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NEW YORK CITY AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1789-1797:

A STUDY OF FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY INFLUENCE

by

ALAN L. BLAU

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

1973

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This manuscript has been read and accepted for the Graduate Faculty in History in satisfaction of the dissertation requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy.

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Executive Officer

Sidney I. Pomerantz

Robert A. East

Hans L. Trefousse

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PREFACE

This dissertation can be described as a study of French Revolutionary influence on existing and developing political structures, attitudes and life in the City of New York. As such it is not primarily concerned with the opinion of New Yorkers toward specific events of the French Revolution, nor with the news articles that were printed in the New York press in relation to the French Revolution, nor with the effect of French Revolutionary diplomacy upon the world of the New Yorker of the 1790's, although references to each of those areas abound. It is primarily a study of the effect of French Revolutionary events and ideas upon those political and social institutions that were developing in New York during the years when George Washington was President of the United States.

Beginning at the moment when President-elect Washington arrived in New York to take his oath of office, in April of 1789, this dissertation concludes with the removal of the French flag and some of the paraphernalia of the French Revolution from the Tontine Coffee House at almost the same moment that John Adams was being sworn in as second President of the United States, in March of 1797. During the intervening years, dramatic and important changes in the political life of the city and nation took place. A major task of this study is to describe those changes while isolating the role played by the French Revolution in bringing them about.

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The overall structure of this dissertation rests upon the bedrock of the newspapers of New York. These newspapers also provide the shape of the narrative that makes up the body of this paper. Particular emphasis has been placed on the letters, essays and editorials that formed the basis for New York newspaper opinion. It is in those writings that the researcher can discern most clearly the major concerns of the New Yorkers during the first eight years of the Federalist Era. To the foundation supplied by the newspapers has been added important filler material found in a large variety of manuscript collections, sermons and orations, pamphlets and broadsides, personal recollections and personal works of travel. This dissertation, therefore, is almost exclusively a primary source study based on the words and writings of the New Yorkers themselves.

These contemporary sources of the first eight years of this nation's life under the Constitution showed almost all New Yorkers as passing through several distinct stages in their reaction to the French Revolution. During the first three years of the French Revolution, New Yorkers were virtually unanimous in their approval of the changes going on in France. Any major divisions among New Yorkers in those first years were caused by events taking place elsewhere. From the Autumn of 1792, when news of the insurrection of August 10 reached New York City, until the autumn of 1794, when news of the fall of Robespierre arrived, the French Revolution exacerbated political and social divisions among New Yorkers. Reactions to individual French and European events became extremely important in determining attitudes towards local and national American events. With the coming of the

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Thermidorian reaction and the later formation of the Directory, however, a third and last phase was underway. The Republicans and Federalists of New York, closely observing the actions taken by the Thermidorians and the Directory against previous decisions of the Montagnard regime, sought to use French government activities to bolster their own position or to attack that of their opponents. More and more the ideas and events on the other side of the Atlantic were becoming integrated into the political life on this side. By 1796 no major incident that involved New Yorkers was likely to have a life completely separated from the events or ideas first set in motion on the Parisian stage of the Atlantic Civilization. Therefore, this last phase of New York reaction to the French Revolution centers almost exclusively on domestic American events, both national and local, which New Yorkers now viewed through the filter provided by the ideas and incidents of the French Revolution.

This dissertation, in sum, has attempted to note carefully the changing influence of the French Revolution upon New York life and institutions during some of the most exciting and challenging years of what R. R. Palmer has called "the age of the democratic revolution." Most importantly, however, for understanding the purpose of this dissertation, the emphasis is on New York politics and not on French events. In this approach, that of a local history study, it is also hoped that the reader will find a microcosm that will illuminate some of the many ways in which the French Revolution affected and changed American attitudes and basic institutions during the administration of President Washington.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The planning and development of this dissertation was carried out under the close supervision of Professor Joseph I. Shulim of Brooklyn College of the City University of New York. Brief words of gratitude cannot begin to do full justice to Professor Shulim's careful shepherding of this dissertation from the first thought of its feasibility to the final approved form of the text. His sympathetic and judicious criticism will always be remembered by this novice in the world of historical writing. Additional thanks are due Professors Sidney I. Pomerantz and Robert A. East of City College and Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, respectively, for their cheerful willingness to read the lengthy text and for their words of encouragement to its author.

Most of the material found in this dissertation was researched at the library of the New York Historical Society. The peaceful atmosphere provided the researcher in that invaluable New York institution is in itself worthy of notice. Even more important, however, was the constant help given to this writer by the Society's library staff. In particular, I would like to thank Arthur J. Breton and Thomas Dunning, the previous and present Curators of Manuscripts of the New York Historical Society Library, for the countless hours of ungrudging assistance which they gave me.

Most personally of all, I thank my wife, Sybil Blau, for her fortitude in suffering through the growing pains of this dissertation

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both as companion and critic and for her willingness to "work her fingers to the bone" in typing the massive first and second drafts of the text. This was effort above and beyond the call of even wifely duty. Finally, my parents, Mr. and Mrs. Isidore Blau, deserve full credit for helping develop in me the knowledge that learning, in and of itself, is both a useful discipline and a true pleasure of life.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

PREFACE iv

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS vii

PART I. "This is the age of revolutions"
AN INTRODUCTION (1789-1791)

Chapter
I. A NEW GOVERNMENT--AN OLD GOVERNOR 1
II. "Gen'rous France"-"Gen'rous Flame". 21
III. PROBLEMS FOR "the present order of things". 40

PART II. THE YEAR OF TRANSITION
(WINTER 1792-WINTER 1793)

IV. HARD TIMES, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL 61
V. A GROWING "spirit of party" 91
VI. THE APPEARANCE OF "Gallico fever" 112

PART III. A BUSY TIME WITH "a busy man"
(APRIL 1793-DECEMBER 1793)

VII. "Tory Town" BELIES ITS NAME 138
VIII. "The whole city will fall before me". 169
IX. "Really extravagant" AND "outrageous Conduct" 205

PART IV. THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY OF NEW YORK AND THE
"REAL" REPUBLICANS (JANUARY 1794-MAY 1794)

X. "An excellent set of Resolutions" 245
XI. "All legitimate power resides in the People". 273
XII. "Peace is always to be preferred if a Peace can be maintained on honorable Principles.". 305

PART V. SEEDS OF LATER EVENTS AND WORSE DIVISIONS
(JUNE 1794-JUNE 1795)

XIII. "Every man must draw his own conclusion." 351
XIV. A DIFFERENCE IN TEMPERAMENT 386

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XV. "Are not the Demos every hour
Increasing their unlawful power . . .?" 422

PART VI. JAY'S TREATY AND THE "Spectre of Revolution" (1795)

XVI. ""Damnation seize the Treaty, Jay and all.""..... 455
XVII. "Equality is all that can be claimed from us.". 497
XVIII. BEWARE "wild ambition, or the pestilence of party". . . . 523

PART VII. DOWN CAME THE LIBERTY CAP, INTERTWINED FLAGS AND ALL (WINTER 1796-WINTER 1797)

XIX. ""What, you rascal, insult your superiors!"" 552
XX. "Proud alone of the name of AMERICANS". 572
XXI. CONCLUSION 615

APPENDIX 647

BIBLIOGRAPHY. 649

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PART I. "This is the age of revolutions":

AN INTRODUCTION (1789-1791)

CHAPTER I

A NEW GOVERNMENT--AN OLD GOVERNOR

The letter writer was unable to contain himself. His joy and pleasure "upon the arrival of the great Farmer--the great Statesman--the great General--the President General--in short the greatest of the greatest men in the World" in New York City on that sun-swept day in late April, 1789, seemed simply to burst out from deep within him. His feelings paralleled "the claps--the Shouts, the Huzzas from the surrounding thousands" that had filled the air of the city streets and had followed President-elect George Washington from his landing at the foot of Wall Street to his quarters at "the old President's House in Cherry Street." David Gelston, the author of the letter, believed that the feelings he expressed were "felt at the Heart of everyone" on that day. There are enough examples of similar descriptions and feelings to endorse fully this belief.[1]

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[1]Letter, David Gelston to John Smith, Apr. 27, 1789, New York Historical Society Library (hereinafter referred to as NYHS), John Smith Papers. For similar expressions of feeling see letter, Elias Boudinot to Hannah Boudinot, Apr. 24, 1789, NYHS, Elias Boudinot Papers, and Rufus W. Griswold, The Republican Court (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1863), pp. 130-136. Elias Boudinot, who was chairman of the Committee of Congress to greet the new president, provided, in his letter, the fullest first-hand account of the ar-

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Gelston's letter, however, contained more than a simple, heartfelt description of that day's mixture of pageantry and faith. As was typical of the New Yorker of the time, David Gelston's account of the President-elect's arrival included an assessment of the long-term practical value of the event that never seemed to interrupt the idealized pleasure of the moment. In his letter, Gelston had already referred to still another day as the "great the important day." He meant by that April 28, which was the beginning of election week--the culmination of the New York gubernatorial contest for that year. Gelston, a supporter of the incumbent, George Clinton, and, like his chief, a strong anti-federalist in his original opposition to the adoption of the new Constitution, happily noted in his letter that General Washington, after resting at his new home on Cherry Street, "returned without parade in the Gov^{rs}. Coach & dined at the Governors." In an aside that linked Washington's formal politeness with Clinton's re-election campaign, Gelston knowingly spoke of it as that "lucky circumstance."[2]

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rival of George Washington in New York City. Griswold used this letter as the basis of his own description of Washington's triumphant entry.

[2]Letter, Gelston to Smith, Apr. 27, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers. David Gelston was a Long Island and New York City merchant and politician, whose political career reached its culmination in 1801 when Thomas Jefferson appointed him to the key political office of Collector of Customs for the port of New York. For information on important, but little-remembered, political figures of New York City history, see Edgar A. Werner, Civil List and Constitutional History of the Colony and State of New York (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1888), the basic source of statistical information on the New York politician of the pre-1888 period; and for general information on New Yorkers for the period covered by this dissertation, see The New York Directory.

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Mingled together in feelings such as those expressed by David Gelston was a peculiar blending of fear and hope. There was the hope of an economically and politically strengthened United States that would assume an important international position and, at the same time, an equally potent fear of an overwhelming national power, created by that very success, which would crush local interests and state governments and weaken the republican liberties gained as a result of the American Revolution. Many believed that those very liberties were safeguarded only by the ability of local governments to stand up against the interests of centralized authority. Typical of that view was a statement attributed to Aaron Burr by his friend and biographer, Matthew L. Davis, who reported that the former believed that unless the powers of the federal government were more distinctly defined, it would ruin the state governments and leave a "national instead of a federal government."[3] Even more clearly stated was a letter from Samuel Osgood, another prominent New York anti-federalist, who summed up his particular fears concerning the new Constitution in this way: "It must be apparent that if the new government flourishes the State governments must proportionably fall into disrepute - The Powers of the general government are indefinite."[4]

In that contest between hope and fear, however, there was no question but that the former was the stronger emotion in 1789. Most Americans seemed almost palpably to feel the wondrous events that were in the air and believe that the full force of a century of enlightened

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[3]Matthew L. Davis, Memoirs of Aaron Burr (2 vols.; New York: Harper & Bros., 1836-37), I, 286.

[4]Letter, Samuel Osgood to _ _ _, Feb. 20. 1789, NYHS, Samuel Osgood Papers.

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and rational thought was reaching its positive climax. As the editor of the Gazette of the United States trumpeted in his first words to the public on his first day of publication from the nation's first capital under the new Constitution: "AMERICA, from this period, begins a new Era in her national existence -'THE WORLD IS ALL BEFORE HER.'" This was triumphant theme no. 1 in 1789. From it followed triumphant theme no. 2, as expressed in the second edition of the Gazette of the United States:

> The Revolution of America, it was very early predicted would have a great influence upon the publick affairs of the European World - but the most sanguine advocate for the liberties of Mankind, could not have anticipated those surprising Events, which have already transpired to distinguish the annals of the present age. - Our generous and magnanimous Allies, the French nation,...discover a noble ardour in the best of causes - and...under the Auspices of the best of Kings, they are on the eve of establishing a new, and a free Constitution.[5]

The United States had supplied the spark and France had caught the flame with which to ignite the torch of liberty.

The editor of the Gazette of the United States was John Fenno, who would be, until the time of his death in the yellow fever epidemic of 1798, the leading national press spokesman for the federal government and what would be called the Federalist Party.[6] And yet there was nothing in the two quotations from the Gazette of the United States to which that firm anti-federalist, David Gelston, could have taken exception in the spring of 1789. In fact, on those basic themes of a republican United States triumphant which would lead the rest of mankind to

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[5]Gazette of the United States (hereinafter referred to as G.U.S.) (New York), Apr. 15 and Apr. 18, 1789.

[6]Thomas D. McCormick, "Fenno, John," Dictionary of American Biography (hereinafter referred to as DAB), 1931, VI, 325.

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a recognition of its liberties, there was profound agreement. It was no wonder then that when two such natural antagonists as Gelston and Fenno could agree so fully that it should appear to virtually all observers that the new government of the United States had begun life under the best of all possible circumstances.

Though the people of New York were generally in optimistic agreement on the future of the United States and the ability of the new federal government to develop a positive national and international role for this country, there seemed to be a constant need among some to seek out and stress those items which they found unsatisfactory and to raise them to the status of acts of national betrayal. As time went on, therefore, the points of conflict became even more clearly defined while the areas of agreement or possible compromise became even more obscured. One small case in point was the bitter gubernatorial election that was then in the New York air along with the huzzas for the new President of the Republic. New York, in the spring of 1789, was holding one of those triennial affairs that could be counted upon to raise the political temperature of both the city and state considerably and that would ultimately help to build political parties out of political and personal factions.

In the gubernatorial campaign of 1789, the leadership role was taken not by one of the two candidates but by Alexander Hamilton, who often seemed to be the first to grasp the workings of a new system and to adapt himself to it. On February 20, 1789, the Daily Gazette of Archibald M'Lean, the Daily Advertiser of Francis Childs, and Samuel Loudon's Packet printed a circular letter from Hamilton, acting as chairman of a citizen's committee to elect Robert Yates as governor.

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This letter, which was to be forwarded to the supervisors of Albany and to other areas of the state as well, was a clear-cut, straightforward political statement of opposition to George Clinton.[7]

The letter noted that at that critical time in our nation's history, when the new government was on the eve of going into affect, it was necessary to have as chief magistrate of New York someone who would assuage party differences, reconcile "discordant opinions," and ease the path for change. Clinton was not the man to do this. The letter accused the governor of having used his salary to enrich himself rather than to offer hospitality to public figures and members of the national government. This use of power was calculated to alienate New York from its sister states. Clinton was further accused of having used the Council of Appointment of the state for gain of party rather than for the benefit of the state itself. The new governor must be a man capable of uniting all good men behind the Constitution and seeking amendments of those parts that needed improvement. The people of New York, the letter went on, were always strong in support of the new Constitution, but for the purpose of healing factional divisions it was decided to nominate Judge Robert Yates. Originally opposed to the Constitution, Judge Yates, according to Hamilton, had since proven to be a figure of moderation and conciliation.[8]

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[7]New York Daily Gazette, Feb. 20, 1789; Daily Advertiser (New York), Feb. 20, 1789; New York Packet, Feb. 20, 1789. The New York Journal, the leading anti-federalist newspaper of New York under its editor, Thomas Greenleaf, published neither the introduction nor the circular letter, itself.

[8]New York Daily Gazette, Feb. 20, 1789. Among the signers of the circular letter was Aaron Burr in a rare moment of public political activity. Matthew L. Davis, in his Memoirs of Burr, I, 287, explained this action on the part of Burr as a direct outgrowth of his personal

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If the federalists under Hamilton's leadership acted first, the antis had the ready-made candidate in Governor Clinton. For the moment, in fact, they were more concerned with the demand of the federalists that each house of the State Legislature have a negative on the other in the election of United States senators. In a series of letters to John Smith, a member of the State Assembly from Suffolk County, such New York City leaders of the anti-federalists as Melancton Smith, John Lamb, James M. Hughes, and David Gelston expressed their feelings and fears on the issue of the moment. These were not, however, feelings of the moment and they reveal the differences that the antis saw between themselves and the federalists--differences that would grow into solidified positions in the overheated atmosphere produced by later political and French Revolutionary events. The anti-federalists strongly held to the view of a joint ballot of both houses of the legislature out of fear of the Senate, whose powers, they claimed, were not known in degree or extent "in a single branch of a Legislature in any free government,"[9] and whose powers must be controlled. They feared that the idea of a separate balloting by the two houses for United States senator would "add amazing force" to the tendency toward aristocracy.

This issue was to recur again and again in such diverse instances as the questioning of the power of the United States Senate as

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friendship for Robert Yates and not necessarily as a partisan political action.

[9]Letter, Melancton Smith to John Smith, Dec. 28, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers. See also the letter of D. Gelston to J. Smith, Jan. 9, 1789, and John Lamb to J. Smith, Jan. 17, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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opposed to that of the House of Representatives during the Jay Treaty controversy and the domestic argument over whether the French should form a one- or a two-house legislature. In the spring of 1789 this issue helped to produce answers to the question of how the antis viewed the federalists. A letter from David Gelston to John Smith was again quite revealing. According to Gelston, the federalists, in their attitude towards the election of senators, really said that "the people at large dont know how to govern nor take care of themselves and it would be much better for them and much easier and more happy for the whole - to have a few Well Born Sensible and Judicious (they must be men of great Estates) to Elect Choose & Legislate -." Gelston went on to praise Smith for taking a firm stand "on strong Republican Ground" on the same issue. Gelston also took that moment to announce his support of the new government under the Constitution. His reasons were simple and practical. The government was a fact, it was here, and it should be used to support "the Rights of the People" by preserving "inviolate and...to the latest Posterity" the rights and privileges of the Assembly as well as the Senate.[10]

Busy discussing ideology, the anti-federalists were slow to act in both the election for governor and in the election for representative to Congress that was going on at the same time. The congressional election, which was to take place on March 3, 1789, once again found the anti-federalists second in the field of political battle. Alexander Hamilton, the indefatigable federalist leader, who was the spokesman for a committee to elect John Lawrence, a lawyer, as con-

[10]Letter, D. Gelston to J. Smith, Jan. 1, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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gressman, called for coordination among the wards for the election of the proper candidates.[11] The opposition apparently learned from this technique, but it was not until April 2, a month too late for the Congressional election, that the antis decided to appoint a committee of thirty six from the different wards of the city in order to promote the re-election of Clinton.[12]

Several days before the congressional election, the opposition to the federalists finally called a meeting to seek a merchant as representative from the district, for, the argument went, no other district in the state was likely to do so and the interests of the city could basically be better served by a commercial figure than by a lawyer. The candidate selected by this nebulous group was John Broome, the President of the Chamber of Commerce and a supporter of George Clinton. One correspondent noted that mercantile interests, like the farmer, landholder, and mechanic must be represented, especially in the first Congress where the whole system of commercial regulations would be set.[13] The federalist opposition countered with arguments that it used in all elections that year. John Lawrence, their candidate, was a true federalist who could best represent the city of New York. Party and factional efforts by the anti-federalists were decried, for the nomination of John Broome was interpreted as just that. The public,

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[11]Election Circular, [Feb. 23-28, 1789], The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, ed. by Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke (15 vols. — ; New York: Columbia University Press, 1961-), V, 268. See also New York Journal, Feb. 26, 1789.

[12]New York Journal, Apr. 2, 1789.

[13]"Federal Merchant" and "An Elector", New York Daily Gazette, Feb. 26, 1789; New York Journal, Feb. 26, 1789.

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itself, had no doubts, for the outcome was an overwhelming victory for John Lawrence who was to represent the city and county of New York in the first two Congresses under the Constitution.[14]

The most important event of that election year, the campaign for governor, was still a long way from conclusion, however, and the major issues still remained to be well aired. A closer look at this election is in order for it would serve several purposes. First, it would show the role of the newspaper as the basic source of argument and information in New York life; second, it would show the techniques developed by the opposing groups to coordinate their efforts; third, it would show the development of arguments that were to be used and re-used over years of political infighting and which would take on even greater significance with the arrival of republican France on the world scene; and fourth, it would show the ever-rising bitterness and hostility that would ultimately separate personal friends, divide social organizations, and overwhelm the broad themes of agreement.

It had already been seen how Alexander Hamilton had led his forces into the political field by means of a New York City committee to elect Robert Yates as governor and by means of coordination of activities among the city wards. It was more than a month later before the newspapers were able to report that the antis, through a committee chaired by the merchant, Jonathan Lawrence (no relation to the new congressman), had met, issued a statement in support of Governor Clinton for re-election, and attempted to coordinate ward activities.[15]

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[14] Daily Advertiser, Mar. 3, 1789. In reference to the Congressional campaign, John Lawrence, whose last name was also spelled Laurence or Laurance, won with almost 90% of the vote. See the New York Daily Gazette, Apr. 9, 1789, for specific figures.

[15] New York Daily Gazette, Mar. 26, 1789. Upstate, however, the

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The federalists, however, had by then taken the lead in more than corresponding committees and political ward actions. James M. Hughes had stated as early as February 22, and with some anxiety, that "the Federalists in this Town are laboring with all Diligence to dethrone Governor Clinton." With Alexander Hamilton in full control, these were not the same federalists pictured in later times as aloof, narrow-minded men making their mean plans in dark and secret places. Such men would not have produced the portrait verbally painted by Hughes when he complained--in apparent reference to them--that political "Abuse both in Prose and Verse is current at every Corner of the Streets."[16]

The abuse in prose can be verified; that in verse has to be taken on trust. But one's trust does not have to be stretched too far if George Washington, himself, could have been caricatured in a far from friendly manner as early as a month before he took office. The cartoon, described by the caustic General John Armstrong, showed Washington arriving in New York "mounted on an ass and in the arms of his mulatto Man Billy - Humphrey's [Colonel David Humphrey, Washington's aide] leading the Jack and chaunting Hosannas & Birthday odes." As Armstrong noted in conclusion, "wit spares nothing - neither

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Clintonian forces had acted with much greater dispatch. In a letter dated Feb. 26, 1789, Peter Van Gaasbeck wrote to the New York City anti-federalist, Abraham B. Bancker (NYHS, Bancker Papers), that the most important decision taken by his group was to nominate Clinton for governor and Pierre Van Courtlandt for lieutenant-governor. Interestingly, in an N.B. at the bottom, Van Gaasbeck had noted: "Col. Hamilton's Letters as Chairman of the corresponding federal committee in New York, made their appearance at our meeting but were ordered to be thrown under the Table, which accordingly was done." The very loose formation of many of those groups can be seen in the fact that Hamilton's letter was presented at all.

[16]Letter, James M. Hughes to John Smith, Feb. 22, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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Washington nor God." As for mere mortals, how much less could they expect![17]

Clinton was certainly not spared even by so august a personage as the Chancellor of New York, Robert R. Livingston, who agreed to a characterization of the governor in these words: "The gov^r^ has as you observed been long a coward." Livingston believed that Clinton would probably be re-elected due to the lack of unity among the opposition (that view was written before the nomination of Yates), but the Chancellor was sure that Clinton would hold office "not attended with the respect and favor of the people."[18] Killian K. Van Rensselaer, writing to Samuel B. Webb from upstate and noting the active role of "Col. H [amilton]" in favor of Judge Yates, added, "I believe old Clinton the sinner will get ousted." General Webb, responding in kind from New York, was less certain of victory for "you well know the art and cunning of Clinton and his party....In this quarter we have nothing to fear. He is most heartily despised except by a few Sycophants whom he has put in office and their dependants 'whose price of office has been obedience to their chief.'"[19]

In the same letter, General Webb had further noted that a series of anti-Clinton letters were then being published in Childs'

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[17]Letter, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Apr. 7, 1789, NYHS, Gates Papers.

[18]Letter, Robert R. Livingston to M. G. J. de Crèvecoeur, Dec. 27, 1788, NYHS, Robert R. Livingston Collection (hereinafter referred to as RRL Coll.).

[19]Killian K. Van Rensselaer to Samuel B. Webb, Mar. 14, 1789 and S. B. Webb to K. K. Van Rensselaer, Mar. 22, 1789, Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb, ed. by Worthington C. Ford (3 vols.; New York: n.p., 1893), III, 125, 126-127.

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daily paper "which are worthy of your attention."[20] These were the "H. G." letters which the editor of the new standard version of The Papers of Alexander Hamilton has said were, with "little doubt," written by Hamilton. The "H. G." letters were typical of Hamilton's political infighting style--sharp, direct, sometimes vicious, and more productive of bitter invective than quiet reasoning. They were characterized, and rightly so, as "a sustained attack" on Governor Clinton, involving accusations of the misuse of state funds as far back as revolutionary days.[21] This brought forward a defense of Clinton and his character by Marinus Willett, anti-federalist and Sheriff of New York, who in turn was attacked by "H.G." as one whose conscience was kept by the governor.[22]

The anti-federalists attempted to "give as good as they got." Thomas Greenleaf's New York Journal printed a letter signed "A Freeholder" in which the latter attacked the opposition to Clinton as aristocrats and thieves and called Yates a Judas. The Governor was held up as a republican, a patriot, a family man, and a simple man of the people who was not out to destroy the Constitution but only to amend it as most states had recommended. Are all Clinton's virtues to be blotted out, he asked, because "his free mind cannot subscribe to the political creed of an H_____n [Hamilton] and S_____r [Philip J.

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[20]S. B. Webb to K. K. Van Rensselaer, Mar. 22, 1789, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 125, 126-127.

[21]Introduction to H. G. Letters, Feb., 1789, Papers of Hamilton, V, 262; "H. G.," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 10 and Mar. 17, 1789.

[22]Marinus Willett, Daily Advertiser, Mar. 19, 1789; "H. G.," Ibid., Mar. 21, 1789.

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Schuyler, Hamilton's father-in-law]?"[23]

Abuse of the most personal sort, as typified by "H. G." and "A Freeholder," was always an aspect of American politics, and New York City was certainly part of that tradition. Some, in fact, considered that vituperation could be a positive action in itself, as well as a developer of needed discussion. At that time, John Fenno's Gazette of the United States published what might be considered a defense of such techniques: "Debate and Dissention not only flow from civil liberty, but contribute to preserve it." The author, probably Fenno, continued by noting that in despotic governments the individual had little occasion to be a disputant. Instead, the writer declared, the subject's "whole attention is employed, in performing duties that are laid upon him." In a country of freedom, however, "every man knows that he may be eligible to legislation. Every man feels a pride & independence of spirit." Then, in an extraordinary and unexpected passage, the writer added: "No restraint can safely be put upon an indulgence which is in itself so salutary. There is less danger from excess than from restriction....But while the spirit of liberty exists, controversy is unavoidable."[24] Nothing could more fully show the optimism

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[23]"A Freeholder," New York Journal, Mar. 19, 1789. In reference to political abuse, what could humans not expect when even the venerable City of New York found itself subject to attack. One reader of the Daily Advertiser, on Jan. 21, 1789, felt required to defend the city against those Philadelphia writers, who, apparently jealous of New York's new status as the nation's capital, called it, among other things, and without regard "for truth or decency, the 'sink of British politics' and the 'headquarters of antifederalism.'" That is, indeed, an odd juxtaposition, for over the next decade British politics and federalism were the pair that were supposed to go together.

[24]"The Tablet, no. III," G.U.S., Apr. 22, 1789. In reference to the point that Fenno's Gazette of the United States ultimately became the national newspaper of federalism, it should be noted that un-

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of the time than to note again that this view came from John Fenno's Gazette of the United States. Fenno, whose newspaper became the national standard bearer of Federalism, would ultimately spend many years decrying that very lack of restraint on the part of the opposition to the general government which he now seemed to praise so roundly.

Having observed that abuse was an expected part of the electoral process, the reporter's final task in viewing this election is to regard it in its totality, and then to separate the general themes from the specific feelings of the moment. Of the accusations against and defense of Clinton's governorship, two points stand out. In an address "To the Independent and Patriotic Electors of the State of New York," the committee of which Hamilton was chairman accused Clinton of opposition to the Constitution on too broad a basis and of being too much a party man. In an "Extraordinary" edition of the Journal two weeks later, the reply "To the Free and Independent Electors of the State of New York," signed for the committee by Jonathan Lawrence, addressed itself in particular to those two points. The committee believed that the opposition to Clinton had originated "either in private animosity or party views, and not from regard to the public weal." The committee agreed that the spirit of party, or more properly, the spirit of faction, was always opposite to a public spirit. They denied, however, that the governor had done anything to attach himself to such a group,

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like the other newspapers of New York, Fenno's Gazette was already a national paper. Fenno had come to New York City only because it was the seat of the national government. When Philadelphia became the nation's capital in the fall of 1790, Fenno immediately moved to that city and set up shop there.

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calling the charge that he was the leader of a faction groundless. The governor was not a mad man intent on producing anarchy through the destruction of the new Constitution. He was simply desirous of adding safeguard amendments to that document.[25]

This last point was also used by a writer in the New York Journal. The election, he declared, would determine whether or not the new system of government would be controlled for the people by the addition of necessary amendments. The future of the state governments and the freedom of the people were at stake. Clinton was opposed to tyranny in all forms whether "in the shape of royal prerogative, an act of parliament, or a new constitution." He was needed to lead the forces who wished to remove the defects in the new system.[26] Another letter in the Journal, this one signed "Junius," called for Clinton's re-election on the ground that he would watch for "Encroachments and unsurpations of power (if any should be attempted) of the general government, on the existing constitution and laws of our state."[27] "Philopos," in the Daily Gazette, reversed the question of power by noting that Clinton should be defeated, for in a republican government four three-year terms was quite enough. For his own good, for the people's good, and for the good of the republican principles he should

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[25]"To the Independent and Patriotic Electors of the State of New York," New York Journal, Apr. 9, 1789; "To the Free and Independent Electors of the State of New York," New York Journal Extraordinary, Apr. 23, 1789.

[26]Extract of a letter from Albany, New York Journal, Mar. 12, 1789.

[27]"Junius," New York Journal, Apr. 2, 1789.

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be turned out.[28] Again both sides agreed in their basic positions: opposition to party and faction and attachment to republican government. Unfortunately, both often refused to believe the other side capable of similar feelings, thereby turning specific differences into hard-and-fast ideological divisions.

It was still a time for optimism, however, when the Gazette of the United States, in the midst of an election that David Gelston was to call a "struggle," could hope that the "Hatchet 'will be burried'" and that "temper and moderation" will prevail. This was despite the fact that Fenno had to acknowledge that the state appeared to be "convulsed by parties."[29] It was an optimism that can only be explained in terms of a deep-seated belief in the new Constitution and the new leadership of the country, and that was expressed in such diverse ways as in the faith of a New York mercantile agent that the new Congress would "adopt Such soothing concilliatory [sic] plans as will ensure the blessings of peace, and concord, and do whatever is consistent to destroy Party and faction";[30] in the faith of a New York merchant and land speculator that the new government would have a salutary effect on European bankers and the foreign and domestic debt credit of the United States;[31] in the faith of an anonymous letter writer to the Daily

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[28]"Philopos," New York Daily Gazette, Apr. 6, 1789.

[29]Letter, Gelston to J. Smith, May 7, 1789, NYHS, John Smith papers; G.U.S., Apr. 15, 1789.

[30]Letter, Colin McGregor to _____, Jan. 24, 1789, New York Public Library (hereinafter referred to as NYPL), Colin McGregor Letterbook (all letterbooks hereinafter referred to as LB).

[31]Letter, William Constable to James Chalmers, Feb. 24, 1789, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB from the Pierrepont-Constable Papers.

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Gazette who believed that discord and despair would be dispelled by the happy reality of the new Constitution; and in the faith of a correspondent to the same paper that Washington would "guard us from domestic calamity as he did from invasion."[32]

That optimism based on a total belief in the future of the country under the new government also found expression in the decision of the Common Council of the City of New York to deposit £2000 beyond their originally projected sum in the Bank of New York as security to allow them to proceed with the remodeling of Federal Hall under the supervision of Major Pierre Charles L'Enfant;[33] and it was a combination of pride and belief that led Chancellor Livingston to praise that building as one "whose elegance and beauty exceed anything of the kind in America," while he awaited the change in government with "great expectations."[34] It was that same pride and belief in the new federal government and in the country, itself, that found expression in the New York Mechanic's Federal Song, one stanza of which follows:

> On a rock's solid base see the ediface stands,
> In this happy asylum for th' oppress'd of all lands,
> Every voice joins my chorus, and sweetly foretells,
> The bliss of the country where liberty dwells.[35]

This call to "th' oppress'd of all lands," with its optimism

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[32]New York Daily Gazette, Mar. 5 and Mar. 7, 1789.

[33]The Iconography of Manhattan Island (hereinafter referred to as Iconography), ed. by Isaac N. Phelps Stokes (6 vols.; New York: R. H. Dodd, 1916-1928), V, 1236.

[34]Letter, R. R. Livingston to [Marquis Francois de Barbé-] Marbois, Apr. 1, 1789, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[35]"The New York Mechanics Federal Song," New York Daily Gazette, Apr. 21, 1789.

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and faith appeared in the New York Daily Gazette even as the "Father of our Country," as Mayor James Duane of New York called General Washington, approached the city.[36] It must have been pure and simple faith that moved the President-elect's old enemy, General Horatio Gates, to write to Mayor Duane two months before the new president was to be sworn in that "Anti-federalism will die away by degrees.... Therefore let all people say Amen, and support it [the new government] accordingly."[37] And it was the faith of a lover twice over--once for his country and its President and once for his wife-to-be that filled Samuel Blachley Webb's description, written for Miss Hogeboom, of the inauguration of "the Presdt-General." Appointed by the Committee of Congress as one of the "Masters of Ceremony," Webb described how, on that last day in April, 1789, he "accompanied the Presdt. from his lodgings to the Senate room, from thence to St. Paul's Church and back to his house, thro' the surrounding shouts of Joy, of the greatest concourse of Citizens, that I ever beheld."[38] While the huzzas and hosannas of the multitude still echoed and re-echoed throughout the winding streets that surrounded the balcony of Federal Hall where the President was sworn in, the public happily went about its business firm in its belief that the proper helmsman had come aboard.

In state politics, George Clinton did win that "struggle" over

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[36]Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1784-1831, ed. by Arthur E. Peterson (21 vols.; New York: n.p., 1917, 1930), I, 447-448.

[37]Letter, Horatio Gates to James Duane, Feb. 22, 1789, NYHS, James Duane Papers.

[38]S. B. Webb to Miss Hogeboom, May 3, 1789, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 128-129.

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Robert Yates, albeit by a much closer vote than the "lead of 1500" that David Gelston had predicted. At the same time the federalists swept the legislative and congressional elections for the city and county of New York. Shortly thereafter a compromise was worked out in the State Legislature which allowed New York to send its two senators to the United States Senate.[39]

Thus both sides had a reason for political optimism at the moment that the nation was poised on the verge of a new period in its history. David Gelston and Samuel B. Webb and all of the people of New York City, provided as they were with a new federal government and an old anti-federal governor, could have, without too great a struggle, united behind John Fenno's expectant and hopeful declaration about America: "It remains for her to complete the splendour of her character, by giving a successful operation to the new government. Wisdom may devise - experience and patriotism may enforce her dictates, but the great body of the people must give the tone to the administration of the new system - And they will do it."[40]

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[39]Letter, Gelston to J. Smith, May 7, 1789, NYHS, John Smith Papers. For more complete election returns see New York Journal, June 4, 1789 which showed a Clintonian victory by 329 votes out of 12,353 ballots cast. For a discussion of state legislature election results see unsigned letter conjectured to be from John Watts, Jr. to General [Philip J.] Schuyler and [James] Duane, June 5, 1789, NYHS, Duane Papers.

[40]G.U.S., Apr. 29, 1789.

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CHAPTER II

"Gen'rous France" - "Gen'rous Flame"

Among the many festive activities that had been planned for the arrival of President-elect Washington in New York City was the singing of an ode specially composed for the occasion. The tune employed had a certain irony attached to it since it was the old favorite, "God save the King." The new words were by "Mr. L** [Nicholas Low]," poet laureate of the Tammany Society, a director of the Bank of New York, and a New York City merchant and land speculator, whose doggerel-versed second stanza would have deserved to have been kept from posterity were it not for a concluding couplet of some historical importance. The stanza follows:

> Thrice blest Columbians hail!
> Behold, before the gale,
> Your Chief advance;
> The matchless Hero's nigh!
> Applaud Him to the sky;
> Who gave you liberty,
> With gen'rous France.[1]

There was much truth of fact and feeling in those last two lines. The hard-won liberty of the United States owed much to the efforts of the French, and Americans were grateful. A problem

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[1] "Ode Sung on the Arrival of the President of the United States," New York Journal, Apr. 30, 1789; Richard B. Morris, "Low, Nicholas," DAB, XI, 448-449.

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would arise, however, when an attempt would be made by some Americans to claim that the fate of American liberties was tied to the fate of the French Revolution. It was the intertwining of two ideas: that our liberty and with it our liberties depended upon events going on within France and, later, upon the outcome of the war between France and the combined powers, that was to create so many of the strains and difficulties faced by this country in the 1790's.

As noted in the previous chapter, no such strain or difficulty was in sight in 1789. Whether federalist or anti-federalist, in the terms of that period, all New Yorkers would have delighted in voicing their feelings concerning a generous France--and many did. Among the individual New Yorkers who left a record of positive response to those early days of the French Revolution was Gouverneur Morris, the intelligent, witty, and worldly half-brother of Lewis Morris, the signer of the Declaration of Independence. Gouverneur Morris spent all of the years of the French Revolution abroad, many of them in France, and for part of the time as United States Minister to that country. Morris had just arrived in Paris as business agent for Robert Morris (no relation) when he wrote to the Count de Moustier that "I find on this side of the Atlantic a resemblance to what I left on the other; a nation which exists in hopes, prospects, and expectations." In a letter to William Carmichael two days later, Morris added that he considered France "as the natural ally of my country"; and then he simply noted, that "to say the truth, I love France."[2] Chancellor Livingston, writing to the Mar-

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[2]Gouverneur Morris to Count de Moustier, Feb. 23, 1789 and to William Carmichael, Feb. 25, 1789, Jared Sparks, The Life of Gouverneur

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quis de Barbé-Marbois, stated: "I see you are like to produce very important changes in that of your nation. God grant that the people both there and here may find their expectations of happiness realized." Livingston's sister, Janet L. Montgomery, the widow of the Revolutionary War general and hero, Richard Montgomery, added a broader wish when she wrote to her brother while on a visit to Ireland that "the Troubles in France you may believe give no small satisfaction to their neibours [sic] who profit by them on every account yet may it not blow up their spirit of freedom which may give a shake to those who now stand so strong."[3]

Alexander Hamilton, who was never known to have suffered from an overwhelming francophilia, suggested to the newly-inaugurated President Washington that he give no more than four formal entertainments a year, each on the anniversary of an important event in the American Revolution. One of those events to be memorialized, according to Hamilton, was the day of the signing of the treaty of alliance with France. To the Marquis de Lafayette, Hamilton wrote that he had some apprehensions for the fate of the changes taking place in France, but "as a friend to mankind and to liberty I rejoice in the efforts which you are making." Hamilton noted with pleasure the "abdication of priviledges [sic] patronised by your Nobility in the States General."[4]

Morris (3 vols.; Boston: Gray & Bowen, 1832), II, 60, 63. See David Saville Muzzey, "Morris, Gouverneur," DAB, XIII, 209-212, for a brief summary of the life of Gouverneur Morris.

[3]Letters, R. R. Livingston to Barbé-Marbois, Apr. 1, 1789 and Janet L. Montgomery to R. R. Livingston, Nov. 19, 1789, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[4]Alexander Hamilton to George Washington, May 5, 1789 and Hamilton to Marquis de Lafayette, Oct. 6, 1789, Papers of Hamilton, V, 335-336, 425-426.

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John Jay, who had recently become Chief Justice of the United States, wrote to a Paris correspondent that "the people of this country ardently wish success to the revolution in France, and that they may speedily enjoy all the blessings of peace, plenty, and good government."[5] And James Beekman, corresponding with a French mercantile house in the Far East, seemed to sum up the feelings of those New Yorkers who left behind expressions of their feelings:

> We would congratulate you and your countrymen on the late successful Revolution that has taken place in your Government, and sincerely wish that it may, (with ours) be mutually productive of the highest advantages to the commercial, as well as political interests of our respective countries. And as our late Struggles in the glorious Cause of Liberty have been similar in their Object, as well as happy Issue, it were to be wished that the Harmony and Friendship that have subsisted between us may be more and more cemented and increased.[6]

The preceding series of individual attitudes in favor of the French Revolution, ranging from the happy expectation of great changes to congratulations on their pleasurable fulfillment, was paralleled by similar statements in the newspapers of New York. The pages of those newspapers were filled with praise for that revolution as news reached the city in September 1789 of the events in France of the previous June. The editor of the federalist Gazette of the United States, as early as September 5, 1789, expressed what was to be for him a continuing attitude as long as he remained in New York City:

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[5]John Jay to Mr. Grand, Mar.1, 1790, Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, ed. by Henry P. Johnston (4 vols.; New York: n.p., 1890), III, 386.

[6]James Beekman to Lanchon Bros. & Co., Oct. 12, 1790, The Beekman Mercantile Papers, 1746-1799, ed. by Philip L. White (3 vols.; New York: New York Historical Society, 1956), III, 1114.

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> The people of France never appeared in a more exalted point of view than at the present important crisis. As friends to the equal rights of human nature, Americans cannot be indifferent spectators of their glorious exertions in the cause of liberty,- and as allies and friends they cannot but wish them a compleat triumph, in establishing a free const. of government.

Later that month, Greenleaf's anti-federalist New York Journal was prepared to state "that the people have effected a COMPLETE REVOLUTION in France-A revolution that is big with consequences of a nature destructive to despotism; and its concomitant evils-ignorance; superstition, and barbarity."[7] Greenleaf was to remain a full supporter of every twist and turn of the French Revolution from that moment on. The New York Magazine, a literary publication, in its first issue, dated January, 1790, included an article "On the Means of Preserving Public Liberty" in which the author soberly praised science for its capacity to "break the chains and unbolt the prison doors of despotism." He went on to note that "at the present moment, France is an instance of its influence: the wealthy subjects of that country are become enlightened, and thus determined to be free." Then in a paroxysm of joy that presaged in one sentence the romantic rebellion from eighteenth century rationalism, the author rhapsodized: "O France! I love thee and thy sons; when my nightly supplication forgets to ask a blessing on thy great exertions, and on thy councils, I shall lose my claim of being a Christian."[8] Though sometimes mingled with forebodings for the success of the revolution, all the New York City newspapers and magazines, including as well the federalist Daily Advertiser and the Daily

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[7] New York Journal, Sept. 24, 1789.

[8] New York Magazine, I (Jan. 1790), 25. For similar expressions in other New York City papers see the New York Daily Gazette, May 17, 1791 and the Daily Advertiser, May 27, 1791.

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Gazette, the mildly anti-federalist Packet, and the literary Weekly Museum, presented a solid front in favor of the events that were transforming "gen'rous" France.

In relation to the last statement concerning the favorable view held by the newspapers of New York towards French events, one point needs immediate clarification: how would the reader determine the opinions held by each newspaper? Editorials in the form in which we understand them today were all but unknown to the newspaper readers of the early Federalist period. The editors of the New York newspapers were generally printers, book-sellers and stationers. They were cut-and-paste men. Gradually, however, during the decade of the 1790's, editorials did begin to appear in some of the press with a great deal of regularity. The editorials could be found in one place--directly under the date in the middle pages of the four page sheet that was the newspaper of those years. The editorials were almost never signed, but the style indicated to the constant reader whether the editor was indeed the author of a particular piece. Among New York editors, Thomas Greenleaf of the New York Journal editorialized consistently throughout this period, as did John Fenno of the Gazette of the United States. Noah Webster, the only college-educated editor, who entered the New York scene in December, 1793, as editor of the American Minerva, editorialized almost every day. The editors of the Columbian Gazetteer, published for the first time in August, 1793, editorialized with some frequency, while Samuel Loudon of the New York Packet (later the Diary) and Francis Childs of the Daily Advertiser less frequently contributed their own opinions to their respective newspapers. Archibald M'Lean of the New York Daily Gazette and John

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Harrisson of the literary Weekly Museum almost never gave editorial comment.

In addition to the direct manner of determining the editorial position of the newspapers through the opinions expressed by the editors, there were other and more indirect means available. Some of the editors summarized the news reports themselves and thereby oftentimes gave their bias away. Moreover, as the political division among New Yorkers became clearer over the years, the political orientation of the newspapers could increasingly be judged by the opinions expressed in a majority of the political essays which they published. It would be dangerous, however, for the reader--even the most practiced researcher--to attempt to extrapolate editorial position from essays or raw news columns unless one were totally familiar with a newspaper over a period of years. Even then the material would be inconclusive for the first years after the acceptance of the Constitution and the beginning of the French Revolution. Internal political divisions would not be played up in the newspapers of New York with any frequency until 1792 and foreign policy divisions would not become clear or important until one year later.[9]

Certainly no such problem of interpretation existed in the first years of the Revolution when the newspapers of New York were edi-

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[9]Dr. Samuel Miller, a New York Presbyterian minister, published a major work early in the nineteenth century called A Brief Retrospect of the Eighteenth Century (London: J. Johnson, 1805), p. 93, in which he noted that newspapers had considerably changed "their form and character" during the previous decade. In Miller's words, "they have become the vehicle of discussion in which the principles of government, the interest of nations, the spirit and tendencies of public measures, and the public and private character of individuals, are all arraigned, tried, and decided upon."

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torially unanimous in their support of all aspects of the French Revolution. Nevertheless, many readers began to express dissatisfaction at what they considered to be the anti-French bias found in the English press reports--reports that were the chief source of the New Yorker's information about the French Revolution. As a result, the New York editors frequently found themselves forced to apologize for their reliance upon such sources.

One such exchange took place in the pages of the Gazette of the United States. A letter writer, signing himself "S. F. P.," wrote "To Mr. Fenno" that the English papers could well be expected to print lies about the French Revolution. "S. F. P." found it hard to understand, however, how American papers could print that scurrility without even a line "to inspire some doubts on the veracity of those publications." "S. F. P." then requested that excerpts be reprinted from the London Evening Post, rather than from the World, or any other paper which was under the influence of "Calonne, and his creatures"; even more preferable, he suggested, were direct translations made from the French press. "S. F. P. " then concluded with this ominous thought: "Designedly to insult the feelings of a whole nation, may perhaps be attended with more disagreeable consequences than some are aware of."[10]

Fenno, and the press in general, were defended by "Candidus," who might well have been Fenno himself. Replying directly to charges by "S. F. P." and others, "Candidus" noted that he had "always felt interested in the success of our allies in their exertions to obtain a

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[10]"S. F. P.," G.U.S., Dec. 30, 1789.

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a free Constitution, and in saying this, I speak the sentiment of every American revolutionist." Printers want to print the truth, he insisted, but it was often difficult in such a case to distinguish between truth and fabrication. Living up to his name, "Candidus" went on to admit that an editor, "being often in want of materials" threw in "the whole mass of incongruities." "Candidus" then concluded with an attempted refutation of the charge that the unintentional publication of false information could cause difficulty between the United States and France: "It is hardly consistent with candor to suggest that America is justly taxable with ingratitude to her allies, because the printers inadvertently publish British misrepresentations of the affairs of France."[11] Nevertheless, the New York editors had been forewarned that their public would not easily accept news reports that questioned the success of the French Revolution.[12]

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[11] "Candidus," Ibid., Jan. 6, 1790. For similar discussions of the problem faced by the editor who decided to reprint unfavorable news about the French Revolution, see the New York Journal of Nov. 26, 1789 and June 8, 1790 and the Daily Advertiser of Sept. 24, 1790. The questioning of the quality of French news received through English sources can be noted ever among persons not unfriendly to the British. Rufus King, federalist senator from New York, wrote to Gouverneur Morris on September 1, 1792, that "Our information respecting France comes principally through England and is so confused and coloured, that we are unable to form a rational opinion of their affairs." He, therefore, asked Morris to send him "exact intelligence" covering French affairs. Life and Correspondence of Rufus King, ed. by Charles R. King (6 vols.; New York: n.p., 1894-1900), I, 426.

[12] The dilemma faced by New York's newspaper editors remained, however, in the face of such statements as that made by Walter Rutherford to his son, John (Dec. 19, 1789, NYHS, Rutherford Collection), that "we have no European news . . . and our Papers are most barren." As the years passed, the editors continued to feel compelled to print all available European and French news despite contradictory and incomplete versions. M'Lean of the New York Daily Gazette took pains to explain, in the issue of July 15, 1793, that the news, though large with conjecture had but little certainty. He made his point with a jingle which neither reads well nor scans well but is, to use a favorite word

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Since most New Yorkers had to base their opinions solely on newspaper accounts--and, as previously noted, primarily on English sources,[13] it would be well to check into the presentation of the facts as found in the newspapers of New York during the first years of the French Revolution. Thus a sample could be taken of the kind and quality of information that was available to the general public.

The winter and spring of 1789 were barren times as far as French news was concerned. If the New Yorker read his Daily Gazette carefully, he would have noted, in February, a report of the Assembly of Notables which was expected to lead to a meeting of the States General, which in turn would produce "a total regeneration in the present absolute monarchical system of that government." It was further reported that republican principles were on everybody's lips and many believed this would terminate in revolution.[14] Not until May did another report surface--an article in the Journal in praise of Necker as the man who could reconcile all views and bring reason forward. The article stated that Necker's report on the restoration of the States-General had been adopted by the King, Queen, and a majority of the Coun-

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of the editors of the period, "authentic":

> Opinions can be form'd on conjectures alone,
> Our readers must be full as good as our own.

Greenleaf, in the issues of the New York Journal for Jan. 8 and 11, 1794, spoke constantly of public anxiety and of a public on the "tenter hooks of suspense" while waiting for further European news. And Loudon of the Diary (New York) reported, in the May 21, 1794 issue, that "some say, the papers are good for nothing to-day, when they hear of no battles being lost or won."

[13] See supra, p. 28.

[14] New York Daily Gazette, Feb. 4, 1789.

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cil, and that the States-General would include in the third estate a number equal to the other two. A month later the Gazette of the United States pointed out that changes of a vast nature were going on in France. The view was that the nobility would join with the Third Estate in deciding that the vote would be by persons. July contained a little more news: a statement noted that the American Revolution had produced two warring European factions--France and Spain on one side and England on the other; a speech by Brissot de Warville, during the election for deputies to the Estates-General, was printed along with events at the meeting that followed; and the speech of Louis XVI at the opening of the Estates-General on May 5, 1789 was also reproduced.[15]

At the beginning of August there was a brief flurry of news, with the first extended reports from France appearing in the Packet and the Journal. The latter reported on the meeting of the Estates-General and the difficulty between the Third Estate and unbending members of the first two estates. Under the heading "Parission [sic] Topics." there was a report that while a "glorious revolution is forming under the auspices of a STATES GENERAL of the kingdom" it was felt that all possible news was waited with interest. All then lapsed into silence until the headline "Revolution in France" appeared in the Daily Gazette on August 31.[16] The New York press was to be filled from that moment until the end of the year with endless accounts of news from France in order to satisfy the appetite of a suddenly aroused public. "Suddenly"

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[15]New York Journal, May 7, 1789; G.U.S., June 3, 1789; New York Daily Gazette, July 25 and July 27, 1789.

[16]New York Journal and New York Packet, Aug. 6, 1789; New York Daily Gazette, Aug. 31, 1789.

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is the key word, for little of the French ferment in the spring of 1789 and little of the hot-house atmosphere present in France for the several previous years seemed to have penetrated the news reports that earlier reached this country. Of course, American events of some importance had taken place since the spring of 1787 which could have crowded out any full treatment of French or other foreign occurrences.

As if to atone for such an oversight every last drop of French news was at first presented. Meetings of the Estates-General were given in detail, and such events as the Tennis Court Oath, the King's address to the assembled Estates, the defiance of the Third Estate, and Mirabeau's motion that during the sessions of the National Assembly no deputy might be prosecuted, arrested, or detained for any action or statement made at the National Assembly were described in full. General reports followed of the confusion in France, of a stalking famine, threats by the King and troop movements.[17] Then came a report that the Bastille was demolished with seven thousand reported killed. Greenleaf of the Journal hoped that that number was false, but, he philosophized, "to quote a trite maxim 'Where slavery is becme familiar habit, the diadem of freedom must be stampt in blood.'"[18]

Loudon's Packet confirmed the news of the taking of the Bastille through information received from a ship just in from Bordeaux. He noted approvingly "that it was highly probable the government would undergo a complete change, and the nation made happy in being freed

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[17]For these reports see New York Journal, Sept. 3 and 10, 1789; Daily Advertiser, Sept. 1, 1789, and New York Packet, Sept. 1, 1789.

[18]New York Journal, Sept. 17, 1789.

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from the shackles of despotism, and arbitrary government."[19] The massive infusion of French material continued in October, with lengthy reports of the sessions of the National Assembly appearing almost daily. The August decrees were also greeted with approval and the Declaration of the Rights of Man published in full. In fact, all aspects of the political problems were presented in depth--the depth of a newspaper article, with the inclusion of some interpretive columns. November and December newspapers continued in the same vein with special attention paid to such events as Robespierre's speech in the National Assembly on the liberty of the press. By the end of December, London reports down to November 13-17 had been received with more and more news of dangerous mob rule. The Daily Gazette of December 31, concluded the year with a full discussion of events in France through the end of October.[20] With the meeting of the United States Congress and the presentation by Alexander Hamilton of his funding plans, however, French news became a minor matter in the press, fading as suddenly as it had blossomed.

With this summary, it is now possible to pursue further the question raised earlier as to how well informed the newspaper readers of the time were concerning the major events going on in France. If this sample is allowed to stand for all the years of the French Revolution, and this author believes it can, the New York reader would have had a broad, if not always accurate, knowledge of the political events

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[19]New York Packet, Sept. 22, 1789.

[20]Daily Advertiser, Oct. 19, 21, 23 and 24, 1789; New York Journal, Oct. 22, 1789; New York Daily Gazette, throughout Oct., 1789; Daily Advertiser, Nov. 20, 24, 25 and 26, 1789 and Dec. 8, 12, 25 and 28, 1789; New York Daily Gazette, Dec. 31, 1789.

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taking place in France. In addition, certain leading figures of the Revolution had or would become familiar names in many a New York household, while the ever-present feeling of closeness to France would make sure that French news was carefully read.

There, however, was one great lack in the newspaper reporting of the time. Only one major aspect of the Revolution would ever be reported in any depth at any one period. At this time it was the political events centered around the National Assembly. At a later date, public interest and newspaper accounts would stress the war between France and the combined powers. Economic and social changes would hardly be noted or even attempted to be understood except by a few, and the newspapers generally would not bear down on those aspects. The philosophical differences among the various French factions, the rise of the clubs, events outside of Paris, such as the Great Fear--or, to put it bluntly, the basic question of what was really going on inside France, if it would serve to complicate the simple hope for the triumph of French liberty--all were ignored. For example, during the Montagnard period of the Revolution, the activities of the Convention were treated in the most generalized and often misunderstood manner by the press, and the Committee of Public Safety was hardly mentioned at all.[21]

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[21]This view is in at least partial disagreement with that of Kurt Beerman, "The Reception of the French Revolution in the New York State Press, 1788-1791" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York University, 1960), who stated, in his conclusion, that the reader of any one newspaper, excepting only the New York Weekly Museum, "possessed sufficient information to form an accurate idea of the events happening in France." Beerman's statement was certainly truest for the period covered by his dissertation but even there Beerman was forced to admit that the treatment accorded French events by the newspapers was "often too superficial." What was true of the period through 1791 became more so for the years that followed. Beatrice F. Hyslop, in her article "American Press Reports of the French Revolution, 1789-1794," New York

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And yet, considering the interpretive difficulties still present concerning many of the events and movements of the French Revolution, i.e., the role of the duc d'Orléans in the early agitation, or the question of the very existence of the so-called Girondist "party," one wonders if the American newspapers and public were not the wiser for their single-mindedness. Regardless of events, the New Yorker generally knew, in those first years, that he wanted France to acquire a government based on freedom, liberty and the consent of the governed, and later on he knew he wanted France to defeat the combined powers for the sake of republican government everywhere. Therefore, it was natural for the newspapers to stress those events which could be interpreted in the simplest and most recognizable terms as aspects of this wish for a free France that would pick up the American torch of liberty.

One final aspect of the early New York and American response to the French Revolution was contained in the view that Liberty (often seen in anthropomorphic terms) had found a home in the United States, from where she had in turn been sent out again to free the rest of the world. Our great and good ally France had now been handed the torch of Liberty. Typical of the "liberty passed on" approach was the short statement found in the Gazette of the United States that could stand for the whole genre: "Europe from America has caught the sacred flame of Freedom. It has kindled into a blaze - it has illuminated their

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Historical Society Quarterly, XLII (Oct., 1958), 329-348, accurately summed up my own research findings for New York City when she stated (p. 343), writing of the years 1793-1794, that "an American reader . . . would have had but little idea of the transformation then going on in France." (See infra, pp. 387-394, for a presentation of the newspaper reaction to the death of Robespierre and the unreality of the response, particularly Republican response, to that event.)

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darkness, and where tyranny erected her throne, and bigotry, ignorance, and superstition supported her infernal region, the sun of a glorious day has arisen - and Liberty rejoices in the divine light and resplendent beams."[22]

Poetry, of course, was also used to express the same idea. The actress, Mrs. Henry, on the occasion of the conclusion of the Old American Company's New York season at the John Street Theater, was given an epilogue to recite that included the view that "as men gain knowledge freedom gains dominion." She further expressed the hope that that ever increasing dominion should not find "Afric's sable Sons" still in chains:

> Oh let not truth offend! wipe out the stain!
> Shall freedom's Sons on others put the chain!
> Detested thought! soon may we hope to see,
> Columbia, Europe, Asia, Afric, FREE,
> One Genius reigns through all - ETERNAL LIBERTY.[23]

And in its New Year's wish to its readers, the Gazette of the United States expressed poetically what it had stated earlier in prose:

> The New Year's bard enraptur'd sings.
> Of halcyon days he tells a story....
> How Europe feels the sacred fire,
> Which erst our heroes did inspire,
> While France, the patron of the free,
> Springs into light and liberty.[24]

The title of still another poem will do very nicely to put this whole idea in succinct form: "On the present situation of France and the Influence which the Independency of America had in producing the Revolu-

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[22] G.U.S., Sept. 26, 1789.

[23] Ibid., Dec. 19, 1789.

[24] Ibid., Jan. 2, 1790.

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tion."[25]

From overseas came comments that seemed to reinforce the view of America's role in producing French freedom. The famous Latin American revolutionary, Francisco de Miranda, writing to Chancellor Livingston and congratulating him "on the prosperity of your new Constitution," further noted, "how your example influences the most submissive and presumptuous people of Europe! it is to be hoped, that those will communicate the taste to the rest....and I wish, the thing would become epidemic over all the nations of the globe!" The Chancellor's sister, still in Ireland, wrote to her brother that "France is treading in our footsteps. You have heard all titles are to be done away -."[26] From the National Assembly, itself, came verification of this belief in the reply of the President of the Assembly to a speech made there by John Paul Jones on July 11, 1790, in which Jones assured the Assembly that the United States remained faithful friends of France. The President noted: "It was by aiding you in the acquisition of Freedom, that the French learned to know it, and to love it." He continued, optimistically, that whereas the United States had to gain their freedom through a sea of blood, the French would do it by means of reason and the virtue and patriotism of their King. "Your country was the first Throne of Liberty," he concluded, but "now she supports herself on the two hemispheres!"[27]

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[25]New York Magazine, II (Jan., 1791), 53.

[26]Letters, Francisco de Miranda to R. R. Livingston, Mar. 30, 1790 and Janet L. Montgomery to R. R. Livingston, July 19, 1790, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[27]New York Daily Gazette, Sept. 28, 1790.

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The theme was carried still further by a respected New York clergyman, the Reverend William Linn, who had been requested by the Tammany Society to deliver the sermon at the fourth of July, 1791, services which that society would attend. The audience that assembled at the Middle Dutch Church that day heard a panegyric entitled The Blessings of America. After picturing the United States as the real Paradise set up by Providence, Linn turned to the French Revolution. In the warm glow of supreme faith, Linn summed up his thoughts on the passing of the torch of liberty: "It is perhaps, not just to say, that the flame was kindled by us, but certainly we contributed to blow and increase it, as France will in other nations; until blaze joining blaze, shall illumine the darkest and remotest corners of the earth." Linn, a true believer in the glorious future of the United States and in the power of the French Revolution to continue the process of remaking the world, concluded with the prayer that "peace, leading in her train religion, knowledge, & liberty, may forever dwell with us."[28]

Again and again we see how optimism, often unsullied by doubt, was the key to the American attitude toward events in France and Europe at that time. As Greenleaf's Journal expressed it in late 1791: "Liberty is now the watch word of half the inhabitants of Europe; & for any monarch to engage in a war against it, would be to put one half of his subjects in arms against the other. France (taught by America) and all Europe will eventually be free."[29] And "Hortensio," writing for The New York Magazine at about the same time, expressed in one fulsome es-

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[28]William Linn, The Blessings of America (New York: Thos. Greenleaf, 1791), pp. 34, 36.

[29]New York Journal, Nov. 12, 1791.

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say, a true apology for his times. Rejoicing to be living in the eighteenth century, he exultantly acknowledged his era:

> This is the age of revolutions - revolutions, not for the purpose of expelling one family of tyrants to introduce another; not for the purpose of making one man more than man, that others may be less; but for the glorious purpose of recovering the human mind from the empire of superstition, and reinstating it upon the throne of reason.

Americans had already "beheld the dawn" of this new era, "Hortensio" proclaimed.

> Our revolution had for its object the equal rights of man, and has been sealed with the richest blood that flowed in the veins of free-men. While exulting in their own high privileges, can the generous sons of America conceal their rapture at the happy prospect which is now opening to our brethren of the old world? A light so great and sudden must be expected at first to be too dazzling; but shortly it shall lead the nations to univeral peace and happiness.

Optimism was too understated a word for this attitude. As Liberty's torch was passed from the United States to France and thence to the world, was it not the millennium that was just around the corner?

30"Hortensio," New York Magazine, II (Sept., 1791), 532, 533.

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CHAPTER III

PROBLEMS FOR "the present order of things"

If at the end of 1791 a near unanimity of opinion still existed in New York City towards the French Revolution, broken only occasionally, as we shall see, by conservative warnings on the nature of man and the need for a vigorous government of three separate branches to preserve hard-won liberty, such was no longer the case concerning domestic issues. It was not that any large opposition still existed to the Constitution, itself, but a growing number of Americans began to express doubts concerning the direction in which some of the leaders of the federal government were taking it.

The key targets of this new anti-federal alignment were the Vice-President of the United States and the Secretary of the Treasury. The former had become involved in national controversy during the summer of 1791. John Adams, through two of his writings, the Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States (1787) and "Discourses on Davila" (1790), had already been accused of desiring to subvert "the stupendous fabric which we have lately reared, and which we fondly hoped would stand unimpaired for ages," the new government under the Constitution. The basis for that accusation was a misreading, either through ignorance or seeming willful misinterpretation, of Adams' remark, in his Defence of the Constitutions,"that

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without three orders and an effectual balance between them in every American constitution, it must be destined to frequent unavoidable revolution." Adams' view that the perfect constitution was "the tripartite balance, the political trinity in unity, trinity of legislative, and unity of executive power, which in politics is no mystery," was simply reduced to a point where Adams was accused of meaning a tri-ordered state made up of monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy.[1]

John Adams was also thought by the public, from Jefferson and Hamilton on down, to have written a series of essays signed "Publicola," which was printed in many of the major papers in the country, including the Daily Advertiser and the Journal in New York. "Publicola," who was really Adams' son, John Quincy, produced this work as a defense of Edmund Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France and in opposition to Thomas Paine's Rights of Man.[2] New Yorkers, and Americans, on the basis of newspaper editorials, essays, and letters, were almost unanimously in opposition to Burke's views, treating him as a modern Lucifer, while Paine's Rights of Man was praised as a contemporary guide

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[1]"Philodemos, no. III," Daily Advertiser, July 5, 1791. The first quote from John Adams' Defence of the Constitutions of Government of the United States was taken from "Philodemos, no. III," while the second quote came from Gordon S. Wood's in-depth study of early American political theory, The Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787 (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press, 1969), p. 575

[2]See Robert A. East, John Quincy Adams, the Critical Years: 1785-1795 (New York: Bookman Associates, Inc., 1962), pp. 134-135, 142-146, for the circumstances surrounding the writing of "Publicola" and for an analysis of its contents. East points out that Jefferson, whom Quincy Adams viewed as a "heresy hunter," was the real target of the "Publicola" essays.

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to man's freedom through reason. One example of that near unanimity of view can be found in a footnote to the printed version of the previously mentioned sermon of Dr. William Linn, The Blessings of America. Dr. Linn well summed up the prevailing view in this paragraph: "Edmund Burke; who has published reflections on the revolution in France; a performance containing abuse, misrepresentation, a specious rather than true eloquence, & sentiments unfavorable to liberty.... - His book has had a direct contrary effect to what was intended; it has awakened & called forth the real friends of liberty; particularly the celebrated Mr. PAINE, whose writings have been of so much service to mankind."[3]

"Publicola," supposedly John Adams, began to be viewed in some quarters as quite as much a heretic as Edmund Burke, himself. As a result, the vice-president's philosophy of government became notorious enough to become the subject of part of a conversation between the Secretary of the Treasury and the Secretary of State of the United States. Their basic discussion concerned the form which our government should take, and the words were those of Alexander Hamilton as recorded after the fact by Thomas Jefferson. Hamilton admitted to a

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[3]Linn, The Blessings of America, n., pp. 33-34. For the "Publicola" series as published in the New York press, see the Daily Advertiser, beginning June 25, 1791, and the New York Journal, beginning July 6, 1791. As an example of the published attitude towards "Publicola," there is the editor's note by Greenleaf in the New York Journal of July 9, 1791, which was a response to a denial from the editor of the Columbian Centinel in Boston that the Vice-President had written the series. Greenleaf stated that the editor's "attempts to vindicate aristocratical, yea, even MONARCHICAL tenets, must be branded with ENMITY to the RIGHTS OF MAN." For two examples of the many articles in favor of Paine's Rights of Man and in opposition to Burke see "Cursory Remarks" by "T. W." in the New York Magazine, II (July, 1791), 368-369, and "Lines occasioned by reading Mr. Paine's Rights of Man" in the Daily Advertiser, May 27, 1791.

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belief that the present form of the American government would probably not best answer "the ends of society by giving stability & protection to its rights, and that it will probably be found expedient to go into the British form." Hamilton found, however, that the present republican system had succeeded far beyond his expectations, and that "that mind must be really depraved which would not prefer the equality of political rights which is the foudn of pure republicanism, if it can be obtained consistently with order. Therefore," Hamilton concluded, in the key sentence for present purposes, specifically referring to John Adams, "whoever by his writings disturbs the present order of things, is really blameable, however pure his intentions may be." Hamilton viewed republicanism as a tender shoot, indeed, whose very existence required the most careful ministrations. It would survive only amongst an educated electorate who could select proper representatives. They, in turn, would pursue a quiet course of ordered debate in whose results all sides would peacefully acquiesce. Writings, such as those of John Adams, however, would upset the public, excite feelings, and make calm debate difficult. What would happen to republican government then?[4]

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[4]Conversation with Thomas Jefferson, [Aug. 13, 1791], Papers of Hamilton, IX, 34. As regards Hamilton's attitude toward republicanism, his deeds speak loudly in his behalf. Hamilton's extreme care to preserve order and give the republican process the fullest measure of assistance can be seen in his constant and often inspired use of the techniques of the system and his acceptance of its framework. His doubts about the survival of republicanism should not be confused, as many historians so often seem to do, with a preference for other systems. The eulogy that Hamilton was chosen to give in honor of the Revolutionary War general, Nathaniel Greene, is a case-in-point. Delivered on July 4, 1789, before a distinguished audience in St. Paul's Church, Hamilton's address often seemed to be a series of musings on his own career and life. The soon-to-be Treasury Secretary noted that "Greene descended from reputable parents, but not placed by birth in

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The irony of that conversation between Hamilton and Jefferson was that it had been the Secretary of the Treasury's own financial program and not John Adams' abstract speculations, real or imagined, that had most severely disturbed "the present order of things," and had subjected the new government to its first major test. There had been earlier wranglings over such questions as honors, titles, how to address the President and the officers of government, and how one should express approval of acts and actions of the President. The first major controversy on the federal level under the new Constitution, however, did not begin with protocol but with the introduction of Hamilton's report on the public credit in January, 1790.

The specifics of Hamilton's report were new at the time of its presentation but its outline had been guessed at well before. As early as June of 1789 William Constable, a New York merchant and land speculator, had shown remarkable prescience as to the future form of the financial system. He had urged his correspondent to sell land and buy up South Carolina's debt which had dropped sharply in value when the state discontinued payment of interest. In Constable's words, the national government had pledged its faith "in twenty different shapes for doing Justice to their Creditors - they have interwoven it in the very Constitution and if they do not do it they will go to ruin - I am

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that elevated rank, which under a monarchy is the only sure road to those employments that give activity and scope to abilities, must in all probability have contented himself with the humble lot of a private citizen, or at most with the contracted sphere of an elective office, in a colonial & dependent government . . . ; & though not hurried on by enthusiasm, he chearfully [sic] resolved to stake his fortune his hopes his life & his honor upon an enterprise of the danger of which he knew the whole magnitude in a cause which was worthy of the toils of the blood of heroes." Ibid., V, 348.

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not interested myself in the Debt - but they ought and will fund their Debt, it is in the Interest of the Government and the people to do it." The optimism expressed by Constable grew even greater after Hamilton's appointment, leading to a strong rise in stocks "owing to the faith placed in the integrity of our Pitt, Col. Hamilton."[5]

By early February, 1790, the newspapers reported that Hamilton's Report on the Public Credit "engrosses the public attention universally: It is the topic in all companies."[6] New York City, which was particularly festive with "companies" that winter--DeWitt Clinton described the city as "filled with Legislatures and Law Courts"--must have been constantly abuzz with talk of Hamilton's plan. The young Clinton, nephew and secretary of Governor George Clinton, was certainly filled with that topic of conversation. Clinton feared the operation of those sections of the report which stated "the importance of public credit, the injustice of discriminating between the original holders and purchasers of public securities, the propriety of assuming the state debts, and the necessity of constituting a funding system." The national debt thus produced would, according to Clinton, mortgage "to perpetuity all the revenues of the States for the payment of its interest." If an emergency should occur which would necessitate an increase of the revenue," Clinton concluded, the people "must either be borne down with heavy taxes or the States plunged deeper in debt." All of this would, in addition, weld the States to an even more powerful national government. Many issues of great importance were to be raised

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[5]Letters, William Constable to James Seagrove, June 11, 1789, and William Constable to James Ingles, Jan. 4, 1790, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB. See also a letter from Colin McGregor to _____, Sept. 22, 1789, NYPL, Colin McGregor LB.

[6]G.U.S., Feb. 3, 1790.

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in this discussion over Hamilton's report, but none was more basic than the issue of the increased power to the central government at the expense of the state--with its parallel fear of monarchy and aristocracy, that was put forward in rather muted tones by DeWitt Clinton.[7]

Muted tones, however, were not typical of much of this funding debate. The attack heated considerably by mid-March when a writer in the Daily Advertiser called assumption of the state debt a Machiavellian scheme to increase the power of the central government at the expense of the states, thereby creating a big-headed monster with withered limbs and extremities. The writer believed that the Secretary of the Treasury and a considerable party hoped, by those means, to center power in themselves. The "twin bastards, Consolidation and Assumption were the policies behind those schemes, urged not by political wisdom but by avarice."[8] By April, letters began to appear carrying forward the concept of the threat of a developing "anti-republican" party, both within the nation and the state, that was bidding to take complete power. "Manlius" called on the free electors to choose men "of more republican character, & more oeconomical principles, who may effect a republican reduction, & who may simplify the habits of the national rulers by political oeconomy, & by the influence of private example. The cause of republicanism and liberty require

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[7]Letter, DeWitt Clinton to Dr. Charles Clinton, Feb. 8, 1790, NYHS, DeWitt Clinton Papers.

[8]Unsigned letter, Daily Advertiser, Mar. 30, 1790. The opposition to Hamilton's funding system did not have a monopoly on monsters. A correspondent in the G.U.S. of July 28, 1790 celebrated the passage of the assumption bill by noting that "the monster with 13 heads receives his death wound--and all the stings of faction are drawn."

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it." Then, rising to a crescendo of moral indignation, he added: "The soldier, whose bravery saved the country, & fixed the upstart aristocracy in power & consequence,...beseeches these rich men of office to spare to his hunger the morsels that fall from their tables.[9]

The anti-funding letters continued in this vein for months, but after the final passage of Hamilton's basic program, the fear of an overwhelming federal power became so real to some as to produce an almost hysterical reaction. One letter, signed "Vox Res Publica," was disturbed by a commission given to the painter, John Trumbull, by the Common Council of New York to paint a portrait of Washington for City Hall. The writer commented that "Flattery to the living rulers is always dangerous, and seldom sincere. American republicans, watch with jealousy the living rulers, & perfume the ashes of the worthy dead." Other writers, on similar subjects, constantly tied virtue to frugality and found suspect anything touching on the arts. By the end of August it was time to bring an ominous prophesy to light. A short letter in the Journal, signed "A Whig," described how he had perused a Philadelphia paper dated September 12, 1783, and how a particularly prophetic sentence caught his eye. That sentence read: "I look forward to the year of 1790 and take it for granted, that our Assemblies and Congress will then be composed of NEW ARRIVED GENTRY, and WEALTHY TORIES."[10]

The partisans of the funding system had Hamilton's own masterly

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[9]"Manlius," New York Journal, Apr. 8, 1790. See also "An Elector" in the New York Journal of that date.

[10]"Vox Res Publica," Ibid., Aug. 20, 1790; "A Whig," Ibid., Aug. 24, 1790. See also "A Burgher," Ibid., July 30, 1790.

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report to give them the basis for their arguments and to provide them with their own best defense. To these supporters of a strong federal government, funding meant a preservation of the gains already won and a freedom for the nation to develop as an independent force to be reckoned with on the international scene. In a clever paraphrase of Hamlet's most famous soliloquy, one writer was able to be both poetic and specific:

> To fund - or not to fund, that is the question!
> Whether 'tis better to assume the debts
> By States contracted for the gen'ral weal,
> And by a lib'ral scheme of finance, prove
> No little, local motives guide our sages,
> In Congress met, to plan a nation's fate,
> And fix the credit of the States forever;
> Or by opposing - end both Credit
> And the Debts together - [11]

A second writer predicted that as a result of the new funding system, the funds of the United States would be kept free from the perpetual flux that European events created for the public paper systems. The fiscal policy of the United States could then be "entirely detached from those views, hopes and fears which convulse the Eastern Hemisphere."[12]

If those were the practical gains to result from funding, what were the theories that were often used to induce support for those programs that would strengthen allegiance to the federal government? "Republican, no. II," in the Gazette of the United States, took up the theoretical concept of the role played by mankind in a republic. Montesquieu had said that virtue was the spring of action in a repub-

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[11] "Paraphrase from Hamlet," G.U.S., Apr. 14, 1790.

[12] Correspondent, Ibid., Aug. 24, 1790.

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lic, but "The Republican" believed this sounded better on paper than was true in actuality. What was the reality? "Human nature is so selfish and corrupt, that the legislator who depends on virtue alone for the support of a Republican system, builds upon a foundation of sand. More permanent and operative principles are necessary." These included, according to "The Republican," participation by all parts of society "in the honours, emoluments & burthens of society; as equal a distribution of property, as the abilities & exertions of individuals will permit; and above all a general diffusion of knowledge among the body of the people."[13]

This was carried a step further by "Union," also in the Gazette of the United States. For him, "government is to society what reason is to the soul; when the authority of either is impaired, vice and ruin will ensue; it is too often said government is evil: good government makes men better than it finds them." The noble savage concept of the period received no support here. In a forceful conclusion, "Union" expressed the view that would forever separate the federalist and anti-federalist even as it became the touchstones of conservative policy. Government, "by imposing an habitual restraint upon the passions," leads men to "lose much of their ferocity, & reason becomes superior; under good government man is a taught animal and gains more than all others by discipline." For "Union" a strong funding system was the powerful force needed to provide such a government.[14]

Another ideological conservative was the Chief Justice of the

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[13]"Republican, no. II," Ibid., Jan. 30, 1790.

[14]"Union," Ibid., Apr. 24, 1790.

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United States, a native New Yorker, who was also in the busy and crowded city that winter and spring for a session of the court. John Jay, as one of the authors of The Federalist Papers, had already contributed theoretical material to the support of the federal government. In his Charge to the Grand Jury, the first federal jury to be seated in the City of New York, Jay added to his contribution by noting that experience would show "whether any people can long govern themselves in an equal, uniform, and orderly manner." It could be done, he believed, only through a strong government under a just constitution. Jay did not believe that such a government was unfriendly to liberty, for "civil liberty consists not in a right to every man to do just what he pleases, but it consists in an equal right to all the citizens to have, enjoy, and to do, in peace, security, and without molestation, whatever the equal and constitutional laws of the country admit to be consistent with the public good."[15]

The new federal Constitution had produced for men like John Jay "the best of all possible governments," but it was still recognized as an experiment. Strong leadership was needed to keep the government invigorated and allow it to survive, for it was, according to a writer in the Gazette of the United States, a government of the people. By reducing the powers of that government the people would reduce their own powers. Thus, the writer in Fenno's paper added a telling postscript to the philosophical debate over the power of the federal government when he insisted that it was the people who "have always been cheated by the tale that they are to get the power which government

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[15]Charge to Grand Juries by Chief Justice Jay, Apr. 4, 1790, Papers of Jay, III, 387, 394-395.

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loses - whereas, their ambitious leaders exercise it, and the people commonly have lost much of what they had before." Once again the New York federalists were first into the arena--this time on the basis of a clearly developed program for the federal government and a carefully thought-out conception of the role of mankind and government in a republican society.[16]

The confidence in the federal government made manifest by the federalist writers of New York at that historical moment could be well understood. The previously untested federal system seemed to have survived surprisingly well the difficulties surrounding the passage of the funding bills--the first major test under the new American Constitution. In addition, Hamilton's soon-to-be released plans for a national bank and an excise tax on whiskey would pass the new session of Congress with little more than token opposition within the federal legislature or in the press.[17]

Hindsight, however, allows us to note that an irretrievable split was already in the process of taking place on several levels of government. Hamilton and James Madison, the leader of the congressional opposition to funding, were now in basic disagreement over the broad question of federal versus state power, while a similar dispute within the cabinet between Hamilton and Jefferson would soon break out

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[16] G.U.S., Aug. 18, 1790. See also Clinton Rossiter, Conservatism in America (rev. ed.; New York: Vintage Books, 1962), particularly Chapter II, for a working definition of what constitutes a Conservative.

[17] See a letter from William North to Col. Walker, Jan. 15, 1791, NYHS, William North Papers, for confirmation of the view of "little or no opposition" to Hamilton's bank and excise plans. The newspapers carried almost no debate on those major issues, and, in fact, it was not until the following years that the bank and excise became major national issues.

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into open newspaper warfare. Within the state of New York, the coalition between the Livingstons and their many relatives and the Hamilton-Jay-Schuyler faction, which together had been able to win New York over to support of the Constitution against the entrenched forces of Governor Clinton, was on the verge of total collapse.

The disintegration of the federalist coalition of New York appeared to have been hastened by the departure of the federal government from New York City in the late summer of 1790. All the natural schisms and divisions within the state were now free to rise to the surface where they could receive total public concentration. Since New Yorkers' reactions are the main concern of this paper, a sure understanding of the nature and sources of those divisions is necessary. It is also necessary to understand that the break-up of New York City and State politics into well-developed and warring factions was under way long before the French Revolution became the incendiary issue of the day. Thus, while factionalism was quietly beginning to create problems for "the present order of things" on the national level, it had already begun the process of making vast inroads upon the political peace of the state and city of New York and upon Alexander Hamilton's hopes for a carefully nurtured system of republicanism.

Political division on the federal level, as noted, was beginning to take shape most importantly over the issue of how much power the national government should be permitted to take for itself. The issue of federal-state power was also one basis for the political realignment then taking shape within the state and city of New York. An older, and, for some New Yorkers, a more important factor, however, in the changing political alignments of the day revolved around the issue

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of family ties and family pride. One who well understood the role played by both factors in New York politics in the 1790's was George Clinton. That astute politician had recently won a fourth term as governor in the hard-fought election campaign held in the spring of 1789. The federalists, however, had made strong gains in other areas --strong enough, in fact, to win control of both houses of the state legislature. As a major politician, Clinton immediately understood the need for conciliation and re-grouping. He quickly offered Aaron Burr, who had supported Robert Yates for Governor, the Attorney-generalship of the State, and Burr had accepted. Clinton then initiated a meeting with one of the new state assemblymen, Rufus King, in which the Governor put forward the most delicate of feelers in the hope of winning the new arrival from Massachusetts to his side. The conversation, recorded by King, reads like a primer for the understanding of New York political life in the revolutionary and early constitutional eras.[18]

The Governor spoke of possible choices for United States senator from New York and brought up King's name as one he had heard mentioned. King replied that as a recent resident in the city and state he might be considered too new to be a proper choice. This brought Clinton to one of his main points. Offices of great power should not "be concentrated on a certain party or family association; that their abilities and wealth already gave them great influence," and the addit-

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[18]Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 287; Conversation with George Clinton, June 12, 1789, Correspondence of King, I, 355-356. King had settled in New York that previous winter because of disappointment over the Massachusetts political scene, opportunities of a professional nature available in New York, and his wife's desire to be near her father, the retired New York merchant, John Alsop.

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ion of great offices "might endanger public Liberty." Clinton had reference to the Livingstons, who clearly fit the Governor's description, and to James Duane, who purportedly claimed that the senatorship was his by right. (Duane and John Jay were both related to the Livingstons by marriage--although the former was related to the Manor Livingstons and the latter to the New Jersey Livingstons.) Waxing historical, Clinton noted that before the revolution there were two great families, or parties, the Delanceys and the Livingstons. They kept constant watch on each other and in general neither dared any measure injurious to the public. Since "all the great and opulent" were now in one party, Clinton believed that his political function was "to keep a constant eye to the measures of this Combination" and thereby protect the interests of the people. King, though interested enough to record the conversation, never pursued the matter further;[19] and he remained a staunch and important federalist, in all the later guises of that word,[20] for the rest of his life.

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[19]Conversation with Clinton, Correspondence of King, I, 355-56.

[20]Before this dissertation is any further advanced it would be well to explain the manner in which the capitalization and punctuation of party, group, or individual political designations have been decided upon. This is especially necessary since one of the major purposes of this work is to show the effect of the French Revolution on the development of New York political life and political parties. The first phase covers the years 1789-1792. During this period there were no formal parties but a general divergence based on one's approach to the Constitution and the federal-state relationship. Therefore, the lower case generic terms, federalist and anti-federalist, have been used almost exclusively for this period. There was also a tendency at that time to form behind a leader for an election and remain together for the campaign. Thus the opposition in the election for New York governor in 1792 were generally known as Jayites and Clintonians. The second phase, in New York City, appeared as a result of that harsh gubernatorial election with its even harsher aftermath, of the federal campaign for vice-president in 1792, of the divisions over Hamilton's financial policies and the continuing federal-state power question,

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Shortly after his conversation with King, Clinton found his political task made even harder as the federalist-controlled legislature chose two federalists, Philip J. Schuyler and Rufus King, himself, as United States senators from New York. George Clinton was too much of a politician, however, to allow the senatorial defeat to stop his maneuvering; and he was also too much of a politician not to take unto himself, when the opportunity arose, one of the "great and opulent"--the Chancellor of the State of New York.[21] The opportunity came about at least in part because Chancellor Livingston had been passed over for office by the federal government. Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and now General Schuyler had all become holders of major offices under the new government. And Livingston had dearly wished for office. His sister, Janet Montgomery, had made constant overtures to the President and to anyone whom she considered close to Washington, while his youngest brother, Edward, had believed that the Chancellor would gain a major office. But none came. Livingston kept his own counsel and, in January, 1791, when Schuyler's short-term Senate seat was up, he

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and finally, as a result of an aggressive republican France represented in the United States in the person of Citizen Edmond Genêt. During this period of developing factions which were still not parties and of developing organizational skills, that is during the latter part of the Vice-Presidential campaign of 1792, throughout 1793 and into early 1794, the terms "Federalist" and "Republican" are used. The words are in quotation marks for a reason that might, at times, seem like an affectation but which is one way of designating the fact that those are self-descriptive terms without any official sanction. In New York City the words Federalist or Federal Republican and Republican or Real Republican are used officially for the first time in the local election of April 1794. From that period on it would seem logical to drop the quotation marks and so it has been done. For a re-iteration of that point and a brief further statement see infra, Part IV, ch. XI, n.15

[21] See a letter from Abraham B. Bancker to Abraham Bancker, July 16, 1789, NYHS, Bancker Papers, for a description of the political maneuvering that led to the selection of Schuyler and King.

