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AMERICAN POLITICS - 1793-1809:

A Case Study in the Theory
of Critical Elections.

by Brenda Forman

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction: Theoretical Considerations - Critical Elections, Latent Cleavages and the Phenomenon of Reactivation.....	p. 1
Notes to Introduction.....	xi

Part I: The Election of 1800

Chapter 1: The Presidential Contest of 1800 as a Critical Election.....	1
Notes to Chapter 1.....	37
Chapter 2: 1793 and After - The First Reactivation and the Roots of Party Politics.....	48
Notes to Chapter 2.....	76
Chapter 3: From the Proclamation of Neutrality to the Jay Treaty - The Reconceptualization of American Politics.....	87
Notes to Chapter 3.....	122
Chapter 4: 1796 to 1800 - Republican Recovery and the Chances of History.....	131
Notes to Chapter 4.....	163
Chapter 5: The "Meaning" of 1800 and Its Legacy to the Future.....	175
Notes to Chapter 5.....	188

Part II: The Interlude Years

Chapter 6: The State of Parties and the State of the Union in 1801.....	193
Notes to Chapter 6.....	218
Chapter 7: Republican Factionalism in Virginia - The Old Republicans in the New Union.....	223
Notes to Chapter 7.....	247
Chapter 8: Republican Factionalism in New York - The Eclipse of Ideology.....	253
Notes to Chapter 8.....	270
Chapter 9: The Delayed "Decision" in Massachusetts - Republicanism Captures Federalism's Recruits.....	276
Notes to Chapter 9.....	302

Contents - continued:

Part III: Reactivation

Chapter 10: Reactivation.....	p. 309
Notes to Chapter 10.....	328
Chapter 11: Reactivation in Virginia - Randolph and the Presidential Candidacy of James Monroe.....	332
Notes to Chapter 11.....	349
Chapter 12: Reactivation in New York - The Clintonian Dilemma.....	355
Notes to Chapter 12.....	366
Chapter 13: Reactivation in Massachusetts - A Qualified Federalist Recovery.....	369
Notes to Chapter 13.....	382
Conclusion: A "Political Geology" of Remembered Conflicts.....	383
Notes to Conclusion.....	400
Bibliography.....	404

INTRODUCTION: Theoretical Considerations - Critical Elections, Latent Cleavages, and the Phenomenon of Reactivation.

The development of the United States between 1793 and 1815 is an especially rich field of study for the political scientist. The decade of the 1790's witnessed the formation of the first American party system. It was also a time of nation-building, as the states joined in a new Union, experimented with a new national government, and the American people sought to define to their own satisfaction the real meaning of their as yet amorphous sense of nationality. Finally, the years between 1793 and 1815 were a time of almost uninterrupted upheaval in the international arena. For twenty-three years, England and France struggled for supremacy in a war which spread to engulf the European Continent and which had a profound impact upon the politics of the new American Union.

This, then, was a time of unusual ferment in American life, and its first decade culminated in one of the most famous electoral contests in American history: the election of Thomas Jefferson to the presidency in 1800 and the simultaneous triumph of the Republican Party in both Congress and the majority of the states. It is not surprising, therefore, that this particular era has attracted the attention of some of America's most famous historians. It has been chronicled, dissected, analyzed, and argued over nearly interminably, beginning with the Federalist historians' efforts to damn Jefferson unto all time, continuing with the Jeffersonian

apologists who sought to glorify his memory, and going on to become a bone of contention in nearly every subsequent reappraisal of the American past, present and future.

The result of this long historiographical battle has been the accumulation of an immense amount of data. Moreover, the fact that much of it has been collected for more or less polemical reasons does not impair its usefulness -- because by now, so many different polemicists have entered the field as to provide a modern analyst with an admirably wide choice of available biases. There is a curious objectivity to be gained from the juxtaposition of a plurality of prejudices, particularly if these prejudices are approached with the analytical tools of contemporary political science -- tools which even the greatest historians did not have at their disposal. The thrust of this study is to see what insights may be gained by applying the theoretical concepts and analytical methods of political science to the masses of data available to us on this formative period in American life.

For this purpose, the election of 1800 has been selected as the central focus of concern here, for this great electoral contest made a strikingly profound impression on contemporaries and succeeding generations alike. In its own day, it was universally perceived as a political event of the first importance -- although interpretations varied as to whether it heralded the millenium or Armageddon. Phrases such as the "Revolution of 1800" were coined to describe it. The twenty-four year period of Republican Party hegemony which

it inaugurated became known to posterity as the reign of the "Virginia Dynasty." And its ideals and slogans became so firmly embedded in the American political vocabulary as to recur in nearly every major debate of succeeding decades; indeed, they remain clearly recognizable there in our own day.

So enduring has this impact proven that we may justifiably choose to treat the election of 1800 as a case study in a specific theory in modern political science; for nearly every contemporary observer appears to have agreed that the contest of 1800 was what V. O. Key would have called a "critical election."*(1)

In proposing this theory, Key might be said to paraphrase Orwell, for he suggests that while all elections are equal, some are more equal than others. Periodically, he suggests, a major realignment occurs in American politics which fundamentally alters the balance of political forces by creating a significantly new majority coalition. This new majority is a very durable one; it proves stable enough to survive for a generation or so. Its formation constitutes what Key calls a "standing decision" by the electorate, and the terms of this "decision" are likely to govern the outcome of major political conflicts for years thereafter. He then proposes three criteria by which a critical election

*All notes appear at the end of the relevant chapter.

may be identified: very high voter involvement, a high electoral turnout, and the maintenance of the resulting realignment over several successive elections.

Walter Dean Burnham has gone on to develop the theory further.⁽²⁾ He suggests that the "critical election syndrome" consists of five characteristics:

1) Given a situation in which there exists considerable latent discontent with the political status quo, the intrusion of some suddenly salient "proximate cause" transforms this latent dissatisfaction into overt opposition. The result is that the dissatisfied groups, (who at this point are the "outs"), are able to capture a mass following.

2) The "outs" then wage their campaign on strongly ideological grounds, employing appeals of high emotional content. This gives the contest something of the taste of a crusade rather than a mere race for office.

3) The next state is an increasingly rigid reaction on the part of the "ins." The more intensely threatened they feel by the opposition's attack, the more rigid their response is likely to be.

4) The campaign culminates in an election (or a series of elections) wherein massive realignments occur. The result of these realignments is the creation of a new majority and a new minority, and the balance between them persists for roughly the next generation.

5) The election embodies a first-rank political decision as to the proper nature of one or more important sociopolitical

relationships: that between government and the economy, for example, or between politics and society. This "decision" precipitates corresponding shifts in both the role and function of major political institutions: the Supreme Court, for example, or Congress.

Burnham concludes by proposing a model by which the driving force behind the emergence of these new coalitions may be analyzed. He sees this emergence as the resultant of two converging processes:

- 1) A growing sense of deprivation -- actual or impending -- on the part of the "outs." The deprivation may be perceived in a variety of terms -- economic, racial, regional, or any others. Whatever the terms in which it is perceived, however, it stimulates those groups first sensing it to organize their strength for the attack on the status quo. By doing so, they create a sense of impending deprivation among the "ins." This in turn stimulates the latter to a counter-organizational effort against their challengers. The result is a "wavelike process" of political mobilization, spreading to involve more and more individuals in the political process. Gross voter participation rises, and the campaign becomes more and more intense.

- 2) A sharp rise in both the scope and intensity of negative political reference-group perceptions. Burnham justly notes that some degree of negative group-identification is necessary to party-identification itself. He suggests, however, that under ordinary circumstances, these are

relatively marginal to the political process. In a period of critical realignment, by contrast, they assume overriding saliency on the part of both ins and outs. They may finally grow so intense as to override -- and perhaps even obliterate -- earlier cleavages based on an older structure of group antagonisms.

The Key-Burnham typology thus furnishes us with an unusually detailed framework for testing its hypotheses. Moreover, despite the fact that it was apparently developed from studies of fairly recent elections, the typology is an excellent model by which to analyze the period under consideration here because the election of 1800 conforms with admirable accuracy to its specifications.⁽³⁾ This, however, only renders the more intriguing the question with which Key ends his exposition. If, as he suggests, an essential component of a critical election is the durability of its realignments, how are those alignments maintained? Turning with this question in mind to the years after 1800, we find that while the alignment did survive, its existence was often shaky.

There is, in fact, a sharp contrast between the American political atmosphere of 1801-1806 and that of the following period. At the national level, the former, is a time of calm; political debate is focused almost exclusively upon purely domestic issues -- in violent contrast to the 1790's, when foreign policy was the supreme touchstone of

political cleavage. Beginning about 1806, however, and reaching full intensity by late 1807, foreign policy issues return to their earlier position of decisive preeminence, and national politics reacquire the passion and virulence which had stamped them in the 1790's.

At the state level, the picture is similar. Between 1801 and 1807, the issue-content in state politics becomes increasingly confused. Party alignments become blurred -- in some instances they disappear nearly completely. One wonders at the frequency with which the great "decision" of 1800 appears to be submerged by murky faction fights and petty local issues. Then after 1807, a sudden shift occurs. The issues of the 1790's appear anew, and with them the party boundaries of 1800 become visible again. The major political themes of the 1790's reemerge in both Congressional debates and the sloganry of popular politics. One has a sense of *déjà vu*; one has been here before -- in 1798.

Once more, the political scientist finds the events of the historical past to be intriguingly relevant to latter-day findings and hypotheses. In another article, for example, Burnham has drawn some interesting conclusions from his analysis of the presidential election of 1964.⁽⁴⁾ The results of his study suggest that:

1) The clearcut saliencies of one election may coexist with latent cleavages bequeathed by another in the past -- possibly a fairly remote past -- and these latent cleavages "may endure for decades without losing their capacity to

influence voting outcomes."

2) These latent cleavages appear to have no specific lifespan. They may be submerged for decades, and still spring to life once more in response to stimuli which resemble those which first created them. This odd pattern suggests that political "development" is not nearly such a linear process as is ordinarily assumed. Burnham finds instead that his data suggest "a curious timelessness" wherein cleavages accumulate, often lose saliency, but never quite disappear. The American party system, he concludes, "has found as yet no single organizing dimension... which can definitively retire earlier cleavages to the history texts."

Evidence to the same effect comes from other quarters. Thomas A. Flinn has discovered a similar pattern underlying the course of Ohio politics: a singular tenacity of old lines of cleavage, occasionally disturbed by some major shock to the political balance of forces, but tending strongly to revert to the earlier pattern once the disturbance is over. "There is no regrouping going on as the equilibrium model implies but instead the regeneration of old loyalties to their earlier vigor." (5)

Finally, a rather spectacular indication of the length of time such old loyalties may survive comes from a study of the political geography of southwestern France. (6) The attempt to explain this region's voting behavior in terms of socioeconomic factors fails nearly completely. The correlation which emerges as truly significant is that of

the ancient animosities left over from the bloody repression of the Albigensian heresy in the twelfth century. "Thus, it seems... that factors of social structure related to economic activity are not able to explain French political geography... The political traditions peculiar to the various regions of France, which owe their existence to history and to an often remote past, retain an essential influence..."(7)

It appears, then, that ancient cleavages live on, even if they go often unnoticed, and that they may be reactivated time and again when the stimuli are right. And this is precisely what one senses to have been happening in American politics after 1807. In many important ways, it is the 1790's revisited, and if the "decision" of 1800 was in fact maintained until the mid-1820's, any analysis of the manner in which this was done must consider not only critical elections and standing decisions, but the reactivation of latent cleavages as well.

That is what this study will attempt to do. In addition to the course of politics at the national level, the analysis will focus upon three major states: Virginia, New York, and Massachusetts. The choice of these three states was dictated by three considerations. First, they were three of the largest states in the Union; together with Pennsylvania, they constituted the bulk of the United States' electoral weight in this period. Second, they occupied positions of acknowledged regional leadership in a time when regional consciousness was a major factor in American life;

-X-

Massachusetts was the chief spokesman of New England, Virginia of the South, and New York the most powerful of the Middle States. Finally, when taken together they provide examples of nearly every type of political culture extant in the Union of the time -- and this was a time when American politics was characterized by a very wide range of diversity in this important area of political development.

The study is long, and it is complex. But then, so was its subject.

NOTES TO INTRODUCTION

(1) V.O. Key, "A Theory of Critical Elections." Journal of Politics, Vol. 17 (1955) pp. 3-18.

(2) Walter Dean Burnham, "The Alabama Senatorial Election of 1962: Return of Inter-Party Competition." Journal of Politics, Vol. 26, No. 4 (November, 1964) pp. 798-830.

(3) See Chapter 1.

(4) Walter Dean Burnham, "American Voting Behavior and the 1964 Election." Midwest Journal of Political Science, Vol. 12 (February, 1968) pp. 1-41.

(5) Thomas A. Flinn. "Continuity and Change in Ohio Politics." Journal of Politics, Vol. 24 (1962) pp. 521-545.

(6) François Goguel. Géographie des élections françaises de 1870 à 1951 (Paris: Librairie Armand Colin; 1951) pp.131-135.

(7) Ibid., p. 134, my translation, italics added.

**CHAPTER 1: The Presidential Contest of 1800 as a
Critical Election**

For the moment, let us leave aside the question of what a critical election really signifies. The question indeed is endlessly intriguing, and in fact forms the substance of our true concern here. Before we can explore this matter, however, we must show with some degree of certainty that the election of 1800 was in fact "critical" by the standards available to us; and if we accept the criteria proposed by Key and Burnham as accurate and exhaustive, then the presidential election of 1800 was irrefutably critical.

Let us begin with Key's three basic categories: high voter involvement, high electoral turnout, and the final realignment's ability to survive over several successive elections.

In 1790, national politics in the United States were on the whole torpid. The great battle over ratification of the federal Constitution was over; indeed, for all its historic significance and brilliant rhetoric, it is questionable just how deeply it involved the mass of American voters. The ratification conventions were hardly representative of popular opinion; nor did the issue of ratification represent a consistent nation-wide cleavage of opinion on either side, for the actual power bases and division of opinion on both sides varied in different areas, and were often contradictory as between states.⁽¹⁾

This apathetic atmosphere disappeared rapidly, however.

Over the next decade, the level and scope of political involvement rose in an almost hyperbolic curve to reach altogether perfervid intensity. Threats of secession were common; at one point or another through the decade, such grumblings were heard from both New England and Virginia.⁽²⁾ By 1798, a Republican was enraged enough to inveigh against:

"the infatuated prostitution which a misguided President and an intriguing junto had made at the foot of the British throne, of what we sacredly owed to humanity, to character, to liberty, and to France...I see the fortunes, nay, independence of my country at hazard..."⁽³⁾

From the other side came predictions of impending national disaster. A typical example is the jeremiad of a Federalist in 1800 who declared that if Thomas Jefferson were elected President:

"...the Constitution will fall a sacrifice to Jacobinism and the results of the destruction will be dreadful to the State...the leaders of this conspiracy proclaim the downfall of the Government in the streets, while the peaceful and unsuspecting citizens are summoned to the nocturnal orgies of the pestilential band to listen to the promulgation of sentiments, bold, base, and blasphemous, calculated only to infect, corrupt, and poison all the blessings and virtues of man... Do you believe in the strangest of all paradoxes -- that a spendthrift, a libertine, or an atheist is qualified to make your laws and govern you and your posterity?"⁽⁴⁾

So violent had the verbal conflict between the two political parties become that a foreign observer -- and a very sympathetic one at that -- concluded in 1799 that:

"at this time...so inveterate is their mutual hatred, their respective policy is so widely asunder and so rooted in their affections, and their reciprocal insults are so many and so offensive, that it is impossible to hope for a reconciliation."⁽⁵⁾

The corollary of this fever-pitch of involvement was a

marked rise in voter turnout. This development was decidedly not due to any legislative extension of the franchise. Even in pre-Revolutionary times, the potential electorate was fairly wide. In New York, for example, some 65% of all adult white males could qualify under the forty-pound freehold requirement, and tenants with twenty-one-year leases (which most did have), merchants, and the more prosperous artisans were also eligible to vote.⁽⁶⁾ The extent of the freehold requirement did decline rapidly in the early 1790's to be replaced increasingly by the requirement that the voter only be a taxpayer,⁽⁷⁾ but in the American context this shift did not influence the size of the electorate as it would have elsewhere. The vast quantity of open lands in the new nation made a freeholder of nearly any man who chose to settle them, with the result that in effect if not intent, the freehold qualification was widely permissive.⁽⁸⁾ The franchise, indeed, was more widespread even in pre-Revolutionary times than was the desire to use it.⁽⁹⁾ That desire was forthcoming only in the increasingly heated political atmosphere of the 1790's.

The real "voting explosion" in America occurred between 1800 and 1815,⁽¹⁰⁾ but turnout in the 1790's rose steadily, if not explosively, to reach quite remarkable heights. In New York State, for example, 12,400 votes were cast in the congressional election of 1789; in 1792, this rose to 18,000, some 79% of the electorate. In 1793, 24,000 ballots were cast in the gubernatorial election.⁽¹¹⁾ In New York City, the spurt

in the turnout for congressional elections occurred in 1795, after which it averaged 46% of the qualified electorate for the remainder of the decade.(12)

The trend is visible even in the calmer political atmosphere of Massachusetts. Between 1792-1797 and 1799-1802, the percentage of active voters in the state rose from 3.9% to 7.4%.(13) Between 1798 and 1800, the turnout in the gubernatorial election jumped by 82%.(14) In New Jersey, 80%, 90% and even 100% of all adult males were voting in 1800. In Maryland, these levels were reached even sooner. In 1790, participation exceeded 50% in 7 cities; in 1792, it did so in 9 cities; and in 1800 it passed 60% in 6 cities.(15)

Finally, the Republican victory in 1800 inaugurated a quarter-century of unbroken Republican control of the national government. Thus, V. O. Key at least might be satisfied that the realignment of 1800 was in fact critical.

Political developments in the 1790's also fit Burnham's more detailed set of prerequisites:

(1) Capture of a mass following: The "Republican interest" of the early 1790's was not a "party" by any but the loosest definition. At the national level in 1792, it was hardly more than an anti-Hamiltonian faction in Congress under the leadership of James Madison and a portion of the Virginia delegation. Only subsequently did "Republicanism" become a "cause" able to mobilize widespread support. Elsewhere in the Union, the meaning of the term "Republican" was vague, ambiguous and often downright contradictory. In some states, especially in

the West, it referred to egalitarian backcountry frontiersmen whose resentment of the Federalist Administration was largely an extension of their distrust of government in general. So pronounced was the Republicanism of Tennessee, Kentucky, and the less settled portions of Vermont, in fact, that one entire school of historiography has maintained that the American frontier was both the cradle of popular democracy in America and the power base whose rapid geographical expansion ensured its triumph. (16)

Yet this analysis does not stand closer inspection. Massachusetts frontiersmen in the 1790's were Federalists and conservatives, apparently as a result of their enduring outrage over Shay's Rebellion. The Republican movement, when it did take hold, centered in the large seaboard towns, with the paradoxical effect that the frontier remained loyal to Federalism as a result of its enduring suspicion of citified politics. (17) The New York frontier was a Federalist stronghold from 1792 until after 1797. Worried above all else by the constant menace of Indian war and the uncomfortable proximity of the British-held posts in the northwest, New York frontiersmen were chiefly concerned with problems of defense and protection. Thus they welcomed a strong central administration, and spared little energy for quarrels over democratic principles in politics. (18) This same set of preoccupations made the Georgia backcountry prorratification in 1788 and pro-Federalist in the following years. (19) Whatever else it was, Republicanism was decidedly not primarily the product of the frontier.

In the South, the term "Republican" meant primarily the whiggish planter aristocrats of Virginia whose opposition to the Federalist Administration began to crystallize in 1790, and arose from their profound suspicion of Hamiltonian finance. (20) The Virginia planter elite set an enduring stamp upon the Republican Party, and this, together with their long alliance with the western frontier, caused yet another great historian to conclude that the roots of political cleavage throughout American history lay in the original conflict between agrarianism and capitalism in 18th century America. (21) According to the Beardian school of thought, this cleavage not only predated the Federal Constitution, but remained fundamental and continuous in American politics until well after World War I. (22)

Yet this analysis too proves inadequate. We have already seen that frontier agrarianism did not necessarily imply political Republicanism. Virginia agrarianism was no guarantee of Republicanism either in the early 1790's. Virginia's formal protest in 1790 against Hamilton's financial program did represent the first step towards an agrarian-based organized party, but many of those who joined in it in 1790 showed loyalty to Washington's administration in other areas later. (23)

Nor does "agrarianism" describe at all the third element within the as yet amorphous "Republican interest" of these early years: the growing numbers of ambitious, new-rich, social-climbing entrepreneurs of the thriving seaboard communities in New England and New York. These status-hungry parvenus,

not the conservative inland frontier, were the first "Republicans" of the north.

The groups forming the core of both Massachusetts and New York Republicanism in the early 1790's show striking sociological similarities. In both states, the "Republican interest" began as the personal following of a prominent factional leader: George Clinton in New York and John Hancock in Boston. These were very specific types of factional followings, moreover for both were composed of "new men" -- ambitious climbers who had come to the fore since the Revolution and whose newly-acquired status depended heavily upon their leader's political power rather than his family connections.⁽²⁴⁾ They were, indeed, rather looked down upon by the older elites whose status derived from old family names or long-established wealth, for they must have appeared somewhat pushy to those whose respectability was more firmly established. They lacked "tone." They were men on the way up, in a hurry to get there, and determined that their arrival should be recognized.⁽²⁵⁾ Those already at the top were Federalists -- so the challengers became "Republicans." They represented the "politics of opportunity" as against the "politics of privilege."⁽²⁶⁾ But they bore little resemblance either to the aristocrats of Virginia or the frontiersmen of Tennessee.

There was, in short, as yet no common denominator among the various opposition groups which had begun to emerge by 1792. Politics in nearly every state was still largely a matter of personal loyalties and factional followings. A Republican Party

itself was yet to be created; to speak of a "mass following" in such a context would be meaningless.

Yet beneath this surface shapelessness lay raw material aplenty for building a national opposition movement. There were deep and long-standing tensions in American society, many predating the Revolution; and while the Revolution had not entirely disrupted the older social structure, it had shaken it enough to enable the older cleavages to surface with new intensity during the Confederal period.

The pattern of tensions which had developed in the 1780's had three aspects: geographical, economic and sociological. There was, first of all, the ancient conflict over legislative representation between the settled seaboard communities and the expanding backcountry. This conflict was nearly coeval with the colonies' foundations. Wherever there was a frontier, tension arose when the outlying settlers sought to resist the efforts of the older communities to maintain their political hegemony over the entire colony. The conflict had even led to bloodshed in North Carolina well before the Revolution itself, and to rowdy though less violent uprisings in Pennsylvania and South Carolina. (27)

Only in the 1790's was this basic geographic tension transformed into a party division between Republicans and Federalists -- but the geographical configuration of the later cleavage betrays its roots. The single variable which correlates most closely with voting behavior by 1800 is the rate of population growth within the area in question. Long-settled

communities having developed a stable social order and showing a low rate of population increase are characteristically Federalist. Dynamism, expansion and mobility appear to mark areas of Republican strength. (28)

Equally endemic was the economic conflict between debtors and creditors in nearly every state. The financial upheaval of the Revolutionary years, the hard times following the peace, and the acute shortage of both capital and specie in the early 1780's combined to raise this issue to peak intensity by the time of the federal Convention. (29) Economics, that rich source of partisan politics, had therefore become a hot political issue well before Alexander Hamilton ever proposed his controversial financial plan for the new Union. Moreover, the lines of cleavage on economic lines largely coincided with the geographical division over representation; and these were even further reinforced by religious tensions as dissenting sects proliferated in the backcountry and came into conflict with the religious Establishments of the seaboard in Massachusetts and Virginia. (30)

Finally, there were the tensions inherent in any society in which new wealth is rising to challenge the position of old riches. The 1780's were largely a period of economic difficulties and commercial disruption in both domestic and international trade. The 1790's, however, opened a period of thriving prosperity whose benefits were not confined to America's older established families. New men, newly rich, were emerging in growing numbers. Prosperous, but not yet fully

"respectable," they hungered for full admission to the circles of power, but repeatedly found their way blocked by older elites entrenched in American society since colonial days. As always in history, the collision of new riches with social frustration held immense political implications. (31)

Here, in fact, lies one of the most crucial elements in the formation of American politics: the tension between status and aspiration in an expanding society.

We may see it at work wherever political opposition emerges. For example, New York's Republican chieftain in the 1790's was George Clinton, and from the beginning of his political leadership, his strength as a popular leader had been founded upon his role in the Revolution. (32) But what had made the young George Clinton into a radical Whig in the first place? His biographer concludes that under the exclusive power structure of colonial New York, the ambitious Clinton had found no career open to him, and his driving desire to play a part in the province's political life had sent him into opposition, largely for lack of an alternative. (33)

Further evidence emerges from the analysis of the leadership of the Democratic Societies which mushroomed across America after 1793. The Federalists were dismayed and outraged at the appearance of the "self-created" societies. (34) Contemporaneously, they attributed the societies' vociferous opposition to the unruliness of the lower orders and to the irresponsible rabble-rousing of "disorganizers." Yet upon inspection, the men who let these Societies turn out to be anything but members

of the "lower orders." They were instead members of the western version of that new and still marginal elite which we have already found to be the nucleus of Republicanism in New York and Massachusetts. They were merchants trading with nations other than Great Britain, and therefore sharing none of New England's obsession with cordial Anglo-American relations; certain manufacturers, especially of iron tools, threatened by British competition; land speculators eager to get rich in the newly opening west; men who had risen to wealth only after the Revolution by profiting from the confiscations of loyalist property; and those ever-frustrated individuals, the intellectuals, in this instance, the Philadelphia group of the American Philosophical Society.(35)

The politics of banking were subject to the same pressures. It was the struggle for access to banking facilities in 1791-1792 which caused the first split in the New York Federalist Party. The break came between the newer financial interests and those older groups which already had control over the existing state banks and which had now managed to exclude later arrivals from participation in the new United States Bank. For the time, the latter held their ground, but the political cost was high. When the "battle of the banks" began, both sides were Federalist; when it ended, part of the mercantile community had defected to the Clintonians. In the spring elections of 1792, the powerful Livingston clan was firmly in the Clintonian camp, and the emerging "Republican interest" had gained an important access to its popular strength by having been able to brand the Hamiltonian Federalists,

as the proponents of privilege.⁽³⁶⁾ A similar cleavage emerged in bank controversies in Massachusetts⁽³⁷⁾ and New Hampshire.⁽³⁸⁾

The pattern runs through the politics of several states in the period. Repeatedly, the division is found to be not just between "haves" and "have-nots" but between attainment and aspiration. In most states, the established elites became Federalists, and their challengers Republicans. In Massachusetts, Connecticut, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, the Republican Party "attracted persons either outside the elite or enjoying recently acquired and insecure position in local society. They were often new men who... had been excluded from the highest levels of influence and standing.... This brute fact of early American politics explains much of the emotive power of the Jeffersonian cause...and the immediacy of one of the most important of Jeffersonian rallying cries -- 'It is principles, not men, that democrats ought to support'."⁽³⁹⁾

And for all their reluctance to admit it, the High Federalists knew that their opposition came not only from the rabble they despised, but from the newly-powerful whom they feared. And when they saw John Adams in the campaign of 1800 consciously seeking to build a new coalition out of these dynamic and discontented groups, their reaction was that special outrage which "gentlemen" direct only against a "traitor to his class." As Fisher Ames snorted:

"You will, at length, clearly discern in the gazettes, the whole plan of a certain great man. It is, by prating about impartiality, Americanism, liberty,

and equality, to gull the weak among the feds. Half the wealthy can be made to repine that talents without wealth, take the right hand of them. Purse pride works in Boston. They are vexed that an Essex junto should be more regarded, than the men whose credit in money matters so far outweighs them."(40)

Town vs. country, creditor vs. debtor, Establishment vs. Dissent, respectability vs. parvenus -- the makings of mass politics lay at hand. What was missing was the right catalyst -- that correct measure of subjectivism which could transform the politics of interest in to the politics of emotion and fuse these seemingly incongruous discontents into a single organized political movement. As we shall see in Chapter 2, history provided this ingredient in force after 1793 when the French Revolution exploded into a world war. The violent upheaval in Europe precipitated a bitter political clash within America over the issue of foreign policy, and by the end of the decade, the catalysis of events overseas had produced two antagonistic ideologies in American politics, each fully articulated and passionately believed. It was around these emotional nuclei that America's first political parties coalesced in the 1790's, and it was the Republican ideology which transformed the "latent opposition to the political status quo" into a coherent and rationalized opposition.

The final impulse, (Burnham's: rather suddenly intruding proximate cause) came in the form of the Federalists' war program of 1798. In response to the crisis in French relations which began in 1797, the Administration proposed and was able to carry a program of direct taxation, heavy military

expenditures, alien control, and the restrictions on freedom of expression embodied in the Sedition Law. The chances of history⁽⁴¹⁾ enabled the Republicans to seize upon this program and make it into the burning issue in the campaign of 1799-1800. Aided by luck, and exploiting their opportunity with skill, the Republicans were able to turn this program of legislation into a powerful negative symbol in which were embodied all the charges they had ever hurled at the Federalists: subservience to Britain, economic favoritism, "aristocratical leanings," and intentions of suppressing civil liberties. Their reward was a major electoral victory.

(2) A political campaign waged on strongly ideological grounds by the "outs": It is hardly possible to overstate the virulence of American political debate between 1793 and 1800. Perhaps never since have political epithets been so venomous, campaign methods so unscrupulous, or mudslinging so unabashedly libellous. Letters were intercepted so frequently that Republican leaders often communicated in cipher. Gangs of toughs broke up political meetings of which they disapproved. Election returns were falsified more than once. Workmen in New England were fired out of hand if they were found to have voted against the Federalist Party.⁽⁴²⁾

As the decade wore on, the level of discourse sank steadily lower to plumb the depths of scurrility in the presidential campaign of 1799-1800. Thomas Jefferson was declared to possess "no Conscience, no Religion, no Charity."⁽⁴³⁾ He was an "avowed advocate" of "the horde of atheists and

anarchists," and a coward to boot, since he had fled before the British armies when he was Governor of Virginia during the Revolution.(44) He was a power-mad demagogue, a "Jacobin First Consul,"(45) and to complete the defamation, he was charged with an illicit sexual relationship with a black slave-girl, "Dusky Sally Henings."(46)

John Marshall asserted that "the democrats are divided into speculative theorists and absolute terrorists,"(47) and in a fine inflammatory address on the 4th of July, 1798, Timothy Dwight demanded:

"For what end shall we be connected with men of whom this is the character and the conduct?... Is it that our churches may become temples of reason, our Sabbath a decade, and our psalms of praise Marseillais hymns.? Is it that we may change our holy worship into a dance of Jacobin phrenzy and that we may behold a strumpet personating a Goddess on the altars of JEHOVAH? ... Is it that we may see our wives and daughters the victims of legal prostitution... the loathing of God and man?... Shall our sons become the disciples of Voltaire, and the dragoons of Marat; or our daughters the concubines of the Illuminati?"(48)

This sort of incendiarism makes spirited reading, of course, but the purpose in quoting it here is not merely to serve up some choice morsels of expert invective. It is rather to indicate the peculiarly intense emotional component of the political conflict then in progress. This particular sort of viciousness tends to be the product of a situation which is especially charged with feelings of anxiety. It is the "gut-reaction" which overrides logic when one's basic sense of security is threatened, and it focuses attention upon the fact that in contemporary eyes, the political battle of

the 1790's was far more than a simple struggle for office between two parties differing only in detail. In the event, that is what it was -- but at the time, that is most certainly not what it was seen to be. If the "fundamental liberal consensus" marking American society from its foundation has become obvious to present-day analysts, (49) it was anything but obvious to Americans in the 1790's. In their eyes, the political conflict around them represented the collision of two irrevocably hostile ideals of social organization and their anxiety as to the outcome of so epochal a conflict was raised to fever pitch by the fact that Americans of both parties were unanimously agreed that their own comparatively orderly political quarrels were intimately related to the dramatic, bloody, and profoundly controversial course of the French Revolution.

Among the earliest to sound the alarm was Gouverneur Morris, and eyewitness of French events:

"I believe that Religion is the only solid Base of Morals and that Morals are the only possible support of free governments... But I have lived to see a new Religion arise. It consists in a Denial of all Religion and its Votaries have the Superstition of not being superstitious. They have with this as much Zeal as any other Sect and are as ready to lay Waste the World in order to make Proselytes." (50)

And when Thomas Jefferson, who, the Federalists were firmly convinced, had sold his soul to France and stood ready to sell his country as well, was on the brink of becoming President, another arch-Federalist indicated graphically what he believed this to presage:

"... his situation would impose it upon him to maintain it (his own power) by the energies of Jacobinism, by courting, exciting, and guiding the passion of the people, a source of power, which, though disguised, is a resort to mere force... such force is... always clumsy, and sometimes taken out of the demagogue's hands by a fresher and therefore more favorite demagogue, (and) it will lead to a more permanent and manageable force. Behold France -- what is theory here, is fact there. What is here faith, is there fruition."(51)

From the Republican point of view, the prospect looked equally threatening, but for opposite reasons:

"Were parties have divided merely by a greediness for office, as in England, to take a part with either would be unworthy of a reasonable or moral man, but where the principle of difference is as substantial and as strongly pronounced as between the republicans and the Monocrats of our country, I hold it as honorable to take a firm & decided part, and as immoral to pursue a middle line, as between the parties of Honest men, & Rogues into which every country is divided."(52)

Tom Paine put it more concisely:

"The cause of the French people is that of all Europe, or rather of the whole world."(53)

It was the emergence of a powerful ideology of individual rights and freedoms which cemented the grabbag of oppositions existing in 1792 into a Republican Party. It was the French Revolution's impact on the American context which gave this ideology its decisive impetus in the 1790's. And the European upheaval was able to exert so immense an influence on American politics because it resonated so powerfully with the United States' own greatest historical experience: the American battle for independence.

It was hardly surprising that this should be so. The glowing slogans and universalistic ideologies of revolutionary France inevitably aroused a strong response from

Americans because they were in many ways direct derivatives of the American Revolution. Countless Frenchmen a decade earlier had been as exhilarated by America's revolt as were many Americans by French events after 1789. After 1783, a rash of literature on America appeared in France -- the market was seemingly insatiable. The American State Constitutions were published and widely read, as was Thomas Jefferson's Notes on Virginia. After 1789, all three factions in the Estates, then the Assembly, and finally the Convention repeatedly invoked the American example as the model whose perfection they were striving to duplicate in France.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The famous French Declaration of the Rights of Man, in both content and phraseology, drew heavily upon the American Bill of Rights. All these things "echoed what had been heard in America for some time..." A feeling spread that the French Revolution was a continuation of the American and that the American Revolution itself was endangered, or unfinished."⁽⁵⁵⁾

In the 1780's the American revolt had resonated so powerfully with France's aspirations as to give a major impulse to the revolutionary fervor which culminated in the great events of 1789. In the 1790's, the French Revolution resonated equally powerfully with American experience, and the result was to reawaken that sense of idealistic fervor which had waned so greatly through the 1780's but which was now recalled as "the Spirit of '76."

It was the foreign policy problems arising from the European war after 1793 which transformed America's

revolutionary heritage into a source of bitter division in domestic politics. The Federalists, for reasons they regarded as unassailable, pursued a steadfastly conciliatory foreign policy towards Great Britain and made little effort to conceal their hostility to France. In response, the Republicans hurled an array of charges at the Administration all of which tended to equate the Federalists with the forces of monarchy and antirepublicanism in Europe. It would be difficult for the most skeptical student of American history in this period, indeed, to escape the conviction that America was decisively influenced by the worldwide democratic revolution. (56)

The Republicans called the Federalists "monocrats" and "aristocrats." The former was Jefferson's favorite term. The latter appeared with rising frequency in the sloganry of public electioneering, for appeals to class consciousness now came rapidly to the fore in the politics of several states. By late 1792, a Republican newspaper in New York declared that Americans were no longer divided between pro- and anti-constitutionalists, but between "Aristocrats and pro-monarchists" and the "real supporters of independence, friends to equal rights and warm advocates of a free elective government," in short, "Republicans." (57) By 1795, this ideological formulation had become fully articulated. In the gubernatorial contest, the Republicans attacked the Federalist candidate's "aristocracy," and then declared that "Talent and virtue, not birth and riches should entitle a man to the suffrages of freemen." (58)

Similarly, in the Pennsylvania congressional elections of 1792, the Republicans dubbed their opponents "the Gentlemen," and the "Aristocrats of 1792" who had been the "Tories of 1776," while Hamilton's financial program was equated with the system of monopoly and corruption forming the basis of British monarchy and aristocracy.⁽⁵⁹⁾ In New Jersey, comments were becoming increasingly frequent in 1793 as to the damaging effects of wealth and influence in politics, and a growing opposition was visible to the idea of a natural governing elite.⁽⁶⁰⁾ Even in New England, where Republican development tended to be slower than elsewhere in the Union, Republican writings from 1796 on began to express growing hostility to "Aristocracy," frequently stressing the theme that the people were being kept in the dark by their rulers.⁽⁶¹⁾

The Republicans further accused the Federalists of plotting to thwart the gains of the American Revolution by reimposing a monarchy upon the United States. The existence of a monarchical movement indeed was a persistent leitmotif in American politics right down to 1800. The fact that no such plot actually existed is irrelevant; large numbers of Americans were utterly convinced that it did.⁽⁶²⁾ Not the least among these was Thomas Jefferson. As early as 1792, he reported to President Washington that the basis of the growing opposition to Hamilton's fiscal system was their conviction that it was a design to change America's republican form of government into a monarchy, and that their prime objective was therefore "to preserve the government in its present

form."(63) He never changed in this conviction. Twenty-six years later he asserted "that the contests of that day were contests of principle, between the advocates of republican & those of kingly government, and that had not the former made the efforts they did, our government would have been... a very different thing from what the successful issue of those efforts have made it."(64)

The bugbear of "monarchism" stalked through the nation's politics right to the end of the decade. Many Republicans sincerely believed it a real and imminent threat, but even had they not, it was too effective a campaign device to neglect -- and to both the dismay and the disgust of the Federalists, they used it to the fullest:

"THE OBSERVATION OF THE PRESIDENT, [Adams] WHEN HE WENT THROUGH TOWN LAST, MADE MORE DEMOCRATS THAN ANY OTHER THING BESIDE. HE TOLD DR. DANA HE DID NOT BELIEVE THE UNITED STATES COULD EXIST AS A NATION. UNLESS THE EXECUTIVE WAS HEREDITARY... At the time, it alarmed many of our people very much; they said they would spill their last drop of blood before monarchy should ever be established. This was a favorite theme for the Democrats to carp upon, and you may depend upon it that they did not let such an opportunity pass by unnoticed."(65)

Another Republican accusation was that the Federalists were slaves of England. James Madison's writings throughout the decade, for example, are peppered with allusions to "British partizans," "the Anglicans," and "Monocrats,"(66) As early as 1793, he had concluded that:

"The Anglican party is busy... in turning the public feelings against France, and thence in favor of England. The only antidote for their poison is... to impress the well meaning with the fact that the enemies of France & of Liberty are at work to lead them from their

honorable connection with these into the arms and ultimately into the Government, of Great Britain." (67)

The charge of "Anglomany" was coupled with that of callous ingratitude towards France, and this proved a politically potent compound. For by accusing the Federalists of being more concerned with their pocketbooks than with America's national honor, so eager to guard their lucrative trade with Great Britain that they were willing to repudiate the only European nation to have aided America in her own revolutionary struggle, the Republicans were able to link their opposition to the Federalists to America's own revolutionary tradition, a linkage which resonated powerfully in a nation having won its independence barely fifteen years earlier. (68) "He who is an enemy to the French revolution, cannot be a firm republican," declared the New York democrats in 1794. "We esteem their cause as our own." (69)

In the specific American context, all these symbols -- "British sympathies," "aristocratic leanings," and "monarchism" -- carried an exceedingly high emotional charge, because resonating as they did with America's specific revolutionary heritage, they drew strength directly from the emotions and associations of early American nationalism. As an ideology, however, they were still too confined, too specifically a creed of American nationalism -- and only one strain of American nationalism at that -- for as we shall see, (70) the egalitarian, universalistic symbology of American nationalism had by no means been settled in the 1790's. There were other

rivals for the prize.

As the decade drew to a close, however, the missing component was added. Largely in response to the challenge of the Alien & Sedition Laws, the Republicans placed increasing emphasis upon the appeal to human rights and equality of opportunity for all, and with this addition their ideology was complete. Transformed from a nationalist into a universalistic credo, its symbolic content vastly expanded, Republicanism became an ideology of immensely deeper emotional appeal -- and, in the process, a catapult to electoral triumph.

Its tone of glowing faith in human potential and mankind's future is caught in a letter of Thomas Jefferson to a young college student in 1799:

"I join you... in branding as cowardly the idea that the human mind is incapable of further advances. This is precisely the doctrine which the present despots of the earth are inculcating, and their friends here re-echoing; and applying especially to religion and politics... We are to look backwards then and not forwards for the improvement of science, and to find it amidst feudal barbarisms and the fires of Spital-fields... To preserve the freedom of the human mind then and freedom of the press, every spirit should be ready to devote itself to martyrdom; for as long as we may think as we will, and speak as we think the condition of man will proceed in improvement." (71)

(3) An increasingly rigid reaction by the "ins": To later observers, the Federalists hardly appear "aristocratic" by any standards, let alone those of the 18th century when real aristocrats were still around as standards for comparison. No true aristocrat would have lavished the attention on his hay and his orchards that John Adams did. (72) No true aristocrat would be so profoundly suspicious of city life, morals and

politics as was George Cabot.⁽⁷³⁾ The Federalists, in point of fact, emerge from their own writings as archetypically middle-class; they would have made splendid Taft Republicans in a later age.

This, however, was not at all the way they viewed themselves. In their own eyes, they were the "best" people in America, and as such they regarded both the direction of public affairs and a position of acknowledged social preeminence as their rightful prerogative. And in a way, their perspective, though distorted, was understandable. In the rather simple society of America, they had never at all experienced that frustrating exclusion from preeminence to which the existence of a real aristocracy might have exposed them. There was no class above them, and so they became obsessed with the threat which they did see -- and that came from below.⁽⁷⁴⁾ There is perhaps no one so convinced of his own gentility as a provincial gentleman, and so we might not be surprised that the Federalists, "in their own self-definition,... failed to identify with the European urban middle classes, which they really resembled, and preferred to associate themselves with the British and European aristocracies, which they hardly resembled at all."⁽⁷⁵⁾ If, however, the reader should harbor any doubts as to the truth of this statement, he is recommended to expose himself to a healthy sampling of the Federalists' own correspondence; their repeated use in reference to themselves of the actual terms "the wise and the good" is so unselfconsciously casual as to reveal quite

graphically how thoroughly ingrained their snobbism really was.

It is this unconscious, and thus unquestioned, snobbism which casts light upon another curious, and in the event a politically decisive, aspect of the Federalists' outlook: their nearly complete failure to comprehend the discontents abroad in American society. Their writings are filled with expressions of irate bewilderment. Typical is Oliver Wolcott's remark at the time of the uproar over the Jay Treaty:

"I doubt not that men of reflection with you, are anxious to investigate the real source of those agitations which successively happen in our great towns. It is certain that they do not proceed from public misfortunes or from a sense of actual oppression. What do these things portend?"(76)

Failing to grasp the nature of the opposition's sense of grievance, they cast about for other explanations. "The opposition to the measures which have been adopted," wrote Wolcott during the hot debate over Hamiltonian finance, "conduct as if they were influenced by something more than rivalry and personal ambition... The best solution which I can give of this disquiet is the pressure of the foreign debts due from the Virginia planters."(77) Another Federalist attributed the crescendo of opposition in the cities to the ancient conflict of rich and poor:

"After all, in these places it is but a strife between the opulent, and the discontented and factious at the head of the poor."(78)

The Federalists' own conviction that the status quo -- both political and social -- was a good one made it even more difficult for them to see anything but malicious insincerity

in the opposition:

"When will the people of this country open their eyes, and despise their false guides? Will nothing but serious calamity teach them their present happy state, and the path of safety?"(79)

Given such a conviction, the Federalists finally decided that nothing could explain the rising wave of dissent but the malevolent secret workings of "foreign influence":

"... we perceive that though the grand object of the democrats has been every where the same, yet their pretended motives have varied with their situation. In America... A plan of indirect operations was therefore fixed upon; and it must be allowed, that by the help of a foreign agent, it was not badly combined. The outlines of this plan were to extol to the skies every act of the boxing legislators of France; to dazzle those who have nothing with the sublime system of "equality;" to make occasional reflections on the resemblance between this government and that of Great Britain; to condemn British laws (and consequently our own at the same time) as aristocratic, and from thence to insinuate that 'something yet remained to be done'..."(80)

Taken as a whole, this outlook inevitably created a highly anxious frame of mind. The logic of its assumptions dictated a train of reasoning the inevitable conclusion of which was that the intensifying political opposition in American affairs presaged the breakdown of all social order, the violation of all the sanctities of property, religion and family, and the inauguration of a reign of chaos. In their private correspondence, the Federalists betray an almost apocalyptic frame of mind. "All that is folly and passion in man, is opposed to all that is virtue and wisdom; I fear that our government supposes him too good, and will prove him too weak for the trust," gloomed Fisher Ames.(81) "Whether

the present tempest shall end in fume or not, I believe we are to calculate upon an early termination of our present system," echoed Oliver Wolcott, Sr. "The principle of government at present is to be understood as founded on the predominancy of popular faction only, and he who 'per fas aut nefas' can engage the greatest number is to rule."(82)

In public pronouncements, the tone of impending disaster was more fevered:

"...great national interests are at stake, as well as those essential principles, on which the immediate peace and security of society, and also the hopes of future happiness rests.

"Can serious and reflecting men look about them and doubt, that if Jefferson is elected, and the Jacobins get into authority, that those morals which protect our lives from the knife of the assassin... will not be trampled upon and exploded."(83)

In view of the analytical models which directed their thought, such fears are hardly surprising, for the Federalists drew their political analogies from either classical philosophy or contemporary France. The Polybian cyclical theory of government was a standard part of the classical education of the period, and interpreted by such a model, contemporary events became automatically alarming. Thomas Jefferson was cast in the role of the leader of the "rabble;" this presaged the coming of "democracy" in the original pejorative meaning of the word; and by definition, "democracy" in this sense was doomed to rapid degeneration into dictatorship.(84) The influence of this classical training is apparent, for example, in the outlook of Federalism's Jeremiah, Fisher Ames. Steeped in Greek and Roman history in his youth, he was

confirmed in his fears of popular dominance by his eyewitness observation of Shay's Rebellion. The result was that both his training and his experience combined to solidify his conviction that republican government was only possible under the direction of the intelligent few.(85)

Thus, if the United States were assumed to be a republic in the same sense as those of ancient Greece or Rome, its doom was sealed as soon as the "masses" should triumph.(86) And should any doubt remain, there was the eloquent and living example of France, where the Jacobin victory had led to a Reign of Terror and at length to the triumph of Napoleon. To the Federalists, these events appeared to vindicate beyond all doubt the validity of their predictions. John Marshall, for example was profoundly impressed by witnessing Napoleon's entry into Paris, for to him it was the living realization of what he believed was the natural culmination of unregulated democracy: one-man despotism supported by the mob.(87)

Contemporary history appeared to follow the classical model so closely that it lent yet additional weight to the Federalists' obsession with "foreign influence." For it is crucial to note that the Federalists were as nationalistic as the Republicans, although their nationalism was of rather different quality.(88) Where the Republicans emphasized ever more strongly the egalitarian, utopian strain in the American Revolutionary tradition, the Federalists with their deep suspicion of the "masses" placed paramount stress upon America's

independence. All their fears, in fact, pivoted on this preoccupation, and because they were utterly convinced that America's independence was immediately threatened by "French influence working through domestic faction," their classical analogies, their misperception of their domestic opposition, and their particular quality of nationalism could be meaningfully interrelated into an internally coherent interpretation of American events in their day. The picture built up logically from the basic assumption that "foreign influence is to popular governments sometimes a slow, but always a corrosive and fatal poison,"(89) for "The consequences of a foreign influence in popular governments, may be elucidated from the history of ancient Greece and modern Italy, as well as from their more recent effects on the governments of Sweden and Poland."(90) Americans especially must be alert to the growth of such influence, for "Our independence is what we ought to guard with the most watchful jealousy, and spurn every attempt to introduce foreign influence -- an evil to which free governments are vastly more liable than any other."(91) The prospect, however, looked serious, for "The faction in this country becomes more daring. There can be no doubt that the leaders rely on foreign support,"(92) and "Most powerful and formidable factions contend whether they shall not be governed by foreign councils rather than their own."(93) The net emotional result was a sense of utterly genuine outrage: "What censure can be too severe upon those who have invited the assaults of a

foreign power, and who foster internal divisions!"(94)

Thus, the Federalists were alarmed by a rising, and to them incomprehensible, challenge to their own established position, and their intellectual equipment, instead of aiding their comprehension, provided intensification and rationalization for their alarm. The Federalists, in short, were scared, and when frightened, most human beings tend to rigidify. The Federalists were no exception.

Hence, they returned the Republicans' charges of "monarchism" and "aristocracy" with heated counteraccusations of "Jacobinism" and "godlessness." The latter charge deserves individual attention. It bore, of course, little relationship to either Greece or France, but in the American context, it was politically logical and not a little ingenious. As Tocqueville discerned even some forty years later, the enormous multiplicity of particular religious denominations in America did not lead to skepticism, but instead to a more solid societal identification with "Christianity" in general.(95) The charge of "godlessness" in this context became an effort to link this social consensus to the feelings of American nationalism, and to turn both against the Republicans. The reasoning employed was interesting. Thomas Jefferson was an avowed Deist; hence all Republicans were "freethinkers;" freethinking was subversive of belief in God; belief in God was necessary to morals, which in turn were the very basis of free government. Hence, Republicans with their

freethinking notions were threats to the Constitution. With this, the logic was complete, and the linkage of nationalism and religion was embodied in the slogan, "For God & Country!"(96) By 1800, the issue was put with utter starkness: "THE GRAND QUESTION STATED... GOD -- AND A RELIGIOUS PRESIDENT: Or impiously declare for JEFFERSON - AND NO GOD!!!"(97)

The attempted linkage was further pursued by emphasizing Deism's European roots. No such exotic notions had a place in the New World. Hence, Deism and by extension, Republicanism, was un-American.(98)

The linkage of "godlessness" with "Jacobinism" required less demonstration -- it was only necessary to point to France where the Jacobins had launched a merciless attack on religion and the clergy. And for Federalists, at least, the final linkage between "Jacobinism" and "Republicanism" required no reasoning whatever -- it was an article of faith.

If such an identity were once assumed, however, the implications were inevitably frightening, for the events of the mid-1790's in France were genuinely terrifying to contemporaries and successors alike. It is not surprising that those to whom a similar course of events appeared to threaten in America itself should feel it imperative at all costs to avert that development.

Thus it happened that by 1797, the Federalists were ready to seize upon the crisis in French relations which had followed the conclusion of the Jay Treaty as the occasion for enacting a program of domestic legislation which was to prove their downfall. This was the war program referred to earlier.

To do them justice, it was largely due to the chances of history that it did prove their undoing, for so long as war with France remained as live and credible a possibility as it was in 1797-1798, neither the direct taxation nor the restrictions of freedom of expression included in the Federalist program aroused extensive opposition.(99)

To an important extent, it was sheer bad luck that thwarted the Federalists. The labyrinthine twists of French politics led to the Directory's reversing its American policy and seeking a peaceful accommodation with the United States; and solely as a result of the peculiarly stubborn, defiantly independent personality of President John Adams, the United State responded to France's overtures. The result was that by 1799, the threat of war with France, so clear and immediate in the preceding year, had sharply waned, thereby eliminating the justification for the Federalist preparedness program.

These were the fortuitous twists of history, yet "luck" is often the name we give to an imaginative response to unexpected circumstances. By 1799, their own anxiety had caused the extreme wing of the Federalist Party to lose that capacity for flexibility and imagination which in earlier crises they had displayed in such quantity. They made their fatal mistake when they persisted in calling for war when it was becoming increasingly clear that France genuinely sought peace. The rigidity of their response to this final challenge of the decade contributed heavily to the Republicans' subsequent

success in capturing the all-important peace issue in 1799, bringing the Federalist Party down in a defeat they themselves had foreseen but whose true causes they had always failed to understand.

(4) An election creating massive and durable electoral realignments: In the election of 1800, the Republicans did more than elect their first president; they also won their first majority in both houses of Congress. There had been a "Republican majority" in the House once before during the 3rd Congress, but it had been so tenuous as scarcely to deserve the name, for it was only in the years after 1796 that the party organization and discipline which render a nominal majority real were developed. (100)

The Republican triumph of 1800 went far beyond the national level. To mention only the major states, the Party conquered the Pennsylvania state government decisively, ousted the Federalists from control of New York, narrowly missed the governorship of Massachusetts, and consolidated their hold on the Virginia Legislature. The solidity of their new-won position varied from state to state; (101) intraparty factionalism soon obscured the meaning of the "Republican" label in New York and Pennsylvania; for example; in Massachusetts, the Republicans gained steadily in strength, winning control of the state government in 1807, but losing it again in 1808, facing close competition from the Federalists at each election thereafter. But it was to be forty years before the national government was held by any Administration which did not at

least call itself Republican.

(5) A first-rank political decision as to the future relationships between politics, government, and the socio-economic system: The Republican philosophy of government was clearly formulated by 1798, emerging from the conflict of the 1790's to stand in sharp contrast to the Federalist ideal of a centralized, activist state. To catch its essence, we need only listen to Jefferson's First Inaugural Address:

"... it is proper that you should understand what I deem the essential principles of government ... Equal and exact justice to all men, of whatever state or persuasion, religious or political; peace, commerce, and honest friendship, with all nations -- entangling alliances with none; the support of the state governments in all their rights, as... the surest bulwarks against anti-republican tendencies; the preservation of the general government in its whole constitutional vigor...; a jealous care of the right of election by the people...; absolute acquiescence in the decisions of the majority -- the vital principle of republics...; the supremacy of the civil over the military authority; economy in the public expense...; freedom of religion; freedom of the press; freedom of person under the protection of the habeas corpus; and trial by juries impartially selected -- these principles form the bright constellation which has gone before us, and guided our steps through an age of revolution and reformation."(102)

This was a body of doctrine so attractive as to have provided analytical categories and terms of discourse for an important part of American political debate to this day. The Jeffersonian ideal is one of a carefully circumscribed government, preserved by a watchfully strict interpretation of the Constitution. It also proclaims as legitimate only a style of authority in which individual rights must always take precedence over the demands of the State. These ideals strike an eternally

responsive chord in the American mind. They constitute a difficult creed however, for the exigencies of practical reality. After 1801, Republican policy ranged far enough from these principles to outrage some of the Party's own staunchest adherents, precipitating a party schism, and giving rise to whole schools of rival historiography in later years. The Jeffersonians were forced into this divergence by the difficulty of being a party in power whose philosophy had been forged in years of opposition and which was therefore often too unrealistic to cope with the knotty problems of actually governing. Yet this philosophy carried such immense emotional appeal that even those Republicans who came most to transgress its dictates did so with deep reluctance. Sincerely committed to a strict interpretation of the Constitution, Jefferson in 1803 worried greatly about the constitutionality of the Louisiana Purchase -- his most popular act while in office.(103) Deeply committed to avoiding both a war and the taxes which a war effort would require, the Republicans after 1806 experimented unsuccessfully with various techniques of commercial restrictions whose cumulative effect may well have been more ruinous than an immediate declaration of war would have been in 1807. Traditionally hostile to a national bank, the Republicans in 1811 defeated the rechartering of the United States Bank, even though a growing segment of their own party favored it. In 1816, both Houses of a Republican-controlled Congress passed an internal improvements bill, only to have a Republican President veto it because despite its clear

popularity, it required a broader interpretation of the Constitution than was permissible by Republican dogma.(104) This enduring influence of an ideology which in some areas was growing rapidly outmoded, upon those whose own desires it often impeded, testifies to the powerful emotional component of the "decision" of 1800. It may have been a utopian creed, but its power is incontestable.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 1

(1) William Nisbet Chambers, Political Parties in a New Nation: The American Experience, 1776-1809 (New York: Oxford University Press; 1963) pp. 28-29.

(2) Marshall Smelser, "The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion." American Quarterly, Vol. 10, No. 4 (Winter, 1968) pp. 392-394; Gaillard Hunt (ed.), Disunion Sentiment in Congress in 1794 (Washington, 1905) ; Alexander DeConde, Entangling Alliance: Politics & Diplomacy Under George Washington (Durham, North Carolina: Duke University Press; 1958) p. 491.

(3) Fulwar Skipwith to Thomas Jefferson, 17 March 1798, in George Gibbs, Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams, edited from the papers of Oliver Wolcott, Secretary of the Treasury, (2 Vols. New York: 1846) II, 159. Hereinafter cited as Gibbs, Memoirs.

(4) "Burleigh" in New York Commercial Advertiser, 9 October 1800.

(5) Duc de la Rochefoucault Liancourt. Travels through the United States of North America, the Country of the Iroquois, and Upper Canada, in the Years 1795, 1796, & 1797; with an authentic account of Lower Canada (4 Vols: London: R. Phillips; 1799) IV, 337. Hereinafter cited as La Rochefoucault Liancourt, Travels.

(6) Alfred F. Young, The Democratic-Republicans of New York (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 1967) pp. 6-7.

(7) George D. Luetscher, Early Political Machinery in the United States (Philadelphia: 1903) pp. 21-23.

(8) Bernard Bailyn, "Political Experience and Enlightenment Ideas in Eighteenth Century America" American Historical Review, Vol. 67, No. 2 (Jan., 1962) p. 346.

(9) Ibid., p. 342.

(10) David Hackett Fischer, The Revolution of American Conservatism (New York: Harper & Row; 1965) pp. xiv-xxv; 187-189;
J. R. Pole. Political Representation in England & The Origins of the American Republic (New York: St. Martin's Press: 1966) Appendix II, "Voting Statistics in America" pp. 543-565.

(11) Young, op.cit., pp. 339, 301.

(12) Sidney Pomerantz. New York An American City (New York: Columbia University Press: 1938) pp. 70-71.

(13) John Allen Krout & Dixon Ryan Fox. The Completion of Independence, 1790-1830 (New York: Macmillan Co.: 1944) p. 162, Note 1.

(14) William A. Robinson, Jeffersonian Democracy in New England (New Haven: Yale University Press; 1916) p. 30, Note 57.

(15) J. R. Pole, "Suffrage and Representation In Maryland, From 1776 to 1810: A Statistical Note & Some Reflections" Journal of Southern History, Vol. 24, No. 2 (May, 1958) p. 222.

(16) Frederick Jackson Turner. The Frontier in American History (New York: Holt, Rinehart & Winston; 1967); See also Homer C. Hockett "Western Influences on Political Parties to 1825" Ohio State University Bulletin, Contributions in History & Political Science #4, Vol. 22, No. 3 (August, 1917).

- (17) Anson E. Morse, The Federalist Party in Massachusetts to 1800 (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1909) passim.
- (18) Young, op.cit., pp. 257-276 & 496-504.
- (19) Allan Nevins, The American States During & After the Revolution 1775-1789 (New York: Macmillan Co.; 1927) p. 419. The same applied to the western areas of Virginia, which were Federalist in the early 1790's. See Charles Henry Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia 1776-1861 (Glendale: Arthur H. Clark Co.; 1910) p. 64.
- (20) Harry Ammon, "The Formation of the Republican Party in Virginia, 1789-1796," Journal of Southern History, Vol. 19, No. 3 (August, 1953) pp. 292-293.
- (21) Charles Beard, Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York: Free Press; 1965).
- (22) Charles Beard, The American Party Battle (New York: The Book League of America; 1929).
- (23) Ammon, op.cit., p. 293.
- (24) Paul Goodman, The Democratic-Republicans of Massachusetts: Politics in a Young Republic (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1964) pp. 97-102; Young, op.cit., p. 575.
- (25) Young, op.cit., pp. 26-27.
- (26) Young, op.cit., pp. 42-54. One contemporary sociologist indeed has suggested status-anxiety as the basic conceptual tool for the interpretation of American society throughout its history. See Rowland Berthoff, "The American Social Order: A Conservative Hypothesis," American Historical Review. Vol. 65, No. 3 (April, 1960) pp. 495-515, & esp. p. 512.

(27) Nevins, op. cit., p. 11.

(28) Fischer, op. cit., pp. 215-217.

(29) Merrill Jensen, The New Nation. (New York: Vintage Books; 1950) esp. Part IV, "The Struggle for Power in the States," pp. 259-347. See also F. J. Turner, op.cit., pp. 248-250.

(30) Herbert M. Morais, Deism in 18th Century America. (New York: Columbia University Press; 1934) p. 55 et seq.

(31) There also appears to have been a significant correlation between aspirant social status, party division, and ethnic issues. In these terms, Anglo-Saxons represented the established groups, and their challengers were variously the Scots-Irish, the Germans, etc. See Ian Graham, Colonists From Scotland (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 1956) passim; James Leyburn, The Scotch-Irish: A Social History (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 1962) passim; Ralph Wood (ed.), Pennsylvania Germans (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1942) passim.

(32) Young, op. cit., pp. 38-39. Clinton's standard campaign slogans were "tried and tested Whig," "old '76," and "the publican general."

(33) E. Wilder Spaulding, His Excellency George Clinton: Critic of the Constitution (New York: Macmillan Co.; 1938) pp. 46-47.

(34) The Federalists' attitude towards the Democratic Societies was in sharp contrast to their view of their own earlier attempt to create a political association in the form of the Society of the Cincinnati. Significantly, membership in the latter was to have been hereditary, and this was quite deliberately intended to buttress the established status of prominent

families. Equally significantly, the outcry over the hereditary qualification forced George Washington himself to repudiate it, and his disapprobation proved as fatal a blow to the Cincinnati's attraction as it later did to the Democratic Societies!.

(35) Eugene Perry Link. Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800 (New York: Columbia University; 1942) pp. 74-90.

(36) Young, op. cit., pp. 211-230.

(37) Goodman, op. cit., pp. 41-42.

(38) Robinson, op. cit., pp. 29-30.

(39) Fischer, op. cit., pp. 203-204, and citations p. 203.

(40) Fisher Ames to Oliver Wolcott, 3 August 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 396. Italics added.

(41) See Chapter 4.

(42) Link, op. cit., p. 187.

(43) "The Politics and Views of a Certain Party Examined." (Philadelphia: 1792).

(44) Porcupine's Gazette, in 1799, quoted in Charles O. Lerche, Jr., "Jefferson and the Election of 1800: A Case Study of the Political Smear," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 5, No. 4 (October, 1948) p. 479, note 42.

