confessed. Jefferson to Dr. Samuel Brown, July 14, 1813, in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, eds., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (20 vols., Washington, 1903), XIII, 311.

17. Ibid., 421.

18. Gerard W. Gawalt, "James Monroe, Presidential Planter," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 101 (1993), 252, 263, 264 (quotation).

19. Philip Marsh, "James Monroe as 'Agricola' in the Genet Controversy," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 62 (Oct. 1954), 476.

20. James Roger Sharp, American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis (New Haven, 1993), 28.

21. Charles Ellis Dickson, "Politics in a New Nation: The Early Career of James Monroe" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1971; Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979); Steven W. Jolivette, "James Monroe and the Republican Triumph" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Irvine, 1994).

22. Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979), 34-37, 85, 87 (quotation).

23. Ibid., 16.

24. Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979), 7-16, 57 (quotation), 58-61; Charles Ellis Dickson, "Politics in a New Nation: The Early Career of James Monroe" (Ph.D. dissertation, Ohio State University, 1971).

25. Ibid., 28.

26. A recent study which praises Monroe's competence in negotiating the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty is Donald R. Hickey, "The Monroe-Pinkney Treaty of 1806: A Reappraisal," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 44 (Jan. 1987), 65-88.

27. Dickson, "The Early Career of James Monroe," 21.

28. Harry Ammon, "Executive Leadership in the Monroe Administration," in John Boles, ed., America: The Middle Period: Essays in Honor of Bernard Mayo (Charlottesville, 1973), 117.

29. Ibid., 118.

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30. Ibid., 119.

31. Ernest R. May, The Making of the Monroe Doctrine (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), (Cambridge, Mass., 1975), 12-24, quotations at 20-21; Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, The Age of Federalism (New York, 1993), 498-506.

32. Dumas Malone anticipated May's observation that Monroe had a revulsion of feeling toward France after Napoleon's take-over in 1800: "The enthusiasm he had felt and manifested for the French cause when he was minister there a decade earlier was entirely dissipated, and he became increasingly desirous that his own country should pursue an independent course." Too proud and patriotic to bribe Napoleon in order to secure his help in obtaining the Floridas, Monroe preferred to use force against Spain. Malone, Jefferson the President: Second Term (Boston, 1974), 50.

33. James Monroe, The People the Sovereigns, ed. Samuel L. Gouverneur (Philadelphia, 1867), 99.

34. Undoubtedly the venerable scholarly reputation of the Elkins/McKitrick team contributed to the virtually unanimous praise The Age of Federalism received and reviewers' obvious hesitation to criticize the work. The only negative review I could find was, appositely, written by the leading historian of the Early Republic, Gordon S. Wood, in Atlantic Monthly, 272 (Dec. 1993), 134-39.

35. Stanley Elkins and Eric L. McKitrick, The Age of Federalism, 499 (first quote), 501-502 (second and third quotes).

36. Ibid., 505. For Monroe's testimony, see his View of the Conduct of the Executive, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 383.

37. Elkins and McKitrick, Age of Federalism, 505-506.

38. Ibid., 509.

39. On Democratic-Republican nationalism, see Alfred F. Young, The Democratic-Republicans of New York: The Origins, 1763-1797 (Chapel Hill, 1967), 578-80; Norman K. Risjord, The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson (New York, 1965), 22-24; William A. Robinson, Jeffersonian Democracy in New England (New Haven, 1916), 152.

40. Ibid., 511 (first quotation), 512 (second quotation), 512-13.

41. George Dangerfield, The Era of Good Feelings (New York, 1952), 95-101, quotations at 101, 104.

42. Noble E. Cunningham, The Presidency of James Monroe (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 98-104.

43. Ibid., 73 (first quote), 188 (second quote).

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44. Ibid., 119-120.

45. Ibid., 121.

46. Monroe to Jefferson, March 22, 1824, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 11-12.

47. Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, 123.

48. Of course, I am referring to J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and Atlantic Republican Ideology (Princeton, 1975).

49. Shaw Livermore, Jr., The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830 (Princeton, 1962), is an outstanding account of this phenomenon.

50. On the Missouri Compromise, see Ammon, Monroe, 449-60; Glover Moore, The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821 (Lexington, Ky., 1953); Cunningham, Presidency of James Monroe, 87-104; George Dangerfield, The Era of Good Feelings (New York, 1952), 226-43; Richard H. Brown, "The Missouri Crisis, Slavery, and the Politics of Jacksonianism," South Atlantic Quarterly, 65 (Winter 1966), 55-72; Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Missouri Controversy and the Sources of Southern Sectionalism," in Fehrenbacher, The South and Three Sectional Crises (Baton Rouge and London, 1980), 9-23.

51. Hofstadter, Idea of a Party System, 188-208; Ralph Ketcham, Presidents Above Party: The First American Presidency, 1789-1829 (Chapel Hill, 1984), 124-30, 148.

52. H. James Henderson, "The First Party System," in Alden T. Vaughan and George Athan Billias, eds., Perspectives on Early American History: Essays in Honor of Richard B. Morris (New York, 1973), 325-71. Henderson, "Quantitative Approaches to Party Formation in the United States Congress: A Comment," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 30 (1973), 307-24, feels that "the early parties were the fumbling creations of unwilling inventors" (323).

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CHAPTER ONE:
JAMES MONROE'S REPUBLICAN IDEOLOGY IN AN AGE OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING (1787-1788)

James Monroe was thoroughly familiar with the historical and sociological thought of his time. His proficiency in the French language, which he studied with Thomas Jefferson when they were congressional delegates in 1784, enabled him to enter the world of the philosophes. At that time he bought many volumes from his friend, who wished to sell the book collection he had accumulated during the congressional sessions at Annapolis and before his departure for Paris as United States minister. It included the works of Helvétius, Diderot, the Marquis de Chastellux, and other Enlightenment thinkers.[1] Coincidentally, Monroe, who had always wanted to visit France, was to follow in Jefferson's footsteps a decade later. Unfortunately, information about the precise dates on which Monroe acquired specific volumes in his impressive library, which he estimated (perhaps overestimated) in 1823 at 3,000 volumes, is not available. Nonetheless, he owned most of the required reading for the era, from the Ancients to the Moderns, in politics, history, and law. Although there are no catalogs of his library for the 1780s, it is likely that in his youth, as a student at William and Mary College and in studying law with Jefferson, he read earlier editions of these works.[2]

Of those theorists who expounded the view of the cyclical rise and fall of civilizations

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and empires which profoundly influenced Monroe's generation, he owned copies of Aristotle's Politics in a French translation (Paris, 1797), and the Works of Machiavelli in an eight-volume French translation (Paris, 1793), which it is likely he purchased when he arrived in France.[3] He probably had these writers' teachings on government and history in mind as he observed the turbulence in Paris from 1794-1796. He also owned basic studies in ancient Greek and Roman history: Polybius's Histories (3 vols., London, 1809); John Gillies' outstanding four-volume History of Ancient Greece (New York, 1814[?]), the work of a great British scholar; Thucydides' essential History of the Peloponnesian War, translated from the Greek by William Smith (2 vols., Philadelphia, 1818), the book which had so powerful an impact on John Adams when he wrote his Defense of the Constitutions of the United States; and a nineteen-volume set of Livy's classical Histories of Rome.[4] These books were sufficient to imbue Monroe with the classical mindset, and indeed his speeches and writings concerning the Constitution reveal his familiarity with classical constitutions and federations.

Like most other educated Americans, Monroe owned sets of the complete works of the greatest French, British and American writers and thinkers of his century. Voltaire and Rousseau appear to have been among his favorites; he owned thirty volumes of the former's works and a thirty-three volume edition of the latter's complete oeuvre. He owned a copy of Baron Charles de Montesquieu's great work, The Spirit of the Laws (Geneva, 1748), probably the most widely read political book of the century. Monroe possessed these studies in their original French language version. He owned the works of John Locke as well as of those later British political thinkers who stressed the inevitable decline of "pure" republican governments

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into perverted, tyrannical regimes as a result of the deficiencies of human nature and man's obsession with power over his fellows. These included the prolific, brilliant satirist and political activist, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke's Works; David Hume's Philosophical essays on morals, literature, and politics, of which a surprisingly late 1817 Washington, D.C., edition is listed in his library catalog (undoubtedly he owned earlier editions of this major philosopher's Essays); and Algernon Sidney's significant polemic in favor of republicanism and expanded suffrage, Discourses Concerning Government, in a two-volume 1750 Edinburgh edition. Monroe had also purchased several books by Benjamin Franklin, Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, Adams's Defence, and other American works.[5]

Although as much as one-third of his library consisted of French-language books, attesting his affinity for that culture and people, Monroe, a veteran of the Revolutionary War who had been wounded at the Battle of Trenton, was firmly rooted in the political soil of his native country. Admittedly, his knowledge of ancient history may have conditioned his reaction toward the political crisis the new republic encountered, but it did not determine it.

Monroe was rather reticent during the course of his political career about the essence of his ideology as well as its intellectual roots; it seems his only sustained effort to elaborate his opinions occurred when he took part in the Virginia debate over that state's ratification of the new United States Constitution in 1788; and more extensively, in his unfinished manuscript written after his retirement from the Presidency, primarily in 1829-1830. This was published posthumously in emended form by his son-in-law, and available in its original at the New York Public Library manuscript division.[6]

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In the following pages we will examine these inchoate essays in ideology in an attempt to ascertain, through intensive analysis, exactly what opinions Monroe carried away from the constitutional debate and into revolutionary Paris in 1794; and, correspondingly, how the Minister's experience in France affected his views in later life, to the extent we can determine this by an analysis of his political testament, rather presumptuously entitled "The People the Sovereigns."[7]

* * * * * * * * *

The time of national Constitution-making, entailing as it did the mandatory reassessment of the country's political institutions, gave Monroe an opportunity to express himself free of the onus attached to special pleading for particular "interests". Immediately aware of the vital impact of the Constitution on his state's future, he told Madison in October 1787, "It will perhaps agitate the minds of the people... more than any subject they have had in contemplation since the commencement of the late revolution, for there will be a greater division among the people of character than then took place, provided we are well informed as to the sentiments of many of them."[8] In the deferential society which Virginia and many other states embodied, most voters looked to their "natural superiors"--the landed gentry--for guidance. That was why Monroe thought it was so crucial that they be informed of the opinions of the "people of character."[9] Considering himself one of these, he immediately set about writing a pamphlet delineating his ideas.

Unlike his Virginia contemporaries, Washington and Jefferson, Monroe was not a successful planter nor a wealthy man. This was especially true at the time of the Constitutional

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Convention. Though it is not my intention to try to fit Monroe into any of Charles Beard's categories of property-holding, it appears that in 1788 his only substantial claim to riches consisted of 5,333 acres of Kentucky land he received from the government of Virginia as a reward for his Revolutionary war services. Few people were interested in purchasing or speculating in these lands at the time, since they were overrun with Indians and nearby British troops, who had refused to evacuate their Northwestern forts in accordance with the Treaty of Paris of 1783. The Spanish government was also hostile, refusing to open the Mississippi River to western trade. According to Forrest McDonald, when Monroe served in the state ratifying convention as delegate from Spotsylvania County in 1788, he owned no land or slaves in the county. He merely shared a house in Fredericksburg with friend and fellow delegate John Dawson, which they were nominally renting from Joseph Jones, Monroe's benevolent, wealthy uncle and Dawson's guardian.[10]

Monroe's wife, Elizabeth Kortright, was the daughter of an impoverished New York merchant, but she had wealthy relatives from whom Monroe sometimes borrowed money. Nevertheless, his notoriously poor financial condition may have played a part in the Virginia legislature's failure to elect him to the Philadelphia Constitutional Convention, fearing he could not afford the travel and living expenses. Whatever money he gained from the sale of his small properties in Westmoreland County, a legacy as his father's eldest son, he perhaps unwisely plowed back into new Kentucky land speculations. By the end of his life, he had successfully patented over 100,000 acres of Kentucky land. However, in the 1780's and 1790's, he was hard pressed to pay for these properties. He was so short of ready money that in 1785 he had

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to withdraw from a joint purchase with Madison of Genesee Valley lands because he was unable to keep up the payments, and in the months after his marriage in February 1786 he even lacked funds to pay Jefferson for the volumes of the great French Encyclopédie he had mailed from Paris.[11]

In the 1780s Monroe owned no slaves, which were the most valuable form of personal property in Virginia. The majority of slaves were concentrated in the Antifederalist counties. The commercial farmers who dominated the trade of the Great Valley (Shenandoah)--Ohio, Harrison, Greenbriar, Randolph, Hardy, Augusta, Rockbridge, Botetourt, Hampshire, Berkeley, Jefferson, Frederick, Shenandoah, and Rockingham--with a combined population of 99,890 whites, held only 13,483 slaves. The voters here were small exporting farmers who appreciated the benefits of a strong national government in encouraging commerce. But slaveholders, as a group, in both the Tidewater (Federalist) and Piedmont (Antifederalist) counties, were equally divided on the issue of the Constitution, according to a preliminary quantitative study. Therefore, the slaveholders--the wealthy-were well-represented at the state ratifying convention no matter which side won. Even those delegates to the Richmond convention who owned fewer than fifteen slaves were generally large slaveholders for their particular county. Virginia's Revolutionary war officers, like Monroe, received large grants of state land; but, contrary to Beard's hypothesis, these individuals felt no especial eagerness to support the new Constitution, which would supposedly provide the stability that would increase real estate values. Half the military officers at the ratifying convention voted against the Constitution. Of the members of the allegedly aristocratic veterans' organization, the Society of

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the Cincinnati, ten were Antifederalists; only eight voted for the Constitution.

Neither a member of the Society of Cincinnati nor a slaveholder, Monroe's only elite credentials were his college education, his apprenticeship in the legal profession under Jefferson, and his occupation as an attorney. He used his law practice to increase his income and support his family from 1786-1790. For one who, like Jefferson, exalted the farmer, he was not a very successful agrarian: Though in October 1788 he finally acquired 800 acres of land in Virginia proper in Albemarle County near his beloved comrade Jefferson, along with a house in Charlottesville near the present University of Virginia campus, he obtained these properties only as a result of the kindness of George Nicholas, who was moving to Kentucky and willing to take his holdings there in exchange. In any case, Monroe failed to make the Albemarle property productive, and continued to rely on his law practice. Monroe did procure a 3500-acre estate in Albemarle--the famous Highlands, now known as "Ash Lawn" and a national landmark-- in 1794, just before he left for France. But he was never able to pay for this land, or to build more than a small one-story frame house on it. This is the real Monroe--a moderate, financially strapped farmer, not the aristocrat created by the imagination of political enemies and historians. By contrast, Jefferson obtained over eleven thousand acres of good land when his father-in-law died in 1773, and must have possessed over fifteen thousand all together.[12]

Monroe's status as a struggling debtor-lawyer may have played a role in his apparent indifference toward such events as Shays' Rebellion, which his contemporaries Washington and Madison viewed with such horror.[13] Although he had been a leader of the Nationalist party in

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the Confederation Congress in the 1780's, constantly advocating its powers over interstate and foreign commerce and its sovereignty over the public lands, he was strangely silent over the uprising in Massachusetts, as if it did not affect his views one way or the other. Perhaps this was because, as a man without property himself, he did not think it a tragedy for debtors to resort to force to keep what little they owned from the tax collectors and rich creditors. Ultimately, of course, he advocated the Antifederalist position at the Virginia ratifying convention, urging the Constitution's rejection and the calling of a second meeting.

Why was Monroe an Antifederalist? We must look at the immediate personal considerations involved in his decision. His venerable uncle, Judge Joseph Jones, had come out against the Constitution. Even more importantly, before Monroe had made up his mind on the new form of government he was nominated as an Antifederalist candidate to the ratifying convention for King George County. As a result of Washington's intervention he was defeated, a slight that may have helped determine his future position. When one considers that at this time he was blaming Madison and Randolph for his financial difficulties it becomes easier to comprehend how immediate personal attitudes could have played a role in his decision to oppose an unamended Constitution. Though easily elected a delegate from Spotsylvania County due to the efforts of his relative John Taliafero, Monroe, as he later explained to Jefferson, wished to promulgate his opinions to his "constituents." This was the origin of his "Observations." It was a lengthy circular letter, which he hoped to put into their hands "eight or ten days before it [the state ratifying convention] met." However, the printer botched the job and Monroe, embarrasssed by its clumsy style, had second thoughts about its being

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misconstrued as an electioneering "impropriety" to advance his qualifications for future preferment. The polemic was never printed, except for a few copies, one of which he mailed to Jefferson in Paris several weeks after the delegates had adopted the Constitution by a vote of 89 to 79 at the end of June.[14]

Jefferson had an Antifederalist reputation, but for different reasons than Monroe. At this juncture, Jefferson, whose fears of what Congress might do if it possessed the power of direct taxation were calmed by Edward Carrington, a Virginia Federalist, objected primarily to the lack of a bill of rights and the Constitution's failure to limit the president's eligibility to succeed himself. While Jefferson was most concerned with the protection of individual liberties against concentrated power, Monroe desired to constrict the orbit of power so that it would be under the majority's control. He would deny the national government the unduly ample resources of direct taxation, and by making both houses of Congress, as well as the President, amenable to popular (not indirect) election.[15]

Perhaps incongruously in light of his fear of a discretionary national revenue power, Monroe supported a strong Chief Executive with an unlimited veto power. This may be partially explained by his belief that the national interest necessitated a national protector, a republican "Patriot President" on the order of Bolingbroke's hypothetical Patriot King. Such an outlook accorded with Monroe's awareness of the sectional divisions in the Union during his congressional tenure and his willingness to heal them. According to Harry Ammon, from the beginning of his career he "demonstrated... an unusual degree of sympathy for the aspirations of the mercantile community. This willingness to respond to the aims of radically different groups

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proved to be one of the greatest assets in his subsequent career.[16] As an ally of merchant capitalists and small farmers alike, Monroe was nevertheless not inclined to sympathize with the starving proletarians of the Paris cities in the 1790's.

Though not wealthy himself, Monroe represented an affluent constituency at the state ratifying convention. Spotsylvania County was characterized by large slaveholders. Thirty-two percent of the slaves lived in units of over twenty-one, more than any other Piedmont County. At the same time, many of the inhabitants lacked slaves.[17] A propertyless individual whose education, family connections, and legal vocation nevertheless placed him in the ranks of the elite, Monroe's ambiguous identity--so familiar to us of the late twentieth century, with our "status anxieties"--was reflected in his outlook on the Constitution and the vacillations expressed in his pamphlet.

At the outset of "Some Observations," Monroe, echoing Montesquieu, expressed his view that a consolidated government was impracticable in a large territory like the United States. Ironically, he regretted this fact, denouncing the Articles of Confederation for promulgating a weak government that was only a "league of independent states." He was ready to blame the states for the impending "dissolution" of the nation, and urged drastic remedies entailing "either a complete annihilation of the state governments, or a partial one or considerable reduction of their powers." Although in the last analysis Monroe upheld states' rights, especially in advocating that they retain exclusive possession of the internal tax power, in "Some Observations" he claimed that abolition of the state governments would give him the "highest gratification," by uprooting conflicting state hegemonies. At this point we might accuse

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him of the disingenuous sarcasm and heavy irony so common to Augustan writers. But this was not Monroe's style; he was too naive for that. He sincerely objected to the power of the state legislatures. That was why he proposed to elect the Senate by popular rather than legislative vote, and for the President to be chosen by the people rather than by electors who were likely to be legislative appointees. State representatives in Congress, he knew from first-hand experience, were too much inclined to put their interests ahead of the good of the whole nation. Rising to rare heights of eloquence, he proclaimed a desire "to lay aside all those jarring interests and discordant principles, which state legislatures if they do not create, certainly foment and increase, arrange them under one government and make them one people... an idea not only elevated and sublime, but equally benevolent and humane."[18]

At least in theory, Monroe argued, "the abolition of the state legislatures" would be a "most fortunate event for America." He viewed the sectional antagonisms in the Confederation Congress, culminating in the abortive Jay-Gardoqui Treaty that he had exerted all his efforts to defeat in 1786, as evincing the need for a unitary government: "... one legislature organized over the whole continent, containing all the free inhabitants of the American states within it, nourishing, protecting, and promoting their interests in every line," rather than "thirteen different legislatures, in pursuit of local objects... without system or policy, jealous of their particular rights, dissatisfied with, and preying upon each other."[19]

Although Monroe's perspective might expect one to conclude he would have lent support to the centralizing dictatorship of the French Committee of Safety under the Reign of Terror, he apparently distinguished between theory and reality; and would probably have

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agreed with Jefferson that, "What is practicable must often control what is pure theory, and the habits of the governed determine in a great degree what is practicable."[20] That was why Monroe immediately turned to the necessity for a confederation; this was what his Spotsylvania constituents wanted to hear.

Though fearful that conflicts between the states and the national government would eventually lead to some form of monarchical restoration, Monroe concluded that the abolition of the states was impossible because it would destroy "liberty and democracy." But he warned that "democracy" was not synonymous with legislative cabals in which "decisions depend, more upon negotiations, the bargain of the day, than any established maxims of justice and policy." He demanded stability. Congressional powers under the Confederation were on paper only. Individual states could nullify its decisions by non-compliance. Foreign governments would have little interest in making treaties with an impotent national government. Moreover, anticipating that their confederates would disobey congressional laws, most states would not readily support a government "destitute of the power of coercion." On the other hand, a large republic required a federated structure to preserve "a strong, efficient, and energetic government," which would accurately perceive and evaluate the needs of "the weaker party" and of localities.[21]

For the United States in 1788, in anticipation of his stand at Paris in 1796, when he feared the unruly regime of the city mobs, Monroe demanded a government that rose above servility to particular factions or interests and pursued the national well-being. In Monroe's view, the solution to the enigmatic, inevitable problem of the brief duration of extended

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republics like France and the United States was for their citizens to elect cosmopolitan legislators who could comprehend the whole nation's interest, facilitating the success of strong government. A prime desideratum was that representatives possess "sufficient information" to legislate in a manner fair to each region's interests.[22]

Among the requisite qualities of "a wise legislator," therefore, were sophistication, wide travel experience, "general science" and "researches," which would enable him to assess the authentic needs and desires of all parts of the country (something akin to Rousseau's "General Will"). But few individuals enjoyed either the wealth or opportunity to achieve such breadth of knowledge and experience. Even worse--as Monroe must have later felt confirmed by Robespierre's rise and fall and the violent Paris insurrections --corrupt, ignorant, and evil men could wreak havoc under a consolidated government. There were thus many pitfalls in the theoretically "delightful" plan of a "complete national government, acting in all cases for the common good." A government with unlimited powers was fraught with danger to public liberty and well-being, considering the frailties of human nature amply displayed by both rulers and ruled.[23]

Foreshadowing his cautious reaction to the program of the French Revolution which he observed in Paris from 1794-1796, in his pamphlet in 1788 Monroe felt impelled to conclude that democratic experiments in self-government--perhaps even that of the United States--were inevitably doomed. Throughout history, he noted, all societies had failed to establish "a democracy or government of the people" for any length of time. Though he applauded the city-states of ancient Greece and the republic of Rome, praising "the manly exertions which the

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friends of equal liberty" mounted against those "diseased" individuals who sought to "exterpate [sic]" the rights of man, he was aware, as a result of his study of history, that the friends of "popular rule" often lacked the support of those whose rights they defended. Champions of popular rights, such as the famous Gracchi brothers in Rome in the second century B.C., "have had to contend against difficulties thrown in their way by all ranks of society: If the poor and those in moderate circumstances only, where an union might have been expected had united, a tyranny had never been erected [sic]." In his study of "antient [*sic*] and modern times," Monroe admitted, he had found that "the ignorance, the folly, and oftentimes the vices of the lower classes have perhaps favored this [antidemocratic] tendency as strongly as the lust for dominion and power in the wealthy."[24]

Although Monroe's historical allusions are vague, his contempt for the lower classes is apparent. His suspicions of the poor, especially the urban poor, who figured largely in the stories he read about the decline of ancient republican city-states, had already nurtured a distrust of both the upper and lower "scums" of society (to paraphrase Theodore Roosevelt) which would blossom during his eyewitness experience of the Thermidorian Reaction. He also sounds a lot like John Adams.

In exoteric form for popular consumption, Monroe incorporated his distrust of the lower classes' political acumen with a cyclical view of the rise and fall of empires and republics. This was ubiquitous in the eighteenth century, linked as it was with the popular concept of "mixed government," a legacy of Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, Polybius, and the more recent Machiavelli, James Harrington, Giambattista Vico, and Bolingbroke. Like the ancient Greeks,

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especially Aristotle, Thucydides, and Polybius, Monroe closely tied the perversion of governments to their opposite, "corrupt," and degenerated forms in a retrograde evolution, the result of the class division and class struggle between the rich and the poor. However, unlike Aristotle, he never portrayed the poor as an autonomous group with a will independent of the rich, but rather as pawns susceptible to manipulation by the latter if they became restive.

In Monroe's opinion, the poor were responsible for their own oppression (the philosopher Herbert Marcuse might have nodded agreement in the twentieth century), precipitating a condition which constituted a "melancholy monument of the weakness of human institutions": the decline and fall of democratic governments. He relied on his readers' knowledge of history (we know he sent copies of the pamphlet to Jefferson and Washington) to back him up.[25] "There is no fact better established by history, than this tendency or effort in all societies to defeat the purpose of their own institution, and terminate in despotism," he reminded them.[26] This was the accepted wisdom of the age.

Like many republican leaders, Monroe despised war, considering it an instrument used by aristocratic governments to crush or divert public unrest. When oppressed Roman "plebeians" chafed at the rule of the oligarchic Senate, that body deviously gave "their passions other objects to act on" by commencing imperialistic wars. After Rome conquered the world, this outlet no longer existed. Its empire fell to pieces as the result of class war and foreign invasion, deprived of any unifying principle to mute class hatreds. Unlike other republican thinkers--Machiavelli, Harrington, Sidney, and Alexander Hamilton among them--Monroe felt that a government which pursued empire was oblivious to its people's needs.[27] "If her

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[Rome's] government had been organized on harmonious principles, and made the people happy under it, her dominion would never have extended" as far as it did, he contended. The search for overseas empire was invariably accompanied by oppression of the majority and the ascendancy of militarists, "distinct orders of people, in which... the aristocracy prevailed." Relying on Polybius's Histories, Monroe extended his analysis to ancient Sparta and Carthage, so-called republics, which, actually dominated by an aristocracy, were useless as models for American statesmen.[28] Moreover, he pointed out, they tended to rely on war as an instrument to blunt class tensions and internal conflicts, an example which civilian-controlled, legalistic American republics would be ill advised to follow, as Madison also noted in Federalist #41.

Monroe was pessimistic about the future of representative democracy. He found no relevant historical paradigms for the United States to emulate--Athens, Thebes, and Corinth, which had briefly flourished as "pure democracies," were too tiny to apply to American circumstances. Since these governments had fallen as a result of domestic intrigue, Monroe may have been thinking of Montesquieu's warning in Spirit of the Laws "If a republic be small, it is destroyed by a foreign force; if it be large, it is ruined by an internal imperfection," when he wrote this portion of the essay.[29] Monroe therefore concurred with the Antifederalist conclusion that the United States must maintain a decentralized governmental structure in order to succeed as a democracy. He suspected that the British and French were happier with their present territorial limits than they would be if they were larger. He even bestowed some kind words on Louis XVI who, after all, had been America's benefactor in the recent Revolutionary War. "It cannot be denied that any monarch was ever, in a greater degree, or more deservedly

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beloved by his people."[30]

During this period, like the great classical republican philosopher Montesquieu, Monroe adopted the view that each country, because of its land mass, soil, climate, "constitution," and social and political traditions, was limited in the type of polity it could choose. In this connection, it is perhaps relevant to remember that the United States itself had subsisted as an appendage of the British monarchy for nearly two hundred years before the Declaration of Independence. "Monarchical tendencies" indeed existed after the Revolution, with some New England members of Congress, disgruntled after the defeat of the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty in 1786, proposing that Prince Henry of Prussia become king of the United States![31]

Even Monroe, who never participated in "monocratic" schemes, was sufficiently distressed by the acrimony persisting in the Confederation Congress to propose hypothetical monarchical alternatives. He feared localist interests would try to gain control of the national legislature and distort expressions of the public good to suit themselves. In such instances, he thought that an occasionally benign monarchy might be preferable to a violent combination of "particular and local interests." Monroe's views were pro-executive, whether that executive were a king or a president. He favored an absolute veto for the latter.

Like John Adams and Benjamin Franklin, Monroe preferred giving power to a king rather than an aristocracy. He applied these views to the American Constitution, arguing that the only counterweight to legislative tyranny (e.g., "aristocracy") other than "an appeal to the people, which if possible should always be avoided," was to give the Executive branch an "absolute negative on the laws." Since it was generally watched more carefully by the people,

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the Executive branch (or President) was less likely than the "popular" branch to encroach on their rights.[32] He warned that the national legislature--especially the state-selected Senate--might be too subservient to "state sovereignties" and "state spirit." A president elected by the whole people, however, would find it his "ruling passion" to possess the "approbation of the union" rather than to satisfy "state interests." A patriot leader would emerge, with the added insurance that it was in his self-interest to play that role.[33]

While the national legislature was subject to domination by state-oriented factions, it was essential that the national executive rise above special interests and devote himself to the whole country's welfare. Monroe pointed out: "Every possible effort should therefore be used to expel from the hearts of those who fill it, a preference of one part of the community to another."[34] His admiration for the Executive power, which few historians have noted, reveals that Monroe was not at this time the ardent friend to decentralization and weak national powers his Antifederalism might automatically suggest. Several years later, his love of order was sufficient for him to excoriate the disorderly influence of men like Robespierre and Babeuf, whose activities and agitation in Paris in the 1790s made it difficult for stable authority to prevail.

A political realist who understood the tendency of those in power to grasp the good things in life as well as more power, Monroe sighed with relief at the presence of checks and balances in the Constitution. In this he was in agreement with Madison, Hamilton, and the "Publius" (Federalist) essays. Even if the Executive was not "virtuous"--a favorite word for the Founding Fathers--Monroe said, once again making historical analogies, "The experience of

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other governments hath taught us, it is possible to devise checks, which from motives of policy and private interest, will even make bad men faithful public servants." Believing the Chief Executive should be equally influenced by all sections and interests, Monroe warned, "Whenever this equipoise is destroyed, and this high character [the President] taught to look up to this, or that state, or combination of states for the smiles or the frowns of government, from that moment will its oppression be felt, and a dreadful anarchy insue [sic]." This independent-minded figure was more reminiscent of the past than the future in a nation where the "spirit of party and faction," as Madison predicted in Federalist #10, would increasingly characterize the pluralist American political system.[35]

Increasingly aware of the dangers which foreign manipulation or intervention posed to the republic's survival--a republic which lacked control of its largest river and its western outposts--Monroe would have concurred with Hamilton's pithy warnings against "foreign influence" in the Federalist. He may even have agreed with his argument that, "An hereditary monarch, though often disposed to sacrifice his subjects to his ambition, has so great a personal interest in the government, and in the external glory of the nation, that it is not easy for a foreign power to give him an equivalent for what he would sacrifice by treachery to the State."[36] By 1793, Monroe had become Hamilton's political enemy, but he could not deny the truth of the latter's statement, in the "Pacificus" papers, that foreign influence "is truly the GRECIAN HORSE to a republic."[37] Unlike many of his friends, Federalists and Antifederalists alike (including Jefferson), Monroe thought the solution for the danger of manipulation or bribery by foreign powers and domestic factions was the President's direct election by the people without

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term limits. Like Bolingbroke's paradigmatic "Patriot King," Monroe's version of the American president would best "stand alone," and bear full responsibility for the government's evil or virtuous conduct.

In order to assign culpability more precisely for wrong-doing, Monroe preferred that the executive power "be vested altogether in one person; unrestrained by a constitutional council, its operations will be more easy and regular, and its responsibility the greater and more immediate."[38] A unitary executive was Monroe's ideal, unlike the plural executive proposed by some of the more radical Pennsylvanians, and ostensibly favored by Tom Paine and Ben Franklin.[39] However, in 1795 Monroe approved the French government's constitution although it substituted a five-man directory for a single executive. Apparently, Monroe was willing to forego adoption of the one-man executive in emergency situations such as that which the French Revolution presented.

In the American federal system, Monroe anticipated the occurrence of partisan wrangling in the Senate and the bickering of state legislatures--problems which the French solved by the Army's suppression of local uprisings. For Monroe, once again the solution was popular election of the upper house rather than its choice by the state legislatures; by this means both branches of the national legislature would be less amenable to the dictates of the state governments. He especially feared that the small states would be able to control the Senate--if each state possessed the same number of senators--and thus defeat measures passed by the people's majority in the House of Representatives.

However, Monroe predicted longevity for the new federal system if it could surmount

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the centrifugal tendencies and inclinations to "independent state sovereignties, or partial confederacies" he expected would plague its first years. Monroe's bugbear was a congressional power of internal taxation---especially direct taxes on land and excises on domestic manufactures. In common with many Antifederalists, he regarded an unlimited tax power as an opening wedge for an eventually limitless authority to preempt the tax resources of the state governments and provide revenue for armies, wars, repression, and other horrendous schemes.[40] Monroe believed that the national government would inevitably overthrow the states if it were allowed to retain the power of internal taxation under an unamended Constitution. Both Federalists and Antifederalists agreed that Congress should possess the-tariff (external tax) power.

If the states were overthrown, Monroe, a strict adherent to the "cyclical" concept of governmental degeneration and evolution into "corrupted" forms, predicted that the Senate would develop into an aristocracy and that a monarchy might even emerge after a "convulsion" or "crisis" terminated the existence of the states. Acutely aware that Montesquieu's vaunted "constituted bodies"--hereditary provincial *parlements*, patrician "Estates" and the like--did not exist in the United States, Monroe feared the country's large size would "contribute to hurry it into a monarchy," since the Senate, not being a hereditary balancing "order," would lack the power to restrain a power-mad Executive. He was somewhat ambiguous about the republic's precise fate: "As there is no second class or order of nobles in America it is difficult to say in what it will terminate."[42]

Although his scenario was rooted in a static concept of decline and renewal, it is not

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surprising that Monroe offered the hope that the inevitable degeneration of the polity could be forestalled if his proposed democratic electoral reforms and tax restraints on Congress were adopted as constitutional amendments. It was common for moderate Antifederalists, their hearts set on the success of their "republican experiment," to contend that relatively minor changes would save their work from oblivion and rescue their reputations as Legislators and founders of states.[43]

The time of constitution-making was considered a unique opportunity to preserve republicanism from inevitable degeneration into aristocracy and tyranny. Some writers thought the 1780's might be the last opportunity available to Americans to enact measures to postpone the moral decay they already perceived in the people and their ambitious leaders, as Gordon Wood's work has brilliantly pointed out. However, the tendency to selfishness and depravity was inevitable, republicans believed, possibly as part of their Puritan legacy. Revolution-bred idealism and exhilaration would not last, so now was the time to legislate desirable reforms.

Predicting that even democratically elected assemblies would seize every opportunity for "wealth and dominion," Jefferson eloquently warned the Virginia House of Delegates in his Notes on Virginia (1781), "An elective despotism was not the government we fought for." Devoutly adhering to David Hume's precept that history's "chief use is only to discover the constant and universal principles of human nature," Jefferson denounced a legislature that a few months earlier had suggested he had played a cowardly role as the state's governor, running away rather than meet a British invasion: "They should look forward to a time, and that not a distant one, when a corruption in this, as in the country from which we derive our origin, will

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have seized the head of government, and be spread by them through the body of the people; when they will purchase the voices of the people, and make them pay the price." Thus Jefferson pointed out that Bolingbroke's dictum--that the corruption of the leaders would infect their subjects--was applicable to Americans as well as Britons: "Human nature is the same on every side of the Atlantic, and will be alike influenced by the same causes." He demanded checks and balances on the lower house, the creation of an independent judiciary, an autonomous upper house and a strengthened executive: "The time to guard against corruption and tyranny, is before they shall have gotten hold of us. It is better to keep the wolf out of the fold, than to trust to drawing his teeth and claws after he shall have entered."[44]

Likewise, Dr. Benjamin Rush, in his Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education Proper in a Republic (1786), found that the current malleable state of the public mind was an opportune moment to promote republican reforms. "The minds of our people have not as yet lost the yielding texture they acquired by the heat of the late Revolution," he observed. While it lasted, "the spirit of liberty" would expedite the development of respect for new laws.[45]

Monroe was merely reiterating this common perspective when he stressed the urgency of the present moment. This "now or never" syndrome, to use a colloquialism, was prevalent in the 1780's and 1790's, a time when "representative democracy" and the "American republican empire" were considered new and wonderful, albeit precarious, historical developments. Though he did not fear any immediate, direct government oppression "against the good people of America," Monroe's pessimistic vision of the future compelled him to "wish those checks and guards"--a bill of rights, tax restraints on Congress, changes in the mode of election and

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structure of the Senate and the president--"adopted, omitted at present from neglect and an overconfidence of our security," but which might never be achieved in the future.[46] Virtually foreordained, republican decay would necessarily preclude its achievement.

Monroe believed in the organic theory: that forms of society and government, like human beings, passed through historical cycles of infancy, youth, maturity, old age, and death. Indeed, this concept was virtually dogma in the mid-eighteenth century. As Rousseau tersely put it in his masterpiece, The Social Contract: "The body politic, as well as the human body, begins to die from its birth, and bears in itself the causes of its own destruction....If Sparta and Rome have perished, what State can hope to endure for ever?"[47] Bolingbroke's classic The Patriot King, published by Franklin's press in Philadelphia as early as 1749, had the same message: "The best instituted governments, like the best constituted animal bodies, carry in them the seeds of their destruction: and though they grow and improve for a time, they will soon tend visibly to their dissolution." The only way to "prolong the duration of a good government," Bolingbroke advised, repeating the warnings in Machiavelli's Discourses on Livy, a once-popular book which is now virtually unknown, "is to draw it back, on every favorable occasion, to the first good principles on which it was founded."[48]

Assimilating these widespread views to the exigencies of the 1780's, Monroe warned that, in light of the republic's ineluctable decline into tyranny, preservative reforms should be adopted before the new Constitution went into effect, so as to postpone the inevitable degeneration for as long as possible:

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> Political institutions, we are taught by melancholy experience, have their commencement, maturity and decline; and why should we not in early life, take those precautions that are calculated to prolong our days and guard against the diseases of old age?[49]

Considering the prevalence of the view that all governments--especially republics--must eventually be overthrown in favor of forms more detrimental to public well-being, Monroe's alarm at the national government's direct tax power becomes more comprehensible. He concluded by repeating his warning that the exercise of the internal tax power "will terminate either in anarchy and a dissolution of the government, or a subversion of liberty." Urging his readers to demand a second constitutional convention and avoid hasty ratification, Monroe ended by denouncing the structure and powers of the Senate, which was not only not subject to popular election, but violated the important principle of separation of powers by simultaneously playing executive and legislative roles. He dreaded this inordinate power of a long-tenured Senate, which much reduced his "hopes for the beneficial effects of the government," and "highly awakened" his "apprehensions of some fatal catastrophe."[50]

On the basis of Monroe's Observations, therefore, we can detect the origins of his ideas on the French Revolution. His abhorrence of self-interested factions; dread of "foreign influence," to which he later attributed the rise of Robespierre and Babeuf in France; and his desire for a strong leader to transcend such invidious forces help explain his rejection of the radical phase of the French Revolution--the Reign of Terror--which, ironically, he suspected was part of a counter-revolutionary foreign conspiracy. It also helps explain his initial approval (which surprisingly never changed to severe condemnation) of Napoleon Bonaparte, whom he

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saw as the Great Man who could save the Revolution by rising above its controversies and uniting the feuding factions behind him. The views he expressed in his Observations do not seem to have changed much from 1787 to 1794. In fact, he applied the historical "lessons" he learned from his American experience to the maelstrom in Europe. This may have limited his effectiveness as well as his diligence in finding out exactly what was going on in France. He chose merely to transfer his American criteria and desired outcomes to the French Revolution.

What outcome did Monroe desire for the United States in 1788? Subjected as he was to conflicting pressures from his constituents, Monroe's stand on the new Constitution often seemed ambiguous.[51] When a meeting of the freeholders and inhabitants of his "home town" of Fredericksburg addressed him and his friend and fellow state assemblyman John Dawson in October 1787, following examination and debate on the proposed new code, it declared its "unanimous approval." The meeting instructed them to support the Constitution's referral to a special ratifying convention as soon as possible:

> We the freeholders and inhabitants of the town and corporation of Fredericksburg convinced of the inefficiency of our present form of government, and of the propriety of immediately adopting the system of government recommended by the general convention of he United States; and that the safety, prosperity, and happiness of Virginia, as well as the other states, depend greatly thereon; we, therefore, direct you, our representatives, to declare, that this is the opinion of your constituents in this corporation.[52]

As historians of the ratification debate frequently note, Federalists were far more articulate than their opponents in the contest.[53] From the south and west as well as the commercial region of northern Virginia came petitions for ratification. Inhabitants of Berkeley County, Frederick County, and the city of Petersburg, a growing rival of northerly

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Fredericksburg, argued that the document produced at Philadelphia was the best constitution obtainable; "nor have we the smallest expectation, that the like exertion of such eminent qualifications can ever again be commended for a similar purpose; deeming it certain, that there remains now for the united states, this only alternative, either by a speedy adoption of the proposed constitution, to become a great and respectable nation--or, by rejecting it, to precipitate the dissolution of the union, exposed to insult and contempt, from without--to wars and dissections, from within."[54] Nevertheless, despite these pressures, Monroe and Dawson voted against ratification, which passed by the safe margin of 89 to 79.

Monroe and Dawson did not heed these pro-Constitution petitions because they arose from two regions--the savage frontier, which Monroe feared as a disorderly influence, and the materialistic, pestilential cities, which he abhorred for their vice and unproductiveness--rather than the moderate freeholding, slaveholding sections which for them epitomized Virginia society. Resisting the tide of petitions from their constituents, they did what they--and they believed, the majority of their inarticulate constituents (the "silent majority" of the eighteenth century) --thought was right. This was in accordance with the code of deference, by which the independent statesman exercised his own judgment, satisfying the dictates of conscience and what he perceived as the public good.[55]

Monroe's speeches in the Virginia ratifying convention, designed to convince his fellow delegates of the danger of an unamended Constitution, stressed his equal fear of factions and monarchy in America's destiny. A moderate who sought to balance the threatened extremes of anarchy and tyranny, which the prescient, seemingly infallible cyclical theory of history

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prescribed as the fate of all governments, he stressed the danger of foreign powers interfering in domestic politics should the new institutions be adopted. Jefferson and Adams, commenting on the Philadelphia Convention from their posts abroad, voiced similar apprehensions.[56]

However, Monroe regarded foreign subversion as even more likely than internal weakness to precipitate a republic's overthrow, a dictum he may have picked up from Montesquieu. Speaking on past republican confederations at the convention on June 10, 1788, he pointed out that the Amphictyonic League composed of Sparta, Athens, and Thebes was overthrown because "the weakest were obliged to call for foreign aid, and this precipitated the ruin of the confederacy." Although the Achaean League consisted solely of small democratic city-states, in contrast to the motley array of democracies and monarchies in the Amphicytonic Council, Monroe noted that it was likewise destroyed by its need for foreign assistance against invaders. But he stressed the analogy between this league and the thirteen states under the Articles of Confederation, apparently drawing the moral that, so long as it refused to permit interference by foreign powers in disputes between the states, the republic was safe.

Suggesting that a confederate republic might be able to thwart the doom that the cyclical theory of history portended, Monroe tried to defeat the Constitution on this basis. Unlike most other members of the Convention, he used historical knowledge for the purpose of drawing optimistic rather than pessimistic conclusions:

> The Achaean league had more analogy to ours, and gives me great hopes that the apprehensions of gentlemen with respect to our confederacy are groundless. They were all democratic and firmly united. What was the effect? The most perfect harmony and friendship subsisted between them, and they were very active in

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> guarding their liberties. The history of that confederacy does not present us with those confusions and internal convulsions, which gentlemen ascribe to all governments of a confederate kind. The most respectable historians prove this confederacy to have been exempt from these defects.[58]

According to Monroe, whose description here seems accurate, the Achaean League was a successful confederation, lasting for two centuries until it was overwhelmed by superior force, first (338 B.C.) by the Macedonians and later (168 B.C.) the Romans. His use of it as a model is not surprising. More important than the league's success was the reason for its failure--its recourse to the assistance of foreign powers to help it in war against its neighboring city-states. These powers later turned on and destroyed it. As Monroe explained:

> The league was founded on democratic principles, and from the wisdom of its structure continued a far greater length of time than any other. Its members, like our states, by our confederation, retained their individual sovereignty, and enjoyed a perfect equality. What destroyed it? Not internal dissection. They were surrounded by great and powerful nations--the Lacedemonians [Spartans], Macedonians, and Aetolians. The Aetolians and Lacedemonians making war on them, they solicited the assistance of Macedon, who no sooner granted it than she became their oppressor. To free themselves from the tyranny of the Macedonians, they prayed succour from the Romans, who after relieving them from their oppressors, soon totally enslaved them.[59]

Monroe's jeremiad on the failure of a promising democratic confederation, the result solely of its getting entangled (perhaps unnecessarily) with stronger foreign powers, appears plausible as an interpretation of ancient history; in fact, he cited Polybius at the convention. On the other hand, it requires no great leap of the historian's imagination to comprehend Monroe's applying (rather misapplying) this same syllogism to the events he witnessed on the streets of Paris six years after the Virginia Convention.[60]

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The cyclical theory of history posited that similar causes produce similar effects over time. In the 1790s France was undoubtedly surrounded by strong powers intent on conquering her. Monroe believed the fanatical Robespierrists and Babouvists were similar to the Achaean league in requiring foreign help to prevail against their opponents. Had these factious groups (like the Achaean League?) succeeded in procuring sufficient foreign help, Monroe argued, they would have overthrown the French Republic. His logic was somewhat buttressed by the French-Government's propaganda and his friendship with several of its functionaries, who allayed his fears, assuring him that these radicals were indeed working for the royalists and the Coalition. But the American Minister hoped that this time, in France, contrary to his reading of Polybius, the "democratic" government would persevere, repulsing enemies from within and without.[61]

Needless to say, Monroe directed his strictures at the state ratifying convention at modes of government, not merely the individuals composing them. However, when we recognize that he, like most eighteenth-century thinkers, was imbued with the organic conception of society and the state (the "body politic"), the view, a legacy of Plato's Republic that the State was Man "writ large," man under the magnifying glass, the one equaled the other. After all, civilizations and governments, like individuals, had distinct life cycles: birth, youth, maturity, old age, ending in decay and death.[62]

Elucidating his philosophy of republics at the convention, Monroe simultaneously pointed out the shortcomings of citizens and governments. He stressed that the convention's objective was "to establish the dominion of law over licentiousness--to increase the powers of

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the national government to such extent, and organize it in such manner, as to enable it to discharge its duties, and manage the affairs of the states, to the best advantage."[63] This was the optimum objective of good government, which confederated democracies like the Achaean League had attained. According to Polybius's Histories, these had never argued or separated. Monroe thought the United States could achieve the same tranquillity, thus indicating that he was not unduly alarmed by Shays' Rebellion or the other supposed instances of instability and threats to private property evinced by the paper money emissions of Rhode Island, North Carolina, and other states. In Monroe's opinion, the nation's position in both domestic and foreign affairs was sufficiently secure "that we are in no danger of immediate disunion, but that we may calmly and dispassionately examine the defects of our government, and apply such remedies as we shall find necessary."[64] As in his desire that the national government adopt centralizing and stabilizing measures to secure Western settlers' loyalty to the Union, Monroe felt that a firm government would produce a solid society and citizenry.

At the convention, Congress's failure to function in a dependable, self-sufficient manner aroused Monroe's criticism, although its defects were the fault of state legislatures which had refused to bestow sufficient power. He bluntly denounced the Confederation Congress as defective in its "form" and "powers," "void of energy, and badly organized." He praised the provisions of the Constitution which granted Congress the power to regulate interstate and foreign commerce, though he insisted that the power of direct taxation should be withheld, as he had done in the Observations.[65]

Why was this power of direct taxation--on land, produce, and (potentially) incomes--

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so crucial in Monroe's political philosophy? There were many reasons: A national government with power to tax could corruptly accumulate embezzled riches for its officers; the power to tax implied the power to destroy the state governments by preempting their customary sources of revenue; and the surplus revenues an extensive direct tax program might provide would needlessly burden the people, deprive them of subsistence, increase potentially exploitative federal bureaucracies, and encourage irresponsible leaders to embark on wasteful army and navy-building schemes, which inevitably led to foreign adventures, reckless wars, and domestic repression. Of course, even the Antifederalists admitted that it might be necessary for the national government to impose direct taxes in such emergencies as attack by a foreign power. However, Monroe noted, there was no danger of war at the present time, certainly none sufficient to justify this intrusive mode of raising revenue, which was virtually guaranteed to curtail the people's liberties and reduce their standard of living, as it had done in Great Britain and France for centuries.[66]

Though Monroe did not elaborate on these bases for his dread of a national power of direct taxation, they were so common, and so frequently expressed during the debate over the Constitution, that he did not need to. He tersely explained:

> My objections to this power are, that I conceive it not necessary, impracticable under a democracy, (if exercised) as tending to anarchy, or the subversion of liberty, and probably the latter. In the first place, it is unnecessary, because exigencies will not require it. The demands and necessities of government are now greater than they will be hereafter, because of the expenses of the [Revolutionary] war in which we were engaged.[67]

Evidently Monroe's suspicion of a congressional power of direct taxation was rooted in

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his awareness of the tenuity of republican governments, even when they were in federative form. Even Montesquieu, their foremost advocate, had predicted they could not endure and, unable to effectively cover a wide extent of territory, would eventually give way to absolute monarchy.[68]

Tailoring his warnings to America's unique situation, Monroe pointed out that congressional control of the impost, sale of the western "back lands" and loans would provide enough revenue "to discharge its engagements and secure the public happiness." Monroe thought that congressional requisitions on the states, although they had been ignored and "much despised" during the war and Confederation periods, would amply supply any deficiency in these other sources if relied on for "trivial sums." "If the government be well administered, or possess any part of the confidence of the people, is it presumed that requisitions, for trivial sums will be refused?" he rhetorically asked.[69] If the people were sufficiently devoted to their government--and he hoped they would be if it adequately represented them--they would not balk at supplying these quotas.

Since the United States was composed of a diverse array of communities joined together for national purposes but otherwise thirteen disparate democracies, Monroe found the national exercise of direct taxation "impracticable in this country under a democracy." Fearing that its vast territorial expanse and the different conditions and tax laws prevailing in each state made it impossible to formulate a "uniform" law on this matter, Monroe rejected any congressional discretion in this regard. Congress lacked "the most minute and extensive local information" needed to ascertain which tax would be most equitable nationwide, Monroe

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asserted; but his real fear was that the power of direct taxation would permit the "general government" to "preponderate" over the states: "They [Congress] cannot know what taxes can be least oppressive to the people. The tax that may be convenient in one state may be oppressive in another. If they vary the objects of taxation in different states, the operation must be unequal and unjust." In light of the national government's trouble collecting the whiskey excise tax imposed in 1791, which precipitated the abortive Whiskey Rebellion in western Pennsylvania in 1794, and the role that the unpopular national direct taxes on land and slaves during the undeclared war with France in 1798-1800 played in the downfall of the Federalists, Monroe may have prophesied accurately for his times. More important, in Monroe's opinion, was the tax power's "tendency" to "give to the United States all the resources of the individual states," "an absolute control" of their revenue resources that would enable the "general government" to "preponderate." He prognosticated that this power would enable Congress to "triumph" over the state governments in their inevitable bitter "conflict," where the national government would hold the advantage, both as a result of its greater powers under the Constitution and the preference of men of "influence" and "talents" to serve in it instead of the weaker state governments.[70]

Like other Antifederalists, Monroe was virtually obsessed with the insecurity of republican government and its tendency toward degeneration, like all governments, into undesirable extremes. He palpably feared the eventual annihilation of the state legislatures under the new polity, in which Congress would have the upper hand. Presciently pointing to Congress's numerous powers to make laws that it deemed "necessary and proper" for the

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"general welfare" under Article 1, Section 8, as a source of unlimited national legislative jurisdiction, Monroe apprehended that many ambitious men would betray their states in favor of the "general government" in a contest between them whose fulcrum would be the direct tax power, an "object with which a federal government ought never to interfere." The power of direct taxation aroused his fear of a Congressional "tyranny" that would "endanger our liberties." This was the only power in the Constitution that, he said, he would deny Congress, since he was "strongly impressed with the necessity of having a firm national government."[71]

Sharing the general lack of confidence in "popular virtue" that prevailed at the close of the 1780's, Monroe nevertheless drew opposite conclusions from the Federalists. Far from being unruly and anarchical, he thought the people tended to exhibit an undesirable admiration for the sources of pomp and power, which would largely be held by national leaders. Expecting the electorate would prefer national taxation rather than the continued existence of their guarantors of liberty, the states, he expected that "oppression" and "monarchy" would arise with popular consent.

Monroe professed doubts about the people's wisdom and devotion to democracy and equal rights: "The concurrent interfering power of laying taxes on the people will occasion a perpetual conflict between the general and individual governments; which... must terminate to the disadvantage, if not in the annihilation, of the latter." Refusing to "bear such a double oppression"--the imposition of direct taxes by two governments--"the people of America... will endeavor to get rid of one of the oppressors" and "ultimately end in the establishment of a monarchical government." He expounded a lesson that was already clear to his audience: "The

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people, in order to be delivered from one species of tyranny, may submit to another."[72] To escape from the double burden of state and congressional taxes, the electorate, Monroe predicted, would eventually yield its expensive liberties at the beatific throne of a king! This conclusion may seem illogical to us, but it inexorably followed from the logic of governmental decline and the belief in the "ambition and avarice" of both the people and their leaders prevalent at this time--in the aftermath of disillusionment with the failure of the Continental Congress to pay the public debt or win respect at home and abroad; and the incessant disorders in the states, the most notable of which was Shays' Rebellion.[73]

While Monroe deplored the alleged popular tendency to drift toward monarchy in an escape from freedom, Federalist leaders at the Virginia Convention depicted their "licentiousness" as requiring the restraining hand of a strong government. Edmund Pendleton and Henry Lee cited Montesquieu, Algernon Sidney, and James Harrington--"the lodestones of Country ideology"[74] --and among Monroe's favorite authors. "These writers point out licentiousness as the natural off spring of liberty, and that, therefore, all free governments should endeavor to suppress it, or else it will ultimately overthrow that liberty of which it is the result," Edmund Pendleton, the president of the state ratifying convention, told his colleagues, using the cyclical theory of history for an opposite purpose than Monroe's [75]

Though most delegates wished to avoid the expected decline of republican government into monarchy, Pendleton and the Federalists thought it more likely to arise from popular anarchy and upheaval, while Monroe and the Antifederalists looked for the catalyst in public docility and apathy toward rulers' abuses and arrogations. One frequently demanded device for

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postponing inevitable republican decay was a Bill of Rights to protect civil liberties and curb the authority of the national government, reserving all unenumerated powers to the states. Monroe advocated such a safeguard for the people's rights.[76]

When Monroe argued that the Constitution failed to provide a viable system of separation of powers, he was referring to the absence of a third force to mediate controversy between state and national governments. Paradoxically, he praised the British "constitution's" system of checks and balances between the contending social orders-- king, lords, and commons--a conservative point of view historians usually associate with John Adams and the Federalist party of the 1790's, who could not make the great leap from seeing government as balancing feudalistic-type "ranks" to viewing it as moderator of legally equal, pluralistic, contending capitalistic individuals, as Gordon Wood points out in Creation of the American Republic.[77] Monroe perceived an invidious harmony in the relations between the different branches of the federal government, which no matter what conflicts existed between them, would unite to throttle the prerogatives of the states. He deplored the absence of substantive checks on the federal government in the allocation of the "division of powers," feeling that it would overwhelm the state governments. Thus he decried a "coalition" between the members of the national government to "destroy the rights of the people" and abolish the states. He insisted that a third, "missing" branch was necessary to balance the inimical dichotomy between the "general government" and the "individual" (state) governments.[78]

In Monroe's interpretation, the states epitomized the "democratic" principle vis-à-vis the national government as American counterparts to the European distinction between king,

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lords, and commons, which respectively represented the monarchical, the aristocratic, and the democratic features of the classical "mixed" or "balanced" constitution. The "general government" created by the Constitution, especially its Executive branch, was not sufficiently responsible "either to the people at large or to the state legislatures." The whole apparatus of "division of powers" between state and national governments was vitiated, Monroe felt, because the national government, in all its branches, was equipped to overwhelm and enfeeble the states.

Since under the new constitution "no real checks" existed on the use of national powers against the states, and the "general government" (the President) was not accountable "either to the people at large or to the state legislatures," Monroe was sure that the states would lose the inevitable confrontation for power. For this reason, Monroe deplored the Constitutional Convention's failure to provide a popular check on the national government's actions: Even Congress was not responsible to the voters in so far as its members might "commit high crimes" with impunity (this was apparently his interpretation of congressional immunity stipulations in Article 1, Section 6, which he misconstrued as freedom from arrest). As far as the President's liability to impeachment by the Senate for "high crimes and misdemeanors," Monroe considered this provision ineffectual, since the Chief Executive would undoubtedly be in collusion with his "counsellors" in the upper house respecting treaties and appointments to office. Far from seeking his removal from office, the Senators would be likely to "advise him to commit such violations and crimes" in the first place, especially if they would themselves thereby gain power and profit.

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An outgrowth of presidential and congressional "impunity" was the dreaded specter of intervention by foreign governments in domestic politics. Combined with the Executive's control of the Army and his friendship with the Senate, the Constitution's lack of institutional controls to deter potentially lawless officials would provide ample incentive for foreign monarchies "to use their arts and intrigues" to take over the government, employing a tractable President and Senate as their minions.[79]

The fact is worth emphasizing: Not only were foreign nations antagonistic to America's well-being on the simple national grounds of balance of power and the concept of self-interest; as monarchies they wished to overthrow the only major republic then afloat, whose example threatened the security of their autocratic dominions. Like others involved in the debate over the Constitution-- Madison and Hamilton, for example--Monroe was not idly dreaming up chimerical cases when he hypothesized a possible foreign take-over of the United States Government by devious diplomatic means. This had been done throughout history, not only in the Greek republics but, most egregiously in the Founding Fathers' own lifetime, in the case of the Kingdom of Poland, which had never had its own government and whose monarch had usually been chosen by the king of France. Moreover, by 1772 the first partition of Poland had already taken place; vast chunks of the country were seized by Russia, Austria, and Prussia. A second partition would occur in 1793 and a third in 1795, each accomplished without firing a shot. Poland had disappeared as a nation --all done by "diplomatic means," of the type the Founding Fathers dreaded might be applied to their infant republic if foreign governments were allowed to exercise inordinate influence over American leaders. Jefferson, who was then the

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perspicacious minister from the United States to France, pointed out the similarity between the Polish King, who was elected for life by a Diet (council) of nobles invariably intimidated by the British and French, and the American President created by the Constitution. "Their [the Constitutional Convention's] President seems a bad edition of a Polish King," he wrote John Adams. "He may be elected from four years to four years, for life." In a letter to Madison in 1787, he predicted that foreign powers would invariably intervene in securing the election of their favorite candidate to America's "elective monarchy": "The election of a President of America, some years hence, will be much more interesting to certain nations of Europe, than ever the election of a King of Poland was."[80]

Moreover, the successful European power, if strong enough, would install its chosen candidate in office for life, and deny the American voters the right of free election. As Monroe astutely pointed out in his speech to the ratifying convention on June 10, 1788, the indirect mode of electing the President--by means of electors chosen for the purpose rather than by direct vote of the people--offered candidates and the agents of foreign governments alike the tempting opportunity to bribe and "corrupt" electors to select their man. Moreover, an incumbent Chief Executive, who might not be eager to lose the reins of power, had the additional advantage of patronage plums and the command of the armed forces, which he might employ to win over undecided electors, gain re-election and the support of national and state legislators. Considering this superiority, Monroe warned, "when once he is elected, he may be elected forever."[81]

Pointing to the provision of the Constitution whereby the House of Representatives,

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voting by states, picked the Chief Executive when no candidate received an electoral majority, he denounced this mode of circumventing the "independent and intelligent electors" as another instance where foreign intervention might manipulate the result. So dangerous a form of government was "calculated to secure neither the interests nor the rights of our countrymen," Monroe haplessly concluded.[82]

The obsessive fear and expectation of the inevitable, even abrupt overthrow of the democratic republic through the alliance of demagogic presidents, ambitious congressmen, and malevolent foreign monarchies was the obverse of the preoccupation with the palpable class struggle that apparently went on in the thirteen states at this time.[83] The Founding Fathers viewed their offspring as doomed to inevitable decay, failure, and transmutation. The time-honored mechanism by which republics were overthrown was the internal conflict between rich and poor, complicated by war and foreign intervention. Monroe had this lethal combination in mind when he voiced his warnings to the Virginia ratifying convention in 1788. We tend to delude ourselves that the Founding Fathers lived in a "classless society," or at least that they thought they did. Obviously, from their frequent allusions to class conflict in ancient times and their awareness of its manifestations in the state legislatures and in episodes like Shays' Rebellion in the 1780's, this is not the case. In this struggle, the state legislatures were generally considered the avatars of rampant democracy--misguided, uncontrollable, anarchical popular rule--while the national government, at least to its advocates, represented the forces of order, reason, and control. Though Monroe was a firm friend of order, he employed the rhetorical paradigms of the day in a sense more typical of the Antifederalists. Nevertheless, his references

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to conflicts between the "particular" and "general" governments were a well-understood shorthand for the struggle between "democracy" and "aristocracy;" or, as "Fabius" (John Dickinson), a Federalist pamphleteer, put it, "for protecting the worthy against the licentious."[84] When one descried the possibility of monarchical intervention in this conflict, it could not automatically be assumed it would be on the side of the elitist, "undemocratic" element. In fact, there was evidence that British agents and troops were instructed to encourage the rebels in western Massachusetts. It was a ticklish situation, preserving a republic; since the foreign monarchies--for our purposes, the "evil knights" in this international game of chess--would support whichever side appeared at the moment to contribute to the dissolution of the United States.[85]

Let us stop a moment to consider how this experience in the 1780's could have influenced Monroe's outlook on the Reign of Terror, the Thermidorian Reaction, and Babeuf. Applying the "lessons" he culled from ancient and modern politics, he saw as logical and coherent what at first appears incomprehensible: the belief that the left-wing elements in the National Convention and the Paris sections were involved in a conspiracy with foreign agents and perpetrators of a kingly restoration. Was this not the same fear Americans had in the Constitution-making period? That their leaders were amenable to manipulation and collusion with foreign powers for the overthrow of the United States Government, and for the very same reason--because this government was a rudimentary republic whose existence posed a threat to the continued survival of oppressive, benighted monarchies and aristocracies of the Old World and its colonial possessions? Monroe's reasoning becomes clearer now: This, the second piece

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of the puzzle, may now be put in place. The first was the pervasiveness of class conflict; both are components of the "cyclical theory of history" and the idea of the uniformity of human nature. For Monroe, in a very real way, at least psychologically and historically, 1794 in Paris was only 1788 in Richmond revisited. And, with the coming of the French Revolution, both Federalists and Republicans increased their acrimoniously partisan attacks, denouncing each other as the tools of malevolent foreign governments and alien ideologies. The Federalists were scorned as the friends of monarchy, the Republicans as partisans of left-wing Jacobinism and anarchy.

Historians have discussed this aspect of American politics in the 1790's ad infinitum.[86] However, they have failed to connect it with the fears voiced in the 1780's for the future of the American republic, and the whole historical context of the classical studies of the Founding Fathers, dating back to Greece and Rome. Only in this manner can the paranoid fears of Americans in the 1790's about their Revolution and the French Revolution alike be fully understood and appreciated.

Monroe himself was as prone as any of his contemporaries to identify his political foes as comrades-in-arms of the British monarchy. For instance, at the height of the Citizen Genet controversy in 1793, when Federalist meetings denounced "foreign influence" in the government and charged that the French minister planned to stir up civil war in the United States, Monroe did not hesitate to brand his opponents as British agents. To a fellow Jeffersonian, John Breckinridge, a Kentucky legislator, he wrote in August 1793, "The monarchy party [Federalists] among [us] has seized a new ground whereon to advance their fortunes." In his

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view, instead of attempting to alleviate Franco-American tensions arising from Genet's disrespect for President Washington and his disobedience to orders to refrain from sending out armed privateers from American ports, "this party have brought it into the public view & are labouring to turn" the citizenry against the French Revolution, "thinking to separate us from France & pave the way for an unnatural connection with Great Britain." Emphasizing the urgency of the situation, he implored his ally to "put the friends of republican government on their guard."[87] In Monroe's opinion, the Federalists would revive the union between the United States and the Mother Country if they could; at least this was how he felt in 1794, when he went to France and adapted his conspiracy theories to the events he witnessed there.

Indeed, the fear of foreign conspiracy was ubiquitous in the 1780's and 1790's, derived from historical and contemporary events. At the Constitutional Convention itself, one of the small-state delegates, Gunning Bedford, Jr., of Delaware, later a devout Federalist, demanded an upper house of the national legislature in which all states would be equally represented regardless of population, a bitter pill for large-state delegates to swallow. He increased its acerbity, threatening that, if the large states remained adamant, the small states would secede from the Union and "find some foreign ally... who will take them by the hand and do them justice." In the 1790's, especially after the presidential contest of 1796, in which the French minister to the United States, Pierre Adet, publicly appealed for the election of Jefferson as the only means to restore Franco-American friendship, expressions of alarm at "foreign influence" were rife. Staunch Abigail Adams, John's politically articulate wife, unsparingly denounced such intervention, especially when it aimed at the defeat of her husband. After he-was safely

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ensconced in the president's chair, she wrote:

> The time is fast approaching when the measures of the government cannot be looked upon with an eye of indifference. We shall either be a united people, more strongly bound by common danger, or we shall become a prey to foreign influence.[88]

About the same time, Monroe's generous uncle, Judge Joseph Jones, expressed similar fears, but they were directed at Adams's predilections for the British form of government. As he wrote Madison in January 1797, after Adams's election had been "ascertained": "I have for a length of time considered Mr. A. as a friend to the British nation and government. Whether he still holds his prejudices for that monarchy I know not.... He has a fair opportunity by a new and sound policy to establish his popularity and do much good.... Foreign interferences should be boldly withstood and rejected as an officious meddling in our affairs, for to these I cannot help ascribing principally the height to which the violence of party has been carried."[89] Examples of such commentary might be multiplied indefinitely.

The Founding Fathers devoted themselves to overcoming the omnipresent threat of "foreign influence," to which weak new republics were especially vulnerable. Despite his historical reputation as the advocate of a weak executive, at the Virginia ratifying convention in 1788 Monroe said the answer lay in a strong president chosen by the voters rather than factious "combinations" of electors who might manipulate the result and throw the contest into the House of Representatives. As Gunning Bedford's Convention threat indicated, the "small states" were especially amenable to external influence. According to Monroe's analysis, in the House of Representatives, where the president was chosen in the absence of an electoral

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majority, they could inordinately exercise their strength. Since each state cast one vote, the President might promise to obey the wishes of the states that elected him. The President might yield to senatorial intimidation. It had the power to convict him of impeachable offenses, thereby tempting him to form an alliance with it whereby they could together engage in a conspiratorial concert of interests to deprive the people of their rights, and perhaps even make him a lifetime Executive. They might use the treaty-making power, which was extremely malleable to Executive exploitation, to betray the national interest to foreign governments. "If he [the President] makes a treaty, bartering the interests of his country, by whom is he to be tried?" Monroe pointed out. "By the very persons [the Senate] who advised him to perpetrate the act." In Monroe's scenario, the joint conspiracy between President and Senate was virtually unstoppable.[90]

As political philosophers like Harrington, Bolingbroke, and Montesquieu never tired of pointing out, only virtuous leadership could preserve the rights of the people; and in Monroe's depiction of the President and the Senate's roles under the new Constitution, precious little virtue existed. Corruptible leaders were always tempted by the largesse offered by foreign governments, and the American republic presented fruitful ground for their machinations. Aware that "we may hold the balance among" them, European powers would try to "influence" presidential foreign policy, Monroe predicted. They would also attempt to manipulate the electoral college to obtain victory for their candidates or re-elect incumbents favorable to them. "There being nothing to prevent his corruption but his virtue, which is but precarious, we have not sufficient security," Monroe somberly concluded. The President must have independence in

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his foreign policy, both from the Senate and from foreign monarchs. He sought to remove the temptation to engage in factious collusion with the Senate in foreign policy by giving the Executive sole power over treaties.[91]

Extremely sensitive on the issue of separation of powers, Monroe wanted to eliminate the Senate's ability to interfere with the president on treaty-making. He objected especially to the Senate because senators were chosen by their individual legislatures, thus representing them rather than the people; even more odiously, each state possessed an equal number of senators despite its population. In his view, this was merely a repetition of the worst features of the Continental Congress, and would hinder the attainment of the general interest. His unpublished "Observations" deplored the threat posed by an omnipotent national legislature, especially since the Senate, in his view, possessed an "absolute negative" on all laws. Alluding to John Adams' favorite political thinker, the Genevese democratic politician Jean Louis De Lolme, author of La Constitution de l'Angleterre (1771), Monroe urged that, to protect the people against legislative omnipotence, the executive should hold an absolute veto. He agreed with his Federalist opponents that the legislative power naturally tended "to group to itself all the powers delegated from the people, and to prostrate the other branches before it; stimulated on by the state spirit, which will in some degree still remain," especially in the Senate, "the difficulty here will be proportionably increased." Like Locke's omnipotent executive, the hypothetically omnipotent legislature might be restrained by a people's revolution as a last resort: "an appeal to the people, which if possible should always be avoided." Paradoxically, the only other alternative to legislative tyranny was "giving the Executive, the other active branch an absolute negative on

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the laws; for otherwise its [Congress's] enterprizes [sic]," its quest for omnipotence "must be successful."[92]

Monroe thought that the Senate should not be allowed to compete for power with the President in his own executive sphere, especially since it was more likely to represent particularistic interests than the general good. About the upper house he complained, "whatever influence this branch may have in directing the measures of the executive, from the nature of its appointment, will be exerted to give it a narrow state byas [sic], and that from this source alone, constructed as the two branches [executive and senate] are, much injury is to be expected from the extraordinary coalition."[93]

Although Monroe strove to limit the powers of Congress by depriving it of the powers of direct taxation and excise duties, feeling this would endanger the state's sources of revenue, he seemed to have less fear of presidential power. For instance, his "Observations" recommended that the President have unsupervised, autonomous control of the "fleet and army at all times," only restricted by nominal congressional authorization "merely to affix the condition, or emergency, upon which his absolute power over them [army and navy] should commence."[94]

In many respects Monroe agreed with the Federalists. He insisted on a strong and independent federal judiciary and praised the bicameral legislative system created by the Constitution. With his invariable antipathy to the Senate, he applauded the provisions whereby tax bills and impeachment proceedings would originate in the lower house. Unlike the democratically chosen House of Representatives, he felt, the Senate was a state-oriented

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branch of government ("by and for the states"), their "diplomatic corps," responsible to the legislators rather than the people. He urged the amendment of the Constitution to have senators chosen by popular vote or by electors chosen by the voters.[95]

Monroe was especially irritated that the Senate possessed joint power with the president over treaties and appointments. He objected primarily because the upper house was responsible to the state legislatures, and the Senate lacked proportional representation, each state having two senators irrespective of population, which was unfair to his home state, Virginia. He protested: "Thus the state spirit, with an equality among the members of the union, is preserved in this branch of the government, and if there was an absolute necessity for yielding the point of representation, yet none suggests itself, at least to me, for not remedying the defect in the form, which has been found so pernicious in the present one [i.e., the unicameral Confederation Congress]."

Nonetheless, his defiance was muted, since few but the most rabid centralizers recommended that the executive exercise unlimited power over treaties and appointments to office. In "Observations," he based his criticism of the Senate's power in these instances on its inadequate quorum regulations and the priority of state interests rather than to any desire for a vigorous president. "By the consent of two-thirds of the senators present, treaties shall be formed; by that of a majority, ambassadors, other public ministers, and consuls, judges of the supreme court and other public officers not otherwise provided for by law, shall be appointed," he noted. Each state's reliance on the attendance of certain members to look out for its interests, "more especially as no quorum is established, appears to me improper." Pointing to

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his favorite example of the North and East plotting to sacrifice western interests, he said that even if two-thirds of those present in the Senate were needed to pass treaties, it was unfair not to set a quorum, especially if Western delegates died or were unable to attend during a critical vote on a treaty concerning such things as Mississippi River navigation. At that point, Monroe hypothesized, the West's interests might be betrayed by less than one-fourth of the total Senate membership.[96]

Monroe's dread of inordinate senatorial power was based on his somewhat cynical view of human nature. He took for granted that human nature was rooted in self-interest, especially at the North. As a member of Congress, he had been in attendance in 1786, when New England and New York mercantile interests strove to force the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty through Congress. The Jay-Gardoqui Treaty, which had nearly passed the Confederation Congress, had offered to give up U.S. navigation rights on the Mississippi, which were vital to the South and West, in exchange for limited continental commercial concessions from Spain. When the issue of free navigation of the Mississippi River was mentioned during the state ratifying convention, Monroe angrily accused the northern states of seeking to arrest the expansion of the South and West. Bitterly recalling his experience at the time of the abortive Jay-Gardoqui negotiations two years earlier, he sketched the crisis he anticipated in the Senate under the new structure of government:

> His own opinion was, that it [free navigation of the Mississippi River] would be given up by a majority of the senators present in the Senate, with the President, which would put it in the power of less than seven states to surrender it; that it was their interest to prevent an augmentation of the southern influence and power; and

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> that, as mankind in general, and states in particular, were governed by interest, the Northern States would not fail of availing themselves of the opportunity, given them by the Constitution, of relinquishing that river, in order to depress the western country, and prevent the southern interest from preponderating.[97]

Although Monroe avoided being explicit on the matter, he indicated that he preferred the President retain sole responsibility for negotiating and ratifying treaties, assisted by a paid group of temporary advisors. He wished to avoid such situations as the possibility of executive/legislative collusion; unwelcome intrusion of state and sectional interests; the violation of separation of powers; and the increased likelihood of foreign governments exerting undue influence. Thus he proposed to detach the Senate and the Executive when foreign alliances (he called them "leagues") were being negotiated, and to require a majority of the whole number of senators to be present to vote on ratification. "If there be a propriety in giving him [the President] a right of making leagues, he ought not to be connected with the Senate," he tersely observed. "If the Senate have a right to make leagues, there ought to be a majority of the states" in attendance.[98]

Monroe's preliminary assessment, "Observations," had ostensibly approved of presidential control of the armed forces. However, at the state ratifying convention a few weeks later, he had second thoughts arising from his fears of collusion between the President and the Senate and his disappointment that the President was not directly elected by the people. Regretting that there was no means by which either the state legislatures or the executive could restrain or "punish" Congress, he thought that the authority of the House and Senate to convict

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the president of "high crimes and misdemeanors" through the impeachment process was likewise in effect nugatory. Envisaging the president and Senate partaking in devious conspiracies with foreign governments, he lamented the ineffectualness of impeachment during such crises. Even should the Senate consider convicting him, "he commands the army of the United States till he is condemned" and might use it to enforce martial law. Moreover, Monroe was aware of the possibility that "foreign nations" would "use their arts and intrigues to corrupt his [the President's] counsellors"--a euphemism for the Senate. Since the president could escape impeachment by conspiring with the upper house, "what a delightful prospect must it be for a foreign nation, which may be desirous of gaining territorial or commercial advantages over us, to practise on them!" If one hand washed the other, both president and senate could commit wrongdoing with impunity.[99]

Monroe remained concerned by the lack of direct popular election of the president. He thought it was possible that the Chief Executive would be chosen by electors who might even scheme to select a criminal for the office. As we have seen, he suspected that foreign governments would have no compunction about engaging in unprincipled activities to "influence" presidential elections:

> What an advantageous prospect for France and Great Britain to secure the favor and attachment of the President, by exerting their power and influence to continue him in the office! Foreign nations may, by their intrigues, have great influence, in each state, in the election of the President; and I have no doubt but their efforts will be tried to the utmost.[100]

Using his own clout as well as external support to gain re-election, the President would

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tempt government officials and their friends with patronage plums. Influential in every state because of the offices at his disposal, the president would manipulate opinion leaders in order to win election by the House of Representatives should the electors fail to cast a majority for one candidate. Rather sarcastically, considering his belief that the electors were likely to be unethical, he concluded: "For these reasons, I conceive, the same President may always be continued, and be in fact elected by Congress, instead of independent and intelligent electors."[101]

Although Monroe's unpublished "Observations" had vehemently urged political leaders, especially senators, to strive for national well-being, at the state ratifying convention he indirectly appealed to state self-interest. He warned that there was no guarantee that Virginia's congressmen would unwaveringly protect her rights. "It is a misfortune, more than once experienced, that the representatives of the states do not pursue the particular interests of their own state," he bluntly observed. Even worse, the structure of the upper house, where each state delegation had two votes irrespective of population, promoted attacks on Virginia's prerogatives by resentful smaller, less powerful states. Going to rhetorical extremes, Monroe cautioned: "When we take a more accurate view of the principles of the Senate, we shall have grounds to fear that the interest of our state may be totally neglected; nay, that our legislative influence will be as if we were actually expelled and banished out of Congress."[102]

On the floor of his state's ratifying convention, Monroe was not above appealing to public opinion in order to achieve his objectives. Since the votes of only seven states were required to pass laws through the Senate, it seemed obvious that "the interest of certain states

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alone will be consulted."[103] He knew that, despite pervasive rhetorical demands that leaders possess disinterested public virtue, his constituents wanted their own privileges safeguarded first of all.

Although Monroe considered himself a nationalist, he persisted in denouncing the national government's power of internal taxation. "My attachment to the Union and an energetic government is such," he declared, "that I would consent to give the general government every power contained in that plan, except that of [direct] taxation." Surprisingly, he briefly indulged in hysterical Antifederalist posturing, claiming that all individual rights were at risk under the new form of government. Demanding a bill of rights before consenting to ratification, Monroe argued that under Article 1, section 8 (the "necessary and proper"clause), Congress might abolish all popular rights, even those that were irrelevant to carrying its powers into execution. Somewhat absurdly, he prognosticated that Congress would eliminate trial by jury and the freedom of the press on the pretext that they were not essential to carrying its delegated powers into effect. Undoubtedly his nationalism was limited by his localist-democratic, Real Whig fears of unrestrained governmental power, a correlative of his pessimistic view of human nature.[104]

Despite Monroe's concern that both individual rights and the autonomy of the states were threatened by the national government, he failed to suggest a final arbiter for constitutional disputes. During the period from 1788-89, Jefferson, Hamilton, and Madison had all considered the judiciary as an ultimate recourse for the protection of individual and state rights, but Monroe rejected this solution. He said judicial review was "calculated to create heats and

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animosities that will produce harm."[105]

Like John Adams, Monroe objected to the excessive powers of the Senate. He believed they would hinder the Executive in the performance of his duty to protect the people and advance the public good. Taking it for granted that the interests of the South and West were synonymous with the national interest, he objected to the power of the Senate over treaties and appointments, fearing that it would chip away at his section's autonomy. With rare eloquence, he revealed his cynical view of human nature, a Hobbesianism scholars usually fail to associate with the allegedly bland Virginian. Blasting the Constitution for promoting "a dangerous government, calculated to secure neither the interests nor the rights of our countrymen," he objected to the Senate's inordinate powers and the insufficient quorum requirements as permitting it to throttle the executive's powers and the rights of the large states:

> Although the House of Representatives is calculated on national principles, and should they attend (contrary to my expectations) to the general interests of the Union, yet the dangerous exclusive powers given to the Senate will, in my opinion, counterbalance their exertions. Consider the connection of the Senate with the executive. Has it not an authority over all acts of the executive? What are the acts which the President can do without them? What number is requisite to make treaties? A very small number. Two thirds of those who may happen to be present, may, with the President, make treaties that shall sacrifice the dearest interests of the Southern States--which may relinquish part of our territories--which may dismember the United States. There is no check to prevent this; there is no responsibility, or power to punish it.[106]

If Monroe was enraged by the meager requirement that only two-thirds of the senators present were required to ratify treaties, he was equally irate that the mere "concurrence of a bare majority of those present" sufficed to approve presidential appointees, including Supreme

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Court justices. Yet he imagined the Senate in covert connivance with the President--whom he hoped to be above partisan machinations-- rather than restraining him in accord with its constitutional purpose. As he put it, "The executive branch is under their protection, and yet they are freed from a direct charge of combination."[107] Engulfed by cynicism and an awareness of human selfishness which he hoped an independent executive could surmount, Monroe was apt prey to disillusionment.

Monroe perceived other possible sources of "foreign influence" in the new governmental structure. Unlike modern historians, he saw the vice-president as a potentially powerful, invidious officer, with responsibilities greater than those usually ascribed to him.[108] With his substantial prerogative of casting the deciding vote in the case of ties in the Senate, the vice-president, if under "foreign influence," could do much damage. Of course, he would become president if the incumbent died or was removed from office, thus making him a potentially valuable lackey for foreign governments. Ever alert to the sectional component of constitutional federalism, Monroe noted, "This gives an undue advantage to the state he comes from, and will render foreign powers desirous of securing his favor, to obtain which they will exert themselves in his behalf." Monroe therefore proposed to abolish the office of vice-president, most of whose procedural duties would more properly be performed by an individual the Senate elected as its president.[109]

Unfortunately for Monroe's reputation as a political theorist, during the debates he sometimes made recommendations without adequately justifying his position. In his unpublished "Observations," he had based his desire for the president's election by the people rather than

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the states on the republican principle that government officials, being "responsible" and "amenable to the people for their conduct," should be appointed by them. Perceiving that direct popular election "would contribute much to the establishment of a national government," he thought it would make the executive as well as Congress "accountable to the people only for their conduct, the high and pure source, from whence they respectively derived their authorities." Unfortunately, he presented a less compelling theoretical rationale at the ratifying convention. However, one could infer that, in light of his distrust of both the electors and the House of Representatives, he made his proposal for direct popular election of the President because he considered it better for popular liberties. "The President might be elected by the people, dependent upon them, and responsible for maladministration," he argued. "As this is not the case, I must disapprove of this [electoral] clause in its present form."[110]

Unlike Jefferson, who tersely pointed out that election by universal manhood suffrage impeded corruption and bribery, foreign and domestic, "because the corrupting the whole mass will exceed any private resources of wealth," here Monroe failed to expand on or defend his choice of popular election rather than indirect selection.[111] Nevertheless, he predicted that if the Constitution were not amended, the government would eventually become tyrannical.[112]

In the course of defending his opposition to the Senate's role in ratifying treaties, Monroe made clear the source of his anxieties that the upper house might be contaminated by "foreign influence": the egregious Jay-Gardoqui Treaty. Reviving memories of this disgraceful treaty, Monroe admitted his concern for Southern interests against Eastern in this affair. He said he represented the nation's future, which pointed westward. The Northerners, on the other

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hand, were willing to submit to Spanish blandishments and eager to acquiesce in the closure of the Mississippi as a means of "preventing an augmentation of the southern interest and power."[113] As Monroe's remarks implied, the combination of sectional antagonism and "foreign influence"--the latter in the shape of Spain's minister, Gardoqui, who had smoothed the negotiations with a gift-horse for General Washington and presents and flattery for Jay--was potentially explosive.[114]

Although he chastised Northeastern mercantile interests, Monroe declared he was their true friend--a rather delicate admission from the floor of Richmond's ratifying convention. Denouncing any commercial treaty that did not open the door to Spain's colonial possessions as prima facie worthless, Monroe proposed that Congress encourage American shipping and navigation rather than negotiate treaties unduly favorable to Spain.[115]

More than most Virginia Antifederalists who later turned Republican, Monroe consistently defended the merchants' livelihood, perhaps because he was aware that they carried southern exports like tobacco and farm products. In his "Observations," he denounced unicameral legislatures, including the Continental Congress, for their tendency to pass laws that discriminated against "the interests of the unfortunate minority," by which he probably meant the merchants and creditors as opposed to the farmers.[116]

Writing Jefferson in 1790 in opposition to national assumption of state Revolutionary War debts, Monroe feared that Congress would tax imports excessively in order to finance these debts, causing the merchants hardship. He deplored the "tyrannous sacrifice of the interests, of the minority to that of the majority; and that the precise medium" of a fair

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apportionment of taxation between the diverse states and occupational groups would be frustrated by assumption and the need to quickly obtain "considerable revenues." "Will not this from necessity, as well as policy, compel them [Congress] to glean whatever they can from trade, pressing that resource... beyond what perhaps for the sake of revenue, it can bear, & introducing a system of economy in other respects very oppressive on some parts of the U. States," he inquired, perhaps with the interests of consumers as well as merchants in mind.[117]

On the other hand, Monroe probably had farming interests primarily in mind when he supported Antifederalist amendments to the Constitution, which would severely restrict direct taxation, substitute direct election of the Senate and the President, and make treaty ratification more difficult by requiring concurrence of three-fourths of the total membership of both House and Senate in cases involving territorial or navigation rights. These revisions, he asserted, were for the "great interests of the people, and of the Union at large," rather than for the benefit of local and sectional interests.[118] Whether or not this was true, the fear of "foreign influence" was revived in the controversy over the Jay-Gardoqui negotiations. The ensuing hostility between small and large states, and conflicts between mercantile and agrarian interests lent impetus to many Virginia Antifederalist proposals.

As a member of the convention committee that framed amendments, Monroe probably exerted some influence. Some of the recommended changes display his views on treaty ratification and the separation of powers. The proposal that would prohibit Congress from levying internal taxes on states that raised their quota of direct taxes or excises by their own revenue modes, as well as amendments prohibiting any president from holding office for a

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longer term than eight years out of any sixteen (which perhaps exhibited his lukewarm commitment to rotation in office) and "that some tribunal other than the Senate be provided for trying impeachments of senators," reflected his fear of centralized power. Behind these proposals lay a concern that foreign nations might manipulate presidential elections to secure victory to the candidate of their choice, and would find greater incentive for their schemes with a Chief Executive of unlimited re-eligibility.[119]

Monroe's keen sense of Jay's near-betrayal of southern and western interests, which would have reduced the value of his western lands and impeded western growth, and his knowledge of various historical catastrophes arising from foreign involvement in the affairs of weak republics, lent impetus to his desire to keep America for the Americans. Indeed, this may have constituted the heart of his dilemma. As an advocate of territorial expansion for the South and West, he violated his own belief that republics could not survive if they were too large, "commonwealths for expansion" rather than "commonwealths for preservation," as Machiavelli had called them. As a pessimist who thought that man was dominated by his passions, Monroe had little confidence in state or national legislatures. Yet, as his writings and speeches on the new constitution indicated, his tenuous confidence rested on a strong executive who might discern and promote national well-being despite the obstacles presented by parochial state and national representatives.

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NOTES: CHAPTER 1

1. "A List of Books sold to James Monroe," [May 10, 1784), in Julian P. Boyd, ed., Papers of Thomas Jefferson (Princeton, 1950--), VII, 240; Ammon, Monroe, 43.

2. Gordon W. Jones, James Monroe's Library (Charlottesville, 1967), 11. According to Jones' inventory, Monroe's collection comprised the following "sets" (i.e., multi-volume works) listed by format and subject: six series of periodical runs; fourteen dictionaries; thirty-nine literature collections; fifty-two in law; sixty-four in history and biography; forty-five in politics and foreign relations; forty-seven in economics; twenty-nine in science and mathematics; nineteen in military affairs; and eighteen in ancient history and literature.

3. Ibid., 19, 45.

4. Ibid., 23, 53, 39, 34, 44, 60.

5. Ibid., 48, 56; for Monroe's ownership of the writings of the American statesman, see ibid., 40, 32, 17.

6. Monroe's son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, published The People The Sovereigns in 1867, obviously in an effort to revive a camaraderie between North and South that had been shattered by the Civil War. The exhortations to Union and appeals to patriotism that sporadically appear in the published version, which, so far as I could ascertain from examining the manuscript, are not Monroe's work, undoubtedly came from Gouverneur's pen. Monroe died in the Gouverneur home in New York City on July 4, 1831.

7. Recently, scholars have asserted that Monroe wrote one of the most famous anti-Hamilton pamphlets of the 1790's, An Examination of the Late Proceedings in Congress Respecting the Official Conduct of the Secretary of the Treasury (Philadelphia, 1793), which charged that the secretary of the treasury's funding and assumption policies had enabled him to "corrupt" the legislature, many members of which had speculated in the public debt, thereby leading to the ascendancy of a "monied aristocracy" in Congress. Edmund Berkeley and Dorothy Smith Berkeley, "'The Piece Left Behind': Monroe's Authorship of a Political Pamphlet Revealed," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 75 (April 1967), 174-180. However, since Monroe's authorship of this pamphlet has not been definitely established we will-not discuss it here.

8. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 13, 1787, Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 176.

9. See J.R. Pole, "Historians and the Problem of Early American Democracy," American Historical Review, 67 (1961), 626-646; Richard R. Beeman, The Old Dominion and the New

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Nation, 1788-1801 (Lexington, Ky., 1972); and Jack P. Greene, "Society, Ideology, and Politics: An Analysis of the Political Culture of Mid-Eighteenth Century Virginia," in Richard M. Jellison, ed., Society, Freedom, and Conscience: The American Revolution in Virginia, Massachusetts, and New York (New York, 1976), 14-76.

10. Forrest McDonald, We the People: The Economic Origins of the Constitution (Chicago, 1958), 276-77. The 1810 Census lists Monroe as owner of 49 slaves in Albemarle County. 1810 Census--Virginia: Albemarle County, reel 1.

11. Ammon, Monroe, 63, 65, 67, 38-39, 50. Virginia census records for 1790 were destroyed during the War of 1812, but Monroe is not listed as a propertyholder in the extant tax lists for 1782-1785 collected by the Census Bureau (Washington, 1908).

12. Robert E. Thomas, "The Virginia Convention of 1788: A Criticism of Charles Beard's An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution," Journal of Southern History, 19 (1953), 63-72; Ammon, Monroe, 74, 77-78, 163. For a detailed examination of Monroe's land and slaveholdings, see Gerard W. Gawalt, "James Monroe: Presidential Planter," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 101 (1993), 251-272. The best summary of Jefferson's lifetime landholdings is Dumas Malone, Jefferson the Virginian (Boston, 1948), 439-46.

13. Richard B. Morris, The Forging of the Union, 1781-1789 (New York, 1987), 262-266.

14. Monroe to Jefferson, July 12, 1788, Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 187-188.

15. James Monroe, "Some Observations on the Constitution" (1788), may be found in Herbert J. Storing, ed., The Complete Anti-Federalist (Chicago, 1981), V, 279-306, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of James Monroe, I, 307-343. For the tax views of two leading Virginians, see Edward Carrington to Jefferson, April 24, 1788, and Jefferson to Carrington, May27, 1788, Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, XIII, 101-102, 208-209.

16. Ammon, Monroe, 42.

17. Philip Morgan and Michael L. Nicholls, "Slaves in Piedmont Virginia, 1720-1790," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 46 (1989), 211-251, 239. It is worth noting that Fredericksburg, Monroe's home town in Spotsylvania, was a mercantile entrepot and center of the Piedmont's grain trade and finance, where a branch of the Bank of the United States open in 1808. William H. Siener, "Charles Yates, the Grain Trade, and Economic Development in Fredericksburg, Virginia, 1750-1810," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 93 (Oct. 1985), 409-426.

18. Monroe, "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Antifederalist, V, 285-286, 303.

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19. Ibid., 286.

20. Jefferson to Du Pont de Nemours, Jan. 18, 1802, in Saul K. Padover, ed., A Jefferson Profile as Revealed in his Letters (New York, 1956), 135.

21. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Complete Antifederalist, V, 286-87.

22. Ibid., 287.

23. Ibid.

24. Ibid., 288. See Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy," 103-105, 109, 110-125, 139, 142-144, for the prevalence of an historically-oriented discussion of class conflict at the debates in the Constitutional Convention.

25. Monroe to Jefferson, July 12, 1788, Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 187-188; Washington to Monroe, Feb. 23, 1789, ibid., 349n.

26. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Antifederalist, V, 288.

27. Stourzh, Hamilton, 133-53; Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans (2d ed., Evanston, 1962), 14-17, 81-83, 156-158. Monroe's comments are in "Observations," 288.

28. "Observations," Storing, ed., Antifederalist, V, 288-89. "Classical republicans" Machiavelli, Sydney, and Harrington viewed Sparta, Carthage, and Venice as peaceable "commonwealths for preservation," while they regarded Rome, quite favorably, as an imperialistic "commonwealth for expansion." At this time, Monroe thought Sparta and Carthage were militaristic as well as Rome. Citing Polybius, he labeled them "aristocracies." Ibid.

29. Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu,Book IX, sect. 1, "In What Manner Republics Provide for their Safety," quoted in Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy," 143n.

30. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Antifederalist, V, 289.

31. See the accounts in Louise B. Dunbar, "A Study of Monarchical Tendencies in the United States from 1776 to 1801," University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, X, no. 1 (March 1922); Forrest McDonald, Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution (Lawrence, Kan., 1985), 179-182; and John P. Kaminski and Gaspare J. Saladino, eds., Commentaries on the Constitution Public and Private (2 vols., Madison, Wisc., 1981), I, 168-172.

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32. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Anti-Federalist, V, 293, 295.

33. Ibid., 295-296. These ideas are similar to those expressed by one of Monroe's favorite writers, Lord Bolingbroke, in his little masterpiece, Idea of A Patriot King (London, 1749). For a discussion of this work in the context of American politics, see Ralph Ketcham, Presidents Above Party: The First AmericanPresidency, 1789-1829 (Chapel Hill, 1984), 59-71, 130-131; Hofstadter, Idea of a Party System, 18-23, 34n., 56.

34. Ibid., 296.

35. Ibid. On the prevalence of self-interest after 1787, see Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 606-615, and John P. Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics (New York, 1984).

36. Federalist Number 22, in Jacob E. Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Middletown, Conn., 1961), 142. Heavily influenced by Hobbes, Hamilton contended that "foreign influence" was most dangerous in a republic, whose leaders might find it advantageous to betray their people's interests for the right price. In his series of pseudonymous essays in 1793 urging public adherence to President Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality in the war between France and Great Britain, Hamilton, in the guise of "Pacificus," warned that foreign influence "is truly the GRECIAN HORSE to a republic." I have borrowed these insights from Gerald Stourzh, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford, 1970), 108-109. Stourzh also appropriately emphasizes Hamilton's linkage of foreign and domestic politics. Anxious that the states of the Union might split into factions, each under the sway of a different foreign power, Stourzh comments that Hamilton's concern for foreign policy, "stemming from his awareness of the way that international politics might impinge upon the young country, profoundly colored his approach to factions" (Hamilton, 109). In this respect his views were identical with Monroe's vigilance against invidious "foreign influence."

37. "Pacificus," No. VI, in Harold C. Syrett et al., eds., Papers of Alexander Hamilton (27 vols., New York, 1961-1986), XV, 106. See note 36 above.

38. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Antifederalist, V, 297.

39. Insightful discussions of the respective influence of Paine and Franklin on the "radical" Constitution of 1776 in Pennsylvania may be found in: Elisha P. Douglass, Rebels and Democrats (Chapel Hill, 1955), 236-237, 263-264; Gerald W. Stourzh, Benjamin Franklin and American Foreign Policy (2d ed., Chicago, 1969), 24-26; Esmond Wright, Franklin of Philadelphia (Cambridge, Mass., 1986), 239, 252-253; Paul W. Conner, Poor Richard's Politicks (New York, 1965), 34, 113-114, 142-143.

40. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Anti-Federalist, V, 287, 290-92, 300. Thomas P.

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Slaughter, "The Tax Man Cometh: Ideological Opposition to American Internal Taxes, 1760-1790," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 41 (1984), 566-591, is a recent discussion of the political ramifications of anti-tax feeling in the early republic. See also Jackson T. Main, The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution (Chapel Hill, 1961), 76-84, 123-125, 143-146, 182-184; Herbert J. Storing, What the Anti-Federalists Were For (Chicago, 1981), 35-36; and Roger H. Brown, Redeeming the Republic: Federalists, Taxation, and the Origins of the Constitution (Baltimore, 1993).

41. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Anti-Federalist, V, 290.

42. Ibid.

43. See James H. Hutson, "Country, Court, and Constitution: Antifederalist and the Historians," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 38 (1981), 337-368; idem., "The Origins of The Paranoid Style in American Politics': Public Jealousy from the Age of Walpole to the Age of Jackson," in David D. Hall et. al., eds., Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History (New York, 1984), 332-372; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 499-500, 560-561. For the Antifederalists' interest in the present rather than future generations, see Michael Lienesch, New Order of the Ages (Princeton, 1988), 134-150.

44. Jefferson's Notes on Virginia, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 237-239. Italics in original. Hume's brilliant essay, "Liberty and Necessity" is quoted in Adair, "Experience Must Be Our Only Guide," in Fame and the Founding Fathers, 111. Italics in the original. See also Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d. ser., 24 (1967), 3-43.

45. Benjamin Rush, Thoughts Upon the Mode of Education, Proper in a Republic. Addressed to the Legislature and Citizens of the State (Philadelphia, 1786), in Frederick Rudolph, ed., Essays on Education in the Early Republic (Cambridge, Mass., 1965), 9-23, quoted, 22-23.

46. "Some Observations," Storing, ed., Anti-Federalist, V, 306. Excellent discussions applying the theme of cyclical decline to eighteenth-century political theory include Howe, Changing Thought of Adams, 32-40, 133-134, and the same author's "Republican Thought and Political Violence," 161-165; Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 163-169; Gay, Enlightenment, II, 98-125; Colbourn, Lamp of Experience, 22-25.

47. Jean-Jacques Rousseau, The Social Contract, Book III, Chapter XI, "The Dissolution of the Body Politic," in Lester G. Crocker, ed., The Social Contract and the Discourse on the Origin of Inequality (New York, 1967), 92.

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48. Henry Saint-John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism: on the Idea of a Patriot King: and on the State of Parties, at the Accession of King George the First (London, 1783 edn.), 128, quoted in Stow Persons, "The Cyclical Theory of History in Eighteenth Century America," American Quarterly, 6 (Summer 1954), 147.

49. "Some Observations," in Storing, Anti-Federalist, V, 306.

50. Ibid.

51. H. James Henderson, Party Politics in the Continental Congress (New York, 1974), 5, points out that even members of the Confederation Congress, who were chosen by the state legislatures, were to some extent responsive to the needs of their local constituencies. A detailed study of Virginia politics in the 1780's-1790's, which examines Monroe's campaign against Madison for Congress in 1789, is Norman K. Risjord, "How the 'Common Man' Voted in Jefferson's Virginia," in John B. Boles, ed., America: The Middle Period: Essays in Honor of Bernard Mayo (Charlottesville, Va., 1973), 36-64.

52. Fredericksburg Resolves, Oct. 19, 1787, in Mathew Carey's [Philadelphia]American Museum, or Repository of Ancient and Modern Fugitive Pieces, 2 (Nov. 1787), 510.

53. This is the theme of Robert A. Rutland, Ordeal of the Constitution (Norman, Okla., 1966). See also Wood, Creation of American Republic, 485-490, and John K. Alexander, The Selling of the Constitutional Convention: A History of News Coverage (Madison, 1990).

54. American Museum, 2 (Nov. 1787), 511-512.

55. Monroe's fear of western selfishness and separatism as a result of its distance from the more settled portions of the republic are described in his letter to Jefferson, Jan. 19, 1786, Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 117-118. On the concept of deference, see J.R.Pole, "Historians and the Problem of Early American Democracy," American Historical Review, 67 (1961), 626-646, and J.G.A. Pocock, "The Classical Theory of Deference," ibid., 81 (1976), 516-523.

56. Jefferson to Adams, Nov. 13, 1787, and to Madison, Dec. 20, 1787, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 435, 438-439; Adams, Defense of theConstitutions of Government of the United States, III (1787), in C.F. Adams, ed., Works, V, 473, VI, 216.

57. Monroe's remarks may be most easily found in Jonathan Elliot, ed., The Debates in the Several State Conventions, on the adoption of the Federal Constitution as recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1891), III, 211-212 (June 10, 1788). The best general studies on the ancient Greco-Roman confederations' influence on the Constitution-makers are probably Carl J. Richard, The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American

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Enlightenment (Cambridge, Mass., 1994);Meyer Reinhold, "Classical Influences and Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," in his Classica Americana (Detroit, 1984), 94-115; Edward M. Burns, "The Philosophy of History of the Founding Fathers," Historian, 16 (1954), 142-168;Richard M. Gummere, "The Classical Ancestry of the United States Constitution," American Quarterly, 14 (Spring 1962), 3-18. The Amphictyonic Council was actually a religious organization composed of twelve tribal groups, rather than a political confederation. In this and other instances, Reinhold asserts, "the Founding Fathers' knowledge of Greek leagues was superficial and refracted at best, their application of lessons therefrom generally partisan and opportunistic." Classica Americana, 103, 104.

58. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 212.

59.Ibid.

60. On Monroe's Parisian milieu, see George Morgan, The Life of James Monroe (New York, 1969; orig. pub., Boston, 1921), 171, 192; Ammon, Monroe, 133, 139; Lucius Wilmerding, James Monroe: Public Claimant (New Brunswick, N.J., 1960), 28-29.

61. On Monroe's friendship with leading French Thermidorians like Merlin de Thionville, Louis Marie-Fréron, and others in the National Convention and the Executive Directory, see Thomas G. Cary, Memoir of Thomas Handasyd Perkins (Boston, 1856), diaries of April 7, 1795 (pp. 76-77) and April 11, 1795 (pp. 85-86). Perkins, a moderate Federalist, Bostonian merchant who arrived in Paris in March 1795, noted that Monroe often attended the Convention debates (e.g., 73, 86).

62. Edmund S. Morgan, Inventing the People: The Rise of Popular Sovereignty in England and America (New York, 1988), 17-37, examines the conception of the "body politic." The life-cycle of civilizations is well-explained in J.B. Bury, The Idea of Progress (New York, 1932), 7-20, and Peter Gay, The Enlightenment (2 vols., New York, 1966-69), II, 98-125; and in its American context, in John R. Howe, Jr., The Changing Political Thought of John Adams (Princeton, 1966), 32-40, 133-134, and Michael Lienesch, New Order of the Ages: Time, the Constitution, and the Making of Modern American Political Thought (Princeton, 1988).

63. Monroe's speech to Virginia's ratifying constitution, June 10, 1788, in Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 208. The total speech extends from 207-222.

64. Ibid., 213.

65. Ibid., 214.

66. Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion (Ithaca, 1978), contains a fine discussion of these issues (224, 226, 253, 259-263). He applauds Monroe's "relatively calm and lucid Antifederalism"

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in the matter of denying the national government the power of direct taxation (144n.).

67. Monroe's speech in the Virginia ratifying convention, June 10, 1788, in Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 214.

68. See Stourzh, Hamilton, 153-161, 190-193.

69. Monroe's speech in the Virginia ratifying convention, June 10, 1788, in Elliot, ed. Debates, III, 215.

70. Ibid., 215-216.

71. Ibid., 217. The best analysis of the Antifederalists' obsession with the fragility of republican governments is Cecelia M. Kenyon, "Men of Little Faith: The Antifederalists on the Nature of Representative Government," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d Ser., 12 (1955), 3-43.

72. Ibid.

73. On disillusionment with the aftermath of the Revolution among the elite, see Minor Myers, Jr., Liberty Without Anarchy: A History of the Society of the Cincinnati (Charlottesville, 1983);Robert A. East, "The Massachusetts Conservatives in the Critical Period." in Richard B. Morris, ed., The Era of the American Revolution (New York, 1939), 349-91. See also E. James Ferguson, The Power of the Purse (Chapel Hill, 1961).

74. This is the phrase used by J. Thomas Wren, in "The Ideology of Court and Country in the Virginia Ratifying Convention of 1788," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 93 (Oct. 1985), 389-408, quote at 400. For Monroe's ownership of Algernon Sidney's Discourses Concerning Government (2 vols., Edinburgh, 1750), and Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws (Geneva, 1748), see Jones, Monroe's Library, 56, 58.

75. Edmund Pendleton, quoted in Wren, "Virginia Ratifying Convention," 400.

76. Monroe recommended a bill of rights reserving all powers, not delegated by them to Congress, to the states, in his speech to the state ratifying convention, June 10, 1788, in Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 219. The best available study of the Bill of Rights is Robert A. Rutland, The Birth of the Bill of Rights (Chapel Hill, 1955).

77. Ibid., 219, for Monroe's comments. Wood's outstanding analysis of Adams and the meaning of the Constitution for "An American Science of Politics," is in Creation of the American Republic, chapters 14 and 15.

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78. Ibid., 219. However, Wood (Creation, 561) misinterprets Monroe's statement to indicate that he was thinking within the framework of the "mixed constitution" of classical antiquity and the British monarchy, rather than the unique national/ state dichotomy of American federalism. Lienesch, New Order, 132, makes the same error.

79. Ibid., 220-221. For a political scientist's opinion of the impeachment power, which in many ways concurs with Monroe's prediction of its ineffectualness, see Clinton Rossiter, The American Presidency (2d ed., New York, 1960), 48-50, 199-200.

80. Jefferson to Adams, Nov. 13, 1787, to Madison, Dec. 20, 1787, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 435, 438-439. This was before a constitutional amendment limited the President to two four-year terms. The partisan struggles of the 1790's become more comprehensible in the light of such pessimistic appraisals of the American future, even by such sensible figures as Jefferson. For a good general account of the partitions of Poland, see Robert R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution (2 vols., Princeton, 1959-1964), I, 411-435; II, 86-96, 146-56.

81. Monroe's speech in the Virginia ratifying convention, June 10, 1788, Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 221. Note the similarity to Jefferson's comments above.

82. Ibid., 221-222.

83. On the pervasive fear during the 1780's that the Union would break apart, see Frederick W. Marks III, Independence on Trial: Foreign Affairs and the Making of the Constitution Baton Rouge, 1973), 33-36, 188-195, and Peter S. Onuf, "Constitutional Politics, States, Sections, and the National Interest," in Neil L. York, ed., Toward a More Perfect Union: Six Essays on the Constitution (Provo, Utah, 1988), 29-57. Many articles discuss the perils of foreign influence--British monarchy or French Jacobins--during the 1790s, but they fail to connect them with fears derived from the Confederation Period via study of the ancient Greeks and Romans. See Marshall Smelser, "The Jacobin Phrenzy: Federalism and the Menace of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," Review of Politics, 13 (Oct. 1951), 457-482, and "The Jacobin Phrenzy: The Menace of Monarchy, Plutocracy, and Anglophilia, 1789-1798," ibid., 21 (Jan. 1959), 239-258. An outstanding summary of the awareness of class struggle during the 1780's may be found in Adair, "Experience Must Be Our Guide," in Fame and the Founding Fathers, esp. 114-119.

84. "The Letters of Fabius, in 1788, on the Federal Constitution," is printed in Paul L. Ford, ed., Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States (Brooklyn, 1888), quote at 188. Dickinson's essays were also published in the American Museum during 1788 under the title, "Observations on the Constitution proposed by the Federal convention." Letter #3, from which this is quoted, is in the Sept. 1788 issue, p. 253. The American Museum was a monthly magazine.

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85. On this aspect of Shays' Rebellion, see David Szatmary, Shay's Rebellion: The Making of an Agrarian Insurrection (Amherst, Mass., 1980), 74-75, 108-109, 118.

86. See Howe, "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790's," in addition to the sources cited in note 83 above.

87. Monroe to John Breckinridge, Aug. 23, 1793, Emmet Collection, New York Public Library. The best accounts of Genet's activities are Harry Ammon's book, The Genet Mission (New York, 1973), and his article, "The Genet Mission and the Development of American Political Parties," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 52 (June 1966), 725-741.

88. Abigail Adams to John Adams, April 5, 1797, Adams Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, reel 384 (microfilm). For Gunning Bedford's comments, see Morris, Forging of the Union, 379n. See also Myron F. Wehtje, "Boston's Response to Disorder in the Commonwealth, 1783-1787," in Martin Kaufman, ed., Shay's Rebellion: Selected Essays (Westfield, Mass., 1987), 61-63.

89. Joseph Jones to James Madison, Jan. 29, 1797, Madison Papers, Library ofCongress. The Jones-Madison correspondence has been published in Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Letters from Joseph Jones to Madison," Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, Ser. 2, Vol. 15 (June 1901), 116-16]; the above cited letter is on 159-60.

90. Monroe's speech at Virginia ratifying convention, June 18, 1788, Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 488-490.

91. Ibid.

92. "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 327. Good discussions of Delolme's contribution to constitutional thought in the 1770s may be found in Robert R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution (2 vols., Princeton, 1959-1964), I, 135, 145-48, and Corinne C. Weston, English Constitutional Theory and the House of Lords, 1556-1832 (New York, 1965), 128-137. It appears that Rakove, "Madisonian Moment," 491, errs when he claims that Madison was unique and original in stressing that in a republic legislative usurpations were more dangerous than executive. Monroe said the same thing here, and Jefferson made much the same point several years earlier in Notes on Virginia, when he reminded his readers, "an elective despotism was not the government we fought for." Notes on Virginia, Query XIII, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 237.

93. "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 336.

94. Ibid., 331 (quotation), 333.

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95. Ibid., 334.

96. Ibid., 335-36. Monroe seems to have misconstrued the Constitution's quorum provisions. Article 1, section 5 states that "a Majority of each [house] shall constitute a quorum to do Business." More ambiguously, Article 2, section 2, on treaties says the President "shall have Power, by and with the Advice and Consent of the Senate, to make Treaties, provided two thirds of the Senators present concur." But 2/3 of ½ (the minimum for a quorum) is 1/3, not 1/4; thus Monroe underestimated the number of senators required to ratify treaties. Even more vaguely, the Constitution says that the president would appoint government officials such as ambassadors, judges, and administrators "with the Advice and Consent of the Senate." This has customarily meant a majority.

97. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 340. See also Drew McCoy, "James Madison and Visions of American Nationality in the Confederation Period: A Regional Perspective," in Richard Beeman et al., eds., Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1987), 226-58.

98. Ibid., 489-90.

99. Ibid., 220

100. Ibid., 220.

101. Ibid., 221.

102. Ibid.

103. Ibid.

104. Ibid., 217-18. For a rebuttal of these charges, see Madison's Federalist #41. In The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism (New York, 1984), 31-32, John Patrick Diggins trenchantly comments on the vacuity of certain historians' tendency to ascribe "classical republican" beliefs to American republicans simply on the basis of their distrust of excessive governmental power.

105. Monroe to Madison, Nov. 22, 1788, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 196. In this letter, Monroe discussed reform of the state judiciary. For the views of the Founding Fathers on judicial review, see David N. Mayer, The Constitutional Thought of Thomas Jefferson (Charlottesville, 1994), 257-94; Clinton Rossiter, Alexander Hamilton and the Constitution (New York, 1964), and Federalist #78 (Hamilton); and Leonard W. Levy, "Judicial Review," in Robert A. Rutland, ed., James Madison and the American Nation, 1751-1836: An Encyclopedia (New

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York: Simon and Schuster, 1994), 219.

106. Elliot, ed.,. Debates, III, 221.

107. Ibid., 221-22.

108. Ibid. For a depreciatory assessment of the vice-president's role, see Rossiter, American Presidency, 129-135, 200-203.

109. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 222.

110. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294; Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 490.

111. Notes on Virginia, Query XIV, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 265-266.

112. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 630-631.

113. Ibid., 339-340.

114. Thomas A. Bailey, A Diplomatic History of the American People (7th ed., New York, 1964), 61-63; Morris, Forging of the Union, 235-243, defends Jay's conduct.

115. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 340. 344.

116. Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 324.

117. Monroe to Jefferson, July 18, 1790, Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, XVII, 231-33. Thomas, "Virginia Convention," ignores the role of the merchants, considering the ratification debate as "essentially a struggle between competing groups within the aristocracy"(72). More study is required before this assessment can be accepted.

118. Ibid., 630-631; Ammon, Monroe, 73. The text of the constitutional amendments proposed by Virginia's ratifying convention may be found in Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 659-661.

119. Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 656 (for Monroe's being chosen a member of the amendments committee), 659-61 (for the amendments). In "Some Observations," when warning against the appointment of senators or other national officials by the state legislatures, Monroe alludes to "the rotative principle, which will I hope never be given up." Storing, ed., Complete Anti-

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Federalist,V, 294. Yet, "Some Observations" had opposed setting limits on the president's reeligibility, and he had approved of senatorial adjudication of the president's impeachment. If he had any impact on the committee's proposed amendments, they indicate that he may have changed his mind on senatorial power over impeachments when the ratifying convention met.

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CHAPTER TWO. MONROE'S SCHEMA OF REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY AND THE CONSTITUTION.

Monroe's political psychology was strikingly original in combining classical republican and liberal themes. Like David Hume, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, and others, he thought that individual self-interest was compatible with public spirit. Along with many other Founding Fathers, he thought that the political aristocracy's love of distinction--"fame"--might give it sufficient motivation to preserve law and order and avoid government encroachment on public liberty. Voicing misgivings about whether any political leader could be intrinsically disinterested, Monroe believed that even a president would have need of the benevolent public bribe of eligibility for re-election to encourage him to do what was right. Contending that "the prospect of reward and the fear of punishment...are the most powerful incentives to virtuous action," he thought that the reward of re-election would contribute significantly toward unbiased presidential action, free from "a preference of one part of the community to another."[1]

Even more candidly than his Federalist opponents, Monroe proclaimed that self-interest was man's primary inducement: "It is possible to devise checks, which from motives of policy and private interest, will even make bad men faithful public servants." Thinking it necessary to

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undermine the power of the states, Monroe lamented that, under the Articles of Confederation, "the most powerful principles of human action, the hope of reward and the fear of punishment, are in the hands of each state, and whilst mankind are subject to their influences, or the passions and affections of the human heart continue as they have been, its course will always be the same."[2] Since each congressman's hope for advancement and fear of punishment rested with the state legislatures, Congress failed to act on behalf of the national purpose. Monroe sought to eliminate this institutional defect, apparently feeling that the human shortcomings--selfishness and egotism--on which it rested were irremediable.

In effect, Monroe desired to shift the source of rewards and punishments from the states to the nation. Revealing himself a strong nationalist as well as a Humean skeptic and pessimist, he differed from his fellow Virginia Antifederalists, George Mason and Edmund Randolph, who preferred to institutionalize sectional hostilities at the national level rather than transcend them. At the Philadelphia Convention, Mason and Randolph proposed to replace the single executive with a triumvirate representing each sectional interest--eastern, middle, and southern. Although they abandoned this demand after the Convention, Mason later advocated a six-man executive council of presidential advisers. Consisting of two members from each of the three major sections of the country and chosen by Congress for a six-year term, it would replace the Senate and the Cabinet as consultants to the chief executive. Serious consideration of these proposals depended on congressional adoption of some of the states' requests for a second convention.[3] Monroe's antipathy to excessive state and sectional influences and his insistence on denying0 the president's "constitutional council" (a vague

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reference to either Mason's projected advisory council or the heads of the executive departments) a role in the president's impeachment, showed that his sympathies lay more with the strong independent statesman of classical antiquity than contentious pluralistic occupations, sectional interests, and political "organization men."[4]

Monroe was convinced that the president's unique, lonely position of power and responsibility made him the government official most likely to discern and strive for the kind of balanced, impartial decisions that most nearly approximated the general interest. Fortified by the prospect of re-eligibility, the presidency would be "so organized, as to give every quarter indeed every man of the union...an equal access to the human [i.e., the president's] heart." His "ruling passion" for fame assuaged by the fillip of re-election, Monroe was confident that the president would be fair to all socio-economic interests. At the state ratifying convention he reiterated this viewpoint. "The President ought to act under the strongest impulses of rewards and punishments, which are the strongest incentives to human actions." In contrast to his earlier position in Some Observations, where he had supported an electoral college, he now demanded the direct popular election of the president. Decrying the president's election at the "metropolis" by Congress or by the state legislatures, "Some Observations" strongly supported the electoral college, arguing that it was preferable to the less feasible alternative of popular vote. Monroe feared that either Congress or the state governments would control the outcome if electors (whom he predicted would fail to reach a majority decision) had first choice.[5] Were the president compelled to rely on the state legislatures rather than the people for re-election, Monroe feared he would obey the orders of the states that supported him, act "oppressively"

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upon the rest, and "a dreadful anarchy [would] insue" [sic]."[6]

Although he nominally supported the concept of rotation in office, Monroe believed that the people's economic well-being would best be served if the president were entitled to indefinite re-election. He flamboyantly wrote, "If you take from those whom the choice of their country hath called forth to this high station, the hope of further favour, and mark to them the extent of service, after the completion of which the door shall be forever closed upon them, in that degree will you deprive yourself of one of the principal instruments by which you are to preserve the equilibrium [of private interests], and secure the public safety."