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suddenly, to the surprise of almost all, threw his support to the Clintonian candidate, Aaron Burr.[22]

The reactions of both sides to this event is important as an additional link in any attempt to understand the general split then developing on all levels of government in the period before the French Revolution had become a major issue in American politics. Chancellor Livingston's own actions have generally been laid to personal resentment over the treatment of his family by the leaders of the federal government.[23] His reply to a letter from a surprised and shocked brother-in-law, Morgan Lewis,[24] gives little indication of any particularly higher motive, although the Chancellor had expressed misgivings about Hamilton's financial policies. Livingston disclaimed any intention of joining a coalition with Clinton beyond the specific event of Schuyler's election; took affront at a supposed offer from the President to appoint him "Agent to borrow money" as beneath one

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[22]Letters, Janet L. Montgomery to R. R. Livingston, [June ?, 1789], and Edward Livingston to R. R. Livingston, June 7, 1789, NYHS, RRL Coll. See Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Jan. 22, 1791, NYHS, Rutherford Coll., for an expression of that surprise. Rutherford, a friend of both the Chancellor and Hamilton and a fellow member of the St. Andrew's Society, which was made up of Scotsmen of New York, found the Chancellor's actions totally unexpected.

[23]For that general view see Papers of Hamilton, VII, 444, n. 3. Jabez Hammond hinted at that view in his The History of Political Parties in the State of New York (2 vols.; Albany: n.p., 1842), I, 51. For another view, that includes several other reasons of an ideological character, see George Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston of New York (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1960), pp. 247-249.

[24]Letter, Morgan Lewis to R. R. Livingston, Jan. 24, 1791, NYHS, RRL Coll. Morgan Lewis was actually one of the first beneficiaries of the Livingston switch in allegiance. He became the state's attorney-general when Burr was elevated to the senatorship.

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not "deemed unworthy of the highest offices in this & the United States"; re-iterated his esteem for Hamilton but opposition to his "political measures"; and pointed out that opposition to Schuyler was basically on the grounds that the latter led the New York delegation "& is supposed to be led by the Treasury." A portion of Livingston's copy of this letter was crossed out, but it reveals even more clearly the motives that Livingston may actually have wanted to express but softened in the copy that reached his brother-in-law. Referring to Hamilton and Schuyler, the Chancellor asserted that "without feeling any personal resentment to either it was certainly proper 1st to lessen the power of my political enemies to injure my friends & second to convince them that I knew how to make adequate return in kind for political injuries though offered by private friends."[25]

The supporters of Hamilton and the general government were, for the moment, shocked and plunged into gloom.[26] James Tillary, a New York federalist and physician, wrote Hamilton of the new coalition in opposition to the national government that included the "Strange

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[25]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Morgan Lewis, Jan. 27, 1791, Ibid. The Clermont Livingstons were not the only representatives of that family who grew unhappy with the political role assigned them by the Schuyler wing of the New York federalists. The Livingstons of the Manor were to join with the Clermont Livingstons in opposition to Schuyler by 1792. The following excerpt from a letter of Henry Livingston to Walter Livingston, July 29, 1791, NYHS, RRL Coll., gave the basic reason--again political preferment. Why, Henry Livingston asked, should they not support an antifederal candidate, for, "should he not succeed & one of Schuylers sons get it I do not believe they will be of our party as they never show any disposition to oblidge [sic] us in the County Elections." The anti-federal candidate, he concluded, "can't be worse."

[26]For examples of that reaction see Robert Troup to Hamilton [Jan. 19, 1791], William Deur to Hamilton, [Jan. 19, 1791] and James Tillary to Hamilton, [Jan. 19, 1791], Papers of Hamilton, VII, 443, 445, 615.

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unions" that had been "brought about by our artful persevering Chieftain [Clinton]." In a verbal style bordering on the rococo, Tillary direfully reported that "Many who were Federalists [are] sucked into his Excellencys Vortex, & the Chancellor's family become one of the principal satellites of this noxious planet." Burr, he gloomily continued, "is avowedly your Enemy, & stands pledged to his party, for a reign of Vindictive declamation against your measures."[27] As for the Chancellor, Tillary bluntly warned Hamilton that he "hates, & would destroy you." Tillary concluded with a wish that clearly indicated that the federalists of New York knew whom they had most to fear in the year 1791: "Long may you successfully fend off the Maddisons [sic] of the South & the Clintons of the North."[28]

This fear of a growing national coalition against the measures of Hamilton was the basis of a letter from James Kent, the future Chancellor and the present struggling young lawyer and assemblyman, to his Clintonian brother-in-law, Theodorus Bailey. Kent acknowledged that the objection which was raised to Schuyler's continuance in office due to his relationship with the Secretary of the Treasury had weight. He considered even weightier, however, the fact that he saw

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[27]One of the leitmotifs of New York politics during the first decade and a half under the new Constitution was distrust of Aaron Burr--a distrust which cut across all factional and party lines. Morgan Lewis, in a letter to the Chancellor previously quoted, warned the latter not to rely on Burr's friendship, it being "a pretty prevalent Idea, that he is a man who makes everything subservient to his private views." Jabez Hammond was equally unkind in his view of Burr. Referring to the latter, in his History of Political Parties, I, 51, Hammond wrote: "In fact, the whole tenor of this gentleman's political life, impresses on my mind a conviction that personal motives rather than his opinions as to measures, had a controlling influence over his political conduct."

[28]Tillary to Hamilton, [Jan. 19, 1791], Papers of Hamilton, VII, 615-616.

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the administration of Hamilton, "which I conceive essential to the prosperity of the nation, violently opposed." Matters which he believed to be vested exclusively in Congress were being contested in North Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Therefore, to send Burr, "who has always been regarded as unfriendly to the government and its administration" - to send that man to the Senate was contradictory to Kent's "faithful attachment to the success of the Constitution."[29]

Hamilton, himself, must have found the results unpleasant, but he soundly refrained from the despair that engulfed so many of his supporters. In a letter that he wrote to his sister-in-law in London shortly after he had received word of Schuyler's loss, Hamilton recited several objections to her request that her father be sent to London as minister. The most important objection, and the one which must have been stated with Schuyler's defeat clearly in mind, was simply this: "Our republican ideas stand much in the way of accumulating offices in one family."[30] Hamilton's knowing and sound reaction to his father-in-law's failure to be re-elected, however, merely increases the historian's curiosity as to why the Livingstons were so completely ignored when the spoils of victory were being distributed in 1789. All that many of that family seemed to crave was a modicum of attention and that was simply not forthcoming. Though the answer to the aforementioned question is still open to conjecture, the results of the failure to do so are not.

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[29]James Kent to Theodorus Bailey, Jan. 27, 1791, Memoirs and Letters of James Kent, ed. by William Kent (Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1898), pp. 39-40.

[30]Hamilton to Angelica Church, Jan. 31, 1791, Papers of Hamilton, VII, 608.

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In the light of all that had taken place on the federal, state and local levels during 1790 and 1791 to disturb public unanimity on a large number of domestic issues, and considering the major role that Alexander Hamilton and his program played in producing so much of that counter-activity, it becomes rather amusing at this point to recall that conversation held by Hamilton and Jefferson in the summer of 1791. In it, one remembers, the Secretary of the Treasury had found John Adams "really blameable" for disturbing "the present order of things." We can now judge that "Davila" and "Publicola" were truly minor irritants in the path of national harmony as compared to the funding and assumption debates on the federal level or the pique of the Livingstons on the state level.

Thus, after only three years of national existence under the new Constitution, New Yorkers seemed to find no more than two figures of nation-wide importance still capable of invoking an almost unanimous positive response. One was the idolized but still human figure of the President of the United States. The other was the idealized and humanized abstraction, Liberty, "that millenial goddess," whose torch of freedom had been passed along to beloved France and which was about to illumine the world.

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PART II. THE YEAR OF TRANSITION

(WINTER 1792 - WINTER 1793)

CHAPTER IV

HARD TIMES, FINANCIAL AND POLITICAL

New York City, in the first years of the 1790's was a bustling town with an ever-increasing population and commerce. Only the elections for state office lacked that special New York fervor which was so typical, even then, of most aspects of that city's life. The local elections of 1790 and 1791 were basically merchant-mechanic contests which, in the words of one observer, "go on slowly and dull and heavily."[1] In addition to the general apathy that characterized the state legislative contests, there was little to distinguish the two major tickets despite their Mechanics or Merchants designations. For example, five of the nine State Assembly candidates on the Mechanics slate in 1790 were also on the Merchants list for that year. As for the State Senate slate, three out of the four candidates on both tickets were the same. Perhaps it was this lack of political distinction between the two leading groups of contestants that led to the

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[1]Letter, David Gelston to John Smith, Apr. 17, 1790, NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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situation where "An Elector" was forced to complain of "the indifference which generally prevails with regard to our Representatives in the State Legislature."[2]

If politics on the local level was unexciting, however, life in the city during that period appeared to have been anything but that. For some, in fact, the town had become too exciting. William North, writing to a friend in London in January, 1791, admitted that he would have preferred being at his farm to being in New York City "where one is continually dinn'd with the fortunes made by speculation."[3] For others, however, New York had already become the magnetic metropolis of future years. As a sample of that fact, a letter from London included the news that "Mr. DePeyster has built a famous Ship for trade & carrys out part of his family now, and the remainder the next voyage--to settle them in New York--which I hear from those that have lately left it, is a very desirable Place."[4] There was no doubt that New York City, just six months after the federal government had left forever, was none the worse for it.

There was also no doubt that New York was on its way to becoming a major financial center. As the city's desirability as a commercial location increased, so did its money supply and so did the

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[2]"An Elector," Daily Advertiser, Apr. 14, 1791. See also the Daily Advertiser on the following dates for that newspaper's first listings of the local election slates of 1790 and 1791: Apr. 20 and 21, 1790 and Apr. 14, 15 and 23, 1791.

[3]Letter, William North to Col. Walker, Jan. 15, 1791, NYHS, William North Papers.

[4]Letter, Margaret Leake to John G. Leake, Feb. 27, 1791, NYHS, Leake Papers.

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mania of its citizens for all sorts of speculative ventures. New York and the world of "stockjobbing" finances were already an inseparable pair and the financial and political repercussions of that fact would soon be severely felt. In the relatively quiet summer of 1791, the mercantile house of Gelston and Saltonstall reported to an out-of-town customer that "the spirit of Speculation has put an end to all regular business almost--Bank Scrip & other Paper has infatuated three fourths of the Community almost."[5] In November 1791, Walter Rutherford visited William Duer, a friend of Alexander Hamilton and one of the country's leading financial schemers, and "found him immersed with Speculators of all classes. Money, Land, and Manufactures enough to turn an ordinary Brain."[6]

By January and February 1792 the mania had reached its zenith. From outside the inner circle of speculators, Benjamin Strong described how "Speculations has got to a great Rage in Town - in the Course of the last week 6 new Banks were set on foot, they all proved to be Bubbles....The Tammany Society have set on foot a Tontine (Subscription on Lives) - of 4000 shares at 16 Dollars each Raises a Capitol of 64,000 Dollars."[7] And so it continued. Though the new bank schemes all collapsed, the stock speculation mania roared on. In mid-February

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[5]Letter, Gelston and Saltonstall to Major Joseph Williams, Aug. 12, 1791, NYHS, Gelston and Saltonstall LB.

[6]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Nov. 25, 1791, NYHS, Rutherford Coll. For similar views see letters from G. & S. to Mrs. Sarah Luke, Aug. 4, 1791 and Messrs. W. J. & R. Hart, Aug. 8 and Aug. 13, 1791, NYHS, Gelston & Saltonstall LB.

[7]Letter, Benj. Strong to Selah Strong, Jan. 25, 1792, NYHS, Strong Family Papers.

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1792, Loudon's Diary, formerly called the Packet, contained a notice that the "Stock Exchange Office is opened at No. 22 Wall St. for the accomodation of the dealers in Stock." Stokes' Iconography noted that this was the earliest mention of any attempt at organized dealings in stocks in the City of New York. Daily sales under joint arrangement was now the plan of the auctioneers.[8]

Plans, plans, plans--the air was filled with them. And then, without warning, the speculation bubble burst. James Morris reported to John Rutherford on March 10, 1792: "There has an explosion happened in the speculating world...and I fear more than we yet have an idea of. Duer is the unfortunate man." Walter Rutherford, shortly thereafter, gave additional news to his son: "The Town rings with nothing but D [uer] 's great Fall, in which hundreds are involved.... Great is the Consternation among the lower classes, and some of them are irritated to Desperation."[9] Reminiscent of other times when all classes in society seemed eager to make their fortune through speculation, the distress was broadly based. As Daniel McCormick, one of the directors of the Bank of New York, noted, no other business but speculation in stocks had "Been minded for some months past," and the sales were attended "from the highest to the lowest class of People." Duer,

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[8]Diary, Feb. 15, 1792; Iconography, V, 1286-1287. Concerning the stock exchange, it was reported to the public a month later that on and after April 21, 1792, the merchants and dealers would meet in a proper room with proper regulations for trading. See Diary, Mar. 23, 1792. Also see a letter from Alexander Macomb to William Constable, Jan. 1, 1792, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters, for an insider's description of the speculative ventures afoot early in 1792.

[9]Letters, James Morris to John Rutherford, Mar. 10, 1792 and Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Mar. 14, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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himself, went to jail on March 23, sent there by some of his creditors, and was followed a few weeks later by another leading speculator, Alexander Macomb.[10]

Failures which amounted in some cases to over half a million dollars, reduced proud men to beggars and street fighters. Possibly the fullest and best description of the calamitous situation was given by H. M. Colden in a letter to New York's congressman John Lawrence:

> Happy are you not to witness the shocking scenes that daily take place here - The depravity of the human mind has been exhibited in its worst stage. The speculators are daily boxing in the streets. Cursing & abusing each other like pick pockets & trying every fraud to prey on each others distresses. This is the real state of Things at this moment. I write to a N. Ykr - for God sake tell it not in Ph. [iladelphia] - but your imagination cannot picture a scene of such mingled distress & turpitude as is now acted in this unhappy City. - B. [rockholst] Livingston's situation is deplorable without Character & without property. some late attempts of his has placed him in the light of a practiced swindler. Few indeed have preserved character since the business was known to be desperate....get the session over as soon as possible and lose no time to come here. I hope the Secretary of the T. reasury will come on likewise his presence is highly necessary to promote a general principle of accomodation amongst us.[11]

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[10]Letter, Daniel McCormick to William Constable, Mar. 24, 1792, NYPL, William Constable Papers. See also letters from William Duer to Walter Livingston, Mar. 23, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.; Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Mar. 28, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; and William S. Livingston to Walter Livingston, Apr. 10, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[11]Letter, H. M. Colden to John Laurence [Lawrence], Apr. 11, 1792, NYHS, John Laurance Papers. For additional descriptions of the financial panic and its affect on New York City and its inhabitants see letters from Walter Livingston to Henry W. Livingston, Mar. 26, 1792, NYHS, Walter Livingston LB, RRL Coll.; Lewis Ogden to Peter R. Livingston, Apr. 13, 1792, NYPL, Lewis Ogden LB; Gelston and Saltonstall to Mess[rs] Magill and Clay, Apr. 11, 1792, NYHS, G. & S. LB, 1791-1793; William and James Constable to Jno. Porteous, Mar. 24, 1792 and to Phyn, Ellice & Inglis, Apr. 6, 1792, NYPL, Wm. & J. Constable LB; Jonathan Lawrence to Eben[r] Hurd, Mar. 24, 1792, NYHS, Jonathan Lawrence LB; Philip Schuyler to A. Hamilton, Mar. 25, 1792 and Mme. Bacler de Leval to Hamilton, Apr. 12, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XI, 186-190, 265; Col. Platt to S. B. Webb, Apr. 15, 1792 and S. B. Webb to Mrs. Webb, Apr. 29, 1792, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 179, 180-181; and two letters from unnamed friends of Thomas Jones to the latter, Mar. 29 and

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Colden's plea did not go unanswered. Alexander Hamilton replied in the most satisfactory manner possible by providing the funds necessary to allow the Bank of New York to pull through the crisis. A momentarily chastened city, reinvigorated with hard currency, was able to resume a more normal life. It took many months, however, for the town to regain full stride, for the failures were "computed to exceed 4 millions of Dollars," obviously an immense sum for the time. But the fears of the New York City businessman who predicted in June 1792 that the city "will not recover from it, for 2 years to come,"[12] proved to be unwarranted. Good times returned by the late fall and the developing European war would soon push New York and American prosperity to new heights.

The financial panic of March and April, 1792, had occurred at the very moment that a bitter gubernatorial election campaign between George Clinton and John Jay was in progress. The campaign, shadowed by the depressing climate that the financial collapse had created, was made additionally abrasive by a newspaper essay war of personal vilifi-

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Apr. 30, 1792, Thomas Jones' History of New York, ed. by E. F. DeLancey (2 vols.; New York: New York Historical Society, 1879), II, 589. See also Joseph Stancliffe Davis, Essays in the Earlier History of American Corporations (2 vols., Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1917), I, 289, and Alexander Macomb to William Constable, May 9, 1792, NYPL, William Constable Letters for descriptions of the shark-like activities of Edward, John R. and Brockholst Livingston during the financial panic and its aftermath.

[12]Letter, Lewis Ogden to Messrs Kemble & Spens, June 6, 1792, NYPL, L. Ogden LB. See letters of Hamilton to and/or from Robert Troup, William Seton, John Jay, William Duer, Philip Schuyler, Philip Livingston and William Short during March and April, 1792, in Papers of Hamilton, XI, for a picture of the local, state, national and international actions undertaken by the Secretary of the Treasury during the financial crisis in order to save the situation both for the city and the nation.

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cation and a series of charges and counter-charges surrounding a huge land deal that Alexander Macomb had made through the auspices of the state land office. In addition to all of this, the campaign was to end in an even more savage battle over the decision of a majority of the official election canvassers which took a seeming victory from one side and handed it to the other.

The campaign had technically begun with the meeting of various citizens' groups in support of one or the other candidate. These were no formal or party groupings but a series of loosely-formed gatherings of Jayite and Clintonian factions with federalist and anti-federalist leanings, respectively. On February 16, a meeting of a number of citizens in New York City met to support John Jay for governor and Stephen Van Rensselaer for lieutenant-governor. The meeting was chaired by John Alsop, the father-in-law of Rufus King. On the twenty-second of February, the Journal reported a meeting of a committee to support George Clinton for re-election chaired by Jonathan Lawrence, the man who had done similar duty in 1789. The next day a meeting of citizens in favor of Clinton was attended by such old-line Clintonians as David Gelston, Melancton Smith, Marinus Willett, and converts like Edward Livingston and Commodore James Nicholson, future father-in-law of Albert Gallatin.[13]

The arguments for both sides are easily summarized. A "Circular Letter to the Independent Electors in the State of New York," with a list of thirty one signers, based their support of John Jay on a belief

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[13]New York Journal, Feb. 18, 22, and 25, 1792.

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that it was "improper to give any man...a perpetuity in the chief magistracy. A frequent change in office" was good for the republican form, the Circular Letter continued, for it tended to destroy "undue influence & corrupt connections" and to annihilate "parties and factions." The letter concluded with a warning to beware of tyranny that arose from power "continued too long."[14] The importance of this theme was shown by Walter Rutherford who reported that he had dined "with a large set at Ch. J. of the US were very merry and all of a mind when the toast came to me I gave Mr. Rensaler [sic] and no perpetual Dictator, (much applauded)."[15] A second theme that was to play a major part in the campaign, particularly after the financial panic hit New York, was connected with the role played by the Governor in the sale of huge parcels of state land at a very low per-acre price. One of the chief purchasers, the aforementioned Alexander Macomb, had reported early in the campaign that "The anti-Clintonians wish to injure him [Clinton] by blaming him for the Sale made to me."[16] A week before voting actually took place, Benjamin Strong, a Jay supporter, wrote to his father that "The election goes on with Success....This land office affair I think will hurt the present Governor's Interest very much with every thinking person."[17]

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[14]"To the Independent Electors in the State of New York," Ibid., Mar. 24, 1792.

[15]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Mar. 25, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[16]Letter, A. Macomb to William Constable, Feb. 5, 1792, NYPL, William Constable Letters.

[17]Letter, Benjamin Strong to Selah Strong, Apr. 20, 1792, NYHS, Strong Family Papers.

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Involved in the land deal were some 3,635,200 acres of state land which were sold to Macomb and his associates at approximately seven cents per acre. Governor Clinton and the members of his land office, including Aaron Burr, were accused by Philip Schuyler and the supporters of Jay of having illegally given away huge areas of New York State public land for their own personal and political gain.[18] The inflammable mixture for corruption was certainly there--land, speculation, and politics. Ironically, it was the backers of Hamilton's policies and of a strong central government--the faction whom historians have often pictured as being the overwhelming source of land and stock speculation--who were best able to make political capital out of that combustible issue during the gubernatorial campaign of 1792. If William Duer could be pointed out as a friend of Hamilton and clearly associated with the federalist cause, most of the speculating Livingstons were definitely in the Clintonian corner by that time, as was the central figure in the land deal, Alexander Macomb.

The Clintonian opposition to Jay was based on three arguments. A letter in the Journal made clear two of them: Jay was an advocate of "an absolute manumission of the slaves" (apparently this issue was important among the Dutch of upstate New York[19]) and was "a high 'aristocratic federalist, who wishes the annihilation of the state govern-

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[18]Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 328-329. See also Hammond, Political Parties in the State of New York, I, 62-73, for a fuller summary of the events herein described.

[19]See letter from James Fairlie to Stephen Van Rensselaer, Feb. 13, 1792, NYHS, James Fairlie Papers.

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ments, & to absorb them totally into the federal union.''[20] One other point was brought forward against Jay but only briefly. It apparently did not count for much at that moment, but it would later become the kind of attack that could very effectively smear the person so described. "John Oldcastle," who may or may not have been Chancellor Livingston, accused Jay and Van Rensselaer of planning to unite the landed and ministerial interests with an attachment to England.[21] Foreign affairs had not yet played a part, major or minor, in the political events so far described. Here we see the first hint of its future role.

If it was not certain whether the Chancellor was "John Oldcastle," there was no doubt that the former was the author of another newspaper attack on Jay's person and candidacy, the choice morsel signed "Aristides." Jay and Livingston had been close friends at King's College, had fought on the same side throughout the pre-revolutionary and post-revolutionary period, but had grown steadily apart personally. By 1792 the Chancellor was clearly the complete enemy. In "Aristides," the Chancellor accused Jay of having estranged himself from all former friends, of being detested by all who best knew his ideas, of being a seeker after a crown, affected by his stay with the princes of Europe, a luxury seeker, and guilty of a whole further list of heinous crimes against republicanism. The Chancellor was clearly not the man to keep personal hatreds out of the public prints.[22]

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[20] New York Journal, Mar. 28, 1792.

[21] "John Oldcastle," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 23, 1792.

[22] "Aristides," New York Journal, Apr. 4, 1793.

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John Jay was not, however, the only target of Robert R. Livingston's wrath. In published articles and, particularly, in an unpublished essay entitled "To the Printer," Livingston widened his field of fire to include a broad spectrum of his opponents. When he saw General Schuyler ("the head of the aristocratic party in this state") turn from his seat in the Senate of New York State and "repair to Philadelphia to consult the S____y of the Tr____y [Livingston elsewhere referred to Hamilton as "The Magnus Apollo of the speculators"[23]] about the apptmt of a Govr. for this State"-, when he saw the Chief Justice of the United States come forward as candidate and all the "hirelings" of the general government "support his pretentions," and when he saw a young man (the Patroon, Stephen Van Rensselaer), without any claims to high office, come forward because of his estate and because, it was hoped, he would join the landed interests of the state with the ministerial influence of his brother-in-law, Hamilton--could any one doubt the object? Could anyone who believed that only the state government could now control the "rapid encroachments" of the federal government do otherwise than support Clinton for re-election? Chancellor Livingston, having painted a scene in which the "ministerial" forces were plotting to take over all governments and overwhelm the middling and lower classes of citizens as well as those "whose talents and virtues they may dread [the Livingstons?]," ended up picturing himself as one with the "popular party" working to save the United States from the power of Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and

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[23]R. R. Livingston, "Reflections on the Gubernatorial Election of 1792," NYHS, RRL Coll.

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their sycophants.[24]

All but lost in the excitement over the gubernatorial contest of that year was the annual election for state senate and assembly offices. Five slates were offered to the public, ranging from a Mechanics slate published on April 13 to a slate presented on April 25 at a meeting of "freemen and freeholders." Between these two dates there was a ticket produced by a "number of respectable citizens," one by an unnamed group meeting at Corré's Hotel and one by the Carmen of New York. As a possible further designation, the list issued on April 25 could have been considered a federalist slate while the Corré's Hotel list seemed, in general, to represent the old line anti-federalist group. Electioneering for any of the slates was almost non-existent, however, and, as in 1790 and 1791, these local elections might once again have been characterized as "dull"--a perfect foil for the noisily exciting gubernatorial campaign.[25]

Election week brought out a large number of voters. The Journal issued a clarion call: "This is a day [the day the polls opened], which distinguishes us from slaves; let every free elector religiously improve the golden priviledge [sic] ; let freemen act like such, not suffering party spirit but PATRIOTISM to influence their votes."[26]

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[24]R. R. Livingston, "To the Printer," 1792, Ibid.

[25]See the Daily Advertiser of Apr. 13, 19, 23 and 25, 1792 for the five slates mentioned in the text. The election results for these state offices (see the Daily Advertiser, June 1, 1792) once again showed a clear lack of slate voting, for no slate elected more than four or less than three of their assembly candidates.

[26]New York Journal, Apr. 21, 1792.

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The Jayites awaited the results with optimism. By May 5 Benjamin Strong noted that though supporters of both Jay and Clinton had been optimistic, the latter "begin to put on Long Faces as tho' they had been Duer'd and are anxious least they loose [sic] their giver of offices; and they be thereby oblidged [sic] to Return to their proper Station of being sometimes governed instead of always governing." Robert Troup, a day later, wrote to Jay, who was on the Eastern Circuit, that it was agreed that the latter would win by at least 250 votes. The Clintonians, Troup further reported, were "low-spirited and have done betting."[27]

By the ninth of May, however, this Jayite optimism was offset somewhat by fear of "much foul play in the returning of officers." General Schuyler characterized his own feelings in that way, for he believed that Jay "would prevail" if the returns were "fairly canvassed."[28] By May 20, the start of months of even greater uproar could begin to be discerned. As Robert Troup described the situation to Jay: "Clinton and his worthy adherents (the Livingstons) seem now to be driven to despair. All their hopes of success rest upon setting aside votes for you; their particular object at present is the votes of Otsego County which are pretty unanimous for you." Then in a sarcastic thrust at the opposition, Troup added that the attempts "made to prevent the canvassing of these votes by forestalling the judgment of the canvassers upon a mere law quibble are really characteristic of

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[27]Letter, Benjamin Strong to Selah Strong, May 5, 1792, NYHS, Strong Family Papers; Troup to John Jay, May 6, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 422-423.

[28]Philip Schuyler to Hamilton, May 9, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XI, 378.

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these virtuous protectors of the rights of the people, of the enemies of aristocracy, and the declaimers against ministerial influence."[29]

Troup, to his "very great surprise," had been called upon by Edward Livingston to give an opinion on the case. When he argued for the acceptance of all the votes, he reported that the opinion "threw the party into consternation. . . . Soon afterwards," Troup continued, "Brockholst went about almost like a madman vociferating against the legality of the return of the Otsego votes" and loudly stating that not a lawyer in the state would accept the votes as legally returned. Troup then noted that such lawyers as Rufus King, Egbert Benson, Samuel Jones, Richard Harison, and J. O. Hoffman were all of Troup's opinion. Of the twelve official canvassers (the total would be reduced to eleven), however, Troup was forced to report that "we have but three friends." The stage was now set for the most divisive struggle in New York history since the battle over the acceptance of the Constitution four years earlier.[30]

Mrs. Sarah Van Brugh Livingston Jay, wife of the Chief Justice and sister of Brockholst Livingston, wrote to her husband before the canvassers' report was submitted. Using the same arithmetic that

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[29]Robert Troup to John Jay, May 20, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 424-426. A brief summary by Robert Troup of the Otsego "quibble" follows: "In February, 1791, A. B. was appointed Sheriff of that County to hold his office for one year. A short time before the expiration of his year he wrote to the Council of Appointment declining a reappointment. About thirty days after the end of his year the Council appoint C. D. Sheriff of the County, but the commission is never delivered to him neither does he in any one instance, take upon himself the execution of the office. . . . In this state of things the old Sheriff continued to act as Sheriff and after the election he received the ballots from the different towns, put them into a box as the law directs, and sent them by deputy to the Secretary's office."

[30]Troup to Jay, May 20, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 424-426.

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Robert Troup had found so unsatisfactory, Mrs. Jay noted that "the canvassers of the votes are eleven, eight of whom are partizans of Clinton, and three are in favor of you."[31] One who was to be of the majority, Thomas Tillotson, was a brother-in-law of the Chancellor. He had written to the latter early in June of the likelihood of a dispute concerning the Otsego votes due to the ballots having been returned by a sheriff whose commission had expired and of a further dispute in Tioga County where the ballots were returned by a deputy. Tillotson wanted the Chancellor to give him a law opinion "in confidence on these points." He warned, however, that such was "the State of the public mind that it will be difficult for us to conduct ourselves without suspicion of partiality."[32]

As if to ward off public censure on the basis of partiality, the canvassers, as a group, requested that Rufus King and Aaron Burr, the two New York Senators, give their opinions on the issue. Mrs. Jay believed, and probably correctly, that the canvassers did that "to cloak themselves" from public contumely,[33] as seven of the most important lawyers in New York county had already published an opinion in favor of the acceptance of the votes. King's opinion agreed with those lawyers, particularly on the basis that previous canvassers had

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[31]Mrs. Jay to John Jay, June 10, 1792, Ibid., 431. The majority canvassers were Melancton Smith, David Graham, Pierre Van Courtlandt, Jr., Jonathan N. Havens, David M'Carty, Thomas Tillotson, and David Gelston. The minority were Isaac Roosevelt, Samuel Jones, and Leonard Gansevoort. See the New York Journal, June 16, 1792.

[32]Letters, Thomas Tillotson to R. R. Livingston, June 3 and 9, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[33]Mrs. Jay to John Jay, June 10, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 431.

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always accepted votes returned under similar circumstances. Burr, however, agreed with the majority canvassers, basically on the technical ground that the ones who had delivered the ballots were not the legal persons called for by the law.[34] (This layman, writing more than a few years after the fact, finds it hard to believe that it could have been the intent of the law to disenfranchise every voter living in a county where there was, at the moment, no legally constituted person available to carry out the letter of the law.)

James Kent's reaction to Burr's legalisms was hardly a model of detached legal calm. For him, Burr had "shamefully prostituted his talents to serve a desperate & abandoned party." Burr had, indeed, placed himself in a rare position which Kent was quick to note: "He is the only lawyer who has publicly avowed in writing an opinion of that side."[35] If James Kent was unable to retain his calm, how much less able was Mrs. Sarah Jay, herself a fiery Livingston. She cried out to her super-controlled husband, "Oh, now is the name of Livingston to be disgraced! Brockholst, Edward, William S., Maturin, etc., are to be of the number [to support the majority]. Those shameless men, blinded by malice, ambition, and interest, have conducted themselves with such indecency during the election, and daily since the canvassing of the votes, as to open the eyes of everyone respecting their views in their opposition to you." Mrs. Jay took comfort in the fact that the

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[34]"Mr. Burr's Opinion to the Canvassers," Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 339-341. The seven lawyers opposing the view of the majority canvassers were Richard Harison, John Lawrence, John Cozine, C. J. Bogert, Robert Troup, J. M. Hughes, and T. Cooper.

[35]James Kent to Moss Kent, Jr., June 15, 1792, Letters of Kent, pp. 44-45.

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"dejection, uneasiness and dissatisfaction that prevails, casts the darkest Odium upon our shameless Governor, while it makes your light shine still brighter than ever."[36]

By mid-June the newspapers had published the reports of both the majority and minority canvassers, and shortly thereafter the opinions of Burr and King were printed, as well.[37] Public opinion now began to heat to fever pitch. Robert Troup reported that the "violent & corrupt procedure" of the Clintonians "has occasioned a great ferment in the City and the people are determined not to let the matter pass over in silence."[38] The Chancellor was worried by the reaction and feared a boomerang, noting that "I could have wished that all the votes had been counted whatever might have been the event." What particularly seemed to worry the Chancellor was that "the idea of Jays being injured will contribute much to his popularity." Clinton, he believed, "was sacrificing the interest of his party to his personal interests even tho he should get in."[39] Jonathan N. Havens, one of the majority canvassers, certain though he was of the correctness of Burr's opinion, was "now thoroughly convinced of one thing which is that we must not think of ever holding up Clinton again at another Election."[40]

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[36]Mrs. Jay to John Jay, June 10, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 431-432.

[37]See the New York Journal, June 16 and 20, 1792, for the Burr and King opinions.

[38]Troup to Jay, June 13, 1792, Papers of Jay, III, 434.

[39]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, June 19, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[40]Letter, Jonathan N. Havens to John Smith, June 18, 1792, NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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What the Jayites contemplated in the way of action began to take shape during the week beginning June 17. On that day Henry Livingston, writing to the Manor, noted that "the Citizens meet at City Hall tomorrow about the Election. Gen[l] Schuyler is in town."[41] The purpose of the meeting, as described by the Clintonian, Jonathan Havens, was "to overset the State by resolutions and agreeing to write circular Letters throughout the counties." Havens then added that the "Clintonians were going to meet them [the Jayites] and try if possible to out vote them--Col Willet [sic] had given them notice that he should be at their meeting and was beating up for volunteers on Clinton's side." Havens, who had already left for his Suffolk County home, concluded by noting that "I shall be glad to hear the Event of the meeting."[42]

Josiah Ogden Hoffman, a rising federalist lawyer and a moving force in the canvassing dispute, described the meeting to Stephen Van Rensselaer. The Clintonians, "under the direction" of Colonel Willett, had arrived very early hoping "to gain the first possession of the room." They were outflanked, however, according to Hoffman, when it was generally agreed that the room "would have been too confined" to properly discuss the question. It was therefore decided to move the gathering to the front of Trinity Church. There the meeting of the "Friends of Liberty," as the federalists christened those in

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[41]Letter, Henry Livingston to Walter Livingston, June 17, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[42]Letter, Havens to Smith, June 18, 1792, NYHS, John Smith Papers. See the Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, I, 724-725, for the decision of the Council to allow "the use of the Lower large Room in the City Hall" for the meeting.

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attendance, was held, with Nicholas Low in the chair, and a set of resolutions suitable to the occasion was passed. Hoffman considered the event a great success for the "Concourse of the people" was not only great "but generally as respectableas they were numerous--The mercantile part of the City were present and all the leading influential characters in the City attended. . . . [and] the temper of the People now is such that nothing but success can allay it." The newspapers immediately published the resolves which were brief and to the point. They simply called for acceptance of the ballots of the counties which had been deprived of a recording of their votes.[43]

In every respect except winning the election the Jayites had once again beaten the opposition to the punch. They had held a successful outdoor meeting which produced a set of resolves expressive of their demands, they had called themselves the "Friends of Liberty" and made that name stick, and they had gone so far as to appoint a Committee of Correspondence with the different counties in the state. Benjamin Strong reassured his father, in Suffolk County, that the letter which he would soon receive would "only Request you will use your exertions in the cause, which is allowed by all good Men to be a good one." As for reports to the contrary in the leading Clintonian paper, the Journal, Selah Strong was warned not to believe "all Greenleaf's Lies, as he is very Partial, and in many Instances deviates very widely from the Truth."[44] J. O. Hoffman, in a private let-

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[43]Letter, J. O. Hoffman to Stephen Van Rensselaer, June 20, 1792, NYHS, J. O. Hoffman Papers. See the New York Journal of June 20, 1792, for the published resolves.

[44]Letter, Benjamin Strong to Selah Strong, June 21, 1792, NYHS, Strong Family Papers.

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ter sent to Stephen Van Rensselaer, reported on the Circular Letter that was being sent upstate and asked Van Rensselaer to contact Peter Van Schaack in Hudson and send certain material on to William Cooper, the federalist leader of Otsego County. Hoffman, in a letter of his own to Van Schaack, noted that it was "no longer a question between Mr. Jay & Mr. Clinton--but the People are now to decide, whether the Constitution is the Palladium of their form of government, or the mere engine of the Party."[45]

In the midst of the controversy, Independence Day, 1792, provided still another setting for the canvassers' dispute. The various celebrations of the "Fourth" in New York City that year were certainly not about to escape involvement in the reigning political controversy. Whether the disputants were Jayites or Clintonians, however, they did manage to find one area of general agreement--in fact it was the only area of agreement in that over-heated and argumentative summer atmosphere. What inspired such a rare feeling of near unanimity was France, her revolution, and the proclaimed rights of man. Even here the political opponents vied with one another, although this time it was in the very ardor of their praise.

The toasts given at the 4th of July dinner of the Tammany Society was a case in point. Included was one to the state of New York and all its officers and another to George Clinton, governor. A note in the newspaper report of the dinner stated, however, that not all of the company present would drink to those toasts. All did drink, though, to toasts to "The French Nation" and "Thomas Paine and the

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[45]Letters, J. O. Hoffman to Stephen Van Rensselaer, June 24, 1792, NYHS, Van Rensselaer Papers, and J. O. Hoffman to P. Van Schaack, June 26, 1792, Nicholas Low Papers.

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Rights of Man." Later that day, Tammany met again in an unusual night celebration, probably brought about by the dissenters to the dinner toasts favorable to George Clinton. That conjecture is based on the fact that in addition to the toasts "The Rights of Man" and "May the arms & wisdom of France, be equally the dread of European despots," there was the following one: "May the Governors of a free people ever remember that all civil authority is from the will & for the service of the governed."[46]

Two other series of toasts given on Independence Day again show that France was praised regardless of the local views of the organizations. The Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, which consistently supported federalist candidates throughout the decade, was completely outspoken in its toasting. Included were the following:

3. "The Governor (of right) of the State of New York."
5. "May the contempt of every true patriot light upon the men, who by a pretended respect to the letter, have omitted all regard to the spirit of the law, violated the Constitution & intentions of the legislature."
6. "The patriotic minority of the canvassers."
7. May Governor Clinton, "by resignation, convince the world, that neither the lust of power or gain have effaced from his mind the duty he owes to the peace & happiness of his country."

Volunteer toast. "May the happy period soon arrive when every civil officer shall be immediately elected by the people."

As for the toasts directed towards France, they were as staunchly pro-French as any. The rights of man was praised, as were Thomas Paine and the French Revolution. Added to the toast in honor of the French Revolution was the sentence: "May the spirit of their patriotism spread to the downfall of all tyranny." The final series of toasts reported for Independence Day, 1792, came from that supposed aristocratic

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[46] New York Journal, July 7, 1792.

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organization--The Cincinnati. The New York Cincinnati elected George Clinton president of the organization that very day and included in their toasts, the French Revolution, the National Assembly, the Rights of Man, and Thomas Paine, defender of the rights of man.[47]

The events of the fourth of July gave both sides an opportunity to express themselves strongly, but instead of cooling off tempers, the arguments and excitement continued to grow. John Jay's return to New York City on the evening of July 10 after several months on the judicial circuit provided the excuse for the next outpouring of emotion. A notice was placed in the newspapers, which called on "the friends of Liberty" to go and greet the Chief Justice. Rufus King, taking the influential federalist lawyer, Egbert Benson, with him in his carriage, reported that "The concourse was immense, & Mr. Jay has been recd. with the ringing of Bells, firing of cannon, huzzaings, & clapping of hands. The shout was 'Jay & Liberty.'"[48] That same evening a meeting of citizens took place at the home of James Myers in the sixth ward and toasts were drunk to John Jay, governor by voice of the people; the patriotic minority of canvassers; the Rights of Man; the French Revolution; and the hope that the flame of liberty would extend to the remotest corners of the world.[49]

Although some supporters of Jay began to fear that public reaction was reaching the point where it might get out of hand,[50] parti-

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[47] Ibid.

[48] King to Hamilton, July 10, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XII, 20-21.

[49] Daily Advertiser, July 13, 1702

[50] For this view see Hamilton to King, June 28, 1792 and King to Hamilton, July 10, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XI, 588-589, and XII, 20-21.

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cularly after a duel was fought between two supporters of the opposing candidates,[51] there was no question but that the Clintonians had never been more on the defensive than they were at that moment. What could they do to mount an effective counter-attack? Morgan Lewis, the state's attorney-general had earlier in the month reported to the Chancellor "on good authority, that Jay & his party plan a convention to amend the Constitution by destroying the Council of Apptmt & making other alterations." Something had to be done "to counterbalance them," he remarked worriedly to his brother-in-law. By Saturday, July 14, Edward Livingston, in a letter of his own to the Chancellor, was assuming a desperate tone. The Jayite committees, he reported, had given the Chief Justice an address, and on Thursday they were to give him a dinner. Furthermore, all the papers were filled with resolves from throughout the state, one "more violent" than the next. Echoing Morgan Lewis, he added that unless the Jayite resolves were counteracted, they would force a convention or a new election, neither of which Clinton would accept. The situation would then grow even worse.[52]

At that point in Edward Livingston's letter a single sentence

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[51]The two duelists, neither of whom was injured, were Marinus Willett, Clintonian and Sheriff of New York, and William Willcocks, a Jayite lawyer who was the only man consistently to sign his own name to his newspaper essays. See Benjamin Walker to Hamilton, July 12, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XII, 30.

[52]Letters, Morgan Lewis to R. R. Livingston, July 4, 1792, and Edward Livingston to R. R. Livingston, July 14, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll. For confirmation of the convention plan, see James Kent to Moss Kent, Jr., July 11, 1792, Letters of Kent, p. 46. Kent had hoped to redress the decision of the canvassers through a convention to be called by the Legislature. He believed that the "mode is wise, benign, orderly, & republican, & no application can be made to it of the harsh and forbidding name of faction & sedition."

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appeared that showed in microcosm the tentative changes in political structure that another few years would solidify and that desperation had made thinkable. Summing up the predicament of the Clintonians, Livingston explained: "Supposing therefore that a show of opposition is necessary as well to intimidate the faction as to thrust up the spirits of their party the Republicans have determined to give some system to their operations and begin by a meeting on Monday."[53] A major shift in the political structure of the times was in the making. A more permanent and formal organization centered about a theory of government rather than an individual political figure was taking its first very tentative steps towards maturity.

The meeting that Livingston spoke about for Monday, July 16, was scheduled in approbation of the majority of canvassers, in determination to support the laws and the constitution of the State, and in reprobation of the conduct of the Chief Justice, who had allowed himself to be placed at the head of a faction bent on destroying the peace of the state. Once more copying their opposition, the "Republicans" voted an address to the Governor and concluded by hurriedly scheduling a public dinner in his honor for Tuesday, two days before the dinner scheduled for Jay. Again in imitation of the Jayites and their Trinity Church meeting, the Monday gathering produced a resolve that "a circular letter be addressed to the free and independent electors of the several counties of the state, earnestly recommending to them, to preserve the peace and tranquility of the community, and to adopt resolutions expressing their sense of the violent measures, which

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[53]Edward Livingston to R. R. Livingston, July 14, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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are now pursuing by a certain party." The counter-attack had moved another step forward.[54]

On Tuesday, July 17, the dinner to celebrate Clinton's victory was held with the governor and a group of about one hundred friends in attendance. Two days later, the dinner in honor of John Jay took place at the City Tavern before about two hundred "Friends of Liberty." Were it not, however, for the fact that certain of the toasts were specifically written for the occasion of dinners that had been arranged by bitterly hostile groups intent on showing their hostility, the modern reader would probably be most struck by the remarkable similarity of spirit that both sets conveyed. For that reason I feel that both sets of toasts should be given as fully as possible so that the reader might more easily note the differences and similarities between them.

Toasts at Clinton's Dinner	Toasts at Jay's Dinner
Constitution of the United States President of the United States Constitution of New York	Constitution of the United States American Nation and President State of New York--may it retain its constitution inviolate
French Revolution	The blessings of peace, liberty, and good government to the French nation
The friends of liberty and good order throughout the world	The rights of man
The seven firm and patriotic canvassers	The honest minority canvassers
"May the sacred name of liberty, never be prostituted in promoting aristocratic, or licentious views."	May no power exist unless derived from the people and exercised for their benefit.

[54] New York Journal, July 18, 1792. See also the Daily Advertiser of July 19, 1792.

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May the sons of America never draw sword but against a foreign foe.

Republican principles and the injured citizens of Otsego, Clinton, and Tioga.

A speedy return of peace, good will, and harmony in the state.

Friends of liberty and justice ever united and happy.

The Governor's toast: The republican interest throughout the union.

Jay's toast: "May the people always respect themselves, and remember what they owe to posterity."[55]

In drawing conclusions from these toasts, and from those given by the various societies during the 4th of July celebrations, as well, several major points should be noted. The first concerns the extreme difficulty that one would have in attempting to make a case for any of those sets of toasts being more or less "republican" than the others, once one set aside the pro-Jay or pro-Clinton differences. The other point would be the total unanimity of feeling towards France and the events taking place there, through the early summer of 1792, as expressed in each and every set of toasts reproduced from that time. Thus, despite a constant stress on point after point of disagreement, there still remained, in the summer of 1792, large areas of agreement among New Yorkers of most shades of political opinion. At least they were talking in the same political language. Points of agreement, however, were fast being submerged under a seemingly insistent need to prove that there were no grounds for its existence.[56]

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[55]New York Weekly Museum, July 21, 1792. See also the New York Journal, July 18, 1792, and the Daily Advertiser, July 20, 1792 for additional reports on the two meetings.

[56]That the controversy had not been forgotten by late fall was shown at a meeting of the Company of Firemen of Engine #20, with some city magistrates and engineers in attendance. The New York Weekly Museum of Dec. 1, 1792, reported that among the toasts given at the meeting were: 2. Government of the U.S.--all power flow from the people and be subservient to their good; 3. Revolution of France--"may she

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By the end of July certain clear-cut changes were in the process of taking place in New York politics. The Jayites had entered the field first with committees of correspondence, public meetings, and a broad-based press and broadside campaign. The Clintonians, however, had begun to learn the techniques of republicanism from their so-called aristocratic opposition. Robert R. Livingston, replying to the letter from Edward Livingston that had used the term "Republicans," was pleased that Edward and the party had roused themselves from their lethargy and begun a counter-attack. The Chancellor noted that the opposition had made excellent use of the public press while the Clintonians tended to content themselves with Greenleaf's paper, "which is only read by one party." Urging that their friends in different parts of the state have a center to come together for group action, the Chancellor also suggested that "a common purse. . . be subscribed to defray a variety of. . . charges."[57] This development towards the acceptance of party structure was a major change in attitude.[58]

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soon overcome tyranny & usurpation & may her light enkindle neighboring nations"; 4. Friends of Liberty everywhere; 5. Government of N.Y. --"may we be governed by men of our own choice"; 6. "All mechanic arts & useful manufacture in America so we can live independent of other countries"; 7. New York Mechanics Society. Once again, the toasts of a group with a strong mechanic bias were pro-Jay and also tied to solidarity with France. Concerning the actual membership of the volunteer fire companies of the day, it covered a broad and representative spectrum of city inhabitants. Two sources of information on that vital city organization are George W. Sheldon, The Story of the Volunteer Fire Department of the City of New York (New York: Harper & Bros., 1882) and Our Firemen. A History of the New York Fire Departments (New York: Augustine E. Costello, 1887.)

[57]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, July 20, 1792, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[58]Noble E. Cunningham, Jr., in his The Jeffersonian Republi-

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To rationalize such a basic change in position, the Clintonians, or incipient Republicans, had to endow their opposition with especually devilish characteristics. This they proceeded to do. On the anniversary of American independence, a letter writer in the Journal had accused the opponents of the majority of canvassers of being tories, lately returned to republican government, who had suddenly become defenders of the public will. On August 1, "Respondent" clinched the argument. For him the "Governor's party" was "composed of unbiassed [sic] freeholders, who enjoy moderate freeholds & independent volition," while the "aristocratical party," as he styled the opposition, was "composed generally of ambiguous freeholders, the refuse of neighboring states & the mechanical creatures of the landed aristocracy." There was, moreover, nothing wrong with the party as long as it did not turn into faction. The latter occurred when the people lost control to a small aristocratic group or junto. For the Clintonians it was becoming a clear case of "Republican" party versus Aristocratic faction.[59]

What was the response of the federalists to this changing po-

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cans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801 (Chapel Hill: The Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1957), p. 47, stressed the importance of Congress as the center for developing party interests, giving the vice-presidential election of 1792 as an early example. I would not totally reject that view (see infra, pp. 101-103) but I believe it was of less importance in the development of political parties in New York than were a whole series of local factors. For example, the letters which passed between the Livingston brothers in July 1792 as well as the "Federalists'" view of themselves and their supporters as the "Friends of Liberty" were both indicative of the beginning of independent local thinking along political lines which was hardly tied to directives coming out of the nation's capital.

[59]"Observations by a Citizen" and "Respondent," No. II, New York Journal, July 4 and Aug. 1, 1792.

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litical scene? As early as February, a supporter of Jay, answering an essayist who praised Aaron Burr as "a man of no party," had stated that a party man was needed at that time. That was most unusual for "party" and "faction" were often interchangeable words in the newspapers and both carried strong negative connotations. The writer, "A Citizen," had argued that a man who remained neutral in a time of danger was not good for much, but a man of party who had worked for and supported the Constitution was a man to be sought. The federalists showed they were ready for party work, and yet in one important respect they were caught short. They still thought they were fighting the anti-federalists of 1788 and 1789. That might have been understandable for "A Citizen," who wrote before the gubernatorial campaign of 1792 had really gotten under way, but a letter signed by William Willcocks, that appeared in the Advertiser in November 1792, showed that many Jayites were still using the themes of the previous state campaign to govern their approach to politics on the national level. With Clinton being pushed for the vice-presidency at that moment, Willcocks felt that it would be no consolation to New Yorkers to be rid of Clinton by making him Vice-President of the United States. This was particularly so since Willcocks had heard that the Governor was to be put forward "because he is an antifederalist--& because he may be aidful to a certain junto of southern nabobs, in embarassing the administration of the secretary of the treasury, & in effecting a new system of finance & placemen." Willcocks concluded that he sincerely wished "that the odious term antifederalism & the thing itself was buried in oblivion."[60]

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[60]"A Citizen," Daily Advertiser, Feb. 20, 1792 and William

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Willcocks' wish was closer to fulfillment than he thought but he would have been very unhappy to have found out, at that moment, of the manner of interment. For Shakespeare to the contrary, the Clintonians had learned what astute politicians have always known: that a rose by any other name could make a great deal of difference. Many of the principles of anti-federalism continued to be believed in and practiced by its original followers, but the gradually developing new name, "Republican," would ultimately cover the old idea in a way that would make it all seem much more palatable to the general public.

What had therefore begun as an election for governor in New York State between two groups formed around the candidacy of two men had become a movement toward the development of political parties. The Clintonians, who had been as loud as any in decrying faction or party, and who had long been out-classed in the organizational and planning techniques of republicanism, had finally learned from the opposition. In fact, they had scored a coup. They were getting ready to fight their political battles on their own terms and the albatross of anti-federalism was about to drop from around their necks. The year 1792 was proving to be a most important year of transition in New York politics.

Willcocks, Ibid., Nov. 20, 1792. Not all federalists misunderstood the developments taking place locally and nationally among their opponents in 1792. Rufus King showed that he recognized the changed nature of the game even if he did not see the full party implications when he wrote to Gouverneur Morris on September 1, 1792 (Correspondence of King, I, 425) that "the opposition, that now exists, arises from other principles than those which produced an opposition to the Constitution, and proceeds from the Rivalry, which always has & will prevail in a free society."

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CHAPTER V

A GROWING "spirit of party"

If the gubernatorial campaign of the first half of 1792 in New York State played a substantial role in effecting far-reaching political changes in local political organization and attitude, it remained for the national election in the last half of that year to solidify the differences that had already appeared. Once again, New York and New Yorkers had a major role to play in those national developments.

The Chancellor of New York had a long-standing correspondence with Thomas Jefferson. Both men shared those "gentlemanly" interests of a philosophical and practical bent that combined to give the accomplished amateur of the eighteenth century the assurance of a practiced professional. If Monticello, itself, was a monument to that ideal, no less so was the Clermont, named by Robert Fulton for the estate of his benefactor. And Robert R. Livingston was more than a latter-day Maecenas. His agricultural work, which helped to introduce the American farmer to the use of gypsum and clover for his soil and the strain of merino sheep for his flock, was a splendid reminder of the importance of the talented amateur to pre-twentieth century technological improvement. Jefferson and Livingston could also feel comfortable together politically. The Chancellor, commenting

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on his dissatisfaction with the federal government, its use of power, and its financial program, would have been assured of a sympathetic listener in the Secretary of State. Such was the case when Livingston, as early as February, 1791, stated in a letter to Jefferson: "I feel, with you, great pain in the dissatisfaction which prevails in the Southern States. I see upon almost every important question a kind of territorial division of sentiment which must disgust those who are left in the minority." Livingston warned that jealousies might thus arise which could, in turn, "lead to disagreeable consequences."[1]

That spring Jefferson and James Madison made their famous northeastern tour, and there was a sharpening of feeling and reaction. Robert Troup (in his large, bold handwriting, that well-characterized his large, bold frame), wrote to Hamilton of the New York City phase of that tour. Describing a meeting of which he was the only recorded observer, he noted: "There was every appearance of a pasionate [sic] courtship between the Chancellor, Burr, Jefferson & Madison when the two latter were in Town. Delenda est Carthago I suppose is the Maxim adopted with respect to you. They had better be quiet, for if they suceed [sic] they will tumble the fabric of the govt in ruins to the ground." The tour was also noted by Nathaniel Hazard, the New York City merchant and ironmonger. He described, at some length, the Connecticut federalist reaction in a letter sent to Hamilton later in the year. The ridicule of the Hartford Wits, as filtered through the

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[1]Dangerfield, Chancellor Livingston, pp. 426-430; Letter, R. R. Livingston to Jefferson, Feb. 20, 1791, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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writing of Hazard, was strongly brought to bear against Jefferson and Madison for a trip "in which they scouted silently thro' the country, shunning the Gentry, communing with & pitying the Shayites, & quarreling with the Eatables; nothing good enough for them."[2]

It was not difficult to portray Jefferson and Madison as carping and querulous critics of the federal government at a time when a broad spectrum of groups and individuals still found vast areas of federal action worthy of the highest praise. Rudolphus Bogert, a young man who resided with and worked for Mr. Thomas Pearsall, a New York manufacturer of cards of wool, cotton, and other thread, and who would be brought into the firm of Thomas Pearsall and Son as a partner by early 1795, wrote optimistically to his uncle in England that "our Exports . . . are Immense . . . We are moving toward a balance between exports and imports. The import is another source of wealth as are the duties on enumerated articles." Vacant lands and European speculation in American funds also added to the wealth of the United States. With pleasure, Bogert noted a treasury surplus of $202,915 for the year and a trade that "moves into the whole world, with not less than 20 large ships that go from America to the

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[2]Troup to Hamilton, June 15, 1791, and Nathaniel Hazard to Hamilton, [Nov. 25, 1791] Papers of Hamilton, VIII, 478 and IX, 534. For the source of the comment on Troup's frame see Aaron Burr to Theodosia Burr, Dec. 1, 1791, Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 307. In his letters to his daughter, Aaron Burr showed a side of his nature that begins to make understandable his ability to charm people and even move them to action on his behalf. The following excerpt from the December letter of Burr to his nine year old Theodosia provides a brief glimpse into the father-daughter relationship as well as into the person of Colonel Troup. "Enclosed in Bartow's last letter came one which, from the handwriting, I supposed to be from that great fat fellow, Colonel Troup. Judge of my pleasure & surprise when I opened & found it was from my dear little girl."

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East Indies." And in an innocent statement of economic fact that would be of enormous import in deciding future political action, Bogert noted that "our commerce is chiefly with the British, then the Dutch, and the French, but the latter bear a small proportion." In the listing of national and personal pleasures, Bogert could conclude "that under the present Energetic government, and the situation of the people at large--this country is happier under the present administration than that of Great britain, or any other heretofore experienced."[3]

At about the same time, two New York City newspapers not noted for their unalloyed sympathy with the federal government as then constituted, could, in fourth of July editorials, survey the scene and praise, with seeming ease, that very government. The Diary, on the 16th Anniversary since Liberty & Independence were granted the American Republic," happily acknowledged that "on this auspicious day, the patriot, who was an eye witness to the dark hours in which America

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[3]R. Bogert to R. Ritzema, Apr. 12, 1792, NYHS, R. Bogert LB. Although Jefferson had become more than a carping critic by the spring of 1792, a letter he wrote to Benjamin Vaughan a year earlier, on May 11, 1791, Writings of Thomas Jefferson, ed. by Paul L. Ford (10 vols.; New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1895), V, 332-334, in reference to the Paine-Burke dispute, is fascinating for its expressions of satisfaction with the general government at the very time he was launching a major public attack against it. Jefferson wrote: "We have some names of note here who have apostatised from the true faith: but they are few indeed, and the body of our citizens pure & insusceptible of taint in their republicanism. . . .

"We have great reason to be satisfied with the train of our affairs. Our government is going on with a firm & steady pace." Taxes he continued, "are always ahead of our calculations," while crops were favorable, and industry and domestic manufacture continued to increase. "Our credit at home & abroad equal to our wishes. So that on the whole we are in as prosperous a way as a nation can well be. This shews the advantage of the changeableness of a constitution." No true-believing Hamiltonian could have written a more ardent love-letter in praise of the success of the general government.

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first announced her right to those invaluable acquisitions [religious and civil liberty], will no doubt contrast, in pleasing reflection, the present with that doubtful crisis--and exclaim,

> With gen'rous pride let patriot hearts expand
> And hail the blessings of a favor'd land."[4]

The Journal, no less sanguine, offered the view that the Declaration of Independence did not merely separate two countries but provided the opening for "the fairest prospect of political happiness, that ever smiled upon our world." The influence of that event in Europe "has long been visible. . . . and success will attend . . . in proportions as reason and philosophy gain an influence over mankind." Meanwhile, the Journal concluded, America offered an asylum from oppression to the "ingenious mechanic," and the "industrious husbandman," as well as security to all.[5]

Again and again an unbridable optimism insisted upon breaking through an increasingly abrasive political surface. The Bogert letter and the two editorials were written in the midst of the New York financial and political crisis previously described but those writings appeared easily to transcend the immediate difficulties.

Such was not the case in the evidence presented publicly and privately by figures on the highest levels of government. The Jefferson-Livingston correspondence and the Jefferson-Adams controversy, which had developed out of events surrounding the first American

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[4]Diary, July 4, 1792.

[5]New York Journal, July 4, 1792.

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edition of Paine's Rights of Man,[6] had already shown the growing enmities between sections and leaders. But all that had gone before was mere smoke compared to the blaze that erupted on the national political scene by mid-1792. In late May of that year, Thomas Jefferson had written to the President a summary of the points of dissatisfaction with the federal government then appearing in the newspapers. Washington later personally discussed those "discontents" with Jefferson. The result of the letter and conversation was a request from Washington to Hamilton that the latter answer "the discontents here enumerated." Those "discontents" included the view that "all the Capitol employed in paper speculation is barren & useless . . . , nourishes in our citizens vice & idleness instead of industry & morality," and has produced a "corrupt squadron" of legislators, intent on getting "rid of the limitations imposed by the Constitution on the general legislature." And all for what purpose? The "ultimate object of all this is to prepare the way for a change, from the present republican form of Government, to that of a monarchy; of which the British Constitution is to be the model."[7]

The Washington letter detailing the political attack of the opposition was interesting both for what was stressed as well as for what was ignored. The attack on the financial program had been made before while that on the monarchical tendencies of the Hamiltonians was

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[6]See Jefferson to Jonathan B. Smith as quoted in Papers of Hamilton, IX, 34, n. 1, and Jefferson to James Madison, May 9, 1791, Writings of Jefferson, V, 331-332.

[7]Jefferson to Washington, May 23, 1792 and Conversation with Washington, July 10, 1792, Writings of Jefferson, VI, 1-6 and I, 198-201, as quoted in Papers of Hamilton, XII, 130, n. 4; Washington to Hamilton, July 29, 1792, Ibid., 13-33

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new in scope and stress. There was nary a word, however, on the French Revolution nor any accusation of anti-French bias against the leaders of the federal government. It would not have been a difficult step to go from an attack on British monarchical tendencies to an accusation of anti-French attitudes, but that step was not yet taken by the Jeffersonian opposition.

Such was not the case in reverse by the leader of the federal forces in the national government. Alexander Hamilton, in a letter of immense length and feeling, which he wrote to Edward Carrington, a favorite Virginia correspondent, unburdened himself of many thoughts and opinions on the political scene of that moment, and particularly on the roles of Madison and Jefferson in subverting, as Hamilton viewed it, the federal government. To the student of the Federalist period, this letter could be considered Hamilton's Hamiet, in the sense that almost every page contains familiar and/or exemplary quotations from the Hamiltonian lexicon. Near the beginning of this essay-letter is the passage which apparently set his long chain of thoughts in motion. He wrote: "It was not 'till the last session of Congress that I became unequivocally convinced of the following truth--'That Mr. Madison cooperating with Mr. Jefferson is at the head of a faction decidedly hostile to me and my administration, and activated by views in my judgment subversive to the principles of good government and dangerous to the union, peace and happiness of the Country."[8]

The rest of the letter was a detailing of those "subversive

[8]Hamilton to Edward Carrington, May 26, 1792, Ibid., XI, 426-445, 429.

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views." Domestically, Jefferson and Madison had "Lost no opportunity of sounding the alarm with great affected solemnity at encroachments meditated on the rights of the States, & holding up the bugbear of a faction in the Government having designs unfriendly to Liberty." In the area of foreign politics, Hamilton viewed the ideas "of those Gentlemen . . . equally unsound & dangerous. They have a womanish attachment to France and a womanish resentment against Great Britain." If both Jefferson and Madison "were left to pursue their own course," Hamilton was certain that "there would be in less than six months an open War between the U States & Great Britain." Hamilton was quick to assure Carrington that he, himself, had "a due sense of the conduct of France towards this Country in the late Revolution, but there is a wide difference between this & implicating ourselves in all her politics." Then, in a sentence presaging future American governmental attitude, Hamilton disclosed what his own predilection was in regard to foreign policy: "The Neutral & the Pacific Policy appear to me to mark the true path to the U States."[9]

Turning to another area of controversy, Hamilton noted that he had heard "that serious apprehensions are disseminated in your state as to the existence of a Monarchical party meditating the destruction of State & Republican Government." Hamilton pledged, however, on his "private faith and honor as a Man" that there was no substance to such charges. He "was affectionately attached to the Republican theory" but in candor he could not refrain from adding that he was not without doubts for its success. For Hamilton, who believed that "stability and

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[9]Ibid., 438-439.

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order" in Government were essential to public and private security, "the only enemy which Republicanism has to fear in this Country is in the Spirit of faction and anarchy." In the penultimate paragraph of this letter, Hamilton pointed the finger at those whom he believed had sowed the seeds of faction and anarchy. The vastness of the gulf between esteemed leaders of the country, only a few short years after Washington's triumphant entry as President-elect into New York City, was here forcefully and fully displayed. Hamilton wrote:

> If I were disposed to promote Monarchy & overthrow State Governments, I would mount the hobby horse of popularity--I would cry out usurpation--danger to liberty &c. I would endeavour to prostrate the National Government--raise a ferment--and then ride in the Whirlwind and direct the Storm! That there are men acting with Jefferson & Madison who have this in view I verily believe. I could lay my finger on some of them. That Madison does not mean it I also verily believe, and I rather believe the same of Jefferson; but I read him upon the whole thus--'A man of profound ambition & violent passions.'[10]

The Secretary of State and the Secretary of the Treasury had spoken. By mid-summer 1792 it was clear that a failure in trust of major proportions had swept over the protagonists so that "betrayer" and "traitor" were neither unfelt nor unexpressed thoughts. Similar feeling had begun to appear on the state and local levels and only the fact that the individuals thus infected could react with common-sense as well as passion, because they were dealing with people they knew

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[10] Ibid., 443-444. See also Hamilton to Washington, Aug. 18, 1792, Ibid., XII, 228-258, in which Hamilton answered the objections raised by Jefferson and which were passed on by Washington. In his reply Hamilton stressed, as his prime objects, the need for neutrality and the strengthening of the federal government. These views were also presented to the public in several series of essays that appeared in the newspapers throughout the late summer and early fall of 1792. See, for example, "An American," "Fact." "Catullus" and "Amicus," all from the pen of Hamilton, in Papers on Hamilton, XII and XIII.

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well, saved the situation. On the national level there was, fortunately, always George Washington. When Hamilton wrote to Washington in mid-summer noting with satisfaction that the President was relaxing his disposition to decline re-election, the former catalogued the reasons why Washington should, indeed, do so, his "reputation" aside. The affairs of the national government were not yet settled; its enemies were not yet totally put to flight; in the states every effort was being made to place enemies of the federal government at their head; and the new House of Representatives would produce increased tests for the Administration. Washington's presence was the rock to which less stable and less secure bodies could safely attach themselves.[11]

In the midst of the heat created by the charges and countercharges that flew back and forth during the summer of 1792, nothing could have been more welcome than a clear-eyed account of the situation by someone who stood outside the main circle of combatants. That need was filled by Jean de Ternant, the last representative for some time of monarchical France to the United States who was also the last representative of France for some time who would be able to view the American scene with a large degree of calmness. In a dispatch to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs, dated August 19, 1792, Ternant noted that the election campaign for members of Congress and the executive heads of government had already started. The animosity between the federalists and anti-federalists, which his predecessors had fully reported,

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[11]Hamilton to Washington, July 30 [-Aug. 3],1792, Ibid., XII, 137-138.

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had been renewed in even greater force. The newspapers were full of articles, pro and con, particularly in relation to some of the principal men of government; although the President's re-election was certain, that of the Vice-President was very much in doubt. Ternant went on to note that the anti-federalists, who called themselves "republicans," and whom their opponent called démocrates enragés, found Adams too aristocratic to support. Even if "the republicans or democrats" were successful in gaining control of the House of Representatives, however, Ternant believed that the Senate would stand as a bulwark against them. Showing great understanding of the American government, Ternant concluded that there was, within the states, a great majority in favor of the federal government under the Constitution and that the government could not and would not fall without the most violent shocks.[12]

The opposition to the federal government, having discovered the truth of Ternant's observation, was no longer basically anti-federalist in the old sense of the word. The overwhelming majority did not desire the destruction of the federal Constitution but rather preferred to bend it to their own will. A letter from the well-known anti-federalist, Dr. Benjamin Rush, to Aaron Burr showed such an inclination through its stated plan of building a chain of party organization within the framework of the constitutional government. In the letter, which was brought to Burr by John Beckley, that key "Republican" organizer, clerk of the House of Representatives and "fund of information about men and things," Dr. Rush remarked that the "republican ferment continues to work in our state

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[12]Ternant to Dumouriez, Aug. 19, 1792, "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-97," ed. by Frederick J. Turner, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903 (hereinafter referred to as "CFM" AHA) (2 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II, 154-155. All translations from the French, unless otherwise noted, were made by the author of this dissertation.

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[Pennsylvania]" and that the fate of the stock-jobbers and brokers would soon be decided. Mincing no words, Rush declared to Burr that "your friends everywhere look to you to take an active part in removing the monarchical rubbish of our government." Burr was warned that unless the republican interest spoke out, "we are undone." An association was developing in Boston that augured well and Burr was urged to "feed it by a letter to Mr. Samuel Adams. My letter will serve to introduce you to him. . . ."[13]

The federalists, following the lead of Hamilton, had already developed a system of correspondence of their own with leading characters from every state in the Union. Hamilton asserted to his local friends that he would direct his attention "to every State South of New York," and urged the others to act elsewhere.[14] Among Hamilton's own letters in his capacity as a one-man committee of correspondence were four sent to friends known and unknown, in which he passed along his opinion of such vice-presidential possibilities as Burr, Clinton, Adams, and Jefferson. While Hamilton was not one to trust "the Government too much in the hands of enemies," George Clinton, who finally became the anti-federal candidate for Vice-President, was "a man of property, and, in private life . . . of probity." Burr, however, was "unprincipled both as a public and private man." In an ever-harsher condemnation, Hamilton's detestation of Burr reached its strongest expression in the following passage: "Secretly turning Liberty into ridicule he knows as well as most men how to make use of the name. In a word, if we have an embryo Caesar in the United

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[13]Dr. Benjamin Rush to Aaron Burr, Sept. 24, 1792, Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 316-317.

[14]Hamilton to Rufus King, Sept. 23, 1792, Correspondence of King, I, 427.

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States 'tis Burr."[15] As for John Adams, Hamilton might not have approved all of his opinions, "but we believe him to be . . . a real friend to genuine liberty . . . combining his attachment to that with the love of order and stable government." Hamilton then admitted that "there was a time when I should have ballanced between Mr. Jefferson & Mr. Adams: but I now view the former as a man of sublimated and paradoxical imagination--cherishing notions incompatible with regular and firm government."[16]

The increasing bitterness of the campaign spilled over constantly into the press. "Columbus," in the "Republican" New York Journal compared, in the strongest terms, the two parties "at present existing in the U.S.--One composed of persons who are endeavoring to lay the foundation of a monarchical government, by instilling into the minds of the people, sentiments inconsistent & unfriendly to republicanism." The other consisted "of the real supporters of independence, friends to equal rights, & warm advocates of a free elective government." In this battle between good and evil the first described part were the "Aristocrats" while the latter "will ever retain the glorious name of Republicans." "Columbus" believed that the race for Vice-President presented the opportunity to prune the tree of liberty "of poisonous twigs that at present spring up and retard its growth." There was no doubt in the mind of "Columbus" that liberty was in danger and that action was needed.[17]

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[15]Hamilton to _____, Sept. 21, 1792, and Hamilton to _____, Sept. 26, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XII, 408, 480.

[16]Hamilton to C. C. Pinckney, Oct. 10, 1792, and Hamilton to John Steele, Oct. 15, 1792, Ibid., 543-544, 568-569.

[17]"Columbus," New York Journal, Oct. 3, 1792.

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Undoubtedly it was newspaper letters like that just described that led "F. G." to send one of his own to the "Federalist" Daily Gazette. More in sorrow than in anger he took to task those letter writers in the newspapers who slandered the country's leaders, railed against the excise laws, called for disobedience, and generally acted to tear down the interests of the country. "F. G." noted that many of the newspapers of this country went overseas. Would such harsh statements, asked "F. G.," bring needed industrious and wealthy people from overseas to our land? "In France," "F. G." asserted, "they consider our condition as a triumphant proof of the efficacy of the principle of liberty." Do not allow falsehood to be stirred up and the growth of the nation halted, he warned his readers.[18]

After almost two more months of continuous personal and factional attacks, Walter Rutherford could report to his son in mid-December that it was "now agreed there will be no change, and many think that old Cloeths sit easiest." There had been much betting over who should be vice-president, and Rutherford noted that "both Federals and Jacobins seem'd certain." A sharp change had indeed taken place when as generally calm an observer as Walter Rutherford was prepared to call the anti-federal opposition "Jacobins."[19] Alexander Hamilton, for his part, was happy to write to John Jay of his own "satisfaction" at the success of Adams, for a Clinton victory "would have been of mortification & pain" to him. Jay, in response, added that he too rejoiced in the re-election of Adams. It was, he believed, "a great Point gained,

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[18]"F. G.," New York Daily Gazette, Oct. 10, 1792.

[19]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Dec. 16, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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but the unceasing Industry and acts of the Anti's render Perseverance, union, and constant Efforts necessary."[20]

Finally, the ever-caustic and sharply witty John Armstrong asked Horatio Gates if the Antis were not "a little humbled at the issue of the Election. . . . Clinton's democratical support is completely ridiculous to be sure. I even now see his southern advocates penning maxims upon republican equality and the rights of men with one hand, and with the other, lashing series of poor devils before them, to the iniquitous task of the day." The soft underbelly of anti-federal republicanism could not escape the ironic thrusts of Armstrong. That Revolutionary War officer, author of the Newburgh letters, and "Federalist" brother-in-law of the Chancellor, was too sophisticated an observer not to conclude with a final thrust which noted that "inconsistency is an ingredient in anti-federalism as well as in all other vices."[21]

With the re-election of President Washington and Vice-President Adams assured, an interlude of comparative quiet overtook domestic politics. In New York City, however, this merely meant that during the first period of political calm in almost a year some of the more violent examples of inter-personal and inter-factional relations gave way to a somewhat less caustic manner of showing antipathy. Among the "pleasanter" examples of private vindictiveness during that winter was one described by Walter Rutherford. Reporting on that year's anniver-

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[20]Hamilton to John Jay, Dec. 18, 1792, and Jay to Hamilton, Dec. 29, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XIII, 338, 384-385.

[21]Letter, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Jan. 12, 1793, NYHS, Gates Papers.

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sary dinner of the St. Andrews Society, Rutherford informed his son that Governor Clinton, the Chancellor, who was president of the society, and he were all very cordial. Rutherford, however, found himself made "the Cats Paw" for he was elected as the new president by a group who made it "a Party matter." Rutherford reported that the Chancellor's enemies "seem much gratified."[22] One of those enemies was something more than merely gratified. James Tillary wrote to Hamilton that the Chancellor "is removed from the Presidency of the Scotch Society & that has been ascribed to my interference. The truth is I wish't to make the whole family unpopular, because in my Judgment, by their apostasy they had rendered themselves quite odious."[23] Even without Tillary's hard-edged words, it was clear where the St. Andrews Society stood politically. For at the anniversary meeting, after the Chancellor and the Governor had retired, the party toasted the Chief Justice and Hamilton.[24]

For the upper echelon of New York society these were becoming exceedingly trying times. Walter Rutherford noted the problem late in January, 1793, when he found that due to his wife's illness he had fallen behind in dinner invitations. The Rutherfords had to plan three dinner parties for the upcoming week. One of the parties would be for a set of friends, one for Jayites, and one for Clintonians.

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[22]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Dec. 2, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[23]James Tillary to Hamilton, [Jan. 14, 1793] , Papers of Hamilton, XIII, 481.

[24]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Dec. 2, 1792, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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Rutherford made it clear that he did not wish to repeat the situation that arose at one party where Mrs. Jay and Chancellor Livingston were both present. There was embarrassment all around, Rutherford wrote to his son, for "you know they have no Intercourse." Even public dinners were becoming increasingly hazardous. Rutherford reported on the house warming of the new Tontine Coffee House, or "Scrip Castle," as he called it, at which the Governor, Chancellor and "a good helping" of both parties were present. During the toasts, without which no dinner could be complete, Governor Clinton gave Jefferson, someone else gave Gouverneur Morris, and Rutherford, "to be of no Party . . . gave poor Lafayette." Thus had political animosities soured even the social scene during that winter.[25]

For New York's most important national figure, that winter did not even provide the outward appearance of calm. After a brief respite, the "Republicans" in Congress launched an all-out attack against him--an attack that historians now generally agree was directed by Thomas Jefferson. They wished to demonstrate that Hamilton's direction of the Treasury Department was filled with corrupt and irregular practices, using his handling of the French loan as the key to their plan. Hamilton, through a massive effort on his part, answered all charges before the Congressional session ended. Thereupon, the House voted down overwhelmingly the censure resolutions put forward by the Virginia spokesman for Jefferson, William Branch Giles.[26] What is pertinent

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[25]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Jan. 20, [1793], Feb. 17, [1793], and Feb. 12, [1793], NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[26]See Editor's Introductory Note to Hamilton's Report on the Balance of All Unapplied Revenues at the End of the Year 1792, [Feb. 4, 1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIII, 532-541, for a full discussion of this attempt to destroy Hamilton and, through him, reach the seat of power of the federal administration.

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here is that the attempt to destroy faith in Hamilton and in the federalist administration was made through an attempt to show bad faith in dealings with France. And yet the French minister, Ternant, had, early in the drive against Hamilton, written a dispatch to his home office which solidly backed the actions of the Secretary of the Treasury. Ternant, noting that the concerted attack against Hamilton and all his works was launched in Congress "by the most zealous members of the popular party," feared that the French debt would not be soon repaid if Hamilton fell before the onslaught. Instead, Ternant hoped that the "friends of order" would get behind Hamilton and save the finances of the government.[27]

The "friends of order" breathed a collective sigh of relief when Hamilton's victory over the opposition was certain. The mood in New York among Hamilton's supporters was so euphoric that at a large dinner at Judge Duane's, held almost immediately after the last Congressional vote, Hamilton was the subject of general conversation and "received the just & grateful applause of the company." General Gates, hardly a true believer in federalism, went so far as to eulogize Hamilton with lines from Alexander Pope, beginning:

> "Statesman yet Friend to truth, of Soul Sincere,
> In Action Faithfull, and in Honour Clear!"

The triumphant Secretary, still absent in Philadelphia, received all this affectionate news from the New York physician, Dr. John Bard, who concluded his letter by praising Hamilton for his "unremitting devo-

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[27]Ternant to Minister of Foreign Affairs (hereinafter referred to as MFA), Jan. 12, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 167-168.

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tion to its [his country's] real Interests."[28]

As the breach between "Federalists" and "Republicans" grew ever wider on all levels of government and understanding, it became more and more difficult to bridge those gaps which had been enlarged, in Hamilton's view, by the "spirit of party [which] has grown to maturity sooner in this country than perhaps was to be counted upon."[29] Among old friends, however, such efforts, though difficult, could still be made. One of the finest examples of the attempt to show that intelligent men could disagree with intellectual vigor and still retain respect for each other can be found in a letter of some philosophical merit that was sent by John Armstrong to Horatio Gates. General Gates had shown during the dinner at Judge Duane's that he was a strong supporter of Hamilton's policies, but at the same time he fitted comfortably into a more sympathetic view of mankind than most conservatives would allow. In fact, General Gates was shortly to become a supporter of most things which could be denominated "Republican." John Armstrong, though writing the letter from his brother-in-law's estate of Clermont, was philosophically a strong "Federalist."[30]

Armstrong believed that in regard to Gates and himself, it was fair to remark "how nearly men may think alike, yet seem to think differ-

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[28]Dr. John Bard to Hamilton, Mar. 4, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 186-187. For further praise from the "friends of order" see William Seton to Hamilton, Mar. 5, 1793, and Gulian Verplanck to Hamilton, Mar. 17, 1793, Ibid., 192,209.

[29]Hamilton to William Short, Feb. 5, 1793, Ibid., 7.

[30]Letter, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Mar. 14, 1793, NYHS, Gates Papers.

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ently." Specifically, he noted how each most disliked tyranny under different shapes.

> You think it most detestable when exercised by one over many; I think it still more odious when exercised by many over a few . . . ; yet we both hate Tyranny, nor do either of us carry our need so far as to believe in the divine right either of Kings or mobs--and of course are equally free from pretending to justify the monarchical massacre of St. Bartholomews day, on the one side--or the democratical one of the 10th of August, on the other.

Armstrong also noted that Gates' position that "the many are generally right" could be tested through facts and therefore was susceptible of intellectual argument. Armstrong believed that Gates and others, wishing good for mankind so strongly, had substituted hope for experience. Bringing the issue home, Armstrong asked when and where did the many govern? Why, here and now in the United States. But does the elector really know the nature and character of the candidates or the latter the clear wants of the former? "Not at all," Armstrong emphasized, "both are taken upon trust, & all that either knows or cares for, is, that it be the man or the measure of his party." Here was the crux of Armstrong's argument. Each state is governed not by the people "but by an individual or junto--more sagacious,--more active,--more bold and more aspiring than the rest." For Armstrong, that "is the aristocracy which is laid in human nature, and which no declarations of rights can obscure or invalidate." To clinch his argument, Armstrong insisted that though you could "divest an Orleans of his title," you could not, "were Mirabeau alive . . . divest him of his sense, learning, eloquence and address -- these were distinctions beyond the reach of even the omnipotence of a french Convention."[31]

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[31]Letter, Armstrong to Gates, Mar. 14, 1793, NYHS, Gates Papers.

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Thus, after a year of increasingly mortal-style combat, some of the disputants were still looking for common grounds of agreement. It was possible, that with enough good-will and a generally peaceful world scene, such attempts as those made by John Armstrong and Horatio Gates--who were admittedly not extreme in their views to begin with--would have succeeded in paving over surface differences and producing, not unanimity, but workable understandings. Good-will, however, was becoming a questionable commodity by March of 1793. And when the news of war between England and France reached the United States a month later, it not only successfully demolished any possibility of this country retaining an easy relationship with both of the warring maritime nations, but it also seriously handicapped any attempt at internal rapprochement. When, near the close of the letter to Gates, Armstrong reported that "Baron Steuben has returned from his Philad[a] expedition--& but little pleased, I suppose, with the Gallico fever he met with," it was clear that a new entry of major importance had appeared on the American scene.[32] Even before the outbreak of war between England and France had been reported, this "Gallico fever" had begun to have its affect in shaping the daily lives and attitudes of Americans, in general, and of those living in the major seacoast towns, in particular. The New Yorker, of course, was one of those most affected.

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[32] Ibid.

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CHAPTER VI

THE APPEARANCE OF "Gallico fever"

In the August, 1791, issue of the New York Magazine, "T. W." took on Edmund Burke in the name of revolutionary France. In language that admitted of no doubts, "T. W." stated: "This glorious revolution was conducted upon principles of liberality, philanthropy and philosophy: It was supported with harmony and peace. Never before were mankind witnesses of such a scene. A nation of twenty-six millions have vanquished and overturned tyranny and oppression, without bloodshed and without striking a blow." Since this summation of total verbal and moral support of the French Revolution would have brought out few dissenting opinions among New Yorkers of the time, the statement might strike the modern reader as ironic but not unusual. Also not remarkable for its time, but nevertheless holding extraordinary impact for today's reader, was "T. W.'s" use of tense. The excerpt is entirely in the past tense, which indicates that the writer considered the revolution to have been successfully completed. In point of fact, most New Yorkers of the time seemed to share "T. W.'s" illusion that the revolution had run its course in a manner that was satisfactory to most Frenchmen.[1]

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[1]"T. W.," New York Magazine, II (Aug. 1791), 435.

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If the French Revolution had come to a successful conclusion for most Americans, a few at the top echelons of government knew otherwise. Undoubtedly the best informed American and New Yorker was Gouverneur Morris, appointed United States Minister to France early in 1792, who had been an observer at the scene since the winter of 1789. Morris' letters to a score of leading federalists, as well as his official dispatches to Thomas Jefferson while the latter was Secretary of State, provide a running series of descriptions and insights into the French situation. Despite accusations of monarchical bias constantly leveled against Morris, and the ultimate decision of the French republican government to ask for his recall, Morris' writings remain examples of acute observation and intelligent conjecture. In May of 1792 Morris wrote such a letter to William Carmichael, United States chargé d'affaires at Madrid, which provided his reader with both a philosophical context and practical preparation for the extraordinary events that were to take place in France that summer.