(45) Virginia Gazette & General Advertiser, 21 October 1800.

(46) Lerche, op. cit., p. 487.

(47) To C. C. Pinckney, 4 March 1801, in Richard J. Hooker (ed.), "John Marshall on the Judiciary, the Republicans, and Jefferson, March 4, 1801." American Historical Review, Vol. 53, No. 3.

(48) "Duty of Americans at the Present Crisis, Illustrated in a Discourse, Preached on the 4th of July 1798" (New York Public Library)

(49) The classic statement of this thesis is Louis Hartz, The Liberal Tradition in America (New York: Harvest Books; 1955). He has developed his analysis further in The Founding of New Societies (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, Inc.; 1964) pp. 69-102.

(50) To Lord George Gordon, 28 June 1792, in Beatrix Cary Davenport (ed.) A Diary of the French Revolution by Gouverneur Morris, 1752-1816 (2 Vols. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co.; 1939) II, 452.

(51) Fisher Ames to Oliver Wolcott, 12 June 1800. Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 369.

(52) Thomas Jefferson to William Branch Giles, 31 December 1795, in Paul Leicester Ford (ed.) The Works of Thomas Jefferson (12 Vols. New York & London: G.P. Putnam's Sons: 1904) VIII, 203.

(53) Rights of Man (New York & London: G.P. Putnam's Sons; 1894) p. 272.

(54) Lewis Rosenthal, American & France: The Influence on the United States on France in the XVIIIth Century, (New York: Henry Holt & Co.; 1882) pp. 105-139, 297-298.

(55) Palmer, op.cit., p. 527. Italics added.

(56) The much-discussed, controversial Palmer-Godechot thesis. See R.R. Palmer, The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe & America, 1760-1800. Vol.2,

"The Struggle" (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1964) and Jacques Godechot, France and the Atlantic Revolution of the 18th Century, 1770-1799, tr. Herbert H. Rowen (New York: Free Press; 1965). It is significant in this connection to note that the famous "self-created societies" of the 1790's were hardly self-created at all, but were instead part of a world-wide movement of such organizational efforts. See Link, op. cit., Chapter 2, where the powerful interplay of influence between the French and English Societies is described, together with their repercussions in America.

(57) New York Journal, 30 October 1792.

(58) "Rough Hower" in the New York Journal, 4 April 1795.

(59) Raymond Walters, Jr., Alexander James Dallas: Lawyer - Politician - Financier, 1759-1817 (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1943) p. 40.

(60) Walter R. Fee, The Transition From Aristocracy to Democracy in New Jersey, 1789-1829 (Somerville: Somerville Press; 1933) p. 39.

(61) Robinson, op. cit., p. 23.

(62) Louise Burnham Dunbar, "A Study of 'Monarchical Tendencies' in the United States from 1776 to 1801," University of Illinois Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. 10, No. 1 (March, 1922) p. 128. Albert Beveridge also reported that he was struck in the course of his research for his Life of John Marshall "by what seemed to be the honest belief of many apparently sensible men that there was a monarchical movement on foot," and he sees this fear as a false one which was "planted by

politicians, sincere and insincere" in the mind of an isolated and ignorant electorate. Letter to L.B. Dunbar, ibid., p. 115.

(63) 23 May 1792, in Adrienne Koch & William Peden (eds.) The Life & Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson (New York: Modern Library; 1944) pp. 510-513.

(64) Anas, 4 February 1818, in ibid., pp. 117-118.

(65) Timothy Phelps to Oliver Wolcott, from New Haven, 18 September 1800, in Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 419. Indignant capitals in the original; italics added.

(66) See inter alia to Jefferson, 12 May 1791, 13 July 1791; to Monroe, 15 September 1793; in Gaillard Hunt (ed.) The Writings of James Madison (9 Vols. New York & London G.P. Putnam's Sons; 1900-1910) VI, P. 50, 56, 197.

(67) To Jefferson, 2 September 1793, in Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 191.

(68) See Chapter 2.

(69) Young, op.cit., p. 415.

(70) See Chapter 2.

(71) Thomas Jefferson to William Green Munford, 18 June 1799, in Adrienne Koch, Jefferson & Madison: The Great Collaboration (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1950) pp. 181-182.

(72) L. H. Butterfield (ed.) The Adams Papers - Vol. III: Diary & Autobiography of John Adams (New York: Atheneum; 1964) pp. 226-250.

(73) See nearly any letter from Cabot in Gibbs, Memoirs, esp. Vol. 2; Cabot repeatedly voices his pleasure at staying home and "rusticating," which to a Versailles courtier would have amounted to exile and disgrace.

(74) Edward Handler, America & Europe in The Political Thought of John Adams (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1964) pp. 4-12.

(75) Palmer, op.cit., p. 524. A more discursive, but lively, account of the Federalist mentality is Vernon L. Parrington, Main Currents in American Thought, Vol. I: The Colonial Mind, 1620-1800 (New York: Harvest Books; n.d.) pp. 364-374.

(76) To Jedidiah Morse, 26 September 1795, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 247.

(77) To Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 8 February 1793, ibid., I, 86.

(78) Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., ibid., I, 331.

(79) Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 20 April 1796, ibid., I, 331. See also Oliver Wolcott to Frederick Wolcott, 15 December 1792, ibid., I, 85.

(80) "A Bone to Gnaw for the Democrats," March 1795, in John M. & James P. Cobbett (eds.) Selections from Cobbett's Political Works (6 Vols. London: 1835) I, 46. See also Fisher Ames to Oliver Wolcott, 2 September 1795: "Any regular system of government in the United States will be an obstacle to the success of the [French] unvaried plan of controlling our affairs by means of our rabble." Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 230.

(81) To Oliver Wolcott, 14 November 1796, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 393.

(82) To Oliver Wolcott, 25 April 1796, ibid., I, 332.

(83) "A Short Address to the Voters of Delaware," Kent County, 21 September 1800, signed "A Christian Federalist" in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., (ed.) The Making of the American Party System, 1789-1809 (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc.; 1965) p. 152.

(84) Lerche, op.cit., p. 482, Note 56.

(85) Winfred E. A. Bernhard, Fisher Ames, Federalist & Statesman 1758-1808 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press; 1965) pp. 352-353

(86) The fact that 18th Century American differed profoundly from 5th Century BC Greece did not escape all observers.

William Vans Murray attacked the analogy in 1787, when he replied to Mably's criticism of the American government -- but such voices were a small minority in the fevered 1790's. See Alexander DeConde, "William Vans Murray's Political Sketches: A Defense of the American Experiment," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol.41, No. 4 (March, 1966) pp. 630-635. Jefferson, of course, denied the analogy outright. See his eloquent refutation in the Notes on the State of Virginia, in Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings, pp. 246-248. But then, Jefferson was not a Federalist, and his convictions on this precise question were one of the most important reasons for his not being so.

(87) Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall (4 Vols. Boston & New York: Houghton Mifflin Co.; 1916) II, 287.

(88) See Chapter 5.

(89) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 510.

(90) Oliver Wolcott to Noah Webster, 10 August 1793, ibid., I, 104.

(91) James Hillhouse to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 23 January 1797, ibid., I, 438.

(92) Oliver Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 4 July 1797, ibid., I, 548.

(93) Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, 21 November 1796, ibid, I, 397

(94) Oliver Wolcott to George Washington, 18 May 1797, ibid, I, 534.

(95) "The sects that exist in the United States are innumerable. They all differ in respect to the worship due to the Creator, but... all the sects of the United States are comprised within the great unity of Christianity..." Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: Vintage Books; 1945) I, 314. See also II, 28.

(96) Morais, op.cit. p. 172.

(97) Gazette of the United States, September 1800, in Cunningham (ed.) op. cit. p. 154.

(98) Morais, op.cit., p. 173.

(99) See Chapter 4.

(100) See Chapter 4. In Part II, we shall discuss further the essential tenuousness of the Republican coalition.

(101) See Part II for further analysis of the internal cleavages within the Republican Party.

(102) Inauguration Address, 4 March 1801, in Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings, p. 324. See also Thomas Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 26 January 1799, in ibid, pp. 545-546.

(103) See Jefferson to John Dickinson, 9 August 1803, in Ford (ed.) Works, X, 28-30.

(104) Leonard D. White, The Jeffersonians: A Study in Administrative History, 1801-1829 (New York: The Macmillan Co.; 1959) p.22.

CHAPTER 2: 1793 and After - The First Reactivation
and the Roots of Party Politics.

Modern scholarship has fairly demolished the Beardian assertion that the party divisions of the 1790's were direct continuations of the alignments formed in the ratification battle of 1788. Once the new national government was launched, the ratification issue appears to have receded from saliency with striking speed, and between 1789 and 1793, no other issue of comparable scope or emotional content arose to take its place.(1)

This appears surprising only so long as we continue to think of the ratification issue as the first nation-wide cleavage in American politics. Closer analysis of the politics of 1788 yields a different conceptualization: this supposedly first national issue was in reality exceedingly fragmented. Far from being fought out on national lines, it was decided instead "in multigroup variety in thirteen state arenas." (2) The winning coalition in each state was specific to the existing political alignments of that state; and the appeals which the pro-ratification forces employed to gain support in one state were often the opposite of those which proved successful in another. (3)

The rapid decline of the ratification issue becomes more explicable when we note two facts. First, several of the anti-federalists themselves favored some form of national government. Second, the men who became the leaders of the Republican

interest in the early 1790's were not the same group who had opposed the Constitution in 1788. Republicans and Federalists alike were recruited from both former supporters and erstwhile opponents of ratification.(4)

It hardly requires mentioning, for example, that James Madison, the motive force of Congressional opposition by 1792, was co-author of the most famous pro-ratification tract, The Federalist. As for Thomas Jefferson, his opponents incessantly accused him of having opposed the Constitution. Yet this was hardly true. "I see in this instrument, a great deal of good," he wrote in 1788. "The consolidation of our government, a just representation, an administration of some permanence, and other features of great value, will be gained by it."(5) To James Madison, he was even more positive in his approval. "I sincerely rejoice at the acceptance of our new constitution by nine States. It is a good canvas, on which some strokes only want retouching."(6)

The "retouching" to which Jefferson was referring was the addition of amendments guaranteeing civil liberties, and the rapid passage of the Bill of Rights did much to allay the misgivings of many besides Jefferson. In New York, for example, where the Clintonians had headed the anti-ratification forces, it burdened them with the onus of "oppositionism" and contributed heavily to their defeat in the spring elections of 1790.(7)

The discontinuity of alignments is illustrated in the changing composition of the leadership on both sides. The

common base for the political opposition which was forming by 1792 was as yet unclear, but whatever the event might prove it to be, it was not antifederalism in the meaning of 1788. Most anti-ratification leaders did become Republicans -- but so did many 'pro-Constitutionalists, most notably Madison and Jefferson. In New York, the Livingstons and the Van Cortlandts had voted for the Constitution in the Poughkeepsie convention, but later became Republicans. Pennsylvania's first two Senators had both supported the Constitution -- but only one remained a Federalist. Similarly, of the first Pennsylvania delegation to the House of Representatives, four members moved from support of the Constitution to Republicanism, while Albert Gallatin pursued the opposite course; Beginning as an opponent of the Constitution, he became one of its staunchest supporters once the Bill of Rights had been enacted. Republicanism in Virginia came to include many old opponents of ratification such as Patrick Henry, James Monroe and George Mason, but its chieftain was the original leader of the ratification drive, James Madison. The same rearrangement of earlier allegiances occurred in South Carolina.⁽⁸⁾ The end result is to render Beard's analysis of the Republican leadership⁽¹⁰⁾ unacceptable. As one close analyst of the question has concluded, "the fact that twelve Federalists of 1787 became Republicans and six could not be classified seems of equal significance with the fact that twenty five became Federalists and suggests the impossibility of showing any substantial relationships."⁽¹¹⁾ Madison himself declared the

ratification cleavage to have disappeared after 1788.(12)

In view of the historiographical controversy of later days upon this point, it is interesting to note that many contemporaries were quite aware of this discontinuity. The Federalists, of course, were thoroughgoing Beardians, habitually equating Republicans with antifederalists and making irate comments as to "the anti-Americans, who generally too, are against the administration." (13) Others, however, drew a clear distinction between the two. "The republican party, who wish to preserve the government in its present form, are fewer in number; ... even when joined by the two, three, or half dozen anti-federalists, who, though they dare not avow it, are still opposed to any General Government; but, being less so to a republican than a monarchical one, they naturally join those whom they think pursuing the lesser evil," (14) remarked Jefferson in 1792. Even earlier, John Quincy Adams had noted that "the names Federalist and Antifederalist are no longer expressive of the sentiments which they were so lately supposed to contain, and I expect soon to hear a couple of new names, which will designate the respective friends of the national and particular systems." (15)

The younger Adams proved prophetic here but this was not immediately apparent. State politics in the years between 1789 and 1792 showed no consistent pattern of cleavage. Where local issues were not particularly controversial, as in Massachusetts and New Jersey, state affairs were tepid. Where

heated differences did exist, as in New York, they tended to be fought out between factional groupings united predominantly by loyalty to an individual leader, or interest groups united only by a specific short-range objective. Political issues at the state level remained fragmented among several local arenas, and the lines of cleavage were as yet amorphous and often contradictory.

Politics were more animated at the national level, for by 1792, an anti-Hamiltonian faction under James Madison's leadership was clearly evident in Congress. This group, composed of the Georgia and North Carolina delegations, half of Maryland's and all but one member of Virginia's, (16) had gone into opposition over the issue of Hamilton's financial program. In Congress at least, the debate was very heated. Nor was this surprising, since Hamilton's financial system was the surface manifestation of a philosophy of government highly distasteful to many sectors of American society.

Hamilton might legitimately be called America's first social engineer. His proposed system was far more than merely a financial program; its ultimate ends were political and social. Its benefits bade fair to accrue chiefly to the wealthiest and most privileged sectors of society and the proposal attracted violent criticism on these grounds. But from the Hamiltonian point of view, such criticism was largely irrelevant; that was what the system was meant to do, for political authority belonged in the hands of the monied elite. Hamilton shared with his Federalist followers a deep distrust

of popular majorities as the arbiters of political legitimacy:

"I am not much attached to the majesty of the multitude ... I consider them in general as very ill qualified to judge for themselves what government will best suit their peculiar situations; nor is this to be wondered at. The science of government is not easily understood."(17)

The proper nature of political authority was that of "a speaking Aristocracy in the face of a silent Democracy,"(18) and the new government must look for support to this elite if it were to survive as a "republic." Once it came to depend on the volatile and irresponsible masses, the road to dissolution was short.

In order to enlist the personal allegiance of the rich and influential, it was necessary to link their economic interests to the support of the new government; and the instruments to this end were to be the interrelated institutions of the funded debt, the national bank, and the excise. As one of Hamilton's closest disciples put it:

"I can consider a funding system as important, in no other way than as an engine of government... The influence of a clergy, nobility and armies, are and ought to be out of the question in this country; but unless some active principle of the human mind can be interested in support of the government, no civil establishments can be formed, which will not appear like useless and expensive pageants, and by their unpopularity weaken the government which they are intended to support."(19)

To which the senior Wolcott revealingly responded:

"... unless there shall be a direct taxation which shall affect every man of property, the people in general in this country will not have the least apprehension of the existence of a national government, and consequently have no regard for it. A direct taxation (as odd as it may seem,) is essentially necessary to induce a people to love their government."(20)

In the context of 18th century America, this entire

design collided head-on with the opposing conviction, so firmly rooted in the revolutionary heritage, that government must remain simple and weak if it were not to become tyrannical, and that it must rely squarely upon the support of plain citizens if it were not to degenerate into a corrupt aristocracy along the lines of Great Britain. From this viewpoint, Hamilton's system "flowed from principles adverse to liberty, and was calculated to undermine and demolish the Republic, by creating an influence of his department over the members of the legislature." (21)

It was this substructure of philosophic conflict which gave heat to the Congressional debate over Hamiltonian finance. It yielded a new perception of the lines of cleavage in American society wherein "the majority of the people, say three millions (the taxpayers)" were weighted down to benefit "the holders of certificates, a few thousand (the receivers)," (22) and in which "the very system of the Secretary's report seems to be to lay as much on the people as they can bear." (23) The outrage which this perception produced came from far more than irritated pocketbooks. It came instead from the burning conviction that the Hamiltonians were out to subvert every great ideal for which the American Revolution had been fought.

It was, in short, the first "reactivation" at work. "Paper influence" was seen to be debauching every principle of free government. The rights of man were outraged by a system which burdened five million taxpayers to enrich 5000 security-holders, and whose result was that only 1/1000 of the American

people "retains in reality a political existence." (24) The rights of property were violated as well for "paper" was no more than the means of transferring to a faction the property of others. (25) Finally, the old theme of Anglophobia emerged in force:

"Is it not time to enquire, whether the constitution was designed to beget a government, or only a British system of finance?..... Already it is whispered that the public debt is the support of government - that the public will cannot be intrusted with a legislative influence - ... As if honesty and integrity were entitled to less confidence, than rapacity and corruption. This last vicious principle of that English model, so slavishly copied, is thus avowed. - Judge whether it is a fit basis for republicanism." (26)

The opposition, however, was as yet more instinctive than confident in 1790. For all the misgivings which Hamiltonian finance aroused among fervent Republicans, it placed them at a double disadvantage. First of all, they had difficulty understanding it, and their failure to grasp its financial subtleties hamstrung their efforts to formulate effective counterarguments. Jefferson called it "a puzzle, to exclude popular understanding and inquiry," (27) and in New York at least, this puzzlement seriously undermined the opposition arguments. In their mystification, Hamilton's critics there were forced back upon the shopworn arguments of traditional agrarianism and upon a slightly monotonous insistence upon the overriding necessity for economy in government. (28) This hardly made for forcefulness.

Secondly, the opposition readily admitted that the new government needed revenue, and as objectionable as they found Hamilton's program, they had no alternative to propose. (29)

This placed them in something of a dilemma, for whatever accusations the Federalists later launched at them, the Republicans were most decidedly neither anti-Constitutionalists nor anti-Unionists. On the contrary, they were preoccupied above all with the careful preservation of the Constitution's purity, and their hostility to "consolidation" arose from their fears that the Federalists drive for government centralization would destroy the Union itself:

"I can scarcely contemplate a more incalculable evil than the breaking of the Union into two or more parts. Yet when we consider the mass which opposed the original coalescence; when we consider that... the monarchical federalists... have themselves adopted the very constructions of the Constitution, of which, when advocating its acceptance before the tribunal of the people, they declared it unsusceptible; that the republican federalists who espoused the same government for its intrinsic merits, are disarmed of their weapons; that which they denied as prophecy, having now become true history, who can be sure that these things may not proselyte the small number which was wanting to place the majority on the other side? And this is the event at which I tremble..."(30)

In 1790-1791, therefore, Hamilton's program presented a difficult target for a party which did not wish to destroy the new government or weaken national unity.(31) And if Hamilton's proposals were rejected, the only viable alternative would be direct taxes. The latter, in the American context, would be so thunderously unpopular as to be politically unthinkable. In Massachusetts, for example, it had been precisely the effort to impose them which had precipitated Shay's Rebellion, and that memory quite paralyzed the opposition to Assumption and Funding in a state where since 1786, the price of social peace had been fiscal stalemate.(32) Reluctantly, therefore,

the Republicans were forced to admit that:

"There are objections of different sorts to the proposed mode of revenue. But as direct taxes would be still more generally obnoxious, and as imports are already loaded as far as they will bear, an excise is the only resource..."(33)

The Republicans were further handicapped by the fact that the concerted attack on Hamiltonian finance was largely confined to Congress. Outside the walls of the national legislature, opposition to the program was neither sufficiently widespread nor focused enough to serve as the basis for a national political movement. Not that the makings of such a movement were not present; in Chapter 1 we saw how numerous they were. Neither was there any lack of murmurings that the fruits of the Revolution stood in immediate danger of subversion, for Republicanism too had its Jeremiahs:

"A system is daily developing itself which must gradually undermine and finally destroy our so much boasted equally, liberty, and republicanism... The desired effect is already produced... Men of pride, ambition, talents, all press forward to exhibit their abilities on the theatre of the General Government. This, I think, may be termed grade first...

"The second grade... is to create and multiply officers and appointments under the General Government by every possible means in the diplomacy, judiciary, and military. This is called giving the President a respectable patronage - a term... which I take to mean... that the President should always have a number of lucrative places in his gift to reward those members of Congress who may promote his views or support his measures; more especially if by such conduct they should forfeit the esteem of their constituents... Respice finem as to the end."(34)

But the discontent, although real, was unformulated, unorganized and vague, and while Hamiltonian finance did provide the basis for much of the grumbling, it provided no foothold

upon which this diffuse unrest might be shaped into an issue. Consequently, the financial program never became a party issue.⁽³⁵⁾ It was altogether too abstruse to use as an issue in grass-roots politics in Virginia, for example.⁽³⁶⁾ Elsewhere, as in New York, it was actively popular among those commercial and political circles which were otherwise most likely to oppose the Federalist Administration.⁽³⁷⁾ Similarly, Charleston, South Carolina, soon to become a hotbed of radical agitation against the Administration, was solidly in favor of Assumption because of the relief it would bring to a state heavily burdened by debt.⁽³⁸⁾ And even William Macklay favored the national Bank.⁽³⁹⁾

The country, moreover, was prospering. The roots of recovery actually lay in the Confederal era,⁽⁴⁰⁾ but its full bloom coincided with the opening of the Federalist years, and with the logic usual in political matters, this coincidence enabled the Federalists to receive credit for the prosperity they had not in reality created. The new government's administrative apparatus took hold with remarkable smoothness and efficiency.⁽⁴¹⁾ The transcendent and universal prestige of George Washington did the rest. Malcontents in Congress might take alarm at the formation of a "court party"⁽⁴²⁾ or indulge in classical analogies between the "stock-jobbers" of 1791 and the "pretorian band" of imperial Rome,⁽⁴³⁾ but if the "republican interest" were ever to transform itself into a nationwide coalition, it needed to find a big, inflammable issue capable of amalgamating a heterogeneous collection of discontents.

And this it simply did not have.(44) Concerted political opposition thus appeared likely to be doomed to minor skirmishing actions in Philadelphia, while the Federalists' success, in the usual curious circle, ensured their success.

Then, upon this backdrop of diffused ferment, there descended the heightening drama of the French Revolution. That great upheaval had been in progress since 1789, but until 1792, its effect on American public opinion had been overwhelmingly favorable.(45) Indeed, there was a sense of personal pride in the first American reaction, for very many Americans saw their country as having actually produced the French revolt by the force of their own example. Thus, Madison could write that:

"... your pleasure as an American will be enhanced by the reflection that the light which is chasing darkness & despotism from the old World, is but an emanation from that which has procured and succeeded the establishment of liberty in the new."(46)

The example, moreover, had been direct and immediate, for many of the Girondin leaders of 1789 had been officers in the American Revolutionary armies. Thus it had been their personal experience which

"seems first to have awakened the thinking part of this nation in general from the sleep of despotism in which they were sunk. The officers... who had been to America, were mostly young men, less shackled by habit and prejudice, and more ready to assent to the dictates of common sense and common right. They came back impressed with these. The press... began to disseminate them; conversation, too, assumed a new freedom; ... and a very extensive and zealous party was formed, who, sensible of the abusive government under which they lived, longed for occasions of reforming it."(47)

In 1789, therefore, as so often in their later history, Americans interpreted another nation's revolution in terms of their own. Another nation had joined the cavalcade of human progress into the better future opening before mankind in which Americans even then clearly saw themselves as the torch-bearers. Madison proclaimed that:

"In Europe, charters of liberty have been granted by power. America has set the example & France has followed it, of charters of power granted by liberty. This revolution in the practice of the world may... be pronounced the most triumphant epoch of its history."(48)

Tom Paine, too, firmly equated the two revolutions as heralds of the millennium:

"What were formerly called Revolutions, were little more than a change of persons, or an alteration of local circumstances... But what we now see in the world, from the Revolutions of America & France, are a renovation of the natural order of things, a system of principles as universal as truth & the existence of man, & combining moral with political happiness & national prosperity."(49)

Another nation had possessed itself of the blessings of republican government "which it is the glory of America to have invented, and her unrivalled happiness to possess." (50)

France, however, was not America. Its society torn by deep divisions, its politics wracked by irreconcilable ideologies, its revolution became an agony whose spasms may be detected to this day. The first convulsion came late in 1792. The King was executed, a Republic proclaimed, and soon thereafter, a reign of terror inaugurated -- all in the name of the glowing ideals of freedom and equality. The effect upon American observers was profound. Which aspect was one to stress -- the actions or the ideals? One's decision provided

the basis for the first clearcut nationwide polarization in American politics. (51)

The decision often correlated closely with one's satisfaction as to the results of America's own revolution; for in 1792, Americans had by no means arrived at any unanimous decision as to just what their Revolution had been all about. Only in later years, did they come to interpret it as a popular revolt against all oppression in the name of freedom and equality for all; in the 1790's this interpretation was anything but unanimous. Once its mythic interpretation was firmly established, the Revolution of 1776 became the pivotal symbol for American national cohesion; but in the 1790's, with its mythology still at issue, it was a prime bone of contention. And as the French drama progressed from climax to climax, Americans' conflicting interpretations of its true nature meshed with their conflicting opinions as to the nature of their own revolt. The result was a violent collision of opinion as to what sort of social order the American Revolution had actually been fought to establish. (52)

If America was to remain a deferential society where people "knew their place," the French Revolution was a descent into chaos whose outcome could only be despotism. And it is important to note that in the 1790's, America was indeed such a society, however fluid it might appear by comparison with Europe. As one contemporary noted:

"Though there be no distinctions acknowledged by the law in the United States, fortune, and the nature of the professions form different classes. The merchants,

the lawyers, the land-owners who do not cultivate their land themselves... the physicians, and the clergy, form the first class. The inferior merchants, the farmers, and the artisans, may be included in the second; and the third class is composed of workmen, who let themselves by the day, by the month, &c.

"In balls, concerts, and public amusements, these classes do not mix; and yet... every one calls himself, and is called by others, a gentleman; a small fortune is sufficient for the assumption of this title, as it carries men from one class to another. They deceive themselves very much who think that pure republican manners prevail in America." (53)

To those wedded to Burke's holistic concept of society, inequality of condition was an inescapable reality which must necessarily be mirrored in social and political relationships alike, if society and government were not both to disintegrate. (54)

"Our greatest danger is from the contagion of levelism;" wrote Chauncey Goodrich. "What folly is it that has set the world agog to be all equal to French barbers... before long the authors of entire equality will shew the world the danger of their wild rant." (55)

If on the other hand America was to become a society guided by the ideal of equality for all -- however elastic the definition of "equality" might remain -- then the French Revolution, for all its excesses, was furthering the cause of humanity as a whole. "In the struggle which was necessary," wrote Thomas Jefferson in 1793, "many guilty persons fell without the forms of trial, and with them some innocent... My own affections have been deeply wounded by some of the martyrs of this cause, but rather than it should have failed I would have seen half the earth desolated; were there but an Adam and an

Eve left in every country, and left free, it would be better than as it now is..."(56)

The French Revolution inspired exhilaration even in some rather unexpected quarters. Joel Barlow, reared in the rock-hard Federalist atmosphere of Connecticut, became one of the enthusiasts among Republican ideologues, much to the concern of his elders at home. Seeking to make them understand his apostasy, he wrote from France:

"I have no doubt but that... the event of the French revolution will be such as to offer us much for imitation... I do not mean that a revolution, or anything like it, will be necessary to us, but that many principles for the general diffusion of information,... & the encouragement of such a degree of equality in the condition of men as tends to their dignity & happiness, will certainly be established by them & will be equally necessary for us. I know that you and some of my other friends... consider my head as turned with these ideas... but had you seen & felt what I have, I am confident you would have been of my opinion."(57)

Because it could call forth such powerful emotional response, the French Revolution became the touchstone of American politics for seven eventful, bitterly divisive years.(58) In state after state, it provided the crucial emotional catalyst to precipitate a nationwide bipolar alignment from what had been until then a plurality of oppositions.(59) The emotions it engendered reached into every area of existence. Republican Congregationalists in New England seceded from Federalist churches, and then wrangled long and bitterly over the division of the congregation's property.(60) By 1797, "Men who have been intimate all their lives, cross the streets to avoid meeting, and turn their heads another way, lest they should

be obliged to touch their hats." (61) Perhaps never again in American politics was popular involvement to be so intense, so all-inclusive and so bitter as in these years.

Nor was it possible to confine the debate to abstract arguments, for France's internal revolution triggered a European war whose battles spread beyond the Continent to the high seas, where it posed unprecedented foreign policy problems for the young American government. The years from 1793 to 1800 became a period of nearly continuous crises in foreign affairs, and the result was that the emotional and ideological "cold-war" impact of the European war upon American politics was greatly sharpened by the concrete "hot war" problems to which it gave rise.

The latter issues were altogether new in American politics, but it is inevitable in all human affairs that we should call upon our understanding of past experiences to interpret new ones. The thorny problems which now arose from the Anglo-French war demanded that the new American government arrive at concrete policy decisions to cope with them. Before any such decisions might be made, however, Americans had to decide in what relationship they stood to the two warring powers. And the criteria which millions of Americans invoked in order to establish this new self-definition were their divergent understandings of their own revolutionary history.

The revolutionary period had created strong emotional associations in the American mind with both England and France, for each of the European powers had been closely connected to

one of the opposing sides in the American struggle. In the popular mind at least, England had been the enemy oppressor, ousted at last after a bitter battle. France by contrast had been America's saviour, for had it not been for French aid, providentially forthcoming under the alliance of 1778, the American Revolution might have gone down in history as but another abortive colonial revolt.

Consequently, millions of Americans were left with a deep and enduring sense of gratitude towards France. In 1790, Madison proposed that the United States enact discriminatory tonnage duties which would favor France over Great Britain, because he could not persuade himself that "the transactions between the United States and those whose services were most instrumental in saving their country, did in fact extinguish the claims of the latter on the justice of the former." (62) William Macklay declared that "Gratitude, generosity, sensibility of favors, benignity, and beneficence... these passions, so far as they respected the French nation, were deeply engraved on the bosom of every American Revolutionist." (63) Even Gouverneur Morris, soon to become one of the bitterest American critics of revolutionary France, urged in 1791 that the United States delay repayment of its debt to France only so much as was possible without injuring either party "because the Conduct of this Nation (France) has been so generous to us that it would be very ungrateful indeed to take Advantage of those Necessities which the Succor afforded to America has occasioned." (64)

Now France and England were locked in yet another struggle whose battle-cries resonated powerfully with those in America's own history. Once again, "monarchy" sought to suppress a "republic," and it was very easy for many Americans immediately to identify the French cause with their own. Thus, the effect in America of the new upheaval in Europe was to reactivate a whole array of sentiments which dated from the American Revolution.

To later observers, clearly aware of the vast differences between the American and French Revolutions such a reaction appears wildly irrational. But if these two uprisings are assumed to be identical in kind, the process is rigorously logical -- and in many contemporary minds, that assumption was most decisively made. Irrationally or not, many Americans "sincerely believed that our own liberties were bound up inextricably with those of France, and that these were fearfully menaced by all the potentates of Europe; that any excesses France might commit were pardoned by the fundamental and supreme right of self-defense." (65)

Others, however, were infuriated by this equation. To them, France was a scene of "despotism by the mob or the military from the first" and of "hypocrisy of morals to the last." (66) Between the two revolutions yawned as great a gulf as "that between liberty and licentiousness." (67) Thus Americans conflicting interpretations of their own revolution meshed with their opposite perceptions of France's to produce passionate political division, for the manner in which one

perceived either revolution's true nature rendered European events either exhilarating or appalling.

The Republicans insistently maintained that the French cause was the American cause, and that France's battle was America's own:

"... all attempts... to alienate the good will of the people of Amer^a from the cause of liberty & repubⁿ Government in F. have a tendency to weaken y^e affection to the free principles of y^e own Gov^t ... such attempts to disunite Nations mutually attach^d to the cause of liberty... ought more particularly to be reprobated at the present crisis, when such vast efforts are making by a combination of Princes & Nobles to crush an example that may open the eyes of all mankind to their nat^l & political rights... [there is] a plan ... tow^{ds} assimilating our Gov^t to the form & spirit of the British Monarchy... this apprehension is greatly strength^d by the active zeal displayed by persons disaffected to the Amⁿ Revⁿ & by others of known Monarch^l principles, in propagating prejudices agst the French Nationa & Revolution."(68)

Or, as a Federalist pungently put it:

"By a strange kind of reasoning, some suppose the liberties of American depend on the right of cutting throats in France."(69)

The collision of these two outlooks within American society produced two clearcut, mutually exclusive attitudinal clusters in American politics -- clusters constituting the emotional equations which are the basis of all political division. Once formulated, these clusters defined the terms in which the political battles of the 1790's were to be fought.

The Federalist "cluster" defined the French Revolution as the road to chaos, and England as the last bulwark of social order.(70) It was marked by especially intense anxiety that America's very independence stood in imminent peril of being

subverted to French influence. Both to preclude this and to defend the existing structure of social and political authority, it came to place growing emphasis upon a deferential style of society and a defense of "government by the best." As Hamilton put it, "the science of government is not easily understood." (71)

The Republican "cluster" defined the French Revolution as a furthering of mankind's advance to greater freedom, and condoned the excesses of its means by emphasizing the glory of its ends: (72)

"Society has hitherto been curst with governments, whose existence depended on the extinction of truth. Every moral light has been smothered under the bushel of perpetual imposition... But these covers are crumbling to the dust... The picture of man could not have been fairly drawn while he sat with a veil upon his face... He rises into light, astonished at what he is, ashamed of what he has been, and unable to conjecture at what he may arrive." (73)

England, by contrast, was regarded as the bastion of monarchy, corruption and antirepublican government. Significantly, Republicans agreed that America's independence was in danger -- but for them the danger came not from France, but from Great Britain, and more precisely from Great Britain's "monarchical" partisans in America. These must be thwarted if the American republic were to survive. Hence, the Republicans placed ever-increasing emphasis upon the natural equality of all citizens, and upon their ability to govern themselves. The art of government was no esoteric science; it lay within the capacity of all, for the "republican principle" was "the great simplicity of nature applied to the

organization of society." (74)

Most important, each side defined its opposition as the tools of a foreign power, and perceived its opponents' objective to be the subversion of America's independence.

The "mirror-image" is perfect. To the Republicans the Federalists were "an Anglican, monarchical aristocratical party... whose avowed object is to draw over us the substance, as they have already done the forms, of the British government." (75) They were "a British party systematically aiming at an exclusive connection with the British Govern^t & ready to sacrifice to that object as well the dearest interests of our commerce as the most sacred dictates of National honor." (76) They obviously enjoyed no real popular support, for Great Britain was "the power who alone supports her (America's) enemies in America," (77) and in view of England's unremitting ill-will and her growing, insidious influence within America itself, it was slanderous to level at "those who wish merely to recover self-government," namely the Republican Party, "the charge of subserving one foreign influence, because they resist submission to another." (78)

The Federalist perception was a point-for-point reflection of the Republican. The Republicans were "the Desperate, devoted, hired agents of France" whose objects were "to destroy the Federal Government, facilitate the introduction of the French, and share in the spoils." (79) It was common knowledge that "since the year 1778, France has never relinquished the design... of maintaining an improper influence in

the councils of America." As proof of this assertion, it was only necessary to recall "the known opposition of French agents to the adoption of the present constitution of the United States; (and) the uniform connection between French politics and anti-federalism." (80) The objectives of this pernicious faction were "to remodel our Constitution under the influence or coercion of France, to form with her a perpetual alliance, offensive and defensive, and to give her a monopoly of our trade, by peculiar and exclusive privileges." (81) The Republicans' insistence on France's claims to America's gratitude was "dangerous to the independence, and offensive to the pride of the United States," (82) while their accusations that the Federalists were pro-British was "the most atrocious of Jacobin calumnies." (83) This slanderous attack was no more than a malign Republican subterfuge to conceal their own duplicity. "It is an undeniable fact, that there exists in the United States, a dangerous French influence... To keep themselves in countenance, this faction asserts the existence of a British influence in the public councils." (84)

The juxtaposition of these two outlooks yields some rather unorthodox conclusions as to what the crux of controversy truly was in these years. Consider: both parties were genuinely fearful that America's independence was endangered by a foreign power; they differed only as to whether that power was England or France. Both parties were firmly convinced that their opponents were the perfidious tools of one

of these foreign nations. Both parties, that is to say, were ardently nationalistic, and the fury of their mutual hostility stemmed directly from the fact that each perceived the other as unpatriotic and un-American.

This insight allows us to cut through the layers of obscuring rhetoric about "French factions" and "British partisans." Neither side in fact favored any foreign power, except insofar as they regarded that power's weight as necessary to counterbalance the unpatriotic designs of the other's domestic adherents.(85) The Federalists, for example, were capable of some very strong anti-British statements. As early as 1792, the senior Wolcott declared that:

"... it is long since that I have not had the least confidence in the honor or justice of the British government, or nation. Their pride, ferocious manners and keen avarice, induce them to carry what they call commerce, by military force, into all parts of the world. Insolence and a rage for plunder are the characteristics of the nation. No sense of morals has the least influence upon their conduct."(86)

In 1794, Theodore Sedgwick indignantly asserted:

"Such indeed are the injuries which we have received from Great Britain that I believe I should not much hesitate on going to war, but that we must in that case be allied to France."(87)

Two years later, Alexander Hamilton expostulated that:

"The British ministry are as great fools or as great rascals as our Jacobins, else our commerce would not continue to be distressed as it is by their cruisers..."(88)

The Republicans, for their part, never failed to choose American over French interests, once they perceived the two to be in conflict. In 1793, Thomas Jefferson urged the Republican interest to sever its connections with Genet, because by his

extravagant behavior, the French Minister was jeopardizing the true republican cause in the United States.(89) By the end of the decade, the Republicans had shifted their public appeals from advocacy of France to an attack on the anti-republican nature of the Federalists' domestic policies. The French Minister to the United States in the mid-1790's showed that he saw very clearly that the Republicans favored France only so long as it was expedient to do so. Thomas Jefferson, he informed Paris, was drawn to France chiefly because he feared England, and should that fear be allayed, the attraction would wane correspondingly. Jefferson, first and foremost, was an American, and "an American is the born enemy of all the peoples of Europe." (90)

This insight enables us to refute yet another thesis as to the true roots of party division in America: that the cleavage was between "nationalism and localism" and that all the various issues that arose "were referred to one or the other of these hostile conceptions of government." (91) It is a gross inaccuracy to accuse the Republicans of anti-Unionism. The assertion is usually grounded on the supposedly secessionist implications of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions. This, however, is to misinterpret the Republican stance of 1798-1799 in terms of the selective use of the Resolutions' theories by later southern ideologues. As designed by Jefferson and Madison, the Resolutions were intended primarily as a defense of human rights, and the assertion of states' rights was conceived as being instrumental to that end, not

the end itself. (92) Moreover, Republicans in other states reacted uneasily to the secessionist implications of the Resolutions, and this contributed heavily to their cool reception in other states by others besides Federalists. (93) Even in 1792, the Republicans condemned "those... who would force on the people the melancholy duty of chusing between the loss of the Union, and the loss of what the union was meant to secure," (94) and by the late 1790's, support of the Union and of the Federal Constitution had come to be one of the Party's chief campaign appeals. (95) As Albert Gallatin remarked, "the Republicans were the most sincere and zealous supporters of the Constitution. It was that which constituted their real strength." (96)

What was really at issue, in short, was the symbology of American nationalism, and it was the impact of the French Revolution upon the specifically American context which polarized this question along strongly dualistic lines. Thus arose the first two national parties in American history, and out of their conflict grew a style of politics, an institutionalized party organization, and a body of doctrine and precedent, all of which has had enduring influence upon America's entire subsequent political development. In view of the lasting significance of these events, it may be worth considering how differently it all might have happened. Consider: in the event, the European war produced two basically divergent linkages between America's revolutionary heritage and current events. The Republicans, powerfully stirred by the ideological aspects

of the French Revolution, linked these to the American heritage as they perceived the latter, and ended with the conviction that for true patriots, the American Revolution was incomplete until the hegemony of the "aristocratic few" was overthrown. The Federalists were equally stirred by the chaotic aspects of the French drama, and believing that France's supposed "liberty" was in fact the "licentiousness" which destroyed liberty, they linked French events to their own conception of the American heritage, and ended with the conviction that for true patriots, both America's national independence and the preservation of her revolutionary heritage of "true" liberty required that order be preserved at home against the agitations of "Jacobinical democrats."

Yet what if the French Revolution had happened ten years later? The Anglo-French War of 1793 would then have been but one more in the series of routine collisions between these two nations which had occurred regularly during the preceding hundred years, and the conflicts would have utterly lacked that passionately ideological, quasi-religious, quality which in the event rendered it a source of such furious division. No longer would it have been "a war... in which... all the dearest interests of society were involved, & which was a contest between government & disorder, virtue & vice, & religion & impiety... this most just of wars." (97) A war of the earlier type would have linked up far differently with America's historical experience. France would not then have appeared to so many Americans to be fighting a battle analogous

to their own revolution -- indeed the very opposite might have happened. Not so very much earlier, there had been such a war: in 1754. And its result had been to produce in America such an intense wave of British-American patriotism, coupled with intense Francophobia, as to cause Benjamin Franklin to assert in 1760 that "If ever there was a national war, this is truly such a one; a war in which the interest of the whole (Anglo-American) nation is directly and fundamentally concerned."⁽⁹⁸⁾ The potential for such a reaction was still present in 1791, moreover, for as William Macklay regretfully observed:

"ours was a civil war with Britain, and... the similarity of language, manners, and customs will, in all probability, restore our old habits and intercourse, and... this intercourse will revive -- indeed, I fear it has already revived -- our ancient prejudices against France. Should we differ with France, we are thrown inevitably into the hands of Britain; and, should France give any occasion, we have thousands and tens of thousands of anti-Revolutionists ready to blow the coals of contention."⁽⁹⁹⁾

Shorn of its ideological content, the Anglo-French War of 1793 would have precipitated very different "molecular" linkages within American politics. The Republicans would have been deprived of the emotional resources which first made them into a party and then powered their rise to triumph, and the Federalist supremacy, which in the event crumbled so rapidly, might never have confronted the sort of powerful emotions, skilfully politicized, which in startlingly short order succeeded in bringing it down. To a great extent, the birth of party politics in America was a product of historical accident.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 2

- (1) This trend is visible in several states after 1789. For Massachusetts, see Robinson, op.cit., p. 2; Goodman, op.cit., pp. 23-30, and 47-50. For New Jersey, see Fee op.cit., pp. 17-19. For Virginia, see Ambler, op.cit., pp. 59-60; H. Ammon, "Formation of the Republican Party in Virginia...", op.cit., pp. 309-310. H. Ammon, "The Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia: An Interpretation." Virginia Magazine of History & Biography Vol. 71, (April, 1963) pp. 154-158. For the disintegration of the antifederalist coalition in New York during the ratification battle itself, see Young, op.cit., pp. 109-128; for subsequent blurriness of alignments in 1791. See ibid., pp. 209-210.
- (2) Chambers, op.cit., p. 28.
- (3) See Chambers, loc.cit., for a state-by-state analysis of ratification alignments and appeals.
- (4) Joseph Charles, The Origins of the American Party System. (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1961) p. 96.
- (5) To the Count de Moustier, 17 May 1788, in Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings, p. 444.
- (6) 31 July 1788, ibid., p. 450.
- (7) Young, op.cit., pp. 123-127, and 154-162.
- (8) Who moved yet further to become a Federalist by 1799.
- (9) Chambers, op.cit., pp. 104-105.
- (10) Beard, Economic-Origins..., pp. 10-33.
- (11) Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801. (Chapel

Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press; 1957) p. 23, Note 71.

(12) "A Candid State of Parties" in National Gazette, 26 September 1792, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 106-114.

(13) Charles Lee to Oliver Wolcott, 5 October 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 567.

(14) Thomas Jefferson to President George Washington, 23 May 1792, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, pp. 512-513. Italics added. Martin Van Buren drew a similarly clear distinction. See Inquiry..., p. 270.

(15) April 1790, in W. C. Ford (ed.), Writings of John Quincy Adams. (7 Vols. New York: 1913-1917) I, 50.

(16) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 22.

(17) "Caesar" No. 2, in New York Daily Advertiser, 17 October 1787, in Richard B. Morris (ed.), The Basic Ideas of Alexander Hamilton. (New York: Washington Square Press; 1956) p.105.

(18) Samuel Stone, quoted in Fischer, op.cit., p. 4.

(19) Oliver Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 27 March 1790. Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 43.

(20) Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, 23 April 1790, ibid., I, 45.

(21) Thomas Jefferson to President George Washington, 9 September 1792, in Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings, p. 518.

(22) William Macklay, The Journal of William Macklay. (New York: Albert & Charles Boni; 1927) entry for 19 February 1790, p. 194.

(23) Ibid., loc. cit.

- (24) John Taylor, Definition of Parties; or the Political Effects of the Paper System Considered. (Philadelphia, 5 April 1794) p. 14.
- (25) Ibid., p. 5.
- (26) Ibid., p. 7, 10.
- (27) Anas, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings p. 121.
- (28) Young, op.cit., p. 179.
- (29) See James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, 17 June 1792, paraphrased in Ammon, "Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia...", p. 159.
- (30) Thomas Jefferson to President George Washington, 23 May 1792, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 514.
- (31) Charles, op.cit., p. 97; Ammon, "Formation of the Republican Party in Virginia..." op.cit. pp. 297-298.
- (32) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 32-37.
- (33) James Madison to Edmund Pendleton, 2 January 1791, in Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 24. See also same to same, ibid., VI, 44.
- (34) Macklay, Journal, entry for 31 December 1790, p. 351.
- (35) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 4.
- (36) Ammon, "Formation...", p. 310.
- (37) Security holdings were especially concentrated in New York, and the holders included not only Federalists but many erstwhile antifederalists and the state government as well. Thus, Madison's discrimination proposal found no support in New York, and even the antifederalists there supported Funding. They opposed Assumption, but did not mount much of public offensive. Young, op.cit., pp. 169-178.

(38) Ulrich B. Phillips. The South Carolina Federalists, Part II," American Historical Review, Vols. 14, No. 4 (July 1909) pp. 732-733.

(39) Entries for 18 January and 20 January 1791, Journal, p.362.

(40) Jensen, op.cit., pp. 194-234.

(41) Leonard D. White, The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History. (New York: Macmillan Co.; 1948) passim and esp. pp. 400-418, 474-479.

(42) Macklay, Journal, entry for 15 July 1789, p. 112.

(43) Madison to Jefferson, 8 August 1791, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 59.

(44) This is interestingly apparent in the curiously anti-climactic character of Madison's article for the National Gazette, 2 April 1792. Entitled "The Union: Who are its real Friends?" it proceeds to a detailed indictment of speculators, unscrupulous financiers, centralizers, and monarchists, ending with an eloquent characterization of the Union's "real friends" as friends of the "people's authority," of "liberty" and of a "limited and republican system of government." Thus far, Madison is on sure ground, for he is dealing in universals -- but when he must descend to the policy level, he can find no objects to attack but "public measures likely to facilitate the way to hereditary government," and "the unnecessary increase in the public debt's amount, duration or extent." The whole list amounts to a skeleton ideology, needing only the infusion of a hotter issue than finances to acquire great power, but failing such an issue, doomed to remain largely irrelevant. See Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 104-105.

- (45) Charles Downer Hazen, Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press; 1897) pp. 140-145. This book is invaluable for any study of American politics in the 1790's.
- (46) To Edmund Pendleton, 4 March 1790, in Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 7, note. Italics added.
- (47) Thomas Jefferson to Dr. Richard Price, 8 January 1789, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, pp. 435-444.
- (48) James Madison in National Gazette, 19 January 1792, in Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 83.
- (49) Op.cit., p. 386.
- (50) Madison "Spirit of Governments" in National Gazette, 20 February 1792, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 94-95.
- (51) Hazen, op.cit., pp. 252-253.
- (52) DeConde, op.cit., p. 54. See Palmer, op.cit., pp. 26-28 and 522-526 for an illuminating analysis of the "curious reversal" in the United States of group alignments in reaction to the French Revolution vis-a-vis the divisions precipitated by that issue in Europe.
- (53) LaRocheffoucault Liancourt, Travels, IV, 587-588.
- (54) Fischer, op.cit., p. 3.
- (55) To Oliver Wolcott, 17 February 1793, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 88.
- (56) To William Short, 3 January 1793, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 522.
- (57) Joel Barlow to Oliver Wolcott, 6 November 1794, in Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 161.
- (58) DeConde, op.cit., pp. 75-78.

- (59) For New York, see Young, op. cit., pp. 349-362. For Virginia, see Ammon, "Formation..." pp. 300-301; Ammon, "Jeffersonian Republicans..." pp. 158-159. For Pennsylvania, see Walters, op. cit., p. 42. For South Carolina and Savannah, see Phillipps, "South Carolina Federalists," p. 733 and p. 733, note 1. For New England, see Robinson, op. cit., p. 10; Goodman, op. cit., p. 52; James Truslow Adams, New England in the Republic, 1776-1850 (Boston: Little, Brown & Co.; 1927) pp. 212-214. For Kentucky and western Pennsylvania, see Link, op. cit., pp. 45-46.
- (60) Charles Warren, Jacobin & Junto, or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames, 1758-1822. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1931) Chapter 10.
- (61) Thomas Jefferson to Edward Rutledge, 24 June 1797, in Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings, p. 544.
- (62) Madison to Edmund Pendleton, 4 March 1790, in Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 5, note 1.
- (63) Macklay, Journal, entry for 26 February 1791, p. 394.
- (64) Gouverneur Morris to George Washington, Davenport (ed.) Diary..., 27 May 1791, II, 193.
- (65) Hazen, op. cit., p. 260.
- (66) Fisher Ames, quoted in ibid., p. 259.
- (67) Alexander Hamilton, quoted in ibid., p. 260.
- (68) James Madison, draft of resolutions to serve as groundwork for county meetings in reference to the Genet crisis, enclosed in letter to Jefferson, 2 September 1793, Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 193.
- (69) Oliver Wolcott to Frederick Wolcott, 15 December 1792, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 84-85.

(70) It is important to note that to a great degree, the Francophobia of those areas which were Federalist strongholds in the early 1790's -- i.e., New England and northern New York -- grew out of their own historical experience. For New England, first of all, Great Britain was "home" in a deep psychological sense; the region's very name indicates the tie. France, by contrast, was the traditional enemy, both politically and religiously. She was a "papist" state, thus the object of concentrated Protestant hostility both in Great Britain and in the New World. She had been England's traditional enemy in a power struggle reaching back at least as far as the reign of Henry V, and one might even say to that of Henry II. To cement that enmity, moreover, she had become the traditional foe in the New World as well, for her long possession of Canada, together with her hold on the Mississippi Valley, had made frontier warfare between British colonists and French-supported Indians an endemic feature of life in pre-revolutionary America.

(71) See supra, Chapter 2, p. 77.

(72) See Jefferson to M. Francois d'Ivernois, 6 February 1795, Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 532, for a bald statement to that effect.

(73) Joel Barlow, Advice to the Privileged Orders in the the Several States of Europe. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 1956) p. 58,99.

(74) Ibid., p. 10.

(75) Thomas Jefferson to Phillip Mazzei, 24 April 1796, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 537.

(76) Madison to Robert R. Livingston, 10 August 1795, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 236.

(77) Fulwar Skipwith to Jefferson, 17 March 1798, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 159.

(78) Thomas Jefferson to Elbridge Gerry, 13 May 1797, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 542.

(79) Porcupine's Gazette, 7 April 1798, quoted in Charles Warren, Odd Byways in American History. (Cambridge: Harvard University Press; 1942) p. 104.

(80) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 502. Secretary of the Navy Benjamin Stoddert makes a nearly identical assertion to President Adams in his letter of 23 November 1798, ibid., II, 114.

(81) Hamilton to Washington, May 1798, in Martin Van Buren, Inquiry into the Origins and Course of Political Parties in the United States (1867). (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Publishers: Reprints of Economic Classics; 1967) pp. 102-103.

It must further be noted that the Federalists' suspicions of French designs upon America's independence were deeply rooted in their experience during the peace negotiations of 1782-1783. At that time, it had soon become obvious that the French Minister Vergennes was none too concerned for the advancement of his American allies' advantage; on the contrary, his desire for a peace treaty which should be as restrictive as possible upon the new nation's future expansion soon became so obvious that the American commissioners broke their own instructions, concluded an advantageous treaty without

consulting the French at all, and presented Vergennes with a fait accompli which gained far more for the United States than he evidently would have liked. Suspicions of French hostility therefore, were rooted in suspicion of France per se; they were greatly reinforced by the Federalists' rising alarm over the course of the French Revolution, but had by no means first originated in 1793. See Merrill Jensen, The New Nation. (New York: Vintage Books; 1950) pp.6-18.

(82) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 515.

(83) Oliver Wolcott to Benjamin Goodhue, 30 July 1800, ibid., II, 395.

(84) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April 1797, cited above.

(85) A fundamental anti-Europeanism on both sides underlay the rhetoric which gave so misleading an impression of real foreign sympathies. Even Alexander Hamilton may be cited in support. See, for example, Federalist #11: "Europe, by her arms..., by force and by fraud, has in different degrees extended her dominion over... Africa, Asia, and America... The superiority she has long maintained has tempted her to plume herself as the mistress of the world, and to consider the rest of mankind as created for her benefit." The Federalist Papers, (New York: Mentor edn. ; 1961) p. 90.

(86) To Oliver Wolcott, 19 February 1792, ibid., I, 74.

(87) To Ephraim Williams, 6 March 1794, in Bernhard, op.cit., p. 225, note 49.

- (88) To Oliver Wolcott, 20 April 1796, in Morris (ed.), Ideas, pp. 303ff.
- (89) John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801, (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1963) pp. 137-138.
- (90) Adet to French Minister of Foreign Relations, 31 December 1796, in DeConde, op.cit., p. 492, note 112.
- (91) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 42-43, 75.
- (92) Koch, op.cit., p. 179 et seq; Adrienne Koch & Harry Ammon, "The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions: An Episode in Jefferson's and Madison's Defense of Civil Liberties". William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol.5 (1948) pp. 145-176.
- (93) Frank M. Anderson, "Contemporary Opinion of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions Part II". American Historical Review, Vol. 5, No. 2 (January, 1900) p. 237.
- (94) Madison, "The Union: Who are its real Friends?" in National Gazette, 2 April 1792, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 104.
- (95) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 217; Young, op.cit., pp.578-580.
- (96) To Henry A. Muhlenberg, 8 May 1848, in Henry Adams, Life of Albert Gallatin. (New York: Peter Smith; 1943) p. 249, italics added.
- (97) British Minister to the United States Hammond to Lord Grenville, 17 April 1794, in Samuel Flagg Bemis, Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce & Diplomacy. (New Haven: Yale University Press; rev. ed., 1962) p.276.
- (98) Max Savelle, "The Appearance of an American Attitude

towards External Affairs, 1750-1776." American Historical Review, Vol. 52, No. 4, (July 1947) pp. 656-662. Franklin greeted the British conquest of Canada in even more revealing terms, rejoicing in it "not merely as I am a colonist, but as I am a Briton." Evarts Boutell Greene, The Revolutionary Generation, 1763-1790. (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1950) p. 181. (99) Journal, entry for 26 February 1791, p. 395. Italics added.

CHAPTER 3: From the Proclamation of Neutrality to the
Jay Treaty - The Reconceptualization of
American Politics.

Burnham suggests that there are two stages to the process whereby a new coalition is formed in a period of critical realignment. The first begins with the emergence of a sense of deprivation -- real or threatened -- among some segments of society. This deprivation may be defined in many different terms -- economic or regional, racial or religious. Once perceived, however, it creates a growing feeling of "out-hood" among those first sensitized, and stimulates them to organize their efforts for concerted political action.

This in turn arouses fear among the "ins" that their own position is threatened, a fear which constitutes for them a sense of potential deprivation. Their reaction is to organize their own efforts for political counteraction. In the heightening competition which ensues between ins and outs, each side seeks an ever wider electoral basis, and a wavelike process is set off whereby more and more individuals are mobilized into the electoral system. Gross voter participation rises, and the campaign becomes increasingly intense.

In the second stage, negative group-reference perceptions show a sharp rise, involving widening sectors of the electorate. Burnham notes that party identification itself requires a degree of such references. He suggests, however, that in ordinary times, they are marginal to the political process. By contrast, in a period of critical realignment,

they become central, acquiring such saliency as often to submerge or even replace earlier cleavages based on an older structure of group antagonisms.

This would serve as a very presentable outline of American party development in the 1790's.

The entire process, moreover, was intimately linked to the course of events in Europe.⁽¹⁾ Nor need we rely on later observers to support this assertion. "Freedom and order were also the elementary principles of the parties in the American Union," wrote John Quincy Adams, "and as they respectively predominated, each party sympathized with one or the other of the combatants. And thus the party movements in our own country became complicated with the sweeping hurricane of European politics and wars."⁽²⁾ Even a hostile contemporary witness recognized the source of political passion in his day:

"A great portion of the difficulties which have attended the administration of the government in the United States, are, by the consent of reflecting men of all parties, referred to a diversity of opinion respecting the objects, nature, and tendency of the French revolution. Though Europe is the principle theatre of contention, yet the effects of the war are visible in the four quarters of the globe. It has divided the civilized world into two great political parties, on one side are found all men, who, from habits, principle, or interest, are attached to ancient establishments; on the other, the enthusiastic partisans of a new and seductive system."⁽³⁾

Other Federalists, too, clearly saw the connection. The "extensive combination of the wicked and the weak" would "probably continue in its efforts to disturb the peace of the country so long as the European contest continues in its present state of dubiety," said Oliver Ellsworth,⁽⁴⁾ for it

was "the European war out of which it grows, and on which it feeds as its natural aliment."⁽⁵⁾ "The preservation of the constitution of the United States was supposed to depend on its issue;" wrote John Marshall of the European war, "and the coalition against France was treated as a coalition against America also."⁽⁶⁾ Jefferson defined the situation as "the confederacy of princes against human liberty,"⁽⁷⁾ and concluded "that the form our own government was to take depended much more on the events of France than anybody had before imagined."⁽⁸⁾

As to the fury of the emotions involved, another eyewitness recalled that:

"To such a degree did this insanity prevail that the whole country seemed to be changed into one vast arena, on which the two parties, forgetting their national character, were wasting their time, their thoughts, their energy, on this foreign quarrel."⁽⁹⁾

So heated were these emotions that it may very be to them that we owe the fact that America developed a two-party rather than a multiparty system. There was absolutely nothing to foreordain such a development. Until after 1793, there was no one opposition in American politics; there were instead several oppositions, with nothing at all to guarantee that they would ever coalesce into one nationwide party. Nor need the prevalence of single-member constituencies and the importance of the presidential contest necessarily have ensured such an outcome. The intensity of localism together with the fragmentation of opposition at the national level in the early 1790's might easily have proven far stronger influences

towards party pluralism; and as for the presidency, it is worth noting that once the Republicans' unifying figure, Thomas Jefferson, retired, a plurality of presidential candidates immediately appeared -- and this well after the two-party pattern had supposedly been firmly established. In the race of 1808, Madison, Monroe, George Clinton and C.C. Pinckney were all in the running, and if the last three proved negligible candidates, the fact that their candidacies found significant backing at all might cast some doubt upon the supposedly unifying role of the presidential race -- as might the utter party disarray which existed later in the election of 1824.

For the fact is that the Republican coalition was exceedingly diverse,⁽¹⁰⁾ and it proved very difficult to find a common denominator whereon it might be consolidated.⁽¹¹⁾ The only available issue was Hamiltonian finance, and this was simply not enough for the purpose. The financial system was passed, it was successful enough to be popular, and by the end of the spring session of Congress in 1793, the opposition's ranks were thoroughly scattered. The latest attack on Hamilton in January had only succeeded in damaging what precarious unity the Congressional opposition had had.⁽¹²⁾

The same pattern is clearly visible at the state level. Opposition to the financial system just was not great enough to support a significant opposition movement. In Virginia, the home of all the major anti-Hamiltonian leaders, opposition at the popular level was all but invisible. The abstrusity of Hamiltonian finance gave it no grounds upon which to build;

and local issues were of no help, because they were non-existent. During the entire period of the 1790's, not a single issue in state politics led to a clash between Federalists and Republicans.(13)

The causes for this lay in the highly factional and personal nature of Virginia politics during the 18th century, in which common goals had been nearly unknown, but its result was that the state's parties in the 1790's had inherited no issues or allegiances from the past which could serve as reference points for the future. Even the earlier sectional conflict had declined greatly in the 1790's, and was to recur only after 1800 with the growth of the Piedmont.(14) Thus, until the rise of the foreign policy issue after 1793, there was no Republican Party even in Virginia, the state usually thought of as the Party's cradle. Without the emergence of that national issue, moreover, there might very well never have been a Republican Party there. A vocal group of opposition leaders, most decidedly, but not a party.

Even in the politically comparatively sophisticated state of New York, the "Republican interest" remained poorly defined and tenuously united in 1793. As yet but a loose coalition of former anti-federalists connected to George Clinton, a smaller group of former Federalists grouped around Chancellor Livingston, and a grab-bag of Burrrites, it had succeeded in electing Burr to the Senate and in delivering New York's twelve electoral votes to Clinton in the Vice-Presidential contest of 1792. But it had done so without having won over

public opinion against Hamiltonian policy. In 1793, "there was a 'Republican interest'; as yet there was no Republican movement" in New York.⁽¹⁵⁾ And in view of the chronic factionalism of New York politics, it is questionable whether there ever would have been, had new and burning issues of foreign policy not emerged so shortly thereafter.

The argument applies even more strongly to New England. In the older, more stable society of Massachusetts, the dynamic tensions which powered the rise of opposition elsewhere, though present, were far less pronounced. Even in 1795, Oliver Wolcott was able to congratulate another Federalist leader upon the quiescence of political feeling in New England. "It gives me the most sincere pleasure that New England remains firm and composed," he wrote. "If the extravagances which are fashionable in other parts of our country were to extend to the northern states, our liberties would soon be lost."⁽¹⁶⁾ Moreover, the Federalists' very success in solving internal problems had created a climate of comparative satisfaction which was not conducive to the growth of opposition.⁽¹⁷⁾ Gubernatorial elections in Massachusetts in the early 1790's show little or no trace of party cleavage; they are instead struggles between the Bowdoin and Hancock factions. In other states, as for example Vermont, such divisions as do emerge are nearly always temporary. Despite the general lack of property qualifications, only a small percentage of the qualified voters bothered to go to the polls.⁽¹⁸⁾ Republican development in Massachusetts always lagged behind its growth in

other states, and when it did acquire real strength, it was a most ill-assorted and seemingly illogical combination of political grievances. Without the issues stemming from the foreign policy crises of the 1790's, it is difficult to imagine how these groups could have come to see any identity of purpose sufficient to inspire unity of action.