Instead of seeking the benefit of the majority of individual citizens within the Union, the President, if his re-election depended on the states, would strive solely to satisfy the desires of the most powerful "combination of states." Moreover, the effect would be similar if constitutional amendment rendered the president ineligible for re-election, invariably leading him back to the states to retrieve his political career. "Discharged forever from the service of the United States," he warned, "will not the approbation of the union, cease to be the ruling passion, and an accommodation to state interests take its place and influence many of the public measures."[7]

In order to prevent a majority of states from rendering a simpatico president invulnerable to punishment, Monroe went so far as to recommend that as few as one-third of the states should be allowed to commence impeachment proceedings. More importantly, he showed his desire to encourage virtuous statesmen with his proposal that the President be "capable of re-election at the expiration of his service which should be at the end of every three

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or four years, so long as he should merit the confidence of his country."[8]

In Some Observations Monroe ardently propounded representative democracy. Despite his opposition to the Constitution, he validated the Philadelphia Convention, arguing that it had been the means by which the people had "submitted" the Constitution, "the people to whom it belongs and from whom all power originates, in convention assembled." Insisting that a popularly elected assembly was the only legitimate means by which "fundamental law" could originate, he implicitly rebuked the manner in which the Virginia legislature in 1776 had arrogated the powers of a constitutional convention. He told his fellow Virginians: "In this situation your present state constitution was, or should have been, formed, and in this situation you are of course able to alter, or change it at pleasure."[9]

A logical extension of Monroe's surprising reverence for the Great Convention as the instrument of the people's will was his conclusion, akin to that of the most nationalistic Federalists, that the new frame of government, as the "supreme law of the land," was superior to individual state action. If the state ratifying convention approved it, it would be "paramount" to all other laws and constitutions within the state. Like the Federalists, whose attitude toward republicanism Wood describes at length in Creation of the American Republic, he granted representative democracy parity with direct democracy as an authentic manifestation of the people's will. His statements on the Constitution made this clear. He declared that when state constitutions disagreed with it, it "will of course prevail, and controul all the departments of the state government, being the ulterior act of the people."[10]

Thus Monroe argued, in common with the Federalists, that the Constitution was created

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by the people rather than the state governments, from which followed the doctrine of national supremacy. In national issues, the Constitution-- voice of the people of all the states-- had priority over the acts of any individual state legislature.[11] * * * * * * * * * * *

Since Monroe's republican ideology acclaimed the average person as inherently good and more trustworthy than his rulers, he respected the Constitution's validity, the people's delegates having ratified it at their conventions. At the same time he denounced those who argued that a new constitution was necessary because during the 1780s Americans had demonstrated that "the passions of mankind by nature render them unfit for the enjoyment of equal liberty." On the contrary, Monroe upheld the natural law doctrine "that the body of the people are virtuous, at least sufficiently so to bear a free government; that it was the design of their Creator in forming such an order of beings that they should enjoy it [a free government], and that it is only by a strange and unaccountable perversion of his benevolent intentions to mankind, that they are ever deprived of it."[12]

Ignoring the embarrassing contradiction posed by human slavery, Monroe asserted that freedom was man's natural condition, and that evil rulers had deprived him of it. It followed of necessity from Monroe's ideological tenets that he respected the Constitution as the manifestation of the people's will. He believed that Congress should "be kept as dependent on them [the people] as possible, having in all respects the same interests with themselves."[13] Thus he assumed that the average voter and his representative would share the same socio-economic strata and hold identical interests.

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In keeping with his view that the people were the only legitimate source of government authority, Monroe made the bizarre proposal that the only punishment that members of Congress, as "the immediate representatives of the people," should undergo for civil wrongdoing was to risk defeat for re-election. "For offences in these branches the general government can provide no punishment, for there can be no tribunal under it, to take cognizance of them," he explained. He argued that the separation of powers would be violated if either the executive or judiciary departments could prosecute congressmen, who might revolt against the government or at least seek revenge by obstructing the other departments in the future. He feared conspiracies against liberty within both Congress and other government departments. As he put it, "Charges of corruption or prosecutions for it, or other offences, committed by those in these branches [of the legislature], should not be allowed from those in the others, for this might either unite them in mal-practices against their country, or create endless strife between them, and thereby destroy the balance of the government."[14] "It has been long established by the most celebrated writers, but particularly illustrated and explained by the President Montesquieu and Mr. Locke, that the division of the powers of a government over one state, or one people only, into three branches, the legislative; executive, and judiciary, is absolutely necessary for the preservation of liberty," he reminded his readers. Like Montesquieu as well as his Federalist opponents, Monroe was especially concerned to preserve the "balance of powers" within government.[15]

It was precisely because government officials were unreliable and easily corrupted that Monroe determined that only the people through "frequent elections" were qualified to judge

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their conduct. "A free people are the only proper judges of the merits of those who serve them, and they only should bring them to justice," he stridently asserted. "This shews [sic] the necessity of frequent elections." For Monroe, therefore, it followed that the proper "punishment" for malfeasance in office was dismissal by the voters, who ought to choose their legislators at frequent intervals. "The members of each [house] should in my opinion return to the body of the people, those of the house of representatives at the expiration of every two years, and those of the senate of every four years, capable however always of re-election," he said. For him eligibility for re-election was the polity's carrot; dismissal was the stick.[16]

Indeed, among the reasons Monroe advocated a one-man executive was to fix responsibility and render culpable individuals more easily punishable for malfeasance. (Apparently he would subject the president, but not Congress, to civil penalties). "The sword of justice," Monroe declared, using one of his favorite metaphors, "should he held constantly suspended over the heads of those, who shall be convicted of having basely sacrificed the interests, or made attempts upon the liberties of their country."[17]

Seeking to facilitate the condign punishment of "traitorous" presidents by "the justice of an injured people," Monroe demanded that the executive "stand alone, unsupported, and unprotected except by the integrity of his conduct." He considered it vital to focus public attention on the president, whom he relied on to enforce the national interest while Congress promoted the states' local views: "For these reasons the executive power should be vested altogether in one person; unrestrained by a constitutional council, its operations will be more easy and regular, and its responsibility the greater and more immediate."[18]

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Since the presidency was held by a single individual, he would be fully responsible for both the glory and the ignominy accruing to his administration, and Monroe reasoned, he would be extremely chary of violating the people's rights. As his expectation that government would be "more easily and regularly conducted in the hands of a single individual" indicates, Monroe perceived the president as a potential symbol of national confidence and power. This position was not intrinsically at variance with Antifederalism's general stance. For instance, Richard Henry Lee, a leading Antifederalist, noted, "Aspiring men, armies and navies, have not often been kept in tolerable order by the decrees of a senate or an executive council."[19] Only a single, alert executive could provide the firmness that effective civilian control required.

Ironically, Monroe thought that the possibility for renown afforded by constant public scrutiny and the opportunity for indefinite reelection would fortify a president's pursuit of virtuous, publicly oriented action, even if he had originally been a "bad" man. He hammered away at the idea that an independent executive, whose ego gratification (as we might put it today) was wedded to his success as a public man, in order to satisfy his lust for fame would play a disinterested, magnanimous public role. As he succinctly stated, in the context of separation of powers and checks and balances between the president and Congress: "With an Executive organized on these principles, being independent of the legislature, and in a very responsible situation, I should be well content to intrust [sic] great powers, because I should calculate with tolerable certainty upon an honest and wise execution of them."[20]

The president's responsibility to the people and his eligibility for reelection served reciprocal functions in assuring, to as great an extent as possible, that he would act with integrity

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to secure his his own political future and to protect the well-being of his constituents. As Monroe explained, "High powers in the Executive branch require in every respect, a direct and immediate responsibility; it should be so organized as that whilst those who fill it, and act with propriety in the discharge of its functions, the door should be left open for a continuance of public favour."[21]

Again like the Federalists, Monroe believed it was the "radically defective" nature of the Confederation government that rendered reform essential.[22] Some Observations' summary of congressional powers under the Articles reflected the influence of Adams' well-known Defence of the Constitutions, which Monroe may already have read. Like Adams, he said that the members of Congress represented the "interests" of their individual states rather than the general good, embodying "a diplomatick [sic] corps, or a corps formed of ministers or representatives from sovereign states acting for the particular advantage of that to which they belong."[23]

Under the Confederation, Congress could not enforce any of its laws or treaties without the consent of the states, and both states and foreign governments might ignore it with impunity because it was "destitute of the power of coercion." The Union was similar to a "league of independent states." But Monroe noted that it had been sufficiently effective to defeat Great Britain and win independence, revealing that "it is competent to external defence, and perfect security from abroad."[24]

In accord with his cynical view of the professional politician's nature, Monroe expected that the individual states would eschew the public good and grant priority to their constituents'

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interests. "For a legislature to contemplate other objects, and make a sacrifice of their own for the good of other people, or even decline availing itself of the legitimate exercise of its powers for that purpose, upon every opportunity which chance or fortune may present in its way, is a degree of liberality to which the human heart hath not as yet attained," he declared.[25] Though he accepted this aspect of the human condition, he deplored it.

Stressing that the evils of individual selfishness contaminated America's political culture, Monroe charged that each state legislature sought to "shield itself from the common burdens of the government" and gain an advantage over the others. Employing "all the arts of intrigue and negociation," they sowed "the seeds of dissolution" of the Republic. Congress would be ineffective as a national body for the simple reason that its members owed their jobs and allegiances to their states, Monroe argued. He predicted the Union would break up if either the states or the "general" government tried to exercise authority in a "high toned" manner. But this would only take place if the people themselves acquiesced. While the members of confederacies composed of princes and absolute monarchies might argue and separate, in the case of "democracies" like the state governments, "although their chief magistrates [governors?] may be offended, yet it is difficult for them to communicate at the same time, the same passions and dispositions to the whole community which they themselves possess."[26]

In Monroe's opinion, although rebellious individuals might frustrate a benign ruler, leaders seldom adhered to the national purpose in any case. Monroe employed this standard republican theme to repudiate the state governments that dominated Congress. Since they were preoccupied with their petty interests rather than any overriding principle of public good,

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"we shall find its [Congress's] decisions depend more upon negociation, the bargain of the day, than any established maxim of justice or policy."[27] Although Monroe had not abandoned the pursuit of "justice," he thought many other politicians had.

He denied that state legislators were motivated by ideals of self-sacrifice, either in conducting their local activities or in thwarting the attainment of national objectives. Expounding "liberal," Hobbesian views and impugning the evils of individualism endemic in human nature, he warned that most legislators seldom rose above the pursuit of their parochial ambitions: "A society of philosophers of the ancient stoick [Stoic] sect might perhaps be capable of such extended philanthropy, but this sect is now altogether at an end, and at its height, never formed but an inconsiderable part of any community, and was by all the rest of the world considered as affecting objects without the pale of human nature."[28] Thus, for Monroe, to strive for magnanimity was alien to "human nature." Anomalously, he employed his "liberal" critique of mankind to attain "classical republican" goals of public service and the subordination of the selfish interests of politicians and state governments to the well-being of the nation.[29]

It was because Monroe distrusted the state legislatures that he opposed their possessing the power to appoint presidential electors or other national officials. He feared that permitting the states to choose the Senate would recapitulate the conflicts of interest between the states and the national government and the political deadlock that had characterized the Confederation. Elections "should therefore proceed from the people immediately, or by means of electors chosen for the purpose," he advised. "This will make them amenable to the people only for their conduct, or to such constitutional tribunals where they are practicable, as they [the

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people?] shall establish to take cognizance of offences."[30]

In accord with his proto-democratic ideology, Monroe proposed to apportion both houses of Congress according to state population. Although he agreed that the upper house should have fewer members than the lower, he wished to reduce its term to four years, thereby increasing the senate's awareness of its responsibility to the people. Having been made acutely aware by his reading of the British "Country Party's" charges in the 1720s, reiterated by "Real Whigs" in Monroe's generation, that the king's appointment of legislators to lucrative offices had transformed them into willing flunkeys of the executive, he suggested, "The members of both branches should be incapable of appointment to other offices while in these, otherwise a wide door will be left open for corruption."[31]

Urging that congressmen be barred from simultaneously serving in executive or judicial capacities, Monroe reconciled classical republican and populist/democratic, Antifederalist arguments. He discoursed at length, in the manner of Lord Bolingbroke, John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon, and James Burgh, on the significance of this prohibition. Alluding to recent British history, he reminded his readers of how the ministry had "corrupted" members of the House of Commons into passing its fiscal proposals by offering them government offices and pensions. In implied opposition to the optimistic arguments of Federalist Number 10, he argued that the new nation's large size militated against the average citizen's obtaining adequate knowledge of what his representatives were doing--and when and whether they had recently received official commissions of a suspicious nature to insure their support of government measures. As an essential precaution in defense of the people's liberty, a new constitution must

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outlaw such appointments:

> This is not an idle or visionary precaution, but in a great measure the pivot, upon which the upright and faithful administration of the government will depend. The experience of Britain hath demonstrated, how often the most valuable interests of the people have been bartered away, by leading members of the house of commons for a seat in the house of peers [House of Lords], or some lucrative office in the government; how much greater then should our apprehension be, of danger in the present instance, when we recollect that the government... comprehends within it such an extent of territory, as to put it out of the power of those who inhabit its extremities, to have any knowledge of the conduct of their servants! The possibility of this kind of traffic should therefore be absolutely prohibited.[32]

On the other hand, Monroe's democratic nationalism and his impatience with the state legislatures' localistic obstructionism during the 1780s evoked sentiments similar to those of Madison in the Federalist. At least in theory, he stated his preference that ultimate authority be exercised by a strong national legislature that promoted the well-being of the whole union, with "commerce flourishing, arts encreasing, lands rising in value, with all those other happy concomitants that attend a well formed and wisely directed government," rather than thirteen separate, selfish, "jealous" competing state governments. On the analogue of Madison's discussion in Federalist #10, Monroe feared that a "strong, efficient, and energetic government" that abolished the states--Madison's equivalent was "faction"-- would simultaneously annul "the vital parts of a democracy, and those provisions which the wisdom of ages has pointed out as the best security for liberty." Aware that the state governments must have priority within their own sphere, he thought it was essential that the national government uphold and "accommodate" their "local acts." Showing the same anxiety to protect minorities as his

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Federalist counterpart Madison, only emphasizing the threat of centralization more than that posed by the states, Monroe feared that a "consolidated" government might be unfair to "the weaker" or minority party.[33]

Apparently Monroe confided less than Madison in the trustworthiness of national officials. For instance, he objected to the national government's possession of the power of internal taxation, fearing that it would "form a system of revenue, by direct taxation and excise," and employ a large number of officials to undertake and supervise its collection, "that would be enormously expensive" as well as threaten the privacy of the citizens (by the property valuations required for tax assessment) and undermine the republican "spirit of the government."[34] Paradoxically, although Madison has gained the greater reputation among scholars for distrust of humanity, Monroe seems to have been more cynical in his hostility toward the politically active class on both the state and national levels.[35]

Despite his pervasive distrust of government officials, Monroe glorified his conception of an independent national executive. Although he argued that the best way to preserve the president's loyalty was through a system of "rewards and punishments," he thought the president was less dangerous to liberty than Congress or the state legislatures because, he reasoned, ingenuous citizens naturally trusted the legislative branch and distrusted the executive, who was less involved in their everyday lives. Although Monroe praised the republican electorate's integrity and thought that natural right dictated that they choose their officials, he also knew they were liable to be deceived by devious, demagogic representatives. Therefore, "unless the Executive had a negative on the laws of the legislature, it [the executive] would soon

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exist only in name," since the people would support the more "popular" branches--state and national--in the contest for power between them.[36] Moreover, even if the Senate as well as the House were popularly elected, as Monroe urged, he still feared there would be inordinate state influence in Congress.

Monroe regarded the Executive, at least potentially, as the most impartial government officer, who would stand above state-oriented factions and pursue the national interest: "The Executive is the [branch] upon which, in many respects, we should rest our hopes, for an equal, a federal, and a wise administration," he asserted. "Every possible effort should therefore be used to expell [sic] from the hearts of those who fill it, a preference of one part of the community to another. The experience of other governments hath taught us, it is possible to devise checks, which from motives of policy and private interest, will even make bad men faithful public servants."[37] He recognized the possibility that the president might be a "bad man," but, like Hamilton's Federalist #72, he believed human egotism sufficiently guaranteed that he would adhere to the people's will in order to secure re-election. Unlike the British King, who "transmits the inheritance in his line forever" and who, "by betraying his trust...might lose his crown, and perhaps gain nothing, even if he established despotism," the quadrennially elected president must automatically revere vox populi as vox dei.[38]

As we have seen, although Monroe took for granted that presidents and presidential candidates would respond to the blandishments of popular election and re-election, he thought their ambitious quest for fame could be sublimated to serve the public good. In his obsession with two ideas--that the presidency should be held by a single individual and that he should be

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elected by and responsible to the people-- Monroe's republican theory of the executive was broadly democratic and politically egalitarian. Anxious that "foreign influence" and excessively ambitious, manipulative incumbents might dominate a Congress that, sequestered within its "metropolis," was assigned responsibility for electing the chief executive, Monroe concluded that natural law and justice as well as more utilitarian considerations impelled a popular choice. Monroe held sacred "a principle which should prevail through the whole, but particularly in the organization of this [executive] branch, a dependance [sic] of this officer, for every thing estimable among mankind, upon the people of America. By the people therefore should the appointment be made...by electors chosen for the purpose."[39]

Although the executive possessed "high powers," Monroe asserted, he was "direct[ly] and immediate[ly] responsible" to the people for the use of those powers. If he adopted policies that benefited the whole nation, he would be rewarded with indefinite reelection. The office "should be so organized that... to those who fill it, and act with propriety in the discharge of its functions, the door should be left open for a continuance of public favour."[40] However, except in his insistence during the debates that Congress uphold the right to the free navigation of the Mississippi, Monroe failed to define that "proper" course.

In effect, Monroe proposed that the national government, via the national Executive, achieve the classical republican ideals of a national community transcending local interests. But he would use man's selfishness and love of fame to accomplish these objectives. In Some Observations, he praised the bicameral legislature created by the Constitution as "perfectly right." Criticizing the unicameral Confederation Congress for being excessively localistic and

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state-oriented, he charged that even an absolute monarch would show more "benevolence" toward his foes and sympathy toward minorities than a one-house legislature, which might be unremittingly vengeful. "But from a combination of states, acting systematically in pursuit of particular and local interests, wielding in their hands the powers of the government, and of course secure not only from censure but of the approbation and applause of those whom they served, however severely the attainment of the objects it contemplated, might bear upon the interests of the unfortunate minority, yet from their justice, it is to be feared, that neither moderation nor even mercy could be expected," he warned. "But the present system is that we have to remedy and we should never lose sight of its defects."[41] Like the Federalists in his hostility toward unicameral legislatures, Monroe differed from many other Antifederalists in believing that a bicameral legislature and single executive on the model of the new Constitution might provide a panacea.

As Monroe was undoubtedly aware, a unicameral national legislature was not a subject for discussion in any event; it had gone out with the Paterson Plan at Philadelphia. Nevertheless, he was disappointed that the senate's structure made it a vehicle for states' power, arguing that the new government's primary goal under the Constitution should be to "guard against, check and controul this intolerant and destructive state spirit" which had pervaded the Confederation's Congress. He sought to eliminate this blight on republican virtue by having the new Senate chosen by the voters instead of by the state legislatures, a step forward in his project to "infuse into all its [the national government's] departments a love, respect, and dread of the whole, for upon this every thing depends."[42] Although Monroe

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professed to abhor selfishness and considered it synonymous with politicians' subservience to state interests, he seemed not to expect much altruism from the members of the House of Representatives either.

As Monroe often asserted in his Observations, he did not believe that most politicians were virtuous men of integrity and public spiritedness. After his election to the Senate in 1790 (by the state legislature he had earlier claimed to distrust), his opinion of his fellow politicians did not improve, although he self-contradictorily continued to venerate the wisdom and virtue of the people who elected them. By the summer of 1791, when it had become evident that partisan conflict would erupt between southern Jeffersonian Republicans and Hamiltonian Federalists in New York and New England, his fears revived that pro-monarchical elements would gain control of the government (in accordance with the cyclical theory of history). Monroe was shocked by "consolidationist" measures such as Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton's public debt funding and assumption program; the creation of the Bank of the United States: indications that conservative elements opposed the bourgeoning Revolution in France; and (a few months later) the near-passage of a bill, pushed through by New England congressmen, that would apportion state representation in the House of Representatives according to a fractional formula disadvantageous to Virginia. He told Jefferson he "reprobated...all measures that may be calculated to elevate the government above the people, or place it in any respect without its natural boundary." To preserve popular control, he counseled, "nothing is necessary but virtue in a part only (for in the whole it cannot be expected) of the high publick servants, & a true development of the principles of those acts

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which have a contrary tendency. The bulk of the people are for democracy."[43]

Exactly what Monroe meant by the word "democracy" as he used it here is unclear. Perhaps he meant direct rule by the people, but that usage did not develop until several years later. More likely, he was referring to the primacy of the lower house, the "democratic" branch of the legislature, as employed in terminology involving "mixed" or "balanced" government.[44]

Hopeful that the Senate would function in a more "democratic" manner if its deliberations were made public, from 1791 until its passage in 1794 Monroe ardently advocated the motion the Virginia assembly had instructed him to introduce to open the Senate's doors. Although the measure's opponents warned that allowing spectators to attend Senate debates would lead it to become a theatrical circus rather than a serious deliberative assembly where legislators could sincerely speak their minds without fear of retaliation by their constituents, Monroe held the opposite perspective. His views had not changed since he composed his "Observations" in 1788. Noting that the public's attention to their activities was essential for the implementation of the people's will, he had then argued that the "rewards and punishments" of electoral vicissitudes would restrain congressmen and presidents from doing evil and encourage them to do good. In notes for a speech he later delivered on the topic in the Senate, he returned to this argument, once again pointing out that political ambitions could "make bad men, faithful publick servants."[45] As in the past, he unromantically denied the legislator's benevolence. But he asserted that even the most wicked politician's behavior would improve if he was under the voters' constant surveillance. This would undoubtedly frustrate the ambitions of covert monarchists:

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> Let the jealous, the prying eye of their constituents uphold their proceedings, mark their conduct, and the tone of the body will be changed. Many a person whose heart was devoted and whose mind pursued with unceasing ardor the establishment of arbitrary power; whilst he supposed his movements were unseen...wod. change his style and from motives of private interest become the fervent patron of the publick liberty. I could wish for the honor of humanity that good actions might always proceed from good motives but to the public 'tis altogether immaterial--with them the end only is important and wise is that political arrangement that so operates on the principles of human action, as to make men, bad men, faithful publick servants.[46]

Monroe remained devoted to the idea that politicians' public spirit could be stimulated by an appeal to their political self-interest.[47] Yet he thought they had to be gently coerced into acting for the public welfare by exposing them to the pitfalls of public exhibition and frequent reelection contests. Continuing to extol the president as the one national figure who was not unduly dominated by "state byas [sic]," he resented the possibility that the Senate, which worked so closely with the Executive in crucial spheres like official appointments and treaty-making, might compete for power with and thwart the president in his own domain. He warned that, "whatever influence this [Senate] branch may have in directing the measures of the executive, from the nature of its appointment [by the state legislatures], will be exerted to give it a narrow state byas," which the president might have to appease in order to gain the upper house's cooperation in "this extraordinary coalition" the Constitution had created between them. At the same time, Monroe was a political moralist who recognized that there were instances, such as presidential impeachment, in which Congress ought to have the upper hand. Thinking it "highly improper" that an impeached president "remain in office after impeachment"

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and prior to a Senate trial, he recommended constitutional amendments to oblige a president impeached by the House of Representatives to resign, or at least temporarily be "disqualified" from seeking reelection. Reiterating his fear of collusion (he called it "union") between the president and the upper house, he felt an impeached president bore the stigma of the House of Representatives impugning his morality and patriotism, and therefore should best be relegated to temporary oblivion lest he resort in his desperation to conspiracy with the Senate. "The senators, would to save the commonwealth from injury, be able to give instruction to a new president," he advised, "and it would perhaps be better to change occasionally the acting party, of a combination that might otherwise be dangerous."[48]

Precisely because he was willing to entrust such extensive powers to the president, including an absolute veto, Monroe insisted that the chief executive possess impeccable character. That was why he held him to a standard of political virtue so rigorous as to require his resignation if Congress maligned his integrity by impeachment.[49]

Monroe's willingness to grant the president extensive powers differed from the ideas of leading Antifederalists. Without going into any detail, we will briefly compare his views with those held by George Mason. Mason, a leading Virginian opponent of the Constitution, was on a par with George Washington and Patrick Henry as a Revolutionary War patriarch: a longtime state legislator, author of the state bill of rights in 1776, and a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention. Unlike Monroe, Mason hoped a second constitutional convention would reduce the president's authority. At Philadelphia he advocated a triple executive, but later proposed to restrict the single executive with a six-man council of state representing each section of the

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country instead of a vice-president or Cabinet.

Unlike Monroe, Mason feared that, if the president were chosen directly by the people, either the Society of the Cincinnati or a similar oligarchic entity might determine the outcome. Believing that candidates who were locally unpopular often had the highest conception of the public interest, Mason preferred the president's election by Congress to a decision by popular vote. Most Antifederalists disagreed with Monroe's view that indefinite reeligibility for election best buttressed a politician's virtuous conduct. They feared the same person would be re-elected for life. Mason, like Monroe, acknowledged the likelihood of foreign intervention in elections and feared Congress would seek to control the president. More devoted than Monroe to the principle of rotation in office, Mason's resoluton to this dilemma was a seven-year, nonrenewable presidential term. He later revised this idea, stipulating that the same man could only serve as president eight years of every sixteen. If he periodically returned to his constituents, the ex-president would reacquaint himself with their needs and serve them better in the future. Mason explained, "Nothing so strongly impels a man to regard the interest of his constituents as the certainty of returning to the general mass of the people, where he must participate in their burdens."[50] For Monroe, only a president disgraced by impeachment was compelled to re-engage his constituents.

In general, Monroe had more in common ideologically with Madison, even during his Antifederalist juncture, than with most Antifederalists. In any case, many historians exaggerate the differences between these two rudimentary parties. They each demanded "internal" restraints (checks and balances, the "general vesting clause," separation of powers) and

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"external" controls on government by such means as the electoral college, the federal structure, and the representation in government of a plurality of socioeconomic interests. They regarded individual property and the government's protection of the right and ability to accumulate property as sacrosanct.[51]

Like Madison in Federalist #10 and elsewhere, Monroe thought it was essential that government protect the interests of minorities from tyrannical legislative majorities. Monroe and Madison each regarded liberty as a natural right. Madison pointed out that one's "passions" attached themselves to one's opinions, creating an irrational devotion to them; Monroe, with his distaste for the stubbornness with which legislators fought for local interests at the expense of "national purposes" and "public safety," would have agreed. Although Monroe's analysis lacked the profundity of Federalist #10's argument that the protection of property was a natural right derived from the unequal "faculties" and abilities of men, Monroe's rhetoric was actually less hostile to economic self-interest than Madison's. Madison's Federalist #10 deplored the bitter contests between rich and poor and hoped that "representatives whose enlightened views and virtuous sentiments render[ed] them superior to local prejudices" would transcend them. But Monroe's "Observations" more serenely urged that "every man of the union" with demands on the government should be allowed "equal access to the human heart" of the impartial executive he postulated.[52]

One of Monroe's most important contributions to political psychology during the debates on the Constitution was his argument that politicians are political animals whose behavior may be determined by their consciousness of the "rewards and punishments" of re-

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election or defeat. Of course this viewpoint was implicit in The Federalist. But Monroe's "Observations" made it crystal clear.[53]

Although Monroe professed greater confidence that the president would promote the public good than did Madison, who instead endorsed "enlightened" legislators "whose wisdom may best discern the true interest of their country," Monroe cast his assumptions in a majoritarian philosophy of representative democracy that was congenial to his Federalist opponents.[54] As much as the Federalists, he hoped to create a national government that conciliated the polity's conflicting "passions and interests"by equitably balancing their demands.

For Monroe the government's mainstay was the national executive, whom he regarded as most fully representative of the nation because he was the only public official elected by all the people. He tended to idealize the people, more because he considered them the only legitimate source of power than out of admiration for their choice of elected officials. Monroe respected the variety of social and economic interests, and in all contexts he was especially concerned to protect minorities from overbearing majorities. At the same time he expected both the people and their representatives would eschew "stoic" asceticism and strive to secure their own well-being, though he hoped they would not in the process disregard their fellow citizens. In any case, he would be likely to agree with the Madisonian Federalists that, in the burgeoning individualistic society of his time signalized by the adoption of the Constitution, as Gordon Wood puts it, "legislation...could not be the transcending of the different interests but the reconciling of them."[55] Thus Monroe hoped that the amended version of the Constitution which he proposed would enable the national government, the president in particular, to achieve

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the classical ideal of a national community that, through reconciling antagonistic groups, simultaneously transcended and fulfilled local interests.

Yet a conundrum arises. Although Monroe presupposed that the people were good, he remonstrated against the selfishness of the state legislators and congressmen they had elected under the Confederation and he expected they would continue to elect similar personnel under the new constitution. The state governments represented the people and the state governments were "bad"--they lacked disinterested civic spirit and oppressed minorities. How, then, could their constituents be "good": kind, benevolent, full of private and public virtue?

Monroe seems to think that man is a zoon politikon (political animal). He usually assumes that the people are vigilant and that the president will be attentive to their needs. Yet at the same time he implies that the citizens of the new, "extended" republic will lack the discernment to detect governmental highhandness in such matters as "corrupt" patronage appointments over the nation's far flung regions. He argues that political self-interest will render the people's representatives, legislative and executive, obedient to their will. But isn't the people's "will" selfish by definition? Monroe often implies as much, in denouncing state delegates' incessant efforts to implement their constituents' local objectives in national assemblies such as the Confederation Congress. But they act in this manner because of their very susceptibility to the "rewards and punishments" that Monroe depicts as a virtual panacea in the new republic's political culture. How does Monroe harmonize the wickedness of the state governments, which were popular creatures, with his expectation that the national government, if all its representatives were elected directly by the voters, would act in a

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nationalistic, rational and objective manner, diametrically opposed to the state legislatures' conduct?[56]

Monroe knew that the people were far from being singlemindedly involved in a quest for the "public good" or the "virtuous republic." Like most Americans of his time, for him a "republic" meant the government in a society where property was rather widely dispersed and the suffrage was relatively large, in which the people elected rulers entrusted with limited powers for limited terms of office. It was a "representative democracy," most particularly in the sense that it was not a monarchy in which hereditary rulers and aristocratic governing bodies exercised control. As Montesquieu, whom most of the Founders revered during the 1780s, had defined it in 1748: "A republican government is that in which the body, or only a part of the people, is possessed of the supreme power." Although modern scholars often assume that Montesquieu thought that democracy constituted the direct involvement of every citizen in the act of governing, this was not what he said. He regarded representative democracy--what Monroe and other Americans called a republic--as equally democratic as direct democracy, and more suitable to modern times. "In a democracy the people are in some respects the sovereign, and in others the subject," he explained. "As most citizens have sufficient ability to choose, though unqualified to be chosen, so the people, though capable of calling others to an account for their administration, are incapable of conducting the administration themselves."[57]

This was representative democracy--republicanism in the only sense that Monroe understood it. From the perspective of Monroe and his fellows, Americans were equally republican as colonists under Britain's monarchy as they were as citizens of independent states

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because they had always elected their legislatures. Aside from their rhapsodies over the virtuous farmer, which they seldom placed in the context of republicanism, it would be difficult to find Monroe or Jefferson for that matter, claiming that the success of the war for colonial liberation and independent governments would transform Americans into noble, self-sacrificing avatars.[58] As Jefferson wrote Benjamin Franklin in 1777, at the height of revolutionary zeal for reforming society (without transforming individuals): "With respect to the state of Virginia in particular, the people seem to have deposited the monarchical and taken up the republican government with as much ease as would have attended their throwing off an old and putting on a new suit of clothes."[59]

Indeed, as Wood makes clear in Creation of the American Republic, during and after the Revolutionary War American leaders began complaining about the lack of kindness and benevolence the people had demonstrated since they became a republic, and they were very disappointed. As for virtue, when the Founding Fathers talked about it they usually meant private rather than public virtue--the good man rather than the good citizen. The privately virtuous man was moral, performed his job well, obeyed the laws, did not rob or steal or have extramarital sexual affairs, and took care of his family.[60] He did not necessarily run for office, participate in the town meeting, or even vote. The noun "virtue" is used far more by twentieth-century historians than it was by eighteenth-century writers, but perhaps its most famous employment was by Jefferson in Notes on Virginia, where he wrote: "Those who labor in the earth are the chosen people of God, if ever He had a chosen people, whose breasts He has made His peculiar deposit for substantial and genuine virtue. It is the focus in which He keeps

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alive that sacred fire, which otherwise might escape from the face of the earth."[61] It seems obvious that Jefferson is talking about individual, personal morality rather than about active involvement in government, although he undoubtedly saw a reciprocal relationship between the good man and the good citizen which neither Hume nor Hamilton would deny.

As Bolingbroke pointed out in Idea of a Patriot King (1739), Niccolo Machiavelli permitted his "prince" (the ruler) to display only the appearance if he lacked virtue in reality, in order to unite his people: "He [Machiavelli] declares the affectation of virtue to be useful to princes: he is so far on my side in the present question. The only difference between us is, I would have the virtue real: he requires no more than the appearance of it."[62] This was a face of Machiavelli that the "classical republican" historians who follow J.G.A. Pocock have obscured. But it was precisely this devious, "machiavellian" Machiavelli whom Monroe would have found a kindred spirit when he said that "the end only is important and wise is that political arrangement that so operates on the principles of human action as to make men, bad men, faithful public servants."

Monroe's ideas on republicanism were more complex than previous scholars have comprehended. He extolled the people, but was unimpressed by their virtue. He adopted cynical ideas about human nature and applied them to politicians. But he appreciated the "love of fame" as a motive guiding the people's rulers toward decent conduct. Monroe did not put much faith in either "public" or "private" virtue; indeed, he seldom used the term. He apparently thought of the people as involved in their own private sphere. They came out of their personal enclaves at periodic intervals merely to vote, the only means he allowed them of holding their

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representatives accountable for their actions. This was their principle of supervision, as Michael Warner calls it; and it was a frail mechanism on which to rely for representatives' good behavior in the course of their term. Meanwhile, the people's state and congressional representatives were expected to act honestly and zealously for their constituents' interests, forbearing from any activities for their own selfish gain (Warner calls this the "principle of negativity").[63]

Monroe expected that the president, as the nation's most powerful political figure and its sole popularly chosen leader, would, like a latter-day King Solomon, resolve all legislative disputes equitably, using his "absolute negative" (veto) when necessary. But while King Solomon had the satisfaction of returning to his hundreds of wives at the end of a long day, the president would merely gain the "reward" of re-election by the voters, who he hoped would be appreciative.

In the final analysis, Monroe failed to delineate what unifying force he expected would hold the new federated republic together. The president's hope for "reward" from the nation provided scant assurance that he would be able to withstand the pressures of special sectional and economic interests. As Monroe himself seemed aware, they might be able to "corrupt" a president notwithstanding the availability of reelection. Apparently Monroe took for granted the continued prevalence of contending social and economic interests as much as Federalist Number 10, although to them he added conflicts between state and national powers, a palpable factor which Madison had to minimize by dint of seeking ratification of the Constitution by nine states. Monroe's most interesting and important omission, when we compare his

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"Observations" and speeches at the state ratifying convention with Federalist Number 10, was his silence on the conflicts between rich and poor which Madison lucidly described in that great paper when he wrote, "The most common and durable source of factions has been the various and unequal distribution of property."

Perhaps Monroe's relative silence on the topic of class conflict reveals more about his political ideology than we think. It may have been his first step on the path to political enlightenment that culminated with the revelation in his final work, The People the Sovereigns, that the United States was unique for its citizenry's middle-class mentality. Its middle-class society within a middle-class culture: perhaps this was ultimately the most effective solvent for the nation's internal conflicts and the guarantor that the young republic would not immediately break apart.

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NOTES: CHAPTER 2

1. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 296. Although Douglass Adair does not mention Monroe, his brilliant essay, "Fame and the Founding Fathers," in Fame and the Founding Fathers, 3-26, remains the best treatment of this topic. Ironically, Monroe's friend Jefferson was one of the few political leaders of the period to disavow the love of fame. During his brief retirement from politics in the 1790s, he wrote James Madison rejecting a request that he reenter public life: "The little spice of ambition which I had in my younger days has long since evaporated, and I set still less store by posthumous than present fame." Jefferson to Madison, April 27, 1795, quoted in Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 193. (Nevertheless, Jefferson accepted the vice-presidency a little over a year later).

2. Ibid., 296, 284.

3. James B. Schick, "The Antifederalist Ideology in Virginia, 1787-1788" (Ph.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1971), 39-45. Like Monroe, Mason, along with Richard Henry Lee and other influential Virginians wished to abolish the office of vice-president. Ibid., 42-43. Not only Mason and Randolph, but several other prominent delegates--Roger Sherman, Benjamin Franklin, and Hugh Williamson--favored a three-man executive chosen by Congress from the different sections of the country. Morris, Forging of the Union, 287-88. The title of Mason's pamphlet proposing a six-man Council of State to advise the president was Objections to the Proposed Federal Constitution. It may be found in Paul L. Ford, ed., Pamphlets on the Constitution of the United States (New York, 1968), 329-32. On the fate of the Antifederalist-sponsored demand for a second convention, which was included in the ratifying instruments of Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York, see Edward P. Smith, "The Movement for a Second Constitutional Convention in 1788," in J. Franklin Jameson, ed., Essays in the Constitutional History of the United States in the Formative Period, 1775-1789 (Boston, 1889), 98- .

4. James Monroe, Some Observations on the Constitution (Petersburg, 1788), 16. This is the only extant printed version of Monroe's critique.

5. Monroe's speech at the ratifying convention, June 18, 1788, in Elliot, ed., Debates, III, 489. For his earlier advocacy of electors, see "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297.

6. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 296.

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7. Ibid.

8. Ibid., 296-97.

9. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 281.

10. Ibid.; Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969).

11. For the significance of the Federalist idea that the Constitution operated on individuals rather than states, see, among many other works, Richard S. Sinopoli, Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Consitution, and Civic Virtue (New York, 1992).

12. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 281. Apparently, at least for public consumption, Monroe's Federalist opponents reiterated his concept of the natural goodness of man. At the Virginia ratifying convention in June 1788, Madison expounded the "great republican principle" that "the people will have [sufficient] virtue and intelligence to select men of virtue and wisdom." Madison, quoted in Lance Banning, "1787 and 1776: Patrick Henry, James Madison, the Constitution, and the Revoluiton," in Neil L. York, ed., Toward a More Perfect Union: Six Essays on the Constitution (Provo, Utah, 1988), 73-74.

13. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294.

14. Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294.

15. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 293-94. (Montesquieu was president of the *parlement* of Bordeaux). On the issue of separation and balance of powers within government, see Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 151-60, 448-56, 548-53, 604-605, and Lienesch, New Order of the Ages, 131-33.

16. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294.

17. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297. For Monroe's later use of the term "sword of justice," see Monroe to James Madison, Oct. 29, 1795, in Madison Papers, Library of Congress, series 2 (Rives Collection), microfilm.

18. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297.

19. Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297; Richard Henry Lee, quoted in Schick, "Antifederalist Ideology," 42.

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20. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 298.

21. "Some Observations," in Storing, Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297.

22. Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 281. For the Federalist critique of the Confederation, see Sinopoli, Foundations of American Citizenship, 87-94.

23. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 284. For Adams' reference to Congress as a "diplomatic assembly" in the Defence, see Adams to Jefferson, March 1, 1787, in Lester J. Cappon, ed., The Adams-Jefferson Letters (2 vols.; Chapel Hill, 1959), I, 176-77. In a section of Defence of the Constitutions that has been strangely ignored by historians, Adams invented a unique and somewhat perverse solution to the dilemma posed by the infiltration of state governmental interests into the Confederation Congress. Although like Monroe he warned of collusion between the state legislatures and Congress, he claimed to fear that the latter would cajole the former into yielding powers, to prevent which he proposed that state governors and state legislatures have the right to veto all congressional acts. George A. Peek, Jr., ed.,The Political Writings of John Adams: Representative Selections (New York, 1954), 144.

24. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 285.

25. Ibid., 286.

26. Ibid., 284. Monroe's words are similar to Madison's famous reminder in Federalist Number 10 that factions will always exist because rulers could not force their citizens to possess the same "passions" and ideas.

27. Ibid., 285.

28. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 286, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 315.

29. An excellent summary of the historiographical controversy that has arisen over the last two decades between the "republican" and "liberal" schools of discourse on the politics of the Early Republic--whether its leadership espoused self-sacrificing classical ideals or preached that individual economic self-interest was the summum bonum--is John M. Murrin, "The Great Inversion, or Court versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England (1688-1721) and America (1776-1816)," in J.G.A. Pocock, ed., Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776 (Princeton, 1980), 368-453. See also Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975); Diggins, Lost Soul of American Politics; and Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984), for various sides

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of the dispute.

30. "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 325, and Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294.

31. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 294-95, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 326-27.

32. Ibid. For the growth of political "corruption" in Great Britain in the eighteenth century, see Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and His Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole (Cambridge, Mass., 1968); Bernard Bailyn, Origins of American Politics (New York, 1968); Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 423-505; and John Brewer, Party Ideology and Popular Politics at the Accession of George III (Cambridge, 1976).

33. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 286-87, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 315-16.

34. Storing, ed., Complete-Anti-Federalist, V, 287; Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 316.

35. See Richard K. Matthews, If Men Were Angels: James Madison and the Heartless Empire of Reason (Lawrence, Kans., 1995), for a hostile interpretation of Madison as a misanthropic, anti-democratic centralizer who thought government should favor the wealthy classes at the expense of the common people.

36. "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 327.

37. Ibid., 328, and Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 296.

38. For Monroe's comparison of the president and the British monarch with regard to control of the armed forces, part of which is quoted here, see "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 298. Hamilton's Federalist #72 is in Jacob E. Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Middletown, Conn., 1961), 486-92.

39. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 297.

40. Ibid.; also in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 330.

41. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 293, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 324.

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42. Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 293, and Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 325.

43. Monroe to Jefferson, June 17, 1791, in Boyd et al., eds., Jefferson Papers, XX, 556-57. For the intertwining of politics and ideology in the partisan response to events during the 1790s, see Richard Buel, Jr., Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics, 1789-1815 (Ithaca, N.Y., 1972), Part 1.

44. See Richard Buel, Jr., "Democracy and the American Revolution: A Frame of Reference," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 21 (April 1964), 165-90; Robert R. Palmer, "Notes on the Use of the Word 'Democracy,' 1789-1799," Political Science Quarterly, 68 (June 1953), 203-26; Willi Paul Adams, "Republicanism in Political Rhetoric Before 1776," ibid., 85 (Sept. 1970), 397-421.

45. Draft of speech, n.d., Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, quoted in Ammon, Monroe, 84. As we have seen, in "Some Observations" he had said, "it is possible to devise checks, which from motives of policy and private interest, will even make bad men faithful public servants." Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 296.

46. Ammon, Monroe, 84.

47. An excellent discussion of how their belief in the reciprocal relationship between "public spirit" and self-interest motivated the Founding Fathers in the art of political compromise is Lance Banning, Jefferson and Madison.: Three Conversations from the Founding (Madison, 1995), 57-99. See also Thomas A. Horne, "Bourgeois Virtue, Property and Moral Philosophy in America, 1750-1800," History of Political Thought, 4 (Summer 1983), 317-40.

48. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist. V, 302-303.

49. Under Article 2, Sect. 4 of the Constitution, removal from office is the president's only punishment after conviction by the Senate for "high crimes and misdemeanors." Thus Monroe's standard of behavior for the executive was much stricter than the Constitution provided.

50. My information about George Mason is based on Schick, "Antifederalist Ideology in Virginia," 39-41, 45-46, 50-53; the quotation from Mason is at 53. In Federalist #10, on the other hand, Madison deplores the identity of interests between legislators and their constituents . Showing antipathy to legislative factionalism, he objects that "many of the most important acts of legislation" constitute "judicial determinations...concerning the rights of large bodies of citizens," whereby legislators are "advocates and parties to the cases which they determine." Unlike most Antifederalists, Madison feels that the community of interests between lawmakers

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and citizens is dangerous because "the most powerful faction" may "trample" on minority rights. Jacob E. Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Midddletown, 1961), 59-60. As we have seen, Monroe, who inveighed against the particularism exhibited by state delegates in both the local legislatures and the national Congress, was closer to Madison's point of view..

51. James H. Hutson, "Country, Court, and Constitution: Antifederalism and the Historians," William and Mary Quarterly, 38 (July 1981), 337-68; Franklin A. Kalinowski, "David Hume and James Madison on Defining 'The Public Interest,'" in Richard K. Matthews, ed., Virtue, Corruption, and Self-Interest: Political Values in the Eighteenth Century (Bethlehem, Pa., 1994), 172-201; and Jeffrey L. Sedgwick, "James Madison and the Problem of Executive Character," Polity, 21 (Fall 1988), 5-23. For the Antifederalist concern to protect property, see Sinopoli, Foundations of American Citizenship, 3-15, 129-55; Gordon S. Wood, "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution," in Richard Beeman et al., eds., Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity (Chapel Hill, 1987), 69-109; and Cathy D. Matson and Peter S. Onuf, A Union of Interests: Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America (Lawrence, Kans., 1990), 152-57.

52. Monroe, "Some Observations," quoted in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 292, 296; Cooke, ed., The Federalist, 58, 64. For Madison's views on man and society in The Federalist and elsewhere, see Ralph Ketcham, "James Madison and the Nature of Man," Journal of the History of Ideas, 19 (Jan. 1958), 62-76; Roy Branson, "James Madison and the Scottish Enlightenment," Journal of the History of Ideas, 40 (April-June 1979), 235-50; Daniel Walker Howe, "The Political Psychology of The Federalist," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 44 (July 1987), 485-509; and Martin Diamond, "Democracy and The Federalist: A Reconsideration of the Framers' Intent," American Political Science Review, 53 (March 1959), 52-68.

53. Daniel Walker Howe, one of the most perceptive students of "Publius," argues that The Federalist sought to restore the supremacy of reason over passion by appealing for ratification of the Constitution to "the enlightened self-interest of practical men" ("prudence"), which was considered rational in terms of Scottish philosopher Thomas Reid's "faculty psychology" to which Publius adhered. Howe, "Political Psychology of The Federalist," 492, 509. The Federalist apparently adopted a position similar to Monroe's argument that the desire for reelection would sublimate the unsociable "passions" of congress and the executive and encourage them to act in the public interest. As Howe explains: "In The Federalist, the Constitution is presented as a marvel of social engineering, based on a sound psychology, that will use human nature to control human nature, among both governors and governed, without requiring recourse to tyrannical coercion." Ibid., 494.

54. A leading Madison scholar finds that his "notions of executive power were the least developed facet of his thought." Jack N. Rakove, "The Madisonian Moment," University of

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Chicago Law Review, 55 (Spring 1988): 494. For a brilliant though hostile exposition of Federalist development of the concept of "representative democracy," which depicts them as deceivers and manipulators of the people, see Wood, Creation of American Republic, 471-615.

55. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, quotation on 608; Jennifer Nedelsky, Private Property and the Limits of American Constitutionalism: The Madisonian Framework and Its Legacy (Chicago, 1990). See also Lance Banning, "Some Second Thoughts on Virtue and the Course of Revolutionary Thinking," in Terence Ball and J.G.A. Pocock, eds., Conceptual Change and the Constitution (Lawrence, Kans., 1988), 194-212. Among many studies that stress the irrelevance of historiographical paradigms pitting "classical republicanism" against "liberalism" to a real understanding of eighteenth-century ideology, see Joseph J. Ellis, After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture (New York, 1979); Diggins, Lost Soul of American Politics; Pauline Maier, The Old Revolutionaries: Political Lives in the Age of Samuel Adams (rev. ed., New York, 1990), vii; Arthur Scherr, "John and Samuel Adams: Two New England Revolutionaries View the French Revolution," Mid-America, 75 (April-July 1993), 113; Daniel T. Rodgers, "Republicanism: The Career of a Concept," Journal of American History, 79 (June 1992), 11-38; Sinopoli, Foundations of American Citizenship; and Gary J. Kornblith, "Artisan Federalism: New England Mechanics and the Political Economy of the 1790s," in Ronald Hoffman and Peter J. Albert, eds., Launching the Extended Republic: The Federalist Era (Charlottesville, 1996), 249-72.

56. My argument here has been influenced by John Zvesper, "The Madisonian Systems," Western Political Quarterly, 37 (June 1984), 236-56.

57. Baron de Montesquieu, The Spirit of the Laws, trans. Thomas Nugent. 2 vols. in one (1748; New York, 1966), I, 8-10, Book II, "Of Laws Directly Derived from the Nature of Government."

58. See Douglass G. Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy: Republicanism, the Class Struggle, and the Virtuous Farmer" (Ph.D. disseretation, Yale University, 1943); Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden: Technology and the Pastoral Ideal in America (New York, 1964); Lienesch, New Order of the Ages, 83-96.

59. Jefferson to Benjamin Franklin, Aug. 3, 1777, in Julian P. Boyd et al., eds., The Papers of Thomas Jefferson (26 vols., in progress, Princeton, 1950--), II, 26. See also Cecelia M. Kenyon, "Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution: An Old-Fashioned Interpretation," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 19 (April 1962), 153-82. Kenyon regards the Revolutionary philosophy as "radical individualism" (174). She argues that the relative safety of the United States from foreign conquest, which contributed to isolationism, "plus the nature of our federal system, inhibited the emergence of a sense of national interest

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transcendent of individual, group, and sectional interests which would supply content for the concept of the common good" (176-77). Thus she rebutted the arguments of Pocock, Wood, and other "republican revisionists" several years before they arose.

60. See Jan Lewis, "Motherhood and the Construction of the Male Citizen in the United States, 1750-1830," in George L. Levine, ed., Constructions of the Self (New Brunswick, N.J., 1992), 143-63, and Jack P. Greene, "The Concept of Virtue in Late Colonial British America," in Greene, Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History (Charlottesville, 1992), 218-233. One of the few political pamphlets of the period, 1787-1800, that discusses and contrasts the difference between "public" and "private" virtue is [Benjamin Franklin Bache], Remarks Occasioned by the Conduct of Mr. Washington as President of the United States: 1796 (Philadelphia, 1797), 31. Displaying a greater tendency toward "classical republicanism" than Monroe and other Jeffersonians, Bache's attack on George Washington's character distinguished between private and public virtue and denied that he possessed the latter. Bache insisted that a politician's private virtues did not substitute for devotion to the national interest ("public virtue"), even assuming that Washington possessed some of the former. "In truth to be sober and chaste and church-going, can be no security for a complete catalogue of the private virtues; and how much less for such virtues (and talents too) as are of a public nature," he observed. Remarks, 31. For the view that Jeffersonian ideology subordinated public virtue to private honesty and personal morality, see Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984), 8, 15, and Jan Lewis, "'The Blessings of Domestic Society': Thomas Jefferson's Family and the Transformation of American Politics," in Peter S. Onuf, ed., Jeffersonian Legacies (Charlottesville, 1993), 109-46.

61. Notes on Virginia, Query XIX, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 280.

62. "The Idea of a Patriot King," in Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, Works, ed. David Mallet (5 vols., London, 1754), III, 63.

63. For the concepts "public sphere," "private sphere," and other terms referred to in this paragraph, see Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere, trans. Thomas Burger (Cambridge, Mass., 1989), and Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

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PROLOGUE: JAMES MONROE'S FRENCH REVOLUTION AND ITS LARGER SIGNIFICANCE

Although it is a truism that the French Revolution exerted tremendous influence on the formation of American political parties, the precise nature of that influence has yet to be determined. Most historians believe that the Democratic-Republicans and Federalists polarized into their respective parties as a result of differences of opinion over the French Revolution.[1] Harrry Ammon emphasizes the influence of the French Revolution after 1793 in causing former Jeffersonian state-righters like Henry Lee of Virginia, "unable to tolerate the approval given the Jacobins in France," to join the Federalists. Many students of this period would agree with him that "the French question. . . occupied a central position in Republican warfare on the administration" because of its alleged ideological affinity to American libertarian thought.[2]

However, this emphasis by historians on the motivations of American political leaders tends to blur the distinction between rhetoric and reality–between what Federalists and Republicans actually thought about the issues of the French Revolution and what they merely said about it for reasons of partisan advantage. Ralph Ketcham suggests that the leaders of the two parties were more interested in political success and the outcome of domestic controversies

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than in the success or failure of the French Revolution, and that they merely used it as an issue in their jockeying for political advantage. "It is perfectly clear that leaders in both parties had uppermost in their minds, as they heard the war news and talked to foreign emissaries, the issues of their Revolution rather than those being debated in Paris," he concludes. "The parallel Federalist capitalization on certain pro-British feelings was just as natural and no more a sign of treason than the Republican identification with France."[3]

This approach may be more accurate than that taken by such historians as Marshall Smelser, John R. Howe, and Richard Buel that the 1790s marked a period of basic dissension among Americans that threatened to undermine the government and dissolve the republic. That the Federalist and Republican parties were neither so antagonistic nor irreconcilable as these scholars would have us believe is revealed by Federalist acquiescence (albeit reluctant) in the election of Thomas Jefferson in 1800 and the subsequent assimilation of that party into the Jeffersonian Republicans, until by 1820 it no longer existed on the national level.[4]

At the same time each party accused its opponent of execrable plots conducted in collusion with foreign governments. This was especially true of Federalist charges that the Republicans were working in tandem with Jacobin radicals led by Maximilien Robespierre in the French Committee of Public Safety from June 1793 to July 1794. As one New York newspaper warned, reminiscing about that period a few years later:

> Had not the immortal Washington, that venerable personage whom they (the Republicans) never ceased to slander, stood like a firm tower against them, the United States might at this moment have been acting over the bloody scene of Robespierre's anarchy. The piece consisted of a double plot: at home, to sow and nurture the seeds of discord between the people

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> and their government; and abroad, to persuade the French that the people were already at war with their government, and that the government was hostile to the French Republic.[5]

A convenient barometer exists for measuring the cogency of Federalist accusations. From August 1794 to October 1796, James Monroe, Democratic-Republican senator from Virginia from 1790 to 1794 and later fifth president of the United States, served as United States minister to France–watershed years in the history of the Revolution, when the overthrow of Robespierre gave way to the Constitution of 1795 and the formation of the Directory. Monroe had been among those for whom Federalist leaders and editors had the greatest antipathy at this time. They regarded him as one of the most extreme "antifederalists" and "Jacobins." Among the most abusive Federalist attacks on Monroe were "Scipio's" Reflections on Monroe's 'View of the Conduct of the Executive' (Boston, 1798), as well as the Philadelphia Gazette of the United States, which, under an "Albany" dateline, published a long attack on Monroe as a conspirator who plotted to overthrow the governments of France and the United States, as well as denouncing him as "this Gallican, Anti-American Monroe." [6] Although several excellent biographies of Monroe and monographs discussing Franco-American relations during this period exist, none has analyzed in detail or recognized the significance of his reactions to the Reign of Terror and the Thermidorian interval before the Directory came to power in casting light on the nature of the "Jeffersonian Persuasion" and its ramifications in the foreign and domestic affairs of the new nation.[7]

Were the Jeffersonian Republicans as fanatical and unyielding in their enthusiasm for the French Revolution's most radical phase, the Reign of Terror, as the Federalist press and

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leadership claimed? Were the differences between the Republicans and Federalists over this issue really so extreme? Or was the Federalist charge of "jacobinism" against the Republicans merely an attempt to rouse the public behind them through the employment of the tactic of the "negative reference group" in implicating their political enemies?[8] A closer examination of Monroe's attitudes during his tenure at Paris should help us find out.

When Monroe arrived in Paris to take up his duties shortly after Robespierre's downfall, he observed that the death of the most powerful member of the National Convention's Committee of Public Safety had revived French nationalism and fighting spirit. Dispassionately, he reported to Secretary of State Edmund Randolph in August 1794 on the nearly unanimous hatred for the Montagnard leader, apparently unaware of the support he had faithfully received from the Paris Commune, composed of lower-class artisans of the faubourgs, until the final hours before his death.[9] "That Robespierre and his associates merited their fate, is a position to which everyone assents," he commented. "The people [of Paris] seems to be relieved from a burden which had become insupportable." Robespierre had held absolute power, Monroe believed, and his hand had moved the guillotine (already the Incorruptible was distinguished by an undeserved infamy). "His acts of cruelty and oppression are perhaps without parallel in the annals of history."[10]

Such language from an American liberal like Monroe, who favored popular rule and civil equality, suggests that he could not comprehend the emergency nature of Robespierre's revolutionism, since the conditions of anarchy, class conflict, and civil war which prevailed in France during the Reign of Terror had been largely absent, or present in muted form, in the

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course of the war for independence which had occurred n Virginia and the other colonies scarcely a decade earlier.[11] The American Revolution had been a basically bloodless one, whose primary internal conflict was between the Continental Congress and recalcitrant state legislatures for war-making power and peacetime sovereignty. The emigration of Loyalists from "rebel" areas before overt conflicts arose helped reduce the potential for violent confrontation.

On the other hand, the American revolutionaries of 1775-1783, including Monroe before his arrival in Paris, were unaware of the rapid changes occurring in France. They were ignorant of French political factionalism and did not know that by 1793 the Revolution had degenerated into open class war between country and city, worker and proprietor, producer and consumer. Such groups as the Enragés, extreme democrats who organized the Société Fraternelle within the Jacobin Club, and whose *sans culotte* leaders sought implementation of general price controls, laws against hoarders and speculators, measures of direct popular rule like the initiative, referendum, and recall, and a bloody purge of royalists and the rich from government and the army; their more moderate colleagues the Hébertists, officers of the Paris Commune; and François-Nöel ("Gracchus") Babeuf, whose search for the correct formula for the *bonheur commun* led him to advocate the equal division of all property and commodities among the members of society in a "community of goods and labor," symbolized the difference between the French Revolution and the American, a difference which Monroe could not understand.[12] In addition, *taxation populaire* (the forced seizure and redistribution of hoarded grain supplies by mobs)–another *modus operandi* which Monroe would find

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anomalous--had been employed since medieval times by crowds of hungry citizens in Paris and the provinces when famine threatened.[13]

In ensuing weeks, the zealous minister expanded his favorable reports on the Thermidorian Reaction and his indictment of Robespierre. The tyrant gone, the people were now "content with the lot they enjoy."[14] "A perfect tranquility continues to reign throughout the Republic," he believed. "The execution of Robespierre and his associates has produced the same effect everywhere."[15] Monroe astutely explained the underlying reason for Robespierre's downfall: the politically influential groups in the National Convention were no longer willing to subordinate the lures of individual profit and personal liberty to an enforced egalitarian Republic of Virtue in which the desires of aggressive individuals were curbed for the benefit of a nebulous "general will." Significantly, Monroe interpreted the outburst of unrestrained economic exploitation which occurred during the Thermidorian Reaction as the fulfillment of the Revolution: "The whole community seemed to be liberated from the most pestilent scourge that ever harassed a country."[16]

At the same time, Monroe was the ideal minister for the Washington Administration to have in Paris while John Jay was simultaneously in London negotiating a treaty of amity and commerce with the British that would be certain to displease America's French allies. With his favorable view of Robespierre's overthrow, the Francophile Monroe found kindred spirits in Paul-François-Nicholas, vicomte de Barras, Louis-Marie La Revélliére-Lepaux, and other moderates who now dominated the Convention. In Monroe's speech before that body on August 13, 1794, in which he received the fraternal embrace from the President of the

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Convention, he attempted to stress the common ground of revolution on which the two republics stood, neglecting to point out how different these revolutions really were. "Republics should approach near to each other," he declared. "But this is especially the case with the American and French Republics." Perhaps forgetting that the National Convention, as distinguished from the United States Congress, was an extralegal, unicameral legislature which had not completed its task of preparing a constitution for the people, Monroe contended that the two forms of government were similar: "They both cherish the same principles and rest on the same basis, the equal and inalienable rights of man."[17] His brilliant rhetoric did not entirely obscure the fact that, despite their devotion to the rights of man, the French leaders had carefully deposed all opposition and had driven dissenting newspapers underground.[18]

Monroe enthusiastically informed his Virginia correspondents of the great victories won by French armies. "The spirit of liberty begins to show itself in other regions," from Geneva to Warsaw, he exulted.[19] In light of these triumphs, Monroe stressed the desirability of strengthening American friendship with France. President Washington had approved his oves toward redirecting the flow of French trade toward the United States. The Committee of Public Safety had transferred all trade with foreign nations from private to governmental hands, thus alienating the merchant community; but Monroe hoped that this centralization might contribute toward the two republics becoming each other's best customers.[20]

Keeping American self-interest in the forefront, Monroe criticized the cold communiqués sent him from Philadelphia. He warned Secretary of State Randolph of the danger of losing French good will. "In the brilliant career of victory which now attends the arms

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of the Republic you will readily conceive that a cordial but dignified tone is better calculated to produce a happy effect, than one which was distant, formal, and merely diplomatic," he advised.[21] Acclaiming the great French victory at the Battle of Fleurus in Belgium (June 26, 1794), Monroe also applauded the increase in national wealth and the dissolution of the Jacobin Club by order of the Convention in November (after prodding by the *jeunesse dorée,* a society of *arriviste* young bourgeois businessmen and bureaucrats joined by a few young aristocrats under the leadership of the turncoat terrorist Stanislaus-Louis-Marie Fréron) portended, in his view, the emergence of the new republic as the greatest power in Europe.[22]

Although Robespierre had opposed wars of foreign conquest, the Convention adopted an expansionist policy after his death, one which Monroe approved. He even applauded the French invasion of the Netherlands, despite its accompanying atrocities. By February 1795 French troops had entered Amsterdam. Monroe anticipated a French withdrawal following a "republicanization" of the Dutch stadtholdrate by the people rather than a foreign army. "The ancient fabric, which was before tottering, will be leveled to the ground" by "the people at large," he predicted. Refusing to accept French imperialism as a fact, he believed that "the ordinary allurements of freedom are sufficiently great to the mass of mankind to require no additional recommendations in its favor." The spirit of the Democratic Revolution had penetrated to the Dutch people, and he was sure that they would "preserve the independence of their country" rather than "become reduced into a few departments of France."[23] Although he deprecated the prospect of French imperialism, Monroe was apparently unaware that it already existed.

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Despite the seeming incongruity, Monroe was firm in his support of the reactionary Thermidorian government, writing his friend congressman James Madison in his ministry's third month that the domestic affairs of France had recovered from Robespierre's tyranny and were "in every respect n the most flourishing condition." The republic's new leaders, according to Monroe, were "wise, humane, and just."[24] Although this juncture produced the White Terror, a random uprising of royalists and the rich against their erstwhile Jacobin oppressors; the *jeunesse dorée;* the return of emigré priests and nobles, and the resurgence of the entrepreneurially-oriented Girondin party and revival of the Roman Catholic Church, Monroe nonetheless contrasted this reaction favorably with the proletarian uprisings of the Terror. In a letter written in January 1795 he informed Secretary of State Randolph:

> During the time of Robespierre, a period of the administration which is emphatically called the reign of terror, much havoc was made not only in the rights of humanity, but great confusion was likewise introduced, in other respects, in the affairs of the government. It has been the systematic effort of the [Thermidorian] administration to repair this waste, and heal the bleeding wound s of the country, and, in this, great progress has been made.[25]

Reporting that he had convinced the Convention to respect United States neutral trade with Great Britain, Monroe applauded such a "wise and humane policy" as characteristic of the new regime. The Girondins and Thomas Paine, whose opposition to the execution of King Louis XVI in 1793 had aroused Jacobin wrath, were set free from prison and permitted to rejoin the National Convention. Monroe was pleased by this as well as by the permission the Convention extended to nobles and foreigners to re-enter France. The return of the ever-arrogant nobles was an instructive lesson, he felt, which while it demonstrated a "spirit of

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humanity and on that account captivates all," presented "before the public, and much to the credit of the Revolution, the strong and interesting contrast between the manly character of the French nation at the present day, and the miserable effeminacy, foppery, and decrepitude of former times." Expecting that the Vendée, a center of royalist and anti-bourgeois sentiment in western France, would be pacified by the decree of general amnesty, Monroe predicted that the termination of that "bloody and destructive" conflict would lend additional strength to the republic.[26]

During the months following his arrival, Monroe persisted in firmly supporting the Thermidorian Convention. He revealed his detestation of radical reformers when he expressed his view that those responsible for the Terror should themselves suffer the guillotine as a matter of course, "by the obligations of justice and humanity." Deploring the Convention's indulgence toward the Robespierrists, he suspected that it sought to "cover with a veil the atrocities which had passed, so far as they could be covered," rather than "punish those of greatest enormity."[27]

In essence, Monroe considered Robespierre an opponent of majority rule and an obstacle tot he fulfillment of the Revolution, regarding with abhorrence his attempts to use his "minority in the Convention" to institute despotic rule with the support of the army and the Paris Commune. After Thermidor the Convention held violence to a minimum, except for the execution of Jean-Baptiste Carrier, the *réprésentant en mission* responsible for the infamous drownings at Nantes during the Reign of Terror. Although Monroe favored the execution, he was relieved, as he reported to Madison, "that no event has taken place" to indicate a recurrence to the Terror on the part of the Convention. And the Jacobin societies wee clearly

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under control.[28] Influenced by such enthusiastic reports on the aftermath of Robespierre's downfall and its moderating effect on the Revolution, Monroe's friend Thomas Jefferson wrote him from Monticello, "Our comfort is that the public sense is coming right on the general principles of republicanism & that its success in France puts it out of danger here."[29]

Early in 1795 Monroe gave his retrospective views on the dissolved Jacobin Club of Paris, analyzing the difference between it and the less radical Democratic-Republican societies which existed (but were in a moribund state) in his own country. Monroe believed that the Jacobin Club had nearly discredited "the cause of republicanism" in France, since Robespierre had manipulated it to gain control over the Convention as a whole by means of its hegemony in Paris. He erroneously informed Madison that the Jacobin Club "was in fact the government of France, and the principal means of retarding the revolution itself; by it all those atrocities which now stain and always will stain certain stages of the revolution were committed, and it had obviously become last pivot upon which the hopes of the coalesced powers depended." He clarified his position when he said that the Jacobin Club was "therefore the greatest enemy of the revolution, and so clear was this that all France called for its overthrow by some act of violence."[30]

This was an extreme statement, but it revealed Monroe's belief that the excesses of the Reign of Terror had served the purposes of the foreign powers aligned against France by paving the way for anarchy and ensuing foreign conquest. He did not understand that Robespierre sought to preserve order through governmental control in a precarious situation, and that the Jacobin club and its auxiliaries served only as one means in performing this

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function.[31]

Nor did Monroe understand the true nature of the Jacobin Club as a political discussion group rather than a faction in control of the government. Having reached political maturity in a revolutionary Virginia atmosphere in which the actions of ministries, Parliament, and eventually the king himself were viewed as the product of a conspiracy to deprive the colonists of their natural and chartered liberties, he sought to make the French Revolution intelligible in terms of faction and conspiracy. Fearing "factions" in opposition to a government having difficulty establishing its authority, Monroe had supported increased national powers when he served in the United States Confederation Congress in the 1780s; it was largely for reasons peculiar to his state's interests (e.g., the new government's treaty-making and direct tax powers) that he opposed the United States Constitution when he served as delegate to the ratifying convention in 1788.[32] His anxiety for law and order and a stable national government greatly increased by the situation he observed in Paris, Monroe eagerly justified the Convention's decisions to curtail freedom of assembly and freedom of the press in the interest of national unity.

At the beginning of 1795, social and economic unrest in Paris intensified. Bread was scarce, partly as a result of poor harvests but primarily because farmers and merchants wee hoarding grain to induce price rises. Jacobin agitation had revived on the part of the Paris working classes; the disorder was aggravated by the by the revolutionary tribunal's trial of the old terrorists, Bertrand Barère de Vieuzac, Jean Marie Collot d'Herbois, and Jacques-Nicolas Bilaud-Varennes. It was foolish to wait so long before prosecuting these members of the old Robespierrist committee of public safety, Monroe apprehended. But the government was fully

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justified, he believed, in asserting its power over traitors. He hoped for the early defeat of the renewed rebellion in the Vendée, which he considered counter-revolutionary, incongruously regarding it as of the same ilk as Robespierre's committee, lumping them together as forces opposed to the "completion" of the Revolution.[33] Thus he expressed his American conservatism–a distaste for extremes of either the Right or the Left, and suspicion of any movements in which the untutored masses appeared to take the lead. And the French Revolution, although it aroused much vitriol between parties in America and France alike, was less divisive in Monroe's home country than it appeared to be. Both Federalists and Republicans adhered to a middle-class mentality that abhorred any resort to force to make changes in the political economy, especially on behalf of the dispossessed classes. In their outlook on foreign affairs, they had their favorites–France or Great Britain-- but this was more a question of the birth pangs of a new people emerging from colonialism and standing on their feet as "the first new nation," as Seymour Martin Lipset calls it, than of contending predilections for socialism or capitalism.[34] In the case of Monroe and his friends, however, their demand for political reform in both the American and French polities to accord with a more democratic and egalitarian sentiment as compared with the ambience of the Ancien Régime's monarchies and aristocracies was a serious one, as compared with the Burkean, Federalist proclivity for adherence to a merely modified version of an elitist status quo in both the Old and New Worlds. This would constitute the gist of the argument between the Federalists and Republicans before 1800. And Monroe would not always be so confident that his side would triumph.

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NOTES: PROLOGUE: JAMES MONROE'S FRENCH REVOLUTION

* This essay has been published in revised form as "The Limits of Republican Ideology: James Monroe in Thermidorian Paris, 1794-1796," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 79 (Winter, 1997), 5-45.

1. Some examples are Norman K. Risjord, "The Virginia Federalists," Journal of Southern History, 33 (1967), 486-517; Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill, 1957), 54; and Joyce Appleby, "The New Republican Synthesis and the Changing Political Ideas of John Adams," American Quarterly, 25 (1973), 578-595, esp. 590-591.

2. Harry Ammon, "The Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia: An Interpretation," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 71 (1963), 159. In an earlier study, however, Ammon put much less emphasis on the French Revolution's impact in concretizing Republican opposition to Federalist policies. Unable to make a "constructive counterproposal" to Hamilton's fiscal system, he argued, they concentrated their attack on foreign policy issues largely out of expediency: "The crystallization of the Republican party from a vague opposition was achieved by concentrating upon a safer and in some ways seemingly less significant issue which required no constructive counterproposal"–foreign affairs and the distant French Revolution. Harry Ammon, "The Formation of the Republican Party in Virginia, 1789-1796," Journal of Southern History, 283-310, quoted, 310. Other studies which emphasize the role of the French Revolution in the maturation of Republican ideology are Richard Hofstadter, The Idea of a Party System: The Rise of Legitimate Opposition in the United States, 1780-1840 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1969), 88-90; Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca, N. Y., 1978), chap. 8; and Banning, "The Jeffersonian Ideology and the French Revolution: A Question of Liberticide at Home," Studies in Burke and His Time, 17 (1976), 5-26.

3. Ralph Ketcham, "France and American Politics, 1763-1793," Political Science Quarterly, 78 (1963), 223; Lawrence S. Kaplan, Jefferson and France: An Essay on Politics and Political Ideas (New Haven, 1967), 40-44, 75, and chaps. 3 and 4; Alexander DeConde, Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy Under George Washington (Durham, N. C., 1958), 56-57, 86-87, 256; and Rudolph Bell, Party and Faction in American Politics: The House of Representatives, 1789-1801 (Westport, Conn., 1973), a quantitative study which considers pre-1795 domestic issues as the authentic source of party division. The classic statement of the primary role of domestic issues, particularly Hamilton's fiscal system, in provoking the rise of party conflict, Charles A. Beard's Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York, 1915), ignores questions of foreign policy. A recent work which views the party conflict in the nation's capital as the product of competition for office between new and old elites is Richard G. Miller, Philadelphia–The Federalist City: A Study of Urban Politics, 1789-1801 (Port Washington, N. Y., 1976).

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4. See the three following influential articles by Marshall Smelser: "The Jacobin Phrenzy: Federalism and the Menace of Liberty, Equality, and Fraternity," Review of Politics, 13 (1951), 457-482; "The Jacobin Phrenzy: The Menace of Monarchy, Plutocracy, and Anglophilia, 1789-1798," ibid., 21 (1959), 239-258; and "The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion," American Quarterly, 10 (1958), 391-419; John R. Howe, Jr., "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790's," American Quarterly, 19 (1967), 147-165; and Richard Buel, Jr., Securing the Revolution: Ideology in American Politics (Ithaca, N. Y. , 1972). Perceptive discussions of Federalist absorption into the Republican party after the War of 1812 are Hofstadter, Idea of a Party System, chap. 5; Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Era of Good Feelings," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 66 (1958), 387-398; and Shaw Livermore, Jr., The Twilight of Federalism (Princeton, 1962).

5. "A True American," New York Commercial Advertiser, Oct. 4, 1797. Republicans sometimes charged that the Federalists were the "bosom friends" and "admirers" of Robespierre. See Philadelphia Aurora, Nov. 11, 1796, which warned: "If these friends of ROBESPIERRE were completely triumphant here, instead of 'popular tyranny,' we should have aristocratic despotism, that would prostrate every thing noble in human nature in the dust." It seems that neither political party wished to bear the odium attached to Robespierre.

6. "Scipio" [Uriah Tracy], Reflections on Monroe's 'View of the Conduct of the Executive' (Boston, 1798), esp. 61, 86, 117-124; Philadelphia Gazette of the United States, Aug. 31, 1797("Albany"), Sept. 2 and 20, 1797; Fisher Ames to Christopher Gore, Feb. 24, 1795, in Seth Ames, ed., Works of Fisher Ames (2 vols., Boston, 1854), I, 167; Norman V. Blantz, "Editors and Issues: The Party Press in Philadelphia, 1789-1801" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1974), 196; "An American," in Virginia Argus, copied in Gazette of the United States, April 21, 1797; Elbridge Gerry to Monroe, Monroe Papers, New York Public Library.

7. Outstanding studies of Franco-American relations during this period include DeConde, Entangling Alliance, and Albert H. Bowman, The Struggle for Neutrality: Franco-American Diplomacy During the Federalist Era (Knoxville, Tenn., 1974), which confine themselves to a brief examination of Monroe's diplomacy, as does, at somewhat greater length, Beverly W. Bond, "The Monroe Mission to France, 1794-1796," Johns Hopkins University, Studies in Historical and Political Science, XXV, nos. 2-3 (Baltimore, 1907), which likewise fails to discuss his views of France's internal problems or ideological questions during his residence in Paris. Other surveys of this period which fail to probe Monroe's attitude to the Reign of Terror or gauge its ideological significance are Bernard Fay, The Revolutionary Spirit in France and America (New York, 1927), 349-351, 377-379, and Charles D. Hazen, Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution (Baltimore, 1897). Harry Ammon's superb biography, James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York, 1971), has superseded W. P. Cresson, James Monroe (Chapel Hill, 1946), but neither of these accounts takes Monroe seriously as a political thinker or ideologue, preferring to concentrate primarily on his political career and his personal life. Even Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca, N. Y., 1978), an important study of Republican thought, essentially ignores Monroe. The only major studies

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to consider Monroe as a viable republican thinker are Hofstadter, Idea of a Party System, 188-198, and Stuart G. Brown, The First Republicans (Syracuse, 1954), but they do not discuss Monroe's observations of the Parisian scene. A comprehensive study of Monroe's political theory is greatly needed. Despite the banality of his views, we often forget that he was in pubic life longer and held a greater number of important offices than either of his more famous contemporaries, Jefferson and Madison.

8. For studies which use the "reference group" concept, see Angus Campbell et al., The American Voter: An Abridgment (New York, 1964), 161-162, and Lee Benson, The Concept of Jacksonian Democracy: New York as a Test Case (Princeton, 1961), 281, 284-287.

9. Monroe to Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, Aug. 15, 1794, in Stanislaus M. Hamilton, ed., The Writings of James Monroe (7 vols.; New York, 1898-1903), II, 16. Robespierre's conservative foes in the National Convention (the party of the Plain) as well as royalist advocates of a monarchical restoration, deluged the presses with defamatory pamphlets in the months after his death. This helps to explain the popular image of him as a bloodthirsty monster which Monroe had adopted and which persists to the present. See Ash Gobar, "The Antirobespierrist Legend" (M. A. thesis, University of Chicago, 1954). Recent historians tend to exculpate Robespierre from the Reign of Terror's excesses. See Robert R. Palmer, Twelve Who Ruled (Princeton, 1941); George A. Kelly, "Conceptual Sources of the Terror," Eighteenth-Century Studies, 14 (1980), 18-36; and George Rudé, Robespierre (New York, 1975).

10. Monroe to Secretary of State Edmund Randolph, Aug. 15, 1794, in Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 16.

11. Numerous books and essays have been written contrasting the "moderation" of the American Revolution with the violence and social dislocation wrought by the French and other "radical" European revolutions. Among the more perceptive are Robert R. Palmer, "The Great Inversion: America and Europe in the Eighteenth-Century Revolution," in Richard Herr and Harold T. Parker, eds., Ideas in History (Durham, N.C., 1965), 3-19, and Palmer, "The Fading Dream: How European Revolutionaries Have Seen the American Revolution," in Bede K. Lackner and Kenneth R. Philp, eds., Essays on Modern European Revolutionary History (Austin, Tex., 1977), esp. 96-102; Marcel Reinhard, "Travaux et Perspectives sur la Révolution française," Annales: Economies, Societés, Civilisatons, 14 (1959), 553-557; and Bernard Bailyn, "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth-Century America," American Historical Review, 67 (1962), 339-351. Crane Brinton, Anatomy of Revolution (New York, 1965) and Hannah Arendt, On Revolution (New York, 1963) find the French Revolution objectionable because of its internecine violence and ostensible subordination of individual rights to vague but sweeping ideologies. They prefer the American Revolution's moderate reforms.

12. Alfred Cobban, The Social Interpretation of the French Revolution (Cambridge, 1965); George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (London, 1959), 23-26, 96, 115-117, 125-126; R. B. Rose, The Enragés: Socialists of the French Revolution? (Sydney, 1965), 83-92; and his Gracchus

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Babeuf: The First Revolutionary Communist (Stanford, 1978); Albert Soboul, The French Revolution, 1787-1799 (New York, 1975), 18-19, 487-492.

13. R. B. Rose, "Eighteenth Century Price Riots, the French Revolution and the Jacobin Maximum," International Review of Social History, 4 (1959), 432-445; Louise A. Tilly, "The Food Riot as a Form of Political Conflict in France," Journal of Interdisciplinary History, 2 (1971), 23-57; Olwen Hufton, "Women in Revolution 1789-1796," Past and Present, 53 (1971), 96-108; Rose, Babeuf, 172-173, 182-183; and Steven L. Kaplan, "The Famine Plot Persuasion in Eighteenth-Century France," American Philosophical Society, Transactions, 72, pt. 3 (1982).

14. Monroe to Randolph, Aug. 15, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 16.

15. Monroe to Randolph, Aug. 24, 1794, ibid., 35.

16. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 2, 1794, ibid., 38. In their motivation to unleash opportunities for individual profit, the Thermidorians were similar to the precursors of the American Revolution. See Joyce Appleby, "The Social Origins of American Revolutionary Ideology," Journal of American History, 64 (1978), 935-958.

17. Monroe to the National Convention, Aug. 13, 1794, ibid., 13.

18. On the Convention's suppression of opposition, see Georges Lefebvre, The Thermidorians and the Directory (New York, 1964), 10-56.

19. Monroe to Jefferson, Sept. 7, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 52.

20. Monroe to Randolph, Oct. 16, 1794, ibid., 70. Georges Lefebvre, The French Revolution from 1793 to 1799 (New York, 1964), 67, 76, 106; DeConde, Entangling Alliance, 353-356; Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 177-186. Peter P. Hill finds Monroe's efforts to gain commercial concessions unsuccessful, and emphasizes the French Government's alienation from the sharp business practices of American merchants. Peter P. Hill, "Prologue to the Quasi-War: Stresses in Franco-American Commercial Relations, 1793-1796," Journal of Modern History (On-Demand Supplement], 49 (1977), D1039-D1069.

21. Monroe to Randolph, Sept. 15, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 63.

22. Monroe to Washington, Nov. 19, 1794, ibid., 114; to Randolph, Nov. 20, 1794, ibid., 124; Lefebvre, French Revolution 1793 to 1799, 17, 32, 128; Soboul, French Revoluton, 422-425.

23. Monroe to Randolph, Feb. 1, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 188, 191.

24. Monroe to Madison, Dec. 18, 1794, ibid., 155.

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25. Monroe to Randolph, Jan. 13, 1795, ibid., 172, 174-175; Stuart G. Brown, ed., The Autobiography of James Monroe (Syracuse, N. Y., 1959), 60-61, 68-69, 72-73, 82-83, 85-88, 98-101. The manuscript of Monroe's autobiography is in the Monroe Papers at the New York Public Library. Left unfinished at his death, it was the work of his last years. Stuart G. Brown estimates he composed it between 1827 and 1830. Ibid., "Preface," v. Monroe died on July 4, 1831. On the counter-revolution in France, see Jacques Godechot, The Counter-Revolution: Doctine and Action, 1789-1804 (New York, 1971), 224-230, 256-260; Charles Tilly, The Vendée (Cambridge, Mass., 1964).

26. Monroe to Randolph, Jan. 13, 1795, ibid., 172, 174-175. Monroe's exasperating relationship with Paine, who lived for almost a year at his house, is well-covered in Ammon, Monroe, 135-137, and DeConde, Entangling Alliance, 357.

27. Monroe to Randolph, Jan. 13, 1795, ibid., 175.

28. Monroe to Madison, Nov. 30, 1794, ibid., 132. Carrier was executed on Dec. 16, 1794. He protested his innocence so far as the drownings were concerned, but accepted responsibility for the executions which took place by firing squad. Soboul, French Revolution, 425-426.

29. Jefferson to Monroe, May 26, 1795, Paul L. Ford, ed., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 10 vols. (New York, 1892-1899), VII, 17. See also Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Jefferson's Foreign Policy and Napoleon's Ideologues," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 19 (1962), 347-48.

30. Monroe to Madison, Feb. 18, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 208. The program and political strength of the Jacobin party at this time are examined in Isser Woloch, Jacobin Legacy: The Democratic Movement under the Directory (Princeton, 1970), 3-47, and Richard C. Cobb, The Police and the People: French Popular Protest, 1789-1820 (Oxford, 1970). On the Democratic societies, see Philip S. Foner, The Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800: A Documentary Sourcebook of Constitutions, Declarations, Addresses, Resolutions, and Toasts (Westport, Conn., 1976); and Alan L. Blau, "New York City and the French Revolution, 1789-1797: A Study of French Revolutionary Influence" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, City University of New York, 1973), 387-395, 420-421.

31. See the analysis in Robert R. Palmer, Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800, 2 vols. (Princeton, 1959-1964), II, 30.

32. In general, see Thad W. Tate, "The Coming of the Revolution in Virginia: Britain's Challenge to Virginia's Ruling Class, 1763-1776," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 19 (1962), 340-343; T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution (Princeton, 1985); Jack P. Greene, The Quest for Power (Chapel Hill, 1963); and John M. Murrin, "The Great Inversion, or Court Versus Country: A Comparison of the Revolution Settlements in England (1688-1721) and America (1776-1816)," in J. G. A. Pocock, ed., Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776 (Princeton, 1980), 368-453. Monroe's nationalist role in Congress during the 1780s and his

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opposition to the Constitution are described in Ammon, Monroe, 41-80. Monroe favored a strong national executive directly elected by the voters, as well as a popularly elected senate apportioned by state population. He opposed congressional power of direct taxation, although he favored national control of the tariff. Ammon properly calls him a "moderate" in his views on the Constitution. Ibid., 68-73.

33. Monroe to Randolph, March 6, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 220.

34. Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nation: The United States in Comparative and Historical Perspective (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); Robert H. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion (New York: Knopf, 1984), chap. 4; Thomas C. Barrow, "The American Revolution as a Colonial War for Independence," William and Mary Quarterly, 25 (1968), 452-464.

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CHAPTER 3.
AN INNOCENT ABROAD: JAMES MONROE IN THERMIDORIAN PARIS, 1794-1796*

In the spring of 1795, Monroe's expectations were sanguine. There was no danger of the restoration of the "ancient monarchy," he believed, because "the great mass of the French nation through all the vicissitudes of the war. . . was always on the side of the revolution."[1] Perhaps Monroe was overly optimistic, since there was vocal and violent discontent, especially in the provincial cities--Lyons, Bordeaux, and Marseilles--and the Vendée, while the urban proletariat was estranged from the post-Robespierre Convention as a result of the termination of bread subsidies for the poor and its passage of a regressive direct tax program. Meanwhile, the peasant classes which had initiated and supported the Revolution in 1789 had become apathetic and politically quiescent.[2]

Violence erupted in April 1795, in the insurrection of Germinal, an attempt by rioters to intimidate the convention into freeing Robespierre's Montagnard cronies. They shouted for "Bread and the Constitution of 1793"--the constitution passed during the Terror, which provided for universal manhood suffrage and guaranteed a subsistence income to all citizens,

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but which had never been enacted. An armed force commanded by General Jean-Charles Pichegru arrested the rioters and saved the Convention without bloodshed.[3]

A more serious revolt occurred in May 1795 (the Revolutionary calendar's month of Prairial). These disturbances ended in bloodshed. Paris workers momentarily took over the Convention, demanded bread and the release of the terrorists, and intimidated a rump Convention into granting their demands for price controls and the Constitution of 1793. The National Guard, however, suppressed the uprising. A vengeful Convention sentenced six Montagnard deputies who had supported the insurrection to the guillotine, along with hundreds of insurgents, and deported the Robespierrist deputies.[4]

Carefully evaluating the uprisings and their outcome, Monroe wrote Secretary of State Randolph that he was encouraged by the fact that "the character of the movement was decidedly anti-monarchical." To his friend Jefferson he reported with greater alarm: "Its success, if it had succeeded, would have revived the reign of terror, and most probably carried all the aristocrats, along with the leading men of the preponderating party, to the scaffold."[5] Seemingly unaware that a "White Terror" by royalist militia against democrats and radicals in progress throughout France was condoned by the Convention, he was now confident of the success of its republican experiment. Not violence but reason was the essence of the Revolution, Monroe believed; admiring the Thermidorian Convention as a moderate group of clear-headed leaders, he contended that violence and riots were anti-revolutionary forces. He recognized that their virtual absence in America was unique: the food riots of Prairial, he said, were caused by a distress "never seen on our side of the Atlantic."[6] Thus he dimly perceived a

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major difference between the American and French revolutions.

In general, however, Monroe's comments on the starving Paris workers seemed somewhat callous. Despite the existence of widespread starvation and the Germinal riots, he assured Randolph of the city's "perfect tranquillity." The people supported the Convention, he noted, but they had no bread. "The distress of the people on account of the scarcity of bread. . . has been like that of a besieged town," he lamented. "They have been constantly upon allowance, which was latterly reduced to two ounces and sometimes less per day." Though Monroe bought bread for his family at exorbitant prices on the black market, he tried not to grieve for the poverty-stricken masses surrounding him, who, he implied, could forego food! While reporting the Germinal riots against the Convention, he denied their real cause--economic grievances and near-starvation--and instead attributed them, as was his wont, to foreign influence. "The accounts which we have of the distress of the aged, the infirm, and even of children, are most afflicting," he wrote. "Yet calmness and serenity are seen everywhere; complaints diminish, and that ferocity which was observable on the 12th of Germinal [April 1], on the part of those who forcibly entered the convention, and which was excited by the animosity of the contending parties, and most probably encreased [sic] by foreign influence, has entirely disappeared." It is only fair to mention that in this same letter Monroe urged the United States to supply France with bread until its current rye crop ripened in late spring.[7] He was also among those who favored the advance payment of the United States war debt to France by means of a government loan to be used by the French to purchase grain.[8]

The riots united the country against radicalism. Even the royalists rallied to the

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moderates out of fear of the Montagnards, who might have guillotined them all. In the calm following the storm, all parties attempted to cooperated in giving stability to the Revolution. François-Antoine Boissy d' Anglas, a member of the convention with whom Monroe was on good terms, advocated constitutional monarchy, indirect elections of representatives, and a restricted suffrage. He played a leading role in drafting the Constitution of 1795 (Year III of the Republic), heading a committee of eleven appointed on April 18 (29 Germinal) to compose the document, whose members were republicans like Pierre-Claude Daunou, Louis-Marie La Revelliere-Lepaux, Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvray, and monarchists like Boissy d'Anglas and Jean-Denis, comte de Lanjuinais. Moderate republicans (members of the Party of the Plain) and constitutional monarchists alike, determined to avoid the extremes of democracy and dictatorship, agreed that the new constitution should embody the principles of 1789, but with a slant toward the rights of property holders that would please the bourgeoisie. As Boissy d'Anglas tersely explained in his report to the Convention on 5 Messidor (June 23, 1795): "Absolute equality is a chimera."[9]

Monroe attended these committee meetings, and was partly responsible for the Constitution's bicameral legislature. He took pride in helping to create France's Constitution of 1795, in which he played an even more direct role than his revered predecessor Jefferson had in composing the Declaration of the Rights of Man in 1789. The National Convention made Monroe increasingly aware of his country's uniqueness and his burden of responsibility. Monroe reminisced in his posthumously published autobiography that the members of the constitutional committee, "anxious to acquire every light which might aid them in the execution

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of so important a duty," asked him for enlightenment regarding the provisions of "the constitutions of our several states and also... that of the United States, whose revolution rested on the same basis with their own, the sovereignty of the people, and whose Constitution had been founded on it." (With the benefit of thirty years hindsight, the former Antifederalist recognized the identity between the republican principles of the state and national forms of government). Members of the committee requested Monroe to prepare "a digest of those constitutions," which he delivered to them after having it translated into French.[10]

Obviously in connection with this assignment, Monroe compiled "Notes about American Constitutions," dated June 7, 1795, in which he cited what he considered the most important features of the state and national institutions. Equality before the law and in pursuit of political office were of signal importance, as was the provision for an independent judiciary with fixed salaries to secure its autonomy from legislative manipulation. Emphasizing the divergent political heritages of the Old World and the New, Monroe asserted: "In the United States of America, the rights of men are equal. They have no hereditary orders of any kind in any station. All the citizens are eligible under certain qualifications for the highest offices of the government, and these qualifications make no distinction in respect to rights, every one, being capable of acquiring them." While he boasted that any citizen could be elected to the state or national legislature, and that manhood suffrage was widespread, he confessed, "In some instances qualifications by property, either by land or rents, is recquisite [sic] in both cases."[11]

In effect, Monroe believed that in America, the acquisition of property–and thus eligibility for office (restricted in some states to property holders)--was open to every man. He

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had high hopes for America's future prosperity, economic growth, and relative economic equality. Nonetheless, his outlook was a far cry from Alexander Hamilton's proposal at the 1787 Convention that electors for U.S. president as well as for national senators be required to possess a large amount of wealth.[12]

Reviewing the unique federal system with its principles of separation of powers and checks and balances, Monroe perceived that in both the state and national governments, whose structures were similar, there was a contest for hegemony between the legislature and the executive: "The power in every one is distributed into three branches, legislative, executive, & judicial, and each of which branches is made as independant [sic] as possible of the others: indeed, it is a principle well established that in proportion as this independence is destroyed, and the ascendency given to either the executive or legislative (for it cannot be given to the judicial) does the government become less free." Thus he condoned the judiciary's relative weakness compared with the other branches, perhaps because it was not popularly elected. Noting that the vital balance of governmental powers between the three branches might be achieved through their fiscal autonomy, he re-emphasized the power of the purse: "Both the executive magistrates & the Judges have fixed salaries, not to be varied whilst they respectively remain in office, the object of which is to secure and preserve their independence of the legislature."[13] Like himself, Madison and Jefferson during the 1780's, Monroe was still sensitive to the threat of the "tyranny of the legislature," as it was widely called.

It was because of Monroe's fear of legislative tyranny that he wished to replace the committee's five-man Directory with a single executive, a stronger foil against the bicameral

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councils. However, he seemed conciliatory to the committee's desire for a plural executive: "If you put in the Executive more than one member, certainly if more than 7 or 5 at most, you cannot well have a council," he believed, since there were too many executives, too many cooks to spoil the broth and diffuse (as well as defuse) responsibility. He observed mockingly, "when the [executive] branch is composed of several [members] it is itself a council." Deriding the trio of the Directory, the Council of Five Hundred and the Council of Ancients, he wrote: "It would therefore be improper to have one executive council, whose business it was simply to execute the laws, & constituting a branch [of] that Executive power, & another whose business it was to advise this how to execute the laws, without whose advice it would not act." (Monroe was probably referring to the provisions of the new constitution whereby the Council of Five Hundred supervised the Directory's command of the army and its use of executive powers).[14] Maintaining that the executive should be independent of the legislature, Monroe thus reiterated the concern he had earlier voiced in "Some Observations" that the president should not be required to resort for advice to an institutionalized, "constitutional council."[15]

Stressing that, under the United States Constitution, although the national government had priority in "national concerns" over the states, its powers were strictly limited, Monroe explained: "The line of separation between the national & state governments is drawn in the constitution of the former; by which it is endowed with special powers only: hence it follows that it possesses those only which are specified, & of course that the states lose those only which are likewise thus specified." This precise statement revealed that Monroe still thought it imperative to defend the rights of the states. It may also have been Monroe's oblique way of

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hinting that he did not think that the French national government should abolish all provinces and counties and replace them with centralized *départements*.

Seeking to elaborate for the French the precise "organization" of each branch of America's governments, Monroe pointed out that each house of the legislature ("a senate and house of delegates or representatives") "has a right to originate & amend bills (except that money bills or those which impose taxes must originate in the most numerous branch), & which being sent to the other, may either be rejected or passed; if rejected, it is as if the subject had not been touched; if passed, it is a law, except in those cases where the Executive has a qualified negative as is the case in the constitutions of some of the States, and in that of the U. States." He explained that an affirmative vote by two-thirds of both houses could override a presidential veto ("qualified negative").

Continuing his exegesis, Monroe jumbled together information about the state and national legislatures. Describing the national upper house, he stressed that it was chosen by the state legislatures rather than the people: "The qualification for the Senator & elector, is in general the same in each state as that for the delegate or representative, except in the state of Maryland the [state] senators are chosen by electors who are chosen by the people, and in the Constitution of the U.S. they are chosen by the legislatures of each state." Monroe was aware that some states, like Virginia, had undemocratically apportioned legislative representation equally by counties irrespective of population, while other states more equitably divided counties into legislative districts in proportion to numbers. He wanted the Frenchmen to know that, in general, the upper house was smaller than the lower, more democratic house.

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Upholding the "liberal" view of Madison's Federalist Number 10, that the upper house would represent the more "refined," elite and intellectual elements of the public, while the lower would embody the average citizen--a slightly divergent view from the classical republican schema, immortalized in John Adams' Defence of the Constitutions (1787-1788) that the members of the upper house would protect the wealthy, and the democratic masses would be represented by average men in the lower-- Monroe said: "The principle upon which the representation in each house was formed was that by a very full representation in one house the interests & business of the people might be completely represented & by the one in the other the wisdom of the country might be collected."[16]

In common with Jefferson and Madison, Monroe felt that the Senate should represent the republic's refined, rational elements rather than merely the rich or the propertied. "The one house was designed as a popular branch, the other as a wise one or board of revision," he said. But he concluded that practice had belied this elitist facet of the classical republican theory of balanced government: "The experiment however has shewn [sic] that the wisest & most distinguished men generally prefer the most numerous branch, being the theatre whereon to display their talents with greater effect, and in consequence that the other branch is filled by sedate provident old men, who are more distinguished for their gravity and moderation than for their wisdom." Perhaps with the United States Senate or the legislatures of New York and Pennsylvania in mind, Monroe observed that "in some instances, the Senate has been filled with men of talents, equal & perhaps superior to many in the other house."[17] Unlike more radical democratic thinkers, he did not perceive the upper house exclusively as a bastion of wealth and

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privilege.[18]

At this point Monroe espoused an original idea for adoption by the French. He wished to increase the similarity between the upper and lower houses, as he had when he proposed the apportionment of both House and Senate according to population during the ratifying debates in 1788. Now he recommended that new republics form legislatures on a slightly different basis than America's, with "a senate organized upon different principles than those avowed there, precisely in fact upon those of the other branch; the same in point of numbers, tenure of service, and gratifications." In proposing that the upper and lower houses have the same number of members (although at this time he did not insist on their election by the same constituencies), Monroe was in tacit opposition to the viewpoint of Madison's Federalist Number 10. He now asserted that, the greater the number of representatives, the more likely that men of reason would emerge (or perhaps he really meant that representatives would be more likely to keep in touch with their constituents, as he had opined in 1788 when he opposed nationally imposed direct taxes in Some Observations). Of such a more numerous senate he predicted, "The presumption is it would possess greater talents, a higher degree of confidence of the people, & of course that the system of legislation would be wiser & the people happier."[19]

Although elimination of the Constitution of 1793's provisions for universal manhood suffrage and guaranteed subsistence and security for all citizens disconcerted the lower classes and the Jacobin and Babouvist elements, Monroe was not perturbed. Reporting that the new constitution contained provisions for a bicameral legislature on the American model, he

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concluded that this "is certainly of greater importance to the preservation of their liberty than any other that has been spoken of," ignoring the fact that the more liberal provisions of the Constitution of 1793 had been set aside.[20]

The Convention appended a supplementary decree to the constitution of 1795 requiring that two-thirds of those originally chosen to the legislative councils be incumbent members of the Convention. To keep up the pretense of free elections, these old deputies might be reelected by the electoral assemblies; but if those precautions failed to result in the election of the requisite number of incumbents, the Convention itself would name the rest from its own ranks. These decrees were especially unpopular in Paris. Although the Constitution was accepted by a large majority in a nationwide referendum, the two-thirds decree was overwhelming rejected in Paris, only one of its forty-eight sections voting for it. Thanks to the vote of the army and navy the decrees won a majority, but their passage led to the revolt of Vendémiare (October 1795), in which royalist leaders seeking to abolish republicanism were aided by an unwitting Paris bourgeoisie who had become disillusioned with the Revolution and its currency devaluations, trade restrictions, riots and food shortages. Joined by a few radicals, these people wanted to get rid of the Convention, which seemed about to establish a self-perpetuating oligarchy. However, General Napoleon Bonaparte's army dispersed the rebellion by skillful use of artillery.[21]

Monroe's official reports home to Secretary of State Randolph and his successor, Francophobe Timothy Pickering, tended to minimize France's internal problems. "The discussion upon the Constitution has been conducted with great temper, and the harmony of

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opinion throughout greater than could have been expected," he said. He tended to blame the democrats rather than the royalists for the disturbances. Monroe did not regret the abandonment of the 1793 constitution, since he favored the separation of powers ("a new bulwark in favor of republican government"), which he believed was embodied in the Constitution of 1795. Nevertheless, the separation of powers principle was imperfectly realized. The bicameral legislature--a two-hundred-and-fifty-member Council of Ancients, married men or widowers required to be over forty years old, in effect comprised an upper house which decided which "resolutions" proposed by the Council of Five Hundred became law. Thus, the upper house actually had greater power than the lower. In addition, the Executive Directory, rather than being elected by the people, was chosen by the legislature, thereby further encroaching on that principle.[22]

Although Monroe acclaimed the Convention's victory in pushing through the new constitution, his official correspondence betrayed great concern about the security of its triumph. Its defeat would have "promised. . . not perhaps essentially to impede or vary the direct course of the revolution; but, most probably, to involve the nation in a civil war; open a new scene of carnage and deluge the country." Despite Monroe's relief at the adoption of the Constitution of 1795, he sympathized with the opposition to the decree calling for two-thirds of the newly-created bicameral legislature to be composed of incumbents from the existing National Convention, feeling that it was based "upon republican principles; the unalienable right of suffrage, etc."[23]

In letters to his friend James Madison, Monroe revealed somewhat more trepidation on

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the question of the validity of the Constitution of 1795, with its limited suffrage and indirect system of elections, which, combined with the two-thirds decree and a provision that the legislature could nullify the outcome of all elections at will, made it an undemocratic instrument of government. His description of "the late terrible commotion" of Vendémiaire and its suppression by the army was designed to convince his friend, and perhaps himself, that the Parisians had voluntarily submitted to the Convention's authority and consented to surrender. "The sense of the citizens was for the measure, or it would not be done," he contended, and they had gladly "disarmed themselves" at the Convention's request. "If they were not for it the situation of the republick would be an unpleasant one for otherwise the citizens would be deemed against the revolution, & which is certainly (I speak of a great majority) not the case." He sought to convey an impression of harmonious unanimity within the Convention, despite the reality of class conflict which persisted even after Robespierre's execution. "All is yet well & promises to be," he predicted on the eve of the new government's inauguration, despite an acrimonious debate between Jean-Lambert Tallien, an erstwhile follower of Robespierre, and François-Antoine Boissy d'Anglas, a leader of the Thermidorians in the Convention, who was accused of favoritism for the royalist Vendémiaire rioters. However, the controversy ended peacefully when a committee headed by Tallien exonerated Anglas of complicity in fomenting the insurrection.[24]

The salutary outcome of the Convention debate renewed Monroe's confidence in the success of the new government and the accord within its leadership. As he told Madison, "I know B. D'Anglass [sic] & I think him true to the revolution, as I likewise think Talien [sic],

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whom I also know. After this I am persuaded nothing will intervene, & that the new govt. will commence under favorable auspices." Monroe invariably suspected that any disturbance of the nation's rapport was the product of the manipulations of foreign agents hostile to the Revolution. Earlier, he imagined that the Paris Jacobin Club was infiltrated by agents provocateurs, and now he said the same about the Rightist conspirators who led the recent outbreak against the government: "The present is indeed an awful moment here. The change of the government & the momentary suspension of affairs makes it greatly so, especially when it is known, as it is , that foreign powers are if not at the bottom, yet deeply concerned in every movement."[25]

Such views accorded with the Convention's propaganda. Yet Monroe was not the only American in Paris who believed it. After the sans-culotte uprising of Prairial (May 1795), for instance, Thomas Handasyd Perkins, a wealthy Boston merchant visiting Europe on business, inscribed in his diary:

> The Convention is said to have discovered a plot, at the head of which were [Pierre Joseph] Cambon and the other Jacobins who were of the Convention, and who have done every thing to produce an insurrection and stir up a disturbance in Paris. To effect this, they are said to have taken measures to stop the arrival of grain; and have distributed money amongst the malcontents, to aid them in their deeds of darkness. They intended to have cut off the present ruling members of the Convention, and, that they might bring the royalists into their party, they intended to establish young Capet [Louis XVII] on the throne. All this has been discovered; and the authors or the heads of the party are called upon to come to the Convention and vindicate themselves, or they are deemed convicted and sentenced to transportation.[26]

These rumors were on the whole unfounded. But that did not prevent Monroe and others from

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believing them, especially when the French Government encouraged these misconceptions as a means of consolidating its power and ascribing to itself the virtues of patriotic nationalism, while stigmatizing its opponents as subversive agents of its monarchical enemies.

Monroe was inclined to see the glass half-full rather than half-empty. He thought that the failure of the "attack on the Convention" proved the "foundation of the revolution. . . solid." Nevertheless, he soberly concluded one of his letters to Madison with the words, "In the course of ten days the new government will be organized, if nothing operates to prevent it."[27]

The smooth operation of the new constitution's electoral machinery, whereby a majority of resident taxpayers over the age of twenty-one met in primary assemblies to choose thirty thousand property-owning electors who appointed the two legislative houses and other officials, inspired the American minister to jubilant rhetorical heights. "The prospect is that the present will be a propitious Era in the history of the revolution," he wrote. A bicameral legislature, he predicted, would neutralize factious elements, especially since the election decree had diffused the former membership of the unicameral Convention among the separate chambers. "The spirit of dissension seems already to be checked," he commented, praising the system whereby the five-man executive directory was selected by the upper house from a list of fifty candidates nominated by the lower, which he preferred to government by an omnipotent unicameral legislature. A separate executive branch was a welcome imitation of the American constitution, he pointed out, ignoring the violation of separation of powers implicit in legislative selection, a method that had aroused his ire when he spoke at the Virginia convention called to ratify the United States Constitution in 1788. At that time he had condemned the insufficient checks or

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"division of powers" between the executive and the Senate on treaty ratifications and presidential appointments; the Senate's power to try presidential impeachment; and the reservation to the House of Representatives of the choice of the president when no candidate secured an electoral majority--which he considered particularly glaring presentiments of a "dangerous government, calculated to secure neither the interests nor the rights of our countrymen."[28]

Perhaps Monroe was too enthusiastic about the extent to which the French Constitution imitated the American. Since the voters had little power besides choosing electors, who then picked members of the national legislature, departmental administrators, judges, grand jurors, and most other officials, the French government was less democratic than the United States, whose voters directly chose members of the state legislatures and the lower house of Congress, and in some states the judiciary.[29] "If suitable men are put into the directoire the happiest effects must result from the change, for henceforward the military & the police will be in their hands," he observed. He was relieved that the legislature, which for him perhaps embodied the excesses of French democracy, "will have little to do with either" of these coercive powers, which henceforth would hopefully be isolated from popular tumults and demagoguery of the Robespierre type.[30]

The Vendémiaire royalist uprising's failure increased the probability that the new government would be ardently republican, Monroe predicted, with its heightening of the Convention's awareness that the Thermidorian Reaction had gone so far to the Right that it endangered the Revolution's survival. Monroe's correspondence at this time is singular for its

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lack of condemnation or moral revulsion at the violence committed by royalist elements against Jacobins and sans-culottes. A letter to Madison, the only notable instance in which he even comments on the Thermidorian excesses, maintains this tone of moral neutrality and sang-froid. Clearly, he preferred the promise of stability betokened by the fall of Robespierre, a figure who awed and haunted him although they had never met. A pragmatic, bourgeois revolutionary, Monroe accepted the political pendulum's swing from Left to Right, anticipating that moderate union would emerge victorious, as had happened in his own country's revolution when popular state legislatures and democratic crowds threatened republican stability in the 1780s, necessitating the creation of the United States Constitution as its culmination at the end of the decade.[31]

In a perceptive review of the progress of the French Revolution since his arrival, Monroe explained its erratic progress to Madison:

> The system of terror had been carried to such an excess that it could be borne no longer. It was therefore ended first by the overthrow of Robespierre & made more complete afterwards by present legislative provisions, which introduced a more humane system. Those who had suffered under it became in consequence an object of compassion. . . . Hence the friends of the revolution were put upon the defensive, & the sword, not of justice, but of revenge, put in the hands of the royalists. . . . By this event [the Vendémiaire insurrection and its suppression] the spirit of royalty has received a suitable check, and that of republicanism a proportional elevation. Under these circumstances therefore the possibility is that a judicious choice will be made of members for the directoire.[32]

Expressing little sympathy for the defeated aspirations of the artisans and wage-earners of Paris, Monroe failed to distinguish their protest from the disorders initiated by the friends of a royalist restoration: to him each was equally evil, equally a foe to securing the Revolution and

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the bourgeois republic most of its leaders sought to perpetuate. How could he fail to agree with such views as those expressed by Thermidorian leader Boissy d' Anglas, who was largely responsible for the provisions of the new Constitution: "A country governed by landowners is in the social order; that which is governed by nonlandowners is in the state of nature."[33]

Indeed, for Monroe the urgency to stabilize the Revolution, to give it some kind of permanent mold and concrete stasis, became a need amounting almost to an obsession, so much so that he appeared willing, even eager, to subordinate the substance of representative democracy, embodied in the give-and-take of a bicameral legislature and its committees, to the mere form of parliamentary government. After elections took place for the two Councils in October 1795 and the organization of the legislative body the following month, Monroe wrote to Secretary of State Pickering: "When I observe that the scene, which was exhibited upon this great occasion resembled in many respects what we see daily acted on our side of the Atlantic, in our national and state assemblies, you will have a better idea of the tranquillit and serenity which reigned throughout, than I can otherwise describe."[34]

Taking solace in the superficial similarity of the new government to that of the United States, Monroe ignored the narrow electoral base of thirty thousand large landholders on which it rested and the seething social and economic discontents of the disfranchised workers, especially in Paris, whose plight was constantly aggravated by widespread poverty and hunger. In Monroe's psyche, the principle of separation of powers embodied in the bicameral legislature had become the linchpin of the Revolution on which its future success rested, although in earlier years he would have perceived this principle had been vitiated by the

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Directory's responsibility to the legislature. Instead, he boasted of the ostensible French imitation of the American example, assuring Pickering that this guaranteed stability: "Nor shall I be accused of an unbecoming partiality when I draw from the increasing similitude in theirs and our political institutions, the most favourable hopes for the future prosperity and welfare of this Republic."[35]

Although historians have grown accustomed to associate an emphasis on ceremony, propriety, and outward show with the views of Federalist ideologues, particularly John Adams, rather than a fervid Democratic-Republican like Monroe, in his outlook on post-Robespierrist France the American minister greatly appreciated the agency of propriety and formalism in restoring peace and quiet to a country which sorely needed it.[36]

In a letter to Madison written a week after the organization of the new government, Monroe made clear his preference for law and order over social justice. "The government is now completely organized in all its departments, & its effect the happiest that can be conceived upon the publick opinion," he reported, as usual emphasizing the presence of a nonexistent unanimity. He thought that the "organization in the apparent tone of each department" was a favorable omen for moderate conduct of "publick measures." What he meant by this was not much different from what Federalists meant when they supported D"high-toned" rituals and titles of nobility for the chief executive in 1789. As he implied, he was more concerned with the appearance of the new government to an observer of its debates than with its actual achievements in promoting the public weal:

> In the House of antients you see the members sitting like those

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> in the Senates of our respective States, quiet & without any thinke [sic] to do: Whilst the messengers of state keep a vigilant eye upon every spectator, & if the slightest indecency passes or disrespect is shown by wearing a hat or otherwise by anyone it is immediately noticed & corrected; as this was the chamber of the late convention where a different style was observed the difference strikes the spectator with amazement: and in the other house the contrast is almost as great; for the manner of debate is more formal & tranquil, & the delay in passing laws much greater, whereby more time will be given for reflection and the laws themselves be wiser of course.[37]

In Monroe's view, the preservation of the gains made in France for republicanism by the Revolution, rather than their extension to embrace social or economic reform was rightly the purpose of the new government. A liberalized suffrage (by European standards) and a representative polity were all he expected from this unprecedented upheaval in the Old World's history; he was content that it should cease at the moderate stage of equality before the law and citizen participation in elections it had reached under the Thermidorians. The five-man Directory, although composed of regicides (members of the National Convention) rather than royalists, contained no spokesman for the natural right of the lower classes to subsistence and security; nevertheles, Monroe praised them as "wise men and sound to the revolution." He thought that the smooth transition to a new government proved the inevitable march of republicanism, writing effusively to Secretary of State Pickering:

> The adoption of a new constitution, founded upon the equality of human rights, with its legislative powers distributed into two branches, and other improvements.. though still perhaps imperfect, yet certainly far beyond what past experiments here gave reason to expect,--is an event of great importance, not only to France, but perhaps to mankind in general.

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Although the unicameral National Convention had been chosen by universal manhood suffrage and had sought to implement a redistribution of royalist wealth among the poor, its efforts to achieve reform were antithetical to Monroe's ideal of a conservative republic, which Thermidor and the constitution it gestated more closely approximated. At this point he sought stasis for the Revolution, being confident that there was "reasonable ground" to be assured of the stability of the Revolution itself.[38]

Virtually pretending that the abysmal interim of violence and reaction following Robespierre's execution had never taken place, Monroe exuberantly contrasted the new government with the situation that had prevailed under the Reign of Terror. "Calm deliberation has succeeded a system which was neither calm nor deliberative," he wrote Jefferson in November, informing him that "a stable government" had finally been established. Contrary to his Republican party's stand at home, Monroe only wished that the legislative councils could be further weakened and the executive branch, the Directory, made more "energetic." Although pleased that the Councils had replaced the turmoil of the National Convention with a more sedate, decorous atmosphere, he hoped that the "executive departments" would "show an energy which grows out of the nice partition of their duties, and the greater responsibility that belongs to each" rather than permit the continued centralization of power in the legislature.[39] This was a far cry from the Jeffersonian protest against "executive usurpation" of congressional powers under Hamilton during Washington's Administration in the United States.

In the following weeks, Monroe's reports on the progress of the new government and its restoration of law and order were uniformly optimistic. Writing to Madison after it had been

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in operation for two months, he praised its "wise, steady and energetic progress. Its outset was distinguished by an effort to introduce into every department of the administration the most rigid economy. . . . Many abuses were reformed and the public expenditures greatly diminished." Denying the existence of any noticeable opposition to the new regime, Monroe assured Madison that governmental "restraint" of dissidents was unnecessary, since "the administration possesses the confidence of the people & wields the government according to their wishes." Monroe was most impressed by the moderation and popularity of the new government. Public opinion supported it, he contended, since it provided both "energy" and "personal safety." After French troops defeated the Austrian armies, royalists began to despair, "for they know that the hopes of royalty are gone as their hopes wee founded in the continuance of anarchy and confusion, to promote which of course all their efforts were united." In Monroe's callous view, the parsimony of the new government--which had abolished price controls on bread ("The Maximum") and reduced the level of rations to the Parisian working classes--was a positive, beneficent aspect of the new regime. At the same time, he soft-pedaled the fact that the nation's finances rested on a very shaky basis, and that not even forced loans had enabled it to redeem the assignats (paper money issued on the security of confiscated Church land).[40]

The belief that a stable government would end the threat of a monarchical restoration spurred Monroe's support of the Directory, yet it is equally significant that, unlike his friends Thomas Paine and Joel Barlow, who had both spent time with him during this period and had observed at firsthand the Revolution and the Terror, at no time did he advocate positive measures to widen the suffrage or aid the underprivileged classes who lived on the brink of

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starvation.

Paine, who had been a member of France's National Convention, initially denounced the proposed Constitution of 1795 for its failure to provide for universal manhood suffrage and in other ways live up to the Declaration of the Rights of Man of 1789, blasting it as the product of "cold indifference and self-interest, which will ... degenerate into intrigue, cunning and effeminacy."[41] In The Rights of Man: Part II (1792) and Agrarian Justice (1797), Paine proposed government grants to the young, the poor, the unemployed, the aged and disabled, which were to be financed by progressive taxes on the income of landed estates and on the inheritance of real and personal property. Each of these works was an outgrowth of Paine's observation and participation in events in France.[42]

Joel Barlow, a fascinating Connecticut Yankee who had gone to France to sell land in the Ohio Valley but instead became a devotee of the Revolution, won French citizenship as a reward for his Letter to the National Convention of France on the Defects of the Constitution of 1791 (1792), in which he proposed such radical reforms as annual election of judges and magistrates as well as legislators; rotation in office; universal manhood suffrage; recall of legislative deputies by their constituents; abolition of capital punishment in peacetime; and moderate salaries for government officials. In Advice to the Privileged Orders: Part II, Barlow espoused a fiscal policy of direct taxes on land and houses in preference to the indirect taxes (excises) on necessities that burdened the lower classes, and even condoned the alcoholic habits of the laboring poor as an inevitable outgrowth of their degraded condition and "the inherent defects of government."[43]

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On the other hand, Monroe's reaction was merely to deplore the Reign of Terror, which under the leadership of Robespierre and Louis Antoine de Saint-Just had exerted the only positive efforts by the national government to institute meaningful change. While Monroe was not in favor of restoring the monarchy, neither was he interested in furthering the cause of "equal rights" in France; for in order to achieve a meaningful civil equality, the Revolution's ostensible aim, widespread political, social and economic reforms were necessary in France, which would give the lower classes property and the "stake in society" they lacked.[44]

* * * * * * *

In February 1796, Monroe suddenly founded his vaunted stability threatened by the spectre of social revolution--the democratic, inchoately communistic Conspiracy of the Equals for "the community of goods and labor." Under the leadership of François Nöel ("Gracchus") Babeuf, a radical Parisian journalist, editor of *Le Tribun du Peuple*, who had served as a food commissioner for the Paris Commune during the Reign of Terror, and his Italian colleague, Philippe Buonarroti, their goal was equal peasant ownership of landed property ("agrarian law") and free food distribution to the city's poor. At times, sounding a proto-Marxist note, Babeuf demanded equal distribution of goods, confiscation of the property of royalists, employment for all, and equal ownership of property by all in proportion to their needs.[45] Bonaparte's army's repressive action of closing the Pantheon Club, seat of the Conspiracy, on February 28, 1796, gained Monroe's approval. It precipitated Babeuf's abortive insurrection in May, and his imprisonment and execution the following year.