> You know that I do, from the bottom of my heart, wish well to this country, [France] & will therefore easily judge what I have felt in seeing them long since in the high road to despotism. They have made the common mistake, that, to enjoy liberty, it is necessary only to demolish authority, & the common consequence results, viz: that the most ardent advocates for the revolution begin now to wish & pray, & even cry out for the establishment of despotic power, as the only means of securing the lives & properties of the people. This is terrible. The war in which they are engaged furnishes a dreary prospect; there seems to be but one ground to hope for success, which is, that improbable things are those which usually happen.[2]

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[2]Morris to William Carmichael, May 14, 1792, Sparks, Life of Morris, II, 173-174. For stated dissatisfaction with Morris by the French republican government see Ternant to MFA, Mar. 7, 1793, "CFM" AHA, II, 187.

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That sense of the complications inherent in human events and human nature, along with a specific feeling of impending crisis and even disaster, that Morris brought to his understanding of the world of the French Revolution was completely lacking in New York that summer. The general view was closer to that expressed in an unsigned statement that appeared in the Daily Advertiser early in July, 1792. The writer was intent on noting that "Few people have a proper sense of the importance of the success of the French Revolution to the welfare & happiness of America." If a counter-revolution was successful in France, "the advocates of hereditary government & titular dignities here may again be emboldened to come forward." But if the French revolution succeeded, "a moderate degree of vigilance on the part of the people of this country will preserve a pure republican system."[3] To most New Yorkers, the French Revolution, in the summer of 1792, was a simple affair of absolutism versus constitutionalism. To a somewhat lesser degree, New Yorkers also believed that upon the final success of the French Revolution depended the future of the United States.

New Yorkers who were being exhorted needlessly "to put the most favorable constructions on all they hear, as it respects the French nation,"[4] were already busy, in varying degrees, doing just that. The Tammany Society placed a notice in the newspapers on July 14, 1792, requesting that its members attend an extra meeting that evening to celebrate the anniversary of the revolution in France. It was the first such meeting and celebration ever held by a New York

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[3]Daily Advertiser, July 3, 1792.

[4]New York Journal, July 11, 1792.

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society. In addition, all "patriotic Frenchmen in this city" were invited to join in the festivities. Tammany, which always enjoyed a special-dress occasion, requested that the national cockade, worn on the left breast, be the distinguishing mark for that occasion.[5]

At the anniversary meeting, Dr. John F. Vacher (Jean-François Vacher), speaking for the "patriotic Frenchmen" present, addressed the Grand Sachem and the members of the society and praised the United States as the source of that "revolution in favor of the sacred rights of mankind, which is now accomplishing in Europe." How joyous, he went on, "that the eighteenth century will witness the glorious crisis, when the rights of man will be completely established in the greatest part of the two hemispheres. . . . We most fervently believe the 4th & 14th of July will be considered by future generations, the epocha of their liberty & happiness." Dr. Vacher's optimistic speech must have given great pleasure, for it was worded in exactly the same terms as the toasts which followed. The toasts themselves, given in both French and English, were a step beyond any of their predecessors in their completeness--almost a summary of American knowledge of the French Revolution, and in the international spirit that they showed. Reaching a true climax in the last of them, one can feel a world beginning to shake in the toasts that were drunk that night.

> 1. To the virtuous & unalterable Patriots of France; 2. The auspicious 14th of July--may it be as memorable to the French as the 4th of July is to the Americans; 3. Heroes of the Bastile [sic] ; 4. First National Assembly & First Congress be equally revered; 5. Washington--father of freedom; 6. Freedom's darling--M. de la

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[5] New York Weekly Museum, July 14, 1792; New York Journal, July 14, 1792.

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Fayette [New Yorkers did not yet realize that Lafayette had fallen out of favor in France]; 7. Clarion of freedom--T. Paine; 8. That unanswerable & invulnerable bulwark of freedom, the Rights of Man; 9. The empire of reason--& the downfall of monarchy [this referred to absolute monarchy and the likes of George III]; 10. May the flame of freedom have the power of dissolving the chains of slavery as lighting does the hardened steel; 11. May the goddess of liberty pass the Pyrenees & Alps, accompanied by justice, reason & the rights of man; 12. Memory of French heroes who spilt their blood in establishing American independence; 13. The nation, the law, & the King of the French; 14. Wisdom & unanimity to the counsel, & victory to the arms of France; 15. The Friends of revolution throughout the world.[6]

The Tammany celebration was greeted both in the "Republican" Diary and "Federalist" Daily Advertiser with similarly-worded phrases of pleasure. The Diary believed that "every American must revere" that day on which the French gained their liberty and freedom and every "friend to humanity must be filled with enthusiasm" when contemplating Bastille Day. A few days later, when reports of the 14th of July Celebrations had come in from all parts of the country, the "Republican" Journal could state that the "14th of July has been celebrated with nearly the same ardour & sincerity throughout the United States, as the 4th." This boundless pleasure in French liberty was called "the general sentiment of the Union," crossing all factional lines.[7]

From London, however, word gradually began to filter back to New York of rumblings in the French kingdom. Colonel William S. Smith, New Yorker and son-in-law of John Adams, was in England in the summer of 1792. In a letter to General Gates he described the difficult position that Lafayette had placed himself in by his letter to the King

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[6]New York Journal, July 18, 1792.

[7]Diary and Daily Advertiser, July 18, 1792; New York Journal, July 21, 1792.

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and the Legislative Assembly which included a denunciation of the Jacobins. The friends of the latter in England "say they are in the majority in the Nation & the real directors of the Natl will. If so our friend the Marquis must 'go by the wall.'" Smith predicted that "a bloody civil war" was about to break out at the very time that the French Assembly had involved itself in a "premature" foreign war. Col. Smith concluded by reporting that "the Jacobins contemplate an absolute removal of the King from the throne, or such a change in the Constitution as to deprive him entirely of the Veto."[8] Such problems of interpretation, however, had not yet entered into the minds of any large segment of the American public.

News from Europe in general, and France in particular, had not been given too much space in the newspapers of New York all through the first eight months of 1792. National, state, and local news overwhelmed all else. Even when war broke out between Austria and France the news, at first, made little impression. As Minister Ternant noted, "only a war between the maritime powers can produce a true interest and excitement" in the United States. Ternant assured his foreign minister however, that France could "be assured of American good will and good wishes." Ternant's accuracy was shortly to be borne out.[9]

News of a fast succession of major French and European events reached an unsuspecting public in September and from that point on French news assumed a place in the New York newspapers that it had

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[8]William S. Smith to Horatio Gates, Summer [July 13?] 1792, Katharine M. Roof, Colonel William Smith and Lady (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1929), pp. 213-214.

[9]Ternant to Dumouriez, Aug. 2, 1792, "CFM," AHA, II, 148.

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never before held. And what news! Continuous warfare, flights, deposition, massacres and the proclamation of a republic. What was equally extraordinary, in its own way, was the ability of the American public to assimilate all this news, including even the defection of the beloved Marquis de Lafayette, and still keep its belief in the future of France.

The Diary, on the 1st of October, reported that a just-arrived ship had brought news of the dethronement of Louis XVI, the death of many of his guard, and the displacement of Lafayette and other notables, with a price put on their heads. But the basic concern of the paper was that "the Nation [would] become an easy prey to their enemies." The Journal, later in the month, again discussing the fate of Lafayette, comforted itself with the view that the French nation, itself, was now a nation of soldiers, "who will persevere to obtain independence for their country, through every obstacle which mad ambition may plant in their way." In the face of the confusion and horror that prevailed in France at that moment, New Yorkers, in general, kept their eye on one point: the French nation had to be preserved from monarchical ambition, for the fate of the United States was in the balance, as well.[10]

A few New Yorkers, however, were not impressed by the rightness of the swift-moving French events, and began to express strong doubts about recent developments. In no uncertain terms, John

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[10]Diary, Oct. 1, 1792; New York Journal, Oct. 10, 1792. See Daily Advertiser, July 3, 1792 for statement of the intertwined fate of the United States and France. Also note the constant reiteration of this theme throughout the remaining years covered by this dissertation, although it is a theme that increasingly becomes the property of the Democratic-Republicans by mid-decade.

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Armstrong proclaimed that "The French are gone to the Devil." It was now "the moment for Great Brittain [sic] to strike." She could take Hispaniola with its vast sugar trade and become "Mistress of both the Indies which would be no small title even in this philosophic day when the highest titles are so little esteemed." Armstrong's mother-in-law, Margaret Beekman Livingston, also turned a jaundiced eye at the events going on in France. "What dreadful doings," she wrote in dismay. "I am horrified when I read the papers--What a sad situation is the poor King and Queen in--all I fear is an unhappy prelude to the unhappy pares [sic] death--This is an event I have longed feared would take place." In a final note of disillusionment, Margaret Livingston would only remark that though "this they call Liberty Surely it is not."[11] This view was repeated by many leading figures of the time. Rufus King, in a letter to John Adams, characterized the revolution as one "conducted with so much barbarity & ignorance." John Adams, in his reply, was most worried "that there should have been in America from the beginning, so blind undistinguishing and enthusiastic an admiration of every thing that has been done by that light airy & transported People."[12]

Eyewitness accounts added still another negative to a developing minority revulsion. Gouverneur Morris, in an official dispatch to Thomas Jefferson, stated simply, "We have had one week of unchecked

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[11]Letters, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Oct. 8, 1792 and Margaret Livingston to Gates, Oct. 6, 1792, NYHS, Gates Papers.

[12]King to John Adams, Sept. 30, 1792, Correspondence of King, I, 431; Letter, Adams to King, Oct. 11, 1793, NYHS, King Papers.

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murders, in which some thousands have perished in this city."[13] William Constable, who had also been in Paris at the time, wrote to his brother "that all those who left that City 1 Inst. [September 1] were stopped at the Barriers altho' they had passports brought back & confined to be tried; in the meantime the populace rose . . . & cleared the gaols by destroying every person within them, . . . upwards of 5000 lost their Lives between 2 & 6th of that month & . . . [Constable] would not return for any Consideration--"[14]

More and more, one group was growing increasingly displeased with the turn of French events. Though a few of them had questioned the direction of the revolution as early as had Edmund Burke, most did not turn harsh in their criticism until the autumn of 1792 when the news of the August and September events reached New York. Even then, it should be strongly noted, they represented only a small minority, albeit an influential segment, of the public. Generally they were "Federalists" who were philosophically opposed to the manner in which French events were proceeding. They believed in gradual change brought about through carefully reasoned steps and led by a strong executive who would serve as a guide to the people. The citizenry were the ultimate source of power, but it was a power that was to be carefully circumscribed so that the people could not degenerate into a mob. For these "philosophical federalists" it was clear where

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[13]G. Morris to Jefferson, Sept. 10, 1792, Sparks, Life of Morris, II, 216-217.

[14]Letter, William and James Constable to Robert Morris, Nov. 16, 1792, NYPL, William and James Constable LB.

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the French Revolution had gone astray: the leaders were led by the mob which, in turn, was aroused by a violent and lawless faction, the Jacobins.

Gouverneur Morris summed up the "philosophical federalist" view in a lengthy letter sent to Rufus King in late October. Morris believed that the events of the 10th of August came about because the previous constitution was defective. The theoretical executive, the king, had too little power, while the actual executive power went to the one house legislature, so that those who controlled the Assembly controlled the government. The populace, flattered that they were all-powerful, and disappointed in the results of promises made to them, felt under no constraint. The king had allowed himself to be surrounded by aristocrats with unconstitutional ideas, while the republicans advocated the constitution at the same time that they planned to destroy it. Now, Morris declared, those who have the power do not know what to do with it and find they have started a chain of "Ideas of Revolt" in motion. Like Macbeth, they find "that they have been taught bloody Instructions which return to plague the Inventor."[15]

While many of those who thought in terms of overall ideas, concepts of government, and chains of events, bewailed the turn of events in France, the vast majority of interested bystanders did not "care a fig" for such flights of abstraction. They would have agreed with Samuel Loudon, editor of the Diary, who expressed the hope that he could bring the reader more favorable news and be finally able to state "that our generous allies are restored, by the favor of heaven,

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[15]G. Morris to R. King, Oct. 23, 1792, Correspondence of King, I, 434-436.

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to the blessings of peace, liberty, & happiness."[16] Thomas Greenleaf, editor of the Journal, gave warning to his "devouring readers," who anxiously awaited news from France, where despotism was attempting "to pluck from their roots those tender plants of FREEDOM which had but just begun to sprout," that they should be careful not to believe all that was said against the republicans of France. Remember, Greenleaf asked his readers, how "the Whigs of 1775 were traduced, & their conduct often misrepresented?" The same was now being done to France, which was today what America was then. The least Americans could do was to suspend their judgment.[17]

Immediately thereafter, Greenleaf was able to report that he had received news of the Legislative Assembly (he called it the National Assembly), "on the last day of their glorious political career," and of the proceedings of "the NATIONAL CONVENTION." After the abolition of monarchy was described, the editor concluded that from the information at hand it seemed that the French were "unanimous--that they were in a fair way of obtaining a good govt of laws, & of not only defending themselves from the band of tyrants which have invaded their territory, but also of exterminating them from off the face of the earth;--Thus do they demand the good wishes & congratulations of every free people."[18]

That most Americans needed no coaxing in offering the French people their heartfelt good wishes and congratulations was clearly

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[16]Diary, Oct. 24, 1792.

[17]New York Journal, Nov. 7, 1792.

[18]Ibid., Nov. 10, 1792.

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pointed out by the French minister, Ternant. He noted that, despite the influx of many anti-revolutionary French refugees from rebellion-wracked Santo Domingo, Americans generally grew more attached to France as the latter's national councils "develop more fully ideas of liberty and equality." Ternant, himself, in noting the news of the end of the monarchy, quickly renewed his loyalty to the French government while reporting that the inauguration of the French republic "has been greeted in the United States with a joy rather generally felt."[19]

All of the makings of what one writer on this period has called "the French frenzy"[20] were there in clear outline when "Q" wrote a cautionary letter to the Diary in late November, 1792. "Q," noting that the New York press had been filled with European news almost exclusively during the past few months, warned that Americans must not "loose the links of unanimity" which now bound them. Sounding increasingly prophetic, "Q" urged that the United States remain independent of European ties. Only in commerce, and even there with great caution, should the United States think of forming any connections with Europe. What would happen, "Q" asked, if Congress were to try to supply France directly with necessary commercial products? Great Britain would intercept and render that aid nearly useless. Assistance, if it came, must proceed from private mercantile interests who could take major risks for the sake of huge profits without at the same

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[19]Ternant to MFA, Nov. 1, 1792 and Nov. 13, 1792, "CFM," AHA, II, 163, 164-165.

[20]See Charles D. Hazen, Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1897), p. 165. The "French frenzy" overtook Americans after France was declared a republic and while that new sister republic was being severely threatened by the armies of the combined powers.

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time involving the nation in the threats of war that might result.[21] Thus was described in brief the neutrality policy that would be developed at the highest echelon of government and which would be ready to be placed into execution at the proper moment regardless of the level to which the "French frenzy" might rise.

Throughout the fall of 1792, the federal administration was busy deciding what to do in relation to payment of the French loan and a request from the new republican government for supplies to be sent to the famine- and revolt-ridden island of Santo Domingo. Since the administration had no idea as to the possible durability of the new French government under the National Convention, Hamilton believed that caution was necessary "not only to the safety of the U States in a pecuniary respect but to the consideration of avoiding a dangerous commitment, which may even prove a source of misunderstanding between this Country and the future Govt of the Fr. Nation."[22] A decision of Washington and the members of his cabinet was for the present to act only to save Santo Domingo "from destruction by Famine." Gouverneur Morris and William Short, in Paris and the Hague, respectively, were so informed.[23]

While the federal administration was wrestling with problems

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[21]"Q," Diary, Nov. 23, 1792.

[22]Hamilton to Washington, Nov. 19, 1792, Papers of Hamilton, XIII, 18, 170-173.

[23]Hamilton to William Short, Oct. 1 [-25], 1792, Ibid., XII, 513; Jefferson to G. Morris, Oct. 15, 1792, Diplomatic and Consular Instructions of the Department of State, 1791-1801, Jan. 23, 1791-Aug. 16, 1793, National Archives as quoted in Papers of Hamilton, XII, 514, n. 2.

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of recognition and financial obligation to the new French Republic, the public at large was following, with almost frightening intensity, the progress of the Duke of Brunswick towards Paris. The fascinated interest and strong feelings of New Yorkers at that moment were probably best expressed in the series of toasts given by Tammany at that society's celebration of the 9th anniversary of the British evacuation of New York City on the 25th of November. How different were these amusing, picturesque, irate, and very specific toasts from those of earlier years:

> 1. May the Duke of Brunswick, King of Prussia, & Emperor of Germany, be introduced to the Natl Convention of France; dancing a trio, to the tune of ça'ira, performed by the sons of freedom. 2. May the Duke of Brunswick, in a rapid retreat, want time to grease a flagstaff. . . .[24] 4. May France obtain its freedom without the control of despotism. . . . 9. Disappointments & defeat to the invaders of the liberties of France. . . . 11. May the conduct of the Jacobins in France, after investigation, be such as will convince the impartial world of its propriety & the Hero of the two hemispheres [Lafayette] be again received into the bosom of his country.[25]

The suspense concerning the fate of France before the onslaughts of the Duke of Brunswick must have become almost unbearable by the second week of December when the Daily Advertiser reported that the English papers left the fate of the French army under General Dumouriez in doubt. To the Advertiser it seemed unlikely that the army would give up without a fight or that Dumouriez could prove a traitor. The French "bend their necks to a foreign yoke?--impossible." On December 13 the first tentative reports appeared. The Daily Adver-

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[24]The toast was an allusion to the fact that the British, in their evacuation of New York, greased the flagpole at the Battery in order to prevent the American flag from being raised while they were still within sight of the shore.

[25]New York Weekly Museum, Dec. 8, 1792.

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tiser headlined "IMPORTANT NEWS--(if true)" over reports from Belfast of the defeat of the army of the Duke of Brunswick. Samuel Loudon of the Diary, on the same date, "devoutly" wished it were so.[26] By the 15th the Journal was willing to give full credence to the report and joyfully called for congratulations all around in the face of the "glorious prospect which our Gallic friends & allies have, of soon getting rid of that band of invading despots who menace slavery & threaten destruction." On the 19th of December, the New York papers were reporting on the celebration in Philadelphia "in testimony of the exquisite pleasure which the free citizens of America feel, from the glorious news of the retreat of the combined armies." Two days later, in the largest print yet seen in a New York City newspaper, the Diary covered the whole area under the date with news from France confirming that the Duke of Brunswick and his army were "FLYING precipitately before the natl troops of France & it was supposed he would not make a stand till he was clear of the French territories." The editor, noting his inability to conceal his pleasure, stated that only those whose "expectations were founded upon the perpetuity of hereditary tyranny" would be chagrined.[27]

In the midst of all this unalloyed joy, how churlish of Gouverneur Morris to doubt. Morris did not question "the force of France if united, & her natural enthusiasm warmed by the ardor of newborn freedom" but he did admit to an apprehension that France "would

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[26] Daily Advertiser, Dec. 8, and Dec. 13, 1792; Diary, Dec. 13, 1792.

[27] New York Journal, Dec. 15 and Dec. 19, 1792; Diary, Dec. 21, 1792. See also the New York Magazine, III (Dec. 1792), 767.

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be deficient in that cool reflection, which appears needful to consolidate a free government." Morris might have been right but so much the worse for him. It was no time for such "cool reflection."[28]

It was time, however, for that manifestation of republican hysteria called "the French frenzy" which burst upon the New York and American scene with full force upon reports of defeat of the forces under the Duke of Brunswick by the people's army of republican France. As the New York Journal editorialized, it was a time for congratulations all around to "every advocate of the Rights of Man. . . . [and] to modern mankind." The Tammany Society of New York, as if in positive reply, was making large-scale preparations "for the patriotic expressions of their Joy, on account of the glorious SUCCESSES of the PATRIOTS of FRANCE, against the armies of the combined invading DESPOTS."[29]

At 7:00 A.M. on December 27, 1792, Jotham Post reported that he "was alarmed" by the ringing of the bells throughout the city. Post, who had graduated from Columbia College the previous spring and was now studying for his M.D. degree, ran out into the street expecting to see some houses on fire--for that was usually the case when bells rang so early in the day. He was agreeably surprised, however, to be informed that the bells were being rung in honor of "the happy turn of affairs [sic] in France, A country which too long had been the seat of absolute and despotic sway." Dumouriez had carried all before him, and young Post used the pages of his diary to exhort the French to go on

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[28]G. Morris to W. Carmichael, Nov. 5, 1792, Sparks, Life of Morris, II, 245-246.

[29]New York Journal, Dec. 26, 1792.

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"in the noble cause of freedom. . . . and destroy despotism in the face of your ennemies [sic]. Ennemies to their country, Ennemies to mankind at large."[30]

The planned Tammany celebration was the climactic event of that "Day of Jubilee," with the Sons of St. Tammany extolled as "the Republican band of brothers" met to celebrate the "DEFEAT of ARISTOCRACY & the TRIUMPH of LIBERTY."[31] Singing their joy, the sons of Tammany joined in the following chorus:

> May Heaven continue still to bless,
> The arms of freedom with success,
> Till tyrants are no more:
> And still, as Gallia's sons shall fly
> From victory to victory,
> We'll, shouting, cry Encore.[32]

And the toasts that evening, while showing only a sketchy understanding of French political happenings, showed a very detailed knowledge of French military events, for it was in the latter that Americans were primarily interested. Toasted were:

> 1. The Republic of France. 2. Petion, citizen president. 3. Dumourier, & his victorious army. 4. Kellerman, Custine, & Biron. 5. The patriot ministers, Le Brun & Servan. 6. LaBourdonnais & the heroic citizens of Lisle. 7. Montesquiou, & his southern army. 8. The citizen of the world, Thos. Paine. 9. La Fayette. 10. Contention & confusion in the councils of all despots. 11. Destruction to all king-craft & to all priest-craft--the poisons of public happiness. 12. May the union & example of France & America enlighten & bless mankind. 13. Universal freedom & its consequent universal peace.[33]

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[30]Diary of Jotham Post, NYHS, Dec. 27, 1792. See Marie Caroline Post, The Post Family (New York: S. Potter, 1905), for a genealogy of the Post family.

[31]New York Weekly Museum, Dec. 29, 1792.

[32]New York Journal, Dec. 29, 1792.

[33]Minutes of the Society of Tammany, New York City, 1791-95, NYPL.

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This confident outpouring of sentiment was matched in a note in the Journal which reported that the joy at the Tammany celebration "could not have been greater in Dumourier's army or in the bosom of the patriot Jacobin Club." The following paragraph, which appeared in all the New York papers, summed up the all-inclusive pleasure of the moment: After the "long night of Gothic darkness" superstition and tyranny had dissolved "before the morn of science," and "universal fellowship" had replaced national prejudice. Now "the shores of Europe & America illuminate each other, and are mutually responsive to the exulting sounds of triumphant liberty & public good."[34]

How fitting that the New Year's season was ushered in at that moment! The feeling of confidence normally prevalent at that time of year was particularly felt as 1793 made its appearance. Jotham Post recorded in his diary his expectation that 1793 would "most probably be attended with many remarkable recurrences. Probably," he cautiously predicted, "we may during this year see all Europe in confusion, and every throne tottering from its foundation." Jotham's father, Jotham Post, Sr., a successful butcher and member of the General Society of

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[34] New York Journal, Dec. 29, 1792. In the New York Daily Gazette of Dec. 31, 1792, a reader requested the editor, Archibald M'lean, to insert an ode by a French republican to the citizens of the United States "on account of their celebrating the victorious arms of France, in their Triumph over despotism." The first stanza of the ode developed the usual theme of American leadership on the road to liberty.

"Au Temple de memoire
C'est vous, Americains,
Qui posseder la gloire
De tracer le chemins:
Les premieres allarmes
Contre les Souverains
Ches vous prirent des charmes
Pour les autres humaines."

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Mechanics and Tradesmen, was not at home on the evening of New Year's Day as he was "busily employed in attending to the anniversary" of that society.[35] At that first anniversary meeting since its incorporation, the Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York toasted the National Convention and Thomas Paine, the mechanic and author of the Rights of Man, and wished that "the late success of the armies of France be the means of restoring liberty to all mankind."[36] Greenleaf, in the Journal, in paroxysms of joy, announced: "The world is astonished at the amazing successes of the armies of the REPUBLIC OF FRANCE--the armies of the despots have gone to pieces! and the mania of FREEDOM is causing all the despots to TREMBLE."[37] For many Americans this was just the beginning of the world-wide revolution that would crown the eighteenth century.

While the vast majority of the public left no doubt of its strongly felt pleasure at French events--for such expression constantly appeared either in print or in the form of public celebration--the historian of this period is duty-bound to point out that the private correspondence of the time indicated a bridling of enthusiasm among many of those who resided in the world of the merchant, landowner and professional man. General John Armstrong, who was never unbridled in his admiration of the French, wondered whether "the general interests of

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[35]Diary of Jotham Post, NYHS, Jan. 1, 1793; Post, The Post Family, unpaged; Duncan, New York Directory, 1792.

[36]New York Journal, Jan. 5, 1793.

[37]New York Journal, Jan. 2, 1793. Additional evidence of the pro-French ardor of the time can be found in a debate held at the literary Uranian Society on February 19, 1793. The question, "Is the present conduct of the French in carrying their arms into foreign countries consistent with the true policy of the nation?" was debated. The ayes carried it 5 to 2. Minutes of the Uranian Society, NYPL.

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Europe" would be promoted by unchallenged French victories. Biting in his criticism, as usual, he noted that the "sage and venerable order of St. Tammany and the Sans-Culottes say they will-others less sublime and illuminated pause at least and endeavor to set the possible advantages of the new philosophy against the unavoidable tumult disorder and bloodshed which will follow."[38] Colin McGregor, the mercantile agent who was still more of an Englishman than an American in his reaction to events focused on the "barbarity of the abandoned french people . . . and their villainous attempts to disturb others." He had thought that Britain "would have had sagacity sufficient to steer clear." It no longer seemed so, he sadly concluded.[39]

In Paris, itself, the New York merchant, Samuel Ward, could now see no hope for the avoidance of a general European war. In disgust at the horrors he saw around him he found "new reasons every day to love my country more & more." There, every man had "the same personal rights," could acquire property, could preserve it, and could choose or be chosen "to all the offices in the states." The American, moreover, was well informed while "the great mass of the People in Europe are most brutally ignorant." To Ward, the European masses were totally lacking in self-command, and without that how could they become and remain freemen? Ward's mood of longing for his native land grew ever stronger as he reported on the sentencing of Louis XVI: "The sad events of this day have given me a sleepless night. I leave town to

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[38]Letter, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Jan. 12, 1793, NYHS, Gates Papers.

[39]Letter, C. McGregor to James R. Miller, Feb. 26, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

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avoid the horror." How truly, he noted, that "People grow familiar with scenes they see frequently--sensibility gets blunted or the feelings are absorbed in a kind of lethargic amazement." Ward could only "languish for my own country the mild manners the safety and ease of those people is indeed it is too charming."[40]

Back in that mild-mannered land across the Atlantic, however, the news of Louis' execution met with only temporary and selective shock. The Daily Advertiser reported the event under the heading: "Decapitation of the Unfortunate LOUIS!" The Journal reported the news as "a serious, stubborn fact," but the editor would not, at that time, hazard a statement on any possible consequences. Walter Rutherford was not so ready to be silent. "Every Body," he reported to his son, "is shocked at yesterday's news of the French Ruffians having beheaded their King." Rutherford, however, had to admit that "if France continues united, she cannot be conquered. 26 million of Desperadoes, and above 200 garrisons, some impregnable, may bid Defiance." The firm of William and James Constable referred to the guillotining of Louis as "that detestable act" and Nicholas Low could only pray that Heaven would give a check to that nation of "downright mad mob & marauders."[41]

The newspapers, however, were quickly filled with articles in defense of the French action. "Liberty," in the Diary, expressed the

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[40]Letter, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Jan. 7 and Jan. 21, 1793, NYPL, William Constable Letters.

[41]Daily Advertiser, Mar. 19, 1793; New York Journal, Mar. 20, 1793; Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Mar. 21, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; Letter, William and James Constable to Turnbull & Co., Apr. 27, 1793, NYPL, Wm. and J. Constable LB; Letter, Nicholas Low to Philip J. Schuyler, Apr. 30, 1793, NYPL, Philip J. Schuyler Papers.

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view that Louis was executed legally by the will of the people. Necessity--the future of millions born and as yet unborn--required the driving out of anti-republicanism. "D. O.," in the same paper asked whether the happiness or "satisfying the ambition" of one was more important than that of twenty-four million. "A Republican," in the Journal, remarked that despotism brought untold harm to the mass of people who suffered for centuries under arbitrary power. Only aristocrats and anti-republicans, "A Republican" suggested, would resent the execution of such a person as Louis XVI. As "Dumourier Americanus" expressed it, all that the French had done in blood had been forced upon them by the nature and actions of their aristocratic opponents. A month later, "Dumourier Americanus" concluded by stating that Americans now knew "that their fate is linked with the fate of the French Republic, and that if the Patriots of France are conquered" Americans "who have never yet tasted of slavery" would have to "bow their necks to the galling yoke." With such warnings gaining increased credence, even the charitable Provident Society found difficulty in totally living up to its name when, at its anniversary meeting, it included the toast: "May the fate of the French monarchy induce all others to a speedy reform.[42]

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[42]"Liberty," Diary, Apr. 10, 1793 and "D. O.," Ibid., Mar. 26, 1793; "A Republican," New York Journal, Apr. 6, 1793; "Dumourier Americanus," Diary, Apr. 12 and May 13, 1793; Daily Advertiser, Apr. 6, 1793. The Calliopean Society, in a debate held on March 26, 1793, decided in the affirmative that the French nation had been justified in beheading Louis XVI. That contrasted strangely with their decision, on October 30, 1792, that Elizabeth had been unjustified in putting to death Mary, Queen of Scots. Possibly the debaters had decided it was improper for one monarch to put another one to death but quite another matter for the people of a nation to make that decision. Calliopean Society Records, NYHS.

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The news of the death of "the unfortunate Louis" was soon overshadowed by the news that France had declared war against Great Britain, Spain, and the United Netherlands. In the very same issue of the Daily Advertiser that carried the report of war was an unsigned paragraph that warned of direct involvement in that war: "Policy incontestable dictates a strict neutrality on our part; but it is a question how far the provisions of existing treaties may militate with our best interests."[43]

The merchants of New York were of two minds as total European war was announced. They hoped for increased business but feared involvement in the war. As the merchant house of Stewart and Jones reported to one of their clients, the general view expressed was that the war would increase demand for American goods. As a result, it was expected that United States commerce would prosper. That hope was seconded by the firms of Gelston and Saltonstall, Lynch and Stoughton and William and James Constable.[44] Colin McGregor reported to one of his clients that he believed it was the intention of the United States "to steer clear of all European quarrels;--surely it is their Int. to do so, and I hope they will steadily adhere to a strict neutrality." And even so pro-French a company as Gelston and Saltonstall let it be known that "if we are wise let us most certainly keep out of the dispute in

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[43] Daily Advertiser, Mar. 29, 1793.

[44] Letter, Stewart & Jones to Messrs Langlands & Smith, Apr. 6, 1793, NYHS, Stewart & Jones LB; Letter, Gelston & Saltonstall to David Greene, Apr. 8, 1793, NYHS, Gelston & Saltonstall LB; Letter, Lynch & Stoughton to David Callaghan, Apr. 13, 1793, NYHS, Lynch & Stoughton LB; Letter, William and James Constable to Richard Shiel & Co., Apr. 12, 1793, NYPL, Wm. & J. Constable LB.

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every possible shape."[45]

The decision for neutrality thus appeared to be acceptable to all sides. Certainly there was no major complaint from the leading protagonists when that policy was promulgated in April 1793. Ternant, the French minister, expressed the view that the United States would adopt a policy of neutrality concerning the European war, declaring that it was the only policy which would work to the advantage of the United States. If France acted correctly, he added, it could be used to her advantage as well. For his part, the British Minister to the United States, George Hammond, had asked Alexander Hamilton what the government of the United States would do in the case of war between Britain and France. When Hamilton replied that he was determined to employ "Every exertion in his power to incline this country to adopt as strict a neutrality as may not be directly contrary to its public engagements," Hammond voiced no objection in response.[46]

At this moment, as the United States stood on the brink of a world at war, many thoughtful Americans paused to contemplate the role that America ought to play in that world. Alexander Hamilton developed his own thoughts in an essay which he prepared for the Gazette of the United States but which was never published. According to the Secretary of the Treasury, there were three parties then existent in the United States, an English party, a French party and an American party.

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[45]Letter, C. McGregor to James R. Miller, Apr. 16, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB; Letter, Gelston & Saltonstall to Messrs Wm., J., & R. Hart, Apr. 22, 1793, NYHS, Gelston & Saltonstall LB.

[46]Ternant to MFA, Apr. 10, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 192-193; Conversations with George Hammond, [Mar. 7-Apr. 2, 1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 193.

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Hamilton condemned those who appeared "to be more alive" to the interests of France or of England, than to those of the United States. "A dispassionate and virtuous citizen of the U States will scorn to stand on any but purely American grounds. . . . His prayer will be for peace, and that his country may be as much as possible kept out of the destructive vortex of foreign politics." Speaking figuratively, Hamilton compared the United States to the wife to whom the husband is bound by affectionate and faithful ties, and for whom he must guard any "propensity of his heart to wander" and thereby mar his fidelity. How unfortunate, Hamilton noted, "that there are persons among us, who appear to have a passion for a foreign mistress; as violent as it is irregular." Hamilton could not prevent the emotions of men from bursting out. He himself was a passionate enough man to understand that. He did, however, hope to develop a channel for those passions--one that would lead to a firm commitment to support American neutrality in the midst of European chaos.[47]

The American public would be constantly tested over the next few years in its ability and desire to hew to the neutral path particularly against the temptations offered by a French mistress. That the vast majority of New Yorkers generally, and genuinely, loved France has been shown with some consistency in this and the preceding chapters. That changes in the French government, leadership, ideology, and almost everything else had little affect on the admiration of most citizens has also been shown. There was, however, a growing sense of criticism of

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[47]"For the Gazette of the United States," [Mar.-Apr., 1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 267, 269.

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some aspects of the French revolutionary experience and in some quarters that criticism was becoming increasingly severe--especially among an important group of "Federalist" ideologues. As the war between the combined powers and France increased in scope and intensity and as revolutionary France grew ever more revolutionary, a period of severe testing lay in store for New Yorkers and Americans. How would the American constitutional system, so recently put into effect, survive the new stresses and strains put upon it by those foreign events? Could a sense of "America first" develop and serve as the guardian of American interests against the emotional ties and treaty ties that bound this country to France? Answers would almost immediately have to be found, for a human whirlwind produced by revolutionary France was about to reach the United States. The year of transition was over; a period which would require decisive action had begun.

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PART III. A BUSY TIME WITH "a busy man"

(APRIL 1793 - DECEMBER 1793)

CHAPTER VII

"Tory Town" BELIES ITS NAME

Citizen Genêt was coming. That remarkable man would ultimately throw fear into foe and friend, alike, but his potential for action was not yet certain. His predecessor as French minister, Ternant, was a cautious and reasonable man who could understand, if not welcome, American desires for a commercial treaty with Great Britain and neutrality with the world. As Ternant had informed his ministry the previous June, Americans had a mercantile spirit which gave them similar characteristics to the English. In late April of 1793, while awaiting his successor, Ternant could only regret that Genêt had not come directly to Philadelphia. In that way Genêt could have been brought up to date on all the major issues facing the French legation. But by April 30 Edmond Charles Genêt had reached no farther north from his point of disembarkment at Charleston than Salisbury, North Carolina.[1]

From that town and on that day, John Steele, the "Federalist" Congressman from that district, had written to Alexander Hamilton of the "Pilgrim's" progress. Steele first characterized Genêt as "the man

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[1]Ternant to Dumouriez, June 20, 1792, and Ternant to MFA, Apr. 20, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 136, 195.

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that we are all affraid [sic] of." He then went on with his description to say "that he has a good person, fine ruddy complection, quite active and seems always in a bustle, more like a busy man than a man of business. A French man in his manners, he announces himself in all companies as the Minister of the Republic . . . talks freely of his Commission, and like most Europeans seems to have adopted mistaken notions of the penetration, and knowledge of the people of the United States." Steele certainly proved his own penetration in that succinct and, as the facts were to bear out, remarkably accurate portrait of Citizen Genêt.[2]

The commission that Genêt so "freely" spoke about gave him a vast freedom of action of which he was certainly very willing to take advantage. His instructions included a call for an attack on the conduct of Louis XVI and his ministers towards the United States and a description of them as "liberticides"; a plan for a commercial and political alliance with the United States against the rest of the world; a movement against Spain and England in the New World; a propaganda campaign to show that America's safety and future depended on the defeat of Great Britain; and an authorization that if the United States government was too timid or delayed too long, Genêt was free to "go it alone" in actions along the Mississippi frontier. Genêt was warned by the French government to act with prudence and moderation, especially as there were British agents, émigrés, and aristocratic refugees from Santo Domingo who were always ready to put the worst face on his ef-

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[2]John Steele to Hamilton, Apr. 30, [1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 358-59.

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forts. Genêt was also told to make use of several "zealous cooperators among the principal officers of the executive power and in the House of Representatives," although he was to make use of them with the greatest circumspection. Finally, Genêt was given blank letters of marque to be filled in by the proper agents and given the power to raise men to fight against Spain and England and to work with the Indians.[3]

To have placed such open-ended instructions into the hands of a man of such relentless energy and rampant self-confidence as Edmond Genêt and then to have warned him to be discreet showed either an amazing ingenuousness or lack of sincerity on the part of the French government. Such instructions were clearly not going to ease the path for the instruction and perpetuation of the neutral policy that the United States government was in the midst of preparing. John Steele had an even better reason than he might then have supposed when he labeled Genêt as "the man that we are all affraid of."

The executive branch of the American government was meanwhile hard at work devising a systematic statement of position. By the 18th of April, President Washington had sent a series of questions to each of his cabinet members asking for their opinions on a proclamation of neutrality, on the reception of the minister from the French Republic, and on the legal standing of "the Treaties heretofore made with France." After much cabinet discussion the Proclamation of Neutrality was issued with the unanimous approval of the cabinet and with the signature of Jefferson, in his official position as Secretary of State, attached to

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[3]Instructions to Genêt, Dec., 1792, "CFM," AHA, II, 201-11.

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it.[4]

One of the first reactions to the publication of the proclamation came from New York City. Senator Rufus King wrote of his pleasure in seeing the proclamation issued, although he had wished the word "neutrality" could have been used in the text. Then, in apparent response to a series of questions from Hamilton, King expressed his doubts that the 1778 treaties between the United States and France could be suspended since the new government of France was in full control of its own territory. Stating that caution was best, King believed that the mere reception of the French minister could do no injury. He concluded his advice with the warning that "we must not become intangled with this mad War."[5]

King's view was echoed even by New York "Republicans" in those first days after the proclamation was printed in the Diary on April 24. Governor George Clinton, who could still have been called the leader of the New York opposition to federalism, issued a firm proclamation of his own. He repeated the warning expressed in the federal government's statement of neutrality and called on wardens and other officers of the ports of the State of New York to report on all ships of war or other armed or prize vessels belonging to any of the belligerents that entered any New York harbor. This was to be done in the name of neutrality and tranquility, although certainly not in the name of impartiality.[6]

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[4]Washington to Hamilton, Jefferson, Henry Knox, and Edmund Randolph, Apr. 18, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 326-27; Diary, Apr. 24, 1793.

[5]King to Hamilton, Apr. 24, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 335-336.

[6]Daily Advertiser, May 14, 1793.

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Several of the toasts drunk at the celebration of the New York Coopers Society made clear that distinction in the American mind between impartiality and neutrality. One of them extolled "Liberty--May that heavenly seed which was sown, and took root in America, grow and spread its branches . . . ; may it be remembered, it is AMERICAN growth." Another toast, equally flowery in sentiment, prayed that "the Gallic banners which have taken up the cap of liberty, bear it forward uninterrupted until its power and influence shall establish the European nations in a state of happiness." But those two statements of partiality were followed by a severely-worded warning: "May no true born American take any active part in the present foreign war." And at the May 14 meeting of the Uranian Society a debate was held on the topic: "Are the United States bound by treaty or ought they form policy to interfere in the present war between France and Great Britain?" The nays "had it," five to one.[7]

These declarations of support for the neutrality policy pursued by the leadership of the federal government were also sustained by the results of the two elections that had been held in New York since the beginning of the new year. In January an election had taken place for congressman for the district including New York City and southern Westchester County. The "Federalists" nominated John Watts to replace John Lawrence, who had since moved to Philadelphia. Watts, whose merchant family had been loyalists during the revolution, had nevertheless been a favorite candidate in previous assembly elections and had generally received the greatest number of votes of any of the candidates.

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[7]New York Weekly Museum, May 11, 1793; Minutes of the Uranian Society, NYPL, May 14, 1793.

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He was also very popular among the mechanics and cartmen--both of whom supported him in this election.[8] But for the first time he was severely criticized, in what could almost be called the opposition press, for his earlier toryism. The Journal printed a letter from a citizen of Massachusetts to a citizen of New York City in which the writer noted that some people in Massachusetts called New York "Babalon and the Royal City" and believed that people were "cajoled" into voting for those supported "by a few designing aristocratic characters." How presumptuous of those "designers," he intimated, to nominate a tory who at the beginning of the late war "basked in British favor." Another outsider, a gentleman from Orange County, wrote to a friend in New York City to remind him that a victory in the State for republicans (Clintonians) would be "as glorious in its nature against corruption and aristocratic power, as the victories obtained by the young but noble republic of France over the combined forces of the enemies to liberty and equality."[9] Thus was France brought into a New York election for the first time, and on the side of the Clintonians, or "Republicans!" But all to no avail. New Yorkers apparently did not accept the view that a vote for Watts could be interpreted as a vote against France. The final results were Watts, 1872 votes and William S. Livingston, his opponent, 707 votes.[10]

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[8]See "Antonius," Daily Advertiser, Dec. 27, 1792, Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Jan. 6, [17]92 [misdated], NYHS, Rutherford Coll., and New York Daily Gazette, Jan. 10, 1793 for early election developments.

[9]"Citizen of Massachusetts," New York Journal, Jan. 16, 1793 and "Gentleman from Orange County," Ibid., Jan. 19, 1793.

[10]Daily Advertiser, Feb. 21, 1793.

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The second election that year was held as the first word of the Proclamation of Neutrality reached New York. These were the April elections for the state offices of senator and assemblyman. Two groups of citizens met separately to draw up lists of candidates. One of the meetings was chaired by James Nicholson and the other by Isaac Roosevelt. If party designations had been used, the Nicholson group would have been characterized as "Republicans" and the Roosevelt group as "Federalists." Interestingly, the Mechanics Society met and supported the complete "Federalist" list, while the cartmen ran their own slate which included three of the seven names from the "Federalist" list but not one of the "Republican" names.[11] The fact that basically only two totally distinct lists were offered to the public was commented upon by "A Federalist." He noted the novelty of the situation but said it could be explained by the political opinions of the gentlemen. Those on Roosevelt's list were "clearly federalists" while Nicholson's list were "Antifederalists and Clintonians." "A Federalist" declared that the latter were truly the old anti-federalists strengthened, and not the the republicans that they claimed to be. Republicans preferred purely representative government, abstained from faction, upheld the government established by a majority of the people, supported the separation and independence of the legislative from the executive branch, looked for office distribution to those most worthy, and submitted to the voice of the people. "A Federalist" clearly inferred that such were not the characteristics of the present opponents of Federalism.[12] When

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[11] Ibid., Apr. 20, 1793.

[12] "A Federalist," Ibid., Apr. 30, 1793.

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the votes were in, the "Federalist"-Mechanics slate won easily with a vote range of 1334 to 961. The highest vote-getter among the losing candidates received 537 votes. As one observer noted to his correspondent: "You'll find by the Papers that the Persons Elected in this country for Members of the Assembly are not friends to our Governor." He might well have added that they were, however, friends to the national government.[13]

In this atmosphere of support for the federal executive and for neutrality, it was easy to overlook the first signs of strong verbal dissent that would eventually lead to a period of physical disorder and which would seriously threaten the peace of the sea-port towns of the United States throughout the late spring and summer of 1793. An outwardly calm but ultimately deeply threatening letter appeared in the Advertiser on April 29, 1793. Addressed to "Fellow-Citizens" and signed "Gundebert," it began typically enough. France, alone against "a combination of almost every sceptered despot in Europe," was "fighting the cause of all the world." The letter took on a new intensity as "Gundebert" suggested that proof was needed that the government of the United States and its Chief Magistrate had done their duty to protect our interest. If the administration lacked wisdom or energy, the people did not. Neutrality might be wished for by all, but if it could be shown that without our help the league of kings would crush republican France, it was our duty to ourselves, our posterity, and the world to aid France. An invasion of Canada and South America might turn the tide. It was then that "Gundebert" produced a warning. If those who

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[13] Ibid., May 30 and June 3, 1793; Letter, Evert Bancker to Abm. B. Bancker, June 8, 1793, NYHS, Bancker Papers.

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were speaking against the French in the coffee houses and porter houses did not control their statements they might find their future in the city "unpleasant" and even "insupportable." The writer concluded with the hope that, in New York City and in every sea-port in the United States, a society be immediately instituted that would adopt "such measures as may, consistently with peace, give support to that great Republic which is fighting the battles of all mankind." With the appearance of "Gundebert," threats to freedom of speech made in behalf of international republicanism were now "out on the table," as was a call for organized opposition to federal policies in the name of republican France.[14]

If, however, the goal of the opponents of the policies of the federal government was, as Alexander Hamilton believed, "to beget if possible a temper in the community which may over-rule the moderate or pacific views of the Government,"[15] they seemed to be enjoying only moderate success through the middle of May. A look at the celebration of the Tammany anniversary that year would be a good place to check for a sharp change in public feeling. On May 13, under the heading "Tammany's Day," the medical student Alexander Anderson had recorded in his diary that he went to St. Paul's, "where after waiting about an hour, I saw an Oration deliver'd (for I can't say I heard it) by Lawyer Colden

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[14]"Gundebert," Daily Advertiser, Apr. 29, 1793. "Gundebert" would have his wish for a society in support of France in every sea-port in the United States fulfilled within a year. It would take the form of the famous and controversial Democratic Societies whose existence would do so much to change political realities within the United States. See also Daily Advertiser, "L," May 13, 1793.

[15]Defense of the President's Neutrality Proclamation, [May, 1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 507.

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[Cadwallader D], one of the Columbian Order,"[16] and grandson of the famous colonial New York figure, Cadwallader Colden. Colden's oration did not have to be heard, however, to know that neither the speaker nor his subject, "The super excellence of the government and situation of the United States," was calculated to produce results subversive of any institution of government.[17]

After the church services, the Tammany procession wound through the streets of the city preceded by the standard of the society and by the cap of Liberty. The latter, used both as an American and French emblem, was still simply a republican symbol. The anniversary dinner, however, which was held at the Tammanial Hall on Broadway, produced reactions of such strong emotionalism that it almost seemed to bear out Hamilton's worst fears. The news reports noted that the first sentence of the toast "SUCCESS TO THE ARMIES OF FRANCE and Wisdom, Concord, and Firmness to the CONVENTION" was "hardly articulated, when, AS ONE, the whole company arose, and gave three cheers, continued by roars of applause for several minutes--the toast was then given in whole, and the applause reiterated." The two toasts included below were also greeted with three cheers if not with the frenzy of the previous toast: "May the guilty blush of monarchs remain unconcealed, unless under an iron mask"; "May crowns and triple crowns be converted into golden types, to publish universally, THE RIGHTS OF MAN." Nevertheless, although the fervor of New Yorkers for republican France was clear, so was the understanding that direct participation in the war

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[16]Diary of Alexander Anderson, NYHS, May 13, 1793.

[17]Daily Advertiser, May 16, 1793.

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was not, at that point, a real possibility. Tammany showed that fact with a quiet toast that wished that "the French Republic never want a Washington to convert the battle axe into the plough share."[18] The Tammany celebration of May 1793 was certainly a more emotional affair than those of previous years and the celebrants seemed Frenchmen at times in the fervent emotionalism of some of their responses. But they also appeared likely to agree with Alexander Macomb, who certainly was not unfriendly to Genêt or republican France, when he noted that "this country seems perfectly to understand that neutrality is its interest."[19]

Despite these reassurances of the public temper, the administration did have reason to be worried. Walter Rutherford, in a letter to his son, a "Federalist" senator from New Jersey, expressed some of those worries when he noted that he regretted "with you that Citizen Janet [sic] and his prizes will be like to bring us in Trouble, a rich Glasgow Ship brought into Phila--only one Frenchman in the Privateer."[20] From Philadelphia, itself, Oliver Wolcott bewailed the fact that the government was "considerably plagued with French politics. . . . A British ship had been captured at anchor in the bay of Delaware." Wolcott feared that such "infractions of our neutrality," unless censured by the government, would "inevitably" drag the country

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[18] Daily Advertiser, May 16, 1793.

[19] Letter, A. Macomb to Wm. Constable, May 25, 1793, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

[20] Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, May 15, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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irto the war, "to the utter ruin of our affairs."[21]

It was just such a fear that led Washington and his cabinet to hold a series of meetings designed to meet what they considered to be an increasingly dangerous situation. In mid-May, the cabinet agreed on the illegality of a number of seizures of British ships that had been made within the territorial waters of the United States, and that had been protested by the British minister, George Hammond. The cabinet called for action to prevent further acts of that nature and to restore the ships. By the end of May Hamilton was able to state the opinion of the Executive that French prizes were to be accepted as saleable in the United States subject to all importation laws and tariffs. The same privileges would not extend to any of the other belligerent powers, being contrary to the 17th and 22nd articles of our treaty of commerce with France. The cabinet unanimously agreed, however, that a ship armed, equipped and manned by French or other citizens in American ports to cruise against some of the belligerent powers was illegal and should be turned over to the civil power of the state. Finally, on June 17, the cabinet unanimously rejected Genêt's complaint against the seizure of newly commissioned French vessels, meaning privateers--in the United States ports, and equally unanimously assured Hammond that this country was turning over the cases to the courts for settlement.[22]

Genêt's reaction to these efforts to preserve neutrality com-

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[21]Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Frederick Wolcott, May 20, 1793, Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams, Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott, ed. by George Gibbs (2 vols.; New York: n.p., 1846), I, 100.

[22]Hamilton to Washington, [May 15, 1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 452; Treasury Department Circular to the Collectors of the Cus-

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bined his typical bravura with an equally typical misreading of the public willingness to support him against George Washington. He wrote to his Minister of Foreign Affairs, shortly after the June 17th cabinet decision, that he had met many obstacles since his arrival in the United States, for the aristocracy had planted deep roots here. But the true republicans, he predicted, were in the process of triumphing. This was so despite the fact that "old Washington" was no longer the same man he once was. In fact, Genêt reported, Washington was jealous of his own success and of the alacrity with which all of the citizens had come to his house, while only a handful of English merchants had supported the President's proclamation. Washington, having put a thousand roadblocks in Genêt's path, had forced the latter to push secretly for a meeting of Congress where a majority, according to Genêt, "led by the first citizens of America, are decidedly in favor of France." While awaiting a meeting of Congress, Genêt reported that he had been busy on all fronts stirring up Canadians, arming Kentuckians, and aim-

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toms, May 30, 1793, Ibid., 499; Cabinet Meeting: Opinion Respecting the Measures to be Taken Relative to a Sloop Fitted Out as a Privateer, June 12, 1793; Ibid., 534-35; Cabinet Meeting: Opinion Respecting French Privateers, June 17, 1793, Ibid., XV, 2-3. For a New York City incident concerning the attempted outfitting of a French privateer--the affair of the Polly--see Register of the French Consulate at New York, NYPL, June 6, 1793; Letter, George Clinton to Sebastian Bauman, June 8, 1793, NYHS, Sebastian Bauman Papers; Hamilton to Richard Harison, [June 13-15, 1793] and Harison to Hamilton, June 21, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 539, and XV, 11-12; Letter, Robert Troup to James Duane, NYHS, June 16, 1793, Duane Papers. For the most complete picture of the Polly affair see George C. Raddin, Jr., Caritat and the Genêt Episode (Dover, N. J.; The Dover Advance Press, 1953). A cautionary word must be expressed, however, in regard to Raddin's total acceptance of Genêt's interpretation of the clauses referring to privateering in the Treaty of 1778. As a result, all actions by the United States government to stop the fitting out of French privateers in American ports are made to seem like anti-French, pro-British responses.

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ing for New Orleans.[23]

Genêt's own relentless drive was apparently catching. The generally more realistic French consul of New York, the Comte d'Hauterive,[24] was, by June, given to almost as much overstatement as Genêt. "The public will not support the Neutrality Proclamation," Hauterive declared. At the same time he predicted that civil strife would result if the "Federalists" persisted in anti-popular actions: "The number of the Friends to France, that is to say, the true Americans, increases every Day; Prejudice for a long time instilled, and kept up by a thousand infamous lies are wearing away, of themselves." Washington and Hamilton, Hauterive continued, would be overturned if they persisted in their policies. The French Revolution, according to the consul, had rendered "a signal Service . . . to every free nation, by inspiring them with that persevering vigilance, which could alone insure the continuance of their Independency."[25]

Hauterive's enthusiasm, at that moment, was, in a way, quite understandable. He had come to New York filled with the views of friends who had pitied him for having to serve in a city to which they had "given the Name of Tory Town." The fact that New York was inaccurately accused of toryism and maligned by the description of it as the

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[23]Genêt to MFA, June 19, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 217.

[24]See Frances S. Childs, "The Hauterive Journal," New York Historical Society Quarterly, XXXIII (Apr., 1949), 85-86, for a sympathetic picture of the French consul.

[25]Comte d'Hauterive to MFA, June 14, 1793, as quoted in Roger L. Williams, "Three Papers Pertaining to the Genêt Affair," Ibid., 89-92.

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home of "the Anglo-Colonial Aristocracy"[26] was, of course, both unknown to Hauterive and disbelieved by the total francophiles who supplied him with his advance information. Therefore, Hauterive's surprise at finding New Yorkers in the grips of a pro-French fervor which filled every conversation and every issue of every newspaper was certainly enough to have turned the head of even an unprejudiced observer. For one who had been led to expect a cold-blooded reception, the warmth and emotionalism of the New York reaction could well have momentarily destroyed all the usual critical faculties.

Shortly after Hauterive's arrival in New York, for example, the newspapers gave a clear indication of their total empathy with the cause of republican France. When news of General Dumouriez' desertion reached the city, the newspapers merely used it as another excuse to re-assert their devotion to the French cause. "Sidney," in the Diary, noted that while Dumouriez had escaped to the "Imperialists," his men had not followed him. In fact, the French were further purified by that act, as only true Frenchmen now remained. "Sidney" concluded, with total optimism, that better men would be substituted for the traitor as was the case after the betrayal of Arnold. That theme was picked up by editor Greenleaf of the Journal, who commented that Dumouriez had become the Arnold of France, "and has absolutely contracted to barter the LIBERTY of France for sordid GOLD." Greenleaf was also confident that Dumouriez' hopes would be confounded. Republican

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[26]Hauterive to MFA, June 14, 1793 in "Three Papers Pertaining to the Genêt Affair," Ibid., 89, 91. A check of the "Federalist" Daily Advertiser throughout May 1793, for example, showed an almost exclusive and positive concern with France and French affairs, including Genêt's travels and activities.

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France was not so easily crushed, albeit there might be temporary setbacks. Greenleaf concluded by predicting "that all future KINGS of France will be early subjected to the fate of the guillotine!" Consul Hauterive could indeed have felt comfortable in New York City during late spring, 1793.[27]

In June, 1793, a visitor from South Carolina arrived in New York City and described himself as being "enraptured with the scene." One of the centers of New York business and political life that caught the eye of the visitor, John Drayton, was the "elegant" new Tontine Coffee House on the northwest corner of Wall and Water Streets where, "from eleven to two o'clock the merchants, brokers, &c.meet . . . [to] transact all their concerns in a large way, and where, the politics of the day are considered."[28] Drayton must have found a pleased group of New York business leaders at the Tontine. Not only did they have a fine new home in which to work, but, as the mercantile firm of Lynch and Stoughton happily noted to a client in Lisbon, the "general war in Europe has given our produce a further augmentation. . . . the demand is brisk, . . . and generally commands great prices." To a French mercantile company at Bordeaux, Lynch and Stoughton added one additional cause for rejoicing: there was "no doubt of our remain-

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[27]"Sidney," Diary, May 27, 1793; New York Journal, May 29, 1793.

[28]Letter No. 1, June 15, 1793, and Letter No. 2, June 25, 1793, John Drayton, Letters Written During a Tour Through the Northern and Eastern States of America (Charleston, S. C.: Harrison & Bowen, 1794), pp. 10, 18. For an equally laudatory description of the Tontine Coffee House by an English visitor see Henry Wansey, The Journal of an Excursion of the United States of North America in the Summer of 1794 (Salisbury: J. Easton, 1796), pp. 57-58.

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ing strictly neutral during this heavy contest."[29]

The merchants were not the only ones to find their purses gladdened by the times. The mechanic, Stephen Allen, a sail maker in 1793 who would later become Mayor of New York and an important commercial and political figure of the first quarter of the nineteenth century, reminisced about the early days of his career many years later. This period, he remembered, was one in which the United States, "being the only nation then at peace became the principal carriers for the other nations of the world. This naturally brought into demand everything connected with Commerce, and the business I was engaged in increased with this demand." Politically speaking, Allen also remembered this period as one of excitement and importance. The war between England and France, he recalled, "led to a complete division among the American people, and there arose the two great parties so well known by the designation of Federalists and Republicans." He, "altho' . . . but a novice in politics, . . . was induced to join the Republican party," the party of "the friends of Equal rights," who also espoused "the cause in which the French nation was engaged."[30]

Allen's view, from a distance of a third of a century, that the "Republican" party was the party of equal rights and the French nation, fits perfectly into the image that that party was creating for itself in 1793, even while it was picturing the opposition as tories and aristocrats. For example, "An Oneida Chief," in the "Republican" Journal,

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[29]Letter, Lynch and Stoughton to William Chambers, May 30, 1793, and L. & S. to Peter Changeur & Co., June 17, 1793, NYHS, Lynch and Stoughton LB.

[30]Letter, 22C, May 1827, NYHS, Letters of Stephen Allen, Nov. 1825-1828, typewritten copy, pp. 77-79.

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war-whooped to the effect that if the insolence of the visiting British sailors (who saluted the King's birthday) and the vilifiers of the French did not cease, the Whigs of New York should take action. Those "enemies to liberty and Equality" had practiced their insults in the streets, in the new Tontine Coffee House, and especially in the Belvedere Club House, the special haunt of the wealthy. For the "Chief," it was insupportable to allow those actions to continue while "our generous allies are suffering all the calamities of a cruel and ambitious war of despots and tyrants."[31]

This feeling was strengthened when, on June 10, a true symbol of "our generous allies" appeared in New York bay. It was the French frigate, L'Ambuscade, which had brought Citizen Genêt to the United States and had been busy ever since capturing enemy merchant ships. A fifteen gun salute passed in greeting between the frigate and the harbor guns, as New York came alive with new excitement. Alexander Anderson reported that at noon on that day he ran down to the Battery just to see L'Ambuscade at anchor.[32]

That night, at the Tontine Coffee House "there was an affray . . . between Whig & Tory, or, to modernize it, Aristocrat & Democrat," in which several arrests were made.[33] Immediately, in the next day's paper, an unsigned letter "To the Whigs of New York" appeared and decried the jailing of two good Whigs for upholding France against England. Where, the writer asked, could such expressions "give offence,"

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[31]"An Oneida Chief," New York Journal, June 8, 1793.

[32]Diary, June 10, 1793; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 10, 1793.

[33]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 11, 1793.

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but at the Tontine Coffee House, "a place the resort of the rich Gentlemen only"? The letter writer concluded by noting that the Coffee House was open to all segments of the public and suggesting that all attend and "teach those sycophants that there are exalted souls in this land of freedom, formed by heaven, to recall mankind to virtue, to scourge the guilty and protect from tyranny the free." That same night Alexander Anderson reported "Another bobbery in the Coffee House." And one could be assured that the Tontine Coffee House was not the only place where the threat of violence had become a daily possibility.[34]

Some letters now began to appear in the newspapers recalling the spirit of days gone by. The name of the sons of '76 was revived by "G.," who announced that they would defy the sons of Royalty who have since "crept back" from the barren wasteland of Nova Scotia. "G." wondered whether the latter would continue to "insult in our ports the Gallic sons of '92?" He advised them to act peaceably and quietly like the other friends of King George, for then they would be ignored. To do otherwise would risk serious consequences. "DeKalb" joined his voice to the others by asking how long might Americans be expected to suffer those insults which showed the English to be filled with "pride and folly" and the French to be filled with "modesty and forbearance?"[35]

What saved the situation, according to one observer, was the

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[34]"To the Whigs of New York," Diary, June 11, 1793; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 13, 1793.

[35]"G," Diary, June 15, 1793; "DeKalb," Ibid., June 14, 1793. See "New York Gentleman," June 12, 1793, and "Wigwam," June 13, 1793, both in the Diary, for similar references to the tories and the American Revolution.

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cap of liberty. John Drayton believed that the verbal and physical sparring that had broken out between the parties at the Tontine Coffee House since the arrival in port of L'Ambuscade, would "ere long have brought them to extremities, had not the cap of liberty, with a motto on it of 'Sacred to Liberty,' been fixed up in the coffee room; where, it now is." Drayton was convinced that this action "quieted the minds as well of the one party, as the other; and sent to attend upon their family concerns many men, who were better employed at home, than in the discussion of politics." The Tontine Coffee House thus joined the Ambuscade, itself, as being among those places where the liberty cap could be found. In a famous sketch by Drayton, entitled "A View of the Battery Harbour of New York and the Ambuscade Frigate," the ship is shown with a liberty cap on the fore-top-gallant-mast head. "I drew it with pleasure," Drayton confessed, "hoping that it would be an ornament to the piece: as I trust everything which brings to the mind ideas of social liberty, and good government, will be."[36]

There is no question but that the cap of liberty in the new coffee house became the sight to see. Described as "a beautiful crimson, adorned with a white torsel [sic], and supported by a staff,"[37] the phrygian cap had now become, for many New Yorkers, the symbol of their feelings for republican France. In the midst of the impotence that many undoubtedly felt at being unable to help France directly,

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[36]Letter No. 2, June 25, 1793, Drayton, Letters Written During a Tour, pp. 18-19, 20. See also Letter, Edward Livingston to R. R. Livingston, May 15, 1793 [misdated--June 15, 1793 likely date], NYHS, RRL Coll., for another eyewitness account of the raising of the cap of liberty in the Tontine Coffee House.

[37]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 14, 1793.

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this visible object seemed to act as a substitute for action and as a sign of oneness between the sister republics. In addition, the cap's importance to the peace of the city was acknowledged in an open letter "To the peaceable and Independent WHIGS of the City of New York" which appeared in both the "Republican" Diary and the "Federalist" Daily Advertiser. The letter, signed "THE REAL WHIGS," informed the citizenry that the "CAP OF LIBERTY" had been "planted" at the Tontine Coffee House and could not offend any liberal soul. He who would try to take it down, "will become an object of the scorn and hatred of every son of Columbia." It was now time for the public to "remain at home," the "Real Whigs" suggested, in what was probably the actual purpose of the letter, "and trust the pledge of our Love to those who usually frequented the place in which it is erected."[38]

With the return of New Yorkers to their more normal daily routines, an essay appeared in the Daily Advertiser which unexpectedly seemed to sum up the general public attitude towards the French Revolution and American neutrality. I use the word "unexpectedly" because the article was written by "Citizen" William Willcocks and addressed in the friendliest of manners to Citizen Genêt. Willcocks was a strong "Federalist" whose blunt newspaper essays, "in propria persona," singled him out as a strong individualist who had become a prime target for the Clintonian opposition. In the context of the usually accepted

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[38]"The Real Whigs," Diary, June 14, 1793. The same letter appeared in the Daily Advertiser of June 15, 1793. See also Poet's Corner of the New York Journal, July 27, 1793, for the words of a new song, entitled "The Cap of Liberty," set to the tune of "Yankee Doodle," in which magic powers are ascribed to the liberty cap. One of those powers included the ability to turn a tory into a republican or whig.

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"Republican" propaganda vis-à-vis "Federalist" attitudes towards France and republicanism, Willcocks could never have written the article which both bears his name and dotes so fondly upon republican France. Willcocks believed that the basic turn of the world's future history depended upon the success or failure of the French. Success in establishing a government based upon "the principles of representation, and equal liberty" would produce an era "auspicious" for human happiness. But if monarchy returned to France by force, the whole world would soon groan again under the lash of tyranny. Willcocks assured Genêt that Americans were with France in their common cause for humanity and in the belief that governments should be instituted for the protection of the civil and religious rights of the people. Both sentiment and attachment to common ideals joined the two republics in a common goal.[39]

The United States stood ready, Willcocks went on, to provide France with every aid in her power, "consistent with that neutrality which the policy and perhaps necessity of our government may at present require." The United States also stood ready to prevent any real assistance by American citizens to the enemies of France. Willcocks thus made clear what most Americans felt required to admit: that the United States government had no alternative but to pursue a neutral policy at that moment. At the same time Willcocks stated that the American people understood the extraordinary problems faced by another people going through so remarkable a series of changes as that through

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[39]William Willcocks, Daily Advertiser, June 12, 1793.

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which France was passing, although Americans prayed that temperance would control French actions and restore their tranquility. Though fighting great odds, as the United States did in '76, and faced with traitors, as the United States had been faced with, both nations have and would prove to the tyrants of the earth "that true patriotism is invincible." Willcocks then noted that there were some British subjects "among us" who still retain a prejudice for their countrymen but they were growing fewer and fewer. They were "contemptible weak men, incapable of distinguishing between persons and things." Willcocks expressed the belief that the day was not far distant when French victories and wise actions would produce a peaceful world in which all could live side by side. Nothing, he concluded, could be more wished for than that.[40]

William Willcocks, the devoted "Federalist"lawyer and assemblyman, who had served as aide-de-camp to William Alexander, "Lord Stirling," during the American Revolution,[41] was not, this writer believes, unrepresentative of his party in this statement of his views. If such a belief is granted, what then happens to the oft-trumpeted stereotype, repeated just a few pages before in the words of Stephen Allen, of the Francophobic, Angelophilic, anti-republican and pro-monarchic Federalists from whom this country was rescued by a liberty-loving opposition? For this reader of the period, the stereotype "will not down," despite the best efforts of some historians to "Bowerize"

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Willcocks to Hamilton, Aug. 25, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 277, n. 1.

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this period into a simple morality tale of good versus evil.[42]

Though a calmer mood had descended upon New York with the raising of the liberty cap at the Tontine Coffee House, there was no let up in the ardor felt by New Yorkers for the French. On Monday evening, June 16, the Tammany Society held a meeting at which "they were favoured with the company of citizen Hauterive, . . . of citizen De Pline, consul to Boston, and of citizen Bompard, Captain of l'Ambuscade, with several of his officers." The Grand Sachem of Tammany, William Pitt Smith, addressed the French citizens in attendance in terms of the brotherly feeling that existed among Americans who had fought the same fight years before and who were now united in sentiment with France. Hauterive, in his reply, answered that the people of the United States were the "first born Sons of Liberty." Advising his listeners to guard their freedom, Hauterive promised that together they would meet under the Tree of Liberty, with the whole universe following in their wake.[43]

No sooner was the Tammany Society meeting a matter of record than "A Citizen," in the Diary, called upon New Yorkers to celebrate the 4th of July "as of yore," when it was done with the complete heart and soul of the inhabitants. He reminded his readers that the cap of

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[42]The picture of the Federalists and Hamilton as propagated by Claude Bowers nearly fifty years ago has, through its widespread dissemination, influenced several generations of readers. Even many of those historians who have questioned Bowers' black-and-white portrait of the parties and protagonists of the 1790's have often diluted their criticism by paying homage to his quality of prose, or to his qualities as a story-teller, or to some such mitigating view. This has proved to be a massive stumbling block for any attempt to give the general public a truer understanding of this period.

[43]New York Magazine, IV (June, 1793), 384.

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liberty was now planted at the Tontine Coffee House and that it was time to honor the day in the spirit of that symbol. It would show the world that Americans had renewed their adherence to the cause of freedom everywhere. A few days later another citizen called on New Yorkers, and all Americans, to celebrate July 4, 1793, in a manner that would recapture the spirit of July 4, 1776. Finally, on the first of July, "DeKalb" asked that all Americans join in the upcoming festivities for that would show that "Republicans know of no distinctions, but those which merit makes." Merchants, mechanics, et. al. should, without distinction, join in celebrating "the blessings of this Republic."[44]

As the sun rose on the 17th anniversary of American Independence, Alexander Anderson reported that he and the rest of New York "were awak'd by the ringing of Bells and discharge of Cannon."[45] The day had already been greeted verbally by Thomas Greenleaf, in a Journal editorial of the day before. He had rhapsodized: "HAIL, auspicious Aera, FOURTH OF JULY, 'SEVENTY-SIX--which loosed the shackles of millions, and inspired other millions with the glorious ideas, that they also, though groaning under the galling yoke of despots, SHOULD BE FREE!"[46] A bit more soberly, Francis Childs of the Advertiser called on Americans to count their blessings for with their best of governments they enjoyed greater liberty than any other people. They should also remember that "VIRTUE ONLY . . . can preserve a republican form of gov-

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[44]"A Citizen," Diary, June 18, 1793; "A Citizen," New York Journal, June 22, 1793; "DeKalb," Diary, July 1, 1793.

[45]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1793.

[46]New York Journal, July 3, 1793.

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ernment." Childs' concluded by also reminding his readers that they should "never be wanting in gratitude to the GALLANT NATION who assisted them in thehour of their greatest distress." Editor Childs had little reason to fear that the French were going to be forgotten on July 4, 1793.[47]

Later in the morning of the "fourth," Alexander and John Anderson "look'd into the Old Presbyterian Meeting, where Mr Miller was to deliver a discourse to some of the Republican Societies, but seeing it so full, we alter'd our course and walk'd on the Battery."[48] If the Andersons had remained, however, they would have heard an interesting sermon given by the Reverend Samuel Miller, one of the ministers of the United Presbyterian Churches of the City of New York. His theme was "Cristianity, the Grand Source, and the Surest Basis, of Political Liberty." Reverend Miller was on sure ground when he used the United States as an example of a place where Christianity supported that liberty which was equally opposed to tyranny and anarchy. Under the guidance of the one true king, he declared, the United States had "been led to frame a constitution which recognizes the natural and unalienable rights of men; which renounces all limits to human liberty, but those which necessity and wisdom prescribe; and whose object is, the general good." Through those means the United States would become "the pattern, and the wonder of the world."[49] Then, in turning to the

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[47] Daily Advertiser, July 4, 1793.

[48] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1793.

[49] Samuel Miller, A Sermon Preached in New York, July 4th, 1793 (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, n.d.), pp. 7, 19, 35.

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French Revolution, Miller was able to override any doubts and concluded with great optimism. "If this wonderful Revolution be, as we trust, a great link in the chain, that is drawing on the reign of universal harmony and peace; if it be occasioned by Christian principles, and be designed to pave the way for their complete establishment, however it may appear to be sullied by irreligion and vice, it is the cause of God, and will at last prevail."[50]

Those who, like Alexander Anderson, were not present for Reverend Miller's sermon, could have read it shortly thereafter when it was published at the request of the Tammany Society. The reverend must have received some not totally favorable comment for, in the printed version, he included a footnote explaining his remarks on the French Revolution, particularly as to its being "the cause of God." He noted that by getting involved in politics he was on shifting ground. Nevertheless, he believed that the revolution rested upon the pillars of the natural rights of men and "upon the fundamental principles of religion which the Author of our natures has revealed." Though the revolution should be censured for acts of violence and inhumanity, understanding was also required. Reverend Miller made a distinction between the crimes of a settled government and those of one in the midst of a revolution; and between a popular assembly and an aggrieved multitude. When a people had to overturn a despotism of long standing and massive oppression, total "wisdom, prudence, and moderation" could not be expected. Miller concluded his footnote by wondering if the reports of French disdain for sacred things and their pursuit of vice and disorder

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[50]Ibid., p. 32.

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were not merely misrepresentations of her enemies. There seemed to be no question but that most New Yorkers, in the summer of 1793, were willing to give the French Revolution every benefit of doubt. For, if God's will be done, Reverend Miller seemed to say, the French Revolution would be carried throughout the world.[51]

With the sermons out of the way, the afternoon of July 4, 1793 continued and improved upon the gaiety of the occasion. Alexander Anderson reported that there was "Much eating, drinking, toasting, singing, noise and confusion in both the Coffee houses--cannons fir'd and bells rung at particular hours" all through the day. To Anderson, "a spirit of Republican festivity seems to have pervaded all ranks, the children imitated their superiors in the several testimonies of joy, which have been greater than usual on this occasion."[52] From all evidence, it would take a willful disregard of previous events to deny the role that French revolutionary fervor played in reinforcing the positive sentiments and attitudes toward themselves that burst out with renewed vigor from New Yorkers and Americans on that day.

The day, of course, was not yet complete, and could not have been without the gala public dinners of the societies and brigades of the city which produced the toasts of the day. From a set of toasts given by a number of "respectable Republicans" at the Tontine Coffee House was one to "the citizens of the French Republic, as

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[51] Ibid., pp. 33n-34n.

[52] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1793.

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they have fought for Liberty, may they convince the world they know its value." Another set by the Society of the Cincinnati was very similar, toasting the French Republic in this manner: "May they be successful in establishing a free government; and convince the world they know its value." A dinner held by the Officers of the Brigade of Militia included as invited guests the French consul, Hauterive, and other officers of the consulate. Their toasts to France were much more effusive, including: "The Republics of France and America, may they be forever united in the glorious cause of Liberty"; "The Rights of Man: May they become universal laws; and May the Cap of Liberty, emblematical of the celestial canopy, cover the whole Earth and shed its benign influence on all nations." A volunteer toast that evening verbalized delicately between promising too much and saying too little: "May the infant arms of America be raised to support the French Republic rather than she should fall."[53]

Perhaps the most interesting place to have been on that 4th of July was the Belvedere House which had apparently undergone a remarkable metamorphosis. That exclusive inn and club, occupying a fair prospect facing the East River, had been "renamed LIBERTY HALL" for the occasion, and hung with the Cap of Liberty, to which had been attached the motto: "Emblem of Liberty, Union, and Peace." An inscription was also affixed to the back wall which read: "This Cap is this day erected by the sons of Liberty--may all who view it bear in

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[53]Daily Advertiser, July 5, 1793; Diary, July 6, 1793.

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mind its motto; and withered be the hand that shall attempt its removal." Only a month before "An Oneida Chief," writing in the Journal, had singled out the Belvedere House as a place of especially strong pro-British, anti-republican sentiment. Now the 17th Anniversary of American Independence was celebrated there with toasts to the republic of France and such wishes as these: "May the habitable globe be incorporated into one free Republic, and may every honest soul receive the freedom of it"; and "May Dampiere [sic] prove a second Washington in the armies of France, and the Mountain, forgetting its heat, prove as firm and steady in Council as the Congress of 1776." The evening ended at the Belvedere with a song specially composed for the occasion. After praising the mighty efforts of Americans who made of the Fourth of July the day on which to celebrate the victory of freedom, the song continued:

> Let Gallia's great name be remember'd this day,
> While the ensigns of freedom with us they display;
> A sound constitution our unity binds
> Since all Arnolds & Dumouriers are purg'd
> from our lines. . . .
>
> The nations discover that Freedom's the sole,
> And their CROWNS they'll exchange for a CAP and a POLE;
> And a hand so presumptious a crown to support,
> Will pass condemnation in Liberty's Court.
>
> Let bumpers be filled from that unfailing spring,
> Toasts all sons of earth, and drink Freedom--No King!
> Till time shall be swallowed in unfading day
> For Freedom and Peace we'll unceasingly pray.[54]

In this peaceful and joyous mood, "Federalist," "Republican," and no-faction New Yorkers filled their "bumpers" with unfailing cheer

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[54] Diary, July 6, 1793.

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as they toasted beloved "Gallia" and the "Rights of Man." With republicanism triumphant among its citizens, it was a particular disservice to have labeled New York, at any time during the first half of 1793, either "Royal City" or "Tory Town." For if New Yorkers had a single wish in regard to their relationship with France during those exciting months, it was, in the words of a Tammany toast of June 16, 1793, that "the ties that unite America and France [might] never be broken."[55]

[55] Daily Advertiser, June 20, 1793.

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CHAPTER VIII

"The whole city will fall before me."

The calm that had returned to emotion-laden New York in the early summer of 1793 represented a tenuous feeling at best. As long as the armed forces of the belligerent powers roamed the streets, taverns and back-alley houses of prostitution that filled the wharf areas of New York, the port city would remain in a constant state of tension. If one added to this the continued privateering and contraband activities of both the chief European rivals and the illegal involvement of New Yorkers and other Americans in these acts, it was clear that the aroma of violence still hung heavily over the city. It was in the midst of this powder-keg situation that the incident of the Little Sarah burst upon the national scene in early July.

In brief, the Little Sarah was a British merchant vessel that had been taken by L'Ambuscade and brought into Philadelphia as a prize. Citizen Genêt had proceeded to turn the merchant vessel into a privateer with the new name of Petite Democrate. Governor Thomas Mifflin of Pennsylvania, following through on a report received from Hamilton, found that the vessel had been illegally converted in port, including the augmentation of its guns from four to fourteen. On Sunday, July 7, hearing that the ship was about to sail, Mifflin sent his Secretary of State, Alexander J. Dallas, to Genêt to secure a promise that the ship would not sail until the matter could be discussed with the President,

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who was shortly due to return to Philadelphia from Mount Vernon. Dallas was unable to gain the desired promise but Jefferson, informed of the failure, went himself to Genêt and gained what he believed to be an unstated promise that the French minister would hold the ship in port until the President returned to the capital. In discussing with Mifflin and Dallas what Genêt had said, Jefferson noted that the particulars of the conversation between Genêt and Dallas were similar to those of his own discussion with the French minister. But Jefferson continued, "Mr. Dallas mentioned some things which he [Genêt] had not said to me, and particularly his declaration that he would appeal from the President to the people." The sequel to this series of events was that the now fully-armed Little Sarah dropped down the Delaware in spite of a request from the President to Genêt, transmitted by Jefferson on July 12, 1793, which asked that the minister hold a number of privateers in port "until the question could be referred to 'persons learned in the laws.'"[1]

When the Little Sarah finally put to sea "three or four days after," she left behind her a cabinet seething with bitterness and recrimination. The question of whether Genêt had or had not declared that "he would appeal from the President to the people" laid the groundwork for many additional months of hostility and eventually open verbal warfare between Genêt and the federal government, as well as among

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[1]Cabinet Meeting: Opinion on the Case of the Little Sarah, July 8, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 70-73, esp. nn. 2 and 5. These footnotes describe the incident of the Little Sarah as discussed in the Anas and letters of Jefferson. For Hamilton's own summary, which fully agrees with Jefferson's version, see Hamilton to King, Ibid., 239-242.

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leading Americans of both parties and the public-at-large. Such major national figures from New York as Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and Rufus King found themselves so deeply involved that before the events set in motion by the case of the Little Sarah passed into history they would find even their self-respect and honor called into question.

Genêt's reported threat to the President and the federal government had not yet reached the public, even as a rumor, when New Yorkers added to their pro-French fervor with an enthusiastic celebration of Bastille Day. Since July 14, 1793, fell on a Sunday, the anniversary took place on Monday, the fifteenth. On that date, Alexander Anderson went to his 9:00 A.M. class at Columbia College "but was inform'd there would be no lecture on account of the day--this being the Anniversary of the Demolition of the Bastille." The next day Anderson reported that he went to class again "but Dr. Kemp absent--perhaps he intended to retaliate upon the hearers."[2] Regardless of the contretemps between faculty and students at Columbia College, the celebrations were a popular success. Indicative of that success was a dinner held by the French republicans living in the city. The latter had invited the Tammany Society to join with them in a show of that "common ardor" which joined the two nations together. The commingling of ardent French and American republicans produced a series of toasts

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[2]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 15 and July 16, 1793. That professors and students crossed paths even in America's very old "good old days" was made clear by a number of other entries in Anderson's diary. For example, the famous Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill's lecture to his students on February 26, 1793, consisted of "a reprimand to three of the class for their disorderly behaviour, and a harangue on the Nature of a College--the Duty of the Professors and that of the Students--."

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that were alive with feelings of mutual esteem:

> The 14th of July, may every people celebrate this Day, like the French and Americans, after having freed their native land of Bastiles & Tyrants!
> The French nation: may the unshaken constancy which they have shown under the frowns of fortune, prove to the world, that they know the value of Liberty & Virtue!
> The American nation: may the attachment which the Americans have shown to France, in its distresses, prove to the world, that they too always know the value of Virtue & Liberty. . . .
> Volunteer toast by the Grand Sachem of Tammany: may the union of France & the United States be mutually considered by their citizens, as essential to the happiness of each; & may the precious blood of their patriot heroes prove its indissoluble element.[3]

The internationalism of the occasion was reinforced by the gracious remarks of Citizen Consul Hauterive. He stated that the French wanted to share the day with Americans "who have never ceased to feel that the success of the French Revolution has forever ensured the glory of your own, and attached to you by indissoluble ties a nation of friends and brethren in another hemisphere." Hauterive then added a quiet warning to the effect that while tyrants remained, Americans, as freemen, should remember that they could not repose in peace.[4] All ended happily in a song commemorating "the Glorious Fourteenth of July." The anniversary song was composed especially for the French consulate party by "Julia," a lady New Yorker who often wrote poetry for the Weekly Museum, and who doubtless reached a far wider audience with this song praising Columbia, Gallia, and Liberty:

> The bright star of Liberty arose in the North, America
> O'er the Atlantic's rough waves her splendors she shed;
> For justice & virtue soon hurried her forth,
> O'er thy realms my lov'd Gallia her influence spread,
> And O may her power your spirits inspire!
> And still may you glow with her sacred fire;

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[3]New York Journal, July 17 and July 20, 1793.

[4]Diary, July 18, 1793.

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While each son of Freedom exulting shall say,
Forever be bless'd this Glorious Day.[5]

In the glow cast by the Bastille Day celebrations, letters began to appear in the press which again questioned the whole basis for the American neutrality policy. "An Old Soldier" wrote that he would follow his commander-in-chief's orders, but he hoped that the Proclamation of Neutrality would not in any way be harmful to his country's friends, the French. We were, after all, bound to France by ties of gratitude and moral obligations. "A Decided Whig," also questioning the Proclamation, stated firmly that "if the neutrality of my country cannot possibly be preserved without a violation of its faith and honor," and he implied it could not, then he was not willing to accept such a neutrality. Those who questioned the neutrality policy of the government, however, found themselves in a basic quandary. That confusion was expressed in a letter to the Diary by "Lucius." He called the Proclamation a mistake for it had been viewed as keeping the United States neutral in attitude towards both England and France. France did not need our help, "Lucius" believed, for her republican government could only fall through internal division. But if, in the future, the United States needed help for our "infant Tree of Liberty in this its only asylum," why should France come to our aid? Though neutrality was our best policy, "Lucius" insisted that we should be neutral in a way that would not charge us with violation of treaty obligations and ingratitude. He concluded, in seeming contradiction with himself, that this country should "discharge that debt of grati-

[5]"Julia," New York Weekly Museum, July 20, 1793.