It was the insistent saliency of foreign affairs which imposed a bipolar configuration upon this inchoate pattern. In state after state, it was the crises following upon the outbreak of the Anglo-French war which catalyzed clearcut division and converted the politics of interest into the politics of emotion.⁽¹⁹⁾ As Jefferson observed, the war "kindled and brought forward the two parties with an ardour which our own interests merely could never excite."⁽²⁰⁾

The Virginia, the Republican leaders found the rallying-point for popular opinion that they had so far lacked in the emotions aroused by the war. Virginia's strong pro-French sympathies allowed them to attack Hamilton's financial program from an entirely new angle: its pro-British foreign policy objectives. This linkage provided them for the first time with an effective weapon for their attack. Only now was the Virginia Republican interest transformed into anything resembling a party. What had been a loose faction of individual leaders venting their dissatisfactions only in private correspondence among themselves now turned increasingly into a unified political grouping actively and obviously seeking to mobilize and win over public opinion.⁽²¹⁾

In New York, where until now, the Federalists domestic policies had enjoyed remarkably wide support, the European war shifted attention to the area in which they were most vulnerable: their pro-British foreign policy. The result was that by 1794, the Republican interest had found a popular following.(22) In New England, only the crisis in foreign affairs succeeded in disturbing the voter apathy which had hitherto prevailed.(23) By the end of 1794, Madison was cautiously optimistic as to the future implications of the fall elections for the House of Representatives:

"In Mass^{ts} they have been contested so generally as to rouse the people compleatly from their lethargy, tho' not sufficiently to eradicate the errors which have prevailed there."(24)

This insistent saliency made the issue of foreign policy the touchstone of political division in the United States during the 1790's.(25) Foreign policy, in fact, became the prime reference point from which individual American's deduced their own sense of domestic partisanship. And because the European conflict was starkly bipolar, it imposed a similar configuration upon the existing cleavages in the United States. The range of available alternatives was relentlessly narrowed to two: one was either pro-England or pro-France, and these two predilections became the nuclei around which coalesced a whole range of subsidiary tensions.

Thus catalyzed, a single line of perceived cleavage, articulated in highly ideological terms, replaced the more complex earlier structure of domestic conflicts which was analyzed in Chapter 2. The ideological slogans of revolutionary

France, amplified by their powerful resonance with the American heritage, provided conceptual categories of unprecedented scope and universality, capable of subsuming many dissimilar, specific, grievances under a single rubric. The result was a major reconceptualization of American events which enabled a previously uncoordinated congeries of petty local interests and incongruous social groups to discover entirely new areas of agreement. The earlier multiplicity of specific deprivations was consolidated into a single category: a sense that the fruits of America's own Revolution were threatened at home by the same forces which threatened the French Revolution abroad.⁽²⁶⁾

From this dramatic reconceptualization was forged the national Republican Party. It made possible the fulfillment of a strikingly prophetic remark by James Madison in 1792. He noted that those "more partial to the opulent than to the other classes of society," who wished that "the government itself may by degrees be narrowed into fewer hands," were numerically inferior to those "believing in the doctrine that mankind are capable of governing themselves" and devoted to "the preservation of republican government" and that consequently the former's "probable conduct" would be to weaken their opposition by encouraging all existing divisions, and "reviving exploded parties" so as to "prevent or disturb a general coalition of sentiments." How would true republicans respond to this strategy?

"Conscious that the mass of people... must at bottom be with them...[they] will naturally find their

account in burying all antecedent questions, in banishing every other distinction than that between enemies and friends to republican government."(27)

Which is precisely how the Republicans built their party.

The power of this appeal, moreover, was specific to the American social context. It became a potent agent for amalgamating quite disparate interests because it exactly fitted the needs of the most dynamic sectors of that society. America, as a comparatively fluid society in which large numbers of people were rapidly rising on the social scale, was marked by a high degree of status-hunger, and by an increasing impatience with such barriers to advancement as still existed. The popular rhetoric of both revolutionary France and of America in 1776 tended heavily to identify revolution and republicanism in general with wider human opportunity. Such a linkage proved politically crucial in American politics. It allowed the appeal to "the principles of republicanism" to embrace a vastly expanded range of interests. In New England, for example, it made possible an alliance between the rationalistic, parvenu entrepreneurs of the seaboard and the rock-ribbed fundamentalist dissenters of the rural interior. Two odder bedfellows indeed would be difficult to imagine, but the new conceptualization conferred logic upon the alliance. For both groups, the Federalist supremacy could now be conceived of as an obstacle to opportunity -- economic opportunity from the standpoint of an aspirant, frustrated new elite; religious opportunity from the standpoint of dissenters excluded from full political rights by the

Federalist Congregational Establishment. From quite opposite starting-points, therefore, both were now able to arrive at a common objective: to oust the Federalists from political power.(28)

This accelerated appeal to opportunity was the contemporary formulation of that widening sense of "out-hood" of which Burnham speaks. The terms in which it was articulated showed increasing emphasis on the popular ideals which had characterized American Revolutionary propaganda. In 1794, for example, "Alcohol" in the Columbian Mirror & Alexandria Gazette drew up a list of seven tests for a true republican as against a tainted monarchist. The themes of equality and opportunity are especially marked. Was he more concerned over Louis XVI's death than over that of another man of the same moral qualities? Did he regard "liberty" as the right of all men or of only a limited circle of friends? Was he annoyed that a place of preferment should be given to a man of no family? Did he accord greater respect to a wealthy than to an ordinary man? Was he secretly pleased at Genet's alleged misconduct (for the opprobrium it cast upon all republicans)? Did he place more emphasis upon France's excesses than on her basic principles? Did he shun virtue in rags, and court "a knave in embroidery?"(29) At the same time, a New York paper impatiently demanded that Americans "have done with these new fangled distinctions of Federalist, Anti-federalist and Republican, and go back to the old and true test of 1776. Was he Whig or Tory then? And what is he now?"(30)

It is important to note that these reawakened appeals to the American revolutionary heritage strongly emphasized the libertarian, universalist strain in that tradition. The slogans of human equality and individual freedom had indeed played a major role in the popular propaganda of the American Revolution -- but they were by no means alone in the field. Alongside them, and possibly even more characteristic of the leadership's thought, was a conservative, traditionalist, legalistic strain. The former justified American resistance to England in terms of universal rights and natural law⁽³¹⁾-- quintessentially stated, "We hold these truths to be self-evident..." It was also strongly future-oriented, perceiving America's struggle for independence as the herald of a new, more moral world order.⁽³²⁾ "Freedom hath been hunted around the globe," wrote Thomas Paine in Common Sense. Hounded from Asia and Europe, she had taken refuge in America, and America henceforth was to be "an asylum for mankind."

From the second standpoint, however, America's struggle was justified in terms of the specific rights of a specific people -- Englishmen on both sides of the Atlantic -- and the revolution was seen not as a break with the past but as a restoration of historical liberties, reaching back to Magna Carta and only recently usurped by Parliament.⁽³³⁾ As late as the First Continental Congress, many American leaders were opposed to placing any reliance at all on natural law in their official stance against Parliament. They felt far more secure on the ground of British constitutional rights, and American charters and grants.⁽³⁴⁾

The libertarian strain had run strongly through the "Spirit of '76." In the years following independence, however, it had steadily lost ground in face of the economic difficulties of the 1780's, the practical problems of governing, and a widening distaste for disorderly eruptions such as Shay's Rebellion.⁽³⁵⁾ By the 1790's, it had fallen rather out of fashion. Thomas Jefferson, returning from France in late 1789, recorded this development with some shock:

"I cannot describe the wonder and mortification with which the table conversations filled me. Politics were the chief topic, and a preference of kingly over republican government was evidently the favorite sentiment... I found myself, for the most part, the only advocate on the republican side of the question, unless among the guests there chanced to be some member of that party from the legislative Houses."⁽³⁶⁾

This situation, however, was soon to be significantly disturbed, for the French Revolution's magnetic slogans of human equality and individual freedoms elicited a forceful reaffirmation of those ideals among widening sectors of American society. The reconceptualization of American politics thus became far more than a fresh perception of the present; it became a major reinterpretation of the past as well. It was, in fact, the beginning of America's reinterpretation of its own revolution in those terms which have since become enshrined in our national outlook.

After 1793, the universalist aspect of America's revolutionary heritage received a powerful stimulus from events abroad. In America, the effect of this stimulus was to reopen an old question: Just what had the American Revolution been all about? This question, now imbued with fresh poignancy,

exposed the duality inherent in the revolutionary heritage. Now that its two strains had acquired equal standing, moreover, this duality became a rich source of division, because the revolutionary heritage was the bedrock of American nationalism. The question thus applied not only to the past but to the future -- because to ask what the true objectives of the Revolution had been was also to ask what the goals of the American nation would henceforth be.

Thus, it was the conflict of rival nationalisms which infused passion into American politics. For until 1793, the universalist, libertarian creed now so deeply imbedded in the American tradition was anything but paramount. It had not been characteristic of anti-federalist thought in 1788, for example; the anti-federalist leaders had been primarily concerned with their distrust of both governments and the common people and had thus concentrated on the need to set constitutional limitations on both. (37) It certainly did not characterize the Hamiltonian Federalists. One analyst, in fact, has asserted that the "American conglomerate" was only fused into a nation by their common belief in the greatness, rightness, mission and future of both American democracy and American ideals -- and that this "American Idea" was "made in France." (38) First Jefferson, as a result of his five-year stay in France, and then more and more other Americans, in response to the European drama of 1792 and after, learned to see their own struggle for liberty through European eyes -- no longer as a revolt for inherited and specific liberties,

but for a larger liberty which was both inherent and absolute.(39) This analysis neglects the fact that it was the resonance of French with American ideals which rendered them so powerful in the United States, and that without the American heritage to build on, they would have struck a far weaker response.(40) It does, however, admirably point up the fact that the American national self-image is not the product of the Revolutionary years but of the dramatic reinterpretation which occurred in the 1790's, and that the triumph of democratic nationalism in this country owed much to the accidents of history.(41)

The stimulus of foreign events was crucially important in 1793; and far from abating, it was continuously renewed as crisis followed crisis in foreign affairs. The milestones of Republican party formation correlate closely with the landmarks of national foreign policy in these years, for foreign policy "became the outstanding issue between the two national political parties... Before Washington completed his first term so obvious was the interconnection between domestic policies and foreign affairs that most people recognized them as two sides of the same coin."(42)

The first crisis came in 1793. The outbreak of war between France and England immediately confronted American policy-makers with the problem of determining the United States' obligations to France under the Treaty of Alliance of 1778. Was America committed to joining the hostilities on France's side, or might she remain uninvolved by declaring her neutrality?

The answer might be emphatically yes or decidedly no, depending upon one's prior orientations towards the two European adversaries. In the more formal atmosphere of the Cabinet, the divergence was stated in the gentlemanly tone of political theory. At Washington's request, both Hamilton and Jefferson submitted advisory opinions; they were utterly contradictory. Hamilton began with the assertion that "no proof has yet come to light sufficient to establish a belief that the death of Louis is an act of national justice." On the contrary, the French Revolution

"has been attended with circumstances, which militate against a full conviction of its having been brought to its present stage by such a free, regular and deliberate act of the nation ... as ought to silence all scruples about the validity of what has been done, and the morality of aiding it.... It is believed that they [the United States] have an option to consider the operation of the treaties as suspended... Treaties between nations are capable of being affected by a great variety of considerations... Forms of government ... may be the considerations of them. Revolutions of government, by changing these forms, may consequently vary the obligations of parties."(43)

Jefferson offered an entirely different analysis. Beginning with the assertion that "the people who constitute a society or nation" were "the source of all authority in that nation," and consequently free to change the agents of their will "whenever they please," he concluded that:

"...the treaties between the United States and France, were not treaties between the United States and Louis Capet, but between the two nations of America and France; and the nations remaining in existence, though both of them have since changed their forms of government, the treaties are not annulled by these changes."(44)

Washington did not act on Hamilton's opinion to annul the

French Treaty, but neither did he follow Jefferson's. He issued instead the Proclamation of Neutrality, and this famous state paper rapidly became the focus of the first nationwide controversy in American politics. The Proclamation was carefully phrased to avoid all use of the actual word "neutrality," and to substitute for it the idea of "impartiality," but this proved ineffective in placating the many Americans who looked with favor on France. Not that they were ready for war. Even the fieriest democrats had no desire for that, as for example the "Old Soldier" who after discoursing at length of the way in which American "souls caught the celestial fire of struggling liberty," demonstrating their sympathy for the French nation so resoundingly that they "once more abashed aristocracy and hailed equality triumphant" in defiance of "proclamations... royal demeanor and state," nevertheless concluded rather lamely that "Still it must not be imagined that my voice is for war... our assistance may best be rendered in peace." (45)

It was not neutrality to which they objected -- it was the insult to France which they saw in the declaration of America's "impartiality." France was "under God, the saviour of America," insisted Hugh Henry Brackenridge. "The cause of France is the cause of man, and neutrality is desertion." (46)

The obverse of this conviction, of course, was that by failing to extend to France the preference to which all claims of gratitude and conscience entitled her, the Federalists were favoring Britain. And this linked the current clash over foreign policy even more firmly to the revolutionary tradition,

for had not Great Britain now proven her implacable enmity to republicanism everywhere? She had sought to crush it in 1776 in America, and now she sought to crush it in France as well. By favoring such a nation, therefore, the Federalists had blatantly exposed their own hostility to the great principles for which the American Revolution had been fought and upon which the American nation had been founded. It was this substructure of newly expanded negative symbolism which rendered the charge of "British sympathies" so effective.

Anglophobia thus became the keynote of the opposition attack. The Supreme Court decision in Chisholm v. Georgia became a "Tory decision." The Federalist press was supported by "British subsidies." The Jacobin Club of Paris was a "British front." Federalist policies, from beginning to end, were declared to be the product of British influence. (47) The effectiveness of this attack, moreover, was enhanced by the course of events between 1793 and 1795, for it was one thing to declare America neutral but quite another to command respect for that position from two powerful and embattled nations. In an effort to deprive France of vitally-needed American foodstuffs, Britain commenced a series of shipping seizures in 1793 which struck hard at the American carrying-trade. Due to the peculiar structure of the American economy at the time, this new British policy inevitably had direct and violent repercussions in American internal politics. Until after 1807, the American domestic market offered a far less attractive object for capital investment than the comparatively

well-developed art of shipping. This was partly due to the poor quality of inland transport, and partly due to the fact that the disruption of European agriculture caused by the Continental campaigns created a vastly expanded foreign market for American agricultural produce. This new business, moreover, fell more and more into the hands of American shippers after 1793 as the maritime capacities of both England and France were increasingly diverted to wartime usage. Inevitably, therefore, the foreign trade sector of the United States economy acquired a swollen preponderance in these years. Never again was it to bulk so large.⁽⁴⁸⁾

The structure of foreign trade ties varied from state to state, and the political repercussions of the British seizures varied accordingly. In New England, where shipping had long been the predominant form of commercial enterprise, its structure reflected the fact that until quite recently, the overwhelming bulk of America's foreign trade had been with Great Britain.⁽⁴⁹⁾ During the 1780's, this pattern had begun to shift as Yankee traders edged their way into the loopholes of the European mercantilist system. By the early 1790's Massachusetts' imports from France were second only to those from Great Britain, and some French markets for United States exports were even better than the British.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Massachusetts commercial interests were thus not monolithic even in 1792, but the balance still lay with the older pattern, whose utter dependence on Great Britain imperatively required the maintenance of good Anglo-American relations. Thus, although

Massachusetts began by reacting with outrage to the British seizures of 1793, cooler heads soon prevailed and opposition to Federalist foreign policy made little headway. (51)

In New York, the bulk of the import trade was also tied to Great Britain, but the export trade was more diversified. The French West Indies were emerging as a particularly profitable new market for the Middle States' products, especially after the French National Assembly in 1793 threw open their Caribbean ports to American ships. New York's attitude towards the Federalists' foreign policy, therefore, was more mixed than that of Massachusetts, for there was a larger group of merchants present to react with alarm to Britain's attempt to destroy their trade with the French West Indies. (52)

The French West Indies trade bulked even larger in the structure of trade further south, and this made an adverse reaction to British policy even more likely there. The reaction was made yet more certain by the fact that the southern states already harbored considerable anti-British feeling due to the efforts of federal agents to collect the debts they owed to England. By striking at the economic security of an influential trader group, therefore, the British Orders in Council of 1793 "unwittingly gave leadership to a long-standing discontent." (53)

The hostility to which Britain's maritime policy gave rise was yet further intensified by their behavior on the northwestern frontier. Despite their agreement under the terms of the Treaty of Paris in 1783 to surrender their posts

there, the English had made no move to do so. They were, moreover, suspected with some justification of fomenting unrest among the warlike Indian tribes of the area. The rankling resentment which many American entertained of England's failure to comply with her treaty commitments were thereby greatly reinforced by the sheer outrage evoked by bloody frontier massacres which England was seen as having provoked.⁽⁵⁴⁾

British policies thus managed to anger both the American seaboard and the interior. The climax came in March 1794 when news arrived of a fresh batch of shipping seizures in the Caribbean, and was followed almost immediately by publication of a highly inflammatory speech made in February to the northwestern Indians by the British Governor General, Lord Dorchester.⁽⁵⁵⁾ The resulting wave of Anglophobia was so intense that it even included a good many Federalists.⁽⁵⁶⁾ Some New York merchants, for example, ordinarily inclined toward Britain, grew disgusted as British seizures of American ships continued unabated;⁽⁵⁷⁾ the same was true in Boston.⁽⁵⁸⁾ It was, in fact, the defection of these merchants from Federalist ranks which enabled a 30-day embargo on trade to pass the House on March 25th after having been defeated on its first attempt. The necessary votes came from "the Eastern members whose constituents were growing so clamorous under their losses in the West Indies as to alarm the representatives."⁽⁵⁹⁾

If economic interests were paramount in influencing these men, the general public's reaction amounted to a paroxysm of Anglophobic nationalism. The Democratic Societies raised a

a tremendous outcry. One published a set of resolutions condemning "the daring outrages and diabolical machinations of the British Court, and the evil intrigues now practised by her agents and emissaries, to undertake and destroy the liberty and happiness of America." Angrily they catalogued Britain's affronts to America's national dignity: "repeated insults offered the American flag," "repeated depredations committed on the property of the citizens of America," "the detention of the western posts," and "supplies to the Indians, our deadly foes." The heat of their indignation swept away even that aversion to war which had constrained even ardent patriots the year before:

"... it is our opinion that war is inevitable; we cannot therefore be too early in making preparations ... it is the duty of all good republican citizens to provide themselves as speedily as possible with such implements of war as may be necessary for their defence."

Finally, in a sweeping conclusion, they set forth in the clearest terms that structure of interlocking associations which by 1794 had become the attitudinal cluster of the American opposition:

"... the cause of France is our own;... our interest, liberty and public happiness are involved in her fate; ... we are bound to support her by every tye of principle and gratitude as well as a principle of self-preservation;... for any man or set of men... to advocate doctrines and principles derogatory to the cause of France... or in support of the base measures of the combined despots of Europe, particularly Great Britain, is a convincing manifestation of sentiments treacherous and hostile to the interest of the United States, and well deserves the severest censure from all true republican citizens of America." (60)

Recognizing the risks of opposing this nationalistic

surge, the Federalists responded with commendable skill. On the one hand, they lent their support to the congressional drive for war preparations; on the other, they rushed preparations for a special mission to London to resolve the crisis. (61) "To supplicate for peace, and under the uncertainty of success, to prepare for war by taxes and troops is the policy which now triumphs under the patronage of the Executive," Madison informed Jefferson. (62) Over strong opposition in Philadelphia, John Jay was dispatched to England late in 1794.

The outcome of his mission, the Jay Treaty of 1794, became the hottest issue yet in American politics. The Treaty was certainly a likely object for criticism. The Republicans branded it a spineless surrender of American rights and there was some ground for the accusation. The Treaty represented a nearly total reversal of the United States' stand on neutral rights. It abandoned the basic principle that "free ships make free goods," acquiesced in a broad definition of contraband which included both naval stores and provisions, and accepted the hated "Rule of 1756" which by declaring illegal in wartime all trade which was prohibited in peacetime, made all United States ships trading with the French West Indies subject to immediate seizure. Thus far, it amounted to a de facto submission to the principles of the British Orders in Council of 1793 which had provoked such an uproar in America.-- but there was more. The United States undertook to pass no discriminatory legislation against British ships for the next ten years; this was to preclude any recurrence of such proposals for

commercial retaliation as Madison had submitted to Congress in January of 1794, but it meant that the United States voluntarily surrendered what was possibly its only weapon with which to counter British maritime depredations. By another proviso, debts owed by Americans to private British citizens were declared not amenable to sequestration; such a proposal had also been put forth in Congress at the height of the war fever.

England did offer some concessions in return, but to many Americans they appeared more insulting than otherwise. The northwest posts were to be surrendered by June of 1796 -- but then, Great Britain was already obligated to relinquish them by the terms of the Treaty of 1783. A joint Anglo-American commission was to decide on compensations for British seizures, on the claims due to British creditors from American citizens, and on the United States-Canadian boundary -- but even this concession was heavily qualified, for Great Britain's compensation for its shipping seizures was made conditional upon the payment of American debts. Finally, the British West Indies were opened for the first time to American ships -- but under such stringent limitations that the Senate deleted this article before advising to the Treaty's ratification.(63)

In retrospect, the Treaty appears to greater advantage than it did in its own time, because for all its ignominious aspects, it did avoid a war with England. Bemis, in his definitive study, is often critical of Jay's diplomatic skill, and makes little attempt to defend the Treaty on positive

grounds. Yet he concluded that by avoiding war, the agreement made up for its many shortcomings, because in 1794 the American Union was as yet too precarious to survive the crippling economic effects such a war would have had. The treaty, in effect, bought time, and time was exactly what the United States then needed. (64)

Such a balanced assessment, however, was impossible in the heated atmosphere of the day. The Treaty's obvious concessions to British power only ensured that when its text arrived early in 1795, the Anglophobic outburst which had begun in 1794 would reach hysterical proportions.

Predictably, the South took the lead. Already the center of anti-British agitation in the previous year, the south now found yet a new grievance in the Treaty. By its terms, the United States was firmly committed to paying the old debts owed to British creditors. These were concentrated in the southern states and had been a sore point in southern politics since 1783. The Treaty, however, made no provision at all for compensating southern slave-owners for the blacks carried off by British armies during the war for independence. This appeared to be adding insult to injury. (65) Coming on top of everything else, it provoked the most extreme outbursts. The Richmond Democratic Society put out a broadside giving notice.

"... that, if the treaty entered into by that d-d arch traitor J-n J-y with the British tyrant should be ratified, a petition will be presented to the next General Assembly of Virginia... praying that the said State may recede from the Union, and be left

under the government and protection of one hundred thousand free and independent Virginians."(66)

A meeting of the Pittsburgh Society on 1 April 1795 declared that its members were tired of the delay in going to war with England and that they were

"almost ready to wish for a state of revolution, and the guillotine of France for a short space, in order to punish the miscreants who enervate and disgrace the Government."(67)

The Virginia legislature in December of 1795 passed resolutions proposing that the Constitution be amended to prevent the passage in future of any treaty "containing any stipulations upon the subject of the powers invested in Congress" unless approved by a House majority. Kentucky, Georgia and South Carolina joined in wholehearted agreement.(68) Madison fumed that the Treaty was a blatant "attempt to Prostrate us to a foreign & unfriendly Nation."(69) In Pennsylvania, Alexander James Dallas condemned the Treaty on nearly every basis possible. It was ineffective, because it settled nothing; it was unequal because Britain gained many advantages to America's few; it was a breach of American neutrality, by aiding England against France; it was an "instrument of party" by fulfilling the Federalists' determination to ally the United States to Great Britain; and finally, because it was a virtual alliance with a monarchical nation, it endangered republican institutions at home.(70)

The Federalists, for their own part, were far from enthusiastic over the Treaty. Among themselves, they defended it in notably tepid terms, voicing unhappiness over its paltry

gains but concluding that it was about the best the United States might have expected under the circumstances.(71) Nor was their enthusiasm increased when English seizures appeared to be continuing unabated, enabling the Republicans to blast the treaty as useless as well as humiliating. It was British behavior in this connection which elicited Hamilton's irritated comment quoted earlier as to the foolishness and rascality of "this overbearing [British] Cabinet."(72) It also caused President Washington to hesitate seriously about signing the Treaty after the Senate had ratified it. He signed only after a scandal erupted in August which appeared to implicate Secretary of State Edmund Randolph in an intrigue with French Minister Fauchet during the Whiskey Rebellion of 1794. Britain's continued arrogance only annoyed Washington, but the idea of "French influence" in America's highest governmental circles aroused all his deepest fears. The Randolph affair convinced him that without a settlement with England, the United States stood in danger of becoming a French satellite.(73) This is one of the outstanding examples of that peculiar linkage of nationalism with fears of foreign domination which so often in the 1790's caused an overriding concern with America's independence to be translated into behavior on the part of Federalists and Republicans alike which their opponents regarded as unpatriotic partiality to a foreign power.

As tepid as they might have been in their private remarks about the Treaty, the Federalists defended it vigorously in public. Beginning in July of 1795, Alexander Hamilton

published a lengthy series of letters under the pseudonym "Camillus"⁽⁷⁴⁾ whose effectiveness caused Jefferson to call him "a colossus to the anti-republican party" and to beg Madison to write a vigorous reply. Above all, the Federalists concentrated on driving home the idea that rejection of the Treaty would mean war with Britain.⁽⁷⁵⁾ This appeal proved extremely effective and the Federalists used it to the fullest. Indeed, they needed as many effective weapons as they could find, for the battle over the Treaty had not ended with Washington's signature. When Congress met in the fall of 1795, the Republicans mounted a last-ditch campaign to defeat the Treaty by attempting to prevent the House of Representatives from appropriating the funds necessary for its implementation. The eventual defeat of this effort was importantly due to the spreading fear that the alternative to ratification was indeed war.⁽⁷⁶⁾ Philip Schuyler wrote to Hamilton in April of 1796 that this fear had proven so effective in New York that "many decided anti-federalists concurred and signed" an Albany petition demanding the Treaty's execution.⁽⁷⁷⁾ In Madison's view, it had been decisive. "The people were everywhere called on to chuse between peace and war," he wrote to Monroe, "and to side with the treaty if they preferred the former."⁽⁷⁸⁾

There were other reasons for the Republican defeat. For all its drawbacks, the Treaty proved very appealing in some quarters. Massachusetts' initial disappointment over its paltry commercial gains was soon overcome by the reflection that it did after all keep open their vital trade ties with

Great Britain, and moreover, offered compensation for their confiscated ships.⁽⁷⁹⁾ The annoyance of New York merchants yielded to the same set of considerations, while New York frontiersmen were altogether delighted at the prospect of regaining the northwestern forts.⁽⁸⁰⁾ The Federalists were able to neutralize the West's hatred of Jay's Treaty by coupling its execution with ratification of the extremely popular Pinckney Treaty with Spain. Above all things, the West coveted access to the Mississippi River, and Pinckney had gotten it for them. The Federalists allowed the rumor to circulate that if the House blocked Jay's Treaty, the Senate would refuse to ratify Pinckney's. This undercut the House Republicans' western support and seriously divided their forces in Congress.⁽⁸¹⁾

Finally, the Republicans made a serious misstep when in the course of their attack on the Treaty, they laid themselves open to the accusation of having impugned the integrity of George Washington. The Republican movement was growing quickly in the United States, but it was no match for the charisma of America's national hero. Even in 1794, Madison had admitted that "The influence of the Ex. on events, the use made of them, & the public confidence in the P. are an even match for all the efforts Republicanism can make."⁽⁸²⁾ Along with the other influences working in the Treaty's favor by 1796, this one proved decisive.⁽⁸³⁾ Several Republican representatives from New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania reversed their earlier stance, and the Treaty appropriations passed the House on April 29th.⁽⁸⁴⁾

The entire effort to block the Treaty backfired badly upon the Republicans. During the previous summer the popular outcry against the Treaty had put the Party well in the way of capturing the all-important issue of American nationalism. As Madison noted with pleasure, "many, even of those who have hitherto rallied to the most exceptionable [Federalist] Party measures, join in the general indignation agst the Treaty. The few who hold out will soon be under the Dilimma (sic) of following the example or of falling under imputations which must disarm them of all injurious influence." (85) By May of 1796, he noted with regret that "Elections in New York, Massachusetts, and other states where the prospects were favorable have taken a wrong turn under the impressions of the moment." (86)

Certainly they had taken "a wrong turn." In 1794, the Boston Republicans had been able to oust two Federalist incumbents in the Massachusetts legislature; by 1796, the Federalists staged a comeback in which they swept both houses of the state legislature, and Boston was rapidly becoming a Federalist bastion. (87) New York City had been solidly Federalist until the summer of 1795, when Edward Livingston rode to victory largely on the basis of his strong anti-treaty stand. In March of 1796, the Federalists recouped their losses by sweeping the state elections, and they were able to do so largely because public sentiment had reversed itself and now supported the Administration's foreign policy. (88) In North Carolina, the Republicans had won the Governorship in 1795, and their winning issue in the campaign had been opposition

to Federalist foreign policy. In the spring of 1796, they suffered heavy losses, largely due to adverse reaction to their attack on Washington.(89) Even in Richmond, the Federalists had gained political control. On April 25, 1796, the Virginia legislature adopted resolutionscondemning the Republican opposition drive and demanding execution of the Treaty.(90) In July, F. Ames reported that he had been unexpectedly heartened by Virginia's political soundness.

"Virginia is infinitely nearer right & more impressible than I expected... Bankrupts & rogues did not come near me, but the other sort who did, seem to think as the Yankees do. Union, constitution, laws, & above all the President are the objects of their zeal."(91)

It remained to be seen how -- or even if -- the Republican Party would recover this ground and resume its advance. Some aspects of the Treaty battle's aftermath, however, might be turned to Republican advantage in the future. The storm had sharply accelerated the polarization of domestic political alignments. Not only had it sharpened and widened the division between pro- and anti-Administration forces within Congress itself, but it had given considerable impetus to the process of political mobilization in the nation at large. In 1796, many Congressmen were still elected without having acquired a clearcut party label; as sharp as the intra-Congressional cleavage was becoming, American grass-roots politics still bore the stamp of a strongly localist, "connexion" style of politics. In the heated atmosphere of Congress, however, such

delegates were increasingly forced to take sides.(92) Once they did so, the specifically American institutional structure which made representatives dependent upon the electoral support of their constituents required that they justify their stance in Philadelphia to the voters at home.(93) In the period of the 1790's, when newspapers were as yet poorly circulated and often too expensive for most ordinary people to afford, a Congressman's letters to his constituents became an important source of information as to proceedings in Congress.(94) As such, they were slanted to present the representative's own behavior in the best possible light, which in turn tended to elicit a highly partisan response, and thus to make local voters increasingly aware of, interested in, and concerned with the conflicts far away in Philadelphia.

New types of active participants in the political process were becoming increasingly visible by the end of the Treaty battle. The Republican éminence grise, John Beckley, became active in this period -- a shrewd, behind-the-scenes manipulator whose campaign techniques bore all the marks of a thoroughly modern politico.(95) Especially in New York, a new breed of professional politicians was rising to the fore, of which the archetype was Aaron Burr. They were all bright, ambitious young men who based their electoral appeal less on their family connections than on their service to their party, and who built up their power base by consciously wooing uncommitted and often hitherto dormant sectors of the electorate.(96)

Whether these new developments would redound to the Republicans' advantage or not remained problematical -- but there were indications that it might. The conflict had produced some significant alterations in party alignments -- notably a massive defection of middle-level Federalists in the South.⁽⁹⁷⁾ Until 1796, for example, South Carolina had been Hamilton's strongest supporter among the southern states. Now, however, the attack on the Jay Treaty had provided the necessary catalyst to transform an assortment of conflicting social groups into a united opposition. The ideals of the French Revolution had served this purpose in Massachusetts earlier; similarly, the anger aroused by the Jay Treaty in South Carolina now enabled wealthy seaboard planters, poor pine-country whites, and the radical democratic ideologues of Charleston to see an area of common purpose: opposition to the Federalists' foreign policy.⁽⁹⁸⁾ The Jay Treaty had hurt the Federalist cause in North Carolina as well. Immediately after the Revolution, North Carolina had been the scene of especially sweeping confiscations of Tory lands. Article Nine of the Jay Treaty, however, had now established certain provisions for reciprocal landownership which might be interpreted in such a manner as to cast doubt upon the titles to these lands. Due to the extent of post-revolutionary confiscations in North Carolina, this aspect of the treaty directly affected the economic interests of many of the state's leading figures. The result was inevitably unfavorable to Federalism's strength there.⁽⁹⁹⁾

There were some significant individual defections. Charles Pinckney, whose efforts proved to be vital in securing South

Carolina's electoral votes to Jefferson in 1800, dated his own conversion to Republicanism from the time of the Jay Treaty, "that foundation of all our Evils and Divisions!" (100) The same was true of Tench Coxe, orginially one of Hamilton's closest disciples in the Treasury Department, but henceforth an ardent Jeffersonian. (101)

The battle had given rise to some significant organizational innovations as well, most important among which for the future was the Congressional caucus. This technique, which soon rose to prime importance as an instrument of Republican Party management, was first employed on April 2nd, 1796, when the Republicans in Congress met to discuss suitable tactics in the House battle over appropriations. (102)

Perhaps the most important aspect of the conflict over Jay's Treaty, however, was the intensification it gave to the symbolic linkages which lay at the roots of party conflict. The Jay Treaty, in effect, became deeply imbedded in the symbology of both the rival nationalisms in American life. At the bottom of the clash over the Treaty was the issue of America's proper place in the world with reference to Great Britain. Could the United States realistically hope to be only a "tail to the British kite?" If so, a place in the British empire's economic system was amply worth the concessions made. The Treaty thereby became a symbol of peace and prosperity -- and hence of patriotism as well. (103) To those with a grander vision of America's future, however, these concessions were both unnecessary and humiliating for America's

immense potential wealth was destined to raise her to world preeminence.(104) From this viewpoint, the Treaty became a symbol of subservience to England -- and hence of a traitorous lack of patriotism.(105)

Thus was the issue of nationalism rejoined with heightened intensity. And if the Republicans' vision proved triumphant in 1800, the road to that victory was anything but smooth, and its successful outcome anything but foreordained. The next four years witnessed a degree of political conflict so intense that it left enduring scars upon American politics for decades to come.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 3

(1) See Beveridge, op.cit., Vol. 2 chapter i for a lengthy description of the French Revolution's impact on American politics, pointing out its deep polarizing effect whereby each side saw its hopes and fears mirrored in Europe. Beveridge admirably analyzes the selective inattention at work whereby the Republicans forgot that Louis XVI had aided American in 1778 and rejoiced in his execution, while conservatives forgot how long the explosion had been building, and condemned the mob for its excesses. Another strong statement to this effect is to be found in James Bryce, The American Commonwealth.

(2 Vols., New York: Capricorn Books; 1959) I, 137. Hazen, of course, is a lengthy analysis of this impact from end to end, but one quotation from his introduction is especially emphatic and deserves repetition here. Colonel Higginson, in a most sweeping assertion of the impact of French events, declared that "the French Revolution really drew a red-hot ploughshare through the history of America as well as through that of France. It not merely divided parties, but moulded them; gave them their demarcations, their watchwords and their bitterness. The home issues were for a time subordinate, collateral; the real party lines were established on the other side of the Atlantic." op.cit., p. ix-x, italics added.

(2) The Lives of James Madison & James Monroe (1850), pp.243-245, quoted in Hazen, op.cit., p.140.

(3) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, end 1799 (no date given) in Gibbs, Memoirs, II,299.

- (4) To Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 5 April 1794, ibid., I, 134.
- (5) Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 6 May 1796, ibid., I, 337.
- (6) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 23.
- (7) To Harry Innes, 23 May 1793, in De Conde, op.cit., p. 180, Note 43.
- (8) To T. M. Randolph, 7 January 1793, in Beveridge, op.cit., II, 24.
- (9) John Trumbull, Reminiscences of His Own Times, p. 168, quoted in James Alton James, "French Diplomacy and American Politics, 1794-1795". Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1911, Vol. i (Washington, 1913) p. 153, Note 1.
- (10) See Chapter 1.
- (11) Chambers, op.cit., p. 76.
- (12) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 52-54.
- (13) Ammon, "Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia..." P. 164.
- (14) Ibid., p. 155.
- (15) Young, op.cit., PP. 340-341.
- (16) To Benjamin Goodhue, 8 August 1795, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 223.
- (17) Goodman, op.cit., p. 65.
- (18) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 3-4.
- (19) Wilfred E. Binkley, American Political Parties; Their Natural History. (New York: Alfred A. Knopf; 1959) 3rd edn., pp. 45-46.
- (20) To Monroe, 4 June 1793, Ford (ed.) Writings, VI, 281-282; see also Jefferson to Madison, 29 June 1793, ibid., VI, 326.

(21) Ammon, "Formation of the Republican Party in Virginia...", p. 305; "Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia..." pp. 158-159.

(22) Young, op.cit., p. 345.

(23) Goodman, op.cit., p. 65.

(24) To Monroe, 4 December 1794, Hunt (ed.) Writings, VI, 224.

(25) Revealingly enough, the undelivered first draft of Washington's Farewell Address prepared in 1792 made no mention of foreign affairs; in the final version of 1796, the matter is so central as to have become an important part of the American outlook ever since. See DeConde, op.cit., p. 465.

(26) And this development, for all the bitterness of the conflict it precipitated, may well have been fortunate in the end. R.R. Palmer, in a perceptive comment, has remarked that if American politics in the 1790's had coalesced around purely internal issues, the United States might have had more troubles than it did. "Quarrels between elites without popular following might be ruinous, especially if geographically localized," for since no principle of legitimacy was involved in such quarrels, localism would triumph. "The paradox, therefore, is that the ideological differences aroused in the United States, which were very heated, and the actual dangers of subservience to foreign powers, which were very real, may have contributed, by creating national parties to debate national issues and elect candidates to national office in an atmosphere of public involvement, to the solidarity of the union, the maintenance of the constitution, and the survival of the republic." Op.cit., pp. 521-522.

- (27) "A Candid State of Parties", National Gazette, 26 September 1792, in Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 114-119.
- (28) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 75-77, 90-96.
- (29) 5 October 1794, in Link, op.cit., p. 124, Note 1.
- (30) New York Diary, 8 March 1794.
- (31) Carl Becker, The Declaration of Independence: A Study in the History of Political Ideas. (New York: Vintage Books; 1942), Chapter 1. See Chapter 2 for an analysis of the historical events forcing the shift from legalist distinctions to natural rights in the American revolutionary apologia.
- (32) Felix Gilbert, The Beginnings of American Foreign Policy: To the Farewell Address. (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1965) p.55.
- (33) Edward S. Corwin. The "Higher Law" Background of American Constitutional Law. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press; 1965) p. 25, Note 66.
- (34) Ibid., pp. 78-80.
- (35) Hans Kohn, The Idea of Nationalism. (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944) p. 295.
- (36) Anas, Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, pp. 120-121.
- (37) Cecilia M. Kenyon (ed.), The Antifederalists. (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., Inc.; 1966) pp. xxviii-xxix, lv-lxxxiii, xci-xciii, & cxi-cxvi.
- (38) R.R. Palmer, "A Neglected Work: Otto Vossler on Jefferson and the Revolutionary Era", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 12 (1955) pp. 463-467.
- (39) Ibid., p. 466, 468.
- (40) As they did in Germany and Eastern Europe, for example,

where there was a nearly total absence of any libertarian heritage with which French ideals might resonate.

(41) One is led to wonder whether, without that triumph, America would have quite the same Civil War that it did -- for the great rallying-cry of human equality would have been vastly reduced in power.

(42) DeConde, op.cit., p. 57; 32.

(43) To President Washington, (Cabinet Paper), April 1793, in Morris (ed.), Ideas, pp. 311-312.

(44) Opinion of the Secretary of State, 28 April 1793, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, pp. 317-318.

(45) National Gazette, 22 May 1793, in Hazen, op.cit., pp. 180-181.

(46) Miller, op.cit., p. 130, Italics added. See also DeConde, op.cit., p. 230, Note 82.

(47) Marshall Smelser, "The Jacobin Phrenzy: The Menace of Monarchy, Plutocracy, and Anglophilia, 1789-1798", Review of Politics, Vol. 21, No. 1 (January, 1959) pp. 250-253.

(48) Sanford W. Higginbotham. The Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics 1800-1816. (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission; 1952) p. 9.

(49) Over 75% as late as 1790. Bemis, op.cit., p. 45.

(50) E.g., the French West Indies and the Far East. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 52-55.

(51) Ibid., p. 56

(52) Young, op.cit., p. 346, 349, & 364-365.

(53) Link, op.cit., p. 53.

(54) Bemis, op.cit., p. 187; Miller, op.cit., pp. 145-147.

- (55) Bemis, op.cit., pp. 239-240, 267-268; DeConde, op.cit., p.94.
- (56) Bemis, op.cit., p. 264.
- (57) Young, op.cit., p. 418.
- (58) Bernhard, op.cit., p. 224, Note 44.
- (59) Madison to Jefferson, 26 March 1794, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 210.
- (60) Resolutions of the Charleston Democratic Society, Independent Chronicle, 18 April 1794, in Hazen, op.cit., pp. 197-199.
- (61) Bemis, op.cit., p. 265; Charles, op.cit., p. 101; DeConde, op.cit., p. 99.
- (62) 25 May 1794, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 216.
- (63) Bemis, op.cit., pp. 351-356; Miller, op.cit., pp. 165-167.
- In a lengthy appendix, Bemis compares Jay's draft treaty submitted to Lord Grenville on 30 September 1794 with the final document signed on 19 November 1794; the comparison is not favorable to the final version. Appendix III, op.cit., pp.391-434.
- (64) Bemis, op.cit., pp. 370-373.
- (65) Binkley, op.cit., p. 47.
- (66) Cobbett, Political Works, I, 51, editors' note.
- (67) Ibid., loc. cit.
- (68) Stephen G. Kurtz, The Presidency of John Adams: The Collapse of Federalism, 1795-1800. (New York: Perpetua Books; 1957) pp. 24-29.
- (69) To Robert R. Livingston, 10 August 1795, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 236.
- (70) "Features of Mr. Jay's Treaty", 18 July - 7 August 1795, American Daily Advertiser, in Walters, op.cit., pp. 66-68.

(71) See inter alia Oliver Wolcott to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 29 June 1795, and Oliver Wolcott to Noah Webster, 1 August 1795, in Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 202-203 and 221-222.

(72) Supra, Chapter 2, p. 71. Apparently, this new series of seizures was not meant to flout the Jay Treaty but was instead based upon a subtle shift in the legal grounds by which the British ministry now justified its policy. This shift, however, produced no visible alteration in the results of British policy. Provisions under the American flag were still being seized on the high seas. The shift in legal principle, moreover, remained unknown in the United States, due to the dilatory nature of mail delivery of the time which caused Lord Grenville's explanatory letter of the British Minister in America to arrive too late to be delivered. Thus, the Republican charge carried the force of credibility. See Josiah T. Newcomb, "New Light on Jay's Treaty," American Journal of International Law, Vol.28 (1934) pp. 685-693.

(73) Miller, op.cit., pp. 169-171.

(74) See Morris (ed.), Ideas, pp. 296-303.

(75) Young, op.cit., p. 455; Bernhard, op.cit., pp. 266-274.

(76) Young, op.cit., p. 464.

(77) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 55.

(78) 14 May 1796, Hunt, (ed.) Writings, VI, 300.

(79) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 57-59.

(80) Young, op.cit., p. 446; Binkley, op.cit., p. 48.

(81) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 61-75; Charles, op.cit., p.113.

(82) Madison to Jefferson, 25 May 1794, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 217.

- (83) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 58.
- (84) Charles, op.cit., p. 112; Chambers, op.cit., p. 88.
- (85) To Robert L. Livingston, 10 August 1795, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 236-237.
- (86) To Jefferson, 22 May 1795, Kurtz, op.cit., p. 76.
- (87) Goodman, op.cit., p. 61 & p. 102.
- (88) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 153; Young, op.cit., pp. 466-467.
- (89) Ibid., p. 169.
- (90) Ibid., pp. 56-57.
- (91) F. Ames to Oliver Wolcott, 5 July 1796 & 25 July 1796, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 372-373. Ames does continue, however, that the Virginians "do not seem to view the danger as nearly & clearly as they ought," Letter of 25 July 1796, loc.cit.
- (92) As for example, John Rutledge, Jr., of South Carolina, who was elected as an uncommitted candidate in 1796 and became a Federalist only some weeks after he had taken his seat in Congress. Phillips. op.cit., p. 736.
- (93) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 256-257.
- (94) Ibid., pp. 72-74; Chambers, op.cit., p. 83.
- (95) Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., "John Beckley: An Early American Party Manager", William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 13 (January, 1956) pp. 40-52; P.M. Marsh, "John Beckley, Mystery Man of the Early Jeffersonians" Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography, Vol. 72 (1948), pp. 54-69.
- (96) Chambers, op.cit., p. 84. It was also as a result of the Jay Treaty controversy that the petty officers of the Town of Boston first became politically active. Charles, op.cit., p. 118.

(97) Charles, op.cit., p. 116.

(98) Chambers, op.cit., pp. 79-80. The "mechanics" of New York City had also defected to the Republican side during the wave of Anglophobia in the spring of 1794. Allied hitherto to the Federalists, they became Republicans now, because under the impact of British pressure on the American nation, their patriotism had surfaced. Young, op.cit., p.382.

(99) Gilbert L. Lycan -- "Alexander Hamilton & The North Carolina Federalists", North Carolina Historial Review, Vo. 25, No. 4 (October, 1948) p. 459.

(100) To Madison, 12 October 1800, in J. F. Jameson (ed.), "South Carolina in the Presidential Election of 1800," American Historial Review, Vol. 4, No. 1, (October 1898) p. 117.

(101) Harold Hutcheson, Tench Coxe -- A Study in American Economic Development. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press: 1938) p.38.

(102) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republican..., p.82.

(103) Charles, op.cit., pp. 119-120; Goodman, op.cit., p. 57.

(104) See Tench Coxe, A View of the United States of America in a series of papers written at various times, in the years between 1789 and 1794 (1794). (New York: Augustus M. Kelley, Reprints of Economic Classics; 1965) pp. 114-348, where in refutation of Lord Sheffield's derogatory predictions as to America's national future, Coxe sets forth a glowing -- and nearly endless -- catalogue of America's glorious potential.

(105) Chambers, op.cit., p. 91.

CHAPTER 4: 1796-1800 - Republican Recovery and the
Chances of History

On March 2nd, 1796, Edward Livingston of New York introduced a resolution in the House which requested President Washington to transmit to Congress all information in connection with the Jay Treaty negotiations, including both Jay's original instructions and all correspondence preceding the Treaty's signature. This move turned out to be a serious blunder for the Republican Party. The House did pass Livingston's resolution on March 24th, by a vote of 62 to 37, but it was the last time the anti-Treaty forces were to enjoy such a clear majority. Washington, alert to the challenge implicit in the request, replied with a brusque message which denied that the House was entitled under any reading of the Constitution to a voice in treaty-making. Then to this constitutional argument, he added the potent force of his own charisma. "It does not occur," observed, "that the inspection of the papers asked for can be relative to any purpose under the cognizance of the House of Representatives, except that of an impeachment; which the resolution has not expressed."⁽¹⁾

It was an extremely skillful maneuver. There could be no doubt as to whose impeachment Washington was referring, and the very notion that the Republicans might be implying such an intent produced a massive reaction against them.⁽²⁾ Their majority against the Treaty was already experiencing severe stress from other sources;⁽³⁾ added to these pressures, the transcendent prestige of George Washington now shook the

determination of many hitherto staunch Republicans, causing the anti-Treaty majority to decay steadily thenceforth.(4)

Livingston's misstep was made possible by the fact that Republican party discipline in Congress was as yet very loose. It appears that James Madison, supposedly the Party leader in Congress, was caught unawares by Livingston's action. Evidently the House Republicans had neglected to consult their own chieftain on this highly important move.(5) Madison's effort to tone down the resolution before its final passage, moreover, caused five southern Republicans, including three from the Virginia delegation, to break with him.(6)

Nor did the Republicans' tactical caucus of April 2nd represent anything but a faint shadow of the instrument of iron party control it later became. The meeting arrived at no consensus, and when it adjourned, the participants were left at full liberty to vote as they saw fit, and to do so without incurring any rebukes for having abandoned party principles.(7)

Two months later, therefore, the anti-Treaty majority was gone, the Treaty appropriations had passed, and the Republican cause was in visible decline. "For the moment at least it presses hard on the republican interest," Madison admitted, but he clearly recognized the role which party indiscipline had played in the debacle. "The final turn of the majority ought at least to have been sooner prepared for," he wrote in his postmortem to Monroe. "This was in fact contemplated. But before some were ripe for the arrangement others were rotten."(8) The Republicans acted on this recognition; indeed, the very

severity of their defeat in 1796 contributed to building their future strength by stimulating them to enforce a far greater degree of party discipline. In the next elections, they attacked the defectors of the spring session for having betrayed the republican cause,⁽⁹⁾ and by the time of the presidential contest in the fall, party lines had come to show a greater clarity of definition than ever before in American politics.⁽¹⁰⁾ Within the next three years, the Republicans developed a degree of party discipline which, had it existed previously, would probably not have prevented actual passage of the Treaty appropriations but would certainly have avoided the opprobrium which Livingston's collision with Washington had brought upon the Party.

For the moment, however, Republican prospects looked dim. Not only had the campaign against the Jay Treaty ended in a major setback, but developments after 1796 in Franco-American relations were beginning to erode the positive power of Republicanism's cluster of symbolic associations as it had evolved by the mid-1790's. As we have seen the events of the early 1790's had forged a firm symbolic linkage between American Republicanism and a favorable orientation towards revolutionary France. So long as France could remain for many Americans an idealized symbol of freedom, opportunity and millennial reform, this association had been one of the Republicans' greatest sources of strength. Late in 1796, however, France emerged from the realm of platonic ideals into that of practical politics when the French Minister to the United States,

Pierre Adet, openly attempted to intervene in the American presidential campaign. Shortly before election day, Adet published a series of proclamations in the newspapers which were startling in their total disregard of diplomatic decorum. Taken together, they were an effort both to bully and cajole the American public into repudiating their own government's foreign policy.

The first dealt with France's attitude in future towards American shipping.⁽¹¹⁾ It was a direct result of the Jay Treaty whose text had arrived in France in August where it had been greeted with intense hostility. Outraged by what it regarded as a de facto alliance between America and its arch-enemy England, the French government had decreed that henceforth France would treat American ships exactly as the United States allowed England to treat them -- which amounted to saying that the French in future intended to enforce the British Orders in Council of 1793. In his next statement, Adet called on all those devoted to the French cause to wear the tricolor cockade in their hats. This provoked an enthusiastic response; tricolor cockades blossomed everywhere. It also provoked an equally enthusiastic counterresponse when Federalist hats immediately began blossoming with black anti-French cockades. When black and tricolor met face to face, the collision was usually vituperative. Adet's third declaration announced the suspension of diplomatic relations between America and France. Then the French Minister proceeded to call upon all Americans to honor their treaty obligations with France and to demand repudiation of the Jay Treaty.⁽¹²⁾ All in all, it was an astonishing performance.

Moreover, it backfired. It was predictable that the Federalists should react with deep outrage. They had never ceased to insist that their Republican opposition was no more than the catspaw of France. Adet's behavior now appeared to establish the truth of that accusation beyond all shadow of a doubt.(13) "The interference of a foreign nation in our affairs is no longer disguised," wrote Oliver Wolcott.(14) The pattern of American events had become too obvious for denial; first the outcry over Jay's mission and then over the treaty he brought back, next the violent attack on President Washington after he signed the Treaty; then the obstinate opposition in the House to the Treaty appropriations; and now Adet's blatant intervention in American presidential politics -- the trail of French influence was clear to all not determined to remain blind.(15)

What was less predictable was that many other Americans should react hostilely to France's open attempt to interfere in America's internal affairs. Adet's descent from the abstract to the practical world, in fact, brought him into direct collision with American nationalism. As a faraway Republic, France could be loved; as a bullying intruder at home, she was hotly resented.(16) Nor was this reaction rendered less inevitable by subsequent French behavior. On 11 December 1796, the French Directory first refused to recognize the credentials of the new American Minister to Paris, C.C. Pinckney, and then directed him to leave Paris as if he were an undesirable alien.

Then on 2 March 1797, France attacked America's pocketbook as well as its pride by issuing a decree against American shipping which directly violated the Treaty of 1778, annulling the principle that "free ships make free goods" and declaring all neutral vessels carrying British goods subject to seizure by French warships.⁽¹⁷⁾ The decree was apparently issued in the belief that the United States would not respond by declaring war,⁽¹⁸⁾ and to that extent the expectation proved accurate. To the extent that the French Directory might have expected their renewed pressure on American shipping to encourage opposition to the Federalists in the United States, however, it proved woefully mistaken. It produced instead a wave of Gallophobic nationalism.

The Directory might have been better advised to consult one of their own countrymen then in the United States, for the Duc de la Rochefoucault-Liancourt clearly saw the true nature of American feelings toward France:

"A painful recollection of the calamities inflicted by England, during their struggles for independence, and a grateful remembrance of the services rendered them by France at the same period, are the common sentiments of the country; and the partiality for France is, no doubt, increased by the reflection that she contends for liberty with the enemy that opposed their independence; and by a persuasion that it was in America that France was first taught to love liberty. This preference, however, for the interests of France is by no means so obstinate as not to give way to a conviction, where it is excited, that France has designs upon the independence of the United States..."⁽¹⁹⁾

Coupled to the insult offered Pinckney, the wave of French seizures which began in 1797 was well designed to excite such a conviction. France's depredations in the Caribbean and

Mediterranean rapidly rose to equal and even surpass even Britain's.⁽²⁰⁾ In response, anti-French feeling in the United States rose to equal the Anglophobic reaction of 1794.

The Federalists, of course, were gratified. Oliver Wolcott wrote to George Washington that "there is reason to believe that the aggressions of France will tend to unite the people."⁽²¹⁾ George Cabot remarked with approval upon the "rapidity with which the people have come to a right way of thinking on French politics,"⁽²²⁾ and expressed his pleasure that public opinion should have taken so salutary a turn "after so much pains had been taken to mislead them."⁽²³⁾ Oliver Ellsworth reported that in his trip through New York and the New England states, he had "found everywhere an increased and increasing attachment to the government."⁽²⁴⁾ James Iredell wrote from Richmond that the Directory's insults were perhaps even a blessing in disguise, for by attempting to apologize for them, the Republicans were undermining their own position. "The attempts were not judicious, and perhaps they were not unfortunate, as they show in a strong point of view the dangerous infatuation which has prevailed."⁽²⁵⁾

The Republicans were equally aware that the anti-French reaction was damaging their cause. Jefferson, now Vice President, hoped that Napoleon's brilliant victories in Europe would continue so as finally to end the Continental war, for otherwise, he said, "I very much fear we shall be engaged in a war in six months, such is the rage of many against France."⁽²⁶⁾

Worriedly Jefferson noted that both parties evinced a considerable desire "to show our teeth to France." (27)

What this all amounted to was that the Federalists had captured the issue of American nationalism. And they had been able to do so because France's ill-advised effort to coerce America had dealt a severe blow to the Republicans' patriotic image. The Republicans had first begun to cement their party by linking themselves to the cause of revolutionary France, and so long as Great Britain remained the chief source of harassment from abroad this association had been tremendously attractive. But when French pressure outstripped even England's the association inevitably caused the public hostility to France to be extended in many quarters to the party generally regarded as "pro-French," i.e., the Republicans.

Gallophobia rose to a climax in April of 1798 when the famous XYZ correspondence was published. John Adams, unaccustomed to being regarded as a popular hero, now found himself inundated by petitions and resolutions of loyalty. (28) Pinckney's supposed reply to the French demands for a bribe became a national slogan, and "Millions for defense but not one cent for tribute" entered the national vocabulary. (29) The wave of Gallophobia spread to include even areas such as western Pennsylvania that were usually noted for their staunch Republicanism. (30) It made unlikely converts to the cause of war preparedness: Giles, Nicholas and Clopton of Virginia, for example. (31) It reversed the Republican gains so recently evident in North Carolina during the Jay Treaty furor. (32) It

allowed the Federalists of New Jersey to present themselves for the first time as the party of patriotism, the supporters and protectors of American honor, liberty and independence -- an appeal which had been unavailable to them in 1794 when anti-British feeling had been at its height.⁽³³⁾ The recoil upon the Republicans was so bad that Jefferson was seriously worried that the Party would be routed at the next elections if France did not shift to a more conciliatory policy.⁽³⁴⁾

Thus, the French crisis of 1797 provoked yet another wave of violent anti-foreign sentiment in the American public and added further acrimony to domestic political debate. Yet it is possible to argue that in the event, the decade's continuous series of foreign policy crises, for all the external dangers and internal divisions they created for the young Union, played an important part in crystallizing a sense of individual national identity in America. The possibility did not go unnoticed at the time. "Our losses and sufferings have been great," wrote James Hillhouse, "but I flatter myself that some good will spring out of the much evil we have experienced; and that by being buffeted by all nations, we shall be weaned from all foreign attachments, (and) learn that we are Americans..."⁽³⁵⁾ In 1798, Joseph Hopkinson saw proof of a major change in the American mind in the fact that "American tunes and American sentiments have driven off those execrable French murder shouts which not long since tortured our ears in all places of public amusement, and in every lane and alley in the United States."⁽³⁶⁾ This same Joseph Hopkinson was the composer of the

song "Hail Columbia" which Albert Beveridge sees as an expression of the "first distinctively National consciousness that had appeared among Americans." (37) American national pride was given a further boost in 1798 and 1799 by their fledgling Navy's surprisingly good record against both English and French attacks. (38) There was a good deal of gratification to be drawn from the awareness that one's own nation, the world's newest, had successfully defied both the world's giants. (39) In many areas of human existence, self-definition is the product of successful encounters with opposition. That the United States was successful in such encounters during the 1790's was often due to an amazing degree of luck -- but opposition aplenty was offered it.