According to Monroe, the Pantheon Club had been fomenting disorders and the

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Directory accused its members-"with full proof," he reported--of working as agents for the enemies of France, "under the mask of patriotism, more effectually to promote the purpose of disorganization." The Virginian charged that "many of those who were at those meetings" had participated in atrocities during the Reign of Terror. Convinced that the Pantheon Club as well as the Terror were the work of British undercover agents, who were the actual "source to which the atrocities that were then practised ought to be ascribed," Monroe refused to legitimize the radical underside of the French Revolution. He predicted that historians would discover that, in destroying the fabric of French life in 1794, Robespierre had been carrying out British instructions: "Time, perhaps, and especially if the revolution weathers the storm it has yet to encounter, will doubtless more fully unfold the real authors of those scenes, which were so frightful to humanity, and disgraceful to man," he predicted, referring to Robespierre's regime, "and that they may be discovered must be the wish of all those who are the friends of truth, wherever they reside."[46] Not surprisingly, Monroe's fear of factionalism and his conspiratorial outlook on history, a patrimony of the American Revolution, combined with his agrarian landholder's viewpoint to conceive of the Babouvist conspiracy as well as the Terror as a foreign plot to undermine the Revolution.[47]

The denouement is well-known. The Washington Administration recalled Monroe as United States minister to France in July 1796. The President's advisers, Secretary of State Pickering foremost among them, had convinced him that the Virginian had not adequately defended Jay's Treaty with Great Britain in his discussions with the Directory. They insisted that such alleged diplomatic ineptitude, combined with Monroe's ardent espousal of anti-

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Federalist views in foreign and domestic policy made his removal essential to the preservation of peace with both powers.[48] Yet, all partisan motives and manipulations aside, the fact remains that Monroe's approach to the French Revolution--his abhorrence of the Reign of Terror; distrust for radical social reform; acquiescence in the right-wing Thermidorian Reaction; and zealous approval of the moderate Constitution of 1795 and the government of the Directory--was virtually identical with the Federalist leadership, including his diplomatic counterpart in London, John Jay.[49]

Historians have not taken sufficient account of the fact that the leaders of the Republican party--Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe--shared with their political opponents, the Federalists, a distaste for the violence and radical reform which characterized Robespierre's short period of domination in Paris. After Monroe informed him of events in France, Jefferson declared his abhorrence of Robespierre and the Reign of Terror. Following Napoleon's coup d'état in 1799, Jefferson lost hope that France would ever establish a stable republic.[50] Even twenty years later, Jefferson insisted that the atrocities of the Reign of Terror had been committed by British agents. He even went so far as to compare the New England Federalist leaders at the Hartford Convention of 1814-1815 with the Jacobin leaders: "The Marats, the Dantons and Robespierres of Massachusetts are in the same pay, under the same orders, and making the same efforts to anarchize us that their prototypes in France did there."[51]

Indeed, Monroe's subsequent election to the presidency in 1816, followed by the beginning of an "Era of Good Feeling" between Democratic-Republicans and Federalists and the latter's eventual incorporation into the Republican party, in sharp contrast to their vigorous

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disagreement over the conduct of the War of 1812 just a few years before, appear more rationally explicable when we examine his view of proceedings in Paris during his ministry.[52]

In their reactions to the most radical stages of the Reign of Terror, there is evidence that unity was lacking among Jeffersonian Republicans. As we suggested earlier, Joel Barlow, the Connecticut poet and land speculator, in Paris seeking to involve the French in land speculations in the Ohio Country, firmly supported the Revolution even as he witnessed its bloodshed. Writing to a fellow New Englander, Federalist stalwart Secretary of the Treasury Oliver Wolcott in November 1794, he recommended American emulation of some of the "principles for the general diffusion of information, the preservation and improvement of morals, and the encouragement of such a degree of equality in the condition of men as tends to their dignity and happiness," thus validating the French Revolution's most extreme stage. Barlow's viewpoint sharply contrasts with Monroe's, whom he frequently visited in Paris at this time.[53]

Though most scholars contend that the American press, including the Francophile Republican newspapers, denounced Robespierre's atrocities and applauded Thermidor, this does not appear to be entirely true.[54] The most popular and influential Jeffersonian newspaper was Benjamin Franklin Bache's Philadelphia Aurora, mouthpiece of the city's artisans and immigrants, who revered its editor's grandfather, the printer par excellence, Benjamin Franklin.[55] The Aurora defended the Terror until Robespierre's overthrow, displayed a cool attitude toward the repressive measures adopted after 9 Thermidor, and was not unduly alarmed by Babeuf's activities (surprisingly, obscure Babouvist journals were available to American printers).[56]

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At the outset of the Terror, the Aurora adopted the view that "rigorous measures" were necessary to suppress monarchists who might try to overthrow the government after the Army left Paris to fight on the frontiers. "A Correspondent" compared those executed as traitors to French "Benedict Arnolds." After Robespierre's execution, however, Bache's praise was more restrained. He suspected that, like Danton, Robespierre had been punished for embezzlement. Moreover, Bache advised, had Roespierere's downfall been the result of an attempt on his part to seize absolute power, "his death will not call forth the sigh of a single republican--perish the monster who would sacrifice his country's welfare to his own aggrandizements, time will show whether his memory deserves execration or respect."[57] By October 1794, after Bache had received more details on the excesses which had prompted Robespierre's demise, he was prepared to stigmatize him as a dictator. He argued that his conservative successors had restored tranquillity in France, and praised the Thermidorians as a "moderate party. . . who abhor the acts of violence and terror which stained the reign of Robespierre."[58]

Unlike Monroe, however, the Aurora denounced the Thermidorian Convention's later suppression of the Jacobin societies, regarding the leaders of the conservative party as a violent faction rather than a legitimate government. Fearing that the abolition of the popular societies would lead to further violence and produce the "worst of consequences," Republicans found it hard to believe such repression was taking place; they finally accepted it as an outcome of France's revolutionary situation which would be reversed once France became a stable republic like the United States.[59]

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Americans who read the newspapers were as informed about French affairs as the United States Government and Monroe's personal friends who relied on his reports. For instance, the pro-Revolution Aurora as well as its Federalist competitor, Noah Webster's New York Minerva, both specifically mentioned Babeuf and his Conspiracy. As the following comment from the Aurora suggests, the incident was briefly the focus of their squabbles:

> The Editor of the Minerva ever on the look-out for an opportunity to calumniate the French, tells us, that the 4th number of a new Paris paper lately fell into his hands. This paper he represents as avowedly on the side of BABEUF and DROUET, and yet he takes it as an authority to prove the extravagance and oppression of the Executive Directory of France; and then proceeds from the same paper to show how unprincipled the BABEUF faction are.

"To side with the Editor of the MINERVA in his abhorrence of the French," the Philadelphia paper was forced to conclude, "one must believe, that the nation is treacherous and unprincipled, and the government ambitious and tyrannical. Mr. Webster must preach yet some months to come, before he converts America to his faith."[60] The spokesmen for the Philadelphia artisans who contributed essays to the Aurora had not yet abandoned their faith in the Revolution's radicalism, and eschewed Monroe's unqualified enthusiasm for the Thermidorian Reaction.

It is possible that, in so far as the most extreme phase of the French Revolution--the Reign of Terror--is concerned, a divergence existed within the Republican party between a radical rank-and-file in the cities and the moderate party leadership, similar to that which

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Richard E. Ellis has found on domestic affairs (particularly concerning democratic judicial reform) during Thomas Jefferson's presidency.[61] The presence of such a division can only be suggested here. However, an anonymously written pamphlet, printed in Philadelphia in 1794, along with the articles in the Aurora already mentioned, make clear that some urban Democratic-Republicans held a more favorable view of the French Revolution, including the Reign of Terror, than the "Virginia Triumvirate" (Jefferson, Madison, and Monroe).

Rather than regard the mass executions as part of a British-inspired plot to ovethrow the Revolution, as had Monroe, "A Citizen," in a pamphlet published in Philadelphia in the spring of 1794 devoted largely to questions of American taxation, thought that those extreme measures were necessitated by the war emergency itself. He castigated Federalist newspaper editors who "expatiate with delight, dilate with pleasure, and exaggerate with freedom on the enormities committed in France," reproaching their refusal to make "allowance for the extremely agitated state of society, to which they [the French] are reduced by the violence and intrigues of the combined powers, and the unequalled treachery and desperate plots of the bigotted clergy, and degraded nobility among themselves."[62]

Unlike Monroe and the Jeffersonian leadership, "A Citizen" did not eagerly overlook French divergences from the American paradigm of "moderate" revolution. He noted differences as well as similarities, arising from the diverse historical circumstances and traditions of Europe from America. As he put it, contrasting the existence of an Established Church, monarchy and aristocracy which had to be uprooted in France before meaningful reform could occur, with their absence in the United States at the time of its revolution: "These [Federalist]

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politicians do not consider that we never had the same complicated violence and intrigue to contend with in our revolution, that the French have to combat in accomplishing theirs; they do not recollect that we also committed outrages that we would not wish to see on record; they do not reflect that the blood shed in struggles for liberty has been like the drop in the bucket, compared with what has been spilled in the wars of ambition and plunder, carried on by kings." After centuries of oppression and special privilege, the French response had been relatively mild, "A Citizen" implied.

Unlike Minister Monroe, this obscure Philadelphia pamphleteer refused to attribute the Reign of Terror to foreign manipulation, but more sensibly regarded it as a defense against impending foreign invasion:

> But is not all the blood shed and violence of France occasioned by the unwarranted interference of foreign power? Were they not humane and mild in the outset of their revolution? Or did we hear of one instance of their cruelty previous to the commencement of this unjustifiable interference?[63]

Even Noah Webster, a devout New York Federalist newspaper editor as well as a lexicographer, attempted to justify the Reign of Terror. He deplored the "political insanity" of the Mountain (*Montagnard*) faction of the Jacobin Club, whose political and anti-religious zeal, an "enthusiasm" as irrational as the most rabid "superstition" of the Roman Catholic Church, threatened to sink the noble revolutionary cause in *"a military aristocracy,"* ostensibly in the cause of liberty.[64] Nevertheless, he predicted, inevitably the Revolution, borne by its vibrant

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ideas of liberty and the overthrow of feudalism in favor of free enterprise and individual self-realization, would secure France hegemony in both material productivity and creativity in the arts and sciences.[65] Although Webster could not approve "the sanguinary proceedings of the Jacobins," he was ready to condone them, being "candid enough to believe much of the violence of their measures may be attributed to the combination of powers, formed for the most unwarrantable purpose of dictating to an independent nation its form of government."[66] He was cognizant of the possibility that "other circumstances, not known in this country," may have impelled the drastic measures of the National Convention.

Strange as it may seem, Americans like Webster and "A Citizen" had a greater appreciation for the vicissitudes of the French Revolution than Monroe possessed, despite his vantage point on the scene. Beset by Directory officials and government propaganda, and predisposed against urban rioting by an agrarian political philosophy that distrusted city "mobs" and glorified independent yeomen, perhaps Monroe's myopic view of events was inevitable. Although Ammon complains that Monroe "had no talent for abstract thinking," he *did* prefer the rural to the urban way of life, but he seldom articulated this preference with the eloquence or intellectual depth of Jefferson.[67] James Madison, whose association with the Constitution and The Federalist Papers often causes us to forget that he was a champion of agrarianism and a slaveholding planter, most pithily expressed the Republican partiality for the farmer over the city worker when he wrote: "'Tis not the country that peoples either the Bridewells or the Bedlams. These mansions of wretchedness are tenanted from the distresses and vices of overgrown cities."[68]

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During his tenure as minister to France (1794-1796), Monroe continued to uphold the view that the French Revolution was essentially a moderate, middle-of-the-road movement, and that temporary upheavals of the Left and Right, like the Reign of Terror and the Vendémiare insurrection, were only minor though noxious disruptions of the temperate pattern marked out by the Revolution as a whole. Erroneously but sincerely, he imputed these exceptions to the rule of rational moderation to a small minority of incendiaries, agents acting at the bidding of the British and the foreign powers aligned against the Revolution. Without exception, whether the riots were initiated by radicals or reactionaries, he still conceived them as creations of the Coalition to abort the Revolution's pristine fulfillment. Thereby Monroe wishfully molded the Thermidorian and post-Thermidorian epoch of the French Revolution in the image of the American, on the model of harmonious consensus, supported by the vast majority of citizens, and the opposition to which was actually not part of the Revolution at all, but merely subversive agents recruited by alien powers at war with the Revolution itself. In this connection, one might recall Jefferson's comment on Monroe's political naiveté, "Turn his soul wrong side outwards, and there is not a speck on it," as well as historian Albert H. Bowman's assessment of Monroe as "a complete innocent" in matters of diplomacy.[69] Though in fact Monroe may have been an innocent abroad, considerations of psychology, personality, ideology, and family background do more to explain his orientation and peculiar outlook on events in France in his reports home, which influenced his political friends Jefferson, Madison, and others, as well as the United States Government.

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Monroe's antipathy to the Reign of Terror and his enthusiasm for the Thermidorian Reaction and the Constitution of 1795, which he conveyed to Jefferson and Madison, who relied on him for information, may be accounted for by three factors: his lifelong opposition to factionalism; his avid preference for the farming life and distrust of the "mobs" of the cities, which he held in common with Jefferson and most other Republicans; and his tendency to personalize issues, i.e., to judge issues in terms of his relationships with people connected with them and vice versa. Even his friendly biographers note a sensitivity in him which sometimes verged on paranoia, as in his suspicions of Madison plotting against his election to the Constitutional Convention in 1787.[70]

Indeed, Monroe the Parisian cosmopolite felt more comfortable with conservative leaders and former aristocrats than with radicals like Thomas Paine, whom he forced to leave his house in the spring of 1796 when Paine began writing an anti-Washington pamphlet, something Monroe's conscience would not tolerate as the president's representative abroad. Monroe and his wife Elizabeth Kortright, daughter of a prominent New York merchant who had been a British Army officer, enjoyed conforming to French social usages and hospitality, which had returned in some degree to the Ancien Regime's courtly taste. He sent his daughter Eliza to an exclusive school operated by Mme. Campan, a former lady-in-waiting to Marie Antoinette. Located on the outskirts of Paris, this institution became the most fashionable girls' school in France under the Directory and Empire. Bourgeois *parvenus* sent their children there to acquire polish and manners under Campan's expert tutelage, and Eliza learned the arts of snobbery. Monroe and Elizabeth were not unduly alarmed by this.[71] As Harry Ammon points

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out, "His open enthusiasm for the Revolution, the obvious admiration for French taste, which he shared with his wife, and the grace and beauty of Mrs. Monroe all combined to make him a personal success among French political leaders."[72]

Among the privileged few in Paris to own a carriage, the Monroes generally enjoyed their somewhat affluent position, a welcome change from their austere living conditions in Virginia. Diplomatic protocol required them to entertain lavishly on occasion. One of their most extravagant celebrations was a dinner party at his home, the Folie de la Bouexière, on July 4, 1795, to which he invited Americans residing in Paris, representatives of the diplomatic corps, the Committee of Public Safety and some Convention members. Over two hundred guests were entertained at a single table. It appears that Monroe, unlike Jefferson a decade earlier, made few attempts to become acquainted with the living conditions of the French masses, but chose to remain isolated in comfortable surroundings during his tenure as minister.[96]

The cyclical theory of history posited that similar causes produce similar effects over time. In the 1790s France was undoubtedly surrounded by strong powers intent on conquering her. Monroe undoubtedly believed the fanatical Robespierrists and Babouvists were similar to the ancient Greek Achaean league, whose demise he had recounted at the Virginia ratifying convention in 1788, in requiring foreign help to prevail against their opponents.[97] Had these factious groups (like the Achaean League) succeeded in procuring sufficient foreign help, Monroe argued, they would have overthrown the French Republic.

In reality France lacked the harmonious society Monroe had attributed to the Achaeans. In August 1794 he claimed that the French people, including even the Paris

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workers, were generally "contented" with their lot and would have been quiescent except for the sinister, subversive Robespierrists and Babouvists. Both seemed to him somehow aligned with the Austrian, Prussian, and British enemy. His opinion was molded by the French Government's propaganda and his friendship with several of its functionaries, who allayed his fears, assuring him that these radicals (and their families) were indeed working for the royalists and the Coalition. Monroe hobnobbed with Merlin de Thionville, leader of the reactionary forces in the Convention and a founding member of the jeunesse dorée ("gilded youth"), gangs of young bourgeois who roamed Paris and the provinces beating up and murdering Jacobins and radicals. He also befriended Louis Guillaume-Otto (1754-1817), *chargé d'affaires* at Philadelphia from 1785 to 1791, who was arrested and imprisoned during the Terror but later held many important diplomatic posts under the Thermidorian regime, the Directory, and Napoleon. The American Minister hoped that this time, contrary to his reading of Polybius and his adherence to the cyclical theory of history, the "democratic" government would persevere, repulsing enemies from within and without.[98]

Thanks to two lengthy memoirs, Monroe's autobiography and his prolix political testament, "The People the Sovereigns," which he wrote after retiring from the presidency and left incomplete at his death, we may gain greater insight into his views of French leaders during his ministry and the ideological basis for favoring the Constitution of 1795 rather than the unicameral democracy envisaged by the Terror.[99]

Monroe took an orthodox republican position in analyzing the National Convention's activities in the fall of 1794. As he explained in his Autobiography, he upheld the idea that,

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although a convention might properly set up a constitutional government, it should not be permitted to "exercise its ordinary powers" once the government's institutions were created. "If the Convention retains the power in its own hands and exercises it in its various branches, the most extraordinary and serious dangers may be apprehended from it." This was because it would thereby arrogate inordinate power, violating the requirement for checks and balances between different power-holding bodies. Though the convention was chosen by universal manhood suffrage, even this factor should not allow it to transcend the classical republican idea, which Jean-Jacques Rousseau upheld in the Social Contract, that the "Legislator" or constitution-maker(s) should not arrogate the authority to execute or implement his (their) work. As Monroe put it in the autobiography, "No government can be sound and free in its principles, or safe in its operation, although derived directly from the people, unless it be divided into three distinct branches, legislative, executive, and judicial, and each is endowed with appropriate power and enabled to support its rights and form a check on the others." His recollections of what he had heard about the Reign of Terror adversely affected his view of popular government, as his remarks in his Autobiography, written over three decades after the events it describes, demonstrate.[100]

Influenced by the writings of classical Greek theorists like Aristotle and Polybius as well as his own observations, Monroe scathingly denounced direct democracy. "A government of the people themselves in a collected body is one of the worst that can be formed and in its operation is sure to be oppressive," he warned. "A representative body, a Convention, for example, is more secure because it must be composed comparatively of a few members, and

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because likewise the people may form a check on them." After this pithy restatement of Adams's doctrine in Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, Monroe observed that the French people had been of little use as a check on their leaders during the Revolution, a result of their "unsettled, tumultuous, and disorderly" condition and of having "been long ruled under despotic government." In such circumstances "all wholesome power on their part will be lost." At this point, the emergence of self-interested demagogic parties that sought to deceive the people was most to be feared. During the Reign of Terror, the presence of foreign agents, hired by the monarchs to overthrow the Republic before they were ousted by its wars of national liberation, exacerbated an already volatile situation and rendered popular liberties more vulnerable to partisan manipulation. As Monroe reminisced, employing the literary technique of prosopopoeia:

> Parties will be formed and leaders will contend for power. Council will be given them by interested persons to gratify selfish views and if the nation be at war and the overthrow of other governments menaced, their agents and their money will be employed to promote seduction and disorder. One party will be apt to overwhelm the other and its leader take the rule. . . . Of the abuses to which such a government is subject the reign of Robespierre affords the most striking example. The Thermidorian] party now in power was more moderate and humane. It had more the control of its own conduct, had better views; and was governed by sounder principles. It had likewise the instructive example of that which it had overthrown before it.[101]

Arriving in Paris in August 1794 under the misconception that the Mountain party still controlled the government despite Robespierre's downfall, Monroe held it responsible for France's harsh treatment of American ships and seamen at this time, and more importantly, for its disrespectful treatment of him. "An hostile attitude was assumed toward our government and

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country, and war seriously menaced," he recalled. "Of this disposition I felt, personally, the most mortifying effect, my recognition being delayed and likely to be refused." In order to circumvent the hostile Committee of Public Safety, Monroe appeared, uninvited, before the Convention itself. He believed that if he personally assured the Convention of the Washington Administration's friendship for France and the French Revolution, he would overcome the government's hostility and "my recognition [would] immediately follow."[102]

But what Monroe perceived as the personal abuse he suffered from the Jacobins obviously left its mark, since he regarded their refusal to receive him as evidence of France's current anarchical condition. "I addressed the convention, and with the desired effect, having been received by that body itself on the next day. That such should have been the state of affairs, as to compel me to resort to such an expedient, is in itself a sufficient proof of the disorder in which the government of France then was, and of the difference between it and all settled governments, whatever be their form."[103] In Monroe's eyes, personal rejection amounted to proof of governmental instability and irresponsibility.

Therefore Monroe applauded the transfer of power to the Party of the Plain. He erroneously, if conveniently, assumed that this shift took place on the day of his speech to the Convention. Admiring the newly constituted legislature's "perfect integrity" and "zeal and perseverance" in Revolutionary principles, he even claimed it exhibited "moderation and humanity" in handling its bloodthirsty rivals, the Robespierrists.[104]

But Monroe's personal antipathy to the latter because of what he perceived as their hostile reception to him and their attacks on American shipping undoubtedly colored his opinion

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of their opponents. As he admitted in his Autobiography, where he wrote in the third person, "Having experienced the unfriendly disposition of the Mountain party towards his country on his arrival, and formed the most unfriendly opinion of its capacity to conduct the Revolution to its desired end, he saw with regret every indication of any remaining influence in that party."[105]

Rather peremptorily, Monroe, even with the benefit of hindsight, dismissed the "popular movements" of Germinal, Prairial, and Vendémiarie, of which he makes an erroneous statement that is only applicable to the last one: "These movements were either excited by foreign powers or by members of the Mountain party." He vigorously applauded the government established by the Constitution of 1795, consisting of the two councils and the Directory, finding it "tranquil, orderly, and efficient."[106] Writing during the 1820s, at a time when the revolutionary movement in Europe was at its nadir, having been suppressed by Europe's monarchs, Monroe steadfastly maintained his earlier opposition to the popular upheavals in Paris he had witnessed in the past.

Though his opinion of Bonaparte's Consulate, which took over from the Directory in 1799, was somewhat ambiguous, Monroe tempered his criticism of this "step toward monarchy" with approval of the creation of the Empire, surprisingly concluding that this event showed the French people's "intelligence and capacity for self-government." Although he regretted that the French found it necessary to identify the fruits of their revolution with Bonaparte's military dictatorship, he inadvertently made clear that personal considerations--his cordial treatment when he travelled to Paris as a special minister in 1803 to help negotiate the Louisiana Purchase--played a large role in the lightness of his condemnation. As he put it, "In making this remark"--his expression of regret that Napoleon had converted the Republic into an

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Empire via the route of military dictatorship,

> I indulge no feeling of personal hostility to Napoleon Bonaparte, in whose favor the change was wrought, and who was the principal actor in it. No one thought more highly than I did of his gallantry in the field, and of his talents as the commander of his army, and personally I had no cause of complaint against him, for in my second mission to France, when he was at the head of the Consular Government, I was treated by him with kindness and attention.[107]

As Monroe himself confessed in connection with his reaction to events at the time of his chilly reception by the Committee of Public Safety in August 1794, he tended to be greatly affected by "incidents of little importance in themselves."[108] When Monroe's self-esteem was injured, however, no incident was unimportant.

* * * * * * * * * *

An acutely sensitive individual, Monroe's opinions and responses to men and measures were determined in large part by his personal relationships. This can be seen as early as 1787, when, as his letters to Jefferson and Madison reveal, he suspected Madison of personal antipathy and political conspiracy against his ambitions. A beginning Fredericksburg lawyer at the time of the Constitutional Convention, Monroe felt alone, insignificant, and unfairly treated, since he had not been chosen a delegate. He also owed Madison money for financing their land speculations in the Mohawk Valley of New York, and was obligated to him for overseeing the transport of his furniture from New York City, where he had finished his stint as delegate to the Continental Congress, back to Virginia. As a member of Congress in 1787, Madison was in New York until May 2, when he left for the Philadelphia Convention. Added to his envy at

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Madison's appointment, these factors increased Monroe's anxiety and confusion. Morbidly aware of his "deficiency," his feelings of inadequacy are evident in his letter to Madison. "My leasure [sic] furnishes me with the opportunity, but the country around [Fredericksburg] does not with materials to form a letter worthy your attention," he wrote. "The scale of my observations is a narrow one & confined entirely within my room; & the subjects of my researches in which I am but seeking to make some proficiency, as I should only detail to you the sentiments of others, give me nothing to supply the deficiency."[109] Consciousness of his "deficiency," stemming from his difficulties in establishing himself as a lawyer, was pronounced in this letter, and seemingly caused him to feel bitter toward his Virginia friends.

While he wrote Madison in a more or less cordial manner--he had, however, abandoned use of the term "affectionate" in his close, though he had called himself Madison's "affectionate friend & servant" in letters written the year before and continued to end his letters to Jefferson this way--at the same time he betrayed his real feelings to Jefferson. He self-pityingly complained about his sufferings in his new legal career, "pursuits [which] tho' confined have not been attended with the less difficulty." Reporting that he had just defeated his old friend John Page for election to the state legislature, he justified this somewhat ungentlemanly behavior on the basis of alleged "disadvantages" he had to surmount in order to advance his career as a lawyer: "I supposed it might be serviceable to me in the line of my profession--my services have been abroad [i.e., in Congress rather than in Virginia], & the establishment others have gained at the bar in the meantime requires every effort in my power to repair the disadvantage it hath subjected me to." Ostensibly blaming his friends Madison and Governor

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Edmund Randolph for his problems, perhaps thinking they had failed to use their influence to help him, Monroe's charges verged on paranoia. As he wrote to Jefferson:

> The Governor, I have reason to believe is unfriendly to me & hath shewn (If I am well informed) a disposition to thwart me; Madison, upon whose friendship I have calculated, whose views I have favored, and with whom I have held the most confidential correspondence since you left the continent, is in strict league with him & hath I have reason to believe concurred in arrangements unfavorable to me; a suspicion supported by some strong circumstances that this is the case, hath given me great uneasiness.[110]

Since no evidence has been found to verify Monroe's suspicions, it is likely they were the product of his imagination. Undoubtedly his hostility toward Madison during this crucial period of constitution-making diminished his ardor for a stronger national government, which he had championed in Congress through the 1780s. Notwithstanding an earlier pledge to Madison of support, he adopted a position of moderate Antifederalism during the ratification struggle. In a letter to Jefferson written while the Philadelphia Convention met, Monroe had gone so far as to support the ultra-nationalistic idea of requiring each state to "revise" its constitution to conform to the provisions of the new "federal constitution." And Madison had predicted that Monroe would support the Constitution after hearing he had been chosen a delegate to the Virginia ratifying convention.[111]

Likewise, in later years the coldness and disrespect shown him by the Robespierrist cronies on his arrival in Paris sharply contrasted with the friendliness displayed by Thermidorian conservatives like Barras and Merlin. Monroe's favorable opinion of the dictatorial Bonaparte was also the result of the amiability with which he was treated when sent

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on his special mission to France in 1803, whose outcome was the Louisiana Purchase.

Monroe revealed that his reputation for Anglophobia among Hamiltonian Federalists in the 1790s was undeserved during the crucial negotiation of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty in 1806, when he agreed to ignore the impressment question in return for the freedom of the carrying trade from British molestation. After this concession he became known as the most sincere friend of Great Britain among the Republicans. Indeed, as early as 1794 Monroe had rejected the Francophile doctrine of "free ships, free goods." He asserted the fundamental correctness of British maritime views, embodied in the Rule of 1756 (that trade closed to other nations in time of peace, like France's West Indies trade, could not be opened in time of war) and the legitimacy of "paper blockades"(Albion's contention that the British Navy had legally blockaded ports even when only a handful of its ships were stationed outside their waters). Monroe argued that any change in these doctrines would require an international agreement.[112]

On the other hand, witnessing the rather disillusioning events of the French Revolution from 1794 to 1796, following which his praise of the upheaval ceased, perhaps partly determined Monroe's willingness to negotiate the objectionable Monroe-Pinkney Treaty. Monroe's tendency to personalize issues also played a role. A recent study of the negotiations stresses Monroe's propensity to confuse his protagonists' tactful conduct with benign motives: "Whenever hopeful predictions crept into his dispatches and private letters home, they owed more to a bad habit of seeing British concessions in personal civility and to a worry that his esteem at home depended on his success abroad."[113] This same tendency to perceive issues in terms of personalities led to Monroe's ill-fated campaign for the presidential nomination in

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Virginia against Madison in 1808.

As negotiator of the treaty in 1806, Monroe naturally hoped for its ratification by the Senate. Apparently the process of negotiation itself had nurtured his desire for amity with the British. As he wrote nearly 1807, when he was still optimistic that President Jefferson and Secretary of State Madison supported his efforts, "We flatter ourselves that the [Monroe-Pinkney] treaty will meet the approbation of our government and country. It was the best that under existing circumstances it was possible to attain." He even went so far in his Anglophile optimism as to predict, "it may be considered as paving the way for a perfect good understanding in future between the two countries."[114] Unfortunately, Jefferson and Madison found the treaty unacceptable, both on the score of insufficient commercial concessions and the failure to eliminate impressment. It was never submitted to the Senate.

Nevertheless, Monroe's candidacy for the presidency was strengthened as a result of his part in the abortive treaty, which received backing from both Federalists and anti-Jeffersonian Republicans ("Quids") in Virginia headed by John Randolph. Southern Federalists like Dr. James McClurg endorsed Monroe for president in 1808 precisely because they believed he offered a prospect of better relations with Great Britain.[115] While failing to actively promote his candidacy, Monroe's personal sensitivity and pique at Jefferson's and Madison's rejection of his treaty inspired his half-hearted, politically disastrous decision to run against the latter for the nomination.[116] When Madison appointed Monroe secretary of state in 1811, therefore, many observers took it as indicative that a policy more favorable to British interests would be pursued.[117] Monroe's eagerness for military command during the War of 1812, and

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his appointment as Acting Secretary of War at the start of that conflict, suggest to some historians that he may have sought to gain a reputation as a "man on horseback" in order to advance his political career. A recent scholar somewhat uncharitably finds Monroe to be a figure incessantly angling for the presidency, "always ambitious but cautious not to appear too much so."[118]

Such imputations seem unfair. Rather than militarism, the key to Monroe's political thought was his equal fear of factionalism and monarchy, as his views on the American and French revolutions during the years from 1788 to 1796 make clear. Although he may have been an "innocent" abroad, Monroe was very much at home in the *American* political arena.[119] As a moderate who sought to balance centralized power and popular turbulence since he entered national political life in the 1780s, he embodied a position with which all Americans, except possibly the most extreme, monarchical Hamiltonian ("High") Federalists could agree. Monroe's experience in Paris from 1794 to 1796 had a molding influence in the crystallization of his thought, as well as on his views of Great Britain and France on the diplomatic front.

Following his return from Paris in 1797, Monroe maintained a low profile in American national politics, practically vanishing from the scene. Among the most Anglophile of Jefferson's advisers, he took a backseat to the more Anglophobic Madison from 1800 to 1816, when he finally became president, at least in part because he had not taken a strong stand against the English during the administrations of his predecessors. Perhaps Monroe--whose political opinions were often geared to impressions gleaned from personal encounters--grew to appreciate the benefits of a conservative regime during his tenure as minister to

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France, as his praise of the reactionary government indicates. Thus he was less ardent to fight Great Britain or condemn the pitfalls of monarchy for popular well-being than some other Jeffersonian Republicans who had not viewed the French Revolution close up as he had. This is indeed an interesting perspective from which to view Monroe's later career, which other historians, eager to make him appear as a zealous friend of the French Revolution and the Rights of Man, have avoided.

Monroe's continued support of the French Revolution was predicated on his perceiving it as following the American example. As we have seen, he interpreted the bicameral legislature and strengthened executive created by the Constitution of 1795 as offspring of the United States Constitution. In addition, he applied the familiar republican dichotomy of agrarian virtue against "vicious" urban commerce and industry, somewhat irrelevantly, to the events he witnessed in Paris. He persuaded himself that the farmers, rather than the "mobs" of the cities, alone were fighting the French battle for liberty. Reassuring Secretary of State Randolph that the Army could be relied on to support the National Convention and continue fighting even after Robespierre's fall, Monroe wrote in August 1794 that he expected it to disband peacefully after the war. "At present the best understanding subsists between it [the army] and the Convention," he reported. "It is possible that in the course of the service, if the war should last long, many of its members may acquire habits unfriendly to retirement, but in an army composed of the yeomanry of the country, as this is, that sentiment will be less apt to gain ground than in any other."[120]

For Monroe, the French people's continued endurance of intolerable economic

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conditions attested their support of the Revolution. Earl in 1795 he wrote to his uncle, Judge Joseph Jones, of his confidence that the people were behind the government, whose forces had just achieved victory in the Netherlands. "The affairs of the republick]sic] flourish much," he reported, though he was less impressed with the government's conduct of domestic than military crises. "The people are contented, of which the best proof... has lately been shewn [sic] by the patience with which they have borne the severest winters known for many years past, although there was the worst possible provision made for such incident." He chose to minimize the significance of the Convention's crackdown on Robespierrists and Jacobin extremists. Unperturbed by the execution of Carrier, the Convention delegate responsible for atrocities committed against royalists in northwestern France on the Loire River, Monroe hardly noticed this event. "The publick councils are it is true sometimes somewhat animated & now and then the head of a capital offender is taken off as was lately done of Carrier, the infamous representative at Nantes," he reported. "But yet no danger threatens from this." More involved in describing his success in gaining French acquiescence (at least temporarily) to American trade with Great Britain than in questioning the morality of government policies, Monroe inquired of Jones about the health of his slaves, especially two he had bought from Jefferson before his departure for Paris, Peter and Thenia. "I hope my people do not suffer & particularly Peter and Thenia to whom remember us," this middling slaveholder requested. Apparently Monroe perceived no incongruity between sympathy for European struggles for freedom and keeping Negroes in bondage at Highlands.[121]

As Monroe later explained to his uncle, his defense of the French Revolution increased

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in enthusiasm following passage of the conservative Constitution of Year III. Assuring Jones that "upon the whole [it] may be considered as a very good one," he explained its provisions, somewhat misleadingly stressing that the newly created bicameral legislature would be restrained by "an independent executive composed of 5 members of whom one only is annually displaced so that in every view the prospect of this country is now the best that can be." Blithely ignoring the fact that no real separation of powers existed, since the five-man Directory was elected by the legislature and had only nominal authority, Monroe depicted the Revolution as moving in a direction that even Montesquieu would have applauded. On the other hand, his idyllic view that a true governmental balance had been achieved was belied by the perpetuation of legislative supremacy in the two Councils.

Observing events more realistically in examining the French Army's triumphs over Spain in the fall of 1795, when the new constitution went into operation, Monroe hoped that military victories had solved the conundrum of civil authorities in dealing with the French soldier once his services were no longer required on the battlefield. Like republican theorists James Harrington and Algernon Sidney, Monroe justified imperial expansion as a solvent for domestic social inequality and a means of assuaging discontent. Recurring to the question he had raised with Secretary of State Randolph a year earlier, of how the "yeoman" army would be disbanded, Monroe suggested French colonization in the Caribbean would be an ideal solution, which would satisfy the veterans and defuse a dangerous situation at home. "By the peace with Spain the whole of St. Domingo [then including both Haiti and the Dominican Republic] belongs to France & whereby an immense country is provided for the army when the war ends," he

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explained in a letter to Jones, "whereby also not only justice will be rendered to those citizens who have deserved so well of the republick but the probability of internal commotion removed."[122] Ironically, the future author of the Monroe Doctrine--the most famous repudiation of European involvement in Latin America--at this time favored renewed French colonial ventures in the Western Hemisphere using Revolutionary veterans as settlers, as a way to remove any possibility of a military overthrow of the republican regime.

However, the Monroe Doctrine was aimed at European governments in the 1820s precisely because they were absolute monarchies; in 1795 Monroe espoused overseas expansion to preserve the viability and stability of an infant French republic, so it would be unfair to condemn him for inconsistency. On the other hand, Monroe's confidence that French veterans would want to settle farms and plantations in the Caribbean, rooted in his erroneous belief that the Army consisted primarily of "yeomen" when in fact the majority of recruits were from Paris and other cities, displays an ignorance of basic facts about the Revolution. Perhaps Monroe's reliance for information on Boissy d'Anglas and other conservative agrarian leaders, rather than seeking out the truth for himself, may have been partly responsible for his inaccurate knowledge of French domestic affairs.

In this connection, a few words about Monroe's living conditions in France are appropriate. When he first arrived in Paris in August 1794, he lived in a house at the Maison des Entrangers on Rue de la Roi, which in the late nineteenth century, its address changed to 101 Rue de Richelieu, served as headquarters of the printing office of the magazine Les Temps. Monroe then rented a house which had earlier been occupied by the recalled U. S. minister

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Gouverneur Morris, at 488 Rue de la Planche in the Faubourg St. German, an early center of working-class agitation in 1789 which had since quieted down.[123]

Early in the summer of 1795 the Monroes moved to an elegant structure known as the Folie de la Bouexière on the rue de Clichy. The house was small but ornate, its six principal rooms designed in the fashionable style of a one-story pavilion. It had originally served as a pleasure retreat for a wealthy farmer-general during the Ancien Règime. The Monroes were among the privileged few to own a carriage in Paris during this period, and they generally enjoyed their affluent position, a welcome change from their austere lifestyle in Virginia. Protocol, and possibly inclination, required Monroe to entertain lavishly on occasion. Among his most extravagant celebrations was a dinner party at the Folie on July 4. 1795, to which he invited the Americans residing in Paris, the members of the diplomatic corps, the Committee of Public Safety and other Convention members--over two hundred guests were entertained at a single table.[124] It seems reasonable to conclude, as we suggested earlier, that Monroe, unlike his predecessor Jefferson a decade earlier, made no attempt to become acquainted with the living conditions of the French masses, urban or rural, but chose instead to remain isolated, ensconced in exceedingly comfortable circumstances.

By 1796, though less optimistic about the Convention's success than he had been earlier, Monroe was still willing to believe that agrarian elements controlled the Revolution and would steer it in a moderate direction. However, in May 1796, Babeuf's plot to overthrow the Directory, the "Conspiracy of the Equals," was uncovered by the police; Babeuf, his colleague Buonarroti, and their followers were arrested and their papers confiscated. A little over a year

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later Babeuf was executed, the first martyr to communism.[125]

In a letter to Jefferson in July 1796, before he knew of his recall, Monroe briefly described the conspiracy. As he told Jefferson, who was undoubtedly sympathetic, he regarded the imprisonment of Babeuf and his supporters as a victory for human liberty over the Paris "mobs":

> On this side of the water the scene has greatly changed for the better, in favor of republican government, for since the adoption of the new constitution, liberty has, as it were, been rescued from the dust, where she was trampled under foot by the mob of Paris whose leaders were, perhaps, in foreign pay, and restored to the elevated station she ought to hold & where she is becoming, as she ought to be, the idol of the country.

Continuing to regard the French Revolution, even these latter stages , as an agrarian movement, Monroe was enthusiastic about the Directory's inept mode of funding the national debt through the sale of public land. Perhaps thinking about Hamilton's Bank of the United States, whose charter he and most Republicans had opposed in 1791, he remarked, "This government seems to have a horror of banks, funding systems, &c., &, therefore, attempts every other resource in preference tot hose," he reported approvingly.[126]

Monroe's chief desire was for unanimity behind the republican government. He considered this a real possibility, writing a few months after his arrival in Paris, "It is obvious that what is called the mountain party is rapidly on the decline, and, equally so, that if the opposite one acts with wisdom and moderation, at the present crisis, it will not only complete its overthrow, but destroy the existence (if possible in Society) of all party whatever."[127] Thus, at least for France, Monroe contemplated with equanimity the abolition of political parties and the

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ensuing practical disappearance of freedom of opinion.

Partly because of his distaste for the Babouvist radicals, Monroe continued to insist that Robespierre and his supporters were hired foreign agents, deliberately committing atrocities to alienate people from the Revolution. As he wrote Jefferson after the Conspiracy's suppression, "The party of discontented among those who were marshalled on the side of the revolution, diminishes daily & seems to be gradually reducing to those who dishonored it in the days of Robespierre & his associates, men who were probably in the pay of foreign powers & employed to perpetuate those atrocities merely to make the revolution odious & thus oppose it, & who in consequence expect punishment from any established order of things." With somewhat twisted logic, Monroe once more asserted that opponents of the regime were British spies and enemies of the Revolution, since they sought to overturn the "established order of things." Reluctantly admitting that some of the opposition consisted of "men of principle who seem to fear the government will incline too much" to a monarchical restoration, he reported, "at present I see no cause for such a suspicion."[128]

Though the legislative elections of 1797 were to prove him wrong, Monroe left France feeling confident that the Royalist party had diminished "throughout France. . . comparatively to nothing" after the new constitution's implementation, consisting merely of diehards "upon whose minds no proof can work conviction." He rejoiced at what he perceived as a new harmony within the population and a validation of representative government, whose viability even "ardent & active agents" of the Revolution had begun to doubt during the Reign of Terror. In making republican government respectable to European skeptics as the American Revolution

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had earlier, the Constitution of 1795 demonstrated the feasibility of "free government" as a moderate alternative to monarchy. "Since this government was established a new and more impressive example is before them, & which be assured has produced already a wonderful effect in reconciling the bulk of the people to it," Monroe insisted. "I have this from many quarters & therefore confide in what I communicate." However, Monroe's optimism was precarious. Aware that he was witnessing major events in an unstable Revolution, he warned, "the scene of this great movement is not closed, nor can anyone pronounce what its issue will be until it is closed."[129]

Perhaps because he feared that Secretary of State Pickering, a Francophobic Federalist, might manipulate negative reports to discredit the Revolution--as even his more moderate predecessor Randolph had done during the Whiskey Rebellion--Monroe's official comments on Babeuf's conspiracy were more restrained than his private speculations that the radicals were in collusion with the enemy.[130] Finding that Babeuf's "avowed object" had been "to overthrow the present constitution, and establish that of 1793," which upheld universal manhood suffrage and the guarantee of a decent living standard for all, he interpreted the discontent as a conflict between friends of the Revolution. As he informed Pickering, the Conspiracy of the Equals was "a project, which sought to marshal one description of patriots against the other; the leaders of the innovating party [Babouvists] differing from the established order, by the greater fervor of their zeal; and offering as an allurement to the poor, and in support of their interests, the free pillage of the wealthy." Though simplistic and unappreciative of the more humane and democratic aspects of the Conspiracy, exemplified by Filippo

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Buonarroti, Monroe's report was essentially accurate.[131] "Fortunately, however, the project was discovered in good time, by the Directoire, and crushed in embrio [sic]," he noted.[132]

Though he was sketchy in presenting the details of the plot, Monroe did mention the impending trial of Jean-Baptiste Drouet, a nonsocialist, radical democratic member of the Council of Five Hundred who had joined Babeuf because he favored the violent overthrow of the Constitution of 1795 and its replacement by the democratic Constitution of 1793. Drouet was among the large contingent of Babeuf's ex-Jacobin followers who embraced political rather than economic radicalism. Monroe was apathetic about uncovering details concerning the plot. "What its object was; who were its real authors, and how many were comprised in it, time will doubtless disclose," he remarked. "Perhaps the trial of Drouet. . . who is accused of being a principal in it, will thrown light on the subject in both views."[133] Surprisingly, his letters from Paris failed to mention either Babeuf or Buonarroti by name, suggesting that he was more concerned about the generalized threat to the Revolution than with individual instances.

Monroe would be on his way to the United States before Drouet's fate was decided. In December 1799 he was elected governor of Virginia, and the following year confronted a slave insurrection plot, Gabriel's Rebellion, and repressed it with undue severity. Perhaps his experience in Paris influenced his dread of lower-class uprising, whether white or black, free or slave.[134]

* * * * *

It is unlikely that Monroe was ignorant of the facts concerning Babeuf's plot, that it was radical, democratic and communist-oriented rather than a royalist conspiracy. First of all, his

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house guest rom November 1794 till April 1796, Thomas Paine, whose release Monroe had secured from a French prison, had a clear understanding of Babeuf's ideology. While residing at the Monroes' sumptuous residence, the Folie de la Bouexiére on the rue de Clichy, former home of a French tax farmer in the days of the Ancien Régime, Paine composed his great tracts on political economy, Agrarian Justice and Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance. Written from 1795 to 1796 and published in early 1797, these works expound Paine's views on social and economic reform and his opposition to communism.[135]

In late 1795, Babeuf was jailed for stirring up opposition to the Constitution of 1795 in his newspaper, Tribun du Peuple, and urging implementation of the more radical Constitution of 1793. In his preface to Agrarian Justice, Paine praised Babeuf's program, which did not advocate communism at this time, but he objected to the Pantheon Club's advocacy of "a directorship usurped by violence," on the order of the Jacobin dictatorship during the Reign of Terror. Though Monroe may not have read Paine's book, they as well as their author were readily available to help refute government propaganda that Babeuf was a royalist agent. These rumors were especially rife during the Directory's indictment and prosecution of Babeuf, over a year before his execution, on various trumped-up charges of royalism from December 1795 to February 16, 1796, although at that time he was acquitted of political crimes against the new constitution.[136] As his letters to Jefferson and others at this time indicate, Monroe chose to believe the "official" account of Babeuf's objectives. This is also true of his negative evaluation of Robespierre.

Other sources of information were available to Monroe, who was adept at reading and

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speaking the French language.[137] In Paris Monroe purchased for himself the complete works of Voltaire in thirty volumes, of Jean-Jacques Rousseau in thirty-three, as well as the writings of Helvétius, Buffon, and other philosophes. He also owned a French translation of Aristotle's Politics (Paris, 1797) and an eight-volume French edition of the Works of Machiavelli (Paris, 1793). French-language books comprised nearly one-third of his library, which he estimated n 1823 totaled three thousand volumes. Though it is unsurprising that he owned a French version of Montesquieu's Spirit of the Laws (Geneva, 1748), the scope of Monroe's interest in political economy--and his exposure to radical ideas–is demonstrated by his possession of two sets of the writings of the early socialist philosophe Gabriel Bonnot, abbé de Mably, in a French edition in thirteen volumes published in 1789-1790, as well as an earlier four-volume Amsterdam series dated 1778.[138] The French language did not intimidate him.

Only two works directly connected with the Reign of Terror and the Thermidorian Reaction are listed in the catalog of Monroe's library: a treatise on public education, which was first implemented in France during the Reign of Terror, François Lanthenas's Bases fondamentales de l'instruction publique et de toute constitution libre (Paris, 1795), and, of more significance in relation to his hostility to Robespierre, a copy of Edme Bonaventure Courtois' stinging denunciation, Rapport fait au nom de la commission chargée de l'examen des papiers trouvés chez Robespierre et ses complices, published by order of the National Convention in 1795. Indeed, Monroe had arrived in France at a time when anti-Robespierrist propaganda flooded the streets of Paris. From the date of his execution on July 28, 1794 to the removal from the Pantheon, the mausoleum for illustrious Frenchmen, of the remains of Jean-Paul

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Marat, the assassinated Jacobin agitator and newspaper editor, on February 8 of the following year, a six-month period, more than fifty defamatory pamphlets were published, some of them by order of the Convention. Following isolated provincial acts of violence during Fructidor (September) 1794, including a Jacobin assassination attempt on Tallien, government repression and anti-Robespierre publications multiplied. Aroused by unrest fomented by the Jacobin clubs at Marseilles and Dijon, the Convention sent troops which closed down the societies at Avignon and purged the one at Marseilles, restoring order by executing five terrorists and sending others to prisons at Paris and Aix-en-Provence in southeastern France. Attempting to justify the repression, the turncoat Montagnards in the National Convention--Tallien, Stanislas-Louis-Marie Fréron, and Merlin de Thionville--depicted these disturbances as the result of a conspiracy laid in Paris by the Jacobins, who, they charged, controlled the provincial clubs. As Monroe observed the Convention's repression of free speech in closing the Jacobin societies at Lyons and Toulon in September and October, and finally Paris in November 1794, he consistently believed Thermidorian propaganda that the Jacobin clubs and popular societies wee controlled from a central headquarters in Paris.[139]

To lend Robespierre's detractors a veneer of objectivity and respectability, about this time the Convention appointed a twelve-man committee to rummage through his private papers, exploiting their contents to embark on another wave of calumny. Courtois, the chief of the commission, was a Dantonist deputy whom the Jacobin society had suspected of speculating in army supplies while representative-on-mission to the Army of the North in September 1793. He took five months to complete his report, soliciting testimony from Robespierre's enemies,

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altering the text of documents, and doctoring the evidence to portray Robespierre as a demonic, arrogant, depraved fanatic who plotted to set himself up as a French monarch. The Rapport, presented to the Convention on January 5, 1795 and officially published shortly after Monroe's arrival, obviously sustained his suspicions of Robespierre's wickedness. Depicting Robespierre as an ambitious, solitary, indefatigable, jealous demagogue aspiring to absolute dictatorship via the "leveling" power of the mob, Courtois warned that his ultimate conspiracy--to establish himself as tyrant--was only thwarted by his execution on 9 Thermidor. As one study points out, "These arguments were only convincing to those who were already convinced of the conclusion--that Robespierre was an ambitious and unscrupulous conspirator who sought tyrannical power at any cost."[140]

Nevertheless, the flurry of pamphlets seemed designed to foster the fears of those, like Monroe, who had dealt with a political environment in which powerful executives were invariably suspected of an unholy hankering for dictatorship. Indeed, in that respect these tracts bore some similarity to the partisan diatribes between Whigs and Tories during the American Revolution and, more recently, between Jeffersonian Republicans and Hamiltonian Federalists in the 1790s, in which Monroe himself had participated.[141]

Though Robespierre was at the height of his popularity with the Paris sans-culottes on the eve of his death, many members of the National Convention, especially those who had grown wealthy from wartime embezzlement and speculation, had grown to hate and fear his power and his reputation for incorruptibility. During the French Revolution it was common for members of competing factions to charge their opponents with participation in "foreign plots" in

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complicity with the coalition of European kings at war with the Republic. They used this bugbear to discredit their enemies, save their own necks, and help send their rivals to the guillotine. This had been the fate of the Hébertists, the representatives of the Parisian lower classes, who proposed the more effective prosecution of the war, a guaranteed grain supply for the people, and harsh punishment of merchants and others who hoarded grain and speculated in the currency in search of windfall profits. In October 1793, corrupt politicians and speculators in the Jacobin party, hoping to distract public attention from their efforts to extort money from private businesses like the French East India Company, life insurance companies, and the Bank of Discount in exchange for "protection" from confiscatory legislation, had charged the Hébertists with conspiracy.[142] Such accusations bore fruit in the execution of the Hébertists at the dictation of the Committee of Public Safety in March 1794.

A devout believer in ubiquitous foreign plots, Robespierre distrusted Dutch and Belgian radicals who were in Paris at this time even though they zealously supported world revolution. Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety, suspecting them as royalist spies and counter-revolutionary agents, recommended that they be guillotined by the revolutionary tribunal in March 1794. On 9 Thermidor, the day of his fall, Robespierre was himself accused of participating in a royalist conspiracy in collusion with Benjamin Vaughan, an English radical and a friend of both Monroe and Benjamin Franklin. A professional revolutionary, Vaughan had departed England for France in 1793, then traveled to Geneva, where he wrote Robespierre, urging that France unite the territories of Belgium, Holland, and the German Rhineland into a great democratic federation which would serve as a buffer between France and its enemies.

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The letter was received by the Committee of Public Safety on the day of Robespierre's execution. His bitter foes, Bertrand Barère and the pro-Hébertist Jean-Nicholas Billaud-Varenne, a radical who favored the redistribution of wealth among the poor and the guarantee of employment for all, withheld it from the Convention, at the same time pretending that it contained evidence implicating Robespierre in a devious plot with British Prime Minister William Pitt to betray the Republic. Billaud-Varenne further embellished the lie at a meeting of the Jacobin Club a few days later, claiming that Vaughan's message revealed that "the Dictator" proposed to partition France between himself and his allies on the Committee of Public Safety, Louis-Antoine de Saint-Just and Georges Couthon. According to Barère, the letter proved Robespierre's treasonous scheme to dismember the country and abandon Belgium and the Rhineland to the Austrians and Prussians.[143] By lending a specious credibility to the legend of Robespierre's royalism, perhaps this incident stimulated Monroe's propensity to believe the worst rumors about him.[144]

In the atmosphere of hysteria spawned by the Reign of Terror and the equally violent Themidorian Reaction, few accusations against Robespierre were too absurd to inspire belief. When one sincere republican, Jean-Baptiste Louvet de Couvrai, a Convention deputy from the Loiret Department in north central France, denounced Robespierre as a royalist as early as 1792 for his initial opposition to a European war, few paid attention. However, fear of Robespierre's ambitions was further aroused when he championed the cult of the Supreme Being, which reached its height in June 1794. This creation of an incipient state church inspired the fierce hostility of de-Christianizers like Marc-Guillaume-Albert Vadier, a powerful member

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of the Committee of General Security who played a role in Robespierre's downfall.[145]

When the Convention itself finally denounced Robespierre as "an enemy of the People," and decided it would feel safer after he was eliminated, it was perhaps natural for its members to seek to convince themselves as well as the people that his overthrow was justified. This they did by means of a deluge of pamphlets, newspapers, books, speeches, plays, letters, songs, and feasts conveying the theme of hatred and disgust for Robespierre. After Thermidor, a great majority of the newspapers "became anti-Jacobin and often royalists," according to French historian Albert Soboul. Few radical journals appeared on a regular basis. Most of the press unstintingly praised the Thermidorian Reaction.[146]

Galart de Montjoye, an underground royalist whose real was C.F.D. Ventre de la Toulouse, was among the first to castigate Robespierre and his followers as leaders of an "anarchist" party subservient to France's foreign enemies. His canard, published in the newspapers during 1794 and 1795 and appearing in pamphlet form a year later, did much to tarnish Robespierre's reputation. Montjoye had earlier edited a royalist journal, L'ami du roi, in rebuttal to Jean-Paul Marat's popular L'Ami du Peuple. His book, composed in the form of a pseudo-biography, was cogent, because ostensibly based on actual events in Robespierre's life.[147]

One of the renegade Jacobin leaders who had taken the lead during the Reaction, Monroe's acquaintance Tallien, hired his protegé Jean-Claude-Hippolyte, Méhée de La Touche to write a stream of pamphlets besmirching Robespierre's posthumous glory. During the Reign of Terror, Tallien had been in Bordeaux as "representative on mission," where he

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stole tax moneys and drew the contempt of Robespierre's followers. In La Queue de Robespierre (Robespierre's Tail), La Touche, writing under the pseudonym Molto-Curanté Felhémési, called for the guillotining of the remaining members of Robespierre's Committee of Public Safety, a prospect Tallien must have found exhilarating. Praising the *"Fréronist"* opposition that led armed assaults on Jacobin meetings, even years later Méhée was writing tracts denouncing Robespierre as a traitor in the pay of the British ministry.[148]

The greatest politicians of the Thermidorian period were among that group of anti-Robespierrist writers who had prudently kept silent during the Terror out of fear of punishment, but boldly denounced him after his execution: Antoine-Christophe, Merlin de Thionville, a close friend of Monroe and guiding spirit of the Reaction; Lievain-Bonaventure, Abbé Proyart, an official at Robespierre's school, College Louis-Le Grand, who, under the pseudonym Le Blond de Neuvéglise, compiled the first "biography," La Vie et Les Crimes de Maximilien Robespierre (Augsburg, 1794), depicting him as a bitter, sullen, fiendish young student; Courtois, whom we have already mentioned; Laurent Lecointre, who led the movement against Barère and his allies in the National Convention; and such prominent pamphleteers as L. Duperron, Jean-Joseph Dussault, and Dufourny de Villiers. One of the more obscure arguments for Robespierre's monarchical tendencies was J.-B. Salle's Plan suivi par Robespierre et les Jacobins pour donner un roi à la France.

Many of the writers, who often wrote under pseudonyms, were either royalists, Girondins, Dantonists, or counter-revolutionary in other ways. The charge that Robespierre intended to restore a king under British protection was only one among many conjured up by those who

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hated him. More often he was denounced for his "monstrous" personal characteristics, including a gloomy, irascible, sexually perverse disposition; limited talents; cowardice; and a culinary preference, typical of Jacobin buveurs du sang, for "the roasted flesh of priests."[149] Monroe seems to have been most convinced by the charge that Robespierre aspired to absolute dictatorship in collaboration with the British government.

Pamphlets, newspapers, books, speeches, plays, letters, songs, and feasts--all became vehicles for defaming Robespierre in the months after his death. Obsessed with justifying its victory, the Themidorian Convention commissioned Courtois to compose another special report on the events of July 26-28, 1794, which he appropriately delivered on the first anniversary of Robespierre's overthrow, July 27, 1795. The Convention duly proclaimed the day of celebration Courtois recommended in honor of Robespierre's death, and the members participated in a costume ball for the occasion. On the other hand, supporters of Robespierre were driven underground by government repression, prosecution, and executions. By mid-1795 the Convention had executed three hundred Robespierrist officials, including about ninety who were guillotined with Robespierre and Saint-Just, on July 28-29, 1794, the bloodiest single day of the Reign of Terror in Paris.[150]

Such stabilization measures were hardly calculated to embolden Robespierre's defenders to articulate their objections. Merlin de Thionville, a former Jacobin who had assumed the leadership of the royalist thugs known as *jeunesse dorée*, was Monroe's companion and the author of one of the most popular Themidorian pamphlets, Capet et Robespierre (1795). A brief, unimpressive essay, it charged Robespierre with responsibility for

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all the acts of violence during the Terror, including the atrocities perpetrated by such deputies on mission as Joseph Fouché, Tallien, and Jean-Baptiste Carrier, since he had been *de facto* absolute tyrant of France during this period. Comparing the respective tyrannies of Louis XVI and Robespierre, Merlin argued that they were aristocratic in nature, cold-blooded, and aimed at the destruction of the Republic. There was little doubt that Robespierre was ambitious, jealous, selfish, and violent.[151]

From August 1794-October 26, 1795, when the National Convention finally terminated its sessions to make way for the government of the Constitution of 1795, over one hundred pamphlets against Robespierre appeared, and not a single rebuttal was printed during this period of over a year. Although, when the Thermidorian Convention repealed the Law of the Maximum--price and wage controls--on December 27, 1794, its action caused widespread suffering in Paris, precipitating the uprisings of Germinal and Prairial (May 1795), eulogies of Robespierre were noticeably missing from the rioters' manifestoes.[152]

Many of the leading radicals--Hébertists, Enragés, those who demanded more drastic measures to provide Parisian workers with enough to eat, decent living conditions, and universal manhood suffrage--joined the Thermidorian clamor against Robespierre, at least at the outset, at the same time demanding restoration of the Paris Commune liquidated by the Convention. As a member of the Club Electoral, a neo-Hébertist organization with a few hundred members, Babeuf had met some of the Enragé leaders, though he was not closely connected with them. These groups idealized the reformist possibilities of political democracy when embodied in the practical, united action of the masses. Embittered by Robespierre's

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purge of their leadership, and his constant harassment and denunciation of them as "ultras" who would have enforced the Terror against the ranks of the bourgeoisie in the interest of a regulated economy, these left-wing intellectuals and journalists rejoiced in his execution. They vied with their former enemies on the Right in castigating him as a madman, a tyrant obsessed by ambition, a monstrous ogre, a veritable Caligula in his bloodlust. Babeuf himself wrote a book, Le Système de Depopulation, charging that Robespierre had contemplated solving France's social and economic problems by systematically slaughtering two million citizens. In September 1794, under the guidance of the royalist Fréron, Babeuf became editor of the Journal de la liberté de la presse, whose publisher was Armand-Benoit-Joseph Guffroy, a member of the Convention from the Pas-de-Calais Department. Though Guffroy had earlier been linked with the Hébertists, after Thermidor he began to print a stream of pamphlets by Mehée de la Touche, who, using the pseudonym "Felhemési," vigorously advanced Fréron's claims to leadership. Babeuf became Guffroy's partner, but only for one month, during which he incessantly labored, with the help of his wife Marie-Anne and his son Emile, to meet the deadline and daily publication, as well as organizing subscriptions and the distribution of the newspaper. The hard work paid off: some of the first numbers sold out, the were soon eight hundred subscribers willing to pay four livres per issue, and the average daily run was twelve hundred copies. Not surprisingly, leftist historians sympathetic to Babeuf are embarrassed by this seeming dereliction from his radical stance.

Nevertheless, we should not assume that because Babeuf briefly joined Fréron's enterprise he shared his reactionary, cynical opinion of the Revolution. A fervent advocate of

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popular rule, he rejected the Reign of Terror and the Jacobin dictatorship as embodying the esprit dominateur in man, rulers' quest for absolute power, which must be counteracted by the constant application of *la force du peuple* acting through democratic institutions.[153] By December 1794, his tune had changed. In the pages of his new journal, Le Tribun du Peuple, Babeuf was advocating class warfare between the *peuple dorée* (the rich) and *le peuple sans culotte*. Publicly advocating the "community of goods and labor" in the Tribun du Peuple on November 30, 1795, he became more appreciative of the role of a militant and effective revolutionary dictatorship of Robespierre's type. Terror might be necessary to ensure success in the first stages of the Insurrection. The "day of the people" included the confiscation of the homes and property of counter-revolutionaries, émigrés, and the wealthy.[154] Babeuf's desire to create a communist state was authentic, although he kept the details of his plan secret from most of his fellow-members in the Pantheon Club, a majority of whom were middle-class Jacobins who wished only for political democracy, social equality, and their return to power. Members of the bourgeoisie, they respected the rights of private property while objecting to the exploitation of the poor.

Was Monroe justified in misconstruing Babeuf's movement as a royalist counterinsurgency, as he did Robespierre's Reign of Terror? Were sources available that might correctly inform him regarding Babeuf's ideas and the nature of his support? The evidence is unmistakable that such sources existed. Though Babeuf briefly advocated contradictory opinions for a few months in 1794, thereafter his popular newspaper, Tribun du peuple, consistently recommended a sans-culotte revolt against a government he perceived as corrupt

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and oppressive.

Babeuf's newspaper was read by middle-class democrats and ex-Jacobins who ignored its economic doctrines while enjoying its anti-aristocratic bias and clamor for implementation of the Constitution of 1793. These groups, consisting of merchants, lawyers, doctors, artisans, small businessmen and professionals--in fact, all but the very rich and the very poor--were critical of the Directory without being subversive. They read radical newspapers, but eschewed radical acts. The revolutionary printer Théodore Lamberté supervised the printing of over two thousand copies of Le Tribun du Peuple. Hawked about in the streets of Paris, and sold by subscription both there and in the provinces, Le Tribun's circulation was nationwide. A list of 590 subscribers found among Babeuf's papers, of which 238 were in the *départements* and 345 in Paris, reveals that the majority of readers in the former belonged to the upper bourgeoisie, including army officers, exporting merchants called *négociants*, engineers, lawyers, doctors, and even some officials in the Directory itself. In the provinces, many subscribers were well-off or even rich, but the proletariat, the wage-earners and day laborers, were unrepresented. Few subscribers in Paris were wealthy landholders; the majority were master artisans, shopkeepers, and small retailers. These kinds of people had participated in the famous journées of the Revolution, from the taking of the Bastille to the portentous uprisings of 1792 and 1793. Factory workers were absent from the list of subscribers. In any case, it seems true that, as R. R. Palmer puts it, "All kinds of persons read Babeuf."[155] However, it appears that James Monroe was not one of them; otherwise he would have had a keener perception of the movement's ideology.

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There were many other radical newspapers in Paris during Monroe's tenure as minister. One of the most important was Révolutions de Paris. Edited by Sylvain Maréchal, a devout communist and member of Babeuf's Insurrectionary Committee, this journal had existed since 1789; American newspapers often carried excerpts from its news columns. Pierre-Gaspard Chaumette, an official of the Paris Commune nicknamed "Anaxagoras" for his zealous adherence to the Dechirstianization campaign and the cult of Reason in 1793, began a Jacobin paper, the Ami des sans-culottes. After he was guillotined in April 1794, his espousal of the Hébertist socioeconomic program persisted in such radical newspapers as the Journal des hommes libres, edited by Charles Duval, a member of the National Convention, and René-François Lebois' Ami du peuple, continuing a journal which had formerly been edited by *Enragé* leader Théophile Leclerc.[156]

From time to time Babeuf received some unintentionally favorable publicity from the Directory itself. His call for class war and praise for Robespierre in the pages of the Tribun du Peuple in January 1795 led to his arrest, but he was quickly released after Jacobins in the Convention rose to his defense. He resumed publication of the Tribun du Peuple, but his renewed encomia to Robespierre and the Reign of Terror, denunciation of the Directory and the Constitution of the Year III (1795), and demand for implementation of the Constitution of the Year I (1793) led the Minister of Justice, Philippe-Antoine Merlin de Douai, to order his arrest again on various charges, among them political crimes against the Constitution of 1795. At this point the Directory attempted to convince the public that Babeuf worked for a royalist conspiracy, but its efforts failed. It also tried to link his wife, Marie-Anne, to royalist

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conspirators and the Vendémiaire rioters. The indictment and prosecution of Babeuf in absentia (he had gone into hiding), with accompanying accusations of royalism, proceeded from December 1795 to February 16, 1796, when a jury acquitted him. Perhaps the Directory's propaganda deceived Monroe into believing that Babeuf actually was a royalist foil.

Had Monroe desired a more objective depiction of Babeuf's views, he could have read the Journal des Hommes Libres and other Jacobin publications which devoted a great deal of indignant attention to the mistreatment of Babeuf and his wife. L'Eclaireur du Peuple, a new sheet that appeared in March 1796, as well as others, reprinted Babeuf's newspaper's report on the imprisonment of his wife. The Pantheon Club, in fact, drew up a petition to Merlin de Douai on February 23, 1796, protesting her arrest and the Directory's disingenuous attempt to connect her with the royalist editor of L'Accusateur Public, Jean-Thomas-Elisabeth Richer-Sérizy. Babeuf himself, though in hiding, published an account of his wife's arrest and maltreatment in No. 40 of the Tribun du Peuple, February 24, 1796. The next day Auguste-Alexandre Darthé, a republican member of Babeuf's conspiracy, was cheered when he read the article at the Pantheon Club. The Tribun du Peuple, the Ami du Peuple, and other opposition newspapers also carried pro-Babeuf news items on the government's persecution of Babeuf and his wife's imprisonment.

As a result of this press campaign, Marie-Anne Babeuf was released from jail on February 26, 1796, after three weeks of illegal internment. The Directory's scheme to crush Babeuf and stigmatize him as a royalist had backfired ignominiously: Marie-Anne had become a martyr, her liberation a cause célèbre, and Babeuf's persecution a symbol of the gap between

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the Directory and republican political opinion. A day later, it ordered Napoleon Bonaparte and his Army of the Interior to shut down the Pantheon Club, dispersing its two thousand members, further testimony to its frustration in dealing with the Jacobin opposition.[157]

In the weeks before his abortive insurrection plot, Babeuf deluged the streets of Paris with inflammatory pamphlets, broadsides, and newspapers. At the end of March 1796 he set up an Insurrectionary Committee, which organized a propaganda campaign to be conducted by agents in each of the city's twelve *arrondissements* and within the Army. Among the tracts Babeuf and his associates deliberately composed for mass circulation were L'Eclaireur du Peuple; L'Addresse du Tribun du peuple à l'Armée de l'Interieur; Lettre de Franc-Libre; Le Cri du peuple française contre ses oppresseurs, and the Courrier republicain. Lamberté, a collaborator in the Conspiracy of the Equals, printed most of these publications, sending Babeuf a bill on April 23, 1796, for more than 17,000 livres worth of work, including two thousand brochures and three hundred broadsides of the Analyse de la doctrine de Gracchus Babeuf, a twelve-point declaration demanding equality of wealth, education, and happiness, and the restoration of the Constitution of 1793, but not specifically calling for the abolition of private property; two hundred brochures and four hundred placards containing Felix Le Peleterier's Soldat, arrête et lis [Soldier, stop and read this], aimed at the Army; three thousand copies each of the Tribun du peuple and the Eclaireur du peuple; and two thousand copies of the Réponse a. . . M.V., a communist treatise by Buonarroti. Although Lamberté lived in the enclos Martin in the wealthy Gravilliers Section, his press was located somewhere in the lower-class Fidelité section, facilitating wide distribution among the workers. However, the wage-

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earners remained quiescent when Babeuf and his co-conspirators, betrayed by a faint-hearted associate, were arrested at their headquarters and charged with plotting to overthrow the government, a capital offense. Crowds witnessing the police break-in and arrest of Babeuf and his followers on May 10, 1796, were told that the force of between seven hundred and eight hundred men, including Army troops, was in the process of capturing desperate criminals responsible for a recent robbery of the Lyons mails.[158]

Held at the Supreme Court in Place Vendôme from February to May 1797, Babeuf's conspiracy trial received much publicity and was extensively reported in the radical press, leading to a revival of the Jacobin party. Babeuf was accused of trying to overthrow the Constitution of 1795. His lawyers conducted a skillful and moderate defense, portraying him as a democratic reformer rather than a communist rabble-rouser. Pamphleteers Pierre-Antoine Antonelle and Jean-Nicholas Pache, and journalists Pierre-Nicholas Hésine and René Vatar, current editor of the prominent newspaper Journal des hommes libres, denounced the Directory's prosecution as merely the most dramatic and egregious example of its unremitting attempts to undermine honest and patriotic republican opinion and encourage pro-monarchical elements. In his testimony Babeuf stressed the democratic aspects of his philosophy, depicting himself as the natural heir of Voltaire, Rousseau, and Robespierre, and primarily concerned to prevent the restoration of the Pretender, Louis XVII.[159]

Babeuf was not saved by his public disavowal of communist sympathies. He was guillotined on May 27, 1797, after unsuccessfully attempting suicide. James Monroe had left France in January, long before Babeuf gasped his final breaths. But what he had seen during

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his residence in France--the Paris crowds, the violence, poverty, and rioting--was embedded in his memory. He had tried to incorporate the events he witnessed into his political schema, using the "Revolutionary Enlightenment" pattern of thought he had picked up as an eighteenth-century American, with its medley of reason and experience, theory and practice.[160]

* * * * * * * * *

An important component of that republican ideology was a belief in the inevitability of class conflicts which would tear apart republican governments, leading to their degeneration into more "corrupt," perverted forms: anarchy, preparing the stage for the termination of representative government in its ironical opposite, tyranny and dictatorship. Americans had learned to expect this from their study of history, especially that of the ancient Greek city-states and the Roman Republic, the last major government to adopt that form before its metamorphosis into the Empire of the Caesars. Aristotle's great work, Politics, based on an encyclopedic study of 158 Greek city-state constitutions, emphasized the struggle between the rich and the poor as the crucial factor I the decline of governmental constitutions from a "pure" to a "corrupted" form in which the well-being of the community took second place to the pursuit of power and the gains of special interests. Tyranny was a decadent form of monarchy; oligarchy was a warped stage of the pure form of aristocracy; and the ideal, balanced government consisting of a coalition of the rich, the poor, and the middle class (Aristotle's *politeia*), when diverted from the quest for the general good, was transmuted into "democracy," or rule by the lowest socioeconomic groups. "For tyranny is a kind of monarchy which has in view the interest of the monarch only; oligarchy has in view the interest of the

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wealthy; democracy, of the needy ; none of them the common good of all," Aristotle explained.[161]

In their studies of the wars between and within the city-states, ancient Greek historians --Thucydides, Xenophon, Polybius--had stressed the endless bloodshed and disorder of class struggle, out of which violent, tyrannical factions or devious demagogues emerged triumphant. These volumes exerted great influence on John Adams, James Madison, and Alexander Hamilton, as well other Founding Fathers. They avidly read them in the 1780s, in the belief that history repeats itself, as if they had lessons to teach a new generation of lawmakers. Douglass Adair, the first scholar to carefully trace the influence of Greek and Roman history on the thought of the makers of the American Constitution, concluded, "Every educated eighteenth-century statesman thus knew from history that the mortal disease of democratical republics was and always would be the class struggle that had eventually destroyed every republican state."[162] Since Monroe was also familiar with the tragic history of the Greek and Roman republics, as he had shown in his writings and speeches about the United States Constitution in 1788, perhaps he was not so shocked by the events he witnessed in Paris as we might think.

Aristotle's successor Polybius, in his Histories of Greece and Rome, elaborated his views into a "cyclical theory" of decline and renewal, emphasizing the inevitable decay of all "pure" forms of government into their extremes or opposites. He contended that degenerate forms of government succeeded pure ones in an inexorable progression. Surrendering to the temptation to become tyrants, the descendants of honorable monarchs would eventually be overthrown by a virtuous aristocracy, whose decadent children would in turn transform the

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government into a selfish oligarchy under their control. The masses would then depose this arbitrary ruling minority. At first satisfied merely with the exercise of "equality and liberty," the people would ultimately turn to"force and violence," delivering their political and military support to the highest bidder. They would then anarchically expropriate the property of the rich under the leadership of their most notorious demagogue, who would finally set himself up as their king. Thereby the cycle completed itself.[163]

Polybius argued that this irresistible cycle of decay could be forestalled, but not prevented, if the citizens remained faithful to the "first principles" of their original constitution, sometimes wistfully referred to as the period of the polity's youth. The cyclical theory contained an inbuilt prejudice against "old age," which was synonymous with a state's (and its citizens') decline into arbitrary government, "luxury," immorality, selfishness and despotism. In Polybius's view, the "mixed" or "balanced" government, in which the one (king), the few (aristocracy) and the many (democracy) were represented, would endure longer than any other because the contending monarchical, aristocratic, and democratic powers would be in stable equilibrium. A bicameral legislature made possible the institutional representation of the conflicting social orders, the wealthy in a senate or upper house and the poor in an assembly or lower house. An independent monarch exercising a veto over all laws and serving as a moderator of class antagonisms ideally stabilized the structure.[164]

Though many American leaders, like Alexander Hamilton, appreciated the role of class conflict in society without ever going abroad, Americans who served in a diplomatic capacity, especially in the 1780s and 1790s, were most visibly impressed by the disparity of wealth

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between rich and poor. John Adams' stay in Europe as minister to Great Britain buttressed the historical lessons he had learned from the Greek and Roman historians and their later expositors, such as Machiavelli in his Discourses on Livy and James Harrington in Oceana (1656). Adams's experience culminated with his classic encomium to the mixed system of balanced government, A Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States of America (1787-1788), wherein he claimed that a limited monarchy with a representative component was the only way to preserve order in the face of eternal and inexorable class conflict. Adams found support among his contemporaries for a political determinism (what Douglass Adair calls "historical-comparative synthesis") rooted in socioeconomic strife. Adams thought foreign powers' intervention in weaker nations' domestic disputes resulted from internal class-based factionalism as well:

> The parties of rich and poor, of gentlemen and simplemen, unbalanced by some third power, will always look out for foreign aid, and never be at a loss for names, pretexts, and distinctions. Whig and Tory, Constitutionalist and Republican, Anglomane and Francomane, Athenian and Spartan, will serve the purpose as well as Guelph and Ghibelline. The great desideratum in a government is a distinct executive power, of sufficient strength and weight, to compel both these parties, in turn, to submit to the laws.[165]

Thomas Jefferson, American minister to France while Adams played that role in Great Britain, was similarly impressed with the economic inequality that prevailed in Europe. He found that his observations verified the historical dogmas. He wrote, "Experience declares that man is the only animal which devours his own kind; for I can apply no milder term to the governments of Europe, and to the general prey of the rich on the poor."[166] More optimistic

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than Adams, Jefferson hoped that the United States, an expansive republic with a relatively literate, widely enfranchised population of small property-holders, might prove exempt from the historical rule that all governments traversed an inevitable road to decay and despotism, the bloody outcome of the struggle between rich and poor. Though uncomfortably aware of the "extreme poverty" of the rural French in the years preceding the Revolution, Jefferson, who travelled far more extensively through the country than his friend and successor Monroe did a decade later, was more inclined to stress the relatively equitable distribution of wealth in the United States. He never tired of comparing the happy and prosperous condition of its people with the poverty and ignorance of the European masses. Always tending to minimize prevalent disparities of wealth, as late as 1814 he pointed out that the United States lacked "paupers, the old and crippled among us. . . being too few to merit notice." Alluding to both rural and urban occupations, he asserted, "The great mass of our population is of laborers; our rich, who can live without labor, either manual or professional, being few, and of moderate wealth." Most people owned property, the rich "know nothing of what the Europeans call luxury," and were not much better off than their employees, Jefferson claimed. Hence, he concluded, the threat of class war that menaced countries like France and England had no sting in the United States, where "the laboring class" owned land, "and from the demand for their labor are enabled to exact from the rich and the competent such prices as enable them to be fed abundantly, clothed above mere decency, to labor moderately and raise their families."[167]

Jefferson depicted a satisfied, relatively harmonious society, with a modicum of class consciousness but nothing like the class hatreds that abounded in Europe. He remained

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convinced for most of his life that the vast territory of the United States (which was doubled during his presidency by the Louisiana Purchase) in comparison with European nations, by making widespread land ownership possible, guaranteed its indefinite survival as a republic. "Here every one. . . by his property, or by his satisfactory situation, is interested in the support of law and order," he wrote to John Adams in 1813. "And such men may safely and advantageously reserve to themselves a wholesome control over their public affairs, and a degree of freedom, which, in the hands of the canaille of the cities of Europe, would be instantly perverted to the demolition and destruction of everything public and private." Jefferson sharply contrasted the United States and Revolutionary France: "The history of the last twenty-five years of France, and of the last forty years in America, nay of its last two hundred years, proves the truth of both parts of this observation."[168]

Recently, historians have discovered there were much greater disparities of wealth than Jefferson's statements would suggest.[169] Their findings make clear the intellectual significance of Jefferson's self-deception--rhetoric masquerading as fact. As one scholar notes, "Easing the tension resulting from the gap between the real and the ideal in any society is one of the prime functions of an ideology." Perhaps it served that purpose for Jefferson and other American republicans.[170]

Though Jefferson was convinced that popular conversance with history was essential to the perpetuation of republican government, he somberly concluded that, with the possible exception of medieval England's semi-mythical Saxon witan (representative assembly), the past's lessons were overwhelmingly negative. "History, in general, only informs us what bad

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government is," he advised a correspondent. "But as we have employed some of the best materials of the British constitution in the construction of our own government, a knowledge of British history becomes useful to the American politician."[171]

Jefferson would have his countrymen avoid emulating the current "corrupt" condition of the British constitution, whose "mixed government" had deteriorated into executive domination by the King and his minions, the prime minister and the Cabinet. Still more, perhaps, would he warn against following the examples of ancient Greece and Rome, where uncontrolled democracy had encouraged demagogy and socioeconomic leveling, leading ineluctably to dictatorship and hereditary despotism in the wake of anarchy. He praised the historical writings of Thucydides and Tacitus for their insights on human nature and the moral life, but found America's representative democracy far superior to the direct democracy of the ecclesia in the Athenian polis. The republican form of government provide an efficient structure for popular rule over a large extent of territory. In addition, it safeguarded the society, at least to a degree, from the domination of an aristocratic élite or tyrannical ruler, to which the Greeks and Romans had been subjected in the persons of Philip of Macedon, Alexander the Great, and the Caesars.

Different forms of government were appropriate for different eras and locales, Jefferson concluded toward the end of his life, with the disillusioning experience of the French Revolution before him. Though liberty and equality were "natural rights," history--current as well as ancient--apparently taught that lands and peoples differed in their ability to assume and protect those rights from the encroachments of evil men. As Jefferson lucidly explained, boldly questioning the value of Aristotle's teachings in the Politics for modern Americans:

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> So different was the style of society then, and with those people, from what it is now and with us, that I think little edification can be obtained from their writings on the subject of government. They had just ideas of the value of personal liberty, but none at all of the structure of government best calculated to preserve it. They knew no medium between a democracy (the only pure republic, but impracticable beyond the limits of a town) and an abandonment of themselves to an aristocracy, or a tyranny independent of the people. It seems not to have occurred that where the citizens cannot meet to transact their business in person, they alone have the right to choose agents who shall transact it; and that in this way a republican, or popular government, of the second grade of purity, may be exercised over any extent of country. . . . The introduction of this new principle of representative democracy has rendered useless almost everything written before on the structure of government; and, in a great measure, relieves our regret, if the political writings of Aristotle, or of any other ancient, have been lost, or are unfaithfully rendered or explained to us.[172]

The Greek revolution against Turkey in the1820's afforded Jefferson an apposite opportunity to ponder the shortcomings of classical political thought. Writing to one of the Greek leaders, an intellectual who had translated Aristotle and Plutarch into English, he attested his admiration for "the fine models of science. . . to whom we are all indebted for the lights which originally led ourselves out of Gothic darkness." Nonetheless, he suggested that American improvements on the polis might provide a model for modern Greece. "Possessing ourselves the combined blessing[s] of liberty and order, we wish the same to other countries," he declared. The ancient city-state was anachronistic, he argued. "Not, indeed, that the forms of government adapted to their age and country are practicable or to be imitated in our day," he warned. "The circumstances of the world are too much changed for that." Attempting the impossible, the ancient Athenians and Spartans, demanding absolute democracy and pristine

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virtue, had only succeeded in creating dominions of masters and slaves. "The government of Athens. . . was that of the people of one city making laws for the whole country subjected to them," he observed. "That of Lacedaemon [Sparta] was the rule of military monks over the laboring class of the people, reduced to abject slavery." Jefferson greatly preferred "the doctrines of the present age," in which "the equal rights of man, and the happiness of every individual, are now acknowledged to be the only legitimate objects of government." Rather than promote the dominion of the few over the many, the American people had circumvented history's pitfall of cyclical decay, "having discovered the only device by which these rights can be secured, to wit: government by the people, acting not in person, but by representatives chosen by themselves."[173]

On the other hand, should the people themselves be corrupted, "representative democracy" would afford scant immunity from the perils of institutional decay. Resolving this conundrum constituted the American Crisis of the Early Republic, lasting from the 1780s into Monroe's own "Era of Good Feeling."[174]

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NOTES: CHAPTER 3

* This chapter has been published in revised form as "The Limits of Republican Ideology: James Monroe in Thermidorian Paris, 1794-1796," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 79 (Winter, 1997), 5-45.

1. Monroe to Randolph, March 6, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 220.

2. Palmer, Age of the Democratic Revolution, II, 218; Godechot, Counter-Revolution, chaps. 11 and 12; Rudé, Crowd in French Revolution, 142-147; on taxation under the Thermidorian Convention and the Directory, see Jean-Pierre Gross, "Progressive Taxation and Social Justice in Eighteenth-Century France," Past and Present, 140 (Aug. 1993), 79-126, esp. 121.

3. Rudé, Crowd in French Revolution, 147-150; Soboul, French Revolution, 432-442.

4. Rudé, Crowd in the French Revolution, 151-159; Soboul, French Revolution, 442-449. Unlike Soboul, J.L. Talmon, Origins of Totalitarian Democracy (New York, 1970) is hostile to the popular movements.

5. Monroe to Randolph, June 14, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 274; Monroe to Jefferson, June 23, 1795, ibid., 292.

6. Monroe to Jefferson, June 23, 1795, ibid., 292.

7. Monroe to Randolph, May 17, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 260-261.

8. Monroe to Randolph, Nov. 20, 1794, in James Monroe, A View of the Conduct of the Executive.... (Philadelphia, 1797), 74; Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 195-196.

9. Soboul, French Revolution, 453-454, 467; Godechot, Counter-Revolution, 260.

10. Stuart Gerry Brown, ed., Autobiography of James Monroe (Syracuse, N.Y., 1959), 107-108.

11. James Monroe, "Note About the American Constitutions–the translation of which was given to Mr. Verron from the -- [Committee of Public Safety] on 7th of June 1795," James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel one. I have occasionally added punctuation to improve comprehensibility.

12. In Hamilton's draft of a Constitution in 1787 he stipulated that those eligible to vote for presidential electors must own "an estate of inheritance or for three lives in land, or a clear personal estate of the value of one thousand spanish milled dollars." Hamilton clearly intended for the upper and lower houses

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of Congress to be more "aristocratic" than the Convention decided. He proposed that the Senate be chosen for life by electors picked by property holders, and that the lower house should be elected by universal manhood suffrage for three-year terms. Hamilton's failure to include property qualifications for the president or the members of the national legislature indicates that he retained some respect for popular democratic sentiments. For Hamilton's recommendations, see Harold C. Syrett et al., eds., Papers of Alexander Hamilton (27 vols.; New York, 1961-1987), IV, 259; Forrest McDonald, Alexander Hamilton: A Biography (New York, 1979), 104.

13. Monroe, "Note About American Constitutions."

14. On the Council of Five Hundred's supervision of the Directory under the Constitution of 1795, see John Hall Stewart, Documentary History of the French Revolution (New York: Macmillan, 1951).

15. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Antifederalist, V, 298.

16. Monroe, "Note About American Constitutions." For a discussion of the attributes of the houses of the legislature, see Willi Paul Adams, The First American Constitutions (Chapel Hill, 1980); Wood, Creation of the American Republic; and Martin J. Burke, The Conundrum of Class (Chicago, 1995).

17. Monroe, "Note About American Constitutions." For a careful survey, see Jackson Turner Main, The Upper House in Revolutionary America (Madison, 1967), esp. 188-243. As Main writes, echoing Monroe's views: "The [post-Revolutionary] senates ordinarily neither defended particular economic interests nor served as the instruments of faction. In fact, they had become almost indistinguishable from the members of the lower house, except that they were somewhat more conservative and, perhaps, wiser. The senate's primary function was that of a revisory body. The role was old, but its extent and importance were new." Upper House, 191.

18. See, for example, [Benjamin Franklin Bache], Remarks Occasioned by the Conduct of George Washington as President of the United States: 1796 (Philadelphia, 1797), for an attack on the U.S. Senate as a clique of selfish "aristocrats."

19. Monroe, "Note About American Constitutions."

20. Monroe to Jefferson, June 23, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 297-298. Monroe sent copies of this letter to Aaron Burr, John Beckley, Robert R. Livingston, and Dr. George Logan, all leaders of the Republican party. He directed them to have it published anonymously in the newspapers to inform the public of France's new stability. Ironically, Secretary of State Pickering intercepted the copy of this rather inoffensive letter that was sent to Logan and used its contents, particularly its denunciation of Jay's Treaty, to justify Monroe's recall as minister. Monroe to John Beckley, June 23, 1795, Washburn Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Vol. IX, p. 21, photostatic copy at Virginia Historical Society; Aaron Burr to Monroe, Sept. 11, 1795, Mary Jo-Kline, ed., Political Correspondence and Public Papers of Aaron Burr, 2 vols, (Princeton, 1983), I. 227; Brown, ed., Autobiography, 107-108; Ammon, Monroe, 152, 605n.

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21. Brown, ed., Autobiography, 109-112; Georges Lefebvre, The Thermidorians and the Directory (London, 1965), 204; Rudé, Crowd in French Revolution, 160-177. The scale of mass participation in the Vendémiaire insurrection is instructive. Between twenty and twenty-five thousand insurgents marched against the Tuileries, more people than fought on both sides combined in most battles of the American Revolution. They were met by four thousand members of the army, who defeated them under Napoleon's command. Monroe estimated that "600 or 800 people" were killed during the riots. Brown, Autobiography, 111. Modern historians seem to agree with his estimates.

22. Monroe to Randolph, Aug. 17, Monroe to Pickering, Sept. 10, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 342, 361; Brown, ed., Autobiography, 107-108, 115; Palmer, Age of Democratic Revolution, II, 214-216. Stewart, A Documentary Survey of the French Revolution, 572-612, prints the Constitution of 1795.

23. Monroe to Pickering, Oct. 20, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 383, 393. Monroe contemporaneously published most of his official correspondence with the State Department and French officials in his View of the Conduct of the Executive in the Foreign Affairs of the United States (Philadelphia, 1797).

24. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 24, 1795, Madison Papers, Library of Congress, Series 1 (microfilm). This letter is incorrectly transcribed in Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 405.

25. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 24, 1795, Madison Papers, Library of Congress, Series 1 (microfilm). Monroe consistently downplayed or ignored the economic distress and mounting inflation, which hit those living on fixed incomes as well as wage-earners, threatening their day-to-day survival, and providing impetus for the riots. See Rudé, Crowd in French Revolution, 161-165.

26. Thomas Handasyd Perkins, Diary, May 30, 1795, in Thomas G. Cary, ed., Memoir of Thomas Handasyd Perkins (Boston, 1856), 101.

27. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 23, 1795, Madison Papers, Ser. 2, Rives Collection (microfilm).

28. Monroe's speeches at the Virginia ratifying convention, June 10 and 18, 1788, in Jonathan Elliot, ed., Debates in the Several State Ratifying Conventions, on the adoption of the Federal Constitution, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, 1891), III, 219-222, 488-490, quote at 222. See also Stuart G. Brown, The First Republicans: Political Philosophy and Public Policy in the Party of Jefferson and Madison (1954; Westport, Conn., 1976), 28-33.

29. For the electoral provisions of the Constitution of 1795, see Stewart, ed., Documentary Survey, 576-580.

30. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 29, 1795, Madison Papers, Ser. 2, Rives Collection (microfilm).

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31. For the view that the Constitution was a "moderate" resolution to the "radicalism" of the state legislatures during the Confederation Period, see Robert R.. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution, I, 228-232, and Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969), 475, 523-524, 543-564, 593-615. For Monroe's view on improving the Confederation, see his unpublished pamphlet, distributed only to his friends, Jefferson and Washington, "Some Observations on the Constitution" (1788), printed in Herbert J. Storing, ed., The Complete Anti-Federalist, 7 vols. (Chicago, 1981), V, 278-308, discussed at length earlier.

32. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 29, 1795, Madison Papers,. Ser. 2, Rives Collection (microfilm).

33. Anglas, quoted in Lefebvre, French Revolution, 1793 to 1799, 161.

34. Monroe to Pickering, Nov. 5, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 408.

35. Monroe to Pickering, Nov. 5, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 408. Monroe expressed his support for a single, popularly-elected executive in his "Observations," 302-306. See also Ammon, Monroe, 69, 73.

36. Like Monroe, Adams unconsciously imposed American norms and institutions as the standard by which those of revolutionary France should be judged. But, more pessimistically, he ended up predicting that Americans' declining virtue would make it necessary for them eventually to adopt some semblance of hereditary status orders characteristic of the Ancien Regime. His views present startling similarities to Monroe's when he examined the French situation. See Edward Handler, America and Europe in the Political Thought of John Adams (Cambridge, Mass., 1964); John R. Howe, Jr., The Changing Political Thought of John Adams (Princeton, 1966); James H. Hutson, "John Adams' Title Campaign," New England Quarterly, 41 (1968), 30-38; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, chap. 14, "The Relevance and Irrelevance of John Adams"; and Appleby, "New Republican Synthesis," American Quarterly, 25 (1973), 578-595.

37. Monroe to Madison, Nov. 8, 1795, Madison Papers, Ser. 2, Rives Collection (microfilm).

38. Monroe to Madison, Nov. 8, 1795, Madison Papers, Ser. 2, Rives Collection (microfilm); Monroe to Pickering, Nov. 5, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 408-409.

39. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 18, Monroe to Secretary of State Pickering, Dec. 6, 1795, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 413-415, 426.

40. Monroe to Madison, Jan. 12, 1796, ibid., 435, 433. On French events, see Soboul, French Revolution, 466, 483-486. An anonymous individual, probably an American in Paris, sent Monroe ca. 1795, a memorandum entitled, "France: System of Finance," which suggested that the French adopt "a permanent system of revenue to be raised by direct and indirect taxes, payable in specie or productions at Specie Value," to redeem the interest and eventually the principal of the public debt and the assignats. Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Series 2, reel 10 (microfilm).

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41. Thomas Paine, Speech in the National Convention, July 7, 1795, in Philip S. Foner, ed., Complete Writings of Thomas Paine, 2 vols. (New York, 1945), II, 588-594.

42. Rights of Man: Part II, in ibid., I, 425-442, and Agrarian Justice, ibid., 609-623.

43. Joel Barlow, Letter to the National Convention of France on the Defects of the Constitution of 1791 (London, 1792); Advice to the Privileged Orders: Part II (Ithaca, N.Y., 1956; orig. pub. London, 1795), 90-97.

44. For the stress on the "right to subsistence" of the radical Jacobin program after 1795, which comprised a significant part of the Babouvist ideology as well, see Isser Woloch, Jacobin Legacy: The Democratic Movement Under the Directory (Princeton, 1970), 171-175, 181-185, 225-229, 362-363; Rose, Babeuf, 141-149 and passim; and Lefebvre, Thermidorians and Directory, 269-273. The contrasting American outlook is examined in J. R. Pole, The Pursuit of Equality in American History (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1978), 42-50, and Willi P. Adams, The First American Constitutions: Republican Ideology and the Making of the State Constitutions in the Revolutionary Era (Chapel Hill, 1980), 189-217, among many other works. The phrase, "equal rights," a catch phrase of the period, is used in Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders, 16-18 passim.

45. The most thorough discussion of Babeuf is Rose, Babeuf. See also Woloch, Jacobin Legacy, 180; Palmer, Age of the Democratic Revolution, II, 232-244. Martyn Lyons, France Under the Directory (Cambridge, 1975), 29-36, sees Babeuf as a leader without followers, and concludes his radical movement was co-opted by more moderate Jacobins. Many of Babeuf's supporters were wealthy bourgeois who favored the democratic aspects of his program but abhorred communism and would have rejected implementation of radical economic measures. Though Babeuf's Pantheon Club had about two thousand members, the laboring proletariat remained indifferent or ignorant of Babeuf's movement. Lefebvre, Thermidorians, 273. The elitist, undemocratic and authoritarian facets of Babeuf's ideology are stressed in Talmon, Origins of Totalitarian Democracy, 167-255.

46. Monroe to Pickering, March 10, 1796, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 465.

47. Gordon S. Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 39 (1992), 401-441, brilliantly discusses the pervasiveness of conspiratorial explanations for political events in the eighteenth century.

48. On Monroe's recall, see Brown, ed., Autobiography, 127-140; Ammon, Monroe, 150-156; Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 257-261; DeConde, Entangling Alliance, 380-391; and Gerard H. Clarfield, Timothy Pickering and American Diplomacy, 1795-1800 (Columbia, Mo., 1969), 52-57.

49. For Jay's views, see Jay to Washington, March 6, 1795, and Jay to Robert Goodloe Harper, Jan. 19, 1796, in Henry P. Johnston, ed., Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, 4 vols. (New York, 1890-1893), IV, 166, 200-202; Stephen G. Kurtz, The Presidency of John Adams: The

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Collapse of Federalism, 1795-1800 (Philadelphia, 1957), 408.

50. Jefferson to Jean-Nicholas Demeunier, April 29, 1795; to Tench Coxe, June 1, 1795, Ford, ed., Writings, VII, 13, 17; Jefferson to John Adams, Feb. 28, 1796, in Lester G. Cappon, ed., Adams-Jefferson Letters, 2 vols. (Chapel Hill, 1959), I, 259; Jefferson to John Breckinridge, Jan. 29, 1800, Ford, ed., Writings, VII, 417-418. Perceptive accounts of Jefferson's changing view of the French Revolution during the 1790s include Kaplan, Jefferson and France, chaps. 3-4, and Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 39-43, 45-50, 91-92, 185-187, 249-250, 266, 440-441.

51. Jefferson to Marquis de Lafayette, Feb. 14, 1815, A. A. Lipscomb and A. E. Bergh, eds., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 20 vols. (Washington, 1903), XIV, 251. See also Jefferson to William Plumer, Jan. 31, 1815, ibid., 235-237. For Madison's attitudes, see his letters to Jefferson, Dec. 6, 1795, and Jan. 10, 1796, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, and Irving Brant, James Madison: Father of the Constitution, 1787-1800 (Indianapolis, 1950), 371-372, 382-383. Both Federalists and Republicans in Virginia condemned Robespierre and feared that Napoleon would emulate his tyranny. Joseph I. Shulim, The Old Dominion and Napoleon Bonaparte: A Study in American Opinion (New York, 1952), 57, 82, 154. For American radicals in Paris and their negative opinion of Robespierre, see William C. Stinchcombe, The XYZ Affair (Westport, Conn., 1980), 9, 97, and Esther Brown, The French Revolution and the American Man of Letters (Columbia, Mo., 1951).

52. Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Era of Good Feelings," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 66 (1958), 387-398; Livermore, Twilight of Federalism.

53. Joel Barlow to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 6, 1794, in George Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations of George Washington and John Adams, edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, 2 vols. (New York, 1846), I, 160-161. On Barlow's view of the Reign of Terror, see Robert F. Durden, "Joel Barlow in the French Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 8 (1951), 327-354, esp. 351-354. Monroe's friendship with Barlow while he was in Paris is discussed in Ammon, Monroe, 134-135. See also Joel Barlow, "Notes Prepared for a Projected History of the French Revolution," ca. 1796, Joel Barlow Papers, Harvard University (microfilm).

54. For opposition to Robespierre in the American press, see Hyslop, "Press Reports, 1789-1794," New York Historical Society Quarterly, 52 (1958), 344-348; Huntley Dupré, "The Kentucky Gazette Reports the French Revolution," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 26 (1939), 163-180, esp. 177-179; Blau, "New York City and the French Revolution," 390-395, 420-421; Donald H. Stewart, The Opposition Press of the Federalist Period (Albany, N. Y., 1969), 93. Philip Freneau was one journalist who remained steadfastly Francophile despite Jefferson's chiding, though his newspaper, the National Gazette, folded in 1793, before Robespierre's name became widely known in the United States. Leonard A. Granato, "Freneau, Jefferson and Genet: Independent Journalism in the Partisan Press," in Donovan H. Bond et al, eds., Newsletters to Newspapers: Eighteenth-Century Journalism (Morgantown, West Virginia, 1977), 291-301.

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55. The most thorough study of Benjamin F. Bache is James D. Tagg, Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia Aurora (Philadelphia, 1991). See also Bernard Fäy, The Two Franklins: Fathers of American Democracy (Boston, 1933); Norman V. Blantz, "Editors and Issues: The Party Press in Philadelphia, 1789-1801" (Ph.D. dissertation, Pennsylvania State University, 1974); and Margaret A. Blanchard, "Benjamin Franklin Bache," in Perry J. Ashley, ed., American Newspaper Journalists, 1690-1872, Vol. 43 of Gale's Dictionary of Literary Biography (Detroit, 1985), 14-22.

56. James D. Tagg, "Benjamin Franklin Bache and the Philadelphia Aurora" (Ph.D. dissertation, Wayne State University, 1973), 562-564.

57. Philadelphia Aurora, Jan. 25, 28, June 6, Oct. 10, 1794.

58. Philadelphia Aurora, Oct. 17 ("Fall of Robespierre"), Nov. 29, 1794.

59. Philadelphia Aurora, Dec. 6, 1794 ("Parties in France"), Jan. 13, March 25, 1795.

60. Philadelphia Aurora, Nov. 10, 1796 (emphasis in original). Webster's earlier enthusiasm for the French Revolution had been dulled by partisan expediency. See his pamphlet, The Revolution in France (New York, 1794), in which he supports the early stages of the Reign of Terror as necessary for France's survival against foreign subversion. For Webster's vacillation respecting the later phases of the French Revolution, see Gary B. Nash, "The American Clergy and the French Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 22 (1965), 405-406.

61. Richard E. Ellis, The Jeffersonian Crisis: Courts and Politics in the Young Republic (New York, 1971).

62. A Review of the Revenue System Adopted by the First Congress Under the Federal Constitution...By A Citizen (Philadelphia, 1794), 106-107.

63. Ibid., 107-108.

64. Noah Webster, The Revolution in France Considered in Respect to Its Progress and Effects (New York, 1794), "Preface," 6, 37-38.

65. Ibid., 14-17.

66. Ibid., "Preface." See also Joseph J. Ellis, After the Revolution: Profiles of Early American Culture (New York, 1979), 201-202.

67. Ammon, Monroe, 79. Monroe's love for farming is discussed ibid., 3, 77-78, 91, 98, 278. The most persuasive advocate of agrarianism was, of course, Jefferson. Jefferson's fundamental premise, which Monroe accepted, was that only agricultural majorities could be trusted to correctly decide political questions. See, e.g., Notes on Virginia, Query XIX, Jefferson to John Jay, Aug. 23, 1785,

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Jefferson to Marquis de Lafayette, April 11, 1787, and Jefferson to Madison, Dec. 20, 1787, in Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1944), 280, 377, 421, 440-441. Among the best of numerous studies of American agrarianism during this period are Leo Marx, The Machine in the Garden (New York, 1962); John F. Kasson, Civilizing the Machine: Technology and Republican Values in America, 1776-1900 (New York, 1976); Chester E. Eisinger, "The Freehold Concept in Eighteenth-Century American Letters," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 4 (1947), 42-59; and Douglass G. Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy: Republicanism, the Class Struggle, and the Virtuous Farmer" (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1943), esp. chaps. 3, 7.

68. "Republican Distribution of Citizens," in [Philadelphia] National Gazette, March 3, 1792, printed in Robert A. Rutland et al, eds., Papers of James Madison (Charlottesville, Va., 1983), XIV, 245.

69. Jefferson to Madison, Jan. 30, 1787, quoted in Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 189.

70. Ammon, Monroe, 65-67.

71. Ibid., 135-139; Monroe to Secretary of State Randolph, Aug. 15, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 18. Although Paine wrote his radical works, Agrarian Justice and Decline and Fall of the English System of Finance while a guest at Monroe's house, the latter does not seem to have read them or shared their sentiments. See also Alfred Owen Aldridge, Man of Reason: The Life of Thomas Paine (New York, 1959), 240-241; DeConde, Entangling Alliance, 357-359; George Morgan, James Monroe (Boston, 1921; New York, 1969), 192-193.

72. Ammon, Monroe, 138.

96. For Monroe's sumptuous living conditions while he resided in Paris, see Morgan, Life of James Monroe, 171, 192; Ammon, Monroe, 133, 139; Lucius Wilmerding, James Monroe: Public Claimant (New Brunswick, N. J. , 1960), 28-29.

97. Monroe's remarks may be most easily found in Jonathan Elliiot, ed., The Debates in the Several State Conventions, On the Adoption of the Federal Constitution as Recommended by the General Convention at Philadelphia (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1891), III, 211-212 (June 10, 1788).

98. On Monroe's friendship with leading French Thermidorians like Merlin de Thionville, Louis Marie-Fréron, and others in the National Convention and the Executive Directory, see Thomas G. Cary, Memoir of Thomas Handasyd Perkins (Boston, 1856), diary entries of April 7 (76-77) and 11, 1795 (85-86). Perkins, a Boston Federalist merchant who arrived in Paris in March 1795, noted that Monroe often attended the Convention debates (e.g., 73, 86). See also, for Monroe's association with Otto and de Thionville, Autobiography, 59-60, 86-87, and Ammon, Monroe, 118-119, 134, 140. Pertinent biographical information on the Frenchmen may be found in Margaret M. O'Dwyer, "A French Diplomat's View of Congress, 1790," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 21 (1964), 408-

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409, and Soboul, French Revolution, 419, 424, 462.

99. The manuscripts of Monroe's autobiography and his unfinished work, "The People the Sovereigns," are in the New York Public Library. Stuart G. Brown's published version of the former is generally reliable, but the printed version of The People the Sovereigns (Philadelphia, 1867), edited by Monroe's grandson, Samuel L. Gouverneur, is not always faithful to the original, eliminating some rambling paragraphs and silently inserting the editor's own hortatory comments on the value of nationhood--this in the aftermath of the Civil War. The citations below have been checked against the original manuscript.

100. Autobiography, 87-88.

101. Ibid. On the impingement of Greco-Roman political thought on Anglo-American life at this time, see J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, 1975); Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans (Evanston, Ill., 1945); H. Trevor Colbourn, The Lamp of Experience: Whig History and the Intellectual Origins of the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1965); Corinne C. Weston, English Constitutional Theory and the House of Lords, 1556-1832 (New York, 1965); and Martin Diamond, "The Separation of Powers and the Mixed Regime," Publius, 8 (1978), 33-43.

102. James Monroe, The People the Sovereigns, ed. Samuel L. Gouverneur (Philadelphia, 1867), 95-96.

103. Ibid., 96. Ostensibly, Monroe's reception by the Convention on Aug. 14, 1794, had been a joyous occasion; perhaps he had been hiding his real feeling of exasperation at the time. See DeConde, Entangling Alliance, 3490350; Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 174-176; Ammon, Monroe, 119-121.

104. People the Sovereigns, 96.

105. Autobiography, 86.

106. People the Sovereigns, 97.

107. Ibid., 99. Monroe composed most of People the Sovereigns in 1828-1829. Ammon, Monroe, 561-562.

108. Autobiography, 86.

109. Monroe to James Madison, Fredericksburg, May 23, 1787, in Rutland et al., eds., Madison Papers, IX, 416-417. For Monroe's financial embarrassment at this time, see Ammon, Monroe, 65; Monroe to Madison, Oct. 13, 1787, in Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 177.

110. Monroe to Jefferson, July 27, 1787, Hamilton, ed., Writings, I, 173-174.

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111. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 13, 1787, ibid., 176; Monroe to Jefferson, July 27, 1787, ibid., 175; Madison to John Brown, April 9, and Madison to Jefferson, April 22, 1788, in Rutland et al, eds., Madison Papers, XI, 16, 28. Students of the "Critical Period" note that Monroe was a "nationalist leader" during his tenure in the Continental Congress from 1783 to 1786, until his surprising switch at the state ratifying convention in 1788. Ammon, Monroe, 66 and chap. 4; Frederick W. Marks III, Independence on Trial: Foreign Affairs and the Making of the Constitution (Baton Rouge, 1973), 50, 80, 86-87.

112. Ammon, Monroe, 150. A recent favorable assessment of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty is Donald R. Hickey, "The Monroe-Pinkney Treaty of 1806: A Reappraisal," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 44 (1987), 65-88.

113. Burton Spivak, Jefferson's English Crisis: Commerce, Embargo, and the Republican Revolution (Charlottesville, 1979), 18. Monroe's naive reliance on polite personal conduct as a barometer of British disposition to make concessions was evident in his unrealistic expectations and excessive demands on Charles James Fox when that pro-American Whig became Foreign Secretary in 1806. Ibid., 51-53.

114. Monroe to Fulwar Skipwith, Jan. 20, 1807, quoted in Hickey, "Monroe-Pinkney Treaty," 88.

115. Dr. James McClurg, in Richmond Enquirer, Oct. 18, 1808, cited in Norman K. Risjord, "The Virginia Federalists," Journal of Southern History, 33 (1967), 508-509.

116. The best study of this episode, with an argument similar to mine, is Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808 in Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 20 (1963), 33-56. See also David A. Carson, "Quiddism and the Reluctant Candidacy of James Monroe in the Election of 1808," Mid-America, 70 (1988), 79-89.

117. Ammon, Monroe, 292.

118. J. C. A. Stagg, Mr. Madison's War (Princeton, 1983), 278. See also C. Edward Skeen, Monroe and Armstrong: A Study in Political Rivalry," New-York Historical Society Quarterly, 57 (1973), 121-147.

119. Among the best studies of Monroe's political milieu are Charles Sydnor, Gentleman Freeholders (Chapel Hill, 1952); Richard R. Beeman, the Old Dominion and the New Nation, 1788-1801 (Lexington, Ky., 1972); Daniel P. Jordan, Political Leadership in Jefferson's Virginia (Charlottesville, 1983); and John Gilman Kolp, Gentlemen and Freeholders: Electoral Politics and Political Community in Colonial Virginia (Baltimore, 1998). An important work from a different perspective is Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia, 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill, 1982).

120. Monroe to Randolph, Aug. 15, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 26. In fact, the French army was primarily composed of men from the cities, especially during the years 1793-1794. Isser Woloch,

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The French Veteran from the Revolution to the Restoration (Chapel Hill, 1979), 85-86, 128.
121. Monroe to Joseph Jones, Feb. 1, 1795, Monroe Papers, University of Virginia, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories (13 reels; Charlottesville, 1969), reel 12. For Monroe's slave purchase from Jefferson, see Fawn Brodie, Thomas Jefferson: An Intimate History (New York, 1974), 289.

122. Monroe to Joseph Jones, Aug. 4, 1795, Monroe Papers, University of Virginia, in Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12. For Harrington's and Sidney's praise of territorial expansion as essential to a republic's longevity, see Gerald Stourzh, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford, 1970), and J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975), 197-199, 395-400.

123. George Morgan, The Life of James Monroe (New York, 1969; orig. pub., Boston, 1921), 171, 192; George Rudé, The Crowd in the French Revolution (Oxford, 1959), 33.

124. Ammon, Monroe, 133, 139; Lucius Wilmerding, Jr., James Monroe: Public Claimant (New Brunswick, N.J., 1960), 28-29.

125. Rose, Babeuf, 270-72; Lefebvre, Thermidorians and the Directory, 278. By the law of 27 Germinal (April 16, 1796), passed shortly before Babeuf's arrest, the French Government decreed the death penalty for public advocacy of either restoration of the monarchy or adoption of the democratic Constitution of 1793. Babeuf and one of his followers, Auguste-Alexander Darthé, were executed under this law. Soboul, French Revolution, 491-92. For a fuller account, see Rose, Babeuf, ch. 17.

126. Monroe to Jefferson, July 30, 1796, Hamilton, ed., Writings, III, 42.

127. Monroe to Randolph, Oct. 16, 1794, ibid., II, 78.

128. Monroe to Jefferson, July 30, 1796, ibid., III, 45-46.

129. Ibid., 46 (italics mine).

130. Monroe to Pickering, May 25, 1796, ibid., 2-3. Secretary of State Randolph had earlier published Monroe's letters in the newspapers, where Federalists had taken advantage of his hostile comments on the Jacobin clubs and "secret societies" in general to discredit the Democratic Societies and the Whiskey Rebellion in the United States. See Monroe to Randolph, Oct. 16, 1794, Hamilton, ed., Writings, II, 81n.; Edmund Randolph to Monroe, March 8, 1795, in Simon Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Madison to Monroe, March 11, 1795, Letters and Other Writings of James Madison (4 vols., New York, 1884), II, 37; New York Daily Advertiser, Feb. 27, March 3, 1795; Monroe to Madison, Feb. 18, 1795, Thomas A. Mason and Robert A. Rutland, eds., Papers of James Madison (Charlottesville, 1985), XV, 478n.

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131. See Palmer's comments, Age of the Democratic Revolution, II, 235-238.

132. Monroe to Pickering, May 25, 1796, Hamilton, ed., Writings, III, 3.

133. Drouet was arrested, but, with the complicity of Barras, one of the Directors and a friend of Monroe, escaped from prison in August 1796, before his trial. Rose, Babeuf, 282. Fleeing first to Switzerland, then to the Canary Islands, where he fought a British naval squadron commanded by Admiral Horatio Nelson, Drouet was pardoned for his role in the Babeuf affair, and returned to France at the end of 1797. Ferdinand Hoefer, ed., Nouvelle Biographie Générale (46 vols., Paris, 1852-1856), XIV, 792-794.

134. Ammon, Monroe, 185-189. The most thorough examinations of Gabriel's Conspiracy are Douglas R. Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion (Chapel Hill, 1993), and Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion (New York, 1972).

135. Agrarian Justice, in Foner, ed., Complete Writings, I, 610. For a more thorough treatment of Paine's relationship with Monroe, see David F. Hawke, Paine (New York, 1974), 307-324, and Ammon, Monroe, 133-137, 602n. It is not clear whether Monroe insisted that Paine leave his home, or whether Paine voluntarily relocated when Monroe forbade him to write an anti-Washington pamphlet, his famous Letter to George Washington (1796), under his roof. See Hawke, Paine, 325-329, for Paine's views of Babeuf. Steven Blakemore, "Revisionist Patricide: Thomas Paine's Letter to George Washington," Clio, 24 (Spring 1995), 269-289, is an intriguing psychological profile of Paine.

136. Rose, Babeuf, 221-222; Soboul, French Revolution, 440, 483.

137. Ammon, Monroe, 138.

138. Ibid., 141; Gordon W. Jones, The Library of James Monroe (Charlottesville, Va., 1967), 6, 11, 19, 45, 48, 56. It is probable that Monroe bought most, if not all of these books during his ministry to France. Perhaps he developed a slight affinity for radical ideas, as he later purchased the British Utopian Socialist Robert Owen's book, A New View of Society; or essays on the principle of the formation of the human character (London, 1813). Jones, Monroe's Library (Monroe's holdings are arranged alphabetically by author), 50.

139. Jones, Monroe's Library (on Monroe's Thermidorian collection); Lefebvre, Thermidorians, 32; Soboul, French Revolution, 425.

140. Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 35-43, quoted at 43; David P. Jordan, The Revolutionary Career of Maximilien Robespierre (New York, 1985), 14-16; René Garmy, "Aux origine de la légende anti-robespierrist: Pierre Villiers et Robespierre," Actes du Colloque Robespierre (Paris, 1967), 19-33; Louis Jacob, Robespierre vu par ses contemporains (Paris, 1938).

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141. James H. Hutson, "The Origins of 'The Paranoid Style in American Politics': Public Jealousy from the Age of Walpole to the Age of Jackson," in David d. Hall et al, eds., Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History (New York, 1984), 332-372; Willi Paul Adams, "Republicanism in Political Rhetoric Before 1776," Political Science Quarterly, 85 (1970), 398-404.

142. Palmer, Twelve Who Ruled, 114-115; Jordan, Robespierre, 187, 191-192, 222-227; Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 5-7.

143. Palmer, Age of Democratic Revolution, II, 121-122; J. M. Thompson, Robespierre (2 vols.; New York, 1936), II, 225.

144. Similar rumors appeared in dispatches from abroad that were printed in American newspapers. For example, the New York Daily Advertiser, June 30, 1794, published a dispatch from Paris, April 27, 1794, which reported the condemnation of "a mid-wife... for having hawked about among her acquaintances, a letter which ascribed to Robespierre a plan for the establishment of Louis XVII on the throne." The actual source of these reports may have been London rather than Paris. British observers also suspected that Robespierre harbored counter-revolutionary, dictatorial ambitions. See The History of Robespierre Political and Personal (London, 1794).

145. Louvet de Couvrai, A Maximilien Robespierre et à ses royalistes (Paris, 1792); Jordan, Robespierre, 202; Soboul, French Revolution, 275, 467, 479.

146. Soboul, French Revolution, 571; Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 15-23. The most thorough survey of the French press is Jacques Godechot et al, Histoire Générale de la Presse Française, Tome I: Des Origines à 1814 (Paris, 1969).

147. Galart de Montjoye, Histoire de la conjuration de Maximilien Robespierre (Paris, 1796, republished 1801); Jordan, Robespierre, 16-17; Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 35-36.

148. La Queue de Robespierre [Robespierre's Tail] (Paris, 1794); Alliance des jacobins de France avec le ministère anglais; les premiers représénts par le C° Mehee, et le ministère anglais par MM Hamond, Yorke et par Lords Pelham & Hawkesbury (Paris, [1804?]). See also Rose, Babeuf, 157.

149. Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 33; Jordan, Robespierre, 17; Merlin de Thionville, quoted in Jacob, Robespierre, 187-191.

150. Courtois's second report on Robespierre was entitled Rapport fait au nom des Comités de Salut public et de Sûreté Générale sur les événements du 9 Thermidor an II (Paris, 1796); Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 22, 37; Soboul, French Revolution, 412.

151. Merlin de Thionville's pamphlet is conveniently reprinted in an unlikely source: Hector Fleischmann, Robespierre et les Femmes (Paris, 1909), 385-390.

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152. Gobar, "Antirobespierrist Legend," 53.

153. Rose, Babeuf, 157-158; Palmer, Age of Democratic Revolution, II, 238; Rose, Enragés, 31; Soboul, French Revolution, 421, 426. See also Albert Mathiez, "Babeuf et Robespierre," in Mathiez, ed., Etudes sur Robespierre (Paris, 1973).

154. Rose, Babeuf, 234-243; Soboul, French Revolution, 439-440.

155. Palmer, Age of the Democratic Revolution, II, 232-233; Albert Soboul, "Personnel sectionaire et personnel babouviste," Annales Historiques de la Revolution Française, 32 (1960), 436-457. On the popularity and large circulation of Babeuf's paper, see also Rose, Babeuf, 219-220.

156. Rose, Babeuf, 142, 188; Hyslop, "American Press Reports," New-York Historical Society Quarterly, 52 (Oct. 1958), 334; Jordan, Robespierre, 60.

157. Rose, Babeuf, 221-222, 228-230, chap. 14 passim.

158. Ibid., 250, 271. Rose's data on Babeuf's myriad newspaper and pamphleteering activities during the brief period 1795-1796 cast doubt on Soboul's conclusion that, "after Thermidor, the popular press as a whole became anti-Jacobin and often royalist." French Revolution, 571. On the other hand, in this era of conspiracy and counter-insurgency, many ostensibly "radical" journals, such as Orateur plébéien and Journal des Patriotes de 1789, were actually being secretly subsidized by the Directory. Rose, Babeuf, 208.

159. Rose, Babeuf, 327; Palmer, Age of Democratic Revolution, II, 243-244. There is a detailed discussion of Babeuf's trial and execution in Rose, Babeuf, chaps. 18-20.

160. For the term "Revolutionary Enlightenment," see Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York, 1976).

161. Aristotle, Politics, Book III, section 7, in Justin D. Kaplan, ed., The Pocket Aristotle (New York, 1966), 308. For classical influences on Enlightenment political thought, see Carl J. Richard, The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment (Cambridge, Mass., 1994); Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans (Evanston, Ill., 1945); J.G.A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975); and Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy." Perhaps it is significant that Aristotle's Politics was on Jefferson's reading table the day he died. Merrill D. Peterson, Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation (New York, 1970), 1008.

162. Adair, "'Experience Must Be Our Only Guide': History, Democratic Theory, and the United States Constitution," in H. Trevor Colbourn, ed., Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair (New York, 1974), 107-123, quote at 115. Other useful works concerning the role that study of classical history--with its stress on cycles of growth and decline, the corruption of consensus by the ascendancy of special interests--played in American intellectuals' perceptions of their political reality in

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the 1780s-1790s--include: Gilbert Chinard, "Polybius and the American Constitution," Journal of the History of Ideas, I (1940), 38-58; Richard M. Gummere, The American Colonial Mind and the Classical Tradition (Cambridge, Mass., 1963); Charles F. Mullett, "Classical Influences on the American Revolution," Classical Journal, 35 (1939), 92-104; Edward M. Burns, "The Philosophy of History of the Founding Fathers," Historian, 16 (1954), 142-168; John E. Crowley, "Classical, Anti-Classical, and Millennial Conceptions of Change in Revolutionary America," in John W. Eadie, ed., Classical Traditions in Early America (Ann Arbor, Mich., 1976), 213-253; and Meyer Reinhold, The Classick Pages: Classical Reading of the Eighteenth-Century Americans (University Park, Pa., 1975).

163. Adair, "Intellectual Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy," 155-168; Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 77-80, 243, 300, 317; Fink, Classical Republicans, 3, 55; Stow Persons, "The Cyclical Theory of History in Eighteenth Century America," American Quarterly, 6 (1954), 147-163; John R. Howe, Jr., "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s," American Quarterly, 19 (1947), 147-165.