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tude which we owe to our brethren of France." How one was to become involved and yet remain neutral went completely unanswered.[6]

Letters such as these did indicate, however, a growing level of unease towards the foreign policy of the federal government. The feeling was enlarged upon by "Fourth of July" who used the war between the despots of Europe and "the heroic Republican Citizens of France" to point up the defects of the present federal government of the United States. After listing, among other defects,

> the exise laws; the encroachments on the state governments; . . . the antirepublican habits of the men in high stations round the executive; the places and imperial domes building on the Potomac; . . . [and] the unasked concessions to the only power on earth which hates us, and the unaccountable supineness, which permits that power to hold posts contrary to treaty, . . .

"Fourth of July" pulled out all the stops, warning that if the people did not take care, they would "glide down the gulph [sic] of despotism." In conclusion, he asserted that it was to "the courage of the people, under the state governments, that we are to look for the props of freedom."[7]

That last-mentioned theme was stressed at the same time by Robert R. Livingston in a private letter to Thomas Jefferson. Livingston had heard that Jefferson planned to resign, but the Chancellor strongly cautioned against it on both public and private grounds. Jefferson, according to Livingston, had become the rallying figure for those opposed to the growing powers of the federal government. In addition, the first vacancy in the highest office could give him "command

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[6]"An Old Soldier," Diary, July 16, 1793; "A Decided Whig," Ibid., July 20, 1793; "Lucius," Ibid., July 22, 1793.

[7]"Fourth of July," Ibid., July 23, 1793.

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of the troops." At such a time, when the Congress met only a part of the year and constantly changed in membership, Jefferson, as a member of the administration, was the only one who could lead those who desired greater control over the power of the executive and who also desired expanded state power.[8]

The supporters of the administration had been silent for some time. Feeling that the attack against them was gaining momentum and that silence was not necessarily the best policy, they began a strong verbal counter-attack. A local essay entitled "Poplicola," which appeared in both the "Federalist" Daily Advertiser and the "Republican" Diary, bitterly reproached those who attacked the great leader of the country, Washington, in terms fit only for an Arnold or a Dumouriez. The ostensible reason for these attacks was the Proclamation of Neutrality. The real reason, "Poplicola" offered, was retaliation for the defeat of "ignorance and anarchy" by the forces of federalism. The protection of American neutrality was a positive act, according to "Poplicola," and certainly was not a crime.[9]

Much more important, however, than any local essay was the remarkable set of essays that ran nationally and was the work of that one-man "Federalist" army, Alexander Hamilton. The "Pacificus" series had originally appeared throughout the month of July in Fenno's Philadelphia-based Gazette of the United States. It reached the New York public on July 24, 1793, when it was printed in the Daily Advertiser. The purpose of "Pacificus" was to answer four objections to government

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[8]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Jefferson, [July 1793], NYHS, RRL Coll.

[9]"Poplicola," Daily Advertiser and Diary, July 25, 1793.

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policy: that the neutrality proclamation was without authority; that it was contrary to our treaties with France; that it was contrary to the gratitude due from this country to France for the aid rendered in the American Revolution; and that it was out of time and unnecessary.[10]

Hamilton rejected as entirely erroneous the idea that the proclamation had enacted some new law: "It only proclaims a fact with regard to the existing state of the Nation, informs the citizens of what the laws previously established require of them in that state, & warns them that those laws will be put in execution against the Infractors of them." Hamilton also insisted that the proclamation was not inconsistent with the operative treaties between the United States and France. Here Hamilton, as "Pacificus," repeated for the public what he had personally told Genêt in a conversation between the two during the previous month.[11] The United States' defensive alliance with France, which concerned the protection of the French West Indies, could not be invoked in the present case because France had been the first to declare war. Moreover, to put that guarantee into affect would require a navy which the United States simply did not possess. By recognizing the minister from the French republic the United States had gone as far as she could in keeping the treaty in force.[12]

The third point that "Pacificus" dealt with was the question of whether the proclamation was consistent with the gratitude due to

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[10]"Pacificus No. I," Daily Advertiser, July 24, 1793.

[11]For Hamilton's discussion with Genêt see Conversation with Genet, June 27, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 29.

[12]"Pacificus No. I," June 29, 1793, "Pacificus No. II," July 3, 1793, and "Pacificus No. III," July 6, 1793, Ibid., 34, 43, 55-58, 65-68.

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France by this country. Here Hamilton attacked the opposition at their weakest. He noted that those who objected to American neutrality at the same time disavowed all intention to advocate that this country should take part in the war. If they wanted peace why did they object to a statement that kept us in that state? He concluded that either they really did want to involve the United States in war or they sought a pretext to censure the president. As long as we had treaties with France, "Pacificus" continued, the latter must be treated differently and more favorably. But "we are continually invited" to go further and "Sacrifice the true interests of the Country; as if 'All for love and the world well lost' were a fundamental maxim in politics." Faith and justice were one thing, Hamilton contended, but gratitude was a much different virtue. A nation had more responsibility than an individual and should not mortgage its own future out of pure generousity and benevolence. France, moreover, had aided us through the direct decision of Louis XVI, who was now branded a tyrant by those who labeled Lafayette a traitor and who dared to "insinuate a distrust even of a _____ [Washington]!"[13]

Hamilton now turned back to internal affairs to make a most important connection and charge. Those who claimed that the French alliance required direct American involvement, he insisted, were the same as those who wished to destroy the Constitution, or who had never wanted it. Believing that part of his purpose was to replace the passionate feeling for France with a reasoned understanding of the need of the United States to survive, "Pacificus" concluded his sixth essay

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[13]"Pacificus No. IV," July 10, 1793 and "Pacificus No. V," July 13-17, 1793, Ibid., 70-72, 90-95.

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with a basic statement of foreign policy that was prophetic of much of the future American approach to foreign affairs and which must have had a great affect upon the reader of that time. In foreign relations, "Pacificus" suggested strongly, we ought to know "not to over-rate foreign friendships--to be upon our guard against foreign attachment. The former will generally be found hollow and delusive; the latter will have a natural tendency to lead us aside from our own true interest, and to make us the dupes of foreign influence." Foreign influence of that sort had the power to lead to "anti-national" actions, which Hamilton called "the GRECIAN HORSE to a republic." Americans should also know that foreign influence did not approach only through the gross form of direct bribery. "It is . . . most dangerous," Hamilton warned, with particular reference to France, "when it comes under the patronage of our passions, under the auspices of national prejudice and partiality."[14]

The "Pacificus" essays had an immense impact in turning public fervor from a demand for direct intervention to help France to a determination to safeguard American interest and follow the lead of the Washington administration. One need only note the almost hysterical tone of a letter that Thomas Jefferson wrote to James Madison in reference to "Pacificus" for the best possible proof of that series' effectiveness. In Jefferson's words: "Nobody answers him; & his doctrines will therefore be taken for confessed. For God's sake my dear Sir, take up your pen, select the most striking heresies and cut him

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[14]"Pacificus No. IV," July 17, 1793, Ibid., 100-106.

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to pieces in the face of the public."[15] In New York, however, the "Pacificus" series had really just begun in the last week of July and it would take several weeks before its message produced a clear public reaction. In the meantime, a terse "P.S." in a private letter would have given the knowledgeable reader enough information to know that that spirit of moderation was in for another severe test. The "P.S." read: "The French fleet is hourly expected here two 74 and five frigates and a number of small vessels."[16]

Although the arrival of the French fleet was delayed for over a week, New Yorkers were presented with a most diverting side-show to keep them entertained during the wait. The British frigate, Boston, had sailed into New York port. A letter signed "Democrat" appeared in the Diary and called on all Whigs to note those who were going on board the Boston to greet her captain, Mr. Courtnay. "Democrat" feared that there were too many New Yorkers "who will scarce treat a Frenchman with common civility in the street, and yet will go 40 or 50 miles to make obeisance to a titled Britain."[17] The Ambuscade, under Capt. Bompard, was in port at the same time, and the atmosphere was ripe for a return to the brawling of early and mid-June. Insults

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[15]Jefferson to Madison, July 7, 1793, Writings of Jefferson, VI, 338. For "Federalist" reports of Hamilton's effectiveness see Stephen Higginson to Hamilton, July 26, 1793, William L. Smith to Hamilton, Aug. 22, 1793, John E. Howard to Hamilton, Aug. 26, 1793, Theodore Sedgwick to Hamilton, Aug. 26, 1793 and Fisher Ames to Hamilton, Aug. 31, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 128, 262, 279, 285, 312. See also Charles Gore to R. King, Aug. 4, 1793 and George Cabot to King, Aug. 2, 1793, Correspondence of King, I, 489, 490.

[16]Letter Jacob LeRoy to [Goldsbrow Banyar?], July 23, 1793, NYHS, Banyar Coll.

[17]"Democrat," Diary, July 29, 1793.

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and challenges flew back and forth and disturbances once again took place nightly in the Tontine Coffee House. On July 30th Alexander Anderson reported that he "saw a Battle between a Whig & Tory Carman, in which the latter prevailed." Finally, a ship to ship combat was decided upon between the Boston and L'Ambuscade after a challenge was issued by Captain Courtnay.[18]

As both ships sailed out to Sandy Hook to do battle, one observer accused "our Antigallican people" of having brought about the event by taunting the French that their "Citizen Bompart [sic] is no fighter . . . [and] is afraid" to take on "armed Ships." But, reported Solomon Townsend, ever since the Ambuscade had answered the challenge "those same sett of people are as quiet as Lambs." On the afternoon of the day of the battle, August 1st, the public was still without definite news as to the outcome, and, Townsend noted, the "minds of most people has been very much agitated and are yet." There was one account of the sea fight, however, from a Mr. Taylor of Staten Island who, Townsend reported, saw the ships from the heights "with a very good glass." He saw one ship "lose her M topmast which account was on the Coffee house books at 3 o clock in the afternoon," and he had supposed that the dismantled ship was the British frigate. Townsend speculated that the Boston, if not taken by the Ambuscade, would "likely be chased into the midst of the French fleet," which was finally arriving off Sandy Hook on its way to New York harbor.[19]

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[18]Diary of A. Anderson, July 30 and Aug. 1, 1793, NYHS.

[19]Letter, Solomon Townsend to Robert Townsend, [undated], NYHS, Townsend Family Papers. Solomon Townsend's daughter noted, on the back of the letter, that the scene described by her father took place during the "quasi-war of the U States with France." But the event pictured

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While New Yorkers were impatiently awaiting definite news of the outcome of the naval battle, the French consul, Hauterive, was patiently planning for another arrival. Writing to Citizen Genêt, Consul Hauterive suggested that if the Ambuscade "returns triumphant, & if our Fleet comes here, I think you may after this come to New York. It even appears to me that invested as you are with a great popularity, your influence upon the minds of the People, divided as they are now, will have a great effect." And then, allowing an unsuspected talent for stage direction to come to the surface, Hauterive concluded with a sparkle of verbal lights: "Appear then among us in this moment of zeal, crown our victorious Brothers of the Ambuscade, & satisfy the wishes of the good Whigs of New York." Genêt, upon receipt of the letter, noted, at the bottom of it, that "New York is the Town of the U S, in which Aristocracy & what is here called the British influence most prevails--Judge from this of the Places in which Tories & Anglomanes are in horror."[20] Genêt's insistent misreading of the American mind continued in a letter sent the same day to the French Minister of Foreign Affairs. The people of the United States, he reported, were filled with the French cause, "want war," and constantly showed their devotion to liberty despite the attitude of their government. He, himself, was going to New York, where, he modestly predicted "the whole city will fall before me!"[21]

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was clearly the fight between the Boston and L'Ambuscade which took place on August 1, 1793.

[20]The French Consul at New York to the Minister of the French Republic at Philadelphia, Aug. 2, 1793, in Williams, "Three Letters Pertaining to the Genêt Affair," 93-94.

[21]Genêt to MFA, Aug. 2, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 235.

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The time was certainly ripe for the city to prostrate itself before the French minister to the United States. The French fleet "of 15 sail" arrived on the afternoon of August 2 and was anchored "in the north river above the Battery." The Ambuscade returned triumphant early that evening, with accounts, "confirmed by those of many Spectators of the combats . . . of the flight of the English Frigate."[22] Alexander Anderson and a friend rowed over to L'Ambuscade the next day, "where we staid 'till we had examin'd the whole Ship, from that we went on board her prize, a Portuguese Brig."[23] Both the public and the public prints welcomed L'Ambuscade and the French fleet as conquering heroes. The Diary, the Weekly Museum, and the Journal all carried a similar story, reporting that the fleet was greeted by an "amazing concourse" of several thousand New Yorkers. The Diary added the hope that the victory of L'Ambuscade would teach the British to be less haughty with the French. The Weekly Museum, under the heading "Vive L'Ambuscade," described the people as being "at a loss how to express their joy," while in the Journal, the Ambuscade was described as arriving "to the UNIVERSAL joy of their brethren in this city."[24]

In a ceremony of tribute to the New Yorkers who so clearly showed their enthusiasm and love for the French cause, the colors of the Ambuscade were given to the Tammany Society "as a token of that

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[22]King to Hamilton, Aug. 3, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 172.

[23]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 3, 1793.

[24]Diary, Aug. 3, 1793, New York Weekly Museum, Aug. 3, 1793; New York Journal, Aug. 3, 1793. The sea fight between L'Ambuscade and the Boston was memorialized in the following couplet found in the New

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respect which those virtuous patriots merit . . . from their Rep. Brethren of France."[25] At the same time letters once again began to appear that took on the tone used by "A Republican" in the Diary of August 3. In the very first sentence of the letter "A Republican" stated his theme: "On the success of the French revolution, perhaps, depends the existence of liberty in this country; and if our generous allies should unfortunately fail in the glorious cause of freedom, the citizens of these United States, may justly fear an attempt to bring them under a foreign yoke." Should we help France? Yes, "A Republican" answered, with all the means at our disposal, short of war. But even that would be a possibility in the future if nothing else would suffice. For liberty had to be guarded at all costs.[26]

Genêt's arrival was now expected daily but the question of how he was to be received was still completely unsettled. On the day that the French fleet arrived in New York, two letters appeared in the Diary discussing the propriety of a meeting called to propose an address of welcome to Citizen Genêt upon his arrival. One of the letters, unsigned, commended the citizens for agreeing to hold such a meeting and for rejecting "the impertinance of those who brand with antifederalism, every measure which is not sanctioned by the secretary of the treasury, and his parisites [sic] in the city." The other letter,

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York Journal of Aug. 31, 1793:

> "The Gaul had the best of the fight, 'tis agreed,
> The Briton the best of the race."

[25] Diary, Aug. 6, 1793.

[26] "A Republican," Ibid., Aug. 3, 1793.

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signed "Decius," objected to the meeting and stated that only the President had the right to offer formal greetings to a representative of a foreign nation. "Decius" concluded by warning, in the most direful vein, that lawless anarchy often tried to take over under just such a guise.[27]

It was, however, a letter from Rufus King to Hamilton that gave the best picture of the New York scene on the eve of Genêt's arrival. A meeting in the Fields had been suggested by "M[elancton] Smith, [David] Gelston, [Samuel] Osgood, B[rockholst] Livingston, [Commodore James] Nicholson, and others of like political Character," to work out the details of a welcome for Citizen Genêt. Between two and three hundred people had assembled and were, according to King, "generally antifederal." With Nicholson in the chair, "an Address was produced, & adopted, and a Committee of thirty or Forty Persons appointed to present it." King then worriedly described his feeling that those gentlemen would "not be stopped by Trifles, they already affirm that the Cause of France is that of america, that it is time to distinguish its friends from its Enemies, that in respect to the rumour of Mr. Genest's [sic] appeal to the People from the Decision of the Executive the people are competent Judges of their own Interest & obligations."[28]

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[27]Unsigned letter and "Decius," Diary, Aug. 2, 1793.

[28]King to Hamilton, Aug. 3, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 172-73. The rumor that Genêt had threatened to appeal from the President to the people has already been discussed in reference to the Little Sarah incident at which time Genêt was reported to have made his statement to A. J. Dallas, the Pennsylvania Secretary of State. The rumor spread throughout the country during July and August and did much to destroy Genêt's usefulness to the French Republic and to the "Republicans" of the United States. Jefferson, in a letter to Madison,

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In the same letter, King also reported that the Chamber of Commerce of New York was prepared to act on Tuesday, August 6, in order to pass resolutions approving the Proclamation and the actions of the President, while the friends to the federal government were "resolved to try the Citizens for the like Purpose." King was not at all happy, however, at the prospect of a popular appeal or even the possibility of a popular triumph of that nature. He felt, and deeply, that the Constitution had vested "competent powers in the hands of the Executive" to see to it that the laws were executed and "the peace and order of the Community preserved. It was never expected that the executive should sit with folded Arms," King declared, "and that the Government should be carried on by Town Meetings, and those irregular measures, which disorganize the Society, destroy the salutary influence of regular Government, and render the Magistracy a mere pageant."[29] Since Rufus King was an influential "Federalist," whose expressions of strong feeling spoke for and influenced many others, it becomes understandable why the "Federalists" ultimately gave up the weapons they had first developed and used so successfully. The "Republicans," whose view of government certainly did not call for abhorrence of or abstention from popular action, were only too happy to pick up those techniques and carry them several steps further. In 1793, however, it was still the "Federalists" who best knew how to use

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dated September 1, 1793, confirmed the truth of the rumored appeal. Jefferson unequivocally stated: "You will see much said & again said, about G's threat to appeal to the people. I can assure you it is a fact." Jefferson, however, never did make his confirmation public. Writings of Jefferson, VI, 402.

[29]King to Hamilton, Aug. 3, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 172-73.

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the techniques of popular meeting and appeals to the public.

Though King's fears, in reference to that "pestilent Fellow," as Walter Rutherford called Genêt,[30] were real enough, the latter's powers to do more than disturb and disquiet were fast receding even as he prepared to come to New York. Through a series of actions, both the American and French governments were in the process of completely undermining Genêt's official position. A commission from Genêt to George Rogers Clark as "commandant en chef de l'armée indépendant et révolutionnaire du mississippi," with its accompanying letter giving Clark command of the military side of the operations to free the areas under Spanish control, had been discovered by Rufus King and other "Federalists." The French Minister of Foreign Affairs in Paris sent a blistering letter to Genêt, decrying his "incredible indiscretions" and his refusal to deal with Washington and the executive branch. In a revealing statement covering the ministry's view of both the American character and Genêt's activities, the Minister concluded: "Ce n'est pas par l'effervescence d'un zêle indiscret qu'on peut réussir pres d'un peuple froid et calculateur, ce n'est pas surtout en compromettant ses interêts les plus chers, sa tranquillité interieure et exterieure."[31] Finally, the cabinet of the United States, in a series of early August meetings, took decisive action. The activities of Genêt, his secretary, and the various French consuls were reviewed, after which Genêt's recall was unanimously agreed to. Also

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[30]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, July 31, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[31]Letter of Commission, Citizen Genêt to General Clarke [sic], July 12, 1793, NYPL, Noah Webster Correspondence; MFA to Genêt, July 30, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 231.

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agreed to were a series of rules concerning the handling of the ships of the belligerents, including the decision that the outfitting of all privateers in American ports were illegal. Furthermore, restitution had to be made for any prize taken and brought into this country's ports by such prize vessels. If France did not give restitution or pay the claims, the United States would indemnify the victims out of the still unpaid portions of the French debt.[32]

In New York City the opposition to Genêt's policies gained strength daily. William Willcocks, who had so strongly supported Genêt and the French in June, continued to support the latter while questioning the activities of the former. Americans idolized the cause of France, Willcocks declared, for they considered it to be the cause of mankind. If Genêt had spoken and written against the President (as rumor very clearly had it), and if he had refused to obey the rules governing privateering, then he had forfeited the favor of the Republic and its good will. All "unparty" Americans, Willcocks concluded, could not go wrong if they upheld American sovereignty and Washington's neutrality policy.[33]

The French government, itself, gave ammunition to the groups forming behind the President's neutrality policy. The ardent francophile, David Gelston, reported that American vessels were "nothing like in demand as they have been, the papers are full of advertisements [due to] the Imbarrassments [sic] our Trade meets with the French [italics mine] in the W. Indies by Privateers, in Europe [by] some late

[32]Cabinet Meetings, Aug. 1, 2 and 3, 1793, as reported in Papers of Hamilton, XV, 157, 159-62, 168-71.

[33]William Willcocks, Daily Advertiser, Aug. 5 and Aug. 6, 1793.

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decrees in France." Apparently Gelston could not admit, in writing, that the French, as well as the British, attacked American shipping or passed arbitrary decrees against American commerce, for he crossed out the phrase, "with the French," in his final text. The thought, however, could certainly not be crossed out and another point was gained for neutrality.[34]

As a crowning act, on the very eve of Genêt's arrival in the city, the New York Chamber of Commerce met and overwhelmingly approved a resolution backing Washington's Proclamation of Neutrality and calling it just and proper. Furthermore, the President was upheld as the true spokesman for the people on the subject of the national will in relation to a foreign power.[35] Now the only question was whether a more diverse group of the public than was represented by the Chamber of Commerce was willing to support a similar statement. If such was the case, Citizen Genêt and his supporters would find New Yorkers prepared to give him a much cooler welcome than might have been expected

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[34]David Gelston to Col. Ben. Hunting, Aug. 5, 1793, NYHS, David Gelston LB. The decrees of the French National Convention to which Gelston referred were those of May 9, 1793 that called for the seizure of merchant vessels "which are wholly or in part loaded with provisions, being neutral property, bound to an enemy's port, or having on board merchandise belonging to an enemy." The latter was declared to be a lawful prize while the former would be paid for "at the price they would have sold for at the port where they were bound." The United States Minister, Gouverneur Morris, protested the action and, on July 1, another decree was passed stating that American vessels "are not comprised in the dispositions of the decree of the ninth of May, conformably to the sixteenth article of the treaty concluded the 6th of February, 1778." But on July 27, 1793, the decrees were reinstated and once again "encompassed American shipping." American State Papers, Foreign Relations, I, 244, as quoted in Papers of Hamilton, XV, 174, n. 7.

[35]Chamber of Commerce Resolution, Daily Advertiser, Aug. 7, 1793.

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in a city so recently thrilled by the victory of L'Ambuscade over the Boston.

The arrival of Citizen Genêt in New York City on August 7, 1793 ushered in the final events of that period between late April and late August, 1793, when so many future American attitudes were being shaped and developed. At that time the sea-port towns of the United States were filled with Frenchmen of every political view and social position and New York was no exception. The medical student, Alexander Anderson, for example, reported in his diary that he "took an Account to Commodore Nicholson's--his house full of French people from Cape François." The house of another leading "Republican," General John Lamb, the Collector of the Customs for the port of New York, was described as "the resort of all officers of the French vessels." Captain Bompard, himself, was reported to have been "fêted there, on his triumphal return from his action with the Boston, and it was the rallying point of all who were in favor of the Revolutionists of France."[36]

Citizen Genêt would have been a highly welcome guest at either

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[36]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 6, 1793; Isaac Q. Leake, Memoirs of the Life and Times of General John Lamb (Albany: Joel Munsell, 1850), p. 348. Commodore James Nicholson, whose name has begun to appear repeatedly in these pages, had been a leading supporter of the Federal Constitution in 1788--he captained the good ship Hamilton through the streets of lower Manhattan in the victory parade celebrating New York's acceptance of the Constitution--but had since become a prominent New York City "Republican." The Commodore's house on William Street, which was reported to be one of the most valuable in the city, was labeled by one historian as "the headquarters for the followers of Burr and Jefferson." In the fall of 1793, Nicholson and Ebenezer Stevens signed an agreement "to supply provisions to the ships of the French Republicans and [to] carry out any other orders given to us by the Consul of the said republic." As was fitting for a good "Republican," Commodore Nicholson would shortly have the opportunity of giving one of his daughters in marriage to another good "Republican," Albert Gallatin. See Charles O. Paullin, "Nicholson,

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home, but another visiting Frenchman undoubtedly never received such an invitation. C. Lagarenne was a Frenchman who disliked equally the French government in power, with its commingling of "anarchy" and "the Iron rod," and the forces of the combined powers, whom he believed offered the French nothing but a return to the old despotism. Lagarenne, who was a friend of the New York merchant, James Greenleaf, had been introduced to Greenleaf's brother-in-law, Noah Webster, and a friendship and correspondence followed. Lagarenne wrote to Webster, on the very day that Genêt reached New York City, that the L'Ambuscade affair had revived "an Esprit de parti," which had been nearly extinguished, or at least silenced. The Frenchman further rued the appearance of so many other men of France in "this land of peace & Liberty," for their seamen, privateers, and "even their public Agents are a perpetual Source of disunion." Lagarenne went on to describe Genêt's character as "very restless Intriguing, & turbulent," and Genêt, himself, as one who "employs every despisable means to Strengthen his party, chiefly composed of the malcontents who are in every country desirous of disorder and confusion." That "set of men," according to Lagarenne, had called themselves "the Democratic Society" and were the "standing army" of Genêt. Lagarenne now made a charge that would often be used against those Democratic societies that were to spring up throughout the United States during that year and next and were to remain an important factor in developing Republican Party politics over the next several years. Lagarenne believed that the societies and the

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James," DAB, XIII, 502, and also, Agreement with the French Consul in New York, NYHS, Ebenezer Stevens Papers.

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rules that governed them "are exactly established on the same principles and Footing as the Jacobins meeting at Paris."[37]

In the midst of writing this letter, Lagarenne reported that the bells of the city had begun to ring, announcing the arrival of Genêt. Noting that the several people who intended to give Genêt a reception still planned to do so, "in spite of all that has been said by the most respectable citizens of New York, to prevent it," Lagarenne concluded with the hope that "the virtuous president . . . whom that scoundrel [Genêt] dared to insult" would soon be vindicated.[38] "That scoundrel," however, felt in no mood to approach New York City in the guise of a skulking villain. Just a week prior to his arrival, Citizen Genêt had written a litany of self-praise to his foreign office in which he stated that he had acquired the esteem of all American republicans and had stopped "the monocrats in their ambitious march." All true democrats understood, he continued, that the fate of America was intimately connected with the fate of the French Republic. Though his position was difficult, he announced, "I have the courage to see it through."[39] And so, at twelve noon on August 7th, welcomed by the ringing of bells and the discharge of cannon, the celebrated citizen disembarked at the Battery.

Genêt was greeted by a committee headed by Commodore Nicholson

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[37]Letters, C. Lagarenne to Noah Webster, June 29 and Aug. 7, 1793, NYPL, Noah Webster Correspondence. Also see infra, pp. 265-271, for a discussion of the Democratic Societies, in general, and the Democratic Society of New York, in particular.

[38]Letter, C. Lagarenne to Webster, Aug. 7, 1793, NYPL, N. Webster Correspondence.

[39]Genêt to MFA, July 31, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 232-233.

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and said to represent the republicans of New York and the friends of the Republic of France. The public welcome given to the ambassador was to be a "testimony to our affection for that Republic and the ideals of Liberty." A procession was formed which proceeded to the Tontine Coffee House where an address was presented to the minister by the committee. Alexander Anderson, who was present, found his dinner "more interesting to me" than the ceremonial speeches. Passing quickly over that bit of philistinism, the ever-watchful historian finds the text of the speeches in the August 10th issue of the Journal. The statement of greeting was a surprising cautious one that must have seemed unsatisfactorily cool to the ever-fervent temper of Citizen Genêt. The welcoming address noted that "In sentiment and principle, there is no neutrality." At the same time, the statement acknowledged that the voice of the government deemed it wise to remain neutral for there was nothing that the United States could do to help France directly. As if in answer to that expression of solidarity with the administration of George Washington, Genêt reminded his listeners that France expected "a faithful and punctual observance of those treaties which she has entered into with you in your hour of danger." Then, perhaps realizing the pedagogical tone of his statement, Genêt concluded with the usual thought that the cause of France was America's cause and that both were fighting to preserve the rights of man. After that exchange of views and amenities, Genêt was conducted to his lodgings in Maiden Lane and the ceremonies were over for the day.[40]

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[40]New York Journal, Aug. 7 and Aug. 10, 1793; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 7, 1793.

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Genêt's entry into New York had proven to be no Roman triumph. He came and he saw, but his only lasting conquest proved to be Cornelia Clinton, one of the daughters of the New York governor. The Genêt-haters played down the size and quality of his welcome and they might not have had too difficult a task. Lagarenne reported to Webster that "the retinue of Genêt was merely composed of mechanics sailors etc etc very few people of another description. Upon the whole the reception has been very indifferent." The merchant, Samuel Ward, writing to William Constable in London, similarly reported that the Citizen, who "arriv'd here today for the first time . . . wants to embroil us but by his measures looses [sic] much of the respectability he had when he first arrivd."[41] It was now clear Citizen Genêt and his New York supporters had been tactically outflanked by the upholders of the President's neutrality policy who had managed to reduce the issue to a single basic question: Does George Washington or Edmond Genêt determine American foreign policy? Within that context, there was no contest. The result, in the words of Robert Troup to Hamilton, was that "you cannot concive [sic] how different the feelings of the Federalists are from those they had a few days since."[42]

Troup's letter was written on August 8, 1793, the date that was to prove to be the turning point in that summer's history of New York City and Citizen Genêt. A notice had appeared in the papers, signed by the merchant, Nicholas Cruger, which announced a meeting to

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[41]Letter, Lagarenne to Webster, Aug. 8, 1793, NYPL, N. Webster Correspondence; Letter, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Aug. 7, 1793, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

[42]Troup to Hamilton, Aug. 8, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 208.

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be held on that date in front of Trinity Church. The purpose of the meeting was to express approval of the President's Proclamation of Neutrality and of his conduct, as well as of the conduct of the Governor of New York in respect to the Proclamation.[43] Robert Troup, who was the leading spirit behind the meeting and was to be the chief speaker, stated the feelings of the moment most succinctly when he wrote: "We have by pursuing a bold & manly line of conduct effected a complete consolidation of parties in favor of the great object of neutrality." In the spirit of a knight entering upon a holy mission, Troup announced that he and his friends "never will suffer a competition to exist between [the President] & the Minister of any county. . . . we shall trump over all the enemies both domestic & foreign. . . . Never were men more industrious & determined than we are."[44]

The meeting, itself, chaired by Nicholas Cruger and managed by Troup, was concisely summarized by Alexander Anderson: "At 12, went Broadway, opposite Trinity Church where a multitude had assembled, and heard an address deliver'd by Col Troup on the advantages of a state of neutrality--after which several resolves were pass'd, expressing their approbation of the President's conduct, etc. amidst the general assent and shouts of the people--about 1. the meeting was dissolv'd."[45] Colin McGregor, the mercantile agent, added a bit more flesh to his description: "To day the largest & most respectable meeting of the Inhabitants was held that ever met in this City, and most unanimously

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[43] New York Journal, Aug. 7, 1793.

[44] Troup to Hamilton, Aug. 8, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 208.

[45] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 8, 1793.

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resolved to adhere to the principles of the Proclamation in the strictest manner:--and resolutions to this purpose were drawn up in order to be sent to the President." McGregor was delighted for two reasons. First of all, it would do away with "the pitiful intrigues of a few disappointed and desperate men, who wish to embroil the Country in War and ruin." Secondly, the "determined Resolution of the great majority of this Country . . . will enhance the value of both Land and funds, and the futile attempts of a few Growlers and French politicians can have no influence."[46]

Immediately thereafter two newspapers editorialized their support of the resolutions. The "Republican" Diary, that very afternoon, praised the meeting as a firm and united decision in support of the President which would, it was hoped, "discourage the few . . . turbulent men among us." Though New Yorkers might differ in their local politics, the Diary concluded, they stood firm and united in the decision to remain neutral and support the President. The "Federalist" Daily Advertiser added its praise of the friends of "order, peace, and national independence," who must have been satisfied by that meeting where "one sentiment alone animated the assembly, which was peace to Americans and a conduct friendly and impartial to the whole world."[47]

The forces of federalism had won a signal victory in New York and in the rest of the nation by the second week of August, 1793. And they were not loath to take advantage of that situation. "Observer," on the attack in the "Republican" Diary, wrote that there were two

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[46]Letter, Colin McGregor to J. R. Miller, Aug. 8, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

[47]Diary, Aug. 8, 1793; Daily Advertiser, Aug. 9, 1793.

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factions that distracted New York at that time. On the one side were the men who by their industry in commercial and other pursuits had raised themselves to a position of standing in society and had something to protect; and on the other side was a party made up of those who had nothing to lose, demagogues and the misguided, who felt such gratitude towards France that all else went by the boards. According to his reading of the situation, "Observer" strongly stressed that the first group had to continue to show its strength and make use of its rights of free speech and assembly. The tide had indeed turned, at least for the moment.[48]

The lack of public display on the 10th of August, 1793, showed immediately the changed character of the celebration of French holidays. With one editor calling it "the birthday of Frenchmen,"[49] the newspapers and the public both treated the occasion as a day meant for Frenchmen, themselves, to celebrate. With the Tenth of August put into perspective by New Yorkers, the same was done in regard to the chief representative of the French government in the United States. Though certainly not treated as a pariah, Citizen Genêt received only the most careful of official welcomes from the city government. Mayor Richard Varick, a cautious man and a "Federalist," invited the Citizen and the principal officers of the French squadron in New York harbor to a dinner on August 14 "at half after 3," to which the Governor and General Gates were also invited. Genêt accepted the invitation in a manner typical of that type of revolutionary who cannot let any oc-

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[48]"Observer," Diary, Aug. 8, 1793.

[49]Diary, Aug. 10, 1793.

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casion go by without delivering at least a mini-speech in the approved fashion of the moment. The Citizen viewed with pleasure the prospect "of fraternising with honest men" who had not been led by "ambition and the pride of riches to forget the sacred principles of Equality, mother and patron of liberty."[50] The dinner, itself, took place almost without mention in the press. If the celebration of "the birth day of Frenchmen" and the official reception for the French minister could pass by as quietly as both occasions did that August, then a new mood had indeed settled upon New York.

The newly-arrived-at state of calm was emphasized in a letter that Robert Troup wrote to Judge James Duane almost a week after the celebrated meeting in front of Trinity Church. Troup reported that the meeting "has operated like a charm--All parties--and all classes of citizens attended and seemed to vie with each other in manifesting their attachment to the President and to the maintenance of neutrality and peace." Troup concluded his assessment of the situation by stating that if former Mayor Duane were then in the city, "you would suppose the milennium [sic] had arrived or was near at hand."[51] This view was echoed by Dr. John Bard, who wrote to Alexander Hamilton in great joy over the success of the Trinity Church meeting, noting that the opposition "make a virtue of Necessity and Affect to join the general Voice on this subject; some of them may be Converted." Bard concluded with a pacan in praise of Hamilton, alias "Pacificus," who was blessed

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[50]Letter, Richard Varick to Horatio Gates, Aug. 11, 1793, NYPL, Emmet Coll., #11152; Letter, Genêt to the Mayor of the City of New York, [undated], NYHS, Genêt Papers.

[51]Letter, R. Troup to J. Duane, Aug. 14, 1793, NYHS, Duane Papers.

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as the one whose publications "on this, as on the former Important and great Occasions, have brought Irresistable conviction to every discerning and Impartial mind." The dependence of the "Federalists" on the strength, intelligence, and energy of Alexander Hamilton was once again made clear as Dr. Bard praised the Secretary of the Treasury as the one who had "and will prove a Tower of strength on which we may rely, to repell the Efforts of a restless, Spirited Faction, Enemies to our peace, Security, prosperity and Happiness."[52]

Two of those whom Dr. Bard, a staunch "Federalist," may have had in mind when speaking of "a restless, Spirited Faction" were busy commiserating with one another over the unpleasant turn of events of recent weeks. Robert R. Livingston, in a letter to his brother, Edward, complained that "the tories . . . will not [now] be wanting persons abt the president to urge him to throw himself into their hands." This was trouble enough but still another problem had arisen for those who had tied themselves to Citizen Genêt and his policies. The Chancellor mentioned to his brother that he was "certainly surprized at Jay and Kings certificate." What the Chancellor had reference to was a statement by Chief Justice Jay and Senator King, dated August 12, that had appeared in the public prints the next day. It

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[52]John Bard to Hamilton, Aug. 24, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 272. Dr. Bard's assessment of Hamilton's role was, remarkably, not an exaggeration. The latter's "Pacificus" series, which had, as previously noted, a major affect upon the minds of many Americans, was followed in August by still another series, "No Jacobin," which took on Citizen Genêt and the activities of all of the French agents in this country. In fact, the New York Journal, no friend to Hamilton, was forced to admit on August 24 that in "a review of the American papers, by the late mails . . . --the most of them . . . are filled (by particular desire)" with "No Jacobin," "Pacificus," and Willcocks. See also comments by Jefferson and leading "Federalists," supra, pp. 178-179 and n. 15, this chapter.

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was a brief notice, signed by those gentlemen, that gave respectability to the rumor that had been circulating for some time: that Citizen Genêt had said that "he would Appeal to the People from certain decisions of the President." The Chancellor was forced to admit that "the assertion . . . makes a very strong and disadvatageous impression upon the public mind thro' out the whole state." Furthermore, the Chancellor sorrowfully noted, the French government's reported instructions to their fleets to seize enemy property in neutral bottoms and to stop provision vessels would "annul our treaty and . . . strengthen the hand of their enemies among us and perhaps . . . unite the people" with those enemies. "If Mr. Gennet [sic] is still with you," the Chancellor interestingly added, "you shd represent this to him in a strong point of light."[53]

That extraordinary personage, Edmond Charles Genêt, moved through the storm seemingly undismayed and untouched by the tempest around him. In a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs that displayed a complete lack of reality, Genêt complained that "the Fayetiste" Washington had annulled his best efforts by means of the neutrality system. He remained certain, however, that the people were with him and that Congress would set things aright. He added that the people of New York had addressed him in terms more vehement than all such previous addresses, and his own reply had increased their ardor. Genêt also told the ministry of the accusation made against him of a plan to appeal to the people from the President. He admitted that the weak actions of the government merited such an appeal but he complete-

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[53]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, Aug. 19, 1793, NYHS, RRL Coll.; Diary, Aug. 13, 1793.

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ly denied the truth of the accusation. In fact, he was going to take the offensive--and here a visible shudder must have surged through the building housing the French foreign ministry. Genêt was going to write Washington "a very strong letter" and beg him to tell the truth by declaring that he never menaced him with such action. Genêt also promised that he would publish his correspondence with Jefferson, a man whom Genêt believed was endowed with good qualities, but who was weak enough to sign what he did not at all think and to defend officially what he condemned in his private conversations and anonymous writings.[54]

Genêt did indeed do all that he promised. But as was becoming increasingly clear to nearly everyone, except himself, his position was growing less tenable by the day. If the usefulness of Citizen Genêt to the French government and to the francophiles in the United States was not completely at an end, it was only because most Americans loved France so deeply that they were willing to ignore or extenuate actions by the chief representative of that country that they would never have tolerated from the minister of any other country in the world.[55]

As a final footnote to the many quarrels of that summer that centered about Citizen Genêt I would like to enter into one myself as

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[54]Genêt to MFA, Aug. 15, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 240-41.

[55]See, for example, "A Dialogue" in the Diary of August 12, 1793, where one of the speakers found it "particularly" hard to believe that Genêt could have been guilty of disrespect to our nation's leaders since he was "an Ambassador from the Gallic Republic--the citizens of which are at this moment shedding their blood in the glorious cause . . . for which every true American would again risque his all."

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perhaps the simplest way of making several points which I feel need stating. The historian, Harry Ammon, in an article entitled "Genêt Mission and Political Parties,"[56] took Alexander Hamilton to task for trying to make use of Genêt's activities in order to achieve certain political ends--defeat of the opposition and of the French interest. At the same time Ammon exonerated Jefferson from any such political activity in the latter's successful attempt to prevent disclosure of incriminating actions and statements of the French minister. Jefferson's purpose, according to Ammon, was simply to hold the administration to a course of non-involvement. Thus, Jefferson was declared innocent even though, in the Secretary of State's own words, Genêt had beer "disrespectful & even indecent towards the P.[resident] in his written as well as verbal communications, talking of appeals from him to Congress, from them to the people, urging the most unreasonable & groundless propositions & in the most dictatorial style etc etc etc." Of course, Jefferson's reluctance to publish this material was understandable when, again in his own words, "If ever it should be necessary to lay his communications before Congress or the public, they will excite universal indignation. He renders my position immensely difficult." I would not have blamed Jefferson for his reticence but at the same time I could not have declared him to be innocent of political intent.[57]

Furthermore, Ammon asserted that the "Federalists" "failed to move Washington in the direction of a rupture with France." Regarding

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[56]Journal of American History, LII (Mar. 1966), 724-41.

[57]Ammon, "Genêt Mission and Political Parties," 728; Jefferson to Madison, July 7, 1793, Writings of Jefferson, VI, 339.

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the New York sources, and that includes Hamilton among other major figures, there is no real evidence to prove that the "Federalists" desired to "move" Washington in that directon. On the contrary, everything points to the idea that every major "Federalist" of New York wanted to preserve neutrality within the framework of international law and international agreements. The meeting in front of Trinity Church on August 8 had just that goal--resolves that were to bring together as many people as possible, regardless of party, in support of the President and his proclamation. In a related point, Ammon concluded that the campaign to break with France was a national one "organized by Hamilton, King, and Jay." His assertion of proof is that resolutions passed throughout the country followed the lead of that adopted in New York by that city's Chamber of Commerce on August 6. That resolution, however, was passed from one to two weeks after meetings in such diverse places as Boston, Trenton, New Jersey, and Alexandria, Virginia had already approved resolves that completely supported the President's actions. In addition, the writings of "Pacificus"--Hamilton, which were so important in changing public opinion, reached New York only after appearing first in Philadelphia and Boston.[58]

By these statements I do not wish to deny that Alexander Hamilton was the most politically knowledgeable and able American statesman

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[58]Ammon, "Genêt Mission and Political Parties," 728-29, 738. See also the Daily Advertiser of July 26 and July 31, 1793 for reports of meetings of the citizens of "Trenton and environs" and of Alexandria, Virginia, productive of addresses in support of the President's neutrality proclamation, as well as a letter from Stephen Higginson to Hamilton, dated July 26, 1793 (Papers of Hamilton), XV, 128, which describe a Boston meeting where the citizens backed the proclamation and

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of those first years after the formation of the new government under the Constitution. Nor do I deny that he had built up an important personal correspondence with major figures in every section of the United States. In fact, I fully embrace such statements as strongly descriptive of Hamiltonian politics. One can only react in wonder, however, at those historians who still insist upon picturing the American political landscape during the Washington administration as made up of politically-innocent patriots (Republicans led by Jefferson and Madison) in battle against politically-motivated Anglophiles (Federalists led by Hamilton). This is certainly not a true picture of the situation in New York City during the tumultuous summer of 1793.

A more valid picture of the New Yorker's attitude towards foreign affairs at the end of August, 1793, can be gathered from a comparison of an essay that appeared in the "Federalist" Daily Advertiser with an editorial written for the first day of publication of the Columbian Gazetteer, a newspaper described by one leading historian of New York City life as a "Republican sheet."[59] "Anacharsis," the essayist, asserted that both England and France were at fault for the foreign policy dilemma in which the United States now found itself. This country, "Anacharsis" warned, must not attach itself to either of the protagonists but should pursue a purely neutral policy. In a summary which contained the one conclusion that few New Yorkers would

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the neutrality actions of the government while criticizing the activities of Citizen Genêt.

[59]Sidney I. Pomerantz, New York, An American City, 1783-1803 (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1938), p. 449. The Pomerantz work, it should be noted, is a remarkable encyclopedic history of New York life in the two decades following the American Revolution.

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at that moment, have opposed, "Anacharsis" declared that America had to stay out of European politics. Similarly, the editors of the Columbian Gazetteer, after noting the advantages that had come to the United States "during the present contest, among the European Powers," heaped praise upon the neutrality policy "recommended by the Executive department" --a policy which the editors declared, somewhat optimistically, to have been "universally acceded to." The editorial concluded with a wish that the "unity of sentiment" which then existed among New Yorkers might be further cultivated and strengthened in order to provide the city and the nation with "our most secure defence."[60]

New York spokesmen for both the "Republican" and the "Federalist" points of view had thus expressed similar heartfelt wishes for that "unity of sentiment" wherein America's safety and security was believed to lie. In reality, however, the hope would soon prove to be nothing more than that. The basis for unity of action and sentiment among the general public was present; a desire to believe in it and make use of it among the party leadership, and especially among the "Republican"leaders, was not.

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[60]"Anacharsis," Daily Advertiser, Aug. 21, 1793; Columbian Gazetteer, Aug. 22, 1793.

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CHAPTER IX

"Really extravagant" and "outrageous Conduct"

Citizen Genêt was now based in New York City. Although the city was no longer the nation's capital, it did have the family of Governor Clinton and more particularly the governor's second daughter, Cornelia. Whatever ardor Genêt was beginning to feel for Cornelia Clinton by the fall of 1793 did not, however, serve to dilute any of his ardor for his mission or any of his hatred for his enemies. President Washington was still "that friend of LaFayette, who displays in his salon medallions of Capet and his family," who called Genêt anarchist and Jacobin, and who threatened recall of the French minister "because I [Genêt] will not surrender to the federalist party, which has but one goal and that is to establish here la Monacratie." Genêt was happy to note that the declaration of rights decreed along with the Constitution of 24 June pleased "the good patriots" of the United States, all of whom were "in my confidence," but he was also sorry to have to note that "the rich and powerful oppose us here as they do in Paris." He lamented that the United States was very different from the place that had been described by Brissot and Crèvecoeur.[1]

For those two gentlemen, however, France, itself, had become

[1]Genêt to MFA, Sept. 19, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 242-43.

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a very different place from the country they had envisioned at the start of the revolution. Brissot, along with many of his leading followers, was soon to be guillotined--a victim of the republic he had helped to create. And Crèvecoeur, in a letter to Robert R. Livingston which was to serve as an introduction for a family of émigrés, pronounced France as "No longer Livable" and as a place where "the wrath of heaven seems to be Let Loose." His fearful vision continued with the statement that the close of the century "will unavoydably See the End of this once flourishing nation." Crèvecoeur concluded with the simplest of warnings: "--beware of our principles."[2]

Crèvecoeur's fears for America were as yet premature. After the long and heated controversies of the summer of 1793, which had been decided in favor of neutrality, New Yorkers seemed content to follow the war and the revolution from afar. The extremely partisan New York Journal, for example, retained a keen interest in French events during September without any of the tensions that surrounded the neutrality battles of that summer. A series "By a Citizen of America" on the new French Constitution spoke in glowing terms of the nature of that Constitution: "Equality is the great corner stone on which it rests." The writer also addressed himself to the confusion produced by the constant changes in leadership among those who directed the French Revolution. He predicted that "these will now have the constitution for their guide, & will be steady."[3] The death of one of

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[2]New York Magazine, V (Jan. 1794), 64; Letter, M.-G.-J. de Crèvecoeur to R. R. Livingston, July 20, 1793, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[3]"By a Citizen of America," New York Journal, Sept. 18 and Sept. 21, 1793.

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the leading figures of the revolution, fellow journalist Marat, produced a one line statement in the Journal of September 21. Four days later, the paper carried a brief report that Marat was buried with great pomp and his murderer was one "Charlotte Cordet." That indifference to the death of Marat was explained, in part, by an unsigned article that appeared in the Journal on the day that Marat's death was reported. The writer pointed out that those who believed that the French Revolution depended upon individuals like Marat or Robespierre were as wrong as those who had earlier believed that the American Revolution depended for its success on Samuel Adams or Hancock or Washington or Franklin. Stirringly, the writer concluded with the view that "A nation determined to be free, cannot be enslaved."[4]

The principles that motivated the French to fight as they did were important to New Yorkers. They were secondary in interest, however, to the drama of the military campaigns, which were viewed as life and death struggles with the same forces which had previously attempted to keep America subjugated. As such, specific news of the war was always a matter of the greatest importance to New Yorkers. The treatment given by both newspapers and individuals to reports of serious French reversals that had reached New York in October 1793 showed a remarkable faith in the face of possible disaster. On the second day of October an editorial in the Journal discussed the news in this manner: Accounts from London up to August 13 "seem all hostile to the Rights of Man--but we do not find that the ardour of our republican

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[4]"Reasonable Observations on French Affairs," Ibid., Sept. 21, 1793.

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brethren in France is in the least abated; for it is said that the news of the surrender of Valenciennes was Received at Paris with calmness."[5] That view and hope was seconded by John Pintard, a prime mover in the development of the Tammany Society of New York, one of the future founders of the New York Historical Society and leader of all things cultural, who was then living at Newark, New Jersey, in order to escape his New York creditors. The latter had been pursuing Pintard in the courts since the spring of 1792 when he had been caught in the collapse of William Duer's financial schemes. Pintard, recording in his diary on October 4 the report carried in the Daily Advertiser of the surrender of Valenciennes by the French, noted that despite those losses, "the French appear not to be discouraged and confident of ultimate success." He concluded with the wish that "God grant it."[6]

The Columbian Gazetteer, that recent addition to the newspapers of New York, joined its voice to the chorus of hope by noting that the foundation of the French republic was so securely laid that the twenty-six million Frenchmen were "animated with one sentiment, to sacrifice every interest to the inestimable shrine of Peace, Liberty, & Equality." A later issue of the same newspaper continued the theme by reporting that though the aristocrats of New York were openly exultant over the defeats suffered by the French, God and His justice would not fail France. It was a war "of despotism on right" and "of malicious oppression on unoffending innocence." Be assured, the edi-

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[5]Ibid., Oct. 2, 1793.

[6]Diary of John Pintard, NYHS, Oct. 4, 1793.

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tors of the Columbian Gazetteer consoled their readers, "that all will eventually be right."[7] Taking up that idea, Greenleaf of the Journal expressed his faith in the French republicans as destroyers of the old and purveyers of all things "both politically and religiously new." Hope for the millenium was still not dead among a large number of Americans--and continued faith in France was a necessary concomitant of that millenial dream.[8]

To those New Yorkers who were not "sold" on a vision of revolutionary France as the future guide for the world, but were in agreement with the system of neutrality designed by the administration to keep the country out of the European war, the months of September and October proved as nerve-racking as it did for the confirmed supporters of all things French. As one administration supporter noted, "the death of the Executive, or of Mr. Hamilton would be a severe blow to the friends of this Country for a while." What led Colin McGregor to muse on such a possibility was the yellow fever epidemic which raged in Philadelphia throughout September and October 1793. The Secretary of the Treasury had been seriously ill of the fever and his life was despaired of for a time, particularly since, as McGregor reported, "Such is the nature of the disorder that few recover who take it." Hamilton did recover, but public fright over the "pestilential fever" did not subside.[9]

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[7] Columbian Gazetteer, Oct. 10, Oct. 14, and Nov. 7, 1793.

[8] New York Journal, Oct. 30, 1793.

[9] Letter, C. McGregor to J. R. Miller, Sept. 16, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB. As with every phase of Hamilton's career, his recovery from what he called "the reigning putrid fever" was surrounded with controversy and became a political issue. Hamilton and his wife had

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McGregor explained the New Yorker's particular sense of vulnerability when he wrote to a friend that "you cannot conceive the terror and apprehensions we are in for fear it should find its way to this place, where we are crouded [sic] wh. thousands of french people who are far from cleanly."[10] In order "to prevent the introduction of Yellow Fever" into the city, a Health Committee was appointed by a meeting of citizens at the Tontine Coffee House. The committee, in carrying out its mandate, instituted nightly patrols of the wharf areas of the city in order to guard against the illegal docking of any boats and set up a system whereby three well-known physicians were authorized to examine, and even quarantine, any person suspected of being ill with the contagious disease.[11] Furthermore, September 20, 1793 was declared to be "A Day Set Apart, in the City of New York, for Public Fasting, Humiliation and Prayer, on account of a malignant and mortal fever prevailing in the City of Philadelphia." One of the sermons given on that day of prayer, besides containing the standard ac-

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been treated by his boyhood friend from the West Indies, Dr. Edward Stevens, who followed the "West Indies Treatment" of cold baths. This technique was opposed to the method practiced by Dr. Benjamin Rush, friend and political ally of Jefferson, who favored a "depleting therapy" that included bleeding. When Hamilton had regained his health he wrote a letter to the College of Physicians of Philadelphia (Sept. 11, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 331-32) praising Steven's treatment. As a result there now seemed to be an official "Federalist" method of cure and an official "Republican" technique. For a fuller summary of this controversy see Papers of Hamilton, XV, 325, n. 1, and 332, nn. 1 and 2.

[10]Letter, C. McGregor to J. R. Miller, Sept. 16, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

[11]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Sept. 8, 1793. Entry of Sept. 16, 1793, Minutes of the New York City Common Council, II, 33-34.

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cusation that a wayward and "ungrateful" people had brought down God's wrath upon themselves, included a revival of Revolutionary war charges against the British as butchers of Americans and a thorough-going denunciation of those who had been British sympathizers during the Revolution, had remained, and had "since grown luxurious and wanton upon the fat of the land."[12] This example of pulpit oratory, delivered in the midst of a time of severe trial, seemed to show the fragility of a neutrality policy that required forbearance of the strictest sort towards a nation whom large numbers of Americans still detested and would have dearly loved to have seen brought low. And a nation, furthermore, which insisted on being the prime enemy of America's best-loved, France.

England's negative image among New Yorkers was not improved as events on the high seas began to take an ominous turn for American shipping. The merchant Samuel Ward, a supporter of the neutrality policy and neither a strong francophile nor anglophobe, wrote to William Constable that he had been forced to send out the ship Jay, bound for France, under his own risk, even though the cargo was "warranted American property." Ward now feared that the English had taken the ship, although the situation was not yet certain. If the ship and its cargo were lost to the British, Ward angrily declared, "I hope to live long enough to see my country chastise the haughty english for their insolent depradations upon our property."[13] William Constable's

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[12]John Mitchel Mason, A Sermon Preached Sept. 20, 1793 (New York: Samuel Loudon & Son, 1793), title page, pp. 8-9, 18, 64. See also letter, David Gelston to Samuel Emery, NYHS, Oct. 21, 1793, Gelston LB, and Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Sept. 28, 1793.

[13]Letter, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Oct. 5, 1793, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

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reply is not available, but a letter to William from his brother, James, dated one month later, indicated that the former had begun to believe that a war between Great Britain and the United States was a distinct possibility. James Constable, on the other hand, had "no Doubt France will declare against us before your answer to this arrives from the outrageous Conduct of their minister." As proof, James Constable enclosed a batch of newspapers that were filled with reports of Genêt's activities and his undiplomatic and undisciplined letters.[14]

The reaction of New Yorkers to foreign policy events of September and October, 1793, illustrated three basic points that those concerned with making American foreign policy would seriously have to consider: 1st, there was a continued strong feeling for republican France and her plight; 2nd, there was a new outbreak of deep hatred towards the British; 3rd, the first two points indicated rough sailing ahead for the tough neutrality policy of the administration. In this situation, the best friend of the federal government had seemed to be the French minister, himself, for if the latter's "outrageous Conduct" could be eternally balanced off against the actions of the "haughty english," neutrality might more easily have been sustained. The intelligent supporters of neutrality knew only too well, however, that growing dislike for Genêt merely obscured for the moment the deep and abiding love of Americans for France, while hatred of the British could, to all intents and purposes, be described as general and inveterate.

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[14]Letter, James Constable to William Constable, Nov. 2, 1793, NYHS, Wm. & J. Constable LB.

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If British activities on the high seas, along with accusations of involvement with the Indian tribes of the Northern frontier, were increasingly becoming thorns in the side of the "Federalist" administration and its neutrality plans, French events still dominated, with Citizen Genêt still occupying center stage in his running battle with nearly everyone in authority. In two official dispatches to the French ministry, dated October 7, that for recklessness of tone and admission of deep involvement in the domestic affairs of the host nation exceeded even his own previous standard, Genêt admitted that he had surrounded himself "with the most pronounced Republicans I have been able to find on all levels of government, as well as in the democratic societies which have been formed both North and South in imitation of ours, and in the antifederalist papers." Then in a burst of revolutionary fervor, Genêt declared to his foreign minister that since the enemies of France in the United States were prepared to deliver the country to England, which would "forever expel equality and the French Republicans from the soil sacred to liberty," he would suggest that what America needed was "the purifying fire of our Revolution which must penetrate to its heart." In a concluding bravura passage Genêt announced acceptance of any decision that would require his sacrifice if it meant saving "the Republicans, the sincere friends of liberty, equality and France, who resided here."[15]

Since Genêt's public actions mirrored his private views, the "Federalists," whose main task was to moderate extremes of feeling towards France and England in order to preserve neutrality, mounted a

[15]Genêt to MFA, Oct. 7, 1793 (two separate letters of that date), "CFM" AHA, II, 252, 245-48.

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strong newspaper attack against the French minister. One of those who took verbal shots at the Citizen in the presumed interest of restoring a proper proportion to relations between the United States and France was that now familiar figure in the essay wars of the time, William Willcocks. He presented an interesting "Federalist"-oriented summary of party positions at the time and the affect of Genêt's arrival on that political framework. Willcocks claimed that all Americans were attached to the republican plan of government. Despite that fact two parties had arisen--"the Anti-federal Republicans" and the "Federal Republicans," or the Outs and the Ins. The Anti-federalists, themselves, were divided into two groups--those who wished the Constitution to be amended and those who wished to destroy it. On the other side were the "Federal Republicans," who understood that the general improvement in commerce, agriculture and prosperity had come about directly as a result of the Constitution, which had also given the United States a new respectability in its relations with foreign nations. It was into the midst of this political situation that Citizen Genêt came.[16]

Willcocks believed that the cordial reception the French ambassador received in Charleston would have been his throughout the country, "for tho' Federalist and Anti-Federalist, with respect to each other, we were concentered in our wishes for success to the French Revolution." Genêt was misled, however, into believing that American sympathy for the French and zeal for their cause was synonymous with a desire actually to take part in their fight. Pursuing paths that would have led the United States into war, Genêt was rebuffed and frustrated

[16]William Willcocks, Daily Advertiser, Oct. 31, 1793.

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by the federal government whom he then determined to bypass, or even overturn, by a direct appeal to the people. Fortunately, Willcocks reasoned, the rash acts of Genêt simply served to destroy the latter's own position with the people as well as with the administration. One could now speak out against the actions of Genêt without being accused of opposition to the French Republic. Willcocks then concluded with a summary of what he believed to be the "Federal Republican" or reasonable position on American relations with the world: support for the French Republic, support for the President's neutrality policy, and opposition to any and all who would involve this country in the European war.[17]

The fear that Genêt would destroy their cause as well as his own became the theme of many a letter which passed between members of that group whom Willcocks had called "Anti-federal Republicans." A central figure in the story of Genêt's supposed statement that he would appeal to the people from the President wrote a distraught letter to Albert Gallatin on the subject of the French minister. The letter was sent in care of bridegroom Gallatin's new father-in-law, Commodore James Nicholson, at the latter's William Street address in New

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[17] Ibid., Nov. 5 and Nov. 6, 1793. See also John Drayton, in Letter XI, dated Nov. 4, 1793, from his Letters Written During a Tour, pp. 119-121, 137-38, which reiterates many of the same points stressed by William Willcocks. Drayton warned that if something were not done soon to remedy the situation regarding Genêt, Franco-American relations would be harmed. People were likely "not to discriminate between men, and things. As the love which Americans had for France, was at once transferred to her minister; so, if he doth not haste to act with prudence, or his country doth not immediately recal [sic] him; the dislike which is now entertained against him, may be transferred to his country."

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York City.[18] A. J. Dallas, the Pennsylvania Secretary of State, and author of the letter, told a great deal in it about his party's attitude towards Genêt and the crisis that the French minister had brought about in the relationship between the United States and France.[19]

To Dallas, Genêt's conduct was "really extravagant." Dallas believed that Genêt cared more "about self" than about the rights of man, and that his courting of Cornelia Clinton was mainly to secure himself "a comfortable retreat" in case of an adverse result to the European war. In practice, Dallas continued, Genêt was more of a despot than a democrat, and one who totally misunderstood the American system. That misunderstanding, Dallas confided, in a surprise admission that he was never to make public, was shown in Genêt's announced determination to appeal to Congress over the head of the President. Genêt did not seem to realize that that legislative body could have no jurisdiction in respect to the exercise of Executive power in the area of the activities of a foreign ambassador. In still another key passage, Dallas extended the blame for Genêt's actions to leading members of the "Republican" Party itself. Genêt's reception, Dallas agreed, in the last of the series of remarkable admissions, "elated and bewildered him; and we should have calculated upon the possibility of his mistaking a zealous attachment to the end, for a licentious disposition to adopt any means which he should think subservient to

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[18] Gallatin had married Nicholson's daughter, Hannah, on November 1, 1793. She was described by one historian as "a woman of high family standing and wide social connections." David Saville Muzzey, "Gallatin, A.A.A.," DAB, VII, 105.

[19] Letter, A. J. Dallas to A. Gallatin, Nov. 8, 1793, NYHS, Albert Gallatin Papers.

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it."[20]

The danger to "Republican" party interests and to relations with France was also discussed in a gloomy note that Robert R. Livingston sent to his brother Edward. Commenting on still another foray by the French minister into the public prints, the Chancellor confessed "that I think the ministerial politicians have less reason to be frantic at G [enêt's] letters than the true republicans for so far as the republican interest is connected with that of France so far it is essentially injured by the intemperate warmth of the minister." Livingston, despite the fact that his hatred of the federal administration had become so personalized as to render him generally incapable of even the slightest objectivity, very clearly showed that he understood the implications of Genêt's activities. The Chancellor, with his strong feeling for the niceties of life, could declare that whether Genêt was right or wrong in his principles there was "a decency and dignity of state which becomes his station and which he is entirely ignorant of."[21]

In the midst of these quarrels between Genêt and the United States government, and the development of an almost panic mood among leading "Republicans," a sense of perspective was a rare and welcome pleasure. Such was provided by the learned New York scientist, teacher, and "Republican," Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill, in an oration delivered

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[20] Ibid.

[21] Letter, R. R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, Nov. 11, 1793, NYHS, RRL Coll. See also Frances S. Childs, "The Hauterive Journal," 69-72, and the Journal of Comte Hauterive, NYHS, Nov. 5, 1793, for the growing displeasure and even scorn that Hauterive privately expressed toward Genêt.

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before the "social, charitable, and humane" Society of Black Friars at their anniversary festival on November 11, 1793. Dr. Mitchill spoke in praise of "Republicanism," a personification who "instigated the Sons of Columbia to assert their rights," and who now "reared her standard in France, confounding on one general wreck Political, Ecclesiatical, & Feudal Oppression; where though assailed with all the fury of despotic prowess, she fights with unequalled bravery the Battles of Liberty, and supports, with unconquerable enthusiasm, the Rights of Man." Mitchill also praised "Patriotism" which for him took the form of love of the "Confederate Republic of America" which provided for its citizens "more of what the rational mind craves, more that enlightened nature longs for and relishes, than in any other region of the globe." Then, in a telling paragraph, Mitchill showed both thankfulness for the geographic position of the United States which separated it "from the neighborhood and debauchery of the eastern world," and pride that no foreigner, "except in one recent and extraordinary instance [Genêt], here intermeddles with our internal policy and concerns." The major foreign policy goal of this country, for Mitchill, was to stay aloof from all attempts to involve it in foreign concerns and direct all its actions "to the preservation of internal security and peace." No staunch "Federalist" could have phrased the goal of the Washington administration more pleasingly.[22]

Dr. Mitchill's paean to his country continued in words which extolled the American system as one in which the "rude and tumultuous

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[22]Samuel Latham Mitchill, An Oration Pronounced Before the Society of Black Friars at Their Anniversary Festival (New York: Friar M'Lean, 1793), pp. 10-13, 15-16; Lyman C. Newell, "Mitchill, Samuel Latham," DAB, XIII, 69; New York Directory, 1794.

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spirit of Democracy is softened down into the mild and well-ordered temper of a Republic." Allowing for the charm of the exaggeration, Mitchill delightfully carried his theme home to its triumphant conclusion when he noted that in the United States "even babies and sucklings are taught to lisp with reverence 'The Ommipotence of the People!'" Mitchill, however, was not a pollyanna for he warned that there were those who were more attached to England, monarchy, and autocracy than to their own country's republican interests. His advice to Americans was to reclaim those people by peaceful means if possible but to be harsh with them if they continued to abuse and disturb the country. Dr. Mitchill's prescription thus went out to the land: recognize the glory of American republicanism, respect the French for fighting to bring about that form of government in their own country, abhor monarchy and aristocracy as represented by England, and develop apart from the involvements and concerns of all other nations of the world. Shades of "Federalist" William Willcocks![23]

Two days after Dr. Mitchill's oration in praise of republicanism, New Yorkers were once again given the opportunity to show their own emotional involvement with their sister republic on the other side of the world of the Atlantic civilization. The New York Journal, on November 13, 1793, headlined the words "GLORIOUS NEWS FROM FRANCE." The story told of the defeat of the British at Dunkirk and the end of the Vendée war. On the next day, a news story in the Columbian Gazetteer which referred to heavy losses suffered by the British in an unsuccessful attack on Dunkirk was headed "GREAT NEWS FROM FRANCE." And on the 16th of November, the Journal looked forward to further good

[23]Mitchill, An Oration etc., pp. 16-19, 30-32

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news that would produce "in every truly patriotic breast, new glows of gratitude to the great Guardian of Liberty." By the 23rd of November, editor Geeenleaf was filled with joy in being able to report the turning of the tide in Europe. It was for him an "enraptured view." Joking and punning in the midst of the victory dispatches, he included the following bracketed item in his news summary: "But, pause, my Don Quixot heroes, though you are loyal, high and mighty lords, LORDS spiritual and temporal, &c. yet; you are not ALMIGHTY."[24]

In the midst of this pro-French glow the annual New York City celebration of the evacuation of the British troops from the city took place. It was the tenth anniversary of the event and the New York Common Council ordered that Alderman Van Zandt make the necessary arrangements for a Corporation dinner on the 25th of November and that he supply the militia with gunpowder, not exceeding £200.[25] When the day came, it seemed to have a special fervor and excitement about it. The noise of the Battery cannons echoed throughout the city and were re-echoed in the harbor by the guns from the French warships at anchor

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[24]New York Journal, Nov. 13, 1793; Columbian Gazetteer, Nov. 14, 1793; New York Journal, Nov. 16 and Nov. 23, 1793. The Journal, being a semi-weekly, did not have the space for endless full length reports of European activities. What Greenleaf apparently did was to read all the war news he could find and then abstract it, interpolating his own attitudes within the summaries. In that column, under the date, administrative and political matters in Paris or at home received little attention. War news often seemed all that mattered to him, and for that matter, to his public. Only on rare occasions, as in the Journal of Nov. 27, 1793, were other French activities mentioned, such as the development of a levée en masse, a national campaign for public manufacturing of war materials at the greatest possible rate, and a report that "the adjudged victims to the guillotine at Paris, average about 40 a month."

[25]Entry of Nov. 18, 1793, Minutes of the NYC Common Council, II, 51.

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there. At the Pearl Street residence of Governor Clinton, the Minister of the French Republic to the United States, who was also the future son-in-law of the man he addressed, delivered a formal statement on the meaning of that day, which included the passage: "The same all-powerful arm which delivered your country from tyranny is now manifesting itself as the protector of the French people."[26]

In mid-afternoon a series of dinners and celebrations commemorating the anniversary were held. The toasts delivered at three of those dinners were preserved in the newspapers of the day. The officers of the militia of the city held a dinner and toasted Franco-American friendship, while a group of American and French citizens met at Robert Hunter's Hotel at the same time and pledged eternal amity between the American and French republics. At the Tammany Society's dinner, the major dates of the American Revolution were first toasted. The members then went on to praise

> The Patriots of France--May wisdom direct their councils, firmness guide their heroes, and success crown their endeavors;
> The United States of America--May they ever be the asylum for the oppressed, and the land of the free;
> Universal peace throughout the world--May the satellites of despots be destroyed, the minions of the aristocracy subdued, and the rights of a citizen ascertained.[27]

The major excitement of that day took place, however, at the John Street Theater. The events surrounding that evening's performance were recorded by William Dunlap, one of the great names in the early history of the American theater. The Old American Company was performing The Grecian Daughter but pre-curtain events proved even

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[26]William Dunlap, History of the American Theater (2 vols.; London: R. Bentley, 1833), I, 204.

[27]New York Journal, Nov. 30, 1793.

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more exciting than those which took place on stage. One of the side boxes in the theater was filled by officers of the French men-of-war anchored in the harbor. The box opposite them was crowded with American officers in their dress uniforms in honor of the day. Many officers and enlisted men of both countries mingled with the crowd in the pit, which had filled the theater at an early hour. As soon as the musicians filed into the orchestra pit, a general cry for "ça ira" filled the house. The maestro was prepared and the band immediately struck up the French revolutionary tune. The Frenchmen in the pit joined in and were soon followed by the whole audience. The band next launched into the "Marseillaise" and the audience stood up at once. The French took off their hats and sang "in a full and solemn chorus." The Americans present "applauded by gestures and clapping of hands." Dunlap vividly recalled "the figure and voice of one Frenchman, who, standing on a bench in the pit, sung this solemn patriotic song with a clear, loud voice, while his fine manly frame seemed to swell with the enthusiasm of the moment." When the hymn was over, shouts of "Vivent les François [sic] Vivent les Americains!" resounded throughout the hall and were not silenced until the curtain rose.[28]

The play of the evening, in its depiction of the triumph of republican virtue, could not have been more apt. There was a moment in

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[28]Dunlap, History of the American Theater, I, 204-05. William Dunlap, who became the sole director and manager of the Old American Company in 1798, has been called "the father of American drama." This title was found suitable by one biographer, who believed that in quality Dunlap's "achievement was far superior to the average of his time." Dunlap was also considered to be "the first man of his country to make a serious business of writing for the stage." He was further praised as one who "aspired to establish a truly moral and cultural theatre." Oral S. Coad, "Dunlap, William," DAB, V, 516-18.

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the work when the heroine of the title saved her father and struck the tyrant to earth. This scene normally aroused excitement but Dunlap noted that the applause usually bestowed "was drowned by the enthusiastic shouts of the excited spectators. Before or since we have never witnessed or felt such enthusiasm." For Dunlap the remarkable events of that theatrical evening showed once again what "a powerful engine" the theater was--both "for evil or for good."[29]

The excitement engendered by the events of Evacuation Day served as an impetus for a revival of every emotion that united the two republics and even for something more. That extra-something might have been discerned in an article which appeared in the Journal two days after that special day and which seemed to be a direct outgrowth of the emotional celebration of the twenty-fifth. The writer expressed the hope that the French would learn from the American experience and not allow "a single devil of THEIR loyalists, aristocrats, refugees, or tories . . . ever to return." All of our troubles, he went on, had resulted from that and from their election to high places and their control of the banks. Those returned loyalists were planning to re-subjugate true Americans and return the country to the hands of the British. The writer minced no words when he warned: "Our ill-judged clemency . . . will, ere long, cause a NECESSITY for our making another PURGING of the people!"[30]

The writer in the Journal did not mention names of individuals or groups but he might have had such an organization as the St. And-

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[29]Dunlap, History of the American Theater, I, 205.

[30]"Communications," New York Journal, Nov. 27, 1793.

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rew's Society in mind. Founded in 1756 and made up of Americans of Scottish origin, the society had replaced the Chancellor of New York as its president in part because of his anti-Jay and anti-Hamilton politics. Walter Rutherford, who had been elected in the Chancellor's stead, reported to his son that the celebration of November 30, 1793 was "the most splendid I ever saw, everything went off in the best manner--My supporters, the govr. and Mayor highly pleased." And no Livingston, except "Federalist" "Phil, our V. Prest.," was present.[31] More to the point, the toasts given at the anniversary dinner, as listed in the Daily Gazette, did not mention France at all--an extreme rarity at that time. Moreover, the only toast that might have been considered internationalist in its implications was one which simply read: "Peace, Liberty, and Happiness to all the world." That was mild, indeed, for a toast given during the week in which Evacuation Day had aroused many New Yorkers to a fever pitch of pro-French feeling and when an article in the Journal spoke of a "PURGING of the people."[32]

The St. Andrew's Society, however, in its obvious self-control, was much more representative of the mercantile New Yorker than was the writer in the Journal. The merchants of the city were not about to be rushed into an overtly hostile posture against the British, their leading customers. As two letters written to William Constable in early November had shown, merchants of both parties were loath to break the spell of neutrality. The rough and ready Samuel Ward made it clear in

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[31]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Dec. 1, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[32]New York Daily Gazette, Dec. 2, 1793.

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his letter that the United States "shall not go to war unless John Bull drives us into it," although he added that if John Bull did force war on us "we shall beat him damnably." A letter from Alexander Macomb (back in business after the financial disaster of 1792), showed that even "Republican" merchants were not looking for war with England. Macomb admitted that neutrality did not gain any protection for the vessels of this country as they were seized in both the British West Indies and in the European trade "upon pretense of their having french property on Board." Despite that, Macomb remarked that "I am satisfied it is better to submit to all this and even more, than that this Country shall involve itself in European disputes." For though he loved France, Macomb freely admitted that "if we can keep unembarrass'd by the politics of Europe, this country must thrive and be happy."[33]

The possible alternatives facing the merchants of New York, as well as American mercantile policy, were reviewed in an essay which appeared in the newest New York City newspaper, the American Minerva, on its second day of publication, December 10, 1793. The editor of the new daily was Noah Webster who was to spend much of the rest of the decade laboring for the Federalists of New York and the nation. In fact, Webster gave as the basic reasons for his involvement in newspaper work "the purpose of vindicating and supporting the policies of President Washington," as well as opposing the designs of Citizen

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[33]Letters, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Nov. 10, 1793, and Alexander Macomb to William Constable, Nov. 9, 1793, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

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Genêt and thereby maintaining neutrality.[34]

The writer of the essay in question, "Brutus," (who was probably Webster, himself) noted that American neutral rights on the high seas had been treated with scant respect by any of the courts of Europe. Such was their rancor against France that they would be willing to cause further war over a matter of a few privateers. But France, too, in some of its recent laws, had shown a "deliberate design" to insult neutral rights. What, "Brutus" asked, should the United States do if her object was to stay out of war? Surrounded as this country was by savages, "and corrupt princes who are little better than savages," Webster saw no way to preserve the national character of the United States "but to put ourselves in a posture of defence." A defensive neutrality, which was Webster's answer, also seemed to have become the basic approach for much of the mercantile community of New York. Few were as yet ready to tackle the possibility of war.[35]

By mid-December, 1793, New Yorkers were in the midst of still another phase of political and economic uncertainty. Samuel Ward best expressed the atmosphere when he reported to William Constable that "[we] are in much confusion from the states of politicks"; on the one

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[34]See Kemp Malone, "Webster, Noah," DAB, XIX, 594-97; and Emily E. F. Ford, Notes on the Life of Noah Webster, ed. by Emily E. F. Skeel (2 vols.; New York: n.p., 1912), I, 364, 386, n. 1, for background information on Webster's journalistic career. The appeal of the American Minerva (New York) to leading "Federalists" was immediately apparent in the reaction of John Alsop and his daughter, Mrs. Rufus King. Alsop wrote to his son-in-law enclosing two issues of Webster's new paper with the comment that "Mrs. King likes them and if you do I will subscribe." See Alsop to King, Dec. 12, 1793, NYHS, King Papers.

[35]"Brutus," American Minerva, Dec. 10, 1793.

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hand the Algerians were carving up American shipping with the blessings of the British,[36] and on the other the American government had "openly quarreled with the French minister whose conduct (if unconnected with diplomatic character) would be thought as foolish and knavish as can consistently be united in one person." The activities of Citizen Genêt always seemed to be good for an "on the other hand" approach to politics. As long as he was still in a position of power he was always useful to the few who wished to deflect attention from British activities of an anti-American sort or to the majority who still believed that neutrality was the only sensible policy.[37]

In a last-ditch effort to take the curse off Genêt and his activities the leading francophiles of New York, which now meant the leadership of the "Republicans" of New York, attempted a "double-barrelled" approach. First of all, a committee was set up "by a number of Citizens," with Ebenezer Stevens as chairman, to make the arrangements for a "Public Dinner" in honor of Citizen Genêt that was to be held on Tuesday, December 10, at Corré's Hotel. Secondly, a major series of pro-Genêt essays was published in the New York press throughout December, 1793 and into January, 1794, in answer to a statement by John Jay and Rufus King which described in full the basis for their

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[36]A truce had been worked out between the Algerines and the Portuguese, for which the British were held responsible. Portugal was the only power that had confined the Barbary pirates within the Straits of Gibraltar. Now it was feared that the Algerines would be free to roam the Atlantic waters of Spain and Portugal and wreak havoc upon American commerce bound for those two countries. For this view see John Lawrence to King, Dec. 10, 1793, John Alsop to King, Dec. 12, 1793, and Herman LeRoy to King, Dec. 15, 1793, Correspondence of King, I, 503-05.

[37]Letter, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Dec. 17, 1793, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

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belief that Genêt had said that "he would appeal from the President to the People." This was the "Cato" series, written by none other than the Chancellor of New York.[38]

Robert R. Livingston had put a great deal of effort into keeping his authorship a secret,[39] but educated guesses had approached the source. Walter Rutherford, writing to his son, had reported: "We were all by the Ears here about Genêt.--Have you seen . . . Cato ag^{t} Jay and King. The C [hancellor] who came lately to Town is suspected, others talk of Brock [holst Livingston].--The first spent a Day with us, and sported some Sentiments quite new to us.--eager for a British war, while Genet and virtuous French are emaculate [sic]." Rutherford must have noticed the similarities between those sentiments "sported" verbally by the Chancellor and the ideas expressed by "Cato."[40]

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[38]Letter, Ebenezer Stevens to Richard Varick, Dec. 4, 1793, NYPL, Ford Collection; Robert R. Livingston, "Cato No. 1," [1793], NYHS, RRL Coll. The "Cato" series was first published in the "Republican" New York Diary and then reprinted "by particular desire" in both the "Republican" New York Journal and the "Federalist" Daily Advertiser. Thus a wide spectrum of New Yorkers were given the opportunity of reading the series in the newspaper of their choice.

[39]A letter from DeWitt Clinton to Chancellor Livingston, dated Albany, January 10, [1794], NYHS, RRL Coll., showed the lengths to which some would go to keep the authorship of newspaper essays a secret. Clinton reported to the Chancellor that he had received the "Cato" papers through number 7 prior to leaving New York City. To prevent detection, Clinton had "burnt the originals and left the . . . copies in the hands of a confidential clerk." If any new ones were sent, they were to be placed with Clinton's regular mail and forwarded so that they could not be discovered. It was worth the care and effort, DeWitt Clinton believed, because their "real merit and influence are verified in the acrimony with which they are spoken of by the Tories."

[40]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Oct. 9, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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In that series Livingston presented Genêt as the innocent victim of those who desired to wound France through him. The report that Genêt had declared that he would appeal to the people "against the constituted power of Govt," "Cato" asserted, was done simply to discredit the minister and excite the public against a nation "to whose generous interference" we owed our Constitution, and our liberty to choose our president. In addition, "Cato" stated his belief that only through continued French success could we "hope to preserve both" our liberty and our Constitution. All these attacks against Genêt, and through him against France, according to "Cato," were led by the minions of "Pacificus," who endeavored to loose all the ties of gratitude and affection which bound this country to France. What could have been the reason for such actions? Was it, the Chancellor asked, because Hamilton, Jay, King and the others desired peace and prosperity for France only under a monarchical form of government? At the conclusion of "Cato, no. I," Livingston had reached his main theme. The opposition to Genêt and France came from the forces of monarchy who hoped to bring the former colonies back into the orbit of Great Britain and her king.[41] "Cato, no. II" continued by discussing the question of relations with France and England at length and concluding that for many, whatever else was said, England had one advantage that justified a show of ingratitude towards France, one virtue that compensated for every vice. Livingston spelled it out: "SHE HAS A KING." The remainder of the series was basically a reiteration of that capitalized sentence, and an appeal for preparedness. In Livingston's

[41] R. R. Livingston, "Cato No. I" [1793], NYHS, RRL Coll.

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mind, if England were to defeat France John Bull would then turn on the United States.[42]

If the "Cato" series was one aspect of a pro-Genêt counter-attack, the aforementioned dinner in honor of Genêt scheduled for December 10 was to be an additional display of feeling for the minister and his country. The dinner, however, did not have quite the affect it was meant to have. On the eve of the dinner, Genêt sent a note to Colonel Stevens thanking him for the honor and assuring him and his friends, "the Republicans of New York," that he would "neglect nothing to preserve their esteem by promoting the triumph of truth." He was, however, forced to decline the dinner invitation, for "indispensable duty" called him to attend Congress and "defend the honor of my Country and my own." A possible explanation for Genêt's abrupt departure seemed to lie in a special message that Washington had just sent to Congress in which he portrayed Genêt, in the latter's own words, "as an anarchist."[43] Regardless of the exact cause, the French minister hurriedly left for Philadelphia, "escorted by 10 light horse," on the morning of the scheduled dinner at Corré's Hotel.[44]

Genêt's final collapse as a major figure in Franco-American relations followed hard upon President Washington's aforementioned message, dated December 5, 1793. In that speech Washington described

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[42]"Cato, No. II," Daily Advertiser, Dec. 18, 1793; "Cato," Diary, Jan. 3, 1794.

[43]Letter, Citizen Genêt to Col. E. Stevens, Dec. 9, 1793, NYHS, Ebenezer Stevens Papers.

[44]Jay to King, Dec. 12, 1793, Correspondence of King, I, 503-504.

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unfriendly acts committed by Genêt which the American government had borne, when they did not threaten danger, "from sentiments of regard" to France, "from a sense of their friendship towards us," from a feeling that France would not long allow Genêt to carry on as he did, and from a belief in the "firmness" of his fellow Americans in their love of "peace and order."[45] By the 15th of December news of Washington's message had reached Philip Schuyler in Albany. Writing to Hamilton on that same date, General Schuyler "rejoiced" that Washington had "been so explicit relative to the french Anarchist." Politically, Schuyler reported, the "Antis" stood "abashed" for they had previously asserted "that the Imputation of an appeal to the people was a fabrication to injure the french cause." Schuyler was now certain "that Genets [sic] imtemperance has served the federal interest, instead of Injuring it."[46]

If Washington's message had made Schuyler rejoice, then even greater pleasure lay ahead. On December 14, Greenleaf of the Journal reported to his readers that the correspondence between France and the United States concerning Genêt would soon be published. Editor Greenleaf, apparently desiring to soften the blow, prepared the way by pointing out that, on August 10, Secretary of State Jefferson had asked Gouverneur Morris, our Ambassador to France, to state to the National Convention the propriety and necessity of their immediately recalling Citizen Genêt. Instances of insults given by the latter against

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[45] A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, comp. by James D. Richardson (10 vols.; Washington's G. P. O., 1897-1908), I, 146.

[46] Philip Schuyler to Hamilton, Dec. 15, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 458 and 458 n. 2.

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American law and government were presented in the official correspondence but Greenleaf refrained, through motives of "delicacy," from repeating some of the phrases employed by Genêt.[47]

If such a strong supporter of the French minister as Thomas Greenleaf now felt the difficulty of defending the French minister, how much greater would the reaction be among those who had long awaited a corroboration of their belief in Genêt's guilty activities against the United States government? One such person was the mercantile agent, Colin McGregor. The latter wrote to an English correspondent on December 19th, the very day that the newspapers of New York published "a valuable letter of Mr. Jefferson, and one to him from the wild Democratic Genet." McGregor was exuberant in his praise of Jefferson's performance, while calling Genêt's writing "below contempt . . . and a Rhapsody of nonsense." Jefferson had suddenly become a hero to the "Federalists," as McGregor showed in his conclusion: "I really begin to alter my opinion of Red Breeches [Jefferson] since I have read his masterly performance."[48] Robert Troup wrote to Hamilton in very much the same vein, with the smile on his face showing right through the written word. Jefferson's letter to Gouverneur Morris calling for Genêt's recall was described as having "blotted all the sins of the former out of the book of our remembrance; and with the sentiments & temper I at present appear to profess, we would much regret that he should quit his post until the clouds which threaten a storm be dispersed." It had been a long time since Jefferson had been

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[47] New York Journal, Dec. 14, 1793.