Meanwhile, however, America's freshly enhanced sense of national pride threatened to push the country too far for its own good, for the wave of Gallophobia bade fair to precipitate a declaration of war on France. In 1794, the nationalistic reaction against England had threatened to bring on an Anglo-American war and this had been avoided only by the Federalists' political skill. In 1798, the wave of anti-French nationalism threatened to cause a Franco-American war, but this time the Federalists themselves were the war party. Speaking of the Congressional debate following Pinckney's rebuff LaRouchefoucault noted the irony of the reversal:

"It is not a little remarkable that in this contest the orators of the federalists held the same language which, three years before, had been employed against them by their opponents; when on the question of sending Mr. Jay to England, the anti-federalists recommended vigorous measures, to restore the United States

from the ruinous and humiliating condition to which they were reduced by England - and that the anti-federalists, to crush the hostile spirit which the other party expressed against France, advanced the same arguments which the governing party used on the former question, to recommend conciliatory measures toward England." (40)

Wisely, the Federalist refrained for the moment from calling outright for an actual declaration of war; the Republican opposition would have proven too strong for so extreme a demand.⁽⁴¹⁾ They did, however, propose a program of war preparedness measures more sweeping than any in the United States' history to date, and in this many Republicans gave them firm support. Beginning in April and continuing through July of 1798, Congress acted successively to create a Navy Department; to purchase warships, ordinance and ammunition; to authorize seizure of French ships in American waters; to place an embargo on all commerce with France and her dependencies; to abrogate all existing treaties with France; to enact the famous Alien and Sedition Laws; and to establish a "Provisional Army" which would add twelve infantry regiments and six troops of light dragoons to the regular army, and bring the great George Washington out of retirement to act as its Commander-in-Chief.⁽⁴²⁾ To finance this immense undertaking, Congress took a step which in the American political context was ordinarily unthinkable: it enacted a direct tax on land, houses and slaves, and although it was clear from the start that the South would bear the brunt of this measure, the prevailing sense of national emergency caused many Republicans to vote with the Federalists to achieve its passage.⁽⁴³⁾

The Federalists were able to achieve all this because for the first time in the decade, the quality of their nationalism and the foreign power which was always the object of their hostility coincided with those of the nation at large. Federalist nationalism always placed primary stress upon America's honor, its respectability, its pride and its strength. The messianic strain so marked in Republican nationalism was strikingly absent. No Federalist would have felt his "American-ness" in these terms:

"Perhaps no other event in the history of man... has equal claim on the exertion and animation of genius, with the emancipation of the western world... this sublime incident of our own times, the AMERICAN REVOLUTION... this STORY OF FAME, this real Revolution, which, in its consequences, includes no less in the general condition of man, than a transfer from tyranny to slavery, and subjugation, to the benignity of rational government, equal liberty, and the advancement of that temporal felicity designed for man by Nature, while a resident in this sphere of her creation."(44)

Juxtaposed to typical statements of Federalist nationalism, the contrast in quality is striking:

France ought not to be unnecessarily alienated, yet she ought not to be flattered "at the expense of the pride of the United States." Only a firm program of preparedness "can save the country from humiliation."(45) America's "indignation" must be excited by "the wounds which innocence and honour receive."(46) The general tenor is well conveyed by a letter from William Smith, then the American Minister to Lisbon. He snorts derisively at "all that old-womanish whining about our reluctance to war, and its calamities and horrors," and then goes on to ask:

"What will the world think of Americans, smarting under such wounds, and dishonoured with the grossest insults, instead of hastening to wipe away the national stain, tamely and philosophically repeating their former love towards their aggressors, insisting on their national partiality for her, and making a fastidious parade of the reluctance with which they quarrel with her, and shedding tears over the anticipated misfortunes and calamities with which this unhappy quarrel is to be accompanied. Is it not like a weak dupe, who finds himself compelled to turn an unfaithful wench out of doors, stopping her at the threshold to whine over their former loves, and to remind her of past joys? ... The alternative only, [is] to have war with its honours... or a French tyranny with its more than honours. Who, a real American, can hesitate a moment?" (47)

The militant, exclusive quality of Federalist nationalism was by no means absent from Republican nationalism; in 1794, it had surfaced in such force as to threaten a war on England. By the same token, the Republicans' characteristic sense of America's millennial uniqueness was not absent from the Federalist outlook. It was a matter of relative emphasis. But in 1798, American xenophobia was directed against France, not Britain, and consequently it received assistance instead of opposition from the Federalists. Where they had regarded the possibility of a war with England as a national calamity, a war with France appeared to them in a very different light. It would deal no crippling blow to the trade ties and credit resources upon which Hamiltonian finance depended. It might even strengthen those ties by inviting Anglo-American cooperation against the common enemy. (48) As always in American politics of these years, however, ostensible concern for foreign events masked the true preoccupation in question which was America's own internal affairs. The Federalists were as

averse as any Republican to America's active involvement in Europe's wars. It was Hamilton, after all, who had drafted the famous sections of Washington's Farewell Address warning against political connections with foreign powers.(49) It was also Hamilton who had said that "If you consult your true interest your motto cannot fail to be: 'PEACE AND TRADE WITH ALL NATIONS;... POLITICAL CONNECTION WITH NONE'..."(50) The true reason that a war with France appeared so attractive to many Federalists was that it appeared to present some glowing possibilities for establishing beyond assault the Federalists' primacy in domestic affairs.(51)

The army would be useful "to awe the Jacobins," and would thereby prove "a very proper thing."(52) A declaration of war on France was absolutely essential, because without it "we lose the advantage of enforcing the act against alien enemies."(53) Congress' hesitation to embark on "an open and active naval war" endangered the nation's survival:

"Nothing short of this will depress effectually the French faction, or discourage the Directory from continuing their efforts to support their partisans in our country or councils... If we hesitate or pause now, the faction will revive, and all the avenues for French poison and intrigue be again opened ... Nothing but an open war can save us, and the more inveterate and deadly it shall be, the better will be our chance for security in future."(54)

In short, a war declaration would cement the Federalists' hold on the issue of nationalism by exposing their opposition's "disloyalty" and allowing the Federalists, as patriots, to crush internal dissent in the name of national security.(55) "Peace... only leaves open a door by which the enemy enters,"

declared George Cabot:

"War would shut him out... war open and declared, would not only deprive our external enemy of his best hopes, but would also extinguish the hopes of internal foes. The rights and duties of every citizen in a state of war, would be known and regarded; traitors and sedition-mongers who are now protected and tolerated would then be easily restrained or published."(56)

It was the Federalists' overwhelming conviction of threat from within which made them regard the Alien and Sedition Laws as so vital a part of the preparedness program. Indeed, this conviction had now approached neurotic extremes in many Federalist quarters.(57) A full-fledged spy hysteria gripped the country. The American Secretary of State encouraged, and appears to have believed, extravagant tales that deadly French documents had been found hidden in the bottom of a barrel in Charleston, meant to foment a slave revolt throughout the South. On June 18th, Robert Goodloe Harper of South Carolina went so far as to make an open accusation in the House that Americans and Frenchmen in the United States were conspiring with the Directory in France to subvert the Constitution.(58) "Our own French partisans being so much worse than the French themselves," wrote Uriah Tracy, "I fear more from them than I do from the crazy Directory."⁽⁵⁹⁾ Jefferson asserted that "no man who did not witness it can form an idea of their unbridled madness, and the terrorism with which they surrounded themselves... their tales of tub-plots, ocean massacres, bloody buoys, and pulpit lyings and slanderings, and maniacal ravings ... to spread alarm into all but the firmest breasts."(60) Again, the crux of the issue was the conflict over the true

nature of American patriotism. "It is unfortunate that our sufferings have not brought about a perfect union at home," said James Hillhouse, "for I am persuaded that had we no persons in this country actuated by any but truly American feelings, we should not have been in a situation so embarrassing." (61)

And in view of the subsequent triumph of the Republican Party, it is important to note that the nation was heavily behind the Federalists only two years prior to Jefferson's election. Republicans voted with Federalists to pass the preparedness program in Congress; (62) and in the elections of 1798-1799, they suffered major setbacks. The elections were held when anti-French feeling was in full tide and before the full impact of the war program, especially the direct tax and the Alien and Sedition Laws, had been experienced. The results were enough to have cast gloom upon the most sanguine Republican spirits. The Party's recent promising gains in New England were swamped by a resounding Federalist victory. (63) In New York, John Jay was re-elected governor by a large majority. (64) There were a few bright spots. The Republicans won control of the New York and New Jersey Congressional delegations. In Pennsylvania, Michael Leib won his Senate race against a Federalist opponent and Gallatin won reelection to the House. The Republicans also picked up another seat on the Maryland delegation. (65) But they suffered discouraging losses throughout the South. The Federalists won the North Carolina governorship and a majority in both houses of the

state legislature.⁽⁶⁶⁾ They scored victories in the Virginia tidewater,⁽⁶⁷⁾ South Carolina and Georgia. Only Kentucky and Tennessee were unshaken.⁽⁶⁸⁾

Nor was there immediate opposition to what was soon to be one of the most burning political issues in America: the Alien and Sedition Acts. To be sure, there were straws in the wind. A small Republican gain had come in North Carolina where a Republican candidate had ousted a Federalist incumbent in a senatorial race because the latter had voted for the Acts, which were highly unpopular in that state.⁽⁶⁹⁾ Much of the Federalists' resurgence in Virginia was due to the fact that the Party leader there was now John Marshall, an outspoken critic of the Acts.⁽⁷⁰⁾ Jefferson, Madison and Gallatin, of course, were bound to be in the forefront of the opposition, and interestingly enough, Alexander Hamilton also objected to the Sedition Act. He found its more coercive aspect to be "highly exceptionable" and more likely to "endanger civil war" than to consolidate national unity. "Let us not establish a tyranny," he warned. "Energy is a very different thing from violence."⁽⁷¹⁾

But these exceptions were few. So long as the United States remained in the grip of a war scare, the Alien and Sedition Laws mobilized no widespread resistance. George Washington considered them necessary measures to counter the disruptive efforts of outside agitators.⁽⁷²⁾ The Alien and Sedition Acts did elicit the famous constitutional protest from the Virginia and Kentucky legislatures known as the

Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, but on their first appearance there resolutions struck small response elsewhere. Only in these two states was there noticeable popular response. The North Carolina legislature did pass a resolution condemning the Alien and Sedition Acts as unconstitutional. But in Pennsylvania, the Republican "Keystone State," the legislature passed counterresolutions endorsing the Laws as necessary to counteract the danger from France. The Maryland legislature rejected the Virginia and Kentucky protest in a resolution stressing Maryland's support for the Alien and Sedition Acts. Republican opinion in New Jersey, New York and Massachusetts was confused and divided. In Delaware, the legislature refused even to debate the matter, while from Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire and Vermont came firm rejections.⁽⁷³⁾ Apparently, most Americans in 1798 regarded the Laws as necessary and proper national measures to counter a clear and present danger.

One may argue, in fact, that the Republican triumph of 1799-1800 was only partly the result of their own political skill. The chances of history, both abroad and at home, appear to have been almost more important. Indeed, on close study, some rather striking alternative possibilities come to light. The pivotal factor in the Republican recovery after 1798 was their capture of the peace issue. And they were able to do this only because it became increasingly apparent after 1798 that France did not want a war with the United States. The popular conviction that a French war was imminent was the

essential component in the electorate's support for the Federalists' massive program of defense and preparedness. Once the war-scare abated, that support was fatally undermined.

But some very slight alterations in European history might very easily have given the High Federalists their war. By May of 1798, a succession of purges in the French legislature had eliminated all forces pressing for a more conciliatory policy towards the United States. The Directory had hardened its position to the point where it was not much interested in even talking to the American envoys. It was this which made the XYZ mission such a long exercise in frustration, and finally outrage, for the three Americans confronted with Talleyrand's endless ability to procrastinate. On August 1st, however, the British Admiral Horatio Nelson trapped nearly the entire French fleet off Alexandria and demolished it in the Battle of the Nile. France's maritime capacity, never overly great, was drastically reduced in this débâcle, which meant that her capacity to injure the United States on the high seas was considerably diminished. For all its current hostility towards the United States, therefore, the Directory now lacked the ability to intensify its pressure on America. (74)

In addition, the blow dealt to France's naval capacity made her yet more dependent on American ships if she were to continue to be able to feed herself; her possessions in the French West Indies would starve without supplies from the United States mainland; and her new ally, the Batavian Republic, would be economically ruined without its American trade. Nor

had Talleyrand expected any American reaction so militant as that which followed upon the publication of the XYZ correspondence. The new result of all these considerations was to cause him to change his policy towards America from one of passive obstruction to one of actively seeking peace. (75)

In the end, some lucky historical accidents in both nations allowed this policy to succeed, but on neither side of the Atlantic was this at all inevitable. In June of 1799, yet another coup convulsed the Directory, and Talleyrand resigned as Foreign Minister. His successor, Count Karl Friedrich Reinhard, disapproved of Talleyrand's conciliatory overtures to the United States. He advocated instead a harder line and even thought to use the touchy subject of Louisiana as a further instrument for applying pressure to the American government. (76) Any whisper of French designs on Louisiana always had a galvanic effect on the American West, which at this point was the only part of the nation in which Republican strength stood untouched. In the current state of popular feeling elsewhere in the United States, such a policy of yet greater coerciveness on the part of France would have been very likely to intensify yet further the nationalistic fervor which had brought the Federalists to a peak of popularity in 1798.

Then, however, history took another twist. Reinhard's policy was never implemented because in a few months he was out of office. The reason was that on 9 November 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte executed his famous coup of the 18th

Brumaire, ousting the Directory from power completely. The peculiarities of his position, moreover, dictated the recall of Talleyrand and a return to the latter's conciliatory American policy. Napoleon needed the support of French banking, mercantile and manufacturing interests -- and they wanted peace with the United States. Napoleon was also deeply interested in wooing the confidence of the European neutrals in order to enlist them on his side against the arbitrary maritime policy of Great Britain. Such an objective dictated a policy of conciliation towards the world's leading neutral carrier -- which was the United States.⁽⁷⁷⁾ In France, therefore, the sudden and amazing rise of Napoleon was possibly the decisive factor in averting a war with the United States in 1799.

Meanwhile, some other chance influences were at work in America. First of all, the Federalists were rather too zealous in enforcing their own program. They were treading on thin ice and this ought to have imposed caution upon them. Their war program laid heavy taxes upon an electorate already proverbial for the sensitivity of its pocketbook; and the wave of Gallophobic nationalism which sustained the Alien and Sedition Acts could not be expected to last forever. Indeed, it began rapidly to subside in 1798 when Benjamin Bache, the irrepressible editor of the Aurora, provoked Federalist wrath by publishing a conciliatory letter from Talleyrand which seemed to hold out hope for a peaceful accommodation with France.⁽⁷⁸⁾ There were some Federalists who clearly recognized that the Alien and Sedition Acts were the Party's most vulnerable spot. One

reported from Richmond that "French principles" were "very much out of fashion," and that "but for the alien and sedition laws, as the latter is called, at which certain characters make a loud clamour, the opposition would, I believe, not know at what to raise bugbears to frighten the ignorant and credulous part of society." (79)

Their own rigidification, however, proved in the event to be the Federalists' downfall. Their perception of their own countrymen had become hopelessly distorted. "In general," declared Wolcott in 1799, "the people are ignorant, strongly prejudiced against the measures of government, vindictive in their influenced in their resentments, and, I fear, incapable of being influenced except by their fears of punishment." (80) In the rising opposition to the Alien and Sedition Acts, the High Federalists could only see "the effects of an unprecedented combination, to establish new principles of social action on the subversion of religion, morality, law, and government." In the tone of vehement protest which characterized many of the petitions now being submitted to Congress, they perceived "too plain indications of the principles of that exotic system which convulses the civilized world." Finally came the death-knell of realistic statesmanship: "With this system, however, organized, the public counsels cannot safely parley or temporize." (81)

A later Republican leader stated that the Federalists' overly zealous implementation of the Sedition Law had "rendered the Republican cause invaluable service" by driving them to formulate a fully-articulated philosophy upon "fundamental

questions,-- those which relate to the powers of government and to the responsibilities under which they should be exercised, -- the only questions which gave rise to permanent political parties."(82) Another near-contemporary wrote that the Federalists' severity in enforcing the Sedition Law in New York was a fatal blunder, especially when in the summer of 1799 they arrested the prominent Judge Peck for circulating a petition in Otsego County for the repeal of the Acts, and escorted him all the way to New York City under armed arrest:

"A hundred missionaries in the cause of democracy, stationed between New York and Cooperstown, could not have done so much for the republican cause as this journey of Judge Peck, as a prisoner, from Otsego to the capital of the State."(83)

As the war scare waned, moreover, irritation over the heavy taxes imposed in 1798 correspondingly rose. Even George Cabot saw the connection, although only in retrospect and even then but grudgingly:

"It was to be foreseen that a direct attack of external enemies being no longer dreaded, no sufficient reason could be offered to the people for subjecting them to the burden of armies and taxes; always odious when first imposed, and only submitted to from a conviction of indispensable necessity."(84)

The Republicans were quick to seize the opportunity which luck had brought them. "'tis in vain in the present temper of the United States to talk of principle;" counseled Meriwether Jones of Virginia:

"from that there has been a considerable defection: we ought therefore to bring our arguments home to their feelings. I am sorry to speak so ill of the sovereign people, but they have really become very mercenary, and of consequence opposed to war expenses. Let peace and economy then be our constant theme."(85)

Acting on this awareness, the Republicans bore down hard on the issues of taxes and the army. Another fortuitous factor intruded to aid them: the death of George Washington in December of 1799. Washington's personal sanction of the Provisional Army had done much to blunt criticism of this unpopular measure. Once he was gone, the High Federalists were yet more vulnerable to attack on the issue of high taxes to support a standing army. (86)

The attack was highly effective. In March of 1799, the importunities of governmental tax-collectors had provoked an uprising among the Germans in western Pennsylvania. Until now, these prosperous, stolid German farmers had been staunch Federalists, but their political coloring was permanently reversed when the Federalists first insisted on taxing them, and then suppressed Fries' Rebellion with what was regarded as draconic severity. (87) Opposition to the Federalists' war program, indeed, allowed the Republicans in 1799 to win control of the Pennsylvania state government for the first time. (88) It also made it possible for Republicanism to make a marked recovery in New England. (89) Fisher Ames noted in alarm from Massachusetts that for the first time, "Jacobinism is certainly spreading from towns and cities into the country places." (90) Even in Connecticut, the land of "steady habits" and the Federalists' most enduring stronghold in New England, Chauncey Goodrich reported in 1799 that "the army begins to grow an exceptional measure among good men." (91)

And even so, the Federalist extremists might have gotten

their war had it not been for the fortuitous factor of President John Adams' personal stubbornness. Slowly becoming convinced that the Directory did not want war, he defied powerful pressure from a major portion of his own party to pursue a policy of accommodation with France. It was almost solely due to his persistence that William Vans Murray was entrusted with a special peace mission to France early in 1799.(92) This mission resulted in time in a peace treaty with France, but it opened a gaping chasm within the Federalist Party. Tensions between Adams and the Hamiltonians had been brewing ever since the election of 1796 in which Hamilton had attempted to maneuver C.C. Pinckney into the presidency ahead of Adams. They had intensified when George Washington had insisted upon having Hamilton as his second in command before he would accept the generalship of the Provisional Army in 1798.(93) But Adams' defiance of the war-hawks in 1799 sealed the breach. The High Federalists now poured invective upon Adams, for they firmly believed that by responding to France's peace feelers, he had betrayed America's national interest. "The reported pacific overtures of the French government," declared Jedidiah Morse, "are the most hostile they could possibly adopt to our true interests. I am infinitely more afraid of their principles than their arms, and peace would open a very wide door to the former, which have already done us a very great and incalculable injury."(94) Adams had proven himself so thorough a turncoat as to leave little to choose between him and the hated Jefferson. It was dubious "whether we shall be much

worse off with him [Jefferson] than with the present man; we have to fear from either the destruction of our government." (95) Now that Adams had defected to the "Jacobins," another internal peril appeared to threaten: an Adams-Jefferson coalition. (96) Some moderate Federalists such as Elbridge Gerry and Samuel Smith even advocated such a step as the surest way of thwarting the Hamiltonians. (97) To the High Federalists, however, the prospect appeared appalling. "A cloud with malignant aspect broods over our country," said one. It threatened "a temporary reign of American Jacobinism" for to the High Federalists a combination of Jefferson with Adams amounted to the triumph of France:

"There are very strong evidences I see, that the J--ns intend to meet the President on his own ground, and it is much to be feared that he will accept their support. This, should it happen, would be in truth hoisting again the flood gates against French principles and influence, which had with so much labour and difficulty been once shut down, and exposing us afresh to a very ruinous inundation... such fears are not by any means peculiar to myself, but are common among all my most judicious and best friends." (98)

So deep was Federalist division, indeed, that there existed in 1799-1800 a very real possibility that a third party might arise in American politics. Adams bluntly stated his intention of establishing one. (99) By now, John Adams was openly referring to the Hamiltonians as the "British faction" in American politics. (100) This was an astonishing assertion to come from a man hitherto so firmly identified with the Federalist Party, (101) and the High Federalists reacted to it with utter outrage. The "Jacobins," they said, "seconded

by Mr. Adams' personal friends," were trying to label as "a British monarchical faction" a number of "the most high-minded and independent gentlemen of the country." They retailed this "calumny" in the full knowledge of its rank untruth because they cynically sought to benefit "by gratifying the prejudices and envy of trimming, weak, or uninformed federalists." (102) With sputtering indignation, they credited Adams' entire accusation to his "low ambition, envy, and ridiculous vanity." (103)

There was more than a possibility of a three-party system in 1800 -- it was a de facto reality. Fisher Ames admitted as much, and in highly derogatory terms:

"There are three parties in the United States. Men, who from mere want or folly, abhor restraint; those who from principle, habit, or property, would impose it, and the personal or interested friends of a man, whose caprices and weaknesses have been sometimes scienter, but often blindly used, to weaken our party and to animate the other." (104)

A third grouping in American politics had in fact become visible immediately after the apparent Federalist sweep in the elections of 1798-1799. In that campaign, the Federalists had won a majority in both houses of Congress, but their seeming numerical superiority was to some extent deceptive. When it came to foreign policy, they could not rely on it. Ten of their twenty-member majority in the House voted as moderates, supporting Adams' peace policy towards France. Federalism's greatest gains in 1798-1799 had come in the South, but it was precisely these new Federalists who were the least likely to vote with the Hamiltonians in Congress.

They looked instead for leadership to John Marshall of Virginia, a firm backer of Adams' French policy. Eight of the new southern Federalists were moderates of this type, and one Georgia member elected as a Federalist never voted with the Party at all.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ A similar division appeared in the New York Assembly where some eight or ten members, chosen as Federalists, voted with their party only on personal questions, and sided with the Republicans on matters of policy.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾

So violent had the Hamiltonians' hatred of Adams become, however, that they ignored these danger signals and set themselves to the task of defeating their own Party's presidential candidate in 1800. To that end, they first tried to convince Washington to run again. When Washington flatly refused, they resorted again to their old plan of 1796 to elect C.C. Pinckney President by electoral strategem.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ Their failure in this attempt was chiefly due to the fact that Adams by now was a remarkably popular figure, and the chief source of his popularity was precisely the peace policy which the High Federalists so adamantly opposed.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾

Along with the army and the direct tax, peace was the transcendently salient issue in the campaign of 1799. Indeed, it subsumed the first two because once the American electorate learned that a French war could be honorably avoided, all their latent distaste for standing armies and heavy taxation came to the surface. Even at the peak of the XYZ furor, Fisher Ames had warned of this likelihood. "Peace is a word, a vain word, that would still deceive and divide." It was

"the substratum of the sentiments of all our citizens." The Federalists ought not to "make quite so much merit as they do of their desire for peace" because this supplies arguments for the opposition to use to block decisive war measures. "In brief," he concluded, "my fears, or my belief is, that the strong impulse on the public is temporary, and if left to itself, its reflux will be embarrassing." (109) Ames was not alone. Other Federalists warned of the dangers to the Party if it opposed the peace movement too openly. Robert Stockton predicted that any attempt to ditch Adams would lead to a Federalist loss in New England. A favorable treaty with France was nearly certain to be concluded before the election, and "it would never be believed but that this treaty formed the true objection; that the federalists wishing war with France opposed him, because he had made peace with that nation on honourable terms." (110) Similarly, George Cabot reported that anti-Adams statements were greeted very hostilely in Massachusetts. Then in a remark revealing the depth of the split within the Party, he continued, "There are even men among the federalists who prefer Jefferson to a federal rival of Mr. A., and there are some certainly who would prefer Mr. J. to Adams." (111)

The warnings proved correct. The peace movement was important in undercutting the Federalists' recent gains in North Carolina. (112) By Oliver Wolcott's own admission, it had quenched the "gleam of federalism" which had flickered briefly in Virginia in the previous elections. It had seriously divided Federalist opinion in New Jersey. Finally, it had

produced a dramatic reversal in Pennsylvania, where a "high spirit in favour of the government had been excited" during the war fever of 1798. "In no state has the mission to France produced so violent a counteraction, as in Pennsylvania," Wolcott asserted, and he expressed his conviction that without that mission, Ross would have won the Pennsylvania governorship.(113) Instead, the Republicans had won both the governorship and the House of Representatives, leaving the Federalists in control only of the state Senate.(114)

By insisting upon a belligerent approach to France, the High Federalists also alienated some of their own potential following. By 1799, the United States had developed a booming reexport trade in goods coming from the French West Indies. The result was the emergence of a new group of prosperous merchants in the Massachusetts seaboard towns whose trade depended upon good relations with France. Adams' foreign policy put these men firmly in his camp,(115) When the French peace treaty finally arrived on 4 October 1800, the High Federalists tried to block its ratification; it was these merchants who applied the strongest pressure for the treaty's approval.(116)

Meanwhile, the Republicans were making considerable capital out of the special mission. They had, they said, saved the country from war by forcing Adams to dispatch it.(117) The Republicans, in fact, were rapidly capturing the peace issue, and it was one of the greater paradoxes of the 1800 presidential campaign that after a Federalist president had

nearly single-handedly enabled the United States to avoid a French war, part of his own party turned against him so violently as to enable the Republicans to reap the benefit of Adams' most popular policy. A year later, an English observer noted as much:

"... almost every step which he [Adams] took has turned to the advantage... of his antagonists. The measure of appointing Commissioners to France ... divided his adherents into two irreconcilable parties & enabled his enemies to enter at the breach & to snatch from him all the glory of a reduction of taxes, which now gives so much splendour to the first acts of Mr. Jefferson."(118)

In 1799, moreover, the peace issue was so tightly linked to the issue of nationalism that whichever party succeeded in capturing the former automatically found itself in possession of the latter as well. In the first stage of the French crisis, the Republicans had found their patriotism under a cloud. By 1799, the chances of history both in Europe and America had enabled them to brand their opponents as tools of England in foreign affairs, and as despots seeking to crush constitutional freedoms at home. By so doing, the Republicans were able to present themselves as the standard-bearers of "true" American patriotism, and to impress their own nationalism's egalitarian, messianic symbology upon the American national consciousness.

We may say further that in capturing the decisive issues of peace and nationalism, the Republicans captured the reactivation of the "Spirit of '76" as well. They successfully represented the campaign of 1799-1800 as a renewed battle

against the same forces of aristocracy and oppression against which the American Revolution had been fought. In October of 1800, the Philadelphia Aurora drew a pointed contrast between "FEDERAL Things As They Have Been" and "REPUBLICAN Things As They Will Be." Instead of "the principles and patriots of the Revolution condemned and stigmatized," there was to be "The Principles of the Revolution restored; its Patriots honored and beloved." Instead of "federalism a mask for monarchy," there was to be "Federalism found to be nothing." Instead of "A Sedition Law to protect corrupt magistrates," there was to be "The Liberty of the Press, and... our constitutional charter, Religious liberty, the rights of conscience, no priesthood, truth and Jefferson." (119)

It was, in its way, a serious distortion of reality, but that did not matter. It was irrelevant that in fact neither moderate nor High Federalists bore any real resemblance to the British aristocracy, or that they never plotted a reimposition of monarchy upon the United States, or that they were as burningly patriotic in their own manner as any Republican. What mattered was the symbolic content of the battle as it finally emerged. By infusing their campaign with the symbols of the American Revolution, the Republicans infused their electoral victory of 1800 with a specifically American meaning. It became less a "decision" than a reinterpretation and reaffirmation of Americans' greatest national decision to date: the decision of 1776.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 4

(1) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 39-46; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 80-82.

(2) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 46-49.

(3) See Chapter 3.

(4) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 71-72.

(5) Discipline was hardly better in New York: Chancellor Livingston had earlier warned his younger relative to be cautious in challenging the Administration, but Edward had obviously paid the warning no heed. Young, op.cit., p. 460.

(6) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 40-41.

(7) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 82.

(8) To Monroe, 14 May 1796, Hunt (ed.), Writings, VI, 300-301.

(9) Chambers, op.cit., p. 89.

(10) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 94-97.

(11) France's policy towards neutral shipping had pursued a wildly erratic course since the spring of 1793, as the revolutionary government had tried to hit upon some effective means of counteracting Britain's determined effort to choke off the flow of American foodstuffs to the Continent. On 9 May 1793, the National Convention declared that so long as Britain continued her policy of seizing all neutral ships carrying provisions to enemy ports, France would do the same. Two weeks later, however, American ships were exempted - and five days after that, the exemption was repealed. Then on 1 July 1793, it was restored yet again, but not for long. On 27 July, the French government reverted to the draconic policy of their

original law of 9 May. In 1794, the same somersault was repeated: in May, the government declared the treaty of friendship with America in full force; in November, it reverted yet again to the restrictive policy of 9 May 1793. Meanwhile, in August of 1794, the British Government, in order to facilitate the negotiations then in progress with Jay in London, had set aside its provisions order of June 1793. News of this repeal reached France late in 1794, and as stipulated by the law of 9 May 1793, the French accordingly repealed their own seizure law; once more, they declared the Treaty of 1778 with the United States in force. This produced but a brief hiatus, however. In August of 1795, the text of the Jay Treaty arrived in France with disastrous results for Franco-American relations. The angry French government determined to exert thenceforth the utmost pressure possible upon America. Adet was instructed officially to intervene in the presidential contest, and French seizures of American ships began to soar to unprecedented heights. Samuel Flagg Bemis, "Washington's Farewell Address: A Foreign Policy of Independence," American Historical Review, Vol. 39, No. 2, (January 1934) pp. 252-255, Note 3.

(12) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 101; Miller, op.cit., p. 200; Hazen, op.cit., pp. 286-287; Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 127-128.

(13) And in fact, the Republicans had been involved in Adet's action, for in their hatred of the Federalists in general, and the Jay Treaty in particular, some second-level extremists in Philadelphia had actually urged Adet to attempt^t his unfortunate

foray into revolutionary diplomacy, (Kurtz, op.cit., p. 140.) In their furious fears of their respective opponents' unpatriotic designs upon American independence, both sides in the 1790's repeatedly acted in such a manner as to confirm, their adversaries' darkest suspicions. We have already noted Washington's signature of the Jay Treaty as a case in point. Hamilton provided another instance during the Jay negotiations. At the time, France was attempting to form a League of Armed Neutrality to counteract British seapower, and it was known in London that she had approached the United States to ask America to join. The United States in all likelihood would not have done so, but such uncertainty as existed on that score would be one more bargaining counter for Jay in the London negotiations. Hamilton, however, in his conviction that a treaty with Great Britain was absolutely necessary to America's continued national survival, injudiciously confided to Great Britain's Minister to the United States that America would definitely not join the League, thereby depriving Jay of any advantage which might be drawn from the threat of doing so. (Bemis, Jay's Treaty, p. 201.) Nor were the Republicans innocent of such "confirmatory behavior" before 1796. In the spring of 1794, Congress was debating the imposition of an embargo on American ports to retaliate against the British seizures of that time. Fauchet, the French Minister at the time, was very concerned that the embargo not be imposed before the fleet then being collected to carry food supplies to France could sail. House Republicans were just as eager to time the embargo to France's advantage.

Thus, throughout the months of February and March, they consulted repeatedly with Fauchet, first as to the best possible starting date and then as to the best time to lift the ban. (James , op.cit., pp. 155-157.) The Republicans' intent was to prevent monarchical Britain from starving the only Republic in Europe, but hostile observers might be forgiven if they interpreted such frequent consultations with a foreign power as unseemly and suspicious.

(14) To Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 17 November 1796, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 397.

(15) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April 1796; George Cabot to Oliver Wolcott, 6 April 1797, ibid., I, 503 & 520-521.

(16) It is interesting to note that even Fisher Ames, America's archconservative, was not vehemently anti-French until French influence became evident in American internal politics. Bernhard, op.cit., p. 218.

(17) Alexander DeConde, The Quasi-War: The Politics and Diplomacy of the Undeclared War with France, 1797-1801. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, Lyceum edn.; 1966) pp. 16-17. Hereinafter cited as DeConde, Q. W.

(18) E. Wilson Lyon, "The Directory and the United States." American Historical Review, Vo. 43 (October 1937 - July 1938) pp. 516-519.

(19) Travels, IV, 345. Italics added.

(20) DeConde, Q.W., pp. 124-125.

(21) 19 April 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 496.

- (22) To Oliver Wolcott, 15 May 1797, ibid., I, 633.
- (23) To Oliver Wolcott, 27 June 1797, ibid., I, 548.
- (24) To Oliver Wolcott, 14 May 1797, ibid., I, 523.
- (25) To Oliver Wolcott, 5 June 1797, ibid., I, 543.
- (26) To Madison, 4 June 1797, Kurtz, op.cit., p. 289.
- (27) To Madison, 15 June 1797, ibid., loc. cit.
- (28) Ibid., p. 299.
- (29) Pinckney had actually replied, "No, no, not a sixpence," but his refusal gained in the translation to popular sloganry.
- (30) DeConde, Q.W., p. 75.
- (31) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 340, Note 2.
- (32) Lycan, op.cit., p. 461.
- (33) Fee, op.cit., pp. 79-83.
- (34) DeConde, Q.W., p. 150.
- (35) To Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 23 January 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 438.
- (36) To George Washington, no date, Miller, op.cit., p. 213, Note 5.
- (37) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 343.
- (38) In March of 1799, the United States vessel "Ganges" successfully defied a boarding and investigation attempt by the British vessel "Surprise," much to the delight of the American public. DeConde, Q.W., p. 203.
- (39) Ibid., loc.cit.
- (40) Travels, IV, 336.
- (41) Miller, op.cit., p. 214. Another deterrent was the fact that Napoleon at the time was equipping a fleet to invade England, and Americans were unlikely to favor a war whose chief effect under the circumstances would have been to assist Great Britain. Gallophobia did not equal Anglophilia.

- (42) DeConde, Q.W., pp.90-96; Kurtz, op.cit., p. 305; Miller, op.cit., p. 213
- (43) DeConde, Q.W., p. 102; Kurtz, op.cit., p. 306.
- (44) Philip Freneau in the Time-Piece, 9 October 1797, in Lewis Leary, That Rascal Freneau: A Study in Literary Failure. (Rutgers University Press; 1941) pp. 295-296.
- (45) Oliver Wolcott to President John Adams, 25 April, 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 510-511.
- (46) George Cabot to Oliver Wolcott, 6 April, 1797, ibid., I, 522.
- (47) To Oliver Wolcott, 14 August, 1798, ibid., II, 118.
- (48) Which did in fact eventuate despite the fact that neither France nor the United States officially declared war during the hostilities of 1797-1800. Bradford Perkins. The First Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1795-1805. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press; 1955) Chapter 8.
- (49) Gilbert, op.cit., pp. 129-134.
- (50) Bemis, "Washington's Farewell Address..." p. 261, Note 35.
- (51) Charles, op.cit., pp. 137-138.
- (52) Benjamin Stoddert to Oliver Wolcott, 27 November 1798, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 115.
- (53) William Smith to Oliver Wolcott, 3 February 1799, ibid., II, 238.
- (54) Stephen Higginson to Oliver Wolcott, 11 July 1798, ibid., II, 70-71.
- (55) DeConde, Q.W., p. 85.
- (56) To Oliver Wolcott, 25 October 1798, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 109-110.
- (57) John C. Miller, Crisis in Freedom: The Alien and Sedition Acts. (Boston: Atlantic-Little, Brown & Co., 1951) passim, brings this state of mind to vivid life.

- (58) Warren, Odd Byways..., pp. 103-126.
- (59) To Jeremiah Smith, 17 April 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 478.
- (60) Anas, in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 128.
- (61) To Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 10 July 1797, Gibbs, Memoirs, I, 557. Italics added.
- (62) Even arch-democrat Joseph Varnum of Massachusetts voted for ~~the~~ Sedition Act. Kurtz, op.cit., p. 306.
- (63) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 14-17; J.T. Adams, op.cit., p. 227.
- (64) Jabez Hammond, The History of Political Parties in the State of New York. (2 Vols., Buffalo: Phinney & Co.; 1850) I, 114.
- (65) Chambers, op.cit., p. 142
- (66) Lycan, op.cit., p. 461.
- (67) Ambler, op.cit., p. 67.
- (68) Chambers, op.cit., pp. 142-143.
- (69) Lycan, loc. cit.
- (70) Ambler, op.cit., p. 75, Marshall opposed the Alien and Sedition Laws on practical rather than idealistic grounds. He maintained that they would offer the Republicans an escape-issue to recoup the losses they had sustained from the popular reaction against France, and were "calculated to create unnecessary discontents and jealousies," This stand much outraged the New England Federalists, who expressed doubts as to the orthodoxy of Marshall's Federalism, Beveridge, op.cit., II, 386-390.
- (71) To Oliver Wolcott, 29 June 1798, Morris (ed.), Ideas, p. 371.
- (72) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 384; Marshall Smelser, "George Washington and the Alien and Sedition Acts", American Historical Review, Vol. 59, No. 2 (January, 1954) pp. 322-335.

(73) Frank M. Anderson, "Contemporary Opinion of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions" Pt. I, American Historical Review, Vol. 5, No. 1 (October, 1898) pp. 45-65; Pt. II, ibid., Vol. 5, No. 2 (January, 1900) pp. 225-253.

(74) DeConde, Q.W., pp. 37-41, 143-147, 161.

(75) Lyon, op.cit., pp. 524-529.

(76) DeConde, Q.W. pp. 214-215.

(77) Ibid., p. 223-232.

(78) Miller, Crisis in Freedom, pp. 63-64.

(79) John Hopkins to Oliver Wolcott, 12 September 1798, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 108. Beveridge is emphatic in asserting that if the Federalists had been content with the other measures in the preparedness program, eliminating only the divisive Alien and Sedition Laws, the Republicans would never have recovered. Op.cit., II, 361.

(80) To President John Adams, 25 May 1799, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 240.

(81) 5th Congress, 3rd Session, Report of the Committee on the Repeal of the Alien and Sedition Law, 25 February 1799, ibid., II, 83-85.

(82) Van Buren, op.cit., pp. 264-267.

(83) Hammond, op.cit., I, 132.

(84) To Oliver Wolcott, 16 January 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 321, Italics added.

(85) To Creed Taylor, 9 April 1799, in Cunningham, Making of the American Party Systems, p. 151. Chauncey Goodrich reported the same sentiment abroad in Connecticut. "The public temper is more than usually fastidious about public expense;

they care more about that than British influence, or monarchy. The strong passion of the country is money." To Oliver Wolcott, 26 August 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 412.

(86) Hammond, op. cit., p. 132.

(87) Manning J. Dauer, The Adams Federalists (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press; 1953) pp. 28-31; DeConde, Q.W., p. 197. The Federalists' decline in Pennsylvania was largely due to their own high-handed behavior, especially in the suppression of Fries' Rebellion. The Federalists were almost unavoidably a minority in the state, but they had not been overthrown so long as their rule had been satisfactory, which by and large it had been. Beginning with the war program of 1798, however, they themselves supplied the Republicans with the issues which brought them down in defeat. Higginbotham, op. cit., pp. 25-27. Wolcott himself admitted that "perhaps the country gentlemen at one time assumed airs of too much superiority over their opponents." He, however, blamed Adams' peace policy for the Federalist downfall in Pennsylvania. "The excess of their zeal might have been moderated, but by reversing the federal system, the President destroyed their influence, and has left them prostrate before their vindictive adversaries." To Fisher Ames, 10 August 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 403. The accuracy of Wolcott's analysis is less impressive than the revealing light it casts upon the manner in which the Federalists' own snobbery recoiled upon them.

(88) Local issues were almost wholly subordinate in the campaign. McKean ran on a platform of total opposition to the national Administration's war program. Kurtz, op. cit., p. 364.

(89) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 23-25.

(90) To Oliver Wolcott, 12 January 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 321.

(91) To Oliver Wolcott, 18 November 1799, ibid., II, 288.

(92) So violently opposed were the High Federalists to this mission that Adams had to threaten to resign if they blocked it. His resignation would have made Jefferson President, and the Federalists regarded that as the ultimate disaster. Hence Adams got his way, but even at the last moment, his opponents in the Cabinet tried to prevent Murray from taking ship to France. Dauer, op.cit., p. 198; DeConde, Q.W., pp. 216-223.

(93) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 308-325.

(94) To Oliver Wolcott, 11 June 1799, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 241.

(95) Thomas Fitzsimmons to Oliver Wolcott, 24 July 1800, ibid., II, 388.

(96) Some time earlier, in the period of the Republicans deepest difficulties, Jefferson himself had speculated on such a possibility. See Jefferson to Madison, 1 January 1797, Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 540.

(97) Dauer, op.cit., p. 248.

(98) Jedidiah Morse to Oliver Wolcott, 8 November 1799, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 287. The same rumor is noted in Oliver Wolcott to Fisher Ames, 29 December 1799, ibid., II, 315.

(99) DeConde, Q.W., p. 260; Beveridge, op.cit., II, 519.

(100) See Adams' letters published in the Boston Patriot, vindicating the special mission to France of 1799, esp. letters 10 and 34. Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 221, 223; Beveridge, op.cit., II, 518.

(101) Adams later wrote that his defeat in 1800 had enabled him to live eight years longer, for he could not have survived another year of "such labours and cares, as were studiously and maliciously accumulated upon me, by the French faction, and the British faction; the former aided by the Republicans, and the latter by Alexander Hamilton and his satellites." Letter 12 in the Boston Patriot, ibid., II, 441.

(102) Oliver Wolcott to Fisher Ames, 18 August 1800, ibid., II, 414-415.

(103) James McHenry to Oliver Wolcott, 1 September 1800, ibid., II, 414-415.

(104) To Oliver Wolcott, 12 June 1800, ibid., II, 368.

(105) Dauer, op.cit., pp. 233-234, 245; DeConde, Q.W., p.212,261.

(106) Hammond, op.cit., I, 123-124.

(107) Dauer, op.cit., p. 249. Late in 1798, the High Federalists had even held a caucus to sound the support for a declaration of war over Adams' head. To such an extent had the President and his party become estranged. DeConde, Q.W., p.168.

(108) Some top-level Federalists leaders backed Adams' French policy -- among them not only Marshall but John Jay, Henry Knox, Patrick Henry (now a Federalist) and George Washington himself. DeConde, Q.W., p. 183,187. Even F. Ames, ardent Hamiltonian and fervent war-hawk, strongly urged Party unity behind Adams, because only that could forestall Jefferson's election. He was right. See Ames to Oliver Wolcott, 12 June 1800, and Ames to Chauncey Goodrich, 12 June 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 368 & 366-367.

(109) To Oliver Wolcott, 7 June 1798, ibid., II, 51-52. See also same to same, 24 April 1797, when at the peak of the anti-French reaction of that year, Ames argues in favor of a new mission to France because otherwise the "Jacobins" will be able to pin a warmonger label on the Federalists. "The dread of war is stronger still than the sense of honour or of injury." Ibid., I, 497-498.

(110) To Oliver Wolcott, 27 June 1800, Ibid., II, 375.

(111) To Oliver Wolcott, 20 July 1800, ibid., II, 383-384.

(112) Lycan, op.cit., p. 464.

(113) To Fisher Ames, 10 August 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 403-404.

(114) Higginbotham, op.cit., p. 28.

(115) DeConde, Q.W., p. 200; Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 352-353; Goodman, op.cit., pp. 102-112; Dauer, op.cit., p. 31.

(116) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 524-525.

(117) Ibid., II, 522, Note 1.

(118) Edward Thornton to Lord Hawkesbury, Washington, December, 1801, No. 57, P.R.O. G.B. F.O. 5, in DeConde, Q.W., p. 337.

(119) Aurora, 14 October 1800, in Cunningham, Making of the American Party System, pp. 157-158.

CHAPTER 5: The "Meaning" of 1800 and Its Legacy
to the Future

In emphasizing the role of political emotion in American politics during the 1790's, the preceding analysis may have appeared to slight the Republicans' organizational ability and success. No such slight is intended. The Republicans of the 1790's laid the ground work upon which was built the political party Americans know today. They did not begin from scratch. In their early days, they depended heavily upon two techniques borrowed directly from colonial and revolutionary practice -- public mass meetings and committees of correspondence.⁽¹⁾ To these older techniques, however, they added an array of new and more effective ones. Of the latter, the caucus was especially significant for the future. State legislative caucuses had been a feature of colonial politics as well, but their political role changed noticeably during the 1790's. Instead of general consultations among legislative faction leaders, they showed distinct signs of becoming important party organs. Especially important was their gradual assumption of the nominating function. Nominations to lower offices tended to remain in the hands of local leaders and public meetings at the town and county level, but gubernatorial and senatorial nominations were increasingly determined by caucuses in the state capital. The caucus was yet to become the central tool of party organization it later did, but its growth in the late 1790's was an important harbinger of things to come.

As party polarization increased at the national level,

moreover, the state caucuses became increasingly linked to the Congressional alignments forming in Philadelphia. At the national level, the nominating caucus was a new development of the 1790's. It improved rapidly over its inefficient beginnings in 1796. In that year, Congressional Republicans met to choose a Vice-Presidential candidate to run with Jefferson, but they arrived at no decision. In 1800, they named Burr, and intraparty discipline had become strong enough to enforce this decision throughout the marathon electoral crisis of 1801 in the House. So successful a device did the caucus prove to be that the Republicans continued to use it as their chief tool of party coordination until 1824.(2)

By the end of the decade, the Republicans were rapidly evolving yet another important organizational technique: the county nominating convention. In the past, meetings of the county's electors had often been held to discuss nominations for local office, but attendance was informal and haphazard. Generally the meeting ended by being controlled by those electors with enough leisure and funds to manage the trip over the deplorable roads of the time.(3) The county convention as it had developed by the turn of the century was a far more sophisticated device. Attendance was formalized, and each township or district was allotted a number of delegates which were to be chosen by its own electors.(4) The system spread irregularly; its success depended heavily upon a county-township system of representation in the state government, and this did not prevail in all states.(5) It also tended to appear

only where party competition at the local level was close and intense. Thus, where party strength was markedly sectionalized, as it was in Pennsylvania, the representative nominating convention did not emerge until transport conditions had improved enough to render a statewide meeting feasible.⁽⁶⁾ Spotty and irregular as it was by 1800, however, the system was an important harbinger of Republican popular organization in the near future.

The Republicans were most inventive when it came to the techniques of grass-roots electioneering. Their skill was most in evidence in Pennsylvania. This was importantly due to the fact that one of the Party's chief strategists in that state was John Beckley, and Beckley would have been in demand as a national campaign manager in our own day. It was largely upon his initiative that the Pennsylvania Republicans learned to deluge the electorate with popularly written campaign handbills, circular letters, and detailed information as to the date of election day and the rules governing balloting procedure. Beckley was also relentless in his drive to get out the vote of every possible Republican elector. His local managers drew up lists of qualified voters and kept them continuously revised. Young, sturdy men were engaged to ride through the countryside to mobilize public opinion in the Republican cause. When the Federalists attempted to hinder these efforts to bring the less literate to the polls by requiring every voter to have a handwritten ticket with the names of all fifteen presidential electors, Beckley saw to it that 50,000 such tickets

were penned and distributed.(7)

This sort of political inventiveness contributed heavily to the Republican victory by enabling them to act swiftly and effectively to exploit the fortunate opportunities which came their way after 1798. Throughout the 1790's, the Federalists repeatedly denounced their opponents' techniques as demagogic, unseemly attempts to pervert "true republicanism" to a tyranny of the masses.(8) Yet the Federalists' own organizational ability is too often underestimated. In New York, for example, they displayed remarkable flexibility and resourcefulness in the 1790's, outmaneuvering the Republicans upon several occasions.(9) They had strong local organizations in New York, Massachusetts, New Jersey and Connecticut.(10) They were quick to preempt Republican methods in Virginia. In the Jay Treaty crisis, for example, they acted swiftly to organize their own series of public meetings to call for the Treaty's ratification,(11) and by the end of the decade, they had largely copied all of the Republicans' organizational methods.(12)

The Federalists never built a coordinated nationwide network of political organizations such as the Republicans had forged by 1799, but they were never entirely unorganized in any state. They were linked together by secret understandings among Federalist gentlemen throughout the Union, by sporadic legislative caucuses in most state capitals, and by a number of personal cliques and connections. In the middle states, moreover, they had begun to develop some very presentable formal machinery.(13) The trouble with this arrangement was

that it was inadequate to cope with the concentrated drive which their defeats in the decade's middle years had developed among the Republicans. Indeed, the more one studies the Republican Party's growth, the more one is struck by how much they owed to the stimulus of adversity. It was only after their setback in the Jay Treaty battle that they began forming the tight committee structure and the nominating conventions which did so much to unify their electoral efforts. It was also at this point that they began establishing their own newspapers and collecting campaign funds on a large scale from the faithful.(14)

The Federalists experienced no such stimulus. They had won, after all, and their innate distaste for pandering to popular favor made a concerted drive for popular support appear improper as well as unnecessary.⁽¹⁵⁾ As underdogs, by contrast, the Republicans had to organize or perish. Martin Van Buren remarked that the Federalist Party by its very nature did not experience the need for systematic organization until it was too late. "Constructed principally of a network of special interests... the feelings and opinions of its members spontaneously point in the same direction." Hence, it rarely required "caucuses and conventions to preserve harmony in its ranks," and accordingly its leaders always avoided "all usages or plans designed to secure party unity, so essential to their opponents and substantially unnecessary to themselves."(16)

The Federalist defeat in 1800 appears not to have been primarily the result of a decline in their own electoral

strength. They suffered some strategically important losses: the artisan-mechanic groups of New York City and Philadelphia, the Germans of western Pennsylvania, and the ambitious new seaboard entrepreneurial groups of whom we have already spoken at length.⁽¹⁷⁾ By and large, however, they retained the majority of their older following. But this no longer proved adequate in face of the sharp rise in Republican electoral power resulting from the accelerated mobilization after 1793 of a previously apathetic electorate.⁽¹⁸⁾ As the following table indicates, in at least three important areas, the Republicans' gains could not have come solely from attrition in Federalist ranks:⁽¹⁹⁾

	Philadelphia County		City of Phila.		NYC		Boston	
	Fed.	Rep.	Fed.	Rep.	Fed.	Rep.	Fed.	Rep.
1792	481	688	1378	836	1874	707	371	330
1796	397	1732	1088	1732	1812	2362	1408	986

This mobilization was effected by the intricate political chemistry already analyzed whereby the Republicans, by capturing the reactivations and issues of the 1790's, won their way to power. Even then, we have seen how very hard-fought the capture was and how easily it might have failed. The Republicans' decisive advance dates only from about 1798, and it was only made possible by certain crucial but quite uninevitable historical accidents.

It is for this reason that we have stressed the emotional and conceptual content of American politics after 1793. It was the quality and intensity of the political symbolism involved which gave a particularly highly-charged "meaning" to the election of 1800. Nothing else can explain the enduring

impression which the Jeffersonian triumph left on American politics. Certainly the Republicans' behavior once in power cannot do so. One looks in vain for dramatic policy innovations or major constitutional revisions. They did not even repeal the Alien and Sedition Laws. Nor did they reorganize the administrative apparatus which the Federalists had built; they took it over as they received it and maintained it nearly intact throughout their long ascendancy.(20) All of this, however, is irrelevant. What does matter is the light in which contemporaries saw the Republican victory, and on this score there can be little doubt. Whether favorably or not, the Republican triumph was perceived as the victory of a democratic, egalitarian philosophy of society and government that was to set its mark upon all of America's subsequent history.(21)

There was an apocalyptic tone to the reactions from both sides. To the Federalists, the Republicans' "Master" was "the Devil,"(22) and "Jacobinic principles" were a "tyrant" and a "noon-day pestilence."(23) They defined the contest as being one "between two hostile parties; one aiming at an entire change of principles and measures; the other striving to support the present established order of things." A Republican victory meant triumph "for French notions of government, for the tempestuous sea of anarchy and misrule; for arming the poor against the rich; for fraternizing with the foes of God and man." Only a Federalist victory could "preserve the union of these states, the purity and vigour of our excellent constitution; the sacred majesty of the laws, and the holy ordinances of religion."(24)

The Republicans, of course, interpreted their victory in diametrically opposed terms, but they were no more objective. Many felt a sense of utter exhilaration at having participated in an event of truly epochal significance:

"Perhaps we are the selected People upon Earth, from whom large portions of mankind are to learn, that Liberty is really a transcendent blessing, as capable by its enlightened energies of calmly dissipating its internal enemies, as of triumphantly repelling its foreign foes."(25)

Henry Adams remarked that "never did any party or any administration in our country begin a career of power with such entire confidence that a new era of civilization and liberty had dawned on earth."(26) Many years later, Thomas Jefferson still believed that "the revolution of 1800 was as real a revolution in the principles of our government as that of 1776 was in its form."(27) Nearly seventy years later, Martin Van Buren set down an assessment of his party's victory which might serve as a capsule summation of our own argument:

"... 'the Civil Revolution of Eighteen Hundred,' a name given to it by the victors on the assumption that, although the weapons were different, the principles which were involved in it and the spirit which achieved the triumph were akin to those which distinguished the Revolution by the sword. The knowledge that Hamilton preferred monarchical institutions... that John Adams ... sympathized very cordially with that sentiment, and the belief that most of the leaders of the Federal party partook largely of the same feeling... caused a wide-spread and sincere alarm on the side of the Republican party for the safety of republican government in the United States. This apprehension imparted a graver character to the contest than any other considerations could have produced, and called into vigorous action much of the spirit by which the minds of the masses had been influenced in the Revolutionary War. It served to weld the members of the old Anti-Federal party and the Republicans... into a thorough union... because it was founded on a principle... which was of sufficient

magnitude to absorb minor differences in their political views." (28)

Out of this subjective interpretation grew the symbolic legacy of the "Revolution of 1800." By 1799, the assault on the Alien and Sedition Laws had evolved into a fully formulated affirmation of the sanctity of individual rights. The Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, which met only tepid or hostile response in other states in their own time, constituted a fully formulated argument against centralized governmental authority and a rich storehouse of available appeals for strict constructionists in later conflicts over constitutional interpretation. The assault on aristocratic England and all her American sympathizers created a full-fledged ideology of social equality and a decisive rejection of any prescriptive claim to social status or political leadership. The Revolutionary reactivation, amplified by the identification with the French revolt, ended in an institutionalized glorification of the simple citizen, unknown in the past and having extensive political implications for the future.

The subsequent violation of nearly all these ideals in practice is immaterial. The vital consideration is their immense and tenacious emotional power. This in turn casts light upon the second aspect of 1800's legacy: the lingering anxiety that the "triumph" might all too easily be reversed.

The Republican victory, so decisive in retrospect, was somewhat traumatic for those actually involved. It was too perilously narrow. John Adams showed surprising electoral strength, despite the fact that his foreign policy had split

his party wide open. Indeed, he ran better than he had in 1796. He received the unanimous electoral vote of the five New England states; south of the Delaware River, he won as many electoral votes as he had in 1796; and from Pennsylvania and New Jersey he received six more votes than in his first campaign.⁽²⁹⁾ The Republican majority in the electoral college was in doubt right down to the finish. A constitutional deadlock in Pennsylvania over the manner of choosing electors nearly kept that pivotal Republican state from casting any vote at all. When it was resolved at the very last minute, it split Pennsylvania's electoral vote nearly evenly thereby all but neutralizing the state's contribution to Republicanism's strength.⁽³⁰⁾ New York was won by a hair,⁽³¹⁾ and then only by the legendary political virtuosity of Aaron Burr.⁽³²⁾ South Carolina's vote finally tipped the scales, but only after some classic behind-the-scenes log-rolling by Charles Pinckney.⁽³³⁾

All of this might still have proven insufficient if the Federalists had remained united. They were so hopelessly divided, however, as to prove their own worst enemies. Alexander Hamilton unwisely wrote a violent diatribe against John Adams which he intended for only private circulation.⁽³⁴⁾ Burr, however, obtained a copy and published it. This drove the Adamsites and the Hamiltonians even further apart, and the beneficiaries of the split were the Republicans. The Federalists lost the election of 1800 almost as much as the Republicans won it.⁽³⁵⁾

Adams might yet have won if the peace treaty with France

had been concluded only a few weeks earlier. The American commissioners in Paris were convinced that a successful end to their negotiations would help Adams' chances at home, but the Paris talks dragged on, leaving their outcome still uncertain while presidential electors were being chosen at home. (36) Again, the Republicans reaped the advantage of this additional chance of history.

Then followed the famous deadlock in the House which necessitated a constitutional amendment to preclude its recurrence. For thirty-five successive ballots in February, 1801, Jefferson and Burr were tied for first place, and no one knew what the outcome would be. (37) In a last-ditch attempt to defeat Jefferson, the High Federalists sought to woo Burr to their side by offering to make him president over Jefferson. In doing so, they defied the fervent advice of their own chief-tain, Alexander Hamilton, who waxed violent in his indictment of Burr's character:

"... there is nothing in his favour. His private character is not defended by his most partial friends. He is bankrupt beyond redemption... His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandizement, per fas et nefas... He is truly the Cataline of America." (38)

The High Federalists' hatred of Adams, however, was second only to their detestation of Jefferson, and in a classic example of la politique du pire, they persisted in their attempt. Hamilton clearly grasped their motives and warned of the consequences should they succeed:

"... the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of their disposition to prefer Mr. Burr.

This disposition reminds me of the conduct of the Dutch monied men, who, from hatred to the old aristocracy, favoured the admission of the French into Holland to overturn every thing.

"Adieu to the Federal Troy, if they once introduce this Grecian Horse into their citadel."(39)

While Hamilton warned in vain, the Republicans laid plans to cope with the worst. It was possible that the Federalists would act on the assumption that the Presidency was vacant and would try to fill it by law. If they attempted that, the Republicans planned to refuse to recognize any president so created, and to resist obeying his laws. Another possibility was that the Federalists would ask only for a new election, without attempting to usurp power in the interim. In this event, the Republicans decided it would be wiser to submit.(40) In the end, neither of these crises materialized, but the fact that they were regarded as serious possibilities indicates the enormous tension which attended the Republican victory down to its last hours.

In combination, the events of 1799-1800 forcibly dramatized the narrowness of the Republican victory. They lent justifiable color to the Republican conviction that the Federalist threat remained real and imminent. Given a perceived "meaning" as emotionally charge as the one attached to the election of 1800, such a threat would inevitable constitute a source of unusual anxiety. Thus it is hardly surprising that Republicans in several states did their best to keep the issues of John Adams' administration alive and burning as long as they could, even - or especially - where all danger of a Federalist resurgence appeared to have been eliminated after 1800.(41)

Republicans obviously felt that they had fought a war, that their victory was hardly more than a precarious armistice, and that should their unity falter, their victory would crumble. Their campaign appeals after 1800 attempted to keep the memory of that war vivid so as to preserve the party unity it had created.

This effort in turn casts light upon the final aspect of 1800's legacy: the ambiguity of its "meaning." This in no way contradicts the assertion that its legacy to the future was great and enduring, but while all Republicans agreed that the victory was both profoundly significant and still imperiled, there existed no real Party consensus as to the precise goals for which it had been won. This was inevitable since the Republican Party by 1800 was about as heterogeneous a coalition as one might imagine. Including as it did Calvinist frontiersmen, urban "mechanics," tidewater aristocrats, and rising urban entrepreneurs, it represented a mixture of political ideals and economic interests so diverse as often to prove mutually exclusive. When after 1801, both the international context and the domestic saliences of American politics sharply altered, these internal stresses, necessarily latent in the earlier context, began to surface rapidly, with striking effect upon the course of party development.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 5

(1) Charles, op.cit., p. 85; In Virginia, these remained the chief tools of party coordination throughout the decade.

Ammon, "Jeffersonian Republicans in Virginia...", p. 162.

(2) Cunningham, Making of the American Party System, p. 123.

(3) Luetcher, op.cit., p. 67.

(4) Ibid., p. 2.

(5) Ibid., pp. 3-4.

(6) Ibid., p. 75.

(7) Cunningham, Making of the American Party System, pp. 69-71.

(8) Miller, Federalist Era, pp. 111-114.

(9) Young, op.cit., pp. 573-574.

(10) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 426.

(11) Beveridge, op.cit., II, 148-150.

(12) Cunningham, Making of the American Party System, p. 107.

(13) Fischer, op.cit., pp. 52-53.

(14) Ibid., p. 51.

(15) Bemis even suggests that their very victory over powerful opposition in the Jay Treaty crisis made the Federalists overconfident and led them fatally to overreach themselves by passing the Alien & Sedition Laws to silence their troublesome opponents permanently. Jay's Treaty, p. xiv.

(16) Van Buren, op.cit., p. 226. Italics added.

(17) Chambers, op.cit., p. 159.

(18) William Miller. "First Fruits of Republican Organization; Political Aspects of the Congressional Election of 1794." Pennsylvania Magazine of History & Biography, Vol. 63 (1939), pp. 141-143.

(19) Luetscher, op. cit., p. 60.

(20) White, The Jeffersonians, p. 546.

(21) Morton Grodzins, "Political Parties and the Crisis of Succession in the United States: The Case of 1800," in Joseph LaPalombara and Myron Weiner (eds.), Political Parties and Political Development (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1966) p. 318.

(22) Timothy Phelps to Oliver Wolcott, 18 September 1800, in Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 419.

(23) J. McHenry to Oliver Wolcott, 12 October 1800, ibid., II, 433.

(24) Editorial in Daily Advertiser, 28 April 1800.

(25) John Dickinson to Thomas Jefferson, 21 February 1801, in Koch, Jefferson and Madison..., p. 215.

(26) Henry Adams, John Randolph (Boston & New York: Houghton, Mifflin & Co.; 1899) p. 58.

(27) To Judge Spencer Roane, 6 September 1819, in Koch, Jefferson and Madison..., p. 215.

(28) Van Buren, op. cit., pp. 246-247, italics added. See a similar analysis in Hammond, op. cit., I, 116-120.

(29) Kurtz, op. cit., p. 406; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., p. 239.

(30) In the 1799 elections the Republicans had won the Pennsylvania House of Representatives but the Federalists had retained control of the Senate. By the law of 1796, which had now expired, electors were chosen on a statewide general ticket, and if this method were now continued, the Republicans would sweep all fifteen of the state's electoral votes. In December of 1799, the House passed a renewal of the general ticket provision. The Senate retaliated by passing a districting law

which would have allowed the Federalists to benefit by their highly regionalized strength to win at least part of the state's vote. Neither house would yield and the result was that no electors were chosen throughout the year. In the state elections of October, 1800, the Federalists suffered considerable losses, but still held a two-vote majority in the state Senate. Pennsylvania precedent did allow the legislature to choose electors if popular elections had failed to do so, but this only raised another question. Were the houses to vote separately or in joint session? The former would allow the Federalists to salvage some votes because they could control the Senate. The latter method would yield a Republican sweep because they would command an overall majority in a joint session. The result was another deadlock. Only on 1 December 1800 was a compromise struck. Each house was to nominate eight candidates, and from the total of sixteen nominees, fifteen electors were to be chosen by joint ballot. The Senate, therefore, put up eight Federalist candidates, and the House eight Republicans, and in joint session, a strict party vote resulted in an eight to seven split in favor of the Republicans.

Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 28-30; Walters, op.cit., pp.95-97.

(31) The Republican edge was less than 500 votes. Kurtz, op.cit., p. 406.

(32) New York's electors were chosen by the legislature, thus the state elections rather than the national contest would clinch the presidential vote. The parties, moreover, were so evenly divided in the legislature that New York City's vote

would decide the outcome - and New York City was again a center of Federalist strength. Republican strength, on the other hand, was divided by rivalries between the Clintonian and Livingstonian clans. Burr's strategy was to persuade the most prominent men among all these rival Republican groupings to run on the Party ticket, thereby uniting the Republican effort by means of the cumulative drawing-power of their names and prestige. Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 176-179; Cunningham, Making of the American Party System..., pp. 74-75.

(33) Not Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, but a relative who had gone over to Republicanism as a result of the Jay Treaty crisis, much to the outrage of his Federalist relations. The Federalists had been active and successful in Charleston, so Pinckney traveled to the state capital at Columbia to cajole the state legislators into voting Republican. His correspondence with Thomas Jefferson at the time contains strong indications, although always couched in carefully indirect language, that he used promises of Jeffersonian patronage as his bait. Whatever his methods, he was successful, and without him, the Republicans would have failed of their majority in the electoral college. Jameson, op.cit., pp. 111-129; Cunningham, Making of the American Party System..., pp. 75-77; Miller, Federalist Era, p. 267.

(34) Letter from Alexander Hamilton, concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams, Esp., President of the United States. (New York: Printed by John Lang by George G. Hopkins, 1800) in Miller (ed.), Ideas, pp. 403-404.

- (35) Dumas Malone, Thomas Jefferson as Political Leader.
(Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press; 1963),
pp. 44-47; Beveridge, op.cit., II, 531-532.
- (36) DeConde, Q.W., pp. 280-286.
- (37) Miller, Federalist Era, pp. 268-273; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., pp. 240-245.
- (38) Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, 16 December 1800,
Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 458.
- (39) Alexander Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, 17 December 1800,
ibid., II, 460.
- (40) Henry Adams, Gallatin, pp. 251-252.
- (41) Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., The Jeffersonian Republicans
in Power: Party Operations 1801-1809. (Chapel Hill: University
of North Carolina Press; 1963) pp. 286-288; Fee, op.cit.,
pp. 139-140.

CHAPTER 6: The State of Parties and the State of
the Union in 1801.

Some remarks are in order here as to the anatomy of the Republican and Federalist Parties as they had developed by 1801. Taken at face value -- and unfortunately for balanced analysis, most of the traditional histories and political studies have indeed taken it at face value -- the virulent campaign rhetoric of the 1790's conveys an impression of clear-cut division between two internally coherent, thoroughly antithetical parties. The reality, however, was considerably more complex. By 1800, both parties had become very heterogeneous coalitions. Both drew support from several social strata and numerous economic interests. Both parties, in fact, had become potentially unstable gatherings of incongruous allies.