164. Kurt von Fritz, The Theory of the Mixed Constitution in Antiquity: A Critical Analysis of Polybius' Political Ideas (New York, 1954), thoroughly analyzes his views on the cycle of constitutions, institutional growth and decay, and the "mixed" or "balanced" constitution, esp. 60-95. See also Lidia Storoni Mazzolani, Empire Without End (New York, 1976), 19-30, 187-188; Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 77-80, 243, 300; Karl Löwith, Meaning in History (Chicago, 1949), 7-9; Fink, Classical Republicans, 2-5; and Meyer Reinhold, Classica Americana: The Greek and Roman Heritage in the United States (Detroit, 1984). In his anthology ancient Greek and Roman constitutions, Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States (1787-1788), compiled with a critical eye in London and which Americans much utilized when it arrived n the United States, John Adams argued that Polybius had exaggerated the perfection of the balance of powers in ancient Rome. Under the Republic, Adams believed the tribunes, representing the people, held an inordinate amount of control as opposed to the aristocratic senate and the monarchical consuls. He thought that the British and American state constitutions more successfully embodied the principle of checks and balances of the ideal "mixed constitution." Chinard, "Polybius and the Constitution," 45-46.

165. Defence of Constitutions of U.S., in Charles F. Adams, ed., Works of John Adams (Boston, 1850-1856), V, 473, quoted in Bruce Miroff, "John Adams' Classical Conception of the Executive," Presidential Studies Quarterly, 17 (Spring 1987), 373; Adair, "'Experience Must Be Our Only Guide,'" in Colbourn, ed., Fame and Founding Fathers, 111.

166. Jefferson to Edward Carrington, Jan. 16, 1787, Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 412. For other examples of Jefferson's outrage at the social and economic inequality he saw during his travels through France, see Jefferson to Charles Bellini, Sept. 30, 1785, to James Madison, Oct. 28, 1785, to George Wythe, Aug. 13, 1786, in ibid., 182-183, 388-390, 394-395.

167. Jefferson to Thomas Cooper, Sept. 10, 1814, ibid., 649-650.

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168. Jefferson to Adams, Oct. 28, 1813, Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 633-634. See also Jefferson to Joseph Priestley, March 21, 1801, ibid., 562-563. For a perceptive examination of Jefferson in this context, see Drew R. McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill, 1980), 248-252.

169. See, e.g., Jackson T. Main, "The Distribution of Property in Post-Revolutionary Virginia," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 41 (Sept. 1954), 241-258; Main, Social Structure of Revolutionary America (Princeton, 1965); Kenneth Lockridge, "Land, Population, and the Evolution of New England Society, 1630-1790, Past & Present, 39 (April 1968), 62-80; Gary B. Nash, Urban Crucible (Cambridge, Mass., 1979); James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: *Mentalité* in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 35 (Jan. 1978), 3-32; Henretta, The Evolution of American Society, 1750-1815 (Boston, 1973); Bettye H. Pruitt, "Self-Sufficiency and the Agricultural Economy of Eighteenth-Century Massachusetts," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 41 (1984), 333-364; Dorothy E. Fennell, "From Rebelliousness to Insurrection: A Social History of the Whiskey Rebellion" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1981; Robert E. Harper, "The Class Structure of Western Pennsylvania, 1783-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pittsburgh, 1969).

170. Robert E. Shalhope, "Republicanism and Early American Historiography," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 39 (1982), 334-356, quote at 348n. Shalhope may have had Jefferson especially in mind. See his brilliant article, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History, 42 (Nov. 1976), 529-556, for the onset in the 1820s of the Sage of Monticello's disillusionment with what he perceived as an increasingly Northern-dominated Union.

171. Jefferson to John Norvell, June 11, 1807, in Saul K. Padover, ed., A Jefferson Profile As Revealed in His Letters (New York, 1956), 159. See also Adrienne Koch, The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1944), 124-128, 152.

172. Jefferson to Isaac H. Tiffany, Aug. 26, 1816, Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., Writings, XV, 65-66. See also Charles M. Wiltse, The Jeffersonian Tradition in American Democracy, 43-46, and Meyer Reinhold, Classica Americana, 108-109.

173. Jefferson to Monsieur A. Coray, Oct. 31, 1823, Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., Writings, XV, 481-482. In this instance, as in many others, Jefferson conveniently ignored the truism that Americans--especially in the South--like the ancient Greeks held large numbers of inhabitants in slavery.

174. See Steven Watts, The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820 (Baltimore, 1987).

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CHAPTER 4:
JAMES MONROE'S QUEST FOR VIRTUE AND THE REPUBLICAN CRISIS OF THE LATE 1790'S

During the 1790's Monroe became more and more obsessed with his quest for public and private virtue. In Paris, his ruminations on this score were quickened by his observation of the downfall of Robespierre's specious Republic of Virtue, which took place a few days before his arrival. Perhaps like Jefferson he believed that Americans' native decency was corrupted by experiencing European wealth, grandeur, and alleged worldly-wise unscrupulousness. In any case, his view of the Americans he encountered in Paris, mainly young merchants, shortly after he arrived was not a flattering one. He had little expectation that they would smooth his path with the Committee of Public Safety when he first arrived, nor did he think his predecessor Gouverneur Morris an eligible intermediary, since he perceived that even conservative republicans despised him. In general, he did not consider the Americans in Paris particularly virtuous. "I did not know the ground upon which the Americans stood here, but suspected as the acquisition of wealth had been their object in coming, they must have attached themselves to some preceding party & worn out their reputations," he complained to Madison.[1] Thus he decided to avoid Morris and the American merchants and ne'er-de- wells and use his own resources and persuasion to gain entrée to the National Convention.

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Having concluded by the time of his recall that the French Revolution was on a virtuous and "agrarian" course, notwithstanding the urban rioting and the violation of strict democratic procedures implicit in certain provisions of the Constitution of 1795, Monroe's quest for virtue concerned itself primarily with the survival of republicanism in the United States. His hopes were sustained by the outcome of the presidential election of 1796, which he hoped would result in Jefferson's election. As he wrote Madison in July, when it was thought likely that Jefferson would be a candidate, he considered his friend's election a panacea for the United States' problems at home and abroad. He took it for granted that Jefferson's pursuit of fame (which the latter had renounced the year before in a letter to Madison) would spur him to seek victory for himself and the Republicans.[2] "I most earnestly hope that Mr. Jefferson will be elected and that he will serve," Monroe wrote. He took solace from the illusion that a Jefferson presidency could mediate between France and Great Britain and restore good relations between the U. S. and its former ally, which Jay's Treaty had eroded. "If he [Jefferson] is elected every thing will most probably be right here [in France] from that moment and afterwards on the other side of the channel [Great Britain]," he predicted. "And in my opinion there never was such an opportunity offered for the acquisition of fame [my italics] in the restoration of national credit abroad and at home as is now presented, independent of the gratification an honest mind [my emphasis] will always feel in rendering useful service to his country." Monroe a priori assumed Jefferson's "honesty", as well as his friend's public and private virtue. Though the party conflict had reached the boiling point, he had confidence that Jefferson would be capable of reconciling contending interest groups: "He [Jefferson] will be

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able at the same time that he secures the preponderating councils and gives stability to republican government, to conciliate the well-meaning of the other party and thus give peace to his country."[3]

Thus Monroe employed a civic humanist shorthand --"fame," "honesty," and the transcendence of party bickering, as present-day historians Gordon S. Wood, J. G. A. Pocock, Douglass G. Adair, and others have used it--to convey his interpretation of political events at home and abroad.[4]

Monroe intuited that his friendly actions toward France ever since he first appeared before the National Convention in August 1794 might prompt the Washington Administration to recall him. He relied on his appointment for a steady source of income. Yet he continued to tempt fate by his self-righteous defense of his diplomacy in letters to Secretaries Randolph and Pickering. He eventually hoped to save part of the proceeds from his salary as minister to build a house on his property in Albemarle County, close to Jefferson. In November 1795 he wrote Jefferson that he could remit him one thousand dollars for a house, orchards, and other improvements on the property, but no more, since he was invariably short of money. "This sum is all I can answer in the course of the ensuing year calculating always on the possible contingence of a recall & upon which I have always calculated from the moment of my introduction into the Convention, & still calculate depending on the course of events on your side of the Atlantic," he pessimistically observed. He composed this letter after the terms of Jay's Treaty, which he had been forced to obtain from French newspapers rather than directly from the Administration, were already known. He was painfully aware that the Washington

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Administration had deceived him.[5] "Be assured if Mr. Jay's treaty is ratified, it will excite great discontent here," Monroe had earlier informed Secretary of State Pickering. "Of this, however, I shall be able to speak with more certainty, after the new government is organized."[6]

At this time of increasing Franco-American hostility, Monroe took perverse pride in his pyrrhic achievement of delaying France's order for minister Pierre ("Citizen") Adet's recall, which signaled the breaking off of diplomatic relations with the U. S. "After deliberating about seven months, they resolved that the honour of their country would be tarnished in their hands if they acted otherwise," he explained to Madison in September 1796. "They say I have detained them seven months from doing what they ought to have done at once."[7] He was painfully conscious of the deleterious effects that French enmity would pose for America's self-interest. Indeed, this most worried him, rather than the ostensible injury to the cause of international republicanism. "It is impossible to forsee [sic] the consequences of this measure which I sincerely regret," he said, "but here no change can be expected and of course if the same councils prevail in America the alliance is at an end not to count the other injuries we shall receive from the loss of the nation so preponderant as it is with such valuable possessions in our seas."[8]

Though unaware that his functions as U. S. minister had been suspended, he already perceived Pickering's betrayal. The secretary of state's tone was disrespectful, since Monroe's diplomatic usefulness was over. He had forfeited French friendship in the face of Jay's treaty and France was no longer passively accepting America's pro-British policy. He expediently blamed this on Monroe. "At this moment I receive a letter from Timothy," Monroe

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observed, his failure to use the secretary of state's surname evincing his disdain, "in reply to my first on this subject [French wrath at Jay's Treaty], addressed as from an overseer on the farm to one of his gang ascribing (if not absolutely the existence of any complaint to me) yet that it is altogether owing to my misconduct that it broke out."[9] By impugning Monroe's honor and treating him disdainfully, Monroe implied, Pickering had sought to degrade him to a servile status comparable to one of the Negroes on Monroe's plantations. Clearly, Monroe thought that Pickering had behaved toward him unfairly and irrationally. Claiming to have composed an impeccable refutation of French complaints, Pickering imperiously argued that the Directory's persisting protests not only revealed Monroe's incompetence, but indicated that he had never shown them Pickering's letters.[10]

In Monroe's view, Pickering was emulating the example of Federalist newspaper editors who imputed blame for the deterioration of Franco-American relations to Republican denunciations of Jay's Treaty in order to shift the onus from their party. "This letter [from Pickering]," he wrote, "corresponds so much with the publication in the New York paper [Minerva] that it tends to create a suspicion they were written by the same hand, but these little Connecticut Jockey tricks are too easily seen through now a days to produce any effect."[11] At this time--unlike the later, more hostile stance he took toward the Father of His Country after returning to the United States--Monroe thought that Pickering and Hamilton had manipulated Washington into demanding his recall. He did not blame the president for Pickering's knavish conduct, lamenting: "Poor Washington. Into what hands has he fallen!"[12]

In accord with classical republican values typified by George Washington, Monroe

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valued his honor more highly than anything else.[13] Although he explained this at various times in his letters, he was especially irate during his ministry to France that he had been accused of speculating in French national lands, an affront to his honesty and honor. The only activiity he had engaged in that approximated speculation was the sale of his Paris residence. Although he had sold his house in Paris at a slight profit in 1797, his original intent had been to offer it at its original value to the U. S. Government. In light of his bad relations with the Washington Administration, however, he failed to take action. Instead, he had persuaded William White Morris, whom he later nearly engaged in a duel, Dr. Enoch Edwards, and a Mr. Burling to produce affidavits to vouch for his honesty in purchasing the house. As he wrote to his congressman, John Dawson: "The Dr.[Edwards] is also able to give one [an answer] to the charge of speculation as well by his own knowledge as the affidavit of young Wm. Morris & Mr. Burling which he possesses to that point. In truth I never purchased any thing but the house in which I lived and sold it with little profit. To this I would make an affidavit if necessary. I suppose all the Americans would have deposed to this effect had I requested or rather not prohibited it; for it was offered by many before I left Paris." Fulwar Skipwith, Monroe's secretary, had also submitted an affidavit. Monroe expected Gallatin to respond to the charges for him.[14]

His political strategy fueled by personal rage, Monroe wrote Republican ex-Governor George Clinton of New York detailing his reaction to the accusations. He sarcastically argued that land speculators were less culpable than the corrupt urban profiteers who had purchased the payment certificates of army veterans and the state debts before the federal government

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agreed to assume those obligations in 1790. Casting himself as the epitome of republican virtue, he wrote Clinton sarcastically, "I have just heard that some benevolent minded people in Philadelphia have circulated a report that I am engaged in speculations in this country in land &c. with Mr. Skipwith [Fulwar Skipwith, his secretary, who later became consul]: and that I omitted to forward or neglected the remittance hence of a sum of money...." Indignant at these unfounded charges of embezzlement, he enclosed copies of his correspondence with Dutch bankers and Skipwith's affidavits to exonerate himself. "In truth I have bought nothing here but the house and lot on which I live, the furniture which I use, my books & a few other trifling articles which I intend to carry with me when I return home such as a few glasses etc...," he bitterly remarked. "I might it is true embark in speculations here, & purchase rich seats for two years purchase, & presume I might procure the money to do it: for national *douceurs* sell at that rate: but I declare to you solemnly that I have not, nor shall I embark in such a business: not that I think it so culpable to do it, as to buy the claims of our soldiers before a provision was made for their payment, & then make the provision [as many Federalist members of Congress had done]; or to buy up the debts of individual states before they were assumed & then assume the payment of them as many profligate men in office with us were known to have done. But because I will have nothing to do with a traffic dishonorable in some situations and commendable in few."[15]

Nevertheless, when Monroe heard that the Federalists were slandering him with charges of land speculation in government funds, after some hesitation he advised Madison and his Republican comrades to ignore the attacks, which he suspected originated with James

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Swan, a wealthy Boston merchant, financier, and stock speculator and renegade Jeffersonian residing in Paris, who at this time bought up the whole of the American war debt to France. "I rather think that these low & despicable calumnies are beneath my notice, since they are only the last despairing efforts of a profligate party, who in its extremities has no other means of saving itself than by slandering its foes who are the friends of private morality & publick honor," he pontificated. Like Brutus, he was an honorable man. "In short does any thing coming from T.P. [Secretary of State Timothy Pickering] or O.W. [Treasury Secretary Oliver Wolcott] merit my notice or that of any other respectable citizen?" he concluded.[16] Despite Monroe's bravado, his friends knew that his thin skin had been abraded by his enemies' innuendoes and ridicule.

Monroe had never been so angry and ironical as he revealed himself in writing these letters. He plainly despised his political opponents as "profligate men," who had committed the ultimate disgrace of castigating his virtuous conduct while themselves picking the pockets of worthy, hard-working Americans. He compared himself favorably with these scoundrels. Far from speculating on the hardships of his fellow citizens, he would not even deign to speculate in real estate in a foreign land, a much less culpable occupation. In short, he rejected speculation --using public money for private gain or attempting to make personal profit as a byproduct of the performance of public duties--as incompatible with democratic-republican philosophy.

Though he was probably gratified to defend himself against castigators of his private republican integrity, Monroe was undoubtedly distressed to find that the French Government's attitude to the U. S. had greatly deteriorated since the Jay Treaty's passage. He had deluded

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himself into thinking that he had persuaded the French to forego action against the United States. He stressed "the difficulties I have had to encounter to prevent this [French] government from taking some very unfriendly steps towards us, on account of our late treaty with England & the danger there still is it may do it: altho' I have done everything in my power to prevent it, & I am still doing everything that I can do for that purpose." He attested his dedication to the project of preserving Franco-American unity: "No effort of my life has been more earnest to accomplish any object than this has been, because I saw in the commencement of an irritating policy which would lead on to other things the certainty of our separation, & which of all things I deprecated [with regard to France]: the relation in which I have been placed in the performance of this duty was new, perplexing & distressing, yet I have pursued an undeviating course, & so far I think I may say, & without vanity, with some effect." Despite his vigorous efforts, he admitted, "the tie between us [the U. S. and France] is greatly weakened," and new measures would be needed to "restore... its antient strength." This was probably a euphemism for the much-desired Republican victory in 1796.[17]

Perceiving Jefferson's election to the presidency in the same light as Bolingbroke's followers in the 1730s viewed Frederick, Prince of Wales's ascendancy to the throne of England as presaging the advent of a Patriot King who would reconcile contending factions, Monroe predicted his friend's assumption of the nation's highest office would be a panacea for the United States's problems at home and abroad.[18] He wrote Madison from Paris in July 1796: "If he [Jefferson] is elected every thing will most probably be right here from that moment and afterwards on the other side of the channel [Great Britain?]." He obviously

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believed that Jefferson would adopt a conciliatory policy toward France and enforce stern measures against England.

On the diplomatic front, Monroe unhesitatingly voiced his belief that good relations between the U. S. and France--what he called a "concert" of interests--were crucial for obtaining concessions from England. For this reason, he welcomed French military triumphs. "The success of France could not redound to our advantage, and especially in the negotiation with Britain, without a good understanding and concert with the French Government," he warned Secretary of State Randolph as early as February 1795, before Jay's treaty's terms were known, "for without which, we could neither count upon success in negotiation, nor in case it failed, upon the fortunate issue of arms." He expected British deception, especially if they perceived the alliance with France as tenuous: "If, then, our good understanding with France was broken, or the necessary concert between us incomplete, Britain would only have to amuse us till the crisis passed, and then defy us."[19]

Hoping that Jay's negotiations would succeed, and believing that some saber rattling about the Franco-American alliance would be to America's advantage, Monroe sought to publicize the harmony between the two allies. In this manner he justified his civic display of affection when he presented himself before the National Convention and read the congressional and presidential testimony of support for the French Revolution, for which Randolph had chastised him. He said that Americans who returned to Paris after visiting London had informed him that the British ministry dreaded the possibility of a Franco-American wartime alliance. He was confident that Congress, merely by perpetuating the embargo it had passed in

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March 1794, would eventually have brought about British capitulation to American demands:

> If... it is admitted that the success of Mr. Jay's mission depends upon a good understanding with the French republic, it follows that, the more cordial it was, and the more generally known, the happier the effect would be; and of course that, by exhibiting this public proof of it, instead of retarding, I forwarded essentially the object of that [Jay's] negotiation; and such, indeed, was my idea at the time: for I knew that the movement would be so understood on the other side of the channel; and in consequence, believed it would produce a good effect, in which I was the more confirmed by the information of several of my countrymen, who were in England when the embargo was imposed, and who assured me that, if it had been continued, Mr. Jay's success would have been immediate.[20]

In Monroe's scenario of conspiracy, the British ministry ("administration") was ever on the alert for indications that American official opinion was inclined to be servile to the former Mother Country. He took it for granted that the Washington Administration, which had appointed him, shared his rejection of pro-British views. "That the English administration would complain of this movement, and of me, was what I expected," he asserted, "but I knew that I was sent here not to subserve the views of that administration, and trusted that, whilst I rested on my instructions, and performed my duty with integrity, although my judgment might occasionally err, as those of most men sometimes do, that no concession would be made to my discredit, in favor of that administration." He told Randolph he expected his backing against British criticisms, and "that I should be firmly supported against its [British] attacks by those who sent me here." He hoped the government would be loyal to him for the sake of "public considerations," and would make neither formal nor substantive "concessions" to the British. If the British thought that they could intimidate Washington's Administration, they would seek to threaten it "for the purpose of weakening the confidence of this [French] Government in our

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own--a practice systematically pursued heretofore, and with the hope of separating, or at least preventing, any kind of concert between the two countries." Monroe's goal was a "concert" between the French and American republics, and he believed the British Government had employed propaganda and wily diplomacy to thwart that effort.[21]

Aware of the uses of power in foreign policy, Monroe argued that French victories in Europe obviated the need for any further conciliation toward the British.[22] He even applauded the transfer from Spain to France of the eastern half of the island of Saint Domingue (Hispaniola), the present-day Dominican Republic, under the terms of the Treaty of Basel by which Spain withdrew from the war against Revolutionary France, its traditional monarchical ally. As he wrote Madison and others, he suspected that "the old connection between the two countries is revived." Oblivious to any potential danger to the United States, Monroe had few misgivings about "Santo Domingo's" becoming as a colony for restless young French war veterans. Although the French Government used Monroe's inability to disclose the provisions of Jay's Treaty to justify its failure to assist America's diplomatic attempts to secure the free navigation of the Mississippi River from Spain, Monroe was not bitter. "One of the objects of this government in taking St. Domingo, is to provide a settlement for those of the army who require it at the end of the war, & a very wise and benevolent object it is," he enthusiastically remarked.[23] Undoubtedly he thought a "republicanized" Santo Domingo would eventually ally itself with the United States.

Monroe perceived that discretion was required when dealing with potentially (or actively) hostile powers. "Had the fortunes of France been unprosperous upon my arrival here,

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the motive for greater caution would have been stronger," he pointed out. "But the case was in every respect otherwise. Her fortunes were at the height of prosperity, and those of her enemies decisively on the decline." By publicly appearing before the National Convention and showing the world that America stood side by side with the most powerful nation on earth, Monroe thought he was facilitating America's diplomatic objectives even more than justifying the efficacy of America's republican ideology: "It was obvious that nothing was wanting to preserve tranquillity at home, and to ensure success in our foreign negotations, but the good wishes and the good offices of this republic towards us," he pointed out. "By the measure, therefore, I thought that every thing was to be gained and nothing to be lost."[24]

Although he favored unity between France and the United States in foreign policy, believing it was most advantageous to American interests, Monroe accepted the ruthless pragmatism of French diplomacy and war-making (which the era considered "diplomacy by other means," as Clausewitz phrased it). Monroe revealed his Anglophobia at this juncture by condoning the possibility that France would continue the war against England indefinitely (while making peace with the Continental absolutist monarchies) as a way to provide employment for its restless young adult male population. "France has many hundred thousand men she must employ after peace with the [Holy Roman] Emperor," he wrote after a significant French victory over the Austrian army in 1796. "She has too a vigorous and an active government; she has means too inexhaustible, & war with some people as well for employment of her army as to give time to the government to consolidate & gain strength, is absolutely necessary." Moreover, Monroe was sure that France's traditional rival Great Britain would feel the brunt of

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French force: "To be candid England is the power against whom they seem resolved to turn that force as well for the considerations above mentioned as to gratify a resentment that is universal."[25] This thought apparently failed to alarm him, since like most Jeffersonians he probably believed that a French conquest of England would lead to its conversion into a republic, what Jefferson termed "republicanizaton."[26]

Anticipation that military victories would lead to the liberalization of formerly autocratic states may have influenced Monroe's response to the string of French triumphs in Austria, Sardinia, the German princedoms, and the Papal States. He noted that the nationalistic exhilaration produced by these successes was contagious, even leading French royalists to a desire for internal peace. "In the interior too the prospect is good," he informed ex-Governor Clinton. "Great harmony exists between the two councils & the Directoire & the people, even those heretofore deemed unchangeably hostile to republican government begin to relax their enmity & to think it better to rest where they are, which they find good, than [to] hazard everything by new experiments." As we have seen, Monroe, himself averse to a leftist radicalization of the Revolution, applauded the consensus behind the conservative republic that had been recently established: "The general idea is, it is better to remain in the port where they are, than embark again upon a sea, whose storms they still remember with horror."[27] In accord with his general pragmatism, he felt it was better to tolerate a *status quo*, even one not entirely to his liking, than risk inordinate violence in the pursuit of unattainable ideals. Monroe was hardly an unwavering ideologue.

Indeed, Monroe deplored the idea of interminable warfare between France and her

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imperial foes. Rather, he favored peaceful negotiations between France and the Holy Roman (Austrian) Empire. Ironically, he seemed more sympathetic with the Hapsburgs than with the more republican British Government, which angered him with its interference with American trade and American politics, disrupting his nation's republican harmony. "I think it probable peace will be made soon with the Emperor, tho' it is to be observed that that court is proud and not easily subdued," he reported to Clinton. "I hope however France will shew moderation & close with that power now that she stands on such favorable ground to command suitable terms. With England the war will still be continued."[28] For Monroe, both French and American self-interest dictated that England be irrevocably defeated. And, in light of France's defeat at the Battle of the Nile in 1798 and Napoleon's final overthrow by a British-led Coalition in 1815--this despite America's "intervention"on the French side in the War of 1812 --Monroe and the Jeffersonians, rather than the Federalists and neo-Federalist historians like Tucker and Hendrickson, Elkins and McKitrick, and Ben-Atar, correctly perceived that the British rather than the French constituted the greater threat to the European balance of power.[29]

Monroe did not deceive himself about his bitterness toward Great Britain at this time. Perhaps the wound he had received at the Battle of Trenton continued to fester, or he resented the way the British had seemingly defrauded his people with Jay's Treaty, and he had played the fool. In any case, he was thinking about the vicissitudes of his country's war for liberty at this time, and how his hopes for republican virtue centered on the maintenance of the strength and stamina the people had (at least legendarily) shown during the conflict, epitomized by the phrase, "the spirit of 1776." In his comfortable Paris mansion, Monroe brooded over the past

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and over the shoddy treatment he had received from Randolph and Pickering. Aware of American power as well as of the extent to which his "country," Virginia, had suffered from British invasion during the Revolution, he denied Pickering's recent innuendoes that Americans feared to confront the British a second time. Evoking the rage militaire (to use historian Charles Royster's phrase) that had inspired Americans at the outset of their fight against England, he gloried in the republic's past, present, and future power, which rested in the patriotism and public spirit of its citizens.[30] "Americans ought not even at the present day to be ranked and considered as a secondary power," he reminded himself, in words exceedingly appropriate for the originator of the Monroe Doctrine. "In point of territory and of productions which are of the first necessity she claims a higher rank; and in point of population (being at present about six millions) when the fertility of her territory, the felicity of her climate, and the nature of her government which is a free republican one, are considered it is but reasonable to consider that the lapse of a few years more, will even in that time too place her, in the first rank."[31] Depicting the militaristic aspects of "republican virtue," Monroe foreshadowed the later rhetoric of "Manifest Destiny."

Monroe's memorandum shows an astute regard for the importance of national self-interest in American foreign policy, what is now called the Realist School. This is surprising in light of the traditional historical interpretation of him as a pie-in-the-sky Jacobin ideologue. He perceived that nations should judge their friends and enemies by actions not ideologies, and whether the former accorded with the nation's own interests. He recognized the importance of naval as well as military power in securing national respect. Aware that the United States

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lacked a navy, he also pointed out that the nation had not yet fully overcome the carnage wrought by British invasion during the War for Independence: "At present she has no fleet, her coast too is unfortified, to the extent of about 400 leagues, and in addition to which she is just recovering from a long and destructive war (more devastating by far than that which now afflicts France, for there was scarcely a district in the United States which was not visited by some party of the enemy, British, Hessians, &c., whereas your [French] enemies have scarcely ever entered your territory." He condoned the conduct of those aging Americans who were reluctant to re-experience war with Britain over the inadequacy of Jay's Treaty, while noting that this was not the attitude of the majority of the people: "... therefore it is not to be wondered at, that the same people, who still live, should incline for the present to enjoy repose: But the American nation is not a pusillanimous nation, its efforts in its struggle for liberty prove this, nor is it insensible of injuries nor will it fail to discriminate between those who are in the progress of time and as circumstance may require, its friends, and those who are its enemies."[32]

Believing that Great Britain's violations of the Treaty of 1783 and its seizures of American ships doing business with French possessions had seriously, perhaps irreparably, damaged its relations with the United States, Monroe hoped that France would not emulate British policies and thereby eliminate the reservoir of American good will it possessed. As he put it in his memo, "England has already accumulated in the course of the present war many injuries [in addition] to those she rendered us in the last, and in my judgment if France does not weaken the effect they ought to produce and certainly will produce upon generous minds, she [England] will in future have cause to repent it."[33] Thus Monroe remembered the atrocities the

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British had committed in the Revolutionary conflict, and thought that American honor required that some response to Britain's continuing affronts toward its former colonies during the current war.

As we have seen, Monroe did not take insults lightly. For him, honor was both a personal and national characteristic. And by recalling him without specifying why, Secretary of State Pickering had impugned Monroe's honor. And Monroe's sense of honor and integrity complemented his sense of justice. He demanded of Pickering a full explanation for his recall: "I request this statement as a matter of right and upon the principle that altho' the Executive possesses the power to censure & remove a public minister, yet it is a power which ought to be exercised according to the rules of Justice: which only are too well-defined, by the principles of our government, to require illustration."[34] Somewhere, perhaps in the body of the Constitution itself, whose preamble lists among its purposes "to promote justice," Monroe was certain the nation's republican creed vindicated him.

Following his return from Paris in the summer of 1797, Monroe remained eager to justify his performance and exculpate himself from Federalist charges of misconduct during his service in France. While duty had restrained him from attacking the Washington Administration while he served as its minister, once he became a private citizen he felt free to speak without besmirching his honor and dignity. Monroe prepared to campaign for election to the Virginia state assembly in 1799 in order to join the Republicans in combatting the Alien and Sedition Acts, but he withdrew his name from the poll when he learned that he was to be the Republican gubernatorial candidate. In a message to his supporters that was never delivered, he admitted

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that, "At present however those motives [loyalty to the Washington Administration] cease to have any weight on my mind." In a firm tone, he appealed to his audience: "On the contrary the same considerations which have hitherto admonished me to be silent, seem now to impose it on me as a duty to address you."[35]

Although he had been recalled in disgrace, Monroe told his audience, he was never given an explanation of the reason for his recall. He was not offered an *official* explanation, merely an opportunity to request a "private" explanation from Secretary of State Pickering as a private citizen. Predictably, Monroe regarded the Administration's stance as a deliberate insult. "But as I had been injured by the administration I thought it became me to look to it only for reparation," he explained. "Besides there were other considerations which satisfied me that the public were interested." The belief that public opinion was aroused caused him to promulgate the events of his mission in his View of the Conduct of the Executive.

Seeking to identify "truth" with objectivity and substantive documentation, Monroe advised his audience to read his book, replete with official correspondence. In this he revealed his pride of authorship rather than any mercenary motive, since Benjamin Franklin Bache was to reap all the profits from sales. "If you will take the trouble to peruse that book you will be able to decide for yourselves whether I merited the censure bestowed on me by the administration, or deserved well of my country," he said. He was confident that the voters would conclude that "the administration" had wronged him, a topic on which his book would shed "the light" of "full information." "It is a book consisting of authentic documents and therefore one which cannot deceive you."[36]

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Although his earlier essay, "Some Observations on the Constitution," had disparaged the ancient Greek Stoics, Monroe now depicted himself as a stoically detached figure, immune to the deluge of vilification and abuse. Not only had the Washington Administration recalled him, he declared, but "from other sources an infinitude of calumnies have been propagated against me. There is scarce a paper in any quarter of the Union thro' which I have not been and am not daily calumniated." He asserted that he had thus far given his traducers only the reply of "silent contempt." Reiterating his disdain for those minions of faction who had sullied his reputation, he boasted: "I have confided that my past life would sustain me against them especially where the charges are supported by no proof, and evidently dictated by malice and party spirit." Insisting that these "calumnies" were based in hatred rather than fact, he voiced "the contempt I have equally for the calumnies & the calumniators."[37] Ignoring the philippic he had launched against the Administration in his View's introduction, Monroe protested his silence in the face of calumny. But should any member of "an impartial public" doubt his innocence, he would gladly take time to explain his diplomacy to "those whose opinions are worthy [of] regard."[38]

In the next paragraph, in language befitting a twentieth-century campaigner, Monroe announced that it was time he took off the gloves in retaliating against his opponents:

> In returning among you to perform the duties I was forthwith entitled to the rights of a free citizen, among which that of speaking with freedom on public subjects is a very important one. But I have hitherto declined from considerations of delicacy growing out of the causes above referred to. There is however a period beyond which this sentiment ceases to be a virtue; on the contrary when it degenerates into a vice. And in respect to myself, this period seems to be arrived.[39]

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Having made this speech at a meeting of his supporters, Monroe obviously stressed his long-suffering civility and reluctant pugnacity in order to maintain an aura of candor, nonpartisanship and political naïveté. "I think proper further to add that I had no agency in calling this meeting," he announced. "That the invitation was given without my knowledge, and that I take part in it at present from the considerations which I have already mentioned."[40] Thus, Monroe made clear that he sought to prove his innocence of wrongdoing to his political and social peers, men "whose opinions are worthy regard."

Should Monroe refuse to stand for public office, he was well aware, he would in effect be lending credence to his opponents' charge that as minister he had behaved disreputably:

> I have no right to shrink from the duties of a citizen in the line I formerly rendered them, especially when by so doing an occasion is furnished for improper deductions, and in resuming my former ground I have thought proper to state the cause of the reserve I have heretofore shown as also why I now resume it [his political activity].[41]

Although he remained politically inactive till he took office as governor in December 1799, Monroe did not hesitate to comment on public affairs. He wrote Jefferson in January 1798, making astute observations on the political consequences of national direct taxation (to fall on land and slaves), which congressional Federalists sought to levy in order to pay for military preparations against France. Advising Republicans to fix the onus for the tax squarely on their opponents, he hoped the burden's unpopularity would precipitate the Federalists' removal from power. "I rejoice that the land tax is postponed," he remarked, "and hope when revived it will be under the auspices of those who likewise imposed on the publick the necessity of such an increase of their burden." He feared that Republicans, out of a feeling of fiscal

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responsibility, would support Federalist tax measures, while the Federalists reaped the benefits of their opponents' integrity. "It would be entertaining [?] to see the friends of an accumulation of the [public] debt, in principle, who have benefited by it also in practice, standing aloof or modestly opposing such a tax," he said, implying that the pragmatic political game could be played by both parties, "whilst the economic part [i.e., the Democratic-Republicans] of the legislature who had opposed the accumulation of the debt, took the lead in providing the tax, and with it the odium attending the provision." Thus he warned the Jeffersonians against falling into what could be a Federalist trap, but which could redound to the Republicans' political advantage if correctly manipulated. "This is not the natural course of things, nor would the effect be salutary" for Republican political fortunes, Monroe pointed out. "Direct taxes must be laid but let them proceed from the quarter [i.e., the Federalists] whence all mischief has proceeded."[42] In this time of political crisis, Monroe thus displayed an uncharacteristic streak of machiavellianism. But his goal was laudable: to save the republic, and more especially the Republican party. He considered them synonymous.

Monroe hoped the Federalists' internal disputes and unpopular policies would destroy them as a party. Particularly embittered after being discredited as U. S. Minister to France, he recommended that the Republicans do nothing to interfere with Federalist warmongering. In this manner the Jeffersonians would gain the reputation of a peace party and ride the wave of popularity to power. The "further they plunge the sooner will the people recover the use of their intellects," he predicted. Somewhat irresponsibly, he (perhaps facetiously) recommended that the Republicans allow the Federalists to "fight on, plunge our country inevitably in a war

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with France, intimidate and traduce the republican party and promote civil discord at home as they are doing." He was confident that his opponents would thereby lose "the esteem of the good people of this country." Federalist excesses like the suspension of diplomatic relations with France, and more importantly, tax increases and the Alien, Sedition, and Naturalization Acts, would soon convince voters in New England that national party divisions were deeper than a sectional antagonism, and that more was "at issue than a mere controversy between northern and southern members." Revealing his nationalistic proclivities, he urged southern congressional Republicans to maintain silence, since by criticizing representatives from the Eastern states, they inadvertently convinced the public that the debate was a sectional issue rather than a matter of principle.[43]

Aware of popular wrath at recent French decrees which made neutral ships carrying British manufactures on board liable to seizure, Monroe chided Americans for their unrepublican devotion to luxurious imports.[44] By contrast, Monroe (perhaps reminiscing about the nonimportation and nonexportation associations created by the First Continental Congress) urged congressional prohibition of the importation of British goods, believing it would inspire greater virtue among the people. Betraying his disillusionment with his countrymen, who had so far blindly followed Federalist policies, he exaggerated the number of those involved in commercial activity, as if this might explain the widespread apostasy from Republicanism. "The resolution of the French government to seize British manufactures is a severe stroke on the dry-goods traders, and all connected with them which comprehends the great mass of our people," he observed. "On my part I wish they [British goods] were permanently prohibited by law

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since I am satisfied the effect would be salutary to the general interests of America." Apparently aware that nonimportation measures would be unpopular, he confessed: "But this is not the general opinion, and in consequence the measure will be considered as a new grievance, by those who suffer for the time in the current price of their produce."

Monroe may have meant that if Congress interfered with U. S. imports from Great Britain, farm producers would suffer because British merchants would be forced to pay lower prices for American goods, since they would possess fewer American dollars to pay for them. Although Monroe was a wheat and tobacco producer, such an outcome did not seem to bother him. Rather, he feared that French depredations on American shipping would turn the people into Anglophiles. "These things must ultimately open the eyes of the people, if they are not the most stupid and likewise the most worthless of all people ever collected in the form of a nation," he contended. "And this I think is not the case: for I consider their adherence to the measures which pass, as a proof of their virtue."[45]

Thus Monroe did not despair. He even pointed out salutary consequences of the alacrity with which Americans supported belligerent, Francophobic congressional measures for increasing the army and navy, arming merchant ships in the Indian Ocean, and improving fortifications, which at least evinced the people's loyalty to the government they had elected, a fidelity which attested their virtue. Nevertheless, as a Jeffersonian who opposed these measures, Monroe hoped the people would eventually grow enlightened enough to alter their point of view. "The want of light is the great evil which overwhelms us & this will not be remedied till more pens are put to work," he chided Jefferson, perhaps hoping the vice-

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president would abandon his aversion to writing anti-Federalist essays for the press.[46]

One of the quintessential ideological facets of "classical republicanism" and "civic humanism" as it has come down to us through Zera S. Fink, Caroline Robbins, and J. G. A. Pocock, is its expositors' emphasis on the connection between "republican virtue" and "manliness."[47] This theme pervaded the decade of the 1790s, in both the political campaign rhetoric and private correspondence of American leaders. Things changed after 1800, when the Second Great Awakening and the Industrial Revolution made white middle-class man, obsessed with moneymaking and getting ahead, into the social epitome of selfishness, while the middle-class white woman came to represent idealistic self-sacrifice on behalf of husband, children, and a diverse array of social causes. During the decade of the conflict between Jefferson and Hamilton, however, "effeminacy" was associated with the pursuit of indolence, luxury, private obsessions, and passivity in defense of one's personal and political rights. "Manliness," on the other hand, connoted aggressive defense of what one believed to be his right to self-respect, dignity, and freedom.[48]

The individual's private rights and "virtue" might be defended with words, or with fists, or with guns on the dueling ground. In dealing with foreign powers, the "manly" man was expected to join the militia (standing armies were frowned upon as the recourse of low-class, mercenary young men who had nothing better to do with themselves, and who might be recruited as the pawns of an aggressive general or political executive in overthrowing the people's liberty).[49]

Thoughts of "manliness" and "virtue" were never far from Monroe's mind. As we shall

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see, he did not eschew the code duello when he felt the need to resort to it. In the case of republicanism as well, the nation's "honor" and "manliness" were valuable to him: and he loathed Jay's Treaty as an affront to the polity's virility. After he learned about (what he considered) the Treaty's disgraceful provisions, he did not hesitate to tell his friend Madison (who no doubt shared his opinion, though in a more restrained manner) how he felt. Mincing no words, he asserted, "The opinion which is gone forth to the world...is that we are reduced by it [Jay's Treaty] to the condition of British colonies--an opinion undoubtedly untrue, abhorrent as the treaty is, but yet that is the state of things." The panacea for the republic's crisis, Monroe confided, was a return to political manliness: even the terrible power of Great Britain would cringe before that. He insisted on a "new negotiation," or better yet, abject British acquiescence to American demands, treaty or no treaty. Monroe was confident that the British feared American Anglophobia, a legacy of the Revolution.. "Tis reported that as soon as the temper of the people was seen, & the hesitation of the President [to sign the Treaty], that a frigate was dispatched to offer any accomodation [sic] desired," he related. "This perhaps may not be true, but that every thing will be granted that is pressed is certain[.] I observe that the friends of Mr. Jays [sic] Treaty say that the alternative is between it & war," he remarked. "But this is false and always was."[50]

In Monroe's view, one of American foreign policy's primary goals was the manipulation of French power in order to achieve America's diplomatic aims vis-á-vis Great Britain, Spain, and the Algerian pirates who harassed American trade in the Mediterranean and kidnaped American sailors. As he wrote Madison in October 1795, he was confident that "a

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manly & able negotiation" on Jay's part (or preferably a replacement) was guaranteed to succeed, especially since France had obliterated all threats to its hegemony after the defeat of a British and émigré invasion at Toulon in December 1793, almost two years earlier. To Monroe's chagrin, "manliness," intrinsic to republicanism, was now waning in the new nation. He thought the United States should vigorously assert a firm attitude--a "manly" policy. "But why have any treaty?" he aggressively proposed. "Demand that they [the British] peremptorily withdraw their troops & it will be done---do the same in respect to spoliations & they will be paid for." Although Monroe seemed quixotic, his basic argument that American diplomatic and military timidity would play into the hands of the British and other foreign powers was sound. Arguing that American passivity would encourage the British to further violate American rights, he pointed out: "If we eternally recede and avow we are afraid of war they [the British] will eternally threaten it, till to avoid it we are degraded in the dust and despised by all nations & have war likewise."[51] Thus, Monroe concluded, national cowardice like personal pusillanimity was a shameful characteristic that could only be counterproductive in the long run.

Castigating the "false argument urged" by the pro-British Federalist "faction" that Republican pleas for American concord with France as the best means for the nation to benefit from French victories merely betrayed Jeffersonian servility to the "terrible republic," Monroe drew the following lesson: "... and thus they [Washington's Federalist administration] keep us in what they call a state of neutrality, or what may with more propriety be called a state of universal contempt, for such is the fact." Displaying uncommon diplomatic acumen, Monroe dispassionately observed: "In truth such is our situation that we are menaced with the danger of

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war from both these powers [Great Britain and France]." To the American minister everything now depended on the proper display of national "manliness." Not only would republican virility achieve American diplomatic objectives, it would paradoxically avoid war and violence as well. "We are not secure of it [war] from England (unless indeed we assume a bold and manly tone) and we have placed ourselves in such a situation with France, that we incur the like danger from that quarter," he argued. "This is the more humiliating since nothing is more true than that by a more manly policy we had it in our power always to stand well here [with the French] and without risking any thing & in consequence to facilitate our negotiations or rather command what we pleased elsewhere."[52]

A "manly" defense of national rights and a noble sense of national "gratitude" toward our French allies--Monroe believed these two axioms of his diplomatic policy had been abandoned by the Washington Administration. And in doing so, the Federalist government had in effect abandoned an aggressive republican foreign policy for the ineffectual antics of weak monarchies like Poland, which itself had recently disappeared as a nation, being gobbled up by its Russian, Austrian, and Prussian neighbors. For Monroe, whose hands were tied by his government, and who was soon to be recalled, the last stand of American republicanism remained his state and his American republic. Perhaps he could help restore republican "manliness" by displaying his individual brand of personal and political manliness and virtue.

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CHAPTER 4: NOTES

1. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 2, 1794, in Thomas A.Mason and Robert A. Rutland, eds., Madison Papers, XV, 355.

2. Rejecting Madison's plea that he run for the presidency, Jefferson had written him in April 1795: "The little spice of ambition which I had in my younger days has long since evaporated, and I set still less store by posthumous than present fame." Jefferson to Madison, April 27, 1795, quoted in Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 193.

3. Monroe to Madison, July 5, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 25.

4. Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca, 1978); Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969); Douglass G. Adair, Fame and the Founding Fathers (New York, 1974); Drew McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill, 1980); John E. Crowley, "Classical and Other Traditions for the Understanding of Change in Post-Revolutionary America: The Idea of Decline," in John W. Eadie, ed., Classical Traditions in Early America (Ann Arbor, 1976); William D. Liddle, "Virtue and Liberty: An Inquiry into the Role of the Agrarian Myth in the Rhetoric of the American Revolutionary Era," South Atlantic Quarterly, 77 (Winter 1978), 15-38.

5. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 18, 1795, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 411. As late as mid-June 1795 Monroe did not know the contents of Jay's Treaty. Monroe to Madison, June 13, 1795, ibid., 265-67. Madison sent him some rumors about the Treaty's contents in March 1795. Madison to Monroe, March 26, 1795, in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., Madison Papers, XV, 496-97.

6. Monroe to Pickering, Oct. 20, 1795, ibid., 401. Monroe did not learn of the Treaty's terms in detail until September 1795. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 8, 1795, in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVI, 77; Ammon, Monroe, 144.

7. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 1, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 52-53.

8. Ibid., 53.

6. Ibid.

10. See Pickering to Monroe, July 19, 1795, June 13 and Aug. 22, 1796, in American State Papers, Foreign Relations, I, 737-38, 741-42.

11. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 1, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 54. Monroe was referring to a letter printed in the New York Minerva, entitled "Extract from a letter from an American

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Citizen, dated Paris, Feb. 14, 1796," which charged that "influential" American politicians (an implied reference to Jefferson) had urged the French Government to denounce Jay's Treaty's incompatibility with the Franco-American alliance of 1778 and warn the U. S. Government it must choose war with either France or Great Britain. Minerva, and Mercantile Evening Advertiser (New York), May 17, 1796.

12. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 1, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 54.

13. For Washington's virtual obsession with his honor, see Edmund S. Morgan, The Meaning of Independence: George Washington, John Adams, Thomas Jefferson (Charlottesville, 1976).

14. Monroe to ---, June 3, 1798, in "Letters of James Monroe, 1798-1808," Bulletin of the New York Public Library, 4 (Feb. 1900), 41-61, p. 45.

15. Monroe to George Clinton, July 25, 1796 (second letter), in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 36-37.

16. Monroe to Madison, Aug. 1, 1796, in Hutchinson et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVI, 389. For Swan's extraordinary career, see Howard C. Rice, "James Swan: Agent of the French Republic, 1794-1796," New England Quarterly, 10 (Sept. 1937), 464-486.

17. Monroe to George Clinton, July 25, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 36-41 (second letter to Clinton).

18. Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and His Circle (Cambridge, Mass., 1968), 33-34.

19. Monroe to Randolph, Feb. 12, 1795, in American State Papers: Foreign Relations, I, 694-95.

20. Ibid.

21. Ibid., 695.

22. On the quest for the "balance of power" in Atlantic politics at this time, see Daniel G. Lang, Foreign Policy in the Early Republic: The Law of Nations and the Balance of Power (Baton Rouge, 1985), and Peter S. Onuf and Nicholas Onuf, Federal Union, Modern World: The Law of Nations in an Age of Revolutions, 1776-1814 (Madison, 1993).

23. Monroe to Madison, ca. July 23, 1795, in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVI, 106-07.

24. Monroe to Randolph, Feb. 12, 1795, American State Papers: Foreign Relations, I, 695.

25. Monroe to George Clinton, July 25, 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 40 (second letter).

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26. See Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 369.

27. Monroe to George Clinton, July 25, 1796 (first letter), in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 35.

28. Ibid., 35-36.

29. Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, The Age of Federalism (New York, 1993); Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1990); Doron S. Ben-Atar, The Origins of Jeffersonian Commercial Policy and Diplomacy (New York, 1993). For more balanced treatments, see Onuf and Onuf, Federal Union, Modern World; Lang, Foreign Policy in the Early Republic; and Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York, 1976), who comments with respect to Federalist fears of French invasion during the XYZ war scare in 1798: "In the fall of 1799, when news came of the destruction of the French fleet at the battle of the Nile, such fears lost whatever plausibility they had had, but by that time the High Federalists had become addicted to the tactics of panic" (257).

30. Charles Royster, A Revolutionary People At War: The Continental Army and American Character (Chapel Hill, 1979).

31. Monroe, memorandum ca. July 1796, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 11-19. Apparently, Monroe was indirectly responding to Secretary of State Pickering's letter of Sept. 14, 1795, in which Pickering implied that the American people rightly feared British power because of the suffering they had undergone in the Revolutionary War. Ibid., 430.

32. Ibid., 19.

33. Ibid.

34. Monroe to Secretary of State Pickering, July 6, 1797, ibid., 66-67.

35. Monroe, campaign address for election to the Virginia Assembly [1799], ibid., 92-95. See also Ammon, Monroe, 172-73.

36. Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 93.

37. Ibid., 94.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid.

40. Ibid., 95.

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41. Ibid.

42. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 8, 1798, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, reel 21.

43. Monroe to Jefferson, April 8, to Madison, June 24, and to Jefferson, June [--], 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 116-18, 129-39; James Roger Sharp, American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis (New Haven, 1993), 183.

44. For the British decree, see John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801 (New York, 1960), 205.

45. Monroe to Jefferson, March 26, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 106-107.

46. Ibid., 107.

47. Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans (Evanston, 1945); Caroline Robbins, The Eighteenth-Century Commonwealthman (Cambridge, Mass., 1959); J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, 1975); Pocock, Politics, Language, and Time (New York, 1971).

48. Ruth H. Bloch, "The Gendered Meanings of Virtue in Revolutionary America," Signs, 13 (Autumn 1987), 37-58; Joan R. Gundersen, "Independence, Citizenship, and the American Revolution," ibid., 59-77; Rosemarie Zagarri, "The Rights of Man and Woman in Post-Revolutionary America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 55 (April 1998), 203-30; Arthur Scherr, "From Europe to America: Medical and Gender Themes in Late Eighteenth-Century Politics," Midwest Quarterly, 37 (Winter 1996), 195-214; Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "Dis-covering the Subject of the 'Great Constitutional Discussion,' 1786-1789," Journal of American History, 79 (Dec. 1992), 841-73.

49. Lawrence Delbert Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982); William B. Skelton, An American Profession of Arms: The Army Officer Corps, 1784-1861 (Lawrence, Kans., 1992); Don R. Higginbotham, ed., Reconsiderations on the Revolutionary War: Selected Essays (Westport, 1978); Richard H. Kohn, Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802 (New York, 1975); Theodore J. Crackel, Mr. Jefferson's Army: Political and Social Reform of the Military Establishment, 1801-1809 (New York, 1987).

50. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 23, 1795, in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVI, 106-107.

51. Ibid., 107. (Italics mine).

52. Ibid.

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CHAPTER 5.
JAMES MONROE AND JOHN ADAMS:
DUELING WITH THE PASSIONS: PART ONE

At the outset of the "XYZ hysteria" against France in the spring of 1798, ex-U.S. minister to France James Monroe found his sense of self-restraint and control over the passions put to the test. President John Adams had been contemptuous of Monroe for some time, especially since the failure of his mission to France. He had disparaged Monroe in letters to his wife Abigail, calling his ministry a "school for scandal against his country, its government and governors, Mr. Jay and his treaty, &c." Disgusted by reports that Monroe had sheltered Thomas Paine at his home in Paris while the brilliant essayist wrote his infamous Letter to George Washington, Adams fumed, "If our Ambassadors abroad will not frown on Abusers of their Employers who will [?]. Examples must and will be made."[1]

Finally, on May 8, 1798, replying to an address from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania Federalists who assured him they supported the Government in its confrontation with Revolutionary France, Adams publicly and explicitly voiced his disapproval of the young Virginian. He declared that the French Government's praise of Monroe after his recall in "disgrace," "in displeasure for misconduct,

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was a studied insult to the government of my country."[2] Coming from the commander in chief, the highest executive official, these were strong words for the times. They insulted Monroe's honor, an highly prized aspect of his social identity.

As Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Dickson D. Bruce, Kenneth S. Greenberg, and others have shown, honor in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries embodied the values of a patriarchal society. There were two forms of honor: "primal honor" derived from Indo-European, chivalrous values; and "sociable honor," or gentility, rooted in Stoic-Christian ethics, the Renaissance and Enlightenment. Primal honor, indigenous to pagan, pre-Christian societies as well as those of the Middle Ages, held that an insult to one's personal morality or one's family, especially one's mother, justified recourse to the code duello. Immortalizing courage rewarded a man's pursuit of his vendetta against the enemies of his family and/ or community. A gentleman's societal opinion of him was crucial to his feelings of self-worth and personal identity. Personal courage, especially in the protection of defenseless women, comprised an essential feature of primal honor. Although "primal honor" applied to all (white) classes, albeit with variations, "gentility," Bertram Wyatt-Brown explains, "was a more specialized, refined form of honor, in which moral uprightness was coupled with high social position. Three components appeared to be necessary for public recognition of gentility in the Old South: sociability, learning, and piety. Northern gentlemen also assumed these graces, but the order of their priority was quite different, and therefore to them Southern gentility appeared in a curious refraction."[3] President Adams's disparaging remarks about Monroe's "disgrace[ful]" performance as minister impugned both Monroe's primal and social honor.

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Although Monroe had never fought a duel, he had nearly done so in 1797. A planter and slaveholder, he was familiar with the code duello. As an officer in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary War, he had acted heroically at the Batttle of Trenton, where he was seriously wounded. Adept at swordplay and gunplay, he had risen from lieutenant to major as a result of his conduct. From 1777-1778 he participated at the Battles of Brandywine, Germantown, and Monmouth as the aide-de-camp to General William Alexander, Lord Stirling. During his time in the Continental Army, influenced by his friend Captain Pierre Samuel Duponceau, Monroe was drawn to Stoic philosophy and deism.

Despite these preachments, which invoked patience and self-restraint, Monroe left Lord Stirling's service at the end of 1778, exasperated at not receiving a field command. Among those friends who tried to help him secure a command were Lord Stirling; General George Washington, under whom he had served at Trenton; and his young friend Alexander Hamilton, Washington's aide-de-camp. Since 1776, Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens of South Carolina had been trying to recruit a regiment of slaves whom Congress would grant liberty in exchange for military service. Congress had agreed to the idea in 1778, but Laurens had failed to convince any state legislature to support the scheme. As a last resort, Hamilton advised Monroe to join Laurens in his attempt to get an independent command. Writing his friend Laurens on Monroe's behalf in 1779, he extolled the young Virginian's character. "You know him to be a man of honor a sensible man and a soldier," he said. "You love your country too and he has the zeal and capacity to serve it."[4] Ironically, it was Hamilton with whom Monroe nearly fought a duel eighteen years later.

In December, 1792 Monroe joined two other congressmen in questioning Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton about charges, made by two men imprisoned for having fraudulently obtained certificates of the public debt, that

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Hamilton was their accomplice, speculating in the public debt with government funds. Hamilton confessed, but not to embezzlement. He admitted he knew James Reynolds, in prison for fraud and bribery, but not as his partner in crime. Hamilton was very fond of Mrs. Reynolds and for several years James had been blackmailing him for having an adulterous affair with his wife Maria; this, rather than subsidized speculation in the public debt, inspired Hamilton's payments.

Adhering to standards of gentlemanly conduct, the congressmen pledged themselves to secrecy. However, Monroe was not as convinced as the others that Hamilton had not manufactured the story to disguise his theft of government funds, especially since Jacob Clingman, Reynolds' partner, was a former Treasury employee. Monroe had brought along one of House clerk John Beckley's workers to take notes, of which he promptly gave a copy to Beckley. In the summer of 1797, Beckley, angry at being fired as House clerk by the Federalists, gave the notes, including copies of some love letters, to the acidulous pamphleteer, James T. Callender, for publication in his tract, The History of the United States for 1796 (1797). Callender charged that Hamilton had manufactured the affair to disguise his stealing from the Treasury. Hamilton replied by publishing a defense of his official conduct, at the same time admitting his marital infidelity. Rather belligerently, he accused Monroe of leaking the letters and the information about the affair, believing Monroe sought revenge for his dismissal as U.S. minister to France. Ironically, their mutual friend Aaron Burr peacefully settled the dispute between them.[5]

Although Monroe made few remarks about this incident that are heuristic in terms of his republican ideology, this is not the case with regard to his near-duel with President Adams a few months later. That episode reveals the curious admixture of feudalistic honor and "republican virtue" in Monroe's worldview during the 1790s. Even the ordinarily nonchalant Vice President,

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Thomas Jefferson, was enraged at Adams' insult to his friend in his reply to the Lancaster address. "You will observe one answer in which, a most unjustifiable mention has been made of Monroe, without the least occasion leading to it from the address," he declared. Seemingly from out of the blue, Adams publicly gloated over the discomfiture of the discredited minister.[6]

Jefferson thought his friend should run for the House of Representatives, where he could publicly, as a man of honor, discredit Adams's misrepresentations. Reminding James Madison of "the P's attack on Monroe," Jefferson hoped Monroe would abandon his law practice in Fredericksburg and Richmond and publicly defend himself in Philadelphia. "His friends here think that nothing can save him from the impression of that [i.e., Adams' denunciation], but his coming into the H. of R. taking his stand on an independent theatre, from which his countrymen will see what are his principles," he reported. He was confident that Samuel J. Cabell, Albemarle County's current Democratic-Republican congressman, would resign in Monroe's favor. As he reported to Madison, "I have counselled him [Monroe] strongly to come to the next session. Such a recruit is immensely wanted here." On his part, Jefferson had reluctantly concluded that his erstwhile friend from Braintree no longer wanted peace with France: "Mr. Adams, in a conversation in the State house yard with Blair McLanachan, declared that such was his want of confidence in the faith of France, that were they to agree to a treaty ever so favourable, he should think it his duty to reject it."[7] Apparently Jefferson was growing somewhat passionate himself, trying to stir up hatred of Adams among his colleagues in order to convince them to reenter public life.

However, while both Madison and Monroe stayed at home, Jefferson witnessed the decimation of Republican ranks from his ineffectual post as vice-president. Strangely, at this point the often hotheaded Monroe was more successful in restraining his passions than his mentor at Monticello. At this time,

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it appears he was well-served by the Stoic philosophy he imbibed as a Revolutionary officer. Like most men of honor, as Wyatt-Brown and Dickson Bruce have shown, Monroe believed that passion must be tamed by reason, and that sometimes a little violence might serve the cause of moderation. Ironically, that was what duelling and the code duello were all about. The purpose of the duel was to curtail the endless blood feuds and vendettas of ancient and medieval times. Pitting one individual against another as representatives of their respective clans or groups, the duel precluded the need for collective bloodlust, acting as a less violent surrogate.[8] Thus, Monroe naturally briefly considered the duel a possible means of stopping Adams' loose tongue.

Of course, Monroe was disgusted by stout old John Adams' playing the role of the militant warrior, as he was doing, wearing a sword at his side as he answered the militant patriotic addresses that came to his door several times a day. This was a parody on honor! At first, Monroe tried to make light of the President's insults. Replying to Jefferson, who had urged him to enter Congress to answer Federalist attacks, Monroe was stoically mild-tempered. He wrote:

> Mr. A. [Adams] will never surprise me by any act of the wild and extravagant kind. If he was in a sober and discreet manner to repair the breach between this country & France, & heal the wounds which his predecessor has given to the reputation & interest of his country I should be surprised.

In Monroe's view, Adams was more "passionate" in his hatred for France than Washington had been. "His passion is to outdo his predecessor & thus I expect to find no difference between the knight of the present day and the former one, than what the superior violence of his passion may lead to." For Monroe, as for Madison and the other followers of Thomas Reid's neo-Stoic faculty psychology, reason was responsible for restraining the passions. And Adams was

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sadly deficient in reason, to judge by the intensity of his passion for war preparations against France.[9]

Concerned that the nation's leaders display the requisite public virtue for carrying out the people's will, Monroe abhorred the idea that individuals chosen by the people should betray their trust by adhering to policies adverse to their desires. He was convinced that in pursuing aggressive measures against France the Federalists in Congress were acting in a manner opposed to public opinion. They stood "against the interest of the continent, & the judgment of the mercantile class of the community, & the wish & opinion of every other class," and their policy "can have no other issue than that of disgracing its authors."[10]

At this point, shortly before President Adams explicitly and publicly denounced him, Monroe's views were moderate. He was confident that the Federalists' arrogance would precipitate a popular reaction against them. "The further they [the Federalists] plunge the sooner will the people recover the use of their intellects," he predicted. Contrary to the views of some Jeffersonians, Monroe denied there was any danger of disunion, "because the eastern people are as averse to it as we." Ahead of most other Republicans he advocated a calm, deliberate strategy, much as Jefferson would advise after the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts in June and July 1798. "It becomes our members to be calm & collected at this crisis," he recommended, "firm yet to say nothing which may hereafter in retrospect dishonor them, their state, or cause." He believed that a temperate course would eventually gain the Republicans the respect and support of New England's quasi-Federalists: "If they [the Jeffersonians] act thus they will soon be looked up to by the eastern people, who will abandon their own representatives," he confided.[11]

Although President Adams had made public the infamous "XYZ dispatches" a few days earlier, Monroe was still optimistic in his prescient belief

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that the Federalist party's days were numbered. "Let the issue be what it may, I mean as to the passage or rejection of Mr. A.'s [Adams'] propositions," for increasing the army and arming merchant ships, "I date from the present epoch, the decline & perhaps the ruin of the party."[12]

Monroe had returned from Europe deeply in debt. He was so strapped for funds at this time that he had to borrow Jefferson's horse to ride from Albemarle County to attend court in Staunton. This was among the reasons he was not eager to enter Congress. Despite Jefferson's entreaties and Adams' insults, Monroe had decided that neither the public nor his private interest would benefit if he returned to Congress. Having resumed his law practice, he thought his family would suffer from what "would amount to an abandonment of my profession." Moreover, he felt that he was getting too old: "Formerly I encountered the two-fold duties of lawyer & publick agent, but then I was younger, & the pressure of publick affairs less urgent." Ironically, the "critical period" of the 1780s, during which Monroe practiced law at the same time that he served in Congress and then the state legislature, seemed less ominous than the present.

Demonstrating acute political sensitivity, Monroe thought that his arrival in the House of Representatives would backfire and increase public hostility to the Republicans. He was aware that the House had a "decided preponderance...against our principles, & this is supported by the full weight of the Executive & two thirds of the Senate." With an eye on the political situation in Federalist New England, Monroe admitted that voters east of the Potomac currently favored the Federalists, but he predicted that foreign and domestic events would eventually conspire in favor of the Jeffersonians. Expecting "the issue of the contest between France & England" to culminate in French victory, and the Federalists sooner or later to betray their monarchical views, "with an increased pressure of distress, which the policy of that party must produce," Monroe foresaw eventual

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triumph for his party. Thus, he continued to advise a policy of what might later be called masterly inactivity on the political front.

Fearful that Federalist propagandists might manipulate sectional antagonisms to obscure more vital partisan and ideological differences between the parties, Monroe advised that the eastern states should be left alone, and that the South, especially Virginia, should do nothing to agitate the Federalists. Alarmed by the passage of the Alien and Sedition Acts and rumors that the Adams Administration wanted to employ the Army to suppress domestic opposition, Monroe observed: "It is probable that an absolute secession would have produced less hatred than has occurred." He regretted that violence, as symbolized by the fracas between congressmen Matthew Lyon and Roger Griswold on the floor of the House of Representatives in February 1798, had prevailed over Republican "moderation." "The violent party has triumphed, its success being much owing to its violence," he lamented, revealing the Stoic influence on his politics, an influence which had hitherto been latent.[13]

Indeed, we may remember that in 1787, Monroe mildly derided the Stoics, pointing out that state legislatures were not qualified to choose the members of the national upper house, since they lacked an impartial sense of the national well-being: "A society of philosophers of the antient stoick sect might perhaps be capable of such extended philanthropy, but this sect is now altogether at an end, and at its height, never formed but an inconsiderable part of any community, and was by all the rest of the world considered as affecting objects without the pale of human nature."[14] Monroe may have admired the self-sacrificing Stoics all along without verbalizing his feelings. Aghast at Federalist repressive measures, which selfishly, tyrannically, and unstoically trounced on popular freedoms, he now predicted: "A course of proceeding, so unusual with us

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& so irregular anywhere, will probably have vibration in an opposite direction after awhile."

For the present, Monroe was pessimistic. He believed there was slight chance that anyone who spoke for the "publick interest" would be heard. To oppose the Federalists now would be "ineffectual" and cast "imputations" on the critic, "which, though unjust, tend to lessen him in the publick opinion." Thus excusing himself for refusing to join the partisan fray in Congress, he admitted that his primary concern was with restoring his damaged reputation after his recall from France. He believed that standing for Congress would not help him in this respect. "I cannot perceive how my taking a seat in that branch would advance my interest or do away calumny," he declared. "If my agency produced no effect, it would hurt my credit, not advance it."[15] Fearing to further risk his prestige by what he anticipated would be an ill-fated attempt to salvage the Jeffersonian cause in Congress, Monroe opted for political quiescence.

Restating to Jefferson the concern he had expressed to Madison about a revival of sectional antagonisms, Monroe suspected it was only some Virginians' disdain and hostility toward New Englanders that kept the latter loyal to Federalism. "The more, therefore, that party is left to itself, the sooner will its ruin follow," he advised. Judging from Jefferson's later, famous remarks in a letter to John Taylor of Caroline, who had suggested that Virginia and North Carolina might be better off if they seceded from a Union where a New Englander was president, he agreed with Monroe's counsel.[16]

Monroe could not easily forget the recent attacks on his conduct, both by the Washington Administration, which had recalled him as minister to France in August 1796, and more publicly and egregiously by President Adams in his address to the people of Lancaster, where he denounced Monroe as a "disgraced minister." Monroe's estrangement from the Administration had commenced

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when Adams did not await his return from Paris before recommending military preparations against France in his speech to Congress in May 1797. As the former minister, Monroe believed his advice should have been requested. He suspected that Adams's insults had become more overt because "publick opinion" had turned in favor of the Federalists. Indeed, Monroe had been offended by Adams's earlier allusions to Monroe as a minister whose actions had fostered dissension at home. "His language too [in the message of May 1797] was as harsh towards me as he could well make it, by indirect allusion, if such it could be called," he remarked.

What Monroe feared at the present time was that Adams's more flagrant attack presaged an attempt by Congress to impeach him for his conduct abroad. He was psychologically prepared for such a dastardly move. "Be the object what it may it becomes me to act with mature counsel in the course I take," he pledged. "A conflict with him [Adams] & his party at the present time must be on terms disadvantageous to me; yet I am not afraid of it." Ever the embattled hero, Monroe was certain that, whatever his mistakes as minister had been, "I was true to my country."

As was true of many American leaders at this time, Monroe was preoccupied with how future generations would perceive his conduct and character--the obsession of the Founding Fathers with "fame." He believed violent attacks on his mission to France would "injure" the Federalists. "I do not think a pursuit of me can benefit them with an impartial or even an honest publick; certainly it cannot with posterity," he observed. Nevertheless, sensitive to the several slights Adams had inflicted on his reputation, Monroe temporarily considered the traditional gentleman's mode of redress: challenging the President to a duel. He presented the alternatives to Jefferson:

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> There are two ways of acting, one by taking no notice of this outrage: the other by calling on the author for an explanation of his motive. For the first it may be urged that as he has only echoed the calumny of his predecessor [President Washington] in a manner as loose and vague as his predecessor urged it, that it does not become me to notice it, or any other attack not accompanied with a specific charge.

Pondering his options, Monroe worried that by refusing to "call" on Adams for a duel, he might seem to be acknowledging the validity of the charges against him.

Thus, Monroe contemplated challenging Adams to a duel! As he explained to Jefferson, he intended to act "mathematically, if I may say so, and the course taken which will bear the test hereafter when our heads are deposited below the surface." With posterity in mind, he wanted Jefferson's opinion. He was "ready to take any course which you advise." Although congressional Federalists apparently wished to make him a "defendant," judging from recent editorials suggesting his impeachment which had appeared in the Federalist [Richmond] Virginia Gazette, he doubted that shooting Adams in a duel would salvage his honor: "Does not A's situation and age preclude the idea of making the affair personal, and if it does can I approach him otherwise than to vindicate myself against a charge?" He feared that the Federalists would manipulate any notice he took of the incident to make him appear disloyal and unpatriotic.

Apparently Monroe's old paranoia, which had manifested itself during the preparations for the Philadelphia Convention in 1787, had revived. He suspected that the Federalists had employed spies in France to keep him under surveillance. On the other hand, he may have merely been seeking additional justification for the dubious privilege of challenging President Adams to a duel. Adams might pose a less formidable opponent than young Hamilton! In any case, like a southern gentleman who humiliated ("unmasked") a social inferior, Monroe knew

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he had to expose general partisan wrongdoing and injustice toward him by personally confronting Adams in some way--with either the pen or the dueling pistol. Of the President and his Federalist coadjutors he complained:

> I do not know what they have to allege against me. That they have had spies who caught up every incautious expression whilst I was there, and have been reinforced since by what could be gathered, I make no doubt. Standing however on upright ground, and knowing that my conduct was useful to my country, I am ready if deemed advisable to repair immediately to Philadelphia, and rush Mr. A. to an explanation. Perhaps the discussion might be taken advantage of to tell some truths as well as develop some principles of importance at the present time. But of this you will be a better judge than myself.

Although he requested Jefferson's advice, Monroe ostensibly had no intention of taking it, at least in the matter of the vice-president's urgent call on him to stand for the Senate or the House of Representatives. He explained that his recent "appeal" for justice from the public in his compilation of official correspondence relating to his French ministry, A View of the Conduct of the Executive (1797), rendered it "improper" for him to serve in Congress, perhaps because he thought he would be a welcome target of Federalist attack. He preferred to serve in the state legislature, where (although he did not mention it in his letter) the Republicans held a majority: "Would it not be better for me to be brought forward by the State at home, in the first instance, if I come into publick life at all for the present," he surmised. "Having long served the State with fidelity, I think I have a joint claim to attention from it under existing circumstances." But he admitted that his present desire was for political limbo.[17]

As his final word, however, Monroe reasserted his commitment to republicanism, the ideal of public service (which Pocock and others have called "civic humanism"), and his own honor as a socially significant individual. He

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indicated that if his good character and the survival of the Republican party depended on his return to public life he would "abandon" his work as an attorney:

> It is possible if I remain at home it may be injurious to my good name calumniated as I am, and even hurtful to a publick cause, and I am not one to withdraw myself in such a case or withhold my services when duty calls for them in either line.

Monroe intended to serve both his honor and the "public cause." In his eyes they were complementary pursuits.[18]

At least rhetorically, Monroe was committed to putting the public interest ahead of his private satisfaction. In preparation for service in the public sphere, he informed Jefferson, his "private affairs" were essentially "sound," but he expected he might need to sell some of his western lands in order to pay off debts he had incurred in France. Expounding civic humanist dogma, Monroe informed Jefferson, who had taught him the law fifteen years before: "In any event a regard for private interest should not restrain me from giving up my profession & taking the other course, if you think it advisable, in regard to the considerations in question." [19]

At the same time, conflicted by the threat to his honor, the aspersions on his conduct in France, and his financial difficulties, he found it difficult to concentrate on the practice of law at Richmond. Even in this hotbed of urban Federalism, for whatever reason (perhaps seeking to justify to himself his role as the classical republican representative of the people), he insisted that public opinion actually opposed the Federalists and their quasi-war with France. As he wrote Jefferson, "My candid opinion is that the tone given or rather the evidence exhibited of publick opinion by addresses etc. is fallacious. The publick opinion in this State [Virginia] is decidedly otherwise if fairly taken."[20] If that were true, why had "publick opinion" not yet spoken in Congress, where the Jeffersonians

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had been routed, and why was he so reluctant to attend? Both he and Jefferson knew the answer: At least for the time being, the Federalists were the majority party.[21]

It may be that, sadly demonstrating an inner feeling of political and personal futility and frustration, the burgeoning Richmond lawyer who had seemingly failed as an aspiring politician considered killing the president of the United States through the duel's ritualized murder. Either before or after he wrote this letter to Jefferson in which he appears to have eschewed a duel, he considered the possibility of killing Adams very tempting. Having been prodded by Jefferson's letter of May 21 to respond aggressively towards Adams's slanders--though the master of Monticello had in mind a run for Congress rather than an armed encounter--Monroe had an extended debate with himself about whether he should take "any notice" of Adams' "attention to me." The new president had even exceeded Washington's vilification of Monroe's conduct as minister during the preceding administration. Monroe was certain that Adams had deliberately gone out of his way to "abuse" his efforts as minister to pacify France, "attributing to it a character his predecessor [Washington] would not do." Jefferson had shared, and perhaps encouraged, this belief. Monroe feared that, "Not to notice it may with many leave an unfavorable impression against me. Yet how notice it. Personally I cannot I presume, as he is an old man & the President--and if I do it publickly or on publick ground can I do it otherwise than by asking as I did before [in a letter to Secretary of State Pickering, July 6, 1797], what the charge that I may vindicate myself, and ought I to assume that character?" Thus Monroe thought that he should either fight Adams on the field of honor or refrain from further action.[22]

But Jefferson seemed unconcerned with Monroe's honor. He enjoyed

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prodding Monroe, telling him that Adams' response had "travelled out of the topics of the address altogether, to mention you in a most injurious manner." "Your feelings have no doubt been much irritated by it," the vice-president continued, "as in truth it had all the characters necessary to produce irritation." At first admitting that, "what notice you should take of it is difficult to say," he finally declared that, with several of his friends, he thought "that feeble as the hand from which the shaft is thrown, yet with a great mass of our citizens, strangers to the leading traits of the character [Adams] from which it came, it will have considerable effect." Thus, Jefferson implied, the prestige of the presidency itself was arrayed against Monroe. He argued that, "in order to replace yourself on the high ground you are entitled to, it is absolutely necessary that you should reappear on the public theatre, and take an independent stand, from which you can be seen and known to your fellow-citizens."

Promising him that Samuel J. Cabell, the current Albemarle County representative, would resign in Monroe's behalf, Jefferson argued that the House was the best forum for him to display his innocence, rather than the "obscure" upper house. Advising Monroe to take a "commanding attitude" in the legislature, Jefferson was aware that his friend's "private interests" might suffer from congressional service. In other words, Jefferson wanted Monroe to do what he had done when his conduct as governor of Virginia was besmirched in 1781: join the legislature and defend himself on the assembly floor. "The very idea" of Monroe's running for office will "strike the public mind, and raise its confidence in you," Jefferson predicted. Self-contradictorily, he advised Monroe to avoid mention of Adams' Lancaster philippic if and when he was elected to Congress, because this would betray a hostile, irrational side he should replace with an appearance of lofty reasonableness. "Were you to show a personal hostility against the answer, it would deaden the effect of everything you should say or do

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in your public place hereafter," he predicted. "All would be ascribed to an enmity to Mr. A., and you know with what facility such insinuations enter the minds of men."

Jefferson was thus less concerned that Monroe vindicate himself than that he work against Federalist policies. He was asking advice from other Republican politicians as well about what Monroe should do. "I have not seen [John] Dawson since this [Adams'] answer has appeared, and therefore have not yet learnt his sentiments on it," he said, alluding to the Orange County congressman who had succeeded Madison in 1797. As Jefferson depicted it, Monroe was indeed disgraced. Only by running for office, subjecting himself to the public gaze, making himself visible--voluntarily unmasking himself, as it were--to the voters, could he exonerate himself.[23]

Having already composed his book, A View of the Conduct of the Executive, which had been on sale for several months, he eschewed further work in defense of his French mission as superfluous. But his letter to James Madison could hardly disguise his hostility toward Adams: "Can I assume again the attitude of an accuser as in my book, ridicule his [Adams'] political career, shew [sic] it to be the consummation of folly & wickedness?" he moaned. His View had denounced the Washington Administration's abusive treatment; now he contemplated Adams as a fresh target: "Is the present a suitable time for this?" He wanted to know whether Madison thought a diatribe against the Adams Administration would redeem his reputation.[24]

Monroe ostensibly had made up his mind that John Adams merited chastisement. He believed a shootout with his political foes was the proper denouement, concluding that his election to Congress, "as a remedy against these attacks... appears to me at present as if that measure would not answer the end." As he had told Pickering when he demanded to know the reason for his recall, he

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thought "Justice" was his due as a man. At the present time he scorned service in Congress, because the satisfaction it would afford him against his political and personal enemies was not sufficiently visceral. "I do not think the moment suitable to produce a publick benefit, and by throwing myself in that theatre at present I rather think I should pit myself against subaltern rascals whilst the greater escaped." How could Monroe's mere service in Congress cause Adams to squirm in fear? He expected challenges from the small fry, freshman congressional delegates, but he was after the president himself! "There is a description of lesser knaves who would be glad to fight me for their superiors, but I do not think the superiors ought to be so fortunate: or rather I am inclined to think that if I am bound to notice any thing said of me by the smaller gentry, it should be in the persons of the larger."[25] Monroe apparently had Pickering and Hamilton as well as Adams in the sights of his dueling pistols.

Returning to the scene following his success in dissuading Jefferson when the latter proposed to threaten "nullification" of the Alien and Sedition Acts in drafting the Kentucky legislature's protest against those unconstitutional laws, James Madison now sought to restrain Monroe's passions as well.[26] In a letter to Monroe a day after the one in which his friend uttered threats of violence against the president, Madison counseled moderation. He argued that it was improper to "repel the aggression" of Adams by challenging him to a duel, even though the President had called him a "disgraced" minister, terms stronger than either Pickering or Washington had employed. Like Monroe, Madison suspected that the Federalists in Congress and the executive branch intended to institute impeachment proceedings against Monroe for what they considered his negligent conduct. By this means they would deprive him of future office. Indeed, Madison agreed with Monroe that Adams' motive in his "unwarrantable attack" might have been to "snare" Monroe into belligerent actions such as threatening a duel, that

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could lend additional merit to charges of impeachment. Rather than seek a duel, Madison advised that Monroe write another pamphlet, this time against Adams rather than Washington: "a temperate and dignified animadversion published with your name to it," in which he might support his character and chastise Adams in a "prudent" manner.[27]

Lukewarmly, Madison proposed that, despite "private sacrifice" and possible impotence in a Federalist-dominated government, Monroe should take a seat in Congress if Cabell resigned. Being "persuaded that in a general view your taking a station in Congress would have a promising tendency, & as the present paroxism [sic] may pass off with as great a rapidity as it has been brought on," Madison seconded Jefferson's suggestion. He believed Monroe could better defend himself against charges of wrongdoing from the House floor. Lamenting the prevalent violence and irrationality of congressional behavior, he joined Monroe in denouncing the opposition's inordinate passion. "There is too much passion it seems in our Councils to calculate consequences of any sort," he reported to Jefferson. "The only hope is that its violence by defeating itself may save the Country."[28]

Madison felt at least as much antipathy toward Adams as Monroe did. Madison disliked Adams. Apparently he had been hostile toward him for several years, perhaps regarding him as a competitor for Jefferson's friendship.[29] Now he wrote Jefferson, venting his disdain for the President:

> The answers of Mr. Adams to his addressors form the most grotesque scene in the tragicomedy acting by the Govenment.... Monroe is much at a loss what course to take in consequence of the wicked assault on him by Mr. A. and I am as much so as to the advice that ought to be given him.

Madison predicted that, if Monroe reentered political life, "the spirit of party revenge may be wreaked through the forms of the Constitution." Echoing

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Monroe's estimate of Federalist strength, Madison, who like Monroe was avoiding public life at this time, observed: "A majority in the H of R and 2/3 of the Senate seem to be ripe for every thing."

As Madison had advised Monroe, he repeated to Jefferson, who wanted to see both men join the political fray, that he believed Monroe should confine his protests to print rather than run for office. "A temperate & dignified animadversion on the proceeding, published with his name, as an appeal to the candor & justice of his fellow Citizens, agst. the wanton & unmanly treatment, might perhaps be of use," he pointed out. "But it would be difficult to execute it in a manner to do justice to himself, & inflict it on his adversary, without clashing with the temper of the moment."[30] In other words, Madison, like Monroe, feared that impeachment would ensue from any action, even entry into Congress, that the omnipotent Federalists interpreted as unduly provocative. It seems he convinced Monroe that it was imprudent to issue any challenge to the President to appear on the dueling ground. The "Colossus of Independence" would live to complete his term.

Monroe's contemplating a duel with Adams at the close of the 1790s is interesting and important, not only for showing the less than sacrosanct character which a younger founding father ascribed to his elders, but in demonstrating the vicissitudes of Monre's republican ideology. This relatively unrecognized statesman and president (the house in New York City where he died, at 66 Prince Street near the Bowery, is now an abandoned building strewn with litter and graffiti amidst an otherwise elegant neighborhood) was a figure of stature in his lifetime, having held a greater variety of public offices than any other president.[31]

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He had engaged in the political discourse and the controversy over republicanism, federalism, and antifederalism from the 1780s till his death in 1831. An emphasis on the indispensability of stable government and a hypersensitivity to the fragility of republican regimes, in accordance with the classical, cyclical view of governmental degeneration, guided Monroe's political behavior from the Constitutional debates of the 1780s until his death. Never a radical on the matter of government structure, he placed his confidence in high-minded, independent statesmen, and (not expecting these to appear very often) the more pedestrian kind of politicians, those conditioned to act in response to the "rewards and punishments," praise and blame bestowed by their constituents.

Despite his general political moderation and personal affability, Monroe temporarily lost much of his respect for his country's Federalist political leaders in his outrage at the Washington Administration's cavalier treatment of him during his Paris ministry from 1794 to 1796, culminating in his dismissal. He perceived his recall as a betrayal of his dignity and honor, and an evident disregard of his sincere efforts to assist his government. He viewed it as a breach of the American people's trust, in violation of such diverse ideals as world freedom and individual fair play and self-respect. Like a feudal knight, he seriously considered dueling as a viable alternative to preserve his honor, although the denouement might be death for himself or his adversary.

Monroe's eager recourse to the code duello when he thought his honor had been impugned reveals that he held much in common with the arrogant southern Federalist "aristocrats" whom he and his fellow Republicans ostensibly abhoored

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as enemies to their republican political culture. Although it may be impossible to finally define what factors made Monroe—or anyone else for that matter—a Jeffersonian Republican rather than a Federalist, Monroe's temperament may have been more aristocratic than democratic. His dogged adherence to honor; heated response when he thought his self-respect castigated; perhaps the wounds he had suffered from British artillery at the Battle of Trenton, helped exacerbate the violence of his rhetoric against Washington, Hamilton, and Adams in the 1790s, a stance that his generally restrained ideology hardly reflected.

Ironically, Monroe's pugnacious attitudes were more characteristic of the feudal aristocrat than the Jeffersonians' proverbial ideal, the middling democratic artisan and yeoman. And in Virginia itself there seems to have been little more enthusiasm for political democratization among Republican leaders than among Federalists. Apparently, the leaders of both parties preferred the rule of the "natural aristocracy."[32] And, if only briefly, Monroe betrayed an aristocratic predilection for fighting duels with other members of the "better sort," even if they were corpulent old New Englanders like John Adams. His obsession with honor, an aristocratic virtue, nearly got the better of his respect for the more "democratic" value, common sense.[33]

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NOTES: CHAPTER 5: JAMES MONROE: DUELING WITH THE PASSIONS: PART ONE.

1. John Adams to Abigail Adams, Dec. 19, 1796, and Jan. 14, 1797, quoted in Arthur Scherr, "John Adams, Providential Rhetoric, and Party Warfare: A Note on Massachusetts Politics in the Late 1790s," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 73 (Jan. 1991), 15-16, and Alexander DeConde, Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington (Durham, N.C., 1958), 342. Among the many studies of eighteenth-century thought that emphasize the conflict between reason and passion as a leitmotif, see Henry F. May, The Enlightenment in America (New York, 1976); Albert O. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests (Princeton, 1977); and Daniel Walker Howe, "The Political Psychology of The Federalist," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 54 (July 1987), 485-509.

2. Adams' reply to Lancaster County address, May 8, 1798, quoted in William T. Hutchinson, William M.E. Rachal, et al., eds., The Papers of James Madison (17 vols., in progress, Chicago and Charlottesville, 1962--), XVII, 146n.

3. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York, 1982), and (an abridged version) Honor and Violence in the Old South (New York, 1986); Dickson D. Bruce, Violence and Culture in the Antebellum South (Austin, Tex., 1979); Kenneth S. Greenberg, Honor and Slavery (Princeton, 1996). The quotation in the text is from Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor, 88-89.

4. Hamilton to Lieutenant Colonel John Laurens, May 22, 1779, in Harold C. Syrett et al., eds., The Papers of Alexander Hamilton (27 vols., New York, 1961-1987), II, 52. For Monroe's military service and his friendship with Hamilton, see Harry Ammon, James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York, 1971), 7-28. A recent study of Laurens' attempts to raise a black regiment in South Carolina is Gregory D. Massey, "The Limits of Antislavery Thought in the Revolutionary Lower South: John Laurens and Henry Laurens," Journal of Southern History, 63 (August 1997), 495-530.

5. For Monroe's confrontation with Hamilton, see Philip Marsh, "Hamilton and Monroe," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, 34 (Dec. 1947), 459-68;and Ammon, Monroe, 95-96, 158-60. Marsh does not mention the early camaraderie between Hamilton and Monroe.

6. Jefferson to Madison, May 17, 1798, in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVII, 132.Adams had earlier impugned Monroe's conduct as minister abroad, albeit in a veiled manner. In his special message to Congress on

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May 16, 1797, which first proposed additional military and naval measures against France as well as a special three-man mission to replace Monroe, he had said that the Directory's effusive farewell to Monroe "evinced a disposition to separate the people of the United States from the Government." James D. Richardson, ed., A Collection of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1922 (20 vols., New York, 1897-1922), I, 225.

7. Jefferson to Madison, May 24, 1798, ibid., 136. For the reputability of "giving the lie" to one's enemies in the Old South--publicly calling them liars--as a mark of gentlemanly honor, see Greenberg, Honor and Slavery, 32-46.

8. Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor; Bruce, Violence and Culture. Other examinations of the duel, which specialize in the eighteenth-century United States but offer a more traditional perspective than Wyatt-Brown and Bruce, include W. J. Rorabaugh, "The Political Duel in the Early Republic: Burr vs. Hamilton," Journal of the Early Republic, 15 (Spring 1995), 1-23, and Joanne B. Freeman, "Dueling as Politics: Reinterpreting the Burr-Hamilton Duel," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 53 (April 1996), 289-318. As Wyatt-Brown tersely remarks: "The ethic of honor was designed to prevent unjustified violence, unpredictability, and anarchy. Occasionally it led to that very nightmare." Honor and Violence, 39. A brief, provocative interpretation of political duels, which argues that individual confrontations served as surrogates for more widespread political violence, is Robert H. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion (NewYork, 1984), 99-100, 185-86.

9. James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, April 8, 1798, in Stanislaus M.Hamilton, ed., The Writings of James Monroe (7 vols.; New York, 1898-1903), III, 115. A recent discussion of Adams's patriotic addresses is Thomas M. Ray, "'Not One Cent for Tribute': The Public Addresses and American Popular Reaction to the XYZ Affair, 1798-1799," Journal of the Early Republic, 3 (Winter 1983), 389-412. For the popularity of the idea that reason should control the passions of the citizens in a stable society, see Daniel Walker Howe, "The Political Psychology of The Federalist," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 44 (July 1987), 485-509; Drew R. McCoy, The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy (Cambridge, 1989), 16-19, 33-34, 44, 52, 65; Albert 0. Hirschman, The Passions and the Interests: Political Arguments for Capitalism Before Its Triumph (Princeton, 1977); and Richard C. Sinopoli, The Foundations of American Citizenship: Liberalism, the Constitution, and Civic Virtue (New York, 1992), 67-71, 106, 117, 135.

10. Monroe to Jefferson, April 8, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe'sWritings, III, 116. See also James Roger Sharp, American Politics in the Early Republic: The New Nation in Crisis (New Haven, 1993), 183.

11. Monroe to Jefferson, April 8, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 116-117. Jefferson adopted this attitude of watchful waiting a few months later.

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See Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 381-82, and Ammon, Monroe, 167-73.

12. Monroe to Jefferson, April 8, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 118; Ammon, Monroe, 163-65.

13. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 129. For Jefferson's plea to Monroe to enter the House of Representatives and combat the Federalists, see Jefferson to Monroe, May 21, 1798, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

14. "Some Observations," in Herbert J. Storing, ed., The Complete Anti-Federalist (5 vols.; Chicago, 1981), V, 286.

15. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 131.

16. Ibid., 131-32. For Jefferson's dialogue with John Taylor of Caroline in June 1798, see Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty, 396.

17. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 133-34. For the love of fame and honor among the leaders of the Early Republic, see Douglass G. Adair, "Fame and the Founding Fathers," in Fame and the Founding Fathers: Essays by Douglass Adair (NewYork, 1974), 3-26; Gerald Stourzh, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford, 1970), 66-67, 95-106, 173-75, 201-205, 240, 267. On "unmasking" as the prerogative of the free white male southern gentleman ("man of honor"), by which he humiliated slaves and social inferiors, see Greenberg, Honor and Slavery, 25-50, and Bertram Wyatt-Brown, "Andrew Jackson's Honor," Journal of the Early Republic, 17 (Spring 1997), 1-36. On Monroe's paranoid reaction when he was not chosen a delegate to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 and blamed the hostility of James Madison and Virginia's Governor Edmund Randolph, see Monroe to Jefferson, July 27, 1787, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 173-74; Ammon, Monroe, 66-67.

18. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 135. On the historiographic current of "civic humanism," see J.G.A. Pocock, "Civic Humanism and its Role in Anglo-American Thought," in Pocock, Politics, Language and Time (New York, 1971), 80-103.

19. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 136. On the political crisis of 1798, during which the Alien and Sedition Acts were passed and the undeclared war with France occurred, see James Morton Smith, Freedom's Fetters (Ithaca, 1956); John C. Miller, Crisis in Freedom: The Alien and Sedition Acts (Boston, 1951); Stanley Elkins and Eric McKitrick, The Age of Federalism, 1788-1800 (New York, 1993); Manning J. Dauer, The Adams

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Federalists (Baltimore, 1953); and Stephen G. Kurtz, The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism (Philadelphia, 1957).

20. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 136. For the prevalence of Federalism in Richmond, see William Bruce Wheeler, "Urban Politics in Nature's Republic: The Development of Political Parties in the Seaport Cities in the Federalist Era" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1967).

21. John C. Hoadley, The Origins of American Political Parties, 1788-1803 (Lexington, 1986); Dauer, Adams Federalists, 137-211; Kurtz, Presidency of John Adams, 284-306.

22. Monroe to James Madison, June 8, 1798, in Hutchinson and Rachal, et al, eds., Papers of James Madison, XVII, 146. The precise date of Monroe's letter to Jefferson, June 1798, is not known. Monroe demanded an explanation of his recall as minister to France from Secretary of State Pickering after he returned to the United States in the summer of 1797. Monroe to Pickering, July 6, 1797, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 66-67. Pickering informed Monroe that President Washington demanded his recall in letters of June 13 and Aug. 22, 1796, printed in Walter Lowrie and Matthew St. Clair Clarke, eds., American State Papers: Foreign Relations (6 vols., Washington, D.C., 1832-1859), I, 737-38, 741-42.

23. Jefferson to Monroe, May 21, 1798, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, reel 21; printed with minor errors in Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, eds., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 20 vols. (Washington, 1903), X, 38-40.

24. Monroe to Madison, June 8, 1798, in Madison Papers, XVII, 146; For Monroe's View of the Conduct of the Executive and its reception, see Ammon, Monroe, 165-69.

25. Monroe to Madison, June 8, 1798, in Madison Papers, XVII, 146 (I have slightly revised the order of the words in the quotation); Monroe to Pickering, July 6, 1797, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 67. Notwithstanding Jefferson's constant reassurance, Cabell had refused to resign to accommodate Monroe in any case.

26. For Madison's restraining influence on Jefferson during the crisis over the Alien and Sedition Acts, see Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 419-24, and Adrienne Koch, Jefferson and Madison:The Great Collaboration (New York, 1950), 174-211.

27. Madison to Monroe, June 9, 1798, in Madison Papers, XVII, 148-49. See also Ammon, Monroe, 172.

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28. Madison to Monroe, June 9, 1798, Madison Papers, XVII, 149; Madison to Jefferson, June 10, 1798, ibid., 150.

29. Madison's personal and political antipathy to Adams had been longstanding. As early as 1787, Jefferson told Madison that he had convinced him that Adams was less warmhearted than he had once believed. "You know the opinion I formerly entertained of my friend Mr. Adams," he remarked. "Yourself and the governor [Patrick Henry?] were the first who shook that opinion. I afterwards saw proofs which convicted him of a degree of vanity and of a blindness to it, of which no germ had appeared in Congress," where he sat with Adams from 1775-1776, when he wrote the Declaration of Independence. Nevertheless Jefferson remained fond of Adams: "He is as disinterested as the being which made him: he is profound in his views: and accurate in his judgment except where knowledge of the world is necessary to form a judgment. He is so amiable, that I pronounce you will love him if ever you become acquainted with him." Jefferson to Madison, Jan. 30, 1787, ibid., IX, 249. Unlike Jefferson, Madison disparaged Adams' Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the U.S. (1787-88) when it first appeared, even though his views on the inevitability of class conflict and the need for a balance of powers between the rich and the poor (even more than for a separation of powers between the legislative, executive, and judiciary), as expressed at the Philadelphia Convention and the Federalist, were similar. "Mr. Adams' Book which has been in your hands of course, has excited a good deal of attention," he wrote Jefferson. "It will probably be much read, particularly in the Eastern States, and contribute with other circumstances to revive the predilections of this Country for the British Constitution. Men of learning find nothing new in it. Men of taste many things to criticize. And men without either not a few things, which they will not understand. It will nevertheless be read, and praised, and become a powerful engine in forming the public opinion." Madison to Jefferson, June 6, 1787, ibid., X, 29-30. Ten years later, Madison was sure that "the maxims of the British Govt. are still uppermost in his [Adams'] mind." Madison to Jefferson, Feb. 11, 1797, ibid., XVI, 489. He continued to condemn Adams opinion in the Defence that the British constitution was the "most stupendous fabric of human invention." Madison to Jefferson, May 27, 1798, ibid., XVII, 137. Madison even preferred "cold" Washington to "hot-headed" Adams. Madison to Jefferson, Feb. 1798, ibid., 82.

30. Madison to Jefferson, June 10, 1798, Madison Papers, XVII, 150-51.

31. For Monroe's residence in his last years, 66 Prince Street, the home of his daughter Eliza and his son-in-law, Samuel L. Gouverneur, see George Morgan, The Life of James Monroe (1921; reprinted, New York, 1969), 439, 442; personal visit by the author.

32. Harry Ammon, "The Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia: An Interpretation," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 71 (April 1963), 153-167; Richard R. Beeman, The Old Dominion and the New Nation, 1788-1801 (Lexington, Ky., 1972).

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33. However, a recent essay on Montesquieu's political thought emphasizes the potential utility of "honor" in salvaging modern liberal democratic regimes. Sharon Krause, "The Politics of Distinction and Disobedience: Honor and the Defense of Liberty in Montesquieu," Polity, 31 (Spring 1999), 469-499. According to Krause's interpretation—she seems unaware that Montesquieu's remarks in Spirit of the Laws were directed at constitutional monarchies rather than democratic republics—he believed that "it is honor, not republican virtue, that checks encroaching political power and serves liberty in the form of personal security." "Politics of Distinction," 472. It is likely that Monroe would have agreed with Krause's concluding panegyric to honor: "As long as political power is of an encroaching nature, we will need 'the great and generous courage' of the few who on occasion resist it, men and women who are willing to risk their necks to defend their liberties." Ibid., 499.

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CHAPTER 6.
JAMES MONROE AND JOHN ADAMS:
DUELING WITH THE PASSIONS: II

Although Monroe had apparently abandoned any thought of challenging Adams to a duel, his rage rumbled beneath the surface. A much crossed-out memorandum concerning Adams' insult, probably written in June 1798, indicates that he was attempting to decide the best course to pursue in his own mind, or perhaps draft a newspaper article discrediting Adams. "Ought JM to do any thing in this case & if any thing what?" he soliloquized, reaching some strange conclusions. The target of his aggression had shifted from the Colossus of Independence to the Father of His Country. At the head of his list of priorities was, "He [Monroe] may call on Mr. W[ashington] as the original aggressor and discuss the point with him. Nor can Mr. W evade an answer--since he in truth is the responsible person, having committed the act." Monroe's reasoning was logical: It was the Washington Administration that had initially recalled him, precipitating the state of affairs which allowed Adams to label him a "disgraced" minister.

Predictably, Monroe's second option was a "call on Mr. A who has thus made him self responsible." His third choice, which would have pleased Jefferson, was to take a seat in Congress "and be ready to answer what may be said." Asserting that public opinion had decided the dispute between Monroe and Secretary of State Pickering in Monroe's favor,

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Monroe's memorandum evinced his contempt for the Federalists:

> Much turpitude is shewn [sic] in the conduct of the admin & none in that of J.M. The whole of Mr. A's admin too has tended to prove the charges alledged [sic] against that of his predecessor, to which Mr. A's admin. is only a postscript. It merits consideration whether general denunciations without specific charges & proof are not best answered by silent contempt. Whether such a conduct on the part of Mr. A is being in unison with his general conduct which is intemperate & impolitick [sic] as every day's experience shews [sic], will not contribute to lessen him in the public estimation.[1]

The trenchant satire in the above paragraph was not Monroe's usual style, which one scholar has aptly described as conveying "a deep seriousness, a conviction of righteousness, and a dogged persistence."[2]

But Monroe was angry, and in his anger he rose to rhetorical heights. As early as June 1, he had berated Adams for his attack. From Fredericksburg, responding to Jefferson, who had deplored the president's comments, he thanked the vice-president for his "interest...in what concerns my welfare." But the icy tone of his remarks unmasked his rage:

> The cause of irritation to which you allude is indeed a serious one, considering the station [the President] from whence it emanated: considering the person [Adams], only an object of contempt. I had seen the paper only the day before I got your letter [May 21, 1798], having lately arrived here.[3]

Preoccupied as Monroe was with his career as a Fredericksburg attorney, Jefferson's letter may have been the first news he received about Adams's insult. He was undoubtedly aware of Adams' aggressive replies to the inflammatory addresses, beginning in May 1798 in Shippensburg, Lancaster, and other small Pennsylvania towns. In mid-May, before he knew of

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Adams's insults, he reported a popular pro-Adams meeting in Fredericksburg. "There is a meeting in town to-day of the merchants to address the President as other places have done Eastward of this approving his measures," he wrote Jefferson. "There is a party in opposition of great respectability, so that the issue is uncertain." As if to deny in advance that anything connected with such meetings could affect him, he wrote: "I avoid the whole of this business, having nothing to do with it; I mention this circumstance lest [his] being here," only for the purpose of arguing cases, "the contrary should be insinuated."[4] At least when he was not personally involved, Monroe preferred to remain aloof from party contention.

On the other hand, Monroe despised Adams as the current head of the Federalist party. He blamed him as much as he did the Hamiltonians for the militant anti-French measures that had passed Congress, endangering both the Republican party, American autonomy from Great Britain, and the protection of individual freedoms and state rights from an encroaching central government. Before Congress divulged the notorious "XYZ Affair" in April 1798, Monroe thought the people would oppose an Adams-sponsored war against France. He hoped that, if the "friends of republican govt. in the H. of R." competently and lucidly discussed the issues, the voters would once again return to Republican ranks. Indeed, he predicted a short political future for Adams and the Federalists. Several months before Adams used the word against him, Monroe said the Adams presidency was disgraceful. He wrote Jefferson in February:

> I believe no administration was ever before in such a dilemma. for if it carries its measures, it must be disgraced, & if it does not carry them, it must be so likewise. Mr. A. may thank himself for this. You did every thing in yr. power to unite the people under his administration, & to give him in

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> negotiation the aid of the republican character & interest to support the pretentions [sic]of our country & not without hazard to yourself. But this he spurned with a degree of wantonness of which there is no example.

Concluding that the abortive attempt by Jefferson and other Republican leaders to conciliate Adams after he succeeded Washington in the presidency had been misguided, Monroe, who continued to sulk nearly two years after the Washington Administration recalled him as minister to France, regarded Adams as equally intolerant of opposition: "He [Adams] would have none in his ranks but tried men, whose political creed corresponded with his own." Remaining bitter toward the Federalists, he saw petty nepotism in President Adams' appointment of his son John Quincy as U.S. minister to Prussia despite his qualifications, calling it "a most reprehensible act." He thought the Republicans in Congress had demonstrated their apathy by failing to oppose both the appointment and the whole idea of extensive American involvement abroad. "If you had appointed (being in his place) a near relation to such an office, the noise which the royalists [i.e., Federalists] would have made, would never have ceased," he reminded Jefferson. "The inattention which the enemies of such a [foreign] mission [the Jeffersonians], enemies from principle too, have previously shewn [sic] to the measure is a proof of their extreme supineness, in cases where they ought to be active, & might be active with effect."[5]

At this time Monroe's opinion of his colleagues' integrity was low. He felt little interest in dragging their chestnuts out of the fire after his recent humiliating treatment by Washington and Adams. Indeed, he felt they should be taking up the political cudgels for him after the pamphleteer "Scipio," a pseudonym for Federalist Connecticut Senator Uriah Tracy, derided

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the blundering Francophilism of his conduct as minister to France.[6]

After Monroe's return to the United States from France in the summer of 1797, he grew increasingly disillusioned with American politics and more dubious of the republican vigor of the American people. Not only had he been recalled and insulted by Pickering and Washington, but Adams' special message to Congress on May 16, 1797 had indirectly castigated him as a man who wished to "separate the people from the government." He was again astounded by Congress's favorable response to Adams' warlike, Francophobic annual message in November 1797. Professing disbelief, he wrote Madison in December:

> I have read the speech [by Adams on Nov. 23, 1797] & replies; & really begin to entertain serious doubts whether this is the country we inhabited 12 or 15 years ago; whether we have not by some accident been thrown to another region of the globe, or even some other planet, for every thing we see or hear of the political kind seems strange & quite unlike what we used to see.

Thus Monroe eloquently described Republican disorientation. As early as December 1797, months before the "XYZ Affair" crystallized public opinion against France, Monroe was in a state of disbelief at the decline of Republican popularity. Far from emerging as popular heroes, the Jeffersonians were daily growing weaker in Congress as anti-French "war fever" swept the nation. Desperately, the estranged ex-minister inquired: "Have you any explanation on this head from our political pilots at Philadelphia?"[7] He feared Americans were turning away from representative government, reviving their enthusiasm for centralizing, "monarchical" aspects of the Constitution, and turning from France to Great Britain as their favorite country.[8]

Scipio's Reflections (1798) had been written primarily to refute the charges in Monroe's

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lengthy compendium, A View of the Conduct of the Executive (1797). Monroe had published his official correspondence with the State Department in this volume to demonstrate that the Washington Administration had acted in a deceitful, double-dealing manner toward him and the French Government, although he had done his best to maintain French friendship in light of the pro-British Jay's Treaty, which had been negotiated and ratified during his mission. Refusing to stoop to the anonymity political diatribes required in those times to answer "the flimsy, scurrilous papers," he believed his "precise" writing style would have betrayed his identity in any case. Thinking it superfluous to write in defense of his own book, he decided "to rest quiet & let calumny have its course." Although the View was about four hundred tedious pages long, Monroe thought that future generations would resort to it for an understanding of the diplomacy of the period and come away convinced of his integrity. His regard for posterity's opinion demonstrated once more the Stoic roots of his personality and the importance he attached to clear thinking and peace of mind. With exaggerated humility, he predicted:

> The book will remain & will be read in the course of 50 years if not sooner, and I think the facts it contains, will settle or contribute to settle, the opinion of posterity in the character of the administration however indifferent to it the present race may be. And it will be some consolation to me to hope on reasonable ground, that I shall contribute to do justice to them with posterity, since a gang of greater scoundrels never lived. [my italics]

Monroe knew the purport of the term, "scoundrel." When Hamilton insinuated that he lied when he denied giving Callender the love letters to Maria Reynolds and other documents connected with the Affair for his publication, A History of the United States for 1796, in the

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summer of 1797, Monroe exclaimed, "Do you say I represented falsely, you are a scoundrel. Colo.H. said I will meet you like a gentleman[.] Colo. M. said I am ready get your pistols."[9] Thus, to call a man a "scoundrel" was tantamount to challenging him to a duel. And, in his own mind, Monroe was still duelling with the Federalists, albeit primarily on a verbal level.

After this colorful, portentous reference to the "scoundrels" who had humiliated him and sought to crush his party, Monroe further vented his rage at the ex-president. Apparently alluding to the grand celebrations of Washington's birthday, which had already become an unofficial holiday, Monroe scornfully disparaged the hoopla: "We are to dance on their birth-night, forsooth, and say they are great & good men, when we know they are little people."[10] Nevertheless, he had anger to spare for "vain, irritable" Adams, who had refused to attend the celebration in Washington's honor, thinking it beneath his presidential dignity.

Monroe's hostility to Adams was probably more political than personal. After all, it was Washington's Administration that had dismissed him as minister. But it was Adams' Administration that was pursuing military measures in anticipation of what it considered an inevitable war with France. Since Monroe and his fellow Republicans considered Great Britain, because of its naval and commercial superiority, as the greater threat to American independence, they opposed Adams' policy. Nevertheless, whatever nostalgia they retained for France's short-lived, abortive experiment in representative government was fast dissipating.[11]

Like many Jeffersonians, Monroe feared the Federalists sought to provoke war with France as a means to increase the national government's military power and augment the force available to throttle internal dissent, which had been done in a slipshod manner by the state

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militia that suppressed the Whiskey Rebellion four years earlier.[12] As Monroe bluntly stated:

> The course of the administration does not surprise me. It is a consistent one. I think, however, the administration will overwhelm itself by its folly & madness. We are preparing for a war which does not exist, expending millions which will have no other effect than to bring it on, which cannot produce in any possible event when brought on, any good & would produce much harm.

Somewhat eccentrically, Monroe predicted that the XYZ Affair revelations would backfire against Adams, thwart his desire for war, and spoil his "otherwise successful project," since the news from abroad must get better. The strategy he recommended was that the Republicans request all papers relating to the progress of the negotiations: "To expose the iniquity of the project & the injury of the policy, the call should be continued for papers, upon every rumor of the arrival of new dispatches."[13] He thought that the people's common sense and aversion to high taxes for military spending would soon dispel the power of Federalist hypernationalistic, xenophobia propaganda.

A few weeks later, as he observed the smooth passage through Congress of laws expanding the army; suspending commercial intercourse with France; levying direct taxes; imposing the Alien and Naturalization Acts; and the impending sedition act, Monroe's alarm increased. He suspected that the latest news from the U.S. envoys to France--Charles C. Pinckney, Elbridge Gerry, and John Marshall--disclosed that "France intends not to make war on us, so that our administration has the merit exclusively of precipitating us into that state." Adams alone bore the guilt for the precarious state of Franco-American relations, stoking French "resentment" by "multiplying the causes of irritation daily," effacing the "respect she

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naturally has for the nation." The Federalist program's success in Congress gradually convinced Monroe that the people were as corrupt as the administration. Since the Federalists controlled Congress, Monroe anticipated war in alliance with Great Britain as her "feeble contemptible satellite." The only hope for America's survival as a republic was that the people would finally comprehend that the Adams Administration had deceived them about France's intentions, which would "give a new spring to republican councils: admitting that the American people are the people they were 20 years ago." Like his friend Jefferson, Monroe repeatedly harked back to the Revolutionary "Spirit of '76," when Americans, engrossed in their war for independence from the mother country, exhibited a zealous, republican rage militaire.

Shrewdly pointing out that it was unlikely that France, if it defeated its European enemies, would forgive the United States, Monroe chastised Adams for his ignorance of Realpolitik. He eschewed idealism. "I believe there is not a noble sentiment in her [France's] councils to which we can appeal," he observed. Depicting Adams as an intemperate warmonger, he predicted he would seek war with France no matter what the consequences to the United States. Even if France defeated all Europe, "our present Viceroy would...be for fighting, to make the last effort in favor of his book [Defence of the Constitutions] that the state of the world would admit of, in the hope also of displaying himself to the same advantage in the field as a soldier, as he thinks he has done as a man of science in the republick [sic] of letters," he said, his barbed remarks sprinkled with dry wit.[14]

Monroe's attack increased its volatility. As if preparing to challenge Adams to a duel, Monroe derided his opponent's virility--the ultimate insult. Although Monroe urged peace and

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Adams proposed belligerent measures, the latter was an armchair soldier while Monroe had fought in the Revolution. Obviously, he felt justified in calling "His Rotundity" an "old woman":

> It is really an astonishing spectacle to behold such a nation as this is, containing so many enlightened men, such a virtuous & intelligent yeomanry, such an active and grasping body of merchants, dandled about against the obvious interest & principles of every class, as it were by an old woman! But such is the state of things that the infatuation or disorder of the nation must be managed with skill & gently, or it will grow worse & become incurable.[15]

Once again demonstrating impressive literary inventiveness, Monroe compared the American people's relationship to Republican opinion molders to that between doctor and patient. "I am very much inclined to think that the patient must find out his own disorder, if not by himself, yet that he must think so," he advised, "that the physician must not appear, or if at all by no means as a prominent character."[16] Fearing further public humiliation, possibly even an impeachment attempt against him should he take command of the fight against the Federalist hordes, Monroe hesitated.

Although Monroe remained extremely angry toward Adams, reason had gained control over the passionate desire to duel. Very much aware of the tide of public hostility against France and Republicans like Monroe who were identified with her, Monroe was wary of the possibility that a challenge to Adams might make him appear a French partisan. He chose a path of inaction. As he explained to Jefferson, "With respect to myself I am inclined to think I should take no step in consequence of the late attack of Adams, but remain as I am quiet." He anticipated that if the Federalists renewed their "violent," intemperate, unsubstantiated verbal

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attacks on him, they would suffer defeat at the polls. Even if congressional Federalists denounced him from the floor of the House of Representatives preliminary to an impeachment attempt, he wished his allies to be cautious and respectful of the omnipotent Federalist majority in requesting "in any form most eligible to the other party an inquiry." He thought that the more the Federalists harassed him and impugned his conduct as minister, the more they would be discredited. To use a colloquialism, he sought to give them enough rope to hang themselves.[17]

Still confounding techniques of verbal and physical combat, Monroe's decision to adopt a passive stance mixed metaphors of violent assault, the code duello, and international conflict. "For me to come forward will place me in some degree in the attitude of an assailant, I mean by calling on Adams in any form, and circumstanc'd as the countries are make me appear as fighting the cause of France against my own country," he warned.[18]

In effect, while adopting for himself a strategy of retreat from both physical and verbal combat, Monroe wanted the Republicans in Congress to do his work for him: carry out his demand on Secretary of State Pickering for the reasons for his recall. Several months later, after reliable peace overtures from French Foreign Minister Talleyrand had arrived via William Vans Murray, U.S. minister to the Netherlands, Monroe's confidence grew that the people would finally perceive that the Adams Administration, rather than the French sought to provoke war. He recommended that the Republicans stress France's amiability as well as the waning idea that the French Revolution was still the cause of republicanism against monarchy. Monroe criticized his fellow Republicans for failing to take advantage of the new developments.[19]

Assuming the role of his party's seer, Monroe urged his friends to lay down the gauntlet to

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Adams now that France's desire for peace was public knowledge. "I see the late Declarations of the French Government have greatly changed the state of affairs, and improved the situation of the republican party," he crowed. If Adams failed to respond with "conciliatory measures" like reducing military expenses and repealing the "unconstitutional and obnoxious" Alien and Sedition Acts, and persevered in his repressive, belligerent course, his pro-monarchical views would be unmasked, "in which case his reputation is gone, for the people will understand him."[20]

Moreover, Monroe thought France justified in refusing to receive the American envoys sent to replace him, since it had similarly treated other nations, not formally recognizing them till treaties had been concluded. In Monroe's view, the Adams Administration was waging an unprovoked, undeclared war on France. Dismissing the U.S. commissioners was "no cause for war," he pointed out, "for it is practiced by all governments to rid themselves of foreign agents whom they dislike." Anticipating the course the Adams Administration finally adopted, Monroe predicted that Adams would take credit for French peace overtures by claiming they were the result of his "firmness," "a ground on which the administration and its friends might rest with honor." While accepting France's tender of peace, Adams "might deny that any sentiment of friendship for the [United] States mingled itself in the councils of France, or contributed to produce the decision."[21]

Unlike his strategy in the spring of 1798, when he doubted French sympathy for the United States, Monroe now advocated a friendlier policy toward the former ally, which, as "a free republican people like us," was engaged in overthrowing absolute monarchies, the inherent

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enemies of the United States. France had overrun even Venice, which some Federalists misleadingly depicted as a republic. Yet the Venetian government, headed by its *doge*, had long been at bottom an aristocracy. "But Venice is mentioned," Monroe protested, "and what was Venice? Much mourning is raised on her account--loud clamor heard. But if there was a distrusted & horrible despotism on earth it was there. She was the open and avowed foe [of the French Revolution] as all the other despotisms were."[22] Monroe had once again restored the French Revolution to a position of respectability in international politics.

Echoing Jefferson, who as secretary of state in Washington's Administration in 1793 had compared the possibility of armed conflict between the French and American republics to "liberty warring on herself," Monroe pointed out, "in warring on America she [France] wars on a free people--a people from whom it is her boast to have caught the spirit of Liberty which is now spreading through Europe and this world." War between the U.S. and France was antithetical to U.S. self-interest as well as her republican ideals: "No profit in any view--but much loss--increased taxes--a standing army &c." Although only a few years earlier Monroe had been trying to gain a commitment for French assistance in obtaining Louisiana and the Floridas from Spain, he now demurred, perhaps because the primary goal, free navigation of the Mississippi River and the right of deposit at New Orleans, had been achieved by Pinckney's Treaty (1795): "We want no acquisition of territory. We have enough at present." If the Adams Administration forced the U.S. into war with France, "We may subserve the views of England but not of these States--of Kings, but not of the people."[23]

Since Talleyrand's peace overtures demonstrated that the Federalists sought war more

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eagerly than the French, Monroe thought the Republicans should take political advantage of these new developments, and revive their stress on the similarity between the French and American revolutions. Expressing himself metaphorically, he advised his party to commence an attack on its opponent's "territory." He urged his friends to resume the argument over Adams' ostensibly pro-monarchical work, the three-volume Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, written while U.S. minister to Great Britain from 1786-1788, and to censure his recent inflammatory replies to popular addresses:

> I am surprised that the principle of the French [Revolution] has not been pressed by the republican party as an argument to explain the views of France--to demonstrate she does not mean war against us--as likewise as an argument why we, if we are true to our own principles, should decline war on her above all nations. This would put the cause fairly at issue & would furnish ground for an offensive incursion on our enemies' territory. Adams might be wounded much thro' this channel--his book (if necessary to go back so far) and replies to addresses expose him greatly. [24]

After they had vigorously exposed Adams' monarchical sympathies, the Republicans would be in a strong position to go on the offensive against the Federalists, Monroe pointed out. Disappointed now at his friends' passivity when they should be on the attack, he feared it evinced a self-destructive tendency which must be overcome. "It is optional with the republican party to act with the best of causes on the defensive and leave their integrity suspected," he warned, "if not be branded as traitors--or put the other party on the defensive & overwhelm it." Like a military commander he directed his friends to put on the "pressure," "for be assured whenever a pressure is made the enemy take to their heels."[25]

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In a belligerent mood, Monroe hinted that if he sat in Congress he would challenge his enemies to duel if they insulted him. Perhaps with himself and his friend, John Dawson, Madison's successor as congressman from the Fifteenth Congressional District in mind, Monroe urged a new breed of politicians to come forward and repulse the Federalists. Changing his stance, he now condemned the current Republican leaders' "marked character of extreme moderation which for consistency [sic] sake renders them unfit" for aggressive actions against their enemies, either on the floor of Congress or the dueling ground. Assuming the role of party strategist, Monroe concluded that at the present time it was advisable that those "heretofore less prominent" lead the Republican offensive against the Federalists in Congress. He even dared to advise his mentor, the Republican demigod Jefferson: "I think an important opportunity presents itself to you to render service which I hope you will avail yourself of." Requesting Jefferson to defend his reputation against "unfriendly insinuations" in Congress, he aggressively remarked, "If I were present there would be no difficulty; the presumption is there would be no such insinuations." If he decided to join Congress, he made clear, he would not hesitate to resort to the code duello if the public controversy "degenerates into a personal quarrel." At the same time, he thought that he could not challenge congressmen to a duel if he were an outsider, since public opinion might misinterpret this as an attempt to screen his guilt by intimidating his critics.[26]

Castigating House Republicans' failure to adequately defend his conduct, he pondered the possibility that their "shrinking" might put him "into a dilemma, of the most mean and contemptible kind too, that of a personal quarrel, [with] such as Harper, Otis &c., or avoiding

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it, resting on my past reputation in the army, for bravery &c to exempt me from improper imputations." As we have seen, in the previous year his friend Giles had nearly fought a duel with Congressman Harper over the latter's alleged aspersions on Monroe's Francophile views.[27] Perhaps for the mild-mannered Jefferson's benefit, he qualified his violent allusions, saying, "You will weigh these things and act nevertheless as you and my other friends think advisable." He liked best the idea that Republican congressmen publicly make "a solemn declaration" which, while reiterating their support of a fair inquiry, vigorously "repell[ed] attack against me, and vindicate[d] my conduct against aspersion from any and every quarter." He wanted his enemies in Congress to know "that I respected the legislature of my country but did not fear it: for having performed my duty to my country faithfully and as I presumed usefully (supposing the preservation of peace on honorable terms & by honorable means an useful act) I stood above any emotion of fear."[28]

Monroe apparently had a duel in mind while he continually questioned Secretary of State Pickering about the reasons for his recall from France. Soon after his arrival in Philadelphia in June 1797, although he demanded an explanation, he implied that Pickering need not fear a challenge from him. "Permit me to premise that in any discussion which has or may take place between us, I have not nor shall I consider you in any other than your official character," he said, "having yet to learn what your pretentions [sic] are to confidence as an individual citizen, or the weight which your opinions ought to have as such." Nevertheless, his tone almost immediately became insolent, and he as much as called Pickering a liar. The Administration's Anglophile Federalist bias amply explained its "attack upon me," and he did not expect the truth

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from Pickering. He merely wanted to give him "an opportunity to justify your conduct by your own arguments." But he informed him in advance that he knew he would lie, as he had lied all along, in order to embarrass the Republican opposition and turn public opinion against the French:

> Indeed knowing what my own conduct was, and what your views are, of which a series of facts and circumstances leave no doubt in my mind, I had no expectation of obtaining from you any thing like a candid answer. On the contrary I expected an evasive one, dealing in hints and innuendos, thrown out to divert the mind from the true object of inquiry. Nor have I been disappointed in my expectation.[29]

Monroe felt only contempt for the Federalists, who dogged his path and sought to discredit him while they flouted the most basic rules of political decorum. Regretting an involvement in Federalist diplomacy that had left him humiliated, Monroe proposed isolation as the best foreign policy for the United States. He applauded the Jeffersonian insistence on economizing through reducing the number of ministers and diplomatic embassies abroad in the latest "foreign intercourse" bill. "The principle taken by the republicans is sound," he said. "If we had had no ministers abroad through this war, I am sure we should have had no dispute with France."[30] Applauding the pacifistic Republican Philadelphia physician/politician George Logan's venture in personal diplomacy to Paris, Monroe predicted that Logan's mission would increase Jeffersonian popularity, especially if the Federalists denounced him in Congress.[31]

In order to show that he was a man of moderation and integrity, Monroe sought testimony from friends that he had always felt respect and veneration for President Washington. This would fortify him for his possible congressional encounter with Adams and the High

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Federalists over an impeachment for his conduct as minister abroad. As early as January 1798, just days after his View of the Conduct of the Executive, a thinly veiled attack on Washington, was published, Monroe informed the young elder statesman of the Old Republicans, John Taylor of Caroline, of his desire that the public perceive him as the first president's friend and confidant. He only hinted at the emotional burden he bore in confronting Federalist aspersions on his conduct since his return. "I have been kept at home by several causes since my return, or should have visited you," he wrote, explaining why he had not yet called on Taylor. "First, I meant to give an account of the conduct of our admin. [Washington's] as well as my own, and therefore could not leave home till very lately: second I felt a kind of repugnance to going about among my old friends till I had given that account." Confident that Taylor had already received a copy of his book, he said he intended to go to Richmond to discuss it with him and other Jeffersonian state legislators. In the meantime, he enclosed a copy of a letter he had written to President Washington in December 1795 and Washington's reply of August 25, 1796. Since the tone of Washington's reply was friendly although Monroe had already been recalled, Monroe surmised, "This shows that he is a man having a conscience capable of great accomodation [sic] to times and circumstances." Undoubtedly he was feeling far from amicable toward the Washington Administration, in any case.