[48] Letter, C. McGregor to J. R. Miller, Dec. 19, 1793, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

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spoken of in those glowing terms in a letter sent to Alexander Hamilton. As for Genêt, Troup could report that the minister was "completely on his back," and in New York no person could be found "who attempts seriously to defend his conduct."[49]

It would be false, however, to leave the reader with the presumption that Troup's letter, dated December 25, 1793, was indicative of the fact that New Yorker's greeted the Christmas season of 1793 and the new year of 1794 in a spirit of unadulterated consensus. In fact, as an extremely unpleasant example showed, the opposite seemed much nearer to the truth. A scandal had developed in the city in mid-December concerning such major items as freedom of the press, libel, the character of the President of the United States, and the world-wide struggle between republicanism and tyranny. A letter from the "Federalist" merchant, Benjamin Strong, to his father, Selah, who was one of the state senators for the Southern district, described the scandal in the following words: "In Mr. Greenleaf's Paper of Saturday last you will see an Infamous Libel against the President--Called an extract of a Letter from a gentleman in Virginia--There is no doubt but it is wrote [sic] by some of Genet's Tools, it has given great offence, and I fear will be a Dear publication to Greenleaf." Strong hoped his father would add to the cost for Greenleaf by withdrawing his subscription to the Journal and persuading "your Neighbours also to do it."[50]

The article referred to by Strong, which appeared in the

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[49]Robert Troup to Hamilton, Dec. 25, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 588.

[50]Letter, Benjamin Strong to Selah Strong, Dec. 10, 1793, NYHS, Strong Family Papers.

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Journal of December 7, has retained, even at this late date, the ability to shock and repel both through the strength of the article's own vituperative power and by the reader's knowledge of the subject of its splenetic frenzy. The letter was a summary of the life of Washington--although the President was not mentioned by name--from the cradle (wherein his legitamacy was questioned) to his "present" eminence as despot, unbeliever, peculator, and destroyer of the friendship between France and the United States.[51]

There was, as Strong's letter showed, an immediate and sharp reaction to the article. "A Citizen" in the Daily Advertiser accused Greenleaf of trying to make the federal government an object of contempt, prostituting the press in a campaign of scurrility against individuals and of personally leading the attack against the character of the President of the United States. In the same paper "An Adopted American" called Greenleaf by the worst epithet that he could think of, "a Slave to Party."[52] At the same time a meeting of the citizens was called for and was held at 1:00 P.M. in the Tontine Coffee House on the very day that the dinner in honor of Genêt was to occur. The meeting resulted in a series of resolutions which included the leveling of charges against Greenleaf for his publication of the anti-Washington "extract" and the appointment of a committee to look into the charges; additionally, Greenleaf was ordered to appear before the committee in order to answer those various charges and questions.[53]

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[51]Extract of a letter from a gentleman in Virginia to a friend in New York, New York Journal, Dec. 7, 1793.

[52]"A Citizen," Daily Advertiser, Dec. 10, 1793; "An Adopted American," Ibid., Dec. 12, 1793.

[53]American Minerva, Dec. 10, 1793.

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In the first issue of the Journal to appear after the one which contained the now notorious letter, Greenleaf, in a signed statement to the public, apologized for having printed a piece that contained such "villainous observations and innuendos" against the President. The harried editor added that the Chief Executive was "as highly respected and revered by me, as by any citizen of the United States." How then did such a scandalous piece find its way into the pages of the New York Journal? Greenleaf reported the interesting fact that the letter had been written in a handwriting that he had recognized and in which he had full confidence. It thereby was able to escape his closer inspection.[54] Apparently, since most New York City newspaper editors of the time were also printers, book publishers, book sellers and stationers, they were often forced to rely on certain correspondents whose handwriting they grew to know and whose writings they grew to trust. The editors of the Columbian Gazetteer confirmed that conjecture in a sympathetic treatment of the plight of Thomas Greenleaf. As editors, themselves, they could understand and explain how such a letter as that in question might find its way into a newspaper, "under a well known hand, without critical inspection." No editor would think it at all strange they concluded, for it was caused by a simple "inadvertancy"--that and nothing more.[55]

The editors of the Columbian Gazetteer were worried, however, about the meaning of the meeting of censure that had been called for by the committee set up under the resolutions of the citizenry. Greenleaf had no doubt of its purpose, for he wrote that he considered

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[54]New York Journal, Dec. 11, 1793.

[55]Columbian Gazetteer, Dec. 12, 1793.

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his publication of the extract as merely "the ostensible cause of my persecution." He attended the meeting at the Tontine Coffee House to which he had been summoned and apologized for the article. But at the same time he questioned the authority of the committee to rule on his right of publication and thereby to threaten the freedom of his press. Greenleaf commented that there were libel laws set up for just that purpose. The Journal's editor soon found that another committee was formed which accepted his apology and labeled attacks on Greenleaf and his newspaper as "arbitrary and illiberal." Furthermore, the second committee resolved that it was the duty of every American to keep watch over "that great palladium of our rights, . . . an unrestrained press," which they called "the surest preservative of . . . the enviable birth-right of AMERICANS." The membership of the two rival committees was such as the informed reader might suspect: the first committee was made up of some of the best known "Federalist" names on the New York scene and the second committee was formed by good and true "Republicans," both new and old. Party spirit was no longer very far from the surface of any issue.[56]

Greenleaf, as noted, had moved to the offensive after the first shock waves wore off. Under the date in his newspaper of December 14, Greenleaf editorialized that his apologies for his "fau-pas [sic] have been satisfactory to every liberal citizen--to every friend

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[56] New York Journal, Dec. 14 and Dec. 25, 1793. The membership of the committee before whom Greenleaf appeared during the evening of December 10 at the Tontine Coffee House included James Watson, Comfort Sands, Benjamin Walker, Leonard Bleecker, Nicholas Low, Robert Troup, Nicholas Cruger, William Willcocks, Thomas Randall, and Matthew Clarkson. The committee that backed Greenleaf was headed by Thomas Ivers, chairman, and Tunis Wortman, secretary. For a fuller reference to Tunis Wortman see infra, Part IV, ch. XI, n. 4.

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to that glorious cause of mankind which is now the European contest between FREEMEN and TYRANTS." He promised that he would not make the same error again, and if the Journal would continue to be supported, it would "continue to be a repository for every communication that may have a tendency to keep alive the PATRIOTIC flame, provided these communications be couched in unlicentious terms." Greenleaf had wisely withdrawn into the bosom of "every friend to the glorious cause of mankind" and covered himself again with the mantle of republican virtue and French revolutionary ideology. There lay safety, if not escape from controversy. For such an escape was not possible in the New York political climate of the time, nor was it likely to be wished for by any newspaperman worthy of the name.[57]

Others not bound to support the life-blood of the newspaper editor expressed ever more vigorously a general public annoyance at the increasingly virulent tone of the New York City press. Of particular note was a series of three articles written by "Steady" and published in the Daily Advertiser towards the end of December 1793. The scurrility of the press was his subject matter and the "party mad" Greenleaf was his prime target. The Journal, according to "Steady," had reached a level of abuse that was harmful to the government itself and not merely to individuals. That the public was supportive of his point of view was claimed by the author in the way that they reacted with "universal alarm and indignation" against the editor and his paper. "Steady" then developed the interesting theme that newspapers were "in a certain sense public property," and a free people had to

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[57] New York Journal, Dec. 14, 1793.

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guard always against the perversion of the press "by bribery and undue influence, foreign or domestic--especially the former." Warming to his subject, "Steady" accused some nameless printers of being "unaccountably partial to the politics of a foreign minister, who from all circumstances, may be supposed very capable of such attempts." Thus Greenleaf was tied to Genêt and a much more serious charge was out in the open. But "Steady" did not confine his attack to the Journal. He believed that the licentiousness displayed by that paper had become contagious. He appealed to Samuel Loudon of the Diary, complaining that Loudon and his son-in-law "were certainly running and quite fast." Not even the Daily Advertiser, itself, escaped the remonstrance of "Steady," who noted that "Mr. Childs' also had some symptoms of the disorder."[58]

That line between a licentious and a free press that "Steady" had attempted to draw was becoming increasingly difficult to determine by objective measurement. More and more it was an individual's party orientation that determined for him whether a particular article or newspaper was an example of a free or licentious press. There was both a growing distinction in tone and a widening gulf of belief between those who considered "an unrestrained press" to be the "palladium" of the rights of Americans and those who spoke of newspapers as public property and counseled "a free people . . . to guard against the perversion" of that press. The former were increasingly "Republican" in their orientation while the latter held more and more consistently to "Federalist" party policy. Much had indeed happened to

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[58]"Steady," Daily Advertiser, Dec. 20, 23, and 24, 1793.

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change "Federalist" minds towards proper press behavior since the early days of the new government when John Fenno had stated in his Gazette of the United States that there was "less danger from excess [of debate and dissension] than from restriction."

As the year 1793 neared its end it was clear that political parties and party spirit had taken a giant leap forward.[59] When Walter Rutherford, after reporting to his son that he had been at many dinners lately where he had heard all opinions, added that he was "to continue on, this week, generally in Federal Houses," it was clear that strong political division among New Yorkers was a present fact. When Philip H. Livingston wrote to his father-in-law, Walter Livingston, that "Schuyler [Peter Schuyler Livingston, Walter's son] is a most violent Frenchman in his politicks" and continued with the hope that if war came the United States would choose sides out of "prudence not prejudice," noting that the choice lay between "Monarchy [England] or Anarchy [France]" it was clear that family division caused by politics and foreign events had also become a fact of life. And when the literary New York Magazine, which had once been in the forefront of those who published material concerning the French Revolution from local sources, refused to print the work of an essayist who signed himself "Liberty," stating as the reason that "it is ever our wish to

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[59]It remained fashionable, however, to decry parties and factions in the oral and written public statements of the time. For three 1793 examples from diverse sources see William Stuart, An Oration Delivered Before the Uranian Society, in the City of New York at a quarterly meeting on Tuesday, 12 March 1793 (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1794); American Minerva, "On Parties," Dec. 21, 1793; DeWitt Clinton, An Address Delivered before Holland Lodge, December 24, 1793 (New York: Childs & Swaine, 1794).

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avoid political discussions," and adding that a newspaper "would be the most proper channel for pieces of this nature to make their appearance in public," it was becoming additionally clear that party spirit had become a major basis for choice of reading material and the tender shoot known as the literary magazine could ill-afford to become embroiled in that kind of controversy.[60]

In reviewing the root causes for the rise of factionalism and party spirit which had begun to affect strongly the invitations that New Yorkers received, the friends they retained, the relatives they still talked to, and the newspapers and magazines that they read, the historian finds that he must turn increasingly to the growing division among New Yorkers over the question of their respective positions vis-à-vis the European war and the French Revolution. The situation was further exacerbated by the continuing arrival of large numbers of Frenchmen of all political persuasions into New York City and the other sea-port towns of the United States during the year 1793. Fewer and fewer New Yorkers could refrain from taking positions that would not alienate someone.

The difficulties that the average New Yorker faced were increased many times over for that city's public officials. Increasingly, the latter were caught up in the arguments and passions of the time, oftentimes when they were merely carrying out their official duties. The multi-leveled questions of interpretation surrounding the enforce-

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[60]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Dec. 15, 1793, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; Letter, Philip Henry Livingston to Walter Livingston, Dec. 15, 1793, NYHS, RRL Coll.; New York Magazine, IV (Nov. 1793), 642.

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ment of the Proclamation of Neutrality and the French Alliance of 1778, particularly as regarded privateers, and the mid-summer arrival of Citizen Genêt in New York City produced its affect upon the public and private life of Governor George Clinton. Additionally, in the papers of Richard Varick, the Mayor of New York, there appeared a half-dozen letters and statements in French, during the year 1793, besides many more in English, through which the mayor became involved in disputes between and among various Frenchmen and French factions. Delicate matters of diplomacy, treaty interpretation, and alien rights were all involved. The increasing problem of French activity--including French barracks filled with armed troops and a French fleet in the harbor, which led Consul Hauterive to speak of "une puissance dans une puissance"--were examples of French activity which the Varick Papers so well mirrored.[61]

The New York official most severely affected and afflicted, however, was the federal judge for the New York district, James Duane. He was charged with the major decision of interpreting the whole question of privateering, with its myriad details and with its possible serious affect on the foreign relations of the United States. Robert Troup described to Alexander Hamilton the way in which the weight of the decision hung over the former Mayor of New York: "Judge Duane is nearly gone. The question of Jurisdiction now before him has frightened him into a fit of sickness & God Knows when we shall have his decree." Duane's delay, according to Troup, had become "a source of

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[61]Richard Varick Papers, NYHS; Journal of Comte Hauterive, NYHS, Oct. 26, 1793.

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virulent censure upon our government amongst the partizans of the French Sans culottes."[62] Duane did finally complete his decision in February, 1794, but then he had to answer additional complaints made to the federal government by both Genêt and Hauterive on the results of his findings. Finally freed of this subsidiary task, Duane wrote the President in May 1794 asking to be allowed to resign for reasons of health.[63]

Clearly, then, the year 1793 had been a difficult and bitter one for many of the country's leaders, as well as for the nation, itself. The United States had entered a period filled with unresolved problems and constant tensions. Thomas Greenleaf of the Journal, in his New Year's Day editorial, reviewed the several issues with which the American public had been most concerned in 1793. They included the "neutrality principles, construction of treaties, Indian Wars, [and] impositions of foreigners." Not one of those issues had been settled by the end of the year, although a variety of actions had been

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[62] R. Troup to Hamilton, Dec. 25, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XV, 588.

[63] Letters, James Duane to Edmund Randolph, Feb. 28, 1794 and Duane to Washington, May 10, 1794, NYHS, Duane Papers. The difficulties faced by Judge Duane were described in a work entitled Memoirs of the Hon. James Duane, Judge of the District Court of the U. States for New York (New York: Keyser, 1852), which was compiled by Samuel W. Jones, himself a New York jurist and later Chancellor of the State. Chancellor Jones described the situation in 1793 and 1794 as follows: "The French . . . gave him [Duane] some trouble as they did almost every other judicial officer, as well as the administration, with their new construction of the law of nations, and their claims that their former services created different legal obligations between us and them than the law and our treaties imposed." Jones concluded that Duane carefully examined the cases and his decisions "were very generally sustained."

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taken to deal with each.[64]

While those problems remained, however, the man who was possibly most responsible for having made three out of four of them the bitter points of argument that they became had all but lost his own power. Citizen Genêt, by order of the Committee of Public Safety of the new revolutionary government of France was ordered removed from his ministerial post, recalled, and arrested on charges of peculation. Furthermore, all consuls who had followed Genêt's lead and sold prizes in ports and armed privateers in contravention of United States neutrality laws were to be discharged. By year's end, the new French commissioners were on their way to the United States to carry out their orders, which were a clear repudiation of Genêt and his activities.[65]

That always "busy man" had, however, already wreaked his havoc. He left in his wake a major increase in party activity, partisan bitterness, the formation of democratic societies,[66] a challenge to the Executive, and a vastly rougher American political fabric. He had also helped to make foreign policy into a full-scale battleground of American domestic politics. The "Federalists," intent upon making Washington's neutrality policy work, could no longer afford to allow pro-French sentiment to "get out of hand." The "Republicans," feeling no need for such constraint, could and did increasingly picture their opponents as anti-French and pro-British. Shadings were losing out

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[64] New York Journal, Jan. 1, 1794.

[65] Order of the Committee of Public Safety, Oct. 16, 1793 and Instructions to the Commissioners, Nov. 15, 1793, "CFM," AHA, II, 287-88, 288-94.

[66] See infra, pp. 265-272, 274-276.

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and absolutes were taking over. The surprise then was that when 1793 came to an end there were still optimists enough on the American scene to temper the worst excesses of partisan hatred. One of those proved to be Robert Troup, who, at his most non-partisan, found grounds to accuse some of his fellow "Federalists," as well as some "Republicans," of "wild notions" regarding the possibility of war. Opening the new year on an optimistic note, Troup recorded his firm belief that most citizens "respectable for character and property" still wanted peace.[67]

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[67]R. Troup to King, Jan. 1, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 540. The Republicans whom Troup accused of rash acts were "Brockholst & Co."--meaning the Livingstons, in general, and their followers. Troup believed that since very few of Genêt's friends any longer had "the hardiness to advocate his conduct," they had now turned to an attempt "to excite hostilities against Great Britain for making a peace between the Portuguese & Algerines." As for Federalists who held such "wild notions," Troup mentioned no names. But one whom he might have had in mind was Philip H. Livingston--the Livingston who had remained a Federalist. Livingston had asserted, in a letter to his father-in-law (P. H. Livingston to Walter Livingston, Dec. 15, 1793, NYHS, RRL Coll.), that "War in my opinion is now inevitable," and advocated joining that side which could do the United States most good and on whom this country most depended. He appeared to believe that England best fitted both descriptions.

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PART IV. THE DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY OF NEW YORK AND THE "REAL" REPUBLICANS (JANUARY 1794 - MAY 1794)

CHAPTER X

"An excellent set of Resolutions"

New York City in mid-winter 1794 was riding the crest of a commercial prosperity produced by the same European war that was shortly to threaten the very survival of the new nation. It was a prosperity that had all the earmarks of a roller-coaster ride with the ever-present threat of hidden turns and sudden dips providing thrills for those who liked to live dangerously, but a deep unease for more sedate spirits. As the merchant, Jonathan Lawrence, described it, the unstable situation abroad was increasing the New Yorker's "spirit for speculation" and unsettling a market already inflated by a near doubling of the costs of goods, services and rents over "what they were two or three years ago."[1]

If the hard-won economic stability and prosperity of the nation was shadowed by a world of uncertainties, the private world of the New Yorker was also shadowed by increasing political divisiveness. For though Peter R. Livingston might describe New York as "very gay"

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[1]Letter, Jonathan Lawrence to William Lawrence & Co., Jan. 30, 1794, NYHS, Jonathan Lawrence LB.

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and with "more private Parties" than he ever remembered,[2] the self-same city and its parties were often filled with deep emotional antagonisms waiting to explode. As two cases in point, there was, first, the anything-but-amiable incident at one of those parties that was described by Cornelia Clinton in a letter to her beloved Edmond Genêt. She related to her future husband how she had found herself in the company of people who spoke venomously of him. She was able to control herself, although with difficulty, until one gentleman announced for all to hear that Genêt was the "most impudent" man alive. Cornelia retorted that indeed he was for he had had the impertinence to prove that Rufus King and John Jay were "lyars." She then took her leave of that company, determined not to be seen with them again, "for your enemies I consider as mine."[3] Several days later, Alexander Anderson recorded in his diary another scene of hard-edged gaiety among a very different social class. As he was passing by Peck Slip, he heard "a dram-shop full of Frenchmen singing Carmagnole." Anderson walked on until he came to the next dram-shop, from out of which wafted the sounds of "'God save great George etc.'" Anderson reported that the singer "immediately procured a parcel of hearty curses upon his Majesty from the rest of the company."[4] Peter R. Livingston's phrase, "very gay," hardly carried the necessary nuances for a proper description of New York City that winter.

In this time of endless discord, possibly the most basic issue

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[2]Letter, Peter R. Livingston to R. R. Livingston, Jan. 26, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[3]Letter, Cornelia Clinton to Edmond Genêt, Jan. 5, 1794, Genêt Papers.

[4]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Jan. 9, 1794.

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of all had seemed to be above controversy: the issue of war and peace. Now, in the face of increased British spoliation on the high seas, the neutrality policy once again began to be called into question. "Anti-Britania" [sic], both in his nom-de-plume and in his letter to the Diary, made clear his annoyance with the present order of things. Admitting that the decision of the federal government to stay out of the European war and to hold to a policy of complete neutrality had met with public approval, "Anti-Britania" nevertheless expressed his regret at that success. He believed that the country now slept in the face of increased British spoliation and impressment. To "Anti-Britania" the route then pursued could lead only to "national disgrace," for, he claimed, the very name of this country, which had been so honored in 1783, had fallen into a disrepute so great that there were now "none so poor to do us reverence."[5]

Another dissatisfied person, but one who had already worked out a plan of action that he wished the country to follow, was Robert R. Livingston. The Chancellor was now very much out of direct political involvement and spent a good part of the year at his Clermont estate. This leisurely life gave him much time to think and write about the events of the day and allowed him to develop his ideas independently of the need to be responsible for their consequences. Early in January, 1794, the Chancellor wrote a long letter to James Monroe in which he spoke of his great anxiety for the country. The Chancellor viewed British actions as having the goal of either tying the United States to them or, failing in that, of destroying the commerce and

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[5]"Anti-Britania," Diary, Jan. 2, 1794.

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credit of this country. The United States would thereby be rendered incapable of defending itself, and would fall victim to "that league of despots who having attacked Liberty in France will be very unwilling to afford her an asylum in America."[6]

What was to be done? The Chancellor rejected the idea of building a navy to defend the coast as taking too much time, being too costly, and giving the enemy too much advance notice of action. Instead, the United States should go immediately on the attack so that between that time and May 1 the country could "acquire possession of the western parts and thus terminate the Indian wars." If the federal government would also grant letters of marque, Livingston predicted that within a month one hundred privateers would be at sea, increasing American power, harming our enemies and procuring peace for ourselves and our allies "in less than six months." Livingston called this plan of great expectations "the sentiments of an old statesman far removed from the influence of any party" and dictated by "the most ardent love of Liberty and my country." If that last statement seemed to indicate that Livingston was in any way apologizing for the rashness of his plan, the concluding sentences of his letter indicated just the opposite. The Chancellor therein indicated his expectation that Monroe would discuss his ideas with Madison and Burr in the hope that something would come of them.[7]

"Republicans," it should be noted, were not alone in their growing impatience with the activities of the maritime powers against

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[6]Letter, R. R. Livingston to James Monroe, Jan. 4, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[7]Ibid.

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American sovereignty. John Alsop, the father-in-law of Rufus King, was willing to take decisive action against a whole list of Old World troublemakers. Alsop, one of the founders of the New York Chamber of Commerce before the Revolution and its first president after the war, might have been expected to have taken a quietly conservative position. In writing to King, however, he praised Congress for its resolve to arm against the Algerines, and called for even greater action. He noted that the British, French, and Spanish were also giving this country trouble and treating Americans like children. Their actions would put an end to our commerce and our imposts, he warned, if we continued unable to defend ourselves. His political sentiments, he stated, would be for a non-importation act against the abusive powers, as was done in 1765 and 1769. Recalling the spirit of those days, he announced grandly that he would rather turn his coat twice or wear homespun than submit.[8]

These letters that began to appear in the press and in private correspondence at the beginning of the new year indicated both a growing uneasiness over the direction of events on the high seas and in the American northwest and a growing determination to do something about it. "Federalist" and "Republican" were united in their feeling that some kind of active policy was needed but no general consensus seemed to be developing as to the proper choice among alternatives. The reasons for this state of affairs can perhaps most clearly be seen in a partisan statement in the strongly "Federalist" American Minerva

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[8]John Alsop to King, Jan. 6, 1793 [misdated], Correspondence of King, I, 481.

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which pointed up two important facts about "Federalist"-"Republican" division in relation to revolutionary France: "Federalists" had no difficulty in supporting republicanism in France but there were clear limitations to their support of that government which owed its being to mob rule and mob violence. The writer stated that while Americans

> detest a minister who can deceive them and a ministry who would gladly plunge them in the horrors of war, when they can be of no service to their allies in Europe, or to the cause of liberty; while they abhor the outrages of a Paris mob, and the violence of the present ruling faction; the Americans still love the nation whose freedom is threatened with half of the force of Europe; they admire the heroic firmness of the French troops; and would rejoice to see France enjoying peace under a free Republican government.[9]

As the statement in the American Minerva indicated, men like Noah Webster and the American "Federalists" stopped well short of embracing Jacobinism or its two usual synonyms, mobocracy and democracy. For example, the leader of the New York "Federalists," General Philip Schuyler, reacted harshly to news reports from France which reached this country in January, 1794. He wrote to Rufus King that if the recently published accounts from France were well founded, then those people, "who once had the character of superior urbanity to any others are now rapidly savagizing, and will soon become, If they are not already so, ferocious Barbarians." What Schuyler reacted to so sharply were reports of the execution of Marie Antoinette and the Brissotins and the massacre at Lyons--all having been "accomplished" by the Montagnard regime in the fall of 1793.[10]

The first of those items was taken up in the American Minerva

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[9]American Minerva, Jan. 8, 1794

[10]Letter, Philip Schuyler to King, Jan. 31, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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of January 9, 1794, where there appeared an article under the heading "Maria [sic] Antoinette." The writer discussed her condemnation and death and concluded with the sentiment that anything might be expected from the French government "in these ferocious times" where "the demon of jealousy" rules with an iron rod in one hand and the guillotine in the other.[11] The combination of the iron rod and the guillotine was too much for the "Republican" Columbian Gazetteer which had, since its inception the previous August, spoken out firmly and often in support of revolutionary France. An article, which appeared under the date January 13 and was headed "Communication," expressed the view that the trial and condemnation of the queen should have been enough. "Why," the writer asked, "should a defenceless female, on whom nature has conferred the rights of protection and tenderness from mankind--be stabbed at the bar of justice."[12]

When news of the execution of the Brissotins reached New York hard on the word of Marie Antoinette's death, the impact was perhaps even greater. Of all the French Revolutionary leaders, Brissot de Warville seemed to have meant the most to Americans. His extravagant praise of this country in his New Travels in the United States which was published in an English edition in 1792 obviously pleased and flattered his hosts and also influenced a large number of European intellectuals in their attitude towards the transatlantic republic.[13]

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[11] American Minerva, Jan. 9, 1794.

[12] Columbian Gazetteer, Jan. 13, 1794.

[13] Though hardly an intellectual, Edmond Genêt apparently came to the United States filled with Brissot's enthusiasms and attitudes towards the United States. See supra, p. 205.

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Brissot's execution therefore came as a greater shock to many influential Americans, including men of letters, than the deaths of either the King or the Queen. As a result of these events the Columbian Gazetteer strongly put forward, in the following statement, the view that it would hold to during the remaining ten months of its publication: "The guillotine is kept in motion, as tho' it were the only instrument for rectifying political opinions, and that this were to be affected by cutting off the heads of all who have the misfortune to differ from those who have the power to exercise it."[14]

The scorn felt by the Columbian Gazetteer towards the government that guillotined Marie Antoinette and the Brissotins had already been expressed at the time of the arrival of news concerning the successful retaking of Lyons by the republican forces of the National Convention. The recapture of Lyons was heartily approved of but reports of mass murders carried out by the victorious besiegers were viewed as meriting "the severest of censures, tho' used in the best of causes." The editors of the Columbian Gazetteer would not justify the "indiscriminate murder" of men, women, and children, but rather hoped, for the honor of the French nation and her republican patriots, that the information was false. The editors concluded with a strongly-worded statement of their moral position: "The cause of virtue needs not the degrading assistance of vice; and justice injures herself by

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[14]Columbian Gazetteer, Jan. 30, 1794. In the February 1794 issue of the New York Magazine, V, 80-83, the "Address of the proscribed Deputies of the national Convention, ordered to be put under Arrest, to the French Nation" was printed and given a sympathetic introduction by the editors. According to the magazine, the "Brissotines" both denied the charges made against them and decried the supposed republicanism of the Convention and its leadership.

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accepting the services of cruelty."[15]

New Yorkers, like most Americans, had long viewed republics as seats of virtue and liberty. The Athenian and Roman republics were favorite historical examplars for educated Americans and the myths, stories, and personages of both ancient civilizations were familiar to any New Yorker who read the newspapers. The creation of the American republic was viewed as a rebirth, under even finer auspices--that is, Protestant Christian--of republican virtue. The new French republic, which had grown out of the French Revolution, was the second in what was fully expected to be a world-wide chain of republics. The rights of man for all men and a peaceful and virtuous world order were to be the longed for, hoped for, and expected results. Now, the actions of the French republic had brought into serious question the belief that purity and virtue were synonymous with republic. Alexander Hamilton, or John Adams, or Gouverneur Morris, or any number of figures at the very highest intellectual and worldly levels of American society had long since accepted the fact of human fallibility and knew that republics, as the most human of governments, were extremely vulnerable to such failings. It was for that reason that the founders of the American republic under the Constitution hedged government in with a systematic separation, division, and balance of powers. Their great fear, in relation to France, lay basically in that very lack of balance which they found in the French system as then constituted and, for that matter, in the French people. For the first time those feelings now seemed to be reaching down to the middling levels of American intellec-

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[15] Columbian Gazetteer Extraordinary, Jan. 6, 1794.

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tuals, which included the printer-editors of the Columbian Gazetteer and the general membership of the Calliopean Society. That young group of literary lights debated, in late January, the following question: "Would the establishment of republican governments throughout the world exterminate war?" Surprisingly, considering both the time and the group, they answered in the negative by a vote of 8 to 7. They did not love France less for that vote but they did take the remarkable step of allowing reality to impinge upon their dreams of imminent utopia.[16]

That willingness of a growing number of New Yorkers to criticize publicly French institutions was made even easier with the introduction, in the fall of 1793, of the new republican calendar and its ten-day week; with the attempt by the violent French anti-clericals to de-christianize the French people (a simple de-catholicizing would have been applauded in the United States as the Civil Constitution of the Clergy had been three years earlier); and with the ever-increasing use of violence and the guillotine by the Jacobins. All three came in for criticism in a Minerva article headed "French Calendar." In it, the writer singled out for criticism the fact that one Sabbath day in seven was changed to one in ten. Where, he wondered, was the vaunted concern of the French revolutionaries for the poor people of France? It was they who would be most affected by that change. The writer, probably Noah Webster, also declared that humanity was shocked at the "Gothic barbarities" of the French as religion was at their impiety.[17]

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[16]Calliopean Society Records, NYHS, Jan. 21, 1794.

[17]American Minerva, Jan. 15, 1794.

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This was an important point of criticism, for the religious attitudes of Robespierre and the Montagnard regime, as understood by most New Yorkers, proved to be an increasingly important stumbling block to full public support of the French republican government by many who were basically friendly to the French. John Pintard was a perfect case in point, as his own words so clearly indicated: "I most sincerely rejoice to hear of the successes of the French Republic, but I do as sincerely lament the enthusiastic excesses of their conventional leaders--especially their attempts to overthrow Religion and eradicate all species of religious worship."[18]

Despite the rise of criticism, particularly newspaper criticism, that signaled the end of one phase of American-French relations, it would be incorrect to picture the Minerva, the Gazetteer, or any other New York paper as anti-French or filled with anti-French propaganda. If the New York newspapers of that period were any guide to true feelings, a much more complex cluster of attitudes guided the thinking at the time. Noah Webster's American Minerva, which was set up in support of the federal government and its policies, was quite clear in its position. It favored the French, as did all New York newspapers, against the combined powers and supported strongly a republican France, but had little good to say for Robespierre and the Jacobins. (Webster's Minerva also had little good to say for the English monarchy.) Its main thrust was an assertion of the need for American neutrality to protect the interests of this country.[19] The

[18]Diary of John Pintard, NYHS, Feb. 24, 1794.

[19]See Webster's essay, "The Combined Powers," in the American Minerva of Jan. 14, 1794, for a concise statement of Webster's views on the French Revolution, the war, and the revolutionary government--views which he consistently held throughout this period.

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"Federalist" Daily Advertiser and "Federalist" Daily Gazette, in their few editorial comments, followed a very similar line. The moderately "Republican" Columbian Gazetteer, which at first defended every aspect of the French Revolution, had begun to take a position very similar to that of Webster's Minerva. The Gazetteer's deep love for France was matched by a growing humanitarian revulsion over the excesses of the Mountain in carying out its rule. As a result, the Gazetteer fell back more and more into praise of the various governments of the United States, which it considered the centers of republican wisdom. The Diary, although strongly "Republican" in its orientation, also began to hold itself back from too close an attachment to the government, as opposed to the people, of France. Only Greenleaf's Journal fit the gross stereotype of pro-French "Republicans" versus pro-British "Federalists" for here was a newspaper totally committed, in the most partisan fashion, to all the works of the French revolution and to all of its representatives.

As a sample of the Journal's commitment to revolutionary France, there was the December 18, 1793 editorial in praise of Citizen Genêt which connected the treatment of the latter with feeling towards France long after most of the strongest supporters of all things French had abandoned the minister as a detriment to their cause. The Journal had editorialized that Citizen Genêt was "the representative of a great republic: our old friend and ally." Why had he been treated in such an unpleasant manner ever since he arrived in this country, Greenleaf asked? The Journal's editor answered his own question by concluding that the politics of the American government had so dictated

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such treatment. It was politics, plain and simple, that had decreed that France should be ill-used and England glorified. American and New York politics of that time, however, were far more complicated than the Journal and its editor were willing to admit or than quite a few historians have been willing to accept.[20]

If January, 1794, saw another step taken in an important change in the attitude of many New Yorkers towards the Montagnard regime of republican France, it also saw an important local change in the structuring of political power in the state of New York. The deep and bitter seeds of divisiveness which had been planted during the gubernatorial election of 1792 and which had taken root as the "Federalists" awaited their opportunity to gain political revenge, had finally borne fruit in the winter of 1794. The change came suddenly, as Samuel Ward showed in his written exclamation of surprise shortly after the state legislature had settled down to business. As if in sudden realization of the turn of events, he remarked to his correspondent how "for a wonder we have a federal legislature in the state"; then as if seeking confirmation of his astonishment, he exclaimed again "do you not wonder--!"[21]

If Samuel Ward was not prepared for the change in political power, the leading "Federalist" of the state had certainly not been caught short. Philip Schuyler, marshalling his forces as if he were still a Revolutionary War general, spoke of the legislature in a letter to Rufus King as "Political combatants . . . collecting for the

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[20]New York Journal, Dec. 18, 1793.

[21]Letter, Samuel Ward to William Constable, Jan. 19, 1794, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

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campaign." Schuyler added that "our friends are confident of success in the principal appointment. We shall not however be the less circumspect as we contend with a wiley [sic] Enemy." The goal of Schuyler's campaign was control of the Council of Appointment of the state government. That board of five members, made up of the governor and a senator elected by the Assembly from each of the four districts of the state, controlled a vast amount of patronage. Here was the plum that could soothe many a "Federalist" mind and pocket, still smarting over the "stolen" election of 1792. General Schuyler was not as yet sure of victory, however, for he feared that the best his forces could do was to elect two "Federalist" members to the Council "in which case the decisions will be on Antifederal principles, with the casting role" of the governor producing a three to two antifederal vote.[22]

Schuyler need not have feared for his success, however, as the words of an important opposition figure clearly showed. DeWitt Clinton, on the day after the opening of the legislative session, feigned indifference to the outcome of events. Reporting on the "malignity of the leaders of the opposite party" who seemed to be guided by a "spirit of persecution . . . that borders upon savage barbarity," Clinton took refuge in the hope of every defeated politician: that the meanness of action of the opposition must "be obvious to the dispassionate part of the Community," which would ultimately wreak its revenge. Clinton also quickly changed the subject to that of France, of whose fate he was "exceedingly anxious to hear." Sharing as he did

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[22]Letter, Philip Schuyler to King, Jan. 4, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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a feeling for France held by a majority of New Yorkers, young DeWitt Clinton gave clarity to his and their anxieties when he wrote: "With the fall of that Republic must fall liberty, virtue, and all the respectable attributes of the human character."[23]

Thus, while politically important New York "Republicans" turned to French news to gain hoped for solace, the "Federalist" leaders of New York moved to solidify their control over state affairs. James Watson, the New York City merchant and "Federalist," was elected Speaker of the Assembly. The membership of the new Council of Appointment was reported by another New York "Federalist" merchant, Herman LeRoy, to be "all of the right sort," including Selah Strong of the Southern District and Philip Schuyler, himself. An opening on the State Supreme Court was filled by Schuyler's candidate, the distinguished New York lawyer, former state attorney-general, and leading "Federalist," Egbert Benson. The "Federalists" thus rapidly consolidated their position in the state legislature and in the state judiciary. In the face of such astute and rapid political action and consolidation, it is little wonder that DeWitt Clinton turned away from the State Legislature and towards French events for his January pleasures.[24]

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[23]Letter, DeWitt Clinton to "My Dear Cousin," Jan. 8, 1794, NYHS, DeWitt Clinton Papers.

[24]Letters, Herman LeRoy to King, Jan. 13, 1794 and Robert Troup to King, Jan. 13, 1794, NYHS, King Papers. See also James Watson to King, Jan. 20, 1794, and Schuyler to King, Jan. 31, 1794, Ibid. It should be pointed out, in relation to patronage, that Rufus King wrote Schuyler warning against "wholesale removal now that the Federalists control the Council of Appointment." Schuyler agreed, but also noted that he was under immense pressure "to make changes-, or what he called 'reformation.'" See letter of King to Schuyler, Mar. 2, 1794, Ibid.

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In this the public-at-large was as one with the future governor of New York. The people appeared to find these "Republican"-"Federalist" disputes much less compelling than the war news for which they seemed to have an unappeasable hunger. That intense interest was rewarded in mid-January with news which the Journal joyously described as "a FEAST to every republican reader." Alexander Anderson recorded in his diary that "true Republicans are much elated with the news of Toulon and Valenciennes together with the Duke of York and his army being taken by the French." News of the retaking of Toulon and the capture of York and his army would have been a feast, indeed, for most Americans if it were true. The public certainly showed its appetite when it wholeheartedly gorged itself on words that told of those delightful and unexpected events. The Minerva reported that all the bells of Philadelphia were rung when the news reached there--the bells fancifully re-echoing "the glorious sound of _____downfall to tyrants_____the Rights of Man forever!!"[25] The Journal continued the report by noting that Congress had to stop work upon hearing the news, so great was the joy. In New York, Cornelia Clinton rejoiced and informed Citizen Genêt that the "Aristocrats are very tame since the good news from France." Cornelia's father, the governor, wrote to his dear child from Albany, saying that it gave him much satisfaction "to hear of the Successes of the Republicans in France." He asked Cornelia to give his "Respects to Citizen and Citess Hauterive," requesting that they write him "but not in French when they receive

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[25]New York Journal, Jan. 15, 1794; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Jan. 16, 1794; American Minerva, Jan. 16, 1794.

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News especially good News." The gaiety of New York was enhanced, according to a report by Alexander Anderson, when, on the evening of January 17, a company of French sailors danced "round a Flag with a candle on the top in the streets, and then march'd along singing Carmagnole."[26]

Public joy was short-lived, however, for as the editor of the Daily Gazette pointed out to readers on January 18, the latest news from Europe received via the ship Astrea contained nothing of the taking of Toulon or the capture of the Duke of York. Rumor now had it that the report had originated with Citizen Genêt. One hard-line New York "anti-Jacobin" responded with delight that the news had all turned out to be "nothing but an invention" of the French Ambassador. Furthermore, that same New Yorker, Jacob LeRoy, was only too glad to be able to report that the National Convention had satisfactorily responded to the President's request for Genêt's recall, with news of that event expected shortly.[27]

The story of the frustrated public demonstration in honor of the supposed French recapture of Toulon[28] included an illuminating sidelight. In fact, the sidelight was in many respects more important

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[26]New York Journal, Jan. 18, 1794; letters, Cornelia Clinton to Genêt, Jan. [?], 1794, and George Clinton to Cornelia Clinton, Jan. 18, 1794, NYHS, Genêt Papers; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Jan. 17, 1794.

[27]New York Daily Gazette, Jan. 18, 1794; letter, Jacob LeRoy to [probably Goldsbrow Banyar], Jan. 18, 1794, NYHS, Banyar Coll.

[28]Toulon had actually been recaptured on December 18, 1793, but the official news would not reach New York until early March, 1794.

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to an understanding of the New Yorker's general state-of-mind at that time than any newspaper essayist's comment could have been. As reported in a letter from Peter R. Livingston to the Chancellor, the false news of the great French victory had "produced in our city the most delightful sensation." The citizens had begun making preparations "to enjoy the Glorious Event" and celebrate the expected "triumph of Freedom over Tyranny." All pleasure, however, "was sullied in one Moment"--that in which doubt was cast on the news of the French triumph. Livingston then pictured the reaction of the "lower class of citizens" who loved the French so much that they were "almost to a Man . . . Frenchmen." These New York "Frenchmen" could not bear to accept the truth and "would not give faith to the Contradiction of the Report so congenial to their wishes." They assembled "in large Bodies to express their Joy" and even invaded the sanctum sanctorum of the upper class-the Tontine Coffee House. There, according to Livingston, they congratulated all the Frenchman they could find and banished "for the Night the Tories from the House." In the face of this unabashed demonstration in favor of the French Republic it was all the more remarkable that neutrality remained a possibility and that the "Federalists," who were the main support for that policy, remained, and in some instances, even gained in power.[29]

While the public nervously awaited reports that would bear out Greenleaf's premature headline: "Glorious News from France," while that same public debated possible action to be taken against the spol-

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[29]Letter, Peter R. Livingston to R. R. Livingston, Jan. 26, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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iators of our shipping,[30] while the federal government awaited the arrival of Genêt's successor, and while the two major political forces in the state and nation fought harsh sparring matches, a development took place that would have a major effect on the American political climate and draw political lines respecting domestic and foreign events into ever-sharper focus. The coming of age of the Democratic Society of Philadelphia might be the label given to the event--an event which would, in turn, lead to the further growth and development of such Democratic societies in major cities and towns throughout the United States.

On January 15, 1794, Samuel Loudon's Diary published what George Clinton described as "an excellent set of Resolutions of the Democratic Society in Philadelphia." Though Governor Clinton saw them "by chance," these resolutions were anything but haphazard in their presentation, proving to be a major source of comment, controversy, and influence throughout the nation. The resolutions, as published in Loudon's Diary, can be summarized as follows:

> 1st--"that it is one of the unalienable rights of freemen at all times to meet together in a peaceable manner, to discuss . . . all subjects of public concern, and to declare and publish their sentiments to their fellow citizens."
>
> 2nd--"that the Democratic Society, founded on the purest principles of civil liberty, and of respect and attachment to the constitution and laws of their country, unbiassed by any party views, and activated Solely by patriotic motives," do further resolve
>
> 3rd--"that we view with unexpressable horror the cruel and unjust war carried on by the combined powers of Europe against the

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[30]James Madison had just introduced a series of resolutions into the House of Representatives which called for retaliatory duties against British ships and merchandise and an end to dependence upon British markets and money. The debate on Madison's resolutions would continue for several months more.

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French Republic"--which is a war not "against that nation solely, but against liberty itself." Americans must give France "every . . . support in our power, consistently with the laws of our country."

4th--"we ought to resist . . . all attempts to alienate our affections from France and detach us from her alliance, and to connect us more intimately with Great Britain."

The resolves continued in that vein, calling for resentment against all who supported England or wanted closer connections, reprobation of all attempts to copy the "courtly forms, etiquette, and manners" of the European courts, and calling for a commercial treaty with France "on a broad liberal basis." One of the last resolves strongly denounced all attempts by whatever means, "to traduce and villify a foreign minister [Genêt] [so as] to render his cause unpopular and his situation among us irksome and disagreeable." Nowhere, however, in all these resolves was there any specific call for direct military action on the part of the American government in support of the French republic.[31]

Noah Webster, who had, since the founding of his newspaper, opposed the whole conception of a "Democratic Society" as Jacobinical and un-American, now rose to the attack in the guise of "An American." Specifically using the resolutions of the Philadelphia society as the

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[31]Letter, G. Clinton to C. Clinton, Jan. 18, 1794, NYHS, Genêt Papers; "Resolutions of the Democratic Society of Philadelphia," Diary, Jan. 15, 1794. The basic work on the Democratic Societies is Eugene Perry Link's Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800 (New York: Columbia U. Press, 1942). In it Link made the point that though the Democratic Society of Philadelphia was the third organized it was the one that gave the whole movement "unity and real momentum." Located in the nation's capital, it was, according to Link, in a position "to inspire and lead a great social movement." Link also noted that with the publication of its circular letter the Philadelphia society produced what became the basic intellectual testament of the growing movement. (See Link, Ibid., p. 10.)

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basis for his opposition, he stated that the United States did not need such self-appointed guardians of public order and justice. Webster asserted that it was the great body of people in this country who "constitute one immense popular society," and not that overweening organization set up in the nation's capital. Webster then noted that although the Democratic Society of Philadelphia made much of its opposition to the war of the combined powers against France, most of their fellow citizens felt the same way. He also labeled as nonsense the society's belief that the liberty of this country would be in danger if French liberty fell. The French, Webster believed, had turned from liberty when they chose to execute those who differed from the government position--as in the case of the Brissotins. Webster, in the person of "An American," then proclaimed his own understanding of this country's basic approach to foreign policy: Americans are determined to be under no foreign influence whatsoever; Americans should and do resent acts against our neutral ships by any nation and not only by England; Genêt has been attacked not because of the use of foreign gold and influence but because of his actions. If anyone had become the minion of a foreign nation, "An American" concluded, it was clearly the Democratic Society with its willingness to excuse France its every fault.[32]

The Democratic societies had thus become mired in controversy only a short time after they appeared on the scene--a condition in which they were to remain throughout their comparatively brief existence. Even their demise, however, did not bring about an end to the disputes that surrounded them in life. Almost two hundred years later

[32]"An American," American Minerva, Jan. 24, and Jan. 25, 1794.

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they remain a subject for major controversy among historicans of the Federalist era. The most recent period of controversy was ushered in by the basic modern work on the subject, Eugene P. Link's Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800.[33] Link's work was filled with well-researched statistical material but also contained provocative interpretive extensions of those statistics. His most controversial point was his stress on the importance of sources other than the French Jacobin Clubs in the formation of the American Democratic societies. Several other statements made by Link also proved controversial. These included his phrases descriptive of those who joined the societies, his characterization of the opposition to the societies, and his suggestion that the societies provided the machinery for developing party organization. This last point will be discussed later in this dissertation, but the other three, which have a direct bearing on the formation of the societies and on what I consider to be a questionable interpretation of the period--at least as far as New York City was concerned--are most pertinent for discussion at this time.

Link's main interpretive conclusion, as noted above, rested on his belief that although the Democratic societies were modeled in part after the Jacobin clubs of France they were influenced at least as much by certain English societies and American Revolutionary organizations, particularly the Sons of Liberty. In fact, Link believed that the Democratic societies appeared as part of a resurgence of American Revolutionary feeling rather than as a direct result of French Revolutionary developments. Despite this belief, Link, himself, constantly

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[33]See n. 32 of this chapter.

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stressed the importance of Genêt and French events to the mood that provided the basis for the establishment of those American societies. Genêt, Link noted correctly, arrived in America with open-ended instructions allowing him considerable freedom of action. The societies seemed, in Link's words, "to be lending their support to a preconceived plan, by supplying leadership, provisions, and organized encouragement." Furthermore, "because of mutual economic interests, combined with Francophile idealism, the republicans [who supplied the general membership of the Societies] were willing to incorporate into their programs collaboration with France and all aid to the French Revolution."[34] Clearly then, Link's own words show, and my own research confirms, that without French Revolutionary fervor and Genêt's activities, the formation of the Democratic Societies, beyond the first tentative one, would have been an unlikely development in either 1793 or 1794.[35]

As to the second point at issue, Link used his statistics to show that "the broad base of the pyramidic structure formed by the membership of the popular societies, was composed of the so-termed 'lower order' of society, the 'swinish multitude,' the 'subterranean

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[34]Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 19-22, 135-35, 145; also pp. 125-30.

[35]For confirmation of this view see statements quoted in this dissertation from such diverse sources as "Gundebert," supra, pp. 145-146; C. Lagarenne, supra, pp. 190-91; Citizen Genêt, supra, p. 213; "A Citizen of New York," infra, p. 274; "Communications," infra, pp. 274-75; as well as in countless statements by Noah Webster sprinkled throughout the remaining pages of this thesis. See also the confirmatory statement by Alfred F. Young, The Democratic Republicans of New York, the Origins; 1763-1797 (Chapel Hill: U. of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Va., 1967), p. 373, that "in February [1794] the Democratic Society of New York City made its public appearance essentially a response to the foreign policy crisis." Cf. Joseph I. Shulim, John Daly Burk: Irish Revolutionist and American Patriot (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1964), pp. 6-7.

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gentry.'" The term "lower order," according to Link, included "the poor farmers, the artisans, the mechanics, and the sailors." Speaking for New York City, I can most certainly say that neither artisans nor mechanics would have considered themselves aptly described by any of those phrases, and much more importantly, would not have been considered or described in that manner by any thinking New Yorker. Psychologically, and in many instances, economically, the mechanics and artisans of New York City were middle class with a strong sense of their place and their importance in New York society.[36]

Link goes on to state that by 1794, "the mechanics were on the alert, as evidenced by the existence of Mechanical Societies in all the principal cities. Important, here, is the fact that the Mechanics and Cooper Societies usually cooperated and worked closely with the democratic-republican clubs." Again, the New York City situation ran counter to his description. The formation of the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York antedated the year 1794 by almost a decade although the Society could not gain a charter from the state until 1792. The French Revolution had nothing to do with either the formation or development of that organization. Also, previous descriptions of local and state elections in this dissertation show that the Mechanics and Tradesmen (as well as the Cartmen's organization), tended to support Federalist-oriented candidates throughout

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[36]For a description of the "economically heterogeneous" New York mechanics of the 1790's see Staughton Lynd and Alfred Young, "After Carl Becker: The Mechanics and New York City Politics, 1774-1801," Labor History (Fall, 1964), 215-24.

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the early 1790's and, in fact, continued to do so until late in the decade.[37] Finally, in reference to the point of the status of mechanics and artisans, the very name of their society--Mechanics and Tradesmen--indicated a middle-class bias.[38]

Another point of disagreement with Link lies in his basic characterization of all opponents of the Democratic-Republican societies as "monocrats." Link stated that the democratic societies arose "as an antithesis" to the monarchical tendencies of men like Hamilton, William Willcocks, Oliver Wolcott, Rufus King, and Henry Knox. Link also pictured the militia and "the patriotic societies" (by which he meant the Democratic-Republican societies) as developing so close a relationship that he could well understand "the restlessness of the 'monocrats'" in the face of such action. Link described the militia as "clearly partisans of France" (but so were most Americans)--who were reluctant to be used in any fight against their fellow farmers, i.e., Whisky Rebellion. A check of militia activity during the Whisky Rebellion, however, showed anything but a reluctance to act.[39] Link then went on to attack the opponents of the Democratic societies as "counter-revolutionists" who used counter-societies such as the

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[37]For a clear picture of the tie-in between the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York and the Federalists of New York see Alfred Young, "The Mechanics and Jeffersonians: New York, 1789-1801," Labor History (Fall, 1964), 246-247.

[38]Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 91-94.

[39]See infra, Part V, ch. XIII, pp. 380-383.

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Cincinnati and the Chamber of Commerce to bring down the representatives of the people and the people, themselves. In New York, the Cincinnati had no real political role during the 1790's, produced toasts at their banquets and celebrations to which no republican could have feared to raise his goblet, and elected George Clinton as their president immediately after his controversial election victory in 1792. As for the Chamber of Commerce, they were an economic pressure group whose interests often lay opposite to that of the Democratic societies, so no one should be surprised at their record of opposition to the latter.[40]

Finally, Link attacked the Federalist press as the most significant opposition force whose main task was "to annihilate democracy in every form." Singling out Fenno's Gazette of the United States and Webster's Minerva as examples of the Federalist press supported by merchants' funds, Link concluded his condemnation by stating that "except for a few notable exceptions, the greater part of American newspapers seemed to be lock, stock and barrel in the hands of the anti-democrats." Since "Democrat" was not an American term of endearment in the 1790's, Link exact words were doubtless true. But the feeling here is that Link meant "anti-republican" for "anti-democratic," since he seemed to use those two words interchangeably. If that feeling is correct, however, Link's description would not hold true for the New York City press. In January, 1794, for example, the political division of the newspapers of New York City could be describ-

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[40]Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 91-94.

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ed as follows: "Federalist"--American Minerva, Daily Advertiser, and New York Daily Gazette; "Republican"--New York Journal, Diary; Independent "Republican"--Columbian Gazetteer.[41] Could the rest of the United States be so markedly different?[42]

Link's conclusions, stated in a strikingly partisan manner, seemed, in a sense, to mirror the increasingly bitter tone that was more and more characteristic of the politics of the mid-1790's. With the French Revolution acting as a major catalytic force, passion and ideology had already overwhelmed reason in its European home and seemed well on their way to doing the same in the United States. The "humane aims and critical methods" that one modern authority on the Enlightenment[43] has viewed as key aspects of that age were fast fading in the name of revolutionary necessity. How successfully the United States could hold to a policy of reasoned national interest in opposition to the outbursts of both republican revolutionary fervor and conservative fears of revolution would determine much about the nation's immediate and not-so-immediate future. The Democratic societies, with their ties to the French revolutionary experience and its passionate language, would pose a severe challenge for an administration

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[41]William Miller's article, "First Fruits of Republican Organization: Political Aspects of the Congressional Election of 1794," The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography, LXIII (Apr., 1939), 118-43, contained the same mistake as Link had made in relation to the political leanings of the New York press. Writing of the same period, Miller stated that "in New York Greenleaf's Journal was the only paper with republican sentiments." (Ibid., 124.)

[42]Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 182-83, 188-90.

[43]Peter Gay, The Enlightenment: An Interpretation (2 vols.; New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1969), II, Intro. xi.

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that prided itself on being guided by the most rational of all foreign and domestic policies, national self-interest.

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CHAPTER XI

"All legitimate power resides in the People"

On February 27, 1794, the Columbian Gazetteer carried three announcements and one document of major local and national interest. The retaking of Toulon by the French government was again reported; Citizen Joseph Fauchet arrived in the country to replace Citizen Genêt as representative of the French Republic[1] and was introduced to the President and the new Secretary of State, Edmund Randolph; and the "Republican" citizens of New York were requested to meet at the Tontine Coffee House on that day in order to send resolutions to their representatives in Congress in reference to "the insults, embarrassments and injuries offered to the Commerce of our Country by Britain and her savage allies." In addition, the Gazetteer published the Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York. On the same day,

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[1]The instructions of the French commissioners, of whom Fauchet was the chief, included orders for the arrest of Genêt and his return to France as a prisoner. The executive branch was united in its decision to save Genêt from a trip back to France and the guillotine. A statement by Rufus King--who discussed the question with Washington and who, along with John Jay, had been particularly vilified by Genêt and his supporters over the issue of Genêt's appeal from the President to the people--briefly summarized the feelings behind the decision: "So long as were in danger from his Intrigues, we wished him ill--that no longer existing we felt compassion and were anxious he should not be sacrificed." (Statement in King's handwriting, Feb., 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 478.) For further discussion of this point, particularly in reference to the fate of Consul Hauterive, see Charles E. Baker, "President Washington Says 'No' to Forcible Repatriation," NYHSQ, XXXIII (Jan., 1953), 59-63.

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the Daily Advertiser printed a letter from "A Citizen of New York" who strongly attacked the Democratic societies. They were accused of joining in correspondence with one another and seeking to produce a network in imitation of the Jacobin Clubs of France from which, he asserted, they were derived. Their purpose, "A Citizen" contended, was to control the representatives of the people and to govern the community themselves.[2]

On that one day, there was thus presented to the reading public announcements and discussion of what were and would be the major issues and themes of the months of February through May 1794. And each one was a by-product of the French Revolution. They included the war within and without France; a change in French ministers based on a changing revolutionary government at home; a local meeting brought about by events created by the French Revolution and the war of the combined powers against France; and a heated controversy produced by an organization that most believed was formed basically through the influence of French revolutionary events and actions.

The New York branch of the Democratic Society was swept into controversy even before it presented itself to the public. In the Minerva, a writer spoke of "the dark and mysterious proceedings of certain popular societies" and called Citizen Genêt "the father" of the American version of those societies. The writer used as evidence the accusation made against Genêt by the National Convention of "his being

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[2]Columbian Gazetteer, Feb. 27, 1794; "A Citizen of New York," Daily Advertiser, Feb. 27, 1794. See supra, pp.265-271, for this writer's views on the origins of the Democratic societies.

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the chief of a club."[3] Others, not unsympathetic towards the planned society, sought clarification of its goals. One such was "A Democrat of 1777," who asked and answered his own questions. He came to the conclusion that the new society could not have been formed in opposition to that true democratic society, Tammany, nor could it be an enemy of the general government, in other words, anti-federalist, nor would any but "tried patriots" be likely to be allowed to join, thus keeping out "Nova Scotia and White-washed Whigs." Since "A Democrat of 1777" had taken the trouble to ask the questions--even though he supplied some of his own answers--it was only fitting that the new organization, itself, should provide its own set of answers.[4]

On February 19, 1794, the New York Journal, in the largest possible type, printed the "Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York." The document was signed by T. Wortman, Secretary. Tunis Wortman, who was to become an increasingly important figure in local Republican Party circles as the decade progressed, already figured prominently as a leading "Republican" theorist. Based on a knowledge of several of his works on free speech and libel, it might well be assumed that Wortman was not merely a recording secretary but the actual intellectual force behind the preamble of the Constitution of the New York Democratic Society.[5]

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[3] "Communications," American Minerva, Feb. 19, 1794.

[4] "A Democrat of 1777," Diary, Feb. 11, 1794.

[5] "Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York," New York Journal, Feb. 19, 1794, and the same reprinted in the Columbian Gazetteer, Feb. 27, 1794. For a decidedly favorable view of Tunis Wortman's efforts in the area of civil liberties and libel laws see Leonard W. Levy, "Liberty and the First Amendment: 1790-1800," American Historical Review, LXVIII (Oct., 1962), 22-37. Levy called

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The preamble began with the declaration that "all legitimate power resides in the People, who have at all times the natural and inherent RIGHT to amend, alter, or abolish the form of Government which they have instituted." So obvious had that idea become, according to the author of the document, that it was "a TRUTH" which needed no buttressing or further explanation "in this enlightened age and country." The object of the society was simply "to support and perpetuate the EQUAL RIGHTS OF MAN" and all actions of the association would be directed towards a furtherance of that goal. The members of the society promised to act with "the moderation and obedience inseparable from GOOD CITIZENS," but they let it be known that they had the right "to constantly express our sentiments, as well of our PUBLIC OFFICERS, as their MEASURES." Since the New York Republican Party would increasingly accept these views as basic tenets of their belief in the months and years ahead, the political importance of this Democratic Society preamble cannot be understated. As for the question of admission and qualifications, the Constitution of the Democratic Society noted that no one might be a member "unless he is a firm and steadfast friend of the EQUAL RIGHTS OF MAN." The membership would clearly make the decision on an individual basis. As for titles, there were to be none except those descriptive of actual office held, "to which title . . . the general name of Citizen shall be prefixed."[6]

Any political organization launched with the fanfare which

Wortman's A Treatise Concerning Political Enquiry, and the Liberty of the Press (New York: n.p., 1800), "an American masterpiece, the only equivalent on this side of the Atlantic to Milton and Mill."

[6]"Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York," New York Journal, Feb. 19, 1794.

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greeted the birth of the New York Democratic Society might well have expected reactions of the strongest sort--and that is exactly what the society produced. One letter writer, remarking on "the political complexion" of the society's members, asserted that the society consisted of those "who in general seem unfriendly" to the present government of the United States.[7] In addition, the members appeared "devoted to the prevailing sentiments in France, and attached to Democracy." To the writer, democracy was synonymous with "faction, ambition, . . . and caprice." Pure democracy, he went on, was an impracticable form of government for this country and to be avoided as a curse. The writer warned that the Democratic Society had the wrong form of government as its goal for the United States. It was the representative form that had and should continue to guide us.[8] That view was also held by "A Citizen" who was not unfriendly to the new society but warned against those who, in the name of patriotism, liberty and equality, committed acts of self-aggrandizement and arbitrary power. As an example, "A Citizen" pointed to the French National Convention where those supposed patriots, Danton and Robespierre, "delude the unwary people." The Democratic Society should beware of such patriots.[9]

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[7]The writer in the American Minerva did not have a list of Democratic Society members, nor was a list ever published. Word-of-mouth, however, must have made the leadership and even general membership of that society a matter of public knowledge and the president and secretary of the society were known by the fact that their names were attached to most of the society's public pronouncements. The secretary, Tunis Wortman, has already been noted; the president was the well-known New York "Republican," Commodore James Nicholson.

[8]American Minerva, Feb. 28, 1794

[9]"A Citizen," Diary, Mar. 3, 1794.

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The focus of the attack on the Democratic Society turned more and more on the question of where the power lay, and where it should lie, in the American form of government. All seemed to agree that power started from the people, but more and more those who could be styled "Republicans" viewed all legitimate power as residing in the people, who had, according to the Democratic Society's preamble, "at all times the natural and inherent RIGHT to amend, alter, or abolish the form of Government which they have instituted." That belief was sharply attacked by an "Old Whig" writing in the Minerva. The essayist strongly implied that once the people had elected their representatives they gave up all their rights of decision until the time of the next election.[10] It was a view that ran strongly counter to the idea of outdoor meetings, all of which had been previously called for by the "Federalists," and the meetings of the Chamber of Commerce, which had been called to influence and support such administration policies as the Proclamation of Neutrality. By holding to this stand ever more strongly in the future the "Federalists" would finally seal their own fate. They who had been first in the field contending for public support--so necessary to sustain a government between elections--now often seemed only too willing to begin the process of disengagement that would ultimately prove so detrimental to their chances to retain that popular support required for political success in a republic.

That view was made even more specific by "Civis," writing in the Daily Advertiser of February 27, 1794. "Civis" had reference to

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[10]"Old Whig," American Minerva, Feb. 25, 1794.

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the meeting that was to be held that day in order to prepare instructions to New York's representative in Congress regarding injuries sustained on the high seas through the acts of England and her allies. He called such a meeting both "improper [and] impolitic." He did not deny that Great Britain had done us injustice, but he did insist that our government should be allowed to act freely on their own information. Our representatives, he believed, should be allowed to act in their legislative capacity without instructions sent from home. Why, "Civis" asked, should a group of citizens from New York City make the laws and decisions for the rest of the country? Leave that action to our duly-elected representatives, he concluded.[11]

The meeting to which "Civis" referred was the culmination of several weeks of activity at home fed by a worsening situation for American shipping abroad. During February the temper of the citizens of the port city of New York underwent a severe change in mood. A new feeling of pessimism was wedded to the willingness of some of the staunchest supporters of neutrality to call either for implementation of strong measures against English shipping and goods or to prepare for war.[12] What had produced this sudden escalation of feeling against the British was the almost unlimited number of condemnations of American vessels in the West Indies brought about by the British Orders-in-Council of November 6, 1793 but which were not made public until late

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[11] "Civis," Daily Advertiser, Feb. 27, 1794.

[12] See, for example, letters of John Alsop to King, Feb. 11, 1794, NYHS, King Papers, H. LeRoy to King, Feb. 13, 1794, and James Watson to King, Feb. 23, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 544-46; Elkanah Watson to King, Feb. 19, 1794, NYHS, Wm. & J. Constable LB.

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December.[13]

With the question of war and peace once again a very live issue some New Yorkers began to feel that a general expression of the public mood was necessary. "A. R.," in the Diary, noted that Great Britain and Spain had ignored our neutrality by abusing our ships and commerce, while France, our great friend and ally, was fighting for liberty and equality--a fight in which we would soon have to take a clear part despite the horrors war brought in its train. "A. R." could feel the "spirit of seventy-six" reanimating the people. Then, as if struck by a sudden inspiration, he called for a town meeting, "say Thursday next," to which all citizens would be invited, in order to discuss ways in which to best aid our commerce and, if possible, to keep us from declaring war. Let us, he continued, tell our representatives from this and other districts of the state what the sentiments of the people are in this matter. Apparently the idea caught on at the moment it was proposed, for in the very same issue of the Diary, "A Friend to Good Order" asked that peace and good order be observed at the meeting which was to be held the following day at the Tontine Coffee House. The meeting, however, suddenly seemed to have taken on

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[13]See "Instructions to the British Ministers to the United States, 1791-1812," Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the year 1936, ed. by Bernard Mayo (Washington: G.P.O., 1941) III, 47, n. 10, for a summary of the Order-in-council of Nov. 6, 1793 and its replacement of Jan. 8, 1794. The British attitude towards neutral trade was made clear in a letter from the British Foreign Minister, Lord Grenville, to George Hammond, dated Jan. 10, 1794, and published in Ibid., III, 48, in which the former stated: "A war between two Nations ought as little as possible to prejudice the usual and accustomed Commerce of a third not engaged in the Quarrel. But the latter ought not, on the other hand, to desire or claim from the War new rights or pretentions to the prejudice of either belligerent Party."

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an exclusivity not envisioned by "A. R." "A Friend to Good Order" warned "such persons as know themselves to have been and continue to be enemies to our revolution, and are at present enemies to the revolution of France" not to "intermeddle in this business, as times grow serious." Serious enough, apparently to lead to the demand that any opposition remain silent.[14]

The two week period that began with the meeting of February 27, 1794 was among the most active, turbulent and exciting in the history of the city of New York since the end of the American Revolution. Within the scope of this work, the only previous periods that were comparable to their sense of urgency and barely-suppressed violence were the early summer days of 1792 when the canvassers' dispute was at its height and the August days of 1793 when the Boston fought the Ambuscade and Citizen Genêt arrived in New York for the first time. In the years that lay ahead only the dispute over the ratification of the Jay Treaty in the summer of 1795 would again reproduce those feelings to the fullest. In each instance outdoor meetings provided a focus and an outlet for public feeling. The public meetings of 1792 and 1793, however, were called by the forces that might now be labelled Federalist, while the meetings of 1794 and 1795 were organized at the urging of a newly-developing Republican leadership that would be given a strong ideological boost by the Democratic Society of New York.[15]

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[14]"A. R.," Diary, Feb. 25, 1794; "A Friend to Good Order," Ibid., Feb. 26, 1794.

[15]The capitalized words Federalist and Republican, when used to denote a political group or party by this writer, have always had quotation marks surrounding them, viz. "Federalist" and "Republi-

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Another distinction among the four public meetings was that the first was brought about by a local domestic issue while the driving force behind the meetings of 1793, 1794 and 1795 was provided by foreign affairs. The revolutionary fervor of Republican France, which at first produced only minor ripples on the surface of American political and social life, was now in the process of creating tidal waves on this side of the Atlantic. As a result, the opposing political forces in this country took on larger-than-life characteristics for their political enemies, who ultimately reacted in diametrically opposite ways. The Republicans gradually gathered the mass of the public unto their bosom, while the Federalists ran in terror from involvement with the "mob." In this additional way did the French Revolution exert its spell over American politics and leave it a very different thing from what it had been before.

On Thursday, February 27, a "numerous [italics mine] meeting of Citizens was held in the street before the Federal-Hall to take into consideration the propriety of expressing their sense on the state of our commerce." In that manner did the Minerva and the Daily Advertiser present the bare outlines of the meeting. The Journal ex-

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can." The reason was that they were unofficial names that stood for positions and attitudes that would ultimately be given official standing by both historians and the groups, themselves. Therefore, until the Federalists and Republicans were officially willing to label themselves by those names, this writer was unwilling to "jump the gun" on those designations. In New York City, however, the local election of April 1794 provided that moment. The newspapers, for the first time, contained lists of individuals running on the Federal Republican ticket (Federalists) and on the Real Republican ticket (Republicans). Since the outdoor meeting of February 27, 1794 and the formation of the Democratic Society of New York set in motion the chain of events which led directly to that election campaign and which set the tone of that campaign, it seemed fitting to drop the quotation marks at this point.

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pressed the purpose somewhat differently: to discuss injuries to our commerce by Britain and "her savage allies."[16] But that difference in wording was minor in comparison to the tortures that the word "numerous" was put through by the various viewers and participants. Loudon's Diary, a Republican paper, mentioned 1500 as the number of those in attendance, while a correspondent in the Federalist Minerva, one day later, called the figure too large by half. The extreme Republican Journal produced still a different set of figures. Greenleaf reported that at least 2000 people attended the meeting that was originally to be held in the Tontine Coffee House, thereby forcing the participants to meet in front of City Hall. Herman LeRoy, in a letter to Rufus King, calculated the figure "nearer to 500 than the 1500 as Loudon mentions." LeRoy went on to down-grade those who were present, noting that "none of our Merchants attended" and adding that he "saw the whole mass but did not know 10 characters among them." Finally, "A. B." in the Federalist Daily Advertiser insisted that there were not above 1000 present and over one half of them seemed to have been led by curiosity. The clear split in attitude towards the meeting was briefly but clearly stated by Noah Webster's own diary entry for February 27: "Meeting of Democrats at City Hall."[17]

The crowd, which gathered at noon in front of the Tontine Coffee House, had moved en masse west on Wall Street to the open area

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[16]American Minerva, Feb. 27, 1794; Daily Advertiser, Feb. 28, 1794; New York Journal, Mar. 1, 1794.

[17]Diary, Feb. 28, 1794; American Minerva, Feb. 28, 1794; New York Journal, Mar. 1, 1794; letter, H. LeRoy to King, Feb. 28, 1794, NYHS, King Papers; "A. B.," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 1, 1794; Diary of Noah Webster, NYPL, Feb. 27, 1794.

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where Broad Street met Wall, in front of what was Federal or City Hall. They heard, if they were close enough, a speech by Peter R. Livingston, a relative of the Chancellor and a future Grand Sachem of Tammany, which was described by one unfriendly non-participant as "lengthy and inflamatory [sic]." Livingston charged, among other things, that there was a large "deficiency" in the federal Treasury owing to the Indian Wars, which were being carried on because the British had instigated the Indians. Another major speaker was White Matlack, who had been a leader in organizing the meeting in honor of Genêt during the previous August and in forming the Democratic Society of New York. Matlack gave as his opinion that no debts owed to the British should be paid until the Western posts were delivered up.[18]

A committee of twenty names was then chosen to draw up resolutions intended, it was believed, "to instruct Watts [John Watts, the New York City Congressman] to vote for Madison's Resolutions."[19] The names were put forward by a group described as "friends to the rights of man," probably meaning the Democratic Society. The committee included such well known Republican figures as Peter R., Edward, and Brockholst Livingston, Commodore Nicholson, Dr. Samuel L. Mitchill, William Denning, Samuel Osgood, White Matlack, and General Gates. The only names that were Federalist in background were Nicholas Cruger and William S. Smith, the son-in-law of John Adams. One writer assumed that the last two names were "thrown in to give a better colouring to

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[18]Letter, LeRoy to King, Feb. 28, 1794, NYHS, King Papers. See also "A. B.," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 1, 1794, and American Minerva, Feb. 27, 1794.

[19]Letter, LeRoy to King, Feb. 28, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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the affair," although neither was present and Cruger was not expected to serve. The committee was to report to the public the following Thursday at a second outdoor meeting.[20]

As soon as it had become clear that the City Hall meeting was to end up a partisan affair it also became clear that the results would be enmeshed in controversy. Articles that appeared on March 1st in the Minerva and the Journal showed only too well the grounds for division that had already been rather clearly worked out over the preceding months. A letter in the Minerva, signed "Peace," noted that the American government had had enough trouble in attempting to subdue the Indian tribes without the direct intervention of England. What would happen if the latter became directly involved? Furthermore, why had England been the only country called to task of late? Had not France attacked our shipping and condemned our goods as well? "Peace" concluded by insisting that the public must learn to rely upon our own wise leaders to conduct us through the storm. The Journal's response to the meeting included a cautionary word to any "Aristocrats" who might have been listening. Greenleaf praised the zeal and unanimity of the participants at the meeting, whose action "augurs a change--downfal [sic] of corrupt, hireling, and aristocratic politics, and SUPPORT of a Republican government, in which is protected the Rights of Man." The editor was happy to note that the "Aristocrats" took the advice given to them and stayed away, "some of them because they were aristocrats, and others because they scorn to mix with the swinish multitude!"[21]

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[20]"A. B.," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 1, 1794.

[21]"Peace," American Minerva, Mar. 7, 1794; New York Journal, Mar. 1, 1794.

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These reactions were mild, however, compared to those produced by a work called Democracy that was published within a week of the February 27th meeting. As a result of that publication, "A Real Friend to the Rights of Man," in the New York Journal, warned the tories that if they continued to alienate the people's affections from France and the rights of man, they would pay the consequences. "A Real Friend" apparently felt that tories had both the ability and the power to influence the public to fall out of love with France--something of an over-statement, as the facts have shown. What had angered "A Real Friend to the Rights of Man" to the extent shown by his threat was the asserted report, which he claimed came from the tories, of the mass murder of the inhabitants of Toulon by the forces of the National Convention, and a "late tory fabrication," that epic poem called Democracy which ridiculed "the friends of freedom."[22]

That poem was a scathing satire which, in the words of its author, was written "in consequence of a tumultuous meeting of the citizens" of New York, "instigated by a few popular demogogues, for the purpose of prescribing to Congress the adoption of hostile measures against Great Britain." Apparently "too hot to handle," a second part was prepared, but, again, according to the author, "the timidity of the booksellers, and the peculiar circumstances of the times prevented its publication."[23] This savage work, which Walter Rutherford

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[22]"A Real Friend to the Rights of Man," New York Journal, Mar. 8, 1794.

[23]Brockholst Livingston, "Democracy," The Magazine of History, extra number, no. 84, XXI, no. 4 (1922), 43-53; Aquiline Nimble-Chops, Democrat (pseud.), Democracy, as listed in the Card Catalog of the New York Public Library. An advertisement that appeared in the Daily Advertiser of Mar. 10, 1794, explained some of "the timidity of the book-

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called "scurrolous [sic] and severe" against the Livingstons and some other characters, was signed "Aquiline Nimble-Chops, Democrat." The Magazine of History, without explanation, listed Brockholst Livingston as the author, but why a leading Republican would have written such a work should be beyond the ken of anyone with knowledge of the period.[24]

Regardless of the author or any personal implications contained within the work but simply as a severe Federalist account of the outdoor meeting of February 27th, it was fully capable of arousing the ire of "A Real Friend to the Rights of Man" or any red-blooded Republican. The work opened with Anarchy and Faction celebrating the meeting as an opportunity to go to war with England. First, however, England was to be used by this country in order to gain as much credit as possible. When England had been "sponged off" as much as could be done, the forces of anarchy and faction could break faith and go to war. War with England, the Algerines, and the western Indians might lead to bankruptcy but that was the way to live. After all, the writer

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sellers" in reference to Democracy. Signed by one of the booksellers, John Reed, the advertisement noted that some booksellers in the city were being pressured into not selling Democracy, which he called "a satire on the meeting outside Federal Hall." But, in the name of freedom of the press, Reed announced that he would publish an edition the next day. He would prefer if the author appeared--his name would be kept in the strictest secrecy--but whether he did or not, publish he would.

[24]Letter, Walter Rutherford to John Rutherford, Mar. 12, 1794, NYHS, Rutherford Coll. If the writer of this dissertation were to guess at a more likely author, one who knew the Livingstons well, opposed democracy as the rule of the mob, had a proven literary ability, a philosophical turn of mind, an acid wit, and was a long-standing Federalist, he would nominate the Chancellor's brother-in-law, General John Armstrong. But it is just as likely that one of the younger literary lights of the New York Magazine or of the Calliopean Society was the anonymous writer.

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pointedly noted, the people could then take over the direct reins of government, themselves, especially if those two fine fellows, Anarchy and Faction, were allowed to have their way. In this manner did more than one Federalist now view open meetings and the increasing demand, fostered by such organizations as the Democratic Society, that the people had the right to advise their representatives of what they wanted and that their representatives were then expected to follow those desires.[25]

In the week between the first meeting, which, as noted, set up a committee to produce resolutions expressive of public feeling, and the second meeting, a certain amount of jockeying for position occurred. The Chamber of Commerce, whom Thomas Greenleaf would probably have considered among those aristocrats he scorned, decided to hold a meeting of its own. Herman LeRoy supposed that it would determine to present a memorial to Congress signed by the merchants advocating protection against British actions. But when the Chamber did meet on March 4 it appeared, much to LeRoy's sorrow, "that no application had been made . . . to complain to the Executive as to injuries committed on our Flag by the Nations at war." To LeRoy, this showed that the meeting was "not composed of great sufferers," and he surmised that those who called the meeting "evidently . . . had a different object in View."[26] If LeRoy was not satisfied with the outcome, Webster's Minerva was happy to see that at the Chamber meeting only one complaint was laid before them as to injuries at sea. The Minerva viewed

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[25]Brockholst Livingston, "Democracy," 43-59.

[26]Letter, H. LeRoy to King, Feb. 28, 1794, NYHS, King Papers; LeRoy to King, Mar. 5, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 548.

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the result as proof that popular clamour again proved to be too great for the cause. The Chamber, however, did appoint a committee of its own to report on the problems which then faced American commerce.[27]

The report of the committee appointed by the outdoor meeting was due on Thursday, March 6, but the newspapers had it available for Wednesday publication. The Federalist reaction was clearly one of relief. The report was praised in the Minerva for its moderate tone, for its backing of the federal government, and for the fact that it could not do harm. Nicholas Low, the Federalist merchant, considered the resolutions "of the Party that assembled here" as more "Inoffencive [sic]" than might have been expected, while John Lawrence added interestingly that they were "produced by some moderate men, who were attached to the general Government." From the Republican side, the Journal called the resolutions "firm but decent" in spirit and remarked that they could "give no offence to any but those whose approbation freeman are not solicitous to obtain."[28]

The resolutions of the committee chaired by William Denning were six in number. They called for a strict guarantee from Britain and her allies of American neutrality rights; no spoliation or depredation on non-contraband items; compensation for any such unjust seizures; return of the military posts on the Northwest frontier, which Britain held in violation of the peace treaty; praise of the United States government for its actions up to that point but a request that

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[27]American Minerva, Mar. 5, 1794.

[28]American Minerva, Mar. 5, 1794; letter, Nicholas Low to King, Mar. 7, 1794, NYHS, King Papers; John Lawrence to King, Mar. 8, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 549; New York Journal, Mar. 8, 1794.

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more be done; and special measures to be taken to aid in the defense of the country, especially of its ports and harbors. The committee expressed a willingness to pay a higher tax for that purpose.[29]

Not to be outdone by the committee's work, "Five Thousand Sound Republicans," or at least someone who felt capable of speaking for that number, wrote his own resolutions for the Federalist Minerva. The four that he included were very similar to those produced by the committee. They could be summarized as Peace--yes, war--no; resent all insults by England against the American flag and ships; demand full indemnification for losses to England; but first try negotiations. War would fall most severely upon the laboring class, "Five Thousand" suggested. There were now, he estimated, at least 3000 laboring men in New York City whose labor was worth $200.00 a year. War would reduce the price of their labor, bring about a revival in speculation, and cause loss of blood, families, and morals. "Five Thousand" concluded that he was confident that the United States government was capable of carrying out the necessary acts to preserve the country as it was. For the moment, on the basis of both sets of resolutions, Republicans and Federalists seemed agreed on the steps that the federal government was expected to take.[30]

By noon on March 6, 1794, a not inconsiderable part of the New York City population had made their way to the intersection of Broad and Wall Streets for the second outdoor meeting of that season. Among the crowd was Alexander Anderson, who wrote in his diary that he

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[29]Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 6, 1794.

[30]"Five Thousand Sound Republicans," American Minerva, Mar. 6, 1794.

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went "to hear some resolutions relative to instructing Congress, pass'd by the People, but not being able to see or hear anything for the crowd, I returned--"[31] Fortunately for the success of the meeting few others followed Anderson's lead. If 5000 sound republicans did not quite make the meeting, the Journal reported that over 2000 citizens did. The resolutions of the committee were agreed to unanimously, according to the Journal, which added the comment that the "unanimity and moderation that prevailed, afforded the highest pleasure to every friend to order."[32]

Thus, at the end of a week that included two outdoor meetings and one of an indoor variety, both sides could have some reason for pleasure. The Democratic Society and its Republican Party friends were able to carry off both outdoor meetings "with the greatest order and decorum," while the Federalists found themselves easily able to live with the resolutions that were forthcoming from those meetings. Some Federalists, including Rufus King, had earlier felt that some kind of memorial to Congress might be necessary to counter expected republican action; but when the resolutions at the meeting proved so inoffensive, Nicholas Low, for one, could report that "my present Persuasion is that we can obtain a great number of subscribers [for a memorial] but it will imitate the Jacobins--and put them possibly upon some other d_mn_able Projects." The Federalists were, at that moment, to use another choice phrase, very much willing "to let sleeping dogs lie."[33]

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[31]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 6, 1794.

[32]New York Journal, Mar. 8, 1794.

[33]Letter, N. Low to King, Mar. 7, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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For the public-at-large, however, there was ample opportunity to forgo sleep during those early days of March, 1794. The time was filled with enough events to please the most insatiable democrat. On March 3, in the midst of all the other activities, the Old American Company presented what turned out to be the "smash hit" of the season, "a serious opera" called Tammany, or the Indian Chief. Actually more of a play with music and songs, it was the work of "a lady of New York," a Mrs. Ann Julia Hatton. Mrs. Hatton, a member of the famous Kemble family of actors and sister of Mrs. Siddons, had arrived in New York at the end of the first week of 1793.[34]

According to William Dunlap, Mrs. Hatton "introduced herself to the American world" by writing the play Tammany, but she had already often appeared in print as "Julia," the authoress of a number of republican-sounding poems. Mrs. Hatton presented her play to the Tammany Society, which, in turn, recommended it to John Hodgkinson, the leading actor of the Old American Company. He then presented the work to the managers of the company. Dunlap here noted that the managers "would not have dared to reject any thing from the sons of St. Tammany," who even then were an organization to be reckoned with. The managers, however, probably saw a good thing in the "serious opera," which Dunlap called "seasoned high with spices hot from Paris, and swelling with rhodomontade, for the sonorous voice of Hodgkinson,

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[34]The last lines of the epilogue of Mrs. Hatton's opera were taken from a poem by "Julia" called On Looking at New York, Jan. 7, 1793. Apparently "Julia" was Ann Julia Hatton and January 7, 1793, rather than the fall of 1793, the time given by William Dunlap in his History of the American Theater, I, 200, was the exact date of her arrival in the United States.

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who was to represent the Indian saint."[35]

If the songs are any indication, for the dialogue is now missing, the "spices hot from Paris" had grown considerably blander in transit. The main characteristic conveyed today by the songs is that of naivete bordering on puerility. One sample, chosen only for the last line, which is the closest thing to a political or social statement in the songs, shows the simplicity of approach:

> Farewell then ye woods which have witness'd our flame.
> Let time on his wings bear our record of fame.
> Together we die, for our spirits disdain,
> Ye white children of Europe your rankling chain.[36]

The play was set in an idyllic Indian world of South America--at least the Orinoco River was mentioned. The Spaniards arrived, caused trouble, deception followed, and a heroic battle against great odds was fought, bringing death to the Indian hero and heroine--Tammany and Mañana. The play concluded with an apotheosis in which the nobility of the hero and heroine brought Spaniard and Indian together as the souls of the noble pair wafted heavenward. Though simple in outline, the play contained at least one major paradox--the feeling of Americans towards the Indian. Admittedly, there was a great deal of difference in attitude towards the Indian by the frontier settler, on the one hand, and the New Yorker in his port city, on the other. Most Americans, however, had long since given up the European romantic view

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[35]Dunlap, History of the American Theater, I, 200-01. See also Edwin P. Kilroe, Saint Tammany and the Origin of the Society of Tammany or Columbian Order in the City of New York (New York: M. B. Brown Co., 1913), pp. 194-95.

[36]Ann Julia Hatton, "The Songs of Tammany, or the Indian Chief," The Magazine of History, Extra number, no. 170, XLIII, No. 2 (1931), 67.

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of the "noble savage," preferring the noun without the adjective. Outcroppings remained with such groups as the Tammany Society who took legend and transformed it into pleasant and harmless mythology. Mrs. Hatton, as the new "Poetess-Laureate" of American Democracy, could well afford to include the charming myth in her work, especially as it was dedicated to the Tammany Society and set in a safely exotic locale. For after all, the white men were Spaniards and the Indians lived in a lush Inca-like paradise, which was a goodly mental and actual distance from the western frontier of New York State where England was being accused of stirring up the "savages." But then, paradox is one of the more interesting aspects of history and life.[37]

Parenthetically as well as paradoxically, however, Tammany, or the Indian Chief was not really about Indians at all.[38] In the prologue to the opera, written by the future Tammany leader, Richard B. Davis, who also belonged to the Calliopean Literary Society, the members of the audience were asked to substitute other actions for those of the actual Indian characters:

> When TAMMANY his country's champion glows,
> 'Thus (says the patriot) WASHINGTON arose,
> And when his hand illumes the fatal pyre
> 'Thus glory saw MONTGOMERY expire.