Even in the days of their ascendancy, the Federalists had been no oligarchic, plutocratic clique. To regard them as such is to miss entirely the quality of American Federalism and to render it impossible to understand either its strengths or its weaknesses. Federalism was the embodiment of a style of social relationships and political conduct which was deeply rooted in colonial American society, and even earlier, in English traditions. The legitimacy of this elitist tradition had only been decisively challenged in the mid-1790's, and it had by no means been obliterated by 1801.⁽¹⁾ The ties that bound the Party together were its leaders' sense of social prominence and its followers' habits of deference, and it indicates how strong these societal traits remained in the

United States even after the "Revolution of 1800" that Senator Morris could exclaim publicly in Congress in 1802, "Why are we here? To save the people from their most dangerous enemy; to save them from themselves." (2)

Federalism in the 1790's was both less and more than a political party in the later American sense. It was less in its relative reluctance to adopt the techniques of popular politics; it was more, in that it was primarily concerned with preserving a more traditional mode of societal organization, and sought political power as an instrument to that end rather than as an end in itself. In both respects, Federalism was the ideological articulation and political manifestation of American society as it had long and legitimately existed. (3) No other definition can render it intelligible. (4)

Yet Federalism in the 1790's was a good deal more than the bastion of the status quo. It had another aspect equally as important, and very nearly the antithesis of its traditionalistic philosophy. This was its highly innovative, strikingly "modern" drive towards political centralization and economic efficiency. It was the Federalists who initiated the drive for a stronger Union; it was they who achieved the ratification of the Constitution; it was their leader Alexander Hamilton who developed a sophisticated, controversial and successful financial program for the young Union.

During the period of their ascendancy, the Federalists saw no conflict between their twin goals of political and economic modernization and the defense of a traditional

structure of authority, but in fact, the combination was intrinsically unstable. So long, however, as the Federalists themselves remained political "ins," both objectives could be -- and were -- articulated in the same ideological terms. Theirs, after all, was the social authority and control of policy whose rightful retention in their own hands they were defending.

A similar instability marked the Republican coalition. The status-hunger, the aggressive economic initiative, and the pragmatic view of government's legitimate functions which characterized the Party's urban mercantile wing diverged profoundly from the social outlook and constitutional theories of the Virginia planter aristocracy. This curious and ill-assorted coalition, however, was effectively cemented by the singularly flexible nature of Republican ideology, which by 1800 had evolved a degree of universalism capable of serving the needs of an amazing range of social, political and economic aspirations. It was crucial to their cohesion, however, that these remain only aspirations, for the Republican Party could pursue several intrinsically incompatible goals at once only so long as they themselves remained political "outs." Incongruous as these objectives might be, they could be -- and were -- articulated in similar ideological terms just so long as they remained inaccessible. The actual distribution of the plums of power, after all, aroused no controversies so long as those plums hung out of reach.

The Republican Party's inherent duality is apparent in the nature of the political rallying-cries it had developed by 1800. Republicanism's cementing ideology was as Janus-faced as was Federalism's, simultaneously strikingly modern and oddly reactionary.

The most powerful of the Party's appeals was the one to anti-British feeling. Hugh Williamson reported that "in my endeavours to discover the most prevailing argument by which the strength of the republican party has been constantly increasing, I have seen none so general, conclusive and well-understood, as a fixed dislike to the English nation."⁽⁵⁾ This appeal, however, was as ambiguous as it was powerful. In its rejection of "government by the best" and of aristocratic pretensions of any sort, it was thoroughly "modern;" yet in its hostility to an active national government and its insistence that the continued decentralization of political power was essential to prevent America's evolving into an imitation of the ousted British monarchy, it ran counter to the dominant trend of western political development since the sixteenth century.

Next in effectiveness was the appeal to the revolutionary philosophy of individualism and the equal rights of man. This, if we are to believe Tocqueville and Ostrogorski, is the very keystone of the modern age.⁽⁶⁾ Yet at the same time, the Republicans erected as their official citizen-ideal the independent yeoman farmer, sturdily free of either economic or political subservience to any other man. "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."⁽⁷⁾ The corollary to this ideal citizen was an ideal government that was strictly circumscribed so as to interfere as little as possible with the individual citizen's life -- an ideal suited only to a pre-modern society, economically undifferentiated and founded upon face-to-face interaction among autonomous individuals.

We may see, therefore, that both parties shared a single basic instability: each was composed of elements representing both the most and the least "modern" tendencies in the Union of that time. On both sides, this potential discontinuity could be held in check only by the continuance of three very unstable conditions:

1) Continued Federalist control of the national government: By ensuring that the Federalists would remain "ins" and the Republicans "outs," this condition would also ensure that each party's cementing ideology would continue to be effective in maintaining the cohesion of its coalition;

2) The continued saliency of foreign policy problems: The internal coherence of both parties' ideologies depended heavily upon certain linkages of concepts and outlooks that were not especially "logical" by any syllogistic standards. In the 1790's , however, they had appeared rigorously so by the standards of emotion and anxiety -- criteria which in politics are invoked far more often than philosophers might desire. They had acquired this air of "subjective logic"

only because they resonated so strongly with the ideological overtones of the struggle between England and France, and because that struggle had activated an older ideological heritage in American politics by creating serious problems for the United States in its international relations. So long as the Anglo-French War continued to rage abroad, the conflict between pro-British and pro-French sympathies might be expected to continue at a high emotional pitch at home, and both parties' ideologies could continue to draw strength from this domestic conflict's ability to elicit intensely partisan response;

3) A relatively stable configuration of social and economic forces within the United States itself: This last condition would ensure that old leadership groups would retain their influence, that they would not successfully be challenged by newly rising elites, that the sectional distribution of economic power would remain stable, and that the electorate's older deferential attitudes towards their leaders would not encounter stress from any major trend toward the differentiation of social and economic roles.

None of these conditions was fulfilled in America after 1801, and it is necessary to analyze in some detail the effects of their removal. The first, of course, ceased to apply in that same year when the Federalists were ousted from control of the national government. Suddenly, the plums of power fell into the Republicans' laps, and almost instantaneously, the Party began to divide over the distribution of the spoils.

Jefferson was determined upon his accession to make no sweeping removals from office. He recognized that the deep divisions among the Federalists gave the Republicans an excellent opportunity to win over the more moderate elements among their opposition:

"My idea is that the mass of our countrymen, even of those who call themselves Federalists, are republicans. They differ from us but in a shade of more or less power to be given to the Executive or Legislative organ. They were decoyed into the net of monarchists by the X.Y.Z. contrivance, but they are come or are coming back... But any violence against their quondam leaders before they are thoroughly weaned from them, would carry them back again."(8)

Jefferson, therefore, was bent upon pursuing a steadfastly conciliatory policy which might attract those whom he called "Republican Federalists" to the Republican fold.(9)

"Deprivations of office, if made on the ground of political principles alone, would revolt our new converts, and give a body to leaders who now stand alone. Some, I know, must be made. They must be as few as possible, done gradually, and bottomed on some malversion or inherent disqualification."(10)

Gallatin, now Secretary of the Treasury, agreed entirely with his President. It was better, he declared, to displease many of the Administration's political friends than to give anti-republican extremists the opening to induce the mass of Federal citizens to make cause with them.(11)

This wisely moderate policy, however, was decidedly not to the taste of office-hungry Republicans in the states. For twelve frustrating years, they had been excluded from the prestige and emoluments of office, and now that the prize of victory was theirs at last, they were eager to turn the Federalists out of their appointments bag and baggage. Thus they deluged

Jefferson with appeals for wholesale removals, and when the President resisted, the disappointed Republicans protested loudly. They were "mortified," they said, "to see their enemies triumphing in a day when they expected triumph and to be daily insulted and abused as not having merited the confidence of the administration, whose advocates they have been." (12) A New York newspaper exclaimed that "It was ardently desired and confidently expected by the Republicans of New York ... that by this time one half at least of the Tories now in office ... would have been removed.... That those who had occasioned the removal of the capital offenders against the state, and restored the shattered constitution to its primitive condition, would naturally expect the removal of the lesser culprits in office. If this should not be the case, for what, in the name of God, have we been contending?" (13)

In the two important states of Pennsylvania and New York, the touchy subject of patronage sowed the seeds of outright party schism. In Pennsylvania, the hot-headed editor of the Philadelphia Aurora became infuriated when both Gallatin and Alexander James Dallas resisted his demands that Federalist office-holders be sacked en masse. By 1802, Duane had joined forces with another malcontent, Michael Leib, and a discernible schism was forming within the Pennsylvania Republican Party. (14) In New York, Aaron Burr's alienation from the Administration began when despite his urgent recommendations, Jefferson steadily refused to appoint Burr's chief aide, Matthew L. Davis, to office in New York City. (15)

Thus, the reversal of no more than the first condition of party stability sufficed immediately to undermine the Republican Party's cohesion, but the second condition was eliminated almost immediately as well, for Jefferson's first administration coincided closely with the only lull in Anglo-French hostilities between 1793 and 1815. This allowed foreign policy to recede from saliency for the first time in nearly a decade. At the national level, at least, there was little to take its place. By midsummer of 1802, President Jefferson could think of only two items to present to Congress for its attention in the fall -- and these two were the singularly unexciting ones of reorganizing the militia and reforming the civil list.⁽¹⁶⁾ "The path we have to pursue is so quiet that we have nothing scarcely to propose to our legislature," he noted.⁽¹⁷⁾ Gallatin congratulated his President upon this new placidity in American politics. "I hope that your Administration will afford but few materials to historians; and we have already a favorable symptom, in the difficulty under which we are to collect materials for a message,"⁽¹⁸⁾ to which Jefferson agreed that "a noiseless course... is a mark that society is going on in happiness."⁽¹⁹⁾

Society may have been going on in happiness, but the same was hardly true of either the Republican Party or of the national government it now controlled. For the eclipse of foreign policy problems meant that the single greatest factor working for party cohesion was also withdrawn. In the 1790's, the issue of foreign policy had been the prime point of division

between the parties, but it had simultaneously been the Republicans' pivotal rallying-point around which to assemble a congeries of dissimilar state "republicanisms" into a national party. Without it, the Party inevitably tended to revert to its old fragmentation. Small wonder, therefore, that the Republicans in several states followed the Federalists into disintegration and internal factionalism, and that Congress in Washington presented a picture of unruly individualism, refractory cliques and regional antagonisms.(20) All the personal and regional rivalries, the conflicting economic interests and the ideological inconsistencies which the structure of saliences before 1800 had held in abeyance now surfaced in force, with severe effects upon party cohesion.*

*James Sterling Young admirably describes the severe fragmentation which the Party experienced at the national level in these years. He distorts the picture in one important respect, however. The fragmentation which he describes was real, and in fact altogether inevitable once the first condition for the Party's stability - its remaining in opposition - had been removed. But the surfacing of the Party's internal discontinuities did not at all obliterate the violent antagonism between Republicans and Federalists to which the bitter conflict of the 1790's had given birth. It merely complicated the earlier bipolar alignment by adding a vast array of additional divisions. Undeniably, the boardinghouse mess became a primary group exercising great influence upon the actions of Congressional members, but these groups were not bipartisan in their membership. Young's sole citation to indicate that they might have been so (pp. 275-276, note 35) is quoted out of context, for Plumer gives the impression that his action in bringing some Republicans into a Federalist mess was decidedly atypical. Tensions and rivalries were indeed endemic among Republicans themselves, but Federalists and Republicans continued to hate each other with unabated fervor. In his celebrated political dinners, Jefferson never mixed them - civility could not be expected to survive the strain. See Claude G. Bowers, Jefferson in Power (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., Sentry Edition, 1967) p. 46. And when John Quincy Adams in 1807 crossed the aisle from Federalism to Republicanism, he did so at the price of social and political ostracism by his erstwhile colleagues to whom his defection was tantamount to heresy, treason and betrayal.

Paradoxically enough, this internal disintegration coincided with a rising tide of Republican electoral victories in state elections. Even refractory New England's political complexion was rapidly changing. Soon after his inauguration, Jefferson wrote his Postmaster-General that "a new subject of congratulation has arisen. I mean the regeneration of Rhode Island. I hope it is the beginning of that resurrection of the genuine spirit of New England which arises for life eternal ... among the people, the schism is healed... Their quondam leaders have been astounded with the suddenness of the desertion." (21) By July of 1801, Jefferson held high hopes of the imminent salvation of all of New England except priest-ridden Connecticut, (22) and by 1804, his hopes appeared near fulfillment. A dramatic reversal indeed had occurred in New England politics. In 1800, New England's entire electoral vote had been cast for Adams; in 1804, every state but Connecticut voted for Jefferson. In 1800, four of the region's five governors had been Federalists; in 1804, they were Republican. In 1800, all five legislatures, all ten Senators, and most of the New England Representatives had been Federalists; in 1804, and Republicans were in full control of all but the Connecticut state government, and held a majority in New England's Congressional delegations. (23) Pennsylvania and New York were Republican. So was the West and most of the South. The Party held Virginia so solidly that Jefferson could say that "federalism in Virginia... is not feared, nor attended to, nor a principle of voting." (24) On the surface at least, the Party's triumph

appeared all but complete.

Yet what was the "Republicanism" which now dominated the nation? By 1804, intraparty factionalism at the state level had gone so far that one might have obtained at least three definitions of the term in New York, two in Pennsylvania, and two in Virginia, none of which much resembled any of the others. Jefferson's pleasure at the Party's victories in state elections, indeed, was soon somewhat dimmed by the growing evidence that these victories did not bring unity in their wake. "I had hoped," he remarked in 1802, "that the proceedings of this session of Congress would have rallied the great body of our citizens at once to one opinion. But the inveteracy of their quondam leaders had been able by intermingling the grossest lies and misrepresentations to check the effect in some small degree." (25)

As for the factionalism becoming rapidly rampant at the state level, he was clearly aware of its cause. "We must expect division," he wrote in 1803, "... as soon as the Republicans shall be so strong as to fear no other enemy." (26) He was right, but it was not solely the fact of its victory over Federalism in 1800 which precipitated the Party's internal divisions. Its disintegration was equally due to the fact that with the eclipse of the overriding salencies of 1798, the Party had lost the only issue of sufficient emotional force to submerge the enormous contradictions it had come to contain.

To the disintegrative effect of the first two conditions' reversal was added the crumbling of the third. It had, indeed,

been weakening steadily since the early 1790's. After 1800 it hardly obtained at all, for both the social and economic structures of the United States were in the midst of a period of explosive dynamism, and this development held profound implications for party politics at both state and national levels.

Americans have traditionally prided themselves upon their country's dynamism, its expansiveness, and its dedication to incessant change. These characteristics evoke undeniable - and often justified - admiration, but their more problematical aspects go relatively unnoticed. Mobility, by definition, is destabilizing, and by 1801, mobility was America's defining characteristic in nearly every area of life. Not only was there a pervading sense of a very high degree of social mobility; to this was joined a headlong process of economic differentiation, proliferation of new social roles, a constant realignment of old social relationships, and a geographic and demographic expansion of nearly explosive dimensions. The result was a hyper-mobile society, immensely vital but simultaneously unstable, whose internal stresses inevitably had political manifestations.

The demographic and geographic expansion was the most obvious. The United States' population climbed precipitously after 1790. In that year, it stood at 3,900,000; by 1810, it had risen to 9,600,000.⁽²⁷⁾ The very boundaries of the national shifted continuously as the flood of settlers moved westward. In 1790, the frontier had hardly passed the fall-line; by 1802 three new states had been formed in the West:

Kentucky, Tennessee and Ohio. In the following year, the Union's size was doubled in one stroke by the Louisiana Purchase.(28)

Coincident with these obvious physical changes, the American economy was undergoing less visible but equally significant alterations. The years between 1793 and 1801 were a period of unparalleled prosperity, during which United States exports rose 500%.(29) The reexport trade was especially dynamic, rising in value from \$20 million in 1797 to \$60 million in 1806.(30) Agricultural exports were also soaring to fill the large European demand created by the Anglo-French War. In 1800, 78,000 quarters of American wheat were shipped to England alone, and in 1801, the total was three and a half times greater. With some fluctuations, these prosperous conditions continued until 1807.(31) American cotton exports were skyrocketing. In 1791, they were virtually nil; by 1801, their value had risen to 20 million pounds; by 1805, to 40 million, and on the eve of the Embargo, it stood at 65 million pounds.(32) Great Britain was the United States' biggest cotton customer. Until the imposition of the Embargo, the South supplied some half the raw cotton used by England's textile mills.(33)

In the West, lands which but recently had been frontier wilderness were now producing an agricultural surplus which traveled down the Mississippi River to New Orleans. By 1802, these exports were valued at \$2 million; sixteen years earlier they had been nonexistent.(34) The West used this new revenue to purchase manufactured goods from the eastern seaboard.

Until now, the economic interests of these two areas of the Union had diverged so widely as to create severe centrifugal tendencies in the West.(35) By the opening of the nineteenth century, the two sections were linked by flourishing trade ties between New Orleans and the eastern cities of Philadelphia, Baltimore and New York.(36)

Techniques of economic activity were changing in accordance with the overall societal shift from the organic, communal interdependence of earlier days to the more impersonal, bureaucratized, individualistic style of the new age. The corporation was beginning to replace the personal partnership as the dominant form of business organization. In the more dynamic areas of the Union, older forms of labor, especially indentured servitude, slavery, and the apprenticeship system, were being replaced by a growing reliance on free labor. Older predispositions favoring control and regulation of economic activity from the top were giving way to an expansive, laissez-faire attitude favoring unrestricted individual enterprise. New York City, for example, had abolished the municipal slaughter-house's monopoly in 1791, and went on to abandon restrictions on butchers' licenses in 1795 and price-fixing on bread in 1801.(37)

Meanwhile, the thriving condition of the shipping and reexport trade stimulated the growth of a whole new range of economic activities to service this paramount sector of the economy. Commissionaires, brokers, maritime insurance companies, warehouses, docking facilities, and banks mushroomed to render the young nation's economy yearly more complex.(38)

The West was not only producing an agricultural surplus by 1800 but was rapidly diversifying its economy. Lexington and Pittsburgh had become thriving manufacturing centers by the late 1790's.⁽³⁹⁾ Western society had also grown rapidly more complex. By 1802, the typical western leader was no longer a restless frontier adventurer but a well-heeled conservative occupying public office and very often commanding a smoothly running political machine of considerable effectiveness in transforming his own interests into official policy.⁽⁴⁰⁾ The New York frontier was developing equally as rapidly. Areas which in 1792 had been barely settled, capital-starved, deeply indebted subsistence economies were thriving, surplus-producing agricultural centers by 1797, boasting small but growing towns. In both areas, the maturation of the economy led to a sharp expansion in the range of social and economic roles. Lawyers, shopkeepers, and professionals appeared next to the farmer and his landlord, and marked differences in relative prosperity replaced the old equality of condition.⁽⁴¹⁾

This exuberant turbulence had numerous political consequences. As frontier regions grew in population, wealth and self-confidence, their demands for better representation in their state legislatures grew more insistent. Western pressure on the New York legislature, for example, not only caused the state to be twice redistricted before 1800 but led to the removal of the state capital from New York City to Albany in 1797.⁽⁴²⁾ Another rising demand from these regions was for better communications and transport facilities by which to get

their growing surpluses to market. It was this preoccupation which made Kentucky and Tennessee so bent upon gaining access to the Mississippi River that the closure of the right of deposit at New Orleans in 1802 nearly precipitated a war with Spain.(43) In New York, it caused Gouverneur Morris to propose as early as 1803 that a Grand Canal be built to span the state.(44)

In the older regions, tensions arose when parvenu businessmen propelled to new prosperity by the thriving commercial conditions of the day found their opportunities limited by the fact that the instruments of credit and economic expansion were firmly controlled by older entrenched groups. This made the drive for new bank and corporate charters a very hot political issue in several states after 1800, with some interesting effects upon the apparently sharp polarization of party alignments.

The issue was joined first in New York. In 1799, Aaron Burr and a group of enterprising New York Republicans had taken advantage of New York City's pressing need for an improved supply of fresh water to obtain a charter for a new Manhattan Company whose ostensible purpose was to fill that need. The charter, however, contained an interestingly elastic clause which could be interpreted in such a manner as to allow the Manhattan Company to engage in banking, and this it promptly proceeded to do.(45) Its directorship dominated by Republicans, the Bank of the Manhattan Co. immediately became a powerful tool of Party interests and helped importantly to swing New York

City's vote to Jefferson in 1800.(46) Naturally enough, the Federalists, in public at least, professed to have been duped into unwittingly granting a banking charter when they had thought they were authorizing a water supply company, yet their protestations do not hold up on closer investigation. When the Manhattan Co. was first being debated in the legislature, Burr had admitted that the charter as proposed could be interpreted to permit the Company to engage in banking. The admission did nothing to block the charter's passage; on the contrary, when the Company went into business in 1799, a sizeable number of leading Federalists appeared among its charter members.(47)

The entire episode held some major political implications. Bray Hammond concludes that Burr's maneuver was more than a clever ruse. "It was a minor revolution, economic and political. It illustrates the larger revolution which in the country as a whole was changing the disciplined and restricted economy of the eighteenth century into the dynamic, complex, laissez-faire economy of the nineteenth century. It illustrates the repressive hold that the Federalists... were trying to maintain on business and that was driving the party's less patient adherents into the rebellious Republican fold."(48)

As early as 1799, therefore, dynamic economic development in New York had begun to blur party boundaries in certain strategic areas, and in this respect, New York was but an early indicator of the trend in several other states. In New England, the bank issue soon displayed similar political effects

by dividing even further a Federalist Party already deeply split in the presidential contest of 1800. In New Hampshire, the issue stimulated the formation of the first organized opposition to the Federalist Governor Gilman, leading to his defeat in 1805.⁽⁴⁹⁾ The Republican victor, Governor Langdon, then received considerable Federalist support in his hotly contested drive for a new state bank. In Boston, Harrison Gray Otis led another group of Federalists in 1803-1804 in support of a Republican proposal for a new Boston Bank open to participation by the "middling interest."⁽⁵⁰⁾ In New Jersey, the same tensions in a different context caused the issue to divide the Republicans. Beginning around 1805, the party's business wing championed the drive to break the Federalists' monopoly on banking facilities, and used as their battle-cry the assertion that in a republic, such powerful institutions ought to be supervised by Republicans.⁽⁵¹⁾ In reply, some of the Party's own adherents thundered that "the banks are the very devil, and the devil being anti-Republican, no man is a republican who in any way associates himself with... a bank."⁽⁵²⁾

One result of the precipitate development was that many pivotal, but hitherto unquestioned, social relationships were subjected to heightening stress. To be sure, if measured in any absolute terms, the changes in American society were relatively small. For all its dynamic growth, the United States had as yet developed no yawning gap between rich and poor. That was to appear only later, in the 1820's. Urbanization was proceeding rapidly, but only after the War of 1812

was the full impact of industrialization felt. Consequently, American cities had not yet begun to experience the pressures which later attended the growth of a discontented class of displaced artisans and poor factory workers.⁽⁵³⁾ For all its expansiveness, America in 1800 was still a strikingly simple and shapeless society whose mores were in such a state of rapid flux as to preclude as yet any sort of rigid stratification.⁽⁵⁴⁾ Yet this very simplicity rendered the social and economic disparities now appearing that much more conspicuous. Especially on the frontier, where they arrived upon a scene which until now had been especially featureless, they presented that much more of a contrast to the older tone of society.⁽⁵⁵⁾

Thus, the style of social interrelationships in America was being transformed perforce by the stresses created by the nation's growth. A deferential relationship between leaders and followers, in either the social or the political sphere, could not long survive on a frontier where the settler, at first totally dependent on his landlord for credit and equipment, became within a few years a prosperous farmer in his own right. And, in fact, if the frontier was indeed a "safety valve," its role in that respect was possibly ambiguous. An early advocate of the thesis believed that the frontier helped to preserve the institutions of the older communities by draining off the more restless advocates of "Innovation."⁽⁵⁶⁾ By the same token, however, it retarded the transformation of the more traditional societies the emigrants left behind, and this could only heighten the disparities in political culture among various sections of the Union, thereby laying the

groundwork for the growth of intense sectional conflict in the future..

The frontier was not the only place where older elites' title to leadership was coming under attack. The challenge was even more direct in the older communities of the seaboard. As the carrying and reexport trades boomed in response to the European war, many new men in the older seaboard communities grew very rich very quickly. "Our catalogue of merchants was swelled much beyond what it was entitled to be from the state of our population," remarked a contemporary.⁽⁵⁷⁾ These newcomers, however, were of a very different breed from those who had formed the core of the old wealthy elite. "Many persons, who had secured moderate capitals, from mechanical pursuits, soon became the most adventurous.... The most adventurous became the most wealthy, and that without the knowledge of any of the principles which govern commerce under ordinary circumstances... The merchants who had been long engaged in trade, were confounded by the changes which were so suddenly effected."⁽⁵⁸⁾ Prompted perhaps as much by temperamental aversion to these crass parvenus as by a desire to maintain their economic ascendancy, the older groups resisted the newcomers' drive for access to full status and power. The frustration thereby engendered among the aspirant groups neutralized the "logical" affinity of wealth to Federalism and drove the newly rich into the arms of the opposition.

In Massachusetts, political and religious authority were characteristically intertwined in the institution of the

Congregational Establishment, and here too older leadership groups were being challenged. The assault, moreover, came from two directions at once. In the backcountry, the Great Awakening had begun in 1734 and had spread steadily through the New England frontier. In 1792, a fresh wave of religious fervor began in the form of Evangelicalism, which spread from New England into western New York and Pennsylvania. By 1801, it had reached a peak in Kentucky and Tennessee. (59) The keynote of these dissenting sects was a fervent anti-clericalism and a call for the return to the purity of early Christian worship before the priesthood had clamped its restrictions upon the spirit and interposed its formalisms between the individual soul and its Creator. (60) We have already seen how its energies were harnessed to the Republican movement in the 1790's.

Revivalism in New England was in great part a rural phenomenon, being strongest in the villages and farming areas of the backcountry, (61) but heterodoxy of a different sort was simultaneously spreading among the prosperous merchants of the seaboard. The atmosphere of expansion and opportunity of these years caused the stern Calvinist creed of orthodox Congregationalism to appear increasingly irrelevant in the eyes of men to whom earthly existence appeared to be very good indeed. To the alarm of the orthodox clergy, therefore, they turned in growing numbers to a more liberal and optimistic creed which resembled later Unitarianism. (62) Challenged by both purists and revisionists, and Congregational clergy grew increasingly shrill in their denunciations, particularly

since in the context of Massachusetts, this challenge was not only a threat to their religious preeminence but to their secular authority as well.

Until 1801, these trends redounded on the whole to the Republicans' benefit. As this precipitate development went on, however, it began to display some problematical aspects. The rise of new riches, for example, was no longer an unqualified blessing to the cause of Republicanism. Men who had "arrived" began to be less enthusiastic over further alterations of the political status quo. In Pennsylvania, quarrels over judicial reform, efforts on the part of radicals in the legislature to impeach several judges of the State Supreme Court, and demands for constitutional revision, opened a split between conservatives and radicals within the Party in which both sides to the dispute billed themselves as Republicans. The leader of the conservatives, moreover, was the Republican chieftain, Alexander James Dallas, and in this conflict within the Republican Party, an important part of his support came from Pennsylvania's Federalists.⁽⁶³⁾ By 1805, in fact, the bitter faction fights within the Pennsylvania Republican Party had given Pennsylvania Federalism a new lease on life. The Federalists had emerged as the force holding the balance of power between the rival Republican groupings, and their support was consequently sought on various occasions by either Republican faction.⁽⁶⁴⁾

Interestingly enough, the same thing was happening in New York. By 1804, two of the state Party's major leaders

had been removed from the state arena. George Clinton had been elected Vice President in 1804 and had been transferred to Washington. Aaron Burr, his influence at its peak in the election of 1800, had declined precipitously since then. First ostracized by the national Party for his equivocal part in the House deadlock of 1801, then condemned for killing Alexander Hamilton in the famous duel of 1804, his political career received the ultimate blow of failure when in the gubernatorial election of 1804 he was beaten by a landslide. The removal of these two powerful leaders combined with the complexities of bank politics to precipitate a complicated faction fight for control of the state party machinery, and as in Pennsylvania, the Federalists joined in the fray as the allies of one or another -- and sometimes both -- of the rival Republican groupings. (65)

Only in Massachusetts were the alignments of 1799 still recognizable, for of the three states in question here, it was only in Massachusetts that the Republicans were still "outs." The "decision" of 1800 was still unaffirmed in New England, although by 1804, the Republicans were well on their way to victory there. For this advance, the successes of Jefferson's first administration both at home and abroad were largely responsible, since Federalist prophecies made in 1800 that the Republicans would inaugurate a reign of godlessness and economic chaos looked somewhat foolish when their victory inaugurated instead a period of peace and unparalleled prosperity. "Why did Massachusetts vote for Jefferson?" asked the American

Mercury in 1804, and then answered:

"The Federalists... foretold the wicked things the new President would do, and he has not done them... People know the difference between a government aimed for their good and a government aimed at the exclusive glory of the rulers... The majority of the people have discovered that their federalists did not possess the piety, talents, or political integrity which they claimed."(66)

Nevertheless, the Republicans in 1805-1806 had not as yet won New England firmly enough to permit themselves the luxury of intraparty factionalism. What internal strains they might have displayed once they themselves had become "ins" will never be known, for the hour of their first decisive victory coincided with a major shift in the domestic and international context of American politics⁽⁶⁷⁾ an important effect of which was to revive Party unity even in states where it appeared most hopelessly decayed.

But wherever the Republicans had won power, and the Federalists had lost power in 1801, both parties exhibited similar tendencies. With their major stimuli towards cohesion withdrawn, and numerous new stimuli towards differentiation added, each party's development tended increasingly towards dissolution and realignment as the internal contradictions latent in both camps surfaced with growing clarity.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 6

(1) Dixon Ryan Fox, The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York, 1801-1840. (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1965) pp. 84-85.

(2) 6 January 1802, debate on repeal of the Judiciary Bill, in Beveridge, op.cit., III, 61.

(3) Or as many believed it had existed, or thought it ought to exist in the future, whatever they thought about the past.

(4) Fox, op.cit., p. 117; Shaw Livermore, Jr., The Twilight of Federalism: The Disintegration of the Federalist Party, 1815-1830. (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1962) p. 263.

(5) To Thomas Jefferson, 6 July 1801, in Fischer, op.cit., p. 173, Note 91.

(6) M. Ostrogorski, Democracy and the Organization of Political Parties. (2 Vols, London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd; 1902) I, 3, 11-13, 38, 49-50; II, 27. Alexis de Tocqueville, op.cit., passim, and especially Introduction to Volume I.

(7) Thomas Jefferson, Notes on the State of Virginia in Koch & Peden (eds.), Writings, p. 280.

(8) Jefferson to Thomas McKean, 24 July 1801, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 282-283. See also Jefferson to John Dickinson, 23 July 1801, ibid., IX, 281. Note that Jefferson stresses the French crisis as the Federalists' pivotal appeal.

(9) Jefferson to Gallatin, 14 August 1801, in Henry Adams (ed.), The Writings of Albert Gallatin. (3 Vols., Philadelphia; J.B. Lippincott & Co.; 1879) I, 37.

(10) Jefferson to Monroe, 7 March 1801, in Ford (ed.), Works, IX, 204.

- (11) To Jefferson, 10 August 1801, in Adams, (ed.), Writings, I, 33.
- (12) Letter to Attorney-General Levi Lincoln from 24 Republican leaders in Connecticut, 4 June 1801, in Cunningham (ed.), Making of the American Party System..., p. 169.
- (13) New York, American Citizen, 5 June 1801, ibid., pp. 172-173.
- (14) Adams, Gallatin, p. 281; Walters, op.cit., p. 121; Higginbotham, op.cit., p. 43; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 214-215.
- (15) Adams, Gallatin, p. 282; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 39-44. Patronage disputes also divided Delaware Republicans as early as 1801. Ibid., p. 221.
- (16) Jefferson to Gallatin, 3 August 1802, in Adams (ed.), Writings, I, 81.
- (17) To Thomas Cooper, 29 November 1802, in Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 403. Jefferson makes the same remark to Dr. Joseph Priestley, 29 November 1802, ibid., IX, 405.
- (18) To Jefferson, December 1802, Adams (ed.) Writings, I, 104.
- (19) To Thomas Cooper, 29 November 1802, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 403.
- (20) James Sterling Young, The Washington Community, 1800-1828. (New York: Harbinger Books; 1966) pp. 65-157.
- (21) To Gideon Granger, 3 May 1801, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 249.
- (22) To Pierpont Edwards, 21 July 1801, ibid., IX, 279.
- (23) Robinson, op.cit., p. 35 & 49.
- (24) To Gideon Granger, 20 May 1803, in Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 469.
- (25) To Caesar A. Rodney, 24 April 1802, ibid., IX, 368-369.
- (26) To Gallatin, 28 March 1803, ibid., IX, 456.
- (27) Bray Hammond, Banks and Politics in America. (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1957) p. 148.

- (28) Turner, op.cit., Chapters II-VI.
- (29) Douglass C. North, The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790-1860. (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., Inc.; 1966) p.53.
- (30) Harold Hutcheson, Tench Coxe - A Study in American Economic Development. (Baltimore: John Hopkins Press; 1938) p. 115.
- (31) John Allen Krout & Dixon Ryan Fox, The Completion of Independence, 1790-1830. (New York: The Macmillan Co.; 1944) pp. 111-112.
- (32) North, op.cit., p. 40.
- (33) Bradford Perkins, Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press; 1963) pp. 23-26.
- (34) Arthur P. Whitaker, The Mississippi Question, 1795-1803. (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc; 1934) p. 152.
- (35) Frederick Jackson Turner, The Significance of Sections in American History. (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1932) p. 182.
- (36) Whitaker, op.cit., pp. 152-153.
- (37) Pomerantz, op.cit., pp. 218-225.
- (38) North, op.cit., p. 50.
- (39) Whitaker, op.cit., p. 18.
- (40) Ibid., p. 226.
- (41) Ibid., p. 20; Alfred Young, op.cit., pp. 258-264, 496-503.
- (42) Young, op.cit., pp. 271-272, 507. The two reapportionments were in 1791 and 1796.
- (43) Whitaker, op.cit., pp. 15-17.
- (44) Fox, op.cit., pp. 153-154.
- (45) Bray Hammond, op.cit., pp. 149-152.

(46) Ibid., p. 160.

(47) Ibid., p. 152; Pomerantz, op.cit., pp. 189-191; Alvin Kass, Politics in New York State, 1800-1830. (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press; 1965) p. 95.

(48) Op.cit., p. 156. Italics added.

(49) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 47, 102-103.

(50) Robert A. East, "Economic Development and New England Federalism, 1803-1814." New England Quarterly, Vol. 10 (September; 1937) pp.434-436.

(51) Fee, op.cit., p. 161.

(52) New Jersey Journal, 15 November 1808.

(53) George Dangerfield, The Era of Good Feelings. (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World-Harbingers Books; 1963) pp. xii, 390-395.

(54) Henry Adams, History of the United States of America during the Administrations of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison.

(9 Vols., New York: Charles Scribner's Sons; 1889-1891) I, Chapters 1 & 2. Hereinafter referred to as Adams, History.

(55) Young, op.cit., pp. 500-501.

(56) Timothy Dwight, Travels in New England & New York. (4 Vols., New Haven; 1821-1822) II, 459-463.

(57) Adam Seybert, Statistical Annals: Embracing Views of the Population, Commerce, Navigation... of the United States of America. (Philadelphia: Thomas Dobson & Son; 1818) p. 59.

(58) Ibid., pp. 59-60.

(59) Morais, op.cit., pp. 59, 173.

(60) In this, it was very close to the temper of American deism of the time, which also sought not to abolish Christianity

but to save it from its priestly corruptors. Ibid., p. 116.

(61) Merle Curti, The Growth of American Thought. (New York: & London: Harper & Bros. Publishers; 1943) pp. 200-201.

(62) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 86-89.

(63) Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 51-52. 67-95; Walters, op.cit., pp. 124-139.

(64) Higginbotham, op.cit., p. 77. Almost exactly the same thing happened in New Jersey. See Fee, op.cit., pp. 141-143.

(65) See Chapter 8.

(66) 6 December 1804, in Robinson, op.cit., p. 51.

(67) See Part III.

CHAPTER 7: Republican Factionalism in Virginia --
The Old Republicans in the New Union

Virginia's Republicans greeted the victory of 1801 with enormous elation. It was, wrote one:

"the Triumph of the democratic Representatives in Congress over the tools of the Anglo-monarchico Aristocratic faction: the Triumph of the sovereign people over their rebellious servants, and of Human Nature or of Humanity over the accursed Persecutors of the Human Race."(1)

But it is vital to understand the specific "meaning" which many Virginians attached to this victory they welcomed so fervently. To be sure, the Republicans had won a major triumph, but as we have already seen, they held some rather widely divergent opinions as to the precise ends for which they had been fighting. The difficulties implicit in this ambiguity in 1800's "meaning" are perhaps nowhere so clearly demonstrated as in the development of Republicanism in Virginia after 1801.

The national Party's purists had generally been Virginians. Virginia had supplied Republicanism with its ideologues and its most articulate spokesmen, and not all proved so flexible as Thomas Jefferson or James Madison. Their position of preeminence secure in the fairly stable context of Virginia society, the Virginia leaders shared little of the driving status-hunger of their northern colleagues. Drawing their wealth nearly completely from agriculture, and valuing the life-style and personal manner of "gentlemen" in the English tradition, they found little to admire in the scramble for control of banks or in the drive for profits and business expansion which motivated so many of their fellow Republicans. As a result, there were many among

the Virginia Republicans whose politics became more exclusively ideological than those of nearly any other segment of the Party. By 1798, these men had come to see the party struggle between Republicans and Federalists as a great battle of conflicting principles, to which the clash of material interests was essentially subordinate. Accordingly, the victory of 1800 was considered as the triumph less of a political party than as that of the great "principles of 1798."

And what were these principles? First, a resolute hostility to any expansion of the national government's authority.

"Jealousy of the State governments towards the General Government and of the influence of the Executive over the coordinate branches of the Government;... a loathing of public debt, taxes, and excises; tenderness for the liberty of the citizen; jealousy, Argus-eyed jealousy of the patronage of the President." (2)

Next, a passionate assertion that the only "true" interest in American affairs was agriculture, and that all others were inherently illegitimate. The only legitimate form of private property, ran the argument, was that deriving from manual labor on the land; all other forms were merely illegitimate "paper interests" designed only to deprive the majority of society's members -- namely its farmers -- of the fruits of their honest labor and to shunt the profits into the pockets of a parasitical minority -- namely the capitalists and financiers. (3) The argument then proceeded to assert that the only legitimate political majority in American affairs was an agricultural majority, because only an agricultural majority could be moral. Unlike the illicit "paper interest," it could never become an exclusive

interest living at the rest of society's expense, because it was itself society's only general interest.⁽⁴⁾ The entire argument, of course, was essentially a rationalization of an economic interest, but it is important to note that it was cast in terms which transmuted a statement of material interest into a claim of moral superiority.

Finally, the overthrow of northern control of national affairs had restored the last great principle of 1798: the preservation of the Constitutional authority of the state governments and the thwarting of New England's illicit goal of erecting a "consolidated" government upon the ruins of the true Constitution.

Basic to this entire outlook was a fierce individualism, the apotheosis of untrammelled personal idiosyncrasy which pervaded southern (white) society from top to bottom, and which was the result of a frontier legacy frozen and perpetuated by the mold set upon it by the plantation system.⁽⁵⁾ But it hardly needs to be stressed that this peculiarly intense form of individualism was in conflict with the overall socioeconomic trends then at work in America. The Virginia purists set their face against these trends, and because they saw themselves as reformers, and the battle of the 1790's as a crusade, they regarded their Party's victory as the occasion for purging the government of its accumulated impurities and recalling it to the path of earlier virtue.

This conviction, by definition, required that the Party do far more than merely reshuffle a few government appointments.

It required that the Constitution be strengthened by amendments explicitly institutionalizing those restrictions upon national authority which the document's imprecise terminology had allowed the Federalists to subvert.(6) From the Virginia purists' viewpoint, this was precisely what the entire struggle had been all about, and now that power was in the Republicans' hands, this ought to be their first order of business.

Accordingly, in October of 1801, a pamphlet appeared, significantly entitled "The Danger Not Over," and written by the Republican leader Edmund Pendleton, which proposed a series of Constitutional amendments setting severe restrictions on the government's power to raise an army or to establish a navy, sharply limiting its flexibility in financial arrangements, and introducing new stipulations to curtail executive influence in the process of treaty-making.(7)

All this was irreproachable Republican dogma, of course. Even in 1798, however, official Party dogma had constituted a poor description of the true objectives of some very powerful elements within the Party, and after 1801, it approximated these even less. The Virginia purists might condemn the United States Bank, for example, but their own Party's Secretary of the Treasury regarded it as indispensable to the orderly conduct of governmental finance.(8) The Old Republicans of Virginia might call for firm restraints upon the arbitrary independence of the judiciary, but one of Pennsylvania Republicanism's chief leaders, Alexander James Dallas, was willing to risk party schism to defend the independence of the courts.(9) The Virginians might

condemn the complexities of Hamiltonian finance in its entirety, but New York Clintonians had few objections to the system at all per se; they merely wanted a larger slice of the profits. These divergences between official Old Republican dogma and the known views of some of the Party's most influential elements might alone serve to illuminate Republicanism's inherent tensions. It was little wonder that the purists did not get the Constitutional amendments they sought. As Henry Adams observed, "the new democrats in New England, New York, and Ohio... cared nothing for fine-spun constitutional theories of what government might or might not do, provided government did what they wanted." (10)

At the national level, moreover, the Republican Party was becoming ever more dependent upon these pragmatists for its support. (11) It could hardly have been otherwise in the expanding context of the day. The rise of the West presaged the impending elimination of the older regions' numerical superiority in Congress. The dynamic expansion of the economy was fast diluting the influence of the planter elite which had set its stamp upon the Party in its first years. Both trends dictated that the Party actively court the support of geographic regions and economic groups having outlooks very different from that of the Old Dominion. Even Thomas Jefferson was impelled to modify the earlier purity of his agrarian ideal. "It is material to the safety of Republicanism to detach the mercantile interest from its enemies and incorporate them into the body of its friends," he wrote, and then added a remark contrasting rather startlingly with some of his statements of only a few

years earlier: "A merchant is naturally a Republican, and can be otherwise only from a vitiated state of things." (12)

Thus, the Virginia purists found themselves disappointed in nearly all their dearest hopes. The great victory of 1800 had brought no sweeping institutional reforms in the government. It had brought no purification of the Party, no return to first principles; on the contrary, the national Party showed distinct signs of compromising with the devil. The inevitable result was a vague but growing sense of disillusionment among Virginia's Republican conservatives, a dawning sense of declining influence in national affairs, and a deepening conviction that the national Party itself was now betraying the fundamental principles for which the purists believed the battle of 1799-1800 to have been fought. The sense of alienation was unmistakable:

"The Republican party, (and by this I mean the old Party ... and not the New one, which has lately sprung up amongst us and now assumes that Epithet) are much dissatisfied with our present prospects. Our principles we fear are not only in Danger of being deserted - but are actually abandoned by many of those whose peculiar province it should be to promote and perpetuate them. From materials, originally part Federal and part Republican - a third Party has been formed... who - unless some change takes place, are in a fair way, I think, to destroy all which the real Republicans have labored so long, and with so much ardour." (13)

These old Republicans, in fact, were rapidly coming to resemble another alienated group in American politics: the Old Federalists. Both groups saw themselves as the true spokesmen of political morality; both saw themselves being deserted by their younger and more pragmatic fellows as the latter grew impatient with the abstractions of political morality and plunged enthusiastically into the struggle for political power. (14)

Both groups' sense of alienation was both precipitated and intensified by the same cause: the behavior of the Jeffersonian Administration in power.

The Federalists grumbled that Jefferson had hardly tampered at all with the political and administrative structure bequeathed him by his opponents. Indeed, this Administration had adopted most of Federalism's most important programs. The Republicans had repealed the Judiciary Act of 1801, but otherwise had not expressly repudiated any Federalist measure -- even the Alien and Sedition Laws. Having bought Louisiana for \$15 million in 1803, the Jeffersonians had made the national debt larger than ever. For all their hostility to the navy, the Republicans had not abolished it; on the contrary, they had put it to good use against the Barbary pirates. Nor had they abolished the national Bank; instead, they had expanded it by opening a branch in newly-acquired New Orleans. By 1803, the national territory was more than doubled, and the newly-purchased province was under a military government bearing not the slightest resemblance to republican institutions, and diametrically opposed to every political profession Republicans had ever made. If a Federalist Administration had done all this, it would have been claimed as a splendid triumph of Federalist principles,⁽¹⁵⁾ and the Federalists complained that if the voters would but admit as much, they would restore the Federalists to power.

The Old Republicans grumbled in much the same terms, but without the element of frustrated approval. Jeffersonianism, in their opinion, was coming to resemble Federalism too closely.

"Federalism,... having been defeated, had gained a new footing by being taken into partnership with republicanism," declared John Taylor. "It was this project which divided the republican party." (16) In the national party's increasing dependence upon the commercial interests of New York, Pennsylvania and Massachusetts, and in the nationalizing thrust of the Louisiana Purchase, the Old Republicans saw the looming eclipse of Virginia and the America it stood for.

They never admitted their affinity to Old Federalism. The conflict of the 1790's had been too emotionally charged, and its memory was too fresh, for its cleavages to yield to such logic, and it testifies to the power of 1800's "meaning" that the Federalist-Republican cleavage of that year stubbornly resisted the many subsequent pressures that otherwise might logically have dictated the formation of a coalition of conservatives from both side. (17) Far from recognizing their resemblance to their Federalist counterparts, the Old Republicans prided themselves upon their own adamant anti-Federalism. Believing themselves the spokesmen of the true "science" of Republicanism, which for them meant the "principles of 1798," they regarded the Administration as having forsaken that science and as having become little more than Federalism in disguise.

Thus, the Republican schismatics in Virginia never allied with the Federalist conservatives of the north. At the same time, however, they grew increasingly hostile to their own official allies within the Party, notably the New York Clintonians. DeWitt Clinton was as vehemently anti-Federalist as

as any Virginia Quid, but for the latter this was not enough to make up for his being the spokesman of the manufacturing, commercial and financial interests of a northern state. Alienated thereby from both past and potential allies, the Virginia Quids rapidly acquired the same tone of impotent oppositionism as stamped the Old Federalists. Both decried the decline of political virtue in America; both were reduced from opposition to obstructionism by similar feelings of impotence.

The Virginia Quids never became an organized party. They never became important in Virginia state politics.⁽¹⁸⁾ They never established any political machinery of their own.⁽¹⁹⁾ Indeed, they might never have become an overt schism had it not been for the peculiar personality of one man: John Randolph.⁽²⁰⁾ But given the nature of the Virginia purists' sense of malaise, Randolph was singularly well-suited to become its spokesman. A brilliant orator, and with the removal of Gallatin to a Cabinet post in 1801, easily the most forceful Republican spokesman in Congress, Randolph in the first years of the Republican ascendancy was the recognized leader of the Party's forces on the floor of the House. He was so, however, largely for lack of anyone better suited to the job. A Federalist observer noted that the Republicans themselves were actually quite hostile to their supposed majority leader, but for all their dislike of his high-handed ways, they united with him promptly on all really important party measures because "He is necessary to them -- they know it -- he knows it -- and they dare not discard him. These frequent quarrels may eventually sour their minds

against him, and prevent a reunion." (21)

Randolph was a most unlikely individual to be entrusted with the responsibility of maintaining Party discipline. He himself lacked all discipline; he could hardly be expected to impose it upon others. His defining characteristic was a willfulness so extreme that he would brook no authority but his own whims, and the latter were erratic in the last degree. Eccentric and petulant, fluctuating suddenly and unpredictably from charm to blistering sarcasm, impatient of restraint and scornful of all inconsistency but his own, he was the embodiment of a distinct characterological type in the Virginia of his day -- a type as familiar and admired in his own state as it was unintelligible and repugnant to a New Englander. (22)

Randolph himself was the personification of discontent; it was fitting and hardly surprising that he should emerge as the leader of discontent among others. He was also the embodiment of Old Virginia -- that same Old Virginia whose influence was inexorably declining before the precipitate expansion of the rest of America. (23) It was inevitable that he should react hostilely to the Party's divergence after 1801 from the "principles of 1798;" and given his utterly willful temperament, it was equally inevitable that he should maintain that no definition of Republicanism was worthy of the least consideration which did not measure up to his own dogmatic standards for Republican purity. Randolph's standards, moreover, insisted upon the primacy at all times of principle over expediency, and rigidly excluded any possibility of compromise -- a set of

political criteria which was all very well for a party in opposition needing only to criticize, but utterly unsuited to the requirements of actually governing a sprawling, heterogeneous nation. And since the Jeffersonian Administration soon showed itself to be willing and able to show the flexibility needed to run a government, it was bound sooner or later to collide with Randolph.

It did so sooner, not later. Early in 1803, the Administration proposed a compromise settlement to the festering controversy over the Yazoo land claims.(24) Randolph was outraged. The scandal had started with an act of thievery, and now the Administration proposed to condone the robbery by compromising with the thieves. So effective was his burning invective against such moral turpitude that he was able almost single-handedly to block passage of the compromise for some eight years. It finally passed at the beginning of the War of 1812, and then only because Randolph was not around to oppose it, having failed this once to gain reelection to the House.

The next collision came in the winter of 1805. Two years earlier, when the United States had bought Louisiana from France, the treaty of purchase had left the exact boundaries of the acquisition very vague. The United States knew it had bought New Orleans and the Mississippi Valley, but had it gotten West Florida too? Spain thought decidedly not. The French steadily evaded the question in public, although their private communications among themselves reveal that they agreed with Spain. In its public pronouncements on the Louisiana Purchase, the

Jeffersonian Administration maintained that it had indeed acquired West Florida, and this considerably annoyed Spain. In 1805, a series of border clashes between the Spaniards and the southwestern frontiersmen gave rise to a wave of Spanish war sentiment in the United States. (25) Jefferson sent a strong public message to Congress in December, and nearly everyone expected him to follow it up with a request for a declaration of war. Instead, however, he sent a secret message to Congress requesting that Congress appropriate \$2 million to buy West Florida from Spain.

Again, Randolph professed outrage. Jefferson, he declared, had no intention of buying the territory from its rightful owners; he intended only to use the money to bribe France into coercing Spain to surrender her rightful possession and the sin was only compounded by the fact that it amounted to a tacit alliance with England, with whom France was now again at war. It was, declared Randolph, a "base prostitution of the national character to excite one nation with money to bully another out of its property,... my confidence in the principles of the man entertaining these sentiments dies, never to live again." (26) Randolph made a serious misstep here in assailing the personal integrity of his Party's idolized leader. Thus he met with no success as he had in his opposition to the Yazoo compromise. The West Florida appropriation passed Congress against all Randolph's efforts. Interestingly enough, in the final vote in the House, half of his support in opposing the appropriation came from the Federalists. (27)

Randolph's third and final step towards overt schism came soon thereafter when in March of 1806 he broke openly with the Administration over the matter of imposing restrictions on British imports in retaliation for Great Britain's heightening pressure on American shipping. (28) By 1807, he was actively opposing the candidacy of James Madison, the Party's official nominee to succeed Jefferson, and seeking to make James Monroe the choice instead. His defection was now complete. Characteristically, however, he never regarded himself as a schismatic. In his own eyes he was always the paladin of true Republicanism; the real schismatics were the rest of his Party who had abandoned their own principles.

His following, however, had drastically shrunk. As Jefferson observed with some satisfaction:

"The defection of so prominent a leader threw them [the House Republicans] into dismay & confusion for a moment; but they soon rallied to their own principles, & let him go off with 5. or 6. followers only. One half of these are from Virginia. His late declaration of perpetual opposition to this administration, drew off a few others who at first had joined him, supposing his opposition occasional only, & not systematic. The alarm the House has had from this schism, has produced a rallying together & a harmony, which carelessness and security had begun to endanger." (29)

And the major reason for the depletion of Randolph's following appears to have been his error in pitting himself against the immense personal prestige of Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's capacity to inspire intense personal allegiance, indeed, appears to have been an important factor working to mitigate the schismatic tendencies within the Party in several states. Party unity was a constant problem throughout Jefferson's

administration, yet in the various internal feuds which erupted within the various state parties, it was common for all sides to continue proclaiming their loyalty to Jefferson himself.(30)

It has been pointed out, and with considerable justice, that George Washington's personal charisma was an important aid to the process of building national unity in the Union's early days,(31) but so far as the Republican Party is concerned, Jefferson appears to have played a similar role. By keeping himself carefully aloof from local party division, moreover, Jefferson saw to it that his own prestige never was exerted in such a way as to alienate such Republicans as might find themselves defeated by it.(32) The Party was torn by factionalism in Pennsylvania, for example, yet both warring groups stoutly maintained their unswerving allegiance to the President, concentrating their criticism instead upon Gallatin and Madison.(33) And if personal loyalty to Jefferson was so strong even in the bitterly divided politics of Pennsylvania, it might be expected to be equally as powerful in the President's own native state of Virginia.

Indeed, Virginia "Republicanism" might more properly be termed "Jeffersonianism;" in the sense that it drew more of its strength from personal loyalty to the President himself than from a sense of membership in the Party he headed. It really could hardly have been otherwise, for the style of Virginia politics had always been strongly personal rather than issue-oriented,(34) and after 1801, this style underwent no sudden

reversal. If anything it was institutionalized by the establishment in 1800 of a highly centralized semi-legislative Republican caucus to direct state Party activities, (35) whose membership inevitably reflected the concentration of Virginia's social, and hence political, power in the hands of a circle of prominent families. (36)

Given such a political style, the Republican victory of 1800 must necessarily tend to appear as largely a personal victory for Thomas Jefferson; and because Jefferson was a Virginian, it was by extension the state's personal victory as well. Jefferson's conquest of the Presidency could thereby be seen as an affirmation of Virginia's position of leadership, status and prestige both within the Republican Party and in the Union as a whole.

Indeed, it is difficult to find any other way to account satisfactorily for the collapse of Randolph's following once he broke with President Jefferson. If viewed in objective terms, there was considerable justification for the growth of discontent in Virginia after 1801, for the Old Dominion was traditionally a proud and self-conscious state whose earlier preeminence within the Union was more clearly threatened every day by the rest of the Union's dynamic expansion. Yet Virginia Quiddism, with the exception of the obdurate Randolph, always had a curiously desultory air, and when Randolph set himself against Virginia's President, he found himself left with more Federalist followers than Virginian. In seeking to account for this apparent paradox, one cannot avoid the conviction that so

long as a Virginian sat in the White House, the feeling of national status and recognition this gave to a state especially sensitive to such values created a sense of noblesse oblige which was far stronger than the pull of material interests.(37)

The conviction gains in force when one analyzes other aspects of American politics in these years in terms of sectional perceptions of relative status within the Union at large. The impact of such perceptions, as they variously constituted sources of either gratification or anxiety, is so evident that it lends considerable weight to Karl Deutsch's findings the success of supranational "amalgamated security units" is closely related to various groups' expectations of benefit from the projected union.(38) It was, for example, the pro-ratification forces' paradoxical good fortune in 1789 that both the north and the south were able to convince themselves that they would dominate the proposed Union. The southern proponents of ratification argued in the state conventions that the south would rapidly outstrip the north in population because the north had no more empty lands left for settlement.(39) Future immigrants, therefore, would have nowhere to go but southward. At the same time, the northern states, at first seriously worried over the proposed Constitution's possible encroachment upon local autonomy, were greatly reassured by the results of the census of 1790 which showed them to be more populous than they had thought. Thus they reversed their earlier attitude, coming to see their hegemony implicit in their commercial dynamism and greater wealth.(40) As James Madison remarked, "northern

States will be reconciled to it [the Constitution] by the actual superiority of its populousness; the Southern by their expected superiority on this point." (41)

Conversely, it was a source of danger to the Union that after 1800, these expectations were rapidly reversed. If Republican discontent in Virginia was significantly allayed by a sense of state pride in the Old Dominion's preeminence in Washington, Federalist discontent in New England was significantly sharpened by a sense of offended sectional pride at having been ousted from the national hegemony which the High Federalists regarded as properly theirs.

The Louisiana Purchase added alarm to outrage. Senator William Plumer predicted serious divisions within the Union if the states formed from this vast territory were admitted on an equal footing with the older states. And why? Because the weight and influence of the eastern states would thereby be drowned. They were too proud ever to submit to this: they "feel the high rank that they are entitled to hold in the Union," (42) Plumer was right. By 1804, a New England Federalist newspaper was mourning the fact that:

"New England, the seat of commerce, of industry, of wealth and active strength is gradually losing her relative weight in the general delegation. Her ancient rights like morning clouds are passing beyond the mountains to fall in prolific showers upon the territories of Ohio, of Indiana, of Mississippi, of Louisiana and the Pacific Ocean." (43)

And Timothy Pickering was trying to promote a project for New England's overt secession from the Union. In 1803, Jefferson puzzled over the "riddle" that:

"federalism... does not appear to have yielded as we might have expected to the evidence either of their reason or their senses. Two facts are certainly as true as irreconcilable. The people of Massachusetts love economy and freedom, civil & religious. The present legislative & executive functionaries endeavor to practise economy & to strengthen civil & religious freedom. Yet they are disapproved by the people of Massachusetts. It cannot be that these had rather give up principles than men."(44)

Yet he might have been less puzzled had he recalled what he himself had written of Massachusetts in the previous year:

"In this last state the public sentiment seems to be under some influence addition to that of the clergy and lawyers. I suspect there must be a leven [sic] of state pride at seeing itself deserted by the public opinion, and that their late popular song of Rule New England betrays one principle of their present variance from the union."(45)

What was happening, in fact, was that the nationalism of New England conservatives was undergoing a significant metamorphosis. So long as they themselves had dominated the national government, a basic tenet of Federalist nationalism had been the maintenance and strengthening of American unity. Among the most damning charges they had hurled at the Republicans, in fact, had been that of being hostile to the Union. As we have seen, moreover, the keynote of the Federalists' nationalism was the fixed determination to promote America's national prestige both at home and abroad; and in view of the rapid shift in their attitude after they lost control of the government, it is difficult not to conclude that this determination stemmed to a very great degree from an identification on their part of America's prestige with their own. For only so long as they themselves were able to control the national government's

affairs did they define the "nation" whose prestige they sought to further as including the entire continental United States. Once ousted from governmental control, their definition of their own national group underwent a rapid and drastic contraction. A vastly sharpened sectional consciousness replaced the wider "American" loyalty of the 1790's, and New England conservatives -- especially the group of ultras headed by Timothy Pickering of Massachusetts -- began to seek the emotional gratifications of national consciousness in the far narrower concept of a patriotism whose focus of allegiance was not the United States but New England alone.⁽⁴⁶⁾

The New England Federalist press after 1801, for example, launched a virulent campaign to arouse hostility to Virginia and the South, and the slogans they used will sound oddly familiar to any reader of our earlier chapters. "Virginia influence" was equated in viciousness to the "French influence" of the previous decade. New England Republicans were branded as the servants or allies of the South, much as all Republicans had been damned in the 1790's for being tools or catspaws of France.⁽⁴⁷⁾ True Federalists were urged to support "all those who are not willing to prostrate our national glory at the feet of a Virginia faction."⁽⁴⁸⁾ If "French" were substituted for "Virginia," the last appeal might have been lifted directly from a Federalist newspaper of 1796.

This sudden and violent shift from ardent nationalism to equally ardent sectionalism is less startling than it may at first seem, if we probe a bit more deeply into the quality of

Federalist nationalism in the 1790's. There had always been a curiously paradoxical contrast between the High Federalists' incessant emphasis upon America's national dignity, honor and independence, and their quite violent sectional disdain for all other parts of the Union but New England. Pennsylvania was "the most villainous compound of heterogeneous matter conceivable;"⁽⁴⁹⁾ its legislature was "spasmodic, chaotic, and contemptible;"⁽⁵⁰⁾ and its politics of a sort to prompt one Federalist sojourner to profess himself to be:

"really happy to have amused myself fifteen or twenty days by a bilious fever... McKean's administration had brought forward every scoundrel who can read and write into office... and the residue of Democrats, with the joy and ferocity of the damned, are enjoying the mortification of the few remaining honest men and Federalists ... in proportion as they dismiss the fears of the gallows."⁽⁵¹⁾

As for Virginia, the true roots of its opposition to Federalism was "the necessity of paying debts, this to a true democrat, that is to say, to a gentleman aristo-democrat, is a most shameful hardship, an insult not to trust to the honor and morals of their good men and true."⁽⁵²⁾ So much for Virginia's integrity; as for its intelligence -- "I am very confident [sic] that wisdom, in Virginia, is absolutely different from what it is considered to be with us."⁽⁵³⁾

New York -- and especially New York City -- was hardly any better:

"It is a mortifying fact, my dear sir, that the federal spirit of this city is not worth a farthing... The people here are driving at their private occupations ...money is their god... I have heard nothing like politics since I came here."⁽⁵⁴⁾

That left only the north to serve as the repository of the true faith. "This government yet rests on New England prudence and firmness."⁽⁵⁵⁾ After 1801, however, the government did so no longer and so it is not entirely surprising that the sectional antagonism which had always run strong beneath the surface of Federalist nationalism should now surface with such intensity.

It is important to note here that this virulent sectionalism did not as yet strike an answering chord in New England society at large. It is for this reason that we have stressed these sentiments as having been those of the High Federalists rather than of the Federalists in general. Opposition to the Louisiana Purchase, for example, centered in New England but even there, the moderate Federalists joined the Republicans in enthusiastically approving the acquisition.⁽⁵⁶⁾ The conservative Federalists' opposition, moreover, suffered a major blow when Alexander Hamilton came out in favor of the Purchase.⁽⁵⁷⁾ There were areas of adamant opposition; Nathaniel Ames noted that "the people about Connecticut River... still curse Jefferson; though he has... acquired at the cheapest rate, without expense of blood of good citizens, and immense territory in addition to our domain -- removed frontier enemies beyond the power of annoyance, and opened immense source of wealth and magnificence to the United States."⁽⁵⁸⁾ But when Timothy Pickering reacted to the Purchase by trying to foment secessionism, he found his project firmly quashed by his own colleagues.⁽⁵⁹⁾ George Cabot, although an ultra himself, made it clear that he thought the idea would enjoy not the slightest support among the people at

large in New England. The moderate Federalists, moreover, might even break with the Party itself if the latter adopted a disunion stance, and that would ruin Federalism beyond all hope of recovery. (60)

The fact was that the Louisiana Purchase appealed powerfully to the lusty expansionistic drive which played so important a part in popular American nationalism of the day. Significantly, it appears to have been the older men in the Federalist Party who most opposed the acquisition; the younger men found themselves greatly excited by the possibilities the great Purchase opened up. (61) And when in the Senate ratification debate, the Federalists tried to argue that the acquisition was so big that it would destroy the nature of the "Confederacy," Senator Breckinridge of Kentucky brushed the claim aside with a statement epitomizing the expansionist spirit which the Federalists sought to oppose:

"This is an old and hackneyed doctrine: that a republic ought not to be too extensive... I would ask, sir, what is his standard extent for a republic? How does he come at that standard? Our boundary is already extensive... Why not, then, acquire territory on the west as well as on the east side of the Mississippi? Is the Goddess of Liberty restrained by water courses? Is she governed by geographical limits? Is her dominion on this continent confined to the east side of the Mississippi?... I believe, on the contrary, that the more extensive its dominion the more safe and more durable it will be." (62)

When to this powerful nationalistic appeal was added the economic prosperity prevailing in these "interlude years," it was not too surprising that the High Federalists should have failed to impose their own contracted sense of nationality upon

the rest of New England society. Jefferson even ended by welcoming their efforts to block the Purchase as having had a beneficial effect:

"Fortunately, the federal leaders have had the imprudence to oppose it pertinaciously, which has given an occasion to a great proportion of their quondam honest adherents to abandon them and join the republican standard. They feel themselves now irretrievably lost..."(63)

After 1807, however, the economic disruption caused by the Great Embargo removed the prosperity which had helped make Jefferson's first administration so successful in New England, while the resurgence of foreign policy to saliency reactivated all the old political antagonisms of the 1790's.(64) Thenceforth, the High Federalists' contracted sense of nationality was to find the popular support it had previously lacked. As the Embargo era wore on, New England's sense of alienation was to assume threatening proportions, to culminate in 1814 in an overt secessionist movement.(65) Such was the effect in New England of a sense of having lost status within the Union after 1801.