Monroe impugned the Washington Administration's apparent use of the publication of his harmless chain letter to John Beckley, Aaron Burr, George Logan and others (which bore the date of June 23, 1795), denouncing Jay's Treaty and praising the increasing moderation of the French Revolution, as reason for his dismissal. Although Secretary of State Randolph and

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Federalist newspapers had published his denunciation of the Jacobin clubs in 1794 to enhance their attacks on the democratic societies, they execrated his later letters to Beckley and others, which were enthusiastic for the Revolution. Bitter against Washington's ostensible part in this episode, Monroe wrote Taylor:

> Mr. W. can trample the constitution under foot, in rejecting the channel of publick ministers, to intrigue with the British government, thro' Govr. Morris, a man without morality, an avowed royalist, with no traits about him but such as are infamous, and takes alarm and proclaims a plot when a representative, like himself [Monroe is referring to himself in his role as minister], of the U. S. is about to give truths to his countrymen.

While in Paris, Monroe had feared that his life might be in danger if it was known that he had written the 1794 letter disparaging the Jacobin clubs. But he objected to Washington's protesting against his letter to Logan merely because it may have been too ardent in its republicanism:

> What objection then could the Executive have of my giving occasionally such a sketch [of the French Revolution in published letters]? Had they rather the publick mind should be debauched by British prints than correctly informed by me? Or were they afraid that other truths should occasionally find their way through that channel to the publick which they wished to smother? Did they wish to hold the publick in the dark, that they might receive impressions from them alone? Or that my correspondence should be publicized by themselves only and my name used to wound the cause to which I was devoted (to promote which I accepted a trust under Mr. W:) as was done in the case of the publication of the history I gave of the Jacobin Societies, when the denunciation of our democratic societies was depending?

Monroe's conviction that Washington was deceitful and lacking in decency or virtue was first fully expressed in this letter, although he had given indications that he had lost his faith in Washington in the View.

For this reason Monroe contemplated publishing the letters between him and Washington,

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written March 24 and August 25, 1796, respectively, concerning the Directory's informing Monroe that they had intercepted a letter that Washington wrote to Gouverneur Morris dated December 22, 1795, and which it perceived as pro-British. For Monroe's part, his main criticism of the letter was that it was addressed to the rakish Gouverneur Morris. At this time he wished to keep secret this brief correspondence with Washington, which might "put the [Federalist] party on its guard." He did not want to draw additional attacks on himself by engaging in controversy with the popular Father of his Country. "If Mr. W publishes his letter to Mr. Morris, he will probably publish mine to him, and thus his reply or explanation [dated August 25, 1796] which it was intended to be," he conjectured. Monroe had deliberately not included the "fact" of his letter to Washington in the View. "But as I did not disclose this fact in my book, from real delicacy, confining myself to publick incidents only tis possible he may not" make the letter public even if Monroe published Washington's lukewarmly friendly letter to him to convey to the public the deceitfulness, or alternately the good relationship between him and Washington, thus casting the stigma for his dismissal solely on Hamilton and Pickering. In accord with his earlier charges against the President in View, he was strongly inclined to publish Washington's letter as proof of his and the Federalist party's hypocrisy and dishonesty. "The more however I think of the wickedness of that party, and the misconduct of this man, the more I am satisfied his true character ought to be made known to the publick," he wrathfully asserted.[32]

But discretion won out over the desire for vengeance, and Monroe kept silent, contemplating instead a later disclosure of the letter as "proof" that he was Washington's

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comrade and that the great president had played no part in his recall, actually orchestrated behind the scenes by Pickering. Although Monroe did not believe this, he was a sufficiently seasoned politician to know that he would be better advised to make use of the letter to convince the public he was on good terms with Washington than to employ it to charge the president with malicious deception. Attempting to contrast his purportedly amiable relationship with Washington to his contretemps with Adams, he explained to Madison two years later: "When Mr. Adams made his attack on me, I was at a stand for awhile, whether to notice it or not; I then wrote the inclosed letter to Mr. [John] Dawson, who returned it with other papers as he passed last summer." He pointed to Washington's politely formal letter to him several days after his recall as evidence that the president was not responsible for his dismissal, for which Pickering solely bore the onus. Probably with tongue-in cheek, he suggested that Washington may not even have been aware of the injustice perpetrated against him. He contemplated publishing Washington's letter in the newspapers to show a rapport had existed between them. "It certainly furnishes a powerful argument against wrong attacks made on me, and even against the act of recall itself," he claimed. "It is an instrument which cannot otherwise than work against" the opposition. Perhaps indulging in wishful thinking, he hoped that Washington might even come out in his behalf if his own conduct was dignified: "The publication of the extract from Genl. W's letter without any hostile reference to him, would turn him against those who have acted under him and have used him to oppress justice & truth." If Washington disputed Monroe's interpretation, he would refute him. He expected the sickly, retired president, now commander-in-chief of the armies against France, would "be silent & leave what I gave as a

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text to be commented on by the world."[33]

By the close of 1799, Monroe was optimistic that the Federalist reign of terror had ended. He was afforded at least some vindication by his election as governor by the Virginia legislature in October 1799, to take effect in December. It helped assuage the French mission's festering wounds. General Washington's sudden death from pneumonia at almost the same moment that Monroe arrived in Richmond to take up his duties as governor may have made him wonder if divine providence was at work ."I heard of the death of the late Genl. W. as I entered the town, and felt my resentment calmed & done away in an instant," he wrote his friend Judge St. George Tucker with perverse gratification. "From the dead we have nothing to fear or hope; and the good a man has done ought to survive him; in this principle I acted upon that subject."[34]

But the "disgrace" he incurred from that mission was still very much on his mind. Responding to a congratulatory letter from Judge Joseph Prentiss, with whom he had served on a committee to revise Virginia's laws in 1792, Monroe ruefully reminisced about his French misadventure. He admitted that the Federalists had aborted his "delicate" assignment when they adopted Jay's Treaty. He proudly asserted that his compilation of correspondence with government officials, A View of the Conduct of the Executive, had manifested his competence, exonerated him, and brought public opinion to his support. Encouraged by the resurrection of Republican popularity in the state, he gave his book some credit for the change. "The act of my recall brought before the public the evidence necessary to enable it to judge of my conduct & that of the administration, and it cannot otherwise than be delightful to me to find, under its gradual progress of truth, the public mind pronouncing itself with such decision on the right

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side," he declared. Though he was optimistic about the future, he was disgusted that the spirit of liberty had been temporarily retarded in the republic during the Adams years. "My hope & belief is that the cause of liberty will prevail," he said. "If it does we shall all be infinitely more than compensated for what we have borne in a crisis which ought never to have been felt in this country."[35] He thought it an aspersion on American egalitarianism and libertarianism that they experience the humiliation of being subjected to clumsy Federalist attempts at "tyranny." It was against the American grain.

Thus, it is not surprising that he was disappointed that the Republican victory in the Virginia legislature was incomplete. Sending to Jefferson Madison's famous Report of 1800 on other States' responses to the Virginia and Kentucky resolutions, Monroe admitted that the Federalists retained some power in the state. Although he thought that the "moderate" Federalists were convinced by Madison's arguments, they were "pledged in a very strong manner to their constituents," some of whom obviously still held Hamiltonian beliefs.[36]

Despite Monroe's exhilaration at his election as governor, Adams's insult of two years earlier continued to grate. Monroe wanted revenge, though he was no longer talking about a duel. Alluding to a message he was preparing to deliver to the legislature, he wrote Jefferson:

> I have thought it beneath me to make a more direct attack on Mr. Adams, and perhaps at present impolitick [sic]. Yet the publick mind ought not to be suffered to lose any portion of its republican tone by taking a position short of what it will bear.

Monroe feared the federal government might enforce the Sedition Act in his state. He expected that if two Republican newspapers which had recently commenced publication in

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Richmond became too inflammatory in their denunciation of the Federalists, Adams would prosecute them under the Act. He sought to keep the editors within moderate bounds, being "strongly impressed with a belief if A. [Adams] puts himself in the hands of the British faction, an attempt will be made to carry the Sedition Law here [in Virginia], as an electioneering trick, in the course of the summer." As before, he hoped the Federalists' extremism would backfire against them: "They must be deprived of a plausible pretext, in which case, an attempt will dishonor them, & their systems of standing armies &c. become a burden to themselves."[37]

Continuing to emphasize the pristine representative basis of the United States government, Governor Monroe utilized every opportunity to extol republican principles. For instance, when he appointed Philip Norborne Nicholas interim attorney general of Virginia, he lauded his "attachment to our free system of government, founded exclusively on the sovereignty of the people, and reverence for those principles which were consecrated by our revolution."[38]

In April 1800 he wrote George W. Erving, a New York Republican recently arrived in Philadelphia, whom he had inadvertently wronged in Paris by denying him a passport while he was U.S. minister to France. The perambulatory Erving had published Monroe's View of the Conduct of the Executive in London despite the misunderstanding, "an act of kindness.... whereby you became the advocate & vindicator of my fame," Monroe informed him. "You transmitted me a copy of that book which I received but never acknowledged." Monroe explained he was silent for fear that his letters would be intercepted by Federalist spies and used to prosecute him for treason. Again he alluded to the traumatic experience of dismissal as U.S. minister to France. "In returning home you well know that I was assailed by all those who

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were unfriendly to liberty," he recalled. "In discharging my duty to my country, in the place I had held, I had wounded the interest and the feelings of the enemies to that cause in both Hemispheres." Depicting himself as a martyr to world liberty, he warned that his enemies kept him under surveillance, in their desire "to injure the cause and myself at the same time."[39]

Because the Federalists watched Monroe's actions and investigated those to whom he spoke and wrote, he had adopted "a system of extreme precaution" and avoided "all correspondence with foreign countries." Thus he neglected to mail his thanks to Erving in London, fearing that Federalists might use it as proof of a "conspiracy." Although this may seem like paranoia to us, it was true that Secretary of State Pickering (unbeknownst to him) had intercepted several of his private letters, such as the one to George Logan in June 1795, which was published in abridged form in the newspapers. After the passage of the Sedition Act Pickering ransacked the foreign mail parcels of Jeffersonian editors like Benjamin Franklin Bache.[40]

Seeking to console Erving about the future of American republicanism, Monroe observed: "The period is approaching when America will again have it in her power to retrieve her name & her fortunes, to become again the patroness of peace, harmony & liberty at home, among citizens to whom those sentiments are natural; and to exhibit an illustrious example to an interested & beholding world, at an epoch the most solemn & awful that ever existed, of a people governing themselves in the practice of all these great & benevolent virtues." Coupling private and public virtue, he took for granted that Americans possessed both, and would overcome Federalist efforts to corrupt and monarchize them. Yet, despite his eloquence, even

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Monroe was not altogether confident that American liberty would survive this crisis:

> Will she [the United States] avail herself of this opportunity,
> which if pretermitted may perhaps never occur again, or
> will she still pursue the downhill & degenerate track in which
> she has already gone so far, till she consumates [sic] her own
> ruin & dishonors mankind? I confide much in the wisdom & virtue
> of my countrymen & will never believe anything to their
> discredit till it is demonstrated.[41]

With his bitter awareness of "the downhill and degenerate track" his fellow-citizens had ostensibly taken, Monroe's optimism thus contained its quota of cynicism.

While Monroe thus privately voiced his fears of Federalist subversion, in his public capacity he paradoxically praised the friendly relationship between him and the French Government. Reporting to Virginia's U.S. senators, Republican leaders Stevens Thomson Mason and Wilson Cary Nicholas, he implied that despite the undeclared war between the two countries, France had granted him a special dispensation to hire Lamotte, a French cannon founder residing in the U.S., to construct a cannon factory on the canal near Richmond. His message to the senators made it appear that he had secured special privileges from and enjoyed special influence with the Directory: "This gentleman [Lamotte] was permitted by special favor to engage in our service, on my application to the French government, by desire of the Executive, it being a concession never made to any but the most friendly powers," he boasted.[42] To indulge in some psychological speculation: it seems obvious that Monroe, out of his perpetual desire for vindication from Washington and Adams's aspersions on his conduct as minister to France, sought every opportunity to "prove" how effective and successful his diplomacy had been in restoring French friendship, and that the Federalists, rather than his alleged incompetence, were

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to blame for the rupture in relations. His "passions"--the passions of pride and resentment--seemed to be at work.

Nevertheless, Monroe was aware that Virginia Republicans must successfully restrain their popular passions in order for voters to confide the national government to the Republicans. If Jeffersonians--leaders or rank-and-file--seemed in any respect to act like an anarchical "mob," the opposition's charge that the Republicans were the party of disorder, Jacobinism, and antifederalism would gain too much credibility. With such ruminations in mind, we can understand Monroe's anxiety about Supreme Court Justice Samuel Chase's prosecution of the Republican scandalmonger and pamphleteer James Thomson Callender, whose diatribe The Prospect Before Us violated the Sedition Act. Fearing that anti-Federalist riots might break out in Richmond during Callender's trial, Governor Monroe thought that public moderation would best stymie the Federalists. "I hope the people will behave with dignity...and give no pretext for comments to their discredit," he explained to Vice President Jefferson. "If I could suppose the contrary I would take proper steps to aid in bringing him forth"--Callender was still in hiding from the government. "I mean to prevent any popular meeting to the contrary."[43]

Relieved that no outbreak of rioting occurred on June 4, 1800 after the jury, harangued by Justice Chase, convicted Callender under the Sedition Act, Monroe praised the citizens' prudence. "The conduct of the people on this occasion was exemplary, and does them the highest honour," he wrote Madison exuberantly. "They seemed aware the crisis demanded of them a proof of their respect for law and order, and resolved to show they were equal to it. I am satisfied a different conduct was expected from them, for everything that could [be] was

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done to provoke it." He suspected that the Adams Administration, which had planted an army regiment a few miles outside Richmond, would begin enforcement of the Sedition Act in the state hoping to precipitate violence and rioting. "I ought to be there to aid in preventing trouble," Governor Monroe had written Madison in May, explaining why a hurried trip to Albemarle County to inspect The Highlands could not include a visit to Montpelier. "I think it possible an idea may be entertained of opposition &c by means of whereof the fair prospect of the republican party may be overcast," he conjectured, believing the army sought to manufacture an incident as an excuse to suppress rioting. "But in this they are deceivd. [sic], as certain characters in Richmond & some neighboring counties are already warned of this danger, so that an attempt to excite a hot water insurrection will fail." But the people remained calm: "It only remains that the business be closed on the part of the people, as it has been so far acted," and that Judge Chase return to the capital, "without experiencing the slightest insult from any one; and that this will be the case I have no doubt."[44]

On the other hand, Monroe welcomed harmonious personal relations with Federalists. His ultimate goal was the union of members of both parties under Jeffersonian hegemony. He was gladdened by an unexpected visit from Thomas Pinckney of South Carolina, like Hamilton an old comrade from Revolutionary War days who had turned to Federalism and now served in Congress. Even John Marshall, a celebrated member of the "XYZ mission," another old friend, called on him. He reported to Jefferson: "Thomas Pinckney has been here & called on me. Invitations were reciprocated. Marshall has called--[Samuel] Chase has not."[45] But his anger toward Adams remained.

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A pivotal year in many respects, 1800 marked the first transition of political power from one party to another and signified the frustration of the first attempt to curtail civil liberties in America. The Sedition Act's renewal was defeated in the Senate in June 1800. Defying his Cabinet and Hamilton, Adams sent a special peace-making mission to France, and the Federalist "reign of terror" ended. In 1800, too, Monroe expounded for the first time his belief in the significance of the absence of feudal traditions and laws from the United States. His thoughts were inspired by St. George Tucker's "enlightened" essay, How Far the Common Law of England is the Common Law of the United States. Editor of a heavily annotated edition of Blackstone's Commentaries, Judge Tucker was a nationally recognized legal authority. Warming to Tucker's topic--whether the common law was included within America's Constitution--Monroe thought it essential that the public understand "the change wrought by our revolution on the feudal institutions of Europe, tending to show how complete that revolution was in the principles of government as of legislation."[46] This was to be Monroe's lifetime theme--stressed in his presidential messages to Congress, the Monroe Doctrine, and The People the Sovereigns, his political testament.

Indeed, Monroe's devotion to the sacred cause of liberty and his confidence in the people's return to the first principles of republicanism were strengthened by the numerous Republican victories in state and national elections in 1800. For Monroe, the election of Thomas McKean, a great Revolutionary patriot, as governor of Pennsylvania revealed republicanism's growing popularity after the Federalists' abortive efforts to subvert it by means of the Alien and Sedition Acts and the undeclared war with France. In a letter to McKean, Monroe praised

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Pennsylvania's penal code, which replaced corporal punishment with the penitentiary, as proof that its laws had become more humane since independence. "The people took the government into their hands, & I think have done more in the 24 years that have since elapsed, to improve the condition of mankind, than Kings & nobles had done before from the creation of the world," he concluded. Nonetheless regretting the people's near-desertion of republican principles for Adams's militaristic, anti-French policies, he thought that McKean's election presaged "the commencement of a change in our political system, which promised to restore our country to the happy state it formerly enjoyed, & from which it had of late so much declined." More optimistically, he observed, "So far I am happy to add my expectations have been confirmed." The fulfillment of his hopes rested on the outcome of the presidential election:

> I trust we are daily gaining ground, and that the election which is to take place this fall, will secure to us forever those liberties that were acquired by our revolution; which ought never to have been put in danger.[47]

Monroe assured McKean they would work together in promoting "the sacred cause of our country." Thus, for Monroe reason took the place of revelation, and secular politics took on a religious aura as a "sacred" object worthy of devotion.[48]

Hoping to implement Pennsylvania's penal reforms in his own state, Governor Monroe was eager to complete construction of a new penitentiary at Richmond, replacing physical torture and capital punishment with solitary confinement (but only for whites). He told the General Assembly, "The experiment which is now making in this and some of our sister states, will probably fix the opinion of the World on this important subject."[49] At least to an extent, in his

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enforcement of the criminal laws Monroe wished the government to replace the "passionate" aspects of physical punishment with the less violent, more "reasonable" modes of the penitentiary.[50] In the final years of the eighteenth century, the Enlightenment creed enjoining rational thinking and control of one's passions formed an important part of Monroe's world-view, as it did for his friend James Madison.[51]

On the other hand, the 1790s were an era of "political violence" and "passion," as historians have often pointed out.[52] And despite his efforts to use reason to keep his passions under control, Monroe was susceptible to anger when he thought of the way the Federalist administrations had abused his confidence, humiliated him, and nearly destroyed his political career and his party's future. Appropriately, on the eve of Jefferson's victory, Monroe wrote to Edmond Charles Genet, the notorious "Citizen" Genet, whose blunder and bluster as the first minister of the French Republic to the United States had nearly dragged the two nations into war seven years earlier. Ironically, after Washington and Jefferson requested Genet's recall in August 1793, rather than return to Paris where angry Jacobins threatened to guillotine him, he remained in New York, and married the daughter of Republican Governor George Clinton. Monroe wrote that he had brought him a box of porcelain from Paris, but had feared sending it after his return in July 1797, aware that "in the then infatuated state of the public mind the passage of such a packet from me to you might be considered as the proof of a conspiracy against the Government, of a treasonable correspondence with France, &c." Now that political conditions were less volatile, he would send a friend to visit Genet with the package. Apparently Monroe felt safer only because he expected the Republicans to win the upcoming

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elections.[53]

Professing greater loyalty and admiration for Genet than he had displayed as minister when speaking about him to the Directory, Monroe applauded his "patient submission to the censures" he had suffered. Actually, he had negatively mentioned Genet to the French, warning that if they sent a special commission to demand satisfaction from the U.S. for Jay's Treaty it would revive memories of Genet's arrogant, bullying tactics.[54]

Responding to a letter from Genet in July 1800 that informed him that the French Government had forgiven his--Genet's--indiscretions, Monroe empathized with the young, disgraced envoy. Both had been humiliated by the Washington Administration, forced to abandon the work in which they were so zealously involved. "As a friend to free government your name will be recorded in the history of the present day," Monroe fulsomely remarked. He urged Genet to abandon any grudges against the U.S. for the way the Government had humiliated and recalled him. As minister, he falsely claimed, he had avoided discussing Genet with the French because that might have revived their resentment of the way the Washington Administration had treated him and further irritate Franco-American relations. "It was my desire and endeavor to dissipate completely all those jealousies and to bring the French Government, into a system of conduct towards us, through the whole of the war, great and magnanimous, which would have done it honor to the latest posterity," he attested, once more showing his concern with future generations' assessment. He assumed that Genet would have concurred with his discreet stance: "I had no particular reason to conclude you would not have united in such a plan, other than the strength of human passions & the knowledge I had you thought you

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were injured."[55] Thus he gently implied that Genet had been inordinately "passionate" as French minister, and that he may have merely "thought" he was injured, misinterpreting the gist of the government's actions.

While candidly admitting that during his ministry he had privately conveyed to French ministers his opposition to Genet's return, fearful that he would denounce the United States, Monroe empathized with him as one who had experienced similar indignities. After gently admonishing Genet about controlling his hostility to the Washington Administration, Monroe abruptly ran the gamut from restraint to fully venting his rage at his humiliation by the Federalists. The ignominy, he hinted, had been tantamount to spiritual death:

> I too have had my day of suffering. I served with zeal the cause of liberty & my country, & was requited by every act of injustice which could be rendered me, short of imprisonment & death. This too has passed, though it can never be recollected by me but with disgust.[56]

Despite his rage against Adams, Washington, and Pickering, Monroe's passions grew more benign with anticipation of Republican victory. By May 1800, after the success of the Jeffersonians in the New York elections, Jefferson's triumph over Adams in the presidential contest seemed assured. But Monroe was wary. "Of the state of the publick mind we have no positive proof, but cause to think it is changing for the better," he wrote Madison cautiously as late as September.[57] His passions--including the passion for vengeance against his political enemies--were clearly under control.

Another instance in which the Governor's reason moderated his passions was his temperate response to Gabriel's Conspiracy, which rocked Henrico, Hanover, and neighboring counties

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in September 1800. Although no whites were killed and the rebellion never got off the ground, over thirty slaves were executed. Monroe was more reluctant than the Henrico county court of oyer and terminer and his own privy council to execute the bungling slaves, but Virginia's governor lacked the pardoning power, or even the right to a vote in council.[58]

On the other hand, the white community, especially the lower class non-slaveholders who enjoyed seeing planters forfeit their human property to the hangman, would undoubtedly have objected to the governor's council exhibiting excessive humaneness. As a brilliant scholar points out in discussing a more obscure slave conspiracy in Norfolk in 1802, in which a slave named Jerry was executed on insufficient evidence:

> Governor Monroe, as respectable a gentleman as Virginia could produce, was an honest, humane member of the gentry class. If he had had his way, not a slave would have hanged at any time in the course of the 1802 rebellion.... As governor, and thus as representative of popular will, however, he had no options.... If because of political misjudgment or a greater sense of integrity--neither of which the review process was designed to encourage--Monroe and the council had granted Jerry a reprieve, the citizens of Norfolk would have responded with a lynching, destroying not only Jerry but also the credibility and authority of the governor himself. In other words, executive defiance of local objectives would have led to instability, and to unsettling results--white perplexity and doubt.[59]

With regard to Gabriel's earlier, more significant rebellion, Monroe inquired of Jefferson "when to arrest the hand of the Executioner." He was aware that the participants in Gabriel's conspiracy were not likely to passively return to slavery, although selling them abroad would hardly be fair to their purchasers. Nevertheless, this option did not exist until the legislature passed a law several months after Gabriel and his cohorts had been executed. Unlike his more

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vengeful comrades, Monroe believed that, "It is difficult to say whether mercy or severity is the better policy in this case, tho' when there is cause for doubt it is best to incline to the former council."[60] At the same time, he was painfully aware that the slave's passion for liberty was common to humankind, and would not disappear despite hangings and torture. "Unhappily while this class of people exists among us," he said of the slaves, "we can never count with certainty on its tranquil submission."[61]

When Alexander Hamilton published his famous excoriation of President Adams, A Letter Concerning the Conduct of John Adams as President of the United States, Monroe saw the irony in the leaders of the Federalist party--his two enemies--going at each other's throats. "I have not read it but am inclined to believe from what I have heard of the work, it will do their whole party more harm than good," he wrote Madison. "I am told it unmasks the views of that party too much not to injure it."[62] Thus Monroe tacitly mocked Hamilton's "passionate" lack of restraint in rupturing Federalist unity out of personal pique at Adams, who refused to submit to his plans for military glory.

After this brief respite from his vendetta against the Federalists who had humiliated him, Monroe soon had ample cause for anxiety. The tie between Jefferson and Aaron Burr in the electoral college threatened the former's assumption of the presidency and gave Federalists in the House of Representatives the spoiler's role. Although concerned that this fortuitous event allowed the Federalists to sully the democratic system and "check the public will," Monroe maintained his self-control at the outset of the crisis. He believed that reason rather than a passionate desire for power and illicit victory would motivate the opposition. "I consider the

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affair as placed beyond all doubt," he reassured Jefferson. "It is natural to expect in the first moment of disappointment, that the party ousted would indulge itself in the expression of sentiments that were most likely to irritate their opponents: but I am inclined to think as soon as the passions on disappointment subside that a different train of sentiment, and more correct views will succeed."[63]

Monroe doubted that the Federalists, who controlled more state delegations in the House than their opponents, would try to install the unscrupulous Burr or one of their own cronies in the presidency to remedy the tie vote. His initial fears centered on the Republicans. He thought they might agree to Burr's election. "It is certain they [the Federalists] cannot defeat the object, *though they may possibly occasion embarrassments, unless indeed our friends, rather the* friends of republican government, should yield the ground after gaining the victory," he warned Jefferson.[64]

A few days later, Monroe showed greater alarm. He wrote Jefferson that he had heard rumors that congressional Federalists intended to pass a law making Secretary of State John Marshall or Senate clerk Samuel Otis president "till another election" took place. Trying to keep his emotions under control, Monroe dismissed the possibility as too malevolent for his opponents to contemplate. "I cannot believe any such project is seriously entertained, because it would argue a degree of boldness as well as wickedness in that party which I do not think it possessed of," he said. Nevertheless, the Virginia assembly was angered by these reports and decided to stay in session and perhaps send a militia force to Washington to guarantee Jefferson's succession.

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Although Monroe stigmatized the Federalists as troublemakers, he believed that a plot to deprive Jefferson of the election would be tantamount to breaking up the Union, something he doubted they were willing to do. "If that party wish to disorganize, that is the way to do it," he tersely wrote Jefferson. "If the union could be broken, that would do it." Employing some unwonted ironic humor, he remarked, "independent of the other motives for preserving it [the Union], it would be wrong to let these gentry escape in that mode the just reward of their merit."[65] He proposed to imprison the House Federalists. If they attempted to block Jefferson's election, they should be jailed. He wanted the Federalists to endure a Jeffersonian victory within the republic, not outside it--in other words, he wanted them to "eat crow."

Cynically but with a strangely optimistic twist, Monroe concluded that the New England Federalists had no desire to break up the Union, since--at least in his opinion and that of most southern Republicans--they reaped most of its benefits by exploiting the agrarians:

> The Eastern people have no thoughts of breaking the Union, & giving up the hold they have on the valuable productions of the South. They only mean to bully us, thereby preserve the ascendancy, and improve their profits.

More poignantly, Monroe's doubts revived about "the firmness of the republicans," which he had first voiced in 1798. Fearing they might succumb to Federalist bluster and revert to their old apathy, he lamented, "We have been so long accustomed to recede & they to conquer, that I fear the same result even in the present case."[66] The Virginia assembly was angered by rumors that Congress would appoint the President if by March 4, 1801 nine states were unable to agree on one man. Many of its members wanted to remain in session till the crisis passed.

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Monroe was on the alert against any Federalist "usurpation" of the election, and promised Jefferson he would call the legislature into session in an emergency "without delay."[67] Eventually, the Federalists gave in, agreeing to cast blank ballots so that Republican delegates could vote their states for Jefferson, who was elected in the House of Representatives at the end of February. But Monroe was slow to forgive the Federalists and Adams for the way they had yet again humiliated him and his party.

Adams added insult to injury. His Federalist Congress had passed a Judiciary Act in 1801 creating dozens of new court officials A few weeks before the end of his term, and extending nearly to midnight on his last day in office, he made hundreds of lifetime judicial appointments, including that of John Marshall as chief justice of the supreme court, thereby embarrassing and impeding Jefferson. Monroe's rage crested at this insult to the democratic process, since Adams had known that Jefferson had defeated him as early as December 1800. "You see that Adams has done everything in his power to embarrass your administration," he told Jefferson. "In some of his appointments, too, he has nominated his enemies to strengthen his party. This shows that personal hatreds are sacrificed to the good of the cause."[68] Although the "hatred" he was referring to was the personal enmity between Hamilton and Adams, he might more appropriately have meant the hatred that the defeated Adams felt for his erstwhile friend Jefferson.

Monroe had not forgotten Adams' insulting Lancaster address, nor his implied condemnation of Monroe in his special message to Congress in May 1797. His unsent letter to Adams, written when it was rumored that the president intended to visit Richmond at the close

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of 1800, perhaps to inspect the Army regiments stationed outside the town, evinced his wrath. While the letter was stiffly formal and polite in tone, Monroe's rage rumbled beneath the surface. "It would give me great pleasure to have it in my power, on your arrival at the seat of government of this commonwealth, to pay you the attention to which your office entitles you," he began. "But you have in that office made an attack on me, by which you attempted to injure my character in the estimation of my countrymen." This undoubted allusion to the Lancaster address in which Adams denounced his conduct as minister to France, an "attack [which] was the more extraordinary because it was unprovoked by me, unconnected with the subject before you, & repeating transactions which preceded your appointment to your present office," had become almost an obsession with Monroe. He emphasized to Adams that, as one whom the Washington Administration had appointed and dismissed, "I was not responsible to you, nor you to the public for my conduct." For the governor to officially greet Adams while the latter had fermented the cloud under which his public reputation labored would, in the eyes of his constituents, amount to a silent acquiescence to the president's aspersions against him:

> Under such circumstances, I consider any attention from me to you, without some previous & suitable explanation on your part, subscribing to the unjust denunciation you made against me, as being highly improper on mine.

Displaying a Romantic sensibility, Monroe seemed again ready to challenge Adams to duel. His "own feelings," as well as his public honor, had been denigrated by the president. He was the injured party, to whom restitution was owed. He would grant Adams an official welcome, "provided it can be done on terms that will justify me to my own feelings, as well as to the

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judgment of an enlightened community in so doing, to myself, to you, and the public." The ominous noun, "explanation," a subtle invitation to armed combat, appeared in Monroe's next sentence. He would treat Adams respectfully, as a governor should treat the president--if Adams first said he was sorry for the gratuitous insults he had lodged against him: "The object of this [letter] therefore is to invite you to make such an explanation on the above subject as will obviate this difficulty, and enable me to perform an office, which in that case would be an agreeable one, because it would exempt me from any improper imputation."

Overwhelmed by various events--his recall from Paris; Pickering's and Washington's silence; Adams' disparaging messages; the Alien and Sedition Acts; Chase's conduct during Callender's trial; the threat posed by the Army's presence near Richmond; the Federalists' attempts to humiliate Jefferson by depriving him of the election; and finally, Adams' notorious "midnight appointments"-- making the political personal, Monroe once again was ready to resort to the code duello against an aged and venerable statesman (the President was twenty-three years his senior). The letter's peroration squarely cast the blame and guilt on Adams: he was a naughty child who should apologize in order to return to his parents' good graces:

> Your own conscience of the injury done me on that occasion, will to a generous mind suggest the proper redress, and I can assure you that I shall meet a spirit of conciliation on your part with a like temper on mine.[69]

Although contemporaries considered Monroe affable and good-natured while regarding Adams as vain, irritable, and taciturn except when it came to bestowing insults, in their sensitivity to criticism and refusal to admit that they were wrong in social situations, the Virginia

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Governor and the lame-duck President had much in common. While Adams was devoted to his family on paper, he was cold toward them in reality. Monroe, on the contrary, was a doting father and husband. In any case, it would certainly have been foolhardy for Monroe to expect Adams to apologize for his insults, especially since he had little respect for Monroe. Apparently he did not expect this; the letter remained in Monroe's desk.

The relationship between the two Founding Fathers had not always been so hostile. Until Monroe gained a reputation as minister abroad for betraying his government to France in the matter of Jay's Treaty and for befriending Thomas Paine, whom Adams despised, the stout New Englander had nothing against the hot-headed Virginian. As vice-president, Adams wrote Monroe at least one polite letter while the latter was stationed in Paris. Written in March 1795, Adams's letter concerned Jay's Treaty, and as was the case with most of the letters Monroe received from members of the Washington Administration who sought to keep him in the dark about the Treaty's contents, it said nothing:

> Congress has risen without receiving the Treaty with England. Mr. Jay has been unfortunate in the Vessels on board of which he sent his Dispatches. Mrs. Adams joins with me in kind compliment to Mrs. Monroe, and in best wishes for your Satisfaction and Success in your Mission.[70]

But times had changed, and after the implementation of Jay's Treaty in May 1796 the party struggle became more bitter. For both parties, it had developed into a contest of virtue against vice. And Monroe thought that virtuous Republicans had shown an undue degree of timidity. After May 16, 1797, when Adams in his special message to Congress first manipulated the threat of war with France--and insulted Monroe for an alleged "disposition to separate the

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people of the United States from the Government"--public opinion invariably rallied to his side.

Monroe was especially sickened by Federalist attempts to exploit the violence on the floor of Congress in February 1798, in the aftermath of the legendary and undignified combat between Vermont Republican Matthew Lyon and Connecticut Federalist Roger Griswold, who fought with fire tongs and hickory stick respectively. Monroe predicted the Federalist attempt to expel Lyon from Congress, when Griswold was actually the "aggressor," evinced a "division which...will be carried to other objects." Displaying unwonted impartiality, Monroe thought that a "cool person" would have censured both men. By failing to endorse even that moderate position, congressional Republicans revealed their dispiritedness and cowardice. "We have been so long on the defensive, that we find it difficult to change the mode of [party] warfare, even where a suitable occasion occurs," Monroe lamented. His passionate feelings rising to the surface, Monroe speculated that the decline in the House's reputation, aroused by such incidents as the Lyon-Griswold fight, would paradoxically precipitate a regeneration of republican values: "Certain it is that the H. of Reps. as a body have lost much ground in the squabble, and if our recovery to old principles &c. is to be brought about, by <u>its</u> decline in the publick opinion, we are in the high road to a happy change."[71] Ironically, the Federalists, who considered themselves the custodians of propriety and genteel behavior, had brought about this public disgrace of a representative body when Griswold attacked Lyon.

Monroe's hatred for the Federalists remained even after the Republican victory in 1800-1801. Advising President Jefferson about an obscure federal appointment in Virginia, he recommended against appointing Federalists. On the other hand, he suggested that Jefferson

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avoid making this policy public; if he did, he would incur the Federalists' "personal hatred...without advancing the public good, for although I would appoint no federalist yet it may have its good effect that the avowal of that sentiment should be known as rarely as possible otherwise than by the act." Monroe made clear where he stood on the issue: "I say I would appoint no federalist by which I mean not till it could be done with safety or rather advantage to the republican cause; which can at no time be unless he be a republican."[72] Such sanctimonious double-talk at least revealed one thing: Monroe had become something of a Machiavellian politician himself!

Disgusted by Federalist obstructionism in the House of Representatives, Monroe's disillusionment with the two-party system was profound. In February 1801, the Governor instituted a system of pony expresses between Congress and the state capital, so that he could take command of the militia in case of Federalist "usurpation" of the presidency. Keeping his hand on the tiller, he was angry that Virginia's Republican senators, Stevens Thomson Mason and Wilson Cary Nicholas, had seldom written him during the crisis. He suspected that Federalist postmasters were obstructing mail deliveries. A "line of expresses" had been undertaken by Colonel John Hoomes, and Monroe expected him to send current information on the state of the election so that he could decide whether to convene the legislature in emergency session.[73] At this point, doubting Republican fortitude, Monroe warned: "We trust that none of the Republican States will give ground. If they do all confidence among the Republicans is at an end. But this idea is too dishonorable to be dwelt on."[74]

Monroe was embittered by Federalist stratagems to deprive Jefferson of the election. "A

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compromise of any kind would have ruined the republican interest of our country," he concluded. "It would have confounded parties & principles, thereby bewildered the understanding & checked the ardour of the people." He thought that the Federalists, who had threatened civil liberties and nearly plunged the country into a needless war, undeserving of conciliation. For Jefferson to appease them "would have covered in part the past enormities & propped the declining fortunes of the tory faction," he asserted. "Such a step would shake the republican ranks, & prove the foundation of a growing interest to its antagonist. The royalist faction has lost deservedly the publick confidence. It will sink under its own weight if we leave it to itself."[75] Monroe saw no virtue in encouraging the persistence of a "royalist" opposition.

Comparing his Federalist opposition to British Redcoats during the American Revolution, Monroe warned of the futility of compromise with the "leaders of the royalist party." But he thought that the rank-and-file Federalists could be converted if Jefferson pursued "a wise, firm, yet moderate course" as president. He reminded Jefferson that as Virginia's governor from 1779-1781 he had imprisoned captured British soldiers in squalid solitary confinement in retaliation for the enemy's atrocities against Americans aboard the Jersey prison ships and at Mill and Forton prisons in England. He should adopt a similarly ruthless policy toward the Federalists. Violent in his dedication to the Republican party, he instructed Jefferson:

> There is a conflict of principle & either democracy,--that is the govt. of the people,--or royalty must prevail. The opposing parties can never be united, I mean the leaders of them; because their views are as opposite as light & darkness. You always had the people and now have the government on your side, so that the prospect is as favorable as could be wished.

Bluntly, Monroe predicted the more "violent" Jeffersonians would be disappointed unless

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Jefferson dismissed all Federalists from the government. Otherwise the "discomfited tory party" would regroup its forces, especially in the judiciary, which it would maintain as its base and "promote reaction." "It is a desperate party because it knows it has lost the publick confidence," Monroe remarked about the Federalists. "It will intrigue with foreign powers & therefore ought to be watched."[76]

Although Monroe's message to the state legislature in December 1801 tried to convince Virginia Federalists of Jeffersonian moderation, he privately gloated that the Federalists would have no choice but to submit to Republican policies, ratified by the people in the election of 1800. As he explained to Madison, "It is in the power of the President & Executive of the State who are republican, to open a cause to the people which has heretofore been obscured by a cloud, or if seen, branded as jacobinic." Recalling how some leading Jeffersonians had deserted to the Federalists, voting for tax measures, military preparations, and the Alien and Sedition Acts during the undeclared war with France, he advised that Republicans ignore "the weak and unworthy characters who have gone before, and who perverted the trust reposed in them to very different purposes." Applauding Jefferson's first annual message to Congress, which proposed to repeal the Federalists' excise taxes and their Judiciary Act of 1801, he said, "I have little doubt that that [Republican] cause will be better understood and become more popular daily. The President has acquitted himself well." He predicted that public opinion would force the Federalists to go along with the Republican program. "His [Jefferson's] indeed was a very extraordinary communication from his place, as the course of proceedings resulting from it must be in the Congress," he noted, aware that the Executive was expounding a

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complete program for legislative consideration. "The former gentry will find themselves in a strange dilemma compelled to admit abuses, by sanctioning reforms which they cannot oppose; guilt becomes afflicting even to the most guilty when it is detected and exposed." Monroe thought Jefferson's steps ought to be guided by his head rather than his heart. "Your difficulties will indeed be great," he lectured the President, "yet I trust and believe you will surmount them, if you will pursue the dictates of your excellent judgment rather than the benevolent suggestions of your heart."[77]

However, Monroe found it hard to ignore *his* emotions when it came to thinking about the injustice to which the Washington and Adams Administrations had subjected him. Writing again to George William Erving, whom he had met during his Paris ministry in 1795, he alluded to the humiliation of his dismissal by Pickering, which continued to torment him. "I can never look back on what occurred during a certain portion of my life, without having my feelings peculiarly excited," he mourned. "We will look forward to a better state of things under a better & wiser administration."[78] Later, after Monroe had reached the pinnacle of fame and power as president of the United States, he would reconcile with both Adams and Pickering. Both men attended a Fourth of July dinner in Monroe's honor during his trip to New York, New England, and the Midwest in the summer of 1817.[79] Monroe was finally satisfied. Did he regard his reason as triumphant over his passion, or did his new tranquillity merely signalize the success of his pursuit of fame, which Alexander Hamilton called "the ruling passion of the noblest minds?"[80] This was not clear.

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NOTES: CHAPTER 6:
DUELING WITH THE PASSIONS: II

1. Monroe's Memorandum on Adams' Lancaster Address, [May-June 1798], Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Series One (reel 2).

2. Philip M. Marsh, "James Monroe as 'Agricola' in the Genet Controversy," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 62 (Oct. 1954), 476.

3. Monroe to Jefferson, June 1, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 125.

4. Monroe to Jefferson, May 14, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 122-23. William Austin, ed., A Selection of the Patriotic Addresses, to the President of the United States, Together with the President's Answers... (Boston, 1798); Ray, "Not One Cent for Tribute," 395.

5. Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 19, and Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 25, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 103, 106 (final quote). For the shortlived attempt by Jefferson and the Republicans to cooperate with Adams after he was elected president and Jefferson vice-president in 1796, see Dauer, Adams Federalists, 120-36; Kurtz, Presidency of Adams, 209-37; and Arthur Scherr, "'Vox Populi' versus the Patriot President: Benjamin Franklin Bache's Philadelphia Aurora and John Adams (1797)," Pennsylvania History, 62 (Fall 1995), 503-31.

6. See Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 19, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 104.

7. Monroe to Madison, Dec. 10, 1797, Madison Papers, XVII, 60.

8. For the preferences and nostalgia of the American gentry who led the first political parties for either Great Britain or France as symptomatic of the persistence of a "neocolonial" mentality until the War of 1812, see Robert H. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion (New York, 1984), 71-80, 123-25.

9. Monroe to Jefferson, March 26, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 107-108; Ammon, Monroe, 159, quotes the Hamilton-Monroe altercation from David Gelston's minutes of the conference, July 11, 1797, Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

10. Monroe to Jefferson, March 26, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 108. On the political repercussions of a Philadelphia celebration of Washington's birthday in 1798, see Kurtz, Presidency of Adams, 294-95, and Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty,

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362-63.

11. On the evanescence of Republican support for the French Revolution, see Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Toward Isolationism: The Rise and Fall of the Franco-American Alliance, 1775-1801," in Kaplan, Entangling Alliances With None: American Foreign Policy in the Age of Jefferson (Kent, Ohio, 1987), 79-95; Ralph Ketcham, "France and American Politics, 1763-1793," Political Science Quarterly, 78 (June 1963), 198-223; Lance Banning, "Jeffersonian Ideology and the French Revolution: A Question of Liberticide at Home," Studies in Burke and His Time, 17 (Winter 1976), 13-14; Simon Peter Newman, "American Popular Political Culture in the Age of the French Revolution" (Ph.D. dissertation, Princeton University, 1991), 186.; Robert H. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society: From The Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion (New York, 1984), 123-25. Jeffersonians' belief that Britain rather than France threatened the balance of power is discussed in Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, Empire and Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1990): Jerald A. Combs, Jay's Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1970); Daniel G. Lang, Foreign Policy in the Early Republic: The Law of Nations and the Balance of Power (Baton Rouge, 1985), 21, 113, 128-31, 139, 144, 147; and Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Jefferson, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Balance of Power," William and Mary Quarterly, 14 (April 1957), 196-217.

12. On the Whiskey Rebellion and the debate over the militia's role, see Richard H. Kohn, Eagle and Sword: The Federalists and the Creation of the Military Establishment in America, 1783-1802 (New York, 1975), 86-87, 175-186, 300-303; and Lawrence Delbert Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and the Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982), 121-129.

13. Monroe to Jefferson, May 4, 1798, in Hamilton, ed.,Writings of Monroe, III, 120-121.

14. Monroe to Jefferson, June 16, 1798, ibid., III, 125-127. For Jefferson's use of the metaphor, "spirit of 1776," at this time, see, e.g., Jefferson to Thomas Lomax, March 12, 1799, in Paul L. Ford, ed., The Works of Thomas Jefferson, 12 vols. (New York, 1904-1905), IX, 62-64. Adams' book, A Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, which he wrote in 1786-1787 while U.S. minister to Great Britain before the Philadelphia Convention met, argued that constitutional monarchy, with a popularly-elected lower house and a lifetime elective senate and executive, was theoretically the best form of government for controlling conflicts of interest between the rich and the poor. See Manning J. Dauer, The Adams Federalists (Baltimore, 1953), 35-54, and John R. Howe, Jr., The Changing Political Thought of John Adams (Princeton, 1966), 135-55. Monroe owned the book, and the ideas he expressed at the Virginia ratifying convention in favor of a strong executive bore many similarities to Adams' views. Gordon W. Jones, The Library of James Monroe (Charlottesville, 1967), 17.

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15. Monroe to Jefferson, June 16, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 127. "His Rotundity" had been Adams's nickname ever since he advocated monarchical titles for the executive officers in 1789. It originated with Ralph Izard, a South Carolina Senator. See George C. Rogers, Jr., Evolution of a Federalist: William Loughton Smith of Charleston, 1758-1812 (Columbia, S.C., 1962), 171; James H. Hutson, "John Adams' Title Campaign," New England Quarterly, 41 (March 1968), 30-39; Philadelphia Aurora, Nov. 4, 1796 ("A Pleasant Anecdote").

16. Monroe to Jefferson, June 16, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 127-28. Jefferson was fond of Monroe's metaphor, and employed it on several occasions. See Jefferson to John Taylor, Nov. 26, 1798, Ford, ed., Writings, VII,310: "The disease of the imagination will pass over, because the patients are essentially republican. Indeed, the doctor is now on his way to cure it, in the guise of a tax gatherer."

17. Monroe to Jefferson, June 16, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 127-28. Italics in original.

18. Ibid., 128.

19. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 16, 1798, ibid., 148-54. For an account of relations between France and the United States during this period, see DeConde, Quasi-War, 142-258, and Bowman, Struggle for Neutrality, 334-85.

20. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 16, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 149.

21. Ibid., 150.

22. Ibid., 151.

23. Ibid. For Jefferson's statement, made during the crisis over French minister Edmond C. ("Citizen") Genet's attempts in 1793 to use the U.S. as a base of operations for French privateering and filibustering activities against Great Britain and Spain, see Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty, 126. Jefferson used the term "liberty warring on herself" in a letter to the French Government requesting Genet's recall, Aug. 16, 1793.

24. Hamilton, ed., Monroe's Writings, III, 151-52.

25. Ibid., 152.

26. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 16, 1798, in ibid., 152-53.

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27. Ibid., 153. See Robert G. Harper to William Branch Giles, May 30, 31, May-June, June 8 and 14, 1797; Giles to Harper, May 31, 1797, James Monroe Papers, Library of Congress

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28. Monroe to Jefferson, Nov. 16, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 153-54.

29. Monroe to Secretary of State Pickering, July 31, 1797, in ibid., III, 74.

30. Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 25, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 106.

31. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 26, 1799, ibid., III, 155-56.

32. Monroe to John Taylor of Caroline, Jan. 8, 1798, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Letters of James Monroe," Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 42 (Oct. 1908-June 1909), 323-24.

33. Monroe to Madison, Dec. 7, 1799, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 161-62, 164 (quotations).

34. Monroe to St. George Tucker, Dec. 26, 1799, Earl Greg Swem Library, College of William and Mary, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12. For Monroe's election as governor, see Ammon, Monroe, 172-74.

35. Monroe to Judge Joseph Prentiss, Dec. 23, 1799, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 168.

36. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 4, 1800, ibid., 169.

37. Ibid., 169-70.

38. Monroe to Philip N. Nicholas, March 16, 1800, ibid., 170.

39. Monroe to George W. Erving, April 4, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 171-172.

40. Ammon, Monroe, 152; Mary-Jo Kline, ed., The Political Correspondence and Public Papers of Aaron Burr (2 vols.; Princeton, 1983), I, 227-28; Arthur Scherr, "The Limits of Republican Ideology: James Monroe in Thermidorian Paris, 1794-1796," Mid-America: An Historical Review, 79 (Winter 1997), 39-40n.

41. Monroe to Erving, April 4, 1800, Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 173.

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42. Monroe to the Virginia Senators in Congress, April 28, 1800, ibid., 176.

43. Monroe to Jefferson, May 25, 1800, ibid., 180. Callender achieved his greatest fame later, as a turncoat, charging that Jefferson had fathered several children by his teenage slave girl, Sally Hemmings. See Michael Durey, "'With the Hammer of Truth': James Thomson Callender and America's Early National Heroes (Charlottesville, 1990).

44. Monroe to Madison, [June 4, 1800], in Hutchinson, Rachal et al., eds., Madison Papers, XVII, 391 (first and fourth quotations); Monroe to Madison, May 15, 1800, ibid., 388 (second and third quotations). Monroe's reference to a "hot water insurrection" was an allusion to Fries Rebellion in eastern Pennsylvania (a formerly Federalist section of the state) in 1799, in which German farmers resisting the direct tax on land passed by a Federalist Congress the year before to finance the undeclared war with France, poured hot water on federal troops sent to enforce compliance. Paul Douglas Newman, "Fries's Rebellion and American Political Culture, 1798-1800," Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, 119 (Jan./April 1995), 37-73.

45. Monroe to Jefferson, May 27, 1800, Writings of Monroe, III, 180.

46. Monroe to St. George Tucker, July 12, 1800, ibid., 193.

47. Monroe to Gov. Thomas McKean, July 12, 1800, ibid., 194-95.

48. See Nathan Hatch, The Sacred Cause of Liberty (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1977); Daniel Bell, The End of Ideology: On the Exhaustion of Political Ideas in the Fifties, rev.ed. (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1988).

49. Monroe to the Speakers of the General Assembly, Dec. 1, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 222-23.

50. On the significance of prison reform in the nineteenth century, see David Rothman, The Discovery of the Asylum (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971), and Michel Foucault, Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (New York: Pantheon Books, 1977).

51. On Madison, see McCoy, Last of the Fathers, passim.

52. See John R. Howe, Jr., "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790's," American Quarterly, 19 (Summer 1967), 147-65, and Marshall Smelser, "The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion," ibid., 10 (Winter 1958), 391-419.

53. Monroe to Edmond C. Genet, July 30, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III,

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195-97.

54. Ibid., 196. For Monroe's disparaging remarks about Genet to the Directory, see Ammon, Monroe, 148.

55. Monroe to Genet, July 30, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 196-97.

56. Monroe to Genet, July 30, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 196-97.

57. Monroe to Madison, Sept. 9, 1800, ibid., III, 205.

58. Monroe to Edmund Pendleton, March 5, 1800, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Letters of James Monroe," Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, 42 (May 1909), 325; Ammon, Monroe, 200.

59. Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor: Ethics and Behavior in the Old South (New York, 1982), 432-433.

60. Monroe to Jefferson, Sept. 15, 1800, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 209.

61. Monroe to the Speakers of the General Assembly, Dec. 5, 1800, ibid., 243.

62. Monroe to Madison, Nov. 7, 1800, ibid., 219-20.

63. Monroe to Jefferson, Dec. 30, 1800, ibid., 248-49.

64. Ibid.

65. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 6, 1801, ibid., 253-54.

66. Ibid., 254-55.

67. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 18, 1801, ibid., III, 256-57.

68. Monroe to Jefferson, March 3, 1801, ibid., 264.

69. Monroe's unsent letter to Adams is in ibid., 249-53.

70. John Adams to James Monroe, March 6, 1795, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, reel 1.

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71. Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 25, 1798, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 105.

72. Monroe to Jefferson, May 17, 1802, ibid., 349-50.

73. Monroe to Col. John Hoomes, Feb. 14, 1801, and Monroe to Stevens Thomson Mason and Wilson Cary Nicholas, Feb. 18, 1801, in ibid., 258-60, 260-61.

74. Monroe to Wilson Cary Nicholas, Feb. 18, 1801, ibid., 261.

75. Monroe to Jefferson, March 3, 1801, ibid., 262.

76. Ibid., 263-64.

77. Monroe to Madison, Jan. 14, 1802, Monroe Papers, University of Virginia, photocopy in Virginia Historical Society (first quotation); Monroe to Jefferson, March 3, 1801, Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 264 (second quotation).

78. Monroe to George William Erving, March 5, 1801, ibid., 265.

79. For Adams's and Pickering's welcome to Monroe during his presidential trip to New England in the summer of 1817, see Ammon, Monroe, 375.

80. Federalist #72, in Jacob E. Cooke, ed., The Federalist (Middletown, Conn., 1962), 468. On the significance of the pursuit of fame in civic humanism since the Renaissance, see J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, 1975); Douglass G. Adair, Fame and the Founding Fathers (New York, 1974), 3-26; and Mark Hulliung, Citizen Machiavelli (Princeton, 1983), 208-10.

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THE CHANGING REPUBLICANISM OF JAMES MONROE, 1787-1831: AN ESSAY IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL IDEAS

by

ARTHUR SCHERR

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CHAPTER 7:
JAMES MONROE:
ANTIMILITARIST AND NATIONALIST

From the outset of his political career, James Monroe had taken pride in his nationalist sentiments. He was the leading advocate for giving Congress power over interstate and foreign trade at the Continental Congress in the mid-1780s. In 1786 when even his colleague James Madison seemed resigned to the breakup of the union into separate regional confederacies, Monroe rejected that alternative. Although he opposed immediate adoption of the Constitution at the Virginia ratifying convention in the summer of 1788 and for that reason was labeled an Antifederalist, he espoused nationalist views even in that anomalous situation. As he put it, "My attachment to the Union and an energetic government is such, that I would consent to give the general government every power contained in that plan [the Constitution] except that of [direct] taxation."[1]

On the other hand, Monroe could go to nearly paranoid extremes when he feared that governmental power might be used to oppress the people or deprive them

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of their rights. In the same speech in which he proclaimed his national feeling, he hysterically charged that the Constitution's "implied powers" clause (Article One, Section 8) might potentially strip Americans of their civil liberties, even on matters unrelated to Congress's successful performance of its enumerated powers. He thought that the national legislature might abolish trial by jury and freedom of the press using the authority conferred by the "necessary and proper" clause, unless another convention were called and passed a bill of rights to restrain it.[2]

Initially, the military was a major focus of Monroe's anxiety regarding the undue accretion of centralized power. Fearful of too much armed might in the Executive's hands, in February 1792 Senator Monroe voted against President Washington's request to enlarge the Army to protect the frontiers. Two years later, undeterred by rumors that Great Britain intended to launch an invasion of the United States from its base in Canada, Monroe voted against a Federalist proposal to authorize the President to raise 15,000 troops to guard against imminent invasion. Monroe dreaded an enlarged Army in the hands of Federalist "enemies of publick liberty," especially when it might be under Alexander Hamilton's command. Instead, Monroe enthusiastically supported a Republican measure, which passed, empowering the president to call up 80,000 militia.[3]

Yet, notwithstanding his ostensible objections to armies, during his long career the antimilitaristic Monroe served in the anomalous position of secretary of war for a few months during the War of 1812, at the same time performing the duties of secretary

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of state. As governor of Virginia from 1799-1802 he was commander in chief of the state militia and headed the nation's military organization as Chief Executive from 1817-1825. It is therefore pertinent to examine his views of the executive's relations with the military in greater detail. It is also important to examine how he viewed the military's role in society and government.

In accord with Monroe's pro-militia ideology, along with most Americans he believed in the superiority of civil over military authority.[4] He was solicitous of the well-being of the average citizen-soldier. As governor of Virginia, in August 1800 he sent out circular letters to the commanders of militia regiments recommending that the state provide militiamen with weapons, rather than that citizens bear the expense of purchasing them. Praising a recent law that had implemented this decision, he regarded the citizen-soldier's role as essential. "The [arms] allotment now sent you commences arming the militia, whereby the means of defence will be put into the hands of those who are to be defended," he directed. "A system which provides in the best mode that human wisdom can devise for the safety of the society in all emergencies, with the least possible inconvenience to its members."[5] At this time, Monroe's dedication to the idea of a citizen army was virtually unqualified.

Believing that integrity was indispensable to the conduct of public servants in both the military and political spheres, Monroe explained his policies to Thomas Smith of Mathews County, whom he had rejected for command of the Sixth Regiment of militia despite his nomination by the county court. He wrote that he was "always ready

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and willing to explain any act of my publick [sic] conduct to those who may be affected by it, and perfectly indifferent whether such explanation be considered as confidential or official." Acknowledging the failure of his executive council to offer an alternative candidate, Monroe was nonetheless indignant that Smith sought to negate his appointive power into that of a mere rubber stamp for the county court. He denied Smith's argument that the Council and the Court held distinct "constitutional rights" to advise the governor. Asserting that the Virginia constitution supported his interpretation, Monroe argued that the Council had priority over the county court in the matter of gubernatorial appointments to office. He thought the Council more likely than a local court to reward "seniority" and "merit," and more capable of nonpartisan, disinterested selection, being "elected by the legislature, from the body of the society, and responsible to that society for its conduct." Monroe concluded that the members of his council would more staunchly pursue the public good than the members of a county court guided by narrow, localist motives. As Monroe tersely explained: "It was fair to presume the members composing such a council would feel themselves above local considerations; that uninfluenced by little cabal [,] the ties of consanguinity or family interest, which might take place in the circle of a county, they would look to the publick interest alone in the discharge of such a trust."[6] Therefore, he regarded the council as likelier to pursue a path of probity and impartiality in its choice. This was vital to proper government and helpful in ensuring order.

In Monroe's concept of public administration, order was essential. He

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perceived "an uniform policy" as synonymous with "justice, especially when it is founded on principle." He regarded military appointments as serious matters, necessitating a determining "power... to supervise the whole. Would it not be absurd to vest such a power in the Council and not intend it to be a permanent one?" Monroe reiterated his belief that the Council of State could reconsider appointments to office at any time, since its role was that of a civil court as well as an advisory body. As governor, Monroe more than his predecessors demanded a coordinate power with the Council to choose executive officials, instead of merely acting as a rubber stamp for the choice of their majority. Ironically, he found it necessary in Smith's case to assert the council's autonomy vis-à-vis the alleged prerogatives of county courts. He warned that if the council were not permitted to reevaluate its earlier decisions, it would forfeit its independence and lose "the advantage of additional information on a conviction in any member he had erred in his judgment," whereby "a bad measure could not be changed or a good one advised."[7]

Responding to Smith's argument that the Council of State lacked the power to overturn his promotion by the county court, the Governor, while attesting his respect for judicial advice, insisted on the Council's primacy. Admitting that the court possessed "a correct knowledge" of each candidate's merits, a result of its familiarity with the people of the county, and was therefore qualified to make recommendations, Monroe argued that the Council's broader perspective was better suited "to judge of the propriety of that recommendation and of the weight of the objections to it."

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Nevertheless, the courts might assist the Council, with "advantage to the publick," by providing it with relevant information to enable it to judge correctly. His predecessors in the governorship had followed this practice, which "seems to be pointed out by the obvious spirit of the Constitution, and to be dictated by considerations of publick Utility."[8] Chiding Smith for undue ambition, Monroe constantly recurred as both governor and president to the theme of the supremacy of the public well-being over personal self-interest. This put him in the "classical republican" rather than the "liberal" mold in terms of the categories used by modern historians.[9]

Since the public good held priority over the desires of selfish individuals, Monroe pointed out, it followed as a matter of course that officers who had demonstrated their stout-heartedness were most deserving of preferment. Monroe found Smith lacking in this regard. He noted that Major Smith had exhibited pique and pettiness in the past when he had not received promotions he thought he deserved, resigning from his regiment after losing an election to serve as its commander. Implying that Smith was puerile and deficient in leadership characteristics, Monroe for his part did not hesitate to arrogate to himself supreme power as the highest civil authority in the state. Asserting that his powers of appointment as the state's governor were absolute, he stretched his constitutional prerogatives when he said he was merely required to ask the Council's advice before making his decision. But he agreed it was his constitutional responsibility to at least ask its opinion: "Had I acted otherwise I should have established a new precedent, violated in my judgment the principles of the constitution

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and exposed myself to just and merited censure."

Governor Monroe insisted that his dilatoriness in appointing a militia commander for Mathews County had not endangered its citizens. Indeed, he prided himself on the state's stability under his administration, ironically only a few months before the discovery of Gabriel's Conspiracy. "It cannot I presume be contended that any injury has occurred to the Commonwealth by the delay," he said. "The Country is happily in a state of perfect tranquility; no invasion or insurrection has taken place and I hope never will. No incident has occurred which made the want of a commandant for the time anywise hurtful to the publick."[10] Monroe seems unduly optimistic here, unaware of the slave population's capacity to rise up at any time.

Professing himself a man whose disinterestedness transcended conflicts of faction based on personal or political loyalty, Governor Monroe contrasted Smith's ambition with his own high-mindedness, "for a party interested usually catches at every incident with a view to profit by it. But it became me to act with deliberation to separate myself from the interest of the parties: to take a general view of the subject and to endeavor in rendering justice to them to acquit myself in the transaction to the Commonwealth whose servant I am."[11] Though this incident is insignificant by itself, it tells a great deal about Monroe's self-concept as both a statesman and an executive.

This was Monroe's invariable stance. Representing <u>all</u> the people, he considered himself above sectional, class, and personal conflicts. This was the ideal he brought with him into the nineteenth century and conveys the essence of the "Era of

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Good Feeling." He pointed out that his Council of State's failure to forward a recommendation for the post did not compel him to accept the county court's choice. He intended "to take that course which my judgment dictates as being most consistent with the Constitution and best calculated to promote the interest of my Country." In this instance, his "country" was Virginia. Insistent on enforcing the supremacy of civil over military authority, Monroe rebuffed Smith's pretensions and his emphasis on seniority based on previous rank .

Monroe maintained his independent position even though he was Major Smith's personal friend. Smith had even visited and written him several times to press his claims. He reproached Smith for his temerity in writing him, which he felt "breathes a spirit and is expressed in terms I did not expect from you." As he often did, the thin-skinned Monroe took offense at the unkind manner in which he was being treated. "I have long known and esteemed you and regret that a this stage of our acquaintance an incident of a nature so unpleasant should occur," he lamented, casting the blame for the dispute squarely on Smith. "I shall however conclude with assuring you that however unjust or improper your insinuations may be they will not induce me to swerve from a line of conduct I adopted on reflection and which my judgment & conscience approve."[12]

Defending his position by assuming the role of an impartial statesman who determined justice and acted to implement it, Monroe disputed Smith's appointment merely on the basis of a county court recommendation, when there were other eligible

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active officers, higher than he in rank. If Smith were chosen over their heads, these officers might mimic Smith's pernicious example by resigning as well, Monroe warned. Even if the council were divided or offered no opinion, Monroe noted, he was not required to obey the county court's dictates. "By acting as you propose I should have established a two-fold precedent, if I may so express myself, first by withdrawing from the Council a subject already submitted to it and properly cognizable by it, second by issuing a commission on the recommendation of a Court under circumstances no person in my place, as I am informed, ever did! And that it was my opinion the latter course would be productive of most harm to the country my conduct has shewn."[13] Therefore, his policy was dictated both by his concern for law and order and by his own fragile ego. But the supremacy of civilian over military authority was always uppermost in his mind. He thought it incumbent upon him to resist Smith's bluster.

Monroe's concern for the superiority of civil authority was demonstrated in the matter of another militia appointment, when he found himself supporting the claims of the *county court.* When Colonel Thomas Minor of Spotsylvania Country recommended his friends for preferment, Governor Monroe dismissed his proposals as unconstitutional interference by an interested party. "No doubt was entertained that the nomination you made was [sic] done with a view to promote the publick good, or that the characters nominated are suitable," Monroe elegantly put it. "But as the Constitution [of Virginia] relies on the recommendation of the [county] Court as one of the modes by which the Chief Magistrate is to issue such commissions, it is wished by

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the Executive to avail itself of it in all cases where it is attainable." He asked the Colonel to bring the subject of his choice of officers before the court and "obtain its recommendation, and transmit the same to me." In this case, Monroe gave the nod to the county courts rather than the militia officer, whereas in the previous instance he had defended the rights of his Council of State against the county courts.[14] He would not permit military officers (which he himself had been during the Revolution) to dictate to him, the highest representative of civilian authority.

As Virginia's governor, Monroe was often forced to make judgments on which the health and safety of the community rested. At these times he had to weigh the consequences of a vigorous, militaristic, arbitrary exertion of executive authority that might create dangerous precedents for less upright leaders in the future. In the summer of 1800, he was faced with the possibility of a yellow fever epidemic at Norfolk. Although he departed the capital early for his Albemarle County home, The Highlands, to visit his family, which had earlier left Richmond because of the threat of smallpox, Monroe was worried by Norfolk Mayor Thomas Newton's alarming report that an epidemic of yellow fever had begun. Newton later changed his mind, but the governor had already reassured him that he was ready to employ the state's resources. He was prepared to return immediately to Richmond and "take the necessary steps for your safety, which the emergency required and the law prescribes." But Monroe was confident that he and Newton could save the town from any calamity, especially since news that the West Indies had undergone the contagion had increased their vigilance.

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The Governor would enforce a quarantine if epidemic threatened. "Whenever you and the corporation [of Norfolk] are of opinion there exists a danger of your taking such disorder from any quarter whatever, and will notify the same to me, the necessary legal precautions will be adopted by the Executive to guard you against it," he asserted. Acknowledging a quarantine's adverse effects on the port's prosperity, Monroe concluded, "From a regard to the commercial interest of the town which might be injured by an improper interference no step of that kind is or will be taken till advised by you it is necessary." Although the Council of State had advised Monroe to trust Newton's discretion, the mayor's apparent willingness to give priority to the citizens' economic interests might encourage undue laxity by others.[15]

But Monroe was governor of the entire state, and he knew the rest of the community's fears could not be ignored. Therefore, on August 25, 1800, "in compliance with the urgent demand of the commercial towns and the general anxiety of the community," on the Council's advice he issued a quarantine against vessels arriving from Norfolk. Though Norfolk's "commercial interest" was thereby impeded, Monroe, guided by "a due regard to the general interest of the society," felt compelled to announce the restriction. He assured Mayor Newton that he and the Council were equally eager to help the townspeople and hoped to restore the town's commercial "intercourse on its former footing" as soon as possible.[16]

Indeed, Monroe was hardly eager to exert his military powers during the crisis. In September 1800 he refused to seize private property for the purpose of

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accommodating those infected until the attorney general had reported to him on the legal ramifications. "I have to request you will be pleased to examine into the subject and give me your opinion on the above points with the least possible delay," he ordered.[17]

The temperate use of power characterized Monroe's conduct as governor. He was imbued with this attitude as a result of his upbringing in the Real Whig antipower ideology of John Trenchard and Thomas Gordon and the Commonwealthmen whose ideas played such an important role in the American revolt against Great Britain. In general, he followed a strict construction of the powers granted the governor under the state constitution and tended to adhere to the letter of the law. He refused to remit a grand juror's fine for nonattendance, explaining to this constituent that the law did not grant him this power. In connection with the regulation of election procedures, he refused to intervene when Richard Bland Lee, a moderate Federalist and one of the commissioners he had appointed to supervise Norfolk's conduct in the presidential election of 1800, informed him that his colleague had recently died. Monroe argued that the statute creating the election commissioners vested responsibility for supplying vacancies with the "surviving commissioner," and that "all power over the subject in the Executive ceased after the first of August."[18] Thus he was willing to allow his subordinates autonomy even though they gave him the opportunity to assume the power.

At the time of Gabriel's Rebellion, Governor Monroe maintained a calm stance,

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again revealing his competence as an administrator. He informed Petersburg's mayor of rumors of a slave insurrection at Richmond and advised him to be "on his guard." Thoughtfully taking up his duties as commander in chief during the abortive rebellion, he knew how to gain the state militia's allegiance--by flattery. Praising the efforts of Richmond's Nineteenth Regiment, which exerted the greatest efforts to prepare for an insurrection that never materialized, he also enthusiastically noted that the hinterland had provided reinforcements, attesting to the citizenry's patriotism and loyalty. Appealing to the civic humanist tradition of communitarian virtue, he told the troops:

> As the occasion is a common one, its burdens ought to be borne equally by all. He [Monroe] has observed with pleasure that this sentiment is entertained and respected by the militia generally. He hopes it will appear by the returns made him there will be no exceptions to it. A citizen of a generous or even just mind will never seek to evade the law or shift his duties on another. The chief magistrate speaks not of the censure due to such conduct because he cannot believe the case will exist.[19]

Monroe sympathized with his fellow-citizens, showing a humane disposition in his conduct toward both whites and blacks. For the latter, he proposed to transport abroad those convicted of insurrection rather than execute them. In many cases the legislature followed his recommendations. [20]

As commander in chief of the state militia, Monroe showed compassion for soldiers who had violated military regulations. In the cases of Patrick Donnelly and Richard Bennett, Jr., two militiamen recruited to suppress Gabriel's Rebellion, whom a court-martial had sentenced to be flogged for drunkenness, disorderly conduct, and

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disobedience to orders, the Governor was merciful, though lamenting that "citizens, called into service for the defence of their Country, should dishonor that title." He chided them for having so little respect for themselves and for public opinion. "They ought to shew themselves worthy of the exalted condition of freemen in every situation in which they are placed, especially in the character of soldiers, where the eye of the observer is sure to criticise their conduct," he asserted. He did not expect them to perform as crack troops from the outset, but he did expect them to demonstrate the private virtues of decent, orderly, industrious citizens, which were prerequisite to public virtue (unselfish service to the commonwealth). Acknowledging that, "It requires time to give them the exact discipline of regular troops, but the practice of morality, good order, and sobriety belong to private life and ought to be displayed conspicuously when called into military service," he warned, "A citizen who fails in any of these virtues dishonors himself and the society to which he belongs."[21]

Following this strident lecture depicting the importance of civil virtue to proper military conduct, Governor Monroe took account of the men's pledge to reform, and was "also highly gratified to learn that these are the first reprehensible acts with which they have been charged." Therefore, he exercised his executive discretion to revoke the court martial's sentence "and remits the punishment." Nevertheless, he ordered the commanding officer to publicly reprimand the two self-indulgent soldiers, so that they would have a taste of that shame and the retaliation of public opinion to which Monroe, along with Jefferson, Madison, and other Republicans, attributed so much power. As

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latter-day classical republicans like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and David Hume often noted, shame and public opinion were the tools by which the classical republican statesman disciplined those disinclined to observe the public good.[22]

That Monroe chose to remit these men's punishment is not surprising. As one who gave priority to civil over military authority, he felt that excessive severity was typically militaristic and to be avoided if possible. By the same token, he was eager to disband any regiments of additional militia collected as a result of Gabriel's Conspiracy. He disliked a standing, active military force.[23] Nevertheless, he was interested in the proper organization of the militia, both as governor of Virginia and later as secretary of war during the War of 1812. Addressing the militia of Richmond County in the state's prosperous Tidewater, he told Captain Robert Hipkins to extend recruiting to adjoining Westmoreland County. "Should this be practicable, it will be very acceptable to the Executive as it seems to be an object of importance to make our militia as strong as possible in Cavalry," he said.[24]

Unlike many hysterical Virginians, Monroe eschewed an obsessive witch-hunt for slaves involved (or allegedly involved) in Gabriel's Conspiracy. After receiving a report that a black slave named Griffin was suspected of participating in the abortive rebellion, he reassured his owner that, "as yet nothing has reached me relative to him, resulting from the trial of others: should anything transpire, showing him to be a party in the affair, you shall hear of it without delay."[25] So reasonable an attitude was uncommon among Southern leaders in the wake of a major slave conspiracy.

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On the other hand, as a responsible administrator Monroe needed to be prepared for future Black agitation. He reinforced the need to employ slave patrols after he dismissed the militia, convinced that, "we ought not to be too confident of our security, since an extraordinary degree of relaxation on our part might tempt them to a renewal of the enterprise in which they have lately been defeated."[26] In general, he maintained the view that citizen armies were more trustworthy than professional armies in maintaining public liberty and performing their duties.

As a United States senator, Monroe had voiced his opposition to raising a standing army to fight Indians on the frontier, believing that a few hundred "woodsmen" would more effectively "end the war and at a trifling expense." Fearing that a standing army might unduly increase national and executive power to oppress the people, he even preferred that Congress pass a law originally sponsored by Secretary of War Henry Knox implementing a reorganization of state militia under a uniform program. As Monroe put it, "Anything is preferable to nothing as it takes away one of the arguments for a standing army."[27] It was only during the War of 1812, when the threat of British invasion imperiled the nation's survival, that he proposed military conscription by the national government and questioned the militia's efficiency.[28]

After Congress declared war in June 1812, Secretary of State Monroe (who would have preferred a military command) showed his concern for national preparedness. He told Virginia's Governor, James Barbour, that the state's eastern frontier needed stronger fortification as a result of "the declaration of War a measure of

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which I highly approve and which will receive my candid support [.] There is perhaps no section of the Union more exposed to the predatory incursions of the Enemy." He sought to impress Barbour with his opinion, reminding him, "It would be more than useless were I to endeavour to sustain by a detailed statement this fact in as much as your acquaintance with this portion of the Union is in no degree inferior to my own."[29]

During the course of the war, Monroe's concern with Virginia's safety persisted. But he favored supplementing state militia with nationalized troops. In late 1813, he overcame his pro-militia predilections sufficiently to urge Governor Barbour to recruit a State Line, similar to those organized in the Continental Army during the American Revolution. He promised he would advocate land bounties as an incentive to enlistment. But he feared that Congress was too involved in passing war taxes to consider measures to encourage recruits. Seeking to retain support for the war, Monroe continued to insist that the conflict was "just and necessary" and urged Governor Barbour to rally the citizens, especially in the matter of paying taxes, which was crucial to ultimate victory and the success of the republican experiment. As Monroe put it:

> The patient acquiescence under much heavier taxes should they be necessary, and the promptitude with which they will be paid, will I am satisfied, by proving the stubborn virtue and unconquerable spirit of our people, wrest from our enemies the vain hope which they have indulged that our free Government would sink under the experiment.[30]

Thus Monroe was sufficiently confident of the taxpayers' virtue in the face of a

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war for the republic's existence to believe they would willingly pay increased taxes. And, in general, tax collections for the War of 1812 were more forthcoming than they had been for the undeclared war with France in 1798 in every part of the country except New England.[31]

As the war dragged on, Monroe became extremely displeased with British misconduct, both in the field, as attested by the burning of Washington, and at Dartmoor Prison in southwestern England, where American prisoners of war were maltreated. In his letter to Barbour in October 1813, he admitted his sympathy for the Governor's complaints about "the horrible crimes that were committed by the British troops at Hampton" during a foraging raid. As acting secretary of war, Monroe regretted his inability to retaliate for the atrocities, but ships were not available. He had submitted Barbour's data "exhibiting in their just deformity these execrable deeds" to a House committee investigating British wartime violations of the law of nations. To Barbour's successor as governor, Monroe's and Jefferson's good friend Wilson Cary Nicholas, Monroe later expressed himself even more bitterly. "It is deeply to be regretted that against an enemy who violates every principle of humanity and civilized warfare, it is not in the power of the Government to extend protection to every part which is exposed to his incursions," he wrote.[32]

Once the war had ended, however, Monroe decided to refrain from asperity toward the former mother country. As secretary of state, he refused to order John Quincy Adams, the U. S. Minister to Great Britain, to protest British wartime atrocities

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against American prisoners of war. "Will it be proper," he said, "for Mr. Adams to make a complaint respecting it, to the British government? For what purpose? If they do not bring Spithead [a mutiny of the British fleet against intolerable conditions in 1797] to trial voluntarily from a sense of what is due to their character, they will not do it on our application." But he anticipated that national feeling would mature once the people became aroused against British wrongdoing. "I am inclined to think that this is one of those cases, which, admitting of no remedy, must produce its effect by acting on the public mind, thereby separating us most completely from G. Britain, consolidate and make us more an independent nation," he predicted.[33] He was confident that national feeling would burgeon following the war.

On the other hand, Monroe was disappointed at the national government's parsimony in reimbursing his home state for its patriotic military expenditures. Toward the war's end, he advised Virginia's leaders not to call additional troops into federal service, especially in light of New England's dereliction, unless President Madison requested it. Fearing the state's efforts would go unrewarded, he reminisced about its struggles during the American Revolution, for which he believed it had never been fully compensated. "Through the whole of our revolution, Virginia acted as if she had no connection with the rest of the union, drew out, & even raised troops, & incurred expenses, which fell on herself; for which at least she never did obtain any credit," he recalled. Monroe hoped that this time the state's leaders would be better prepared to press their claims before Congress. From Washington, where he served as secretary of

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state, Monroe advised, "Press those in power here, when you see an occasion for it; but do it with method; in making any call or claim, know the ground of it, & make it appear."[34]

At this time, the War of 1812 was at its height; the abysmal British invasion of Washington had just taken place. As acting secretary of war, a post to which President Madison had appointed him after General John Armstrong resigned in disgrace for failure to defend the capital, Monroe was in charge of the nation's defenses from Sept. 27, 1814 to March 2, 1815.[35] He felt it incumbent on him to make exorbitant, even chauvinistic recommendations for increasing the Army's size. Chagrined that the Army had not achieved its authorized strength (62,448 men), he sought to add to it "a permanent force, consisting of not less than 40,000 men... raised, for the defence of our cities and frontiers, under an engagement by the Executive with each corps that it shall be employed in that service within certain specified limits."[36]

Monroe's plans encompassed both present and future. His goal was a force sufficient "to bring this war to a happy termination." His justification was an alarming analysis of British motives: "It may fairly be presumed that it is the object of the British Government, by striking at the principal sources of our prosperity, to diminish the importance, if not to destroy the political existence, of the United States." He worried that the citizens' "public virtue" was not as strong as it had been during the last conflict with England. Monroe did not doubt that the War of 1812 should be considered America's second war of independence. Indeed, he perceived it as a war for survival:

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> A nation contending for its existence against an enemy powerful by land and sea, favored, in a peculiar manner, by extraordinary events, must make great exertions, and suffer great sacrifices. Forced to contend again for our liberties and independence, we are called on for a display of all the patriotism which distinguished our fellow-citizens in the first great struggle. It may be fairly concluded that if the United States sacrifice any right, or make any dishonorable concession to the demands of the British Government, the spirit of the nation will be broken, and the Foundations of their union and independence shaken.[37]

At this late point in the war, Monroe sought to secure the cooperation of an intractable Senate dominated by his enemies. Adroitly displaying his nationalist feeling, Monroe deprecated any thought of surrender to Britain. "The United States must relinquish no right, or perish in the struggle," he asserted. "There is no intermediate ground to rest on." Perhaps desiring to present a powerful image with his presidential candidacy in mind, he warned:

> A concession on one point leads directly to a surrender on every other. The result of the contest cannot be doubtful. The highest confidence is entertained that the stronger the pressure, and the greater the danger, the more firm and vigorous will be the resistance, and the more successful and glorious the result.

Resorting to the chauvinistic rhetoric of a flag-waving rabble-rouser, he depicted the republic on the brink of military disaster, at the mercy of a sadistic adversary. "It is the avowed purpose of the enemy to lay waste and destroy our cities and villages, and to desolate our coast, of which examples have already been afforded," he noted. "It is evidently his intention to press the war along the whole extent of our seaboard, in the hope of exhausting equally the spirits of the people and the national resources." He suspected that Great Britain intended to attack New York City from its

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Canadian base and separate that great seaport from the rest of the Union. Seeking to exacerbate congressional Angst in order to gain a stronger army, he predicted future British attacks on the capital, on New Orleans at the mouth of the Mississippi River.[38] He noted the obvious fact that the victory of Great Britain and its allies in Europe would allow them to bring increased strength to bear in America, and it was likely that the superior British fleet would raid U. S. cities and towns unopposed.

Despite Monroe's conversion to the need for a standing army, he still maintained allegiance to America's pastoral ideal, and was deferential toward peaceful civilian occupations. His support for the replacement of militia by regular troops, he explained, arose partly from regret that peaceful, domesticated militiamen rather than unattached regulars would be used to repulse British "incursions," thereby taking the farmer from his crops and the blacksmith from his forge. "By interfering with their ordinary pursuits of industry, it must be attended with serious interruption and loss to them, and injury to the public," he lamented. He urged accelerated ship construction to enable the Army to shuttle to diverse battlefields, thereby obviating the need for militia on the ground. Finally, he admitted that he considered militia more expensive and less efficient than regular troops.

Believing he could end the war with one successful campaign, in October 1814 Monroe convinced Madison to appoint him Acting Secretary of War. Antiwar Republican Congressman Thomas Worthington of Ohio suspected Monroe's motive in seeking military renown was his desire to win the presidency in 1816. Even Secretary

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of the Navy William Jones, a friend of the Madison Administration, thought Monroe inordinately ambitious for military glory, perceiving him as being "governed by reputation," with "a strong military passion, but without the requisite qualifications."[39]

Though his reasons were undoubtedly more patriotic than Worthington suspected, Monroe proposed drastic measures to pull military victory from the jaws of defeat. He warned that "an honorable termination" of the conflict could only be secured if Americans, after driving the British from their shores, "pushed the war into Canada." He thought a renewed aggressive onslaught would also obtain Indian allies for the United States. Appealing to both national esteem and self-interest, he believed a conquest of Canada would serve as a diversionary tactic, "relieve the coast from the desolation which is intended for it, and... keep in our hands a safe pledge for an honorable peace." Although at least 100,000 regular troops would be needed for the Canadian invasion, he was confident that, assisted by militia and volunteers, they would victoriously preserve the republic, and "fix on a solid and imperishable foundation, our union and independence, on which the liberties and happiness of our fellow-citizens so essentially depend."[40]

Unlike most historians, who are generally indifferent to Monroe, J. C. A. Stagg, the most thorough student of his conduct as secretary of war, is hostile, and perceives him endlessly angling for the presidency. Stagg even seems to accept the High Federalist charges of those like Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts that Monroe, Jefferson and Madison wished to set up a military dictatorship to permanently institute

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what Quincy referred to as "the fundamental prescripts of the Montecellian dynasty."[41] Although Stagg's work is excellent, he has surprisingly lost the basic insight that Monroe, as secretary of state in Madison's Administration, his reconciled friend, and the third member of the Virginia Triumvirate, was the inevitable choice to succeed Madison in the presidency. There was simply no one else, certainly not among the Federalists and antiwar Republicans, with the stature or popularity to compete with him. It seems unfair for Stagg to charge that Monroe's occasional efforts to accommodate antiwar elements and pro-war Federalists, e.g., by reducing the number of troops he demanded and by agreeing to commission Federalists as volunteer officers, were motivated by a quest for votes and popularity rather than a desire for harmony in his quest to achieve the public good by winning the war.

Convinced of a Canadian invasion's usefulness in defending the Middle Atlantic states and the feasibility of an American occupation of Upper Canada, Monroe went so far as to goad Major General Jacob Brown into supporting his plan, which would employ militia, volunteers, and regulars. At the end of January 1815, however, Congress, averse to expanding the scope of the war, passed a law prohibiting the president from signing up more than forty thousand state troops and militia and denying him the right to use militia outside their home borders without the state governor's consent. "The great object to be attained, is to carry the war into Canada, and to break the British power there, to the utmost practicable extent," Monroe argued. He was willing to recruit at least forty thousand private volunteers for this service. "If we

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fail to raise a force which will put the result beyond hazard, so far as certainty is attainable, we ought not to make the attempt, but rest satisfied with making a defensive, inglorious war for the nation, however honorable it may be for the gallant officers who conduct and may be employed in it."[42] Thus, like Adam Smith and the Moderate Whigs who had earlier influenced the Hamiltonian ideology of commercial expansion and strong central government, Monroe thought a standing army was vital to national existence and liberty and preferable to inconstant citizen militia.[43]

With a zealot's fervor, Monroe justified terrorism and attacks on civilian populations (Canadians) as measures of national defense. He proposed that the recruitment of 100,000 men--an unprecedented number in America's short history--for the invasion of Canada "will arrest, in the further prosecution of the war, the desolation of our cities and our coast, by enabling us to retort on the enemy, those calamities which our citizens have been already doomed to suffer--a resort which self defence alone, and a sacred regard for the rights and honor of the nation, could induce the United States to adopt." His advocacy of perpetual retaliation--especially in light of the fact that the British had ostensibly attacked the capital in revenge for the American army's burning of the public buildings and the governor's mansion at York (Toronto), against commanding general Henry Dearborn's orders in April 1813--was more in accord with later ideas of total war than with the pre-French Revolutionary ideals of limited warfare of the mid-eighteenth century.[44] Accommodating the Senate with four plans of mobilization, he wanted its help to determine "the most prompt and efficient

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mode that can be devised, consistent with the equal rights of every citizen" to raise the enormous force.[45]

Monroe's first plan would subject "all free male persons" between ages 18-45 (apparently blacks were not excluded) eligible for service, but only four out of every "class" of one hundred men would be expected to fight. Each "class" of one hundred would be roughly equal in wealth, but if any "class" refused to raise its quota of four men, the War Department would "draught" the man, "Any person, thus draughted, being allowed to furnish a substitute." Instead of the U. S. Government paying the recruits their land and money bounties, they would be paid by the other members of the class in proportion to their wealth, thus saving the government money.[46]

In an effort to appease advocates of state's rights, Monroe proposed to undertake recruiting in a decentralized manner, using either county courts, militia officers, or specifically appointed county agents. He upheld the Madisonian concept of delegated powers, insisting that Congress had the constitutional right to pass this law, derived from its power to raise armies. He was plainly attempting to extend congressional powers over recruitment to include nominal members of the militia, who were eligible to serve as federal volunteers. "It would be absurd to suppose that Congress could not carry this power into effect, other than by accepting the voluntary service of individuals," he asserted. "It might happen that an army could not be raised in that mode, whence the power would have been granted in vain."[47]

Persuasively depicting the state of mind of a regular soldier, as compared to a

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temporary volunteer or militiaman, Monroe insisted that the professional was the better warrior. Looking forward hopefully to the development of a professional army, Monroe eulogized the type of "mechanical" soldier this Army molded. More like automatons than the independent farmer/fighters of the citizen militia, regulars would unquestioningly obey their commanding officers and unthinkingly risk their lives for victory against the British hordes, who were undoubtedly eager for renewed conquest after their triumph against Napoleon. "The safety of the State might depend on such an army," Monroe pointed out. "Long continued invasions, conducted by regular, well disciplined troops, can best be repelled by troops kept constantly in the field, and equally well disciplined." Indulging in psychological analysis of the military virtues, he said: "Courage in an army is, in a great measure, mechanical. A small body, well trained, accustomed, to action, gallantly led on, often breaks three or four times the number of more respectable and more brave, but raw and undisciplined troops." Perhaps reliving his own experiences as a young officer--over thirty years before, he had been seriously wounded fighting for his country at Trenton---Monroe examined the impact of wartime camaraderie on a prospective professional soldier's personality: "The sense of danger is diminished by frequent exposure to it, without harm; and confidence, even in the timid, is inspired by a knowledge that reliance may be placed on others, which can grow up only by service together."[48]

Rejecting the standard Jeffersonian perspective that the stalwart militiaman was the best reliance for the defense of his country, Monroe now squarely stated his

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preference for a regular army. This was surely a revolutionary moment in the evolution of Republican ideology. Employing the ideas of direct democracy and collective will, most eloquently espoused in Aristotle's Politics and Rousseau's Social Contract, Monroe justified his proposal for draftable classes of male citizens, and extolled Congress's inherent power to legislate conscription. "The idea that the United States cannot raise a regular army in any other mode than by accepting the voluntary service of individuals, is believed to be repugnant to the uniform construction of all grants of power, and equally so to the first principles and leading objects of the federal compact," he said, addressing himself to antiwar Federalists even more than to the southern state-righters in his own party. "An unqualified grant of power gives the means necessary to carry it into effect. *This is an universal maxim, which admits of no exception.* Equally true is it, that *the conservation of the State is a duty paramount to all others.* The commonwealth has a right to the service of all its citizens; or, rather, the citizens composing the commonwealth have a right, collectively and individually, to the service of each other, to repel any danger which may be menaced." Thus, Monroe concluded, republican self-defense and civilian farmers' (which led to military) camaraderie, both vital to republican preservation, made it essential to raise a professional army to meet the crisis. Adhering to the vestigial remains of the Jeffersonian pro-militia doctrine which his wartime message had apparently left in ruins, Monroe granted "Old Republican" ex-comrades like John Taylor and John Randolph this bit of dubious consolation: "The manner in which the

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service is to be apportioned among the citizens, and rendered by them, are objects of legislation. All that is to be dreaded in such case is, the abuse of power; and, happily, our constitution has provided ample security against that evil."[49]

* * * * * * *

Monroe's perception of the professional soldier varied little from the invidious depictions that had long been used to castigate this alleged minion of despots, and could easily be applied to the mindless industrial factory workers whom Adam Smith pitied for the dehumanizing tasks they performed while he prophesied that they represented the wave of the future for developing economies. For the sake of national survival, Monroe now advocated the employment of this type of organization and this type of individual, the unfree man incapable of thinking for himself, who automatically did his duty. It was a case of the end justifying the means. And since "the citizens composing the commonwealth" were obligated to serve it (and one another) in the ways best suited to their capacities, the optimal solution would keep the farmer at home raising crops and caring for his family while the footloose bachelor exercised his adolescent rage and libidinal frustrations on the enemy. In the end, everyone would benefit.

Indulging in constitutional exegesis, Monroe implied that it had been the Founding Fathers' original intent that Congress raise professional armies.[50] He ascribed to the delegates to the Philadelphia Convention in 1787 an intuitive understanding of how it felt to be a military man. They understood the importance of solidarity within the corps, which only a professional army could attain. "The grant to

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Congress to raise armies, was made with a knowledge of all these circumstances, and with an intention that it should take effect," Monroe declared. "The framers of the constitution, and the states who [sic] ratified it, knew the advantage which an enemy might have over us, by regular forces, and intended to place their country on an equal footing." He went so far as to argue (somewhat dubiously) that even the state militia had their roots and their legitimacy in congressional action authorizing them.[51]

As he had said before, Monroe viewed the willingness of the people to fight for their freedom and their federal republic as the litmus test of their virtue. Only by this means would the people authentically evince their support for the Jeffersonian program: low taxes, fiscal responsibility, neutral maritime rights, national honor, limited government, economic laissez-faire, preservation of civil liberties, and territorial expansion.[52] This was Monroe's idea of the public good.

Moreover, Monroe suggested, the classification of draftable males by age categories would be more convenient to the people than standard militia service, since each class called into action could combine its funds to hire a substitute--hardly a paean to popular virtue and self-sacrifice! He hoped that "the unmarried and youthful" would consent to fight for their "class in "defence of the State," since they "can best defend it, and best be spared," when compared to the older and richer, who would pay them "an adequate compensation from the voluntary contributions of the more wealthy, in every class." "Great confidence is entertained that such contribution will be made in time to avoid a draught," Monroe commented, inadvertently casting a negative reflection on the

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public's virtue. "Indeed, it is believed to be the necessary and inevitable tendency of this plan to produce that effect." As his state's governor, Monroe had always favored governmental frugality. Now he did not deny that he liked the idea that the landholders rather than the government would pay the recruits. He wanted to fill the existing regiments with new recruits, up to the limits of their authorized strength. By this means experienced troops already enrolled would be able to instruct the newcomers in the arts of warfare.[53]

Asserting that Congress possessed the power "for raising regular armies granted without limitation," Monroe wished to dispel the doubts of the Senate Military Committee, headed by his foe William Branch Giles, that his request to classify the male citizenry for federal military service paralleling the militia's was constitutional. "The men are not drawn from the militia, but from the population of the country," he explained, protesting that he did not seek to clandestinely deprive the militia of manpower in order to weaken them. "When they enlist voluntarily, it is not as militiamen that they act, but as citizens. If they are draughted, it must be in the same sense." Though convinced that "the present great emergency of the country" necessitated a national draft, Monroe assured the Senate that his "sacred regard for the principles of our constitution" would not permit him to propose unconstitutional measures.[54]

Pacifist elements must have been even more alarmed by Monroe's request for an "additional permanent force" of forty thousand men, to serve in peacetime. But the secretary of war was quick to explain that the augmented Army would protect local

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neighborhoods in the cities and on the frontiers, rather than involve itself in looking for a fight with other nations on the country's borders. He expected many young men, even antiwar New Englanders, would volunteer if they were not forced to serve far from home. "Every able bodied citizen is willing and ready to fight for his home, his family, and his country, when invaded," he asserted. "Of this we have seen in the present year the most honorable and gratifying proofs. It does not suit all, however, to go great distances from home." Trying to put the best face possible on the endemic localism of rural Americans, he observed, "This generous and patriotic spirit may be taken advantage of, under proper arrangements, with the happiest effects to the country, and without essential inconvenience to the parties." He even went so far as to suggest that the local officers who commanded the local troops should also recruit them, emulating state militia and Revolutionary War volunteer recruitment efforts.[55]

Rather than create a new set of soldiers, the second plan Monroe advocated relied on existing militia units. All free males in the militia between the ages of 18-25, 25-32, and 32-45 would be divided into groups ("classes") and the President would be granted authority to call any of these groups into services in times of national "exigencies" for a two-year period. Monroe also proposed to increase the land bounty these recruits would receive from 160 acres to two hundred and sixty, and to stipulate that any five men could pay a substitute to fight in the war. On the other hand, he feared the latter provision would discourage volunteers for the comparatively meager federal grants, "by the high bounty which some of the wealthy might give. The

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consequence would probably be very injurious, as it is not believed that any great number could be raised in this mode." Thus, although Monroe was willing to let the rich buy their way out of the war, he thought the repercussions would discourage volunteers from accepting the less lucrative national bounties.

Monroe remained most enthusiastic about the draft plan. Noting that the states had used it to recruit their Continental quotas during the Revolution, "with decisive effect," he evoked memories of the Revolutionary Continentals, composed of the poorest young adults in the society, who nevertheless had fought for the people's freedom.[56] He predicted that the first plan "will be found more efficient against the enemy, less expensive to the public, and less burthensome on our fellow-citizens."[57]

Nevertheless, despite his preference for conscription, Monroe rendered homage to the classical, pro-militia values he had expounded in the past. Refusing to reject militia service for the war's duration, he insisted It would still be needed "for important aids, especially in cases of sudden invasion." Thus he advocated extending the militia's period of service and classifying its troops according to age. He believed that the perpetuation of the militia would reveal to the British enemy national unity and patriotism, and he would crumble at the mere thought of confronting this wellspring of republican virtue! *"The proof which it [the militia] would afford of the impregnable strength of the country, of the patient virtue and invincible spirt of the people, would admonish the enemy how vain and fruitless his invasions must be, and might dispose him to a speedy, just, and honorable peace."*[58] Like the

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Old Revolutionary he now was, Monroe always had the condition of public and private "virtue" on his mind. Although this noun was now seldom used to describe Americans, grown increasingly committed to individualism and selfish enterprise, Monroe had been conditioned by his upbringing during the first war with Great Britain to place the conflict in these terms.[59]

Thus Monroe once again professed sympathy toward the militia. Perhaps he thought this the best way to gain passage of his national military program. More likely, his statements were sincere. Unfortunately, he thereby gave ammunition to his numerous critics, disposed to associate military professionalism with moral decay, political corruption, and governmental instability, to manipulate his effusive rhetoric to deny the need for a massive regular force.[60] After noting the "very important services already rendered by the militia," he returned to his threat to invade Canada, declaring, "It cannot be doubted that it is in their [United States'] power to expel the British forces from this continent, should the British Government, by persevering in its unjust demands, make that an object with the American people." He seemed confident of the outcome. "Against our united and vigorous efforts, the resistance of the enemy will soon become light and feeble," he predicted. "Success in every fair and honorable claim is within our easy grasp."[61]

Exaggerating the success of American arms, Secretary of War Monroe, as Republicans were fond of doing, blended together themes of military prowess or *virtù*, as Machiavelli called it, with the "virtue" of self-sacrificing, civic spirited American

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freedom fighters. "The effort which we have already made has attracted the attention and extorted the praise of other nations," he asserted. "Already have most of the absurd theories and idle speculations on our system of government been refuted and put down." The war had served as a salutary barometer for the viability of American republicanism, and therefore of republicanism in general, against "absurd" European theories that republics could not last and must dissolve into monarchy after an interim of anarchy.

Monroe thought Americans' perseverance against mighty Britain this time around had lifted the republic to the status of a full-fledged world power, on a par with European nations. "*We are now felt and respected as a Power,*" he proclaimed, "*and it is the dread which the enemy entertains of our vast resources and growing importance, that has induced him to push the war against us, after its professed objects had ceased.*" But, he warned, only a strong peacetime conscript Army could preserve America's status as an emerging superpower. "Success by the discomfiture of his [the enemy's] schemes, and the attainment of an honorable peace, will place the United States on higher ground, in the opinion of the world, than they have held at any former period," he predicted.[62] Yet his demand for a peacetime conscripted forty-thousand-man army was unprecedented. Indeed, in the course of the war Congress had authorized only fifty-eight thousand, and a mere one-third that number had ever enlisted.[63] On the other hand, Monroe believed that a 100,000 man army would lead the U. S. to victory in the war, foreshadowing America's emergence to the heights of

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national security and world power:

> Success by the discomfiture of his [the enemy's] schemes, and the attainment of an honorable peace, will place the United States on higher ground, in the opinion of the world, than they have held at any former period. In future wars, their commerce will be permitted to take its lawful range unmolested. Their remonstrances to foreign Governments will not again be put aside unheeded.[64]

By creating a stronger military presence, Monroe declared, future Americans would be able to enforce freedom of trade and promote national honor and prosperity. His message eloquently concluded: "Our union, founded on interest and affection, will have acquired new strength by the proof it will have afforded of the important advantages attending it. Respected abroad, and happy at home, the United States will have accomplished the great objects for which they have so long contended. As a nation, they will have little to dread; as a people, little to desire."[65] Despite his militant rhetoric, Monroe, unlike his friend Jefferson (judging from the latter's famous "empire for liberty" letter to James Madison in 1809), did not wish to permanently add Canada to the Union. In his message, Monroe merely proposed to "expel British forces from this continent" as a temporary war measure.[66]

In sum, Monroe thought he was fighting the Revolution all over again. During that conflict, Congress had its own army, Washington's Continental troops, although it lacked any power to draft men other than to requisition them from each state, organized in State Lines. Various other state corps served in the War for Independence, along with militia.[67] Although Monroe was undoubtedly aware that his request for

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conscription was more extreme than the ineffectual Continental requisition system, he must have had the old Congress's problems in mind when he thought the draft would "be found more efficient against the enemy, less expensive to the public, and less burthensome [sic] on our fellow-citizens" than militia service. Monroe depicted his conscription program as similar to the recruiting done by Continental officers during the Revolution, even though most of the levies were raised by state and local officers and committees. The national government had no coercive powers and a Continental officer who failed to convince enough men to volunteer under him simply had nobody to command. Monroe himself had experienced this kind of disdain when, having served as Lord Stirling's aide de camp in the Battle of Monmouth, he returned to Virginia in 1779 in an attempt to raise volunteers for an independent field command. Not enough men would agree to serve under the frustrated young would-be lieutenant colonel, and he ended up studying law under Governor Thomas Jefferson's tutelage instead.[68]

Nevertheless, without specifying which government had exerted the recruiting power during that now legendary conflict (most of his audience was too young to remember the Revolution's specific details, including Giles himself), Monroe lent his national, centralizing plan the imprimatur of the spirit of 1776: "It has likewise the venerable sanction of our Revolution. In that great struggle, resort was had to this expedient for filling the ranks of our regular army, and with decisive effect."[69]

By the end of the war, Monroe was convinced that federal troops should bear a greater share of the burden of Virginia's defense. Although he served as secretary of

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war in Madison's Cabinet during the last months of the conflict, Monroe could exert little influence on congressional actions regarding payment of state troops.

Monroe showed his increasing nationalism in his attitude toward Virginia's defense. A letter to Governor Wilson Cary Nicholas admitted the justice of the governor's complaints that the War Department was not doing enough to defend Richmond and the Northern Neck. "A regular [federal] force is undoubtedly the best adapted to the defence of our Sea-board," he observed. "It is the most efficient and economical, and likewise the least burthensome in other respects to the people. Equally true is it, that according to the principles of our Constitution, this force ought to be raised and supported by the General Government."[70]

Monroe awaited the decision of Congress on measures relating to the defense of the states. But he regretted that thus far the "monied part" of the citizenry, dubious of public credit, had been reluctant to lend funds to the government. Consequently, the president had been unable to increase the size of the army and relieve the states of their military burden. Monroe would have liked to nationalize state troops. As he put it, "The means adverted to are local corps to be raised by the United States for different terms of service, and an authority to accept and take into the service of the United States, corps which may be raised by the States individually, and likewise to employ volunteer corps to serve when they may be required." While he hoped that Congress would vote to augment the Army sufficiently by "voluntary enlistment," he was willing to propose conscription acts if necessary. He concluded that the possibility of British

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raids on Norfolk and Richmond made it dangerous for him to honor Governor Nicholas's request to disband the militia.[71]

Though recognizing the national government's duty to pay and provision militia in wartime, Monroe feared that the War Department might lack funds for this purpose. While he lamented that the people did not want to lend the government money, he denied that this reflected negatively on their public spirit and patriotism. "The resources of the country are abundant, the virtue and patriotism of our fellow-citizens unequalled; but until a system of finance, inspiring general confidence, is adopted, the want of money will be experienced," he explained. He urged Governor Nicholas to convince Virginia bankers to lend the national government money that it would use to pay troops "employed in the defence of the State."[72]

Advising Governor Nicholas to raise state militia to serve under the terms of a law authorizing the president to accept up to forty thousand volunteers for the war's duration, to be paid by the national government from the outset, Monroe thought it would "be of essential advantage to the United States as well as to this State [Virginia] that the President should have power to accept such force," transferring it to the service of the United States. Aware that his state had already agreed to raise double its quota of war volunteers on condition that the United States Government provide for their payment, Monroe concluded that "the public interest may be essentially advanced" by President Madison's concurrence in this arrangement. Monroe objected to excessive governmental frugality in wartime. "Neither on principle or with a view to economy is it

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necessary, or advisable, to reject other troops, with a view to obtain the service from the militia alone," he observed. "It is on the contrary eminently important to the public interest, to obtain the service within the proper limit from that species of force in each state (the national regular force being inadequate) which can and will perform it with the greatest promptitude, willingness, effect, & with the least expence."[73]

Obviously eager to conciliate both state and national governments, Monroe nevertheless maintained that the latter should possess superior military authority--which of course extended to paying military expenses. The wartime emergency had overridden his former Antifederalist objections to a strong national army, and anything like them is absent from his correspondence at this time.

Indeed, Monroe--naturally enough, since he was now secretary of war--admitted a preference for national troops. "There is no doubt that this service can be best rendered...by a regular force," he said.[74] Yet he was not averse to employing state volunteers in emergencies (such as the defenses of Norfolk and Richmond) when regular forces were unavailable. Moreover, he favored giving the President extensive powers to incorporate this force of state volunteers into the national army. *He now held nationalist, but not militarist views.* Should the state volunteers be willing to serve for a longer period than militia, they would be desirable substitutes for militia. By this means, Monroe pointed out, President Madison might immediately activate the "extra portion of force contemplated to be raised by Virginia, under that part of the act relating to volunteers," even without additional congressional legislation.[75]

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Discouraged by the ineptitude of American forces during the War of 1812, Monroe became an advocate of a stronger national army and a stronger central government. Regretting the drastic cutbacks Congress had immediately imposed on the army at war's end, he wrote, "The peace has given to our military arrangements a new direction, which has I fear been carried too far." Nevertheless, he was optimistic about future correction of the "evil" of military weakness. "In any event we ought so to fortify the coast, as to put our citizens in a state of greater security, in the event of another war," he advised. "It would be the surest measure to prevent one."[76] No longer did Monroe fear a standing army. As long as Jeffersonians were in power, he thought they might deter the despots of Europe from bullying his country. Since he trusted his own party to use military power in a rational manner that would not adversely affect the people's freedom, he could now praise a standing army's virtues without fear.

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CHAPTER 7: NOTES

1. For Monroe's support of greater congressional power over foreign trade, see e.g., Frederick W. Marks III, Independence on Trial: Foreign Affairs and the Making of the Constitution (Baton Rouge and London, 1973), 80-87, 92, 146. On regional confederacies, Jackson T. Main, The Antifederalists: Critics of the Constitution, 1781-1788 (Chapel Hill, 1961), 282-83; for Monroe's opposition to direct taxes, see Jonathan Elliot, ed., Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution (5 vols., Philadelphia, 1891), III, 217.

2. Elliot, ed., Debates in the State Conventions, III, 218.

3. Harry Ammon, James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York, 1971), 90-91, 109.

4. On the debate over civil versus military control of the armed forces, see Lawrence D. Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982), and Charles Royster, Light-Horse Harry Lee and the Legacy of the American Revolution (New York, 1981), 217-220.

5. Governor James Monroe, Circular Letter to the Commandants of Militia Regiments, Richmond, Aug. 1, 1800, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories (microfilm), reel one, frame 375.

6. Monroe to Thomas Smith, May 31, 1800, ibid., frames 339-344.

7. Monroe to Thomas Smith, May 31, 1800, ibid., frame 339. For Monroe's assertion of executive authority, see Ammon, Monroe, 174-178.

8. Monroe to Thomas Smith, May 31, 1800, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories.

9. On the debate between historians who emphasize the Jeffersonian Republicans' devotion to the commonwealth ("community") and those who stress their adherence to what a later generation would call "rugged individualism," see J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975); Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca, 1978); Banning,"Jeffersonian Ideology Revisited: Liberal and Classical Ideas in the Early Republic," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 43 (1986), 3-19; Drew McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy

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in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill, 1980), for adherents of the first interpretation; and Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984); Appleby, "Republicanism in Old and New Contexts," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 43 (1986), 20-34; John P. Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics (New York, 1984); and Doron Ben-Atar, The Origins of Jeffersonian Commercial Policy and Diplomacy (New York, 1993), for the latter viewpoint.

10. Monroe to Thomas Smith, May 31, 1800, Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1, frames 340-341.

11.Ibid.

12. Monroe to Thomas Smith, May 31, 1800, Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1, frames 343-344.

13. Ibid., frame 341.

14. Monroe to Colonel Thomas Minor, June 13, 1800, Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1. For a similar assertion of executive prerogative, see Monroe to Colonel Littleberry Mosby, Powhatan, June 18, 1800, ibid., frame 356.

15. Monroe to Thomas Newton, Norfolk, July 28, 1800, ibid., frame 365. For Monroe's concern that ships bound from Norfolk to Richmond be carefully inspected to guard against yellow fever, see Monroe to Dr. John Foshee, Aug. 11, 1800, ibid., frame 379.

16. Monroe to Colonel Thomas Newton, Aug. 25, 1800, ibid., frame 380.

17. Monroe to the state attorney general, Sept. 3, 1800, ibid., frame 393.

18. Monroe to Samuel J. Fauntleroy, Aug. 25, 1800, Monroe to Richard Bland Lee, Aug. 25, 1800, ibid., frame 381.

19. Monroe to Mayor of Petersburg, Aug. 31, 1800, and Monroe, General orders, Sept. 12, 1800, Executive Letter Books and Papers, James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1, frames 389-390, 409-410.

20. Monroe to Jefferson, June 15, 1801, in Hamilton, ed., Writings, III, 292-95. See Douglas G. Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion (Chapel Hill, 1993), 112-13, 142-43, 147, 149-60, for Monroe's efforts to achieve legislative enactment of transportation and colonization of slave convicts and eventually free

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blacks as well.

21. Monroe, General Orders, Richmond, Sept. 25, 1800, in Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1, frames 423-424 (italics in the original). On classical republican ideas of public and private virtue, see McCoy, Elusive Republic, 68-80; and a recent work that discusses this subject at length, Ann Fairfax Withington, Toward a More Perfect Union: Virtue and the Formation of American Republics (New York, 1991). See also Paul A. Rahe, Republics Ancient and Modern: Classical Republicanism and the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1992); Barry Schwartz, George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol (New York, 1987), 201-207; and Roger H. Brown, Redeeming the Republic: Federalists, Taxation, and the Origins of the Constitution (Baltimore, 1993), chap. 11.

22. On the recognition by political elites of the influence of public opinion, see Joanne B. Freeman, "Slander, Poison, Whispers, and Fame: Jefferson's 'Anas' and Political Gossip in the Early Republic," Journal of the Early Republic, 15 (Spring 1995), 25-57. Jefferson succinctly expressed his party's view of public opinion. "The basis of our governments being the opinion of the people, the very first object should be to keep that right," he wrote in 1787, "and were it left to me to decide whether we should have a government without newspapers, or newspapers without a government, I should not hesitate a moment to prefer the latter." Jefferson to Edward Carrington, Jan. 16, 1787, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 411-412. For Jean-Jacques Rousseau's use of "fear and shame" (emulating Plato's Republic) in preserving the individual's virtue, see Madeleine B. Ellis, Rousseau's Socratic Aemilian Myths: A Literary Collation of Emile and the Social Contract (Columbus, Ohio, 1977), 281-82. In one of his most famous essays, David Hume said, "As FORCE is always on the side of the governed, the governors have nothing to support them but opinion. It is therefore, on opinion only that government is founded." "Of the First Principles of Government," quoted in Garry Wills, Cincinnatus: George Washington and the Enlightenment (Garden City, 1984), 99.

23. Monroe to Capt. William Giles, Sept. 28, 1800, and to Major Robert Quarles, Oct. 3, 1800; to the Commandants of the 12th and 38th Regiments, Oct. 3, 1800, to Colonel John Mays, Oct. 3, 1800, all in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1.

24. Monroe to Captain Robert S. Hipkins, Sept. 30, 1800, ibid.

25. Monroe to William Bernard, Esq., Port Royal, Oct. 1800, ibid.

26. Monroe to Colonel Cheatham, Chesterfield, Oct. 4, 1800, James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 1.

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27. Monroe to Archibald Stuart, March 14, 1792, Monroe Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

28. Good discussions of Monroe's proposals to Congress in October 1814, when he briefly served as secretary of war as well as acting secretary of state, are Ammon, Monroe, 338-340, and Cress, Citizens in Arms, 173.

29. Secretary of State Monroe to Governor James Barbour, June 23, 1812, Executive State Papers, Virginia State Archives, in Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12. In Dec. 1812 Monroe was appointed acting secretary of war, a post he held until Feb. 1813. Ammon, Monroe, 315-317.

30. Monroe to Governor Barbour, Oct. 23, 1813, Executive Papers, Virginia State Archives.

31. Davis R. Dewey, The Financial History of the United States (12th ed., New York, 1934), 112, 140-41.

32. Monroe to Governor Barbour, Oct. 23, 1813, Executive Papers, Virginia State Archives; Monroe to Governor Wilson Cary Nicholas, Jan. 4, 1815, ibid. (also printed in H. W. Flournoy, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers (Richmond, 1892), X, 413-414.

33. Monroe to --, July 22, 1815, James Monroe Papers, University of Virginia. A recent study of conditions in Dartmoor is Robin F. A. Fabel, "Self-Help in Dartmoor: Black and White Prisoners in the War of 1812," Journal of the Early Republic, 9 (Summer 1989), 165-190.

34. Monroe to [Governor Barbour?], June 17, 1814, "Letters of James Monroe," in Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine, 4 (April 1923), 408.

35. Biographical Directory of the American Congress, 1774 to 1996 (Washington, D.C.: Congressional Quarterly, 1997), 1539.

36. Monroe's Report to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Oct. 17, 1814, in American State Papers: Class 5: Military Affairs, I, 514-517.

37. Ibid., 514.

38. Ibid., 515.

39. Thomas Worthington Diary, Library of Congress, entry for Sept. 26, 1814, and William Jones to Alexander James Dallas, Sept. 15, 1814, Dallas Papers, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, both quoted in J. C. A. Stagg, Mr. Madison's War: Politics, Diplomacy and Warfare in the Early Republic,

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1783-1830 (Princeton, 1983), 431.

40. Ibid., 515.

41. See ibid., 278, 282, 313, 468.

42. Monroe to Major General Jacob Brown, Feb. 10, 1815, printed in full in C. P. Stacey, ed., "An American Plan for a Canadian Campaign: Secretary James Monroe to Major General Jacob Brown, February, 1815," American Historical Review, 46 (Jan. 1941), 348-58, quote at 356-57. See also Stagg, Mr. Madison's War, 466-67.

43. On Adam Smith's belief that in a constitutional monarchy, standing armies best protected the people from invaders, see Lawrence Delbert Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982), 27-33, 176; Richard B. Sher, "Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and the Problem of National Defense," Journal of Modern History, 61 (June 1989), 240-68; and, for a slightly different view, Donald Winch, Adam Smith's Politics: A Study in Historiographic Revision (Cambridge, 1978), chap. 5.

44. Reginald C. Stuart, War and American Thought: From the Revolution to the Monroe Doctrine (Kent, Oh., 1982), chap. 6, "The Limited War of 1812," downplays the war's violence, arguing that Americans were ruthless only toward the Native American tribes: "The dual tradition of limited war between European antagonists and unlimited warfare between Europeans and natives persisted" (141).

45. Monroe's Report to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Oct. 17, 1814, in ASP: Military Affairs, I, 515.

46. Ibid.

47. Ibid., 515.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., 515 (Italics mine).

50. On this topic, see Charles Lofgren, "War-Making Under the Constitution: The Original Understanding," Yale Law Journal, 81 (Jan. 1972), 672-702, who agrees with Monroe's view.

51. Monroe's Report, Oct. 17, 1814, ASP: Military Affairs, I, 515. In fact, at least thirty of the 55 delegates to the Constitutional Convention had performed military service during the Revolution, and

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"half that number... were hardened veterans." Clinton Rossiter, 1787: The Grand Convention (New York, 1966), 145.

52. Although critical of what they consider the Francophile nature of Jeffersonian foreign policy, Peter S. and Nicholas Onuf, Federal Union, Modern World: The Law of Nations in an Age of Revolutions, 1776-1814 (Madison, 1993), 156-82, nevertheless conclude on the basis of Republicans' response to the War of 1812 and their effusive praise of federal republics that they were the more patriotic and nationalistic of the two parties.

53. Monroe to the Senate Committee on Military Affairs, Oct. 17, 1814, American State Papers: Military Affairs, I, 516.

54. Ibid.

55. Ibid.

56. See Robert A. Gross, The Minutemen and Their World (New York, 1976); Robert A. Middlekauf, "Why Men Fought in the Revolution," in David D. Hall et al., eds., Saints and Revolutionaries (New York, 1984); Charles Royster, A Revolutionary People at War (Chapel Hill, 1979), Appendix; Lawrence D. Cress, Citizens in Arms (Chapel Hill, 1982); John Shy, A People Numerous and Armed (New York, 1978); Mark V. Kwasny, Washington's Partisan War, 1775-1783 (Kent, Ohio, 1996).

57. Monroe's Message to Senate Military Affairs Committee, Oct. 17, 1814, in American State Papers: Military Affairs, I, 517.

58. Ibid. (Italics mine).

59. Steven Watts, The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820 (Baltimore, 1987), 73-74, 102-103, 162-64, 219-20.

60. See Carleton B. Smith, "Congressional Attitudes Towards Military Preparedness During the Monroe Administration," Military Affairs, 40 (Feb. 1976), 22-25.

61. Monroe's Message to the Senate Military Affairs Committee, Oct. 17, 1814, American State Papers: Military Affairs, I, 517.

62. Ibid. (Italics mine).

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63. Lawrence Delbert Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982), 173.