If those hints were not clear enough, the prologue, in the rolling tones of John Hodgkinson, continued:

> In each heroic act we fondly trace
> Those features which Columbia's worthies grace.
> In every age with exultation, see
> Columbia's sons determin'd to be Free.

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[37]Hatton, "The Songs of Tammany," 57-69; Kilroe, St. Tammany, p. 94.

[38]See the Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 6, 1794 for a statement of this view.

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Or shed their dearest blood for Liberty.
And O! may this exalted spirit glow
Long as the rolling tide of time shall flow.[39]

The epilogue, which was written by the authoress, herself, also made clear that the play concerned more than simple Indian life. Moving from the national to the international scene, Mrs. Hatton took the prologue one step further:

You will applaud (tho' from a female pen)
The scene that points to view the Rights of Men.
. . . . . .
Ne'er on this soil shall Freedom's flame expire;
The sun shall catch it fervid from his fire;
From shore to shore the glorious fire shall roll,
Till all are Free, from 'Indus to the Pole!

The lady then concluded with a couplet that must have sent her audience out cheering:

'Let ermin'd tyrants from their thrones be hurl'd,
And blest Equality embrace the world.[40]

According to a review in the Daily Advertiser, the audience did indeed greet the opera "with unbounded applause," and all republicans were asked to support a play filled with "simple and virtuous sentiments."[41] William Dunlap, however, found the work to be "literally a tissue of bombast." He also quoted with approval from a review which noted that a "ruse" was used "to collect an audience for the support of the piece, by circulating a report that a party had been made up to to hiss it." The public audience for the new opera was also critici-

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[39]Calliopean Society Record, NYPL, Dec. 9, 1793; "Prologue to the new Opera of Tammany; or the Indian Chief," New York Magazine, V (Mar., 1794), 187-88.

[40]"Epilogue to the New Opera of Tammany," New York Magazine, V (Apr., 1794), 252-53.

[41]"A Calm Observer," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 7, 1794.

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zed as being made up of "the poorer class of mechanics and clerks," and of bankrupts "who might be much better employed than in disturbing a theatre." Dunlap had reference to a noisy scene that occurred before the curtain went up because James Hewitt, the orchestra's leader, was not ready with a popular tune which was requested from the audience. Clearly, a play whose basic function was "to split the ears of the groundlings," and which attracted an audience "who, for the most part, are capable of nothing but inexplicable dumb shows and noise," and were, moreover, bent on political disturbance, was not a work that would have fit into Dunlap's ideal of a theater that was "a truly moral and cultural" experience.[42]

But that new public, which was sneered at by the most literate and literary of the reviewers, took Tammany to its heart as an expression of its feeling for the rights of man and for the role of its country in spreading the ideals contained within that phrase. One who had hoped to be a part of the Tammany audience was John Anderson, who recorded in his diary that he and his brother Alex had planned to see Tammany, but they had missed it so far. No family could have approached the theater with greater fear for their immortal souls than the Andersons. As Alexander Anderson wrote in his own diary in reference to theatergoing: "Sensible of the danger of frequenting such places, 'twas not without imploring the Divine protection that I enter'd there." If the Andersons desired to see Tammany, it must have meant a great deal to the average pious New Yorker for whom the theater was not a literary event but an experience which was meant to reinforce

[42]Dunlap, History of the American Theater, I, 209-10.

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his strongest ideals and feelings. Tammany, through its presentation of an idealized America which was in the process of bringing liberty to the world, and in its implied feeling of kinship with republican France, served just those emotions which most New Yorkers were feeling at that moment.[43]

Those feelings were reinforced still one more time during that very same week which had begun with the first outdoor meeting. The New York public had had two outdoor meetings and a successful republican play to stimulate them and now came the icing on the cake: official news of the retaking of Toulon by the French republicans. The words must have seemed doubly sweet to the New Yorker whose previous celebration had been cut short by reports that the recapture was only a rumor. Now it was the final touch to what was turning out to be a festival of sweets.

At such a moment it seems only fair to turn to Thomas Greenleaf, the editor of the Journal, for at least a sampling of what a true francophile was feeling at that moment. Under the heading "Victory," Greenleaf emoted:

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[43]Diary of John Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 13, 1794; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 12, 1794. In reference to audience reaction in the playhouse and the kind of audience that was attracted to the theater, another incident of the type that disturbed Dunlap on the night of the premiere of Tammany, or the Indian Chief occurred on the evening of March 8. John Hodgkinson was portraying a British soldier on stage when a member of the audience called him to accounts for wearing the red coat of a British officer. Hodgkinson explained that he was playing a person with a negative character and asked the audience if they would have preferred if he played the character as an American or Frenchman. Though the audience was quieted by Hodgkinson's explanation, there was no question but thatthe theater, as a reflection of the political and social world that surrounded it, was in for a volatile time over the next several years. (See "Verax," Daily Advertiser, Mar. 11, 1794.)

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> Vive la République Française--and may all the PEOPLE say, AMEN. After long and anxious expectations, the GLORIOUS NEWS of the RECAPTURE of TOULON by the patriotic citizen soldiers of France, is FULLY and UNEQUIVOCALLY confirmed.--Citizen Soldiers, with hearts inspired by Patriotism and Love of Country, have out-generalled, beaten, and degraded . . .

etc., etc. Greenleaf, continuing in that manner, concluded with the wish that the whole world should know that "our magnanimous allies" do what they do to establish the "RIGHTS OF MAN" and to destroy forever the "TYRANNIC SWAY" of the despots. In honor of the great victory the bells of New York rang and the guns of the battery fired "PEALS OF GRATULATION."[44]

In an apparently spontaneous generation of feeling, the people of New York greeted each other with outpourings of joy, filled the taverns with their boisterous pleasures, and kept up the day "with the conviviality and good fellowship, with the pleasing sensations of an event of such importance might inspire."[45] John Anderson, on his way home that evening, heard loud noises coming from the Tontine Coffee House and went to investigate. Instead of the usual trouble that such occasions had brought in the past, Anderson discovered a roomful of Englishmen and Frenchmen "dancing the carmagnole, round the American and French flags."[46]

Not every New Yorker, however, shared in that pleasureable feeling of brotherly conviviality. In fact, some found the whole celebration quite distasteful. What could bring out the curmudgeon in an

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[44] New York Journal, Mar. 8, 1794.

[45] Diary, Mar. 7, 1794 and Daily Advertiser, Mar. 8, 1794.

[46] Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 7, 1794.

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individual more than hearing bells ring and cannons fire all day in honor of an occasion that brings one no joy? Such was the fate of Herman LeRoy, who, writing to Rufus King in the midst of the din, grumbled that the bells were still being rung although it was already 6:00 P.M. The noise made him "feel disagreeable," and he wished that it could have been done "on some other occasion more to the benefit of mankind." He had heard that the surrender was owing to a disagreement between the Spaniards and the British, and wished that "they would quarrel themselves into a general peace, that we may not be disturbed here." LeRoy clearly had no faith that a victorious republican France would bring peace to the rest of Europe and to American commerce. He was also disturbed by a report that 4000 inhabitants of the town ("some say the number was 10 thousand") were "driven in a square and there massacred by the French when they took possession." How, LeRoy wondered, could our bells "celebrate an act wh. if true, disgraces human nature."[47]

The celebrations nevertheless continued in a more formal manner on March 10 according to a plan that seemed to be the handiwork of the Democratic Society. Public notice was given in the newspapers of a commemorating ceremony in honor of the glorious "RE-CAPTURE of TOULON" and other republican successes. Officers and soldiers of the militia who wished to attend were asked to do so in uniform. The plan was that they and other "Republican citizens" who attended would assemble at City Hall, proceed to the French consulate, where they would meet the French consul and French officers, and then go as a group to a

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[47]H. LeRoy to King, Mar. 7, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 548-49.

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dinner at Corré's Hotel on Broadway. Each militia officer would walk arm in arm with a French officer.[48] At noon on Monday, the tenth, the procession was formed, led by the French and American officers and followed by "a numerous body of Citizens supposed about 300." They paraded through the streets, accompanied by a band of musicians, with the flags of both nations intertwined, as one account said, "to denote the friendship and firm alliance between the two republics."[49] Also carried in the procession was the Liberty Cap, or as that report called it, the "sacred emblem of Liberty." Singing patriotic songs, the paraders reached Corré's Hotel where those who had tickets sat down to dinner.[50]

The dining celebrants produced a lively set of toasts which are well worth repeating for they not only present the state of mind of many of the people at that moment but also show the way in which the Democratic Society, by developing a cohesive group of Republicans, was preparing to beat the Federalists at their own organizational game. The volunteer toasts, which always followed at the close of the formally-planned toasts, sometimes gave a better idea of the political feelings aroused at a dinner. So it was in this case, where the following volunteer toasts were given:

1. Thomas Paine and all friends to the rights of man;
2. Democratic Societies;
3. Confusion to the politics of Wm. Smith of S. C. and all who

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[48]Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 10, 1794.

[49]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 10, 1794; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 10, 1794.

[50]Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 13, 1794.

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pursue his system of British measures.[51]

The celebrants, through these volunteer toasts, showed that they were not only honoring French victories but were also making clear their political allegiance to anti-administration forces like the Democratic Societies and the national opposition to such administration spokesmen as William L. Smith.[52]

The main body of toasts, after cheering the people of the United States and their president and the people of France and their Convention, continued in the following vein:

3. May the allied Republics of America and France be bound together by the indissoluble ties of Liberty, friendship, and justice. 6 cheers.
9. Success to the French fleets and armies. 9 cheers.
10. All true Republicans in Great Britain and Ireland--may their shackles be free. 9 cheers.
11. Re-capture of Toulon as a prelude to final extirpation of traitors and tyrants in the world. 12 cheers.
12. Free our brethren in Algiers and stings to G. B. 9 cheers.
13. The fallen heroes of France and America.

Most interesting of all, perhaps, was the toast which received the greatest number of cheers, eighteen in all. This toast included the wish that "the present Minister of the French Republic pursue the in-

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[51]The reference in the volunteer toasts to Wm. L. Smith of South Carolina concerned his speech in the House of Representatives in opposition to Madison's resolutions and in support of the necessity of continued trade with England. Using statistics supplied by Hamilton and, according to Hamilton's son, John Church Hamilton, a speech written by the Secretary of the Treasury, himself, Smith proved the most persuasive spokesman of the Federalist point of view at that moment in the House. He thus became a proper target for the Republican opposition. See John C. Hamilton, History of the Republic of the United States of America as traced in the writings of Alexander Hamilton and his Contemporaries (7 vols.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1857-64), V, 350.

[52]Columbian Gazetteer Extraordinary, Mar. 13, 1794. The volunteer toasts, which were generally offered by the Chair and by the honored guests, were often given on the "spur of the moment" and were often most indicative of the feelings of that moment.

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terest of his country with the same zeal and integrity as his predecessor Citizen Genêt." If, as I believe, the most important influence in the formation of the Democratic Societies was the French Revolution, this toast to Genêt is confirmation of that closeness which extended to the now-disgraced but most revolutionary representative of republican France.[53]

The Tammany Society also held a celebration on that day in honor of the re-capture of Toulon. Their toasts were of a much quieter nature, showing that the membership of Tammany and the Democratic Society was far from interchangeable as yet. The Tammany toasts called for the United States "to maintain an honorable peace" or, if that proved impossible, to engage in a successful war; they also asked that France gain an "honorable peace" and a firm republican government. Only three of the toasts received three cheers--quite a difference from the wild celebration that took place at Corré's Hotel. Those three were for the President of the United States, for Citizen Fauchet (Genêt was not mentioned), and for the volunteer toast: "Perdition and contempt to those who would divide friends of Liberty and the Rights of Man."[54]

Many New Yorkers had such a good time in celebrating that day that they were apparently loath to see it all end. Even as night came on, the streets were still reported to be "tumultuous and noisy."[55] Over the next several days, the Republican newspapers continued to make

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[53] Ibid.

[54] New York Journal, Mar. 12, 1794.

[55] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 10, 1794.

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reference to the "good civil entertainment" held in honor of Toulon. Congratulations were offered on the manner in which the celebrations indicated "the highest sensibility of patriotism." Loudon, in the Diary, after describing the "grand and pleasing spectacle," became almost tongue-tied with pleasure as he expressed the feeling that when "friendship is not barely confined to individuals, but attaches whole nations together in bonds of alliance, the powers of language are too feeble to describe the scene with justice."[56]

Mrs. Ann Julia Hatton apparently did not agree, for she used her powers of language to add to her laurels, crowning the fortnight with an ode "On the Retaking of Toulon." Mrs. Hatton's work was interestingly dedicated to the Democratic Society of New York. Its first two stanzas show how strongly millennial literature had made a comeback among the francophiles of 1794:

> Hail! glorious day, with sacred joy survey'd
> By men and angels, whose bright dawn foretells
> The fate of Kings. No more by pomp betray'd,
> Shall man be bound in fantastic spells.
> All hail! Democracy! whose fulgent light
> Shall chase the plague of tyranny away;
> Whose wholesome laws, clear to the dimmest sight,
> Shall rule the land with uncorrupted sway.[57]

Then, with the perfect timing of a practiced diplomat, Minister Fauchet of the French Republic had a notice published in the newspapers which stated that all Frenchmen were forbidden to violate United States neutrality and any such commissions previously issued were hereby revoked.[58]

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[56] Diary, Mar. 11, 1794. See also the Columbian Gazetteer and the New York Journal, for Mar. 11, Mar. 12 and Mar. 13, 1794.

[57] "On the Retaking of Toulon," New York Journal, Mar. 15, 1794.

[58] Jean Antoine Joseph Fauchet may not have been an old diplomatic hand in point of years but survival in the political world of

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Thus had two weeks of remarkable public activity come to an end. The Federalists could breathe a collective sigh of relief that no real mischief had been done, but the real winners were the Democratic Society of New York and its local political ally, the Republican Party.[59] The former had shown itself to be a real force in New York City politics and had gained the confidence that only organizational success could bring. Republican France had taught Americans who were willing to follow some important lessons, and New York City politics would not be quite the same again.

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revolutionary Paris entitled him to respect for his abilities as a rapid learner. His first major position, at the age of thirty, was Chief of the Bureau of Administration of War in 1791. He then became secretary to the Mayor of Paris in 1792 and was appointed Chief of the Commissioners to the United States in late 1793. By the end of the decade he was a strong partisan of Napolean. See "CFM," AHA, II, 288, n. c.

[59]For a discussion of the interrelationship between the Democratic Society of New York and the Republican Party of the city see infra, pp. 331-36.

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CHAPTER XII

"Peace is always to be preferred if a Peace can be maintained on honorable Principles."

The world of the "Atlantic Civilization" had changed considerably in the days since 1789. The aspirations awakened by the Age of Enlightenment were replaced alternately by the wildest fears and by the most mind-boggling of millennial dreams, both of which having been engendered by the truly revolutionary developments of those years. In the midst of such transience, the weary traveler (i.e., historian) would naturally scan the landscape for something fixed and permanent on which to rest his gaze, knowing that for once the familiar sight would breed anything but contempt.

In such a mood, the eye and mind come to rest upon the figure of Colin McGregor, the mercantile agent for several British firms, who, in 1789, viewed the fortunes of the United States as being tied to a strong national government which, in turn, would have the strongest of commercial ties with Great Britain. In February, 1794, McGregor was still firm in those views, decrying strongly any attempts to decrease the power of the national government or to use those powers to pass resolutions harmful to relations between the United States and England. In addition, McGregor yearned for the destruction of the "barbaric" republican government of France that had "disgraced not only the french nation; but the very name of Man." In McGregor, then, there was the

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very image of the long-held and slow-dying stereotype of a Federalist--one who wished to see the United States tied to monarchical England while delighting in the thought of the destruction of republican France. McGregor, though hardly the typical Federalist, as this paper has shown, was, at least, for better or worse, the model of consistency.[1]

Refreshed by the discovery of this fixed star on the horizon, whose monthly and yearly positions proved a steady guide to the historian in need of generalizations, the eye and mind regained their composure even as they eagerly perused a McGregor letter sent in mid-April to a Scottish correspondent, one John Mackenzie. In it, McGregor was sorry to say "that by the folly madness and depredations of G Britain in the W Indies the peace and prosperity of both Countries is too likely to be interrupted." The startled mind and eye recoiled in disbelief at those words. Was McGregor excoriating England in language reserved previously for republican France? McGregor continued on remorselessly, noting that the United States had consistently held to its neutrality but the conduct of England, through its "infamous instructions of Novem. last has worked a powerful alteration in the opinions and measures of the people and Government of this Country, and by way of retalliation [sic] and redress Congress are now pursuing the most effectual steps in their power."[2]

McGregor had apparently done some profound thinking in relation

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[1]Letters, Colin McGregor to _____, Jan. 24, 1789, and McGregor to J. R. Miller, Feb. 20, 1794, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

[2]Letter, McGregor to John Mackenzie, Apr. 16, 1794, Ibid.

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to himself and his own future and decided that he was an American. As he stated, "All the property I possess is now in this country and I am determined to protect and defend it, and no national prejudices [in favor of England] shall influence my conduct." Speaking now as an American to an Englishman, McGregor told Mackenzie that "Our Rulers [his terminology still showed the influence of a lifetime's adherence to monarchy] are patient and firm and there is only one Sentiment throughout the U. States; which is to abide by Their decision and to support the Laws, to repell [sic] Invasion, or to make Conquest." Then waxing ever more resentful of the mother country, he expressed his fear "'that in this hour of her insolence' she will not manifest either a just or moderate disposition." Seeming to throw up his hands in exasperation, McGregor added: "In the name of God . . . what sort of men are those who guide her Councils, who waste her blood and treasure, and who by pursuing such diabolical principles meditate the destruction of that Country and government which has so long been the pride and admiration of the old World?" To the astonished on-looker, not even an Ovidian metamorphosis could have been more complete or more remarkable than the transformation of Colin McGregor into a full-blown "Americanophile" within the space of one month.[3]

The transformation of Colin McGregor was unusual, however, only in the distance that that gentleman had to come to reach his strongly anti-English stance of April 1794. Others, who had long believed that America's economic stability as a nation rested on her commercial relations with England but who placed the interests of the United States

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[3]Ibid.

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above everything else--in other words, the typical New York Federalist--had, by mid-March, come to the conclusion that war with England was a distinct possibility and one for which New York had to be prepared. To begin at the highest levels of government, a letter from Hamilton to the President, dated March 8, 1794, already showed the direction that Federalist thinking was about to take. Believing that the "present situation of the United States is undoubtedly critical, and demands measures vigorous, though prudent," Hamilton presented Washington with a plan of military defense. The plans included suggestions for the defense of the leading ports of the nation, the recruiting of a standing army, giving the President the power to lay an embargo, and the possibility of action in concert with other neutral powers. Hamilton concluded with the raison d'être behind the plans put forward in the letter: "The pains taken to preserve peace, include a proportional responsibility that equal pains be taken to be prepared for war."[4]

The influence of these views upon New York Federalists began to show up after the middle of March. A letter signed "Americus," that appeared in the American Minerva of March 19, signaled that change in thinking. The writer noted that peace was desired by all and had always been his own goal. The point, however, had been reached where further injury and insult could no longer be permitted. England, he continued, had gone too far with her refusal to redress any of America's grievances while allowing constant piratical attacks against

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[4]Hamilton to Washington, Mar. 8, 1794, The Works of Alexander Hamilton, ed. by John C. Hamilton (7 vols.; New York: Charles S. Frances & Co., 1850-1851), IV, 506-08.

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our commerce. "Americus" suggested that war be prepared for with defensive as well as offensive readiness. He then called for an embargo of all shipping to the Indies, an action which he stated could be agreed to by all real patriots and Americans. On that date, Webster editorialized to the same purpose. The public mind, he reported, had been "extremely agitated" during the past week as a result of the capture and condemnation of American vessels and cargoes by the British in the West Indies. He warned grimly that "nothing but a speedy suspension of these commercial hostilities can prevent a rupture with Great-Britain."[5]

From the Republican side came words of similar import. The Diary called for "a general embargo on the West Indies trade at least." To the editor, the United States had already shown enough forbearance, and now had broad public support to test the embargo plan for periods of two, four, or even six months. (Loudon was correct in his assumption that broad public support was behind the drive for an embargo, for in a letter to King, John Jay had gone so far as to say that he was "much inclined to a perfect stop to the Exportation of Provisions of every kind for at least 6 to 8 months."[6])Loudon concluded the edi-

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[5]"Americus" and editorial, American Minerva, Mar. 19, 1794. Federalists in other parts of the country showed a similar change in attitude towards England and war. David Ross of Bladensburgh, Maryland, wrote a letter to Hamilton dated Mar. 21, 1794 (Works of Hamilton, V, 593), which noted that those who were most inclined to peace and against the Madison resolutions were now "for very spirited measures, if a war cannot be avoided." But, he pointed out, it was also felt that Great Britain should be given time to alter her measures so that the United States was not put into the position of France--of declaring war and attacking the British at the time and place desired by the latter.

[6]Letter, Jay to King, Mar. 21, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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torial by cautiously noting that it was "perhaps unnecessary at present to engage in absolute hostilities; but if even that last of evils must be resorted to in defence of our national honor and existence, it is hoped that a high degree of unanimity will prevail." In the Journal, "Americanus" also called for an embargo against England, but went one step further. He asked that all British property be detained until Americans were compensated for their own lost property.[7]

A sense of unity now prevailed in New York to an extent unknown in many years. John Jay and Samuel Loudon, Noah Webster and Thomas Greenleaf, and a host of similarly strange bedfellows had put forward the same set of ideas. Loudon's quiet hope that "unanimity will prevail" seemed close to fruition as all republican forces gathered together in the face of ultimate danger, war with England.

A sense of unity, however, was not enough. The mood of the public demanded a show of action by the various governments. In the face of "inadequate" congressional and legislative response, a meeting of citizens of the city took place at noon on March 20 in front of the Tontine Coffee House for the purpose of consulting "on the propriety of petitioning the Legislature for an appropriation of money to fortify the Harbour."[8] The proposal for a petition was carried and a bi-partisan committee of five appointed to put it into execution. The committee consisted of Chancellor Livingston, his youngest brother, Edward, John Broome, president of the Chamber of Commerce, Richard Harison, United States attorney for the federal district of New York,

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[7]Diary, Mar. 15, 1794; "Americanus," New York Journal, Mar. 15, 1794.

[8]Letter, Samuel Jones, Jr. to Samuel Jones, Esq., Mar. 21, 1794, NYHS, Samuel Jones Papers.

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and James Alner, Brigadier-General of the Brigade of the City and County of New York. It was further resolved that an express be dispatched the next day so that the petition would reach the Assembly in as short a time as possible.[9]

In addition, New Yorkers had the satisfaction of knowing that Baron Steuben, who was a resident of the city, had agreed to look over the harbor to ascertain the best sites for the placement of fortifications. By March 25, the Baron was able to present to Rufus King a detailed plan for the fortification of New York City and its port. New Yorkers were further comforted by reports carried in the newspapers that "a bill is before the Legislature of this state, . . . for the purpose of fortifying the port of New York." Privately Rufus King received assurances from the Federalist leadership in the State legislature that laws were readying to provide funds for defense and for the militia--£30,000 for fortifying New York harbor, £12,000 for the protection of the Western and Northern frontier, and £30,000 for the procurement of necessary artillery, smaller weapons, and ammunition for the state militia.[10] By April all sides could agree with Alexander Macomb's assessment that "Congress is acting in a determined manner." As proof, Macomb could now add that "the Harbours of the United States are fortifying--ours is begun on Governors Island." A sense of unified action was present to an unexpected degree.[11]

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[9]Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 24, 1794.

[10]Letter, Baron Steuben to King, Mar. 25, 1794, Schuyler to King, Mar. 23, 1794 and Watson to King, Mar. 22, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

[11]A. Macomb to W. Constable, Apr. 16, 1794, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters. Baron Steuben's plan of fortification stressing the use of

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That unity of attitude was not lessened by a new development that made war even more likely. In a letter that angrily noted that the "concealment of the instructions of the 6th of Nov. until the end of December evinces their [England's] disposition to have injured and irritated as much as possible," Federalist John Lawrence also spoke of "the speech of the Canadian Chief" which proved the British "determination to have measured Swords with us, were we indisposed to have borne with the Insults and Injuries." What Lawrence had reference to was the speech of Lord Dorchester before a deputation of Indian chiefs friendly to the British. Dorchester had intimated to his hearers of a probable break in relations between the United States and England in the near future. Having recently returned from a visit to England, Dorchester was believed to be speaking with authority. Lawrence therefore came to the conclusion that the hatred of the British ministry to this country "is too apparent to admit of a doubt" and that a full settlement of all grievances had to come about or "we shall never have harmony between the two Countries."[12] Lord Dorchester's speech was also the subject of an unsigned article in the Republican Diary. The writer called on all Americans to be ready for war. Eyes should be kept open, preparations should be made, and our declared enemy should

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the Narrows which guarded the approach to upper New York Bay, was not followed. Governors Island, which was closer to the city and whose fortification probably gave New Yorkers a greater sense of security, became the defensive hub of the port, instead. The money that the city wanted from the state was forthcoming on March 26, 1794, while a supplemental sum was made available on April 6, 1795. (Iconography, V, 1306.)

[12]Lawrence to King, Apr. 3, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 558-59 and 558 n.

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feel our unified blows.[13]

Instead of a declaration of war, however, Congress opted for an embargo of a month's duration that was to be laid on all vessels in the harbors of the United States that were bound for foreign ports. Beginning on the 26th of March, the embargo was to hold for all ships except those given clearance by the order of the President of the United States.[14]

Exactly one day after the embargo was passed, news was received of the revocation of the November 6th orders and their replacement by a new set of instructions dated January 8, 1794. According to the January orders, the admiralty courts of the West Indies were to cease their indiscriminate condemnation of American vessels. The first reactions were both cautious and wary but with a burgeoning sense of optimism.[15] The optimism waned, however, as quickly as it had developed. New Yorkers were tired of a situation where, in the words of Colin McGregor, "our fears and alarms are excited or allayed by the occurrences of the day." They were also angered at being treated as stepchildren by a country they had learned to accept as necessary to commercial intercourse but found impossible to embrace with any real warmth.[16]

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[13]Diary, Mar. 25, 1794.

[14]New York Magazine, V (Mar., 1794), 192.

[15]For the first optimistic reactions see the American Minerva, Mar. 28, 1794, H. LeRoy to King, Mar. 30, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 557 and letters, G. Saltonstall to R. &. J. Backus, Mar. 28 and Apr. 2, 1794, NYPL, R. & J. Backus Papers.

[16]Letter, C. McGregor to John Mackenzie, Mar. 29, 1794, NYPL, C. McGregor LB.

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John Alsop ridiculed "the great news as it is call'd from England in favor of our Neutrality." A canker had been found in the midst of that beautiful work, the Orders-in-Council of January 8. According to Alsop, American vessels that were finally acquitted by the admiralty courts were to be "saddled with the costs" of the court. If those costs were added to the delay and the damage to the cargoes in the long wait before adjudication, Alsop concluded, then it was all "too humiliating for a free & spirited people to bear."[17] A writer in the Diary subjected the new "good news" to an even broader questioning. "Detector," speaking of a general British policy, stated that her objective was to destroy both France and America--the latter because its independence was secured with the assistance of the former. All had been in readiness for an English attack, he continued, and only British reverses in Europe, at such places as Dunkirk, Toulon and Guernsey, had stayed their sword.[18]

The orders of January 8, therefore, provided only the most momentary of checks to the aggrieved spirit of the country. As news of continued depredations and impressments and over-all losses continued to come in from the West Indies, the Columbian Gazetteer did not seem incorrect in its assessment that from the voice of the people there resounded incessantly but one phrase: "To Arms! To Arms!"[19]

No close reader of the period, however, would mistake the

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[17]Alsop to King, Mar. 31, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 558.

[18]"Detector," Diary, Mar. 31, 1794.

[19]Columbian Gazetteer, Mar. 31, 1794.

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general unity of purpose of the moment for a major reversal of the trends and divisions that had been developing with a singularly steady pulse over the previous few years. A crisis situation that required a singleness of national purpose could smooth over many of the national divisions but could not make them disappear. For though England was now thoroughly excoriated by almost all Americans, the attitude towards France continued along previously developed lines.

Greenleaf of the Journal, for example, was worried that the Mountain might not be able to retain its power against "Pittite" gold. Reporting on rumors that Citizen Paine was under arrest, Greenleaf's first reaction was to doubt the man--one of the editor's heroes--rather than to doubt the government which might have acted in that way. Greenleaf "hoped that, at this late day, he [Paine] had not been dragged into the Pittite atmosphere, the attractive minerals within which impels that tool-like man." Throwing off the momentary doubt, Greenleaf concluded that Paine would show that "stubborn virtue is purer than fine gold, and destroys its impellant power."[20] Noah Webster, on the contrary, was worried lest the Mountain extend its power to the seat of the American government. During the recent debate in the House of Representatives over the Madison resolutions it was reported that the galleries had reacted with applause and hisses in an attempt, so Webster construed it, to produce the proper voting reactions on the part of the Congressmen. Webster protested such actions by reminding his readers that this was not the Mountain in France where the decisions of the National Convention were dictated by the

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[20]New York Journal, Mar. 26, 1794.

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bloody and ever-changing demands of the mob.[21]

The Federalists, always quick to translate French events into national and local terms, were often disturbed by the visions they conjured up. Noah Webster, in the editorial just excerpted and in a pamphlet published in March, 1794, entitled The Revolution in France Considered in Respect to Its Progress and Effects, proved himself a past master at this technique. In the preface to his pamphlet, Webster explicitly noted that it was important to determine for our country where our admiration should end and our censure should begin as regarded the French Revolution and its government, religion, and morals. In a section dealing with the application of French revolutionary experience to the United States, Webster turned to a discussion of private associations, which he considered beneficial when devoted to "the purposes of promoting arts, sciences, benevolence, or charity." But, he pointed out, "whenever such societies attempt to convert the private attachment of their members into an instrument of political warfare, they are, in all cases, hostile to government." They would, therefore, be useful in pulling down bad governments but dangerous to good government. Webster accused such societies, whether Jacobin or Democratic, of working for the destruction of liberty and equality of rights in a free country and therefore being aristocratic in their influence.[22]

In the concluding section of his pamphlet, Webster asserted

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[21] American Minerva, Mar. 21, 1794.

[22] An American [Noah Webster], The Revolution in France Considered in Respect to Its Progress and Effects (New York: George Bunce & Co., 1794), Preface, p. 49.

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that France was not then in possession of a free government. She would "have to conquer the errors of her legislators and the passions of a turbulent populace" before arriving at such a government. In words that had obvious American implications, Webster remarked that the French had to learn that representatives were not to be governed by the Paris mob and that the galleries had to be silenced or France would be enslaved. Laws, not private wills, had to govern, while executive power had to be vested in a single hand and legislative power in two houses. He concluded that France would enjoy liberty only when she returned to wisdom and experience. Americans, he warned, on pain of loss of liberty, "adhere to your constitution of government."[23]

Less direct translations of French events into local and national terms might have been seen constantly in the daily press of that time. Taking a sample of newspaper comments for April that did not specifically deal with any major issue but were more on the order of random asides, the reader can see how France and the French Revolution had entered into the very marrow of American consciousness. Webster, for example, briefly took note of a report that came from Havre de Marat, formerly de Grace, that there and elsewhere "the bible had been publicly burnt, as the most ancient and most injurious piece of superstition."[24] While Webster attacked the de-Christianization of the French, "Aristides" in the Diary defended one aspect of the process--the abolition of the Sabbath. After all, "Aristides" argued, the

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[23] Ibid., pp. 69-71.

[24] American Minerva, Apr. 2, 1794.

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French had taken the first major step of escaping from the fear and superstition that were hallmarks of the Romish religion. They were now on their way through various stages en route to the true religion. "Aristides" did admit, however, that such actions by the French had given the enemies of liberty an opportunity to vent their spleen and even caused many of those who were friends to the cause of freedom to look with a less favorable eye upon the struggles of the French.[25]

Late in the month, the Columbian Gazetteer took the National Convention to task for its "obstinacy" in regard to any and all pacific overtures from the combined powers. The editors contrasted the reaction of the French government with "the truly virtuous and exemplary policy of the Swiss Republic, whom no provocation can move to deviate from their determined and persevering neutrality." Webster took that comparison several steps further when, he, too, noted the answer of the Swiss to attempts by the joint powers to make them go to war against France. He pointed out that the allies had been as incessant in their drive as "certain Jacobin Emissaries and incendiaries have been plotting to drag America into the war in favor of France." The parallels were strong, according to Webster, for just as the Swiss had suffered at the hands of the French, the Americans had been robbed and plundered by the British. And just as the allied powers had used the argument of French hostility to try to persuade the Swiss, "the incendiaries of France and America have made use of the injuries done to our trade to hurry us into a long desolating war."[26]

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[25]"Aristides," Diary, Apr. 23, 1794.

[26]Columbian Gazetteer, Apr. 24, 1794; American Minerva, Apr. 23, 1794.

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On the last day of the month, a correspondent in the Minerva took the occasion to comment on a change in street names, from royal to republican, that the New York City Common Council had just approved. The writer called the desire for changing names both silly and foolish and a "French mania," although he found some excuse for it in the enthusiasm of "a brave nation struggling for their rights against an infamous league of princes." What was to be said, however, for "an American Corporation, gravely sitting down to do the same thing?"[27]

One organization that would have applauded the action of the Common Council as the natural reaction of elected officials to the stated desires of the general public was the Democratic Society of New York. That organization presented a further distillation of its ideas in an Address of the Democratic Society of the City of New York to the Republican Citizens of the United States. This document was both an apologia and a credo. The apology for its existence need not concern us here, but the credo is of extreme pertinence for its clear-cut presentation of two major political questions of the day: what were the exact powers of the people in a representative form of government and what should be our relationship with Republican France? The address, signed by James Nicholson, as president of the society, and Tunis Wortman, as secretary was an open declaration of war where the interests of France were at stake. The work proclaimed, in words that

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[27]American Minerva, Apr. 30, 1794; Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, II, 73. The new republican-sounding street names went into affect on April 21, 1794. The changes were from Crown St. to Liberty St.; from Prince to Rose; from Beaver and Princess to Beaver; from Stone and Duke to Stone; from King to Pine; and from Little Queen to Cedar.

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bear quotation, that

> we are lovers of the French nation, that we esteem their cause as our own, and that we are the enemies, the avowed enemies, of him, or those who dare to infringe upon the holy law of Liberty, the sacred Rights of Man, by declaring that we ought to be strictly neutral, either in thought or speech, between a nation fighting for the dearest, the undeniable, the invaluable Rights of human nature, and another nation, or nations wickedly, but hitherto (we thank God) vainly endeavoring to oppose her in such a virtuous, such a glorious struggle.[28]

Then using a figure of speech that Franklin D. Roosevelt was to use in equally vivid and graphic form 147 years later, the Address asked if one could sit stoically by when the house of one's neighbor was on fire, especially if that neighbor was also one's "benefactor, your only real friend." To withhold the bucket of water made one an abettor of tyranny and despotism. To show how strongly the society felt on that point, the Address, although it denied that the society believed that everyone who opposed them could be considered an enemy of the United States or "even an aristocrat in his heart," stated without compunction that "he, who is an enemy to the French revolution, cannot be a firm republican; and therefore, though he may be a good citizen in every other respect, ought not to be entrusted with the guidance of any part of the machine of government."[29]

The Address of the Democratic Society then turned to its second and equally important statement of belief. The only solid basis of popular rights, according to the society, was derived from public opinion and the general spirit of the people. The Democratic Society

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[28] An Address of the Democratic Society of the City of New York to the Republican Citizens of the United States (Newport: Southwick & Woodman, 1794), pp. 3, 8.

[29] Ibid., p. 9.

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of New York, the Address declared, was formed for the patriotic purpose of obtaining "a more perfect knowledge of the fundamental principles of our own constitution; to diffuse political information; to form a more intimate acquaintance with the sacred and inalienable rights of mankind; to cherish in our breasts the pure and holy flame of Liberty, and to cultivate the love of our country as the most noble of human virtues."[30] The Address then took those high sounding phrases and translated them into specific action. Congress was in session at that moment discussing issues of major national concern. To be properly informed, it had to know the ideas of the people at large. The Democratic Society of New York believed that "no better mode of expressing that voice" of the people was available "than by societies whose members are composed of, and mingle with, every class of citizens; and who dedicate a certain portion of their time to that particular purpose."[31]

Thus did the Democratic Society of New York state directly and openly its two main themes of belief: that American salvation was tied to the salvation of the French government as then constituted and that the Democratic Society, as a major voice of the people, had the task of informing a waiting Congress of the views of the public-at-large. Federalist fears about the Democratic societies were certainly not about to be allayed by such statements of belief, especially while questions remained as to the contents of that bucket that was supposed to bail out the French and while the views of the people as gathered by

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[30] Ibid., pp. 13, 18-19.

[31] Ibid., p. 20.

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the Democratic Society always seemed to be of a nature that ran counter to the ideas of the Federalist Party.

All of these theoretical ideas came down to specifics in the local election held in New York City at the end of April, 1794. Both sides, or more properly, at first, various groups and individuals, presented slates of possible candidates to the public. After a tentative suggestion, in the Minerva, of a unity slate of candidates for the State Assembly "due to the present crisis"--a slate made up alternately of Federalists and Republicans[32] --the Federalists moved quickly to complete a list of candidates totally satisfactory to themselves. As early as April 12th the Minerva described a meeting of "a respectable number of citizens" that took place at City Tavern, with John Jackson in the chair. The citizens nominated Matthew Clarkson and Richard Hatfield for state senators from the Southern District and also nominated J. Watson, J. O. Hoffman, J. DeLancey, J. M. Hughes, and N. Cruger for the state assembly. A full slate for the Assembly, however, consisted of seven candidates. As the Minerva ingenuously described it, the meeting at the City Tavern was informed of a large meeting of Mechanics being held simultaneously at Corré's Hotel. The former sent a committee to Corré's to work out a new slate. Conveniently two names of mechanics were then added to the two slots left vacant on the Federal Assembly list. They were Jotham Post and Richard Furman. Thus was born "what is entitled now The Federal Re-

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[32]The unity slate that appeared in the American Minerva of April 11, 1794, included the following names: James Watson, Melancton Smith, J. O. Hoffman, J. Broome, P. Cortenius, Dr. Samuel Latham Mitchill, and N. Cruger.

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publican Ticket."[33]

A correspondent's note appeared below the naming of the new ticket in which the writer expressed his pleasure at hearing that the Mechanics Society had backed "federal men to represent the city and country." In homage to them, the writer called the laboring people of every country "its strength and support." As long as they resisted foreign influence and designing men, and backed up the Constitution and laws of their country, he concluded, they would be a bulwark for the freedom of all.[34]

Panegyrics aside, the fact that the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen as well as the Cartmen[35] endorsed the Federalist or Federal Republican ticket is too important a fact to be quickly noted and then

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[33]American Minerva, Apr. 12, 1794. The Federalists were still first in organizational ability. An electioneering letter sent by Stephen Van Rensselaer to the Federalist leader of western New York State, Judge William Cooper, showed the technique used by the party. The purpose of the letter, dated April 2, 1794 (NYHS, William Cooper Papers), was "to procure a federal representation at the next session" of the state legislature. Van Rensselaer reported that a meeting of the Federalist chiefs had already taken place in Albany, while Tioga County was commended to Cooper's charge. Members of the legislature from Cooper's western district had pledged to support the Judge for Congress, and three persons had pledged $400.00 (a heady sum) for the campaign. Van Rensselaer concluded by reminding Cooper that Otsego County had to be unanimous for him if he was to win. That the Federalists of New York City were also not merely content to announce a slate and sit back was pointed up by Greenleaf of the Journal. Under the heading "Modern Electioneering Policy," he published a letter sent by J. O. Hoffman, one of the Federal Republican candidates, calling for a meeting of those in favor of that ticket. This must have been one of the earliest examples of a political election rally extant, and Greenleaf's displeasure, as a member of the opposition, is readily understandable. See New York Journal, Apr. 19, 1794.

[34]"Correspondent," American Minerva, Apr. 12, 1794.

[35]See the Columbian Gazetteer for a statement of Cartmen's support of the Federal Republican ticket.

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shunted aside. That simple act of endorsement, of which this was neither the first nor the last example during the decade, tells a great deal more about the character of the Federalists and of the mechanics, tradesmen, cartmen and similar laboring and small entrepreneurial groups than any lengthy statement by an historian could possibly do. It should also help to shatter still further the stereotypical picture of an aristocratic Federalist Party whose views were anathema to the very groups which now came forward so strongly in support of those "aristocrats."

The path that the Republicans took to reach their final and official slate was a good deal more complicated. Three days earlier than the Federalists decided on their ticket, a list of seven names for the Assembly was presented to the Journal. Of that list of names not one became a candidate. On April 12, however, which was the same date as word of the official Federalist slate became known, the Journal reported that "a numerous and respectable meeting of Republican citizens" met and selected their candidates for state senate and assembly. Of that list, both candidates for state senator, D. Gelston and T. Thomas, remained as final choices but only four of the seven listed choices for Assembly were on the final list. More significantly than that, however, was the statement of the nominating group that no one whose views are considered unfriendly to the "glorious cause for which France is now struggling" should be elected to any office, a statement almost identical with the one made in the Address of the Democratic Society during that same period. On the 16th of April the Journal carried another list submitted by "many citizens." Of that list five names remained on the final slate. On April 19, a writer named

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"Legion" presented his choices and they fully coincided with what would become the official list. Finally, on April 21, the newspapers carried the list drawn up at a meeting of "real Republicans and true friends of their country," chaired by Isaac L. Kipp. The "real Republican" slate, which saw the light of day a full week and a half after the Federal Republican list appeared, included William Denning, Peter Elting, Peter R. Livingston, Isaac Stoughtenburgh, Ebenezer Stevens, and John Campbell. One name that had been included on the opposition list also appeared on the "real Republican" list--Richard Furman, mechanic.[36]

The fact that the Republicans took as long as they did to produce a unified slate plus the fact that the Federalists won the support of both the Mechanics and the Cartmen gave the latter a really major push towards victory. Certainly the confidence of leading Federalists showed in their private letters to Rufus King. Richard Harison wrote on April 18 that they were "warmly engaged in Electioneering and I think with a great Prospect of Success." A week later Herman LeRoy almost repeated Harison's words, writing that "Electioneering goes on and we have good hopes." On the day the polls closed, Walter Rutherford wrote to his son in all confidence that "there is no doubt the Federal Ticket has a majority."[37] The Chancellor, earlier in the campaign, gave his own interpretation of events and they squared rather well with the Federalist predictions. Noting that the parties were

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[36]New York Journal, Apr. 9, Apr. 12, and Apr. 16, 1794; "Legion," New York Journal, Apr. 19, 1794.

[37]Letters, R. Harison to King, Apr. 18, 1794, and LeRoy to King, Apr. 25 and May 1, 1794, NYHS, King Papers; letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, May 5, 1794, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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extremely violent towards each other throughout the state, with no expense spared by either side, he warned his brother Edward not to run--for Edward Livingston's name had been one of those first mentioned by the New York City Republicans. As the Chancellor put it, "I have less hopes of the republicans succeeding in New York than elsewhere. The tories make a powerful party and I find the mechanics and cartmen are on their side so that I find no class of people in which you can depend."[38]

Despite the fact that these men "in the know" expected a clear-cut Federal Republican victory, the "real Republicans" put up a strong battle based on one major and one subsidiary campaign theme. The Chancellor had shown the pervasiveness of the major issue when he called the opposition party "tories." It had now become the basic Republican tactic--one that had clearly been developing over the previous year, that had begun to accelerate during the previous month, and that now appeared as a full-scale attitude--to proclaim that the opposition was basically the party of toryism.[39] As "An Elector" simply put it, the present election would determine whether Republicanism or Toryism was most prevalent among New Yorkers. Too long, he continued, had representatives of this city been men opposed to the

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[38]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Edward Livingston, Apr. 18, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[39]For a refutation of the argument used here by the Republicans that tories found a home exclusively in the Federalist Party see Edmund P. Willis, "Social Origins of Political Leadership in New York City from the Revolution to 1815 (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, U. of California, 1967). It was the similarity in the origins of the leadership groups of both parties that Willis believed to be a major finding of his study. For a contemporary writer's similar view that as many ex-tories were on the anti-federal side as on the other, see "Trimmer," Diary, Apr. 18, 1794.

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"glorious" American Revolution, some having even remained with the British throughout the war. With the possibility of another war with England approaching, would it be proper to have such men in our councils, he asked?[40]

The belief that the Federal Republicans were really tories in disguise, carried with it the parallel theme that they could not be good friends to France. "Demosthenes" put it all very succinctly when he told his fellow citizens that they had to elect men who were friends to the American and French revolutions, which would leave out those of the Federal Republican ticket. "A Whig" added the view that Republicans were "the friends of the French" and "supporters of American freedom," while those who were opposed to the revolution in France were "enemies to liberty and equality," notwithstanding all of their protestations of federalism and love of the general government.[41] The issue of faithfulness to France reached a climax of sorts when a backer of the Federal Republican ticket reported that an address had been "insidiously" circulated in handbills throughout the Southern District in support of the "Real Republican" candidates for state senate. The address asked for support of Gelston and Thomas solely on the basis of their attitude that France must be helped by the United States and that we had to go to war if necessary to defend the French. The old idea that the defeat of republican France would lead to an attack upon the United States had been revived once again by the "Real"

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[40]"An Elector," Diary, Apr. 12, 1794.

[41]"Demosthenes," Ibid., Apr. 21, 1794; "A Whig," Ibid., Apr. 30, 1794.

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Republicans.[42]

By far the best presentation of the Republican position came from "Legion"--a worthy spokesman for what would be the party of Jefferson and for the views of an organization like the Democratic Society, of which he was quite possibly a leading member.[43] "Legion" saw the election in the larger framework of the world-wide war of despotism against liberty. The best way to meet that challenge, he proposed, was by electing representatives who were committed to carrying out the will of the people; men whose "own interests [are] so interwoven with those of the people, that they constitute but one, compact and undivided interest." What should these representatives not be, he then asked? Old tories were out because they were opposed to liberty, the rights of man, equality of privileges, and republican government. Also not to be considered were those who, in one shape or another, opposed the French Revolution. "Legion" viewed the French as fighting for what Americans fought for, of being enemies to those who were enemies to our own government. The final group who should not be voted in by a republican electorate were warm advocates of the funding system. (Attacks against the funding system had gradually begun to be revived in the late winter of 1794.) In a statement of no small dogmatic strength, "Legion" called the funding system "a child of monarchy" whose advocates could never be friends to republicanism. "Legion" thus linked together the three groups whom he believed had disqualified themselves as proper representatives of a republican people: old

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[42]"A Discovery," Daily Advertiser, Apr. 30, 1794.

[43]The fact that "Legion" presented what turned out to be the final Republican ticket two days before it became official suggests that he was in a position to know.

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tories, opponents of any aspect of the French Revolution, and supporters of the funding system.[44]

The basic approach of the Federalist campaign was set by William Willcocks in a letter printed in the Daily Advertiser just after the Federal Republican ticket was set. Willcocks was not running for Assembly that year, but, never reticent, he wanted to give the public some of his thoughts on the upcoming election. War had to be prepared for, he stated, since George III and "corrupt" Pitt seemed intent upon spreading it to us. The American government had so far acted with moderation but the time might be near when we would have to fight for our rights. Willcocks therefore advised that men of cool and independent spirit be chosen who would neither harangue in public places nor panic at the first approach of war. Such men should be friendly to the state government while firmly attached to the federal government. Using a phrase that Daniel Webster would later make famous, Willcocks noted that without ties to both the state and federal government "we are but a rope of sand." Choose men, he advised, "who will not sacrifice to party views and party men the real interest of the state."[45]

The Federal Republican case was summed up by "A Friend to Order and Government." He attacked the slate styled "Ticket of the Real Republicans and True Friends to the Liberties of their Country" as the godchild of the leaders of the Democratic Society of New York. Those who preferred a government of laws rather than government by arbitrary

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[44]"Legion," New York Journal, Apr. 19, 1794.

[45]William Willcocks, Daily Advertiser, Apr. 14, 1794.

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faction, he asserted, would not be fooled by those who called their opposition tories and aristocrats. "A Friend to Order and Government" then concluded with a bill of particulars against those who would misname themselves "Real Republicans." For did that group not:

1) support the violation of the suffrage at thelate election for governor?
2) lack firm support of the Constitution?
3) support the interference of a foreign minister in our government?
4) attempt to precipitate war before the recent outrages were committed at sea?
5) oppose the Proclamation of Neutrality of the President?
6) abuse the friends of the Constitution and the country?[46]

With this wide-swinging attack that above all stressed fidelity to the federal government under the Constitution, the campaign basically came to an end.

To no one's great surprise, except perhaps Peter R. Livingston, who reportedly lost a number of bets, the Federalist ticket swept the field. Several comparisons are worth noting, however, with the state senate and assembly elections held during the previous year. The most obvious difference was in the number of votes cast. Whereas in the election of April 1793 approximately 1500 votes were counted the total was just about doubled in the April 1794 election. The second difference concerned the way in which the vote was split. Despite the fact that the Federalists had official Mechanic and Cartman support and in spite of the fact that the Republicans were a much-delayed second into the field, the latter made enough gains in total votes to encourage their hopes for the future. A better organized Republican party--and the formation of the Democratic Society of New York could well bring

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[46]"A Friend to Good Order and Government," Ibid., Apr. 29, 1794.

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that about--might make even more solid gains the next time around. A third difference between the two elections held a year apart was the increased confidence that Republicans were showing in a presentation of their views. While the Federalists reiterated their ties to the national administration--meaning President Washington, above all, and their faith in the Constitution, the Republicans launched new and forceful attacks against funding, against a supposed Federalist lack of faith in the people that took the form of aristocratic and tory attitudes, and last, but certainly not least, an attack against Federalist failure to support fully France and her revolution.[47]

To what was this aggressive new local political stance of the Republicans attributable? Threat of war with England was a new factor on the scene but the Federalists, as even the Chancellor of New York was forced to admit,[48] had taken a firm line and in effect blunted any Republican charge of softness in that area. The only other new factor in the political campaign of 1794 was the Democratic-Republican Society of the City of New York. To that organization, I believe, one must turn for the new cohesiveness and potency of the Republican attack. Some time had already been spent in this dissertation wrestling with the various controversies surrounding the formation and membership of the Democratic Societies,[49] but one controversy remains to be dealt

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[47] American Minerva, May 29, 1794. See the Minerva of that date for a complete listing of the votes received by each of the candidates.

[48] Letter, R. R. Livingston to James Monroe, Apr. 8, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[49] See supra, pp. 265-272 for a full discussion of those other points of controversy.

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with: the societies' political role and their relationship to the Republican Party. Eugene P. Link, in his own work on the societies, quoted with approval a suggestion that the purpose of the Democratic Societies was to set up political machinery of a permanent nature. Link, in his own right, stated that "the Democratic societies laid the groundwork for the Republican party." Link also believed that the societies awakened the interest of the common man in government, and asserted that "they clarified the issues and prompted concern." Even more directly and forcefully, William Miller, in his article on the New York congressional election of 1794, declared that the Republican Party became a truly effective political organization in New York City for the first time through the auspices of the politically adept and highly professional organization created by the Democratic Society.[50]

Miller's assertion and Link's suggestion that the Democratic societies were instrumental in the development of the Republican Party were rejected by Noble E. Cunningham, Jr. in his book on the formation of Republican party organization during the Federalist Era. Cunningham agreed that the societies "were uniformly Republican in sympathy" and entered actively into politics but insisted they were neither a party nor the chief basis for a party, merely partisans. In another part of his text, Cunningham reaffirmed his belief that the societies "conditioned" the people for later party activities but did not provide any machinery for party organization. Direction of policy, according to Cunningham, still came from "top leaders of the opposition to the

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[50] Link, Democratic-Republican Societies, pp. 108, 108 n., 206; Miller, "First Fruits of Republican Organization," 118-43.

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national administration." In other words, party organization developed through the gradual and successful implementation of congressional party discipline and not through the efforts of local organizations that neither lasted long enough nor had the necessary discipline to develop nation-wide party machinery.[51]

My own research into New York City politics of this period, however, leads me to believe that Link and Miller, along with Alfred Young,[52] were closer to the actual feeling created by the Democratic Society within the political parties of New York. For though the Democratic Society of New York did not retain its power for much more than a year it did produce permanent changes in the organization of the Republican Party in New York City and it did help to elect the only consistent winner of the decade--the aristocratic Edward Livingston. Three key changes brought about by the Democratic Society of New York were, I believe, its ability to unite the wealth of such leading Republicans as Commodore Nicholson and Samuel Osgood[53] with

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[51]Cunningham, The Jeffersonian Republicans, pp. 63, 65-66. Cunningham, on pages 181-182 of The Jeffersonian Republicans, did speak of the importance of ward organization in party activity, but his basic thesis remained unchanged. See infra, Part V, ch. XIV, n. 57.

[52]See Young's Democratic-Republicans of New York, pp. 570-571 and 578, for a statement of belief that New York politics gained its basic strength and organization from the local level up and not from developments emerging in the halls of Congress that ultimately filtered down to local forces.

[53]Samuel Osgood was described by the British traveler, Henry Wansey, as "formerly a considerable merchant, but now retired from business. He is a leading man in the anti-federal interest. He

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the literary talents of the leading New York Republican ideologist, Tunis Wortman; to press on the people's consciousness the idea that they had the right to advise their representatives between elections and "the natural and inherent RIGHT to amend, alter, or abolish the form of Government which they have instituted,"[54] and to discover through Committees of Correspondence and Circular Letters that Republicans of New York had attitudes and feelings that were similar to those of Republicans throughout the union. Discussions of each of these points have formed an important basis of Part IV of this dissertation. In the light of these factors, it becomes increasingly less meaningful to debate whether the Democratic societies were actually ever political parties or even ever thought of themselves as such.

Much more meaningful, I believe, is to present several examples of New York Democratic Society activity during and after the election campaign of 1794 which indicated the society's power and potential for power during the period when it was at the height of its influence. As first example, there were the remarks of the Vermont Democratic Society, in answer to Lord Dorchester's speech to the Indians, which were presented in special supplements of the Republican Diary of April 26 and the Republican New York Journal of April 30, 1794. The supplements were paid for by the New York Democratic Society because the latter was pleased "with the unequivocal language of the Vermont Society expressive of their wish and inclination for peace, if it can be maintained on honorable terms, as with their undaunted firmness and

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married a widow . . . , with whom he had a fortune of thirty thousand pounds." Wansey, Journey of an Excursion of the United States, p. 82.

[54]"Preamble to the Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York," New York Journal, Feb. 19, 1794.

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patriotic determination to sacrifice a very considerable part of their property, if necessary, rather than submit." This example showed that there were now Democratic organizations throughout the country which felt kinship towards one another and which would reprint the views of their fellow members to show this fellowship of interest and attitude. Since the New York Democratic Society included men of great wealth, the cost of publication created no financial problem.

Two other examples directly concerned the local election that took place that April. A writer in the Federalist Minerva, after the election was over, asked the Democratic Society if it had not, before the election, adjourned the Democratic Society and then met as a group to decide upon the nomination of Republican candidates? If true, this meant that the "Real" Republican ticket was determined in its final form by the leadership of the Democratic Society. A close look at the contretemps before the Republican slate was finally selected[55] indicates that there was a great deal of uncertainty before a strong hand stepped in to make the final decision. In addition, the writer, "Legion," who presented what turned out to be the final list two days before the official list was published, wrote in a manner that sounded ideologically and verbally close to official statements made in the name of the Democratic Society. Whether true or not, however, the question of the Democratic Society's role in the selection of the Republican Party ticket was a live issue in June, 1794. In a related incident that provided an interesting finis to that election, "Unprejudiced," an anti-Democratic Society writer in the Republican Diary,

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[55]See supra, pp.324-325 of this dissertation.

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described a scene in which Commodore Nicholson, the president of the society, was seated at one of the polling places, telling all around him "that if they do not succeed this year, their society will increase, and on the next year they will get in their own creatures." Once again, if this vignette was true, it indicated a much more important political role for the Democratic Society of New York than Noble Cunningham had been willing to grant.[56]

Finally, as regards the congressional election of December, 1794, in which the Democratic Society most certainly played a role, this dissertation will include a full discussion of it in its proper place.[57] Suffice it to say at this point that the Democratic Society was a major issue in that campaign and that the Republican candidate did win with the help of firm organizational support from the Democratic Society. The Democratic Society of New York gave badly needed cohesion and organizational strength to the Republican Party in the city, although it could not do it alone and it did not retain its political power for very long. Nevertheless, I believe that as a result of its short-term existence, the Republican Party of New York became a force to reckon with in the political life of the city.

For the American sea-port town whose life-blood was trade, both April and May 1794 were the cruelest months. With the embargo still on (it would continue until May 26) the American Minerva reported that merchants, seamen and cartmen "walk the streets with their arms folded

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[56]"Federal Republican," American Minerva, June 5, 1794; "Unprejudiced," Diary, June 10, 1794.

[57]See infra, pp. 404-411, for a discussion of the congressional election of December, 1794.

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and enquire, what news?" The only bright spot that Webster could report was that "the fortification of our harbour is begun and furnishes some employment for labouring men."[58] In addition, the task of fortifying Governors Island furnished a show of non-partisan camaraderie on a scope that had been virtually unknown for years among New Yorkers. On various dates, notice was left with the newspapers that the Tammany Society was determined to add to their republican zeal by "turning out to 'work with their own hands' upon the fortifications"; that the English Republicans were asked to meet to determine a convenient day to labor on fortifications; that Germans, patriotic school masters, students of Columbia College, the members of the Saint Andrews Society, of the Mechanics and Tradesmen's Society, etc., etc. were to meet to work on the city's defenses. The Journal, by the end of April, could praise the speed with which the work was going forward and the number of citizens who were taking part in this true community project.[59]

Two of those who took part and left a record of that project were the Anderson brothers. At 7:30 A.M. on April 24, the officers of the 3rd and 4th regiments and about forty volunteers, among whom were John and Alexander Anderson, assembled at City Hall, from which they marched to the ferry stairs and embarked for Governors Island. Once there they went to the store house and furnished themselves with spades

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[58] American Minerva, Apr. 19, 1794.

[59] See the Columbian Gazetteer, Apr. 24, May 1, and May 8, 1794, Annals of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York, 1785-1880, ed. by Thomas Earle and Charles T. Congdon (New York: The Society, 1882), p. 31; and the New York Journal, Apr. 26, 1794, for examples of non-partisan response to the crisis.

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and shovels, whereupon they went to work levelling a hill on the southwest side of the island. As Alexander Anderson described it, they "shovel'd, digg'd and wheel'd the barrows alternately." Quartermasters having been previously chosen, they were ready by one o'clock with a dinner of "boil'd ham, bread and cheese, brandy, spirits, and water." A special guest in the person of Governor Clinton, himself, awaited them at the long dinner table. The meal, which was eaten to the playing of fifes and the beating of drums, was concluded with a toast to the President of the United States. After an afternoon of more hill levelling, the laborers for a day finished work at about 5:00 P.M. "and shouldering our shovels march'd military stile to a table furnished with liquors." After refreshing themselves, they returned to the city where they proceeded to the Government House, again accompanied by music, and were dismissed. The next day, John Anderson reported only the expected amount of aches and pains, and concluded, in satisfied fashion, "that I shall not be much the worse for a days digging with the spade and wheeling the barrow in the service of my country, as well as for my own safety."[60]

Exactly one month later, on Saturday morning, May 24, a visitor to New York heard drums and fife playing not far from his window. He ran over and "saw a large body of people on the other side of the Governor's House, with flags flying, and marching two and two towards the waterside." Henry Wansey, the recently arrived British traveler, wondered what it was all about. He had not heard the drums since he

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[60]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Apr. 24, 1794; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, Apr. 26, 1794.

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left England. He hurried downstairs from his boarding house room and found out "it was a procession of young tradesmen going in boats to Governor's Island, to give the state a day's work." Wansey was told that it was "a patriotic and general resolution of the inhabitants of this city, to work a day gratis, without any distinction of rank or condition, for the public advantage, on these fortifications." In his diary, Wansey recorded a republican rhapsody of feeling that was quite understandable in the context of the time and place: "How noble is this! How it cherishes unanimity and love for their country! How much does it tend to unite all ranks of people, and render the social compact firm and united." Wansey's choice of such words as "unanimity," "love for country," "firm and united" well described this particular aspect of New York life in the spring of 1794, and if carried through in other examples would have made the city a republican marvel. As it was, the onlooker could indeed have joined with Wansey in exclaiming: "How noble is this!"[61]

The war of the combined powers against France that produced all of these repercussions for New Yorkers was also to have its affect on the lives of two of its leading citizens. Their different reactions

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[61]Wansey, Journal of an Excursion of the United States, p. 81. An editorial in the Columbian Gazetteer of May 8, 1794, had expressed much the same theme as that with which Wansey concluded. Speaking of fortification work, the editors noted that "all orders of citizens alternately lend a hand to them; and none have yet profess'd themselves either too haughty or too indolent to handle the shovel, the mattock or the wheelbarrow, in so good a cause." In addition other groups or individuals called for a joint effort, as in the case of "A Fireman" who sent out a call to the "Republican Firemen of the City of New York" to prepare for the probable conflict ahead by forming a special fireman's brigade. See the New York Journal, Apr. 23, 1794.

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to their nation's call for assistance provided yet another example of contrast during those months of trial. These two collegiate friends who had become mature political and personal enemies were those pillars of the community, John Jay and Robert R. Livingston. Both were called upon by their President to assume major foreign assignments at a critical time in their nation's history. John Jay was offered the post of Envoy Extraordinary to Great Britain while the Chancellor was asked to replace Gouverneur Morris as Ambassador to France. Neither wished the assignment but one put duty before desire while the other exhibited less pleasant characteristics.

In mid-March, a plan put forward by Rufus King and several New England senators was brought to President Washington. In order to prevent war, calm the public, and save the national honor, the senators suggested that the country be prepared defensively, that a suitable person be sent to the West Indies to aid Americans there, and most importantly, that an Envoy Extraordinary be sent to Great Britain to "require satisfaction" for lost property and work out adjustments of the points that threatened war. Both Robert Morris and Alexander Hamilton seconded the plan, which Washington finally decided to accept as the only method of averting war. The President picked Jay as the best of the possible choices open to him and offered the Chief Justice the position on April 14. King reported that Jay gave no answer at first but was clearly unhappy at the thought of that arduous assignment. The next day Hamilton, King, and the New England senators, Caleb Strong, George Cabot, and Oliver Ellsworth, went to see Jay "to press upon him the necessity which exists that he should not decline

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the Envoyship; that in short he was the only man in whom we could confide, and that we deemed the situation of the Country was too interesting and critical to permit him to hesitate." King briefly added: "he did not decline."[62]

On the same day the Chief Justice wrote a letter to Sarah Jay reporting that there was a "serious determination" to send him to England, "if possible to avert a war." Jay told his wife that he felt he had to accept regardless of personal feelings or wishes. As he put it: "If it should please God to make me instrumental to the continuance of peace, and in preventing the effusion of blood, and other evils and miseries incident to war, we shall both have reasons to rejoice. Whatever may be the event, the endeavor will be virtuous, and consequently consolatory." Apparently receiving tearful letters from his wife from whom he would be separated for over a year, Jay put his acceptance in terms that both could understand and approve. Public consideration and duty forced it upon him. Both had to resign themselves to God's will and resist despondency. The key words in the Jay lexicon were there, duty and resignation.[63]

Resignation, however, was not the long suit of the Chancellor of New York and his sense of duty to his country apparently indicated to him that working for the defeat rather than for the hated federal administration was the only correct path. Since the winter the Chancellor had become so deeply enmeshed in Republican party politics

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[62]Notes of Rufus King taken during the crisis of March-April 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 517-21.

[63]Jay to Mrs. Jay, Apr. 15, April 19, and Apr. 20, 1794, Papers of Jay, IV, 3-5, 7.

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and schemes for war that it would undoubtedly given his mind too great a wrench if he suddenly found himself a member of that administration he so detested. A letter to James Monroe, dated May 14, 1794, showed well the all-pervasive political nature of the Chancellor's views at that moment. Livingston told Monroe that he knew "the general sense of the country has been on the side of peace" but he could not see the United States wait helplessly in the face of British outrages and "the arts and artifices" of British and American emissaries for then our moment of action would be over. That the Chancellor's overwhelming desire was for war could be seen in his suggestion for possible American action. This country could give work to our unemployed seamen and gain back our impressed ones by immediately issuing letters of marque and, in the Chancellor's own words, "to connive at the fitting out of privateers under French colours by giving such a construction of the treaty as the words will bear." Furthermore, all trades with England should be in British bottoms so that this country could use British ships and men as hostages.[64]

The Chancellor then turned to his reasons for having refused the nomination as Minister to France. Numerous personal difficulties at that time made it very difficult for him to pick up and go. There was also the problem of the effect of his appointment on the politics of the state. The Council of Appointment, controlled as it was by Federalists, would give the chancellorship "to a person of very dif-

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[64]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Monroe, May 14, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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ferent political sentiments" from himself.[65] Finally, being of such different political opinions from much of the federal administration, the Chancellor would either be compelled to violate his own principles to conform to them or risk his reputation by incurring their resentment. Strangely enough, James Monroe, the recipient of the letter and as ardent a Republican and Francophile as the Chancellor, did accept the offer of Minister to France when it was proffered to him shortly afterwards.[66]

The Chancellor did not lack counselors who put immense pressure on him to accept. The President, after being turned down once, asked Livingston to reconsider and offered to give the Chancellor as much time as he needed to settle his affairs commensurate with the need to send a minister as soon as possible.[67] Edward Livingston wrote his brother that he was convinced of the importance of the mission which, he believed, would lay "the groundwork of the future connection be-

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[65]The fact that the Chancellor feared for the political consequences to his party of his vacating the chancellorship of the state of New York should not be considered unique on his part. John Jay could also count the political advantages and disadvantages of a public act as well as anybody else, if not with the same consistency as some. He wrote to King that Mrs. Montgomery, Livingston's sister, had mentioned that the Chancellor was contemplated for the French post. If the latter should accept, who, asked Jay, should succeed him? "In some hands that office would weaken the security of Property, & be the engine of much political mischief." Jay suggested that King should become Chancellor in case the eventuality materialized and Gulian Verplanck should take King's place as senator. But confer with Hamilton, Jay further suggested, and he concluded with a homily that seemed typical of the man: "Rational men need and ask advice, not for Direction but for Information." See letter of Jay to King, May 3, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

[66]Letter, Livingston to Monroe, May 14, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[67]Letters, Washington to Livingston, Apr. 29 and May 14, 1794, Ibid.

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tween the two republics."[68] Morgan Lewis, the Chancellor's brother-in-law, seconded Edward Livingston's view that the mission was "a desirable Object." Among the considerations that led Lewis to that judgment were a long list of private and public reasons that he undoubtedly thought would most appeal to the Chancellor: "displacing a man obnoxtious [sic] to the french nation" (Gouverneur Morris); the appointment being forced upon your Enemies by the nation itself"; the critical nature of the period; "the prosperity of the french and American People depending on the Cast of a Die [;] the great respectability you will acquire both abroad and at home [;] and the Opportunity you will have of opening the way to future greatness in your own Country." Knowing his man well, Lewis closed by stressing that the advantage for the Livingston family would be great. The Chancellor was also pressured by French republicans living in Philadelphia. Georges-Pierre LeBlanc, the secretary of the French legation, wrote to the Chancellor that those in whose behalf he was writing, including Minister Fauchet, insisted that the Chancellor accept "for the essential welfare of humanity." LeBlanc closed by flattering himself that the Chancellor's "love of your country, will surmount all personal considerations and even the most tender affections," for upon his mission "depends perhaps the wellfare [sic] of several great nations."[69]

All was to no avail. No private or public benefit could shake the Chancellor's decision. To the President, Livingston wrote that

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[68]Letter, Edward Livingston to R. R. Livingston, May 1, 1794, NYHS, Edward Livingston Misc. Mss.

[69]Letters, Morgan Lewis to R. R. Livingston, May 1, 1794 and LeBlanc to R. R. Livingston, May 9, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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nothing could please him more than to be the means "of cementing the union between France and America . . . upon whose mutual prosperity or ruin must in some sort depend the extension or abolition of freedom in the civilized world." He could not, however, make immediate arrangements for a permanent residence abroad. Yet the Chancellor could not refrain from a certain pleasure--under the circumstances of his refusal one might call it gloating--that "my enemies have been less successful than they imagined in depriving me of your favorable opinion." How delicious it must have been for Livingston to have finally received an offer of a major post with the federal government, to have been almost begged to accept by the Chief Executive of the United States and then, on the scantiest of excuses, to have been able to tell the President that the administration had lost him forever![70]

There was one final moment still to come, however, in this particular study in the contrast between public duty and personal pride. The evening before John Jay was to set sail on his mission, he received a brief note from the Chancellor wishing him well and hoping that their past friendship rather than their present political differences would be best remembered. Jay replied by thanking the Chancellor for his kind wishes, reciprocating them, and hoping that it was possible that "Time here or hereafter will correct Errors." This most formal of exchanges between former friends concludes our little morality tale of two New York "aristocrats," parted by politics, personality, and the French Revolution--the last named for that long list of events which it set in motion and which made permanent the separa-

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[70]Letter, Livingston to Washington, May 10, 1794, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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tion of many former friends.[71]

John Jay, sailing from New York harbor aboard the American frigate, Ohio, on the morning of May 12, 1794, carried with him the last best hopes for peace with England. Two of the private letters in the mail placed aboard the Ohio--and there must have been a great deal, for the embargo was still in effect--made that point clear. The mercantile house of Lynch and Stoughton, writing to the firm of John Kirwan and Sons, London, told their correspondents that "if satisfaction is not obtained [by Jay] it will be impossible to maintain that Harmony which is conducive to the Interest and prosperity of both Nations." William Edgar, a New York merchant and friend of the Constables, wrote to William Constable that if Jay "does not procure relief for the . . . insults and Robberys committed by privateers etc I fear we will come to Blows."[72]

Blows were exactly what editors Webster and Greenleaf seemed to be coming to in still one more aspect of Jay's mission. The Minerva, in describing Jay's departure, reported that the Chief Justice left to the acclamation of an "immense concourse of respectable Citizens." The Journal reprinted the Minerva's version but immed-

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[71]Letters, Livingston to Jay and Jay to Livingston, May 11, 1794, Ibid.

[72]Letter, Lynch & Stoughton to John Kirwan & Sons, May 10, 1794, NYHS, L & S LB; letter, William Edgar to William Constable, May 8, 1794, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters. See also Talleyrand to Messrs. Bourdieu, Cholet and Bourdieu, June 10, 1794, Talleyrand in America as a Financial Promoter: 1794-96, Trans. and ed. by Hans Huth and Wilma J. Pugh (Washington: U.S.G.P.O., 1942), II, 30, for Talleyrand's reassurance to his London employers that Jay strongly desired peace and that the latter's political future depended upon a successful completion of his mission.

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iately followed it with a statement by a "correspondent" that not more than two hundred people had actually shown up to see Jay off. The remainder of the crowd had merely raced along at the sight of the ship under full sail. Webster verbally took Greenleaf to task for attempting to distinguish between those who attended the sailing "to pay their respects to Mr. Jay" and those who followed along simply to watch the spectacle of a sailing ship. Did Greenleaf, Webster asked, make a similar distinction between those who met at City Hall at the end of February to pass resolves and those who attended simply to look on? By that time, however, Jay was safely on the high seas and his mission could go ahead without further worry of whether editors, politicians, or the general public might come to blows. There would be enough of that when the Chief Justice returned.[73]

In New York harbor, on the same day that the Chief Justice sailed for England, "a grand civic feast" in honor of the anniversary of the Tammany Society was held aboard the French sloop-of-war, La Perdrix.[74] The special ship-board fête, described as "a happy intermingling" of two friendly peoples--French and American--included both the Governor and the Chancellor of the state in attendance. United States and French flags flew high over the reversed standards of Great Britain and the combined powers. The band played Ça Ira and other patriotic songs, and at each toast, one round of cannon was fired except for toast #4 which was followed by fifteen rounds and the

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[73]American Minerva, May 12 and May 14, 1794; New York Journal, May 14, 1794.

[74]Kilroe, St. Tammany, p. 192.

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singing of the "Marseilles Hymn." In the words of the descriptive newspaper paragraph, "Americans and French appeared like a band of brothers, each striving to speak each other's language." The brotherly aspects of the celebration were clearly indicated in the toasts given aboard La Perdrix:

1. Liberty, Equality, Fraternity
2. The French Republic
3. The United States of America
4. May the bonds of friendship between France and the United States be eternal. This was the toast greeted with fifteen rounds of cannon fire.
5. The tree of Liberty planted by America and watered with the blood of the French--May it grow and cover with its branches the whole Universe . . .

13. May the present war, by giving happiness to Mankind, destroy the seeds of discord and secure everlasting peace.
14. May the British nation obtain a good government, and bless the Sans Culottes for procuring it to them.[75]

In a strange and marked contrast to the warmly emotional scene aboard the French sloop-of-war was the Tammany Society's own celebration of its anniversary which was held later that day with the Mayor and the French consulin attendance. Division was played down, unity and peace stressed, and the toasts were models of calm and quiet thought. They included one to the Chief Justice of the United States, who was wished a successful mission, one to the French Republic and one to the equal rights of man. There were no emotion-rousing calls to do battle in the name of republicanism.[76] Tammany, which was still primarily a social organization made up of Republicans and Federalists, was apparently attempting to stay united by ignoring politics, or where that was impossible, by allowing each side to express itself in

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[75] Columbian Gazetteer, May 15, 1794.

[76] Ibid., May 12, 1794.

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its own manner. That may have been the reason for the two very different sets of toasts and feelings at the two distinct celebrations of Tammany's day. Even if that reasoning was correct, however, the key question still remained: could union and unity win out over division and divisiveness?

Certainly most New Yorkers had had more than their share of division by late spring 1794. And just as certainly most New Yorkers could have marched in unity behind the ideas expressed in a letter that the Staten Island Republican, Abraham Bancker, wrote at the height of the crisis with England. At the conclusion of several chapters that have so often stressed the pull of opposing forces in American society, it is well to remember that it was still possible for a New Yorker to be for union, peace, a British treaty, and France all at the same time and that none of those were, as yet, mutually exclusive. Bancker first hoped that "our rulers will proceed with consideration to our true Interests, and not rush into War without real Necessity. Peace is always to be preferred if a Peace can be maintained on honorable Principles." (Amen, most New Yorkers would have said.) Bancker continued with the wish that differences with England might be speedily adjusted and that a treaty of commerce and alliance "founded on a substantial Basis" might be the outcome of negotiations between the two nations. At the same time he delighted in the success that appeared in almost every "instance to attend the arms of France. A people so united and so determined must and will be free." (Amen, most New Yorkers would have said.) Then the writer concluded: "Despots must be humbled and every Species of despotic

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Power must be prostrate in the Dust, before Universal Liberty can reign triumphant. That this glorious Aera may not be far remote, is the cordial wish of Abraham Bancker." (Amen, most New Yorkers would have said--as they continued on their divisive ways.)[77]

[77]Letter, Abraham Bancker to Evert Bancker, Apr. 9, 1794, NYHS, Bancker Papers.

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NEW YORK CITY AND THE FRENCH REVOLUTION, 1789-1797:

A STUDY OF FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY INFLUENCE

by

ALAN L. BLAU

Part II

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PART V. SEEDS OF LATER EVENTS AND WORSE DIVISIONS (JUNE 1794 - JUNE 1795)

CHAPTER XIII

"Every man must draw his own conclusion."

Since the late spring of 1793 an almost constant series of events had kept the port city of New York in a mood of nervous excitement. It had been a year of meetings, open and closed, indoor and out, Republican and Federalist, a year of liberty caps and liberty poles, Ça Ira and Carmagnole and "God Save Great George," a year of endless toasts, of new political societies, of old friendships broken, and a year of political and family rivalries hardened even further by French revolutionary events. Moreover, as a port whose ships plied the major sea lanes of the world, New York was particularly subject to every twist and turn of British and French maritime policies. All of these factors had served to produce a city on edge.

Typical of that edginess and the broken friendships was an incident that had occurred in mid-May and which involved three old Revolutionary War comrades. Commodore James Nicholson, now a leading Republican and president of the Democratic Society of New York, was rumored to have accused President Washington of having received British gold as a bribe.[1] The man to whom Nicholson was supposed to

[1]New York Journal, May 14, 1794.

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have made the charge was General Samuel Blachley Webb, an old friend and confirmed Federalist. In answer to a letter from Nicholson, Webb certified that the Commodore did not say that he believed the President was "Bribed by British Gold." Webb, however, went on to relate "the Substance of a conversation" that had passed between the two of them, in the presence of a third old friend, General Matthew Clarkson--a conversation which Nicholson "acknowledged was true." According to Webb, Nicholson "railed with great Violence" against the President and the Secretary of the Treasury, and called the President an aristocrat as "evinced by his Nomination to Offices of importance, Men of Aristocratic Principles." After an argument of some length, Nicholson asked Webb "'Do you know what has been attempted by British Gold in France'--my answer was I did--on which you said 'You believed or you should not be Surprized, if the same Game was playing with the Officers of our Government' or words to that effect." Webb then noted that, "feeling hurt to find my old friend so totally changed in sentiments respecting Characters dear to me & to our Country in General," he reported what had passed between them to several former mutual friends in the hope that they could convince Nicholson of what Webb "conceived to be an erroneous opinion." Webb was sorry that Nicholson "should have had so much trouble about the business"--requiring the publication of a letter of denial in Greenleaf's paper; but, General Webb concluded in the iciest of tones, he presumed that Nicholson's letter of denial agreed "with the foregoing relation of facts, from which every man must draw his own conclusion."[2]

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[2]S. B. Webb to James Nicholson, May 18, 1794, Correspondence of Webb, III, 192-94.

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Personal animosities and impersonal animosities reached their most asinine level at the end of May 1794 when a correspondent in the Journal suggested that the fact that the sun had not shone and rain had fallen "without intermission" for the previous ten days was due to the failure of the federal government to renew the embargo, much against the will of the people. He noted that it was shameful to see all those boats moving out with food and supplies for the "British robbers in the West Indies."[3]

One would have been curious to have seen the reaction of the Journal's correspondent if he had known that Minister Fauchet, in a dispatch to his foreign ministry written two days before, had taken credit for the fact that Congress did not renew the embargo. Fauchet noted that the people were up in arms against the English and the votes were there for a continuation of the embargo. The French minister reported that he pointed out to his Congressional friends the interesting fact that the embargo was hurting France more than it was hurting the British. As a result, a complete switch in voting took place. In the words of Fauchet and the French commissioners, this showed the completeness of influence that the French Republic possessed over the feelings of Americans.[4]

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[3]New York Journal, May 31, 1794.

[4]Commissioners to MFA, May 29, 1794, "CFM," AHA, II, 359. The fact that France was now represented in the United States by a group of commissioners created its share of confusion and difficulties. For example, La Forest, the secretary of the legation, was suspected by Fauchet of holding secret meetings with Federalist leaders. Both La Forest and Petry, another commissioner, were later accused of misdemeanors and aristocratic leanings and were recalled by the government in Paris. (See "CFM," AHA, II, 717n.) A problem of another sort resulted from the fact that some dispatches of the French legation were signed by the Commissioners as a group, some by Fauchet

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With the coming of June, 1794, however, a new atmosphere seemed to take over, replacing the uneasiness of the preceding months. The rain did stop, the sun did shine, and the embargo was ended. For a town dependent on mercantile life as was New York, the ending of the embargo was a major event. In addition, although John Jay was now almost half-way to England, New Yorkers knew that it would be some time before their fate was decided. They could begin to relax for the first time in many months. James Constable, always the nervous Federalist, who as late as June 7 told his brother that "many of us seem satisfied that War must take Place," was able to write, one week later, that "the Apprehensions of war are subsided, Congress adjourned to 1 Nov. Everything now seems to depend upon Mr. Jay."[5]

For the Federalists, the adjournment of Congress was definitely cause for an easier mind. A writer in the Minerva noted that Congress had divided into two groups--the antifederalist faction which gave "a French cast to all our politics" and who "hate Britain more than they dread war" even as they refused to pass anything that would prepare the nation for war, and the federal men who "get ready for war, but do not provoke it." The writer claimed that some antifederals "make it a merit of the first kind to tie America, like a toy or a child's whistle, about the neck of France." A true American, he as-

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singly, and still others were written chiefly by Fauchet but included an additional section signed by two, three, or all four commissioners. Finally, the dispatches signed by Fauchet, alone, generally had a much more revolutionary tone to them and were much more critical of the executive branch of the American federal government. In fact, as the months went on, Minister Fauchet began to sound more and more like his renowned predecessor, Citizen Genêt.

[5]Letters, J. Constable to William Constable, June 7 and June 14, 1794, NYHS, Wm. & J. Constable LB.

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serted, would "shun and suspect any foreign connection."[6] Similarly, Alexander Hamilton, writing to Jay about events at home, reflected the general Federalist pleasure that the session of Congress closed "better than I expected." If Britain was now "disposed to justice, peace, and conciliation," he believed, "the two countries may still arrive at a better understanding than has for some time subsisted between them."[7]

With the embargo at an end, the European wars once more worked strongly to the advantage of New York City. William Strickland, another of the endless supply of British and French travellers who visited and wrote about America in the early years of the Republic, described his first introduction to New York harbor in a manner which stressed the mercantile character of the city: "We found ourselves lying at no great distance from the town in the midst of a forest of masts, some hundreds of vessels surrounding more in number and in closer tier than I ever before saw except on the Thames below London Bridge." The situation of the town impressed Strickland still further, as did the sight of the quays, "cover'd with workmen merchandize and carriages."[8] After landing and spending one day in the town, Strickland found himself simply and completely amazed that he "should have traversed one fourth of the circumference of the world and meet again everything similar to what I have left." Looking for what was differ-

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[6] American Minerva, June 6, 1794.

[7] Hamilton to Jay, June 4, 1794, Works of Hamilton, IV, 564-65.

[8] Journal of William Strickland, vol. 4 and vol. 5, NYHS, Sept. 20 and Sept. 25, 1794.

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ent, he could only search in vain, for "everything is perfectly English; the mode of living as far as I have yet seen, dress, manners, customs, appearance of the people, occupations are all English."[9]

Although everything in the sea-port town of New York was "perfectly English" to Strickland, he did note that the "City is so full of French that they appear to constitute a considerable part of the population." Henry Wansey, taking a walk to the suburbs with Frederick Jay, brother of the envoy extraordinary, and with "Mr. Armstrong" (John Armstrong?), crossed Boston Road to The Indian Queen, a "tea drinking house and garden" and found it "filled with Frenchmen and their families; they all wear tricolored cockades, whether aristocrats or democrats."[10]

Among the Frenchmen in New York at that moment was that extraordinary example of a European chameleon, Charles Maurice de Talleyrand. Though the French commissioners suspected Talleyrand and his partner, Beaumetz, of being in the United States to work out projects "against the well-being of the Republic,"[11] the partners' New York stay was basically tied to a more innocent project--the setting up of an American branch of the commercial house whose interests they promoted in America. In preparation for that project and in words that showed Talleyrand to be still another one of the city's boosters, the Frenchman wrote: "The city which appears to me to be the best situat-

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[9]Letter, William Strickland to Revd John Robinson, Sept. 21, 1794, NYHS, Wm. Strickland Papers.

[10]Journal of William Strickland, vol. 4, NYHS, Sept. 22, 1794; Wansey, Journal of an Excursion of the United States, p. 74.

[11]Commissioners to MFA, June 9, 1794, "CFM," AHA, II, 392.