The South's dawning awareness of declining relative status within the Union had its own ominous implications. By 1829, one Southern Senator exclaimed in Congress that "the People of the South might almost be considered as strangers in the land of their fathers,"(66) and we need not mention to what extremes this feeling had gone by 1860. But it appears extremely significant that this sense of alienation turned into discernible and overt secessionism only after the Virginia Dynasty's conclusive demise; "as rapidly as the certainty of domination within the Union waned, the demand for separation

from the Union waxed stronger and stronger." (67)

That demand might easily have been heard far earlier, for the Embargo of 1807 inflicted more devastating economic damage on the South than on any other section of the Union. Yet throughout the storms of the Embargo era and the War of 1812, as secessionism fermented vigorously in New England, not a murmur of disunion came from Virginia which remained instead unshaken in her loyalty to the Administration. That this was so may be importantly attributed to the fact that the Embargo was distinctively the policy of Virginia's own President, Jefferson, and that as a result Virginia perceived her wounds as self-inflicted (68) New England, suffering in reality far less, perceived its problems as being inflicted by hostile outsiders, and did develop the overt separatist movement which germinated in the South only when the Virginia Dynasty had fallen.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 7

(1) Page to Tucker, 25 February 1801, in Norman K. Risjord, The Old Republicans: Southern Conservatism in the Age of Jefferson. (New York & London: Columbia University Press; 1965) p. 18.

(2) John Randolph, quoted in Risjord, op.cit., p. 18.

(3) Eugene TenBroeck Mudge. The Social Philosophy of John Taylor of Caroline: A Study in Jeffersonian Democracy. (New York: Columbia University Press; 1939) pp. 151-165.

(4) Ibid., pp. 25, 147-149, 194-198.

(5) W. J. Cash, The Mind of the South. (New York: Vintage Books; 1941) pp. 30-41.

(6) Adams, Randolph, pp. 59-60.

(7) Risjord, op.cit., p. 24.

(8) Gallatin to Jefferson, 13 December 1803, in Adams (ed.) Writings, I, 171.

(9) See Chapter 6. Moreover, when the Republicans in Washington tried in 1804 to impeach one of the more obnoxiously partisan Federal judges, Samuel Chase, they succeeded only in alarming many of their own adherents by appearing to threaten the principle of judicial independence in general. In the vote of the various articles of impeachment, their Congressional majority evaporated. At their strongest, they mustered under one-fifth of their nominal strength. Beveridge, op.cit., III, 219-220.

(10) Adams, History, II, 205.

(11) Risjord, op.cit., p. 37.

(12) To Gallatin, 12 July 1803, Ford (ed.) Works, X, 15.

(13) James M. Garnett to James Monroe, 19 March 1806, in Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., "Who Were the Quids?" Mississippi Valley Historical Review. Vol. 50, No. 2 (September, 1963) p. 253.

(14) Fischer, op.cit., passim, is a close and illuminating analysis of this growing internal division within the Federalist Party.

(15) Adams, History, II. 204-205. The popularity of this entire program contributed heavily to the decline of Federalism in South Carolina, for example, because by adopting Federalism's program in effect, the Administration had deprived the South Carolina Federalists of all their issues. Accordingly, South Carolina gravitated towards the Administration; the older members of the Federalist Party clung to the Federalist name, but the sons of the Federalist gentry drifted steadily into the Republican Party. Phillips, op.cit., p. 742.

(16) Taylor to Monroe, 26 October 1810, in Risjord, op.cit., p.25.

(17) The cleavage proved similarly stubborn in New York. See Chapters 8 & 12.

(18) Ambler, op.cit., p. 87; Risjord, op.cit., p. 73.

(19) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 230.

(20) Risjord, op.cit., p. 33, & p. 77.

(21) Everett Somerville Brown (ed.), William Plumer's Memorandum of Proceedings in the United States Senate, 1803-1807. (New York: Macmillan Co.; 1923) entry for 26 January 1804, p. 122.

(22) Adams, Randolph, pp. 1-12.

(23) Randolph's entire political career would have been all but impossible in any but one of the older states, for his

relationship to his constituency appears to have been a manifestation of deferential politics in the purest eighteenth-century manner. His intemperate outbursts in the House, his obdurate obstructionism after 1804, and finally his outright break with the administration in 1806 ended by alienating his own supporters in both Congress and the state Party, but they had little discernible effect upon his own constituents who returned him to Congress with but a single break throughout the administrations of both Jefferson and Madison. See Adams, Randolph, pp. 246-251.

(24) The Yazoo scandal had begun in the winter of 1794-1795, when the Georgia Legislature had conveyed title to huge stretches of land comprising most of what is now Alabama and Mississippi to four land speculation companies. It was soon revealed that the Legislature had done so because it had been bribed almost en masse. A huge outcry ensued, and the next legislature repealed the grants. In the meantime, however, the original speculators had unloaded their ill-gotten gains on many honest purchasers elsewhere in the Union, and the repeal of the grants now threatened extensive financial loss to hundreds of people who had bought Yazoo land parcels in good faith. A legal snarl resulted which was transferred from the state to the national level in 1802 when Georgia ceded title to the entire Yazoo claim to the national government. See Bowers, op.cit., pp. 299-302. The Administration's proposed compromise was to set aside five million acres of the ceded tracts to be used to satisfy the individual claims outstanding, while other features of the plan

were designed to compensate the state of Georgia for the loss of those revenues it might have obtained had it been able to sell the lands itself without difficulty. See Adams, Randolph, pp. 103-105; Adams, History, I, 302-306.

(25) Adams, Randolph, pp. 160-162; Bowers, op. cit., pp. 313-315.

(26) Bowers, op. cit., p. 325.

(27) Adams, Randolph, p. 170.

(28) See Chapter 11 for detailed discussion.

(29) To Wilson Cary Nicholas, 13 April 1806, Ford (ed.) Works, X, 224-245, note 1; same statement to Caesar A. Rodney, 24 March 1806, ibid., X, 245-246.

(30) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power, pp. 231-235.

(31) Seymour Martin Lipset, The First New Nation (New York: Basic Books, Inc.; 1963) p. 17.

(32) Cunningham, Making of the American Party System, pp. 84-86; see also James S. Young, op. cit., pp. 159-162, and 247, where Young concludes that of all the Virginia Dynasty, only Jefferson was at all successful in conducting an effective presidency in face of the obstacles with which party fragmentation confronted him.

(33) Risjord, op. cit., p. 32.

(34) Ibid., p. 27.

(35) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 201.

(36) Harry Ammon, "The Richmond Junto, 1800-1824." Virginia Magazine of History & Biography, Vol. 61 (October, 1953) pp. 396-397.

(37) Adams, History, III, 217-218.

- (38) Karl W. Deutsch, et al., Political Community in the North Atlantic Area (Princeton: Princeton University Press; 1957) p. 49.
- (39) Jesse T. Carpenter, The South as a Conscious Minority, 1789-1861 (New York: New York University Press; 1930) pp. 174-175.
- (40) Ibid., pp. 176-177.
- (41) To Edmund Pendleton, 8 April 1787, ibid., p. 174.
- (42) Brown (ed.), William Plumer's Memo..., entry for 20 October 1803, p. 9.
- (43) Portsmouth Oracle, 13 October 1804, italics added.
- (44) To John Bacon, 30 April 1803, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 463-464.
- (45) To John Langdon, 29 June 1802, ibid., IX, 383, italics added.
- (46) Adams, History, I, Chapter 3.
- (47) Robinson, op. cit., p. 152.
- (48) Portsmouth Oracle, 12 October 1802.
- (49) Oliver Wolcott to Frederick Wolcott, 2 April 1799, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 231.
- (50) Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, 18 November 1799, ibid., II, 288.
- (51) Uriah Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, 7 August 1800, ibid., II, 399.
- (52) Col. John Trumbull to Oliver Wolcott, 16 February 1795, ibid., I, 180.
- (53) Oliver Wolcott, Sr., to Oliver Wolcott, 15 February 1796, ibid., I, 300.
- (54) Joseph Hopkinson to Oliver Wolcott, 17 May 1798, ibid., II, 49.
- (55) Chauncey Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., 15 November 1796, ibid., I, 394.

- (56) Koch, Jefferson and Madison..., p. 240.
- (57) Whitaker, op. cit., p. 256.
- (58) Warren, Jacobin and Junto, entry for 31 January 1804, p. 162.
- (59) David H. Fischer, "The Myth of the Essex Junto," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 21 (1964) pp. 230-232.
- (60) Adams, History, II, 162-164. Fisher Ames agreed with Cabot. See Bernhard, op. cit., pp. 341-342.
- (61) Beveridge, op. cit., III, 152.
- (62) Marion Mills Miller (ed.), Great Debates in American History (14 vols., New York: Current Literature Publishing Co.; 1913) Vol. 2 - Foreign Relations: Part I, pp. 109-110.
- (63) To Monroe, 8 January 1804, Ford (ed.) Works, X, 61.
- (64) See Part III.
- (65) For a detailed account of New England secessionism and an analysis of the Hartford Convention of 1814-1815, see Adams, History, VI, 224-406; VII, 52-70, 366-386; VIII, 1-227, 289-309. Fischer, Revolution of American Conservatism, pp. 175-180; Fischer, "The Myth of the Essex Junto," pp. 226-234.
- (66) Robert Y. Hayne, quoted in Carpenter, op. cit., p. 18.
- (67) Ibid., pp. 181-182, italics added; see also Risjord, op. cit., p. 176, 179.
- (68) Henry Adams certainly thought so. See History, IV, 281-283.

CHAPTER 8: Republican Factionalism in New York -
The Eclipse of Ideology

The great "decision" of 1800 hardly seemed to decide anything in New York. The election was barely over before party boundaries within the state had ceased to bear any but the vaguest resemblance to those of the 1790's. The Republican triumph seemed only to have cleared the way for an intraparty faction fight of classic dimensions, which Jabez Hammond went so far as to liken to those of the Roman Triumvirate.⁽¹⁾

Nor did this bitter internecine warfare stem from any inherent tension between "modern" and "traditional" elements either within the Republican Party or between the Party and its Federalist opponents, for New York State as a whole was developing so rapidly as to render any such distinction all but outdated.⁽²⁾ As early as 1796, New York City had already passed Philadelphia in the value of both its imports and exports;⁽³⁾ by 1800, it had surpassed Philadelphia as the chief port of destination in the trade with New Orleans;⁽⁴⁾ and by 1810, it had passed Philadelphia in population.⁽⁵⁾ The rest of the state was similarly dynamic. The "aristocratic" manor lords of the Hudson Valley were very businesslike aristocrats. Not only was the Valley's agriculture thoroughly geared to the commercial export market⁽⁶⁾ but the great families of the area were heavily involved in both the shipping trade and large-scale speculations in western lands.⁽⁷⁾ Even the western district was leaving its frontier days behind in a process of rapid socio-economic diversification.⁽⁸⁾

New York was speedily leaving the 1790's behind in every way; its politics were no exception. It was perhaps predictable that the older alignments should become increasingly irrelevant in an environment which was changing so quickly, but that result was ensured by the same factors which promoted Party fragmentation at the national level. First, the fact of the Federalists' defeat removed the Republicans' prime incentive towards cooperation and allowed the factionalism which had always been latent in the Party⁽⁹⁾ to surface; second, the temporary eclipse of foreign policy problems gave full rein to the new cross-cutting issues thrown up by New York's rapid development. Consequently, the tangled intraparty politics display little discernible ideological content; they appear instead to have been directed almost exclusively towards the conquest of political power. Nor was that power desired for the sake of vindicating any great political principles; it was sought because it conferred sizeable economic benefits and the control of a juicy porkbarrel of patronage upon its possessors.⁽¹⁰⁾

It was in New York, in fact, that there first emerged that distinctive breed of non-ideological, purely power-oriented politician soon to become so familiar on the American scene.⁽¹¹⁾ The breed may have been esthetically somewhat unappealing, and certainly there is much to deplore in the corruption, log-rolling and political cynicism which eventually accompanied his triumph, but this very same obliviousness to "principle" has performed an important positive function in furthering the development of the pragmatic, "catchall" parties whose failure to appear

in other national contexts has been so much puzzled over by contemporary analysts. In view of this discrepancy between the "style" of American parties and those, for example, of France, it worth examining here its possible causes.

Ostrogorski provides a useful point of departure:

"From the very foundation of the United States, the advantages attaching to the management of public affairs had not only let loose ambitions but also... cravings of a purely material kind. The lucrative posts ... which the federal service or that of the States could offer, were sought after with an eagerness such as one would never have expected from a democratic people with whom equality of station appeared to exclude a taste for official titles..."(12)

The usually perceptive Ostrogorski, I suggest, went far wide of the mark in the passage italicized above. The "eagerness" he finds so unexpected was very much to be expected in a context such as New York at the opening of the 19th century. Here was an expanding society whose very dynamism must inevitably create intense status-hunger among the many men who were rising to new wealth but whose new preeminence had not quite as yet received the stamp of social recognition; at the same time, here was a society which essentially lacked a past, a historical tradition, a stock of traditional sources of status -- a society, in short, which was acutely status-starved.

As Shaw Livermore observes in his analysis of the Federalists' decay, "American society in their time offered few institutional channels through which men who fancied themselves superior to others could find public acceptance of their self-assumed superiority."(13) In France under the Ancien Régime,

a newly-rich French merchant could buy his way to social standing by entering the noblesse de la robe, and even after 1815, he could purchase a baron's title or marry his daughter to a titled aristocrat; and when he did, he passed a critical psychological threshold, ceasing to identify with the class he had left. But his American counterpart could do no such thing; there existed no counterpart to either the noblesse or to that aristocrat willing to join his impoverished nobility to an heiress' dowry.⁽¹⁴⁾ Thus he must perforce remain, ostensibly at least, in the class from which he sprang -- the universal American class of commoner.

This, however, did not at all eliminate his drive for social recognition -- if anything it rendered it more acute. And where else was he to find it in the American context but in the conquest of political office? What other sources of social recognition were available to him? Lord Canning observed that the possession of political office carried immensely greater status in America than it did in, say, England. There, family power was hereditary and consequently family connections carried immense prestige; rank per se was highly prestigious and was sufficient reward for many ambitious individuals; accumulations of wealth existed far greater than any in America and with the acquisition of such riches, political distinction became secondary; and a large army and navy provided careers to satisfy many other ambitions.⁽¹⁵⁾ Commenting upon Canning's analysis, an American observer remarked that:

"In place of all this, we have nothing, to which the ambitious can aspire but office... office here is family, rank, hereditary fortune, in Short, Everything out of the range of private life. This links its possession with innate principles of our Nature; & truly incredible are the efforts Men are Willing to Make, the humiliations they will endure, to get it."(16)

If the specific American social context rendered political office so desirable, the specific American institutional context further dictated the style of politics necessary to win it.⁽¹⁷⁾ Given an electoral franchise more extensive in America than in any other country of the time, and given the fact that the positions which controlled appointments to office were themselves elective, the road to political power lay through numbers. "Our Government is popular, the People are the foundation of power; by their favour can ambitious men acquire eminence. Upon these data are our Parties founded."⁽¹⁸⁾ And if one were to maximize one's following, one could not be too finicky about the nicer points of political "principle," especially in the extremely heterogeneous society of the United States. Thus, an ambitious man could cling to the purity of his political principles only at the expense of his own aggrandizement -- and in dynamic states such as New York, there were fewer every day who cared to do so.⁽¹⁹⁾

This specifically American situation led to steady attrition among the Federalists' ranks. Christopher Gore noted that "many of the... ardent politicians of our Section of [the] Country have become tired of waiting for Place and Distinction,"⁽²⁰⁾ and some grew too impatient to wait. A spectacular defection was that of John Quincy Adams, and

significantly, the younger Adams was said to be "devoured by the 'glorious fault,' political ambition." (21) One cannot help wondering if there were not much to detach this scion of an intensely political family from his party in the fact that all hope of gaining political distinction from membership in that party was growing daily more remote.

The fact that American society in this formative period lacked a store of traditional sources of status available to serve as alternatives to politics may have had profound implications for all of America's future. For as one close analyst has concluded:

"That the Federalists did gradually re-enter the mainstream of American political life can be traced in large part to their consuming desire for office. Had they loftily held aloof as a bitter but powerful minority many serious effects might have resulted... Federalists might have continued to be introverted and backward-looking with little incentive to adapt themselves to a rapidly changing social and political structure." (22)

It is worth noting that in other national contexts, certain crucial groups did continue to hold "loftily aloof." The conservative clergy was never reconciled to the French Revolution. For very many, the grand revolutionary slogans promising a wider life for all mankind on earth could not at all compete with the magnetic appeal of Holy Church's promise of life eternal -- and the tension between clericalism and anti-clericalism persists in French politics to this day. The new sources of status opened by the Napoleonic reforms could not reconcile the obdurate exiled aristocrat for his lost station. Nor could the "career open to all talents" wean the French social-climber

from his ancient fascination for the glamor of nobility and his deepset conviction that true social "arrival" meant passing officially into a higher class. The deep stratification of French society before the Revolution set an enduring stamp upon the psyche of aristocrat and commoner alike. A long history had created this model for social aspiration; it did not yield to a few years of revolutionary upheaval; instead, it worked long after to perpetuate the fragmentation of political division. But without such a model, the pressure of status-hunger could create entirely different results. One might argue that individual ambition -- in a fluid society lacking a "past" -- worked to create a pragmatic style of politics.

Pragmatic politics however, cannot do without ideology altogether. Given a context in which the elements necessary to form a numerical majority are extremely heterogeneous, some appeal to "principle" is necessary if a grabbag of disparate interests is to find any focus of agreement. If quarrels over concrete specifics are not to tear the coalition apart, the appeal may necessarily be formulated so vaguely as to be all but meaningless -- what, after all, did the appeal to "equality" ever really mean in everyday life? -- but it must nevertheless exist if ordinary people are to get excited over the battles among their ambitious leaders. Otherwise, there is no basis left for division but factional followings, and party politics becomes impossible.

As we have seen, the great issues arising from the European crisis performed this function in the 1790's. But in

New York, the eclipse of foreign policy problems after 1801 only helped to reinforce those trends within the state already working to outmode the great bipolar division forged in the 1790's. Shorn of ideological issue-content, the struggle for political power within the state quickly degenerated into a multisided factional free-for-all in which the burningly salient issues of 1799-1800 were rapidly submerged. What replaced them were bitter conflicts over bank charters and patronage, together with some rather vicious personal feuds, none of which showed much respect for the party boundaries delineated in the 1790's. Indeed, this chapter might better be called "Party Factionalism in New York" because neither Republicans nor Federalists in these years showed any discernible signs of party cohesion.(23)

The Republicans were the first to fall apart. The Party as it had developed by 1800 was composed of three powerful factions: Clintonians, Livingstonians, and Burrites. The first two had been major forces in New York politics since Revolutionary days. The Clintonians were the most numerous component of the Party.(24) Their original power base had been the political popularity of George Clinton, bolstered by their long control over the state government under Clinton's many terms as Governor. By 1801, the Governor's nephew, Dewitt Clinton, had maneuvered himself into a position of domination within the all-important Council of Appointment and had emerged as the recognized leader of the Clintonians.(25) The Livingstonians were the wealthiest elements within the coalition. Their power base lay in the Hudson Valley where their immense estates

were located, and with the Republican conquest of the Council of Appointment in 1801, their influence was vastly expanded when their party loyalty was rewarded with several of the most sought-after appointments in the state.⁽²⁶⁾ The third faction was numerically small but disproportionately influential, and was united primarily by a fierce loyalty to the fascinating personality of Aaron Burr⁽²⁷⁾ whose superb generalship in the presidential race of 1799-1800 had thrust him to the forefront of the Republican Party.

So long as the Federalists remained in power in New York, these three groups managed to work together. But there was little love lost among them and when the Federalists were ousted from control first of the legislature in 1800 and then in 1801 from the governorship as well, their defeat gave full rein to the rivalries among the three powerful Republican factions.

The first split came when Clintonians and Livingstonians combined to crush Burr's influence within the State.⁽²⁸⁾ In 1801, they ousted Burr and his close follower, John Swartwout, from the directorship of the Manhattan Company, whose chartering in 1799 Burr himself had made possible.⁽²⁹⁾ Burr was further snubbed in the allocation of patronage. Although his chief center of support was New York City, the Council of Appointment under DeWitt Clinton's direction gave the bulk of the City posts to Clintonians, leaving but a few for Burr's adherents.⁽³⁰⁾ In 1802, the anti-Burr forces launched a virulent assault on the Vice President in the New York American Citizen, a newspaper controlled by DeWitt Clinton and edited by James Cheetham, a

journalist with a greater gift for invective than accuracy. Cheetham accused Burr of having turned traitor to his party during the House electoral crisis of 1801 by trying to become President with Federalist collusion. The Burrrites replied with a scathing indictment of the Clintonians and Livingstonians which appeared under the pseudonym of "Aristides," subsequently identified as William P. Van Ness.⁽³¹⁾ "Appearances are stormy at New York;" wrote Gallatin, "the schism disgusts many Republicans."⁽³²⁾

By the end of 1802, the political struggle in New York had become a three-way contest among the Clintonian-Livingstonian combination, the Burrrites, and the Federalists. At this point, the ever-explosive issue at bank charters arose to complicate the picture yet further. In 1803, a group of New York City Federalists went into the banking business as a private unchartered company under the name of the Merchant's Bank. They then sought a charter from the state legislature when it met for the session of 1804. The legislature, however, was Republican-controlled, and the Clintonian chieftain, DeWitt Clinton, having now wrested control of the Bank of the Manhattan Co. from the Burrrites, notified the legislature that he and his adherents would do their best to block any legislative effort to charter a rival institution. DeWitt Clinton's word carried the force of law in some circles, but it evidently did not do so in the legislature which his Party supposedly controlled, for in 1805, the agents of the Merchant's Bank obtained their charter by liberally lining the pockets of several state

legislators.⁽³³⁾ Republican party discipline in New York was apparently no match for the allurements of Federalist money in 1805.

Meanwhile party boundaries had become even more hopelessly confused in the gubernatorial contest of 1804. The Clintonians' and Livingstonians' drive to crush Burr had led to an interesting rapprochement between the Republican Vice President and the New York Federalists. Burr wanted to be governor, but he could not do it alone. Obviously, he could hope for no assistance from the rest of his own Party, because the rest of his own Party consisted of his bitterest enemies, the Clintonian and Livingstonian clans. In the rulebook of pragmatic politics, allies are where one finds them, and Burr was the most pragmatic of politicians. With no possibility of Republican support, his only alternative was to look to the Federalists -- and this he duly proceeded to do.

The Federalists had their own reasons for favoring such an alliance. It was at this time that Pickering and the ultras were hoping to promote the formation of a separate Northern Confederacy. If Burr could become Governor of New York with Federalist support, and if a combination of Burrites and Federalists could reconquer the state legislature, Burr might be persuaded to take the state out of the Union along with New England.⁽³⁴⁾ Thus, in 1804, one candidate for the governorship of New York was the Republican Vice President of the United States with a backing primarily composed of Federalists.

Burr's backing, however, did not include all of New York's Federalists. The proposed alliance, indeed, had precipitated a serious split in the Federalist Party, and the New York Federalists now fell apart as the Republicans had done earlier. Nor was the division particularly prompted by any profound aversion to Burr as a Republican; it was chiefly due to a profound aversion to Burr as an individual. To many Federalists, Aaron Burr was the incarnation of political corruption and the idea of allying with him was totally unacceptable. Not the least among these men was Alexander Hamilton, who exerted all his vast personal influence to keep New York Federalists from voting for Burr.⁽³⁵⁾ In this attempt, he was only partially successful. Most of the Federalists in Albany decided to back Burr despite Hamilton's opposition, but many Federalist voters decided otherwise. The collapse of Federalist party unity was evident in the results of the vote. Burr lost heavily, but appears to have received many Republican votes, indicating that he was defeated by Federalist defections. Compared to 1803, the New York "Republicans" -- if that term retained any meaning at all by now -- had gained as many votes from the Federalists as they had lost from the Republicans to Burr.⁽³⁶⁾

It is nearly meaningless, however, to refer to Morgan Lewis' victory in the 1804 gubernatorial contest as a "Republican" victory. It was a victory of the Clintonian-Livingstonian coalition over Aaron Burr, and Burr's decisive defeat⁽³⁷⁾ almost ensured that these hostile allies would turn on each other. This they soon did, and the occasion for the split

arose from the struggle referred to earlier over the charter for the Merchant's Bank. During the charter debate in the legislative session of 1805, Governor Morgan Lewis (who was a staunch Livingstonian) broke with his Clintonian associates to express his full approval of the proposed charter. Dixon Ryan Fox asserts that in the New York context, the logic of Lewis' arguments was immaterial; what counted was the personal defalcation of the Livingstonians from the Clintonians.⁽³⁸⁾ The Clintonians reacted with outrage, branding the Livingstonians as schismatic "Quids."⁽³⁹⁾ The Republican Party, therefore, already divided by the campaign to oust Burr, was yet further divided between Clintonians and Livingstonians. This makes it questionable whether one might even posit the existence of a "Republican Party" in New York by 1805, but subsequent events compounded the confusion even more.

Burr's standing as a major factional leader suffered one setback in his electoral defeat of 1804; it suffered yet another blow from the wave of revulsion which followed from all sides upon his killing of Alexander Hamilton in the famous duel of that same year. Part of the latter reaction arose from true regret for Hamilton's death; even John Adams, another of Hamilton's arch-enemies, remarked bitterly that "No one wished to get rid of Hamilton in that way."⁽⁴⁰⁾ Part of the reaction, however, was political, for the disastrous outcome of the duel had given Burr's opponents an excellent weapon to use against him. "You will have perceived," noted Gallatin, "that to the natural sympathy and sincere regret excited by Mr. Hamilton's death

much artificial feeling, or semblance of feeling, has been added by the combined Federal and anti-Burrite party spirits." (41)

The net result was that by 1805, the Burrites had become a faction without a leader. Thus deprived, they soon went on to become a divided faction as well. In December of 1805, some Burrite leaders made a peace bargain with DeWitt Clinton. The merger was publicly announced in February of 1806, and it immediately split the Burrites. Many of them could stomach an alliance with DeWitt Clinton no better than many Federalists had been earlier able to tolerate their own leaders' alliance with Burr. These anti-Clintonian Burrites united with the (Livingstonian) Lewisites (or "Quids") to oppose Clinton. (42)

This brought the Federalists into the fray. At first, they had hoped that the Republicans' internal divisions might make possible a Federalist resurgence; these hopes, however, soon gave way to the conviction that the Federalists could not hope to best DeWitt Clinton unaided. Thus they had begun to think about allying with the anti-Clintonian forces and in 1806 they began giving their support to Governor Lewis. (43) In the legislative elections of 1806, the Federalists emerged as the balance wheel between the two warring Republican factions. Where they were sure of a majority, they supported Federalist candidates; where two Republican tickets were in the running, the Federalists supported the Lewisite. Their weight was enough to produce a majority of pro-Lewis members in the new state Assembly, and to make it possible for the Lewisites to oust the

Clintonians from control of the Council of Appointment.(44)

But here, paradoxically, the all but forgotten cleavage of 1800 reared its battered head to prevent a true alliance of Lewisites with Federalists. The Federalists had supported Lewis in large part because they hoped thereby to break out of their post-1800 political quarantine and regain access to political office. But Lewis soon discovered that if he rewarded any of his Federalist supporters with the appointments they desired so greatly, he would lose his Republican support. Thus in the distribution of patronage, the Federalists got nothing.(45) Some were so disgusted that they were ready to abandon their barely-formed alliance with Lewis. Others maintained that in a choice between Lewis and DeWitt Clinton, the Governor was the lesser of two evils. On this negative and half-hearted basis, some of the Federalists gave Lewis their reluctant support for the upcoming gubernatorial contest.(46) Others, however, took the opportunity to desert to the Clintonian camp, for with fine disregard for the great division of 1800 in its entirety, the Clintonians welcomed any and all who proclaimed their opposition to Lewis.(47)

Immediately prior to the gubernatorial race of 1807, therefore, the political lineup in New York presented the following motley appearance: behind Morgan Lewis were ranged the Livingstonians, the anti-Clintonian-Burrites, and a portion of the Federalists. Behind Daniel Tompkins(48) stood the Clintonians, a portion of the Burrites, a detachment of Federalists, and a newly-aroused Irish vote whose party label might

best be termed "DeWitt Clinton." (49) Tompkins won, but it would be impossible to call his election a "party" victory in any sense of the term. By 1807, there were no parties in New York; (50) there was only a bewildering welter of political splinter-groups and personal faction-followings which resembled nothing so much as the pattern of dissolution which had come to obtain on a national scale in the mid-1820's.

The resemblance is provocative. In the presidential election of 1824, a major reshuffling of political allegiances was in progress which soon led to the total collapse of the first American party system. (51) As yet, however, the unifying slogans and salient issues of the Jacksonian era remained unformulated. Without issues, party politics became impossible and political activity was left with no alternative mode of expression but "connexion" politics. The result was a "helter-skelter scramble of groups and related factions, who made ad hoc alliances as they found them expedient... Each man drew what elements he could around him, on a personal basis, in terms of more or less contrived conjunctions of interests..." (52) This description of national politics in Monroe's last administration neatly sums up the course of political affairs in New York State between 1800 and the Embargo era.

What new issues and alignments -- if any -- might eventually have crystallized from this welter of confusion will never be known, for after 1807 the reactivation of the issues of 1798 applied brakes to the untrammelled factionalism of the interlude years. With the return of these issues, the party boundaries

they had created became visible once more.(53) Until this return, however, the great "decision" of 1800 had appeared all but totally submerged in New York, and party unity had utterly collapsed on both sides.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 8

- (1) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 247.
- (2) Kass, op.cit., p. 8.
- (3) Pomerantz, op.cit., p. 158.
- (4) Whitaker, op.cit., p. 137.
- (5) In 1800, New York City had 60,489 people to Philadelphia's 69,403; by 1810, the count was 96,393 to 91,784. North, op.cit., p. 49.
- (6) A.F. Young, op.cit., p. 69
- (7) Fox, op.cit., pp. 122-150.
- (8) See Chapter 6.
- (9) A.F. Young, op.cit., pp. 577-578.
- (10) The majority party in the New York State Legislature could control the selection of the four-man Council of Appointment, and the latter disposed of all political appointments in the state. The number and scope of these appointments, moreover, was extremely large. The post of Secretary of State, Comptroller, Attorney-General, Surveyor and Commissary General were appointive; so was the entire judiciary, from the Chancellor down to the justices of the peace; the Council also appointed every district attorney, mayor (including the Mayor of New York City), city recorder, county clerk, sheriff, auctioneer and coroner, as well as the officers of the state militia. Howard Lee McBain, DeWitt Clinton and the Origin of the Spoils System in New York. (New York: 1907) pp. 78-79; J. Hammond, op.cit., I. 168.

(11) Ostrogorski, op.cit., II, 43.

(12) Ibid., loc. cit., Italics added.

(13) Livermore, op.cit., p. ix, See also Dangerfield, op.cit., p. 332, where in reference to the presidential race of 1824 he observes that "The passion for the Presidency in those days ... was, in part, social malnutrition -- society had few rewards to offer, aside from political ones."

(14) Although by the end of the century, the impoverished European noble had discovered a handsome market for his title in the United States. Henry James' novels should decisively quash any lingering doubts as to the ever-rankling status-hunger among ostensibly egalitarian American parvenus. See also Francis J. Grund, Aristocracy in America. (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1959) for a revealing -- and immensely humorous -- contemporary account of social pretentiousness in "egalitarian" America of 1839.

(15) Election speech in Liverpool, cited by Edward Everett in letter to J. McLean, 18 August 1828, Livermore, op.cit., pp.266-267.

(16) Ibid., loc.cit.

(17) For the period under consideration, of course, the term "American" is not entirely accurate; the description in the text applies chiefly to the Middle States. But although it was in New York and Pennsylvania that this non-ideological style of politics first emerged (Ostrogorski, op.cit., II, 44), it rapidly spread to encompass an ever-growing portion of the Union (Chambers, op.cit., p. 165). New York is treated here as the future American trend in microcosm.

(18) Memorandum in possession of Rufus King, n.d., (1812?) if in Fischer, Revolution..., p. 174, Note 92.

(19) The same situation produced similar results in the West.

When Ohio was admitted to the Union in 1803, it was overwhelmingly Republican. Many of the Federalist leaders in the state had emigrated from New England, and if anything might guarantee staunch adherence to Federalist principles, a New England upbringing in the 1790's might have been expected to do so. These ambitious men, however, discovered very rapidly that in Ohio, their Federalism was a conclusive bar to their political advancement -- and the result was that for very many of them, ambition overruled principles, and they moved into the Republican camp. (Hockett, op.cit., pp. 58-59.)

(20) To Rufus King, 5 October 1812, in Fischer, op.cit., pp. 173-174.

(21) Ibid., p. 43.

(22) Livermore, op.cit., p. 267.

(23) In this chapter, the analysis focuses upon the complexities of shifting factional alignments in New York to the exclusion of popular "grass-roots" politics. This focus was selected because contemporaries themselves appear to have agreed that the direction of New York State politics depended primarily upon the decisions of its factional leaders and only secondarily upon those of its voters. "There is no state in the Union in which Elections are governed by so few men as in New York," wrote William Plumer (Brown (ed.), William Plumer's Memorandum..., p. 442, entry for 2 March 1806), and in 1801, Gallatin worried that "so much seems to depend in that State on certain individuals, and the influence of a few is so great, and the

majority in the city of New York (on which, unfortunately, the majority in the State actually depends, that city making one-eighth of the whole) is so artificial, that I much fear that we will eventually lose that State before next election of President." (to Jefferson, 14 September 1801, in Adams (ed.), Writings, I, 50-51.).

(24) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 172.

(25) Dorothe Bobbé, DeWitt Clinton. (New York: Minton, Balch & Co.; 1933) p. 75; McBain, op.cit., p. 71.

(26) Jefferson made Chancellor Robert R. Livingston the American Minister to France; the New York Council appointed his close follower, John Lansing, to be Chancellor in his place; his brother-in-law, John Armstrong, was appointed United States Senator to fill the unexpired term of John Lawrence; his brother, Edward, was named Mayor of New York City; and other brothers-in-law were designated secretary of state, chief justice, and state supreme court judges. McBain, op.cit., pp. 128-129.

(27) Ibid., p. 126.

(28) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 173.

(29) Spaulding, op.cit., p. 261; Bobbé, op.cit., p. 88; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 186.

(30) McBain, op.cit., pp. 136-138.

(31) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 185-188; Spaulding, op.cit., pp. 262-264; Bobbé, op.cit., pp. 92-93.

(32) To Jefferson, 9 August 1802, Adams (ed.), Writings, I, 83.

(33) Fox, op.cit., p. 69; Bobbé, op.cit., pp. 114-116.

- (34) Herbert Agar, The Price of Union. (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Sentry Edition; 1966) p. 141; Spaulding, op.cit., pp. 272-273; J.T. Adams, op.cit., p. 237.
- (35) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 208; Agar, loc.cit.; J. Parton, The Life and Times of Aaron Burr. (New York: Mason Bros.; 1858) pp. 331-333.
- (36) DeAlva S. Alexander, A Political History of the State of New York. (3 Vols., New York: Henry Holt & Co.; 1906) I, 138.
- (37) Lewis won by some 7,000 votes, a victory of nearly three to two. Spaulding, op.cit., p. 274; Fox, op.cit., p.68; Parton, op.cit., p. 335.
- (38) Fox, op.cit., p. 69.
- (39) Not to be equated with either the Randolph or the Pennsylvania Quids. No connection existed among the three. See Cunningham, "Who Were the Quids?" and Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 222-235.
- (40) Parton, op.cit., p. 365.
- (41) To Jefferson, 18 July 1804, Adams (ed.), Writings, I, 201.
- (42) Fox, op.cit., p. 71; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 227-230.
- (43) Fox, op.cit., pp. 70-72.
- (44) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 235.
- (45) Ibid., I, 244.
- (46) Fox, op.cit., pp. 72-74.
- (47) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 246. It is significant to note, however, that as soon as the Clintonians had reconquered the Council of Appointment, they excluded the Federalists from

patronage as rigidly as had the Lewisites. The division of 1800 still proved stubborn, whichever camp was involved. See Fox, op.cit., pp. 81-82.

(48) A dark-horse nominated by the Clintonians because their two leading figures, DeWitt Clinton and Ambrose Spencer, had by this time made too many enemies to allow either to be put forth as the official nominee. Ibid., I, 238.

(49) Fox, op.cit., pp. 75-80.

(50) Even the New York Republicans' party machinery, among the best-disciplined in the Union in 1800, had succumbed to division. In the campaign of 1807, there were two rival organizations in operation, both of them "Republican." Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 152-153.

(51) Robert V. Remini, The Election of Andrew Jackson. (Philadelphia & New York: J. B. Lippincott & Co.; 1963) pp. 17-20; Richard P. McCormick, "Political Development and the Second Party System" in William N. Chambers and Walter Dean Burnham (eds.), The American Party System: Stages of Development, (New York: Oxford University Press; 1967) p. 97.

(52) Chambers, op.cit., p. 200.

(53) See Chapter 12.

CHAPTER 9: The Delayed "Decision" in Massachusetts -
Republicanism Captures Federalism's Recruits.

New England was slower than other parts of the Union to make the "decision" of 1800. In the year when Thomas Jefferson conquered the presidency, Federalism was still predominant in all the state governments of New England. By 1807, however, its sway was crumbling in all but Connecticut.⁽¹⁾ The decision, while delayed, appeared none the less decisive.

Yet the reversal was less revolutionary than might at first appear, for the "Federalism" which held New England in 1800 was not the united front the label implies. The Party had been deeply divided by the same foreign policy crisis which had powered the Republicans' resurgence after 1798 so that by 1800, Massachusetts in effect if not in name was a three-party system, comprised of High Federalists, Republicans, and Adams-men. We have already analyzed the first two groupings in some detail; the third, however, merits further attention here.

Ostensibly, the Adams-men were Federalists. In certain vital respects, however, they resembled the Republicans more strongly than they did the party whose name they bore. Indeed, Adams' supporters both in New England and elsewhere in the Union were often called "half-Federalists," and the boundary between them and the Republicans was already very blurred in the Massachusetts elections of 1800. With time, it disappeared entirely as Adams-men gravitated steadily to the Republican camp.⁽²⁾ By capturing the social and economic groups which the Adams-men represented, the Republicans ensured the decline of Federalism

in New England; and as we shall subsequently suggest, their success in doing so might have been possible only in the atypically serene context of Jefferson's first administration. To understand the Republicans' ability to capture this following, however, it is first necessary to understand the composition of the Adams-men themselves.

The issue upon which Adams himself first broke with his own party was that of his special mission to France; it was this same peace policy which drew to him the first component of his following. To those merchants whose trade ties were with the Continent and the French colonies rather than with Great Britain, the prospect of a French war spelled possible ruin.⁽³⁾ Not only would it drastically disrupt their activities overseas, but it might easily cause nearly all those wholesalers to whom they sold their cargoes upon their return to Massachusetts itself to stop payment.⁽⁴⁾ Thus, while the majority of Federalism's leading figures turned violently against Adams in the presidential race of 1800, those prominent Federalists who did stand by the President were almost invariably merchants of this type or commercial lawyers whose economic interests dictated opposition to the Hamiltonians' war program.⁽⁵⁾

There were other motives than economic, however, behind the opposition of many such men. Many were spurred by social frustration as well. The French trade upon which their prosperity rested was a far more recent growth than the British trade in which the old established firms of New England were chiefly engaged. Where the latter dated from colonial days,

the former had become significant only in the 1790's. Thus the merchant interests involved in the French trade were new arrivals on the Massachusetts social scene, and the ultras within the Federalist Party whose warlike foreign policy threatened their economic interests represented the same forces which blocked their social ascent at home. In Massachusetts, as elsewhere in the Union, entrenched social status in society correlated closely with Federalism in politics,⁽⁶⁾ and between 1798 and 1800, those men who opposed High Federalist hegemony in both spheres had rallied around John Adams. They had not as yet, however, broken completely with the Federalist Party. Adams' defeat in the presidential contest deprived them of their original focus of loyalty but not of the discontent which had first motivated their heterodoxy. After 1801, therefore, they were left with nowhere to go except into the Republican camp. Archetypical of this aspirant group was the Crowninshield family of Salem. They had first gone into overt opposition as Adams-men in 1798, and their motive then had been their economic interests in opposing a French war; after 1801, however, their opposition gradually stiffened and they soon became declared Republicans. Their motives, however, were no longer at all related to foreign policy; the Crowninshields became Republicans because only thereby could they defeat the entrenched Derby clan in their bitter contest for local social and economic leadership.⁽⁷⁾

Another segment of Adams' following further illuminates the divergence between his supporters and the Hamiltonians'. "The leaders of the first class are generally right;" noted Hamilton

himself after a swing through Massachusetts, New Hampshire and Rhode Island in 1800, "but the leaders of the second class are too much disposed to be wrong."⁽⁸⁾ "Wrong" in Hamilton's terms meant staunchly loyal to John Adams and very cool to Hamilton's project of maneuvering Pinckney into the presidency in Adams' place. Hamilton encountered little difficulty in persuading the "strong minded men in New England" to cooperate in this plan, but from the Party's small local leaders and its rank-and-file he met serious opposition.⁽⁹⁾ The basis of their resistance is illuminated by the assessment made at the time by a New Jersey Federalist. These secondary leaders, he said, "have looked up to a few men to direct them in federal politics," and for four years these "few men" had been telling them that John Adams was "one of the wisest and firmest men in the United States." A sudden reversal on that point now would be severely damaging -- indeed, it would probably ensure a Federalist defeat in New England -- especially since no plausible reason was available to justify it. Adams' peace policy was overwhelmingly popular; no-one among "this class of men" could be made indignant over Adams' dismissal of Secretary of State Pickering, since in their view the President had done no more thereby than exercise his constitutional right; and otherwise, no other reason could be adduced beyond "private anecdotes not proper to be mentioned," and these were mere assertions.⁽¹⁰⁾

The Federalist Party, in short, had found itself with a genuinely popular figure at its head, and had its major leaders been willing to accept that fact, they would very likely have

won the presidential election of 1800.

The core of Adams' support, therefore, came from rising but still marginal elites, and from his real personal popularity among many ordinary citizens. The resemblance of both groups to important components of the Republican Party is obvious. If the Adams-men were not quite Republicans, they were very far from their High Federalist opponents. They were, in fact, a physical manifestation of the discontinuity which we discovered earlier to be inherent in the Federalist coalition. This discontinuity provides a clue to the process whereby Massachusetts Republicanism captured this following in the years between 1800 and the Embargo era.

For it was not at all theirs to begin with. In 1800, indeed, John Adams was a more significant force in Massachusetts politics than was Republicanism.⁽¹¹⁾ So true was this that the state's Republicans discovered very soon that their best means of furthering their own political advancement was to ride on John Adams' coattails. A good illustration of this situation was Elbridge Gerry's campaign for the Massachusetts governorship in 1800. There were two other candidates in the field: Caleb Strong, the Federalist incumbent; and an individual named Gill, running as a Republican. Gill proved a negligible contestant, pulling but 5% of the total vote;⁽¹²⁾ the real contest lay between Gerry and Strong. Gerry was the Republican Party's official nominee -- but the character of his campaign shows him to have been the candidate of a very hybrid form of Republicanism. Gerry ran as a Republican pledged to the support of

President Adams, and specifically to the support of Adams' peace policy towards France.⁽¹³⁾ For a Republican candidate in 1800 to present himself, as Gerry did, as a "friend of the people, of the rights of man, and of peace"⁽¹⁴⁾ was nothing surprising, but it was a revealing indication of the blurred definition of "Republicanism" in Massachusetts that he should place equal emphasis upon his support for President Adams while the rest of his Party were doing their utmost to oust Adams from office.

The approach, however, was very well taken, because it allowed Gerry to appeal to a very wide range of voters. The High Federalists may have regarded Gerry as a turncoat and a renegade because of his much-publicized, highly controversial role in the secret maneuvers leading up to Adams' dispatch of the special French peace mission;⁽¹⁵⁾ moderate Federalists, however, could regard him as a "true" Federalist precisely because of the support he had then given to the hard-pressed Adams. Republicans for their part could regard Gerry as one of their own, first, because of his long association with their Party, and second, because of his stubborn pursual of a peaceful accommodation with the Directory after the rest of the XYZ mission had gone home in despair.⁽¹⁶⁾ When the vote was in, it showed that in a record turnout of 40,000 votes, Gerry had lost to Strong by a mere 200 ballots.⁽¹⁷⁾ This was an unsettling surprise for the Federalist ultras. The fact that Gerry had lost appeared far less important than the fact that his margin of defeat had been so narrow.⁽¹⁸⁾ And indeed, they had reason to worry, for Gerry's strong showing revealed serious divisions within urban

Federalism and the growth of a powerful Republican commercial interest.(19) His total vote was more than double that of the Republican candidate for governor in 1799, and where Heath had carried only two cities for the Republicans in that year, Gerry had now carried six, including Boston.(20)

In lower-level contests as well, Republicans ran as Adams-men. Indeed, until about 1802, they were often more emphatically Adams-men than they were Republicans, and their transition to outright Republicanism owed much to the specific, and in some ways atypical, political and social situation obtaining in Massachusetts, under Jefferson's first administration. The metamorphosis of Jacob Crowninshield is illustrative. By 1802, Crowninshield and his family were declared Republicans -- but in 1800 they had presented themselves very differently indeed. In a special election held in August of 1800, Jacob Crowninshield had run as a staunch Adamsite and his supporters had proclaimed that the battle with the Essex Junto's brand of Federalism would be settled only when the latter had been defeated by the forces of "Adams and Liberty." Crowninshield was not running as a Republican, however; on the contrary, his campaign statements insistently stressed that no one was a better Federalist than he.(21) Because neither he nor his Federalist opponent obtained a majority, a runoff election was held in October. The strength of Adams' appeal was apparent in the fact that the Federalist Salem Gazette carefully avoided repudiating the President and focused its attack instead on the old targets of "Jacobinism, Deism

and Democracy." But at the same time, Crowninshield's paper denied that their own candidate had the slightest connection with "democracy;" Crowninshield was an "Adams Federalist" and a supporter of Adams' peace policy. In the regular election which followed in November, the Federalist paper's insistent attack forced the Register to issue a categorical denial of any connection whatsoever between Crowninshield and the French, Crowninshield and the "canaille" -- or between Crowninshield and Jefferson.(22) In 1800, in fact, the Register never even mentioned Thomas Jefferson in its pages, and devoted only minimal attention to the Alien and Sedition Acts. At that point, the Adams brand of Federalism -- in Salem at least -- was decidedly not a Jeffersonian movement. (23)

By the end of 1801, however, a significant shift had occurred. Adams had now lost his bid for a second term, and the Register noted with disgust that all Federalists -- even his most violent erstwhile opponents -- were now "his friends & panegyricists." Accordingly, it appealed to all former Adams-men to rally to Jefferson's support.(24) A year later the transition was complete. In November of 1802, the Register declared that Adams' administration had been an "aristocratic experiment" and the Crowninshields were overtly Republican.(25)

Even after their conclusive loss of the Adams-men, however, the Federalists might not have declined quite so precipitously had it not been for two other factors specific to the context of Massachusetts in these years. The first was the dynamic social and economic expansion of Massachusetts

itself. The second was the immensely popular record of Jefferson's first Administration.

The years between 1800 and 1807 were a period of unparalleled prosperity in New England. Exports rose by 45%; re-exports quadrupled; ship tonnage increased 25%.(26) This dynamic expansion ensured a concomitant increase in those very social and economic groups which had first formed the body of the Adams-men, and if they could no longer become Adamsites, the attitude of the Federalist conservatives made it equally unlikely that they would be Federalists. Both their economic orientation and the quality of their nationalism clashed too greatly with the High Federalists' outlook for such an alliance to be feasible, and as their numbers increased, the Federalists' relative influence in Massachusetts politics inexorably declined.

To begin with, in a setting of rapid expansion and proliferating opportunities, the Old Federalist leadership sought to preserve the restrictive economic structure of the eighteenth century. They refused to recognize, for example, that the New England economy was becoming daily more closely linked to the Middle States' market; instead, they cherished thoughts of secession whose realization would have destroyed the prosperity of a substantial portion of New England's own business community. As early as 1804, Timothy Pickering bemoaned the tepid response of Massachusetts' commercial men to any secessionist proposals, say that "love of money will be our ruin,"(27) but he never recognized that his Party must hold

these lovers of money if it were to remain a significant force in American politics.

The Old Federalists further ensured their own isolation by their attitude towards the granting of new bank charters. In a period when more and more of their own adherents were demanding additional charters, the Old Federalists clung to a restrictive banking policy which could only end by alienating their own "natural" recruits.(28) Until 1811, they successfully resisted the drive for a new Massachusetts State Bank which would compete with the Federalist-controlled Boston Bank chartered in 1803; but when the new bank finally won its charter, it owed much to the Old Federalists' resistance for having driven many of their own most aggressive commercial interests into the Republican camp.(29) The State Bank of 1811 became "another of the victories of the newer set of businessmen, working through the party of Jefferson,... over the conservatives who had not yet left the dying Federalist party."(30)

To these clashes of economic policy, the Old Federalists added petty insults such as the exclusion of the Crowninshields from the Salem dancing assembly in November of 1802.(31) This combination of economic hyperconservatism, potentially disruptive sectionalism, and snobbish resistance to the social aspiration of newly risen wealth could hardly fail in the end to alienate those rising elites in Massachusetts who represented whatever hope for continued influence the Federalists might have had.

As if to ensure their own defeat, however, the Old

Federalists set themselves against the expansive nationalistic spirit which increasingly pervaded the outlook of ordinary citizens as well. In the dynamic context of Massachusetts society of the day, in which ever greater numbers of people were emerging into new prosperity and becoming newly relevant to the political process, it was nearly inevitable that the "quality" of their nationalism should conflict deeply with that of the Federalist ultras. Unlike the High Federalists, their social status was too new to permit their identifying strongly with the ruling classes of Great Britain. Unlike the Old Federalists, however, they could draw gratification from the sentiments of popular nationalism, that great source of vicarious status in increasingly egalitarian societies.(32) These new arrivals on the American social and political scene, therefore, tended to find the satisfactions of group-identification in the concept of the American nation -- and in the expansive atmosphere of Jefferson's first administration, that concept was a gratifying one indeed. In its ebullient self-confidence and its pervasive sense of optimism, it was a concept of particular appeal to younger minds, and it is worth noting that with the passage of some two decades since the Peace of Paris, a new generation had matured in American society which had no memory of colonial days or of the more parochial outlook which that period had bred in its citizens.

There was apparently some connection between the spread of this spirit of youthful nationalism and the initial split

in the Federalist Party. The British Minister to the United States in 1799 thought as much. He noted that the Federalists' internal divisions were much exacerbated by conflicting opinions as to the desirability of an alliance with Great Britain, and he credited the resistance to any such proposal to a rising spirit of American nationalism, a desire to be dependent on none -- and he noted further that these sentiments were especially prevalent "in the younger part of the Society."⁽³³⁾ Had we but sufficient voting statistics available, it might prove exceedingly interesting to test them for a correlation between comparative youth and support of Adams in 1800.

By setting their faces against this nationalistic spirit, the Old Federalists all but guaranteed that they would fail to attract the new voters coming of age each year and reduce themselves to an aging and dwindling minority. Certainly, there are published statements indicating as much as the Jeffersonian era wore on. "It is a well known fact that the rising generation is almost wholly Republican," noted one newspaper in 1807.⁽³⁴⁾ "It has been a matter of astonishment and inquiry, 'Why so many young men should have been led to imbibe the dangerous and destructive principles of Democracy?'" noted another in 1809.⁽³⁵⁾ "Nine-tenths of our young men, farmers and mechanics who annually become voters are Republicans," observed a third on the eve of the War of 1822.⁽³⁶⁾ And on the very eve of the Hartford Convention, a Federalist newspaper complained of the same tendency in terms which might

help us to understand why secessionism encountered such resistance in New England, even at the height of the war crisis:

"... the younger classes of our citizens who have come upon the stage since the commencement of our Federal Government, have many of them, considered it as one consolidated and not a confederation of independent sovereignties. This unjust conception has been the fruitful source of most of the errors which have led to our present unhappy condition...(37)

Instead of recognizing the growing power of "universalistic" nationalism in American life, however, the Old Federalists seemed bent upon flouting it. In 1802, a Massachusetts Republican newspaper attacked the Federalists' habit of "belittling everything American,"(38) and a specific instance of their ill-judged hostility was their effort to derogate one of the major symbols of American popular nationalism, the Declaration of Independence. Beginning about 1797, New England Federalists stopped reading that great document at their 4th of July celebrations.(39) The practice spread steadily thereafter. By 1806, Nathaniel Ames noted that both in Dedham and in several celebrations in Connecticut, the Federalists had refused to read the Declaration; indignantly, he quoted the Albany Centinel's statement that reading the document was a "wicked practice."(40) In thus pitting themselves against the strongest social emotion of their day, the Federalists sealed their own fate.

The disastrous results of the Old Federalists' refusal to accommodate themselves to a new era were reflected in the voting returns of the interlude years. New England witnessed

a "voting explosion" in this period, and the increase went heavily to the Republican Party. In Connecticut, where until 1800 the vote had been very light, the gubernatorial turnout rose 70% between 1801 and 1806. In the process, the Federalist vote rose by 20%, but the Republican jumped 792%. In Vermont, total turnout rose 85% between 1800 and 1807. The Federalists' portion rose 33%; the Republicans' rose 205.4%. In New Hampshire, the total vote rose by 69.3% between 1800 and 1805. The Federalists improved their tally by 18.5%; the Republicans by 166.5%. In Massachusetts, the years between 1800 and 1807 saw the total turnout go up by 106%. The Federalist vote increased by 76.8%; the Republican by 146.5%.⁽⁴¹⁾

In a less dynamic context, the Federalists might have hoped to maintain their dominance by maintaining their absolute numbers. It is significant in this connection to note that in areas having reached a state of social equilibrium, the Federalists held their own.⁽⁴²⁾ The Connecticut River Valley was a prime case in point.⁽⁴³⁾ Republicanism, by contrast, flourished in the turbulently expansive atmosphere of the cities. As Hamilton disapprovingly observed, "The cities have been employed by the Jacobins to give an impulse to the country."⁽⁴⁴⁾ Two of Massachusetts' three richest cities were Jeffersonian in 1800.⁽⁴⁵⁾ Similarly, "half-Federalism" did not flourish in rural areas either,⁽⁴⁶⁾ and when it was absorbed into Republicanism, it continued to draw much of its strength from the most mobile segments of society -- the growing numbers of

ambitious office-seekers, rising merchants, capitalists and professional elements.(47) In the expanding context of Massachusetts, therefore, reliance on the absolute numbers sufficient to ensure the Old Federalists' hegemony in an earlier day could only ensure that their relative weight would steadily decline.

There were those among the Federalists who grasped this fact quite clearly. These were the "Young Federalists" who sought after 1800 to revamp their Party to meet the challenges of a democratic age. Quite consciously, they adopted nearly the entire armory of Jeffersonian politics -- ideological and organizational alike.(48) First of all, they accepted as a fact of life the popular participation in politics whose legitimacy the Old Federalists stubbornly refused to concede. While their elders clung to the concept of "government by the best," the Young Federalists increasingly identified themselves in public with the concept of responsibility to popular opinion.(49) They did introduce some interesting reinterpretations of the majoritarian idea by distinguishing between "republicanism" and "democracy." Only the former, they declared, was "true" majority rule, whereas the latter was a perversion thereof; "democracy," they said, was "mobocracy" which allowed an office-seeking minority to impose its will on the majority. Ominous for the future was the attack in this connection upon the "aristocratic" Virginia slaveowners' domination of the rest of the Union by means of the illicit advantage they drew from the three-fifths compromise in the

Constitution.(50) It is significant, however, that even in this reinterpretation, the Young Federalists employed arguments all of which implicitly endorsed the majoritarian principle.

Even more startling was their espousal of the slogans of agrarian supremacy and economy in government. After 1800, the Young Federalists harped as insistently upon the theme of governmental thrift as the Jeffersonians ever had before 1800. Their seemingly incongruous adoption of the agrarian cause reflected the fact that Federalism's power base lay no longer in the turbulently mobile environment of the cities but in the conservative countryside.(51)

Perhaps most paradoxical of all, however, was the steady shift of Young and Old Federalists alike towards strict constructionism. The shift was already apparent in the debate over the Louisiana Purchase. Timothy Pickering insisted that no constitutional authority whatever existed for the incorporation of the new territory into the Union. "The assent of each individual State," he declared, "is necessary for the admission of a foreign country as an associate in the Union; in like manner as in a commercial house, the consent of each member would be necessary to admit a new partner into the company."(52) The argument contains curious echoes of John Taylor's notion of concurrent majorities,(53) and indeed, when we consider the Federalists' shift towards states' rights in terms of the concept of regional feelings of relative status in the Union, it is not too surprising that this should be so.

Being now out of office, the Federalists might be expected to alter their earlier advocacy of expanded national power, for as Henry Adams observed, "at bottom, Massachusetts was as jealous as Virginia of any stretch of power likely to weaken her influence." (54)

The Young Federalists did more than adopt the rhetoric of Jeffersonianism; they adopted its organizational techniques as well, and in their organizational ability they proved often as capable as their Republican opponents. They had little patience with their elders' reluctance to canvass for votes or organize a popular following. The intense irritation to which such fastidiousness could give rise is well illustrated by a Maryland Federalist's outburst in 1800:

"Have our party shown that they possess the necessary skill and courage to deserve to be continued to govern? What have they done?... their conduct, even now,... in most, if not all of the states, is tremulous, timid, feeble, deceptive, and cowardly. They write private letters. To whom? To each other, but they do nothing to give a proper direction to the public mind... They meditate in private. Can good come out of such a system? If the party recovers its pristine energy and splendour, shall I ascribe it to such cunning, paltry, indecisive, back-door conduct? Certain I shall not, but to a kind and watchful Providence." (55)

Rebelling against such gentlemanly tactics, the Young Federalists began in 1800 to organize with a will. By the end of the decade they had succeeded in building up quite an impressive network of political machinery throughout New England. In their efforts, moreover, they used at some point every device which their Party had hitherto most decried: nominating caucuses, caucus subcommittees, statewide general

committees made up of district delegates, all knit together by a network of correspondence committees.(56) Their organizations' effectiveness varied from state to state, but then so did the Republicans', and in general the determination which this organizational effort indicates demands that the classic portrayal of Federalist political passivity be extensively revised.

This effort to modernize the Federalist Party, however, was severely hampered by four countervailing influences. The first of these was the associative symbolism of the name "Federalist" -- one of the major symbolic legacies handed down from the battle of the 1790's. The Republicans, with skill and luck, had succeeded in making their opponents' name the focus of a cluster of powerful negative symbols, all of which tended to equate "Federalism" with anti-republicanism, "monarchical" and "aristocratic" leanings, and intentions of domestic suppression. The "name... of federalism is to become so scouted that no party can rise under it," remarked Jefferson with some satisfaction,(57) and added later that "the federalists know, that, eo nomine [in their own name] they are gone forever. Their object, therefore, is, how to return into power under some other form. Undoubtedly they have but one means, which is to divide the republicans, join the minority, and barter with them for the cloak of their name."(58)

Indeed, the associative symbolism of the Federalist name had been completely reversed since the early 1790's. In those

years, it had carried such powerfully positive associations that the Republicans at their outset had often tried hard to link their own cause to the Federalist name; the 1790's were well advanced before they completely abandoned such hyphenated self-designations as "Republican-Federalists." By 1801, however, the Federalists were seeking to associate themselves to the positive symbolism which the Republican label had come to contain. "I hope it is not too late to wrench the name republican from those who have unworthily usurped it," said -- of all people -- Fisher Ames in 1801, (59) and by the close of Jefferson's presidency, a British traveler noted with some puzzlement that both parties "equally lay claim to the title of Republicans. It is somewhat singular that there should be a difference at all." (60)

The Young Federalists fully understood the necessity of ridding their Party of the antirepublican connotations which its name had come to possess; (61) but they never succeeded in erasing Federalism's negative image. By 1815, "Federalism" had become a standard smear-word in the American political vocabulary; (62) it was still so as late as 1840. (63) In politics, there is a good deal in a name, and it is interesting to note that in 1796, the Republicans' own period of adversity, the negative connotations which had accrued to the Republican name as a result of the Party's [^]déba^cle in the Jay Treaty debate had prompted Jefferson himself to think of changing his Party's name from Republican to Whig. (64)

The Young Federalists labored under the additional handicap of their own colleagues' resistance to their modernizing effort. The "new" Federalist Party they wanted to create was deeply distasteful to those older Federalists who were products of an earlier age. For these men, the increasingly democratic America confronting them was not something to which they even wished to adapt, nor was political activity -- particularly the hurly-burly sort of political activity which popular politics demanded -- any longer a source of honorable recognition.⁽⁶⁵⁾ Applied to these men at least, DeWitt Clinton's charge that the Federalists would rather rule in Hell than serve in Heaven⁽⁶⁶⁾ contained some truth. The obdurate conservatism and embarrassing outspokenness of a Timothy Pickering, for example, could and did go far to undermine the Federalist innovators' efforts to improve the Party's image.⁽⁶⁷⁾ The stubborn clannishness of others like him eventually succeeded in alienating some who had begun as Federalism's staunch adherents. We have already mentioned John Quincy Adams' transition to Republicanism; the metamorphosis of William Plumer is equally illustrative.