64. Monroe's Message to Senate Military Affairs Committee, Oct. 17, 1814, American State Papers: Military Affairs, I, 517.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid.; Stuart, War and American Thought, 133-36. J. C. A. Stagg, "James Madison and the Coercion of Great Britain: Canada, the West Indies, and the War of 1812," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 38 (Jan. 1981), 3-34, implies that Madison and Monroe wanted to permanently annex Canada in order to deprive the British Empire of a major source of timber and naval stores for its fleet and of grain for its West Indian colonies, thereby making it more dependent on the United States and reducing the likelihood it would violate American rights in the future. Jefferson looked forward to war with Great Britain, thinking it offered the U. S. an opportunity to annex Canada and add it to its "empire for liberty... and I am persuaded no constitution was ever before so well calculated as ours for extensive empire and self government." Jefferson to Madison, April 27, 1809, in James Morton Smith, ed., The Republic of Letters: The Correspondence Between Thomas Jefferson and James Madison, 1776-1826, (3 vols., New York, 1995), III, 1586.

67. Fred Anderson Berg, Encyclopedia of Continental Army Units (Harrisburg, Pa., 1972).

68. Ammon, Monroe, 26-30.

69. Monroe's Message to Senate Military Affairs Committee, Oct. 17, 1814, American State Papers: Military Affairs, I, 517.

70. Secretary of War Monroe to Governor Wilson Cary Nicholas, Jan. 4, 1815, Executive Papers, Box 220, Virginia State Archives, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12. This letter may also be found in Calendar of Virginia State Papers, X, 412-414.

71. Ibid.

72. Ibid. See also Calendar of Virginia State Papers, X, 414.

73. Monroe to Governor Nicholas, Feb. 4,1815, Executive Papers, Box 220, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12.

74. Ibid.

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75. Ibid.

76. Monroe to Dr. Walter Jones, May 28, 1815, Monroe Papers, Virginia Historical Society, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12.

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CHAPTER 8.
JAMES MONROE, DOMESTIC FACTIONALISM, AND "FOREIGN INFLUENCE": FROM THE 1790'S TO THE MONROE DOCTRINE.

From the beginning of his service in the Confederation Congress, when he was exposed to the mockery of sectional equity epitomized by the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty negotiations (1785-1786), Monroe was acutely aware that many members were motivated by subservience to state and sectional interests--and even worse, to the malign forces of "foreign influence." These fears comprised a prominent feature of his Weltanschauung for the remainder of his years in public life. His officeholding encompassed service as a U.S. senator from 1790-1794; American minister to Paris from 1794-1796 and again in 1803; U.S. minister to Great Britain and Spain from 1803-1807; Secretary of State from 1811-1815; and President from 1817-1825, in addition to other posts. His dread that, overwhelmed by the centrifugal forces of domestic factionalism and "foreign influence," the United States would meet the same sad fate as the ancient republics, which he had eloquently expressed at the Virginia ratifying convention in June 1788, lent impetus to his leadership of the Republican party from the 1790s till his retirement from the Presidency. It was an integral part of his

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republican ideology and the "paranoid style" which recent historians have traced to Real Whig theory of the eighteenth century.[1]

During the 1790s, Monroe's leadership of the Republican party in the Senate was spurred by anxiety that the Hamiltonian Federalists comprised a "monarchical" party whose first loyalty was to Great Britain. He feared they sought to convert the United States into a royal government aligned with the former Mother Country against the United States' ally, France, which in 1792 had become a republic. In August 1793, when Hamilton and other New York Federalists tried to stir up popular hostility to Edmond Charles ("Citizen") Genet, the first minister the Republic sent to the United States, Monroe anxiously considered it a plot by "the monarchy party among [us]" to "seize new ground whereon to advance their fortunes." "This party...are labouring to turn the popularity of this respectable citizen against the French revolution, thinking to separate us from France & pave the way for an unnatural connection with Great Britain," he warned. "Put the friends of republican government on their guard."[2]

For Monroe and his allies, the Federalists comprised an illegitimate faction manipulated by the same devious "foreign influence" he had inveighed against in 1788 at the state ratifying convention. An assiduous party builder during the 1790s, Monroe was inspired by a conviction that the Federalists were a "tory," "royalist," and "Anglophile" party that might be more loyal to British interests and institutions than those of the American republic.[3]

It was, therefore, not surprising that in 1801, at the height of the crisis precipitated by the tie vote between Jefferson and Aaron Burr in the electoral college, Monroe opposed making concessions to the Federalists to secure Jefferson's election. In 1788 he had fearfully

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envisioned the time when the House of Representatives would decide the presidential contest, and warned that foreign and domestic factions would determine the issue. The moment he had then anxiously predicted had now arrived. He did not want to convert the Federalists into heroes by acceding to their unreasonable demands. "There is no political error more to be avoided, than a step which gives cause to suspect an accommodation with that party, or coloring to an opinion it is feared or respected," he wrote Jefferson. "Such a step would shake the republican ranks, & prove the foundation of a growing interest to its antagonist." Believing that Jefferson's victory showed that "the royalist faction has lost deservedly the publick confidence," Monroe was confident that "it will sink under its own weight if we leave it to itself." He eschewed Republican cooperation with the Federalist party, concerned that, "in a spirit of accommodation it will daily gain ground, be called a Spartan band & the republican cause [would] be overwhelmed."[4]

Insisting that "a compromise of any kind would have ruined the republican interest of our country," Monroe urged Jefferson to withhold promises to retain Federalists in office or to adopt their funding, foreign policies, and naval program in exchange for support against Burr in the House of Representatives. Monroe regarded them as diehard monarchists, a "tory faction" that must be resisted. "Be assured, with the leaders of the royalist party you will never have a friend," he told Jefferson. "With principles so opposite, it is impossible you should." On the other hand, he thought that if the Republicans were "wise, firm, yet moderate," they would attract the allegiance of the Federalist rank-and-file. He made it clear that he regarded the Jeffersonians as the American, democratic party, while the Federalists were the aristocratic

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party dedicated to perpetuating foreign influence: "There is a conflict of principle & either democracy--that is the government of the people--or royalty must prevail." In keeping with the views he expounded at the ratifying convention thirteen years earlier, Monroe feared that their declining popularity would tempt the Federalists to seek foreign assistance in the future:

> It is a desperate party because it knows it has lost the publick confidence [he wrote]. It will intrigue with foreign powers & therefore ought to be watched.[5]

With such a negative attitude toward the Federalists, it was not likely that, once elected president in 1816, Monroe would attempt to appease them in order to gain their support. Although his first administration later gained a reputation as an "era of good feeling" (a metaphor coined by the Boston Columbian Centinel, a Federalist newspaper), Monroe did little to conciliate the opposition, which he continued to regard as illegitimate and prone to conspire with the British, as it had done during the War of 1812. Ironically, General Andrew Jackson, the Hero of New Orleans, who in later years denounced his wealthy, nefarious Whig opponents as "federalist" exploiters of the people, urged him to appoint Federalists to office immediately after his election. He recommended William Drayton, a South Carolina Federalist, for secretary of war. "Now is the time to exterminate that Monster called Party spirit," Jackson said. "Consult no party in your choice."[6]

Monroe's reply was graciously uncooperative. Agreeing with Jackson "decidedly in the principle that the Chief Magistrate of the Country ought not to be the head of a party, but of the nation itself," Monroe admitted that "the members of the federal party who left it in the late war, and gallantly served their Country in the field, have given proofs of patriotism and

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attachment to free government that entitle them to the highest confidence." Yet Monroe was convinced that some Federalists had long contemplated the overthrow of the government, even during the 1780s. He linked them to the later Federalist party. "We have heretofore been divided into two great parties," he pointed out. "That some of the leaders of the federal party entertained principles unfriendly to our system of government I have been thoroughly convinced; and that they meant to work a change in it, by taking advantage of favorable circumstances, I am equally satisfied." Reminiscing about his experiences as a member of Congress during the Confederation and as a U.S. senator during the 1790s, where he observed "indications" of monarchism in Federalist behavior, he regarded it as "an epoch at which the views of men were most likely to unfold themselves, as, if anything favorable to a higher toned government was to be obtained, that was the time."

Monroe thought the Federalists' opposition to the French Revolution demonstrated their monarchical sympathies. Retrospectively, by contrast with his suspicions of Washington during the late 1790s, he concluded that the President's resistance had deterred their making a "daring attempt" to overthrow republicanism: "I thought that Washington was opposed to their schemes, and not being able to take him with them that they were forced to work, in regard to him, under-handed, using his name and standing with the nation, as far as circumstances permitted, to their purposes." The other major deterrent was the Jeffersonian "opposition, which was carried on with great firmness, [and] checked the career of their party, and kept it within moderate limits." Though missing from the era's official documents, Monroe said, evidence of the anti-republican conspiracy might be found "in debate, and in society."[7]

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The new president wanted the celebrated general to know that the plot was no product of his imagination. "I am satisfied however that sufficient proof exists, founded on facts and opinions of distinguished individuals, which became public, to justify that which I had formed," he said. Though he later refused to support Jackson's presidential candidacy, Monroe credited his victories with having "checked the opposition, if they have not overwhelmed it." Even at this late date, Monroe was bitter toward the Federalists. "The contest between the parties never ceased, from its commencement to the present time, nor do I think that it can be said now to have ceased," he observed, reminding Jackson, "You saw the height to which the opposition was carried in the late war; the embarrassment it gave to the government, the aid it gave to the enemy."[8]

Monroe hoped that the Hartford Convention fiasco had demoralized the Federalists. "I may add that the daring measure of the Hartford Convention, which unfolded views which had been long before entertained but never so fully understood, contributed also in an eminent degree to reduce the opposition to its present state." He felt that, as the new Republican president, he possessed a mandate from the voters to deal firmly with the Federalists. Nevertheless, he might choose them to "fill vacancies" in the government.[9]

Although he remained haunted by the belief that a resurrection of the Federalists might restore foreign influence, Monroe's final words were reassuring. "My candid opinion is that the dangerous purposes which I have adverted to were never adopted, if they were known, especially in their full extent, by any large portion of the federal party: but were confined to certain leaders and they principally to the eastward." Praising the "manly and patriotic conduct"

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of Federalists in the other states, he thought most of them were loyal to the Union. On the other hand, southern and eastern Federalists had always been linked "together as a party," so, despite their recent pronounced differences, "the distinction between republicans and federalist, even in the Southern and Middle and Western states, has not been fully done away." Thus he did not intend to offer many positions to Federalists, especially since this might alienate Republicans. Justifying his position, Monroe rhetorically asked: "To give effect to free government and secure it from future danger, ought not its decided friends, who stood firm in the day of trial, to be principally relied on?" He refused to encourage Federalist extremists to believe that their role at the Hartford Convention was forgiven, and thereby "lessen the ignominy" they deserved.[10]

But Monroe speculated that he might be more lenient in the future. "My impression is that the Administration should rest strongly on the republican party, indulging towards the other a spirit of moderation, and evincing a desire to discriminate between its members, and to bring the whole into the republican fold as quick[ly] as possible." Thus his goal was to eliminate the Federalists, not reconcile them. He denied the need for an opposition party, which some "distinguished men" now thought legitimate, in order to "keep union and order in the republican ranks. <u>This is not my opinion</u>." Thus Monroe continued to adhere to the classical republican idea that contending parties were illegitimate and threatened representative democracy's survival. He criticized the ancient republics and Britain's constitutional monarchy for permitting the existence of rival parties:

That the ancient republics were always divided into parties; that the

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> English government is maintained by opposition, that is by the existence of a party in opposition to the Ministry, I well know. But I think that the cause of these divisions is to be found in certain defects of those governments, rather than in human nature; and that we have happily avoided those Defects in our system.[11]

Monroe was probably referring to his belief that, in contrast to the Old World, there was no class conflict in the United States. Convinced, like his predecessors--Adams, Jefferson, and Madison--that social and economic strife was the main source of partisan divisions, Monroe differed from them in believing that parties were not rooted in "human nature" and would inevitably disappear if the government pursued the right policies.[12]

As numerous historians have recently pointed out, it is somewhat misleading to regard Monroe's presidency as an "Era of Good Feelings." In part because he continued to consider the Federalists a potentially disloyal faction amenable to British "influence," Monroe sought to eliminate rather than validate the two-party system. After 1816, the Federalists vanished as a national party, many of their leaders having opportunistically converted to Republicanism, but they were still strong in New England.[13]

From the beginning of his administration, Monroe was committed to eliminating the Federalists. Throughout his presidency he considered the existence of an opposition party a threat rather than a bulwark to the republic's stability. Concerned that Virginia Jeffersonians like Thomas Ritchie, editor of the Richmond Enquirer, would misinterpret his visits to Federalist strongholds like upstate New York and New England in the summer of 1817 as attempts to court their favor, he wrote his son-in-law, George Hay, an influential Virginian, that he did not intend to appoint Federalists to office till he was sure that he had achieved "a union of parties on

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republican principles." He suspected that if he appeared to kowtow to the Federalists by appointing them, they "would infer that it proceeded from fear of them as a party."[14] He remained steadfast in his refusal to conciliate the Federalist leadership, in large measure because the New England states had acted disloyally during the recent War of 1812. Their legislatures had refused to raise troops against the British during the War of 1812; their merchants and farmers had traded with the enemy while the rest of the country was under British blockade, and at the Hartford Convention in December 1814, their delegates, consisting of representatives from Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, and parts of New Hampshire and Vermont, had proposed localistic constitutional amendments and hinted their states would secede from the Union if their demands were not met.[15]

During the dispute in Congress from 1819-1820 over Missouri's admission to the Union as a slave state, Monroe could not help but blame Rufus King and other New York Federalists for exacerbating the crisis. He thought they were irresponsibly using the issue of slavery expansion to revive their party by appealing to northern antislavery sentiment with the demand that Missouri and all future states admitted to the Union must prohibit slavery. Monroe opposed slavery restriction. In accord with his thinking since the 1780s, he suspected the Federalists who wished to block Missouri's admission to the Union as a slave state embodied "a remnant of the policy, which sought in 1786, to shut up the mouth of the Mississippi."[16] He was certain that they were still obsessed with impeding an interstate alliance between South and West that threatened their power within the Union.

Nevertheless, in accord with his conception of the president as an independent

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mediator between conflicting interests, Monroe sought to work out a compromise on this critical issue. Although he often requested advice from his Cabinet, which was composed of the most prominent political figures of the time, before deciding his position, he knew that its members were as violently divided as Congress on the matter, with Secretary of State John Quincy Adams in favor of prohibiting slavery in Missouri and the southern members, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford and Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, equally vehement in favor of slavery. Monroe proposed his own plan in February 1820, advising Virginia's Republican senator James Barbour, president pro tempore of the Senate, to separate the bill admitting Maine as a free state from that receiving Missouri as a slave state and permitting Maine's entry first as a southern gesture encouraging reciprocity by its northern colleagues. This was, as Harry Ammon comments, "a solution maintaining the existing balance of power" between the states which "seemed eminently sound and statesmanlike." Unfortunately, Barbour ignored Monroe's suggestion.[17]

Monroe's efforts on this momentous occasion were hampered by lack of a reliable confidant in Congress; his son-in-law, George Hay, whom he frequently employed as an intermediary, was in Richmond attending the state assembly. Rising to the occasion, however, the President evinced disinterested statesmanship, lending his support to the proposal of slaveholding Senator Jesse B. Thomas of Illinois to exclude slavery from the Louisiana Purchase north of line 36° 30′, with the exception of Missouri itself. This was the famed Missouri Compromise.[18]

Monroe's attempt to rise above partisan conflict nearly led to Virginia's secession.

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Rumors that he supported concessions to the antislavery party and the Thomas amendment aroused the diehard state rights proslavery groups that controlled the Virginia legislature, which was scheduled to renominate Monroe at its caucus on February 9, 1820. Implying that Monroe was motivated by a desire for re-election, the meeting adjourned till February 17 in order to better ascertain his position. "We will show him we are for principles and not men," Charles Yancey, a state legislator, wrote.[19] Defending his acquiescence in the compromise, Senator Barbour reported that he, Monroe, and other southern leaders at the capital had agreed that the only other choice was to "dissolve the Union." Should the northern-dominated Congress bar slavery from all territories as well as Missouri, "the whole territory of the West of the river will be interdicted to us....we have no alternative but disunion." The Missouri Compromise was a preferable option.[20]

Although Monroe had supported the Missouri Compromise, he personally favored the unrestricted expansion of slavery. He regarded the proslavery opponents of compromise as heroic figures, and agreed with their opinion that the Constitution guaranteed slavery entry into national territories. Thus he resignedly wrote Jefferson, who held similar views, "It requires...great moderation, firmness, & wisdom, on the part of those opposed to the restriction, to secure a just result."[21] Monroe apparently felt some misgivings about the wording of the compromise, objecting that it seemed to deprive future states "forever" of the right to institute slavery at some time in the future after they achieved statehood. "Many think that the right [to own slaves] exists in one instance & not in the other," he observed. "I have never known a question so menacing to the tranquility and even the continuance of our Union as the

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present one. All other subjects have given way to it, & appear to be almost forgotten."[22]

In light of Monroe's private conviction that slaveholders should have unimpeded access to the territories, he took particular offense at his state's temporary refusal to renominate him. One New Hampshire congressman said the legislature's reaction against Monroe "show[s] in how little estimation the President is held in his native state," and predicted "they will look out for a new president."[23] Seeking vindication and re-election, Monroe composed a letter to his friend and family physician, Albemarle County assemblyman Dr. Charles Everett, requesting him to circulate it at the next legislative caucus. Insisting that he personally viewed any congressional restriction on the admission of Missouri or future states as unconstitutional, he vigorously espoused views virtually identical to those of the extreme state-righters. He declared that proponents of the gradual emancipation of Missouri's slaves and the prohibition of slavery in later states to be carved from the Louisiana Purchase were covert disunionists.[24] He even hinted that he was willing to acquiesce in Virginia's secession from the Union if the antislavery forces prevailed.

Displaying an uncommon degree of political acumen, Monroe seized the opportunity to proclaim his devotion to slavery and state's rights: "My object has invariably been to defeat the whole [antislavery] measure if possible, & in no event, even to save the Union, to restrain Missouri in admitting her to the Union, or any state hereafter to be admitted in any manner different from the other States." Protesting his loyalty to state interests, he reported his efforts to make Virginia's rejection of compromise known at Washington, including a request that his son-in-law, Virginia legislator George Hay, visit and inform northern congressmen of the

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legislature's opposition to compromise, even the state's readiness to secede. While denying that southern congressmen supported "compromise," he noted that northern "friends of the Union" like Thomas, "who have voted with the Southern members," had devised the agreement as a means "to defeat the object of those who wish to sever" the Union.[25]

Although misleadingly depicting himself and Virginia's senators, James Barbour and James Pleasants, as adamantly opposed to compromise, Monroe did not intend to close the door entirely. Reiterating his claim that Northern Federalists used the slavery issue as a ploy to frustrate the creation of a political alliance between the South and West that could dominate the government, Monroe recalled his struggle to jettison the Jay-Gardoqui Treaty in 1786. Once again it seemed Northerners sought to cheat and deprive the South of its rights for their own advantage.[26]

Attempting to persuade the legislative caucus to renominate him as well as to dramatize his delicate position, Monroe depicted himself as an heroic, embattled defender of Virginia's interests. "A crisis exists of which our friends at Richmond have no conception," he explained. "The danger is more serious than they can readily believe. It is the dormant spirit of 1786 which has been restless under the opening of the Mississippi, & the establishment of States on its waters, that has burst out in a new form & with great force & great support in all the non-Slaveholding States." The goal of the North was to eviscerate the growing power of the West, prevent its alliance with the South, and reduce the number of slave states.[27]

Reviving memories of his earlier struggles to protect Virginia's rights and secure the free navigation of the Mississippi River during his service in the Continental Congress, Monroe

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was dismayed that his state's legislative caucus now rejected him. "If I did my duty then & have done my duty since in promoting that wise & just policy" and upholding Southern interests, "Virginia ought to be the last State who would entertain any doubt as to the future." Then, like independent statesmen since the time of Cincinnatus in ancient Rome, he proclaimed his lack of ambition and indifference toward re-election to the presidency: "With respect to this office, I did nothing to gain it. I will do nothing to keep it, a very slight injury would force me from it."[28] To his son-in-law he likewise asserted: "If the legislature prefer any one else, let them [sic] declare it. My own reputation is always under my own protection."[29]

Monroe's plaintive message had the desired result: On February 17, Virginia's legislative caucus reconvened and chose Monroe's supporters to the electoral college.[30] In March, apparently betraying his state, Monroe signed the Missouri Compromise bills, while eighteen of Virginia's twenty-three congressmen persisted in voting against restricting slavery north of 36°30′.[31] Monroe behaved in a somewhat devious manner in protesting his loyalty to Virginia and slavery in order to gain nomination by the state caucus, while actually intending to support compromise. But he did it in the belief that both compromise and his re-election were essential to the perpetuation of the Union.

Monroe was aware that most members of the antislavery northern majority in the House of Representatives that wished to bar Missouri's admission as a slave state were as implacable as the Virginians. New Englanders admitted that it had become "political suicide for a free-state representative to tolerate slavery beyond its present limits." Even with the Thomas Proviso prohibiting slavery in the rest of the Louisiana Purchase (except for Arkansas) and the

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immediate admission of Maine, free-state congressmen voted 87-14 to deny entry to slaveholding Missouri, which passed by three votes thanks to unanimous southern support. The antislavery Thomas Proviso passed the House easily, receiving the approval of a bare majority of southerners and almost every northern congressman. Southern senators showed greater devotion to the Union, carrying the Compromise against free-state opposition to Missouri's entry. Northern senators rejected the Compromise in toto by a vote of 18-4, while Southerners favored it 20-2. Most of the northerners who voted to admit Missouri were defeated for re-election, their Unionist stand receiving little support from their constituents and the derision of proslavery Virginia congressmen like John Randolph, who immortalized these moderates with the sobriquet, "doughfaces." Nevertheless, President Monroe acclaimed them with wholehearted gratitude. He lauded "the patriotic devotion" of the fourteen northerners "who preferred the sacrifice of themselves at home to...the risk of the Union."[32]

One of the reasons for Monroe's eagerness to compromise was his persisting fear that Federalists from the nonslaveholding states intended to use the Missouri controversy as a vehicle to create a new political party in opposition to his re-election. He even suspected that a few New York and New England Federalist leaders were promoting their states' secession from the Union. Like most Jeffersonian Republicans, Monroe was sure that eastern secessionist schemes were unpopular. But he was convinced that "the parties at the head of it, know that they risk every thing on the result, and have seemed to be resolved to push it to the greatest extremity."[33] Although partialities for foreign powers like Great Britain and France played a less obvious role in American politics in the 1820s than they had in the past, in

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Monroe's mindset they could arise to exacerbate the plague of domestic factionalism, especially in view of increasing agitation by British abolitionist societies.[34]

Despite Monroe's foreboding that the issue of slavery in the territories and states would eventually tear apart the Union, his prediction that public opinion would turn against such restrictions was later proved accurate. Congress in the Kansas-Nebraska Act (1854) and the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott Decision (1857) repealed the Missouri Compromise and asserted that slavery was legal in the territories. For Monroe in 1820, as for Abraham Lincoln forty-two years later, the preservation of the Union was the primary concern. Although not entirely satisfied by the Compromise, Monroe applauded the failure of what he perceived as a Northern Federalist plot to manipulate the crisis, either to gain hegemony over the South and West or to break up the Union. "There is a vast portion of intelligence & virtue in the body of the people, & the bond of Union has heretofore proved sufficiently strong to triumph over all attempts against it," he reassured Jefferson. He was sure "that this effort [of the Federalists to rend the Union] will not be less unavailing."[35]

Nevertheless, remembering recent New England Federalist collusion with the British during the War of 1812, Monroe remained committed to ostracizing domestic parties tainted by "foreign influence." "Surely our government may get on and prosper without the existence of parties," he complained to Madison in 1822. "I have always considered their existence as the curse of the country, of which we had sufficient proof, more especially in the late war." He thought that the disappearance of the Federalist party at the national level and the prevalence of peace and prosperity provided an opportunity "to promote the public good." Confident that

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"public opinion" would eventually demand that Congress put aside its factional controversies, Monroe looked forward to general harmony and the permanent cessation of party strife. He perceived political parties as artificial encumbrances that, unlike the Whigs and Tories in Britain's parliamentary system, were not essential to government operations. Presaging Louis Hartz's concept of the "liberal tradition in America," Monroe stressed that the United States's lack of a feudal heritage precluded the existence of serious socioeconomic and class conflicts (between different social orders) from which party competition invariably evolved: "The causes which exist [for parties] in other countries do not here. We have no distinct orders."[36]

In accordance with his belief that the president "ought not to be the head of a party, but of the nation itself," Monroe conceived of the president as an independent executive who transcended the selfish, short-term interests represented in the national legislature and envisaged the long-range good of society. Despite congressional outrage that he was trampling on the theory of legislative supremacy, Monroe, following the policy of Jefferson and Madison, asserted that a constitutional amendment was required before Congress could undertake federal construction of internal improvements. Finally, when Congress in May 1822 passed a bill authorizing repairs on the National Road and set up a full-scale system of federal toll collection to which Monroe objected, he vetoed the measure as unconstitutional. Once more he recommended that Congress submit a constitutional amendment to the states. Feeling strongly on this issue, he had negatived the bill without consulting his Cabinet.

On the other hand, despite his principled opposition, Monroe actually thought construction of a national system of roads and canals was essential to national security and

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commercial growth. In several cases, he ignored his own tenets in order to advance the progress of transportation. During his final months in office, Monroe signed several laws advancing internal improvements. The most important ones, signed on his last day in office, funded the extension of the National Road from Wheeling in western Virginia to Zanesville in central Ohio and authorized Congress to subscribe $300,000 for the purchase of fifteen hundred shares of stock in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal Company.[37]

Although the National Road Bill of 1822 was the only piece of legislation Monroe vetoed during his two terms, his action conformed to the image of the presidency he had first expounded at the state ratifying convention in 1788: The president ought to employ his veto, acting as representative of all the people, when he believed that factious sectional interests had gained a congressional majority, enabling them to push through legislation adverse to the permanent general interest.[38]

The situation abroad continued to unsettle President Monroe, lending credence to his unvarying albeit vague fear that "foreign influence" threatened to subvert American independence. In the aftermath of Napoleon's fall, the European autocrats created a "Congress system" whereby they formed a cooperative alliance to throttle democratic movements abroad. Ironically, in 1819 Russian Emperor Alexander I invited the United States to join this "Holy Alliance," which, superficially dedicated to promulgating "Christian" precepts, was actually planning military intervention against the new Latin-American republics that had revolted against Spain. Secretary of State Adams noted that the democratic principles of the United States were antithetical to those of the European governments; moreover, while the U.S.

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could theoretically request military assistance from the Alliance if it joined, it might also be required to assist them. In 1820 he instructed the U.S. minister to St.Petersburg, Henry Middleton, that President Monroe was aware that America's "principles...might not harmonize with those of any European member of the board. This consideration alone would be decisive for declining a participation in that league, which is the President's absolute and irrevocable determination, although he trusts that no occasion will present itself rendering it necessary to make that determination known by an explicit refusal."[39] Far from being vague and hypothetical, the danger of "foreign influence" had been thrown literally in Monroe's lap. And he surely wanted to steer clear of it.

Dismayed that the French Army had joined the reaction and intervened militarily to restore Naples' monarchy in 1821, Monroe reluctantly concluded that American democracy must turn inward. Reminiscing about the past, as he often did, he wrote a friend:

> It has been my undeviating object, to support our free government, and all my efforts have been directed to that end. Having been much abroad, and seeing by the opportunities thereby afforded me, many of the dangers to which it is exposed, I have endeavoured to turn the knowledge thus acquired, to the benefit of my country, and to fortify ourselves in those weak points.

Although proud that "our revolution gave birth to that of France," and that its "glorious example" had also "produced the [revolutionary] movement in South America, & is now producing another great movement in Europe," Monroe feared the Old World's frustrated, moribund kings would seek revenge on the United States, the paradigm of revolution, blaming it for leveling their thrones and possibly their heads. "Is it possible that these hereditary

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monarchs, who know that if they lose their power, they will probably lose their lives, since their existence must always menace that of the republicks founded on their overthrow, can behold our government the certain but innocent cause of their peril, with other than a hostile spirit?" he pointed out, his words betraying his anxiety. "Can we doubt that they will omit anything in their power to put it down?"[40]

Giving scope to his obsessive fear of the ultimate form of "foreign influence"--military invasion--Monroe lamented that the French Army had suppressed liberal revolts in Naples and would probably do the same thing in Spain, "commencing perhaps by seduction, & finally, if necessary, resorting to arms." Following success in their adroit diplomatic and military maneuvers, Monroe warned: "Should they crush the spirit in Europe, may they not then look to America? There is much reason to believe that this latter project was under consideration after the overthrow of France," but was postponed as a result of postwar "exhaustion" and the monarchs' illusion that Spain had defeated the rebels.

Convinced that a European invasion of Latin America was imminent, Monroe recommended an increase in the army and navy. "We ought not to hesitate, to make every exertion in our power, to put ourselves in a state of preparation, to meet whatever may occur!" he insisted. He feared that the Holy Alliance, irate at the recent victory of republican rebels in Spain, might even turn their troops against the U.S. in their "despair." Although in the past Monroe and the Democratic-Republican party had advocated military reductions, objecting that armies and navies were expensive, served special interest groups, and might even be turned against the people, the President now found himself championing preparedness: "I never

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doubted that we were secure, that is, that we had within us the means of security, but I have been profoundly impressed with the conviction, that we ought not to consider ourselves exempt from danger, or to omit any of the precautions to guard against it."[41]

His confidence rested on congressional passage of his proposed increases in defense spending. "Admitting that our institutions are secure, & that we are proof against any attack which may be made on us," he cautioned, "yet the difference, between a war for which we may be prepared, & one for which we are not, in the expence, & other greater calamities, even with a single power, is so obvious, that we ought not to hesitate, to make every exertion in our power, to put ourselves in a state of preparedness, to meet whatever may occur." He argued that "a steady, vigorous & persevering" military policy would not only protect the United States, it would also "tend to encourage and animate the friends of liberty in other countries."

Seeking to counter the arguments of John Randolph and other political enemies that he proposed increased funding for the army, the navy, the militia, coastal fortifications, and the West Point Military Academy in order to set himself up as a military dictator, Monroe explained that he had urged Congress to adopt these measures because of his "anxiety" that the monarchs might invade the Americas. Adopting the unusual stance for a Republican of defending military programs, Monroe was reassuring: "From such a scheme of policy, there is no danger to our institutions; properly executed, it is the least, and perhaps the only security for them."[42]

Even to protect America's traditionally inviolable "neutral rights," which were at risk in the current war between Spain and her rebellious colonies and in any future conflict, Monroe

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pointed out the Government required "the means of supporting them" and maintaining its respect at home and abroad: "If we do not claim and support those rights, with firmness, always however with moderation, our government will lose its character, and the confidence of our own people."[43]

However, Congress, seeking to reduce taxes and economize in a time of depression, and heartened by formal ratification in February 1821 of a treaty with Spain which peacefully settled their dispute over Florida by ceding it to the United States, remained unpersuaded by Monroe's fears. An act passed in March 1821, to take effect June 1, had reduced the army's authorized strength by forty percent and slashed funding for military fortifications. Congress did not revise its provisions for the remainder of Monroe's term.[44]

Consequently, aware he lacked military clout, Monroe concluded that the best way to preserve American immunity from "foreign influence" was through isolation from Europe and its interminable wars. He considered the War of 1812 an unfortunate example of how "unprovoked injuries" could unwittingly involve the nation in Europe's strife. He urged Americans to maintain a higher level of military strength, thereby fulfilling their "especial duty" to humanity "to be at all times prepared to defend the rights with which they are blessed." Expounding the concept of the "two spheres," and ignoring the yawning economic chasm posed by African-American slavery, Monroe's annual message to Congress in December 1822 stressed America's divergence from Europe in its lack of class distinctions, which he thought exempted it from the dangers of internal strife: "If a convulsion should take place in any of those [European] countries it will proceed from causes which have no existence and are utterly

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unknown in these States, in which there is but one order, that of the people, to whom the sovereignty exclusively belongs." Monroe was confident that the United States had provided the world "a great example" of "liberty and humanity." It was essential that it preserve its military strength, but only to defend American liberty, as an "example" to "the virtuous and enlightened of every country" rather than engage in struggles for freedom abroad.[45]

The contrast between the economic inequality and special privilege prevailing in Europe and the relative absence of class distinctions and great disparities in wealth in the United States remained in the foreground of Monroe's thought after he left the presidency. His projected history of political thought, The People the Sovereigns, which he composed sporadically in the late 1820s and never completed, stressed the divergence between the United States and the ancient republics. Monroe argued that America's federal republic had eliminated the class conflict that burdened ancient Athens and Rome, giving rise to their violent political factions. He reluctantly admired the communistic elective monarchy of ancient Sparta because "the opposite and conflicting classes of the rich & poor, could not exist, among them." In a sense, Monroe perceived an affinity between the United States and ancient Sparta. He thought political parties were unnecessary in the United States, which lacked either an hierarchical class structure or privileged social orders, which invariably formed parties to represent their special interests. In the long run he was confident that virtuous citizens would eschew parties and elect men of talent and integrity, who, in accord with his conception of the presidency, would rise above personal ambition in their pursuit of the "public good."[46]

Persisting in his defense against charges that he had visited New England in the summer

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of 1817 to conciliate the opposition, Monroe asserted: "No allurement has been offered to the federalists to calm them down into a state of tranquility. None of them have been appointed to high offices, and very few to the lowest." Relieved that the Federalist party had destroyed itself by its disloyalty to the Union during the War of 1812, he denounced those who argued that his trip to New England had revived its power. As he explained to Madison, he had merely conducted the tour to increase support for national defense and improve his health.

After January 1822, Monroe confronted a more specific denunciation of his alleged favoritism to Federalists. At that time, New York's freshman Senator Martin Van Buren, irked that Monroe had not consulted him before acquiescing in Postmaster General Return Jonathan Meigs' appointment of a former Federalist, General Solomon Van Rensselaer, as postmaster of Albany, charged that the President was a party "heretic" and "fusionist" who favored the aristocratic opposition. But Van Buren's anger actually arose from his feeling slighted by the President, and from Van Rensselaer's prominence in the Clintonian party in New York, which was in competition with his "Bucktail" party (later called the "Albany Regency") in the state legislature.[47]

As Monroe had made clear in his letter to Jackson as early as 1816, he had no intention of forgiving the Federalists for their many sins--particularly their amenability to "foreign influence," demonstrated by their Anglophilism during the war--by distributing the plums of office among them. He eschewed "amalgamation" between the parties, and would not appoint Federalists even to "the lowest offices" unless the majority of Republicans favored it. On the contrary, Monroe wished to "draw the people more closely together, and to leave the federal

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leaders without support." He thought their exclusion was "consistent with the principles of our government, and would promote the general welfare." Although it was against his principles to "persecute" the opposition, he clearly thought that political parties had merely hindered the achievement of national unity, stability, and republican "virtue." Thus he concluded his letter to Madison:

> Parties have now cooled down, or rather have disappeared from this great theatre, and we are about to make the experiment whether there is sufficient virtue in the people to support our free republican system of government.[48]

Appropriately, Monroe's fear of "foreign influence," so evident in his comments during the debate on the Constitution, was epitomized during his presidency in the famous "Monroe Doctrine." Following the Congress of Verona in the fall of 1822, the Holy Alliance of European autocracies delegated to France responsibility for suppressing the republican revolt in Spain. In January 1823, at the same time that an unknowing President Monroe recommended American isolation to Congress, France withdrew its ambassador from Madrid. In April 1823, the French Army crossed the Pyrenees and occupied the Spanish capital, and in a few months they had taken over the country and reinstalled the king.[49] As is well-known, in the course of his annual message to Congress in December of that year Monroe warned that the U.S. Government would regard an anticipated revival of European colonization in the Western Hemisphere, in the form of Russian threats to annex the San Francisco Bay area and an effort by the resurrected Spanish monarchy to reconquer its revolted South American colonies with the help of Bourbon France and other members of the "Holy Alliance" of European kingdoms,

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"as dangerous to our peace and safety."[50]

Although they had been struggling against Spain for over a decade, Monroe finally recognized the independence of the Latin-American republics in March 1822. Despite demands by congressional zealots, he had never authorized armed U.S. intervention on behalf of Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia, and the other rebellious provinces, instead maintaining a benevolent neutrality toward them. As Monroe's December 1823 annual message explained: "In the war between those new Governments and Spain we declared our neutrality at the time of their recognition, and to this we have adhered, and shall continue to adhere, provided no change shall occur which, in the judgment of the competent authorities of this Government, shall make a corresponding change on the part of the United States indispensable to their security."[51] Monroe's implication was that the United States would intervene militarily if an armed European alliance resumed Spain's war against her former colonies.

At this juncture, Monroe adhered to a view Jefferson had expressed in 1793, at the outset of the French Revolutionary Wars. Both men were apprehensive during the constitutional debate from 1787-1788 over the likelihood that foreign governments would seek to manipulate the new republic's presidential elections. When Austrian and Prussian armies invaded the French Republic in early 1793, Secretary of State Jefferson worried that they might follow up a victory with a trans-Atlantic expedition against the United States that would abolish the republic. "If great successes were to attend the arms of the kings, it is far from being certain they might not chuse to finish their job completely, by obliging us to change in the form of our government at least, a change which would be grateful to a party here, not numerous, but

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wealthy and influential," he wrote, fearful that his opponent, Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton, whom he suspected of pro-monarchical tendencies, would exploit any catastrophe to seize power.[52]

Appositely, Monroe recalled those revolutionary days in a letter to Jefferson in June 1823 that indicated his concerns during the preparation of his dictum against European intervention in the Americas. Confessing his anxiety about "the critical state of the world," he hoped for the failure of the Bourbon offensive against the Spanish republic and the ensuing overthrow of the French monarchy. Unrealistically taking for granted the existence of a French and Spanish insurrectionary underground, President Monroe wrote, "What the precise organization of the revolutionary force in Spain, is, or whether any is found in France, are facts with [sic] which we have little knowledge. We cannot believe that the revolutionary spirit has become extinct in the latter country, after the astonishing feats performed in favor of liberty by Frenchmen." Regretfully reporting that, instead of assisting the Spanish republic, the British government had recommended Spain establish a house of lords "after its own model," Monroe concluded that the British ministry was "in principle, with the holy Alliance, and is therefore averse, to aid Spain, in any manner, whereby to aid the cause of human rights." Although he thought the British people were pro-democratic, he recalled that Great Britain had led the forces arrayed against the French Revolution; since Russia's government under Alexander I was an anti-republican despotism, he saw no likelihood that the Emperor would help the Spanish republicans.

Revealing a proclivity for political fantasy, Monroe predicted a second French

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revolution that might even overthrow the Austrian monarchy and its famous chancellor, Count Klemens von Metternich. He wrote Jefferson: "Should the French armies be repulsed, and a party in France declare in favor of young Bonaparte, it is probable that Austria would at least be paralized [sic], if she did not take part with him." He regretted that he did not expect a Europe-wide democratic revolution to take place. At this time Monroe even contemplated U.S. military intervention in Spain to restore the republic! Ruefully reminiscing that in the days of the French Revolution the United States, an avaricious neutral eager to gobble up the trade of the warring powers, had eschewed its libertarian responsibilities abroad, he was painfully aware that few democracies now existed overseas:

> Such is the state of Europe, & our relation to it is pretty much the same, as it was, in the commencement of the French revolution. Can we, in any form, take a bolder attitude in regard to it [Europe], in favor of liberty, than we then did? Can we afford greater aid to that cause, by assuming any such attitude, than we now do, by the form of our example?

Having authorized the departure of U.S. envoys to the new republics of Colombia, Argentina, Chile, and Mexico, Monroe informed Jefferson that American relations with them were "very friendly." But, with his unending fear of "foreign influence," he remained skeptical about their future: "The presumption is that the whole country [sic] will settle down under a republican system; but so great is the ignorance of the people & so little is the dependence to be placed on their popular leaders, and active the intrigue of foreign powers, that we cannot pronounce with certainty on the result." He even contemplated withdrawing U.S. diplomats from members of the Holy Alliance as a gesture against absolute monarchy.[53]

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Like Jefferson thirty years earlier, in December 1823 President Monroe was convinced that foreign powers would invade the United States if they succeeded in their anticipated efforts to conquer the new Latin-American states. Ironically, he favored joining the old enemy, Great Britain, in Foreign Secretary George Canning's proposed joint démarche to the royalist powers, France, Prussia, Austria and Russia. Monroe inferred that the British Government had decided that its "indecisive & inactive policy" in Latin America was untenable, and that the Holy Alliance's anticipated intervention against the infant republics, which would disrupt Great Britain's emerging and highly profitable trade with them, must be resisted. "It [Britain] has availed itself of the alledged [sic] project of the allied powers," he wrote his friend Madison in October 1823, "of the truth of which however I have no doubt, to assume a decisive attitude against them, & in so doing, to move in concert with us, should we be so disposed." He bluntly admitted that he intended to concur with Canning's "proposition fully, and decisively," expecting that, once the Holy Alliance restored monarchy in the Spanish colonies, "they would, in the next instance, invade us."

Unlike the state of affairs during the ratification debates at Richmond in 1788, the threat now posed by foreign powers was real and impending rather than distantly hypothetical. More than merely a question of "foreign influence" and diplomatic manipulation of New World politics, Monroe thought the Holy Alliance's military menace imperiled the very survival of the United States. Showing himself a skilled theorist of Realpolitik, Monroe queried his predecessor: "Ought we not then to encourage Great Britain in the course she seems disposed to pursue, and avail ourselves of any service she can render, in a cause which though important

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to her, as to balance of power, commerce, etc., is vital to us, as to government."[54]

In a letter to Jefferson the same day, Monroe voiced a similar warning. "My own impression is that we ought to meet the [Canning] proposal of the British government and to make it known, that we would view an interference on the part of the European powers, and especially an attack on the [Spanish] Colonies, by them, as an attack on ourselves, presuming that, if they succeeded with them, they would extend it to us," he asserted.[55] Perhaps recalling his experiences as Virginia's delegate to the Continental Congress in 1785-86, when he had first warned against foreign involvement in America's internal affairs (the Mississippi River question), Monroe preoccupied himself with the efforts of European monarchies to thwart America's republican experiment. He was haunted by the notion that the Holy Alliance would use force to reunite South America and Spain, then undertake the conquest of the United States.[56] Although Congress rejected his pleas for preparedness, he even contemplated a military duel with the Holy Alliance to save the republican experiment in the New World. In this instance, the British played a decisive role by forcing the French, in the famous "Polignac Memorandum," to promise that they would not invade the Americas.

Coming soon after the Missouri Compromise, Monroe's anxiety that autocratic regimes would overthrow the republic quickly replaced his dread of Federalist resurgence as the major threat to liberty. Monroe's concerns were rooted in his fear that either "foreign influence" or domestic faction--perhaps both--would encumber and eventually destroy America's experiment in liberty. Although he had been an Antifederalist in the 1780s, like the Federalists' leader Madison he had feared a majoritarian tyranny in Congress would violate

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private property rights and the rights of minorities. This led him to urge a Bill of Rights. During Monroe's presidency, as his support of slavery expansion during the Missouri debates demonstrated, this shielded minority included slaveholders.[57]

Monroe early recognized the existence of the sectional tensions that Madison had pointed out at the Philadelphia Convention in 1787. These conflicts persisted from the time of Monroe's attendance at the state ratifying convention in 1788 to the close of his presidency (and beyond).[58] His reactions to the Hartford Convention, the Missouri Controversy, the threat of the Holy Alliance, and in his letters to Andrew Jackson (1816) and Madison (1822) demonstrate that he merged his fears of New England treachery and Federalist subservience to "foreign influence" during the War of 1812 with an awareness that foreign powers were invariably on the alert to manipulate or undermine the "republican experiment" and recolonize the Western Hemisphere. The only calamity he dreaded more was that disloyal American citizens might assist them in achieving their goals.

As we have seen, a notion of the interrelationship between "foreign influence" and domestic factionalism was an invariably recurring, driving principle of Monroe's political thought from his attendance at the Virginia ratifying convention in 1788 till his presidency. From the outset, concomitant with Monroe's warning that foreign governments would attempt to manipulate presidential elections and domestic politics, it was necessary that he imagine the existence of corruptible, pliant domestic factions willing and eager to conspire with them. In the 1790s and afterward, by stigmatizing his Federalist political opponents as the confederates of subversive foreign (i.e., British) agents, he imputed all treasonous evil to them and arrogated all

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virtue, goodness, and patriotism to himself and his Republican party. This somewhat delusive perspective narrowed and simplified his policy options as president, but it also made it difficult for him to view objectively his opponents' ideology and policies. He regarded his political foes, at least to a degree, as traitors to the republic; while, justifying his Jeffersonian Republican party's partisanship as a temporary expedient necessitated by the current political combat, he insisted they incarnated public legitimacy, validity, and disinterested concern for the general welfare. On the other hand, the Federalists perceived Monroe and the Republicans as subversives and considered themselves the only authentic political organization.[59]

Although during the 1790s Monroe, a struggling partisan leader, regarded his political opponents with fear and suspicion, after 1816 a victorious President Monroe confidently looked forward to incorporating the demoralized Federalists peaceably into the Republican fold. Convinced that the Federalist rout had dispelled the threat of "foreign influence," Monroe was hopeful that the Missouri Compromise had shown that domestic conflicts could be peacefully resolved as well. The internal threat posed by Anglophile New England Federalism having been dispelled by the War of 1812's relatively successful outcome and particularly by the tranquillizing effects of the Missouri Compromise, Monroe could turn to the British for assistance abroad without re-experiencing his earlier anxiety about domestic repercussions. He was gratified that his firm handling of the Holy Alliance, combined with Canning's offer of British support, had adroitly eliminated the danger of foreign invasion.

Persuaded by his enduring belief that, in sharp contrast to the Old World, the United States lacked acute class distinctions or disparities in wealth, Monroe's optimistic final

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message to Congress focused on the absence of feudal social orders as the foundation of the republic's uniqueness and prosperity: "There is no object which as a people we can desire which we do not possess or which is not within our reach. Blessed with governments the happiest which the world ever knew, with no distinct orders in society or divided interests in any portion of the vast territory over which their dominion extends, we have every motive to cling together which can animate a virtuous and enlightened people."[60] Having overcome both divisive Federalists and brutal European monarchs without using force, Monroe could retire from public life proud that during his presidency the twin menaces of domestic factionalism and "foreign influence" which had preoccupied him over the course of his political career had been at least temporarily subdued.

CHAPTER 8: NOTES

1. Gordon S. Wood, "Conspiracy and the Paranoid Style: Causality and Deceit in the Eighteenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 39 (July 1982), 401-441; James H. Hutson, "The Origins of 'The Paranoid Style in American Politics': Public Jealousy from the Age of Walpole to the Age of Jackson," in David D. Hall, John M. Murrin, and Thad W. Tate, eds., Saints and Revolutionaries: Essays on Early American History (New York: Norton, 1984), pp. 332-72.

2. Monroe to John Breckinridge, Aug. 12, 1793, Emmett Manuscript Collection, New York Public Library.

3. For Monroe's leadership of the Republican party in the 1790s, see Stuart Gerry Brown, The First Republicans: Political Philosophy and Public Policy in the Party of Jefferson and Madison (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1954), pp.97-121; Ammon, Monroe, pp. 81-107, 157-202; and Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1957), pp. 21-22, 47, 49, 57- 60, 120-23, 130-31, 136-40, 172, 195.

58. Monroe to Jefferson, March 3, 1801, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, 3: 262.

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5. Ibid., 263-64.

6. Andrew Jackson to Monroe, Nov. 12, 1816, in Sam B. Smith et al., eds., The Papers of Andrew Jackson, 4 vols., in progress (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1980--), 4: 75 (Spelling modernized).

7. Monroe to Jackson, Dec. 14, 1816, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, 5: 343-49, quoted at p. 343.

8. Ibid., 344.

9. Ibid.

10. Ibid., 345.

11. Ibid., 346 (Italics mine). For a view that depicts Monroe in this instance as slightly more conciliatory to the existence of the Federalist party, see Steven Watts, The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-1820 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1987), p. 301.

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13. Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Presidency of James Monroe (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 1996), pp. 108-9; Ketcham, Presidents Above Party, pp. 129-30; Shaw Livermore, Jr., The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830 (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1962); Richard P. McCormick, The Second American Party System: Party Formation in the Jacksonian Era (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1966), pp. 22-27,86-87, 90-92, 166-67, 246-47.

14. Monroe to George Hay, Aug. 5, 1817, in "Letters of James Monroe, 1812-1817," Bulletin of the New York Public Library 6 (1902): 230.

15. On New England disunionism and the Hartford Convention, see Marshall Smelser, The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815 (New York: Harper, 1968), pp. 285-99; J.C.A. Stagg, Mr.

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16. Monroe to George Hay, Dec. 20, 1819, Monroe Papers, Virginia Historical Society, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1969), microfilm, reel 13.

17. Ammon, "Monroe and Executive Leadership," p. 127 (quotation); ibid., pp. 127-28; Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, pp. 97-98; Ammon, Monroe, pp. 451-55. See also the excellent discussion in Glover Moore, The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1953), pp. 231-46.

18. Ammon, "Monroe and Executive Leadership," pp. 127-28; Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, pp. 98-104.

19. Charles Yancey to Archibald Austin, Feb. 10, 1820, quoted in Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, p. 99.

20. James Barbour to Spencer Roane, Feb. 13, 1820, quoted in ibid., p. 101.

21. Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 7, 1820, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, 6: 114. For Jefferson's support of slavery in the territories and his reluctant acceptance of the Missouri Compromise, see Merrill D. Peterson, Thomas Jefferson and the New Nation: A Biography (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), pp. 995-98.

22. Monroe to Jefferson, Feb. 19, 1820, ibid., 115-16.

23. William Plumer, Jr., to his father, Feb. 12, 1820, quoted in Everett S. Brown, ed., The Missouri Compromises and Presidential Politics, 1820-1825, from the Letters of William Plumer, Junior (St. Louis: Missouri Historical Society, 1926), p. 10.

24. Monroe to Dr. Charles Everett, Feb. 11, 1820, Lee Papers, Virginia Historical Society, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 13. See also Moore, Missouri Controversy, pp. 238-4; Don E. Fehrenbacher, "The Missouri Controversy and the Sources of Southern Sectionalism," in Fehrenbacher, The South and Three Sectional Crises (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1980), pp. 9-23; and Charles S. Sydnor, The Development of Southern Sectionalism, 1819-1848 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1948), pp. 120-33.

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27. Sydnor, Development of Southern Sectionalism, pp. 125-29 ; Charles G. Sellers, The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846 (New York: Oxford University Press, 1991), pp. 140-43.

28. Monroe to Everett, Feb. 11, 1820, Lee Papers; Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, p.100. On the general topic of presidential aloofness from electioneering during this period, see M.G. Heale, The Presidential Quest: Candidates and Images in American Political Culture, 1787-1852 (London: Longmans, 1982).

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39. Dexter Perkins, A History of the Monroe Doctrine, rev. ed. (Boston: Little & Brown, 1963), pp. 23-24, quote at p. 24.

40. Monroe to Archibald Stuart, May 27, 1821, Archibald Stuart Papers, Virginia Historical Society, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 13.

41. Monroe to Archibald Stuart, May 27, 1821, Archibald Stuart Papers. Lawrence D. Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), surveys the "radical Whig" ideology, dating from Great Britain in the seventeenth century, and inherited by Jeffersonian Republicans in the eighteenth and nineteenth, which warned that the executive would use a standing army to "corrupt" the government, intimidate the people, and usurp greater power.

42. Monroe to Archibald Stuart, May 27, 1821, Archibald Stuart Papers. For Monroe's declining political influence and Randolph's charges, see Ammon, Monroe, pp. 471-72, 495-505.

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46. Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Era of Good Feelings," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 66 (Oct. 1958): 387-98.

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48. Monroe to Madison, May 10, 1822, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, 6: 290.

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49. Perkins, History of Monroe Doctrine, p. 34.

50. Monroe's seventh annual message to Congress, Dec. 2, 1823, in James D. Richardson, ed., A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 20 vols. (New York: Bureau of National Literature, 1897-1922), 2: 787.

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52. Jefferson to Harry Innes, May 23, 1793, in Boyd et al., eds., Papers of Jefferson, 26: 100.

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54. Monroe to Madison, Oct. 17, 1823, James Madison Papers, Library of Congress, Ser. 2, reel 26 (microfilm) . Spelling and punctuation in original.

55. Monroe to Jefferson, Oct. 17, 1823, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, 6: 323-25.

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57. Rakove, "Madisonian Moment," p. 492; Leibiger, "Madison and Amendments," pp. 457-63. For Monroe's demand for a bill of rights at the state ratifying convention, see Elliot, ed., Debates, 3: 218.

58. On the peril of sectionalism in the early republic, see the comments in Rakove, "Madisonian Moment," pp. 486-89, and Sharp, American Politics in the Early Republic, pp. 3, 11-12, 21, 24, 93, 110-11, 144, 158-59, 169, 184, 207, 217, 248, 276.

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CHAPTER 9.
THE PEOPLE THE SOVEREIGNS (1829): JAMES MONROE'S POLITICAL TESTAMENT

Though James Madison's contribution to the Federalist Papers has secured him an immortal place in American political thought, and Jefferson's Notes on the State of Virginia (1781) contains many statements of his ideas, even if his primary purpose lay elsewhere, James Monroe, unlike his mentors, who have always been regarded as more profound political theoreticians, alone composed a full-scale study of his political views. Monroe left his work incomplete, partly for reasons of ill-health, but also because of his son-in-law's unenthusiastic response. Perhaps most significantly, he abandoned the task because in 1829 his fellow citizens chose him to participate in critical political events in his state, to sit in the first constitutional convention to take place in Virginia since that necessitated by revolution in 1776.

Monroe had begun research for his book shortly before his presidency ended in 1825. At the time of his election to one of the most important posts of his long career, delegate to, and president of the Virginia constitutional convention, he was in the process of writing what was essentially his political testament, if by that one means simply a final statement of one's most enduring beliefs, The convention met from October 1829-March 1830, but Monroe resigned

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in December as a result of poor health. The convention, failing to deal effectively and creatively with critical problems like the gradual abolition of slavery, the inordinate political power of the great slaveholders, and the demands of western parts of the state for more equitable representation and an expanded suffrage, rejected an opportunity to enact reforms which might have defused some of the tensions, at least in Virginia, leading to the fratricidal warfare of 1861-1865.[1] The convention's tragic failure beclouded Monroe's last years. He died on July 4, 1831, within two years of composing The People the Sovereigns.

Monroe somewhat grandiosely entitled his unfinished study The People the Sovereigns: Being a Comparison of the Government of the United States with those of the Republics Which Have Existed Before, With the Causes of their Decadence and Fall. Unfortunately, his essay has surprisingly been ignored by historians and political scientists.[2] The People the Sovereigns marks Monroe's circuitous progress from adherence to the classical republican doctrines of "mixed government," which he expounded in 1788 at the Virginia ratification convention, to the "liberal republican," representative-democratic views held by the majority of his politically articulate countrymen in the nineteenth century, embodying in microcosm a progress in American political thought which Gordon S. Wood has chronicled as a whole in The Creation of the American Republic and The Radicalism of the American Revolution.[3]

In many ways the evolution of Monroe's thought parallels that which Wood has delineated for John Adams, whose son, John Quincy, was in fact Monroe's close political confidant, with the essential qualification that Monroe reached conclusions diametrically opposed to those of the Braintree philosopher.[4] Adams could not be swayed from his belief that the system of

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"representative democracy" ostensibly set up for the first time in history by the U.S. Constitution had in any real sense transcended the organs of "mixed" or "balanced" government, king, lords, and commons, and their analogous embodiment in monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy. These constitutional features, with their concomitant social "orders" and hierarchical "ranks," had been immortalized in the writings of Aristotle and Polybius and ostensibly epitomized in that "most stupendous fabric of human invention," the British constitution. After some soul-searching, Monroe in The People the Sovereigns concluded that the difference between the two modes of government was more than mere rhetoric. Although he explicitly cites few writers in the body of the work, the text and manuscript notes indicate that Monroe had carefully pondered such familiar political thinkers as Plato and Aristotle, David Hume, James Harrington, Thomas Hobbes and John Locke , and particularly Charles Baron de Montesquieu and Jean-Jacques Rousseau.[5] The opinions are Monroe's, filtered by years of political experience and crises of nation-building.

Apparently Monroe hesitated to inform his friends Jefferson and Madison, sophisticated political thinkers and accomplished literary stylists, about his project. The president nonetheless confided in the Marquis de Lafayette, an old comrade whom he and both houses of Congress invited to visit the United States on an all-expenses-paid tour at the end of 1824. Lafayette was Monroe's dinner guest at the White House on several occasions, both in October and December 1824 and in February 1825, as well as at his Loudoun County plantation Oak Hill in the summer of 1825. Evidently they talked about Monroe's book, since Lafayette alluded to it in a letter to him from aboard the steamboat Potomac after one of these dinners. "You

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contemplate writing a political exposition," he reminded his old friend. Applauding Monroe's efforts to "avail yourself of the books of capital authors," Lafayette mailed him "the commentary on Montesquieu by my friend [Destutt de] Tracy," who also happened to be the father of his son George's wife. Thus he directed him to the founder of the French school of Ideologie and originator of the word itself, Antoine Louis Claude, comte Destutt de Tracy, a political economist and critic who, though all but forgotten today, was Jefferson's favorite thinker in the years following his retirement from the presidency. Among Tracy's most important writings were his defense of the system of "representative democracy" against Montesquieu's ostensible prediction that it could survive only in small territories, A Commentary and Review of Montesquieu's Spirit of Laws (Philadelphia, 1811), and A Treatise on Political Economy: to which is prefixed a supplement to a preceding work on the understanding, or Elements of Ideology (Georgetown, D. C., 1817). Jefferson had read both of these works in manuscript, himself translated them into English, and had them published in the United States before they appeared in the original French in Paris, where Napoleon's censorship made their publication dangerous.[6]

Aware of Jefferson's interest, Lafayette told Monroe, "It has been translated under the patronage of Mr. Jefferson, who considers it as the best publication of the kind. You will, I believe, find it is the most advanced theoretical piece on the Science, altho the practice, in every detail, be still superior to theories." In The People the Sovereigns, Monroe took up Lafayette's refrain, similarly distinguishing between the historian and the political theorist. "It is more the duty of an historian to narrate the transactions of a government in its internal concerns,

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and those with foreign nations, than to analyze with vigor its parts, and to compare its merits with the governments of other people," he reiterated. "It belongs to a writer on government to take a more comprehensive and minute view of the subject or principle."[7]

Lafayette wished to return to France, and participate in overturning governments as he had in the American and French revolutions. He was also involved in various intellectual enterprises, as he informed Monroe, whom he sent "the prospectus of a New Encyclopedia carried on by distinguished men, friends of freedom, and my personal friends. The work is worth[y] to be had [sic]." Lafayette also sent Monroe four volumes of the elaborate Encyclopédie Moderne, a French undertaking which eventually ran to twenty-four volumes.[8]

Thus, while Monroe hesitated to disclose his latest literary endeavors to Jefferson and Madison, he was somewhat more open with his old Revolutionary War comrade Lafayette, perhaps because he was less familiar with the English language than his facile fellow statesmen and less likely to criticize. Monroe took his book seriously and worked on it intently, as Lafayette's remarks and a later entry in John Quincy Adams's diary indicate.[9] The gap in our knowledge and awareness of Monroe's abortive attempts to systematize his ideology in The People the Sovereigns deserves to be filled.

* * * * * *

Monroe's analysis of the American republic's uniqueness and pertinacity begins with a seeming paradox. In an attempt to combine history, theory, and national experience, with which his own personal experience was intimately bound, he starts out with a discussion of the reasons for the failure of republican governments.[10] Asserting that republics fall as a result of

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defects in either society or government, he notes, like Montesquieu, that the basis for each of these is the character of the people (p. 21): "If they possessed the necessary intelligence and virtue, acted together, and made a common cause in defense of their rights, the artifices of unprincipled and designing men, however deep and well-contrived they might be, would be sure to fail." Thus Monroe relied on the integrity of the personality rather than the vigor and careful construction of political institutions for the survival of republics. In this he was faithful to the old Antifederalist credo.[11] He also retained the traditional distrust of inordinate power in the hands of individuals which had been a legacy of the whole Puritan-Revolutionary ideology.

Believing with Montesquieu that only certain kinds of societies and personalities could maintain free, socially responsible republics, Monroe admitted that man's "natural passions and principles" might require the constraints imposed by internal "moral causes" and the external coercions of state and society (p. 22). Monroe joined the Founding Fathers in believing that rulers of states required greater restraints on their reckless, selfish "passions" than ordinary citizens. He presented this view in his analysis of the disparate state and national governments within the United States, a uniquely "federal" republic. Declaring that the national government had been created "by the people of each state" (p. 23), he felt that this condition provided a sufficient restraint on "consolidation, so far as it has gone." His acceptance of "consolidation" suggests that his nationalism had increased with the years, while that of his colleagues Jefferson and Madison had waned, leading them to turn to the haven of the state governments for the safety of individual rights, including the egregious right of white men to own black slaves.[12] Dreading equally the twin evils of "consolidation" and "disunion" as "ruinous" dangers to the

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federal union, Monroe asserted that he intended to ignore the conflict between state and national governments, since both rested on the people's will and were equally vital to the American republic (pp. 23-24).

The People the Sovereigns reopened the debate between "mixed government" and "representative democracy" that had been vehemently articulated in the eighteenth century, first in the Colonies' dispute with the Crown and then between conservatives and radicals, Federalists and Antifederalists in the 1770s and 1780s. Monroe sought to ascertain whether a pure republic, which he defined as one in which the people elected all officials (representative democracy), was superior to a mixed government whose structure combined elements of monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. The latter "is the class [of polity] which stands in competition with our own," he asserted. "Whether a government composed of discordant materials can, under any circumstances, and from any cause whatever, preserve equal harmony in its movement, and promote as effectually the happiness of the people, as one which is homogeneous in all its parts, is the point in contest between them" (p. 29). Obviously, Monroe preferred homogeneity, with which he associated federal republicanism, to "mixed government's" diffusive elements. Which form of government was better for the people? The "mixed monarchy" with which Great Britain was indelibly associated, or the burgeoning "pure republic" of the United States? From the manner in which he phrased the question, Monroe's sympathies were obvious. His preference rested on conservative grounds of public tranquility and stasis, as it had during his years as U. S. Minister to France. He proceeded to explain and justify his choice.

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According to Monroe, separation of powers, which was essential to the stability and prevention of governmental encroachments and arrogation of authority, could only be secured in a republican govenment, "in which the sovereign power is vested in the people," rather than in a monarchy, aristocracy, or mixed form. Revealing the influence of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Du Contrat Social, a book he owned, Monroe said that only in a republic might the Sovereign (the People) be separate from the Government (officers that they chose to administer affairs), by means of a "compact, to which all the people are parties, and in which those who fill its various departments and offices are made their representatives and servants" (p. 32). Moreover, Monroe perceived a prime difference between republics and other governmental forms: A republic is the only kind of sovereignty wherein a change of governmental structure may take place without violence (p. 34).

In contrast to his praise of American-type representative democracy, Monroe deplored direct democracy where the people themselves exercise the governing power. This tyranny of the majority produced "abuses" equal to those in which sovereignty was concentrated in one (monarchy) or a few (aristocracy). Since men were not "angels," Monroe pointed out, borrowing a metaphor used by Madison in the Federalist 51 and by Jefferson in his First Inaugural Address, they needed government. Representative democracy was best-suited to "protect the rights and promote the happiness of the whole community" (p. 39). Merging the theories of Montesquieu and Rousseau, Monroe concluded his discussion of the "two great principles" of government--the separation of the Sovereign from the governing (executive) power and the division of governmental functions into independent legislative, executive, and

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judicial branches (p. 43).[13]

Unsurprisingly, when one considers his thoroughgoing disapproval of the Reign of Terror and the Babeuvists, Monroe bluntly stated his dread of direct democracy of the type that had prevailed in ancient Athens: "Unite the government with the sovereignty, although it be in the people, and every species of abuse, with the certain overthrow of both, will follow" (pp. 43-44; my italics). Recollecting his experiences as American Minister to Paris in the 1790's, he depicted the Reign of Terror as a frightening example of the excesses of popular rule. "The people might be said, and especially until the fall of Robespierre, to rule, en masse, and under the greatest possible disadvantages," he pointed out, probably referring to the foreign invaders and the food shortages in the cities (p. 91). He persisted in blaming Robespierre for whatever violence and popular disorder existed during the Reign of Terror.

Having perhaps become more conservative since his days in the Virginia ratifying convention of 1788, when he demanded the direct election of both houses of Congress in a system of proportional representation, Monroe nevertheless continued to favor a bicameral legislature. However, he now upheld the Federalist theory that the more representative house should be larger and that another, with fewer members, should possess greater prudence and time for "calm deliberation." Anticipating the size limits which would be set to the present-day House of Representatives, he said: "I am satisfied that an assembly consisting of four or five hundred members, in its most popular branch, would be sufficiently numerous for the wise management of the affairs of any community, however great its population or extensive its territory; and that the augmentation of it beyond that number could not fail to produce an ill

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effect" (p. 46). An excessive number of delegates would dilute the responsibility of individual representatives, "impairing the power of the people until the government be subverted," Monroe warned (p. 46).

Acutely aware of the temptations of power and politicians' tendency to shift the burden of wrongdoing, Monroe was ready to replace trust in the people's leaders with popular vigilance, in a society where old-fashioned "virtue," private as well as public, had little prospect of resurrection. Monroe believed that a small number of rulers was more conducive to "calm deliberation" than a numerous assembly comprising every citizen. He considered a one-man executive and a small judicial body most "efficient" and most "responsible to the people" (p. 47), less productive of legislative rivalry, "intrigues," and tumults and parties among the voters.

Dreading social disruption, Monroe steadfastly adhered to the antiparty ethos and the independent executive he had always theoretically expounded, although his political opponents in the 1790's had denounced his partisanship. However, they soon realized he was closer to them in principle than they had suspected. Multiple executives and the factions they invariably headed would precipitate social and sectional conflicts, potential dangers that a single executive would obviate:

> Standing alone, his decision would in all cases be conclusive, and the ministers under him be compelled promptly to obey his orders [Monroe wrote]. There would, therefore, be more energy in the government (pp. 47-48).[14]

Though constituents could more easily keep surveillance and prevent the abuse of power with a single than a multiple executive, Monroe was aware that instances of executive

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malfeasance were inevitable. In this case, he appreciated the importance of the legislative branch's role in impeachment. "The right of impeachment and of trial by the legislature is the main spring of the great machine of government," he argued. "It is the pivot on which it turns" (p. 50). In The People the Sovereigns, he had proposed that members of Congress not be liable to impeachment; their sole punishment should be rejection by the voters for re-election. This had also been his position in the 1780's. "In every view, therefore, it is the branch on which the people must depend, principally, for their safety," he declared, "and to which they must commit all those powers in regard to the supervision of the conduct of those in other departments which they cannot execute, as the sovereign power, directly themselves."[15]

Unlike congressmen, the president should be punished for misconduct in office, since he was responsible for exercising many "important powers": "The force of the country being in his hands; the intercourse with foreign powers; the supervision and control of the administration, in all its departments, in peace and war; with the appointment to office, and the patronage incident to it; misconduct in many ways might endanger the system, and would evince a perfidy, which would require the severest punishment." Indeed, Monroe wished to penalize the chief executive beyond the "high crimes and misdemeanors" specified in the Constitution. "Even neglect or idleness, distinctly proved, to the public injury, should not escape notice or censure," he advised.[16] Under these strictures, few presidents past or present would have escaped the stigma of impeachment.

As its primary "rival," the legislature was the appropriate check on executive malfeasance, Monroe concluded. Employing Newtonian analogies, he said: "In this mode, the machine will

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be kept in motion by its own powers, and on a proper balance."[17] Castigating the idea that a special institution should be created solely for the purpose of impeachment or that the judiciary should be involved in this procedure, Monroe admonished against the "disorganization" that would ensue if a plethora of government agencies were created. Again he invoked machine analogies to support congressional handling of impeachment. "The right of impeachment and of trial by the legislature is the main spring of the great machine of government," he argued. "It is the pivot on which it turns.". Since the voters would be observing the proceedings, the legislature would be unable to abuse this crucial power. "An attack on the executive would draw the public attention to it, and if unfounded, rather benefit, than injure the individual," he noted. "The whole proceeding would be before the public, in the case of trial, and if innocent, the sympathies of the people would be excited in his favor" (p. 50). Thus Monroe relied on the people's intelligence to determine the president's guilt or innocence and the allocation of political rewards and punishments.

A zealous advocate of the system of checks and balances with which the Constitution had invested the three branches of government, Monroe approved of the congressional power to punish the president and members of the judiciary for misconduct. In Monroe's opinion, this was the most significant check Congress could exercise over those branches. But he admitted the legislature could make greater inroads upon the other branches' powers than vice versa. He believed the judiciary had little actual power to encroach on either branch.

Although he seemed less concerned about the tyranny of legislative majorities than he had been at the 1788 state ratifying convention—and he reasserted his endorsement of legislative

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powers at the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829-1830—Monroe favored the constitutional means of protecting the other branches from legislative "encroachment": the presidential veto and the judiciary's power to void "unconstitutional" laws (p. 50).

Altering the viewpoint he had adopted in his "Observations" (1788), Monroe now preferred the president's conditional veto enacted by the Constitution to the "absolute negative" he had formerly advocated. He lent a posteriori approval to the Constitution: "If the right in the executive to negative acts be qualified, as it might be, it would bring the subject again before the legislature, with new light thrown on it, and secure to it a more deliberate consideration" (p. 51). Relying on the people's integrity, Monroe expected them to devote their "attention to the subject" when disagreement existed between Congress and the executive. He hoped they would deliver their opinions through "declarations of sentiments" against "objectionable" laws, which might precipitate such consequences as a constitutional amendment or a federal court decision that an act was unconstitutional. He continued to regard the president as a figure whose veto could simultaneously protect and enlighten the nation. As he explained, "Instances might occur in the progress of affairs, of a political nature, in which the better opportunity enjoyed by the executive to acquire full information, might enable it to negative a bill with advantage to the country." Monroe considered the federal judiciary apolitical and not, like the president, in competition with Congress. Yet, in exercising its obligation to veto unconstitutional laws, the courts were "a tribunal of the people, to prevent encroachments, tending to subvert the Constitution, and with it, their rights and liberties" (p. 52).

Like Jean-Jacques Rousseau and John Adams, Monroe perceived the legislative and

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executive branches as dangerous to liberty insofar as they might try to combine government and sovereignty (legislative and executive powers).[18] He feared that, far from seeking centralizing aims, the national legislature would fragment as a result of conflicts between sectional parties in Congress. "If the members of the legislature lose sight of the nation, and look to their senators only, the system is in the utmost danger," he warned, since "local interests" would take priority over "those of a general character," to the "injury of every part" of the union. Perhaps with the controversy over Missouri that had occurred during his administration in mind, Monroe anticipated and denounced legislative tendencies toward localistic factionalism. "At the head of each combination will be found a leader, who will push its cause to an extreme, for his own advancement, at the expense of the public good," he predicted. He espoused a solution: "A national policy must be cherished and prevail. If the people possess virtue, intelligence, and are devoted to self-government, this danger can never assume a serious form" (p. 53).

Thus far, Monroe asserted, the United States had avoided the worst pitfalls of faction and disunion. Its statesmen had generally adhered to republican principles, the foremost of which was that government's purpose was the happiness of the people, and that rulers must be constantly aware of their "duty" to promote it (p. 55). Reasserting his conviction that representative democracy, in its American version, was the best form of government, Monroe emphasized that the United States was the only country that had successfully maintained this form over time (p. 57). Though Monroe's praise was extravagant, recollection that his presidency had occurred when it seemed possible that European invaders, under the aegis of the Holy Alliance, might attempt to extinguish liberty in Latin America and even the United

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States, perhaps lent impetus to his enthusiasm.

Disturbed by his awareness that most peoples had never been free or had lost their liberty, Monroe determined to undertake a systematic, simultaneous study of society and government, since together they ensured public happiness. "Society cannot exist without government, and the nature of government must depend on the state of the society" (p. 58). Apparently disagreeing with Thomas Paine's epigram, expressed in Common Sense, that "government, like dress, is the badge of lost innocence," Monroe's view, though superficially a cliché, has profound implications. Throughout history most societies had a priori been incapable of self-government, since, with the exception of the ancient republics of Carthage, Greece, and Rome, they had never adopted it.

Monroe added that, "among the moderns, the government of Great Britain furnishes the most striking example" of free government (p. 59). It is doubtful that his friend Jefferson, obsessed with the alleged corruption of Parliament and the increasingly urbanized character of England's debased proletariat, would have agreed with him.[19] Monroe's flattering assessment of the British government suggests something of time's mellowing influence on his earlier radicalism.

Monroe's text continues in a moderately conservative vein. He asserts that without government there can be no social order or safety, again apparently at variance with Paine's ideal of man as a free being who instinctively knows how to handle his liberty when unfettered by draconian regimes. Somewhat closer to Thomas Hobbes in his view of human nature, though lacking his bitter pessimism, Monroe thought that people naturally distrusted each

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other's motives and required government to act as an umpire between them. An amateur psychologist as well as a political theorist and statesman, Monroe astutely pointed out that strangers who met on a lonely street were naturally suspicious and afraid of each other (something a late twentieth-century New Yorker can readily comprehend). As he put it:

> Such is the nature of man, of the best class of the human race, that so soon as society is formed, a government must be established over it. Such are his wants, his passions, his principles, and his faculties, and such the elevation and depression of which he is susceptible, that without such government there can be no order or safety in society (p. 60).

What justifies governmental authority? Monroe then inquired. "Election and force" were the two original roots of government, he declared, rather than the much touted, reactionary concepts of "divine right" and "paternal authority." Monroe believed that, as a society's population increased and its people became more technologically advanced, they tended to become more republican in their governments. This idea disagreed with Montesquieu's arguments respecting the small size desirable for agrarian republics, but not for the French scholar's conclusion that a "commercial republic" like England need have neither virtue nor small population for it to preserve the citizen's liberties.[20] He bluntly asserted that the idea that government derives from patriarchal or divine right was "absurd," since the source of such justification would necessarily stem from direct descent from Adam himself, an unprovable genealogy which no monarch dared claim. Then he clinched his argument (which showed Lord Bolingbroke's influence) by pointing out that neither Adam nor his despicable elder son Cain had ever arrogated kingly prerogatives (pp. 64-66).[21]

In discussing the state of nature, Monroe reiterated the views of "natural rights" expounded

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by both Hobbes and John Locke, although the latter's barbs were more directly aimed at Sir Robert Filmer's defense of divine right in De Patriarcha. Since "all men are by nature equally free," Monroe argued, some forceful individual or group must have imposed government upon them without their consent, against their "natural rights" (p. 68). Whether government had its origin in force or free election depended upon that society's degree of civilization, he contended, showing a surprising degree of originality and anticipating twentieth-century sociologists like William F. Ogburn and Lewis Green Mumford. According to Monroe, government played an essential role in advancing the civilizing process. "Government is indispensable in every stage, and becomes more imperiously so in the progress from the one to the other [i.e., savagery to civilization], according to the degree to which civilization is carried," he observed (pp. 69-70).

Arguing that forms of government evolved in tandem with the degree of social progress, Monroe first concerned himself with the "rude state of nature," during which man was "unlettered and unrestrained," a condition in which "few are [now] seen." Like Rousseau, he lamented that, while men in modern society were hostile and suspicious of each other, men were naturally "sociable." Therefore, the first governments were "simple" structures, created without laws, "principally for the protection of the virtuous against the vicious, of the weak against the strong" (pp. 71-72). These individuals, who had not yet fully escaped the "state of nature," eschewed abstract "principles" of government. In many respects their polity was similar to that of the American Indian, who held little private property and whose laws imposed the death penalty for murder (p. 73).

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Making a smooth transition from theoretical discourse to practical programs, Monroe employed his philosophical opinions on the rudimentary form of government in the "state of nature" as a springboard for recommendations concerning official policy toward the American Indian tribes. Since governmental policy toward Native Americans was an important and controversial issue in the United States in the 1820's-1830's, Monroe's commentary on this matter was undoubtedly the result of careful thought. He favored the creation of schools and local governmental institutions for the Indians as instruments by which to "civilize" them, prevent their extinction, and advance practical humanitarian reforms (p. 74). Though he opposed exterminating them by force or by curtailing their supplies of food and land, he had contempt for the Indians' primitive kind of government, which resembled the proverbial "state of nature" and showed them to be "utterly incompetent to the discharge of the duties of a well-organized, free, representative government" (p. 74). Nevertheless, along with Hobbes and Locke, Monroe regarded the "state of nature" as an historical era, unlike David Hume and (though he was ambiguous on this point) Rousseau.

In Monroe's view, monarchy was historically the first form of government. Believing that men in the state of nature created government out of the need they experienced for a leader to enforce law and order, he conjectured that their appointee--generally an aged and revered individual--might be kept in office for life if he competently performed his duties and punished evil-doers. The community generally agreed to maintain his eledest son in the same post following his death (p. 76). From these roots, Monroe conjectured, arose "the claim to hereditary right," whose effect would be to divide society into factions and "ranks" arrayed for

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and against monarchical rule. At this early period, with men just emerging from the "state of nature" and setting up government, these factions would present the electorate with the diametrically opposed alternatives of absolute monarchy and direct democracy, since there did not yet exist the concept of "division of power into legislative, executive and judicial." The ignorant multitude would be too helpless and fearful of its opponents to employ a representative system (p. 77).

After careful consideration, Monroe concluded that neither direct democracy nor absolutism favored individual liberty. However, technological progress was greater under absolute monarchy, and as society became increasingly diverse, "the people are also put at a greater distance" from the king's power (p. 78). The option of direct democracy became increasingly impracticable as population grew and economic diversification accelerated, and it was no longer possible for the people to meet in popular assemblies, "to govern themselves en masse." Consequently competition between various chieftains occurred, and an embryonic representative system emerged.

Discussing his version of the evolution from popular participation in government toward a monarchical system, Monroe hypothesized this heterogeneous society's failure to preserve direct democracy. No matter what the prevailing political system--absolutism, direct democracy, or embryonic representative government--economic and demographic growth ineluctably gave rise to class conflict between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots: "The two great classes of rich and poor would grow up in each society, which would move in separate bodies, and in opposition to each other" (p. 78). Fearing that the poor, who

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comprised the overwhelming majority, would take over the government, the rich "would be apt to incline to the side of the chief or prince." The community as a whole remained too savage and ignorant ("unlettered") to set up any "regular government" notwithstanding the relatively sophisticated division between rich and poor (p. 79).

Despite his earlier reputation for radicalism, Monroe abhorred both direct democracy and tyranny as illegitimate conflations of sovereignty and the governing power. Reiterating the cyclical theory of history prevalent in his time, he thought that these twin political evils alternated in the polity over the years. Evincing his antipathy to the concomitant class struggle, and especially toward the proletariat, he wrote: "Contests between the rich and the poor would be unceasing, and whenever the latter wrested the government completely from the hands of the former, the power would be sure to pass to leaders who would be apt to quarrel with, and to cut each other off, and thus it would be lost," he wrote, perhaps with Robespierre in mind (p. 80). In Monroe's opinion, the poor were violent and ignorant. Struggling among themselves, they lacked a sense of class solidarity and esprit de corps. Apparently the wealthy had greater unity. When the conflicting parties, each representing a socioeconomic class, tired of fighting, they compromised with the prince, who sympathized with the rich. This was the origin of "mixed government," a compound of features of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy, each organ of which (king, lords, and commons) represented a "distinct order" in society (p. 81).

Although "mixed governments" endured longer than had the "ancient democracies," Monroe said, they inclined to despotism, especially if the chief was a successful military leader. This was especially the case when the people were uneducated, and consequently lacked

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insight to detect the executive's encroachments on their freedom. The people had never had a fair chance to govern themselves because they were inadequately educated in an understanding of the benefits of representative government. Therefore Monroe recommended that the pursuit of an education might rescue the people from their "depressed and degraded state," but for this a wider and more equal distribution of property was essential (p. 82). Moreover, the Roman Empire's conquests had blighted emerging republics in Europe.

Although Monroe lamented that the ignorant masses eventually fell under the domination of the political despotism and power of the rich, once they became better-educated and increased their knowledge of the arts and sciences, they derived benefits from the growth of commerce. Inevitably they became "more intelligent," and obtained a larger share of the economic pie (p. 84). An educated and wealthy professional class and intelligentsia evolved, posing a threat to the existing despotism. Of this group, which was analogous to the "natural aristocracy" that political thinkers like Aristotle, James Harrington, Jefferson, Madison, and Adams had lauded, they "acquired great wealth and consideration by their manners, talents, and services, which had exalted them by the just standard of merit above any in the privileged orders." Therefore, it was appropriate that they overthrow the existing absolutism and establish free government "by a revolution and by force" (p. 84). Historically, Monroe was describing a bourgeois revolution like the American, though he was not sure if Europe's middle classes, who had never had a chance to gain experience in office, would be capable of seizing control of governments from his era's absolute monarchs.

On the other hand, disputing Montesquieu, Monroe joined Madison, Hume, Jefferson, and

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Paine, insisting that republican government and separation of powers could successfully extend over a large area and population, "provided the state of society throws no impediment in its way." He reiterated that for an expansive republic to endure, the people must "generally be intelligent... possess some property, be independent and moral,"and capable of erecting a representative government composed of "three branches, a legislative, executive and judiciary, under a wise arrangement, and vest in each powers competent to its objects" (p. 85).

Unfortunately, Monroe conceded, most European governments subsisted under "monarchic" despotisms. Their overthrow was necessary, after which, he predicted, the ensuing republics would encounter "serious difficulties, arising from foreign, as well as internal causes." To this extent Monroe agreed with Montesquieu's pithy statement in Spirit of the Laws (which he apparently had in mind when he warned against "foreign influence" at the state ratifying convention in 1788): "If a republic be small, it is destroyed by a foreign force; if it be large, it is ruined by an internal imperfection."[22] For a large republic struggling in a monarchical world political system, both dangers were very real. The French experience of democratic revolution followed by domestic tyranny under Napoleon, then his overthrow by the combined monarchs of Europe, who restored the repressive, aristocratic Bourbons, was a relevant example of this double threat to budding European republics.

However, Monroe was not entirely pessimistic. He argued that the people of Europe were better fitted for democracy than those of the ancient republics because scientific advances, aided by commerce and the printing press, had helped propagate the "spirit of equality" among intellectuals. Monarchs had become more willing to listen to the people's complaints. In

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Monroe's opinion, the time was ripe for peaceful revolution, but "those who take the lead" must "act with moderation and humanity. Violence and cruelty will be sure to defeat any attempt that may be made" (p. 87). Warning against a disastrous repetition of the techniques and world view which in his opinion had prevailed during the Reign of Terror, whose bloody excesses negated the Enlightenment's peaceful message of gradual reform, Monroe thought there was reason for cautious optimism about Europe's political progress. Apparently the existence of the Holy Alliance had not completely blunted his hopes for future world republicanism.

Monroe's conclusion that only peaceful, gradual change was eligible for Europe at this time was on the whole not much affected by the final outcome of the French Revolution. Employing his personal observations as minister to France to elaborate his view that the French Revolution was an abortive effort to establish a government "founded on equal rights" (p. 88), Monroe blandly described his French mission, also recalling his return to Paris in 1803 as special envoy to consummate the Louisiana Purchase: "I arrived in Paris on the 2d of August, 1794, a few days after the fall and execution of Robespierre, and I saw the revolutionary government in operation in its subsequent stages; under the convention; under the directory and the two councils; under the consuls; and I was present when it finally terminated under the Emperor" (p. 88).[23] Though Monroe's memory was accurate, his failure to express outraged indignation over Napoleon's usurpation reveals more than his bare recital of events.

As I have pointed out, and contrary to the beliefs of some historians, on the topic of the French Revolution Monroe was less radical than Paine, Barlow, or even Jefferson, who vigorously denounced Bonaparte in letters written after his retirement from the presidency.[24]

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Grateful for Louis XVI's assistance to the United States during the American Revolution, Monroe regretted that he had been guillotined in 1793. He claimed that Louis XVI, whose hostility to the French Revolution was a matter of historical record, was "the friend of that [French] Revolution as the friend of liberty," and that his activities in the warfare between the aristocracy and the people were "altogether impartial." Like John Adams and other conservative leaders with whom he is seldom associated, Monroe condemned the early Revolution's failure to balance the "passions" of men by means of institutional separation of powers. Although he recognized the "inevitable" impediments that "internal as well as foreign causes" posed to the Revolution's success (p. 89), what is most surprising--and ideologically revealing--is his general lack of enthusiasm for the Revolution after the passage of thirty years, now that it was clear that America's security and survival were not bound up with the success of its "sister republic."

Acknowledging French "devotion to liberty" during the bloody battles of the 1790's against the European coalitions, Monroe nonetheless denounced the National Convention, which he inaccurately viewed as incarnating mob rule. "That body formed the government, because, by its acts, the public actions were sanctioned," he argued. "But it was rather as the organ and instrument of the popular feeling and will under the excitement which prevailed, than a calm and deliberative assembly, acting according to its own judgment." He claimed that the Convention's members lacked an independent will, being guided instead by "popular sentiments" as determined by the outcome of local uprisings (p. 91).

Despite the passage of thirty-five years, and the French Revolution's defeat by the

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combined powers, Monroe remained unable to perceive the necessity that the extreme methods of the Reign of Terror had been necessary to save France from foreign invasion and internal subversion and stabilize the central power. He echoed French reactionaries' low opinion of Robespierrre, regarding him as a ruthless and dangerous demagogue, "a leader who yielded to the worst passions which could animate the breast of an ambitious competitor for power" (pp. 91-92). He held the view that the "cruel and evil" Mountain Party in the Convention, led by Robespierre, used the Jacobin Club as its violent instrument, while the "Plane" (Plain) represented the party of "moderation and humanity." While acknowledging that both parties supported "liberty and the Revolution," in contrast to his suspicion during the 1790's that the radicals were agents provocateurs hired by the Coalition, he continued to insist that the Robespierrists and the Jacobin societies in Paris and elsewhere in France cooperated in perpetrating meaningless political murders: "In the early stages those societies promoted with just views the success of the Revolution, but they afterwards became instrumental to the greatest enormities. Between the Mountain Party and this [Jacobin] society in Paris the most perfect harmony and concert existed, and which extended in consequence to all the other societies" (p. 92).

Never doubting where to impute responsibility for the guillotine's violence, Monroe bluntly stated, "Robespierre became the leader of the Mountain party, and likewise of the Jacobin society in Paris, and by him, or by his instrumentality, the distinguished members of the party of the Plane, and other illustrious friends of the Revolution, were cut off [i.e., executed]." This was historically inaccurate. The only members of the Convention who were guillotined, other

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than Robespierre and his associates, were the Girondins and the Dantonists, who were his enemies within the Jacobin Club, not members of the Plain, and for whose execution the violent, class-conscious Hébertists (who were themselves executed) were the main instigators.[25]

Monroe relived the emotions of 1794 as he described these "enormities," the execution of "innocent persons women as well as men, [which] sapped the foundations of the Revolution, and will always be viewed with horror." In Monroe's opinion, Robespierre alone deserved the fate he had meted out to others: "This atrocious individual was at length overwhelmed, and led to the guillotine, by which he suffered the fate he merited" (p. 93). An understanding of the subtle political, social and economic realities existing in France in 1793-1794 still eluded Monroe. His dread of the cycles of class conflict, which he refused to confront fully in writing about the Revolution, may help explain this. It was the apparent absence of vicious class conflict in the American Revolution that made it such an admirable event, Monroe argued.

The contrast between the American and French revolutions greatly impressed him when he arrived in Paris in 1794, and "beheld a state of affairs of which I had before seen no example, nor anything which in the slightest degree resembled it," Monroe recalls in People the Sovereigns. The American Revolution had "exhibited a very different spectacle," in which harmony and consensus prevailed between the people and their leaders. Its popular movements were "in every stage, tranquil, and their confidence in their representatives unlimited." Reassured by such wholesome deference even as he wrote, Monroe reminisced that popular approval of resistance to England increased with the intensification of the crisis in 1775-1776. "No animosity or rivalry was seen among them [the Americans]," he commented.

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"If any had previously existed, it ceased at that crisis." He insisted that the absence of established orders of nobility and clergy helped maintain American unity. Anticipating Louis Hartz's thesis in The Liberal Tradition in America by a hundred and twenty-five years, he stressed that in America men rose or fell on their merits, not on their ascribed status "We had but one order, that of the people; nor had we any citizen among us who did not rest on his merits and the opinion entertained of it [sic] by his fellow-citizens at large" (p. 93).

Denying the existence of controversy or class conflict in Virginia during the Revolution, Monroe recalled that "the whole body...clung together on the purest principles, and in the most simple and perfect form." On the other hand, in France after Robespierre's fall (especially in Paris) a multitude of contending factions sought to seize power: monarchists, nobility, clergymen, and others who had suffered the loss of property and of self-esteem as a result of the French Revolution. "All these classes acted in concert, but being overwhelmed, moved as it were under the mask," Monroe asserted. He believed these disgruntled groups comprised a minority of the population, but the elections of Fructidor (September) 1797, in which a royalist majority was elected to the legislature, indicate otherwise. At the same time, he had a low opinion of the people's party in France, holding that it was as culpable as the monarchists for the abysmal failure to achieve national unity. "The people contributed their part to this disorderly and frightful spectacle," he charged, while Paris and the Convention smoldered with "smothered passions." Suspicion and fear of renewed violent excesses prevailed everywhere. Although the Mountain retained a majority on the Convention's executive committees, by 1794 it had lost ground in the unicameral legislature (p. 94).

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As Monroe explained in The People the Sovereigns as well as the autobiography he wrote a few months later, he was acutely aware of the Convention's hostility to his country when he arrived in Paris. It had violated the Treaty of 1778 by the seizure and condemnation of American vessels trading with Britain and the imprisonment of their crews. Paradoxically, like France's vilified and discredited minister to the United States, "Citizen" Edmond Charles Genet, Monroe sought a solution by means of "an appeal... to the real government, the people, through the nominal one, the Convention," thereby exposing its injustice to American citizens and stimulating public clamor for Monroe's recognition as minister and the redress of his nation's grievances. Apparently regarding his delayed reception as a personal snub as well, Monroe suspected that the Convention's inaction reflected the disorganized state of the bureaucracy, and was "in itself a sufficient proof of the disorder in which the Government of France then was, and of the difference between it and all settled governments, whatever be their form" (p. 96).

Not until he personally appealed to the Convention was Monroe recognized as minister. His injured feelings assuaged by his reception, Monroe thereafter has nothing but praise for the "party of the Plane" which seized power from the Mountain after Robespierre's execution. In contrast to the Robespierrists, this faction treated him with respect; conversely he thought it conducted itself "with perfect integrity," "zeal and perseverance" in preserving the French Revolution's gains (p. 96). Thus Monroe reiterated the views he had espoused in 1794 as late as thirty-five years later.

Monroe remained impressed by the "moderation and humanity" of the Thermidorians' trial

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of Barère and other Montagnard leaders, whom they chose to deport rather than guillotine. "I saw in its progress, in the trial of some of the leading members of the Mountain party who had survived, and were denounced before it, a disposition rather to forgive, than avenge the injuries it had received from that party," he observed. The Convention's display of "moderation," rather than persisting in executing the Robespierrists, showed it was assuming more of the features of the temperate American Revolution, which Monroe hoped would serve as its model.

In The People the Sovereigns' brief discussion of the Paris insurrections (Germinal, Prairial, and Vendémiaire), Monroe reproduced his earlier conspiratorial view that "these movements were either excited by foreign powers or by members of the Mountain party." Monroe praised the "proceedings" of "the government of the Directory," whose branches were chosen by an indirect electoral method, as being "more tranquil and orderly, and the government itself, in all its departments, more operative and efficient," than under the radical and turbulent, but democratically elected Convention. Obviously Monroe, like his friend Jefferson, did not regard suffrage democracy per se as an unalloyed, absolute good.[26]

Indeed, Monroe much preferred an orderly republic to the unleashed democracy he believed had prevailed under Robespierre. During the interval under the Constitution of 1795, "The people confined themselves more within the limit of their appropriate duties, as the sovereign power of the state, and left the government more free to perform those which belonged to it, as their representative and responsible organ" (p. 97). On the other hand, with the advantage of hindsight, Monroe, unlike Jefferson and other Republicans, expressed few qualms over the Republic's overthrow by Bonaparte; rather, he regarded the coup d'état of 18

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Brumaire (Nov. 9, 1799) as in some sense the consummation of the Revolution! Viewing himself as something of an expert on French affairs as a result of residing there as minister from 1794-1797 and again during the negotiation of the Louisiana Purchase in 1803-1804, Monroe viewed the imperial phase of the Revolution "with great interest and satisfaction," as evincing the people's "intelligence and capacity for self-government," a strange conclusion when one considers that they were under a dictatorship which censored the printing industry. Monroe believed that under Napoleon's regime as first consul (1799-1804), during which he was virtually a dictator who ruled with the assistance of a puppet legislative body, the people felt closest to their government and least oppressed. Popular enthusiasm for Napoleon resulted in acquiescence to his proclamation of himself as emperor of France in 1804, an event which, even after the passage of over two decades, Monroe did not seem to regret as a setback for democracy.

The explanation for Monroe's favorable opinion of Napoleon, and his restrained condemnation of the French people for surrendering their liberty, appears to lie in his conviction that a militant spirit, the rage militaire for which the French revolutionary armies were famous, was essential to the existence of republican virtue in the citizenry. This was an old concept, derived from Aristotle, and expanded by Machiavelli, Algernon Sidney, and the English republican theorists of the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who had deplored standing armies and zealously advocated the perpetuation of citizen militias as the source of national defense.[27] These views had been extended by the Scottish common sense theorists, Adam Ferguson and John Millar, though their mentor Adam Smith preferred public reliance on a

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standing army under the king's control as more stable and less liable to factional manipulation.[28]

In any case, Monroe, who was familiar with all these thinkers, regarded the martial spirit of the French citizenry, embodied in the levée en masse and the ardor with which they followed and supported that paragon of military discipline and strategy, Napoleon, as among the most admirable and "republican" features of the French Revolution. The citizen-soldiers fought most enthusiastically under Napoleon's leadership, perhaps because he, a commoner who had risen to greatness as a result of the Revolution's more liberal laws, exemplified the social solidarity and spirit of national unification that had been an important facet of "classical republicanism." Having experienced his own feelings of martial zeal and ésprit de corps when he served as a courageous officer under Washington's command in the *American* Revolution, Monroe somehow perceived this as the prime outcome of the French cataclysm. He believed that this martial spirit had pervaded France throughout its revolution. As he wrote:

> I noticed this in my first mission, during my residence in Paris, from 1794 till 1797; and I was more sensibly struck with it on my return to France in 1803. It was by the patriotic zeal and devotion to liberty of the whole French people, that the most gallant exploits were performed that the modern world had witnessed: that all the surrounding nations had been repulsed, and many subdued, so that in truth the Revolution was accomplished when the last change [Napoleon's proclamation of the empire] took effect (p. 98).

The term Monroe was looking for, but which had not yet become part of the English language--though its inventors, as he might think fit, were French--was "nationalism."[29] Regarding the creation of national feeling, devotion to la patrie, as equivalent to perpetuating freedom and democracy, in his surprisingly favorable retrospective assessment of Napoleon's

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coup Monroe reveals a willingness to sacrifice two of the three French revolutionary graces--liberté and égalité--in exchange for the assurance of a dubious fraternité. Once more Monroe's loyalty to libertarian precepts seems less firm than we might expect.

Hardly regretting Napoleon's accession to regal powers and his manipulation of popular revolutionary zeal to destroy the Republic, Monroe denied that Napoleon's success evinced French incapacity for self-government. Contending that the people relied on him to "support," not overthrow the Revolution's achievements, Monroe suggested that, although Bonaparte ultimately deceived them, this did not impugn their competency to rule themselves. "The people had much improved in their capacity for self-government, yet their emancipation from the opposite extreme had been too sudden, and the interval too short for them to have become, in all respects, competent to it," he wrote. In other words, they had attempted to go too fast too soon. "They were devoted to the Revolution, and were grateful to those who had signalized themselves in its support, especially by gallant victories in the field" (p. 98). Napoleon was foremost among these triumphant generals. By making him their leader, they advanced the Revolution's greatest hero to a much-deserved place of glory in its pantheon. It was their confidence in his republican virtue--perhaps misplaced--that allowed Bonaparte to deceive the people and overthrow the Republic.

As has already been seen, it is likely that Monroe's personal feelings, his perception of the conduct that governments and individuals had adopted towards him, played a role in his evaluation of the Montagnards, the National Conventon, and the Thermidorian Reaction. His memoirs suggest that he was treated with greater consideration by the Plain when members of

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that faction came to power than by the Mountain; apparently, Napoleon also was respectful toward him. Reluctant to indulge in even mild censure of Napoleon's acts, Monroe explained he had "no feeling of personal hostility" toward him. Reiterating his stress on the crucial role of martial spirit in preserving republican virtue, Monroe admitted, "No one thought more highly than I did of his [Napoleon's] gallantry in the field, and of his talents as the commander of his ["an" in the manuscript] army, and personally I had no cause of complaint against him, for in my second mission to France, when he was at the head of the Consular Government," at which time Monroe and Robert R. Livingston negotiated the Louisiana Purchase, "I was treated by him with kindness and attention" (p. 99).

Even at the time of writing his last political testament, The People the Sovereigns, memories of personal emotional reactions supervened, as they had at various points in Monroe's career, conveying their impact on the final formulation of his ideology. That ideology contained little that could be called radical, or out of step with the mainstream of American political culture. On the contrary, Monroe revealed a tolerance for the shortcomings of governments--like that of France during its abortive revolution--that failed to achieve his own nation's goals of republican self-government. In his search for the ideal form of government, Monroe was undoubtedly not surprised to discover that there's no place like home.

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CHAPTER 9: NOTES

1. Ammon, Monroe, 561-566; Daniel C. Gilman, James Monroe (Boston, 1899), 224-25. Important studies of the Virginia state convention of 1829-1830 and its aftermath include: Dickson D. Bruce, The Rhetoric of Conservatism: The Virginia Convention of 1829-1830 (San Marino, Cal., 1982); Alison G. Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832 (Baton Rouge, La., 1982); Joseph C. Robert, The Road from Monticello (Durham, N. C., 1941); and Charles Henry Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861 (Chicago, 1910). Monroe's death is discussed in Robert P. Hay, "The Meaning of Monroe's Death: The Contemporary Response," West Virginia History, 30 (Jan. 1969), 427-35.

2. Edited by his grandson, Samuel L. Gouverneur (Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1867).

3. Gordon S. Wood, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969); The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York, 1992). For an incisive critique of sweeping "paradigms" like "classical republicanism" and "liberalism," see Daniel T. Rodgers, Contested Truths: Keywords in American Politics (New York, 1987), 8-11.

4. Wood, "The Relevance and Irrelevance of John Adams," chapter 14 of Creation of the American Republic, 567-92. Monroe's friendship with John Quincy Adams, which began during his presidency, in which Adams served as secretary of state, continued during his retirement. They exchanged many candid letters on matters of ideology and political change, e.g., John Quincy Adams to Monroe, Jan. 10, Monroe to Adams, Jan. 25, Feb. 14, 1831, Hamilton, ed., Writings, VII, 216-17.

5. Monroe's "Notes on Plato and Aristotle," James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 5. See the earlier discussion of Monroe's reading above, and in general the list of the books he owned available in Gordon W. Jones, The Library of James Monroe (Charlottesville, 1967).

6. Lafayette to Monroe, Feb. 24, 1825, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Series 1, reel 8 (microfilm). Destutt de Tracy's influence on Jefferson's empiricism and his political ideas, a subject of renewed interest among intellectual historians, is investigated in Joyce Appleby, "What Is Still American in the Political Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson?" William and Mary Quarterly, 30 (April 1982), 287-309; Drew McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill, 1980), 253-55; and especially Adrienne Koch, The Philosophy of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1944), 54-83, 101, 152-66, 178-85.

7. Lafayette to Monroe, Feb. 24, 1825, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Series 1, reel 8 (microfilm); People the Sovereigns, 122.

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8. Evidently the books Lafayette had sent Monroe were the first volumes of M. Courtin, ed., Encyclopédie Moderne, ou Dictionnaire abrégé des sciences, des lettres et des arts (24 vols.; Paris, 1823-1832). For Lafayette's visits with Monroe, see Ammon, Monroe, 541-43. Anne C. Loveland, Emblem of Liberty: The Image of Lafayette in the American Mind (Baton Rouge and London, 1971) and Fred Somkin, Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom, 1815-1860 (Ithaca, 1967), analyze the impact of Lafayette's year-long tour on the American people. For the political ambitions behind the visit, see Sylvia Neely, "The Politics of Liberty in the Old World and the New: Lafayette's Return to America in 1824," Journal of the Early Republic, 6 (Summer 1986), 151-71.

9. John Quincy Adams, diary entry, April 6, 1829, in Charles F. Adams, ed., Memoirs of John Quincy Adams (Philadelphia, 1876), VIII, 131.

10. Page numbers in parentheses in the text indicate that the printed edition of The People the Sovereigns is being cited. When Monroe's handwritten version is quoted, appropriate citations will be made in the notes.

11. Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 428-29,

12. Drew R. McCoy, The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy (Cambridge, 1989), 74-83; Robert Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History, 42 (1976), 537-545.

13. The classic source of the distinction between the Sovereign and the Government which carries out its commands is, of course, Rousseau's Social Contract, Book II. Rousseau's admirer, David Hume, expounded similar views, and he was a popular author in the United States. See Hume's essays, "Of the Origin of Government," and "Of the Independence of Parliament," in Charles W. Hendel, ed., David Hume's Political Essays (Indianapolis, 1953), 39-42, 68-71.

14. It is possible that Monroe consulted his 1788 pamphlet, "Some Observations on the Constitution," when he wrote this passage, since their wording is similar. Discussing presidential integrity in relation to impeachment proceedings, Monroe wrote at that time that the president should be forced to resign pending the outcome of his trial: "With the charge should the powers of his office cease. He should *stand alone* unsupported, and unprotected except by the integrity of his heart and the rectitude of his conduct." "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti Federalist, V, 297 (my italics). Believing the president should observe the highest standards of integrity, in 1788 Monroe proposed he should be impeachable by one-third the members of the House of Representatives rather than a majority. Ibid.

15. People the Sovereigns, 48-49; "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti Federalist, V, 294.

16. People the Sovereigns, 49.

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17. Ibid. On the profusion of machine analogies in political rhetoric at this time, see Richard Striner, "Political Newtonianism: The Cosmic Model of Politics in Europe and America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 52 (Oct. 1995), 583-608.

18. Adams wrote, "If the executive power, or any considerable part of it, is left in the hands either of an aristocratical or democratical assembly, it will corrupt the legislature as necessarily as rust corrupts iron." Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, quoted in Manning J. Dauer, The Adams Federalists (Baltimore, 1953), 43. For Rousseau's views on executive and legislative "tyranny" and "despotism," see The Social Contract, Book III, chaps. 10 and 11.

19. Jefferson to Samuel Kercheval, July 12, 1816, in Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1944), 673-74.

20. On the complex nature of Montesquieu's republicanism, see the comments in Gerald Stourzh's excellent study, Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government (Stanford, 1970), 154-55.

21. In The Idea of a Patriot King (London, 1749; reprinted Indianapolis, 1965), 17, Henry St. John, Viscount Bolingbroke, a popular writer in America, stated his preference for "limited hereditary monarchy" as the best form of government, and specifically denounced absolutism as an "absurd" and irrational system. Monroe owned several editions of Bolingbroke's works. Jones, Monroe's Library, 23. For Bolingbroke's comments on the Bible, see Jefferson's extensive excerpts from his philosophical works in Douglas L. Wilson, ed., Jefferson's Literary Commonplace Book (Princeton, 1989). On Bolingbroke's popularity, see Donald S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," American Political Science Review, 78 (March 1984), 189-197.

22. Charles Louis de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu, Spirit of the Laws (1748; reprinted Oxford 1989), Book IX, Chapt. 1, p. 131.

23. Monroe attended Napoleon's coronation as emperor at Notre Dame Cathedral on December 2, 1804. He objected to the ceremony, not because it was repulsive to his republican principles, but because he felt he was not given a seat appropriate to his ministerial rank. Stuart G. Brown, ed., Autobiography of James Monroe (Syracuse, 1959), 208-209; Ammon, Monroe, 235.

24. For Jefferson's antipathy toward Napoleon, often expressed in letters after his retirement from the presidency, see Jefferson to George Logan, Oct. 3, 1813, in Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., Jefferson's Writings, XIII, 384-87; Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings, 105-106, 620, 626, 640-41, 652, 655, 661, 677, 682-85. Jefferson often called Napoleon "the Attila of the age," and denounced him as "the ruthless destroyer of ten millions of the human race," an unprincipled military dictator "whose thirst for blood appeared unquenchable, the great oppressor of the rights and liberties of the world." Jefferson to John Adams, July 5, 1814, ibid., 640. Ostensibly Monroe did not share his

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Monticellian mentor's disgust at Bonaparte's destructiveness and amoral international conduct.

25. George Rudé, The French Revolution (New York, 1988), 84-87, 104-105.

26. Jefferson to Jeremiah Moor, Aug. 14, 1800, in Paul l. Ford, ed., Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York, 1892-1899), VII, 454-56.

27. J. G. A. Pocock, "Civic Humanism and Its Role in Anglo-American Thought," in Politics, Language, and Time (New York, 1971), 80-103, and "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 22 (1965), 549-83; Lois G. Schwoerer, "No Standing Armies!" The Anti-Army Ideology in Seventeenth-Century England (Baltimore, 1974); Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans: An Essay in the Recovery of a Pattern of Thought in Seventeenth-Century England (Evanston, Ill., 1962), 17-18, 37, 69, 70, 80-81, 185; Lawrence D. Cress, Citizens in Arms: The Army and Militia in American Society to the War of 1812 (Chapel Hill, 1982), 15-50.

28. Donald Winch, Adam Smith's Politics (Cambridge, 1978), 33, 76, 102, 103-113; Richard B. Sher, "Adam Ferguson, Adam Smith, and the Problem of National Defense," Journal of Modern History, 61 (June 1989), 240-68. Charles Royster, A Revolutionary People at War (Chapel Hill, 1979), stresses that the martial spirit at the outset of the American Revolution dissipated as the conflict progressed.

29. Boyd C. Shafer, Faces of Nationalism (New York, 1972), 9-10; Shafer, Nationalism: Myth and Reality (New York, 1955), 97-151; Robert R. Palmer and Joel Colton, A History of the Modern World (5th ed., New York, 1978), 427.

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CHAPTER 10.
IN JAMES MONROE'S CIVIC HUMANIST REPUBLIC.

Apparently Monroe had long been an aspiring political theorist. In his last years, his ambition to emulate the political philosophers he so much admired reached fruition. Monroe's exegesis of his favorite political thinkers in The People the Sovereigns discloses the civic humanist origins of his political thought. From the outset, like a good classical republican, he dedicates the work to his "countrymen." Believing that political science comprised categories of systematic knowledge, he advised that the organization of "free governments" might best be comprehended by the study of "authentic history," including scientific essays on the general subject of government. He distinguished between the historian and the political theorist: "It is more the duty of an historian to narrate the transactions of a government in its internal concerns, and those with foreign nations, than to analyze with vigor its parts, and to compare its merits with the governments of other people." Ostensibly he respected political theorists more than the mere narrators of events: "It belongs to a writer on government to take a more comprehensive and minute view of the subject on principle."[1]

Through a detailed examination of James Monroe's published writings, speeches, and his posthumous The People the Sovereigns, this study has attempted to elucidate Monroe's

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essentially neo-classical republican ideology and its intersection with his role in the "public sphere," his public acts as a politician and statesman, and, where relevant, his psychology and personality. Although at the Virginia constitutional convention of 1829-30 he appears to have shifted his position to advocacy of legislative supremacy, for the most part Monroe had always favored the "balanced" form of government, with coordinate powers and restraints being exercised by the monarchical (executive), aristocratic (upper house), and democratic (lower house) branches of government. At the same time, unlike John Adams, he eschewed such old-fashioned terminology, and stressed that America's federal republics, state and national, were all bottomed on the people as the ultimate source of power in a representative democracy.[2]

Monroe's final work concluded that political participation, comprising zeal for the well-being of the community (both one's locality and members of other parts of the union), was most effectively exercised in a representative democracy and a prosperous middle-class socioeconomic order.[3] Thus he endorsed America's middle-class political economy, which by the time of his death little resembled the austere subsistence republic, epitomized by ancient Sparta, that Baron Montesquieu had recommended for "virtuous" agrarian citizens. Monroe was willing to accept the importance of relative wealth, what his contemporaries often called a "decent competence," in securing political stability and the success of representative government.[4] Postulating a symbiosis between federal republicanism (representative democracy) and prosperity for the politically articulate in his public speeches as Cabinet member and president, Monroe's would-be *magnum opus*, The People the Sovereigns, anticipated David M. Potter's classic, People of Plenty, by 125 years.

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Monroe's writing is not remarkable for its clarity. But in The People the Sovereigns he lucidly stated his dedication to a free society, based on the Montesquieuan theory that each form of government must be fitted to a particular type of society. "No proposition according to my judgment, admits of a more satisfying demonstration, than that in the formation of government, the condition of the society on which it is to operate is to be regarded," he declared, "that the government which suits one state will not suit another; and that the most improved [i.e., wealthy] state of society is that which is best suited to the most free government, if it is not the only one that admits of it."[5] In short, unlike Montesquieu, once Monroe's ideology had reached mature form, he perceived no contradiction between commercial wealth and the longevity of a democratic republican form of government (although Montesquieu regarded England as a *commercial* republic). Implicit in this view was Monroe's belief that even in a society with thriving commerce and manufactures, the people should be sufficiently intelligent and well-educated to elect their representatives and judge of the most crucial governmental matters.

Monroe's writings, as well as his speeches and addresses as governor and president, articulated his devotion to public objectives and the general welfare. He was the first president to twice tour the country, delivering speeches in an effort to rally public support for increased military expenditures that Congress had refused to approve.[6] Earlier, as Virginia's governor, Monroe showed greater devotion to public activism and policy-making than his predecessors, who had been nurtured on genteel concepts of deference toward their fellow aristocrats in the legislature and viewed the governorship as essentially an honorific, ceremonial office. By

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contrast, Monroe was the first Virginia executive who utilized his public addresses to outline general policies. His annual messages to the legislature began with the end of his first year in office in December 1800. As Harry Ammon, Monroe's biographer, notes, "The presentation of an annual address to the legislature comparable to the President's annual message to Congress" was a unique development in Virginia. "His [Monroe's] predecessors had submitted occasional communications to the legislature, but these were brief statements which did not attempt to present a comprehensive view of the affairs of the state. Monroe's messages were lengthy examinations of pressing needs to which solutions were often indicated. Since the legislature still relied on the cumbersome method of initiating legislation on petition (some two hundred being received at each session), these messages provided a much-needed guide."[7]

By substituting for the deluge of individual petitions a central, statesmanlike personage as the source of policymaking, Monroe's messages thrust him into what sociologist Jurgen Habermas calls the "public sphere," as he manifested his foremost ideas and ideals and those of the citizens of the republic he represented. He stood for the people, who by means of the state legislature, exercised the option of ratifying or dismissing him as their spokesman.[8]

Although as governor Monroe commanded popular deference, the ideas he expounded necessarily corresponded with his constituents' beliefs and desires. To employ the jargon of literary scholar Michael Warner's recent work, The Letters of the Republic, Monroe owed it to his constituents, both as governor and president (and to a lesser extent in the other public offices he held), to embody in his persona the "principle of impersonality" and the "principle of negation." He served as a kind of tabula rasa on which to mirror the ideals of the republic,

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effacing himself as an individual political actor while reflecting the people's hopes and wishes. To this extent his role was an "impersonal" one, but it may more properly be called trans-personal, in that, in discerning the desires of his "countrymen" (this was what Virginians called themselves in those days), he also expressed his own.[9]

In his public and private life, Monroe evoked civic humanist and classical republican ideals. Although Joyce Appleby, Isaac Kramnick, Steven Watts, and others have developed the view that the Jeffersonians were devoted to the pursuit of individual self-interest (thereby minimizing the government's implementation of the ideal of individual self-sacrifice to the public good), other scholars, like Lance Banning, J.G.A. Pocock, and Drew McCoy, claim that the Republicans pursued an ascetic, public-oriented ethic ("virtue") right through the Age of Andrew Jackson. An article by Kramnick aptly sums up the prevailing historiographical consensus that virtually all American politicians, Federalists and Republicans alike, were men-on-the-make rather than self-sacrificing statesmen without regard for their pocketbooks and their political futures:

> [Joel] Barlow and his friends, British and American, knew their Aristotle, their Machiavelli, and their Montesquieu. But they also knew their Locke. The world view of liberal individualism was fast pushing aside older paradigms during the last three decades of the century in the wake of the American crisis and the inventions of [James] Watt and [Richard] Arkwright. Two hundred years later, republican revisionism depicts these late eighteenth-century figures as preoccupied with public virtue and civic humanism and as uninterested in Lockean liberal ideals. When allowed to speak for themselves, however, these radicals seem to tell a different story.[10]

Although modern critics may berate Monroe as a selfish slaveholder, he knew his Locke, his Aristotle, his Machiavelli, and his Montesquieu, and fancied himself a patriot who

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endeavored to effect the public good (and in the eighteenth century South the "public good" included slaveholding) rather than his own individual gain. By the time he wrote The People the Sovereigns, however, he had successfully resolved for himself the conflict between the two concepts of public life. Declaring that "representative democracy"--republicanism--was the best form of government for the American people and for any other people who were ready for it, he argued that the public good would emerge from individual votes and needs. Blending "classical republicanism" and "Lockean liberalism," as present-day scholars have denominated eighteenth century ideologies, Monroe articulated a philosophy that sought to identify and combine private interest with the public good, a moral banner which the Jeffersonian Republicans carried forward into the nineteenth century.

Perhaps Jean-Jacques Rousseau, a theorist Monroe admired, best expressed this reciprocity between public and private interest in the Social Contract when he wrote, "The undertakings which bind us to the social body are obligatory only because they are mutual; and their nature is such that in fulfilling them we cannot work for others without working for ourselves." And Rousseau continued, expounding the egotism underlying the ostensibly impartial General Will: "Why is it that the general will is always in the right, and that all continually will the happiness of each one, unless it is because there is not a man who does not think of 'each' as meaning him and consider himself in voting for all? This proves that equality of rights and the idea of justice which such equality creates originate in the preference each man gives to himself, and accordingly in the very nature of man."[11] Jefferson's Second Inaugural Address voiced similar views. "We are firmly convinced, and we act on that conviction, that

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with nations as with individuals, our interests, soundly calculated, will ever be found inseparable from our moral duties."[12] Monroe voiced the same feeling, beginning early in his political career, when he advocated an independent executive who represented all sections of the country and a Congress cognizant of mercantile as well as agricultural interests.

Even in his pugnacious Antifederalist polemic, "Some Observations on the Constitution," Monroe had exalted the "public good," as embodied in a stronger national government, over the disparate interests of selfish individual states and their presumptuous legislatures. Analyzing state legislatures' single-minded devotion to their constituents' interests, Monroe ruefully commented:

> Whether it contains within it a territory so extensive as the Russian or German empires, or is confined in its operation to the narrow scale of their smallest principalities or provinces, yet it is the business of state legislation to pursue its destined course 'the interests of those who live under it.' For a legislature to contemplate other objects, and make a sacrifice of their own for the good of other people, or even decline availing itself of the legitimate exercise of its powers for that purpose, upon every opportunity which chance or fortune may present in its way, is a degree of liberality to which the human heart hath not as yet attained.[13]

Painfully aware that most people placed their own well-being ahead of that of the community, Monroe hoped that the new nation's leaders would be more benign. Nevertheless, he could not resist an ironic comment, emphasizing the divergence between combative state (and national?) legislators and the ancient world's more ascetic, self-sacrificing figures: "A society of philosophers of the antient [sic] stoick [sic] sect might perhaps be capable of such extended philanthropy, but this sect is now altogether at an end, and at its height, never formed but an inconsiderable part of any community, and was by all the rest of the world considered as

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affecting [sic] objects without the pale of human nature."[14] Monroe thus acknowledged the dominance of human selfishness in politics and society, and that those who preached morality and public virtue were often stigmatized as jesters or laughingstocks.

These sentiments during the state ratifying debates in 1788 manifested Monroe's acceptance of the idea that self-interest a priori motivated the members of every political organization. As we have seen throughout, Monroe, although a realist, at the same time wished to manipulate self-interest to achieve civic ideals. At least in theory, he sought to establish a national government that transcended local concerns. But he believed that human nature militated against so ascetic an achievement. Aware of men's imperfection, Monroe confessed that they needed government. As he explained in his final work, The People the Sovereigns, he found representative democracy in which a bicameral legislature had the greatest power, best-suited "to protect the rights and promote the happiness of the whole community."[15] Nevertheless, true to the classical republican ethos of "mixed government" and balanced powers, he decried an unlimited legislative power, feeling it was most liable to abuse and required curbs by the executive and judiciary.[16]

Regretting that most men lacked the breadth of knowledge, as well as the disinterestedness, to pass legislation that was equitable for the whole country, Monroe in 1788 rhetorically adopted an extreme nationalist position, rhapsodizing on the charms of indivisible union despite the alienating effect it might have on his fellow Antifederalists. In contrast to the selfish, solipsistic state legislatures, Monroe said,

> How much more delightful therefore is it to the mind to contemplate one

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> legislature organized over the whole continent, containing all the free inhabitants of the American states within it, nourishing, protecting, and promoting their interests in every line and extending its genial influence to every part; commerce flourishing, arts encreasing [sic], lands rising in value, with all those other happy concomitants that attend a well formed and wisely directed government, than thirteen different legislatures, in pursuit of local objects, acting upon partial and confined considerations, without system or policy, jealous of their particular rights, dissatisfied with, and preying upon each other.[17]

Playing devil's advocate, Monroe here professed his adoration of a consolidated union where individual states had been abolished and the well-being of the whole nation was all that mattered. "If it were practicable, I should embrace this change with the utmost pleasure, and consider it the goal at which all our efforts should bend, the polar star that should direct all our movements," he declared, mimicking fanatical Federalists. "I should consider the abolition of the state legislatures as a most fortunate event for America, and congratulate my country on the commencement of a new aera [sic] in her affairs from whence to date the dawn of better hopes and happier days." But then, returning to the real world of disputatious classes and sections, he concluded: "But is it practicable, can it be accomplished."[18] In the sphere of practical politics, despite his desire to implement the ideals of the independent statesman who stood above selfish factions, Monroe invariably recognized the divergence between ideal and reality.