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ed to maintain these constant connections is New York. Its good and convenient harbor, which is never closed by ice, its central position to which large rivers bring the products of the whole country, appear to me to be decisive advantages." The New York Chamber of Commerce could not have done any better, especially as Talleyrand closed with the thought that New York could even double its usefulness by becoming the center of trade with the French islands of the West Indies.[12]

New York already had a goodly share of that West Indies trade, as the local mercantile house of Lynch and Stoughton noted with approval in a letter to their Lisbon agent. The export of flour and provisions to those islands was already considerable for troops and fleets had to be supplied; and Lynch and Stoughton could see "no appearance of any decline this Summer." As for the European trade, Lynch and Stoughton reported that large shipments of American produce were "actually making for" France, Spain, and Portugal at that time, "which has given rise to prices thereof." In fact, there were now "more orders in hand for Europe than can be executed or Vessels found to carry same."[13]

The most exciting mercantile news of all, however, came with "the firing of cannon which announc'd the arrival of the American Indiaman."[14] On the morning of June 18 the ship America, which belonged to the New York firm of Gouverneur and Kemble, sailed into the

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[12]Talleyrand to Bourdieu, Cholet, and Bourdieu, Jan. 15, 1795, Talleyrand in America, II, 94-95.

[13]Letter, Lynch & Stoughton to Gould, Kirwan & Co., June 20, 1794, NYHS, L & S LB.

[14]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 18, 1794.

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harbor from China via the Ile de France after more than a year's journey. For its owners, the pleasure of its safe arrival was increased by the fears that had been held for its safety due to "the numerous captures that have been made of Vessells [sic] from this country amongst the Islands and some very unwarrantable and shameful condemnations by the abuses in . . . [British] Courts of Admiralty." The deeply felt wounds of Americans were not easily forgotten, even with the return of full-blown prosperity. Gouverneur and Kemble, however, were able to assuage their wounds many times over when the profits started rolling in. Reporting to their agent in China, they told of one sale that Samuel Gouverneur made on nankeens--"a dollar a piece for upwards of 250,000 pieces." The America carried silks, tea, china, sugar and gunpowder, as well, and when the final value of her cargos was reckoned it was found to be "not much short of 600,000 Dol.rs"[15]

Good times for the world of commerce, the life-blood of the port, was transferred to all others whose own livelihood was affected by increased foreign and domestic trade. Grant Thorburn, who became one of the leading flower and seed dealers of New York in the first half of the nineteenth century and one of that "great City's" leading characters--of the colorful variety--recalled his arrival in New York from Scotland in 1794 when building was going on apace. He was a nail maker, by trade, and one of his first jobs was working on the City Hotel on Broadway which was built in that prosperous summer and autumn

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[15]Letters, Gouverneur & Kemble to Messrs David Scott & Co., June 25, 1794, G. & K. to George Smith, June 30, 1794, and G. & K. to Capt. Charles S. Schnader, Nov. 20, 1794, NYHS, G. & K. LB.

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of 1794. Thorburn claimed that the new hotel was the first house in the city and country "whose roof was covered with slates." Proudly he reminisced that he had made the nails for that roof.[16]

National and personal pride seemed to be the basic feeling of that summer of 1794. The mercantile house of Stewart and Jones, writing to a British client, seemed to sum up the general public mood. The firm first noted that the dividends of the Bank of the United States were "a very rising property and esteemed the best and most stable . . . in the Country and productive." The nation, itself, was "in a most prosperous way," with much good property for investment by foreigners. Stewart and Jones assured their client that there was "not the least probability of our going to warr [sic] with any Nation," both the people and government being "most peaceable inclined." In sum, they found their fellow Americans "to be the most happy people under the Sun and God be praised for it and long may he continue it to us." They wished that it could "be the Case with all mankind soon."[17]

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[16]Grant Thorburn, Fifty Years Reminiscences of New York (New York: Daniel Fanshaw, 1845), p. 209. Thorburn, who was an artisan before he was a tradesman, and thus could have been a member of the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen twice over, expressed a view in his Reminiscences (which were dedicated to the widow of "Major-General Alexander Hamilton"), that might explain at least one reason why the Federalists of the 1790's had an attraction for both mechanics and tradesmen. Thorburn remembered, with all the built-in failings of the literary reminiscence, that at the time--circa 1794--Washington, Jay, Hamilton and others, "all honest men," were at the head of government. Defaulters, he claimed, were then unknown, "but presently there marched in a troop of the pure Democracy, with Aaron Burr at their head; and then commenced the tug at the purse strings." Since that time, Thorburn sadly concluded, defaulters had regularly marched out of Washington D.C. and New York City. See Thorburn, Reminiscences, p. 211.

[17]Letter, Stewart & Jones to Malcolm Ross, June 14, 1794, NYHS, S. & J. LB.

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One way that foreigners could enjoy the happiness of Americans was to migrate to this country. As the yearly rate of increase in the population of the city and country showed, many were doing just that.[18] Probably the most celebrated new arrival of that year was Dr. Joseph Priestley, who reached the United States during the first week of June. His arrival in New York harbor was greeted with that mixture of pride and uncertainty which might have been expected to mark the appearance of such an important but controversial refugee. Priestley, who had come to this country to find political and religious asylum from the verbal and physical attacks of his countrymen, was welcomed by Loudon's Diary with open arms. The editor noted that the United States had become the place of refuge for some of the greatest people of that age who were persecuted in Europe "merely because they have defended the rights of enslaved nations." The Diary closed with the thought that England would "one day regret her ungrateful treatment to this venerable and illustrious man."[19]

The American Minerva also welcomed Dr. Priestley, although Webster diluted the greeting somewhat by noting that the doctor's

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[18]According to the New York Directory, the number of householders, persons occupying stores, shops, etc. were nearly as follows: 1790, 4500; 1791, 5800; 1792, 6700; 1793, 7700; 1794, 9000. See "Domestic Occurences," New York Magazine, V (Aug., 1794), 54, for a compilation of these statistics. Another sign of the increased immigration to the United States was the formation, on May 22, 1794, of the New York Society for the Information and Assistance of Persons Emigrating from Foreign Countries. The society included a Committee of Correspondence composed of Melancton Smith, Dr. S. L. Mitchill, Dr. Amasa Dingley, O. Webb, J. Lee, A. Cuthell, and L. Wayland. The committee membership was clearly Republican in its political orientation.

[19]Diary, June 3, 1794.

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"theological tenets are not generally believed in this country." Webster concluded positively, however, by agreeing that Dr. Priestley's religious beliefs had "many respectable advocates, and the Doctor will felicitate himself on finding in the United States, no persecution of opinions."[20] The Daily Advertiser repeated Webster's statement the next day but the Journal would have no part of any remarks which showed anything less than wholehearted approval. Greenleaf had no doubt that Priestley would be "hailed welcome to these climes of freedom, by every friend to Liberty and the Rights of Man--and his philosophic genius and patriotic and moral virtues be deemed a happy acquisition to this country." Greenleaf reserved some particularly harsh words for England, whose "intrigues, corruption and cruelty" forced Priestley to cross the Atlantic at his advanced age.[21]

Dr. Priestley soon found himself caught in the middle of the reigning political disputes of the city, but his wisdom shone through in his judicious replies to the formal welcoming addresses of various local groups. The Democratic Society of New York welcomed Priestley to these "shores of Liberty and Equality" where reason had triumphed over "artificial distinctions" and where law operated to protect all equally. Describing the governments of the old world as exemplars of corruption and despotism who now combined to prevent the establishment of liberty in France and destroy the rights of man, the Democratic Society pictured the United States as a place where the friends of liberty "may enjoy the best blessings of civilized society." In his

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[20] American Minerva, June 6, 1794.

[21] Daily Advertiser, June 7, 1794; New York Journal, June 7, 1794.

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quiet reply, Priestley praised the United States and hoped that friendship might yet return between England and this country.[22]

The Minerva printed not only the address and the reply but also an editorial that praised Priestley for expressing a desire to be protected by the laws of the United States and not by the Democratic Society. Webster assured his readers that the doctor would undoubtedly discover the character of men and societies in this country and would prove himself to be a sound republican who supported the President and the maintenance of our government and its laws. Unlike the Democratic Society, Webster implied, Dr. Priestley would find it in his duty and interest to support "the constitutions of the people's choice" and to maintain total independence of any foreign power. Webster never seemed to lose an opportunity to attack the Democratic Society and his tenacity approached the monumental.[23]

The second Sunday that Dr. Priestley spent in the United States coincidentally happened to be Trinity Sunday. It provided a perfect opportunity for the preachers to speak out against Priestley's unitarian views. Henry Wansey attended the most fitting of all churches on that day, Trinity Church, and reported that Dr. Abraham Beach, who preached the sermon, applied to Dr. Priestley, by name, to acquaint himself with God. Wansey observed that "they are really

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[22]"Address to Joseph Priestley by the Democratic Society of New York," and Priestley's reply, Columbian Gazetteer, June 9, 1794.

[23]American Minerva, June 7, 1794. See also "Address to Joseph Priestley by the Associated Teachers of New York City," Columbian Gazetteer, June 12, 1794; "Address to Joseph Priestley by the Tammany Society of New York," American Minerva, June 10, 1794; "Address of the Republican Natives of Great Britain and Ireland, resident in the City of New York," Wansey, Journal, pp. 275-77.

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afraid of Dr. Priestley, and are preparing publications against Unitarianism."[24] On that same Sunday Alexander Anderson attended church in the morning, afternoon, and evening and heard three different preachers in discourses against the religious doctrines espoused by Priestley.[25]

On the whole, though, Dr. Priestley could well have been gratified by his reception in New York City. Wansey recorded a dinner held at the home of that leading Republican, Samuel Osgood, where the guest list included Dr. and Mrs. Priestley, Dr. Samuel Prevoost, the Episcopal Bishop of New York, and his lady, Edmond Genêt, and Melancton Smith. After dinner Wansey was seated between the Bishop and Dr. Priestley, which led him to remark that though the Bishop and the Doctor represented "the seat of war in England," they were representatives "of peace and civility here."[26] Even Webster of the Minerva could wholeheartedly praise one aspect of Priestley's religious views. Taking note of six letters of Dr. Priestley to the philosophers and politicians of France on the subject of religion, Webster remarked that they were "useful and pertinent" and deserved to be studied by those "whose zeal for the cause of France, leads them to vindicate the errors of the ruling powers." For in them, Priestley "censures the French legislators for their interference in religious concerns. . . . He tells them that as statesmen they have nothing to do with relig-

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[24] Wansey, Journal, p. 200.

[25] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, June 15, 1794.

[26] Wansey, Journal, pp. 198-99.

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ion."[27] Thus, with the exception of those for whom Priestley's religious attitudes were anathema, a most cordial and liberal American welcome was provided for the eminent British refugee. At that moment, Priestley might well have felt, along with the merchants, Stewart and Jones, that Americans were "the most happy people under the Sun" and that he was fortunate to be among them.

In this period of relative internal calm when a general prosperity of purse and easiness of mind made Americans very happy to count their blessings, when Congress had concluded its session and Jay was still on the high seas, French news once again took up the largest part of newspaper space. The French news, however, was almost entirely of a military nature. If one were to survey the New York City newspapers of June 1794 for French news of another kind only the most general of political matters would be found. The Daily Gazette did print a supplement which carried reports of the trial of "Herbert [sic]" and his fellow conspirators by the "Revolutionary Tribunal," as well as a description of Danton and a report on what was described as his lowered status. There was nothing in the paper, however, on non-political legislative measures and the Committee of Public Safety might just as well have not existed.[28]

What was true of the Daily Gazette was true of every other New York newspaper except for the American Minerva. Noah Webster's interests were much too broad to be narrowed down to merely military

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[27] American Minerva, June 26, 1794. For further praise of Priestley see also Extract from an Oration of Dr. [Amasa] Dingley, Columbian Gazetteer, June 23, 1794.

[28] New York Daily Gazette, May 29 and June 4, 1794.

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matters. Though endlessly chastising the Jacobins and the Parisian mob, Webster praised the peasantry of France for displaying the "most noble traits." What he found so noble was the peasantry's "sacred regard to property . . . even when they have the opportunities to plunder with impunity." Webster called that "a distinguished example of moral virtue, or perhaps more correctly, of patriotic enthusiasm."[29] The editor of the Minerva also praised the French armies for standing "as a firm bulwark against all attacks, [even as] the members of the convention, are mowing off each others heads, with a spirit of jealousy and vengeance, that has no parrallel [sic] in the history of faction itself." Webster noted that Danton, who once "almost governed the convention with his nod," had now been accused of being a traitor, along with others who were a short time before "immaculate patriots." Some reports even indicated that he had been guillotined. Robespierre had removed his competition, Webster concluded, and would either be dictator, himself, or "sink into the grave." Webster left his readers with the reminder that Jacobin clubs were good at one thing, pulling down governments. Where they ruled, he asserted, "Liberty cannot exist."[30]

If the public had wanted a truer understanding of French events, they would have had to turn to a source which was both unavailable to them and which they had been led to disbelieve. A dispatch from Gouverneur Morris to Secretary of State Randolph, dated July 23, 1794, provided a sample of that well-rounded information

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[29] American Minerva, May 28, 1794.

[30] Ibid., June 3 and June 4, 1794.

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which the general public never received. Concerning the Jay embassy, Morris believed that the success of French arms "will have secured that of Mr. Jay's mission." Great Britain, he believed, would not find it to their convenience to earn the continued enmity of America as well. In France, itself, the new harvest was large and early, which was good news for all Frenchmen. As for the state of the parties at that time, Morris reported that there was considerable ferment over the power of the two great committees: the Committee of Public Safety and the Committee of General Security. Morris expected that a general explosion would come shortly, especially since the foreign enemy was less of a problem at that time. (Events were about to prove him right again.) Morris concluded with a statement whose theme was very similar to Webster's praise of the peasantry and property and which was another reason for the American Federalist abhorrence of what they considered to be Jacobinical politics: "Hitherto power and property are at war, and the latter is a daily victim; whereas it is their union which can alone establish permanent systems of government." Morris' words, which were meant as a maxim for his time, as well as for the French theater of the revolution, would shortly find their own American repercussions in the Whisky Rebellion.[31]

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[31]G. Morris to E. Randolph, July 23, 1794, Sparks, Life of Morris, II, 450-52. For a series of equally lucid interpretations and descriptions of the French scene see Morris to Washington, Oct. 18, 1793, Morris to Jefferson, Jan. 21, 1794, Morris to Randolph, Apr. 15, 1794 and May 31, 1794, Ibid., 369-70, 392-400, 419-26, 436-39. Morris was often accused of aristocratic leanings and even an anti-French bias by the Republican opposition in the United States. It was a charge made so often that most Americans, even Federalists, often took for granted that those were proper characterizations of the Morris embassy. But no one who reads those letters can possibly come away with anything but wonder that Morris should ever have been so characterized. The two following excerpts should be proof enough:

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Meanwhile, the interest of Americans and New Yorkers remained with French military successes,[32] which they could enjoy from afar, and with their own economic and political success which seemed to be assuring their continued existence as a nation.

The celebration of that nationhood, or more specifically of that action which declared that these United States of America were indeed an independent nation was about to take place once again. A remarkably convivial atmosphere had descended upon the city of New York and there was no question of whether violence would be a part of this year's celebration as was so strongly feared before the previous year's anniversary. In a mood of the sheerest confidence, the Diary's editor, Samuel Loudon, stated that Americans were "now in the full enjoyment of every blessing which could possibly have been contemplated and even more than probably had 'entered the heart of man to conceive.'"[33] If Loudon was confident, Webster sounded like the most blatant of Francophiles. He described the French as "struggling with

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"The successes of the Republic will give pleasure to all those who are attached to France; for whatever may be the opinions as to a government, which may undergo yet a dozen changes, it seems to be demonstrable from facts, that the plan of dismemberment . . . really exists, and it is that plan which has foiled the allies." (Jan. 21, 1794, p. 395.)
"We have at present to complain, that both Britain and France have violated their treaties with us, Yet I can by no means consider the cases equal; for as to Britain, the act proceeded from cool meditation of regular government; but in France, it is one among many bad effects of that extraordinary situation into which she is thrown." (May 31, 1794, p. 436.)

[32]For bipartisan praise of French war efforts see New York Journal, May 24 and May 28, 1794 and American Minerva, June 21 and June 28, 1794.

[33]Diary, July 3, 1794.

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half the force of the civilized world, and contending with all the prejudices, the errors and the abuses generated by the feudal despotism and the hierarchy of Rome." Webster rejoiced in the "national heroism" of the French people which confounded her enemies and excited her friends. The outside forces that had attempted, illegally, to destroy France would succeed only in destroying themselves. Webster then concluded in a fitting 4th of July manner but in a most unusually abandoned style for him: "Long live the American republic. . . . Vive La Republique."[34]

July 4, 1794 included a memorable vignette to set it apart from past and future Independence Day celebrations in the city of New York. At about 10 o'clock on the morning of the Fourth, members of the Tammany, Democratic, and Mechanics Societies joined members of the militia at the Battery and formed a procession wtth French citizens,[35] or "French Jacobins" as they were called by Moreau de St. Méry. The latter watched the groups form from a window of the apartment of Talleyrand and Beaumetz, which faced the Governor's mansion on one side and the Battery on the other. The procession, which also included the flags of the United States and France entwined and the Cap of Liberty, was described by Moreau as formed of Americans and Frenchmen, marching two by two and singing the Marseillaise and other republican songs, both in English and French. As the procession passed by on its way uptown, Moreau told how the "Jacobins" interrupted themselves "to

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[34] American Minerva, July 4, 1794.

[35] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1794; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1794.

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address invectives to us in the windows where they saw us, Talleyrand, Beaumetz, Cazenove, La Colombe, Baron de la Roche and me." Moreau reported that Citizen Genêt was in the procession "and sang and insulted us like all the others. We wept for our country and for him!"[36]

After that emotion-filled scene the procession wound through the streets of the city, with John Anderson catching the marchers at Pearl Street (which he reminded us was "late queen street") and then again at Beekman Street. The marchers finally broke off at the New Presbyterian Church and at Christ's Church, which were the destinations of the Democratic Society and the officers of the militia and of the Mechanics and Tammany Societies, respectively.[37]

At the Presbyterian meeting, Dr. John M'Knight, taking as his theme "God the Author of Promotion," painted a rosy picture of the state of the United States and its people. All the old ideas were brought forward as M'Knight described the tree of Liberty spreading wide in America "and the nations of the earth taking shelter under it. . . . Sparks of that fire of liberty which has burned so bright in America, have been transported to Europe and kindles into a blaze." As a natural result of that last thought, M'Knight turned to the French Revolution. While he noted that we might lament "the great effusion of blood which their struggle for liberty has cost them, we wish success to their cause." Taking the idea of the spread of liberty one step further, Dr. M'Knight prayed that the enthusiasm shown

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[36]Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey, ed. by Kenneth Roberts and Anna M. Roberts (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday and Co., Inc., 1947), pp. 125, 164.

[37]Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1794; Columbian Gazetteer, July 7, 1794.

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by the French might "spread until all the nations of the earth became free." For M'Knight there was but one cloud upon the horizon, the possibility of United States involvement in the European war. M'Knight warned that war was "a dreadful calamity" and only absolute necessity should involve a nation in it. M'Knight concluded with the reminder that Americans should "rejoice that the rights of man, both civil and religious, are coming to be better understood . . . ,-and that some of the nations . . . are shaking off the galling fetters of bigotry and despotism."[38]

While Pastor M'Knight was making the blessings of peace one of several points in his sermon, the Reverend Joseph Pilmore made it his central theme as he preached to a generally more conservative audience, made up of the Tammany Society and the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen. Using the "fair tree of genuine liberty" as his symbol, as had Reverend M'Knight, Pilmore listed the golden fruits that grew on it: "equal rights, real freedom, security of property, a righteous government of our own election, a perfect equality among all religious societies, and the sacred rights of conscience." To retain those glories, and here Pilmore took up another theme that had been used by recent speakers, our nation had to be united. We could not rely on others, Pilmore asserted, not even the French. Presenting the French Revolution in terms different from the usual unstinted praise found on such occasions, Pilmore noted that the French, to whom we owed so much, "have been engaged in a cause, which in its original principle,

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[38]John M'Knight, God the Author of Promotion (New York: William Durell, 1794), 13-17, 19.

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was just and righteous." The common people, oppressed by a "despotic tyranny" on the one hand and a "superstitious and corrupted clergy" on the other, found revolution to be necessary. Joining with Louis, our friend and ally, a Constitution was adopted "which secured the freedom of the people." Here Pilmore stopped his chronicle of the French Revolution, noting that the departure from the Constitution of 1791 and what had happened since was not his present task to discuss. Odd that Pilmore should have stopped at the moment when the praises of most orators would have just begun to soar: at the moment of the downfall of Louis and the beginning of the French Republic. Pilmore, however, merely noted that disorder and calamity followed while hoping that "something great and glorious may yet arise from the present darkness."[39]

The all important point for Pilmore was to keep our country at peace. With war among all the major nations of Europe, Pilmore believed that it required greatness to keep us on the straight path. Here Washington, that "incomparable man, chosen by Heaven to save our country," received his due. Washington's neutrality proclamation also received praise as a force for peace that was re-echoed by "all Columbia's legislative sons." Pilmore then launched an attack against those who "warmly pressed" the country to arms. His labeling them as "well-meaning, but mistaken men" must have caused some discomfort, if not downright irritation, among a number of his listeners. Turning to praise of John Jay as a man of "established reputation and admirable talents," Pilmore concluded by rounding off his theme: This country has done its duty as a neutral; we could not be faulted. If we had

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[39]Joseph Pilmore, The Blessings of Peace (New York: John Buel, 1794), unpaged.

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finally to submit to arms, we could, with a clear conscience, humbly hope for help from the Lord. We should never forget, however, that our primary reliance should be on peace, in recognition of the good it had brought and would continue to bring to ourselves and our country.[40]

The list of organizations holding special meetings and celebrations that day, as taken from the newspapers of the next several days, included the Tammany, Democratic, and Mechanics Societies, the officers of the Brigade, the Merchants, the Cincinnati, Capt. Stoutenburgh's Co. of Brigade Artillery, and Capt. Montaignie's Co. of Light Infantry. The major characteristic of the toasts of all the aforementioned groups but one was the similarity of feeling which they imparted. There was an inclusiveness about them that betokened an embracing of mankind and the universe in the name of republican brotherhood. Each one toasted the day, the President of the United States, universal peace, liberty and happiness, and the French Republic. Even the set of Capt. Montaignie's company, which had the most revolutionary ring to it in its phraseology, asked that "the people of all the world experience a speedy emancipation and be resolved to own no king but Heaven's." There was nothing there that any republican would find it hard to agree with.[41]

One set of toasts, however, contained feelings and expressions that ran strongly counter to the others. It was the product of

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[40] Ibid.

[41] Columbian Gazetteer, July 7, 1794; American Minerva, July 5, 1794; New York Journal, July 9 and July 12, 1794.

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the society that prided itself most on its democratic principles but in the exclusivity of its own words seemed more the product of an elitist attitude than of a democratic one. It was, in fact, the set of toasts of the Democratic Society of New York. That exclusivity of expression was stated in the very first toast: "The United States of America: May none but true and undisguised Republicans enjoy the benefit of citizenship." As for the toast to the President of the United States, it was couched in terms that showed something less than all-out faith in the man. The toast hoped that "his conduct in negotiations with Great Britain [might] produce proof that extreme patience and forbearance are not incompatible with firmness and fortitude." Another toast wished "health, happiness and prosperity to those members of Congress whose opinions and decisions flowed from patriotism" and wished disgrace to others, while still another, dedicated to the State of New York, hoped that all citizens would become Democrats. To the Republic of France, the Democratic Society wished that "their present struggle for Liberty and Equality [might] secure peace and happiness to the whole family of mankind; and may the feelings between our citizens and theirs continue in full vigor." Possibly most interesting of all, considering the fact that it came from the Democratic Society of one of the leading mercantile cities of the United States, was the volunteer toast which stated, in the best Southern Republican manner: "May agriculture constitute the chief ambition of Americans as the true source of her physical and moral happiness." More and more the Democratic Society seemed to be setting itself up as judge of the republican qualities of others and almost

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demanding that others prove their orthodoxy to the satisfaction of the society.[42]

The newspapers reviewed the celebrations of the fourth of July with great pleasure that year. The Journal was pleased that the threats posed by England and her "minions" towards this country had "reanimated the citizens to their former vivid and grateful recollection of that glorious aera and act, which . . . dissolved us from the domination and tyranny of Britain and bid a world be free." The Minerva was delighted that American republicans had not been drawn to the excesses of the French, while the Columbian Gazetteer saw in the "humor and social harmony" of the proceedings of the day a sign of permanent support for "a happy constitution and a good government." The Journal summarized the feelings of the occasion by pointing out that the toasts throughout the nation were remarkably similar. They included the same "grateful remembrance of that glorious era; . . . contempt for the treatment of Britain towards this country; . . . veneration for the Rights of Man . . . ; solicitude for the prosperity, independence, and happiness of the French Republic, and extermination of despots."[43]

Possibly the best summary of all came from the pen of the seventeen year old John Blair Linn, whose oration delivered before a literary society of young men showed so clearly this faith that was in the process of being transferred from one generation of Americans to another. Recounting to his audience the glorious moments of the dead

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[42] Columbian Gazetteer, July 7, 1794.

[43] New York Journal, July 5 and July 12, 1794; American Minerva, July 5, 1794; Columbian Gazetteer, July 14, 1794.

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heroes of the American Revolution--already a kind of mythic litany--Linn called on Americans to hand down to posterity "the true blessing and spirit of Liberty." One nation, France, had been "captivated" by those charms of freedom for which Americans had fought. As a result, Liberty awakened in Frenchmen's "bosoms an enthusiasm which braves the pointed steel, and bids them proclaim, 'We will perish or be free.'" Though thousands may have already died in the struggle, their "rich blood" had "fertilized the fields" where the Tree of Liberty still stood firmly rooted. Great Britain, not apparently chastised enough "for her insolent and detestable designs on France," now turned her hostile glance once more in Columbia's direction. Concluding with the proper spirit of the aggrieved young celebrating a heroic moment, John Blair Linn cried out to the British lion: "Draw from her [America's] borders your hostile legions, or justice once more shall awake the long slumbering sword!"[44]

For New Yorkers the summer of 1794 happily saw the "long slumbering sword" continue to slumber. It was a summer of everyday business, filled with the minor pleasures and pains that make up much of life. It was certainly a far cry from the tension and temper-filled summers of 1792 and 1793 when angry and excited crowds took to the streets to dispute election results or the neutrality proclamation. As one writer amusedly wrote in early August, the lack of European news for at least ten days turned the coffee houses dreary and made

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[44]John Blair Linn, "An Oration," from Miscellaneous Works (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1795), pp. 49-58. For a similar oration by "a young gentleman before a juvenile Literary Society in the City, 4 July 1794," see New York Magazine, V (July, 1794), 427-29.

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New Yorkers bored with life. They all threw down their newspapers in disgust. After all, they could not now read about thousands killed, walls destroyed, or towns taken. There might be an insurrection in the West or Col. Simcoe might say something hostile to American interests, but the real news of bloody European wars--that was what the public was waiting for![45]

The case was at least slightly overstated, of course, for the public did have other interests and various societies were constantly holding debates on the leading moral and political issues of the day. The Tammany Society, for instance, held a discussion in late June on the question: "What is the difference between the words Republican and Democrat?" In addition, the Calliopean Society held meetings from July to October that brought up several of the issues most on the minds of New Yorkers at that time. Basic to young New Yorkers was the question of the viability of republican government. Several debate questions covered that area:

> Are democratic societies beneficial to republican governments?
> Would it be prudent to prohibit by law any person from holding the same office in the Legislature for a longer time than three years in succession?
> Ought the members of Congress to consider themselves as representatives of the several states rather than of the Union; and ought they to consult the interest of those states in preference to that of the Union?

The increased influx of immigrants gave the Calliopean Society a reason to debate whether "the present emigration of foreigners to America [was] beneficial to the country"; while the publication of Tom Paine's disturbing The Age of Reason led the members to discuss whether that

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[45] American Minerva, Aug. 2, 1794.

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book was "likely to produce more good or evil in the world."[46]

The literary society's debate over The Age of Reason took place in early September but public discussion had begun over a month earlier. Advertisements for Paine's new work were published in late July by various booksellers along with a "blurb" from Paine, himself, which stated that in the "wreck of superstition, false systems of government, and false theology," mankind should not "lose sight of morality, of humanity, and of the theology that is true."[47] Two quick retorts appeared in the newspapers. An "Episcopalian," in the Journal, stated that it was a pity "that this able revolutionist, should have suffered himself to be led away with the enthusiastic folly that has overturned, and almost annihilated the glorious French nation!" An unsigned statement in the Minerva that sounded like Webster took Paine's work apart as an unworthy effort to "overthrow the system of Christianity in America" and which was being "industriously circulated by certain democrats" to level the kingdom of Jesus Christ along with the earthly monarchies.[48]

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[46]Minutes of the Society of St. Tammany, 1791-95, NYPL, June 20, 1794; Calliopean Society Records, NYHS, Aug. 12, Aug. 26, Sept. 9, and Oct. 7, 1794. For the record, the voting of the society on those debates in the order mentioned in the text were as follows: 1. Yes: 9--No: 7; 2. Yes: 13--No: 5; 3. Yes: 9--No: 12; 4. Yes: 9--No: 8; 5. Good: 13--Evil: 7. As an additional point of interest in relation to the Calliopean Society, the names of individual members were prefixed by "Citizen" instead of "Mr." beginning with the records of the meeting of Sept. 2, 1794. However, there is no way to judge whether that action was the individual decision made by the recorder or whether the society made the decision as a group or whether the term "citizen" was used verbally during the meetings.

[47]Columbian Gazetteer, July 31, 1794.

[48]"Episcopalian," New York Journal, Aug. 2, 1794; American Minerva, Aug. 4, 1794.

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If the French Revolution had an "achilles heel" for large numbers of Americans it lay in the treatment of the Christian--not the Catholic--religion. Paine's work was accepted, for better or worse, as a prime example of the thinking emanating from France at that time on the subject of God, Christ, and religion. Although far from being universally condemned and finding considerable support among the younger men, The Age of Reason was correctly diagnosed by James Morris when he asserted that the book would ultimately "draw a contempt on French principles."[49]

Contempt was certainly the word for the manner in which a writer in the Minerva reacted to what was probably the most interesting news of a French event of a religious nature which reached New York that summer. The Fête of the Supreme Being, which Robespierre had staged in late spring, was called "new proof of that . . . eccentricity of Character" which was typical of the French at that moment. The writer, who could hardly supress his laughter upon reading the

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[49]Letter, James Morris to Jacob Morris, Aug. 2, 1794, NYHS, James Morris Misc. Mss. For further and quite varied reactions of New Yorkers to Paine's Age of Reason see Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 12 and Aug. 25, 1794, William Linn, Discourses on the Signs of the Times (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1794), Preface, pp. 162n., 163n., and Columbian Gazetteer, Sept. 29, 1794. The book of Dr. Linn's sermons was reviewed in New York Magazine, VI (Jan., 1795), 26-28 by one "Iranaeus." Although the writer mildly criticized Dr. Linn for seeming, "on some occasions, to go too far in approving all the conduct of the French nation," he fully applauded the minister "for his witty and excellent sarcasm on that drunken politician and licentious moralist, citizen Thomas Paine. It is the best answer his late publication has received, and is, perhaps, all that it deserves." Tom Paine was already persona non grata among a large body of Americans and the worst was yet to come. Grant Thorburn, that staunch embodiment of conservatism, told a sadly amusing story in his Fifty Years of Reminiscences of New York, p. 82, of meeting Paine in 1801, just after the latter's return to the United States, and of being suspended for three months from psalm-singing in the Scotch Presbyterian Church in Cedar Street for shaking the hand of that "licentious moralist."

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accounts of the ceremony, noted that it was probably good for a patriotic display in praise of the Republic but inquired as to its relationship with either piety or religion. In order to honor the Republic, Jesus Christ was made to appear a sans-culotte and a good republican. (It should be noted that there was no reference to Christ in the Fête of the Supreme Being.) This was religion honored, snorted the writer.[50]

The Reverend Dr. William Linn, however, showed that it was still possible to be a firm believer in God, Jesus Christ, and in the French Revolution. In France, Dr. Linn admitted, "there appears to be a great and open disavowal of all religion whatever." Even while observing negative instances of French religious character, however, Linn proceeded to condemn those who attacked France out-of-hand for irreligion while they themselves were often "avowed infidels, or scandalously immoral in their lives." Linn saw the changes taking place in religion as part of an over-all vision conceived by God to return religion to its "primitive purity and power," similar to what He was in the process of doing for civil government. Linn concluded in a burst of optimism: "There is reason to believe, from prophecy, that when France shall have recovered her Liberty, and peace has returned, that pure and undefiled religion shall prevail."[51]

If Dr. Linn believed that France was in the midst of transformation, he envisioned that an America, freed from foreign invasion and

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[50] American Minerva, Aug. 8, 1794.

[51] Linn, Discourses, pp. 15-16, 18-19, 24.

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civil discord, could actually take the lead in establishing a new Zion. For we already had a Constitution that allowed for change in representation or repeal of unjust or oppressive legislative acts. Dr. Linn warned, however, that "if a small part of the community be permitted to resist the execution of law, nothing but anarchy and confusion will ensue; for it is an established principle in all free governments, that the will of the majority ought to prevail." What Dr. Linn had reference to was the so-called Whisky Rebellion which threatened that position of a new Zion which Linn conceived for this country.[52]

For a short time the rebellion in Western Pennsylvania assumed a central position of interest among New Yorkers, although it neither received the constant attention that French events normally gained nor did it arouse the essayists as foreign affairs tended to do. Perhaps that reaction, however, was simply the result of the unanimity with which New Yorkers censured the actions of the rebels.

The Minerva, reacting sharply to reports of rioting in Pittsburgh against the collection of the excise duty on spirits, warned that if the rebellious spirit shown in the West was permitted to make life and property insecure and destroy hopes of peace and liberty, then anarchy would gain full sway and government would not be worth defending. The Columbian Gazetteer, calling the rebels "Malcontents" and viewing the opposition to the excise as "a serious matter," wished "that a due consideration of the general concerns of society may be allowed to outweigh the petty interests of individuals; and that . . . the propensities of individuals may become subservient to public pros-

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[52]Ibid., pp. 176-78.

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perity." The results, the Gazetteer asserted, would tell much about the direction the country would take.[53]

Early in September, after the federal government had begun to take active military measures, the Diary added its hope that the fear of federal arms "may induce the insurgents to terms, when the dictates of duty, unsupported by a prospect of coercion, are too weak to be effectual." The vigor shown by the Chief Executive and his officers in their preparations "for compulsory measures," Loudon added, should make it unnecessary to put "those measures into operation."[54] Still later that month, when federal activity was moving into high gear, the Daily Advertiser praised the willingness of the people to support law and good government against the Whisky rebels. Editor Childs hoped that "the insurgents . . . will . . . seek an accommodation--and thereby avert the horrors of domestic carnage." But Childs doubted that they would do so unless they were convinced of "the readiness of the militia to march against them, [and] that all attempts to overturn or innovate on the power of a government based on the hearts of the people, will be impotent."[55]

Greenleaf's Journal had a more difficult task than the other papers because the editor had consistently attacked funding and the excise as crimes against the American public. Furthermore, the rebels were people with whom Greenleaf would normally find himself in agree-

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[53]American Minerva, Aug. 9, 1794; Columbian Gazetteer, Aug. 14 and Aug. 25, 1794.

[54]Diary, Sept. 10, 1794.

[55]Daily Advertiser, Sept. 25, 1794.

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ment on a wide spectrum of issues. An editorial in mid-August, written on the occasion of Washington's proclamation and Governor Mifflin's calling up of the Pennsylvania militia, showed clearly his internal conflict. "These manoeuvres look serious--they look like CIVIL WAR, the worst, the most intolerable of all wars," Greenleaf fearfully stated. But he also noted that whisky was "a peculiar manufactory of that country--the very circulating medium of it," and asked understanding on that score. He also asked that "an old sore be applied with balm! that all the equal sons of Columbia, with one will, might turn their strength upon the culture of land in peace, or, if necessary, to oppose invading enemies." Greenleaf closed with an appeal that rung out with equal parts of fustian and feeling fed by indecision: "Avert--O Guardian of America--O Genius of Liberty--avert the curse of intestine broils."[56]

Greenleaf's confusion found its counterpart in the Democratic Society of the City of New York, but the resolution of that organization one week later showed a greater willingness to use the occasion as an attack on the laws that led to the rebellion. The Society stated its disapproval of the use of force by the citizens of the western part of Pennsylvania in their fight against the excise. But the Society called for the use of all "pacific means" to repeal those "immoral, oppressive and expensive laws." The Democratic Society concluded by suggesting that the federal government be lenient and conciliatory towards the western citizens and by commending the govern-

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[56] New York Journal, Aug. 13, 1794.

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ment of Pennsylvania for their use of prudent measures.[57]

Unity against the violent actions of the opposers of the excise was the order of the day, but a deep questioning of how the government found itself in that position was also a fact. The widely disparate answers arrived at did not bode well for the politics of consensus. The Whisky Rebellion, for example, was interpreted by one strong Republican as an example of "the administrators of the General Government . . . [being] much more afraid of offending the avowed Enemies of this Country, than they are of their Constituents." Otherwise, the writer observed, "that obnoxious Law," the excise, would have been repealed during the last session of Congress. The writer, Col. Hugh Hughes, corresponding with Major Charles Tillinghast, the deputy collector of the customs for the port of New York, called the actions of the federal government a part of "Pacificus's System to break the Spirits of the People to such a Degree that they will patiently bear any Burden he chuses to lay on them." Hughes could not understand why, if the people were the basis of the Union, they were not consulted and conciliated. "I am very confident," he wrote, "that a very great majority of the Inhabitants of the U. States are as easily governed . . . as any People in the World of equal knowledge and sense of what is just and right." What could an administration expect, however, when it treated the people "with Contempt in not thinking them worthy Notice?" Hughes then broadened his attack to the system that allowed the election of "bienniel Representatives and

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[57]Resolution of the Democratic Society of New York, Columbian Gazetteer, Aug. 28, 1794.

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sexennial Senators and the Executive being chosen by Proxy &c." The results, he observed, were "all foreseen and told repeatedly, but rejected as factious."[58]

A diametrically opposite presentation of the causes of the rebellion and the means of preventing another one was discussed at the home of William Seton, Cashier of the Bank of New York. The British traveler, William Strickland, had been invited to dinner by Seton and had met there several "intelligent American gentlemen." The conversation turned towards the federal government, whose weakness was agreed upon "and lamented by all." To that weakness, Strickland reported, was "attributed the commotions which at present exist in the Western parts of Pennsylvania." The dinner guests, however, did not view the riots in a serious light and no one doubted that they would soon be suppressed by the forces that had been mobilized against them. The diners also agreed that "unless one exemplary punishment was inflicted on the promoters of these disturbances, no longer would any respect be paid to the federal government, and its perfect inefficacy would be proved." These men then went on to discuss the areas of weakness that they found in the general government. Nothing seemed more insistently productive of evil results than the system of state governments which appeared to be set up so that the states could hold themselves independent of one another without a care for any other state or for the

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[58]Letter, H. Hughes to Major Charles Tillinghast, Aug. 10, 1794, NYHS, Lamb Papers. Col. Hugh Hughes had been assistant quartermaster-general of the Middle District during the American Revolution. He was a close friend of John Lamb, Collector of the Customs of the Port of New York, and of other long time supporters of George Clinton, such as Melancton Smith and David Gelston. See Leake, Memoirs of the Life and Times of General John Lamb, p. 393.

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union as a whole. According to the dinner guests, particular examples of such state activity could be found in New York, South Carolina, and Pennsylvania. Singling out the actions of Governor Mifflin, who was described as being responsible in part for the insurrections and of then having drawn back in fear of the results, the gentlemen suggested that "the present mode of appointment of the Governours of the different States" be changed so that they would "hold their authority from the federal government, not from the appointment of the respective states."[59]

In the end, all sides proved to be correct in their assessment of the ultimate strength of the excise rebels and in the ability of the government to cope with them. But as these various statements have shown, the Whisky Rebellion helped to quicken the development of attitudes that had been forming for some time. More and more Republicans were finding reasons to criticize the Constitution--although some had never given up their original criticisms since their days as anti-federalists--with their opposition centered on the issue of federal power and its responsiveness to the public. Less power to the federal government and more power to the people might well havebeen their slogan. As for the Federalists, the spectre of an impotent federal government began increasingly to haunt their minds. Remembrance of the Articles of Confederation with its all-powerful states and beggar national government began to shake the confidence of some of them in the present Constitution. More power to the federal government and less to the rival states became an implanted thought. Seeds of later events and worse divisions had begun to sprout here.

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[59]Journal of William Strickland, vol. 5, NYHS, Sept. 24, 1794.

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CHAPTER XIV

A DIFFERENCE IN TEMPERAMENT

Marking time. That was what American and French affairs generally seemed to be doing in early October, 1794, as viewed from the western shores of the Atlantic Civilization. The Columbian Gazetteer of October 2, 1794 contained information about the following news items: Jay's negotiations--no further news but hopeful of success; Major-General Anthony Wayne's expedition against the Indians of the Northwest--important news expected any day; the Whisky Rebellion--Washington had joined the militia to take charge of operations against the rebels in western Pennsylvania; yellow fever--fewer cases than might have been expected at that time of year. French events also seemed to be continuing along at a steady pace. Military victories remained the order of the day while the government of Robespierre and the Committee of Public Safety, despite some rumblings, appeared strong enough for the moment.[1]

For Noah Webster, the French Republic actually appeared too strong. Most Americans had wished for French victory all along, Webster claimed, but now there was growing apprehension that the French, elated by victory, would push on and continue the war to the detriment of European "repose and prosperity." Bringing forward the

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[1]Columbian Gazetteer, Oct. 2, 1794; American Minerva, Oct. 1, 1794.

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conservative's view of mankind to bolster his arguments, Webster declared that those who believed that republican France was too noble to become a mere conqueror had neglected their lessons on the history and nature of man. French fervor for the reformation of all nations could well lead them to spurn prudence, Webster asserted, as he concluded with the warning that the French, in the flush of victory, might not remember "that no nation has a right to compel another nation even to be happy."[2]

With editorials and events moving along well-routined paths the public seemed to be totally unprepared for an inconspicuously placed news item that appeared in the press of October 6, 1794. The New York Daily Gazette carried an announcement under a small heading, "Postscript," that verbal information passed on by the captain of a French frigate had brought news of the beheading of Robespierre. The notice merely added: "It is said that he was executed for the assumption of too great a degree of dictatorship." The Diary of the same date carried the same information. The Columbian Gazetteer of October 6 first reported, under the date, on the brilliant success of the Western army under General Wayne, for the long awaited news had finally arrived. The paper noted that that victory should please the frontier inhabitants and produce results which the Indian treaties had so far failed to bring about. Then, in very small print, came news that the Prussians had suffered a defeat and "that M. Robersperre [sic], of the National convention, in attempting a dictatorship, had failed, and suffered the weight of the guillontine [sic]." Two days

[2]American Minerva, Oct. 1, 1794.

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later, the Journal repeated the sea captain's story but editor Greenleaf suggested that the captain might have simply been testing the politics of his listeners. Greenleaf concluded by noting that "the merits of this ipse dixit will be better known after the next arrival." Webster ignored the rumor entirely, for in an editorial of October 8 he railed against the Revolutionary Tribunal of Paris which used so-called "moral evidence" instead of direct evidence and which he called the political equivalent of the Spanish Inquisition. Robespierre and his party would be toppled in a month, Webster added, if freedom of thought was allowed full rein.[3]

The uncertainty about the reports of Robespierre's death was ended on October 10, 1794 with full information arriving from London sources and with National Convention proceedings of the event crowding the pages of the newspapers the next day. The Daily Advertiser, in fact, was filled for six of its next seven publishing days with reports pertaining to Robespierre's death and the facts surrounding it. The only editorial word from Francis Childs, however, was a note as to the importance of the event and the opportunity it would now give the National Convention to recover its authority. The Daily Gazette, under the headline "Real Interesting," showed unusual spirit as it announced that the just-received news was "so important, that we have, by unusual and extraordinary exertion, been able to present our readers with the following copious selections." The selection indeed proved to be copious, as did those in the Diary. The Miner a now re-

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[3]New York Daily Gazette, Oct. 6, 1794; Diary, Oct. 6, 1794; Columbian Gazetteer, Oct. 6, 1794; New York Journal, Oct. 8, 1794; American Minerva, Oct. 8, 1794.

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ported that it had received the London papers which included information "of great Importance. The death of Robespierre and his party on the 28th [July] is confirmed." As a result of "so interesting" a piece of news, the Minerva published an extraordinary edition of the paper which contained the debates of the Convention, "preparatory to this catastrophe." The Journal, in its first statement acknowledging the fact of Robespierre's death, could not hide its unhappiness. Though France remained victorious in the field, Greenleaf was forced to note that "in the cabinet, if the accounts are truly stated, we recognize apparently fatal jealousies;--fatal at least to individuals who appeared the principal supporters of that perseverance which alone insured success . . . at best, this historic page is DARK and melancholy." Lastly, the Columbian Gazetteer also filled its pages with news of the death of Robespierre and the other victims of the guillotine during those late July days of 1794 in Paris. The Gazetteer, commenting on the London reports, noted that the blood-thirsty "rabble" which had honored Robespierre a day before now pulled his body apart and carried it through the city. "Such," the editors concluded, "has been the fate of this famous dictator."[4]

The scope of the American reaction to the beheading of Robespierre is probably the single most remarkable thing about that reaction. If nothing else had shown the importance of French events to New Yorkers this act and the vast space given it should have ac-

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[4]Daily Advertiser, Oct. 10, 11, 13, 14, 15 and 17, 1794; New York Daily Gazette, Oct. 11, 1794; Diary, Oct. 10 and Oct. 11, 1794; American Minerva and American Minerva Extraordinary, Oct. 10, 1794; New York Journal, Oct. 11, 1794; Columbian Gazetteer, Oct. 13, 1794.

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complished that end. Of course, measured linage cannot, in-and-of itself, show the depth of feeling aroused by any event. To show that, there is the description given by Moreau de St. Méry of the immediate public response. The news, according to Moreau, "produced a universal sensation in the United States, quite different among some than among others." He pictured the "Jacobins" as "profoundly grieved, as at the loss of their father, their leader, their best friend." All others, according to Moreau, who were not Jacobins and "all true patriots, all sincere friends of liberty, saw the event only as a blessing from Heaven, unfortunately conferred too late."[5]

Moreau would certainly have included Noah Webster among his list of true patriots and friends of liberty. The editor of the Minerva congratulated himself on having spoken out as early as the previous March on the disastrous train of events in the government of France, with its openings for factionalism. Faction, according to Webster, could lead only to the death of liberty. The editor of the Minerva now turned on the Democrats of America whom he accused of simplifying all issues. For example, they blamed the problems faced by the French republic on British gold. Even Danton had been accused of having sold out to "Billy" Pitt. But Robespierre--he was different. He was "a real Sans Culotte." After months of praise, however, he too had been whisked off the scene. In whom would the Democrats now put their hopes? Regardless of the man they would now turn to, Webster asserted, "our Jacobins will not learn . . . that Men who make the most pretensions to virtue, religion or patriotism, always have the least of

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[5]Moreau de St. Méry's American Journey, pp. 143-44.

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it; & that noisy patriots who pay great court to the people, in all ages, in all countries and under every form of government have eventually proved to be tyrants."[6]

If Noah Webster was quite certain of his delight in the fall of Robespierre and the Jacobinical government which he so detested, the editors of the Columbian Gazetteer, like the men in the middle that they were, seemed uncertain of their own feelings and of the meaning of the event. Their speculative turn of mind took the editors of the Gazetteer into the woods where they compared Robespierre's greatness to the Green Bay Tree: "His branches were far extended, and his roots were numerous, and deep and strong. Torn from his standing by a Revolutionary Tornado, the adjacent forest must have shared largely in the breach." Carrying forward their concept of a natural cycle, the editors of the Gazetteer believed that the same expectations and duties would devolve on the successors to Robespierre "while the astonished world will be dinn'd with the replicated enormities of . . . the Tyrant, and his accomplices." The editors concluded by noting that it would test the sagacity of the French nation to find those men "whom power and talents may not transform to the disposition of those, who, in dreadful succession, have made their exit on the fatal scaffold of the GUILLONTINE [sic]."[7]

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[6] American Minerva, Oct. 11, 1794

[7] Columbian Gazetteer, Oct. 16 and Oct. 20, 1794. Sadly for this writer, the Columbian Gazetteer ceased publication on November 13, 1794 and was replaced by the Evening Post. Sadly, I say, for the Gazetteer was generally well-written, well-edited, and included a good amount of editorial comment. It also combined political independence with a pro-French Republic, anti-Jacobin position making it somewhat unique among New York newspapers. That very independence was probably

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As for the strongly Republican newspapers of New York, their editorial columns were strangely silent for more than a week after the death of Robespierre had been reported. An event of this magnitude would normally have brought a rash of statements from Loudon of the Diary and, even more certainly, from Greenleaf of the Journal. This Republican silence was apparently true nationally, as well, for [illegible] Webster remarked that Bache's Philadelphia General Advertiser, which he called the "oracle" of the Jacobins, had not yet made up its mind as to its position by mid-October. Webster conjectured, however, that the Democrats would probably drop Robespierre from the heights to sink into a grave of infamy.[8]

While Webster crowed merrily on, the confusion of the New York Republicans was displayed for all to see. On October 15, the Journal editorially ignored Robespierre completely, concerning itself only with a résumé of military matters. By October 18, Greenleaf had apparently decided to put the best possible face on the whole matter. He noted that the "effects produced by the execution of Robespierre, and party, are favourable--it would seem, that peace, invaluable peace, is thought of." Plans for the reappearance of the goddess (Peace) were now being made, he suggested, by those "whose schemes of conquests [the combined powers] have proved chimerical."[9] On that same

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its major problem in finding a large-enough readership, for it was neither Federalist-enough nor Republican-enough to suit the partisanship of the age. Nor was the Columbian Gazetteer a mercantile paper, which could have compensated for its lack of total political commitment to one group.

[8]American Minerva, Oct. 14, 1794.

[9]New York Journal, Oct. 15 and Oct. 18, 1794.

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date, a lengthy unsigned statement on the French Revolution appeared, under the date, in the Diary. The writer, possibly editor Loudon, had, like Greenleaf, made some decisions as to what could be saved from the collapse of the Mountain. The leaders of the Revolution, he stated, were "like other politicians, . . . sometimes in the right, and sometimes otherwise." But "the fidelity of the soldiers to the standard of the Republic"--that was what counted. Here was something that American Republicans could hold on to. Thus, in the midst of disappointment and confusion, the American francophiles, who had bound themselves to the rule of Robespierre and the Jacobin clubs, began to unloose those chains and find solace in the French army and the "great majority of the rest of the people."[10]

By the end of October, 1794, the Journal and the Diary had regained their tongues and proceeded once again to lash out at the doubters. Reiterating a previously stated point, Greenleaf viewed the executions of Robespierre and his party as productive of good results. He now saw "a unanimity of sentiment . . . prevail throughout that great Republic" with a continued "spirit of perseverance in arms, as though inspired from above." He also pictured "a great calmness, and freedom in debate and candor and tenderness . . . in the National Convention, than for months past."[11] Greenleaf, ensnared by his own utopian vision, seemed to forget that he had recently written of the "Robespierre regime" in those same terms of undiluted rapture. The Diary, too, had pulled itself together and in early November published

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[10] Diary, Oct. 18, 1794.

[11] New York Journal, Oct. 29, 1794.

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a correspondent's laudatory remarks about the French nation and its good treatment of prisoners. How long, the paper asked, would the kings of Europe contend with a nation which was "first in internal strength, in greatness, and in generosity." As for America, we should rejoice to find ourselves "caressed by such an ally--the most powerful and the most magnanimous in the universe!"[12]

Greenleaf, not to be outdone by such sentiments, showed that he had not only fully recovered from his shock, but was fully capable of reaching new levels of joyous abandon. He even reclaimed the Jacobins for his own. This time, it was the "aristocratic scribblers" who received his scorn for persisting "in falsehoods" respecting the Jacobin society in France. The society had survived, Greenleaf delightedly noted, "purged of all 'vile intruders.'" The Jacobins were now, more than ever, "strictly in union with the Convention." In fact, Greenleaf triumphantly, and with no little hysteria, concluded: "The Convention are . . . Jacobins--the Armies are Jacobins--their Generals are Jacobins--and the whole Republic is one immense Society of real Jacobins."[13]

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[12] Diary, Nov. 3, 1794.

[13] New York Journal, Nov. 1, 1794. Greenleaf's paean in praise of Jacobins was reversed by Webster in the Minerva of November 10, 1794. Webster compared the Jacobin clubs to fire: good servants but horrible masters. "A fire, kept under command, is good to consume old rubbish," Webster suggested, "but when master, it makes no discrimination, but levils [sic] the most convenient and most splendid structures, as well as Gothic piles, in one common ruin. Heaven be blessed," Webster continued, expressing a not uncommon thought, "for the ocean of 3000 miles that separates the tumbling structures of feudal Europe from the magnificent fabric of our American Government. May Jacobinism never set fire to this elegant building."

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A realistic appraisal of French events now seemed to have grown increasingly beyond the capabilities of many New York Republicans. Their understanding of the competing forces vying for power in France, as seen in the writings of Samuel Loudon, Thomas Greenleaf and many of the contributors to their newspapers, appeared to be nothing more nor less than a series of self-deceptions that grew more and more distant from the actualities of internal French events. Their view, in the fall of 1794, could thus be labeled with great accuracy, in the view of this writer, as the American Republican's mirage of France and the present state of its revolution. In an environment where the millenial dream could still be considered by American Republicans to be an approachable reality, the more conservative American Federalists, simply through natural caution and a temperamental inability to dissolve their doubts about man as a rational creature, showed a much better grasp of the historical events then being played out on the Parisian stage.

The question of political parties and temperament has never been specifically discussed in this dissertation but it has been talked about and hinted at in countless ways. By temperament this writer means the mental and emotional set of the kind of person who would be attracted to the different political philosophies that were now being catagorized under the labels of Republican and Federalist. Grant Thorburn and Stephen Allen, for example, were both mechanics in 1794 but one became a life-long Federalist and the other a life-long Republican. One aspect of Thorburn's temperament could be summed up in a social attitude he held throughout his life: there were class

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differences and they ought to be preserved. As typical was his cynical comment: "What a fine thing democracy is in theory." Stephen Allen spoke of himself as having "early taken a stand in favor of liberal principles." He contrasted those unspecified principles against others held by royalists and tories as reasons for his joining the Republican Party. Undoubtedly an intimation of opposition to class distinction was included therein. But the question of temperament as a force in shaping political attitudes could only be glimpsed in these surface comparisons.[14]

Temperamental differences were much more clearly presented in two speeches delivered only a week apart by two men who were in some respects quite similar. Both were native Americans, both had been born in the 1760's, both were just beginning careers, one as lawyer and private secretary to the governor of New York and the other as lawyer and Professor of Law at Columbia College, and both would leave a major mark in the history of New York City and State. One was DeWitt Clinton, whose speech, An Oration on Benevolence, was delivered before the Society of Black Friars at their anniversary festival on November 10, 1794. The other was James Kent, who delivered An Introductory Lecture To a Course of Law Lectures for his Columbia College students on November 17, 1794.[15]

Both believed that the American form of government required as

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[14]Thorburn, Reminiscences, pp. 24-25; Letter 22C, May, 1827, NYHS, Letters of Stephen Allen, Nov., 1825-28, typewritten copy.

[15]See Frederick C. Hicks, "Kent, James," DAB, X, 344-45 and Dixon R. Fox, "Clinton, DeWitt," Ibid., IV, 221, for brief summaries of the early years of both of these major figures in New York history.

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much education for all as possible because, in Kent's words, "there is no individual in any station, act, or occupation, who may not entertain a reasonable expectation in some period of his life, and in some capacity, to be summoned into public employment." Both, therefore, looked to public education and the university to give the people the necessary "competent ability" or, as Clinton stated it, "the diffusion of knowledge requisite to produce this great improvement [an educated electorate]." Clinton then went on to summarize some of the benevolent improvements that American society had made or should make--improvements which Kent either mentioned himself or would agree with over the years. Clinton's examples were the founding of schools of virtue and seminaries of learning; the encouragement of agriculture, commerce, and manufacturing; the patronizing of the polite arts and the useful sciences; a respect for the rights of nature and religion; the assuaging of physical evils by the establishment of hospitals, alms houses, and public granaries; and an end to slavery and capital punishment. There the similarity of men and ideas ended.[16]

Clinton's oration betrayed a totally different temperament from that shown by Kent. Clinton's ideas, as far as this speech was concerned, were made up partly of Rousseauist visions of men in nature and society and partly of Henry of Navarre's grand concept of a world order. It was all tied together in a full-scale utopian package. The oration was filled with such concepts as those which suggested that man's true nature could be understood through seeing him in infancy or

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[16]DeWitt Clinton, An Oration on Benevolence (New York: Friar M'Lean, 1795), p. 16; James Kent, An Introductory Lecture to a Course of Law Lectures (New York: Francis Childs, 1794), pp. 4-5.

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in a state of nature before society had the chance to corrupt or refine him; that the controlling power in a nation ought to be the will of the community and not the will of an individual; and that the sentiments of the people were always right, whereas the sentiments of an individual, "especially of one in an elevated position," were too much under the governance "of sinister impressions." Clinton was also an optimist where the capabilities of mankind were concerned. A time would come, he envisioned, when all the nations of the world would be happy with each other, when war would end, and the olive branch would be extended everywhere. Clinton proposed a "Congress of Ambassadors" from all the nations of the world "to consult upon the ways and means of augmenting the mass of human happiness." Free commerce "based on the channels which nature points out" was another Clintonian goal, as was a university of the world founded as a storehouse of the knowledge of all nations and peoples. In Clinton's phrase, the prejudice of nationality would disappear "before the talisman of merit." Then, with the grandest of all utopian visions, a one-world order of happy people, DeWitt Clinton brought his Oration on Benevolence to a triumphant conclusion.[17]

Temperamentally, Federalists were incapable of such visions. Their view of mankind in the mass would not allow such grand utopian designs to take their minds off what they considered to be the everyday difficulty of keeping man's nose to the grindstone. James Kent's lecture was a perfect example of that difference. One might argue that the circumstances of Clinton's oration and Kent's lecture might

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[17]Clinton, An Oration on Benevolence, pp. 11-12, 16-19.

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have been the major reason for their different styles and visions. The latter, after all, was a sober presentation before an earnest group of students while the former was a talk before a socially-minded meeting of friends. Considering the evangelical urge of many professors, however, who, when given the opportunity, have been known to tear a utopian passion to tatters, it seems safe to dismiss the occasion as the basic cause for the differences. No, it would be more logical, and possibly even truer, to believe that the chief variable was the difference in temperament of the Federalist and Republican mind. For example, Clinton had said that the sentiments of the people were always right. Turning to "experience" as his teacher, Kent replied

> that [public] opinion is not an infallible standard of safety. When rivalries prevail in the Community, and Parties become highly disciplined and hostile, every measure of the major part of the Legislature is sure to receive the sanction of that Party among the Constituents to which they belong. Every Step of the minor Party, it is equally certain will be approved by their immediate adherents, as well as indiscriminately misrepresented or condemned by the prevailing voice.

Kent's belief that the minority must be protected against the majority led him to put his full faith in the Constitution and the laws as interpreted by the Courts of Justice, "which are organized with peculiar advantage to exempt them from the baneful influence of Faction . . . , and to maintain the Authority of the Constitution."[18] This was a "far cry" from Clinton's view that the will of the community ought to be the controlling power in a nation, a view that seemed to envision no disagreement or dissent once the majority had made its decision.

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[18]Kent, An Introductory Lecture, pp. 11-14.

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Kent, as Clinton had done, concluded with a world-view. Great revolutions were stirring in all areas--in government, in morals, in habits of thinking, and probably even in "the destination of human society." Kent saw the possibility that "demolition" and "innovation" were necessities in the eastern continent in order to bring society back "to its original Principles of simplicity and freedom." But once again Kent held his ground and refused the utopian version. Amidst "the universal passion for novelty, which threatens to overturn everything which bears the stamp of time and experience," Kent warned, "we in this country ought to be extremely careful not to . . . let the admirable Fabrics of our Constitutions, and the all pervading Freedom of our Common Law, be left unheeded or despised."[19]

Surprisingly, however, the Federalists were not without a small vision of their own. Their utopia, however, was an exclusive one. It did not call for a union of nations nor did it see the United States as an active agent in spreading the good word to the rest of the world. Rather, in the words of James Kent, it was a deep-seated persuasion "that we [Americans] are favoured with the best Political Institutions, take them for all in all, of any People that ever were united in the Bonds of Civil Society." Kent, like his fellow Federalists, had faith that "the goodness of these Institutions will brighten on free investigation, and faithful experiment, and be respected according as they are understood." Possibly because utopia, or a system as close to it as fallible man could create, was already available for them in their own country, the Federalists could react

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[19] Ibid., pp. 21-22.

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only with increasing disbelief and anger towards their opponents who would not see the United States as they did but went running instead after distant and foreign systems. Perhaps that was one reason why James Kent could recall many years later that this period was the one when "my hostility to the French democracy and to French power beat with strong pulsation." To the Federalists the quest had ended. The nearest thing to perfection that imperfect man could make had been created in the Republic of the United States under the Constitution and it now had to be nursed tenderly and guarded ferociously.[20]

For Republicans the quest had begun well, but had only begun. A perfect world order was their goal and the millenial dream was still theirs to believe in. Listen to Thomas Greenleaf in his end of the year editorial in the Journal: A revolution (the French Revolution) had taken place "which has ushered forth Events DREADFUL TO TYRANTS, and which, under the smile of auspicious Heaven, will issue in the gentle and universal reign of peace and love."[21] One can imagine DeWitt Clinton believing in that possibility in 1794 but James Kent would never have been a worshipper at that idyllic shrine. These were the two worlds that could not be reconciled then and which temperament has forever since kept apart.

It was the 19th of November, 1794 and, in the nation's capital, the French minister was summarizing American events for his superiors back home. The one certainty of American politics, Minister Fauchet

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[20] Letters of James Kent, p. 82.

[21] New York Journal, Dec. 31, 1794.

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stated, was still neutrality which remained the basis of American foreign policy. News of Jay's mission was still mostly conjecture but Fauchet believed that circumstances worked in favor of France. All parties now agreed that France was unbeatable and, as Fauchet optimistically asserted, all sides in the United States began to see that American greatness lay through its alliance with France. The reception given James Monroe in Paris, he noted, would greatly aid his own mission. Fauchet complained, however, that unless he was given stronger and more constant support from the French government at home his position could not help but be weakened. As for the actions of the President of the United States, Fauchet informed his ministry that there was nothing to complain about as of late. Washington refused to see any of the émigrés and his conduct was completely proper.[22]

That very day, however, and possibly at the very moment that Fauchet was writing home, Washington delivered his State of the Union message to Congress which Fauchet was later to describe as "noteworthy for its general silence on foreign affairs and for its attack on the Democratic societies."[23] What Fauchet had specific reference to was President Washington's famous frontal assault against "the self created societies which have spread themselves over this country, have been labouring incessantly to sow the seeds of distrust, jealousy, and of course discontent, thereby hoping to effect some revolution in the government." The quotation just given was not from the speech to

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[22]Fauchet to Commissioner of Foreign Relations (hereinafter referred to as CFR), Nov. 19, 1794, "CFM," AHA, II, 482-83.

[23]Fauchet to MFR, Dec. 1, 1794, Ibid., 493.

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Congress, itself, but from a private letter sent by Washington to John Jay, which was dated nineteen days before the State of the Union message. Washington's anger at the Democratic Societies, the "self created societies" to which he referred, had been simmering for some time and was based on his certainty that "they have been the fomenters of the western disburbances." The language of the insurgents was now "much changed," Washington noted, "but their principles want correction."[24]

If Washington had hoped, through his condemnation, to bring immediate destruction to the Democratic Societies his failure was soon apparent. The attack, instead, produced an extended debate in and out of Congress and visibly shook President Washington's above-party stance by clearly aligning him with the Federalists on this issue.[25]

The Democratic societies soon rushed into print with strong words of defense. The Democratic Society of New York, for one, issued a circular letter addressed to their "Fellow-Citizens" of the Philadelphia Society which declared that despite allegations that the Democratic-Republican Societies were hostile to the true interests of the United States, desired to destroy the Constitution, were guilty of sedition and had attempted anarchy against order, they, for one, would

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[24]Washington to Jay, Nov. 1, 1794, Papers of Jay, IV, 130-31.

[25]For samples of Federalist response to Washington's speech see Response of the Senate to Washington's State of the Union Speech of Nov. 19, 1794, Correspondence of King, I, 579-80; letter, Philip Schuyler to King, Dec. 2, 1794, NYHS, King Papers; American Minerva, Dec. 12, 1794.

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continue to support republican government against the "ministerial party."[26]

The Republican newspapers of New York also rose to the defense of the societies. Greenleaf of the Journal promised that he would publish copious excerpts from the debates in the House of Representatives "on the phrase self-created societies, which appeared in the President's speech." The reason he gave was that the subject "affects, in this free country, the liberty of meeting to converse on political topics, of speaking, writing, and publishing the political sentiments of its hitherto supposed independent citizens."[27] In Loudon's Diary, "Observer" defended the democratic societies as basic to American liberty. Under other names, he declared, the democratic societies produced the American Revolution. "Observer" went so far as to ascribe "all the liberty that was ever experienced by any people, to such laudable combinations." For him, the New England town meeting was only another name for a democratic society.[28] The split over the societies could not be deeper when one side viewed them as disorganizers of government who sowed "the seeds of distrust" and "discontent," while the other side saw them as defenders of liberty who did the work of the people by expressing the popular will in the mass.

The national dispute over the Democratic societies reached a climax just at the moment when New York held its congressional elec-

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[26]Democratic Society of New York, Circular (New York, Dec., 1794), pp. 8-11.

[27]New York Journal, Dec. 3, 1794.

[28]"Observer," Diary, Dec. 18, 1794.

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tion. It was now a certainty that the issue of those "self-created societies" would play a major role in the election scheduled for December 9, 1794. John Watts, the incumbent, was re-nominated by the Federalists and Edward Livingston became the candidate of the Republicans. Almost immediately after the nominations were made, "A. B.," in the Minerva, coupled an attack on Livingston with an attack on the Democratic Society of New York. In fact, he accused the latter of having produced the choice of Livingston for the Republicans. As "A. B." put it, the Democratic Society, where citizens "locked themselves up, at certain periods, to disperse political information," must have made "wonderful progress" for they nominated to represent "the first commercial city" in the nation, a young lawyer "of a mediocrity of talents in his profession, and of no particular acquaintance with Mercantile affairs."[29]

The democratic societies were also the center of attack in a letter from "P." to the electors of the State of New York. Who were the true friends and who were the real enemies of the federal government and the nation, the writer asked? Did those who joined "the Southern War interest" merit the support of New Yorkers or did those who belonged to "the Northern Peace interest?" A crystal ball was not needed to know what answer "P." preferred. "In the success of France we all rejoice," the writer continued, but in order to preserve American prosperity it was also agreed that peace was a necessity. Love of order, he insisted, had to prevail over "the fury and impetu-

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[29]New York Journal, Nov. 26, 1794; "A. B.," American Minerva, Nov. 28, 1794.

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osity of party men." Now "P." made his key point: the clubs formed lately had produced "faction and . . . licentiousness. . . . Support no man who is friendly to them." In France it was now an accepted fact that the Jacobin clubs had produced "the treasons and bloodshed" that were the bane of their revolution. "P." concluded by advising the electorate of New York to reject all private clubs "as the bane of liberty and a free government." Instead, the public should "rally round our excellent constitution" in order that we might "continue to be free."[30]

The supporters of Edward Livingston did not mount their own newspaper campaign until December 3, six days before the polls opened. A second election announcement, which appeared in the Journal on that day, characterized Livingston as "an able and patriotic Citizen, a friend to Liberty and the Rights of Man." The Republican Citizens of New York were addressed that same day by "An Old Whig" who established a twin theme for the Livingston campaign. The world now presented a scene where despots trembled and where the rights of man was ready to triumph. "An Old Whig" asked for victory of a man who would help bring about the triumph and who would stand for "liberty and equality." Becoming even more specific, the writer restated that familiar Republican campaign slogan of the previous spring: "he who is opposed to the French Revolution, cannot be a friend to the liberties of America." Edward Livingston was then described as a true friend to France, a good Republican, and one who would not betray his country's rights. That last point brought "An Old Whig" to his second theme. Livingston

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[30]"P.," American Minerva, Nov. 29, 1794.

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did not remain in New York City while it was under British control (as did Watts), but was a friend to the Whigs of '76. (Of course, Livingston was all of twelve years old in 1776 but he apparently had a mind of his own even then.) The question now came down to this: should one vote for a Whig or a Tory? Let the Whigs join together, "An Old Whig" suggested, "and blast the hopes of the aristocrates [sic]." Those two themes--support Republican France and "blast the hopes of the aristocrates" had become the chief arguments in the Republican campaign.[31]

Before the campaign was over, one other theme, really a double theme, suddenly flared into the open. The Journal, on Saturday, December 6, published two more resolves for the candidates. One, produced at a meeting with the mechanic, Thomas Tvers, in the chair, favored Edward Livingston; the other, with the banker, Philip Livingston, in the chair, supported John Watts. The Diary, on Monday, contained two comments on those sets of resolves. Under the heading, "Communication," the writer noted that the opponents of Livingston spoke of the need to prevent a family combination from taking over the politics of New York. But whom did the opponents of Edward Livingston find to chair one of their meetings but a near connection, Philip Livingston. Moreover, the latter was a bank president.[32] What was the propriety of allowing a person who held such a position to serve as electioneering chairman, the writer asked? Was it done to deter those of the "ple-

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[31] "An Old Whig," New York Journal, Dec. 3, 1794.

[32] Philip Livingston was President of the New York branch of the Bank of the United States.

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beian order" who used his bank from expressing their views? The writer's use of the term "plebeian order" hardly seemed to characterize him as a champion of those he so labeled, except possibly as their paternal master. But he was clearly making a point that he hoped would touch a responsive chord.[33]

In the same edition of the Diary a correspondent had certain observations that pertained to the meeting chaired by Thomas Ivers. He asserted that the personal abuse directed against Edward Livingston in the election campaign showed what happened when there was a candidate of the people running against the aristocracy of the merchants. Because a mechanic presided at one of the meetings in favor of Livingston, the correspondent remarked, the advocates of the latter were already called lower class.[34] Getting his "Irish" up, the writer concluded by exhorting the supporters of Livingston to arise and show the world who was the higher.[35]

Not every mechanic, however, seemed quite so inclined to take up the cudgels in behalf of Edward Livingston. "A blunt carman," writing to the Minerva and every other newspaper in the city, announced that he would not vote for Livingston for the following blunt reasons: he did not like great families; he would not vote for a man who

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[33]"Communication," Diary, Dec. 8, 1794.

[34]Thomas Ivers was described as a "rope maker" in the New York Directory of 1794; a year later he was listed as a "rope manufacturer." This slight change in job designation was one example of that desire for upward mobility that was such a strong characterization of New York mechanics, whether they were Republicans or Federalists.

[35]"Correspondent," Diary, Dec. 8, 1794.

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was poor one day and rich the next; he would not vote for a man who rode the backs of private clubs; he would not vote for a man who was not a firm friend to the United States Constitution; and he would not vote for those who would plunge us into war.[36]

The results of the election seemed to be almost palpably felt by both sides immediately upon the closing of the polls. The Journal, noting on December 13 that the late election was "severely contested," also reported that the supporters of Livingston were so confident of victory by about 100 votes that they dared risk that opinion publicly.[37] Letters from disconsolate New York Federalists reaching Albany less than a week after the election had already led General Schuyler to apprehend "that Mr. E. Livingston will be the successful candidate. If so," he remarked with some annoyance, "I can impute it only to a want of exertion in our friends." By Christmas time, one of those friends, the Federalist lawyer and politician, J. O. Hoffman, reported to Rufus King that he was certain that the New York City election would "end in our Mortification--Many of our friends speak with confidence, but I am altogether without hope."[38] The final result bore out Hoffman's prediction. Edward Livingston was the winner by 205 votes. Statistically, the Federalist total had slipped by 234 votes from the previous Congressional election of January 1793 while the Republican vote had increased by over 1000 ballots. The additional

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[36]"A blunt carman," American Minerva, Dec. 4, 1794.

[37]New York Journal, Dec. 13, 1794.

[38]Letters, Schuyler to King, Dec. 14, 1794 and J. O. Hoffman to King, Dec. 26, 1794, NYHS, King Papers.

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voters, it would seem, had clearly decided in favor of the Republican candidate.[39]

The historian, William Miller, in his article on this election, concluded that the Democratic Society was primarily responsible for the change that produced victory. As he noted, there was organized for the first time, under the auspices of the Democratic Society of New York, "an effectual republican 'electioneering engine.'" Alfred Young, in his Democratic-Republicans of New York, agreed, noting that the Democratic Society worked sub rosa and successfully for the election of Livingston.[40] A contemporary Federalist observer, in confirming both the new organizational ability of the supporters of Livingston and their ability to appeal to the lesser mechanics, summed up the major factors behind Livingston's victory. As Walter Rutherford saw it, "Ned. Livingston carried his election for Congress . . . because his supporters were indefatigable among the lower classes."[41]

It should also be noted, however, that for much of the rest of the decade, Edward Livingston was the only Republican candidate who was consistently able to take full advantage of the new Republican organizational ability. I believe that it was by winning the mechanics to his side as much as by means of new Republican organizational ability that Edward Livingston was able to become a regular winner in the

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[39] Daily Advertiser, Feb. 7, 1795.

[40] Miller, "First Fruits of Republican Organization," 143; Young, Democratic-Republicans of New York, pp. 420, 424, 560.

[41] W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Feb. 8, 1795, Livingston Rutherfurd, Family Records and Events (New York: DeVinne Press, 1894), p. 161.

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local elections of the City of New York.

In 1794, if New Yorkers thought in terms of Republican organization, they thought of the Democratic Society. Those societies, as previously noted, were now under severe attack. They were tarred by their opponents as fomenters of division at home and tied by those same opponents to the Jacobin clubs of revolutionary France, which had fallen into increased disrepute since the collapse of the "dictatorial" rule of the "tyrant" Robespierre. The angry arguments that raged over the so-called "self-created societies" continued at that level for several more months but by the end of that time, in New York City, at least, an interesting thing had begun to happen. The reins of Republican power started to shift into different, and for a time, less controversial hands. This transition is worth close consideration not only for its direct affect on the political life of New York but also because it shows one more way in which French revolutionary events cast their shadow on American life at that time.

The activities of the French National Convention had begun to create problems for long-time francophiles and Republicans like Thomas Greenleaf and for the democratic societies of the United States. Having tied themselves so strongly to the "Mountain" and the Jacobin clubs, they found that they had to explain away the increasingly strong actions taken by the Convention which culminated in the closing of the original partisan club. Faced with attacks against themselves that were bolstered by events in France, the Democratic Society of New York once again addressed the citizens of the United States in a letter signed by David Gelston and Jacob de la Montagnie, the Society's

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new president and secretary, respectively. This time, their tone was much more defensive than formerly. Voices had been raised against the Society, the address noted, from the highest sources. What they wanted was a fair and impartial hearing before the public.[42] In New York City, the Journal, the Minerva, and the two month old Evening Post, a Republican paper,[43] printed the address, thereby assuring a mixed and good-sized local readership.

The Society, in its address, denied it had fomented the insurrection at Pittsburgh. It accused much of the press of being hostile and even went so far as to declare that some of the press had been

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[42]"Address of the Democratic Society of New York City to the Citizens of the United States," New York Journal, Jan. 17, 1795. See also the American Minerva, Jan. 24, 1795 and the Evening Post of Jan. 19, 1795. David Gelston as recently as October 22, 1794, had sent a letter to a correspondent in which he had confidently stated that "societies on similar principals are Establishing and increasing throughout the Union. I wish them success and prosperity and rapid increase." See Gelston to Doct Thº Wickham, NYHS, David Gelston LB. Gelston also sent a letter, dated Oct. 31, 1794, to a relative, Hugh Gelston, Jr. which points up rather strongly the "achilles heel" of American Republicans, especially those who professed the strongest of equalitarian principles. It was the President of the New York Democratic Society who wrote: "A Friend of mine wishes to purchase a Negro girl of 12 to 14 years old if you know of any one that would be willing or wish to come to New York one that is healthy--and of a good family--the price he leaves with you will give as much as you would for yourself the Family is an exceeding good one that wants her."

[43]The Evening Post (New York) bought out the Columbian Gazetteer and printed its first edition on November 17, 1794. It was published three times a week under the editorship of the active Republican Levi Wayland, who promised a paper of "liberal sentiments." The latter was joined as co-editor on December 8, 1794 by the life-long friend, memoirist, Tammany figure, and political bed-fellow of Aaron Burr, Matthew L. Davis. The paper was short-lived, however, for on May 25, 1795, Wayland and Davis announced the discontinuation of the Evening Post and solicited the patronage of its readers for the Diary, "which plans enlargement and additional interest to Mercantile gentlemen," as well as to gentlemen of every other description.

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"bought" to print dishonest statements about the Society. As to the charges that it was self-created, the Democratic Society of New York asked logically what private society was not self-created. Were they to be condemned for objecting to acts of government that they believed were inimical to freedom? What precisely was their danger to the United States? They were too numerous for secret conspiracies, and they fully backed law and social order while opposing anarchy. The address closed with a restatement of the Society's basic beliefs: first of all, the legislative branch was the only supreme power in a community, whereas the executive and judicial branches were definitely subordinate to it; secondly, the people were supreme and their rights came first.[44] The only problem with the statement was that the Democratic Society often seemed to confuse its own will with the popular will. As the Minerva said, albeit in a highly partisan manner, the great mass of people were "affronted that they must be told [by the Democratic Society] what to think and what are their rights and duties."[45]

If the democratic societies often acted in a high-handed manner in an assertion of their beliefs, it should be noted that their opponents were not always perfectly observant of the niceties of an occasion. The failure of one group of New York Federalists to observe those niceties ended by ultimately costing them and their party dearly. The Tammany Society of New York was basically a non-partisan social organization throughout the first half of the Federalist Period. Al-

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[44]"Address of the Democratic Society of New York," New York Journal, Jan. 17, 1795.

[45]American Minerva, Jan. 24, 1795.

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though Tammany's attachment to republicanism and France was well-known, such attachment and Federalist beliefs were certainly not mutually exclusive, as this paper has taken great pains to show. The controversies of the previous few years, of course, had strained relations between Federalists and Republicans, whether they were members of the same family, old friends, or business acquaintances. The Tammany Society, as a social organization containing a wide variety of persons and personalities, probably felt the strain even more than more exclusive organizations. Such feelings, however, were kept quiet over the years, until the President's strictures against self-created societies and the Congressional debate that followed shattered all attempts at unity within the Society. Tammany had a special problem because it, too, could have been considered self-created. Was it possible that President Washington could have been referring to them as well as to the Democratic societies in his warning?

The issue was joined at a Tammany Society meeting of January 19, 1795, which the leading historian on the origins of the Society called "thinly attended" and Federalist dominated. A resolution was passed in the name of the Society which declared support for Washington and urged all who loved the "prosperity and happiness" of the United States to give the President their "fullest approbation." Not satisfied with a mere set of resolutions, the meeting also produced an Address to the People of the United States. The Address combined total praise of George Washington with total condemnation of the democratic societies: "We vow . . . our hearty and entire approbation of the conduct of the President of the United States, in his late endeavours to

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discountenance certain self-created societies." Moreover, according to the Address, the democratic societies had, under the garb of democracy, hidden "the cloven foot of aristocracy." Finally, the authors of that document asserted that civil liberty had to stand above natural liberty if society were to survive. The address was signed by the regularly elected Grand Sachem, the merchant, J. Little, and by the Secretary of the Society, Benjamin Strong--both Federalists.[46]

At the beginning of February, a rump group of Tammany members headed by Coertland Van Beuren, Grand Sachem pro tem, and John S. Sears, Secretary pro tem, held a "large and respectable" meeting which condemned the previous address of Tammany members as "officious, inconsiderate, impolitic, and unconstitutional." By agreeing with the President in condemning self-created societies, Tammany had condemned itself, the second group asserted. It had also disagreed with the House of Representatives, which was closest to the people, negated the natural rights of its members, injected politics into a social order, and was the work of a few.[47]

The question now was which meeting represented the real Tammany Society. Was it the meeting chaired by the regular Grand Sachem or was it the meeting chaired by a Grand Sachem chosen for the occasion? The confusion was at least stated with some clarity in a Webster editorial headed "Tammany Democratic versus Tammany Federal." To understand the contradictory developments, Webster stated, it was necessary to keep in mind the fact that the society was made up of people of op-

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[46]Daily Advertiser, Jan. 21, 1795. See also Kilroe, St. Tammany, pp. 196-97, for a discussion of this Tammany meeting.

[47]New York Journal, Feb. 4, 1795.

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posite politics. One part was "attached to the present government and its administration"; the other consisted of members of the Democratic Society. Webster did not know which group had the greatest number but he did know that the groups were bitterly antagonistic.[48]

By the end of February, 1795, however, it had become quite clear what direction Tammany was taking. "Shade of Tammany" caught the new spirit when he commended what was now called the Tammany "majority" for not condemning the self-created societies. He advised them to continue their alertness against those who would control their actions. Thus, out of the dispute over self-created societies, the dispute between the Republicans and the Federalists within the Society of St. Tammany came out into the clear light of day. The tug-of-war that followed showed where the power lay and the Federalists began their withdrawal from the Society. Though Tammany did not become directly involved in New York City politics for several more years, the leading historian of the origins of Tammany, Edwin P. Kilroe, expressed his belief that with the withdrawal of the Federalists, "the resulting unanimity of feeling removed the barrier which the original non-partisan character of the Society had interposed to political action."[49]

The question of the relationship of the Tammany Society of New York to the developing Republican Party parallels the controversy that has been previously discussed at some length in reference to the Democratic Society of New York and its relationship with the Republican

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[48] American Minerva, Feb. 4, 1795

[49] "Shade of Tammany," New York Journal, Feb. 18, 1795; Kilroe, St. Tammany, p. 197.

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Party of that city.[50] Curiously, just as a recent work on the formation of the Democratic-Republican Party has played down the role of the democratic societies as a major cog in the wheel of party machinery development, so too has the latest work on the early history of the Tammany Society.[51] Once again, however, I must enter a demurrer with the qualification that I am speaking only for the period and the city covered by this dissertation.

My own view is that as the Democratic Society of New York, along with its followers throughout the nation, came under increasingly severe attack for being Jacobinical in form and intent, fomenters of revolution, and a general danger to the community, the Tammany Society gradually began to take over the political role that the Democratic Society had played for the Republicans of New York, i.e., helping to give form and direction to their minority local party. What enabled this to occur was the fortuitous departure of the Federalists from the Tammany Wigwam, which in the words of historian Jerome Mushkat, left the Republican "Interest . . . in command."[52] Three basic factors give me reason to infer that Tammany took over this role. First of all, the Tammany toasts after the incidents of January and February 1795 gradually took on the tone of extreme partisanship and ideology that was previously the almost exclusive property of the Demo-

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[50]See supra, pp. 331-336.

[51]Jerome Mushkat, Tammany, the Evolution of a Political Machine, 1789-1865 (Syracuse U. Press, 1971). The recent work on the formation of the Democratic-Republican Societies previously referred to was Noble E. Cunningham's The Jeffersonian Republicans: The Formation of Party Organization, 1789-1801.

[52]Mushkat, Tammany, pp. 23-24.