As late as November of 1804, Plumer was an ardent anti-Jeffersonian. "[T]he present democratic system flatters the vanity, the follies, & vices of the people," he wrote, "... & arms the worst passions in man against men of talents integrity & property... to such a party, so long as I am what I am, & they remain what they now are, I never can or will unite."⁽⁶⁸⁾

Barely two months later, however, he was penning a serious criticism of the Federalists' tactics in the current struggle over constitutional reform in Connecticut, noting that the Federalists were using arguments that could only give the Republicans excellent weapons to use against them.(69)

By 1805, Plumer was becoming annoyed at the Federalists' persistent harping on worn-out themes. Noting the Republican sweep in the New Hampshire state elections, he wrote that "indeed I feel a greater degree of indifference on the subject than I thought for. I am weary of party politics... I really wish the Eastern states may be united in the great objects of national concern -- & if united -- they will be respected by the other portions of the Union."(70) Soon he was to note that the Federalists had won a majority in the Massachusetts House only because Boston had sent three times its usual number of delegates. This, he wrote, was both unseemly and futile, since Massachusetts would soon be completely democratic. "It is the effect of party -- and of an expiring party."(71)

By the beginning of 1806, Plumer had begun to direct severe censure towards the Congressional Federalists' obstructionism, deploring their behavior in supporting measures only to embarrass President Jefferson. "Their prejudices govern more than their reason," he wrote in disgust. "Such men ought not to be vested with Legislative power."(72) He also vented his annoyance at Pickering's intemperate outbursts in the Senate, and at the Congressional Federalists' cliqueishness in general.

It only intensified their own prejudices, he remarked pointedly, to refuse all contact with anyone whose opinions differed from their own. (73)

They were already refusing contact with Plumer himself. In January of 1807 he noted that his credit as a party-man among the Congressional Federalists was gone, and that John Quincy Adams' friendliness towards him appeared to increase as Pickering's declined. (74) But by this time, it appears that Plumer hardly cared any more. His entry for 16 March 1806 is a diametric reversal of his earlier hostility to Thomas Jefferson. The President was not a practical man, Plumer decided, but he was an honest one. (75) His political transformation was complete. From beginning to end, it had taken barely a year and a half, and his own words indicate that it was prompted chiefly by his exasperation with his own reactionary colleagues.

The Young Federalists encountered a more subtle drawback in their own effort's tacit but characteristic thrust: to use the trappings of democratic politics to rebuild upon a new basis the prescriptive status which their fathers had commanded without effort but which had been destroyed by the Union's rapid subsequent development. (76) In later historical situations where the sense of déclassement has been infinitely more poignant and more widespread, such efforts have proven at times terrifyingly successful; one thinks of Boulangisme in France, for example, or the more virulent twentieth century

growths of Fascism and Nazism. But such sinister successes have invariably arisen from a context marked by intense, all-pervasive social anxiety, a context in which numerous groups are falling in relative status, and where in the specific international context of the day the sentiments of nationalism have become a source of frustration rather than of vicarious strength.(77)

These conditions most decidedly did not obtain in the United States of the early Jeffersonian era. Perhaps never again was America to be permeated with so unqualified a feeling of social and national optimism. To be sure, some groups were losing status -- notably the Old Federalists -- but an infinitely greater number were gaining it at an unprecedented rate. The full impact of industrialization was yet to be felt, and with it the sobering problems of real poverty, urban squalor, and class antagonism.(78) Its borders marching across a continent, its wealth multiplying daily, prosperous and at peace, the nation's future appeared so brilliant that to feel oneself an "American" was to feel oneself a part of all that was best, purest, and most successful in all the world -- the deepest satisfaction that any form of group-identification is capable of bestowing.

The inevitable result was a national sense of buoyance, an almost mystical faith in America's singular and noble future.(79) "European travellers who passed through America noticed that everywhere... except for a few Federalists,

every American... seemed to nourish an idea that he was doing what he could to overthrow the tyranny which the past had fastened on the human mind." (80) A recurrent theme in the literature of the period was that Americans were a chosen people, established in a divinely selected habitat, for an experiment unique in the annals of human freedom. (81) Webster's spelling-books, Morse's geographies, and John Pierpont's readers were all honeycombed with suggestions that America's republican institutions had been divinely inspired. (82) "The anti-federalists in politics are all optimists in philosophy;" observed an English visitor, "and everything in the United States (federalism excepted) is the best of all possible things." (83)

America in these years was thus a society in which each individual was coming to see himself as capable of nearly endless personal advancement; in which the sentiments of nationalism were sources of the greatest satisfaction; and in which the symbolic content of that nationalism was settling conclusively into a universalistic, egalitarian mold. Such a society could not be brought to yield deference to any form of prescriptive status, no matter how veiled. The Young Federalists might have done better in late nineteenth century France.

Finally, they were fighting the record of an Administration which was possibly the only one in American history that really fulfilled its campaign promises. Failing utterly to

fulfill the Federalists' dire prophecies of 1800 that the Republican victory would usher in a reign of godlessness and economic chaos, the Jeffersonian Administration proceeded to cut taxes, curtail military expenditures, reduce the civil list, and only the expense necessary to buy Louisiana in 1803 prevented it from effecting a sizeable reduction in the national debt as well. Simultaneously, the Peace of Amiens produced a lull in the European war, allowing all the most inflammatory issues of the 1790's to be shelved with an almost audible national sigh of relief. Finally, the nation acquired an empire at a stroke by the Louisiana Purchase; and if, as we have already seen, this vast acquisition was much opposed by leadership groups anxious to maintain the existing balance of power within the Union itself, it was overwhelmingly popular among the people at large in whose eyes it added immeasurable ~~im~~ eclat to their young nation's prestige. As Secretary of State Madison remarked, "The purchase of Louisiana in its full extent, though not contemplated is received with warm, & in a manner universal approbation. The uses to which it may be turned, render it a truly noble acquisition." (84) In the face of so immensely popular a record, the Federalists simply had no issues with which to work. (85)

Favored as much by luck as by skill, therefore, but greatly favored nevertheless, the Republicans between 1801 and 1807 cemented their hold upon the most basic issues of the day: nationalism, peace and prosperity. Their successes at

the national level were mirrored within Massachusetts in the steady rise of their electoral strength. By 1806, the Republicans just barely missed capturing the state governorship; by 1807, they held it. No factionalism marked their rise to power; they could not afford it in face of the still-powerful Federalist challenge, much as Pennsylvania Republicans, so chaotically faction-ridden after 1800, were obliged to stand united in the 1790's.⁽⁸⁶⁾ But beyond their organizational unity, the Massachusetts Republicans' rise to power was equally due to the disruption of the Federalist coalition under the stresses of socioeconomic development, and the Old Federalists' subsequent failure either to hold their more dynamic "natural" recruits or to attract the newly-rising sectors of Massachusetts society to their standard. In the end, the Republicans captured this following -- but under only slightly different circumstances, it would have gone to revitalize Federalism itself.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 9

- (1) See Chapter 6.
- (2) Dauer, op.cit., p. 253.
- (3) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 105-113.
- (4) William T. Whitney, "The Crowninshields of Salem, 1800-1808," Essex Institute Historical Collections, Vol. 44 (1958)p.4.
- (5) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 18, Note 52 & P. 214, Note. 29.
- (6) Ibid., p. 203.
- (7) Whitney, op.cit., p. 3,7,29-34.
- (8) To Oliver Wolcott, 1 July 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 376.
- (9) Dauer, op.cit., pp. 253-256; DeConde, Q.W., p. 275; Beveridge, op.cit., II, 517.
- (10) Richard Stockton to Oliver Wolcott, 27 June 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 375.
- (11) He was nearly as significant on a national scale as well. George Clinton went so far as to assert that the peace mission to France made Adams so popular that it nearly kept Jefferson from the presidency. "Had we not previous to this named Mr. Jefferson for president we should have supported Mr. Adams." Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memo..., entry for 15 March 1806, p. 452.
- (12) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 390.
- (13) Goodman, op.cit., pp. 104-105.
- (14) DeConde, Q.W., p. 267.
- (15) Samuel E. Morison, "Elbridge Gerry, Gentleman-Democrat," New England Quarterly, Vol. 2 (1929) pp. 6-29.

- (16) Robinson, op.cit., p. 32.
- (17) Kurtz, op.cit., pp. 390-391.
- (18) Robinson, op.cit., p. 33.
- (19) Goodman, op.cit., p. 105.
- (20) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, p. 152, Note 1.
- (21) Salem Impartial Register, 21 & 25 August 1800.
- (22) Whitney, op.cit., pp. 9-11.
- (23) Ibid., pp. 12-13.
- (24) Salem Impartial Register, 26 October 1801.
- (25) Whitney, op.cit., p. 25. The same pattern was repeated in other fishing and whaling communities of the seaboard. Towns such as Marblehead, Gloucester, Cape Cod and the Nantucket Islands had been severely hurt by their exclusion after the Revolution from the British empire's markets; they had subsequently recovered by finding markets in the French imperial possessions. As with the Crowninshields, their economic interests provided the first impulse in their move towards Republicanism when the threat of a French war in 1798 raised the specter of economic ruin. Goodman, op.cit., pp. 115-118.
- (26) Goodman, op.cit., p. 183; J. T. Adams, op.cit., p. 239.
- (27) East, op.cit., pp. 431-432; Dauer, op.cit., pp. 12-13.
- (28) Ibid., p. 434.
- (29) Ibid., pp. 439-441.
- (30) B. Hammond, op.cit., p. 166.
- (31) Whitney, op.cit., p.32.

- (32) Thorstein Veblen calls patriotism "collective prestige" -- an admirably concise formulation. See On the Nature of Peace (New York: 1917) p. 31.
- (33) Liston to Grenville, 29 January 1799, in Dauer, op.cit., pp. 184-185.
- (34) Independent Chronicle, 30 March 1807.
- (35) Massachusetts Spy, 26 April 1809.
- (36) New Haven Patriot, 11 April 1811.
- (37) Salem Gazette, 21 October 1814.
- (38) Salem Register, 18 January 1802.
- (39) Daniel J. Boorstin, The Americans: The National Experience (New York: Vintage Books; 1967) p. 384. Throughout the 1790's. 4th of July celebrations were foci of party controversy, with each side doing its utmost to dominate the proceedings. At a 4th of July festival in Philadelphia in 1800, two schoolmasters even walked out when a pupil read the Declaration. Ibid., pp. 383-384. By 1803 or so, the parties had taken to holding separate rival celebrations, each of which provided the occasion for vigorously impugning the opposition's patriotism. Whitney, op.cit., p. 22. The Federalists seriously injured their cause in New York by using their control of the Albany common council to ban the reading of the Declaration at the 4th of July celebration in 1805. J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 223-224.
- (40) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, p. 185, Note 1, entries for 4 and 22 July 1806.

- (41) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 74-75. The Maine District is included in the Massachusetts returns, which may exaggerate the Republican gains somewhat since Maine was the power base from which they attacked Federalist hegemony in Massachusetts proper. Ibid., pp. 42-47.
- (42) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 10
- (43) Robinson, op.cit., p. 166.
- (44) To James A. Bayard, April 1802, in Cunningham (ed.) Making of the American Party System, p. 82.
- (45) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 213, Note 29.
- (46) Ibid., loc.cit..
- (47) Goodman, op.cit., p. 131.
- (48) Fischer, Revolution..., pp. xviii-xix.
- (49) Ibid., p. 153.
- (50) Ibid., p. 156.
- (51) Ibid., pp. 171-173. The Federalists were especially ardent agrarians in Maryland, where the small rural counties were deeply jealous of staunchly Jeffersonian Baltimore. Ibid., p. 173; Livermore, op.cit., p. 84. This shift in the Federalists' power base produced some statements which, coming from Federalists, were altogether startling. The New York Evening Post, for example, a staunchly Federalist sheet, remarked sourly on 19 April 1808 that cities were indeed "sores on the body politic." By 1819, the shift in orientation produced the following Federalist phillippic which was altogether worthy of John Randolph himself: "Shall I vote for the men who

... will place the great Agricultural State of Maryland at the feet of the Merchants, the Bank Speculators, the Brokers, the Lottery Officekeepers, the Foreigners, and the MOB OF BALTIMORE? or: Shall I give my support to those, who will maintain... the honour, the dignity and independence of the CULTIVATORS OF THE SOIL?" ("Agricola" in the Baltimore Federal Republican, 28 September 1819.)

(52) Debate in the Senate, 3 November 1803, M.M. Miller, Great Debates, p. 106. William Plumer echoed the same argument. See Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 20 October 1803, pp. 7-8.

(53) Mudge, op.cit., pp.96-97. The notion of "concurrent majorities" is more commonly associated with John Calhoun, but Calhoun borrowed most of his ideas on this subject from his predecessor, Taylor.

(54) Adams, Randolph, pp. 89-90.

(55) James McHenry to Oliver Wolcott, 22 July 1800, Gibbs, Memoirs, II, 384-385.

(56) Fischer, Revolution..., pp. 60-63; Goodman, op.cit., p.132.

(57) To Joel Barlow, 3 May 1802, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 371.

(58) To Gideon Granger, 16 April 1804, ibid., X, 74-75. Same statement in Jefferson to Dr. George Logan, 11 May 1805, ibid., X, 142.

(59) To John Rutledge, 26 January 1801, in Cunningham (ed.) Making of the American Party System, p. 80.

(60) John Melish, quoted in Fischer, Revolution..., p. 163.

(61) They became even more eager to do so after 1807 when the reactivation of the issues of 1798 gave fresh life to the old Republican charge that all Federalists were Tories at heart. In 1809, for example, the younger members of the Party in New York went so far as to propose that the Party expel everyone to whom the charge of Toryism might conceivably be applied, a proposal which deeply outraged their elder colleagues. See Fox, op.cit., pp. 107-109.

(62) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 180.

(63) Livermore, op.cit., p. 260; Fee, op.cit., p. 249.

(64) Kurtz, op.cit., p. 142.

(65) Fischer, Revolution..., p.32.

(66) Bobbé, op.cit., p. 133. Clinton made this statement in the Senate in January of 1809.

(67) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 180.

(68) Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 17 November 1804, pp. 199-200.

(69) Ibid., entry for 6 December 1804, p. 215.

(70) Ibid., entry for 15 March 1805, p. 317.

(71) Ibid., entry for 31 May 1805, pp. 321-322.

(72) Ibid., entry for 10 February 1806, p. 428.

(73) Ibid., entries for 28 February 1806 and 18 March 1806, pp. 439 & 458.

(74) Ibid., entry for 14 January 1807, p. 574.

(75) Ibid., pp. 453-454.

(76) Fischer, Revolution..., p. 33.

(77) See for example, Ernst Nolte, Three Faces of Fascism (New York, Chicago & San Francisco: Holt, Rinehart & Winston; 1966); Walter Laqueur and George L. Mosse (eds.) International Fascism, 1920-1945 (New York: Harper Torchbooks; 1966); Eugen Weber and Hans Rogger, The European Right (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press; 1965); Raoul Girardet, "Pour une introduction à l'histoire du nationalisme français" Revue Française de Science Politique, Vol. 8, No.3 (September 1958) pp. 505-528.

(78) "The mass of Americans were sanguine and self-confident, partly by temperament, but partly also by reason of ignorance; for they knew little of the difficulties which surrounded a complex society." Henry Adams, The United States in 1800 (Ithaca: Great Seal Books; 1955) p. 113.

(79) Curti, Roots of American Loyalty, pp. 60-61.

(80) Adams, The United States in 1800, p. 126.

(81) Krout & Fox, op.cit., p. 208.

(82) Ibid., pp. 183-184.

(83) Edward A. Kendall, Travels through the Northern Parts of the United States, in the Years 1807 & 1808 (3 Vols., New York: 1809) II, 233.

(84) To Monroe, 30 July 1803, Hunt (ed.) Writings, VII, 60.

(85) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 49-50; Goodman, op.cit., p. 183.

(86) Higginbotham, op.cit., p. 21; Adams, Gallatin, p. 311.

CHAPTER 10: Reactivation

The Peace of Amiens, despite its name, had never been more than an armistice. By May of 1803, a formal state of war once more existed between England and France. Overt hostilities, however, only recommenced some two years later, and this prolonged lull in the war abroad allowed foreign policy problems to remain in eclipse in United States politics throughout Jefferson's first administration.

There was nothing particularly exciting to serve in its place as a national touchstone of political cleavage. Accordingly, American politics, deprived of the great salencies which had nationalized it after 1793, tended strongly to revert to their earlier fragmented pattern. The issue-content of these interlude years contrasts strikingly to the burning questions which had dominated American debate before 1800. The hottest political issue in New Jersey, for example, was the drive to improve the state's dreadful roads by building new turnpikes.⁽¹⁾ The Pennsylvania Republicans fell apart in a welter of factions, and the state's most salient issues -- constitutional and judicial reform -- were of such a nature as to give rise by the end of 1804 to a promising alliance between the Federalists and the conservative Republicans (or Quids) against the radical Republicans under Duane and Leib.⁽²⁾ New England presented a paradoxical picture wherein the period of the Republicans' greatest advance was also one in which political conflict was nearly devoid of substantive issue-content. The hotter the party contest, it appeared, the less

nationally significant its pivotal concerns became. Programmatic content disappeared almost entirely to be replaced by quantities of sloganeering as to the merits or dangers of aristocracy and democracy, together with endless and often quite virulent personal attacks.⁽³⁾ In Salem, for example, national issues were already nearly invisible in the spring elections of 1802 and by 1803, they were in total eclipse; yet at the same time, political conflict between the rival Crowninshield and Derby clans rose to unprecedented intensity.⁽⁴⁾ The Crowninshields called themselves Republicans and the Derbys called themselves Federalists, but the utter lack of any party appeals in their bitter political rivalry has led their historian to conclude that "Salem politics... had at stake supremacy in Salem itself."⁽⁵⁾

It is important to note that the old issues were often clearly visible beneath the pall which appeared to have descended upon them in these years. Late in 1804, for example, the Administration asked Congress to enact restrictions on the Santo Domingo trade, whereupon the Congressional Federalists professed to sniff "French influence" at work because the French Ministers had steadily protested the American trade with their revolted colony.⁽⁶⁾ Throughout the period, Fisher Ames filled the pages of the New England Palladium and the Boston Repertory with warnings that France was still intent upon dominating the United States. Napoleon's France, he insisted, was not a whit different from Jacobin France. Its

hegemony in Europe only made it more dangerous. Only the British Navy stood between it and the defenseless American Republic. (7)

None of these warnings could take root in the serene context of Jefferson's first administration. The Republicans' domestic policies were so overwhelmingly popular that the opposition could find no issues to work with in that area, while the lull in European hostilities made it impossible for them to capitalize on any conflict over foreign policy. In his first administration, indeed, Jefferson hardly needed to have a foreign policy, yet the persistence of the themes which had permeated the earlier debate indicates that the nationalistic anxieties of the 1790's were by no means allayed; they were only dormant, and any resumption of the European war might be expected to reactivate them in force.

Which it did. Beginning late in 1805, the renewed war in Europe rapidly restored foreign policy to its old saliency in American debate. In his Second Inaugural Address, Jefferson had been able to gloss over the entire area of foreign affairs in one very brief, general paragraph. He had then concluded that "contemplating the union of sentiment now manifested so generally, as auguring harmony and happiness to our future course, I offer to our country sincere congratulations." (8) Only a few months later, however, Jefferson was forced to strike a very different note. "Since our last meeting the aspect of our foreign relations has considerably

changed," he began, and then detailed the ominous developments of which he spoke. America's coasts were infested by hostile vessels, her harbors were blockaded, her ships were being captured. The negotiations with Spain for buying the Floridas had collapsed, and harassments were increasing on both land and sea. Harbor fortifications and gunboats were now needed for defense and the militia required reorganization to put it in a better state of preparedness.(9)

Any resumption of warfare in Europe might be expected to reactivate the ideological foreign policy cleavages of the 1790's by restoring that issue to salience, but such an effect was made doubly certain by the specific nature of the Anglo-French collision as it now developed. For now, the field of battle was markedly different from what it had been in the 1790's. English and French troops no longer clashed directly on the European Continent, for that had fallen steadily under Napoleon's control. The conflict now shifted to the high seas as each adversary sought to establish an economic stranglehold on the other. In an effort to deprive England of her markets, Napoleon established his Continental System, designed to seal off the European mainland from all intercourse with Great Britain. England responded by employing her decisive naval superiority in a determined effort to choke off the flow of neutral shipping carrying supplies to France.

This shift of locale only ensured that the Anglo-French struggle would affect the United States even more directly

than it had in the 1790's, for the United States was by now the world's leading neutral carrier and accordingly, American shipping came in for the full force of England's coercive maritime policy.⁽¹⁰⁾ In 1805, the British Court of Admiralty handed down the "Essex" decision establishing a new and far more restrictive definition of bona fide reexports. This greatly expanded the range of goods subject to seizure as contraband,⁽¹¹⁾ and because the reexport trade bulked extremely large in the overall pattern of American trade,⁽¹²⁾ it dealt a very heavy blow to United States commerce. To compound the problem yet further, however, the resumption of the Anglo-French War brought with it a drastic rise in British impressments of American nationals as England sought to fill her navy's critical need for manpower. In 1796, British shipping seizures and impressments had been two of the most inflammatory issues in American politics; when reactivated after 1805, they proved to have lost none of their power.⁽¹³⁾

The subsequent behavior of France and Great Britain alike, moreover, was almost ideally suited to reactivating every issue and every animosity of the 1790's. Each of the European powers, in its grim determination to strangle its adversary, sought to pressure the United States into serving its own objective. Fine points of international law as to neutrals' rights in wartime were summarily ignored in what both England and France regarded as a war for survival. As each contestant decreed restrictions on neutral shipping,

the other retaliated with a set of counterrestrictions until by the end of 1807, their cumulative effect was to place the United States' carrying trade in an insoluble dilemma. Under the Orders in Council of 11 November 1807, the British Government required all ships bound for French-ruled Continental ports, on pain of seizure, to touch first at an English port and obtain a British license there before continuing their voyage.⁽¹⁴⁾ Napoleon responded with the Berlin and Milan Decrees of 21 and 17 November 1807 respectively, which declared that any neutral ship having either submitted to British search or touched at any English port had thereby forfeited its neutral character and stood subject to immediate seizure upon arrival at the Continent.⁽¹⁵⁾ These were mutually exclusive sets of conditions and they could not help but exert a disruptive effect on the American carrying trade.

The blow was the more acute because before 1815, the United States economy was more heavily weighted towards overseas commerce than it was ever again to be. Until 1808, there was little investment in domestic manufactures, despite the nation's increasing wealth.⁽¹⁶⁾ Shipping presented a much more profitable field of endeavor and one, moreover, where the American product did not encounter the severe competition which domestic manufactured products faced from better-quality, lower-priced British imports. American capital could and did go into speculation in Western lands, but with this exception, it simply had very few alternative investment outlets except for shipping.

The revenue from customs receipts, moreover, was the foundation of governmental finance under the Jeffersonians no less than it had been under the Federalists. With the repeal of internal taxes in Jefferson's first administration, there simply was no other significant source of revenue, yet by 1806, these receipts had yielded so richly as to allow the Administration not only to cover all the government's current expenses but also to pay \$2.5 million of the obligations undertaken to complete the Louisiana Purchase, discharge over \$3 million of the funded debt's principal and some \$4 million of its interest, to redeem some \$2 million of 5 1/2% stock, and still be left with a \$4 million surplus in the Treasury.⁽¹⁷⁾ Any impairment of the carrying trade, therefore, would have political repercussions at several levels. First, it would strike at the prosperity of numerous influential individuals; second, it would undermine the financial basis of the government itself.

After 1805, however, the British became ever more single-mindedly determined to throttle that trade -- for the English by now were in the grip of so violent a nationalistic fury against France that they viewed even the indirect assistance which neutral carriers gave the French cause as a hostile act against Great Britain herself. In 1805, an inflammatory pamphlet by a polemicist named James Stephen, entitled "War in Disguise; Or, the Frauds of the Neutral Flags," appeared in Britain. It was a head-on assault upon the legitimacy of American claims to neutrality. So aptly did it express

the militant English mood of the time that it immediately acquired a vast circulation and evidently influenced the thinking of the Government itself.(18) Simultaneously, the Royal Navy's smashing victory at Trafalgar on 21 October 1805 nearly obliterated the French fleet, and with its removal Great Britain had far less need to bother about conciliating neutrals. This new development gave free rein to the militant frame of mind embodied in Stephen's pamphlet.(19)

The result was a steady rise in British insults to American ships. In April of 1806, the H.M.S. "Leander" fired on an American vessel in the very harbor of New York City, killing an American seaman. American nationalist sensibilities, already raw from a rash of similar incidents on the high seas, exploded at this outrage perpetrated within sight of the New York docks themselves. A mob seized some of the "Leander's" crew members and marched on the British Consulate. Even in Boston, popular indignation forced the Federalists to demand strong countermeasures. President Jefferson proceeded to order British ships out of American waters, to interdict their supplies, and to demand that the "Leander's" captain be court-martialed.(20) Of these three measures, however, there was small hope of effecting any but the second in face of Britain's naval mastery, and no hope at all of allaying the mood of arrogant determination which lay behind the British actions. Depredations on American ships continued unabated, and in June of 1807, another spectacular incident provoked a

fresh outburst of nationalistic resentment in America. The British vessel H.M.S. "Leopard" stopped the American frigate "Chesapeake" off Hampton Roads, Virginia, and when the American ship refused to submit to search, the "Leopard" fired on her, boarded her and forcibly removed four seamen whom the British claimed to be "deserters." (21)

The ensuing outcry was even greater than the one which had followed the "Leander" incident. "This country has never been in such a state of excitement since the battle of Lexington," wrote Jefferson. (22) The reaction crossed state lines to sweep the seaboard. The Virginia militia began patrolling the coasts to keep British ships from replenishing their provisions. In New York City, a mob descended on the harbor and seized the rudder and sails from an English ship anchored there. In Boston, the Federalists were unable to prevent an outraged town meeting from issuing a strong statement of protest. (23) In New Jersey, where since 1800, politics had been almost solely concerned with state issues, the "Chesapeake" incident acted with dramatic speed to restore to salience the great issue of the 1790's: foreign enmity to the United States. (24) The reaction also crossed party lines to unite the nation momentarily in a furious outpouring of nationalistic indignation. "All parties join in indignation at English insult and murder," noted Nathaniel Ames in Massachusetts. (25) Jefferson noted the same reaction, but added some doubts as to its durability. "The gross insult lately received from the

English has forced the latter [the Federalists] into a momentary coalition with the mass of republicans; but the moment we begin to act in the very line they have joined in approving, all will be wrong."(26)

The Administration did have to act, however. For the first time since gaining power in 1801, the Jeffersonians found themselves confronted with foreign policy problems as intractable as those of the 1790's but this time their own position was very different. As "outs," they had repeatedly been able to advance their standing by attacking the policies of the Federalist "ins;" as "ins" themselves, they were forced to develop positive policies of their own to cope with a rapidly deteriorating international situation. The policy they developed was the Great Embargo of 1807; it immediately became the dominant issue in American politics, both state and national, throughout the Union.(27)

The Embargo was conceived as a moral alternative to war. By withdrawing all American ships from the high seas and forbidding any American carrier to take goods to or from foreign ports, it was reasoned, it would force the European powers to terms, for they would shortly be forced to recognize that they themselves needed both the products of America and the services of her shipping. It was, moreover, decidedly not a novel idea, suddenly conceived and hastily applied. The notion that war might be efficiently conducted by means of commercial restrictions had deep roots in the American

past, reaching back as far as the non-importation agreements of Revolutionary days.⁽²⁸⁾ It had long been a favorite of Jefferson's. He had adumbrated the idea as early as 1794:

"I love peace, and I am anxious that we should give the world still another useful lesson, by showing to them other modes of punishing injuries than by war... I love, therefore... [the] proposition of cutting off all communication with the nation which has conducted itself so atrociously. This, you will say, may bring on the war. It if does, we will meet it like men; but it may not bring on war, and then the experiment will have been a happy one."⁽²⁹⁾

Jefferson's hopes for the success of such a policy rested on the conviction that Europe needed American foodstuffs and raw materials more than the United States needed Europe's products. "Our commerce is so valuable to them that they will be glad to purchase it when the only price we ask is to do us justice. I believe we have in our own hands the means of peaceable coercion."⁽³⁰⁾ Thus, the idea which matured into the Embargo of 1807 was nearly fully developed in Jefferson's mind even before the onset of crisis in 1805-1806. In 1804, he wrote to Gallatin that:

"It will be necessary for us to consider of a gradation of peaceable measures which may coerce the belligerent powers into an obedience to the laws within our waters, ... a non-intercourse law may be necessary... These things should be considered and agreed on among ourselves, and suggested to our friends."⁽³¹⁾

The idea benefited further from the American public's ingrained reluctance to go to war for any reason. The peace issue had proven decisive in 1799-1800, and Jefferson must have believed it risky to allow it to be raised again now, even given the violence of the Anglophobic nationalist outburst following the "Chesapeake" incident. And indeed, that

outburst proved short-lived enough, for Jefferson did not ask Congress for strong preparation measures and his delay allowed the realization to spread that if continued, such a militant attitude must lead to war. (32)

Thus, both orthodox Jeffersonian doctrine and the realities of practical politics favored the adoption of some form of commercial restrictions in response to England's coercive maritime policy. (33) The first effort in that direction had produced a selective ban on British imports under the Nonimportation Act of 25 March 1806, but by the end of 1807, it seemed obvious that something stronger was needed, especially when unofficial word arrived in December of the draconic new British Orders in Council of 11 November 1807. The Cabinet met in mid-December and drafted the Embargo message. On 21 December 1807, Congress passed the Embargo Act which forbade the exportation of any American goods whatever, by sea or by land, for an unspecified, and thus apparently unlimited, period of time. (34)

The Federalists, of course, seized upon the Embargo immediately and attacked it with alacrity. As a policy in which Jefferson's personal prestige was heavily invested, as one which would inevitably strike heavily at many American pocketbooks, and as one which could so easily be attacked as anti-British and pro-French, the Embargo appeared to be the answer to all their frustrated dreams during the issueless interlude years. They even began to hope that they might use

it as their means to reconquer the presidency.(35) And indeed, the event proved their hopes to have been not altogether misplaced, for using the Embargo as almost their only campaign issue, the Federalists managed in the 1808 elections to triple their electoral vote and to double their share in the House of Representatives.(36)

For our purposes here, however, the most important aspect of the political controversy as it developed in response to the Embargo was that this drastic measure -- conceived, at least, as a moral alternative to war -- managed with amazing speed to reactivate all the burning issues which had dominated American politics in the 1790's. Once again, and for the first time since 1800, American politics resounded with the old clashes of rival nationalisms and divergent foreign sympathies, and with conflicting appeals to the revolutionary heritage. Once again, the great issues of peace and prosperity rose to their old primacy. As Bradford Perkins has remarked, "the nation was forced to fight political battles that had been all but settled."(37)

The themes which dominated the bitter national controversy over the Embargo have a familiar ring indeed. The Federalists harped incessantly upon the theme that the Embargo was the result of the Republicans' subservience to French influence.(38) "The long and short of it is this," declared one New England Federalist paper; "rather than resist any overbearing and insulting measure of France, we are to be

ruined, by commercial restriction."(39) "Why is the Embargo like good strong coffee?" riddled another and answered: "Because Bonaparte is remarkably fond of it. Why is the Embargo like French influence in our cabinet? Because unless speedily removed, it will be the ruin of America."(40) The old nationalist theme of America's "true" independence resurfaced, and with it the echoes of the Revolutionary heritage:

"... is embargo independence? Deceive not yourselves. It is palpable submission... France and Great Britain require you to relinquish a part of your commerce, and you yield it entirely... the path of our duty... is the path of active preparation -- of dignified energy. It is the path of 1776."(41)

The theme of national honor which had often given such a militant cast to Federalist nationalism in the 1790's reemerged as well. In the speech just quoted, Josiah Quincy continued:

"But, I shall be told this may lead to war. I ask, are we now at peace? Certainly not, unless retiring from insult be peace... The idea that nothing on earth is so dreadful as war, is inculcated too studiously among us. Disgrace is worse..."(42)

The revitalization of this variety of American nationalism allowed the Embargo to be attacked from yet another angle as a cowardly surrender of national pride:

"... we are compelled by our wonderful administration, to abandon the ocean... like a spiritless, contemptible spaniel yelping his own disgrace as he seeks for safety in the dignified retirement of his kennel. -- Genius of America! Whither art thou fled!"(43)

"French influence," national honor, independence, the Revolutionary heritage -- it was the 1790's revisited. The resemblance is only enhanced when we look at the themes which

dominated the Republicans' counterattack. First and foremost was their insistence that the Embargo was the only possible means of keeping the United States at peace. "[W]e consider the embargo... as a measure best calculated to preserve our property from plunder, our Seamen from impressment, and our nation from the horrors of War," declared the Republicans of Essex County, Massachusetts, in February of 1808. (44) "[I]n our opinion the EMBARGO is a prudent, just and politic measure, rendered necessary by the rapacity and depredations of the principal belligerent nations... that a repeal of the same... would probably involve us in the calamities of WAR," stated the Republicans of New York City in September of the same year. (45)

Secondly, the Republicans defended the Embargo as being in effect an economy measure, insisting vehemently that whatever losses the nation sustained from the Embargo, these were as nothing compared to the ruinous effect of a war:

"THE EMBARGO

"Will produce temporary inconvenience; the loss of a few thousand dollars;... It will not starve anybody...

"A WAR

"Will produce the loss of millions of dollars, burning and sacking of towns and cities, rape, theft, murders, streams of blood, weeping widows, helpless orphans, the beggary of thousands, the ruin of agriculture, and an extensive depravation of morals.

"Citizens of the United States! Which do you choose?" (46)

Finally came a forceful reanimation of the appeal to the Revolutionary heritage whose essence might be reduced to the bald statement that all Federalists were Tories at heart.

"As in the days of HANCOCK and ADAMS, you have among you the emissaries of Britain. They are anxious to restore the DESCENDANTS of the OLD TORIES, and degrade the patriots of our Revolution. They are in favor of men who wish to hazard our Commerce to the depredation of the European powers... who wish to expose our SEAMEN to every outrage of impressment and murder, just to gratify their British masters. They seek to DIVIDE YOU FROM YOUR GOVERNMENT, so that British Aggressions may find less opposition... These men are devoted friends to the nation who set CHARLESTOWN in flames... who attempted to starve the people of Boston by a cruel PORT bill... They advocated the Boston Massacre... They thirst for the Blood of Republicans." (47)

A less violent statement, but one equally charged with American Revolutionary symbolism, was a Vermont delegate's defense of the Embargo in the House of Representatives. Declaring that Great Britain was willing to allow the United States only the trade which Britain herself saw fit to countenance, and that only on condition of paying a duty on all American exports in the form of British licensing fees, he asked:

"Is it possible that any man who professes himself an American could accede to this? The spirit of 1776, refusing to pay a duty of 2 per cent. on tea, would certainly not now yield that for which they then contended, and become again tributary to the British Government," (48)

Thus, as soon as a major foreign policy crisis once more confronted the United States, every major theme of the 1790's reappeared with undimmed vigor in the vocabulary of American politics. It was indeed the 1790's revisited, and on the surface at least, it might appear that the complex political shifts of the interlude years had been but pastimes for temporary idleness, now reduced to sudden irrelevancy by the

reactivation of an old conflict carrying an infinitely greater emotional charge.

Reactivation, however, is not repetition; and to remark that the conflicts of 1798 and 1808 displayed striking parallels is not to say that they were identical. A scene once viewed and later revisited is subtly changed in our eyes by the fact of earlier viewing, and in neither politics nor life can one step twice into the same river. 1808, we find, differed from 1798 because it had been preceded by 1798, and the development of the "second round" was significantly influenced by the historical outcome of the first.

Indeed, we have already seen that the 1790's themselves had not really been the "first round," for the political battle of those years had itself been a reactivation of yet an earlier conflict: the American War of Independence. The crises of the 1790's had reactivated the entire complex of conflicting predispositions vis-à-vis England and France which the Revolutionary period had established in the American national memory. Dormant for a decade, these symbols had come again to life when the outbreak of the Anglo-French war had required Americans to respond to the foreign policy problems with which the European struggle confronted them. The terms of discourse and the ideologies to which this domestic clash of opinions gave rise ended by establishing a firm issue-linkage between foreign policy and domestic politics in the evolving vocabulary of American political

debate. In the interlude years, the relaxation of pressure from the international arena allowed this linkage to become inactive in its own turn, and as it did, the terms of discourse in domestic affairs shifted pronouncedly. But even while dormant, it retained its immense potential to trigger the reopening of a whole array of domestic conflicts, should a renewal of Anglo-French hostilities bring a return of the foreign policy problems which had forged the linkage in the first place. This "trigger-effect" was one legacy of the conflict of the 1790's.

There was another one even more crucial, however: the institutionalization of the cleavages of the 1790's in the form of structured parties constituting instruments of organized political activity; equipped with fully formulated political ideologies; and commanding both intangible resources in the form of strong emotional loyalties and concrete resources in the form of the ability to bestow material rewards. This was a factor which had not been present at the outset of the 1790's. It had instead been created by the conflict of those years, and it now established an altered set of parameters within which the terms of the newly re-activated conflict were delimited. The political struggle of the years after 1807, consequently, developed in a manner significantly different from the one which it otherwise paralleled in so many respects.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 10

- (1) Fee, op.cit., p. 144.
- (2) Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 49, 77, 89-95.
- (3) Robinson, op.cit., pp. 49-50.
- (4) Whitney, op.cit., pp. 18-19, 22-28, 79-84.
- (5) Ibid., p. 34.
- (6) Ibid., pp. 84-85.
- (7) Bernhard, op.cit., pp. 335-338. The Pennsylvania Federalists echoed the same argument. Higginbotham, op.cit., p.106.
- (8) March 1805, Ford (ed.) Works, X. 127-135.
- (9) Fifth Annual Message to Congress, 3 December 1805, ibid., X, 187-191.
- (10) Bradford Perkins, Prologue to War: England and the United States, 1805-1812. (Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press; 1963) p. 5, 21, 77.
- (11) Perkins, First Rapprochement, p. 178.
- (12) Between 1793 and 1801, the value of United States exports nearly quintupled, and this expansion was primarily a result of the rapid development of the reexport trade. Domestic exports doubled between 1790 and 1807, but reexports in the same period grew from \$300,000 to \$59,643,558. North, op.cit., p. 25. See also Walter Wilson Jennings, The American Embargo, 1807-1809 (University of Iowa Studies in the Social Sciences, Vol. 8, No. 1; 1921) p. 10.
- (13) Perkins, First Rapprochement, pp. 62-65, 156.
- (14) Agar, op.cit., pp. 149-150.

- (15) Adams, History, V, 152.
- (16) North, op.cit., pp. 56-57.
- (17) Bowers, op.cit., pp. 347-348.
- (18) Perkins, First Rapprochement, p. 180.
- (19) Ibid., loc.cit.
- (20) Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 107; Bowers, op.cit.
pp. 345-346.
- (21) Ibid., p. 141; Bowers, op.cit., pp.427-428.
- (22) To James Bowdoin (United States Minister to Spain)
Ford (ed.) Works, X, 454.
- (23) Perkins, Prologue to War, pp. 142-143.
- (24) Fee, op.cit., pp. 147-148.
- (25) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entry for 11 July 1807, p. 216.
Fee notes the same reaction in New Jersey. Op.cit., p. 148.
- (26) To Thomas Cooper, 9 July 1807, Ford, (ed.) Works, X, 451.
- (27) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp.291-292.
- (28) Louis Martin Sears, Jefferson and the Embargo (Durham,
North Carolina: Duke University Press; 1927) pp. 47-48;
Risjord, op.cit., p. 52; Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 150.
- (29) To Tench Coxe, 1 May 1794, Koch & Peden (eds.) Writings,
pp. 528-529.
- (30) To Dr. George Logan, 21 March 1801, Ford (ed.) Works, IX, 220.
- (31) 1 September 1804, ibid., X, 100.
- (32) Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 144; Higginbotham, op.cit.,
p. 136.

(33) See Adams, Gallatin, p. 368, where Adams concludes that despite its severe failings as a coercive measure against England and France, the Embargo "was in fact the only policy upon which a fair degree of unanimity in the party was attainable, or which their political education had prescribed."

(34) Adams, History, IV, 166-174; Agar, op.cit., p. 151.

(35) Fischer, op.cit., p. 84. The Pennsylvania Federalists thought they could at long last reconquer the state government on the strength of the Embargo's unpopularity. Higginbotham, op.cit. p. 166.

(36) Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 158.

(37) Ibid., p. 172.

(38) Ibid., p. 157; Jennings, op.cit., p. 43; Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 163-166; Sears, op.cit., p. 118.

(39) Hartford Connecticut Courant, 6 January 1808.

(40) Massachusetts Spy or Worcester Gazette, 21 September 1808.

(41) Josiah Quincy in the House of Representatives, 28 November 1808, in Jennings, op.cit., p. 63.

(42) Ibid., loc.cit.

(43) New York Republican Crisis, quoted in Boston Reperetory, 31 May 1808. Unfortunately for themselves, the Federalists could not press this argument as strongly in 1808 as they had been able to do ten years earlier. The atmosphere was certainly propitious for such appeals to national pride as that which now appeared in Jackson's Political Register: "How long, Americans, will you suffer this? How long shall

your country be debased and degraded in the eyes of Europe -- the very name of America be a term of reproach?" (Quoted in Boston Reperetory, 3 June 1808). The last time the Federalists had used such appeals, the war in the offing had been a war against France, to which they had had no objections. If such appeals should strike fire in 1808, however, the result would be a war against Great Britain -- and their own English sympathies made that possibility appear highly undesirable. Their own predilections, therefore, hamstrung their ability to make effective use of what could have been a very powerful slogan.

(44) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 292.

(45) Ibid., loc.cit.

(46) Washington Monitor, quoted in Northampton Republican Spy, 20 July 1808.

(47) Massachusetts Republican broadside of 1808, in Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 293-294. Pp. 293-297 are filled with examples of such appeals, all couched in terms heavily charged with the symbols of the American Revolution. See also Fox, op.cit., pp. 103-107 for the Republicans' insistent use of the charge of Toryism in New York State.

(48) James Fish, in April of 1808. M.M. Miller, Great Debates, p. 137.

CHAPTER 11: Reactivation in Virginia - Randolph
and the Presidential Candidacy of James Monroe

Until 1806, the Quid schism in Virginia had drawn its strength from issues quite unrelated to foreign policy. Virginia Quiddism had instead been a response to specifically domestic issues, all related as we have seen to the dynamic socioeconomic expansion of the Union at large. The renewed saliency of foreign policy after 1806, however, magnified the Virginia Republican Party's internal strains. Insofar as it brought John Randolph himself to the point of open rupture with the Administration, it intensified the trend towards party division; in its impact upon Randolph's ability to draw others with him into opposition, however, it counteracted that tendency.

The deteriorating international situation in 1806 only added fuel to Randolph's personal attacks upon the Administration. The Randolph Quids - and especially Randolph himself -- were the visible symptoms of the Republican Party's internal discontinuities, economic, ideological and sectional, and the nature of the crisis as it now unfolded might have been specifically designed to exacerbate every one of these strains. The conflict with Britain concerned American shipping interests - and Randolph had never had much love for men of commerce. The crisis' economic impact fell hardest on the maritime interests of the northern seaboard -- and Randolph had even less concern for the prosperity of New England and New York. Finally, the situation threatened to result in a war -- and in Randolph's eyes, to ask the agricultural South to ruin itself in a war

to save the commercial interests of the North was to add insult to injury.

Randolph's reaction was a sweeping repudiation of the Administration's whole approach to the crisis and it ended by carrying him beyond opposition into overt rupture. The arguments by which he justified his attack were drawn directly from the conflict of the 1790's: the moral supremacy of agriculture, the moral turpitude of offensive war, and a ringing assertion (though fascinatingly transmogrified) that the safety of republican institutions in America hinged upon the outcome of the conflict in Europe. What we find beneath the elaborate rhetoric, however, is less the great "principles of '98" than a violent sectional hostility to the North and everything it stood for. Thus, it appeared that the first impact of the renewed foreign policy crisis was to imbue with fresh poignancy the sense of declining status within the Union which, we have argued, lay at the roots of Virginia Quiddism. This discovery enables us to understand not only the furious resentment which drove Randolph into his ill-judged rupture with his own party, but also the anxieties which contributed to James Monroe's being put forth as a rival to James Madison in the presidential election of 1808.

The occasion for Randolph's breach with his Party came in the House of Representatives early in 1806. Congress had just begun the long struggle to formulate some policy response to England's heightening pressure on American shipping. The

House debate turned on the relative merits of two resolutions then under consideration. One, called the Gregg Resolution, proposed a total ban upon all imports grown or manufactured in Great Britain. The other, known as the Nicholson Resolution, proposed a selective ban barring only those English goods which the United States itself could produce or could obtain elsewhere. The Nicholson Resolution had the Administration's backing, because it would cut less deeply into customs receipts and so weigh less heavily on the Treasury.(1)

Randolph chose to support neither. Instead, he delivered a long speech in the House on 5 March 1806 attacking the policy of commercial restrictions in its entirety, and the implication of his whole tirade was that if it were not for the growing ascendancy of the urban Republicans of the North within the Republican Party, the United States would not now be confronting a crisis at all.

The crux of the issue, Randolph began, was that Congress appeared ready to risk provoking England into a war for the sake of the American carrying trade -- and to do so, moreover, for the sake of that trade's most spurious sector: the re-export trade. Did the difficulty concern "the fair, the honest, and the useful trade that is engaged in carrying our own productions to foreign markets, and bringing back their products in exchange?" he asked. Not at all. Congress was thinking of bearding the British lion for the sake of that "carrying trade which covers enemy's property" by bringing foreign produce

from the West Indies to the American mainland and thence to the European Continent.(2)

Having thus established to his own satisfaction the illicit and factitious nature of the re-export trade -- which, it will be remembered, constituted the chief economic interest of a sizeable portion of his own Party -- Randolph then delivered a ringing assertion of the primacy of agriculture, couched in terms which were heavy with resentment towards cities and all the commercial pursuits they stood for:

"... if this great agricultural nation is to be governed by Salem and Boston, New York and Philadelphia, and Baltimore and Norfolk and Charleston, let gentlemen come out and say so... I, for one, will not mortgage my property and my liberty... for this mushroom, this fungus of war -- for a trade which, as soon as the nations of Europe are at peace, will no longer exist -- it is for this that the spirit of avaricious traffic would plunge us into war."(3)

Randolph then proceeded to attack such a war on two additional grounds. First of all, it was unconstitutional; it would be an offensive war, and the Constitution was conceived for defense alone.(4) Secondly, it was immoral; in 1798, the Republicans had opposed a French war because it would swell the power and patronage of the Executive, raise taxes, standing armies and navies -- why should they forsake those principles now?(5) But the true basis of Randolph's fury was revealed when he answered his own question. The Party, he declared, had forsaken its principles, abandoned the interests of the great agricultural majority, and gone whoring after the gods of commerce:

"... here the secret comes out. Britain is your rival in trade, and, governed as you are by counting-house politicians, you would sacrifice the paramount interests of your country to wound that rival. For Spain and France you are carriers, and from good customers every indignity is to be endured. Yes, sir, and when a question of great national magnitude presents itself to you,... those who now prate about national honor and spirit... pocket any insult,... consider it as a mere matter of debt and credit; a business of profit and loss, and nothing else."(6)

Randolph's hatred for men of commerce -- and especially northern men of commerce -- led him down some strange pathways. In his effort to demolish any argument which might justify risking a war to protect those hated commercial interests, Randolph ended up defending Great Britain's actions in terms which sounded strange indeed in the mouth of an illustrious Republican. Great Britain, he declared, "occupies the place of France in 1793. She is the sole bulwark of the human race against universal dominion."(7) Everything she did, her depredations on American shipping and her impressments of American seamen alike, was justified by the fact that she was locked in a struggle for survival.(8) This was an argument which sounded curiously like a Federalist defense of the Jay Treaty in 1795, but the purely instrumental nature of the argument emerges from the words which followed immediately upon the passage just quoted:

"... no thanks to her for it. In protecting her own existence she insures theirs [the human race's]. I care not who stands in this situation, whether England or Bonaparte. I practice the doctrines now that I professed in 1798."(9)

Randolph was still an Anglophobe at heart -- he had

merely added Bonaparte's France to his gallery of phobias: "... with all my abhorrence of the British Government," he declared, "I should not hesitate between Westminster Hall and a Middlesex jury, on the one hand, and the wood of Vincennes and a file of grenadiers on the other." (10) This statement created something of a sensation among the Republicans in his audience, for the association of "republicanism" with France was too fresh in most minds for them to grasp the fact that Randolph had by no means turned into an Anglophile. (11) He was merely so infuriated by the growing ascendancy within his Party of the urban, commercial Republicans of the North that he was willing to use any stick to beat them with. But if his fellow-Republicans missed the real nature of Randolph's sense of grievance, they decidedly did not miss his scathing indictment of the Gregg Resolutions as the measures of "an invisible, inscrutable, unconstitutional cabinet, without responsibility, unknown to the Constitution. I speak of back-stairs' influence," (12) in other words, the Jefferson Administration itself.

Randolph, finally, had gone too far. "Mr. Randolph has passed the rubicon," noted William Plumer, who had come down from the Senate to watch the debate; "neither the President or Secretary of State can after this be on terms with him. He has set them and their measures at defiance." (13) His tirade, in fact, had proven counterproductive for it had "bro't some members in favor of the measure, [i.e., the

Gregg, rather than the more moderate Nicholson Resolution] who, I beleive, [sic] would otherwise been opposed to it... They now say if it does not pass Mr. Randolph will obtain a triumph over the Administration." (14) Actually, it was the Administration-supported Nicholson Resolution which passed the House on 17 March 1806, and the vote showed how self-damaging Randolph's intemperance had proven. He was joined in opposition by only eight other Republicans; the bulk of the negative votes came from the Federalists. (15)

By his own actions, in fact, Randolph had managed to alienate the majority of his own following. He did not, of course, subside into silence -- no one could ever expect that of John Randolph. He continued to be a thorn in the Administration's side right down to the War of 1812. His following, however, was much altered. In his continuing attacks upon Jeffersonian foreign policy, his chief cohorts were not Republicans but Federalists. (16) In April of 1806, Varnum reported to Plumer that the Federalists had taken to voting with Randolph in the House, and that apart from the Federalists, only twenty members backed the Virginia schismatic. (17) The same pattern emerged from the final vote on the Embargo in December of 1807. There were 82 ayes to 44 nays. (18) Randolph, after an overnight reversal from support to opposition, voted nay. (19) Of the forty-three Congressmen who joined him, the bulk were Federalists, who voted against the Embargo en bloc. (20) In 1809, the Federalists and the Randolph-ites

again joined in Congress to oppose defense measures and the Non-intercourse Act.(21)

By contrast, Randolph's Republican following shrank steadily as his attacks upon the Administration increased. When he broke with the Administration in 1806, for example, the Richmond Junto, which to all intents and purposes ruled the Virginia Republican Party, refused to go along.(22) In January of 1807, the Virginia House of Delegates passed by a large majority a resolution approving the Administration's foreign policy -- and it was well understood that this resolution was deliberately intended to rebuke Randolph.(23) By 1808, Randolph had even lost the support of several of his own closest associates. Nathaniel Macon, who regarded himself as an "old school" Republican, nevertheless refused to join Randolph's attempt to thwart Madison's candidacy by making Monroe the next President. John Taylor of Caroline, as great a Republican purist as ever Randolph himself had been, came to suspect that "party enmity" instead of an honest difference of opinion, inspired Randolph and the Quids, a suspicion with which Wilson Cary Nicholas heartily agreed.(24)

Randolph, in fact, had managed to mobilize against himself nearly every political imperative extant in the Party of his day. We have already discussed at length the damage he dealt himself by offending Virginia's sense of personal loyalty to Jefferson.(25) Beyond this, however, Randolph's Republican contemporaries cited other reasons for deploring his behavior. These are enlightening, for they did not exist and could not

have existed until they had been created by the preceding conflict of the 1790's.

First of all, Randolph was condemned by Administration and conservative Republicans alike for endangering party unity. His schism, indeed, actually embarrassed most southern conservatives because with factionalism already rife in New York and Pennsylvania, Randolph's persistent rebellion in Virginia cast suspicion on all critics of the Administration, and placed a premium on party regularity. (26) A sanction based upon the imperative of party unity could only have emerged when the phenomenon of the party itself had come into existence. In 1796, for example, when the House Republicans had caucused to discuss tactics in the coming floor fight over the Jay Treaty, no such norm had been available to enforce unity of action, and its absence contributed importantly to the Republicans' ensuing defeat. (27)

Secondly, by endangering party unity, Randolph was seen to be increasing the peril of a Federalist return to power. (28) The nature of this rebuke reveals the interesting shift which the concept of Republican Party group-consciousness was now undergoing. In the elections of 1808, the Federalists had used the Embargo issue to score some disturbing successes in several states. In Virginia, they managed a major resurgence to return a large Federalist minority to the state Assembly. (29) In New York, they won several new counties in 1808 and went on the next year to score their first statewide victory since

1799.⁽³⁰⁾ In Massachusetts, they recaptured the General Court in 1808 and the governorship in 1809.⁽³¹⁾ In Pennsylvania, the signs of a Federalist revival were beginning to be clear enough even in 1806 to penetrate the thick fog of Republican factionalism and cause the Party's splintered ranks to begin drawing together.⁽³²⁾

The renewed foreign policy crisis, in fact, had operated nearly unassisted to give the Federalist Party a new lease on life, and as the Federalist threat reacquired that reality it had not had since 1801, the boundaries of Republican group-consciousness were redefined in the terms of the 1790's. Intraparty quarrels over the Party's "true principles" were submerged. Internal factional enmities were suddenly overshadowed by the reemergence of a greater threat. Once more, "Republicans" united against "Federalists" and the party boundaries of 1800 became visible again. In the next chapter, we shall see this process at work in New York. Pennsylvania is another splendid example. There as elsewhere, the Federalists pounced on the Embargo issue and concentrated their entire effort on attacking the Administration's foreign policy. Since about 1804, the conservative Republicans (or Quids) and the Federalists had developed a very promising degree of cooperation in matters of state concern which might possibly have grown into a formal alliance. So salient had the foreign policy issue now become, however, that the Federalists' new onslaught at the national level forced the Pennsylvania Republicans, conservative and radical alike, to reunite in the

Administration's support. In the elections of October, 1808, a clearcut Republican-Federalist cleavage reemerged for the first time in several years.⁽³³⁾ "Republican unity reappeared under the stimulus of a revived Federalism campaigning on national issues. Internal divisions were suppressed... The stresses of the campaign destroyed the Constitutional Republicans as a third party... The election was fought squarely on the issues of the embargo and the policies of Jefferson."⁽³⁴⁾ Republican party cohesion might still be tenuous in periods of calm, but the 1790's had evidently forged an in-group perspective sufficiently tenacious to reemerge in force when the hegemony of the Party itself was once more clearly threatened.

These, then, were the influences which worked to counteract Randolph's overt schism after 1806: loyalty to Jefferson, the new imperative of party unity, and the renewed group-consciousness of the Republican Party. It is now time to explore the interplay of these and other influences in the presidential candidacy of James Monroe in 1808.

To some extent, Monroe's candidacy was the result of the same feelings of sectional jealousy which had motivated Randolph's defiance of his party. As Henry Adams observed, "Madison's candidacy made a counter-movement necessary for those Virginians who would not be dragged at the heels of the Northern democracy."⁽³⁵⁾ The basis of Monroe's backing, however, was a more complex matter than mere sectional anxiety. Several of his most important supporters, in fact, had now become Randolph's opponents. They had their own reasons for

backing Monroe against Madison, and the contrast between theirs and Randolph's is often striking. Upon analysis, indeed, we discover two entirely different political outlooks to be involved in Monroe's candidacy, and their incompatibility helps to explain why Monroe ran so badly in Virginia and failed to make any showing elsewhere at all.

Monroe's candidacy itself required a good deal of public justification, for by its very existence it conflicted with two of the Party's strongest imperatives of the moment. Madison was known to be Jefferson's personal choice as his successor, and he benefited therefore from the transfer of personal allegiance from the President to his heir-designate. Madison was also the nominee of the Republican Congressional caucus, and although the nomination had been far from unanimous,⁽³⁶⁾ it gained authority, once made, from the Republicans' newly-strengthened impulse to maintain party cohesion. The arguments variously used by Monroe's supporters to justify the violation of these two imperatives are revealing.

For that group headed by Randolph and William Branch Giles, Madison was no more than a Federalist in disguise. A Republican chieftain he might be, but his long association with men who wanted a stronger government -- notably the Northern democrats -- rendered him suspect in their eyes.⁽³⁷⁾ To this, Randolph added to Madison's sins that of being a "Yazoo man," i.e., an advocate of the compromise settlement for that festering issue still blocked in Congress by

Randolph's obdurate opposition.(38) He further implied that Jefferson had had ulterior motives in refusing to submit the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty to the Senate in 1807. The text of the Treaty was as yet unpublished, and its highly disadvantageous nature was therefore not known.(39) Randolph implied that it had constituted in fact a satisfactory accommodation with England, and that Jefferson had suppressed it only out of the fear that it would bring Monroe so much recognition as to make him a strong rival to Madison for the Republican Party's presidential nomination.(40)

The matter of the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty helps to illuminate the other aspect of Monroe's backing. If conservatives such as Randolph hated Madison because they thought him the advocate of too strong a government, others feared that he was too indecisive a personality to conduct a strong foreign policy. Much of Monroe's Virginia backing thus came from those who thought he would make a stronger president than Madison.(41)

This was a feeling which obviously had little in common with Randolph's motives in supporting Monroe. The advocacy of a strong foreign policy, indeed, had always been a prime tenet of the Federalists. But in 1808, it led several members of the Richmond Junto to back Monroe until the fall of the year when the text of his treaty and his correspondence with Madison during the negotiations were published. The Treaty was then revealed to be glaringly disadvantageous to the United States; the terms attached by the British to its

implementation were found to be altogether insulting; and Madison's correspondence showed him to be a far more skilled diplomat than Monroe.⁽⁴²⁾ As a result, several of Monroe's former backers in the Junto shifted their support to Madison.⁽⁴³⁾

Monroe also had the backing of a portion of the Virginia Federalists, acting on the principle that any increase in Republican disunity was a gain for Federalism.⁽⁴⁴⁾ This, however, only added to the disjointed nature of the Monroe forces. The pro-Madison and pro-Monroe factions among the Republicans might be fighting between themselves, but both continued to denounce Federalism with unabated vigor. The Federalists represented only 10% of the legislature to begin with, and even their minority status apparently could not enforce unity among themselves. They ended by holding two separate party meetings: one endorsed Monroe; the other endorsed C.C.Pinckney.⁽⁴⁵⁾

Monroe's candidacy, therefore, was confronted by strong countervailing pressures from without, and weakened by seriously divergent political motivations from within. His backing thus proved in the event to be an odd assortment: a core of Randolphites hostile to Madison as a "semi-Federalist," those Republicans still unconvinced that Madison was tough-minded enough for the job, and a part of the Virginia Federalists.⁽⁴⁶⁾ This group of incompatibles fell far short of a winning coalition.

The same set of influences which operated to curtail his following worked also to hamstring Monroe's actual campaign.

It will be seen from the preceding paragraph that aside from the small cadre around Randolph and a sprinkling of Federalists, Monroe's backers themselves were neither anti-Jefferson nor anti-Republican. This statement applied even more strongly to the electorate at large. Monroe, therefore, could not run on a program of outright opposition to Jeffersonian policies, for he stood no hope at all of election if he did. Jefferson himself had already warned Monroe of this in 1806 when Randolph had first begun promoting Monroe for the presidency:

"In the present case, the public sentiment... is, without a single exception, in firm adherence to the administration... the ground of opposition to the administration is not that on which it would be advantageous to you to be planted. The great body of your friends are among the firmest adherents to the administration; and in their support of you, will suffer Mr. R [sic] to have no communications with them... it is unfortunate for you to be embarrassed with such a soi-disant friend. you must not commit yourself to him." (47)

By 1808, a number of others were telling Monroe the same thing. Alexander McRae wrote him that:

"You are in my opinion still gaining ground here; but a number of those who express themselves to be most warmly attached to you, declare, that they would in a moment, abandon you, 'if they could suppose you capable of countenancing the opposition made to the administration.'" (48)

Similarly, John Taylor wrote Monroe that "The opinion of all your friends whom I have seen is, that a difference with Mr. Jefferson will destroy your popularity... a multitude would desert you, if it was avowed that you would change, and Mr Madison adhere to, the system of his administration." (49)

Monroe thus faced a dilemma. If he were not to remain

a shadowy contender, he must take a stand openly opposing the Administration, yet any such open repudiation of Jefferson and his policies would doom the challenger's hopes from the outset. This difficulty was only compounded by the fact that Monroe himself was a lukewarm candidate. He appears to have viewed his own campaign as more an effort at self-vindication than a determined grasp at the presidency.⁽⁵⁰⁾ He had been deeply hurt by Jefferson's refusal to submit the Monroe-Pinkney Treaty to the Senate. "In rejecting the treaty it [the administration] had by implication censured me," he wrote.⁽⁵¹⁾ It was Monroe himself who, with Jefferson's consent, published the treaty correspondence in 1808 largely because he wanted it known that Jefferson had assured him that the Treaty's bad terms were probably the best that might have been expected under the circumstances. "I allowed the nomination to be made and persevered in, as a trial of my character," he wrote, "...and not in the expectation, or desire of being elected."⁽⁵²⁾

Nor was Monroe in basic sympathy with many of his supporters on the all-important issue of foreign policy, now that the renewed crisis abroad had once more aroused the American conflict between Anglophobes and Francophobes. Monroe had been one of France's most ardent champions in the mid-1790's -- indeed, it had been for this precise reason that the Federalists, with the utmost distaste, had appointed him United States Minister to France, for the known royalist sympathies of Gouverneur Morris, the previous Ambassador, had so ruffled French tempers by 1794 that it was deemed politic to send a

known Gallophile to replace him.⁽⁵³⁾ After 1806, England's increased pressure on the United States reactivated the Anglophobic memories of many Americans whose lives had been far less intimately involved than Monroe's with the most dramatic events in America's national history; Monroe, a leading protagonist in those events since Revolutionary days, could hardly be immune. "He evidently discovers strong prejudices against the English nation," noted Plumer in 1806.⁽⁵⁴⁾ The heartfelt Anglophilia of his Federalist supporters and the more calculated English sympathies of his Randolphite backers could hardly fail to jar upon him.