In his assessment of the ambiguous role self-interest could play in politics, Monroe was remarkably similar to "Publius" (The Federalist), with whose views, as interpreted by historian Daniel Walker Howe, he would have agreed. "Eighteenth-century faculty psychology was a discipline in flux, Publius knew," Howe writes. "He took remarkable advantage of this transitional moment in the history of ideas. He treated self-interest as an intermediate motive,

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sometimes partial, short-term, and passionate (in the derogatory sense of 'selfish passions'), but capable of being collective, long-range, and rational. Short-term self-interest he identified with the Articles of Confederation and with his adversaries; long-term self-interest he allied with reason, virtue, and the Constitution."[19]

At the same time, Monroe avoided espousing any particular social or economic interest (the planters' included), hoping to blend all together in harmonious pursuits. Perhaps it was for this reason that Monroe often advocated the interests of merchants, whom he appreciated as the carriers of the farmers' produce and the artisans' manufactures. As early as 1790, proposing that state land taxes amortize a portion of the national government's takeover of state debts, he warned national lawmakers against taxing imports excessively to pay for the assumption. Mindful that experimentation with different tax modes was essential in finding the right option, he dreaded a "tyrannous sacrifice of the interests of the minority to that of the majority; and that precise medium which will be most productive in point of revenue and beneficial in other respects, can only be discovered by a gradual operation and gentle experiments, which the assumption will entirely prevent."[20] A latter-day Aristotle in search of the golden mean, Monroe hoped to find a "precise medium" in the arena of political economy that would satisfy all interests, thereby promoting the general good.

A concern for the rights of the minority, a feature which Antifederalism and Madisonian Federalism paradoxically had in common,[21] equally spurred Monroe's desire to protect the identity of the states within which the people lived and for which they felt an affinity.[22] When Monroe referred to "the probable inefficiency of the national government comparatively with

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those of the States in raising the necessary funds" to pay the public debt, he had this affinity in mind. He was worried that Congress would be less discerning than the state governments in determining which taxes the people would most willingly bear to pay for assumption. He also feared that the fledgling national government might collapse under the burden. "The weight of all the State creditors thrown into the national scale at present, might also perhaps produce some disorder in the system, as it would occasion a fortuitous but severe pressure from that quarter [the state creditors], affecting them [Congress] from the [national] heart to the extremities, before either their legislatures, by moderate experiments, had acquired sufficient knowledge for the purpose, or the people given sufficient proof of what they could, and what they would bear." With his fear of the "tyrannous sacrifice of the interests, of the minority to that of the majority,"on the crucial matter of taxation Monroe echoed Madison's opinions in Federalist No. 10. Monroe warned that assumption's requirement of immediate large-scale national taxation would frustrate "that precise medium": a just distribution of revenue sources between the diverse states and occupational groups.[23]

Monroe maintained this perspective at his accession to the governorship of his state and to the presidency as well. In such instances as his support of the Missouri Compromise in 1820; the national bank; the funding of the National Road's extension from Wheeling, Virginia to Zanesville, Ohio; national investment in the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal; and protectionist tariff measures in 1824 and 1828 (the latter was the notorious "Tariff of Abominations"), he manifested a disposition to look to the nation's long-term benefit rather than the short-run advantage of particular sections or states, including his native Virginia.[24]

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Monroe delivered many official addresses which espoused his idea that the "public good," a term he often used, took priority over individual desires. In general, as Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., comments regarding his presidential speeches during his Northern tour in 1817: "His style was ponderous, lacking the brilliant conciseness of Jefferson or the profundity of Madison. But the thoughts were his own."[25]

The public good, Monroe felt, also consisted of the checking and balancing of individual wants. His message to the Virginia legislature in December 1801 epitomizes this concept. For Monroe, "the just claims of an enlightened public," whose children he hoped would receive an appropriate education at state expense, deserved to be satisfied. Aware that the improvement of the navigation of the Potomac and James Rivers was vital, he praised the legislature for having already accomplished much in that regard by cooperating with private development companies. "It appears that this highly important undertaking has been carried on with an activity and zeal becoming the boldness of the design," he exulted. "The Legislature will not fail to appreciate fully the importance of these improvements to the general interest of the commonwealth." He graphically depicted what the improvements in rivers, harbors, roads and bridges would signify for the population, "how many thousands of our citizens will be benefitted by them! how great the facilities which they give to commerce! How vast the amount of the produce which they invite to Market! How great their ornament to our country!" He praised the government's policy of assisting private enterprise to accomplish public works and build public buildings as "equally respectable for its wisdom and liberality," evincing "an elevation of mind and a foresight which become the representatives of freemen." He thought that the

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proverbial spirit of the War for Independence, "the bold design to undertake and the courage to achieve their ever memorable revolution," had inaugurated this temperament of cooperation between the public and private spheres. "It is a spirit which ought never to become inactive, but should be cherished, excited and directed to its proper object, the publick good."[26]

In accordance with present-day historians' ideas of civic humanism, Monroe's version of the patriot was actively directed toward the public good, rather than merely a passive receptor of ideas from the "public sphere." "It is the duty of the patriot to inquire--is no part of our police yet imperfect, is there nothing to be done the accomplishment of which may in any degree promote the interest of society?"[27] Yet, Monroe made clear, this patriot--the American patriot--was sui generis. Unlike the pagan heroes of ancient Greece and Rome, his greatness was sanctioned by the Creator, who had bestowed "manifold blessings...on this highly favored and very happy country." Moreover, Americans were free of the tyranny that had burdened European regimes, thereby combining the blessings of civil and political liberty:

> The principles on which our ancestors colonized here, by precluding hereditary distinctions, placed man on the elevated ground he was destined to hold by his Creator; and nothing occurred from that period to the great epoch of our independence, which tended to disqualify him for or make him unworthy to hold it.

Freed from the incubus of hereditary privilege and "the vices of the old world," without the oppressions of a "contaminating executive power," Americans' growing prosperity gained impetus from their republican virtue. As Monroe put it, engaging in metaphors derived from the cyclical theory of governmental degeneration, "the simplicity and purity of our early manners and institutions... a simplicity and purity which adorned our youth, and invigorated our

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manhood," characterized republicanism.[28]

Reminiscing about the nation's Revolutionary heritage in metaphors derived from Puritan Calvinists and Whig Revolutionaries, Monroe observed that (white) enslavement had been the only alternative to Revolution and Independence: "When the moment arrived which was to degrade and humiliate the American people to a condition with the slaves of the East, or present to the world the extraordinary spectacle of an independent power in this hemisphere, with the example of a government founded in a great measure on new principles, they proved themselves equal to the crisis."[29] Americans molded the clay of "pre-existing materials," making use of "the melancholy example of past times and the instructive light of modern sages."[30]

Especially in Virginia, Monroe pointed out, after 1776 Americans had engaged in "a profound system of revision and legislation...by means whereof whatever of the unequal feudal usages of Europe had crept into our Code was expunged." As a result of the Revolution, Monroe boasted, brilliant legal and political institutions emerged, "founded on and protecting the equal rights of man." Although Monroe was merely the governor of a single state, he grandiosely compared conditions in America, which "may justly be considered the happiest among nations," with "the misfortunes of our fellow men in other countries."[31]

In order to preserve any self-governing state, Monroe declared, its citizens' education must be fostered. "A people well informed on the subject of their rights, their interests, and their duties would never fall into the excesses which proved the ruin of the ancient republicks [sic]," Monroe asserted. As always, echoing Aristotle's Politics, he considered stability crucial.

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"They would not, like the mob of Athens, dishonor themselves, or their cause, by insurrections, or other acts of violence, which put to hazard or called in question the practicability of their system."[32] He deplored the violence of Athenian democracy under Pericles, just as he had denounced the excesses of democracy in France during the Reign of Terror. Through education, Americans would be able to overcome any threats of upper or lower class tyranny. This was another theme of classical republicanism and Jeffersonianism to which Monroe subscribed.[33]

It should not surprise us that civic humanism suffused Monroe's rhetoric. It is suggestive that there is no record of his owning the Federalist Papers, that manifesto of liberal individualism that was found in almost every library. Yet he did own John Adams's classically-oriented, much maligned Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States, John DeLolme's Constitution de l'Angelterre in a 1785 London edition, the works of Machiavelli and Algernon Sidney, as well as of that ambivalent figure, Adam Smith, and numerous works (in English translation) derived from the ancient Greco-Roman legacy: nineteen volumes of Livy's Histories, Thucydides' History of the Peloponnesian War, a French translation of Aristotle's Politics (Paris, 1797), and Polybius's History, as well as the contemporary British historian John Gillies's History of Ancient Greece.[34]

When Monroe went to Spain as U. S. minister in 1804 after successfully negotiating the Louisiana Purchase with Napoleon, the books he carried with him disclose something of his general interests, although undoubtedly to some extent they also reflect the specific diplomatic mission in which he was engaged. He included the works of Francis Bacon, Jonathan Swift,

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Lawrence Sterne, Shakespeare, William Murphy's translation of The Works of Tacitus, Alexander Pope's translation of Homer's Odyssey, Martens' Law of Nations, the essays of "Junius," and Vattel's books on the laws of nations.[35] Thus Monroe's literary choices reflect his attraction to the Augustan classicists who were politically allied with Lord Bolingbroke's Country Party during the 1730s and 1740s, as well as classical republican writers like Tacitus and "Junius" and the "natural law" theorist, Vattel. Of course, Monroe had read Bolingbroke's classical republican essay, Idea of the Patriot King.[36]

Even more interesting, among Monroe's papers there are several hundred pages of notes on Plato's Republic and Aristotle's Politics. He probably compiled these notes at the time of writing The People the Sovereigns. They show that his main concern was whether the "public good" was practiced in the governments these authorities discussed. His first notes quote from and analyze Book I, chapter 1 of Aristotle's Politics. "A city is an association in which each acts for his good," Monroe writes, abbreviating Aristotle's more universal sentiment that "every polis (or state) is a species of association, and, secondly, that all associations are instituted for the purpose of attaining some good."[37] It seems unlikely that Monroe was trying to be cynically individualistic, merely that he was summarizing Aristotle's ideas.

Examining the views of both Plato and Aristotle on aristocracy, Monroe writes, "Aristocracy is based on virtue." Then he goes on to synopsize Plato's Republic at greater length, "a treatise of a republic, is of justice-- A perfect government is the image of perfect Justice--can weak mortals prefer such justice on earth?" Perhaps summarizing Plato's theory of ideal Forms, Monroe observes: "A skillful painter makes his models after the beautiful."

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Monroe lamented ancient Sparta's practical decline from the ideal of balanced government embodied in its constitution. Aristotle's critique of Sparta primarily consisted of objections that its government gave women too much equality, the right to inherit property, and freedom to engage in luxury and licentiousness. According to Aristotle, female flippancy led to a decline in virtue and frugality among the male population, and a general obsession with the acquisition of wealth. "An inevitable result under such a constitution is that esteem is given to wealth, particularly in cases when the men are dominated by the women; and this is a common state of affairs in military and warlike races, though not among the Celts and any others among whom male homosexuality is openly esteemed," the Greek wrote.[38] Plato's Republic similarly disparaged Sparta as a "timocracy," where the priority of martial valor as a social value was eventually replaced by an obsession with "ambition and wealth." Monroe exaggerated their critiques for effect.

In his old age, Monroe seems to have imbibed the ancient Greek philosphers' contempt for the Spartan government, although it is difficult to tell whether he is expressing his own opinion or theirs. "Aristocracy is based on virtue," he wrote, in a document entitled, "An anaysis of the two republics of Plato." "It is this, which was said at Lacedemon & in Crete, but I see these men covetous, of gold & of blood, who feared to place virtue at the post of honor, which they exhibited in public but discarded in private, by the practice of every species of voluptuousness." Although he apparently did not dispute Aristotle's view that Sparta's aristocratic form of government was theoretically the best, Monroe rather harshly commented, "This government [Sparta] has two reigning vices, ambition & intrigue."[39] Monroe may have

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been reiterating Aristotle's conclusion that Sparta's government had gradually become hypocritical, corrupt, and characterized by great disparities of wealth, but he admired its original communistic form of economic organization.

Monroe agreed with Aristotle that oligarchy was a noxious form of government. "In oligarchy, fortune & income conduct to honors," he pointed out. "The corrupt rich, have the place of laws. Gold is every thing; virtue nothing." He felt equally antagonistic toward "democracy," which in ancient Greek parlance meant government by the propertyless mob. Thus Monroe declaimed: "What is democracy? Liberty which is licentiousness. Equality which is oppression. Liberty without consistency. Despotism with an 1000 heads." "Monarchy draws tyranny on its steps," he warned. "As man, it is subject to passions of all ages." He was angry: "Justice is not in these. Where is it? Let us organize then a perfect city. Let us not employ any, but indispensable elements. Labourers for subsistence--workmen for the arts; warriors, to defend the state--magistrates to govern--These are necessary--more [than these], vicious." He echoes the warnings to the soldierly (timocratic) element by Plato (and, to a lesser degree, Aristotle). "The warrior has power, the mother of ambition," he declares. "But inform him, on his education, the destiny of the republic depends." Here he seems to be summarizing Plato's Republic, with its advise that mothers should not permit their children to read Homer's violent epics and their insulting descriptions of the gods.[40]

In the manner of Plato, Monroe referred to the warriors as "guardians": "These warriors will be the guardians of the state like shepherds over a flock of sheep." Even more strangely, Monroe expresses feminist tendencies, although this may merely be only his summary

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of his reading of Plato's Republic. However, it is illuminating that he thought fit to emphasize this radical aspect of Plato's thought by including it in his notes: "Let the women have the same education as the man, through gymnastics & war. The objection to such education for women; to their exercising mothers, is power." He notes Plato's views of the laboring poor, with whom neither man apparently much sympathized, judging from Monroe's reaction to the Parisian poor riots in 1795: "As to labourers & artisans they will learn their trades, & to them they should be confined. They should obey & never command."[41]

Monroe summarized Plato's communist ideal for the officer/ guardian element and the philosopher kings. "A communion of all goods & pleasures, will produce unity," he opined. "Property must be common in a perfect commonwealth. The labourers, will cultivate the fields for all," he suggested. "The warriors, will watch for all, & must be nourished at public expense--Thus you destroy the distinction between mine and thine."[42] Paradoxically for those who view him as a slaveholding conservative, Monroe carefully summarized the Platonic argument that communism would establish a spirit of national and social solidarity that perhaps had not been achieved within America's modern representative democracy.

Even more shocking to modern sensibilities (particularly feminists), Monroe took thorough notes on Plato's recommendations in The Republic for the guardians' common ownership of women, legalized prostitution to accommodate "distinguished" soldiers, and his tolerance of homosexuality: "Let the women be common. There will be solemn feasts of hymen. The warriors from 30 to 55 [years old] shall be united with female warriors from 20 to 40. Lot will decide, but the magistrates, will have the address, to arrange the spouses, most

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proper, to progress the purity of the race." Reflecting a lifetime of admiration for the military life, which included acquiescence to the possibility of French Revolutionary veterans taking over Saint Domingue as their own private colony, Monroe wrote down Plato's proposal that soldiers should have every opportunity to gratify their sexual passions, including some which the United States Government still officially frowns upon today: "If the warriors are distinguished, they shall be permitted oftener than others to taste the pleasures of hymen. If such warriors are in the field, while the campaign lasts, they may enjoy these pleasures with a young man."[43]

Unfortunately, historians have neglected Monroe's thought. Had they been aware of his diligent reading of Plato and Aristotle, which suggests his adherence to classical republican ideology, perhaps they would have paid more attention to his general adherence to that ideology. It is well-known that Jefferson, who was probably less of a civic humanist and political conservative than Monroe, had contempt for the idealistic and totalitarian ethos embodied in Plato's Republic and, along with his friends John Adams and Dr. Benjamin Rush, opposed his inclusion in college curricula. Indeed, Plato's ideas were generally anathema to American intellectuals. It would be difficult to find another American statesman who summarized Plato's Republic at such great length as Monroe.[44] On the other hand, it is unlikely that scholars will inveigh against Monroe as simultaneously a communist, a homosexual, a radical feminist, a militarist, and a male sexist merely on the basis of his notes on Plato and Aristotle, although on the dubious proof of Jefferson's youthful Commonplace Books extracts from Milton's Paradise Lost, Kenneth A. Lockridge achieved renown by depicting the author of the Declaration of Independence as a matricidal, psychopathic misogynist, to the applause of

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historians.[45]

On the other hand, the actual text of The People the Sovereigns, in which Monroe castigates Plato, suggests that his notes on The Republic were no more than that--notes--and did not express Monroe's sincere beliefs about the properly constructed state. In People the Sovereigns, endeavoring to emulate the theoretical skills of the political scientists he admired, Monroe, perhaps influenced by G.W.F. Hegel's classic, The Philosophy of History, divided history into three epochs, epitomized by their most representative political theorists: Plato and Aristotle; John Locke and Algernon Sidney; and Montesquieu and Rousseau. Taking for granted that early definitions of government were "vague and indeterminate," Monroe viewed the ancient Greek theorists as first of all political empiricists, who understood men's "principles and passions" without elaborating detailed artificial constructs. Claiming that in ancient times both "despotism and the government of the multitude were viewed with horror," Monroe argued, somewhat unconvincingly when one remembers that, except for the Greek city-states most governments were tyrannies at the time, that the first political epoch was characterized by "mixed government."[46]

Monroe praised Aristotle, for whom the voluminous notes in his papers evince his interest and admiration. "Among the writers of the first [i.e., the ancient democratic] epoch, Aristotle is the most distinguished," he believed. But he condemned Plato, and joined with Jefferson and Benjamin Rush in regarding him as a crackpot and a feckless utopian. Despite his familiarity with Plato's Laws and The Republic, he shared his friends' dislike for Plato, writing dismissively: "Plato composed a work on the subject of

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government. He drew two projects, but they are so theoretical and objectionable in every view, so little applicable to us, and even to the age in which they were written, that they need not be noticed." On the other hand, having throughout his career employed the classical concepts of "mixed government," historical cycles, and a strong executive, he praised the Greco-Roman political scientist Polybius as "an author of great talents."[47]

Regarding Aristotle's Politics as "the most comprehensive, systematic, and truly descriptive of the governments of that epoch; of the start of the science, and of the manners of the people," Monroe informed his readers, "I shall take from it the sketches which I deem material for the object which I have in view." He discoursed at length on Aristotle, summarizing Politics in thirteen consecutive pages of footnotes. Nevertheless, he criticized the Stagirite for devoting himself almost exclusively to small city-states, "free governments" the size of a present-day village, rather than discussing aristocracy, monarchy, despotism, and other governmental variants in larger territories.[48]

Viewing John Locke and Algernon Sidney as representative of the "second epoch," Monroe claimed these thinkers were primarily concerned with thoroughly analyzing "despotism" as the best means to prevent it. He felt they did not carefully analyze other forms of government or their "abuses." Perhaps he meant that they insufficiently warned about the evils of unrestrained democracy.[49] Yet at the outset of his discourse, Monroe had viewed the *American* people as guarantors of policies of "a general character" against selfish legislators, who were more likely to seek to advance their "local interests." As he hypothetically constructed typical episodes of congressional factionalism:

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> At the head of each combination will be found a leader, who will push its cause to an extreme, for his own advancement, at the expense of the public good. A national policy must be cherished and prevail. If the people possess virtue, intelligence, and are devoted to self-government, this danger can never assume a serious form.[50]

Perhaps Monroe was thinking about his friend James Madison's comments at the Virginia constitutional ratifying convention in June 1788 when he wrote these words fifty years later. At that decisive gathering for the future of the Union, in the course of defending the Constitution from Antifederalist charges that the national judiciary would run rampant and ignore state authorities, Madison had declared:

> I go on this great republican principle, that the people will have virtue and intelligence to select men of virtue and wisdom. Is there no virtue among us? If there be not, we are in a wretched situation. No theoretical checks, no form of government, can render us secure. To suppose that any form of government will secure liberty or happiness without any virtue in the people, is a chimerical idea. If there be sufficient virtue and intelligence in the community, it will be exercised in the selection of these men; *so that we do not depend on their virtue, or put confidence in our rulers, but in the people who are to choose them.*[51]

Thus, even Madison, the reputed leader of the conservative party in the 1780s, appealed to the sovereignty of the people in explaining the new polity's modus operandi. Undoubtedly Monroe, who after his retirement from the presidency took a position in the political spectrum to the right of Madison (to judge from his conduct at the 1829-30 convention), pursued the same moderate goals when he appealed to popular "virtue" in The People the Sovereigns.

Somewhat clumsily, Monroe compared the republican ideas of John Locke and Algernon Sidney with those of the more democratic Montesquieu and Rousseau. His

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comments were too general and vague to give a true indication of what he acquired from reading these thinkers. Perhaps showing evidence of having read David Hume's essay, "Of the Independency of Parliament," he admitted that Locke and Sidney "lived at a very unsettled period, and looked at one danger only." Undoubtedly he was alluding to their fear of absolute monarchy and Roman Catholic hegemony under the Stuarts. Evidently not perceiving the revolutionary impact of Montesquieu and especially Rousseau, Monroe paired them together as having a similar message. Rather obtusely, he commented that their works "are more elementary and general, more in accord and spirit with those of the first epoch [Plato and Aristotle], aiming as is presumed from the government under which they lived, and the fear of giving offense to those in power." Since the Social Contract was banned in both France and Geneva, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that Monroe was unfamiliar with the recent history of his times.[52]

Although the works of these theorists were "able," Monroe condescendingly pointed out, they naturally lacked foreknowledge of the United States' great federal republican system. "They... do not point out either the advantages or the special dangers of our system, for they did not contemplate it," he observed. "I may take further notice of them hereafter. My object is to look at the dangers as well as the advantages of our system, and to point out its dangers, so far as I may be able, with the means of averting them." Thus asserting his mission, Monroe proclaimed his satisfaction with the condition of the nation he had headed for eight years. "With us there is at present no existing disease," he said, resorting to the Aristotelian organic theory of society, and equating society and government. "We are on the contrary blessed with

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perfect health. Our object is to preserve that state, and prevent a disease. It is, therefore, our duty to look to the dangers which threaten liberty, from any and every direction, and to guard against them."[53]

Thus Monroe sought self-actualization through public rather than private virtue. His willingness to serve his country abroad despite the financial burdens it imposed upon him, his army service without pay during the American Revolution (although he finally received large land grants in Kentucky), his reconciliation with Madison in 1811 after refusing to campaign actively against him in the presidential election of 1808, attested to his loyalty to ideals of public virtue above public narcissism. Although Americans during the 1790s talked a lot about "virtue," they seldom elaborated what they meant by the term, nor the discrepancies between public and private virtue.[54]

However, Monroe's concept of virtue was probably similar to that of his friend Benjamin Franklin Bache, Benjamin Franklin's grandson. Bache was the printer and editor of the Philadelphia Aurora, a newspaper which Monroe greatly admired. "Bache's is the best political paper," he wrote in 1794. "He is the Grandson of Dr. Franklin & a republican."[55] It is not surprising that Monroe selected Bache to publish his View of the Conduct of the Executive in 1797. Monroe lent Bache money and said he could keep whatever profits he derived from publishing the book.[56]

Also in 1797, perhaps partly inspired by the harsh way the Administration had treated Monroe, Bache wrote a long pamphlet attacking President Washington, entitled Remarks Occasioned by the Late Conduct of Mr. Washington as President of the United States: 1796.

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In this tract, Bache argued that Washington's susceptibility to emotional influences and sensitivity to criticism showed an unmanly deficit in public virtue. Bache pointed out that an aspect of republican virtue, in both ancient and modern times, consisted in bearing public censure with fortitude. A virtuous republican persevered independently of public acclaim. According to Bache, by abusing his journalistic critics, Washington showed his lack of maturity and virtue. Comparing Washington unfavorably with the self-controlled statesmen who appeared in Plutarch's Lives, Bache pointed out: "Mr. Washington also, if a real republican, must confess that republicans should be trained even as to their tempers; and be able to bear hardships of the mind as well as of the body; looking for the reward of virtue in itself, whenever the public decides ill concerning him." He charged that Washington's sensitivity to criticism furnished a poor example for other American leaders: "To be effeminately tender of the individual is to be unpitying towards the public; and it is even an encouragement to individuals to make the public subordinate to their personal ambition."[57] Thus, like the famous classical heroes Belisarius and Marcus Regulus, the true patriot should bear the criticism of the public if he believes he is acting uprightly. This was a widely accepted aspect of public virtue.

Clearly differentiating between public and private virtue, Bache explained that the former encompassed honorable, independent political conduct that sought to find a harmony of interests in society without regard to one's self-interest. In contrast, private virtue merely endorsed fair dealing and trustworthiness in private business transactions, decent conduct towards one's family, and personal morality including a modicum of church attendance. Bache thus followed in the classical republican, neo-Harringtonian tradition described by scholars like

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J. G. A. Pocock, Lance Banning, Gordon S. Wood, Michael Lienesch, and Drew McCoy. "What is said of the impropriety of transferring one virtue to stand in the place of the other, applies still more against an attempt to make private hold in the place of public virtue," he asserted. Brashly comparing Washington to King George III, another erstwhile "Patriot King" and "Father of his Country" who blithely led his people toward moral and political decline, Bache alluded to the recent Revolution: "The supposed private virtues of the present monarch of Great Britain have so little served his empire, that we have repeatedly during his reign seen it on the brink of ruin; and America knows that it is during this boasted period, that its own safety required a separation from him." He thought that George III's "apposite example" ought to alert Americans to the inadequacies "respecting the private pretensions of general Washington," whose adherence to rules of private morality by no means qualified him to be a statesman. "In truth to be sober and chaste and church-going, can be no security for a complete catalogue of the private virtues; and how much less for such virtues (and talents too) as are of a public nature," he argued.[58] Although Joyce Appleby has argued that Jeffersonian "liberal capitalist" ideology subordinated public virtue to the possession of private honesty and personal probity, Bache carefully distinguished between them, granting the former priority. He insisted that private virtue could not substitute for devotion to the public interest, even assuming that Washington displayed the former.[59]

Unfortunately, Monroe never made so explicit a statement of his conception of private and public virtue, their similarities and differences, nor did many other Americans, including Jefferson and Madison. But Bache's classifications would have suited Monroe's taste well

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enough. Several of Monroe's public addresses, to which we shall now turn, make this clear.

One of Monroe's primary concerns was that the voters sustain sufficient interest in government and possess the education adequate to read the newspapers and understand official policies and activities. "In a government founded on the sovereignty of the people," Monroe declared, "the education of the youth is an object of the first importance." A republican government should "diffuse knowledge throughout the whole society," easily comprehensible by "every citizen." In a representative government, though the people did not need to possess the qualifications for rulership, they must have sufficient knowledge of the way their government worked and of their "duties " as citizens to "be attentive" to their delegates' conduct in office. He employed the Social Contract's Rousseauist terminology, urging the people to maintain adequate interest in public affairs to wield "sovereignty" over their "government." "While the people are faithful to themselves their servants will be faithful to them also," he declared. As Montesquieu and Rousseau had done decades earlier, he warned that the decline of republican virtue would encourage government officials to usurp power.[60]

Unlike these philosophes, who despite their current historical reputations hesitated to entrust self-government to the masses, Monroe emphasized the necessity of public education rather than personal frugality and moral austerity for preserving self-government.[61] "It is only when the people become ignorant and corrupt that their representatives forget their duty and aspire to the sovereignty," he observed. Because popular attention to public affairs was so crucial, the state government itself should supervise a system of public education rather than leave it to the discretion of individual householders who contributed to private academies.

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Axiomatically, all "established governments" practiced the art of self-preservation, Monroe said. In order to survive, monarchies and aristocracies employed "standing armies, fleets, and other expensive establishments" against their own people, who, like "a foreign enemy, are the object of their terror." In a popular government like Virginia's, free public education was the weapon for the survival and "security of free government," and of "improvement of the condition of mankind."[62]

Monroe was confident that a well-informed and educated people, alert to incursions on their rights, would keep corrupt representatives in line even if their own short-term interests suffered. Perhaps with the French Revolution's excesses in mind, he said that democratic Americans would eschew "insurrections, or other acts of violence." Resorting to the ballot box rather than to frenzies that undermined republican stability itself, and "would rally...on the day of election to rid themselves of obnoxious measures by dismissing from their service undeserving men."[63] Despite the ubiquity of revolutionary violence by both blacks and whites across the globe, including the abortive Gabriel's Rebellion in his own state, Monroe concluded that those who possessed the ballot and the education to go with it would choose peaceful modes of reform.

Emphasizing the organic, reciprocal features of the ideal classical republican society, Monroe argued that public education would help all classes, rich, poor, and middling. He was under the impression that all citizens paid something out of their pockets for the education of their children, either in county levies and/or for private tutors. "There is scarce an inhabitant of our country so lost to the claims of nature and to every just and generous sentiment as to

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abandon his children to brutal ignorance," he was certain. He urged the legislature to pass laws to centralize educational funding, enabling it to "procure excellent instructors, and establish seminaries in every neighborhood." Perceiving the impact that education had on children, he said that increasing the number of schools would certainly "more generally diffuse knowledge, and the morality of the children, who would be instructed in the presence of their parents, [would be] better preserved."[64]

With rare eloquence, Monroe pointed out that education would enhance communal solidarity and "give support" to republican principles. A widespread system of improved education would foster youthful republican "affections," patriotic civic friendships, and comradery throughout local neighborhoods: " It would draw the youth of the country into society together by means whereof they would become acquainted and form friendships which would remain through life; friendships which would equally promote the social harmony of the State, and the comfort and happiness of the individuals who compose it."[65] Friendships based on intelligence rather than ignorance, enduring through life, would secure republican virtue and republican self-government. He chastised the legislature, which neglected to implement an act in favor of public education passed in 1796, for ignoring the prompting of "reason and experience" by relying for enforcement on hostile county courts.[66] Thus, for Governor Monroe, burgeoning eighteenth century "liberal democracy," as Joyce Appleby, John Patrick Diggins, and other scholars call it, was to be eschewed in favor of taking on the mantle of the independent leader, a role to which he grew increasingly accustomed over the years,.

Next turning his attention to the citizen militia, another "bulwark" (as he called it) of

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classical republican community, Monroe reminded the legislature of the dangers the standing army alternative posed to public liberty. Since the Atlantic Ocean protected America from the European powers, thus rendering a strong army superfluous, he assumed that if malevolent public officials instituted a standing army, they would fail to convince its officers, "educated like ourselves in democratic principles, [to] abandon those principles to turn their arms against their country." By the same token, Monroe decried dependence on military chieftains' probity to safeguard American liberties from ambitious legislators or ruthless monarchs. Indulging in the classical republican rhetoric of citizen responsibility for public defense and general alertness against internal and external assault, he insisted that the people should defend themselves with their own weapons, or with rifles provided by the state. "Free men should never rely on others for the protection of an interest for which they are personally responsible, and from which they have no right to shrink," he affirmed. Since either foreign or domestic armies might overturn the republic if the people lacked the will and ability to fight for its preservation, the people "should be able at all times to take such an attitude in arms as would forbid the idea of invasion or usurpation."[67] A true classical republican, Monroe maintained that the public spirit of republican citizenry, fostered by a communal education in republicanism and self-defense, best ensured the government's perpetuation.

Urging the legislature to overhaul the entire militia system, Monroe pointed out the weakness of its current condition. The citizens were ignorant of military drill and duties and remiss at attending militia musters. He recommended the revival of a time-tested punishment, earlier employed to discipline remiss militiamen and to force state assemblymen to attend

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sessions of the legislature and instituted in ancient Athens to force citizens to vote: "The failure of the men or officers to attend musters admits a prompt and easy remedy by the imposition of fines which would make it their interest as well as their duty to attend; fines which would produce their effect equally with the rich and with the poor." (Apparently he intended to propose a graduated system of penalties). He hoped that officers would be sufficiently enthusiastic to gain expertise in their work and "infuse a military spirit in the whole body," thereby rendering fines unnecessary. Probably alarmed by Gabriel's recent abortive slave insurrection and rumors of other impending servile uprisings at Petersburg, Richmond, and Norfolk, Monroe emphasized the importance of a more efficient and well-armed militia. He even proposed to inject himself as a catalyst stimulating the officers toward increased military preparedness, convening them "in larger bodies, by brigades for example, to be trained in the presence of their Generals and of the Chief Magistrate, when his other publick duties permitted his attendance, yielding them such light accommodations as the change might require." He concluded, "The subject is highly important to the best interests of society."[68]

Acknowledging "the great importance to the publick"of improved transportation, Monroe similarly wished to rehabilitate the "publick roads and bridges" under the authority of the state rather than the lethargic counties. Hoping to "unite in a common policy, the support of our republican government, the improvement of our country and the happiness of our citizens," Monroe emphasized that he submitted his proposals to the legislature as the "immediate representatives of the people." He linked the quest for public improvements with the Republican party's national victory in the presidential election of 1800-1801, which

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safeguarded "the personal liberty of our citizens, the stability of our Union, the sovereignty and the happiness of the people."[69]

Though he advocated improved facilities for trade and communication, and hence increased national wealth, Monroe, a Jeffersonian Puritan, directly attacked the spirit of avarice. Implying that Jefferson's election had somehow restored individual and public virtue, Monroe drew parallels between the Revolutions of 1776 and 1800, as Jefferson would do in 1819. But Monroe seemed more attuned to the classical republican ideals of virtue and frugality, rather than political libertarianism. "Had the contest which achieved our independence, ended in the aggrandizement of individuals, vain and unprofitable would it have been," he declared. Had that been the result, our race of glory, our career of happiness would have been soon over."[70]

However, far from seeking selfish egoistic gratification, Americans, "among whom there was no superior, contended in a common struggle for their equal rights," undergoing calamities in order to achieve "peace, and the happy order of things which would grow out of it." Jefferson's election had gained them the fruits of their Revolution. "I have no hesitation to declare, that I consider the late election to the Executive of the United States, as having essentially contributed to secure to us the enjoyment of the blessings for which we contended in our revolution," he reminded the state legislature in December 1801. Downplaying the threat of military conflict between the Virginia and Pennsylvania militia and recalcitrant Federalist congressmen who refused to surrender power, Governor Monroe stressed the peaceful mode in which the succession had taken place. "No strife, no unbecoming violence, no popular

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tumult, were heard of," he remarked. "Tranquillity, order, and a dignified but unimposing solicitude prevailed in every quarter." By evincing their "competence to self government," the American people had proven to themselves and the world that they could exercise "sovereignty." He applauded the new Jeffersonian regime, composed of "wise and virtuous men," dedicated to restoring "a republican tone in the government and its measures," gaining respect from foreign powers and stabilizing the nation's finances, and (most important in a communal republic), accomplishing "the restoration of social harmony."[71]

Joining the Old Republican crusade to more strictly delineate and separate the national government's legislative, executive, and judicial powers in the wake of the Federalist attack on civil liberties and the distasteful Hamiltonian fiscal plan, Monroe now vaguely recommended that the legislature promote amendments to the U. S. Constitution that would preserve American liberties inviolate. In this he reiterated the views of Republican leaders John Taylor of Caroline and Edmund Pendleton. Fearing that the government would revert to undemocratic centralization after Jefferson's tenure in the presidency ended, Taylor also hoped the Republicans would push through corrective constitutional amendments in the interim.[72]

From March till October 1801, Taylor's uncle and former guardian, Judge Edmund Pendleton, published parts of a newspaper series entitled The Danger Not Over, which recommended constitutional amendments restricting the national government's power in regard to the army, the navy, finances, and treaties. Although not like Taylor a former Antifederalist, Pendleton hoped the national government would deconstruct Hamiltonian Federalism. Pendleton was appalled, as Monroe had been earlier during the 1788 ratifying convention, at

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the violation of separation of powers implicit in the Senate's authority to ratify presidential appointments and treaties, and the likelihood that the president would appoint senators to lucrative offices and Supreme Court seats in exchange for their votes. In his pamphlet, The Danger Not Over, Pendleton declared: "An essential principle of representative government is that it be influenced by the will of the people; which will can never be expressed, if their representatives are corrupted, or influenced by hopes of office." Pendleton proposed to confine the President to one term, transfer the appointment of judges and foreign ministers to Congress, deny the Senate its "executive" (treaty-making) powers, and prohibit members of Congress and federal judges from accepting other offices during their tenure. He also proposed the approval of treaties by both houses of Congress, and the passage of new amendments further protecting freedom of speech, press and religion, and demarcating the powers of the state and national governments. Heeding the pleas of Monroe, Pendleton, and others, the Virginia House of Delegates in its 1801-1802 session proposed seven amendments to the Constitution similar to Pendleton's, but the state senate postponed action on them.[73] This abortive effort to secure constitutional reform on the national level may be considered among the last gasps of classical republicanism in Virginia and America in the nineteenth century.

First, last, and always, Monroe epitomized classical republicanism, its conservatism and self-restraining virtue. An advocate of imperial expansion who thought the propertied members of his "Elect Nation" (as James Harrington called the projected British Calvinist Utopia in the 1650s) should rule, he considered it essential that the republic's leaders, if not the citizenry,

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possess high-minded, disinterested virtue.[74] Monroe was receptive to Jefferson's hopes for American expansion into the Floridas, Texas, and Cuba. During Monroe's presidency, Jefferson looked forward to the eventual American seizure of Texas ("Techas") from Spain. Jefferson was confident that Texas, Florida, and perhaps Cuba, "will join us on the acknowledgment of their independence, a measure to which their new government will probably accede voluntarily." He thought that when he addressed Monroe in this manner, he was preaching to the converted: "But why should I be saying all this to you, whose mind all the circumstances of this affair have had possession for years?" And indeed Monroe favored Jefferson's doctrine of the separate American and European spheres, with their racist undertones. Monroe said that white Anglo-Saxon, U.S. racial superiority rendered inevitable American leadership in the hemisphere against future European intervention. "The destiny of this western world depends however on the continued prosperity & success of this portion of it," Monroe agreed. "If the European has more wisdom & energy than the African, or Asiatick [sic], I am satisfied that the citizens of this Republick [United States], have in like proportion, more, & for the same cause, than the inhabitants of any other portion of this hemisphere, not excepting those, or their descendants, who emigrated from other countries, than that, from which we took our origin [Great Britain]." Compared to Americans and Britons, even other members of "European" stock were incompetent to lead the hemisphere.[75] British classical republicans like Harrington and Algernon Sidney, who had similar racial biases, would have applauded these views. It is therefore not surprising that Monroe's idea of virtue included dispossessing the Indians of their lands and offering them inadequate substitutes west of the

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Mississippi.[76]

Monroe maintained a nationalistic perspective on the matter of the disposal of the public lands, whose acreage had increased under his administration as a result of treaties with the Creek, Choctaw, and Cherokee tribes. In his first State of the Union Message in December 1817, Monroe said that the "public lands are a public stock, which ought to be disposed of to the best advantage of the nation. The nation should therefore desire the profit proceeding from the continual rise in their value." Monroe believed that if "great capitalists" had the opportunity of amassing vast tracts at low prices, "the profit will accrue to them and not to the public." He proposed no specific plan, however. He noted that the purchase of territory from the Indians encompassed Ohio, Indiana, Michigan, Georgia, and Alabama Territory, the last consisting mostly of Cherokee lands. Monroe upheld the view that the Indians would ultimately benefit from white takeover of their land, which in any case was justified by "nature" because white people needed more land for their expanding population, and better knew how to cultivate and improve it. "In this progress, which the rights of nature demand and nothing can prevent, marking a growth rapid and gigantic, it is our duty to make new efforts for the preservation, improvement, and civilization of the native inhabitants," Monroe declared. He argued that justice was on the white man's side, rather than that of the native buffalo hunter, who was being selfish and unfair in claiming land that he did not physically use and occupy: "The hunter state can exist only in the vast uncultivated desert," he asserted. "It yields to the more dense and compact form and greater force of civilized population, and of right it ought to yield, for the earth was given to mankind to support the greatest number of which it is capable,

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and no tribe or people have a right to withhold from the wants of others more than is necessary for their own support and comfort."[77]

In The People the Sovereigns, Monroe praised the communistic government of ancient Sparta for blunting social conflicts, since "the opposite and conflicting classes of the rich & poor, could not exist, among them." Similarly, during his first term in office he was so intent on applying classical republican concepts of the public good to Native Americans that he appeared ready for a slight compromise with their kind of communism, informing Congress that "the reservations of land made by the treaties with the tribes on Lake Erie were made with a view to individual ownership among them and to the cultivation of the soil by all, and that an annual stipend has been pledged to supply their other wants." As a result of federal acquisition of Indian lands, less need existed for defending territory that would soon be overrun by white settlers and protected by cannon and fortifications impregnable to Indians' less advanced weaponry. Thus, Monroe predicted, the public lands would increase in value as the expanding population of the United States moved to these regions. He hoped the proceeds of public land sales would advance the public good, filling the public treasury and facilitating repeal of the excise taxes that had been in effect since the War of 1812. As he explained, "The public lands are a public stock, which ought to be disposed of to the best advantage of the nation. The nation should therefore derive the profit proceeding from the continual rise in their value."[78]

Anticipating passage of the Public Land Act of 1820, Monroe hinted he desired legislation that would help distribute land to small farmers rather than big speculators, who would buy it cheaply in quantity and sell it to small purchasers at exorbitant profits. In

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purchasing public lands, Monroe said, "Every encouragement should be given to the emigrants consistent with a fair competition between them, but that competition should operate in the first sale to the advantage of the nation rather than of individuals. Great capitalists will derive all the benefit incident to their superior wealth under any mode of sale which may be adopted," he admitted. "But if, looking forward to the rise in the value of the public lands, they should have the opportunity of amassing at a low price vast bodies in their hands, the profit will accrue to them and not to the public." Moreover, Monroe warned that land speculators would arrogate power to determine the character of the population that settled the western lands "in such a manner as their opinion of their respective interests might dictate," granting priority to whoever could pay them the most money rather than appreciating the importance of an upright clientele on the nation's frontiers.[79]

Therefore, Monroe hoped Congress would pass a public land sale law to promote the "public interest": "I submit the subject to the consideration of Congress, that such further provision may be made in the sale of the public lands, with a view to the public interest, should any be deemed expedient, as in their judgment may be best adapted to the object."[80] A few years later, the Land Act of 1820 abolished the 1800 land act's four-year credit system, which encouraged speculation. The minimum price was reduced to $1.25 an acre and minimum purchases were fixed at 80 acres. Although this stipulation benefitted the pioneer in principle, farmers' tendency to be heavily in debt made it virtually impossible for them to pay the full cash price and ultimately rewarded speculators.[81] Despite its untoward consequences, Monroe's demand for land reform had undoubtedly been designed to improve opportunities for the small

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settler.

Monroe himself insisted throughout his career that he had served the public at bargain basement prices, especially considering the expenses of his numerous diplomatic missions, much of which he had paid out of his pocket, and he claimed, for which he had never been fully compensated. Conceiving of himself as a selfless public servant, Monroe proudly refused payment or perquisites for much of his public activity. When, in the summer of 1780, Virginia's Governor Thomas Jefferson required information about the military defenses of North and South Carolina, he sent Monroe as his military agent. Monroe refused any monetary compensation for the expedition, declaring that he had refused any payment during the Revolution.[82]

On his presidential tour of New England and New York in the summer of 1817, Monroe paid the expenses for his travels out of his own pocket, something unheard of among presidents today.[83] But in that era of much touted republican virtue, perhaps the wise politician played to the galleries by performing just such magnanimous and disinterested, but not too costly financial sacrifices. They would reap ample political dividends among the masses in the future. Perhaps this was Monroe's way of thinking. The most recent, and on the whole sympathetic, student of his presidency, Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., seems to think so. "Ever the politician, Monroe missed few opportunities to bolster his political position," he comments about Monroe's trip to the lower south and southwest in the summer of 1819. And Cunningham concludes his study: "Neither an ideologue nor a leader with a grand vision, Monroe was a political person who sought to achieve specific, attainable objectives."[84]

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Monroe sometimes justified his tendency to gratify his ambition by claiming that he had the public well-being solely at heart. When in 1811 he chose to take the position of secretary of state rather than remain governor, he rationalized his political self-seeking in a letter to his friend Colonel James Patton Preston, a member of the House of Delegates who served as the state's governor from 1817-1819, claiming that Virginia's interests as well as the nation's would benefit from his decision. Confiding that "a late invitation from the President into the department of State has given me more concern than you will readily imagine," he was aware of the possible impropriety of resigning the governorship for the more prestigious office. "Feeling as I do the utmost gratitude to the State, for the many proofs of its confidence & esteem, I was fearful that I might be thought to fail in what I owed it, if I accepted any other office," he acknowledged. "The consideration, however, that the great interests of the state were nearer involved at this time, in the measures of the general government, and more dependant [sic] on their success, than in any thing to be done here, and being persuaded that the acceptance might promote in some degree harmony in the republican party, I at length concluded in favor of the measure." Somewhat hypocritically, Monroe asked for his colleague's ex post facto vindication of his actions: "It will give me great pleasure to receive your sentiments on this subject," he wrote. "I know that they will [be] given with candour & an impartial consideration of all the circumstances which merit attention. It would have been more satisfactory to me to have received them before the measure was adopted, but that was impossible."

Dramatizing the occasion, Monroe emphasized his self-sacrifice in grasping the more challenging office. The opportunity for glory was greater, but so was that for disgrace. "I am

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aware that I am about to engage in duties that are more difficult at a moment of great embarrassment, in respect to our foreign concerns, and that the prospect of giving satisfaction is much less favorable than that which presented itself to me in the office from which I am removed," he said. "I shall enter on these duties, with a firm resolution, to do every thing, in my power to merit the approbation of my country," he declared. "The result will be left to the judgment of my fellow citizens."[85] Perhaps disguising the striving of selfish ambition, sublimated towards the public good in the passion for fame, behind metaphors of disinterested patriotism, Monroe, as he was to do later on an intellectual level in The People the Sovereigns, combined a classical republican, civic humanist mindset with that of the liberal democratic "man on the make."

That Monroe's contemporaries recognized the proverbial conflict in the minds of statesmen and would-be statesmen between public duty and self-interest was made clear by Colonel Preston's reply. "I am aware of the concern that you would feel in quitting your late appointment [as governor], and I am rejoiced that you have come to that decision which I know your best friends would most approve," he wrote deferentially. "I am assured that, among other yet important considerations, that will be effected in our foreign concerns, than [sic] a perfect confidence will again be restored not only among the republicans of Virginia but that it will be diffused throughout the whole United States." And, as if to assure Monroe that he had no doubt that his friend's motives were completely disinterested, Preston wrote: "Your declining from your late appointment and acceptance of the present can never be construed into an abandonment of duty except by the most malevolent."[86] As Monroe's friends perceived it,

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he had stepped forth from the "plow" of his localist endeavors like Cincinnatus the Roman republican statesman and reemerged on the national stage to employ his virtues and talents to save the republic.

Perhaps chiding those political opponents who charged in the 1790's that Monroe had used his public service in France to speculate in land and real estate and accumulate a fortune, Preston observed: "I hold it as the most decisive additional proof of your republican patriotism that you have been so prompt at all times at the call of your country and regardless of future consequences to meet the increased responsibility and difficulty of office, so embarrassed by the critical situation of our foreign relations, and unpropitious to a substantial support." There was more than formal rhetoric involved in Preston's efforts to comfort Monroe against those who might accuse him of avarice and ambition, the twin bugbears of Early Republican politician/statesmen. " The first draft of Preston's letter concluded, "There is no man who can feel himself more interested than I do in the result of your endeavours to merit the esteem of your fellow citizens--as there is none who is more entirely convinced that it is your determination to merit their approbation." These words must have been his instinctual feelings about the issue of republican service in the new nation.[87]

Interestingly enough, the final draft of Preston's letter was less explicit about the theme of republican self-sacrifice than the unsent version. Instead, Preston emphasized how Monroe's service in the Madison Administration would reinforce party unity and simultaneously unite the country. "Having been from home for a fortnight past, I obtained through the public prints the Pleasing information contained in your very friendly Letter of the 3rd Instant," he

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finally wrote. "Be assured that no circumstance has occured [sic] latterly in the movement of the administration that has afforded me such entire satisfaction." He acknowledged:

> Last winter I anticipated in all my conversations with my friends that your appointment to the magistracy of our State would among a variety of other beneficial effects restore harmony and cordiality among the republicans of Virginia. An event which I deemed of all others the most desirable was much as I knew upon this depended our weight in the scale of the union and much of our happiness at home. I rejoice that the President has enacted this claim on your efforts in this momentous crisis.[88]

Monroe would now be allowed to exercise his abilities through the entire Union, Preston rejoiced: "I am convinced that among other great and important considerations that will be effected both in our foreign and domestic concerns that a perfect confidence will again be preserved not only among your native State but that it will now be defused [sic] throughout the whole United States," he said. "I am aware of the concern that you would feel in quitting your state Station but I am pleased that you have come to this decision which your best friends will most approve." He retained his letter's final sentence justifying Monroe in stepping down from the state office: "Your retiring from your late appointment and acceptance of the present can never be construed into an abandonment of duty except by the most malevolent."[89]

To an extent, the party cause justified the personal ambition of Monroe as well as others. In 1808, Monroe was resoundingly defeated in the unique contest between him and Madison for the presidency. He failed to receive any electoral votes, even from Virginia, where he represented a coalition of Old Republican states' rights and antiwar groups and Madison stood for those nationalist, centralizing Jeffersonians eager to confront England. An obscure politician expressed glee at the outcome. "I am really pleased to hear of the Richmond

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triumph," he reported. "The Monroe ticket only got ten votes at our [county] election. The correspondence between the President [Jefferson] and Monroe, which appeared on the day of the Election, was a manifest injury to Monroe among all parties." Jubilantly predicting the finish of Monroe's life in politics, he asserted, "My friends' [sic] political career is for ever at an end, and... this unfortunate contest will terminate all his glories."[90]

Indeed, avarice as well as ambition may have played roles in Monroe's decision to forsake the governorship for more prestigious and lucrative national office. At the outset of his resumption of the governorship in 1811, he was having financial difficulties. And the assembly had been remiss in meeting his most basic needs. "The legislature having failed to provide furniture, which, together with the expence attending my establishment here, require funds which I have not at this moment at command," he lamented to a friend in March. "I have been two months in office, & the sum actually due me would afford considerable aid. I am anxious that I can not draw it regularly till the end of the quarter. It may be in your power to accomodate [sic] me in that amount, by an understanding between us."[91] Even though he held the state's highest office, he found it necessary to beg for funds from a friend. For someone as thin-skinned as Monroe, such subtle humiliation may have helped motivate his shift to national office.

Nevertheless, there were other imperatives as well. We can label Monroe neither a "classical republican" nor a "liberal democrat" without stretching the truth. As scholars have tended to emphasize more and more, these two pigeonholes are the creations of historians rather than of people of the time. Even such utterly democratic and egalitarian organizations as the Democratic-Republican societies, which appeared for a brief but raucous few years in the

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1790s, propagated "classical republican" themes of balanced government, separation of powers, and the fear of executive abuses and inordinate "avarice and ambition." A recent insightful article by a young scholar, Matthew Schoenbachler, demonstrates how the societies utilized classical republican rhetoric to advance liberal democratic ideals as well as pursue their own ideological preferences and sectionally-based class and economic interests (e.g., free navigation of the Mississippi River, support of the French Revolution, opposition to Jay's Treaty): "In the name of vigilance, fear of corruption, apprehension of ministerial plots and excessive accumulation of power by agents of the government, in the name of many traditional 'republican' concerns, the ordinary Americans who comprised the bulk of the membership of these post-revolutionary Democratic-Republican Societies launched a democratic and egalitarian uprising not against, but on behalf of, key strands of classical politics."[92]

Although Monroe was not a member of the Democratic societies and was in France during the time Washington made his devastating address against them as "self-created societies," he shared many of their attitudes and objectives. He agreed with them that there were objective, à priori political truths which representative governments subsisting according to natural laws and social contracts could not legitimately ignore. Moreover, each member of the body politic was expected to subscribe to these beliefs in public competency to govern, freedom of speech and the press, and other axioms common alike to the liberal democrat and the classical republican. By the end of his life Monroe was willing to accept his mentor Jefferson's dictum (which the latter may not have fully believed when he uttered it}, "We are all republicans, we are all federalists."[93] By the end of Monroe's presidency, the Federalists were

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more affable than they had been when Jefferson first took office.

Monroe sought to proselytize for this faith during his presidency with his nationwide tours in the summers of 1817 and 1819, the most extensive that had yet been undertaken by a U. S. President. In this manner, Monroe evinced his ambition to unite and serve as president of all the people. He explained his objective following his New England tour in the summer of 1817. "I wish to bring about an union of the whole population of our country, in support of our republican government, which can be done only, by an union of parties on republican principles," he declared. "A premature favour, of [sic] any leading federalist, would tend to defeat that object, by exciting the resentment of the republicans, at the same time that it cemented the federalists, who would infer that it proceeded from fear of them as a party, whereby the two parties would be kept asunder, and I, by an act of folly not only defeat the great object, which I have most at heart, but lose the confidence of those with whom I have always acted, & who possess, in the highest degree, mine."[94]

While Monroe sought to attain the classical republican goal of national harmony and consensus, he refused to betray his own party's interest (which he considered prima facie synonymous with the well-being of the majority of the people) in an effort to win over the opposition. And indeed, loyalty and gratitude to one's friends (comprised under the rubric "honor") formed part of the classical republican idiom.[95]

Most appositely, President Monroe explained his policy of reconciling the parties to his friend and predecessor, James Madison. Perhaps more than anyone else, Madison epitomized the classical ideal of an independent statesman. His politics in the 1790's had evolved from

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Federalist centralization to Republican individualism and state's rights once he perceived that public liberty and legal equality were threatened by Hamiltonian adherence to special interests.[96]

With perhaps justifiable boastfulness, Monroe described to Madison his victorious progression throughout New England and New York in the summer of 1817. One of the trip's highlights was his journey with Jeffersonian General Jacob Brown, a commander during the War of 1812, to visit battlefields like Sackett's Harbor "whence I shall hasten forward, in the completion of my tour, as fast as possible." Monroe gained the impression that the enormous crowds which greeted him wherever he went, even in Federalist political territory, were motivated by "a desire, in the body of the people, to show their attachment to our union; & to republican government." As for the Federalists, he acknowledged, "There was just cause to entertain doubts, from the events of the late war, on their ruling motives." Yet, in his private letter to Madison, like his public messages of the time, he showed the same willingness to forgive the wayward children of the great republican "family." He observed, "The most distinguished in the opposition in private life, seemed to seize the opportunity which my journey afforded them, to remove, by the most explicit & solemn declarations, impressions of that kind, which they knew existed, and to get back into the great family of the union, & most of the leaders have held language of the same kind." He was confident that most of the citizens were loyal to democracy and devoid of preferences for foreign governments: "Of the attachment of the people to our union & government I have no doubt. Their movement has been evidently from the heart."[97] Monroe seemingly had no fear that New Englanders would regress from their newfound republican ideals. He assumed that they were merely returning to what

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Bolingbroke had called the "first principles" of constitutional government.

As a public leader who had always been gladdened by popular approval, Monroe was willing to appease the public will, especially if it brought him the acclaim he had long craved. "I expected to have travelled in the character of a private citizen, but soon found that I must either return home or yield to the course which the public opinion dictated," he informed Madison. "I accomodated [sic] with the latter, but so heavy has been the pressures [sic] on me that I often found it would overwhelm me." Being the center of a public spectacle surrounding republicanism, Monroe's anxieties quickly yielded to exhilaration. "General Brown says that I look better than when he saw me in March," he noted, an opinion confirmed by others. His trip took on the character of a Jeffersonian love feast. "In many parts, I met with some of our old friends & particularly in Vermont, all of whom made the most friendly inquiries respecting you and Mr. Jefferson," he told Madison. "I would require a volume to give you a detailed sketch of the incidents of this tour.... In every quarter (except Boston) both parties united, which I deemed highly fortunate, on public as well as private considerations."[98]

As president, Monroe sought to restore an imagined pre-party national republican consensus that had ostensibly been undermined by the Hamiltonian Federalist party's rise to power during the 1790s. A few irreconcilable New England Jeffersonians, who had suffered too long under Federalist rule to share Monroe's eagerness to bury the hatchet, led the Boston diehards who refused to join the Federalist crowd addressing the President: Henry Dearborn, who had been in Congress during the Jay Treaty struggle, served as Jefferson's secretary of war and ended his career an unsuccessful general during the War of 1812, and Benjamin

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Austin, a radical who violently hated lawyers as overfed tools of the rich, and wished to abolish the profession, preferring that people settle most of their disputes by mediation and arbitration. "At Boston, the union was declined by Gen. Dearborn, Col. [Benjamin] Austin (the old man) & some others, who presented a separate address," Monroe reported. "I did all that I could in my reply, to prevent that circumstance injuring the republican cause, party, or those members personally."[99] Ever the advocate of harmony, Monroe feared to alienate either his friends or his enemies. All were equally essential to the preservation of the virtuous federal republic.

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CHAPTER 10: NOTES

1. Samuel L. Gouverneur, ed., The People the Sovereigns (Philadelphia, 1867), 122.

2. On John Adams's political *faux-pas* ,explaining America's form of government in terms of the "social orders" and feudalistic terminology of the Old World, see Gordon S. Wood's famous chapter, "The Relevance and Irrelevance of John Adams," in Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill, 1969), 563-592.

3. See Jean Yarbrough, "Republicanism Reconsidered: Some Thoughts on the Foundation and Preservation of the American Republic," Review of Politics, 41 (Jan. 1979), 61-95.

4. For recent scholarly statements of this theme, see Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 47 (Jan. 1990), 3-29; Donald K. Pickens and G. L. Seligman, ''Unworthy Motives': Property, the Historian, and the Federal Convention: A Historiographic Speculation," Social Science Quarterly, 88 (1987), 847-58; Gordon S. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York, 1992); Martin J. Burke, The Conundrum of Class: Public Discourse on the Social Order in America (Chicago and London, 1995), 22-23,45, 52,73; Thomas A. Horne, "Bourgeois Virtue, Property, and Moral Philosophy in America, 1750-1800," History of Political Thought, 4 (1983), 318-40.

5. The People the Sovereigns, 21-22.

6. Most of Monroe's speeches were made at forts and military installations, thereby conveying his belief in the importance of increased defense expenditures in a subtle manner. Jeffrey K.Tulis, The Rhetorical Presidency (Princeton, 1987), 71.

7. Harry Ammon, James Monroe: The Quest for National Identity (New York, 1971), 175-76. On the petition process in Virginia, see Raymond C. Bailey, Popular Influence upon Public Policy: Petitioning in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (Westport, Conn., 1979).

8. Jurgen Habermas, The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1989).

9. Michael Warner, The Letters of the Republic: Publication and the Public Sphere in Eighteenth-Century America (Cambridge, Mass., 1990).

10. Isaac Kramnick, "Republican Revisionism Revisited," American Historical Review, 87 (June 1982), 664; Steven Watts, The Republic Reborn: War and the Making of Liberal America, 1790-

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1820 (Baltimore, 1987); Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984).; Lance Banning, The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology (Ithaca, 1978); J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment (Princeton, 1975); Drew McCoy, The Elusive Republic (Chapel Hill, 1980).

11. The Social Contract, Book II, Chap. IV, in G. D. H. Cole, ed., The Social Contract and the Discourses by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (New York, 1950), 29.

12. Thomas Jefferson, Second Inaugural Address, in Koch and Peden, eds., Life and Selected Writings of Jefferson, 339.

13. "Some Observations," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 286.

14. Ibid.

15. The People the Sovereigns (Philadelphia, 1867), 39.

16. Ibid., 51.

17. Ibid.

18. Ibid.

19. Daniel Walker Howe, "The Political Psychology of The Federalist," William and Mary Quarterly, 44 (July 1987), 485-509, quote at 491.

20. Monroe to Jefferson, July 18, 1790, Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, XVII, 232.

21. Alpheus T. Mason, "The Federalist: A Split Personality," American Historical Review, 57 (April 1952), 625-43.

22. Christopher M. Duncan, The Anti-Federalists and Early American Political Thought (DeKalb, Ill., 1995), 165, explicitly cites Monroe's "Some Observations on the Constitution," in Storing, ed., Complete Anti-Federalist, V, 286, as an example of this localist affinity.

23. Monroe to Jefferson, July 18, 1790, in Boyd, ed., Jefferson Papers, XVII, 231-33.

24. Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Presidency of James Monroe (Lawrence, 1996), 94-104, 166-67, 190.

25. Ibid., 34.

26. Monroe to the Speakers of the House of Delegates, and of the Senate, Dec. 7, 1801, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 304. The whole of this revelatory message covers pp. 302-318.

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27. Ibid.

28. Ibid., 305. See John R. Howe, Jr., "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s," American Quarterly, 19 (Summer 1967), 147-65, and John E. Crowley, "Classical and Other Traditions for the Understanding of Change in Post-Revolutionary America: The Idea of Decline," in John W. Eadie, ed., Classical Traditions in Early America (Ann Arbor, 1976), 213-253.

29. Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 304.

30. Ibid.

31.Ibid.

32. Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 308. See Aristotle's Politics, Book V, chap. 8, "How Constitutions May Be Preserved." Among Aristotle's main themes in Politics, one scholar observes, "is that the various political forces in the state should all desire to keep the constitution as it is, for this makes for stability." Trevor J. Saunders, ed., Aristotle's The Politics (London, 1987), 150.

33. See David M. Post, "Jeffersonian Revisions of Locke: Education, Property-Rights, and Liberty," Journal of the History of Ideas, 47 (1986), 147-57.

34. Gordon W. Jones, The Library of James Monroe (Charlottesville, 1967), 17 18, 45, 39, 34, 60.(Jones's catalogue of Monroe's library is alphabetically arranged). According to one statistical survey, among the ancient Greek and Roman writers only Plutarch, Cicero, Livy, Tacitus, and Plato were cited with any frequency in the great American political debates which transpired from 1760-1805. However, their intellectual heir, Baron Montesquieu, was the most frequently cited authority during this period, exceeding even John Locke as a source. Donald S. Lutz, "The Relative Influence of European Writers on Late Eighteenth-Century American Political Thought," American Political Science Review, 79 (March 1984), 194.

35. "Books to Take to Spain, 1804-1805," in James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6 (microfilm).

36. James William Johnson, The Formation of English Neo-Classical Thought (Princeton, 1967); Isaac Kramnick, Bolingbroke and his Circle: The Politics of Nostalgia in the Age of Walpole (Cambridge, Mass., 1968).

37. Monroe's Notes on Plato and Aristotle, James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6 (microfilm); Ernest Barker, ed., The Politics of Aristotle (New York, 1962), 1.

38. The Politics of Aristotle, Book II, chap. ix, 1269b12-b23.

39. "An analysis of the two republics of Plato," Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6.

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40. Monroe's Notes on Plato and Aristotle, James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6 (microfilm); Francis MacDonald Cornford, ed., The Republic of Plato (New York, 1964), chap. 9, part 1, 68-69.

41. Monroe's Notes on Plato and Aristotle, James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6 (microfilm).

42.Monroe's Notes on Plato and Aristotle, James Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 6 (microfilm).

43. Ibid. Although the New York Public Library designates these notes as involving Aristotle alone, out of about 125 pages of notes, ostensibly relating to Aristotle's Politics, actually about one-fourth are notes on Plato's Republic. Perhaps this was because Aristotle discussed Plato's Republic at the beginning of Politics and elsewhere in the work. For Monroe's support of the occupation of Saint Domingue (then including Haiti and the present-day Dominican Republic, both of which were under French control in the late 1790s), see Monroe to Joseph Jones, Aug. 4, 1795, in James Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories (13 reels; Charlottesville, Va., 1969), reel 12.

44. Carl J. Richard, The Founders and the Classics: Greece, Rome, and the American Enlightenment (Cambridge, Mass., 1994), 189-90, 192, 211. Although John Adams's views changed in later life, in 1775, holding a favorable attitude toward Plato's work, he somehow included him among the influences on America's social contract/popular sovereignty theory, writing: "These are what are called revolution-principles. They are the principles of Aristotle and Plato, of Livy and Cicero, of Sidney, Harrington, and Lock[e].--The principles of nature and eternal reason." "Letters of Novanglus [Adams]," Jan. 23, 1775, quoted in ibid., 232.

45. Kenneth A. Lockridge, On the Sources of Patriarchal Rage: The Commonplace Books of William Byrd and Thomas Jefferson and the Gendering of Power in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1992). Even a lukewarm reviewer of Lockridge's book (most of them are very enthusiastic) calls it "a tour de force of ingenious interpretation." Richard L. Bushman, in Journal of the Early Republic, 14 (Summer 1994), 250. More typical is the following: "This study is an intriguing and valuable contribution to the growing literature on gender and society in colonial America. By exploring the circumstances under which these private expressions of patriarchal rage arose, Lockridge thoughtfully demonstrates how much the commonplace books of Byrd and Jefferson reveal about both gender and power in eighteenth-century Virginia and the impulses behind the brittle but enduring hegemony these men were able to construct and sustain." Terri L. Snyder, in Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 102 (April 1994), 274.

46. People the Sovereigns., 119.

47. People the Sovereigns, 125-26. Monroe may not have read Plato as thoroughly as it appears. After all, Plato was among the first to expound the cyclical concept of governmental decline through

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history in The Republic, Book VIII, sect. 546a-b. Allan Bloom, ed., The Republic,(New York, 1968), 223-24.

48. People the Sovereigns, title page, 120-21, 125-26 (quotations), 126-39. For Monroe's critique of Aristotle, see ibid., 119.

49. Ibid., 119.

50. Ibid., 53.

51. Jonathan Elliot, ed., Debates in the Several State Conventions on the Adoption of the Federal Constitution, 5 vols. (Philadelphia, 1891), III, 536-37 (June 20, 1788). (My italics).

52. People the Sovereigns, 120-21 (quotation); 140-48 (on Locke), 148-51 (Sidney), 151-55 (Montesquieu), 155-58 (Rousseau). David Hume, "Of the Independency of Parliament," in Charles W. Hendel, ed., David Hume's Political Essays (New York, 1966).

53. People the Sovereigns, 121 (quotation).

54. For a good recent analysis of the prevalence of private virtue (personal morality and upright conduct) rather than public virtue in the discourse of the Revolution, see Jack P. Greene, "The Concept of Virtue in the Late Colonial Period," in Greene, Imperatives, Behaviors, and Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History (Charlottesville, 1993), 208-235. Since most of Greene's examples are based on New Englanders, including clergymen, his conclusions may be misleading.

55. Monroe to --- , April 23, 1794, Gratz Manuscript Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

56. Monroe to Benjamin Franklin Bache, Nov. 13 and 20, 1797, Monroe Papers, University of Virginia, in Monroe Papers in Virginia Repositories, reel 12; Monroe to Bache, March 26, 1798, Bache Family Papers, American Philosophical Society.

57. [Benjamin Franklin Bache] Remarks Occasioned by the Late Conduct of Mr. Washington as President of the United States: 1796 (Philadelphia, 1797; Evans #31759), 31.

58. Ibid., 31. For examples of the "classical republican" historians, see Pocock, Machiavellian Moment, 74-76, 329, 472; Pocock, "Civic Humanism and its Role in Anglo-American Thought," in Pocock, Politics, Language, and Time: Essays on Political Thought and History (New York, 1971), 80-103; Banning, Jeffersonian Persuasion, and "Some Second Thoughts on Virtue and the Course of Revolutionary Thinking," in Terence Ball and J. G. A. Pocock, eds., Conceptual Change and the Constitution (Lawrence, Kans., 1988). 194-212; Wood, Creation of the American Republic, 65-96, 415-28; McCoy, The Elusive Republic: Political Economy in Jeffersonian America (Chapel Hill, 1980), esp. 68-73. A similar viewpoint may be found in, e.g., Ketcham, Presidents Above Party, esp. 186-87; John Ashworth, "The Jeffersonians: Classical Republicans or Liberal Capitalists?" Journal of

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American Studies, 18 (Dec. 1984), 425-35, who calls the Republicans "pre-capitalist commercialists"; and Andrew W. Foshee, "Jeffersonian Political Economy and the Classical Republican Tradition: Jefferson, Taylor, and the Agrarian Republic," History of Political Economy, 17 (Winter 1985), 523-50. On the transfer of popular affections from George III to Washington, see William D. Liddle, "'A Patriot King, or None': Lord Bolingbroke and the American Renunciation of George III," Journal of American History, 65 (March 1979), 951-70.

59. Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984), esp. 15, 94, 96. In Appleby's opinion, for the Jeffersonians, "virtue had lost its public character and attached itself instead to the private rectitude essential to a system of individual bargains" (96). For a similar emphasis on the replacement of public virtue with simple honesty, business acumen, and the private virtues, see Rowland Berthoff, "Independence and Attachment, Virtue and Interest: From Republican Citizen to Free Enterpriser, 1787-1837," in Richard L. Bushman et al., eds., Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin (Boston, 1979), 79-96; Jan Lewis, "'The Blessings of Domestic Society': Thomas Jefferson's Family and the Transformation of American Politics," in Peter S. Onuf, ed., Jeffersonian Legacies (Charlottesville, 1993), esp. 111-17, 133-34, 139; and John P. Diggins, The Lost Soul of American Politics: Virtue, Self-Interest, and the Foundations of Liberalism (New York, 1984). Ignoring such enemies of Washington as Bache and Monroe, Barry Schwartz, George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol (New York, 1987), 188-206, argues that Washington's countrymen universally lauded his public virtue and projected on him the private virtues as well (charity, humility, personal morality), considering him the epitome of self-mastery, "moderation, resoluteness, and strength of will" (203).

60. Governor Monroe to the Speakers of the House of Delegates and of the Senate, Dec. 7, 1801, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 306-307.

61. An excellent study of the condescending attitude of even the most liberal philosophes toward the canaille is Harry C. Payne, The Philosophes and the People (New Haven, 1976).

62. Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, III, 307.

63. Ibid., 308.

64. Ibid., 309.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 309-10.

67. Ibid., 310-11.

68. Ibid., 312.

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69. Ibid., 315-16.

70. Ibid., 316.

71. Ibid.

72. Norman K. Risjord, The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson (New York, 1965), 24-25.

73. Ibid.; David J. Mays, Edmund Pendleton, 2 vols. (Cambridge, Mass., 1952), II, 332-36 (quotation at p. 334).

74. For Harrington's views, see J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment: Florentine Political Thought and the Atlantic Republican Tradition (Princeton, 1975), 395-96.

75. Jefferson to Monroe, May 14, 1820, in Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, XV, 250-251; Monroe to Jefferson, Aug. 23, 1820, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VI, 151-52. In general, see James E. Lewis, Jr., The American Union and the Problem of Neighborhood: The United States and the Collapse of the Spanish Empire, 1783-1829 (Chapel Hill, 1998), and T.R. Schellenberg, "Jeffersonian Origins of the Monroe Doctrine," Hispanic-American Historical Review, 14 (1934), 1-32.

76. Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, 48-49. Unlike the famous Indian-hating General Andrew Jackson, Monroe argued that Indian land titles to the Southeast, mostly Creek, Choctaw, and Cherokee, had to be legally extinguished, even if the treaties of cession were made with European powers, as the Louisiana Purchase with France and the Florida purchase with Spain.

77. Fred Israel, ed., State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, I, 153-54; Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, 46

78. State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, I, 153; "The People the Sovereigns," New York Public Library Manuscript Division, Box 12. Congress repealed the internal taxes by an act passed Dec. 23, 1817. Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, 52.

79. State of the Union Messages of the Presidents, I, 153.

80. Ibid., 154.

81. Richard B. Morris, ed., Encyclopedia of American History (New York, 1996), 611.

82. Ammon, Monroe, 33; Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979), 6. For Monroe's struggle for compensation from Congress for his diplomatic missions, which went on till the year he died, see Ammon, Monroe, 569-70.

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83. Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Presidency of James Monroe (Lawrence, Kans., 1996), 35-36.

84. Ibid., 73 (first quotation), 188 (second quotation).

85. Monroe to Col. James Preston, April 3, 1811, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

86. James P. Preston to Monroe, April 21, 1811, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society (draft).

87. Ibid. For insinuations that Monroe had embezzled funds while he was U. S. minister to Paris, see [Philadelphia] Gazette of the United States, April 21, 1797, copying article from Virginia Argus.

88. Preston to Monroe, April 21, 1811 (final draft), Virginia Historical Society.

89. Ibid.

90. Granville Smith to John Preston, Nov. 20, 1808, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society. Smith was alluding to Jefferson's letter requesting that Monroe not compete with Madison for the presidency, making clear that he favored Madison for the office at this time, although he hoped Monroe would win election in the future. This correspondence was published in the Richmond Enquirer and other newspapers. See Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808 in Virginia," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 20 (1963), 33-56; Ammon, Monroe, 272-77; and Dumas Malone, Jefferson the President: Second Term, 1805-1809 (Boston, 1974), 548-53.

91. Monroe to John Preston, March 16, 1811, Preston Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

92. Matthew Schoenbachler, "Republicanism in the Age of Democratic Revolution: The Democratic-Republican Societies of the 1790s," Journal of the Early Republic, 18 (Summer 1998), 237-61, quote on 241.

93. Jefferson's First Inaugural Address, March 4, 1801, in Albert Fried, ed., The Essential Jefferson (New York, 1963), 403.

94. Monroe to George Hay, Aug. 5, 1817, New York Public Library Bulletin, 6 (June 1902), 227-230, quote at 228.

95. Kenneth Greenberg, Honor and Slavery; Steven M. Stowe, Intimacy and Power in the Old South: Ritual in the Lives of the Planters (Baltimore, 1987); J. G. A. Pocock, The Machiavellian Moment, 455, 465, 471, 474-75; Bertram Wyatt-Brown, Southern Honor; Joanne B. Freeman, "Affairs of Honor: Political Combat and Political Character in the Early Republic (Political Parties, William Maclay, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, John Adams, Aaron Burr)," Ph.D. dissertation, University of Virginia, 1998. On the significance of "gratitude" among the "affections" felt by civic-minded republicans, see Jay Fliegelman, Prodigals and Pilgrims: The American Revolution Against

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Patriarchal Authority (Cambridge, 1982), 93-106, 177, 214-19, 233, 250-54; Barry Schwartz, George Washington: The Making of an American Symbol (New York, 1987), 54, 98-101; and T. H. Breen, Tobacco Culture (Princeton, 1986), for explorations of the facets of "friendship" in pre-Revolutionary Virginia.

96. John Zvesper, "The Madisonian Systems," Western Political Quarterly, 37 (June 1984), 236-56.

97. Monroe to James Madison, July 27, 1817, James Madison Papers, Library of Congress, ser. 2, microfilm (reel 26).

98.Ibid. I have changed the original sentence order slightly.

99. Ibid. In Austin's case, the residual partisanship in New England despite the "Era of Good Feelings" had a tragic outcome. A few months after Monroe's tour, Austin's son was shot dead in cold blood on a Boston street by a Federalist lawyer whom the senior Austin had called a crook. Dictionary of American Biography, s.v., "Austin, Benjamin."

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CHAPTER 11.
UNENDING REVOLUTIONS: JAMES MONROE'S REPUBLICAN IDEOLOGY IN HIS FINAL YEARS

It was appropriate that Monroe died, as he had lived, in a time of revolution. He was even more enthusiastic about the French Revolution of 1830 than he had been regarding its violent predecessor more than thirty years earlier. Residing in New York City, in the home of his daughter Eliza and his son-in-law Samuel Gouverneur at 66 Prince Street near the Bowery for the final nine months of his life, he was surrounded by radical urban artisans who saw in the uprising of July 1830 an attempt to emulate their own revolution. As Independence Day 1830 neared, he responded with alacrity to the request of Joseph M. Cowperthwaite, a New York chairmaker, to proclaim his support for revolution. "The revolution of France undoubtedly took its origin from that of the U. States," Monroe asserted. "Her citizens fought and bled in our service. They caught the spirit of liberty here & carried it home with them." His mind wandered back to the days of the American Revolution in which he had fought and been wounded. He thought of his old friend, the Marquis de Lafayette, who had visited him during his presidency: "We can never look back to that era, without fixing our eyes on an illustrious individual [Lafayette], who has been equally distinguished for his service in support of that great cause, in both hemispheres." His peroration rose to eloquent heights of certainty: "I have no

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doubt that the late glorious triumph in favor of liberty [will] promote the general interest of the civilized world."[1] However, Monroe's effusive reference to Lafayette, an aristocrat who had fled France in disgrace in 1792, leaving his wife to rot in a Paris jail until, ironically enough, a heroic young American minister named Monroe gallantly requested her liberation, showed that he was not the flaming radical that some New York artisans seeking a socialist state with "equal rights" for all to the nation's wealth might desire.[2]

Monroe's wife Eliza, to whom he was extremely devoted, died in September 1830. Afterwards he lost much of his interest in politics and in life. He died on July Fourth of the following year. Yet his passion for the Rights of Man and the revolutions in the west remained strong. Ironically, his primary correspondent on this issue was John Quincy Adams, his old adversary on the merits of the French Revolution during the 1790s and later his secretary of state and confidant. Like Monroe an ex-president, Adams had recently been elected to the first of many terms in Congress, where he gained a reputation as "Old Man Eloquent" of the antislavery cause. In January 1831, Adams explained his matured view of the French Revolution to Monroe. His old chief had sent him a copy of a recently published address by his son-in-law Samuel Gouverneur extolling the Revolution of 1830. Adams was enthusiastic, "as far as my nature would admit,"about the new, less radical revolution that had occurred in Paris the preceding July, with the deposition of Charles X and the ascension to the throne of the "bourgeois monarch," Louis Philippe:

> In the early stages of the French Revolution it appeared to me like an
> Angel of Vengeance spreading Death and devastation over all Europe--
> I saw ruin impending over all the antient Institutions in that quarter of the globe;

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> but I saw nothing which was to take their place for the protection of social order and for securing human nature in the quiet enjoyment of its rights-- of Life--of Liberty--of Property--of Religion--of Intellect.[3]

Ironically, after Monroe had fought and won his political battles against reactionary Federalists and his life drew to a close, his old foe John Quincy Adams admitted that he had been wrong about the French Revolution and that Monroe had been right: reform was preferable to unenlightened despotism. "The old and ricketty [sic] Governments of Europe had more blood in them than I gave them credit for," he lamented. Adams joined the Jacobins whom he had formerly denounced in blasting England's fiscal hegemony, which had converted a nation of shopkeepers into a fountainhead of Reaction. Though his Republican foes had taken cognizance of the fact much earlier, Adams was now forced to admit that England, not France, was the strongest power in Europe, one to be dreaded by the United States: "Supported by the funding system of William Pitt and the sinking fund of Dr. [Richard] Price (who little imagined to what uses his inventions would be applied) they struggled against the batteries of Revolutionary France for thirty years till that Revolution itself had degenerated into a military despotism, upon the ruins of which they restored the exiled race of the Bourbons, extinguished almost every Republic in Europe, and proclaimed, as in our Country it was proclaimed for them, that the long agony was over."[4] Only the United States, in the maddening stalemate of the War of 1812, had defied the British colossus.

Nevertheless, Adams admitted that he had felt "deep compassion" over the "undeserved fate" of Louis XVI and his family. After the restoration, however, the Bourbons' harsh repression caused a revulsion of feeling against them. "They had laboured with perverse

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and untiring perseverance to extirpate every sentiment that could have been formed in their favour." After their overthrow in 1830, the Bourbons no longer aroused Adams' "compassion." Denouncing Charles X, the former Comte d'Artois, who had annulled France's Charter of Liberties, he cried, "He appears in the light of a deliberate violator of obligations voluntarily incurred. He has had the maladdresse [sic] to put himself in the wrong by the very act of self-destruction and of making himself odious even by his misfortune."

An expert in power politics, co-formulator of the Monroe Doctrine and the Anglo-American détente after the War of 1812, Adams pointed out that renewed revolution was about to overturn the Congress of Vienna's settlement. "The European Alliance is at an end," he declared. "The new Government of France is recognized and with it the revolutionary principle is acknowledged." Alarmed by the turbulent, potentially explosive European situation, Adams feared a chain reaction in which a Belgian revolt against the Netherlands would precipitate an Irish rebellion against Great Britain and a democratic revolution in England itself. Aware of the agitation for free speech, lower food prices, and suffrage reform being undertaken by middle-class businessmen, intellectuals and members of Britain's burgeoning industrial proletariat, Adams exclaimed: "Is there not Evidence of a Revolution already effected in England, greater than that of France?" He pointed out that Britain's prime minister, the Duke of Wellington, hitherto the most popular man in England, had nearly been murdered by a mob when he declared his opposition to parliamentary reform.

Like Thomas Jefferson decades before, Adams considered the overthrow of the British monarchy imminent. Once the ministry acceded to the bourgeoisie's demands, its powers

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would go into decline. "A high aristocratic whig ministry succeeds pledged to effect a reform in Parliament, a reduction of taxes, and a retrenchment in the Revenues of the Church," he observed. "And what are to become of poor laws--Corn Laws, and a national debt of a thousand millions? The political system of England, external and internal, presents the image of an old Gothic Castle at their Theatres, crumbling into ruin at the last Scene."[5] Despite his growth in liberalism, John Quincy Adams still feared the progress of democracy and equality, perhaps more than he should have considering the debased condition of the factory workers in England and even the wealthy bourgeoisie's lack of the right to vote in a society anachronistically dominated by the landed gentry.

Sounding like his great, dead father, John Quincy was anxious about the impending revolution. He was thoroughly aware that he was witnessing the fall of the Ancien Regime. "It would seem that all the feudalism of Europe is falling before the Republican principle and the Sovereignty of the People," he observed. "There is perhaps in this much reason to rejoice, and little to regret." Recalling the image of Lafayette, who had played a crucial symbolic role in the success of the moderate revolution of 1830, Adams warned of the inevitability of violence: "Our friend la Fayette says that blood may flow, and I believe he might have added, blood must flow." Exercising the ironic talents for which his father was noted, he concluded, "I should have more sanguine hopes of futurity if the experience of the last forty years had presented any better guaranty for the re-edification of the social fabric than the Code Napoleon."[6]

As one might expect, Monroe's response was to justify and extol the impending bourgeois revolution in France and Western Europe. Beginning cautiously, he rose to a

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crescendo in defense of the recent upheaval. "The present revolution in France opens a new epoch to that country & to the world, the consequences attending which cannot now be estimated with any degree of certainty," he observed. He stated his preference for the current non-violent French revolution over its more shattering precursor:

> The first revolution [of 1789] was marked, especially in its early stages, with a violence & cruelty, which laid the foundation for its overthrow. In this statement I concur with you, as I do that the present one has occurred under much more favorable circumstances. They have stopped at a point to which the people of that country may be competent, as I trust they are.[7]

After his arrival in New York City in October 1830 to live with his daughter and son-in-law, Monroe was briefly immersed in the fervor for the new revolution displayed by the city's artisans. Grateful for New Yorkers' affability, he tried to return their "kind attention" with participation in their revolutionary fêtes. "I have been called out on one or two occasions, connected with the French Revolution, in a manner I could not resist, but my attendance was momentary," he wrote James P. Preston, a friend and governor of Virginia from 1816-1819, enclosing a copy of Samuel Gouverneur's eulogistic address on the revolution.[8]

One of Monroe's final public acts was to proclaim his support for the Revolution of 1830. In a message in 1831 to a committee of New York City mechanics inviting him to celebrate the recent uprising in Paris, Monroe declared his "high respect" for all people's "efforts in favor of liberty." He was particularly saddened by the "failure" of the Great French Revolution of 1789 despite the participants' "gallantry & patriotism." But he was enheartened by "the recent most glorious event"--the Paris uprising in July 1830, dominated by the middle

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classes and led by Lafayette as commander of the national guard. Monroe preferred this moderate revolution to its more radical predecessor. "The moderation and humanity which they have displayed shew that they have derived useful admonition from the errors of their former struggle," he observed. "The prudence also with which they have adopted the counsel of enlightened & virtuous men, to whom they have committed the direction of affairs, affords an additional strong ground on which to confide in their success."[9]

In contrast to the Anglophobia of his youth, which arose at least in part from the life-threatening wound he suffered at the Battle of Trenton, Monroe now wrote about the British and their constitutional monarchy in measured, even sympathetic tones. Should England concur in the bourgeois revolutions taking place in Western Europe, she would gain "support both at home and abroad." Monroe was hopeful that the British intended to aid the cause of constitutional monarchy in France and help bring down the autocratic governments of the Holy Alliance. As he wrote John Quincy Adams:

> It [Great Britain] admits the revolutionary principle, but confines it to limited monarchy, by which she intended, as I presume, to support the existing state in France, and by means thereof her own government and likewise to put an end to the holy alliance.[10]

Displaying a political moderation that was perhaps the product of age, Monroe accepted the revolutionary nature of the concept of constitutional monarchy in an Old World suffused by absolute monarchies. No matter what its shortcomings in comparison with the United States' liberal, representative democracy, the cause of limited monarchy, upheld by Great Britain and now France, was preferable to the vile Eastern European principles of

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absolutism and divine right. Indeed, Monroe enthusiastically looked forward to the time that France and England, by their example, would extend the constitutional form of government "to other people, to Spain & Italy, & even to the north. Its effect on Belgium is involved in too much darkness at present to admit any rational conjecture respecting it."[11] Although Sir Robert Peel's Liberal Tory ministry supported France's new regime, Monroe was uncertain whether it would embrace internal reforms.

Confident that any alterations in European government in a republican direction would be traced to American influence, Monroe predicted the new liberal currents would increase American popularity abroad. "I think that the change will operate in our favor with both France and England," he told Adams. "The part General La Fayette takes in it will be felt in every quarter, and will give great support to the system."[11] Ironically, by their emphasis on England's role in the future liberalization of Europe, both Monroe and Adams revealed that the former mother country still exerted a strong influence on their hopes for their republic's future security.

Thus, John Quincy Adams' reflections again turned to Great Britain and its hypothetical "Revolution." This was his term for the growing agitation among the middle classes for extension of the suffrage, the granting of civil rights to Roman Catholics, and repeal of the Corn Laws, the landed aristocracy's prohibitive tariff on grain imports. "The Revolution which has taken place within the last year in England, seems pregnant with consequences in the history of the world, not less memorable than are to be anticipated from the changes in France," he concluded. He predicted that "Catholic Emancipation" would precipitate a reform of the suffrage and Ireland's independence from the British Empire. Fearing a "reformed House of

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Commons" would eventually abolish Britain's monarchy, the Established Church, and the House of Lords, Adams anticipated a revolt of the impoverished masses as well. He pondered what effect a change in Britain's form of government might have on the United States. "Here I perceive nothing but as through a glass darkly, and would fain draw light from a more penetrating ken," he said. He tended to agree with Monroe that European liberalization would increase American prestige, and "the proximate effect of the recent changes both in France and England upon our political relations with them will be favourable to us."[12]

Hoping above all to strengthen American influence, Adams hoped that the separatist movements in Europe's empires would teach his constituents the importance of remaining united as a federal democratic republic. "I persuade myself that the separation of Belgium from Batavia [the Netherlands], already effected, [and] that of Ireland from Great-Britain, which must soon come, will teach us, but to cling more closely to each other," he said.

Primarily concerned with the impending disintegration of the British Empire and the salutary effect he hoped it would have on America's antislavery movement, Adams commented on the efforts in British antislavery circles to abolish slavery in the West Indies, which came to fruition two years later. He thought that Americans might emulate their mother country and eventually adopt abolitionist measures:

> If the abolition of Slavery in the British Colonies be as there is some reason to believe one of the reforms to which the Ministry of Earl Grey is pledged, the influences of that measure may be felt not only in our newly modified relations with those Colonies, but in our intercourse with Great Britain herself if not even in our internal concerns, and in the condition of our Union.[13]

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Thus Adams, like Jefferson, Madison, Thomas Paine (in The Rights of Man) and other Republican zealots at the time of the first French Revolution in the 1790s, assumed a reciprocal relationship existed among republican governments: If all the world's nations were republics, they would empathize with each other, cooperate with each other, and peacefully resolve their disputes. War would be virtually eliminated. Likewise, if a republican, or semi-republican government, like England, abolished slavery, its "sister republics" (such as the United States) would be encouraged to do likewise, since they were all part of the same liberal republican community and prided themselves on emulating and collaborating with each other.[14]

To an extent Adams' quixotic hope that the abolition of slavery in the British West Indies would somehow facilitate its downfall in the American South reflected this naive Republican ideal of the 1790's. In any case, John Quincy confessed himself "an anxious Spectator" of how European events might affect his country. He informed Monroe that his speculations about international affairs had "arisen in my mind from the perusal of Mr. Gouverneur's Oration, and of your obliging letters."[15]

Like Adams, Monroe observed the situation in England and its implications for American liberty. He particularly dreaded that class struggle would culminate in the impoverished masses' seizure of the property of the rich, in accord with the cyclical theory of governmental degeneration. Ostensibly analyzing the debate in Britain's House of Commons which culminated in the Reform Bill of 1832 extending the suffrage to the middle-class merchants and factory owners of the cities, Monroe's distrust of direct democracy was similar to that which he expressed in Paris in the mid-1790s. In common with the British Tories, he

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perceived the augmentation of the suffrage to include the middle classes as an opening wedge for universal manhood suffrage. He obviously considered this dangerous in England, where the poor were illiterate and, he thought, incapable of exercising political responsibility. "The danger is, if the right of suffrage is extended to the whole population, without any qualification, as to property," he warned, "that as the difference of interest begins to operate, as it will soon do, that the mass of poor, which will be by far the most numerous, will elect persons who will be instruments in the hands of leaders who will overthrow the government, &, by convulsive movements, restore the despotism."[16] Aware of the predominant role of economic interest in political decision-making, perhaps Monroe regretted that not everyone was willing to pursue the public interest so disinterestedly as he conceived he had done.[17]

In his own way a proto-Marxist, Monroe foresaw "convulsive" movements against the government that represented the dominant economic classes. He anticipated the outbreak of revolution in England over suffrage reform. One gathers this from Monroe's comment: "You [John Quincy Adams] have stated the difficulties which England has to encounter to sustain her present state." At this time, the Revolution of 1830 having been consummated, he thought that France had greater prospects of stability than Great Britain. Nevertheless, he supported the moderate goals of the British ministry that entered office in 1831, succeeding the Duke of Wellington's Tory government which resigned in November 1830. King William IV chose as prime minister the popular Whig, Lord Grey, who formed a coalition government dominated by Whigs and committed to expanding the suffrage. "That the present ministry entered [office] with a determination to make a [suffrage] reform, if in their power, I am confident," Monroe

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said. "I am confirmed in this sentiment by my knowledge of...several of the members, particularly Grey, Holland, Landsdowne and Mr. Brougham."[18] Death claimed him before he could comment further on the outcome of the parliamentary debates, the Reform Bill of 1832.

During his years of retirement, Monroe remained conscious of the sectional divisions and animosities that he often feared would cause the breakup of the Union. In 1798 he had thought it important for rank-and-file Federalists to understand that the differences between the High Federalists and the Jeffersonian Republicans were sectional rather than ideological. Now, nearly thirty years later, a Virginian, notorious state's rights Virginia Senator William Branch Giles, sought to revive animosity between New England and the South by reviving memories of the Embargo Act of 1807 and the ensuing war with Great Britain, both events precipitants of treasonable conduct by Northeastern merchants and farmers who considered trade and profit more important than the republic's survival. Alarmed by rumors propagated by Giles that the Embargo Act had been repealed in 1809 as a result of President Jefferson's submission to New England threats of secession, Monroe advised Jefferson to avoid linkage with that notorious nullifier and make his own public statement about the factors involved in the Embargo's repeal. "My opinion is that Mr. Giles in himself, may write what he pleases, & do no harm," he wrote Jefferson. "My fear is, that if your name is connected, with that very important occurrence [the Embargo's repeal on the heels of New England intimidation], by any act of your own, and especially by a correspondence with him, that it will become the cause of great inquietude to you, and do a public injury."[19] He thought Jefferson should take action to deny that he had recently befriended Giles. "The object...is to bring the subject under your

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consideration, in the light suggested, that you may, if in your power, controul it, should you deem it proper." The retired president feared that his predecessor might find himself unfairly associated with those who advocated breaking up the union.[20]

On the eve of retiring from the presidency, however, Monroe was eager to conciliate one venerable leader of the states' rights "Old Republicans," John Taylor of Caroline. Though they had been friends and allies during the 1790s, Taylor deserted Monroe after 1811, feeling that he and Jefferson had adopted James Madison's "consolidationist" philosophy. Taylor also opposed U.S. involvement in the War of 1812, believing it an unnecessary contest to protect the carrying trade of New England shippers, which would dangerously increase the country's military and executive powers and oppress the poor farmer with taxes.[21]

Monroe had retained good personal relations with all three Virginians. He wanted Taylor to meet him at Madison's home, Montpelier, in Orange County, where Taylor had been born and orphaned. First he intended to visit the Sage of Monticello, Thomas Jefferson. "Most heartily do I wish that you could be there with me," he wrote Taylor. "I shall remain a week or ten days in Albemarle, where it would afford the greatest pleasure if you could come and join me. I would go with you to Mr. Jefferson's and we would return by Mr. Madison's."[22] Monroe wanted to conciliate all Republican factions should any future exigencies arise, either with foreign powers or through the resurrection of a "monarchical" party akin to his perception of the old Federalists.

In the spring of 1823, with widespread attention being drawn to the contest for Monroe's successor, he wanted to make clear his impartiality between Secretary of State John

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Quincy Adams, Secretary of the Treasury William H. Crawford (the choice of Jefferson and most of his friends), Secretary of War John C. Calhoun, and Major General Andrew Jackson, hero of the Battle of New Orleans.[23] Upholding nonpartisan ideals, Monroe advised Taylor to support whichever candidate he preferred for president and not be swayed by his views--as if the stubborn Taylor needed this advice. Despite their recent political arguments, Monroe, obviously thinking about their fraternal struggle against the Federalists in the 1790s, considered them kindred spirits: "We have been so long accustomed to act together, and in the most difficult situations, that if I were, to act at all, I would willingly move in concert with you." On the other hand, as revealed by Monroe's request for Taylor's advice on appointments to the Supreme Court and the ministries to France and Mexico, he still valued the states' rights ideologue's advice.[24]

With regard to the clarification of his political ideology, Monroe continued to praise the ideal of nonpartisanship. Moreover, he persisted in the view to which he had adhered since his speeches at the state ratifying convention in 1788, arguing that republics were most endangered by the corrupting "influence" of foreign powers. Monroe gently reproached Taylor for the extreme states' rights doctrines which he had voiced in such works as Construction Construed, and Constitutions Vindicated, Tyranny Unmasked (1822), and New Views of the Constitution of the United States (1823), which actually could have broken up the union. Nevertheless, he made clear that he regarded them both as paragons of republican nobility and self-sacrificing public service:

> Of your [Taylor's] devotion to principle, and disinterested attachment to

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> free republican govt., I have the most thorough conviction, as I have of the soundness of your views, as to the dangers to which it is exposed, and the necessary means of supporting it. The only difference between us is, that I having seen much of the intrigues and villany [sic] of foreign countries, look perhaps too much to dangers from that source, whereas you look, a little too much, I speak comparatively, to those from within.[25]

Yet Monroe could not deny the partisan strife in the capital. He admitted to Taylor his "great difficulty" in dispensing patronage, in light of "the number of very respectable characters brought into view, many of whom have claims on their country, and on me, if the support of the measures of the admin. gives such a claim." More embarrassing, many applicants were adherents of one of the presidential contenders, "it being earnestly my desire from priniciple, as well as personal feeling to take no part in that question."[26]

Ironically, Madison and Monroe, founders of the First Party System, adhered to the ideal of nonpartisanship when attempts were made to force them to participate in the creation of the Second. In 1824, retired at Monticello, Jefferson, like most Virginians, quietly lent his support to conservative, laissez-faire Republican candidate William H. Crawford for the presidency. He feared the "consolidationist," nationalistic reputation of John Quincy Adams.[27] Monroe had adopted a policy of neutrality in the presidential election of 1824 even though John Quincy Adams had been his secretary of state. But desperate members of the Adamsite National Republicans were determined to enlist his and Madison's support in the grueling battle with Andrew Jackson four years later whether they liked it or not. Virginia Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer, a former Federalist-turned Monroe supporter, was in the forefront of those seeking to get him and Madison to accept election as Adams electors in 1828.[28]

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Both the Adams and the Jackson tickets sought to recruit Monroe and Madison to their tickets of electors. When a pro-Jackson meeting nominated them, Monroe wrote Judge Francis Brooke declaring that they had no wish to serve. When a Democratic committee "gave me an invitation to attend a dinner...in favor of Gen. Jackson," his reply stated "explicitly that I can take no position which may, by inference, arrange me on the side of either of the candidates against the other."[29] Monroe was especially hesitant to choose one candidate in preference to another because, whichever man won, he urgently needed a favorable settlement of his claims against the government for back pay and expenses during the numerous European missions he had undertaken between 1794-1807. For him this meant the difference between solvency and impoverishment.[30]

Monroe's friend and neighbor, Loudoun County congressman Charles Fenton Mercer, was exerting all his efforts in getting favorable consideration for his claims before Congress. Monroe had reached the point where he did not care whether Congress or the state legislature granted him relief. He was even willing to forget the grudge of a lifetime to assist his case, and profess that he bore no ill will toward George Washington for his recall as U.S. minister to France over thirty years before. "Indeed, my whole conduct since general Washington's death, has shown that I had no unfriendly feelings toward him & have made liberal allowances, for his posture, in my recall," he said.[31] As far as possible, he wanted to bury past recriminations between himself and the immortal Father of His Country.

Taking special pains to be hospitable, Monroe invited Mercer and his colleagues up to Oak Hill for the Christmas holidays to discuss the presentation of his case for reimbursement in

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the form of a published "memoir": "When you come up, I will decide on the form which may be given to the proposed publication of the memoir &c.," he asserted. "I feel the force of your remarks, and am inclined to confine any addition which may be made to an introduction, with notes to particular passages, in the papers, as they now are." He acquiesced in a passive role for the time being, trusting that Mercer felt the congressional pulse more accurately than he could. "I am decided in the sentiment, that nothing ought to be attempted otherwise than in the manner you suggested, and form the opinion, that a review of the decision [of the House to postpone his claim] is as much due to the nation as to me." Once again he professed to be above party, a paragon of integrity the validity of whose claims transcended partisan dispute:

> I ask no favor, & never will, well knowing that I stand, on ground which ought to place me above it, and trust that my mind will be equal to any future event.[32]

But Mercer had bad news for him. Congress had little interest in his claims. The politicians were obsessed with preparations for the presidential election of 1828, the much-awaited rematch between Jackson and Adams. "The Presidential election literally swallows up every...interest here," he reported. "The partizans, and their following of the two candidates, I am persuaded think of little else, and the daily return of the proceedings of large numbers of people, on the subject, constitute the food of this, in my opinion, most degrading spirit."[33]

The frenzied electioneering afforded Monroe scant solace, with his concern about saving Oak Hill from the auctioneer's block. Meanwhile, he joined Madison in demanding that the contending candidates refrain from asking their assistance. In December 1827, John Quincy Adams' secretary of the navy, Samuel S. Southard, urged Monroe to consent to nomination as

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vice-president on the Adams ticket. He promised the nearly-bankrupt planter that "pleasant employment and a handsome yearly income for the next four years" would be his (if Adams won). Monroe's old friend and neighbor John Taliaferro, who had sponsored his entry into politics forty years earlier, seconded the idea. But Monroe was not interested, especially since he was probably aware that Jackson, not Adams, would be the winner.[34]

Irate that his name had been placed on the list of Adams candidates without his consent, Madison pledged to resign if chosen, since he "meant to keep aloof from the political agitations of the period," had made a public declaration to that effect in the newspapers, "and as a further safeguard, Mr. [Joseph] Cabell was made acquainted in a conversation I had with him some time ago, with my determination not to be enlisted in a party service." He and Monroe had both earlier warned Mercer to desist, but he had not obeyed them. Determined not to initiate a correspondence with Mercer, Madison requested that Monroe, "in case of any further confidential communication with him on your part, whether by letter or common friend, that you would refer without qualification to my sentiments as concurring fully with yours." Like his less cerebral friend, Madison continued to link partisanship with the degeneration of the republican community. "I have a letter from General La Fayette, in which he mourns over the spirit and style of our partisan gazettes as wounding our Republican character, and causing exultation to the foes of Liberty," he dejectedly reported.[35]

In Monroe's case, there was perhaps a nobler motive involved in his refusal to participate in the presidential contest. Unlike twentieth-century ex-presidents, Monroe believed retired chief executives should abstain from further political involvement.[36] He thought that it

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was essential for them to stand apart from partisan controversy as true elder statesmen on which all groups in the unstable republic could rely in times of national emergency. What more suitable individual was there around which the whole nation could rally, if the current president happened to be a center of extreme dissension? Thus Monroe associated his abstention from participation in the election on behalf of either candidate with the future well-being of the republic.

Monroe's genuine affability, his desire to preserve friendships and avoid conflict between partisan and personal affiliations, affected his refusal to accept appointment as an elector. As he explained several times, he wanted "to preserve a state of perfect neutrality between the candidates in the approaching election." Having been friendly with both John Quincy Adams and Andrew Jackson during his presidency, he hoped to maintain a relationship of "confidence [and] personal regard" with both of them. In his view, the "public interest" required that ex- presidents abstain from electioneering, which would only make personal and political enemies out of former friends. "By taking part you are necessarily thrown into collision with individuals which will be more acrimonious according to the previous relation you have held with the candidates & their friends, & the nature of the trusts in which you have served," he noted. Perhaps finding a role as an austere elder statesman enticing, Monroe insisted that ex-presidents would be most useful in giving advice on optimal government measures, especially in times of "great emergency."[37]

Similarly, after a Democratic convention at Richmond nominated Monroe as a Jackson elector, he pointedly declared it his "duty to decline the trust in question." Asserting that both

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his "eminent desire to cherish tranquillity in my retirement" and existing personal and political relationships would be thwarted if he participated in the presidential election, he felt it "very repugnant to my feelings to take the part of either [candidate], against the other." He expounded the "permanent rule" that America's "excellent system of government" would achieve greater durability and success if former presidents "abstained, after their retirement, from becoming partisans in subsequent elections to that office."[38]

Monroe propagated the unconventional theory that former presidents could play an active role in politics if they engaged in independent policy-making not politicking. This idea seems never to have caught on in the United States, but Monroe considered it important to America's survival as a republic. Although he hardly put it in such terms, he considered the ex-president as a variation of Bolingbroke's patriot king, standing above parties in pursuit of the "public interest." Somehow, Monroe regarded the ex-president's nonpartisan political action as a vital safeguard preventing the degeneration of republican government:

> Instances may occur in the course of time, in the vicissitudes of human affairs, in which the opinion of those who have had long experience may be useful. Every government that has existed has been exposed to trying emergencies. All those which were strictly republican have been subverted. Ours will, I trust, experience a different fate.[39]

In exercising impartiality toward competing parties and presidential candidates, Monroe argued, ex-presidents would occupy a unique position to help resolve future crises. He had carefully assessed this concept's value. Perhaps inconsistently, the leader who had formerly touted the infallibility of the Jeffersonian party and had denied the validity and viability of the

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Federalist opposition now urged the creation of an independent third force, led by ex-presidents, to mediate between them and autonomously formulate policies. "Should an emergency of any kind ever occur, it may be important that there should be among the people some men unconnected with either of the contending parties," he observed, "and among them, those who have retired from that high office, whose voice might be heard." Thus, in the winter of his lifetime, Monroe at least superficially adopted a creed of nonpartisanship. He thought this would make his wisdom and experience available to leaders of both parties. And indeed he was popular with men from both parties, Federalists and Republicans. Virginia Federalist Charles Fenton Mercer had commented many years earlier, when Monroe had been reinstated in his position in the Republican hierarchy as Madison's secretary of state, that he was "a democratic antidote for the poison of democracy." "There is no one so capable of uniting the honest men of both parties as Col: Monroe," he advised. Probably referring to the abortive Monroe-Pinkney Treaty of 1806, in which Monroe had bent so far to conciliate the British that Jefferson and Madison refused to present his work to the Senate, Mercer observed, the "evidence of independence, wisdom and firmness, which his public confidence has recently furnished, assures to him, the confidence, at least, of all the Federalists."[40] In his belief that he represented a venerable nonpartisan ideal, Monroe was not whistling in the dark.

The crux of the matter was that the ex-president must to some extent satisfy all parties. Unlike the hypothetical congressional leaders of Madison's Federalist #10's "extended republic," who aimed to frustrate the majority's will, Monroe's elder statesmen would have something for everyone. They would therefore be trusted by everyone. "To render service

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they must enjoy, in like degree, the confidence of the whole community, in their disinterestedness and impartiality," he explained. "If they embark as partisans, on either side, they would have no weight with the other. By remaining neutral it might be otherwise."[41]

Claiming that on the eve of his retirement he had devised this idea of abstention from electioneering--the converse of what is practiced by ex-chief executives as we have come to know them, from Herbert Hoover to George Bush--Monroe thought such a lifestyle was "best adapted to my own peace & tranquillity, & as a permanent rule, [to] contribute most to the welfare of my country." He noted that he had "frequently declared" this policy, and "[I] cannot depart from it."[42]

To Judge Francis T. Brooke, who in January 1828 organized an "Anti-Jackson Convention" in Richmond that nominated Adams for president and Monroe and Madison as electors, Monroe explained their desire for "neutrality."[43] Far from "departing from neutrality," he pointed out that their silence with regard to their presidential preferences demonstrated their contempt for attempts to thrust them again into the public arena. In his opinion, it was a question of character. As he put it, "You will be sensible that we [he and Madison] owe something to the consistency of our own characters, and that we should no longer be held in a doubtful light before the public."[44] Urging Brooke to promulgate their declarations of neutrality, Monroe warned that otherwise, compelled to publish their refusal to serve without his imprimatur, they might seem to be reprimanding him, "which I should be sorry to shew." In a blunt postscript, Monroe remarked: "To delay the publication of our [his and Madison's] answers, until answers are received from the other persons, will not be admitted by the public

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as a sufficient cause for it, as it is known that our nomination was made, in consequence of the office we had held. I most earnestly advise you, therefore, to publish it immediately."[45] The presidency's former occupants were entitled to respect.

A few weeks later Madison and Monroe were even more despondent about being dragged into the electoral battle between Adams and Andrew Jackson. "You were not more surprised than I had a right to be at seeing our names on the electoral ticket," Madison wrote Monroe. "After my letter to you, which you made known to Col. [Charles Fenton] Mercer, I wrote to Mr. Cabell [Joseph C. Cabell, a state senator] in the most decided terms; and he informs me he made the proper use of it." He also referred to letters that he and Monroe had received from Mercer himself. Though adamant in his decision not to participate in the election, Madison was aware of "the delicacy of the task" of rejecting the appeals of the National Republicans, some of whom had been his friends. Cognizant that parties were being increasingly accepted as permanent, legitimate political institutions, Madison lamented to Monroe the demise of impartiality. "A plea of neutrality is already represented as a claim of privilege belonging to no particular citizens," he said. "The particular ground taken by you cannot be altogether unsuited to my case, and will be respected by all in proportion as a sense of delicacy can controul [sic] the feelings of party."[46]

Although he had been among the leaders of the Democratic-Republican party since its creation in the 1790s, Monroe's presidency had been marked by an "era of good feelings" toward the Federalists that took place largely on his own terms. Despite his never having acknowledged the legitimacy of the Federalists--especially of their Anglophile leaders–Monroe,

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like many elder statesmen (Jefferson's resumption of correspondence with John Adams and, briefly, even with Timothy Pickering after his retirement from the presidency, are examples), was willing to let personal civility and affability take precedence over partisan differences.[47]

This was true even in the case of John Marshall, whose conduct Monroe had found odious after his return from the "XYZ mission" to Paris in June 1798. After his "midnight appointment" as supreme court chief justice by John Adams in March 1801, Marshall, who served till his death in 1835, went on to mold the government of the United States in a centralizing, nationalistic, and capitalist direction, and became the greatest justice in the institution's history. He aroused the hatred of Jefferson and many other states' rights southerners. In 1802 Monroe, insisting that Congress could "repeal the law organizing the supreme court for the express purpose of dismissing the judges when they cease to possess the public confidence," had even proposed Marshall's impeachment if his decisions violated the majority's will. And he believed then that any federal judge's opposition to "the sovereignty of the people" should be considered "good cause for impeachment."[48]

But Monroe chose to accept Marshall's outstretched hand of friendship. In an effort to assist Monroe's research on his autobiography and his study of governments, the Chief Justice sent him a copy of his now-forgotten bestseller, A History of the Colonies.[49] Perhaps thinking of their childhood friendship, attendance at Campbelltown Academy as young adolescents, and service together in the American Revolution, Marshall offered the work, a few days after Monroe stepped down from the presidency, "as a mark of the affectionate recollections excited in the bosom of the author when he looks back to times long since gone by."[50] He praised

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Monroe's public conduct since the Revolution in terms which must have pleased and surprised the aging statesman:

> In the momentous and then unlooked for events which have since taken place, you have filled a large space in the public mind and have been conspicuously instrumental in effecting objects of great interest to our common country. Believe me when I congratulate you on the circumstances under which your political course terminates, and that I feel sincere pleasure in the persuasion that your administration may be reviewed with real approbation, by our wisest statesmen.[51]

Graciously replying to the Chief Justice's letter, Monroe "esteemed as a testimonial of his regard" Marshall's gift of his book on America's colonial experience. He was even more grateful that his former political enemy had praised his Administration:

> The favorable opinion which you have expressed of my Conduct in discharge of the arduous duties of the very importance office from which I have just retired, affords me the highest gratification. We began our career together in early youth, and the whole course of my public conduct has been under your observation--Your approbation therefore of my administration of the affairs of our country, deserves to be held & will be held by me in the highest estimation. For your own welfare & happiness be assured of my best wishes.[52]

In his interminable search for the approbation of others and his sensitivity to rejection, dating from his suspicions in 1787 that his close friends Madison and Randolph had plotted to exclude him from the Constitutional Convention, Monroe was ready to forgive Chief Justice Marshall, embodiment of the centralizing forces that his closest comrade Thomas Jefferson abhorred. For him the quest for friendship and self-esteem occasionally took priority over stubborn adherence to partisan ideologies. This was especially true during his final years' mellowing.

Despite the bright promise of a more moderate French Revolution on the eve of his

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death, Monroe's final decade was marked by fear and uncertainty for the stability of the American republic and republicanism in general. As usual, Monroe was torn between participation and abstention from public life; he was painfully aware of the likelihood that the former might bring on rejection and disgrace as easily as posterity's praise. Although old age raised its voice for withdrawal, Monroe had one more formidable task to accomplish for the sake of his countrymen: the presidency of the state constitutional convention in 1829-1830.

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CHAPTER 11: ENDNOTES

1. Monroe to J. M. Cowperthwaite, [July?] 1830, in S.M. Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 216; see George Morgan, The Life of James Monroe (Boston, 1921; reprinted, New York, 1969), 439, 442, on Monroe's housing.

2. On the conservative purport of Lafayette's persona and image for Young America during the 1820s-1840s, see Fred Somkin, Unquiet Eagle: Memory and Desire in the Idea of American Freedom (Ithaca, 1968), and Anne C. Loveland, Emblem of Liberty: The Image of Lafayette in the American Mind (Baton Rouge, 1971). On the presence of socialist elements in the New York Workingmen's Party, see Edward Pessen, Most Uncommon Jacksonians (Albany, 1967).

3. John Quincy Adams to Monroe, Jan. 10, 1831, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, reel 9 (microfilm). The speech was an Oration Delivered by Samuel L. Gouverneur, esq. On the 26th November, 1830, at Washington Square, before the citizens of New-York: in commemoration of Revolution in France, 1830 (New York, 1830).

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid. For Jefferson's predictions that the lower classes, overburdened by the hardships of war, huge public debts, and high taxes, would eventually overthrow the English monarchy, see Jefferson to Thaddeus Kosciusko, June 28, 1812, and Jefferson to John Adams, Nov. 25, 1816, in Andrew Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, eds., Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 20 vols. (Washington, D.C., 1903), XIII, 169, XV, 84-86.

6. Adams to Monroe, Jan. 10, 1831, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress.

7. Monroe to John Quincy Adams, Jan. 25, 1831, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 216-217.

8. Monroe to James P. Preston, Dec. 7, 1830, Preston Papers, Virginia Historical Society.

9. Monroe to a Committee of Tammany Hall, 1831, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 220-21.

10. Monroe to John Quincy Adams, Jan. 25, 1831, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 216-217.

11. Ibid., 217.

12. John Quincy Adams to Monroe, Jan. 29, 1831, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, reel 9.

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13. Ibid.

14. Reginald Stuart, War and American Thought from the Revolution to the Monroe Doctrine (Kent, Ohio, 1982), 5-12, 68-70, 183-87; Sir Michael Howard, War and the Liberal Conscience (London, 1978) 29-33; Paine, Rights of Man: Part II, in Foner, ed., Complete Writings, I, 283-85, 419, 447, 449, 451; [James Madison] "Universal Peace," [Philadelphia] National Gazette, Jan. 31, 1792, in Hutchinson, Rachal, et al., eds., Papers of James Madison, XIV, 206-208, and Madison to Horatio Gates, March 24, 1794, ibid., XV, 287; Benjamin Rush to James Currie, July 26, 1796, in Lyman H. Butterfield, ed., Letters of Benjamin Rush (2 vols., Princeton, 1951), II, 779; Stanley Hoffmann, "Rousseau on War and Peace," in Hoffmann, The State of War: Essays on the Theory and Practice of International Politics (New York, 1965), 54-87.

15. Adams to Monroe, Jan. 29, 1831, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, reel 9.

16. Monroe to John Quincy Adams, Feb. 14, 1831, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 224-225.

17. Conceiving of himself as a selfless public servant, Monroe proudly refused payment or adequate perquisites for much of his public activity. When Virginia's Governor Thomas Jefferson in the summer of 1780 needed military information about the state of the defenses of North and South Carolina, he sent Monroe as his military agent. Monroe declined all compensation for this expedition, and claimed that this had been his policy throughout the American Revolution. Ammon, Monroe, 33; Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979), 6. On his presidential tour of New England and New York in the summer of 1817, he paid the expenses for his travels out of his own pocket. Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Presidency of James Monroe (Lawrence, 1996), 35-36.

18. Monroe to John Quincy Adams, Feb. 14, 1831, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 225. On the formation of the new British ministry, see Peter Gay and R.K. Webb, Modern Europe (New York, 1973), 569-570.

19. Monroe to Jefferson, Jan. 15, 1826, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 62-64.

20. Ibid. During the 1820's Jefferson himself was quite aroused by a northern-dominated Union's threats to state sovereignty. Ironically, in December 1825 Jefferson had written Giles advocating southern secession if a Northern-controlled central government ever gained unlimited powers. Robert E. Shalhope, "Thomas Jefferson's Republicanism and Antebellum Southern Thought," Journal of Southern History, 42 (Nov. 1976), 553-54.

21. Manning J. Dauer and Hans Hammond, "John Taylor: Democrat or Aristocrat?" Journal of Politics, VI (Nov. 1944), 379-403; Benjamin F. Wright, Jr., "The Philosopher of Jeffersonian Democracy," American Political Science Review, 22 (Nov. 1928), 870-92; Myron F. Wehtje, "Opposition in Virginia to the War of 1812," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 78 (Jan.

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1970), 65-86.

22. Monroe to John Taylor, Loudoun, May 12, 1823, in Worthington C. Ford, ed., "Letters of James Monroe," Massachusetts Historical Society, Proceedings, 42 (May 1909), 337.

23. Cunningham, Presidency of Monroe, 167-70.

24. Monroe to Taylor, May 12, 1823 and Feb. 9, 1824, in Ford, ed., "Letters of Monroe," 337, 338.

25. Monroe to Taylor, May 12, 1823, ibid., 337.

26. Monroe to Taylor, Feb. 9, 1824, ibid., 338.

27. Dumas Malone, The Sage of Monticello (Boston, 1981), 435-40.

28. Marie B.Hecht, Beyond the Presidency: The Residues of Power (New York, 1976), 118-19.

29. Monroe to Madison, Jan. 18, 1828, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 145.

30. Ammon, Monroe, 546-47, 553-60,566-71; Cunningham, Presidency of James Monroe, 179-84.

31. Monroe to Charles Fenton Mercer, Nov. 30, 1827 (draft), Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Series 2 (microfilm).

32. Monroe to Charles Fenton Mercer, Dec. 12, 1827, Monroe Papers, Ser. 1, reel 9.

33. Mercer to Monroe, Jan. 7, 1828, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, Ser. 2 (microiflm).

34. Ammon, Monroe, 559.

35. Madison to Monroe, Dec. 18, 1827, in Letters and Other Writings of James Madison (New York, 1884), III, 603.

36. See Hecht, Beyond the Presidency.

37. Monroe to Col. Hugh Mercer, [Jr.], Dec. 10, 1827, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 134-35.

38. Monroe to Judge Francis T. Brooke, Feb. 21, 1828, ibid., 153-54.

39. Ibid., 154.

40. Charles Fenton Mercer to John Francis Mercer, July 30, 1811, Oct. 12, 1810, Mercer Family Papers, Virginia Historical Society; quoted in Douglas R. Egerton, Charles Fenton Mercer and the Trial of National Conservatism (Jackson, Miss., 1989), 146.