In the end, Monroe ran a poor second to Madison in Virginia, winning 3,408 votes to Madison's 14,665.⁽⁵⁵⁾ Outside Virginia, he received noticeable support only from Georgia.⁽⁵⁶⁾ In some ways, therefore, the revival of the earlier controversy deepened the divisions within the Virginia Republican Party. On balance, however, it operated to contain the intraparty schism by reviving as well the organizational imperatives, political norms, and in-group perspectives which were the historical legacy of the earlier conflict.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 11

- (1) Risjord, op.cit., pp. 54-55.
- (2) M.M. Miller, Great Debates, p. 116.
- (3) Ibid., p. 117.
- (4) Ibid., p. 118.
- (5) Ibid., p. 121.
- (6) Ibid., p. 121.
- (7) Ibid., loc.cit., italics added.
- (8) Ibid., p. 122; See also Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 5 March 1806, p. 443; Adams, Randolph, p. 178; Risjord, op.cit., p. 59.
- (9) M.M. Miller, Great Debates, p. 121.
- (10) Ibid., p. 126, italics added.
- (11) To do him credit, Randolph here was almost echoing the views of Thomas Jefferson himself, for the President had come far from his Francophilia of the 1790's. In 1802, he wrote the American Minister to France that "we stand, compleately [sic] corrected of the error, that either the government or the nation of France has any remains of friendship for us." (To Robert R. Livingston, 10 October 1802, Ford, (ed.) Works, IX, 396.) In 1810, he declared that "Bonaparte hates our government because it is a living libel on his." (To William Duane, 13 November 1810, in Koch, op.cit., p. 234.) The ascendancy of Napoleon in France, in fact, had introduced a new difficulty into the body of orthodox Jeffersonian doctrine as it had evolved by the end of the 1790's. From 1793 onwards, the Republicans had based their nationlist self-definition

very heavily upon a rejection of Britain. This, however, was rather too negative a basis to serve as the foundation of a positive American identity, and consequently, they had repeatedly invoked France as the positive counter-ideal to England. The entire self-image of American popular nationalism of the day, in fact, consisted in many respects of a rebellious but as yet uncertain declaration that America was not English, but the persistent ambivalence of that statement might be apparent in Nathaniel Ames' characterization of England as "that corrupt old whore of a stepmother that we rejected forever." (Warren, Jacobin & Junto, p. 236.) Until it should become a confident assertion that America was American, a counter-ideal was very necessary. Yet the rise of Napoleon in France could occasionally make England look a good deal less "tyrannical" by contrast than her former colony, now a young nation in search of a national identity of its own, might desire. France was no longer a Republic but a dictatorship whose rapacious nature became clearer every day, and Republicans were very likely plagued by feelings of ambivalence arising from the fact that by now they probably did prefer England to France from an ideological, although not from a nationalistic, point of view. Even as early as 1798, for example, the Pennsylvania Republican leader Alexander James Dallas said that although he once had admired France as "an object of delight and respect," her abandonment of the Revolution's high idealism in preference for a program of territorial expansion had brought him to regard her as an "object of disgust and dismay." (Walters,

op.cit., p. 87.) With his usual eye for anyone's sore spots, Randolph had hit upon one of his own Party's tender points here.

(12) M. M. Miller, Great Debates, p. 119.

(13) Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 5 March 1806, p. 443.

(14) Ibid., entry for 8 March 1806, p. 446.

(15) Risjord, op.cit., p. 60.

(16) Jefferson had already predicted as much in 1806: "Upon all trying questions, exclusive of the Federalists, the minority of Republicans voting with him has been from 4. to 6. or 8., against from 90, to 100; and altho' [sic] he yet treats the Federalists with ineffable contempt, yet, having declared eternal opposition to this administration; & consequently associated with them, in his votes, he will... end with them." (To Monroe, 4 March 1806; Ford (ed.) Works, X,260.)

(17) Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 6 April 1806, p. 477.

(18) Jennings, op.cit., p. 40.

(19) On 18 December 1807, Randolph supported the Embargo as the only means of furthering the national interest; on 19 December 1807, he opposed it as partial, unconstitutional, and blatantly anti-British. This sort of characteristically erratic behavior damaged Randolph's standing yet further.

Adams, Randolph, pp. 224-225. See also Risjord, op.cit., p.97.

(20) Bowers, op.cit., p. 441.

- (21) Ambler, op.cit., p. 90.
- (22) Ammon, "The Richmond Junto..." p. 403.
- (23) Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 4 January 1807, p. 557.
- (24) Cunningham, "Who Were the Quids?" pp. 261-262.
- (25) See Chapter 7.
- (26) Risjord, op.cit., p. 6; Adams, History, III, 164.
- (27) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans..., 1789-1801, p. 82.
- (28) Harry Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808 in Virginia" William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 20, No. 1 (January 1963) p. 34.
- (29) Ambler, op.cit., p. 88.
- (30) Fox, op.cit., p. 102, & p. 109; J. Hammond, op.cit. I, 275-276; Jennings, op.cit., p. 131.
- (31) Goodman, op.cit., p. 19; Adams, History, V. 12.
- (32) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 166; Higginbotham, op.cit., p. 103.
- (33) Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 107-108, 119, 174, & 328.
- (34) Ibid., p. 176.
- (35) History, III, 121.
- (36) It was opposed not only by southern Republicans backing Monroe but by New York Republicans supporting George Clinton. See Chapter 12.
- (37) Agar, op.cit., pp. 161-162; Ammon, "Richmond Junto," p. 411. Virginia's old hostility towards all advocates of strong government brought some men into the Monroe camp who

were decidedly not Randolphites. John Taylor was one; despite the distaste he now felt for Randolph's conduct, his distaste for what he regarded as Madison's crypto-Federalist political principles was even greater. Cunningham, "Who Were the Quids?" p. 262.

(38) Adams, Randolph, p. 160.

(39) See Perkins, Prologue to War, pp. 114-137 for a good compressed account of the Treaty negotiations and terms.

(40) Adams, Randolph, pp. 210-211.

(41) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p.232. See also Plumer's characterization of Madison as talented but wanting in "nerve - timid and inefficient - in short, he is not a practical man - And that is a declaration that he is not qualified for the office." Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., entry for 16 March 1806. p. 455.

(42) Risjord, op.cit., pp. 92-93.

(43) Ammon, "Richmond Junto," pp. 403-404 & p. 404, Note 30.

(44) The Virginia state legislative caucus of 21 January 1808 endorsed Madison by a vote of 136-57, and 20 of the votes for Monroe came from the Federalists. Risjord, op.cit., p. 90.

(45) Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808," pp. 52-53.

(46) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p.232.

(47) To Monroe, 4 March 1806, Ford (ed.) Works, X, 261.

(48) 31 December 1807, in Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 233.

(49) 20 March 1808, ibid., loc.cit.

(50) Ibid., p. 234; Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808," p. 47.

(51) Monroe to Littleton W. Tazewell, 30 October 1808, Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 235.

(52) Undated memo, ibid., loc.cit..

(53) J. Miller, Federalist Era, p. 165; Kurtz, op.cit., p. 119.

In his entry of 16 March 1806, Plumer remarks that Monroe had been "too hotheaded in France at time of Revolution." Brown (ed.) William Plumer's Memorandum..., p. 455.

(54) Ibid., entry for 17 January 1806, p. 380.

(55) Ammon, "James Monroe and the Election of 1808," p. 53.

In addition, C.C.Pinckney received 760 votes.

(56) Risjord, op.cit., p. 88.

CHAPTER 12: Reactivation in New York -
The Clintonian Dilemma

In his Fifth Annual Message to Congress in the fall of 1805, Thomas Jefferson requested that the legislature consider defense measures to cope with the new onslaught of English harassments in American coastal waters.⁽¹⁾ Of these measures, the matter of harbor fortifications was of especial concern to New York, for the New York City harbor was nearly totally undefended at the time. As yet, however, the nation at large was not fully aroused over Britain's maritime outrages; the "Leander" incident which occurred soon thereafter, for example, did not elicit nearly so sweeping a reaction outside New York as did the "Chesapeake" incident a year later.⁽²⁾ Thus, when the Message was referred for consideration to the House Ways and Means Committee, the Committee Chairman, John Randolph, was able to hold it there until January of 1806, effectively blocking any House action until an aggrry Jacob Crowninshield demanded that the committee be discharged.⁽³⁾ On the day of that discharge, the famous Gregg Resolution was introduced. It included no provision for defense but at least it proposed some sort of action against the British -- but again, Randolph stubbornly opposed it. In February of 1807, Jefferson sent Congress his Special Message on Gunboats.⁽⁴⁾ To be sure, Jefferson's lumbering, unseaworthy gunboats were a fairly ridiculous weapon against the massed might of the Royal Navy, but at least they were something. No matter; Randolph fought the proposal tooth and nail, even though he

was as incensed as the rest of the nation by the "Chesapeake" incident in June.(5) His opposition displayed the glaring inconsistencies so typical of him; right after the "Chesapeake" incident, for example, he called for immediate retaliation, saying the United States ought to attack Canada and Jamaica if the British refused redress(6) -- but whenever the question was put, his argument was the same: the protection of commerce was no cause to tax southern pocketbooks.

This new point of division could only exacerbate the conflict already brewing between Virginia and New York over the leadership of the Republican Party. Many influential New York Republicans, hardly placated by the selection of George Clinton as Vice President in 1804, were increasingly displeased at the prospect of yet another Virginian President in 1808. Some thought it time that New York had its turn at the presidency; that would constitute but political recognition of the fact that New York was fast outstripping Virginia in wealth, population, and all the prerequisites of power.

This division between New York and Virginia became obvious to all when it came time for the Party to nominate its presidential candidate for 1808. The Party's Congressional caucus named James Madison, but it was something of a rump caucus that did so, for in addition to those Republicans backing Monroe, most of the New York Republicans boycotted the meeting.(7) They were not placated by the fact that the caucus had nominated their own man, George Clinton, for Vice President -- nor was Clinton himself, for he soon wrote

a friend in Albany that he had not been consulted as to the nomination and had neither refused nor consented to run.⁽⁸⁾ It seemed possible that a rival caucus would nominate Clinton for president, in which case he would be running for both President and Vice President on two rival Republican tickets. This could cause the Party serious difficulties in the coming campaign.⁽⁹⁾

George Clinton's advocates did not by any means represent the entire New York Republican Party. Indeed, it was nearly meaningless by now even to speak of a "Republican Party" in New York since as we have already seen, the politics of that state had become a multisided faction fight rather than a party struggle. By 1807, New York "Republicanism" had come to include Clintonians, Livingstonian-Lewisites, Clintonian Burrites and anti-Clintonian Burrites, and the confused politicking of the interlude years had even made it possible to include pro- and anti-Clintonian Federalists among "Republican" ranks, depending on whose "Republicanism" one chose to regard as orthodox -- Clintonian or Quid. The split over the Republican presidential nomination for 1808 added yet a new complication to this existing labyrinth of maneuver.

George Clinton's nephew, DeWitt -- the acknowledged leader of the New York Clintonian faction -- now began booming his uncle's presidential prospects against Madison.⁽¹⁰⁾ Revealingly enough, his first step to this end was to use the newspapers he controlled to begin a campaign against "Virginia influence."⁽¹¹⁾ Even more interestingly, George

Clinton's supporters' annoyance at the Congressional caucus' action in nominating their man for only the second spot on the ticket prompted them to begin a public attack on "King Caucus" nearly twenty years before that issue became a Jacksonian battle-cry. (12)

The mere fact that George Clinton's chief advocate was DeWitt Clinton would have made it likely that his Livingstonian-Lewisite enemies would throw their own support behind Madison, for their guiding principle in nearly all matters for some time now had been that anything DeWitt Clinton wanted was automatically something for them to oppose. This likelihood, however, was made certainty by the impact of the Embargo issue upon New York politics.

As they did nearly everywhere else in the Union, (13) the Federalists in New York immediately placed themselves in outright opposition to the Embargo. (14) At first glance, there appeared to be a good deal of political logic in such a stance for the Embargo's interdiction of all overseas commerce bore heavily on the highly export-oriented economy of New York. (15) The Federalists, therefore, were not the only ones to conclude that there was political mileage to be made from opposition to the measure; soon after it was enacted, DeWitt Clinton publicly expressed his disapproval, an action which put one of New York's leading Republicans in open opposition to the Republican Administration's most important policy. (16)

The apparent logic of this course, however, soon appeared

more than dubious in view of the sharp alteration in the American political atmosphere which the renewed foreign policy crisis had brought about. As it had in Pennsylvania and Virginia, the resumption of pressure from abroad had revived the old generic distinction between Federalists and Republicans. The old subjective associations of the 1790's sprang to life. The Embargo, declared the Federalists, only made obvious to all what they had known all along: the Administration was a cowardly, subservient tool of France.(17) "No Embargo -- No Foreign Influences," they cried; "Freedom of Navigation and Trade -- Liberty and Independence."(18) The Republicans retorted that the Federalists' opposition to the Embargo only demonstrated their blatant partiality to England, making obvious to all what the Republicans had known all along: all Federalists were Tories in disguise, and in this disguise at that.(19)

This had always been a highly effective charge in New York politics, and the Federalists had not detracted from its effectiveness by their own behavior. In the 1790's, they had repeatedly sided with England in disputes between France and Great Britain; and after 1805, when the conflict lay again between the United States and England, they had charged that the American government was more at fault than Great Britain because it so obviously favored France.(20) Their behavior in 1808 and 1809 was no less calculated to lend credibility to the charge of Toryism. Instead of confining themselves to opposing the Embargo and its successor,

the Nonintercourse Act of 1809, they persistently claimed that Great Britain had given no cause for complaint -- that France was the prime aggressor -- and that Great Britain was therefore right in all her actions.(21) A near-contemporary concluded that by so arguing, the Federalists destroyed one of their own finest opportunities:

"This, was a revival of the old contest of 1798, and of course, roused into action the democratic feeling which operated so intensely on the minds of men during that period. Nay, more, it was calling out the remnant of revolutionary feeling which then existed. Our mothers had taught us in our cradles that the British were our enemies. It was difficult for the most adroit politician to teach us a different and adverse lesson."(22)

Because the Federalists had now closed ranks to mount an all-out attack upon the Republican Administration, therefore, the New York Republicans found it necessary to close ranks in the Administration's defense. As a result, the old cleavage between Republicans and Federalists, so long obscured in the murky factionalism of the interlude years, reappeared, and Republicans once more became hostile to all Federalists, not merely to those unallied to their own particular faction. It was this reactivated cleavage which created the Clintonian dilemma, because it again made a liability of the Federalist support so often courted in the interlude years by Clintonians and Livingstonian-Lewisites alike.

If cooperation with the Federalists could now once more be regarded as unseemly per se, DeWitt Clinton was vulnerable to such charges. The Clintonian candidate for governor in 1807, Daniel Tompkins, owed his election in large part to

Federalist support, because the Federalists' disgust over the Livingstonian incumbent Morgan Lewis' failure to reward their support with appointments to office had caused many of them to desert to Tompkins. In early 1807, the Clintonians had welcomed these defections on the general principle that any enemy of the Livingstonians, even a Federalist, was a friend of theirs. By the end of the year, however, such an alliance of convenience could no longer survive the renewed antagonism which the Embargo issue had precipitated between Republicans and Federalists as a whole. That issue, indeed, had rapidly become so salient that it had become nearly as much of a touchstone of political division as the French Revolution had been fifteen years earlier. Just as with the earlier issue, a man's party label had come to be defined almost solely in terms of the position he took with reference to the Embargo:

"The principal and almost the sole topic of dispute between the two parties was the question as to the propriety and fitness of this measure, with which was connected a dispute whether the British orders in council were provoked by the French, or whether the French decrees were not in some degree excusable as a retaliatory measure to the English orders in council. The federalists advocated the first position, and the latter was contended for by the republicans."(23)

It was this reactivated cleavage which rendered untenable DeWitt Clinton's earlier position on the Embargo issue. DeWitt Clinton was certainly not about to allow himself to be branded as a Federalist, for DeWitt Clinton was a deeply ambitious man and since 1801, a Federalist label had constituted a major block to any man's hopes of political advancement in New York.

The Federalists themselves had learned to their disgust that they might be assiduously courted as a swing-vote, but they were never rewarded with appointments to office. If DeWitt Clinton were now to maintain his own power position, therefore, it was necessary that he support the position of the Party which was that power's vehicle -- and that required him to support the Administration on the pivotal Embargo issue. The rest of his Party were already doing so. When the legislature met at the opening of 1808, Governor Tompkins himself came out in favor of the Embargo, calling it the safest and most efficient method of enforcing the United States' rights. The Assembly endorsed his stand by the overwhelming majority of 62-22.⁽²⁴⁾ That left little doubt as to DeWitt Clinton's choice; he immediately aligned himself publicly with the Governor.⁽²⁵⁾

Clinton's reversal preserved his standing as a Republican, but it immediately alienated his Federalist adherents, and this in turn injured his prospects of furthering his uncle's presidential campaign. The problem lay in the fact that George Clinton was generally understood to be the candidate of those groups who opposed the Administration's foreign policy.⁽²⁶⁾ Madison, of course, was recognized as the pro-Embargo candidate, and the overriding salience of this issue had impelled the Livingstonian-Lewisites and the anti-Clintonian Burrrites to unite behind both the Administration's foreign policy and its presidential candidate, Madison.⁽²⁷⁾ This, however, left the Clintonians isolated within the

Party. DeWitt Clinton could not hope to swing New York's electoral vote to Vice President Clinton unless he found allies outside the Party; but the only allies available to him were the Federalists, and to unite with them now would be to dash his prospects beyond all hope of recovery by incurring the stigma of having betrayed his Party at a time when it needed the loyalty of every one of its followers. DeWitt Clinton needed allies as badly as ever, but he could not afford Federalist allies any longer. (28)

Under pre-Embargo circumstances, he just might have put together a winning coalition. He could not, of course, look to ally with Monroe's backers; too many of them were too outspokenly anti-commercial to allow his own followers even to contemplate such an alliance, even if the Virginia Quids themselves had been at all interested in the idea -- which they were not. (29) But the New York Republicans, despite their internal feuds, might still possibly have been able to unite against "Virginia influence" had the Embargo not made it freshly imperative that they support the Administration; and the less obdurate among the New England Federalists, too weak to install an actual Federalist as President, might have been willing enough to replace a southerner with a New Yorker -- even a Republican New Yorker -- to add enough votes to Clinton's total to elect him. (30) Even as it was, a goodly portion of the Federalists stood ready throughout most of 1808 to ally with either Clinton or Monroe, and they put up their own candidate in the end only because the dissident

Republican contenders were unwilling to join forces among themselves. (31)

Even so, the pro-Madison forces found it rough going in New York. Clinton's candidacy split the state party deeply. Opposed to it stood the predictable combination of Livingstonians, Lewisites, and anti-Clintonian Burrites, but in addition to their habitual hostility to all measures Clintonian they invoked arguments which recall those already analyzed in connection with Monroe's candidacy. Failure to back Madison, they argued, would place the Republican Party's internal divisions on public display and thereby weaken it nationally. (32) Here again was the imperative of party unity, forged in the 1790's and now newly available to influence political action in the Embargo era. The altered political context produced by the renewed saliency of foreign policy, moreover, ended by deflecting even the drive to assert New York's dominance within the Party to the Madisonian cause, for the Clintonians' opponents argued further that a public split in New York Republican ranks would weaken the influence that New York Republicans could exert over Republicans from other states. (33) The state party's position had thus become curiously analogous to DeWitt Clinton's own: continued influence required continued allegiance. Yet when the legislature met to choose electors in November of 1808, the split proved unbridgeable. Although the legislature was "Republican" controlled, the New York "Republicans" could reach no agreement upon their choice for president. In the

end, they left the state's nineteen electors free to vote their own consciences -- and revealingly enough thirteen of them voted for Madison. (34) In the atmosphere of 1808, the support Clinton might have rallied in 1806 proved impossible even in his home state. The 1790's had wrought their work well.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 12

- (1) See Chapter 10.
- (2) Adams, History, III, 211.
- (3) Bowers, op.cit., pp. 331-332.
- (4) 10 February 1807, Ford (ed.) Works, X, 359-366.
- (5) Adams, Randolph, pp. 222-224; Risjord, op.cit., pp. 81-83.
- (6) Ibid., pp. 79-80.
- (7) Dr. Samuel Mitchill to Mrs. Mitchill, 25 January 1808, "Dr. Mitchill's Letters From Washington: 1801-1813." Harper's Magazine, Vo. 58 (December 1878-May 1879) p. 752; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 264.
- (8) 5 March 1808, J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 264.
- (9) Dr. Mitchill to Mrs. Mitchill, 1 April 1808, "Dr. Mitchill's Letters From Washington," p. 753.
- (10) Sears, op.cit., p. 200.
- (11) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 264; Spaulding, op.cit., p. 290. Risjord, op.cit., p. 86.
- (12) Spaulding, op.cit., p. 289; Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., pp. 115-121.
- (13) An exception was South Carolina, where the Federalists supported both the Embargo and the War of 1812, with the result that they were at length assimilated into the Republican Party. Phillipps, op.cit., p. 742.
- (14) Fox, op.cit., pp. 99-102; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 260.
- (15) J. Hammond, loc. cit.; Sears, op.cit., p. 197.
- (16) Bobbé, op.cit., p. 127; Fox, op.cit., p. 103; Note 5; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 260.

(17) Fox, op.cit., p. 101.

(18) New York Evening Post, quoted in Albany Gazette, 25 April 1808. Throughout the Embargo's duration, the Evening Post harped continuously on the theme that the troubles the Embargo caused were due to French influence. Virginia D. Harrington, "New York and the Embargo of 1807." Proceedings of the New York State Historical Association, Vol. 25 (1927) p. 149.

(19) Fox, op.cit., pp. 106-107.

(20) J. Hammond, op.cit., I. 223.

(21) Ibid., I. 274-275.

(22) Ibid., I, 275, Italics added. See also Fox, op.cit., p. 107, where he points out the freshness and bitterness of revolutionary memories in New York at this time.

(23) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 261.

(24) Ibid., loc.cit.

(25) Ibid., I, 263; Spaulding, op.cit., p. 287; Kass, op.cit., p. 20.

(26) Spaulding, op.cit., p. 287 & 291. George Clinton had begun to diverge from Jefferson in this area back in 1807. Much outraged by the "Chesapeake" incident, he had wanted the Administration to respond by requesting a program of strong war-preparations from Congress. When Jefferson would ask no more than his rather ludicrous fleet of gunboats, Clinton was much disgusted. In private, at least, he criticized the Embargo as well as being inadequate and indecisive. Ibid., p. 286.

(27) Ibid., p. 293; Cunningham, "Who Were the Quids?" p. 259; J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 266-267.

(28) It is interesting in this connection to note what happened to Clinton's following in 1812 when in a similar dilemma, he made a different choice. George Clinton was now dead, and DeWitt was promoting his own presidential prospects against Madison. In this project, he had the support of a portion of the New York Federalists, again acting on the principle that anyone opposed to Madison was worth their support. In the November elections, the Federalists had won control of the Assembly, which allowed them to reconquer the Council of Appointment. Once in control, they renominated Clinton Mayor of New York City. This time, Clinton openly accepted the Federalists' backing -- and the result was that he was deserted by the pro-Madisonian Republicans. Fox, op.cit., pp. 171-174.

(29) Spaulding, op.cit., p. 292; Risjord, op.cit., p. 86.

(30) George Cabot and Harrison Gray Otis were enthusiastic advocates of this strategy. Spaulding, op.cit., p. 292.

(31) Adams, History, IV, 284; Spaulding, op.cit., pp.292-293; Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 162-163.

(32) J. Hammond, op.cit., I, 268.

(33) Ibid., loc.cit.

(34) Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p.121; Spaulding, op.cit., p. 293; J. Hammond, op.cit., I.268.

CHAPTER 13: Reactivation in Massachusetts -
A Qualified Federalist Recovery

The Embargo issue was tailor-made to the needs of Massachusetts Federalism in 1808. In an economy as heavily weighted as New England's towards seaborne commerce, the Embargo's economic impact went deeper than anywhere else in the Union. Prosperous merchants were not the only ones to feel its full brunt; the Embargo also struck at the livelihood of many humbler citizens by crippling the shipbuilding industry, and by throwing thousands of sailors out of work. The Embargo, moreover, was more than a pocketbook issue. As a policy bearing the very personal stamp of a Virginia President, it was excellently fitted to reactivate New England's old and powerful sectional consciousness. Officially neutral but tacitly anti-British, it was bound to resonate strongly with New England's historical sense of kinship with Great Britain and enmity towards France. Little wonder the Federalists thought they saw the makings of victory in this issue; from 1808 until the outbreak of the War of 1812, they made the policy of warfare by commercial restrictions their central and almost sole focus of attack.

Nor did immediate results appear to indicate that they were mistaken. The Embargo's economic effect on New England was sudden and drastic;(1) its political impact followed suit. The Embargo put a sudden end to the tepid issue-content of New England politics in the interlude years, and with it, to the steady Republican advance of that period. Between

1801 and 1808, the biggest issues in New England state politics had been strikingly non-national -- a religious liberty bill in Massachusetts, together with a law quieting land titles in Maine; another religious liberty bill in Vermont; improvement of the New Hampshire militia and the possibility of revisions in the state constitution; extension of the suffrage, constitutional reform, and a religious liberty bill in Connecticut.⁽²⁾ The struggle was closest in Massachusetts and New Hampshire, but even in the latter state, Governor Langdon could remark in his message to the legislature in June of 1806 that political feelings were rapidly subsiding.⁽³⁾

The Embargo changed all that. It immediately became the leading issue in every campaign of 1808, and on the strength of it, the Federalists made some striking gains. They reconquered the Massachusetts legislature and narrowly missed the governorship, broke the Republicans' solid ascendancy in Rhode Island, reversed the promising Republican gains in stubbornly Federalist Connecticut, and in Vermont -- until now the Republican firebrand among the New England states -- they won both the governorship and the upper house of the state legislature.⁽⁴⁾ Their gains were as important at the national level as well. In the congressional elections of 1808, Connecticut, Rhode Island and New Hampshire returned Federalist delegations; Vermont sent two Republicans and two Federalists; Massachusetts returned only seven Republicans as against eleven the previous year. In the

presidential election, the only New England state to vote for Madison was Vermont.(5)

These victories however, were more precarious than they appeared. Their majorities both in 1808 and after were narrow -- often only a few hundred votes.(6) Their conquest of the Massachusetts legislature in 1808 was partly due to the fact that many safely Republican towns, wanting to save on the cost of delegates' salaries, did not send as many representatives to the General Court as they were entitled to do; it was also partly due to the fact that the election districts were gerrymandered in such a way as to overrepresent the Federalists.(7) Nathaniel Ames thought the resurgence of "Devilism" did not come "from alteration of public sentiment but from negligence of Repub's [sic] and great exertion of Federalists. Some have owned or boasted of the sums they paid to runners over the State to delude Republicans into security and prompt Federals to exertion to send utmost number of Representatives."(8) And when the Federalists won the governorship in 1809, they did so by only 2% of the vote.(9) In short, if the Embargo did indeed "resuscitate Massachusetts Federalism,"(10) the latter awoke to a world very different from the one in which it had flourished earlier. Neither economically nor socially, religiously nor institutionally was Massachusetts in 1808 quite what it had been ten years earlier. Federalism's renewed vigor was sapped from several directions.

Massachusetts' economy was no longer a small, self-

contained unit tied almost exclusively to Great Britain and her possessions. The explosive expansion of the American carrying and reexport trade in the 1790's had created ties to France, the Continent, the French West Indies and even China as well. Great Britain remained the United States' chief source of imports, but the Continent had now become a far more important market than England for American exports.⁽¹¹⁾ New England, and Massachusetts in particular, had come to dominate the United States coastal trade, having become the chief carrier for the produce of both the Middle States and the South.⁽¹²⁾ At the same time, the northeast had become greatly dependent upon the Middle States for its own food supplies.⁽¹³⁾

The corollary to this economic expansion was a qualitative shift in the outlook of a growing segment of the Massachusetts business community. It was less and less possible to expect the possession of riches to imply adherence to the cluster of other attitudes which had accompanied their possession in the preceding generation. The moralistic rigor of old Congregationalism ran counter to the new businessman's increasingly individualistic, *laissez faire* outlook. The old imperative of the individual's moral responsibility to the community conflicted with the new drive to maximize profits. The older generations' exclusive sense of class

frustrated the aspiration of newly rich men hungering for social recognition and political power. Finally, the expansion of the New England economy made the existence of a national Union profitable and consequently attractive, a fact which was soon to be important in countering the rise of anti-national sectional consciousness. The strikingly cautious nature of the Hartford Convention, for example, contrasted sharply with some of the inflammatory secessionist rhetoric which had characterized the separatist movement; and the Convention's moderation was due in large part to the fact that even before the War of 1812, a great many New England businessmen had become clearly aware that their own prosperity depended on their access to the sales and investment opportunities only the national market could offer.(14)

This shift in outlook helps explain the seemingly incongruous fact that especially in its first year, the Embargo enjoyed considerable support among the urban, commercial interests of Massachusetts.(15) The conservative Federalists might harp upon the theme of "foreign influence," insisting that the Embargo was the product of "that cringing sycophancy which has marked the conduct of our national government toward the tyrant of Europe,"(16) namely Napoleon, and that it constituted "the most indubitable evidence... that their great study has been to involve this country in a war with Great Britain, and of course to form a coalition with France, regardless of consequences."(17) They might also stress the theme of sectional antagonism, insisting that the Southern

states were "Frenchified enemies to Commerce;"(18) that the "present leading men in the Southern States have beheld with jealousy your increasing prosperity, and feel neither respect for your pursuits nor sensibility for your sufferings... Politicians of yesterday, from the backwoods and mountains, vie with each other in the language of insult and defiance; and the men whom you delight to honor... are stigmatized as a corrupt and seditious party of the community;" and that "a perfect union... among the Eastern States" was necessary to prevent Massachusetts from being "in fact enslaved by sister States;" and that the Constitution must be amended to reduce slave representation.(19)

But both economic and psychological facts were against them. The ever-tightening net of British restrictions on American shipping after 1805 directly conflicted with the interests of those newer commercial interests in Massachusetts which were also its business community's most dynamic elements.(20) This economic conflict could only make these men the more receptive to the sort of Anglophobic nationalism the older Federalists found so distasteful. Jacob Crowninshield, for example, strongly supported both the Nonimportation Act of 1806 and the Embargo of 1807, but he did so for reasons very different from the orthodox Jeffersonian rationale. Crowninshield regarded both measures as preliminaries, not alternatives, to war,(21) and the reason was that he had come to view the Anglo-American conflict from a strongly nationalistic point of view. Britain, he concluded, was

less interested in starving France's Continental dominions than in crushing American trade. "As to England, she wants to reduce us to the situation of Colonies. She w^d confine us, if she could, to the carriage of our own native productions." (22)

We have already seen how this internal division within the wealthier classes in Massachusetts society combined with the other social and religious discontents abroad in New England to produce the Republican Party; but the most important implication of this development for the post-Embargo period was that these economic, social, and religious shifts in the internal balance of Massachusetts society had been institutionalized by 1807 in the form of a Republican Party organization characterized by a remarkable degree of centralization and a high calibre of leadership. (23) By 1807, this new addition to Massachusetts's political institutions had very nearly succeeded in accomplishing the "decision" which outside New England had been made in 1800. After 1807, it was to be vitally important in helping Massachusetts Republicanism to weather the storms of the Embargo era and the War of 1812.

It was able to do this largely because in the course of its advance, the Republican Party in New England had seized firmly upon all the most important issues of its day. Not only had it taken a decisive stance in favor of popular participation in politics, responsibility of elected representatives to their constituents, and in obdurate opposition to the social

and political pretensions of self-styled "aristocrats." (24) Even more important, the Republicans in the interlude years had taken a continuous and emphatic position in favor of Union and nationalism, (25) and in the post-Embargo years they emphasized this appeal even more, "identifying their party and policies with a larger sense of national purpose, with pride in the past and hopes for the future." (26) This identification was to stand the Party in good stead under the strains of the Embargo period, and later under the even heavier stresses of war.

As a result, when the Massachusetts Federalists in 1808 found themselves in possession of the splendidly salient issue of the Embargo, they also found that this was about the only issue supporting their resurgence. Their renewed vitality was no longer buttressed by those attitudinal clusters characteristic of the tightly homogeneous society of an earlier day, nor was their renewed political authority bolstered by an unchallenged structure of religious and social authority. In Montesquieu's terms, they found the manners of Massachusetts society much changed, and accordingly their new victory was founded not upon their old legitimacy but upon the shaky basis of irritated pocketbooks. "As the embargo is the foundation on which stands the present federal triumph, when that shall cease they will probably stand on nothing," remarked the American Mercury on 2 June 1809, and its assessment was reasonably accurate. Federalist gains coincided closely with the periods in which trade was most

severely impaired. Their control of the Massachusetts state government was broken anew in 1810 after the Embargo had been replaced by the Nonintercourse Act and trade had picked up again.⁽²⁷⁾ They were lifted to power once more when the United States declared war on England in 1812, but even in the periods of their greatest resurgence, their victory margins were narrow and they faced a steady, stubborn Republican resistance.

Republican in-group identification, in fact, had apparently taken such firm root by 1808 that it was capable at times of overriding very clearcut economic interest. The Embargo crippled the Massachusetts shipbuilding industry -- yet in 1808, the shipbuilders of Plymouth sent Jefferson a message supporting it.⁽²⁸⁾ It reduced the town of Marblehead to the point of actual starvation; (Dedham and other inland towns had to raise a food subscription for it in March of 1809); yet the people of Marblehead stubbornly supported the Embargo as "a law of wisdom," declared their refusal to become smugglers, and condemned "with the utmost abhorrence and indignation the conduct of a party among us who are continually endeavoring to excite the good people of this Commonwealth to a disobedience of the laws of the Union."⁽²⁹⁾ The Federalists held a big anti-Embargo rally in Boston's Faneuil Hall on 9 August 1808, and invited other towns to support their resolutions of censure. Many complied -- but just as many refused.⁽³⁰⁾

Massachusetts Republicans as a whole, in fact, supported

the Embargo with striking firmness throughout 1808; their support wavered only in 1809 when the Embargo's damaging effect on the Massachusetts economy had approached the political danger point at home without having effected any noticeable change in the attitude of France or England.(31) Yet even then, while town meetings throughout the state were endorsing anti-Embargo resolutions increasingly hostile to the Administration, other town meetings were passing resolutions of loyal support. Nearly every issue of the Independent Chronicle between August 1808 and March 1809 contains reports of mass meetings supporting the Embargo,(32) and sometimes the same town issued diametrically opposed opinions. In February of 1809, Nathaniel Ames recorded with his usual pungency that Topsfield "some months ago was conspicuous as the seat of a seditious Fudderal meeting, belching rebellious Resolves against President Jefferson and Congress for Embargo, but this day the largest meeting ever known in Essex County of real citizens of all the towns issue excellent Resolves in a voice of thunder, shaking Fudderalism into growling insignificance."(33)

This stubborn -- and to the Federalists, irrational -- Republicanism on the part of even some areas hardest hit by the Embargo was recognized with perplexed dismay by leading Federalists themselves. "There is indeed considerable change," wrote Manasseh Cutler late in 1808, "but strange as it may appear, those who continue democrats, seem to be more violent

than ever... The New England democrats, I am inclined to think, are the most bitter and obstinate in the nation." (34) And it would appear that the prime cause of New England Republicanism's stubborn resilience even under the greatest stress was that the Party had established a nearly unbreakable grip upon the issue of American nationalism. In December of 1808, for example, Nathaniel Ames wrote indignantly that "John Randolph... makes a speech in direct hostility to his own patriotism and pretends to persuade Congress to open trade, involving submission to British tribute and French confiscation, as if the honor and dignity of the U. States was nothing in comparison to the benefits of the little trade the belligerents might allow us." (35) By 1811, he noted that "French perfidy... disgusts all, and dissolves confidence in any but our own Government. We must consider ourselves Americans. And the voice of all America now seems to be that all European shackles on this quarter shall be broken." (36) And even in 1814, in the depths of the war and at the height of the New England secessionism movement, a British observer warned his superiors in London that "there is a very strong democratic Party in each of these Commonwealths And... they will in the event of any attempt being made to separate New England from the Union most probably be assisted by the General Government in resisting this Measure." (37)

The Republicans, therefore, had effectively established themselves as the party of patriotism and union; they had evolved a powerful sense of in-group identification; and they

had institutionalized all this into a strong party organization. The result was that the Embargo's reactivation of the 1790's in Massachusetts was fought out within markedly different parameters than the earlier conflict had been. Once more, it must be emphasized that this "countervailing force" was the historical legacy of that earlier conflict, and that without the historical fact of the earlier struggle, the outcome of the "second round" might have been very different indeed. Between 1808 and 1812, every major political theme of the 1790's was reactivated in Massachusetts: "foreign influence," conflicting nationalisms, peace and prosperity. The Federalists' subjective standpoint in the reactivated conflict, of course, was crucially different from their earlier one, for in 1808 they no longer controlled either the presidency or the Congressional majority necessary to mold national policy to their desires. Thus, it was now they who attacked, and the Republicans who defended, the Administration's foreign policy. But allowing for this reversal of positions, the arguments employed on both sides were direct derivatives of their predecessors of 1795-1800. As elsewhere throughout the Union, the new issue was joined on the same ground and argued in the same vocabulary as had prevailed a decade before.

And although the legacy of that earlier struggle operated seriously to qualify the Federalist resurgence, it was in the end a very near thing. The peaks of the Federalist revival coincided closely with those periods in which the old emotions and the old categories were most effectively reanimated, and by 1814, the effect of a war which in New England at least was

thoroughly unpopular had reactivated these feelings and outlooks to a very dangerous level of intensity. Massachusetts had become the focus of a secessionist movement whose disruptive potential was only dissipated in 1815 by a nearly miraculous coincidence of unlooked-for events: the sudden signing of a peace treaty at Ghent after months of seemingly hopeless negotiations; and a brilliant, and utterly unanticipated, American victory against the British at New Orleans. If on balance, reactivation aided Republican supremacy in New York and Virginia, its role in Massachusetts was the opposite; in the specific historical context of events between 1808 and 1814, reactivation there very nearly put the survival of the Union in question.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 13

(1) Sears, op.cit., pp. 145-146. Exports from Massachusetts in 1807 were valued at \$20.1 million; in 1808, they fell to \$5.1 million, a drop of some 75%. The drop was as bad for New England as a whole: from \$24.3 million in 1807 to \$6 million in 1808. The percentage of decline was even greater for the Union as a whole: some 79%. But the two figures are misleading insofar as they do not take into account the fact that New England shipping was deeply involved in carrying the products of other regions to Europe, and her loss of this carrying trade was additional to her loss in exports of her own production. Jennings, op.cit., pp. 214-215.

(2) Robinson, op.cit., p. 40, pp. 77-78.

(3) Ibid., pp. 48-50.

(4) Ibid., pp. 81-82.

(5) Ibid., p. 82.

(6) Thorp Lanier Wolford, "Democratic-Republican Reaction in Massachusetts to the Embargo of 1807." New England Quarterly, Vol. 15 (March, 1942) p. 52; Goodman, op.cit., p. 155.

(7) Sears, op.cit., pp. 176-177.

(8) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entry for 31 May 1808, p. 243.

(9) Goodman, op.cit., p. 196.

(10) Perkins, Prologue to War, p. 159.

(11) Goodman, op.cit., p. 192. The shift is dramatically apparent when the average yearly value of American exports and reexports to Great Britain and Ireland from 1804 to 1807

is compared to the combined total of those to France and her Continental dominions in the same period. (All figures from Jennings, op.cit., pp. 11-20.)

Average yearly value of United States' combined exports and reexports, 1804-1807

To Great Britain & Ireland:	\$18,051,913	To France:	\$ 11,561,182
		To Spain:	3,684,042
		To Italy:	3,664,194
		To Hamburg & Bremen:	4,323,005
		To Holland:	16,352,515
		To Denmark & Norway:	1,579,619
		Total	<u>\$ 41,163,567</u>

(12) East, op.cit., p. 431.

(13) Ibid., p. 438.

(14) Ibid., pp. 442-446. In 1814, at the height of the secessionist movement, Matthew Carey argued that New England's secession would be its economic ruin; that its wealth depended on its carriage of southern produce, and on its sales of both foreign and domestic manufactures to other states. New England, he concluded, was rich because she levied economic tribute on the rest of the United States. The Olive Branch, quoted in ibid., p. 431.

(15) Goodman, op.cit., p. 192,197.

(16) New England Palladium, 3 February 1809, resolutions of town meeting in Wells, Maine District.

(17) Ibid., 24 February 1809, resolutions of town meeting in Gloucester, Massachusetts. The New Jersey Federalists harped on the same theme. Fee, op.cit., pp. 153-154. Throughout the Union, the Embargo pulled into action all the old

political leitmotifs of the 1790's: neutrality, nationalism, and the Republicans' alleged pro-French sympathies.

(18) Warren, Jacobin and Junto, entry for 21 February 1809, p. 233.

(19) Massachusetts Legislature's Address to the People, February 1809, in ibid., pp. 219-220.

(20) See Whitney, op. cit., pp. 103-115, for a detailed analysis of the manner in which the resumption of Anglo-French hostilities combined with the specie shortage in the United States, the ruin of Sumatra pepper culture, and the collapse of the American coffee market to force the Crowninshield family's trade into a pattern which by 1806 was in total conflict with British maritime regulations. Another study has concluded that the opposing blockade systems of France and Great Britain had made profitable commerce all but impossible by the time of the Embargo, and that the Embargo itself only delayed, rather than accelerated, the destruction of United States trade. See John N. Reinohl, "Post-Embargo Trade and Merchant Prosperity: Experiences of the Crowninshield Family, 1809-1812." Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. 42, No. 2 (September, 1955) pp. 229-250.

Also John N. Reinohl (ed.), "Some Remarks on the American Trade: Jacob Crowninshield to James Madison, 1806." William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 16 (January, 1959) pp. 83-119.

(21) Whitney, op. cit., pp. 99-101.

(22) J. Crowninshield to W. Bentley, 14 December 1805, ibid., p. 115.

(23) For organizational details, see Cunningham, Jeffersonian Republicans in Power..., p. 147; Goodman, op. cit., pp. 133-135;

Chambers, op.cit., p. 163. An interesting first-hand account of this organization in action is Nathaniel Ames' entry for 28 August 1808, in Warren, Jacobin & Junto, p.226, describing his participation in a Norfolk County committee "to communicate with the Central Committee of the State... to watch over the Republican interest both in State and National Governments, especially as to elections and appointments -- convey intelligence -- confute false rumors -- confirm the wavering in right principles -- prevent delusion of weak brethren -- and fight that most formidable enemy of civilized men, political ignorance, a task, mighty, endless and insuperable... a Herculean labor enough to stagger common undertakers to combat the pulpit, the bar and host of superstition, vanity, pride, and selfish wretches under foreign influence." Both Federalists and Republicans organized strongly after 1801. For the institutionalization of party cleavages in Salem, see Whitney, op.cit., pp. 20-22, 34-36. For the fresh impetus which the Embargo gave to mass meetings and caucus activity on both sides, see Robinson, op.cit., pp.61,80-81.

(24) Robinson concludes that the "appeal to class jealousy" was of primary importance in the Republicans' advance. Op.cit., pp. 108-110.

(25) Ibid., p. 152.

(26) Goodman, op.cit., p. 199

(27) East, op.cit., p. 437; Goodman, op.cit., p. 196; Adams, History, IV, 449; V, 314-315; VI, 115. A very similar pattern

was true of the rest of New England. See Robinson, op.cit., pp. 85-86; Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entries for 13, 17 & 22 April 1810, 1 June 1810, and 29 May 1811, p. 244.

(28) Sears, op.cit., p. 103.

(29) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entries for 7 December 1808 and 9 February 1809, p. 231.

(30) See Jennings, op.cit., pp. 133-135, for a list of both groups.

(31) Wolford, op.cit., pp. 36, 60; Robinson, op.cit., pp. 83-84.

(32) Robinson, op.cit., p. 155, Note 18.

(33) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entry for 20 February 1809, pp. 228-229.

(34) To Timothy Pickering, 29 December 1808, in Robinson, op.cit., p. 83.

(35) Warren, Jacobin & Junto, entry for 5 December 1808, p. 227.

(36) Ibid., entry for 30 June 1811, p. 241. See also p. 238:

"1811!... It seems decreed that it is time that Americans break all European shackles!" This transition in Nathaniel Ames' outlook from his ardent Francophilia of the 1790's is an interesting indication of the possibly quite crucial role which unremittingly hostile pressure from both England and France played in accomplishing the "weaning" effect discussed in Part I. I have become increasingly convinced in the course of my researches that until Americans came to see both European powers as hostile outsiders, a strong, positive American self-definition was all but impossible. That American nationalism became so strong, so early, was vitally due to the

configuration of the international situation until 1815.

(37) Sherbrooke to Bathurst, from Halifax, 20 November 1814,
in J.S. Martell (ed.) "A Sidelight on Federalist Strategy
during the War of 1812." American Historical Review,
Vol. 43 (1938) pp. 559-560.

CONCLUSION: A "Political Geology" of Remembered Conflicts

The foregoing analysis leads one to suggest that the durability of a critical election's realignments may not be among such an election's true attributes. American political developments in the interlude years indicate that further realignment was in progress on both sides almost as soon as the great electoral "decision" had been made. Developments after 1807 indicate further that the Republican Party's ability to maintain its cohesion at both state and national levels owed a great deal to the reactivation of the issues and outlooks of the 1790's. Without that reactivation, the reign of the Virginia Dynasty might have proven substantially shorter, and in New York and Pennsylvania, at least, the Republican Party might have divided earlier and along rather different lines than it actually did in the mid-1820's.

Yet the election of 1800 was then, and has since been, so unanimously regarded as "critical" that one feels it imperative to reconsider the meaning of this term. And in this endeavor, it appears more fruitful to focus our attention upon 1800's rich legacy of political symbolism -- for that legacy's influence is evident in American political debate for many decades thereafter. Indeed, the battle-cries of the 1790's echo persistently down the years. In 1867, Martin Van Buren wrote of Jefferson's election that:

"The promises of the mild sway of reason and justice
... which bore upon its wings the repeal of odious
taxes, the reduction of superfluous expense, the
payment of the public debt... with a zealous concern
for the rights of the States as well as for those

of individuals, -- made impressions upon the public mind in favor of the principles upon which it was founded, which now, after the lapse of more than half a century, are as fixed and as powerful as they were then."(1)

The power of these "impressions" had been repeatedly demonstrated before Van Buren wrote, and have been repeatedly evident since his time. In the antebellum period, moreover, their echoes appear to have emerged in fullest force at junctures where the realignment of 1800 was being subjected to the greatest strain, and this alone might serve to redirect our attention from durability of realignments to symbolic content in our search for the true components of criticality.

It is altogether striking, for example, how the ideologues of New England separatism after 1807 adopted almost verbatim the formulations of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions of 1798-1799.(2) Of all the reversals in early American politics, perhaps the most ironic is this espousal of strict constructionism and states' rights by the party which claimed descent from George Washington and Alexander Hamilton.

The echoes resound again in the Missouri Debates of 1819-1820. The humanitarian attack on slavery was only one element of the struggle; equally basic was the north's growing restiveness over the political advantage the south drew from the three-fifths compromise in the Constitution.(3) Yet both prongs of the northern attack were articulated in terms first fully asserted in the 1790's. The creed of human equality was poignantly applicable to the assault on the

institution of slavery itself; and the ideology of social equality enabled northerners to attack southern slaveowners as idle, callous "aristocrats," a charge which in the course of the 1790's had become imbued with a diffuse but powerful set of associations implying un-Americanism.

The attack on "King Caucus" after 1824 was again indebted to the Republican ideologues of a quarter-century earlier. The assault upon oligarchic control of the party hinged upon the assertion of the transcendent legitimacy of popular sovereignty. And this appeal lay fully formulated and ready for use after 1824 because it had already been fully articulated and successfully employed before 1800.

Going further, we are struck by the extraordinary tenacity of the negative associations adhering to the name and concept of "Federalism." During the Missouri Debates, for example, there was for a while the real possibility that elements of both the Republican and Federalist parties in the east and the northwest might form a new political alignment on the basis of a common hostility to slavery. But the chief spokesman of the antislavery forces in Congress was Rufus King, and nearly every spokesman of the humanitarian cause outside Congress was also a Federalist -- and the logic of the prospective coalition proved no match for the lingering distrust of "Federalism" per se. The Missouri Compromise was made possible by the fact that too many of King's prospective allies came to suspect that his antislavery rhetoric was only a smokescreen behind which he hoped to engineer a Federalist

return to power. (4)

In the years immediately after the War of 1812, the tenacity of these old emotional associations impeded prima facie "logical" realignments at the state level as well: in Pennsylvania, (5) for example, and in New Jersey. (6) The word "Federalist" was still being used as a term of political opprobrium in elections of the 1830's and 1840's, (7) at a time when the issues of both the Federalist and Jeffersonian eras were long outdated, when indeed many genuine Federalists had become Jacksonians, and when at the national level at least, there had been no Federalist Party at all for twenty years or more. (8) New issues and new party groupings had clearly emerged by the 1830's, "yet many of these issues were cast in terms that were only too familiar to those who had fought the battles of an earlier day. The name and aura of Federalism retained their strange and lingering power to evoke strong emotional response." (9) The deep cleavage which emerged from the 1790's exerted a formative influence on the future configuration of American political alignments for decades to come, by supplying the first major reference points by which individual citizens arrived at their own sense of political in-group identification. The issues upon which the old parties had taken shape might be totally eclipsed; their actual composition and even their names might be altered beyond all objective recognition; but the sense of in-group consciousness to which they had first given rise exerted a subtle and enduring influence. That was clear even

in 1823:

"... the parties of which we speak... though they originate in single points of difference, take deeper root; they outlive the causes of their commencement, and those who constitute them are led to opposite sides upon all questions which may arise in the progress of public transactions... real or fancied persecutions rivet the bonds of union; the succession of generations renders them more enduring, and the transmission of sentiments and feelings of the father to the son is generally regular and unbroken. Notwithstanding the change of interests and of name, the same individuals and families have been found after a lapse of years, acting in concert on all questions of a public nature. Such has been the character and such the history of parties everywhere."(10)

To paraphrase the old adage, life is short, politics long.

"Tories are tories still," declared Thomas Jefferson in 1824, "by whatever name they may be called."(11)

Again, the ideological formulations of southern secessionism after 1850 are directly indebted to the conflict of the 1790's. The doctrine of states' rights was central to the whole southern defense, just as it had been to the earlier New England separatist rationale. It testifies to both the intensity and the ambiguity of 1800's legacy that fifty years later, one aspect of it could be used so effectively to counter another; for the defense of states' rights was now directed against the assertion of human equality, and both had been part of the "meaning" of 1800. Now the emotions generated by each appeal were so conflicting as to end in civil war.

The echoes go on and on, and we hear them even today. The bitter domestic conflict over American neutrality in the late 1930's resounded with appeals to Anglophobia which

might have been lifted intact from the Jay Treaty controversy.⁽¹²⁾ The attacks in our own day on "big government" and "fiscal irresponsibility" are often uncannily similar to Jeffersonian slogans of 1799. The enduring slogan of states' rights was unfurled once more in Alabama only a few years back, and may be expected to stage many comebacks in the future.

There are enduring echoes too of the liberal, universalistic strain in Jeffersonian Republicanism: the a priori assumption that centralized power represents a continual threat to individual liberty; the fear of commercial and industrial elites; the emphasis on the individual's birth-right to education and self-advancement without which the very concept of a "War on Poverty" would be impossible; the tenacious conviction that human rights are deeply sacred values, whatever limitations upon them may appear to be required by the necessities of state.

These are tenets with which any American is thoroughly familiar; he may decide to act against them, but only at the price of creating for himself some degree of inner psychic conflict.⁽¹³⁾ And their persistent recurrence in American political debate down the years leads to a concept of "political geology" rather different from that proposed by Daniel Elazar.⁽¹⁴⁾ His is geographical, stressing the tenacity of political cultures implanted by original settler patterns. It is an excellent, highly fruitful concept, and the concept proposed here is meant not to contradict but to

amplify it. The "political geology" suggested here is temporal -- a process of "political sedimentation" by which the cleavages of past years are layered over by those of successive generations, accumulating over time to create anidiosyncratic, specifically national, "geology" of remembered conflicts. Old cleavages may occasionally be submerged, yet as Burnham has observed, their eclipse never appears to be entirely permanent. Even decades later, they may be reactivated in response to stimuli resembling those which first precipitated them.

Even while dormant, moreover, they constitute a vital stockpile of formulated appeals, ideological rallying-points, and historically determined issue-linkages of crucial import in national political debate. Nor are they necessarily truly dormant -- even if no breath of them is audible in Congress, the press, or even the hottest election campaigns -- for the more highly charged any historical conflict was in its own time, the more likely is its "mythological" interpretation to be perpetuated in school textbooks for the young. For better or for worse, these texts are instruments of indoctrination, and the outlooks they impress take firm root, in sharp contrast to any facts they might accidentally contain. The tenacious emotional content of these historically determined outlooks, values, and issue-linkages, greatly amplified by their incorporation into the mythos employed to socialize children, enables these historically determined concepts to influence subsequent alignments over possibly quite unrelated issues -- for repeatedly, the experiences of the past are

called upon to interpret the conflicts of later days.

Here, if anywhere, lies the essence of 1800's "criticality." Coming as the culmination of a particularly bitter political conflict, involving a cluster of emotion-packed ideals, it was immediately perceived as a historical vindication of these ideals; and once so perceived, it endowed them with all the tenacious attraction which adheres to success.

This is the most subtle aspect of 1800's criticality, but it may be the most important. The fact is too often ignored that the historical success or failure of any ideal in its first test in a nation's history influences that ideal's attractive power in the nation's entire subsequent existence.⁽¹⁵⁾ The Alien and Sedition Laws provide an especially good case in point. Here was a program for the deliberate suppression of domestic opposition which, so long as it could be justified by the necessities of a war effort, drew widespread support from the more jingoistic strain in American nationalism. Only a fortuitous combination of events allowed that war threat to fade, but once it had done so, the way was open for a successful assault upon the Alien and Sedition Laws which drew its own strength from the egalitarian, civil-libertarian strain in that nationalism. We have seen how deeply imbedded the latter appeals became in 1800's legacy of meaning, and their enduring influence in America's subsequent political development is apparent on only brief further reflection.

For the United States has witnessed other resurgences of domestic repression. As in 1798-1799, these have been nationalistic responses to a perceived threat from abroad -- the "Red Scare" after World War I, the Japanese internments during World War II, the McCarthy witch hunts during the onslaught of the Cold War. Each time, these responses have met determined domestic opposition, and much of that opposition's effectiveness was due to the fact that it was able to appeal to a long and successful historical tradition vindicating the individual freedoms guaranteed in the Constitution.

Even given this advantage, however, the opposition's task was often a hard one; without it, the cause might have appeared too hopeless even to attempt. In late nineteenth-century France, for example, the growth of what might have become fascism was decisively weakened by the powerful counterpull exerted by the ideals of the great French Revolution. The sheer existence of these magnetic appeals, reinforced by a history of brilliant, even if turbulent, success, provided potent ideological rallying-points for the emergent Socialist Labor movement; and this in turn enabled the Socialists to formulate a stance of strong opposition to the forces which in other national contexts became fascism triumphant. In Germany, by contrast, the working classes had no such ideological resources at their disposal. The cause of Liberalism had borne the discouraging stigma of defeat ever after its ignominious failure in the mid-nineteenth century. The German Socialists were never able to formulate

an ideology of sufficient emotional power to counter the passions which fed National Socialism, and their inability to do so contributed heavily to the appalling tragedy of twentieth century Germany.

Human beings tend to fight for causes which have won for them in the past⁽¹⁶⁾ -- and if in 1799 the appeal to constitutional liberties acquired a vast accretion to its power because repression came to appear unnecessary, there was no guarantee that it would be so. Had the High Federalists gotten their war, posterity might very likely have viewed their domestic policies as those which had been historically vindicated, and twentieth century schoolchildren might well be learning about the Alien and Sedition Acts not as perversions of the American ideal but as necessary measures to protect the American nation.

In the event, the ideals of constitutionalism and individual freedoms were enshrined in America's nationalist heritage. But it was in large part the accidents of history which allowed it to be so. There are other, darker, possibilities which the United States escaped by similar historical fortune. In the event, the nation after 1815 chose to regard the War of 1812 as a triumphant reassertion of American independence and as a historical vindication of the validity and vigor of democratic institutions.⁽¹⁷⁾ Yet the war very nearly proved a catastrophe. A secessionist movement was gathering force in New England, a major Federalist electoral revival was in progress,⁽¹⁸⁾ and only the

nearly miraculous events of early 1815 deflated both. The Republican Party was in serious trouble, and there were many Federalists who confidently expected that another year of unpopular war, incompetently fought, would not only discredit the Party entirely but cause the national government itself to collapse.⁽¹⁹⁾ The Peace of Ghent saved the Party from political disintegration and rescued the nation itself from financial bankruptcy⁽²⁰⁾ and perhaps outright disunion -- but to a significant extent, Great Britain was led to sign that peace only because she found herself confronted by new and more pressing problems arising from the twists of European politics.⁽²¹⁾

The American "geology" which might have been created under only slightly different circumstances merits some consideration. Indeed, we might pose a question which is less flippant than it might first appear: is Prince Metternich perhaps the unrecognized patron saint of popular democracy in the United States? Consider: until 1815, domestic political conflict, exacerbated by foreign pressure, reached heights actually endangering the Union's existence, yet in this period the United States did not have to cope with several major problems which confronted it soon thereafter. Industrialization was as yet embryonic, and consequently so were the social stratifications and deepening social tensions attendant thereon. The nation's economy was still comparatively simple. America remained a predominantly agrarian country, with large areas of subsistence farming.

This simplicity allowed the country to weather major disruptions of the international market without experiencing major social disruption at home.(22) Sectional rivalries over the West were already brewing, but erupted openly only in the postwar Missouri Controversy. Thenceforth, they rose steadily in intensity to culminate in the Civil War.

After 1815, the clouds of disunion gathered ever thicker, yet thanks to the settlement imposed on Europe at Vienna, (including as it did a structure of international rivalry which caused England to be politically isolated), the United States was relieved of pressure from the international arena. This permitted the nation to develop its characteristically decentralized, loosely-articulated political system of overlapping jurisdictions. Such a system came to place a high premium upon individual autonomy and upon limitations to central authority -- but by the same token, it was not a system able to cope efficiently with external threat. The fact that such a threat abated after 1815 left the United States free to pursue what Louis Hartz has termed its "democratic telos." Had that threat continued, however, would the triumph of popular democracy in America have been as straight?

We shall never know, of course, yet the shadow of what we escaped might cause us to reassess many of the crypto-teleological assumptions which underlie too many analyses of political development.

NOTES TO CONCLUSION

(1) Van Buren, Inquiry, p. 279, Italics added.

(2) Adams, History, IV, 407.

(3) Hockett, op.cit., p. 128; Glover Moore, The Missouri Controversy, 1819-1821 (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press; 1953) pp. 17-18, 127.

(4) Hockett, op.cit., pp. 127-129; Moore, op.cit., pp. 67-70, 75-76, 106, 160, 175-178.

(5) Philip Shriver Klein, Pennsylvania Politics, 1817-1832: A Game Without Rules (Philadelphia: Historical Society of Pennsylvania; 1940) pp. 354-355; Higginbotham, op.cit., pp. 303-304.

(6) Fee, op.cit., pp. 210-219.

(7) See Chapter 9.

(8) At the state level, however, the organizations built up by the Young Federalists after 1801 displayed remarkable viability until well into the 1820's. Fischer, op.cit., pp. 80-81.

(9) Livermore, op.cit. p. 260. Italics added. See also ibid., p. 263, where Livermore points out that the word "Federalism's" associative symbolism had long since become far more than the name of a political party. It had become instead the symbol of "a denial of the capacity of men generally to rule themselves," and that Republicans found "continuing and real meaning" in the charge that their opponents were implacably hostile to popular self-government. Then he justly points out how important the newness of such governmental institutions

was: "Popular government had not been obtained for so long ... that men could simply shrug off charges that there lurked about men who would destroy democratic institutions."

(10) Albany Argus, 12 September 1823, Italics added.

(11) To Van Buren, 29 June 1824, in Van Buren, Inquiry, pp. 435-436.

(12) See inter alia, Wayne S. Cole, America First: The Battle Against Intervention (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press; 1953); William Randolph Hearst, William Randolph Hearst - A Portrait in his Own Words (San Francisco: 1952); Marian C. McKenna, Borah (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press; 1961).

(13) See Hartz's provocative analysis of Southern secessionism in these terms, in Founding of New Societies, pp. 93-102.

(14) Daniel J. Elazar, American Federalism: A View from the States (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Co.; 1966) pp. 79-140.

(15) As Talcott Parsons has properly pointed out, "institutionalized values and norms... exercise a persistent and, in the long run, very important influence on the political process, as well as other processes in society," and both the development and the successful maintenance in the United States of a constitutional-legal system including an independent legal-judiciary is difficult to account for "without reference to what has been called... the institutionalization of values." Talcott Parsons, "Social Structure and Political Organization." World Politics, Vol. 13, No. 1 (October 1960) p. 118, 128. And further to the same idea: "Not ideas, but material and ideal interests, directly govern men's conduct.

Yet very frequently the 'world images' that have been created by 'ideas' have, like switchmen, determined the tracks along which action has been pushed by the dynamic of interest."

Max Weber, "The Social Psychology of the World Religions," in H.H. Gerth and C. Wright Mills, From Max Weber: Essays in Sociology (New York: Oxford University Press, Galaxy Books; 1958) p. 280.

(16) And the election of 1968 indicates that they are still doing so. "Where are the snows of yesteryear? In the election returns, that's where." Wilson Carey McWilliams, "After the Election," Commonweal, Vol. 89, No. 9 (29 November 1968) pp. 297, 307-310.

(17) White, The Jeffersonians, p. 27; Fischer, op.cit., p.181, adds the observation that the war's outcome also reinforced negative associations of Federalism with toryism, monarchism and Anglophilia.

(18) In the fall of 1814, the Federalists won more than a third of both houses in the next Congress; they held all the New England states along with Maryland and Delaware; they had won a third of New York's lower house, just under a majority of New Jersey's state legislature, and some 30% of both houses in Pennsylvania, in addition to electing five Federalists to Pennsylvania's erstwhile solidly Republican Congressional delegation. Livermore, op.cit., p. 11.

(19) Adams, History, IX, 56-57.

(20) See Walters, op.cit., pp. 179-200, for a detailed and rather sobering account of the utterly dire financial straits

to which the American government had been reduced by January of 1815.

(21) Lawrence S. Kaplan, "Jefferson, the Napoleonic Wars, and the Balance of Power." William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd series, Vol. 14 (1957) p. 214.

(22) Adams, History, IV, 280.

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