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41. Monroe to Francis T. Brooke, Feb. 21, 1828, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 155.

42. Ibid., 155.

43. Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 209.

44. Monroe to Judge Brooke, March 3, 1828, ibid., VII, 155-56. On the significance of "character" as a catchword to describe the importance of public and private virtue and integrity to the leaders of the early republic, see Jean Yarbrough, "The Constitution and Character: The Missing Critical Principle?" in Herman Belz et al., eds., To Form a More Perfect Union: The Critical Ideas of the Constitution (Charlottesville, 1992), 217-49; Robert H. Wiebe, The Opening of American Society: From the Adoption of the Constitution to the Eve of Disunion (New York, 1984), 12-16, 35-66, and Gordon S. Wood, The Radicalism of the American Revolution (New York, 1992), 39-41.

45. Monroe to Judge Brooke, March 3, 1828, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 156.

46. Madison to Monroe, Jan. 23, 1828, ibid., 612-13.

47. Jefferson to Timothy Pickering, Feb. 27, 1821, Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress, reel 62 (microfilm). Of course, see the numerous letters from Jefferson to his two-times presidential competitor John Adams after his retirement from the presidency, collected in Lester J. Cappon, ed., The Adams-Jefferson Letters (2 vols., Chapel Hill, 1959). The single letter to Pickering concerned their apparently shared Unitarian beliefs. Not long afterward, Pickering resumed his campaign of malice against Jefferson, in such matters as denying that he was the primary author of the Declaration of Independence and minimizing the originality of its ideas. Malone, Sage of Monticello, 116, 178, 432-33, 435.

48. Monroe to John Breckinridge, Jan. 15, 1802, Breckinridge Papers, Library of Congress, quoted in Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall, 4 vols. (Boston, 1916-1919), III, 59.

49. The complete title of Marshall's surprisingly popular book was History of the Colonies, Planted by the English on the Continent of North America, From Their Settlement to the Commencement of That War Which Terminated in Their Independence (Philadelphia, 1824).

50. John Marshall to James Monroe, March 7, 1825, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress. On Marshall's friendship with Monroe, see Ammon, Monroe, 3, 17, 45.

51. John Marshall to James Monroe, March 7, 1825, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress, microfilm (reel 8).

52. James Monroe to John Marshall, March 10, 1825, Monroe Papers, Library of Congress.

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CHAPTER 12.
MONROE'S LAST HURRAH: THE VIRGINIA CONSTITUTIONAL CONVENTION OF 1829-30

Along with his friend Charles Fenton Mercer, a reform-minded Federalist congressman from Loudoun County who was pressing Monroe's claims against the government, Monroe in 1829 was elected a delegate to the state constitutional convention from Loudoun County. He lived on his plantation, Oak Hill, having sold most of his Albemarle estate, Highlands, three years before.[1] The vote was open only to those who ordinarily voted under the terms of the 1776 constitution, i.e., landholders (in rural areas) who possessed either 100 acres of unimproved land or 25 acres and a house, or those who owned a house and lot in town.[2]

Only 50,000 of Virginia's 450,000 slaves lived west of the Blue Ridge, and large planters were understandably wary of a reapportionment that would increase the power of those who lacked zeal to preserve human bondage. Many slaveholders thought Mercer's motive in demanding a constitutional convention was to abolish slavery. Southern aristocrats acknowledged that Mercer, not Monroe, was the prime mover of Loudoun County's petitions for a new convention as early as 1825.[3]

Ironically, the former Federalist counties rather than the Jeffersonian ones favored legislative reform and expanded suffrage. One "Old Republican," Benjamin Watkins Leigh,

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even compared Mercer's struggle for a constitutional convention with another Federalist-inspired convention-- the secessionist Hartford Convention of 1814. While Mercer stymied such talk by pointing out that the existing Virginia (1776) constitution contained no provision for amendments and there was no war going on (two aspects of the Hartford Convention's proposals of constitutional amendments to the U.S. Constitution that had no equivalent in Virginia), he covered his tracks by proposing reapportionment of the legislature to benefit the west, but sought only moderate suffrage expansion. Mercer was more democratic than Monroe, seeking to extend the suffrage to nonfreeholders. His opponents played dirty however, charging in the newspapers that he wanted to enfranchise free Negroes. Writing in rebuttal, he urged the state legislature to act while those Revolutionary titans, Monroe and Marshall, still lived. He neglected to mention that both men advocated his economic program.[4]

The most distinguished of the tidewater's sons attended the convention, among them the senescent Monroe, Marshall, Madison, William Branch Giles, and John Randolph of Roanoke. Yet most of the speakers were younger men--Charles Fenton Mercer, Philip Doddridge, Littleton W. Tazewell, and Benjamin Watkins Leigh. Although Mercer led the group that favored increasing the representation of the west by basing legislative apportionment on white voters only, and advocated extending the suffrage to non-freeholders, other delegates, such as James M. Garnett, Mercer's brother-in-law, wanted the constitution revised to <u>increase</u> the power of the big land- and slaveholders. As was invariably the case whenever he appeared in public, John Randolph displayed the most bizarre conduct and expressed the most eccentric opinions of all the participants. Recent writers have misleadingly depicted Randolph as an

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humane emancipator, (largely to discredit their latest bête-noire, Thomas Jefferson) because his will freed his slaves, but this is far from the whole picture. During his lifetime he was the most vehement defender of slaveholders' rights and he opposed any attempts to limit slavery, including gradual emancipation and colonization. He often voiced his contempt for disfranchised poor whites and elitist gradual emancipators like Charles Fenton Mercer and, to a lesser extent, Monroe. His remedy for the dilemma of slavery in Virginia and for western sections' demand that slaves not be counted in the population for the purpose of apportioning legislative seats was a promise to shoot all his slaves if other slaveholders would follow suit.[5]

James Madison was the voice of the middle-of-the road liberals. While he eschewed universal manhood suffrage, he mildly opposed continued recourse to the freehold qualification for voting. As early as 1788, Madison had proposed calling a state constitutional convention to enact the secret ballot and the abolition of property requirements for voting and officeholding, replacing them with a taxpaying qualification.[6] Unlike Monroe at the 1830 convention, he did not uphold retention of some kind of real property assessment for voting.

Having been an extremely popular, recently retired chief executive, Monroe despite poor health was chosen president of the state constitutional convention that met in October 1829. Extremely feeble, he was led to the president's chair by two other venerable (and older) statesmen, James Madison and Marshall, the latter still holding the position of Chief Justice of the United States. Convoked in an attempt to rectify inequitable apportionment of state legislative seats between a once-wealthy East that was declining in population and an unrepresented West whose numbers were increasing, the convention met in an atmosphere of

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class and sectional hostility that was further exacerbated by the presence of new, angry young leaders. An expert on the convention, Dickson D. Bruce, thinks Monroe was too unfamiliar with the critical situation that prevailed between east and west to successfully "bring together conflicting opinions and interests." His reputation for sluggishness now worked against him, and in December 1829 he left the convention and was replaced as its president by Philip Barbour, a tidewater conservative. Although seven years older than Monroe, Madison, despite his protestations, was in better health. However, Bruce observes, even he "was like a fish out of water in the difficult meetings of 1829-1830." Notwithstanding his advanced age, Madison still powdered his hair, and Monroe and Marshall wore clothes from the style of the good old Revolutionary War days. But these demigods of the Republic wielded little power at the convention. Douglas Egerton points out: "To the left of the chair sat Madison and Marshall; on Monroe's right was Charles Fenton Mercer, calmly smoking his long clay pipe."[7]

On October 5, 1829, after Madison nominated him, Monroe was unanimously elected president of the convention. He immediately expounded his platform: the cause of "republican virtue."[8] His sincere praise of Madison as an epitome of public spirit hinted at his mixed hopes and fears for the new republic: "The proofs of his [Madison's] very important services, and the purity of his life, will go down to our latest posterity; and his example, aided by that of others, whom I need not mention, will give a strong prop to our free system of government." Who were these others? Perhaps Monroe had to be silent because there were no others--only Madison, himself, and perhaps Philip Norborne Nicholas, another Jeffersonian crusader during the late 1790s "XYZ crisis," when it seemed that republicanism might fall a victim to

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governmental tyranny and executive usurpation. As for William B. Giles, another delegate, Monroe despised his states' rights extremism; and the great Chief Justice, John Marshall, definitely went too far in the direction of nationalist "consolidation."[9]

Displaying his usual veneer of public modesty, which hid a propensity for self-righteousness, Monroe pleaded ignorance of the proper parliamentary procedures and took note of his recent serious "infirmity." Insofar as his ideology was concerned, he summarized his political philosophy and outlook on America's future. Though predominantly optimistic, he again betrayed uneasiness. He recognized the uniqueness of Virginia's contribution to American republicanism: it had been the first state to bring forth a constitution after independence was declared. On the other hand, its constitution suffered from the defects of primacy, one of the most important of these being the failure to include any provisions for amendment. This omission, as Monroe was well aware, made a new constitutional convention especially urgent. From the outset he admitted that the time for devising "a new support to our system of free republican government," in the shape of a new constitution, had arrived:

> Our Constitution was the first that was formed in the Union, and it has been in operation since: We had at that period, the examples only of the ancient republics before us; we have now the experience of more than half a century of this, our own Constitution, and of those of all our sister States. If it has defects, as I think it has, experience will have pointed them out, and the ability and integrity of this enlightened body, will recommend such alterations as it deems proper to our constituents, in whom the power of adopting or rejecting them is exclusively vested.[10]

He reiterated the cyclical theory of governmental growth and decline which he had imbibed as a young man from Aristotle and Polybius. "All other republics have failed," he

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reminded his audience. "Those of Rome and Greece exist only in History. In the territories which they ruled, we see the ruins of ancient buildings only; the Governments have perished, and the inhabitants exhibit a state of decrepitude and wretchedness, which is frightful to those who visit them."[11] Not only the governments, but the people of ancient Greece and Rome had sunk into an appalling condition of unfreedom, apathy, and poverty--no doubt as a result of their loss of democratic government. However, unlike his friend Jefferson, there is no record of Monroe ever having visited Italy--or Greece either, for that matter. Thus he was not talking about the plight of the Greeks from his own experience.

Monroe credited his constituents with the ability to differentiate between casting their votes based on deference to individuals of high social and economic status and making their choice on principle. Thus, he thought them capable of understanding the ideologies of competing candidates. He understood the gravity of Virginia's crisis, and he believed they understood it too:

> Our fellow-citizens, in the elections they have made, have looked to the great cause at issue, and selected those whom they thought most competent to its duties. They have not devoted themselves to individuals, but have regarded principle, and sought to secure it. In this I see strong ground to confide in the stability and success of our system. It inspires me with equal confidence that the result of your labors will correspond with their most sanguine hopes.[12]

At the time of his election to the 1829 constitutional convention, Monroe was aware of the inequitable apportionment between west and east in the state legislature. Deploring sectional controversy within the state, he noted, "If either part thinks itself oppressed it will be discontented & unhappy. The affection of each part should be promoted, on equal and just

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principles, towards the others." He warned, "Our system of government is new, and we find little cause for consolation in the example, and fate, of other republics, all of which have failed."[13] He perceived that the modern problems of sectionalism and slavery, unique to the United States as a large federal republic, were the rocks on which its government might founder at the state as well as the national level. That seven-eighths of the Tidewater's voters had opposed convening a state constitutional convention was eloquent testimony to the sectional cleavage.[14]

The day before the convention, Monroe learned about electoral maneuvers between east and west. He informed Madison, a formidable symbol of constitutional republicanism who had just arrived in Richmond, that Mercer and the reform-oriented delegates favored Madison for convention president. Monroe assured Madison that committees and the vice-president would do all the real work, "as well as free you from all burdens" and warned him that if he declined the presidency, he and Marshall would be justified in refusing it if it were offered to them. "Every object will be accomplished if you can act," Monroe wrote hopefully. He feared that the western part of the state would secede if its demands for apportionment of representation in both houses of the legislature solely on the basis of white population were rejected. Someone, probably his friend Congressman Mercer, had led him to this conclusion:

> It has been communicated to me, from unquestionable authority, that if a particular arrangement as to the power of the white population, is not adopted, that all those to the west[ward] will withdraw & make a constitution themselves, & submit it to their constituents. I mention this in profound confidence, it having been communicated to me, under an official injunction of secrecy.

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Moreover, the southern, aristocratic planters seemed hardly more conciliatory:

> It is stated also that the temper below is equally ardent & violent, in certain quarters especially. I mention this, merely that you [Madison] may be acquainted with it, should it be brought before you.[15]

Nevertheless, despite Madison's refusal to accept election, Monroe showed his devotion to duty by agreeing to take the office on the rebound, despite his threat to reject it in a similar manner.

The conservative "Old Republicans"--Monroe's allies earlier in his career, like John Taylor and John Randolph of Roanoke-- had grown lukewarm toward him for supporting the Madison Administration and nationalistic measures after the War of 1812. They were alarmed that the reform movement was being led by Federalists in the Tidewater counties and leaders like Monroe's congressional representative, his friend from the piedmont, Loudoun County congressman Charles Fenton Mercer, and Philip Doddridge. During the 1820's these Federalists had shrewdly joined with western yeomen farmers and urban artisans, who objected to high suffrage requirements and malapportioned legislatures, in demanding a revised state constitution and the convening of a constitutional convention. An advocate of roads, canals, government assistance to business and industry, and the emancipation and colonization of the slaves, Mercer hoped that the nonslaveholding Valley and the West would support his proposals for converting Virginia into a modernized capitalist state.[16]

Somewhat unfairly, the legislature authorized each of the state's twenty-four senatorial districts to send four delegates to the convention irrespective of its population.[17] As president, Monroe appointed the twenty-four man central committee, consisting of one member from each

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senatorial district. Madison presided over the committee, which was equally divided between pro- and anti-reform factions. The reform group deliberately sat apart from the planters.[18]

Although Madison and Monroe seemed to hold a powerful position at the convention, their leadership was largely symbolic.Perceiving the urgency of the convention's task, Monroe considered himself well-suited to bring together the antagonistic members of his society on constitutional amendments. His goals were to uphold the "great principles" of the Revolution, especially its concern for equal rights, "maintain equal liberty among our fellow citizens, inspire confidence, promote affection, and bind the State [Virginia] in all its parts, more closely together."[19]

Appositely, considering Madison and Monroe's status as elder statesmen and Monroe's credo that a retired president was obliged to render disinterested service to the polity, the two elder statesmen moderated the convention's crucial debate on the allocation of county representation in the state legislature. Under the prevailing constitution each county held an equal number of votes, permitting the declining eastern (tidewater and piedmont) counties to control the legislature and thwart laws authorizing creation of new counties in the increasingly populous west. Although they disagreed on the extent of reform, moderates and democrats in each section accepted the need for reapportionment. Diehard conservatives, however, insisted that the eastern counties, where most of the large slaveholding planters still lived, must retain their hegemony.[20]

Monroe and Madison attempted to end the deadlock. Madison chaired a committee that proposed to allocate house representation on the basis of white population alone, while

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maintaining each county's equal representation in the senate. His committee also recommended a reduction in the membership of the House of Delegates and an extension of the suffrage to include white taxpayers, without property qualifications. Radical convention members wanted representation proportional to white population for both houses, and universal manhood suffrage.[21]

In contrast, conservative delegates wanted to base county representation in both the house and senate on a combination of white population and tax revenues (i.e., wealth). John W. Green of Culpeper County attacked the Madison committee's recommendations on the convention floor. He and legendary conservative leader Benjamin Watkins Leigh urged the apportionment of both houses on the combined basis of white population and taxation. Abel P. Upshur mocked democratic principles, arguing that justice dictated rule by the rich. He believed that experience rather than theory molded the best leaders. Western delegates refused to compromise, insisting on the adoption of white population as the standard of representation for both legislative houses. They charged that the Eastern proposal to use wealth to determine representation degraded republicanism and Revolutionary ideals. Monroe briefly emerged in the strange role of savior of the democrats. On November 14, 1829, as president of the convention he cast the deciding vote against Green's aristocratic proposal.[22]

Yet when it became a matter of substituting broadened taxpayer suffrage for the existing freehold requirement, Monroe joined the conservatives. He feared an expanded suffrage would endanger the propertied classes. As had so often occurred in the recent past--both during the events of his presidency, culminating in the Monroe Doctrine, and in his retirement

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reminiscences, The People the Sovereigns-- he revealed the formative effect of his experiences as U. S. minister to France in molding his conservative republican ideology. Remembering the violence he had witnessed during the three Paris uprisings in 1795, he ascribed his fears of universal white manhood suffrage to them. "I had recently been in England and France, and witnessed popular movements in both countries, particularly in France," he said. "I was present during three of the great movements of the people [Germinal, Prairial, Vendémiaire], who seemed to act without any check or control." He described in detail what happened in one instance, probably the Prairial insurrection when mobs of hungry workers stormed the National Convention, killing one delegate and the mayor of Paris:

> I saw one of these movements directed against their existing Government, and by which it was literally torn to pieces. It was at length repressed, with the bayonet, by [General Jean Charles] Pichegru. In another the Convention was most violently assailed; the multitude, burst into the Legislative Hall; they were met and opposed, by the members; they killed one, and cutting off his head, marched with it on a pike to the President's Chair. I witnessed this scene.[23]

Again, recalling the right-wing, October 1795 (Vendémiaire) assault on the Convention, which was repelled by Napoleon's troops, he depicted events as if they had recently occurred, instead of having taken place thirty-four years before: "The Convention was about to pass over the Government to the Directory and the two Councils. The excitement among the people was great, (being fomented, as I believe, by the agents of foreign powers, for a political purpose), and they had like to have overthrown the Government, but after much bloodshed, they were at length repulsed." He even claimed to have witnessed popular uprisings in England, perhaps confusing his brief stay there in 1806 with his experiences during the French Revolution en route

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to Paris in 1794: "I had seen also, popular movements in England, though not of so marked a tendency." But it was the French Revolution's violent explosion that inspired his doubts about the feasibility of democracy and universal manhood suffrage: "I confess that this conduct of the people of France, under a Government which was exclusively their own, made me pause."[24] As a result of this experience of popular madness, Monroe questioned the wisdom of extending the suffrage, even in his home state.

Continuing to reminisce about his long political past and its impact on his willingness to experiment with further democracy, he reflected on a debate over suffrage extension which took place when he was in the Virginia legislature in 1810. Pointing to the violence he had witnessed in France, he had "wished the tendency of the measures, asked for, to be carefully weighed." He admitted that at that time he "hesitated, not from any thing I had ever seen in my own country, but from what I had seen of men elsewhere." He concluded by proposing to extend the suffrage to small property holders rather than confine it to those owning at least fifty acres of unimproved land. He remarked, "I reflected long, and at length, became willing to extend the right of suffrage to all those, who have a common interest in the country, and may act, as free and independent citizens." Monroe's optimism was buoyed by his conviction that America's powerful middle-classes and lack of aristocratic orders made it exceptional, invulnerable to violent revolution or anarchy even if suffrage became too extensive:

> We are differently situated from any other nation on the face of the earth. If self-government can exist any where, it is in these States, and in Virginia as well as in any other part of our Union.[25]

Although expecting a broadened suffrage to produce modest political effects, Monroe

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remained appalled by the "divisions" between east and west, which might cause "the most unhappy consequences." Every section should "unite in some arrangement, which may be satisfactory to a great majority of the House and of the Senate; and even to sacrifice a portion of their respective claims, rather than to fail" to draft a constitution. Seeking consensus, he feared that the state would split if no constitution passed, or was approved only by a small majority. He doubted that a separate state of West Virginia would receive congressional recognition. Perhaps shocking state's righters, he finally admitted that he favored federal internal improvements. Avoiding mention of a constitutional amendment, he pointed out that a divided Virginia would be unable to fully utilize public works: "Could we then get forward, with all our objects of internal improvement; objects which I have always advocated, and in the accomplishment of which I have taken a deep interest, with the same success, as in our present situation?" Abandoning the cautious stand he had assumed during his presidency, he evaluated "these improvements, as very important to the strength and welfare of the Commonwealth, and stability of the Union."

Perhaps unionism was Monroe's primary reason for welcoming national internal improvements. He predicted that if the U.S. Government assisted the state with new roads and canals the nation would be more strongly united. The threat of civil discord continued to disturb him. In a revealing analogy, he compared an hypothetical split between eastern and western Virginia with a rupture of the Union. "If the Atlantic States should be separated from those of the west, the country would be ruined," he warned. Once Virginia divided between slaveholding east and freeholding west, he feared, the Carolinas and Georgia would follow suit.

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To avoid sectional fragmentation, he advocated a far-reaching program of internal improvements. They would perpetuate national unity. "If we can bind the States together, by opening communications between them, then our union will be perfected, nothing can ever break it," he asserted.[26] Such romantic rhetoric was typical of Monroe.

Aware that the existence of slaves in large numbers in the east was the main source of conflict between east and west, Monroe reviewed the conflicting demands for legislative reapportionment. The west proposed representation with white population as a base, while the east wished to combine population and taxation ratios to determine the number of assemblymen from each county. Monroe opened by saying "that the claim of those in the west, is rational under particular circumstances." He noted that the east insisted that its senior status, greater wealth, and the possession of its "peculiar" slave property entitled it to hegemony. Monroe stressed the issue of slavery. Sounding a note of at least theoretical abolitionism, he ringingly declared: "I am satisfied, if no such thing as slavery [had] existed, that the people of our Atlantic border, would meet their brethren of the west, upon the basis of the majority of the free white population."[27]

Despite Virginia's devotion to the "equal rights of man," slavery had prevailed there at the time of the Revolution. Had whites earlier replaced Africans as a source of labor, sectional strife would have disappeared. In any case, four hundred thousand freed Virginia slaves would still be a propertyless, disfranchised, burden to the state. Their color permanently set them apart from the rest of the community. If the Negroes remained in Virginia, the inevitable result would be "disorganization" and "perfect confusion." Moreover, Monroe thought, without

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assistance from the national government, the task of removing freed blacks from the state would be insuperable. Even as freedmen, their destiny was to remain impoverished criminals, stealing in order to survive-- a blight on white society. As Monroe graphically depicted it: "They must remain as poor, free from the controul of their masters, and must soon fall upon the rest of society, and resort to plunder for subsistence."[28]

Monroe made the point, like his mentors Jefferson and Madison before him, that even emancipation would not alleviate the condition of the blacks unless they were exiled from Virginia. But few northern states would receive them. Painting a bleak, jaundiced picture of the living conditions of African-Americans in the free eastern states, Monroe reported: "They have emigrated to Pennsylvania in great numbers, and form a part of the population of Philadelphia, and likewise of New-York and Boston. But those who were the most ardent advocates of emancipation, in those portions of the Union, have become shocked at the charges of maintaining them, as well as at the effect of their example."[29]

Anticipating the Proslavery Argument that would become common a decade later, Monroe alluded to the hypocrisy of those western states whose constitutions proclaimed devotion to human equality and abolished slavery, but whose people's racial prejudice and desire to avoid black competition for jobs and economic resources led them to pass laws denying entry to free blacks. According to Monroe, while Ohio acknowledged the "equal rights of all," it expelled all Negroes from the state. And in truth, he was only slightly exaggerating. In 1804 and 1807, Ohio, first of the Northwestern states, passed laws requiring blacks who entered the state to produce a certificate of freedom and post a bond guaranteeing

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their good behavior. Violators were subject to expulsion and a fine, which if unpaid could result in their being hired out, which was tantamount to slavery.[30]

Despite his age and illness, Monroe was obviously conversant with recent events. Ohio's "Black Laws," passed in 1804 and 1807, like the more notorious Black Codes adopted in the South immediately after the Civil War, required blacks entering the state to post a $500 bond guaranteeing their good behavior and to carry certificates of their freedom. The harsh bond provision was not enforced until 1829, when magistrates in Cincinnati, alarmed by the steadily increasing Negro population, announced that the Black Laws would be enforced and gave the African-Americans thirty days to comply or leave town. The town's blacks protested to the legislature and gained an extension before their exile could take effect, meanwhile sending a delegation to Canada to investigate opportunities for resettlement. Impatient white mobs rioted and destroyed Cincinnati's black quarters in the interim. When the governor of Upper Canada offered the blacks welcome, nearly two thousand of them emigrated from Cincinnati. The injustice perpetrated against the black population occasioned regrets on the part of white liberals, who understood that the repressive legislation had forced many "respectable persons" into exile.[31]

These laws and white enthusiasm for them, especially in Cincinnati, amounted to black expulsion from the Midwest. Undoubtedly Monroe referred to them, albeit in exaggerated terms, when he said that Ohio had expelled all blacks. He seemed sympathetic to the whites. "She [Ohio] has been obliged to do it," he pontificated. He relied on federal assistance in freeing the slaves and expelling them from the republic: "If emancipation be possible, I look to

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the Union to aid in effecting it."[32] His hope was that the Jeffersonian goal of emancipating, then deporting Virginia's slaves would be facilitated by federal funds. Painfully aware that other parts of the Union, even the so-called "free states," were nearly as averse to accommodating a free black population as his own state, he concluded that emancipation followed by deportation was the optimal alternative.

Republicanism, Monroe declared, formed the substratum of Revolutionary ideology and Virginia's statehood. It embodied the "equal rights" of man. Each part of the Union joined every other part in a secular covenant. "None took advantage of the other's distresses," Monroe avowed. He quixotically predicted that eventually Virginia and the other southern states would abolish slavery, wishing to undo this abomination to the "equal rights" principles of the Revolution, which was repugnant to their state constitutions and bills of rights. They would then deport the freed Negroes. In any case, Monroe pointed out, even an unsuccessful attempt at abolition would at least reduce the volume of antislavery memorials to Virginia's legislature. Monroe argued that slavery and abolition were national issues that required congressional assistance to resolve them. "This matter is before the nation, and the principles, and consequences, involved in it, are of the highest importance," he warned. "But in the meanwhile, self-preservation demands of us union in our councils."[33] He thought the time had arrived for the whole state to undertake abolition. He insisted that federal aid was essential: "As to the practicability of emancipating them, it can never be done by the State itself, nor without the aid of the Union."[34]

Reiterating Jefferson's claims in the Declaration of Independence, Monroe prefaced his

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advocacy of western demands for abolition by touting the view that colonial Virginia had opposed slavery and prohibited slave importations but was overruled by Britain's Privy Council, and renewed the prohibition after independence was declared. From Monroe's perspective, Virginia had been a leader in antislavery agitation as well as the movement for independence. "No imputation, then, can be cast upon her, in this matter," he pointed out. "She did all that was in her power to do, to prevent the extension of slavery and to mitigate its evils."[35] He recurred to his customary viewpoint that he sought to represent the whole society rather than any discrete faction. "As to our western brethren, I feel as deep an interest for them, as for those on the Atlantic border," he eloquently proclaimed. "I have so long represented the Commonwealth, that I have no sectional feeling. I look to the Commonwealth, and seek the welfare of the whole."[36]

Although he claimed to represent "the whole" commonwealth, Monroe, except for his antislavery stance, tended to support large eastern landholders against the emerging propertyless urban masses and the small western freeholders. Seeking to condone the state legislature's inaction, Monroe lauded its generosity in surrendering the western lands to the Union in 1784 and allowing Kentucky to become an independent state whose inhabitants were "held together by a common interest." More feebly, he defended the legislature's deplorable record in permitting the creation of new western counties. Arguing that its role had been "fair, open, manly, and generous," he had to admit that he lacked firsthand information: "So at least I am assured, for I have been absent, in the performance of other duties, and cannot be expected, to recollect the details, of this subject."[37] Subtly reversing his burgeoning support of

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the west, Monroe concluded this first speech, November 2, 1829, with the ambiguous statement that right was on both sides. He did not think the east's discriminatory principles "would violate the natural and political rights of man."[38]

In Monroe's tortured logic, the abolition of slavery was embraced within the struggle for "equal [white men's] rights" within the Colonies' fight for freedom during the American Revolution. By shedding her sons' blood in that conflict and prohibiting further slave importations during the Revolutionary War., Monroe reasoned, Virginia evinced its devotion to the abolition of slavery, the Mother Country's legacy. Somewhat overstating the case, Monroe equated Virginia's prohibition of slave imports and participation in the Revolution with opposition to slavery itself. Perhaps in psychological self-defense, he revived memories of the Revolution, linking them with the state's efforts to curtail slavery. Somewhat illogically, he said:

> Virginia was the first State, which instructed her Delegates, to declare the Colonies independent. She braved all dangers. From Quebec to Boston, and from Boston to Savannah, Virginia shed the blood of her sons. No imputation, then, can be cast upon her, in this matter. She did all that was in her power to do, to prevent the extension of slavery, and to mitigate its evils.[39]

Monroe seemed unaware that the state's motivation in prohibiting further slave imports was more to maintain the existing price levels of slaves already in the state, which were reproducing at high rates, than idealistic humanitarian zeal.[40]

Again seeking to depict himself as more liberal than he actually was, Monroe spoke in defense of a suffrage still bottomed on freeholder requirements (though reduced from the fifty-acre stipulations of the 1785 law), and eschewed the western and urban demands for taxpayer

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or universal white male suffrage. Implying that a widened suffrage, in which a greater number of small western farmers and eastern laborers gained the vote, would not threaten the existing, inequitable apportionment of legislative districts and the sanctity of slavery, his rhetoric sounded more democratic than the proposals he supported. "I will carry the right of suffrage as far as any reasonable man can desire," he declared. "Then the rights of all the citizens will stand upon the same ground: the poor man and the rich, will stand on the same level."

Pointing out that the "equal rights" of white men were not injured by guaranteeing the possession of slaves owned by the wealthy, Monroe warned: "As to the arrangement of districts, and the protection of [slave] property by some reasonable guarantee, I do not see how it can affect the question, of equal rights, among the citizens. It will not affect it, within any one district, where there are both poor and rich men." Legislative districts, microcosms of the body politic, encompassed diverse interests, which must receive assembly representation. Protection of slaveholders, Monroe stressed, had nothing in common with previous "monocratic" schemes to create an American monarchy which might be advanced by increased property requirements for voting, which endangered the security of the republic.[41] As he eloquently put it:

> If the plan was to create an order of nobility, or to make the right of suffrage, depend on much property, it might enable the rich, to oppress the poor; but that is not the case; it leaves both on the same ground, and gives the one no advantage over the other. I only say, that representation should be based, on the white population, with some reasonable protection for property. But how is this to be done? It may be done in two modes. First it may be arranged, as it is in South Carolina, by taking both into consideration; base your [lower house] representation on the white population of the State, and combine that, with the proportion of taxes

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throughout the whole; then each district will have its own share.

Aware that he had just described the eastern conservative program, Monroe quickly balanced the equation by lending qualified support to the western reformers' viewpoint. "The other mode is thus: Let one of the branches of the Legislature be placed upon the basis of white population alone, and the other branch, on the compound basis of population and taxation," he proposed. "If this plan be adopted, then the question arises, in which branch, shall the white basis prevail? and in which the compound? Will you give the basis of white population only, to the House of Delegates or to the Senate?" Showing his moderation, he embraced the reform program that would allot the white population basis of representation to the lower house. "I think it will be more safe, for both sections, for the western and Atlantic country, if you give it [the white representation basis] to the House of Delegates, and for the compound basis, to prevail in the Senate."[42]

Asserting the Senate's power to exercise a general veto on the house of delegates, Monroe perhaps deliberately overlooked the fact that state tax laws, made in the lower house, could not be amended by the upper house, which could only approve or reject them in toto. Depicting the compromise as being derived from classical balanced government, in which each house exercised an equivalent curb on the other, he declared: "If you could agree on this arrangement, the country will, I think, be satisfied, and there will be an ample check upon the course of legislation, by the structure of the Senate." He seemed to concur with the conservative view that the lower house, more directly responsible to the electorate and most likely to be dominated by violent passions, required restraint by the upper house. "The popular

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branch, may then originate whatever it shall think most for the good of the country; and if, through the stimulus of heated feeling, they should propose any improper measure, the Senate will operate as an immediate check," he observed. "It was on this principle, that I voted against the proposition to establish the white basis for the Senate."[43]

Monroe pointed out that the senate, as voice of the slaveholding aristocrats, apportioned on the basis of county wealth (measured by tax assessments) as well as numbers, would safeguard slavery. Thus, he tersely concluded: "I wish to see the basis of white population alone adopted for the House of Delegates, and the compound basis of representation, consisting of white population and taxation combined, for the Senate. This is my view."[44] While institutionalizing the prerogatives of upper class slaveholders, the senate, for Monroe, also embodied the rational mode of politics. In his later years, as in his earlier, he preferred stability, consensus, and conservatism rather than rough ventures in democracy and political experimentation.

Opposition to Monroe's general stance arose from an unlikely source--William Branch Giles, governor of Virginia and a conservative leader. In a speech on Nov. 9, 1829, he expressed alarm at Monroe's suggestion that the U. S. Government's assistance be obtained for the abolition of slavery as well as for internal improvements. Giles warned such attitudes would encourage the U.S. to "annihilate all State rights--the destruction of the State Governments, and more, the amalgamation of a great mass of power in the Federal Government... a consolidated despotism."[45]

Although, like Monroe, Giles thought that unanimity was a worthy goal for the

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convention, he considered the conservative 1776 constitution the summum bonum. He apparently regretted the Federal Constitution of 1787. Denying that a "sense of imminent danger" had produced the state's 1776 constitution, Giles said that despite the obvious wartime peril, general "equanimity" prevailed. Nevertheless, Virginia's current security should not encourage the delegates to argue interminably about "philosophical abstractions." Urging unanimity, like Monroe and the Jeffersonians he emphasized a successful convention's role in cultivating pro-republican world opinion: "Should we fail in the objects for which we are called together, we would lose the confidence of our constituents, and whatever political fame and standing we have acquired; and should disappoint the expectations of our fellow-citizens, and of the world."[46]

Though Giles charged that western democrats had destroyed the desired consensus, he still professed his admiration for "the honorable frankness and candour" of the discussions. While lamenting the presence of invidious "local interests," he remarked: "The whole debate appeared... to have afforded a new and conspicuous example of the just celebrity which Virginia has obtained for morals and for principles."[47] However, his own stance seemed to cast doubt on this conclusion.

While Monroe, Madison, and other moderates sought to downplay east-west conflict on slavery, Giles bluntly acknowledged that sectional disparities in slave-ownership determined stands on suffrage and representation. He stressed the power of the slaveholding "interest," when he reminded the convention: "This difference of interests consists in the unequal position of the slave property in this State, and this interest is so important that the production of the

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labour of the slaves, forms the foundation of one third of the whole taxes of the State." Giles' professed goal was to override the "unfortunate stumbling block" of sectional conflict and restore harmony. "It was the duty of all to meet and subdue the difficulty, or to apply such remedy as would be acceptable to all," he asserted.

Monroe must have been appalled when Giles charged that his remarks on abolition threatened consensus. He thought Monroe was too eager to submit all intrastate disputes, including the question of abolishing slavery and compensating slaveholders, to the national government. Giles was obviously angry that Monroe had interjected the question of the national government's role in abolition, a bête-noire for most slaveholders, into the constitutional proceedings where he felt it had no part. He observed:

> The venerable gentleman from Loudoun (Mr. Monroe) thinks emancipation impossible, without the aid of the Federal Government; and, perhaps, it would not be possible even with that aid--an aid which, could it be had, surely would not be desirable to any. He hoped the venerable gentleman [Monroe] would excuse him for saying, that he did not see the precise applicability of his remarks to the precise subject under consideration, and he could not avoid saying, that his feelings were much excited at the mere suggestion of calling upon the Federal Government for aid in so delicate a question.

And Giles pointedly concluded with the rhetorical question: "What would be the effect of calling on the Federal Government to aid us in the common, ordinary, municipal regulations of the state?"[48]

Monroe's argument that federal assistance was necessary to build internal improvements and abolish slavery angered Giles. He also protested Monroe's assertion that the national government had the power to prevent Virginia's voluntary division into two states.

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Deploring "the effect of all these dependencies" on the federal government by his state, he used reductio ad absurdum logic, warning, "The effects must be the annihilation of all State rights--the destruction of the State Governments--and more, the amalgamation of a great mass of power in the Federal Government."[49] The mercurial Giles perceived his old ally Monroe as having finally deserted to the "consolidationist," nationalist enemy--Federalism resurrected! Since in the past Monroe had already lent his support to rechartering the Bank of the United States, a protective tariff, and the extension of federal-sponsored internal improvements, in a similar manner to Madison and to Jefferson during the nationalizing days of his second term, Giles could not have been too surprised at Monroe's latest tergiversation.[50]

Ironically, Giles' assessment metamorphosed Monroe, an erstwhile champion of states' rights, into the friend of national consolidation. "Have gentlemen reflected on the tendencies of a vast momentum of power, collected in any hands, which are beyond their control?" he inquired, alluding to Monroe's desire for federal intervention. "The best we could hope under such an amalgamation, would be a consolidated despotism." Venting his irreconcilable hostility to any "interference of the General Government" in state matters, he regretted that sectional strife between eastern and western parts of the state might permit backdoor national mediation. "Were it not for this important difference of sectional interests, he would indulge the most flattering hope that the Convention should be enabled to improve the condition of man, by adding to the great political lights heretofore shed on this State, and the whole world, by our venerated forefathers."[51]

Wary of the sectional conflict, Giles intended to obscure the slavery issue with glittering

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generalities on the significance of America's republican experiment. He admitted that "the science of politics, had not kept pace in improvements with any of the other arts and sciences." Praising republican ideology, Giles said the U.S. Constitution had made "the only effort at improvement" in government, "a new and just principle in the science of politics--one in direct hostility to the pre-existing basis on which all other Governments were founded." However, his guiding star was the Declaration of Independence not the Constitution. He argued that advocates of the national government's intervention in state affairs, as Monroe seemed to be, sought to revert to anti-republican institutions like monarchy and aristocracy, vitiating the republican improvements made "fifty-four years ago," i.e., in 1776 not 1787.

Giles bitterly rejected the U.S. Constitution as a monarchical regression from the beauties of the localist-democratic Declaration of Independence and the Revolutionary state constitutions. "We have rather retrograded to those principles which our forefathers had abandoned," he lamented. "We have gone back to imitate the British system, as far as regards practical, political economy, after having established the most happy and beautiful fundamental system of our own." He abhorred the new nationalism of the Monroe and John Quincy Adams administrations and John Marshall's judicial conduct (ironically, he was present at the convention and supported the conservative program on legislative representation).[52]

Unconsciously paraphrasing Thomas Hobbes, the seventeenth-century philosopher of absolutism, Giles observed that the U.S. was the only society not based on fraud or force. Comparing his localist Virginia gentry with John Hampden and Algernon Sidney, two seventeenth-century English republicans executed for their "patriotic enquiries into the science

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of politics," Giles perceived a class struggle underlying the political. He charged, rather unconvincingly, that an aristocratic minority had throttled freedom of political inquiry, dispensing its dogmas against the supporters of rural democracy. "The few who had by combinations usurped the rights of the many, and possessed themselves of all the proceeds of their productive labour, have employed all their means to prevent further improvements in the science of politics, to avoid the detection and exposure of the fraud, which was the foundation of their systems," he concluded.[53]

Giles speciously grounded his attack on equal rights for the west on the need to revive devotion to the rights of man--the "principles of 1776." First he lauded the epoch's "great discovery...made in opposition to former systems; that all the rights of Government are founded in the consent of man, and that consent ascertained through the social compact, or, in other words, the written Constitution." However, he abruptly reversed his endorsement of majoritarian government. Emulating the arguments his nationalist foe James Madison had expounded in Federalist #10, he argued that the social compact permitted the minority to veto the majority will when a "local interest" (e.g., slaveholders) needed special protection. Exposing his conservatism, Giles' version of the "social compact" hindered the majority in implementing its will while enforcing respect for the minority's special interests and needs. Alluding to the slaveholders, he said: "Here we have a local interest, which is admitted by all to be applicable to peculiar sections of the State, but not to the whole of it. This local interest must be secured by provisions in the fundamental laws; if not, upon general principles, the majority would govern it." He asserted the propertied minority's right to control the majority in order to

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protect its interests: "If it be improper that the majority should govern, where there is a particular, local interest, the minority should have a power of controlling the majority, so far as to afford protection to such particular, local interest."[54]

Finding himself in an unfamiliarly radical role, at least by comparison with the aristocratic Giles, Monroe adopted a temperate position on suffrage extension, another controversial issue. On Oct. 13, 1829, John Marshall, though himself opposed to suffrage expansion, in his role as Richmond's delegate presented a petition from the town's artisans demanding enfranchisement of non-freeholders. Disputing their opponents' argument that any hardworking Virginian could acquire sufficient land to vote, the artisans noted that those whom "fortune or inclination have engaged in other agricultural pursuits" faced difficulty in purchasing a town freehold. In addition, the Richmond nonfreeholders warned that, if denied the suffrage, they would ultimately revolt against their "degraded condition" vis-à-vis the "privileged order" of plutocratic planters. They insisted that, together with white-basis county representation, universal white manhood suffrage would reduce their hostility toward the slaveholding gentry.[55]

Several delegates pointed out that class conflict between the planters and small farmers would be ameliorated by suffrage extension, while the absence of big cities containing mobs of propertyless city workers, whose place in the southern economy was taken by four hundred thousand slaves, made universal white manhood suffrage even less dangerous for Virginia than for the "free" states.[56] Monroe's radical fellow Loudoun county delegate, Richard Henderson, demanding taxpayer suffrage, stressed that Virginia was the most backward of the "twenty-four states that form the Federal Family" in extending the suffrage. All other states,

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both slaveholding and nonslaveholding, had displaced the freeholding qualification with simple taxpaying or merely age and residence requirements. As a result, proponents of suffrage expansion argued, Virginia was declining in population relative to neighboring states as adult white males hungry for political rights drifted away.[57]

In a more conservative vein than his colleague, Monroe's speech on Nov. 21, 1829, during the convention debate over propertyholder and lessee suffrage, advocated modest property requirements for the vote. He "thought that the Right of Suffrage might be extended beyond the limit prescribed by the present Constitution, and with advantage to every class of the community, [and] it is my desire to show to what extent, I think it may be carried, and within what limit it should be confined." He favored granting the vote to lessees (leaseholders), a more radical stance than that of the convention, which had just defeated this proviso 37 to 52. On the other hand, adopting a more conservative stance than his friend Thomas Jefferson, who favored universal manhood suffrage, Monroe opposed granting merchants and city workers the franchise.[58]

Arguing that the "country" was no more than the "territory" it encompassed, Monroe thought it logical "to confine the elective franchise to an interest in land: to some interest of moderate value in the territory of the Commonwealth." A citizen's attachment to the nation equated his devotion to the patrie: "is it not the effect of our residence in it, either as the land of our nativity or the country of our choice? Our adopted country?" He seemed to extend a welcoming hand to foreigners. "And of our attachment to its institutions? And what excites and is the best evidence of such attachment? Some hold in the territory itself; some interest in the

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soil: something that we own, not as passengers or voyagers, who have no property in the State, and nothing to bind them to it." Implicitly, Monroe suspected that merchants and artisans, who lacked land, would have less devotion to the national good and be more attentive to their petty interests and concerns than the upright farmer.[59]

Extending Physiocratic theory to embrace the eligible voter's political psychology, Monroe was certain that the landholder epitomized the worthy citizen, who put the republic's security ahead of individual gain when conflict arose between them. "The object is to give firmness and permanency to our attachment," he pointed out. "And these are the best means by which it may be accomplished."[60] The farmer could be trusted to act in the patrie's best interests.

Despite his belief in the purifying effects of republican land ownership, Monroe, like Jefferson in Notes on Virginia, was not eager to liberalize suffrage requirements for immigrants. Having been brought up in monarchies, they had been indoctrinated in invidious political views. "Our country is an asylum for the oppressed of all countries," he commented. "They fly to us from all regions of the globe, particularly from Great Britain; and more especially from Ireland--they fly to us from poverty and oppression." Although he was sympathetic to their plight, he would not give them political rights till they had been indoctrinated in proper views of government. "I am willing to receive them," he pointed out, "but I consider those people as very different from ours; and as they are not fit to be at once admitted to equal political rights among us, they should not be permitted to participate in the sovereignty, nor get hold upon the Government till they have been rendered fit for it by the acquirement of different feelings and

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principles."[61]

In Monroe's idyllic farmers' republic, there was no room for monarchical dissent. Even with regard to suffrage liberalization, Monroe apparently feared that extending the vote to poorer citizens would threaten the republican consensus he sought to promote. Though reiterating the traditional rhetoric that the U.S. was "a Government of the people; it may properly be called self-government," he felt some misgivings about suffrage enlargement. "But the whole system is yet an experiment," he asserted; "it remains to be seen whether such a Government can be maintained, and that it may, in our Union, I have no doubt. But wise provisions, as to the exercise of the Right of Suffrage, and the powers of Government, are indispensable for its preservation." Monroe sought recourse to historical examples.

As he had done at the ratifying convention forty years earlier, Monroe emphasized the usefulness of studying history to avoid the actions which had led to the overthrow of past republics. Still adhering to the cyclical theory of history--that similar causes produce similar effects and that human nature has always generally been the same--Monroe said: "We ought to profit by the examples of every other nation; we ought to look at the history of other Republics, and see the causes which led to their overthrow. When we find that the most important and democratical among them have been soon overthrown, we ought to guard against the causes which led to their downfall."[62]

Painfully aware that excessively democratic governments had often veered off into anarchy and despotism, Monroe warned that the constitutions of the new western states like Ohio, Illinois, Alabama, and Mississippi granted too much power to the people. Claiming to

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respect the views of both advocates and opponents of suffrage extension--the former were the currently unenfranchised western small farmers and propertyless city dwellers, the latter were the large slaveholders who feared that a democratic suffrage might precipitate antislavery clamor to expropriate the rich--he observed: "It is very natural, that those on the one side should feel a strong inclination to give the greatest possible extent to the rights of every citizen, whatever may be his circumstances. It is equally natural that doubts should be felt on the other side, when the experience of other Governments has admonished them of danger."[63]

During this period Monroe composed his unfinished work of political theory, The People the Sovereigns. He now expounded a similar exegesis of governmental decline. He divided history into three epochs--first, the ancient republics, especially Athens, Sparta, Carthage, and Rome; the second, typified by the monarchies that followed the fall of the Roman Empire; and "the third and last, commenced with the discovery of this hemisphere, the emigration of our ancestors, to this section, with their colonial state, the revolution which followed, and the Governments founded on its principles." Mimicking the terminology of Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Social Contract, Monroe examined ancient Athenian democracy. He stressed that, although both "Government and sovereignty" were in the people's hands, only an elective Senate, run by wealthy businessmen and landed aristocrats, had power to propose laws. Decrying the myth of Athenian democracy, he tersely remarked: "The State [Athens] consisted, therefore, of two classes, the rich and the poor." And it was overthrown by the demagogue Pisistratus after only ten years in 560 B.C.[64]

Despite his great respect for the rights of property, Monroe, as in The People the

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Sovereigns, praised Sparta's communistic politico-economic base. He believed that an equal division of property among all the citizens facilitated adherence to a consensual common good, since no one stood to gain more than another from government policies. He thought Sparta's balanced government lasted longer than Athens' direct democracy largely because of its communal economic system. He told his fellow delegates:

> Lacedemon was under two Kings and a Senate who held their places for life. This Government lasted longer [than Athens]. And why? The lands were divided equally; the people fed together, Kings, Senators and people at the same tables. This had a tendency to connect them together; at the same time all intercourse with foreign nations was prohibited. The bonds were close; and the Government was never overthrown until these bonds were first broken. Commerce introduced war and acquired plunder, whereby the manners of the people were changed. But would any body think of introducing such a Government here?[65]

Although Monroe advised that the downfall of Athens and Sparta ensuing on their increasing luxury and economic inequality should remind Americans of republics' fragility, he did not intend to recommend primordial Spartan communism as a panacea for the divisions within his state. Nevertheless, by supporting suffrage for leaseholders as well as landowners, he showed a democratic tendency. Perhaps being deliberately vague about what amount of real property should qualify a voter, he insisted he would see to it that the quantity could be easily obtained by any hard-working man. A moderately extended suffrage would undoubtedly promote harmony and consensus rather than divisiveness between rich and poor, east and west. "I think if the Right of Suffrage should be so extended as I have suggested, I can see in that event no remaining cause of variance," he asserted. "All who wish to enjoy it can

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procure it by a few months' labour, and if public virtue and the general abhorrence of corruption shall prevail, as I hope and believe they will, we shall have those who enjoy the right, so nearly on a level with those who do not, that their influence will operate to tranquilize the whole mass of society, and induce the poor man to use exertions which will soon obtain for him the right of voting."

Monroe thus early preached the myth of the self-made man, the Horatio Alger figure who could easily obtain political and economic rights in this burgeoning land of opportunity. He believed that successful individuals would serve as role models for those less industrious, inspiring them to work hard and eventually gain the prize of landownership. On the other hand, he concluded, "we are not in a situation to go farther," i.e., to give the vote to landless town dwellers.[66]

Monroe's emphasis on the indispensability of landownership to political virtue was shared by John Randolph, the leader of the "Old Republicans." Though demanding perpetuation of the unamended 1776 Constitution, Randolph was "sincerely gratified" to find himself in accord with Monroe's view that landownership was the only valid basis for voting and citizenship. Like Monroe, he emphasized the unique situation of the United States, where at least some land was attainable by everyone. As he perceived it, widespread landownership was the basis of Virginia's constitutionalism. "I said that I considered it [land] the only safe foundation in the commonwealth," he explained. "For whom are we to make a constitution? For Holland? For Venice (where there is no land?). For a country, where the land is monopolized by a few?" Virginians were "a people emphatically agricultural; where land is in

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plenty, and where it is accessible to every exertion of honest industry," he concluded, sharing Monroe's optimism about middle-class democracy's future in the state.[67]

When Monroe again spoke briefly a few days later, he reiterated his view that the right of suffrage should depend on "moderate" land ownership. Home ownership and "some interest in society" rooted in "the soil" were indispensable qualifications for responsible citizenship. Elucidating his viewpoint's liberal basis, derived perhaps from reading G.W.F. Hegel's Philosophy of History, he summarized his theory concerning what he called the "second great epoch." This was the era of monarchical absolutism, commencing with the rise of the Germanic kingdoms that obliterated the Western Roman Empire in the fifth century. He disparaged the feudal age and the medieval Franks, supposed originators of the Age of Chivalry which some southerners so much admired. "The people who settled on the ruins of the Roman Empire were rude in their condition and character," he observed. "Their governments were monarchical, accompanied with an order of nobility." Except for England, all of Europe's governments were "despotic," and even there, "liberty had, through a long space, no solid basis on which to rest."[68]

Monroe's remarks on the evolution of English liberty were perceptive, and as relevant in his era as they had been to Montesquieu's generation. "The effort there was to avoid despotism," he pointed out, "and the most that the friends of liberty aspired to, and contended for, was to rescue the people from slavery, and acquire for them some hold in the system." This they did in the thirteenth century through the popularly-based House of Commons. Nevertheless, the English Government provided little in the way of "example...which we ought

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to imitate." Based on aristocracy, it included little popular representation and even lacked freedom of speech and religion. These deficits precipitated the great migration to the Thirteen Colonies, which were essentially self-governing, the King and his Governors possessing the veto power but without ability to initiate laws. "There was no nobility or prince," Monroe proudly observed. He stressed that the success of the American Revolution further advanced popular rule:

> The revolution transferred the whole power to the people. There were no privileged orders; nor was the Government hereditary. It consisted of a House of Burgesses, a Council, and a Governor. Every proposition originated with the people, under our Colonial Government, and, therefore, liberal and free principles were inculcated, which were made perfect by our revolution.[69]

Depicting Virginia's administration since the Revolution as completely popular, Monroe claimed that even senatorial vetoes of the House of Delegates' actions "are formed by representatives of the people, and intended to give greater stability and permanence to their Government." From this perspective he may have intended to stun his listeners with a discussion of the differences between ancient Athens, wracked by strife between rich and poor, and the ostensibly classless American republic. Once more resorting to the terminology of Rousseau's Social Contract, he explained:

> Such a condition, therefore, as the rich and poor, and such a struggle between them, as overthrew the Government of Athens, and prostrated the power of the people, did not and does not exist here in the slightest degree. In the ancient Republics, and especially in that of Athens, the people possessed the whole power: the sovereignty and the Government were united in them: with us it is different.[70]

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With overtones similar to his friend Madison's Federalist #10, Monroe's speech revealed a conundrum. Madison had defined a "faction" as, "a number of citizens, whether amounting to a majority or minority of the whole, who are united and actuated by some common impulse of passion, or of interest, adverse to the rights of other citizens, or to the permanent and aggregate interests of the community." But Monroe was more conservative. "The sovereignty is in the people, but the exercise of Government is in their representatives," he told the convention. "Every voter partakes a share of the sovereignty; and thus the Right of suffrage is the basis of our system of Government." But this precious, sovereign right of suffrage must be cautiously dispensed: "And hence the necessity for caution how we extend the right to such as have no permanent interest in the community." For him, only those without sufficient property were defined as "factious," i.e., having no "permanent interest" in common with the rest of the community. Consequently, the people's representatives, elected by a refined and restricted electorate, though large by comparison with any other nation in the world, were sacrosanct: "When we see that the representatives are so numerous, and that the voters constitute so great a mass, we have the certainty that they never can pass laws in favor of one class of society to the injury of another class."[71]

In assuming that only the propertied should be entitled to vote Monroe once more espoused the classical republican argument that those who lacked "substance"--substantial real property holdings --were *a priori* not sufficiently responsible to the society and the nation's future to hold the suffrage. As a republic with an ample number of voters and representatives, Virginia's government (and, by extension, that of the United States) guaranteed the rights only

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of those with a "permanent interest in the community"--the old "stake in society" ideal, most carefully propounded in James Harrington's Oceana (1656). In common with Madison, Monroe thought that the common good consisted in protecting "one class of society" from other, more aggressive or dangerous classes. He optimistically expected that the multitudes of voters and delegates would guarantee the rights of all classes without stumbling into legislative deadlock. But Monroe would have no qualms about expelling the propertyless majority from his political universe. They are those with "no permanent interest in the community." Thus we are hurled back into the classical republican universe of Harrington, Trenchard and Gordon, and Bolingbroke.[72]

Monroe definitely had his own blind spot. By excluding from the political arena the propertyless, who were or would eventually become a majority of the population, he mocked his boast that the legislature "never can pass laws in favor of one class of society to the injury of another class." He eliminated the most numerous class, those without land, from his projections.

On the other hand, as a politically astute observer Monroe was aware he had deliberately omitted the laboring white poor from the political universe. He was sufficiently humane and proto-democratic to feel compelled to apologize for his somewhat conservative stance. "Many reasons urge us in looking to self-government to cause the Right of Suffrage to draw as near as possible every class in society together," he continued. "But it should be connected with an interest in the soil." Reiterating his abhorrence of legalized or hereditary social discriminations, he said: "I wish to see no distinction, order, nor any thing like rank

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introduced amongst us. Let all be in the hands of the people. Let a majority rule."[73]

After nominally endorsing democratic rule, Monroe attempted to further buttress his progressive credentials. Somewhat anachronistically, he assured his audience that he despised the aristocratic social institutions, primogeniture and entail, which his patron Jefferson had successfully abolished in Virginia over fifty years before. (Monroe's statement would be analogous to a contemporary politician asserting that he favored women's suffrage!). As Monroe put it: "The laws of primogeniture and of entail are gone, and what is the tendency of such a state of things? The father brings up his sons, in his own principles and habits, and when he dies he divides his estate among them; or if he dies intestate, the law of descents comes in and divides it for him."[74] Apparently, Monroe was still living in the eighteenth century.

Monroe thought the laws for equal inheritance of landed estates would eventually facilitate widespread land ownership, ensuring a substantial suffrage. With the increased dispersal of inherited land by sale, he predicted, most people would eventually become landowners. "In two or three generations the largest estates become subdivided until the owners become reduced into one mass; and the whole aspect of society becomes nearly the same," he said. "Does not this present a reason why the Right of Suffrage should be connected in some degree with the soil?"[75]

In contrast with their patriarchal forefathers, inheritors of landed estates had less interest in augmenting their holdings than in selling them and using the money for their own purposes. Materialistic rather than genteel, they would inadvertently help distribute the land in a more socially egalitarian and useful fashion among the people, thereby advancing political and

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economic democracy. Recommending only a minimal real estate requirement for the vote. Monroe advised, "Let the test be made as moderate as can be." Predicting that the number of landholders and voters in the state would expand rather than diminish over time, he assured his listeners that Virginia would thereby avert the cyclical theory of governmental decline. He drew a roseate picture of a classless society where virtually everyone owned a little land, thanks to the laws providing for equal division of estates and the abolition of primogeniture and entail, for which his old patron Jefferson was primarily responsible.[76] As Monroe explained:

> Here we see none of those causes which overthrew the ancient Republics. The bases of our society are different from theirs. Our interests are more combined. The mass of the people are more connected with each other. Here are no great divisions of rich and poor existing distinct from each other, and engaged in perpetual conflicts. For these reasons, I should like to see the Right of Suffrage connected with the soil, but to an extent as moderate as circumstances will admit.[77]

Monroe's hopes for community thus hinged on the preservation of a middle-class farmer's republic in which no individual was too poor or too rich to wish to overthrow the existing republican order. This ideal was growing increasingly unreal as the nation's wealth, rural and urban, became concentrated in fewer hands. But it still retained some reality as Monroe spoke.[78] However, there were delegates like Edward Campbell, a reformer who represented several western counties near the Ohio River (Brooke, Preston, Ohio, Tyler, and Monongalia), who deplored Monroe's bland assumption that everyone should be expected to work to acquire land as a prerequisite for the vote. Stressing that Virginia's suffrage was among the most restricted in the Union, Campbell "referred to the fact that in twelve States...

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nothing more is required of a voter than residence and the payment of taxes." Despite Monroe's emphasis on ancient Athens' decline from democracy into dictatorship, Campbell noted that, lacking the foresight to impose a taxpaying qualification, the city-state had adopted universal manhood suffrage,"and therefore their downfall was no warning against" taxpayer suffrage. Irate at Monroe's insistence on restricting the vote to landholders, Campbell, a supporter of the taxpayer franchise, concluded: "As to the case of procuring a freehold, no man with due respect to himself and his rights, would stoop to purchase what he had a right to demand."[79] Thus, in contrast to Monroe, Campbell abandoned a somewhat elitist Lockean "natural rights" theory for a stance of "equal rights" for all white men.[80]

Monroe had spoken in support of amendments proposed by Robert Stanard, a delegate from Spotsylvania County, part of the western Piedmont that often sympathized with western demands for reform. Stanard's recommendation to grant the vote to all those who paid taxes on real or personal property was more liberal than either the existing laws or the proposals of Tidewater delegate Benjamin Watkins Leigh, whose amendment restricted suffrage to freeholders, lifetime leaseholders (lessees), and tenants in common. Although Monroe, Madison, and Marshall voted for Stanard's amendment, it was rejected, 41 votes to 44.[81] However, Leigh's amendment was also defeated, 37 to 51. Revealing that his desire to attain harmony within the convention superseded his devotion to substantive suffrage extension, Monroe supported Leigh's amendment, while Marshall and Madison, ostensibly more radical, rejected it.[82]

On the other hand, the Chief Justice was ardently pro-slavery at the Convention. While

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Madison and Monroe favored counting only whites in determining county representation for the lower house, Marshall proposed to count slaves as three-fifths of a person in the apportionment of both legislative houses ("federal numbers"), as the U. S. Constitution of 1787 provided.[83] This would guarantee the east perpetual political power.

Although in his quest for consensus Monroe finally voted for Leigh's amendment, his switch was not appreciated by Mr. Leigh, a Richmond lawyer, who, along with Giles, represented Chesterfield County in the "Southside" Piedmont district. Leigh argued that property holders alone should possess the vote, since they were likely to be more virtuous than non-property holders. Disparaging lower-class citizens as "rabble" and "vagabonds," Leigh predicted, "You will be almost sure to find, among those without property, no industry and no economy, and if you then look to those who exhibit the greatest degree of vice, you will find them to consist" of the landless as well. Denouncing a proposal by moderate John R. Cooke of Frederick County to permit propertyless taxpayers to vote, Leigh condemned Monroe, whom, he charged, advocated the abolition of the "landed qualification" for the franchise. "This very morning, I heard the venerable gentleman from Loudoun (Mr. Monroe) insist on connecting that [voting] privilege with the soil, and I then saw him vote in favour of a proposition of the gentleman from Spottsylvania [Robert Stanard], the object of which was to dispense with all landed qualification whatever," he declared. "After this I can hope for nothing more; far less, can I expect that my shoulders will be broad enough to sustain the weight of such a cause." Histrionically pretending to have abandoned the debate, Leigh concluded by insisting that any hard-working man could gain the wherewithal to purchase sufficient land to acquire the

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right to vote under either the 1776 constitution or the more modest landholding proposals of the convention.[84]

While Monroe indignantly insisted that Leigh misunderstood him, at the same time he sought to conciliate the conservative leader. He assured the delegates that he sincerely favored a landholding suffrage. "I am for adhering to an interest in the territory," he pointed out. "I am for providing some tie which shall connect the voter with the soil." His interpretation of Stanard's proposal was that individuals who had paid a modicum of taxes would be eligible to vote. Elaborating on his opinion, he then stated that he had assumed that the requisite tax would be sufficiently high that it could pertain only to resident holders of real property. "My idea was that, if he was taxed, he must of course be a resident," Monroe argued, "and if taxed to the extent which I expected, (and it was my view that the tax should be made to exceed the value of a freehold or a lease), it would enjoin upon him an obligation to purchase or lease real property." Proclaiming his dedication to restricting the suffrage to landholders, Monroe emphasized: "I had no idea of abandoning a hold upon the land, not in the least." And he continued:

> It was my purpose to take a deliberate view of the proposition as it should appear in its last stage, and then to vote for or against it as my best judgment should dictate. I never meant to abandon some hold upon the land, but to give security by it to our system of Government. I am for giving permanence, if possible, to a system of self-government.[85]

In attempting to appease conservatives, Monroe's rhetoric mimicked the most rabid Federalist anti-egalitarian. He warned that there was no "security" if the vote was bestowed on "transients" and that a "hold upon the land" was the only guarantor of self-government. He

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gratuitously declared that he was skeptical that even the British, who were then engaged in a peaceful revolution for suffrage extension culminating in the Reform Bill of 1832, were capable of democracy. Sounding a pessimistic note, Monroe warned, "you go afloat, the moment you put the Right of Suffrage in the hands of a transient population. You can have no security." "Go to Great Britain, I name that country because its history and condition are best known to us," he told his listeners, as if to reassure them he did not intend to praise the old French revolutionary regime but to concentrate his attention on a conservative constitutional monarchy. Exaggerating in a manner befitting the old extreme Hamiltonians, Monroe said that if Great Britain's government was in the "hands of the people, they would immediately behead the King and cut off the heads of the Nobility; and throw every thing into confusion." He explained, "the reason is, they are incompetent to self-government." If even the doughty British could not be trusted to govern themselves, Americans, ostensibly the only people suited for representative democracy, ought to be especially cautious not to overextend *their* capacities.[86]

Seeking to reassure his audience that the American people were exempt from this dire fate, he insisted, "we are competent. We are altogether in a different situation." Though their "history and condition" were similar to England's, he said: "The general diffusion of knowledge among our people inspires me with the strongest confidence in the success of our system." Though praising American uniqueness and the high level of public education, Monroe ended with a warning: "Let us be on our guard as to the exercise of the Right of Suffrage, on which the sovereignty rests, which is in the people."[87] For Monroe, if sovereignty rested in "the people," they were only some of the people--the rich and the middle class. He also favored the people

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placing all their confidence in their representatives.

Monroe was if anything too satisfied with relying on the people's representatives for deciding their future. "All the officers of the Government, though many of them are not elected immediately by the people, are their Representatives, since they derive their appointments from the people, by the agency of those whom the people do elect," he asserted. Obviously Monroe was referring to the legislature's election of such state officials as the governor and the judges. This was representative democracy once removed. He reiterated, "My object is to connect the Right of Suffrage with the territory."[88] Monroe's ideology seemed to have reached the apex of conservatism. Not only did he insist that only landholders vote, he was willing to regard the legislature's creatures as "democratic" representatives of the people. Apparently his speech had the desired effect. Leigh may not have been totally convinced of Monroe's sincerity, but, rendering lip service to the president's efforts, he assured the delegates "of his personal regard and respect for Mr. Monroe, and expressed his satisfaction that he still adhered to a landed qualification for voters."[89] Perhaps Leigh hoped by such blandishments to recruit Monroe more firmly to the conservative cause.

Leigh denounced an amendment offered by John R. Cooke, Frederick County's representative, to enfranchise personal property holders in towns like Richmond and Petersburg, and merchants and manufacturers connected with Northern businessmen. A member of the legislative committee, Cooke sought to reform Virginia's suffrage and apportionment practices. Although Dickson Bruce calls him a "weak reformer," he sided with the conservative faction on fewer than one-quarter of the votes. While propounding moderate

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residence and taxpaying requirements for voting, Cooke employed radical rhetoric.[90]

Leigh warned that extension of the suffrage would enfranchise those who might collude with northern abolitionists and overthrow the South's system of slavery, men "who had not only no common interest with the people of Virginia, but an interest directly hostile to theirs." Appalled at Cooke's idea of allowing all state, county, or corporation taxpayers to vote, which he claimed would permit the dregs of society in town and country access to the suffrage, Leigh directly connected slaveholders' interests with denial of the vote to those he assumed were alien to the South's true identity, "persons like some in Richmond and Petersburg, who were the mere factors for the manufacturing houses of the North, and who had not only no common interest with the people of Virginia, but an interest directly hostile to theirs." Not only would manufacturers who favored high tariffs and abolitionists wishing to extirpate slavery be enfranchised by Cooke's amendment, Leigh charged, but men who lacked independent wills, the classical republican's traditional bête-noire, would also gain the privilege: "It would admit every man who owns a horse: and there were numbers in his own county who owned nothing else, living by charity on the lands of others and wholly devoted to their will in every thing that was not directly dishonest." Leigh made his point the same way Gouverneur Morris had done at the Constitutional Convention over forty years before, when, proposing that only freeholders be allowed to vote in federal elections, he said: "Give the votes to people who have no property, and they will sell them to the rich who will be able to buy them." Dreading large-scale suffrage expansion, and envisioning a desertion of southern artisans and manufacturers to antislavery northern businessmen, he predicted, "All these would give the votes not of

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themselves, but of their benefactors."[91]

Edward Campbell joined Leigh in assailing Monroe's position in support of freehold suffrage, but unlike the easterner he found the ex-president insufficiently democratic. Springing to Monroe's defense, his Loudoun County comrade, Congressman Charles Fenton Mercer, who favored increased representation for the west despite his Federalist background, said "he did not believe, that his venerable friend and colleague (Mr. Monroe), intended to exclude house-keepers, who have an interest in the soil."[92] There seemed to be a war between the factions to ascertain where Monroe's commitments rested.

The suffrage question was resolved partly as a result of the impasse over representation. Though a compromise was reached without the complex maneuvering that occurred on that more volatile issue, it was sticky enough. Suffrage was discussed by the legislative committee. On October 12, 1829, the convention's first day, Philip Doddridge of northwest Virginia's Brooke County had proposed suffrage for all county taxpayers. A day later, however, Cooke made a more significant proposal. Like Doddridge, he proposed residency and taxpaying requirements, but made explicit what was by then a permanent part of the reform cause by tacking on the first sentence of Virginia's declaration of rights, that suffrage should be expanded because "all men are by nature equally free and independent."[93]

As chairman of the convention's legislative committee, James Madison guided through the "white basis" for the apportionment of the House of Delegates, and by a tie vote denied the white basis for the Senate, retaining value of property as a consideration. Madison was the guiding force in this development. But Monroe agreed with his stance. In a speech in 1853,

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convention historian Hugh Blair Grigsby reported their position was considered "treason to the east."[94] The eastern delegates rejected Madison's compromise, even though it would have produced an 89 to 27 House majority for the area east of the Alleghenies. Both sides spewed out menacing talk of splitting Virginia into two states. Pressed to side with the east, Madison surrendered to their position that the three-fifths quota for slaves should be used to determine representation for the upper house. Madison, Marshall, and Monroe defeated the "white basis" for the state senate, allowing three-fifths of the slaves to be counted there. With regard to suffrage extension, Madison, despite his prediction that inevitably the United States' population would explode with non-property holders, said that if the suffrage were not broadened, the government in the future would have to rest on military force. The twenty-four man legislative committee, chaired by Madison, voted to extend voting rights to all twenty thousand householders and heads of families who paid taxes.[95]

A representative from Frederick County in the Shenandoah Valley, John R. Cooke sought to revise suffrage and apportionment practices. Conservative forces relied on the swing votes of nine men in a crisis. These voted conservatively from one-half to three-quarters of the time: James Madison, who represented Albemarle and Orange counties; the Eastern Shore representatives Thomas Joynes, Thomas Bayly, and Abel P. Upshur; Jeffersonian William Fitzhugh Gordon; physician Thomas Massie, Jr.; Chapman Johnson, Joseph Martin, and John B. Clopton.[96] Despite being something of a "weak reformer," Cooke would side with conservatives on fewer than one-quarter of the votes. The legislative committee, which decided the controversial issues of suffrage and apportionment, included B.W. Leigh, John Randolph,

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and Philip Doddridge, along with Madison, Charles F. Mercer, Cooke, and Chapman Johnson. Four members of the committee were from the West, nine from the East; six from the Piedmont and five from the Valley. Unsurprisingly, the committee had great difficulty agreeing on anything.[97]

The convention agreed on the new legislative apportionment before it decided on suffrage qualifications. Moderates of Monroe's ilk played a decisive role in the outcome. Since reformers were unable to secure their objective of county apportionment in the lower house based on current white population alone--as Monroe had favored--and conservatives lacked the numbers to retain the status quo, Alison Freehling points out, "The balance of power rested with those western Piedmont moderates who, like James Monroe, favored the white basis in the house, but not in the senate."[98] A conservative piedmont member, John W. Green, proposed to apportion the lower house on a compound basis of population and taxation, similarly to Leigh's proposal in the legislative committee. Philip Doddridge, a member of the legislative committee, presented the demand reformers had long made to base legislative apportionment in both houses on white population alone.[99]

Loudoun delegate Monroe was among the leaders of the western Piedmont moderates who favored the "white basis" for the House, but not for the Senate. The first significant compromise proposal was undertaken by former Governor James Pleasants, who proposed to allocate both houses according to 1830 white population, while adding three-fifths of the slave population to the senate's apportionment, with provision for periodic reapportionment. Conservatives gravitated toward Piedmont representative William Fitzhugh Gordon's

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inequitable plan to base both house and senate strictly on 1820 white population, devoid of a plan for future reapportionment. While Pleasants' plan bestowed 32 votes on the Tidewater, 40 to the Piedmont, 26 to the Shenandoah Valley, and 36 to the Trans-Allegheny West in a 134-member house, Gordon's plan would give the Tidewater thirty-six, the Piedmont forty-two, the Valley twenty-five, and the Trans-Allegheny thirty-one, thus depriving the West of votes. If delegates agreed to use up-to-date white population as an ongoing basis of apportionment, western representation would benefit most.[100]

Appalled by Gordon's failure to provide for future reapportionment of political power, Western members deplored his plan's evident intention to give both houses of the legislature a permanent Eastern majority irrespective of future demographic changes. Fixed apportionment would especially hinder Virginia's rapidly growing Trans-Allegheny, where whites already comprised 26.5 percent of the state's 1830 white numbers, yet under Gordon's plan would retain only 23.1 percent of house membership. On the other hand, tidewater leader John Randolph of Roanoke refused to adopt a "white-basis" house, even if it were based on 1820 population. He feared that a legislature in which westerners held the balance of power would inevitably abolish slavery. Philip Doddridge demanded a white-basis house with periodic reapportionment to reflect population change, and would accept a "federal numbers" (three-fifths clause) senate on the same basis. He threatened to abandon the convention if it ignored his proposition.[101]

Gordon's plan gained victory when three delegates from the Albemarle-Amherst-Goochland district switched from reformism (a "white-basis" house with periodic

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reapportionment) to adopt his proposal. They upheld a legislature permanently fixed on the basis of 1820 white population. As a result of this defection, the convention rejected, by a vote of 50 to 46, a white-basis house and approved, by the same margin, apportionment of both houses on the basis of the 1820 (white) census.[102]

Reformers were even more disheartened when delegates rejected Doddridge's proposal for periodic legislative reapportionment at twenty year intervals after 1841, with the house based on white population, the senate on "federal numbers." By a tie 48-48 vote, delegates denied the periodic review formula; representation would henceforth be frozen at the unfair, already outdated 1820 figures. Western Virginia's political peonage was thus indefinitely assured. Trans-Allegheny reformers' efforts were doomed once and for all on January 12, 1830, when the convention rejected an automatic legislative reapportionment to take place every twenty years. The convention then ratified James Madison's spurious plan, whereby, if two-thirds of both houses approved, future reapportionment could be considered. Reformers grumbled, painfully aware that two-thirds of both houses of a legislature dominated by the East would never consent to a reapportionment that would diminish eastern power in favor of the West.[103]

The new constitution's final suffrage provisions rejected both the freehold basis and universal white manhood suffrage. The compromise enfranchised existing freeholders as well as adult white males owning lands or lots worth twenty-five dollars, or leasing land at a twenty-dollar annual rent for five years or more, who were taxpaying, housekeeping heads of families. The percentage of white adult males eligible to vote thereby increased from 56.6 percent to

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66.9 percent of the state's taxpaying adult white males, but it was only 55.4 percent of all adult white males.[104] The denouement took place in January 1830, several weeks after Monroe had left the convention. But he did participate in the debates over the election of the governor before his departure on account of ill health.

Unlike Jefferson, whose Notes on Virginia nearly fifty years earlier had warned that the concentration of all powers in the legislature constituted "elective despotism," Monroe, to the chagrin of reformers and his friend Madison, announced that he favored the governor's continued election by the legislature, not directly by the voters. Indeed, he considered "the question as very important: inferior it is true to some which have come before us; but involving in a high degree the fate of the Republic" and "the success of our system of Government." While he rhetorically praised the venerable doctrine of separation of powers, in effect Monroe endorsed its violation by supporting the governor's election by the general assembly. He acknowledged that legislative supremacy was "founded on the idea, that you thereby concentrate all the powers of Government in that body, uniting in one branch, not only the Legislative power, but a control over the other two branches, and thus bringing all the three in effect into one." He sought to condone his ostensible support of fledgling legislative tyranny by claiming that monarchy or excessive executive power was more dangerous to liberty. At the outset he admitted that if one branch of government dominated the other two-- as was the case with legislative choice of the executive and judiciary-- "that the unqualified concurrence of the three great powers of Government in one body, especially if in one person, gives it the character of a despotism." Stressing his populistic fear of "one person," Monroe made clear

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that he would never exchange an elective president or state governor for a king, warning: "If these powers meet in a monarch who is hereditary, and responsible to nobody, that monarch is a despot, and the people are his slaves."[105] Monroe's vigorous rhetoric made clear that, although he had espoused a strong executive power as president and even at the 1788 ratifying convention, he respected the separation of powers between the president (monarch?) and the other branches of government. At the state level he seemed inclined to retain legislative primacy.

Perhaps detecting disapproving murmurs among the conservative eastern delegates at his preference for a weak governor, Monroe assured the delegates he preferred a strong executive to an unrestrained democracy. He stated he theoretically preferred absolute monarchy to direct democracy of the type that existed in ancient Athens, where the people had literally ruled *en masse*. "If these three powers [legislative, executive, and judicial] are united in a General Assembly of the people, as in the ancient Republics, though the Government is not despotic, yet the consequences are equally fatal and even worse, than in the other case [of monarchy]," he concluded. "All things are soon thrown into confusion; there is no security for property or any thing else." In accordance with the classical theory of governmental degeneration, anarchy led to the demagogic rule of one man, in which, "life itself is not safe. Some popular leader gets the control, and soon makes himself a despot." He concluded by declaring he would not lend his approval to either absolute monarchy or absolute democracy: "In either of these instances, the concurrence of the three powers produces a despotism."[106] Thus, one tyranny led inevitably to another: a dictatorial legislature, like an absolute monarchy,

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would eventually succumb to the oppression of one man. The best solution, Monroe said, was the one Virginians had employed for hundreds of years: republican representation.

Acutely aware that the cyclical theory of history expounded by Plato and Aristotle portended doom and dictatorship for all nations, including the U. S., Monroe eagerly displayed his fidelity to representative democracy, which he and Jefferson alike regarded as America's unique contribution to the science of government. Unlike the dreaded alternatives of absolute monarchy and legislative tyranny, popularly elected legislatures would always be reined in by the voters (at least according to President Monroe). "As soon as you pass the power from the people to their Representatives, the matter is changed," he tersely remarked. "The people control all their movements. The people have a complete check upon them, if they are only true to themselves, intelligent and virtuous."[107] If restricted to the supervision of their employees (i.e., representatives), Monroe argued, the people, by living moderately and uprightly, would do a far better job than if literally entrusted with self-government. He thus expounded the traditional republican creed, one that both Federalists and Republicans alike could endorse. In a way, he was reechoing Jefferson's dictum from the First Inaugural, "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists."

Recapitulating Madison's argument at the outset of Federalist #10, Monroe observed that a legislature with unlimited power was "liable to abuse" it. But a legislature--even a unicameral legislature, Monroe said--would at least help check the tumults ensuing from direct democracy. Reiterating doctrines in favor of "mixed government" and division of powers expounded by Harrington, Bolingbroke, and Montesquieu, he advocated a complete separation

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of powers between executive, judiciary and legislative branches. At the same time, he was inclined to give the legislature the power to appoint the other branches, thus revealing that, in his old age, he trusted it rather than the executive to embody the people's will:

> But if there be a regular Constitution, and the three branches of Government be separated, and a limit is prescribed to the Legislative branch, and its power clearly defined; and, if in a like manner, limits are set to the Executive Department and its power is also defined; and the same with respect to the Judiciary; the powers of all being distinct and clearly defined; although the election of a Governor (for I now confine myself to that) be by the General Assembly, it cannot be said that the three powers are concentrated together in that body.[108]

Thus Monroe thought that, even more than the branches' separation in terms of electoral constituency, the delimitation and definition of their powers determined their freedom from domination by their counterparts.

Regarding the people's power to discontinue remiss legislators as a vital check on the legislature's authority, Monroe thought that the separation of powers among legislative, executive, and judicial departments would sufficiently restrain an omnipotent legislature. Even if the governor continued to be chosen by the legislature, "common sense itself is a sure barrier" to the legislature's usurping executive powers. "The difference of their duties, that of the one being to make the laws, and that of the other to execute them, is so marked and obvious that they cannot be mistaken," he counseled. Sounding surprisingly like Madison during the Constitutional debates of 1787-1788 and like Jefferson in Notes on Virginia, Monroe admitted that the strongest branch of government and the one most likely to arrogate excessive powers was also the most popular--the legislature. "The danger is in the Legislative branch," he said.

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Still, he believed that vigilant executive and judicial branches would adequately restrict the legislature.[109]

In matters of both state and national government, Monroe supported a powerful judiciary, certainly to a greater extent than Jefferson, who grew increasingly localist and suspicious of judicial authority. John Marshall's greatest judicial decisions--McCulloch vs. Maryland, Cohens vs. Virginia, Dartmouth College vs. Woodward, Gibbons vs. Ogden--took place during Monroe's presidency, and he voiced no opposition to them. Indeed, both Marshall and Nicholas Biddle, who became president of the Bank of the United States during Monroe's presidency and was known for his nationalist views, were on friendly terms with Monroe. Thus it should not be surprising that at the state convention he assured his audience that the judiciary could be relied on to protect the people's rights and abstain from interfering with the legislative and executive. "The duties of the Judiciary are still more distinct, and its limits more clearly and more easily defined," he asserted. "It is the Executive and Legislative powers, if any, which are likely to interfere." Eschewing advocacy of the popular election of judges, which Jefferson had been proposing, Monroe adhered to the traditional view: "The Judiciary will be independent, if they hold their offices during good behaviour. They ought to be maintained so, and should have power to declare any law which is contrary to the Constitution."[110] Thus Monroe's last significant governmental deliberations were marked by adherence to a cautious conservatism.

Reverting to the Founding Fathers' ideas of representative democracy, Monroe felt uneasy with the burgeoning Jacksonian polity that sprung up in his last years. Reiterating the

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views he had expounded at the state ratifying convention forty years earlier, he warned that self-interested legislators might be expected to try to cajole the executive. Now, however, he incongruously supported the choice of the executive by the legislature rather than by popular vote. Sounding a lot like Montesquieu or John Adams, he warned of the legislature's propensity to corrupt the executive:

> The success of our system of Government depends upon its organization, on the distribution of power between the different branches, and on keeping each branch independent of the others. Power I know may be abused: that the Legislature may influence the Governor, I cannot doubt. A leading man in the Legislature who can contribute greatly to his [the governor's] re-election is likely to have some weight with him; and that he may turn that weight to his own account in an improper manner, is probable. It is incident to the frailty of human nature.[111]

Like the American Revolutionaries, Monroe refused to ascribe virtue a priori to the political elite or the socially prominent portion of the "natural aristocracy." The rich and the poor, legislature and executive, politicians and their constituents, were equally liable to dishonesty and self-serving behavior.[112] "It is incident to the frailty of human nature," he said. Incompatibly with his opposition to the governor's election by the people, he told the convention that the latter were the true source of governmental responsibility and correction--that the people's decency, uprightness, interest in public affairs, and accessibility to public information, were the crucial desiderata, rather than their governors' wisdom and prudence. (The Federalist opposition and conservatives over time had always had it the other way around).[113] "The check is in the intelligence of the people, and in the circulation by the press of the proceedings of public bodies," he argued. "The people are the great check upon all."[114]

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Yet Monroe thought the people were not intelligent enough to choose the governor, or "chief Magistrate," as he called him. Though he vaunted the voters' ability to absorb political information sufficient to survey the proceedings of the diverse governmental branches, as far as electing the governor, he self-contradictorily observed, "from their situation, they can hardly ever be acquainted with the real merits of the candidates. They cannot confer together to any great extent; they can hold no general meeting where the matter may be discussed, nor can they get impartial information."[115]

Over the years, Monroe had become pessimistic about the people's ability to elect their officials. Perhaps the rise of the Second Party System and its more ribald appeal to popular passions--"Jacksonian Democracy," as we call it today--caused him to think twice about popular ingenuousness. There is little direct evidence on his opinion of the raucous campaigning techniques that came into being with the presidential elections of 1824 and especially 1828, except that he and Madison wanted no part of them.[116]

At this point, he thought party nominations excessively dominated by "great caucusses," which manipulated the voters. The governor would feel responsible for his election to the politicians who ran the caucus rather than to the people. He would regard it as his duty to further the interest of his benefactors, which, in Monroe's opinion, would make the office the tool of the most powerful faction. Personalities and particularistic issues, not the public good, would make policy. "Thus the country is divided into two parties on the worst and most dangerous of principles," he lamented. Anticipating that the governor and his partisans would be loyal to each other; Monroe regarded this as tantamount to honesty among thieves. He said:

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> Such is human nature, and such are the passions of men, as proved by their conduct in all Governments in all ages, and on which I found these remarks. By this means the independence of the people is weakened.

Adopting the Antifederalist rationale, Monroe argued that, since the people could easily monitor the activities of local notables, they were capable of electing congressmen, state senators, and legislators. "They can perform their duty with perfect success," he said. "They have a personal knowledge of the men, and will choose those best qualified for the trust, and no consequence will follow that can operate to the injury of the State at large."[117] Seeking to reduce the governor's power, he thought his independence could be guaranteed by restricting him to a single term in office. If the term remained one year, as it was under the 1776 Constitution, the governor would hardly be able to implement any programs. But Monroe was more concerned about making a governor elected by the legislature "independent" of legislative factions: "He serves his one term and retires. No selfish motives can operate upon him." As was his custom, Monroe turned to ancient history for examples of how popularly elected executives betrayed their trust.

Pointing to Roman consuls like Marius and Sulla, Pompey and Caesar for proof that, "the more you connect the people with the Executive, and the greater you make his power, the greater is the danger to Republican Government," Monroe argued that popular election of statewide --and possibly nationwide-- officials incited factional conflict (although he did not at this time consider the central government). "The Republic was broken into parties; their contentions were pushed to extremes, and ruin was the consequence," he said. His confidence

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in the people seemed to have evaporated; he feared they were not qualified to exercise more than a modicum of sovereignty. "Self-government depends for its success, on keeping the people in a state of calmness," he declared, in Burkean tones. "The less you give them to do in exercising their elective privilege, the safer they will be." While the people could discerningly elect government officials close to home, like district representatives in Congress and legislators and senators from their counties, "embark them in the election of a Chief Magistrate," Monroe warned, "and you agitate at once the whole State, from which I dread unfavorable consequences." This was a far cry from Monroe's opinion at the state ratifying convention in 1788, when he advocated popular election of the president of the United States. Now he consoled himself with the idea that legislative elections, presided over by the people, were the only really important ones anyway: "The whole system turns upon the election of the Representatives to the Legislature, and to which they are fully competent."[118]

Expounding ideas that would have embarrassed him in the 1790s, Monroe wished to "confine the people" to electing their local representatives, which "will sustain their dignity." He thought it was important that they observe the rough-and-tumble of electioneering. This would "enlighten" them about the views of competing candidates, "whose mutual rivalry will expose their errors to public view." This was a strange volte-face on Monroe's part. Indeed, he went so far as to acclaim partisan campaigning's indispensability to the success of representative government: "It is on this that the security of the whole system turns." Seeking to justify legislative selection of the governor, Monroe explicitly installed the assembly as surrogates for the people. This was a highly undemocratic position if one thought about it:

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> My opinion is, that the Legislature supplies the place of the people as a Representative body: they occupy that ground which the people themselves would occupy. If the Legislature has the power of impeachment, and the Senate power to try the persons impeached, they will watch over every other branch of the Government and keep it in order.

Suddenly, Monroe had changed his stance from advocacy of separation of powers to an endorsement of legislative supremacy. This had been an Antifederalist credo. The legislature should be empowered to "watch over every other branch of the Government," he was certain. With the representatives arrogating all the sovereignty of the represented, what Monroe was suggesting was tantamount to the "tyranny of the legislature" that he and Madison had long feared, and which Alexis de Tocqueville denounced in Democracy in America a few years later. The dogma had never been expounded so bluntly as Monroe put it in his final public address: "It is my opinion, that through the Legislature, as occupying the place of the people, the whole movement will be controlled, and every branch made subservient to their will. This is my view."[119]

He remained loyal to his vision. He and Marshall voted against the governor's election by the people, while Madison voted for it. Monroe's side prevailed.[120] In contrast to his position at the state ratifying convention many years earlier, when he insisted on popular election of the president of the United States, Monroe, wishing to curb the intrastate sectional conflict, thought it prudent to retain the less democratic mode of legislative selection.

Conservative delegate William Brodnax of the district composed of Brunswick, Dinwiddie, Lunenburg and Mecklenburg counties in the slaveholding Piedmont, sought

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decentralization of the executive power. He proposed to strengthen the institution of the privy council (council of state), chosen by both houses of the Assembly either from their own members or the people at large . This extreme idea, which apparently eliminated the governor, was vetoed but Monroe and Marshall voted for it, with Madison in opposition. Perhaps Monroe thought that a weakened executive power might be less likely to aggravate the state's sectional tensions. Perhaps he believed that administration by a six-member privy council, like Calhoun's later idea of the "concurrent majority," would blunt sectional confrontations and preserve the state's unity. Similarly, there was a negative outcome on an earlier roll call creating a privy council and governor, chosen by the general assembly, to jointly administer the state. In a strange alliance, Monroe joined the conservative states-righter Giles and the Nationalist titan Marshall in favor, while the centrist Madison was opposed.[121]

At issue was the abolition of the Privy Council (also known as the Council of State). Instead of the 1776 constitution's eight members, Philip Norborne Nicholas, representing Charles City and Richmond, proposed a four-member Privy Council with a four-year term, and the creation of a new office, lieutenant governor. Nicholas objected to abolishing the Council, but he wanted to increase the governor's power by allotting him the casting vote when the Council was equally divided, something the executive lacked under the original constitution.On the other hand, Nicholas advocated the office of a Lieutenant Governor, elected by the general assembly, to act as governor during emergencies.[122] Yet this would be more likely to strengthen the Executive than continuing the Council's hegemony.

. While Nicholas stressed the importance of giving the governor a deciding vote in

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case of a tie in the Council, by contrast William B. Giles, the current governor, preferred to retain the frail executive power existing under the 1776 Constitution. Crippled and on the brink of senility, Giles was confused about the provisions of the 1776 Constitution, which he claimed provided a lieutenant governor. He decried any revision in the executive power. "Some wished to assimilate the Executive of this State, to that of the United States, which he viewed as neither more nor less than a limited monarch," he declared, recurring to rhetoric of the 1790s.[123]

An intrinsic part of the controversy over increasing the governor's power was whether the privy council's role should be enhanced or diminished. A dispute arose over reducing the Council to four members from the current eight. Monroe and Marshall, who favored a stronger executive, were abruptly joined by Giles. They voted for Nicholas's amendment to reduce the Privy Council from eight to four members and to create an office of lieutenant governor and a governor with a tie-breaking vote. Thus, at the last minute, Giles had decided the governor's powers should be increased, which seems logical, since he was the presiding governor. Perhaps his speech against a strengthened executive was merely political bravado. Strangely, the old centralizer Madison opposed Nicholas's amendment. It was defeated.[124]

A few radical democratic members, mostly from the west, wished to abolish the Privy Council altogether. Benjamin Watkins Leigh, the conservative leader, was aghast at such an idea. Rather, he insisted that the Council should be retained and strengthened, and the governor must be forced to take its advice. McCoy, a western delegate, proposed to substitute the newly created office of lieutenant governor for the privy council. By contrast,

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Leigh, regarding the council as equivalent to a "plural Executive," ranked it among the best features of the 1776 Constitution. John Randolph, the "Old Republican" hero, insisted that the existing constitution was nearly perfect. He agreed with Leigh that a weak governor controlled by the Privy Council was preferable. "If you change the existing form of your Executive, your Governor may come to the most important decisions at the most unguarded moments," he warned. "Publicity is the guardian of virtue," Randolph pointed out, reversing the customary logic of Monroe and other republican statesmen that a single responsible executive would receive the most publicity and the greatest public scrutiny. "Publicity is the guardian of virtue. He [the governor] cannot now decide in secret, where no eye is upon him but that eye [God?] which we are all too apt to forget. It is in privacy that the deepest and most damning crimes are perpetrated." In other words, Randolph thought, with the Council to hound him and observe his every move, the governor was less likely to make selfish decisions or arrogate powers.[125] Perhaps convinced by Randolph's arguments, Monroe and Marshall voted in favor of Brodnax's proposal to retain the Privy Council, while Madison opposed it. Brodnax's amendment was defeated, while a motion to abolish the Privy Council by William H. Fitzhugh, who was, like Monroe, one of the representatives from Loudoun/Fairfax district, gained passage. Madison voted for Fitzhugh's motion, while Monroe opposed it.[126]

In early December 1829, when the state assembly convened in Richmond, the convention was forced to leave the capital building and move to the First Baptist Church. Too ill to continue in attendance, Monroe left for Loudoun County a few days later. He was replaced by Philip P. Barbour, a states' rights Republican. His service thus ended after only

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two months.[127]

At the 1829 convention Monroe had revealed an antipopulist streak that set him at variance with the most democratic impulses of the times, including that of his own Loudoun district, which wanted democratic suffrage and equitable representation for the west in both houses. He preferred the legislative election of the governor rather than popular election. In order to fulfill society's ideal of him as a legendary democratic statesman, Monroe somewhat deviously pretended that it was ultra-democratic for the (unrepresentative) legislature to appoint the governor. He then qualified his position, admitting that he was not that democratic after all, since he theoretically preferred monarchy rather than direct popular rule. In any case, Monroe concluded, both paths--monarchy and extremist democracy--led to despotism and one-man dictatorship. In the meantime, he had blurred the real issue--his opposition to increased popular rule and popular election of the governor--and, like classical republicans and Federalists, urged the people to give their legislators greater authority to act for them and choose their leaders. He had switched from advocacy of a one-party state to urge utilization of the two-party system--on its face a radical democratic innovation--as an instrument of conservative control by which to enforce legislative supremacy, reduce direct popular participation in government, and blunt sectional and partisan divisions within his state.

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CHAPTER 12: NOTES

1. On the sale of Highland, see Ammon, Monroe, 556-57. and Gawalt, "Presidential Planter," 260.

2. Alison Goodyear Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832 (Baton Rouge, 1982), 37.

3. Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 221-22.

4. Ibid., 223.

5. Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 228-29. For an example of an historian who glorifies Randolph's "antislavery" temperament while discrediting Jefferson as a racist slave driver, see Paul Finkelman, "Thomas Jefferson and Antislavery," in Peter S. Onuf, ed., Jeffersonian Legacies (Chapel Hill, 1993), 188.

6. Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage from Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton, 1960), 224-25. See also Drew McCoy, The Last of the Fathers: James Madison and the Republican Legacy (Cambridge, 1989), 249.

7. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., The Rhetoric of Conservatism: The Virginia Convention of 1829-30 and the Conservative Tradition in the South (San Marino, 1982), 32-35; Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 229.

8. The most recent full-length study elaborating this theme is Ann Fairfax Withington, Toward A More Perfect Union: Virtue and the Formation of American Republics (New York, 1991).

9. Proceedings and Debates of the Virginia State Convention of 1829-30 (Richmond, 1830), 1.

10. Ibid.

11. Ibid., 2.

12. Ibid.

13. Monroe to S. M. Edwards, April 6, 1829, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 195.

14. Charles Henry Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia, From 1776 to 1861 (1910; reprinted, New York, 1964), 144.

15. Monroe to James Madison, Oct. 4, 1829, Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel 4 (microfilm).

16. Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 218-22.

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17. Ibid., 227, 229.

18. Ibid., 229.

19. Monroe to Edwards, April 6, 1829, in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, VII, 195.

20. Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 218-22; Bruce, Rhetoric of Conservatism, 2; Alison Goodyear Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831-1832 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982), 36-48.

21. Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia, 148.

22. Ibid., 60-62.

23. Proceedings and Debates, 150.

24. Ibid.

25. Ibid., 148.

26. Ibid.

27. Ibid., 149.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid, 149. On the treatment of free blacks in the North, see Leon F. Litwack, North of Slavery: The Negro in the Free States, 1790-1860 (Chicago, 1960); James Oliver Horton, Free People of Color: Inside the African American Community (Washington, 1993); Eugene H. Berwanger, The Frontier Against Slavery: Western Anti-Negro Prejudice and the Slavery Extension Controversy (Urbana, Ill., 1967); and V. Jacque Voegeli, Free But Not Equal: The Midwest and the Negro During the Civil War (Chicago, 1967).

30. Proceedings and Debates, 148. Litwack, North of Slavery, 70-74.

31. Litwack, North of Slavery, 72-74.

32. Proceedings and Debates, 148.

33. Ibid., 149.

34. Ibid.

35. Ibid.

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36. Ibid., 150.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid.

39. Ibid., 149.

40. Robert McColley, Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia, 2d ed. (Urbana, Ill., 1973); Gerald W. Mullin, Flight and Rebellion: Slave Resistance in Eighteenth-Century Virginia (New York, 1972), 15-16.

41. Rowland Berthoff and John M. Murrin, "Feudalism, Communalism, and the Yeoman Freeholder: The American Revolution Considered as a Social Accident," in Stephen G. Kurtz and James H. Hutson, eds., Essays on the American Revolution (Chapel Hill, 1973), 256-88. On Virginia's suffrage requirements, see Charles S. Sydnor, American Revolutionaries in the Making: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia (New York, 1965), 36, and Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 38.

42. Proceedings and Debates, 151.

43. Ibid.

44. Ibid.

45. Ibid., 237.

46. Ibid., 237.

47. Ibid.

48. Ibid.

49. Ibid., 237.

50. Interesting, in the last years of his life Jefferson, while expounding states' rights dogma, supported a program of federally sponsored emancipation, with federal compensation to slaveholders after it emancipated their slaves and deported them to Haiti. Jefferson to Jared Sparks, Feb. 4, 1824, in Paul L. Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson, 10 vols. (New York, 1892-1899), X, 291, 293.

51. Proceedings and Debates, 237.

52. Irving Brant, James Madison: Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (Indianapolis, 1961), 465.

53. Proceedings and Debates, 237.

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54. Ibid., 238.

55. Ibid., 25-31; Freehling, Drift toward Dissolution, 71.

56. Ibid., 72-73. See also Chilton Williamson, American Suffrage: From Property to Democracy, 1760-1860 (Princeton, 1960), 223-35.

57. Ibid., 72.

58. Proceedings and Debates, 238. For Jefferson's lifetime support of universal white male suffrage, see Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 36-45.

59. Proceedings and Debates, 428 (speech of Saturday, Nov. 21, 1829). See Chester E. Eisinger, "The Freehold Concept in Eighteenth-Century American Letters," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 4 (Jan.1947), 42-59, and Douglas L. Wilson, "The American Agricola: Jefferson's Agrarianism and the Classical Tradition," South Atlantic Quarterly, 80 (Summer 1981), 339-354. Despite his support of universal white male suffrage, Jefferson, like Monroe, assumed that merchants were less patriotic than farmers. "Merchants have no country,"Jefferson wrote. "The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains." Jefferson to Horatio Spafford, March 17, 1817, in Edmund S. Morgan, "The Puritan Ethic and the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 24 (Jan. 1967), 10.

60. Proceedings and Debates, 428 (speech of Nov. 21, 1829).

61. Ibid., 429.

62. Ibid. On the cyclical theory of history, see Stow Persons, "The Cyclical Theory of History in Eighteenth Century America," American Quarterly, 6 (Summer 1954), 147-63, and John R. Howe, Jr., "Republican Thought and the Political Violence of the 1790s," American Quarterly, 19 (Summer 1967), 147-65.

63. Proceedings and Debates, 429.

64. Ibid.

65. Ibid.

66. Ibid., 430. See Richard L. Bushman, "'This New Man': Dependence and Independence, 1776," and Rowland Berthoff, "Independence and Attachment, Virtue and Interest: From Republican Citizen to Free Enterpriser, 1787-1837," in Richard L. Bushman et al., eds., Uprooted Americans: Essays to Honor Oscar Handlin (Boston, 1979), 79-96, 99-124; Daniel T. Rodgers, The Work Ethic in Industrial America, 1850-1920 (Chicago, 1978); and Irvin G. Wyllie, The Self-Made Man in America: The Myth of Rags to Riches (New York, 1966).

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67. Proceedings and Debates, 430. (Italics in original).

68. Proceedings and Debates, 431-32 (Speech of Nov. 23, 1829). See Rollin G. Osterweis, Romanticism and Nationalism in the Old South (New Haven, 1949), 41-81.

69. Ibid., 431-32 (Speech of Nov. 23, 1829).

70. Ibid., 432. An excellent discussion of the Republicans rosy perception of the developing American political economy and its middle-class mentalité through a "vision of classlessness" is Joyce Appleby, Capitalism and a New Social Order: The Republican Vision of the 1790s (New York, 1984).

71. Proceedings and Debates, 432.

72. On the preoccupation of both "classical republicans" and Real Whig theorists with the idea that the propertyless and the poor were untrustworthy, spineless individuals who could not be trusted with the vote and should indeed be considered outside of society--even enslaved and forced to contribute to its productivity--see Edmund S. Morgan, American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia (New York, 1975), and Jack P. Greene, All Men Are Created Equal (Oxford, 1976).

73. Proceedings and Debates, 432.

74. Proceedings and Debates, 432.

75. Ibid.

76. A recent study which emphasizes the significance of Jefferson's achievement in abolishing primogeniture and entail for promoting a more equal division of land ownership in Virginia is Holly Brewer, "Entailing Aristocracy in Colonial Virginia: 'Ancient Feudal Restraints' and Revolutionary Reform," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd ser., 54 (April 1997), 307-346.

77. Proceedings and Debates, 432.

78. Edward Pessen, Riches, Class and Power Before the Civil War (Lexington, Mass., 1973); James Oakes, The Ruling Race (New York, 1983); Daniel Vickers, "Competency and Competition: Economic Culture in Early America," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 47 (Jan. 1990), 3-29.

79. Proceedings and Debates., 440.

80. See the analysis in David M. Post, "Jeffersonian Revisions of Locke: Education, Property-Rights, and Liberty," Journal of the History of Ideas, 47 (1986), 147-57.

81. Proceedings and Debates, 428, 432. For the text of Leigh's amendment, see Proceedings and Debates, Nov. 20, 1829, 393.

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82. Ibid., 432.

83. Irving Brant, James Madison, Commander in Chief, 1812-1836 (Indianapolis, 1961), 465, describes Marshall's position.

84. Proceedings and Debates., 438 (Nov. 23, 1829); Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 49-51, 75.

85. Proceedings and Debates, 439 (Speech of Nov. 23, 1829).

86. Ibid.

87. Ibid.

88. Ibid., 439.

89. Proceedings and Debates, 440.

90. Dickson D. Bruce, Jr., The Rhetoric of Conservatism: The Virginia Convention of 1829-30 and the Conservative Tradition in the South (San Marino, Cal., 1982), 31, 35, 37, 60, 64-65.

91. Proceedings and Debates, 440. For the Gouverneur Morris quotation, see Forrest McDonald, Novus Ordo Seclorum: The Intellectual Origins of the Constitution (Lawrence, Kans., 1985), 238-39.

92. Proceedings and Debates, 442. See also Egerton, Mercer, 230-31.

93. Bruce, Rhetoric of Conservatism, 64-65.

94. Irving Brant, James Madison: Commander-in-Chief, 1812-1836 (Indianapolis, 1961), 463.

95.Ibid.

96. Bruce, Rhetoric of Conservatism, 31.

97. Ibid., 35, 37.

98. Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 66.

99. Bruce, Rhetoric of Conservatism, 60.

100. Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 66-68.

101. Ibid., 68-69.

102. Ibid., 69.

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103. Ibid., 69-70.

104. Freehling, Drift Toward Dissolution, 76.

105. Proceedings and Debates, 481 (Nov. 27, 1829); Ammon, Monroe, 566.

106. Ibid.

107. Ibid.

108. Ibid., 481.

109. Ibid.

110. Ibid. For Jefferson's advocacy of the popular election of juries in "ward republics," see Jefferson to John Adams, Oct. 28, 1813, in Lipscomb and Bergh, eds., Writings of Jefferson, XIII, 400, and Dumas Malone, Jefferson and the Ordeal of Liberty (Boston, 1962), 398-99. As measures to curtail the Supreme Court's power, Jefferson proposed to entrust both houses of Congress with reconfirming their appointment every six years. He also wanted to make the publication of each justice's opinion mandatory, so that Congress and the public would be aware of their "character" and whether they supported unconstitutional acts. He hoped Congress would pass a joint resolution denouncing Marshall's decision in Cohens vs. Virginia (1821) as an unconstitutional invasion of state's rights. Jefferson to James Pleasants, Dec. 26, 1821, in Paul L. Ford, ed., The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (10 vols., New York, 1892-1899), X, 197-200.

111. Ibid.

112. On the prevailing mentality of enlightened self-interest among the "middling classes" during the Revolutionary and Confederation periods, see Joyce Appleby, "The Social Origins of American Revolutionary Ideology," Journal of American History, 64 (March 1978), 935-958; Bernard Friedman, "The Shaping of the Radical Consciousness in Provincial New York," ibid., 56 (March 1970), 781-801; Ralph Lerner, "Commerce and Character: The Anglo-American as New-Model Man," William and Mary Quarterly, 36 (Jan.1979), 3-26; Cathy D. Matson and Peter S. Onuf, A Union of Interests: Political and Economic Thought in Revolutionary America (Lawrence, Kan., 1990); and Gordon S. Wood, "Interests and Disinterestedness in the Making of the Constitution," in Richard Beeman et. al., eds., Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity (Chapel Hill, 1986), 69-109.

113. See, e.g., Martin Diamond, "Democracy and The Federalist: A Reconsideration of the Framers' Intent," American Political Science Review, 53 (March 1959), 52-68, for the view of the authors of the Federalist papers; and David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism: the Federalist Party in the Era of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York, 1965), Linda Kerber, Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America (Ithaca, 1970), and James M.Banner, Jr., To

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the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origins of Party Politics in Massachusetts, 1789-1815 (New York, 1970), for the later Federalist party.

114. Proceedings and Debates, 481.

115. Ibid., 482.

116. See Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson (New York, 1964).

117. Proceedings and Debates, 482.

118. Ibid.

119. Ibid. For Antifederalist emphasis on legislative supremacy, see Christopher Duncan, The Antifederalists and Early American Political Thought (Dekalb, Ill., 1995).

120. Proceedings and Debates, 484; Ammon, Monroe, 566.

121. Proceedings and Debates, 493, 490.

122. Ibid., 488-89 (debates of Nov. 28, 1829). Under the 1776 Constitution, the Governor did not have the right to break a tie vote in the Privy Council. He merely had coordinate appointive powers and commanded the militia. Moreover, under the 1776 Constitution, the Governor could only be impeached after he left office. Francis Newton Thorpe, ed., The Federal and State Constitutions, Colonial Charters and Other Organic Laws (7 vols., Washington, D.C., 1909), VII, 3816-18.

123. Proceedings and Debates, 490. There is no mention of a lieutenant governor in the 1776 Constitution. Thorpe, Federal and State Constitutions, 3816-19.

124. Proceedings and Debates, 490.

125. Ibid., 493.

126. Ibid. (Nov. 28, 1829).

127. Proceedings and Debates, 588; Egerton, Mercer and National Conservatism, 231-32.

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CHAPTER 13:
CONCLUSION: THE PARADOX OF MONROE'S POLITICAL THOUGHT

We have gone with Monroe a long way on the path from youth to old age. But there was less change than continuity in his political thought. In his political testament, The People the Sovereigns, composed after experiencing the exhilaration of serving in the highest Cabinet posts and for two successful terms as president, Monroe zealously affirmed the stamina of representative democracy. This outlook at the end of his life contrasted with the anxiety and skepticism he expressed during his decade of opposition to the Federalists in the 1790's. He had then feared that the people's public and private virtue would be corrupted by the Federalists' siren call for personal profit via the mechanisms of a commercial/industrial republic.[1]

Despite his adherence to republican government, Monroe had never shown unadulterated confidence in popular judgment. He dreaded legislative tyranny throughout his political career. However, as he wrote in "Some Observations (1787)," he would not let his fear of congressional encroachments on the other branches permit him to justify violent revolution,

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which he maligned as "an appeal to the people, which if possible should always be avoided." He preferred the conservative alternative of "an absolute negative for the President."[2] He hoped to rely on the mechanisms of checks and balances and separation of powers rather than unrestricted popular rule. At the 1788 ratifying convention, he had predicted that the voters would be more solicitous of the interests and reputations of state legislators than of the president, erstwhile symbol of *all* the people, whom they would relegate to scapegoat for national shortcomings and recipient of meager praise for national successes.

Paradoxically, while Monroe admitted that humankind was primarily selfish, he thought that the American people, who held the power of judging their national executive and legislators, could keep them under control and faithful to the pursuit of the "public good." His experiences as United States Minister to France (1794-1796) after the Reign of Terror had caused him to doubt the competence for representative democracy of Europeans who had previously endured absolutist rule, especially the urban canaille. Thereafter, he ascribed republican virtue solely to the United States. He favored France against England because it was the European government most similar to a republic, having been allied with the U. S. since the Revolution, and would hopefully promote American interests in current disputes with such states as Spain, Great Britain, and Algeria. In any case, American self-interest rather than blind subservience to France determined Monroe's diplomatic course. This was in accord with his ideological view that the republic's survival dictated an opportunistic foreign policy, which he implemented in the Louisiana negotiations of 1803, the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty of 1806, his support for the War of 1812, and his overtures to Great Britain before proclaiming the Monroe Doctrine in

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December 1823.

Monroe's conservative attitudes--eschewing idealism for the pragmatic and feasible--persisted after he retired from the presidency. He hoped the British would not be so foolhardy as to attempt a democratic suffrage during their disorders in the late 1820s, and he apparently preferred the conservative French revolution of 1830 over its more violent predecessors. He adopted an attitude more conservative than Madison's when he opposed suffrage for all white male taxpayers at the Virginia constitutional convention in 1829, arguing that some type of householding or landholding credential should remain. Reflecting on the French Revolution's Reign of Terror, Napoleon's ill-fated empire and the royalist restoration, and saddened by the political success of the "monarchical" Federalists during the 1790s, Monroe in 1829 demurred at entrusting the people, instead of the assembly, with the election of Virginia's governor. He preferred to retain the governor's council, rather than rely on an unimpeded single executive to make decisions.

In these respects Monroe differed from his old friend and colleague James Madison, who, adopting what modern historians might call a more "liberal" stance at the 1829 convention, favored a broadened suffrage and a popularly elected governor. Monroe's conduct sharply contrasted with his position during the more idealistic 1780s, when he advocated for the new nation a directly elected president and Senate. As president of the United States Monroe had asserted the executive power, though at times--as in the Missouri Compromise dispute--he worked behind the scenes. While in 1829 he sought to limit the state governor's power and restrict the scope of popular choice--a conservative or "classical republican" viewpoint--at the

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state ratifying convention in 1788 Monroe had been more the "liberal democrat," proposing a powerful, popularly elected executive and a democratically chosen national legislature.

Thus, Monroe's evolution may be considered perversely atavistic. Unlike the course of American nationhood itself, he had reverted, at least in some respects, from a "liberal democratic" to a "classical republican" agenda. Perhaps this was his way of accommodating his views to the unique political situation of the antebellum South, whose upper-class oligarchy sought to restrict the voice of the lower classes in order to preserve its hegemony, and of course, the institution of slavery, for which it felt an almost paranoid concern. On the other hand, Monroe's posture may show the meaninglessness of dividing eighteenth- and nineteenth-century American political thought into antithetical "classical republican" and "liberal" modes.

An emphasis on the indispensability of stable government and a hypersensitivity to the fragility of republican regimes, in accordance with the classical, cyclical view of governmental degeneration, guided Monroe's political behavior from the Constitutional debates of the 1780s until his death. Never an extremist on the matter of governmental structure, he placed his confidence in high-minded, independent statesmen and (not expecting these to arrive on the scene very often) the more pedestrian variety of politicians, those conditioned to act in response to the "rewards and punishments," praise and blame bestowed by their constituents. In general, he hoped that the patriot-prince/patriot President type of leader as well as the more opportunistic breed would fulfill the requirements of the "public good," despite their disparate motives for doing so.

Monroe temporarily lost much of his confidence in the utility of presidential power in his

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outrage at the Washington Administration's cavalier treatment of him during his ministry to France. He perceived his dismissal as a betrayal of his dignity and his sincere efforts to assist his government, as well as of the American people's trust, in violation of such diverse ideals as world freedom and individual fair play and self-respect. Indeed, for several years after his recall in 1796 Monroe was preoccupied with a search for justice, if not revenge against the Federalists (particularly Washington, Pickering, and Adams) who had disgraced him. Like a feudal knight, he seriously considered duelling as a viable alternative to preserve his honor, although the denouement for himself or his adversary might be death.

An indirect evidence of Monroe's late-in-life apathy toward increased presidential power was his refusal to participate in presidential politics in 1828, an outlook which Madison, whose nationalism had declined in his old age, shared. Monroe thought that ex-presidents (like himself) should retain pristine dignity as senior statesman, admired and consulted by those actively engaged in politics, somewhat like his earlier conception of *sitting presidents* who "stood alone," as he had put it during the Constitutional debates of 1788.

During his presidency Monroe had been an activist executive. In advocating the Monroe Doctrine, internal improvements, the recharter of the Bank of the United States, and a protective tariff, in the post-War of 1812 era he was more nationalistic than his friends Jefferson and Madison. The People the Sovereigns revealed his consistent adherence to a moderate posture in his belief that "disunion and consolidation" would be equally "ruinous" to the republic. Disunion would catastrophically separate the states, while "consolidation would lead to monarchy and despotism, which would be equally fatal." Evoking the old Federalist idea that

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the United States as a representative democracy was rooted in the people's will, Monroe asserted that both state and national governments "rested on the same basis, the sovereignty of the people."[3]

Having early rejected the outmoded Antifederalist "compact theory" of a state-centered Union, throughout his career Monroe maintained the Nationalist view that the Constitution originated with the "people of each state." In the unique terminology that he first employed at the state ratifying convention in 1788, he referred to the state and national "branches" of government in The People the Sovereigns.[4] He perceived them as checking and balancing each other, much like the intra-governmental legislative, executive, and judicial branches, anticipating the theories of recent political scientists like John Austin Ranney.

Surprisingly, in The People the Sovereigns Monroe found little to criticize in Napoleon's militaristic regime, which he condoned as an outgrowth of the Enlightenment. The treatise is essentially a panegyric to America's system of representative democracy. It marks a theoretical transition from Monroe's adherence to the dire "cyclical" concept of governmental degeneration, first voiced at the state ratifying convention in 1788, in which his political thought had been dominated by the fear of conspiracy between corrupt legislatures and executives. That fear continued to obsess him into the decade of schism between Jeffersonian Republicans and Hamiltonian Federalists in the 1790s, nurturing his perception that President Washington was the naive pawn of devious would-be American monarchists. He concluded that only the voice of the people, expressed through his own Republican party, could save the republic from that dreaded fate. As The People the Sovereigns attests, by the late 1820s, reassured by two

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decades of Jeffersonian rule, Monroe had apparently grown more confident in the trustworthiness of the American people and the perdurance of representative government.

With Monroe's comments at the state constitutional convention in 1829, his painful reminiscences about the French Revolution's deterioration into a reign of terror, he reverted to an antipopulist stance. Proclaiming himself an advocate of monarchy rather than direct democracy, while predicting that both paths led ultimately to tyranny and one-man dictatorship, he preferred legislative rather than popular election of the governor. At least on the level of theory, he seemed less influenced than Jefferson and Madison by the sectional controversies of his time, notwithstanding his central role in the crucial Missouri Compromise. In his last plunge into political waters at the convention of 1829-30, he persevered in espousing classical republican ideology, while at the same time propounding the radical nationalist goal of gradually abolishing slavery with financial assistance from Congress.

While Monroe's The People the Sovereigns constituted a paean to representative democracy (republicanism) in theory, in practice he filled in its outlines in a conservative mold (at the state convention of 1829), declaring himself against increased popular rule, opposing a popularly elected governor and a substantially broadened suffrage. In common with his ultra-classical republican, Federalist political enemies, Monroe urged the people to give their representatives greater authority to act for them in choosing their leaders.[5] At the same time, his legalistic formalism in dealing with rebellious slaves in the Southampton murders in 1799 and Gabriel's more famous conspiracy in 1800 evinced a dogmatic adherence to the rule of law, which both Federalists and Republicans could admire.[6]

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What, then, made Monroe a Jeffersonian Republican rather than a Federalist? The answer seems to lie in his **temperament**. His dogged adherence to honor; his heated response when he thought his self-respect impugned; perhaps the wounds he suffered from British artillery at the Battle of Trenton, determined the violence of his rhetoric against Washington, Hamilton and Adams in the 1790s, a stance that his moderate ideology hardly reflected. Ironically, these pugnacious attitudes were more characteristic of the feudal aristocrat than the Jeffersonian's ideal, the middling democratic artisan and yeoman. And in Virginia itself there was little more enthusiasm for political democratization among Republicans than Federalists. Apparently, the leaders of both parties preferred the rule of the "natural aristocracy."[7]

In Monroe's case, his occasionally inflammatory rhetoric did not actually correspond to the reality of his political views when his concrete policy positions and even ideological treatises like The People the Sovereigns are examined. In this study we have concentrated on a James Monroe that is seldom discussed--the political commentator and ideologist, not the bombastic, angry pamphleteer.

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CHAPTER 13: NOTES

1. See Thomas Pangle's enlightening comments in "Civic Virtue: The Founders' Conception and the Traditional Conception," in Gary C. Bryner and Noel B. Reynolds, eds., Constitutionalism and Rights (Provo, Utah, 1987), 105-40.

2. "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 327.

3. People the Sovereigns, 23. For similar terminology, dating from Monroe's years in France, see his "Note about the American constitutions," June 7, 1795, Monroe Papers, New York Public Library, reel one, and Monroe's Autobiography, 107-108.

4. People the Sovereigns, 23. For his earlier employment of this terminology, see "Some Observations," in Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, I, 219.

5. On Federalist ideology, see Linda K. Kerber, Federalists in Dissent: Imagery and Ideology in Jeffersonian America (Ithaca, N. Y., 1970), and James M. Banner, Jr., To the Hartford Convention: The Federalists and the Origin of Party Politics in Massachusetts (New York, 1970).

6. See Arthur Scherr, "Governor James Monroe and the Southampton Slave Resistance of 1799," The Historian, 61 (Spring1999); Douglas R. Egerton, Gabriel's Rebellion: The Virginia Slave Conspiracies of 1800 and 1802 (Chapel Hill, 1993).

7. On the antipopulism and genteel classical republican outlook of leading Virginia Republicans, see Harry Ammon, "The Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia: An Interpretation," Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, 71 (April 1963), 153-167, and Richard R. Beeman, The Old Dominion and the New Nation, 1788-1801 (Lexington, Ky., 1972). For speculations on the psychological roots of Monroe's Anglophobia, see Edward Angel, "James Monroe's Mission to Paris, 1794-1796" (Ph.D. dissertation, George Washington University, 1979), 16.

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