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cratic Society; secondly, a major leadership role in the local battle against the Jay Treaty was taken by the new leaders of Tammany; finally, the Tammany Society took the lead in a whole series of events and celebrations that clearly served the interest of France and the Republican Party while failing, in 1796, to continue the celebration of President Washington's birthday which it had itself initiated. These three factors were increasingly in evidence for the period from mid-1795 until early 1797, the remaining years covered by this dissertation.[53]

This argument, however, runs strongly counter to Jerome Mushkat's contention that although Republican interest was left "in command" of Tammany after the Federalist departure in February, 1795, the Republican members "paid for its survival" by being "left . . . destitute for the next fourteen years," and living out "a twilight existence as a struggling fraternal [italics mine] order." In immediate support of that claim, Mushkat reported that no new members were initiated into Tammany during the two years that followed the Federalist walkout and that attendance fell to a new low. In other words, Mushkat pictures a moribund organization that barely survived for fourteen more years until it took a new lease on life by becoming the key political organization in the City of New York.[54] Despite the gloomy Tammany picture which he painted, Mushkat neverthe-

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[53]See the remainder of this dissertation for a development of these points.

[54]Mushkat, Tammany, p. 24.

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less stated that "by 1800 . . . all the important city Republican leaders [save five] were Tammanyites." Mushkat then added that this was to be understood only "in fraternal terms [italics mine]."[55]

Logic and reason, however, lead this writer to wonder whether politically astute Republicans would have wasted this opportunity that the Tammany Wigwam gave them to meet for other than social purposes. Mushkat's own remarks about Tammany's role in the political life of the city at the same time that it was supposedly simply a fraternal order indicate that more than mere socializing was at work:

> The Tammany Society had a singular importance in the development of the city Republican party . . . played a vital role in transferring to the Republicans the democratic mystique that Federalism had once claimed . . . gave local Interest [Republican] politicians a credible vehicle for posing as patriotic, nationalistic democrats, devoted to constitutional principles and Lockean idealism.[56]

Even if I do not agree with all the terms that Mushkat used to describe the Tammany Society in its supportive role in relation to the Republican Party of New York, I nevertheless believe that Mushkat's just quoted statement is a fitting summation of my own contention that the mantle of organizational assistant to the local Republican Party did begin to move from the Democratic Society to the Tammany Society (although it was a process that took several years to complete), after the unfraternal incidents of January and February, 1795, between

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[55] Ibid., p. 26.

[56] Ibid., pp. 24-25.

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"Tammany Democratic" and "Tammany Federal."[57]

Based on the number and the nature of attacks against the democratic societies which developed at about the same time that the Tammany Society of New York split apart, it would have been both understandable and sensible for the Republican Party, whose political apparatus was still rather informal, to have removed all ties with the pariah society and to have knocked at the door of the waiting wigwam of the older and more acceptable organization. It was made even more sensible since it now appeared that French support of the Jacobin clubs--which most Americans viewed as the French equivalent of the democratic societies--had come to an end. Noah Webster's summation of the French scene, which was undoubtedly shared by many Americans who were not Federalists, was enough to show the wisdom of such an act. It gave Webster great pleasure to report that Paris, "the well-

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[57]Such views as I have expressed here seem also to run counter to suggestions by Noble Cunningham that Republican organization in the city was based on a general committee and a network of ward committees rather than on a Tammany organization that was being converted by Aaron Burr from a social and benevolent society into the foundation of Republican political organization. I have no quarrel with Cunningham on those points, however, for I do not believe that ward committee organization and Tammany Republican organization were mutually exclusive. As this dissertation has shown, ward committee work had been developed by the Federalists as early as the 1789 congressional election and was copied by the Republicans (or anti-federalists, as they were then called) in time for the gubernatorial campaign of that same year. What I am suggesting is that the Democratic Society at first and then the Tammany Society both played a major role in giving the Republicans of New York a market place for their ideas and a meeting place in which to bring together the leading Republican minds and fortunes of the day. Whether Aaron Burr directed the effort or not--one certainty about Burr was that his name never appeared on the Tammany membership list--is beside the point in the context of my argument. Enough major Republican figures were Tammany members, including the increasingly important figure of Matthew L. Davis, to have given that organization an authoritative position among New York Republicans.

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spring of all revolutionary actions," had turned against the clubs, that the reign of terror was at an end, and that "a brave people of keen sensability [sic], alive to injuries and courageous in defending their country from the nefarious designs of foreign princes, are delivered from the domination of popular intriguers."[58] Could the Republican Party of New York have done less than the government located in "the well-spring of all revolutionary actions"? Survival, I believe, dictated otherwise.

[58] American Minerva, Feb. 7, 1795.

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CHAPTER XV

"Are not the Demos every hour
Increasing their unlawful power . . .?"

Rheumatism, or at least that was the diagnosis. Daniel McCormick, a Republican Director of the Bank of New York, reported in late October, 1794, that Governor Clinton was confined to his bed with rheumatism. The painful ailment which afflicted Clinton was not generally known but Samuel Ward did notice, by mid-November, that the Governor had retired from the public gaze to such a degree that he seemed "not to be talked of much." Ward was not ready to count Clinton out as yet--the triennial election for governor would be held in April, 1795--characterizing "our present governor . . . as a cunning old Fox and not easily hunted."[1] It was only with the approach of the state legislative session in January, 1795, that Clinton announced to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the Assembly--and thus to the public, as well--that for "upwards of three months I have been confined to my Chamber and for the most part of the time to my Bed by an acute or inflammatory rheumatism of the severest kind." As a result, he would not be able to attend the session of the Legislature that was about to begin. By the end of the month came further information. In a joint statement, published in the newspapers on January 26, Gov.

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[1]Letters, D. McCormick to W. Constable, Oct. 24, 1794 and S. Ward to W. Constable, Nov. 11, 1794, NYPL, Wm. Constable Letters.

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Clinton and Lt.-Gov. Van Cortlandt announced their retirement from public life.[2]

With the announcement of Clinton's retirement, a generally leisurely series of pre-campaign meetings and activities shifted rapidly into high gear. By the second week of February, two very respectable sets of candidates--in fact, the complete losing tickets of the two previous gubernatorial campaigns found themselves in opposition to each other. Judge Robert Yates and General William Floyd were recommended for Governor and Lt.-Governor by a group of citizens headed by William Denning, Chairman and Jonathan Swartwout, Secretary. John Jay and Stephen Van Rensselaer received their recommendation "at a numerous and respectable meeting of Citizens of the City of New-York, associated with electors from several parts of the State, at the Assembly Room in William Street." Matthew Clarkson chaired the meeting and James Kent was the secretary. A group of mechanics and cartmen met and also resolved to support Jay and Van Rensselaer.[3]

Two immediate ironies were apparent from the nominations. First, no party designations were attached to either set of candidates even though each group published long lists of supporters--eighty seven names in support of Jay and ninety four names favoring Yates--and the names on the lists made it obvious that the Jayites were the

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[2]George Clinton to the President of the Senate and Speaker of the Assembly of the Legislature of the State of New York, Jan. 3, 1795, NYPL, George Clinton Papers; Daily Advertiser, Jan. 26, 1795.

[3]Daily Advertiser, Feb. 12 and Mar. 5, 1795; see "To the Electors of the State of New York" on behalf of Jay and Van Rensselaer, Feb. 10, 1795, NYPL, Abraham Yates, Jr. Papers, and Statement of the Committee to Elect Yates and Floyd, New York Journal, Mar. 11 and Mar. 21, 1795, for the chief broadsides of the campaign.

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Federal-Republicans and the Yatesites were the Democratic-Republicans. It appeared that on the state level, at least, there was to be a studied movement away from direct party association. Secondly, each group reversed its 1789 position. The opposition to Yates now came from the very group which had chosen him to run against Clinton in that year, while the Denning group, which included David Gelston, Melancton Smith, Samuel Osgood, and John Lamb, among others, now united behind Robert Yates.[4]

Perhaps ever so slightly embarrassed by such reversals of position, the committees set up by each side began the campaign in almost hushed tones. The committee to elect Yates and Floyd, for instance, listed the republican virtues that Judge Yates exemplified, while noting that Jay was unacquainted with state affairs, being so often involved with the federal government and European relations. The broadside put out by the Jay forces was equally circumspect in tone and use of language, although it was fuller in its presentation. Since "a very large portion of the Citizens of this State" had supported Jay and Van Rensselaer at the previous election, since neither had done anything to lessen that support, and since Clinton and Van Courtlandt, to whom many in the opposition had "personal attachments, strengthened by length of time," had refused re-nomination, it was hoped that Jay and Van Rensselaer would receive "general approbation." It was also hoped that party spirit, "which for some years past, had divided this State," would be allayed, if not extinguished. Peace, honor and prosperity were the themes advanced by the Jayite ap-

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[4] Ibid.

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peal to the electors which concluded with an exhortation to their "Fellow Citizens" to come forward and show "that in a Republic, virtues and talents are duly estimated and that the services of the Patriot are not forgotton." A "P.S." followed which was necessitated by the fact that the supporters of Jay were running a campaign with an absentee candidate. The public was assured that "authentic information" had arrived "that Mr. Jay has finally concluded his business in Great Britain and is expected to embark this month for America.[5]

After the flurry of election activity that produced the candidates, the gubernatorial campaign for 1795 went into hibernation for over a month, although some electioneering must have gone on during that time simply on the basis of a summary of the resolves published in the New York Journal at the end of March. There were seventeen of them, all produced at various "respectable" meetings held throughout the state. The increased use of newspaper space to support the editor's political position was also observable in the fact that fifteen of the resolves in the Republican Journal were in support of Yates.[6] Other usual channels for opinion, however, seemed to have dried up for most of the campaign. Newspaper editorials and essays, local dinners with their multiple toasts, orations and sermons and private letters all said remarkably little about the candidates or the campaign. The only issue that seemed capable of arousing any public or private comment was the question of whether Jay would or would not return to

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[5]Statement of Committee to Elect Yates and Floyd, New York Journal, Mar. 11, 1795; "To the Electors," Feb. 10, 1795, NYPL, Abraham Yates, Jr. Papers.

[6]New York Journal, Mar. 28 and Apr. 1, 1795.

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New York before the summer. The friends of Jay assured the public that the envoy extraordinary would return by late spring,[7] while his opponents reported that Jay was not expected to return until word of the ratification of his treaty was received by him in England. Basically that was the published and private campaign for governor of New York through mid-April 1795. At least that was all that was available in the written records which usually could be counted on to give a good picture of what interested or excited the public at any particular period.

What did keep New Yorkers busy and excited during the winter and spring of 1795 was their own business at home and French affairs abroad. William Constable, who had gone to England in 1792, returned in late May of 1795. In the course of his three year absence, he wrote, "it wod seem as if this Country had doubled in Number and in Wealth. Property in this City has increased two fold."[8] The steep rise in prices of both goods and services made the issue of inflation one that deeply concerned New Yorkers. Noah Webster combined the interest in business at home with French affairs abroad in a discussion of what occasioned the high prices. The first two causes he listed were the increase in circulating medium and the stock of the funded debt. But the principal cause, he believed, was the war in Europe "which has created an immense demand for many of our principle

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[7]See King to Wolcott, Mar. 19, 1795, Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and Adams, I, 191-92 and Jay to Hamilton, Nov. 19, 1794, Works of Hamilton, V, 54, for the basis of Federalist belief that Jay would return before Inauguration Day.

[8]Letter, William Constable to P. Colquhoun, June 27, 1795, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.

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[sic] articles of export." As an example, Webster drew a picture of the condition of France, with its standing army of over a million men who were supported directly by the labor of an additional six million Frenchmen. He here referred the reader to Lindet's report on the interior state of France. As a result of the immense consumption of goods and produce in France, she had to turn elsewhere for everything but the bare necessities. Salted provisions for her fleets were now drawn largely from America, while flour, leather and cloth were purchased in ever-greater quantities from this country. Webster believed that the immense demand for those articles in France "has been the principal cause of the high price of them in America."[9]

If Noah Webster blamed the need of the French to feed their growing army, as well as their growing appetite for territory, as an explanation for the continuing pattern of inflation in the United States, he was equally harsh in condemning French influence in this country for producing a party distinguished by a "delirious zeal" for the French Revolution. Americans who were equally patriotic, republican, and interested inthe welfare of their own country were declared open enemies of the francophiles, he claimed, simply because they did not share the desire to praise any and every act of France. Webster concluded with a strong statement of Federalist belief as to the conduct of Americans: "We have an excellent country, and a better government than any. Preserve that government and assume the dignity of republicans. Reject those who would become "the dupes and foot-balls

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[9]American Minerva, Jan. 21, 1795.

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of foreigners."[10]

Webster's theme received national circulation in a Proclamation of a Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving which the President of the United States issued for observance on February 19, 1795. The Proclamation, which was drafted by Alexander Hamilton, expressed an administration view of the blessings of America. Proper thanks were in order for our having escaped the calamities "which afflict so many other nations, and trouble the sources of individual quiet, security, and happiness." A list of reasons for the particularly happy position of the United States was then given: exemption from foreign war, increasing prosperity, internal tranquility, and the suppression of an insurrection "which so wantonly" threatened internal peace. Furthermore, the constitutions of government which guided the United States had established that rare commodity: "liberty with order for the preservation of our peace, FOREIGN and DOMESTIC." What was most important now, the Proclamation declared, was for "the Author of those blessings to teach us to rightly estimate its value, to keep us from wantonly using prosperity to jeopardize our advantages, and to render this country as a safe asylum to all."[11]

In New York City two of the sermons preached on that special day of prayer and thanksgiving stressed exactly those points which the Proclamation had stressed. The sermon entitled Mercy Remembered in Wrath was preached by John Mitchel Mason, pastor of the Scotch Presby-

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[10] American Minerva, Jan. 24, 1795.

[11] Proclamation of Thanksgiving for Feb. 19, 1795, Jan. 7, 1795, Works of Hamilton, V, 61-62.

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terian Church. In it, Mason directed his listeners to two particular reasons for giving thanks: preservation from foreign wars and deliverance from domestic discord. Mason recalled how a series of disasters during the last years had almost torn apart "the fairest experiment which the sun ever beheld, of a government reared on the equal rights of men." What with "savage depredations, . . . daring and shameless encroachment, . . . maritime insult and plunder, . . . intestine feuds, and ill provided . . . means of defence," a disunion appeared the likely result. But the internal rebellion was put down and the other threats had either been met through the force of arms or the works of peace. To Mason, it was "the victory of principle over passion, of order over confusion, of laws over licentiousness." The pastor then compared the generally peaceful American scene with the constant and bloody recourse to arms in Europe over the preceding half-decade. He considered it a miracle that the United States had escaped direct involvement for there were always those who, given the least pretext, would have attempted to push the country over the precipice. A life of tears and repentance would not have absolved them, Mason preached to the assembled, if the evils of war had overtaken us.[12]

The other sermon was delivered by the Reverend John M'Knight, one of the ministers of the United Presbyterian Congregation. Called The Divine Goodness to the United States of America, Dr. M'Knight's sermon cautioned against the influence of faction and party. There

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[12]John M. Mason, Mercy Remembered in Wrath (New York: J. Buel, 1795), pp. 7, 10-12, 14-15, 18, 25.

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were at present two political parties in this country, M'Knight noted. One party had been alleged to be aiming at the introduction of monarchy and to be intent on subverting the equal rights of men; the other "with views subversive of all subordination, order, and good government, and tending to introduce a scene of anarchy and confusion." M'Knight believed that both imputations were "generally and equally unjust." The true statement of the case seemed to be: "That the one party thinks the constitution would admit of improvements, and ought to be amended: the other, that it is better as it is, and might be injured by any attempts to alter it." M'Knight concluded with his own sense of thanksgiving. For if he was correct in his estimate of party difference, then all could be discussed without rancor or violence. That was a proper conclusion for a sermon on divine goodness to the United States.[13]

Among the other pleasurable occasions for many New Yorkers during the late winter season of 1795 were two celebrations in honor of two most celebrated figures of the national government. George Washington's birthday was honored by the Tammany Society in what was still an annual tradition, while Alexander Hamilton's return to private life became the occasion for a Chamber of Commerce dinner. From the tone of the toasts at Tammany's Washington's birthday celebration and from the very fact that Washington was honored by the Society despite the severe internal divisons produced by the President's own remarks about "self-created societies," it might have appeared that the

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[13]John M'Knight, The Divine Goodness to the United States of America (New York: Thomas Greenleaf, 1795), pp. 20-22.

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Tammany Federalists still retained no small power in that Society. Actually, it was more probable that this was the "last hurrah" of the Tammany Federalists and that they were the only ones who attended the dinner. The toasts to individuals included, in addition to Washington, one to Kosciusko and another to Jay, whose embassy, it was hoped, would "prove beneficial to his country," and whose service, it was equally desired, might "be rewarded with gratitude." The National Convention of France received the good wishes of the assembled group, who hoped that the success of French arms might yet establish the independence of Poland. The toasts of a mildly philosophical nature, however, made clear the more conservative nature of the organizers of the dinner:

> 9. May all free, republican governments be able to crush insurrection. . . .
> 11. May the true sons of Columbia always know that natural liberty must be restrained by civil.[14]

The ever-watchful French commissioners also took note of the celebrations surrounding Washington's birthday. Observing the President's universal popularity and simplicity, they called Washington "véritablement l'heureux de son siècle."[15] They also noted that it would be folly for anyone to attack Washington effectively or to make an impression against the government which his name protected. That popularity had carried over to Hamilton, the Commissioners reported, for the now retired Secretary of the Treasury left office with the greatest tokens of esteem and praise from the most considerable mer-

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[14] American Minerva, Feb. 25, 1795; Daily Advertiser, Feb. 25, 1795.

[15] Notice should again be taken of the remarkable difference in tone between the dispatches signed by the Commissioners and those signed only by Fauchet.

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chants of New York and Philadelphia.[16]

On February 27, the Chamber of Commerce of New York gave the returning hero a dinner at the Tontine Coffee House that must have been the stag event of the year. Over 200 gentlemen attended, including such a diverse lot as the Chancellor of the state, the judges of the state court, the Speaker of the Assembly, the Recorder of the city, and the President of Columbia College. They all were in attendance to honor one who "HAS DESERVED WELL OF HIS COUNTRY." Many of the toasts seemed to share a similar motif, a joining of two positive values to produce a perfect whole. Thus, industry and improvement, liberty and law, social order and social happiness, peace and union, integrity and knowledge, and patriotism and honest fame were cheered. The dinner concluded with the volunteer toasts in honor of the memory of Baron Steuben, from the chair; the merchants of New York, from Hamilton; may love and honor be the reward of virtue, from the Chancellor; the commerce of the City of New York and the honest merchant from Judges Lansing and Benson, respectively; and, after he had withdrawn, nine cheers for Alexander Hamilton.[17]

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[16]Commissioners to Committee of Public Safety (hereinafter referred to as CPS), Feb. 26, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 584-85.

[17]Daily Advertiser, Feb. 28, 1795. The dinner in honor of Hamilton was followed by official honors from the City of New York. The Common Council, on March 16, 1795 (Minutes of the Common Council, II, 132), as "a Testimony of the high Sense this Board entertains of the public Service of . . . Hamilton, especially in the administration of the Office of Secretary of the Treasury," resolved to present him with "the freedom of the city." On April 12, 1795, Hamilton acknowledged receipt of the certificate that granted him that freedom and expressed his pleasure to Mayor Varick (M.C.C., II, 148). Finally, on April 30, 1795, the mayor and aldermen of New York admitted Hamilton to the freedom of the city "as their testimonial and that of the Corporation of this city of their opinion of your merit and distinguished

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Pleasure at the celebrations in honor of the son who returned a conquering hero was not, however, total and universal. Editor Greenleaf of the Journal, in reprinting the Minerva's description of the dinner, did manage to find reason to complain. Where at that "great" dinner, the editor of the Journal asked, was any toast that noted the struggle for universal liberty, that said success to the French Revolution, or that even mentioned the French? Greenleaf also called attention to the royal-looking Tontine Coffee House, the scene of that dinner. Can those there forget that it was through France that our own liberty was assured? Cunning British forces were everywhere, Greenleaf warned, so beware. Greenleaf's objections were expanded upon in late March in an article in the Journal by one "Andrew Lookon." He criticized the friends of Great Britain at the Tontine who "sniffed out" every French act which might mean the taking of a United States merchant ship, while they ignored all such British actions. The French never acted unfairly, "Lookon" asserted, without making full restitution. The writer then shifted gears to ask why a new treaty with England was needed. He answered his own question by suggesting that it was done to please the friends of despotism and to let Britain know that "we will put up with any insult rather than engage in another war."[18]

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service in the cause of your country." (Varick to Hamilton, Apr. 30, 1795, Works of Hamilton, V, 633.)

[18]New York Journal, Mar. 4, 1795; "Andrew Lookon," Ibid., Mar. 25, 1795. The Tontine Coffee House was the scene in mid-March of a party that was probably much more to the liking of Greenleaf and the letter writers listed. The dinner, given by the officers of the first regiment, was in honor of Col. Rutgers, their Commandant and the Adjutant General of New York State. The set of toasts produced by this

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It must have been articles of the nature of "Andrew Lookon" that drew from Webster a lengthy retort that encompassed a great deal of his opposition to French democracy and American democrats. Noting that the young Americans of that day were growing up listening to "the rhapsodies" on French democracy rather than reading the sober writings of elder statesmen like John Adams, Webster found good reason for their confusion as to why yesterday's hero in France became today's tyrant and tomorrow's guillotine victim. If they read the proper work on government they would know that that was the natural result of the French governmental system. "The French have placed all authority in one center; as many French Americans, wish to do in this country," Webster declared. In such a system, "laws do not govern but men; and when men govern, they are not led by reason, but driven by passion." Webster had no quarrel with the French struggle for self-government and national independence. That was an honorable cause. But the French prejudice against "two independent branches, and an independent executive and judiciary" was unfortunate. Webster then spelled out his preferred system of government: "one branch of government is to be controlled by another, and all controlled by the Supreme Power of Laws, deposited in the hands of one responsible person." The system described by the editor of the Minerva sounded strangely familiar--

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group definitely did not forget to wish France well, even including patriotic tunes of both nations with certain of the toasts. The Commander-in-chief of the United States was cheered with the President's March, while the toast in honor of the French Republic was greeted with Ça Ira. A toast to Kosciusko and the oppressed Poles was followed by Carmagnole, while the Marseillaise followed the toast that asked that the alliance between America and France be perpetual. The final toasts, followed by Washington's March, wished liberty, peace, and prosperity to the whole human race. See Daily Advertiser, Mar. 16, 1795.

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and it was. For there was no doubt that as a firm Federalist, Webster had described the favorite system of the firm Federalist--the American system under the Constitution.[19]

Webster may have had no quarrel with the French "so far as they are struggling for the right of governing themselves," but how would he react if the French continued in their attempt to extend their system to other countries? A test of his reaction and, in fact, of the reaction of everyone else, was rapidly approaching.

On April 2, 1795 Mott and Hurtin's New York Weekly Chronicle[20] reported on "the anxiety of the public mind for the next regular intelligence from Europe. . . . as most probably it will be of the utmost importance to the powers at war."[21] On the same day, the merchant Jacob LeRoy, in a private letter, had information "by a late arrival at Philadelphia, from Havre De Grace (39 days) . . . of Amsterdam & Rotterdam being in possession of the French, with 12 Sail of the line, and 1000 Merchantmen."[22]

Public reaction was not long in coming. Minister Fauchet re-

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[19]American Minerva, Mar. 27, 1795.

[20]Mott & Hurtin's New York Weekly Chronicle printed its first issue on January 1, 1795. Published every Thursday, it was a small, four column paper. In the first issue the editors wrote that they were "determined that their press shall not be prostituted to the low purposes of detraction and licentiousness, but by them be held in sovereign contempt." On April 30, 1795, the editorial team of the paper changed to William Hurtin, Jr. and Andrew Commardinger and the name of the paper became the New York Weekly Chronicle.

[21]Mott & Hurtin's New York Weekly Chronicle, Apr. 2, 1795.

[22]Letter, J. LeRoy to G. Banyar, Apr. 2, 1795, NYHS, Banyar Coll.

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ported that the news of the taking of Amsterdam was "greeted with delirium in this country by the people. All the bells in all the cities ring in celebration of this event."[23] Fauchet might have been guilty of over-reaction in the past but his description seemed to fit exactly the New York response to the news from Holland. The New York Magazine for April gave a long and favorable account of the French takeover, remarking on the "glorious results for liberty." Mott and Hurtin's Weekly Chronicle, forced to save up its adjectives for one long week, announced proudly on April 9 that "we have this day laid before our readers the Important News of the Regeneration of the Patriots of Holland, in the CAPTURE of AMSTERDAM, by the French Patriots. . . . An EVENT the most glorious in the annals of Modern Europe--a mighty and brave People relieved from the galling yoke of Tyranny, without the effusion of blood."[24]

The public, unlike the Weekly Chronicle, could give immediate vent to its emotions and did. On April 2, the very day that news of the French cpature of Holland had arrived, "a large and respectable number of the Old Whigs" of New York met and resolved to celebrate the event. The next day, at twelve o'clock, so the Evening Post reported, "a great concourse of citizens assembled on the battery . . . to celebrate the signal victories of our brave Republican allies, the French." Guns were fired in a fifteen round salute while the bells "pealed congratulations for one hour." The Journal reported that three cheers

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[23]Fauchet to CPS, Apr. 3, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 617.

[24]New York Magazine, VI (Apr., 1795), 254; Mott & Hurtin's New York Weekly Chronicle, Apr. 9, 1795.

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filled the air as the citizens cried "ANOTHER NATION'S FREE!" and the French ships in the harbor answered the salute. Greenleaf also reported that the Marseillaise was sung, in, of all places, the Tontine Coffee House by French and American citizens, amid loud applause from all but those "whose sole idolatry is at the shrine of kings and nobles." Greenleaf concluded his report by noting that the French Consul "gave grateful acknowledgment of this public display of attachment to republican principles." The Evening Post ended its description with a sense of pleasure that came right through the printed page: "a superior degree of satisfaction was easily to be discovered in every Republican countenance."[25]

Fauchet's use of the word, "delirium," to describe the public reaction began to seem a trifle mild when the celebrations continued on Monday, April 6, where they had left off on the previous Friday. Alexander Anderson described the scene under the heading, "Rejoicing for the successes of the French in Holland." There was a discharge of cannon at sunrise from the French ships in the harbor which were "dress'd in Flags." The firing, which was repeated at noon and at sunset, was followed by the singing of the "Marseilles Hymn" by the sailors aboard ship and echoed by large groups of New Yorkers standing at the wharves.[26] The French Consul, delighted by the "new proofs of . . . attachment to the French cause," thanked New Yorkers in the name of all the French patriots present in that city. In addition to thanks, the French Consul and the citizens of the French Republic gave

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[25]New York Journal, Apr. 4, 1795; Evening Post, Apr. 3, 1795.

[26]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Apr. 6, 1795; Daily Advertiser, Apr. 6 and Apr. 7, 1795.

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a dinner to upwards of 500 guests at the City Assembly Room. At the head of the table of honor was placed the tree and cap of liberty, decorated with a tri-colored riband, and a framed copy of the French Constitution of 1793.[27] Songs were sung, toasts were drunk, and band music played. At the conclusion of the dinner, the French Consul was led home, preceded by the tree and cap of liberty. Both objects were later erected at Bowling Green on the pedestal where the statue of George III had stood before the Revolution. That charming irony hopefully received its proper due from the citizens of New York.[28]

The celebrations were still not over, however. On Tuesday, April 7, William Rhinelander described how, in compliment to the French, "our patriots have been ringing Bells and firing cannon and rejoicing with them these two days past." In a parenthetical aside, the merchant Rhinelander reported that "these accounts [the taking of Holland] will give some check to our commerce for a short time."[29] The days and nights of festive pleasures finally did come to an end on the seventh of April, but not before the Tammany Society held a meeting in commemoration of the victories of France in Holland. The toasts contained their own particular brand of joy and delight and were free from the vitriol that sometimes marred such occasions. Glasses were lifted to the five republics--America, France, Switzerland, Genoa, and

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[27]Interestingly, the Thermidorians were about to end the life of the Constitution of 1793--if a still-born document can be said to have a life--even as many Americans continued to worship at its shrine.

[28]Evening Post, Apr. 6, 1795.

[29]Letter, William Rhinelander to [probably C. Robert], Apr. 7, [1795], NYHS, Wm. Rhinelander LB.

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Holland; to the wish that French political principles might pervade all minds and French arms conquer all aristocrats; to the men who planned and executed the happy alliance between France and the United States; and to the hope that England might turn to the freedom of its past--the Puritan Revolution. A final toast asked, rather gently, that the patriots of France might "convince the Tyrants of the world that the establishment of the Rights of Man, and not plunder is their object."[30]

Noah Webster, however, remained remarkably clear-eyed (unusual even among most Federalists), throughout the extravagant emotional display of his fellow New Yorkers. For him the Dutch may have rid themselves of "the despotic control of their Stadtholder, but had they really become independent? Had they not replaced one ruler with another? Could they really be an independent nation under the French?[31] It was becoming quite clear that Noah Webster did not trust French republicanism. The French, he admitted, did assist us "in the late war, to throw off the English yoke." He also noted, however, that they "sent a minister [Genêt] to make demands upon our gratitude, and establish an influence in this country; which would have placed it wholly under the direction of the French government." What saved us from that fate? Certainly the firmness of the American executive helped, but, Webster believed, the most important factor in saving the country from French control was distance and the Atlantic Ocean. Even now, Webster warned, there was a powerful party in this country that

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[30] Daily Advertiser, Apr. 8 and Apr. 9, 1795.

[31] American Minerva, Apr. 14, 1795.

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was more under French than American influence. Only law and the separation of powers could preserve the rights of man for Americans.[32]

That Webster greeted the delirious celebrations in honor of the latest French victory with both a lack of enthusiasm for the festivities and a strongly negative view of the French ability to free the world without at the same time imposing their own dogmas, was not particularly surprising. What was most unusual was the reaction of the French Commissioners who had previously taken such great pride in the American public's attitude toward their country. In fact, just two weeks before, Fauchet had spoken with no small pleasure of the "delirium" created among Americans by the French triumph in Holland. But now the Commissioners questioned the value of French meetings and celebrations in the United States. Americans, they declared, were "a cold people" and many of them had reacted badly to French warmth and demonstrativeness as shown at those public gathe.ings. In addition, since many of the new French days of celebration and special fêtes were being copied in the United States by many of the Frenchmen residing here and even by numbers of Americans, it was producing a counter feeling among "native Americans." The latter were growing hostile towards the constant marching in the streets, beating of drums, firing of cannon and ringing of bells.[33]

The nice distinctions made between native Americans and other Americans and the sudden calling into question of the Franco-American celebrations almost immediately after one of the most triumphant

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[32] Ibid., May 5, 1795.

[33] Commissioners to CPS, Apr. 19, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 646-47.

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examples of such a demonstration has to arouse great curiosity in the historian. What did the Commissioners think they had to lose by the alienation of some Americans who were already certain that they did not want to become involved in any European war? Were the Commissioners discouraged at that moment by the fact that the federal government remained adamant in its neutrality policy despite any and all attempts to change that policy? Had reports of a treaty with Great Britain that went beyond the expectations of the French government also acted to discourage the Commissioners? Or was this in part an attempt by the French Commissioners to ingratiate themselves with the Thermidorian government in France which had already shown its opposition to popular demonstrations? Regardless of the cause, Fauchet and the other Commissioners once again asked the home office for directions about the attitude they should take and the exact policy they should follow in relation to developing American events. What the foreign ministry in France thought should be done will apparently never be known, for the ministry seemed to be curiously forgetful of its ministers once they had been bundled off to America with their instructions. As Fauchet had complained the previous November, how could he carry out any plans or ideas unless he was given stronger and more constant support from the French government at home? Thus, while most New Yorkers joyously celebrated the French victories, the representatives of the victors fretted their mission away.[34]

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[34]Commissioners to CPS, Apr. 19, 1795, and Fauchet to CFR, Nov. 19, 1794, "CFM," AHA, II, 646-647, 483. The new French Minister, Pierre Adet, who arrived in the United States in mid-June, directed an even more scathing remark to the Committee of Public Safety. Adet complained that he was the fourth minister from France since 1791, but

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Only after the celebrations had fully run their course did electioneering for the almost forgotten gubernatorial campaign recommence. Then it was generally to reiterate points made the previous February. In the brief two weeks remaining before the election the only really new addition to the campaign was the nomination of the State Senate and Assembly tickets, for those annual elections would occur at the same time as the triennial election for governor. Interestingly, the party designations for the previous year were retained for the local elections although, as has been noted, the gubernatorial candidates still lacked direct party affiliation. On April 15, the Daily Advertiser listed the Federal Republican ticket for the Senate of the State of New York and two days later listed the ticket for the Assembly. The next day the New York Journal announced that at a meeting of Republicans at Hunter's Hotel a full slate of senatorial and assembly candidates had been selected. Both slates were remarkably similar as to the class and occupational background of the candidates. The Federal list included two merchants, two doctors, a lawyer, a city alderman, and a shopkeeper. The Republican list included two merchants, two lawyers, a broker, a city ward collector of revenue, and a rope maker.[35]

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none had ever received letters of advice and instruction from their government. They were forced, therefore, to act completely on their own. See Adet to CPS, June 28, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 739.

[35]Daily Advertiser, Apr. 15 and Apr. 17, 1795; New York Journal, Apr. 18, 1795; Duncan, New York Directory, 1795. The Federal Republican list included Samuel Jones for State Senator and J. Watson, J. Post, G. Furman, R. Furman, W. P. Smith, J. Morton and H. Will for Assembly. The original Republican list included David Gelston for Senator and W. Denning, P. R. Livingston, DeWitt Clinton, T. Beekman, T. Ivers, E. Stevens and W. Boyd for Assembly.

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Then, on April 22, the Journal announced a major break with political tradition. At a "numerous" meeting of cartmen and other citizens, with a cartman in the chair, those present, with only three dissenting votes, resolved to support the complete Republican ticket with the substitution of a dealer in fruit (a cartman) for the rope maker.[36] An interesting side light of this movement of cartmen into the Republican column was the fact that the Secretary at the meeting of "cartmen and other citizens" was Matthew L. Davis, the close friend of Aaron Burr. Davis was also one of the editors of the Evening Post, a member of the Tammany Society and very possibly of the Democratic Society. That the new Tammany Society leadership was busy carrying forward the task of forging a union between the Republican Party and the "lower order" of mechanics and cartmen seemed to have become a distinct possibility in the arrangements and substitutions just described. That these events would have an increasingly important affect on the political life of New York City was also becoming a distinct possibility.

In the brief and quiet close to this campaign, the major curiousity was that party designation was continued for the local elections but was never publicly extended to the gubernatorial campaign with its national implications. If John Jay and Robert Yates had not been publicly and officially designated with party labels, however, it was no secret whom they represented. In the finest literary effort of the campaign, both candidates were clearly ticketed with the logical

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[36] New York Journal, Apr. 22, 1795. The substitution, at the request of the cartmen, was Alexander Lamb for Thomas Ivers.

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party designations. This work was a poem entitled Electioneering which was found in the private records of the Calliopean Society. Richard B. Davis, one of the Society's literary critics, noted that "though political disquisitions, especially those which relate to domestic party politics" were generally considered as improper subjects for a literary work by the Society, "the merit of this piece atones in a great measure for its violation of neutrality." The poem, which divided the parties into "Feds" and "Demos," was indeed worthy of publication, for though a partisan piece of anti-Federalist propaganda, it was deftly written with a light and witty touch that might have made a Federalist smile even as he winced. It is, in fact, one of the few literary pieces of that era that is worth quoting at some length:

The day is now not far before us
(Hear it ye Feds and brother Tories)
The great and the important day,
Big with the fate of Feddy Jay!
Are not the Demos every hour
Increasing their unlawful power,
Straining their nerves and eke their pates
T'advance the interest of Yates?
. . . . . .
Did any man e'er do or say
So much for us as Mr. Jay?
Who stroak'd the Lion's whiskers, say?
And kiss'd his dirty paw? Why Jay.
Who makes commercial treaties, ha?
And cheats the French? Why Mr. Jay.
The Western posts who gave away
Till two years hence? Why Mr. Jay.
Who comes in triumph home in May
To be our Gov'nor? Viscount Jay!
At least I hope and beg and pray
That this may be the case with Jay;
For should it not and should the fates,
Espouse the part of Rebel Yates
Or should we thro' neglect or fright
Lose the bright prospect now in sight,

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'Twould so dishearten all our men
They'd never show their heads again.[37]

The literary climax of the election of 1795 turned out to be this private poem read by a handful. Apparently, without the political presence of George Clinton, neither side could work up much public animosity. Were it not for the uncertainty of the date of Jay's return, the campaign might have disappeared entirely from the pages of the public press. In this atmosphere, which totally reversed the mood of the campaign of 1792 and the nervous anxieties of the previous two years, New Yorkers calmly went to the polls and waited.

While waiting for the election returns that were "Big with the fate of Feddy Jay" and while waiting for the return of the envoy extraordinary, himself, New Yorkers did manage to find an incident that would keep the city from falling into somnolence. It was, in fact, an incident of enough general interest to catch the attention of the ever-watchful French Commissioners, who included it in one of their letters to the Committee of Public Safety. A liberty cap, with the flags of France and the United States intertwined below it, had been placed in the Tontine Coffee House during the severe disturbances of June 1793. It had served, at that time, to cool the overheated situation.[38] According to the Commissioners, parts of the display began to disappear over the intervening years. It was decided, therefore, to replace the disappearing parts with a totally new display. The new fixture was described as "a well designed, carved, Liberty-Cap, sus-

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[37]"Electioneering," Calliopean Society Records, NYPL, Apr. 8, 1795.

[38]See supra, pp. 155-158.

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pended on the point of an American Tomahawk, and the Flags of the Republics of America and France attached on each side." It "formed a very handsome figure," the Daily Advertiser's report concluded. The Argus & Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser[39] added that the words "Sacred to Liberty" were placed underneath the emblem.[40]

A small ceremony followed at which the Marseillaise was sung and two toasts given. The first was a combined toast and curse, promising that "he who dares to Insult the cap will incur the detestation of every true republican." The other toast cheered the three Republics, America, France, and Holland.[41] Alexander Anderson, who was drawn to the coffee house by the apparently loud celebration, recorded the sight. Hearing "an uproar" he went in "to know the meaning" of it. He found, "in consequence of a badge of Freedom fix'd up by some Patriots," that "a number of men, chiefly French, were singing and kneeling before it." In the cool, unemotional prose of Anderson, one

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[39]With the issue of Monday, May 11, 1795, Greenleaf's Journal had become The Argus & Greenleaf's New Daily Advertiser. Another change in an individual newspaper occurred when the New York Daily Gazette became the New York Gazette and General Advertiser with the issue of May 4, 1795. Editor M'Lean described the paper as "enlarged and improved." It now contained two more columns per page. The editor vowed to continue to observe "that impartiality which a variety of opinions and sentiments require, and which, consequently give birth to truth." The daily status of Greenleaf's paper, it should be noted, now gave New Yorkers a choice of five daily newspapers. In addition to Argus, there was the American Minerva, the Daily Advertiser, the New York Gazette, and the Diary. For a city with a population of from 40,000 to 50,000 it was a remarkable achievement.

[40]Commissioners to CPS, May 31, 1795, "CPM," AHA, II, 702-03; Daily Advertiser, May 19, 1795; Argus, May 19, 1795.

[41]Argus, May 19, 1795.

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can almost see a shoulder-shrugging gesture that indicated wonder that grown men would genuflect in a coffee house before a red bonnet and intertwined flags. Noah Webster, however, left no doubt of his feelings in the sarcastic comment that followed the description of the ceremony in the Minerva: "We congratulate our fellow Citizens, on this auspicious event, and in escaping the dangers that beset the true republicans, in the absence of this palladium of our rights. We trust the interests of republicanism are now effectually secured against the claws of Toryism."[42]

If the security of republicanism in New York depended upon the presence of the "badge of Freedom" in the Tontine Coffee House, republicanism was almost immediately in danger again. Two days after the ceremony, the Daily Advertiser reported that "the attention of the town" was engaged by the removal of the French tri-color from its place in the display. One William Anderson, the Daily Advertiser continued, who arrived a few days earlier from England, seemed to be the perpetrator. "A Legion of Yankees," in Greenleaf's Argus, warned that justice had to be meted out to this Anderson and to his accomplices. The French Commissioners, noting this affair as well, called the accused "a Mr. Blackstone." An English officer had also been accused, the Commissioners reported, which led several Frenchmen to go to the hotel where he was staying, take his uniform coat, and publicly trample on it and rip it up. Blackstone or Anderson or whoever the culprit was managed to get out of town, the flag was replaced, and the incident

[42]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, May 18, 1795; American Minerva, May 19, 1795.

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quickly ran its course.[43]

The event would not have been complete, however, without a little sermonizing on the subject. The editor of the Daily Advertiser[44] was the lay preacher on this occasion. No friend to the United States would have carried out such an act, he stated. Although it was not right that the peace of New York should have to depend on the display of a complete cap of liberty in a coffee house, it was the wish of the people that the fixture should remain inviolate. Its removal, therefore, was an act of indiscretion and wickedness. But, the editor cautioned, it was not an act of the first importance and should not becloud the fact that New York City was a place where every man, "from Chief Magistrate to the daily labourer, who attends industriously to his business, may enjoy the advantages of a Country, unexampled in prosperity." The editor concluded by asking that the tranquility of the city be preserved for therein lay public happiness.[45]

Public happiness for the Federalists lay in victory in the elections and the return of John Jay. Both desires were granted on the same day, which must have made May 28, 1795 a very special day in the memory of old Federalists. On that day the Daily Advertiser carried the final retuns of the State Assembly and Senate elections. They showed a Federalist assembly victory margin of 300 to 440 votes

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[43]Daily Advertiser, May 21, 1795; "A Legion of Yankees," Argus, May 22, 1795; Commissioners to CPS, May 31, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 703.

[44]On January 25, 1796, an announcement appeared in the Daily Advertiser which stated that John Morton was now, and had been for the year past, "the conductor and principal proprietor" of the newspaper.

[45]Daily Advertiser, May 21, 1795.

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and a senate margin of from 500 to 700 votes. In the assembly vote the Republican candidates crept up on the average of 100 votes closer to the Federalist candidates. Much more importantly, however, was the difference in number of votes between the high man and low man on each ticket. That had narrowed considerably indicating conscious voting of a complete ticket along party lines and very little ticket splitting for individual candidates.[46]

True Federalist joy, however, came with the long-awaited appearance of John Jay. The Federalist papers of New York vied with one another in their description of his arrival. The Minerva, which was an afternoon paper, managed to report the news first in a large type announcement. No sooner were the people informed of Jay's arrival, the Minerva informed its readers, than a vast multitude crowded to the wharf and escorted him to his house with frequent cheers and "every possible demonstration of joy and respect, the tribute of reward due the services of the patriot, and the messenger of peace." The next day's Daily Advertiser and Gazette printed separate stories instead of the more usual method that newspapers followed on such occasions of printing a description from the same source and with the same wording. The Daily Advertiser reported that "our beloved and much respected Citizen JOHN JAY, arrived in the Ship Severn" on the previous day at about one o'clock. The Gazette described the ship Severn as "much-wished-for," adding that it arrived in 42 days from Bristol, "on board of which, the eminent Patriot and Statesman, the

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[46] Daily Advertiser, May 28, 1795. The vote total of the winners in the Assembly race ranged from a high of 1591 to a low of 1490. The Republican total ranged from 1190 to 1150 votes.

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Hon. John Jay." The Daily Advertiser then described "an immense concourse of Citizens who were in a few minutes assembled on the wharfs," while the Gazette used the phrase "innumerable multitude" and specifically named the wharf where Jay landed "amidst the most eager huzzas" as Ackerley's wharf. Jay was then escorted, again according to the Daily Advertiser, "amidst repeated acclamations to his house in Broad Way," where the Gazette left him filled with emotions "more easily conceived than expressed." The Daily Advertiser concluded its description by reporting that at six o'clock "a joyful peal was rung from the bells of the city; and at seven a federal salute was fired from the Battery, which was returned from the fort on Governors Island."[47]

That same evening, the Union Society[48] of the city, which viewed Jay's return "as connected with the peace, happiness, and best interests of their country," proceeded to celebrate the occasion. The toasts are listed almost completely because they help to explain how the Federalists could manage to continue to win elections despite public delirium over France and her victories. It showed, once again, that love of France and federalism were not mutually exclusive. The Union Society toasted:

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[47]American Minerva, May 28, 1795; Daily Advertiser, May 29, 1795; New York Gazette, May 29, 1795.

[48]As a result of the Federalist walkout from Tammany, an observer might well ask if any other organization became home to the expatriates. My own answer would be to point to the Union Society, whose leadership had a distinctly Federalist cast. By 1796, in fact, some of the former Federalist officers of Tammany had become officers of the Union Society.

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1. John Jay;
2. Peace;
3. Moderation and firmness;
4. Switzerland, Holland, and all free republics;
5. The United States and friends of its steady Constitution;
6. Free elections and fair canvassing;
7. Success to the honest citizens of France;
8. Distraction to the internal enemies of France;
9. Destruction to the external enemies of France;
10. Liberty of the press;
11. May all retire with the plaudits of Alexander Hamilton;
12. George Washington.[49]

The pleasure of the Federalists was made even greater when the results of the gubernatorial election began to come in. Jacob LeRoy, writing to a correspondent about Jay's arrival, added that there was "no doubt of his being our governor haveing [sic], at present a majority of seven hundred." He then added without tears, "the Democrats despair."[50] The delight of the Federalists was made complete when the full election returns showed Jay to be the victor with 1580 votes more than Yates while Van Rensselaer had 652 votes more than Floyd.[51]

That delight found its voice in both public and private expressions of Federalists throughout the state.[52] Probably the most contagiously merry letter came from a not unexpected source, the jolly Robert Troup. In high spirits, he congratulated Stephen Van

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[49] American Minerva, May 29, 1795.

[50] Letter, Jacob LeRoy to [probably Goldsbrow Banyar], May 29, 1795, NYHS, Banyar Coll.

[51] Daily Advertiser, June 6, 1795.

[52] See, for example, letters from S. Van Rensselaer to William Cooper, June 15, 1795, NYHS, Wm. Cooper Papers, and James Morris to Jacob Morris, June 10, 1795, NYHS, James Morris Misc. Mss.

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Rensselaer on the election sweep. "We hope that we shall make a proper use of our success--and bend all our efforts to promote the solid prosperity and happiness of the state." Troup asked that his best wishes be given to General Schuyler "and add to them if you please the fraternal embrace for the singular reverse of our political fortune--He must believe with me that the milennium [sic] is rapidly approaching--After the miracle just viewed who can doubt it?" In that sense the Federalists seemed finally to have been converted to the possibility of a millennium here on earth.[53]

The miracle was not merely a local matter for those New Yorkers who contrasted the United States as it was on the eve of the Constitutional era with the country as it was in May and June 1795. Noah Webster saw a "Happy America" enjoying the triumph of peace "whilst the different countries of Europe are convulsed with internal commotions, and threatened with invasion and desolation." Becoming even more specific, Webster summed up the world of the major countries of the Atlantic Civilization: "England is oppressed by profligate ministers and Debauched princes! France is oppressed by a thousand demagogues, the upstart tyrants of the day. Blessed be the lot of America!"[54] America was blessed, indeed, to "Ambrosias," in the Weekly Chronicle, who wrote that "America . . . may be called the Paradise of the world, for what place is there now in the known world that enjoys the freedom which she possesses." The Gazette, too, found cause to contrast "the blessings which Americans enjoy . . . with the

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[53]Letter, R. Troup to S. Van Rensselaer, June 8, 1795, NYHS, Troup Papers.

[54]American Minerva, June 5 and May 14, 1795.

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unhappy state of European Affairs." The Gazette concluded with a "sigh for the fate of contending powers," which made even sweeter "our peculiarly happy lot."[55]

If Federalists, and New Yorkers in general, greeted that moment with pleasure, either for reasons of political success or economic prosperity or a stable and peaceful society or for a combination of the three, editor Thomas Greenleaf of the Argus made it quite clear that the joy was not total and its duration might well be short. In an editor's Address to the Public on the occasion of the first issue of his new paper, Greenleaf explained the reasons for the new title. The Argus, the monster of Greek mythology, penetrated "the most tenebrous shades, . . . with his fifty wakeful eyes." So, too, would his paper serve as the watchful guardian of the people's interest. To do that, a free and open discussion of laws and men was necessary. Otherwise office holders would become gods and heroes who could do no wrong. Greenleaf then put forward his definition of a true Federalist which very clearly explained what he had in mind: "Those are true federalists only . . . who are strenuous supporters of a constitutional administration of government, agreeable to the spirit of the ever-memorable declaration of American Independence." Thus, while Federalists made the Constitution their bible, Greenleaf brought forward the Declaration of Indpendence as his. The Declaration would, indeed, in its democratic abstractions and its opposition to centralized authority, become the key American document in Democratic-Repub-

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[55]"Ambrosias," Weekly Chronicle, May 7, 1795; New York Gazette, June 23, 1795.

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lican philosophy.[56]

Philosophy and abstractions, however, had normally little interest for Thomas Greenleaf. The Federalists would have done well to have viewed as even more ominous two very specific statements in the Argus of June 18, 1795. Both concerned the governor-elect and both were uncomplimentary. In the first statement, Greenleaf asserted that Jay's election had been greeted with deep joy by the "Royalist refugees, and Tories of New York." As for Jay, the treaty-maker, Greenleaf declared that he may well have been duped by the leading British politicians, whom the editor of the Argus called "responsible" for the treaty. Any hopes of the Federalists that they might enjoy their victory for any length of time was about to be proven short-lived. Prosperity and peace might have extended their gentle sway across the land, but the Jay Treaty was about to come home to roost.

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[56] Argus, May 11, 1795.

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PART VI. JAY'S TREATY AND THE "Spectre of Revolution" (1795)

CHAPTER XVI

"'Damnation seize the Treaty, Jay and all.'"

"If this treaty fails, I despair of another. If satisfactory, care should be taken that public opinion be not misled respecting it; for this reason the sooner it is ratified and published, the better." So wrote John Jay to Alexander Hamilton on November 19, 1794, the day the treaty with Great Britain was completed. Although Jay's fears about public opinion were to prove well taken, he felt that he had done all that was possible. As he resignedly expressed himself: "My task is done; whether finis coronat opus, the President, Senate, and public, will decide." He continued by noting that he had arrived in England "in the moment of exultation and triumph on account of Lord Howe's victory [the British success over the French fleet near Brest]; from that day to this, I have experienced no change in sentiment or conduct relative to the negotiation." It was in this context that Jay believed that the treaty which came out of the negotiations was the best he could have delivered.[1]

Jay's letters telling of the completion of his mission reached New York City at the very end of January, 1795. Two immediate re-

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[1]Jay to Hamilton, Nov. 19, 1794, Works of Hamilton, V, 54.

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actions from opposite sides of the political spectrum gave a clear indication of both the direction that the lengthy debates over ratification would take and the depths of emotional feeling that they would arouse. Chancellor Livingston, writing to James Madison and passing on reports of the contents of the treaty, already declared "that Mr. Jay has sacrificed the . . . interests of this country." As evidence, he cited particular letters from British subjects which showed great anxiety lest the treaty not be ratified, "it so favors them." To prevent ratification was "certainly the duty of every man who wishes well to the country," the Chancellor asserted.[2] On the other hand, Walter Rutherford greeted the news of the completion of the treaty with pleasure. Though "the particulars are not authenticated," he asserted, "we have no doubt they are favourable to us." As proof of that, he noted that "already our American stocks have risen in London fifteen per cent."[3]

The first newspaper reports appeared in the Daily Advertiser of February 2 and in the American Minerva of the following day. Both stories, similar in outline, informed the public of the conclusion of

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[2]Letter, R. R. Livingston to Madison, Jan. 30, 1796 [misdated], NYHS, RRL Coll. James Madison, in a letter to the Chancellor, dated Feb. 8, 1795 (NYHS, RRL Coll.), thanked the latter for his information concerning the treaty but showed more political sense than Livingston in making the following comments on the possibility of bringing up the treaty for congressional discussion before it was officially presented: "As it would be impossible to avoid the appearance of an anticipated attack on the Treaty, it could be said with so much plausibility that the treaty ought to be seen and sustained in the whole, before it be prejudiced in any of its parts, and that regulations of a distrustful aspect were particularly improper in the very moment of friendly adjustment."

[3]W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Feb. 1, 1795, Rutherfurd, Family Records and Events, p. 160.

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the treaty between Jay and the British ministry. The terms were not yet fully known but were rumored to include the British surrender of the Western posts within eighteen months; commercial intercourse for American ships with the British West Indies; and reference of the question of whether neutral ships make free ships to a commission for judgment within two years. Both editors were certain, however, that the treaty would, by preserving peace, be of great advantage to this country.[4]

If the Minerva and the Advertiser were delighted by the rumored results of the treaty, the first reaction of the French Commissioners was a "mixed bag." As a group, the Commissioners played down the treaty's significance, believing it to be more of an act for internal political purposes than for any solid advantages that might follow. Two days later, however, Minister Fauchet wrote a letter to the Ministry of Foreign Relations that told a very different story. The Jay mission had originally surprised him, he admitted, and made him fear for the status quo that he had wished to preserve. Now, with the results partially available, his worst fears seemed about to be realized.[5]

The actions that led to the Jay treaty, Fauchet claimed, were pushed by a group of men who were unfriendly to the principles of the French Revolution, and who, by international intrigue, hoped to neutralize the affections of the American people. This was the most important motive behind the treaty, according to Fauchet--a motive more

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[4] Daily Advertiser, Feb. 2, 1795; American Minerva, Feb. 3, 1795.

[5] Commissioners to CFR, Feb. 2, 1795 and Fauchet to CFR, Feb. 4, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 556-57, 559.

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important even than the desire of the Federalists to satisfy the cupidity of the mercantile interest for a commercial treaty with England. What could now be done to save the honor of the French position, Fauchet asked? The French Minister suggested that France regain Louisiana from Spain for the double purpose of adding much additional territory in the New World and of using that territory as leverage for holding the United States government to them.[6] (Noah Webster's view that it was distance that saved the United States from the French variety of republicanism seemed to have some truth to it on the basis of Fauchet's plan.)

The treaty, itself, finally reached the United States in early March, too late for the session of Congress that had involved itself so strongly in debate about the democratic societies. President Washington, therefore, called the Senate into special session for June 8 in order to consider the treaty negotiated with Great Britain by John Jay.[7] Even though the contents of the treaty would remain a secret to the general public until the end of June a steady stream of comment now began to appear about it.

A full-scale attack was launched by "Montgomery" in a four-part Journal series published in April. The writer asked the people to remember how they had suffered at the hands of George III and to remember, at the same time, how they had been helped by their French allies. With that remembrance, America should blush that it now de-

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[6] Fauchet to CFR, Feb. 4, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 561-63, 567-69.

[7] A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the President, I, 571.

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graded itself by entering into a treaty with a power "tottering on the brink of ruin, whose principles are directly contrary to the spirit of republicanism."[8] "Montgomery" had thus expressed three of the major themes that would be constantly and exhaustively reiterated by opponents of the Jay treaty during the year of national debate that was to follow. Those themes, reiterated in the middle two essays in the series, stressed that, by accepting the treaty, the United States would be acting contrary to its duty to France, contrary to republicanism, and contrary to self-interest by selling itself out to a country "tottering on the brink of ruin." Francophiles, as well as many other Americans who strongly admired France without succumbing to the slavery of total adulation, had become firmly convinced that England was about to collapse through a combination of internal corruption, national debt, and French power.[9]

"Montgomery" concluded his series of essays with a discussion of the fact that the President and a small number of men in the Senate could accept a treaty harmful to our country and opposed to the will of the majority. He did not doubt the patriotism of the present worthy President and Senate, but was it not possible, if British sentiments increased, that our republican government could be destroyed and placed in monarchical hands? To prevent such an occurrence, "Montgomery" suggested an amendment to the Constitution that would give the treaty-making power to the House of Representatives, the "republican part of government," rather than to the Senate, which

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[8]"Montgomery," New York Journal, Apr. 8, 1795.

[9]Ibid., April 11 and Apr. 15, 1795.

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he labeled the aristocratic branch.[10]

The French Minister was also not idle in the face of this obvious blow to hopes of a new Franco-American treaty that might have tied American commercial prosperity to France. Joseph Fauchet proceeded, on his own, to speak, exhort and act in a manner designed to rouse the anti-treaty forces. His activities led to an exchange of letters between Alexander Hamilton and Attorney-General William Bradford. Bradford, who believed that Fauchet's conduct was such as should have aroused great public censure, informed Hamilton that James Monroe had sent word that a new French Minister, Pierre Adet, was on his way to Philadelphia. As a result, Bradford continued, Secretary of State Randolph preferred not to make an issue of Fauchet's activities, especially since Fauchet was believed to be disposed "to do much mischief" on his return to France.[11] Bradford noted, however, that since nothing more was heard of Adet, "and this man [Fauchet] is evidently endeavoring to stimulate the party which is opposed to the treaty,"

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[10] Ibid., Apr. 22, 1795.

[11] Fauchet did indeed do "mischief" upon his return to France for he published A Sketch of the Present State of Our Political Relations with the United States (Philadelphia: B. F. Bache, 1797), in which he portrayed the Washington administration as pro-British and false to the tenets of republicanism. The following excerpt from p. 23 of the Fauchet work, as translated by B. F. Bache, gives a fair idea of Fauchet's thesis and presentation. "Everything proves . . . that hatred [,] as much as the consciousness of weakness [,] guided the American administration in its conduct to us. General Washington ceased to view our revolution with a favourable eye, as soon as he saw LaFayette and the king struck, whom he delighted in calling the protector and father of his people. All the individuals who composed his council, except Mr. Jefferson; all those who had the right, by their reputation and their former services, to influence his conduct through their correspondence, excepting the Moultries, the Livingstons, the Clintons, and the Samuel Adams', all were united against us and strengthened him in his hostile intentions."

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something should be done to steal his thunder.[12]

In answer to Bradford's request that some momentum be provided for the campaign of the pro-treaty forces, Hamilton responded with the essay "Horatius, to the People of the United States," which defended the idea of a commercial treaty with Great Britain and objected to the idea that America's future should be tied to France or to any other country. As Hamilton phrased his words, if the people consulted their "true interest" their "motto cannot fail to be 'PEACE and TRADE with ALL NATIONS--beyond our present engagements, POLITICAL CONNECTION with NONE.'" He further cautioned the American people "to spurn . . . , as the box of Pandora, the fatal heresy of a close alliance, or in the language of Genêt, a true family compact with France." This country would then become merely a satellite of France and entangled "in all the contests, broils and wars of Europe." It would be nothing less than "insanity," Hamilton believed, to follow such a plan. Those who were "avowed and secret partisans of it merit our contempt for their folly, or our execration for their depravity."[13]

With both sides having delivered themselves of beginning arguments for and against the proposed treaty, the Senate finally met in secret session to determine the fate of Jay's handiwork. After almost two weeks without any word from the Senate chamber, Hamilton wrote to Rufus King that "the anxiety [in New York City] . . . about the result, is extreme." A message "that the treaty had been disagreed to" ap-

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[12]William Bradford to Hamilton, May 21, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 1-2.

[13]"Horatius, to the People of the United States," May, 1795, Ibid., VII, 169-72.

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peared that morning and caused "considerable alarm," Hamilton reported, but he had assured those whom he saw that any rumor of a final decision must be premature. Talking with "men of business of all descriptions," Hamilton informed King that they believed that "a disagreement to the treaty would greatly shock and stagnate pecuniary plans and operations in general." Others, like himself, who were not likely to be affected in the same way, looked forward to the result "with great solicitude, as fixing or endangering the stability of our present beneficial and desirable situation."[14] John Lawrence confirmed Hamilton's report of New York Federalist alarm in another letter to King. "Bob [probably Robert Troup] is wonderfully worked by your delay," Lawrence wrote. He then added, with some amusement, "If you do not ratify, I believe, he will soon expire." Troup's reaction might have been extreme in its emotional quality, but Lawrence made clear that it was not unique: "The Treaty. The Why--wherefore--For and against--Consequences etc are the principal subjects of conversation."[15]

On June 22, the battle in the Senate reached a climax unknown to the general public with the introduction of a series of amendments to the original treaty by Aaron Burr. If the Burr amendments had been adopted, they would have effectively killed the treaty. Both Burr's amendments and those of Senator Henry Tazewell of Virginia, failed of passage, however, and, on the afternoon of June 26, 1795, the Minerva was able to report to a waiting New York that the Senate had agreed to

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[14] Hamilton to King, June 20, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 6.

[15] Letter, J. Lawrence to King, [undated], NYHS, King Papers.

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ratify the treaty. The newspaper could not say whether the ratification was absolute or with qualification, but the latter was believed to be the case.[16] On June 27 further clarification was provided by William Constable, who reported to an English friend that the treaty was ratified "with the exception of the 12 article, which requires explanation, and will most probably be expunged by the consent of both Parties."[17] On that same day, the Staten Island Republican, Abraham Bancker, who had stated his support of France, peace, and a British treaty the year before, also learned of the ratification of "the Treaty with Great Britain." After noting that the information must have relieved Jay, "as well as the people at large from a State of anxious Suspense," Bancker expressed the view that the treaty would now "open a prospect of the Continuance of Peace in this highly favor'd Land."[18]

Bancker, however, reckoned without the efforts of his fellow Republicans and the French ministers to defeat the treaty, whether by influencing the President to refuse his signature or by rendering the

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[16]Davis, Memoirs of Burr, I, 409-11; American Minerva, June 26, 1795. For the official record of the debate, see Annals of the Congress of the United States, Third Congress (Washington: Gales and Seaton, 1834-56), 854-868.

[17]Article 12 of the treaty gave the United States the privilege of trade with India under certain restrictions, opened the hitherto closed British West Indies to American ships--but only to ships of seventy tons or less, and required that the United States promise not to carry molasses, sugar, coffee, cocoa, or cotton in its own ships to any ports other than its own.

[18]Letter, William Constable to Jno. Inglis, June 27, 1795, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB; letter, Ab[m] Bancker to E. Bancker, June 27, 1795, NYHS, Bancker Papers.

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treaty still-born through the refusal of the House of Representatives to vote appropriations to carry out its provisions. That this effort was already under way could be seen in one of the most remarkable letters in a long series of extraordinary performances turned in by the French ministers who represented revolutionary France in the United States.[19] Much has been made through the years of Hamilton's conversations with the British agent, George Beckwith,[20] and the British Minister, George Hammond.[21] Those conversations were injudi-

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[19]Moreau de St. Méry took special note of the failings of the French ministers sent to this country, claiming that such choices showed "little desire" on the part of France "to win the friendship of Americans." Ternant, Moreau declared, "merely passed through the country." Citizen Genêt, unfortunately, was much more active. Moreau asserted that Genêt "wanted to burn up everything. If he had been minister another six weeks, he would have been successful, and the President would have been forced to call a session of Congress to declare war on England." As for Fauchet, Moreau was equally unkind. The former was described as "less of a diplomat than a cowardly slave to the Jacobins on the continent." Adet, however, was treated much more kindly. Called "wise and gentle," by Moreau, Adet's major fault was described as a "home life [that] was such that it attracted no one." Moreau, however, wrote before Adet publicly came to blows with the American government and proved himself to be as incendiary in his diplomatic relations as had his two immediate predecessors. As for the failings of his fellow countrymen, as a whole, Moreau summed up his view in the following line: "They have been contemptuous of all customs unlike those of their own country." Moreau's American Journey, pp. 275-76.

[20]See Julian P. Boyd, Number 7: Alexander Hamilton's Secret Attempts to Control American Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton U. Press, 1964).

[21]See Samuel Flagg Bemis, Jay's Treaty: A Study in Commerce and Diplomacy (New York: The Macmillan Co., 1923), pp. 331-32. Prof. Bemis believed that Hamilton was responsible for the worst features of the Jay treaty. Bemis accused Hamilton of undercutting Jay's position by informing the British Minister to the United States, George Hammond, that this country had no intention of taking part in a League of Armed Neutrality against Britain. According to Bemis, this action by Hamilton removed any leverage that the American envoy might have had in his dealings with the British government. More recent opinion, however, has disagreed with Bemis on this whole issue, believing both that the

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cious and even unfortunate in the way they sometimes undercut the Secretary of State. Hamilton's discussions of policy, however, paralleled the policy line of the executive branch--those which had been laid down by his commander-in-chief. They were also basically attempts to prevent permanent ties with any European power. How much more could and should be said of the numbers of elected and appointed American officials, in constant close contact with the various French ministers, who acted directly contrary to the policies of their government with the avowed purpose of tying their country to an expansionist, revolutionary France and involving the United States in "the vortex of European politics"?

All this is brought up here because of a statement by Pierre Adet in his first diplomatic letter sent from Philadelphia. Describing his initial audience with the President, Adet reported that he would have been touched by Washington's apparent sincerity "if he had not already been instructed by the public voice and by men attached sincerely to France" that the President had become the plaything of the guileful American cabinet. Adet, the newcomer, had already made a firm and ominous decision: he "will tear the veil from the truth about United States policy"; he would show that it had been one "of black ingratitude" towards France. In this partisan mood, he wrote his ministry that he would try to act circumspectly in his efforts to pre-

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latter's conclusion "does not stand up under close scrutiny," and that it was the actions and statements of James Monroe, the American Ambassador in Paris, which weakened Jay's hand. For this view see John C. Miller, The Federalist Era, 1789-1801 (New York: Harper & Row, paperback ed., 1963), pp. 165, 290, and Miller's Alexander Hamilton and the Growth of the New Nation (New York: Harper and Row, paperback ed., 1964), pp. 420-21.

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vent ratification by the President. But how much hope could there be when a corrupt Senate made its decisions on the basis of gold and promises of further riches and power. He himself had had to pay before he could get a copy of the treaty. Adet sighed sadly at the thought that the voice of the American people could be "enchained and betrayed time and again by perfidious and adroit men like Hamilton and Jay." The French Minister closed, however, on a more optimistic note. Already looking forward to the next session of Congress, Adet put his faith in the House of Representatives where a majority favored France. He had good reason to hope, he said, that a schism would develop between the House and the Executive Branch, for there was no doubt that the English party which controlled the Executive Branch could not do the same with the House of Representatives.[22]

Adet had been well primed on American history and American affairs in a matter of days. He had, in fact, become an expert. Unfortunately, for Franco-American relations and the political and social peace of the United States it was a view of history of such an unyielding partisan Republican nature that it would only portend a still more difficult turn of events--in fact, nothing less than a year of the most rabid and rampant divisiveness that the United States had seen since the adoption of the Constitution. In New York, as in the rest of the country, the issue was about to be joined in all seriousness and with the possibility of the gravest of consequences for the union.

The Senate, by a vote of 20 to 10, had conditionally ratified

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[22]Adet to CPS, June 25, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 734-35, 737-39.

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the Jay treaty. It had also enjoined secrecy on its members until the President had made his decision. Jay and Hamilton, disagreeing with the Senate, had wished the treaty published as soon as possible; the Republicans, feeling that a good issue was in the making, were already highly aroused by the secrecy surrounding the whole enterprise. A break in that secrecy, therefore, could be expected momentarily. The first public disclosure came when the publisher of the Aurora, the firm Republican Benjamin Franklin Bache, printed extensive and selected excerpts from the treaty. Within a few days Bache received and printed the full text of the treaty along with an introductory letter from Senator Stevens Thomson Mason of Virginia. The full treaty soon traveled to all parts of the United States with Bache, himself, distributing the treaty in some areas in the manner of an early-day Johnny Appleseed.[23]

One of those who claimed to be Bache's source for the original set of excerpts was the new French minister, who apparently had the happy faculty of immediately making himself at home wherever he went. In a letter to the Committee of Public Safety, Pierre Adet described how he had purchased a copy of the treaty from a senator [probably Senator Mason] and, upon looking over the document, saw "that French

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[23]Annals of the Congress of the United States, Third Congress, 861, 867-68; Miller, The Federalist Era, pp. 167-88. Jeremiah Wadsworth, Connecticut congressman, wrote to Hamilton in mid-July that B. F. Bache had passed through Hartford on his way eastward distributing Jay's treaty. Wadsworth went on to note that men all over the state were misrepresenting the treaty and exciting the people against it. He concluded by asking Hamilton for material in support of the treaty that could be used as part of a newspaper campaign against the opposition. See Wadsworth to Hamilton, [July], 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 14.

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interests were harmed and those of the people of the United States betrayed." He thereupon gave an extract to the grandson of Franklin (B. F. Bache), who published it in his paper without knowing from whom it came. Picked up by other papers, the extract, according to Adet, "has produced the reaction for which I hoped." The friends of France had been joined by the merchants and all those involved in commerce, he reported, in order to oppose the treaty. The government could not help but see and hear the reaction. Adet hoped that he and the Spanish Minister, whom the former now called the instrument of France, could counterbalance the British influence, but he was as yet unsure.[24]

If Adet was uncertain of the ultimate fate of the treaty, there was no uncertainty as to the immediate reaction. It was swift and vicious. In the few days between the publication of the extracts and the fourth of July celebrations of that year, Jay's effigy was burned endless times; the slogan "Damn John Jay! damn every one that won't damn John Jay!! damn every one that won't put lights in his windows and sit up all night damning John Jay!!!"[25] was chalked on endless walls which had the necessary endless space; and a newspaper essay war to end all essay wars was in the process of getting underway. One small sample of effigy burning was the one held in Philadelphia on July 4 which Adet described: "The effigy was of Jay holding a balance in his right hand: the lighter plate had Liberty and the Inde-

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[24]Adet to CPS, July 3, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 741-42, 744.

[25]John Jay, Mr. Jay's Second Letter on Dawson's Introduction to the Federalist (New York: American News Co., 1864), p. 19. This John Jay was grandson of the first Chief Justice.

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pendence of America written on it; the heavier carried the phrase, Gold of England. In Jay's left hand was the treaty and from his mouth came the words: 'Pay me what I ask and I will sell my country.'" The same thing would have happened in New York, according to one source, were it not for the fact that Jay had just been inaugurated as governor.[26]

The treaty, therefore, may have preserved peace between the United States and England but its effect upon the domestic American scene was unhappily just the opposite. That the American public "has seldom been more agitated by any question or event than by the present Treaty" was admitted by the editor of the Minerva. Noah Webster believed, however, that the fact that the treaty was first made known in mutilated and misrepresented versions, seconding "the previous disposition of the Jacobins of our country, to clamor at the treaty and condemn it in gross," was the basic reason for that public agitation. To him it was merely a "continuation of that unrelenting spirit of party and faction, which has embarrassed our public administration for two years past." Whatever the cause of the public outcry, however, there was no question that the treaty was, as Alexander Anderson simply put it, "generally disapprov'd of."[27]

Despite the intense feelings, however, July 4, 1795, proved to be a happy day in the city. Bells and cannon sounded at sunrise to usher in the day. John Anderson, up with the sun, spent the early

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[26]Adet to CPS, July 6, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 745; letter, Maturin Livingston to R. R. Livingston, July 15, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[27]American Minerva, July 3, 1795; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, July 3, 1795.

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part of the morning painting the American and French flags on silk for a schoolmate. Later in the morning, Anderson went out and saw the main procession of the day go by. About 900 persons took part in the July 4th procession which formed at the Battery at 9 o'clock and moved out in the following order: the Legion under the command of Col. Rutgers, the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, the Tammany Society, the Democratic Society, and the Officers of the Militia.[28]

Those same organizations and several others who did not take part in the morning's march met at mid-afternoon for the usual round of dinners in honor of the day. The Democratic Society dined at Hunter's Hotel with their guests, including the Consul of the French Republic for New York, Citizen Rozier, and the French Consul for Massachusetts. In addition to a toast to "the French Republic, our best and faithful friend," there were three which had specific reference to the Jay Treaty, or, as the Democratic Society called it, Grenville's Treaty. There was a toast to the President of the United States: "May he comply with the unanimous wishes of every true friend of his country, by preventing Grenville's late treaty from becoming the supreme law of the land." Another toast was given to "the ten virtuous, wise, and independent Senators who refused to sacrifice their country's commerce, rights, and honor." Finally, the Democratic Society wished that light and truth might "illumine the dark recesses of the Senate chamber."[29]

At the same time a very different set of toasts was being ap-

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[28] Daily Advertiser, July 7, 1795; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1795; Annals of the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, p. 32.

[29] Argus, July 6, 1795.

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plauded at the Tontine Coffee House, where the merchants of New York had as their dinner guests Governor Jay, Major General Morris, Judges Iredell, Hobart, and Lawrence, Colonel Hamilton, Senator King, Mayor Varick, and Dr. Johnson, President of Columbia College. The Republic of France, for example, was not mentioned even once, while the climax of the toasts was reached with the last regular one which received nine cheers. Headed "The Steady Firm Patriot," the toast continued: "Who declines not a public duty because it is arduous, nor fears to endeavour to serve his Country though at the risk of its censure:-- May the Public esteem ever recognize, and reward, the purity, and usefulness of his exertions." In case someone might not have recognized the "Steady Firm Patriot" to whom the toast seemed specifically to have referred, the company added a final toast to Governor Jay which was followed by repeated cheers in his honor immediately after he retired from the dinner.[30]

Eight other sets of toasts at eight other gatherings on July 4, 1795 greeted the public in their newspapers over the next several days. The range was almost as diverse as the number. The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen, which had grown to the point where it now had its own flag, the American ensign, which was exhibited on all public occasions, presented a set of toasts that included the request that all "lovers of monarchy leave us." The Society concluded by toasting the two Republics of Europe and adding: "May France never sheath her sword until mankind shall be fully emancipated from the dominion of

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[30]Daily Advertiser, July 7, 1795.

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tyrants."[31] But not one word was said, even obliquely, respecting the Jay treaty. The almost forgotten Society of the Cincinnati also met and toasted the Treaty of Alliance of 1778 with France but left the Jay treaty enshrouded in silence. Such was also the case at the dinner of the New York Rangers at which the Governor and Lt.-Governor of the state were toasted, and the people were asked to "never seek more liberties than constitutes happiness, nor more freedom than tends to public good."[32]

In the remaining five sets of toasts, however, much was said about the Jay treaty and none of it was complimentary. The officers and privates of Capt. Snowdon's Company gave six cheers to American commerce, "unfettered by the influence of tyrants thro' the medium of secret negotiations" while nine cheers were given to the virtuous minority of the Senate "who refused to assent to a treaty destructive of the nation's independence and commerce." The Officers of the Brigade and a group belonging to the Regiment of Artillery gave fifteen cheers to the volunteer toast delivered by Col. Rutgers which praised "the patriotic ten in the Senate." The toasts of the Third Company of the Regiment of Artillery followed similar lines, saluting the Rights of Man, the French Republic, and the "Commerce of the United States." The latter was toasted with the hope that it might promote America's infant manufactures and never receive "an unjust check from unequal Treaties." The final set from a military company

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[31] American Minerva, July 8, 1795.

[32] Argus, July 9, 1795; Daily Advertiser, July 9, 1795.

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came from Capt. Montaignie's Light Infantry, which often vied with the Democratic Society in the militant tone of its toasts. Toasting the sons of France and the patriotic societies throughout the Union, Capt. Montaignie's company also praised Citizens Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Clinton and others like them, who remained true to the founding principles of the nation. Two who apparently did not were saluted differently, in this ingenious toast: "May the cage constructed to coop up the American eagle, prove a trap for none but Jays and Kingbirds." And once again the virtuous ten received their due, this time as "the ten worthies, who nobly strove in our National Senate."[33]

That evening, most of the population of New York City was on the Battery and Bowling Green watching the fireworks that brought to an end what one commentator called "a day of joy and harmony." In addition to the rockets there were illuminations in front of City Hall --"American Independence of 1776"--and before the Government House-- "New York Artillery"--and an emblematic painting in Pearl Street which John Anderson left enigmatic when he merely remarked that "the subject [was] suitable to the occasion." Not all of New York was out-of-doors that evening, however, for the Tammany Society, under its new Grand Sachem, Peter R. Livingston, assembled at the Wigwam and produced rockets of its own.[34]

These verbal fireworks took the form of a set of toasts that would tell the attuned New Yorkers that a major change had taken place in that "fraternal" society. There was no longer any question of

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[33] Daily Advertiser, July 8 and July 9, 1795.

[34] Daily Advertiser, July 7, 1795; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 4, 1795.

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whether Tammany was a Republican or Federalist organization. These toasts, on a non-partisan occasion, clearly showed that Tammany was now an organization with a clear Democratic-Republican bias. One could even begin to surmise, based on the skillful wording of the toasts, that Tammany was in the process of replacing the Democratic Society as the key Republican Party organization in the City of New York. Seven of those carefully worded toasts follow:

1. United States of America--May she never enter into any alliance which may have the least tendency to smother the flame of Liberty, or to injure the Rights of Man.
2. The President of the United States--May he never affix his signature to the front of a treaty engraven with the words--'Destruction to Liberty and Commerce.'
3. The Patriotic minority in the Senate of the United States--who opposed the treaty which will ruin our commerce and disgrace our country.
4. The House of Representatives--May they evince the Republican spirit when the Rights and Liberty of the people are invaded.
5. The Republic of France--unanimity to her Councils, liberty and prosperity and uninterrupted success; May the ties which unite us continue as long as nature, itself. . . .
11. Eternal union and concord between Republics--may all who attempt a disunion with France be treated as traitors. . . .
15. May the commerce of the United States be as free as its air, and may our citizens see the impropriety of importing British merchants as Stock in Trade.[35]

With Independence Day now behind them, interested observers began to assess its meaning by using the toasts as the basis for much of their judgment. The Argus found that by a perusal of the newspapers of the country the fourth of July had been celebrated that year with especial fervor, "as tho' it were (which God forbid) to be the last year of freedom they were to enjoy." Turning to the toasts of the day, Greenleaf found that they "indicate sentiments congenial with

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[35]Daily Advertiser, July 8, 1795.

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true republicanism."[36] The Chancellor of New York and the French Minister also commented on the toasts in letters which they sent to France. Writing to James Monroe, Chancellor Livingston remarked that "as the toasts on the fourth of July are a pretty good list of the sentiments of the people," perhaps the French papers would print them "as evidence of the sentiments of the people here." Minister Adet, writing to the Committee of Public Safety, reported that unhappiness with the treaty had manifested itself in New York and Baltimore, in addition to Philadelphia. His proof was the 4th of July toasts, which, he said, showed that discontent clearly.[37]

While the Republicans used the toasts to support their contentions about public response to the Jay treaty, the Federalists attempted to downgrade the toasters. The Minerva repeated the view that toasts were said to be indicative of the public mind, "but when two societies, composed mostly of the same men [Webster probably meant the Tammany and Democratic Societies] toast each other, it is simply a proof of self-esteem." Nothing was more arrogant, Webster continued, than for little companies of men, many too young to be experienced, to call themselves "the PUBLIC or the PEOPLE." They seemed to forget the French view that no small portion of men can represent the people or nation as a whole.[38] "A Calm Observer," writing in answer to comments in the Argus, declared that toasts given by a few, unrepresenta-

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[36] Argus, July 10 and July 15, 1795.

[37] Letter, R. R. Livingston to Monroe, July 10, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.; Adet to CPS, July 17, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 746.

[38] American Minerva, July 8, 1795.

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tive members of a society meant nothing. Was that republicanism, he asked? According to the statistics of "A Calm Observer," the Tammany toasts were given at a meeting that had not more than eighteen to twenty members present, four or five of whom refused to drink the second and third toasts with their negative references to the Jay Treaty. Some, in the name of republicanism, he complained, were using the treaty to try to destroy the Constitution. It still stood firm as a rock, "A Calm Observer" declared, optimistically predicting that it "will endure the storm of Faction."[39]

With Indpendence Day and the toasts it spawned a part of history, the newspapers became the focal point of a continuation of the treaty debate. This time the Republicans were first in the field with two series in opposition to the treaty running alternately in the Argus. The first series, launched on July 10, was the work of Brockholst Livingston, writing under the name of "Decius." Five days later "Cato," the series of Robert R. Livingston,[40] made its appear-

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[39]Daily Advertiser, July 11, 1795.

[40]The Chancellor was exceedingly busy at that moment. Besides writing the "Cato" series, he was visited at his Clermont estate by former Minister Fauchet, who would carry a letter strongly condemnatory of the treaty to James Monroe in Paris; he was exchanging mutual condolences with James Madison over a treaty "which sacrifices every essential interest . . . of our country"; he wrote to the President asking him to act in a way which would make him, for the second time, "the saviour of your country"; and he entered into correspondence with Samuel Adams because he believed "it might be useful for the old Whigs to know each others sentiments on important points." The Chancellor, however, asked that Adams keep the contents of the letter to himself, "as the knowledge of it would but serve to make enemies of some men that I respect." See letters of R. R. Livingston to Monroe, July 10, 1795, to Madison, July 6, 1795, to Washington, July 8, 1795, and to Samuel Adams, July 10, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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ance, so that the Wednesday and Saturday editions of the Argus contained "Cato" while "Decius" appeared the rest of the week.

Brockholst Livingston or "Decius," in his first essay, announced that he was directing his remarks to the moderate thinking men who had not been driven by their emotions to either one side or the other. Unfortunately showing that he had never been of their company, "Decius" immediately declared that he had opposed the Jay mission from the beginning. At the same time "Decius" condemned the members of a certain party who had praised the mission and even the results before they were known. Nothing could now hide the fact, he continued, that the treaty was highly disadvantageous to the United States. That such would be the result could have been surmised, "Decius" asserted, from the actions of the envoy extraordinary whose obsequiousness to his English opposites was such as to produce no great expectations. Furthermore, the secrecy that surrounded the treaty was proof enough that the Senate "conceived it disgraceful and prejudicial to the United States."[41]

"Cato" began his series by challenging the treaty results on a very basic point. The Chancellor declared that when Jay went to England, the British were collapsing while France was everywhere victorious. It was unfortunate for the rest of his argument that the Chancellor began with a patent inaccuracy, but it did not do as much damage as it might have, for most Americans truly believed that England was on the verge of collapse. The Chancellor continued with

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[41]"Decius," Argus, July 10, 1795.

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that very point. With England in such a position, he stated, she should have been happy to have given us all that we deserved. If we had entered the war against her, he asserted, we would have brought about her complete collapse. In such a situation Jay should have had no trouble in producing positive results, the Chancellor concluded.[42]

The Chancellor, in both his "Cato" series and his private letters, continued his attack against the treaty by arguing that he saw in it "not the slightest satisfaction for our injuries. . . . but above all I see and I dread in the execution of the treaty an immediate rupture with France when (my letters assure me) the very apprehention [sic] of a treaty has excited very disagreeable sensations." The Chancellor particularly attacked Article 17, in which Jay gave up the position that free ships make free goods by admitting that enemy property on board neutral vessels was liable to capture, and Article 18, which broadened the meaning of the term contraband. Both those articles, the Chancellor insisted, could be considered by the French "as a direct declaration of hostilities." Livingston followed with an assessment of England and France in relation to the United States. England, "notwithstanding her professions I consider a secret enemy[;] France as our most certain ally." To go to war against France "would be the signal for a civil war among ourselves," the Chancellor believed, again adding that he feared that France would, "sh[d] the treaty be ratified," force the United States into war by demanding that we put into effect "our guarantee of the Islands [French West

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[42]"Cato," Ibid., July 15, 1795.

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Indies]." Only Washington, whose name and virtue was above party, could "save under these circumstances the reputation of the nation" which had been sullied by a treaty "which sacrifices every essential interest and prostrates the honor of our country."[43]

If the Argus, through the writings of "Decius," "Cato," and its editor, Thomas Greenleaf, became the newspaper focus of the anti-treaty forces of New York, the Minerva, for its editorials and essays, and the Daily Advertiser, for its series of essays, shared the central position for the pro-treaty forces. Noah Webster, in a July 10 editorial, rose to the defense of Governor Jay against the massive anti-treaty assault. Jay had been considered the truest friend of liberty by many of those who now attacked him, Webster asserted, until he had opposed the "subversion of our constituted authorities" in 1793.[44] The censure Jay had incurred over his mission to Great Britain was proof to Webster that no amount of service "can save a man from Ingratitude." Jay reluctantly took on the heavy burdens of his envoyship out of a need to serve, and came back with "the best treaty he could." To abuse a man for not gaining all points from Great Britain, which Webster correctly called "a great and proud power," was, according to the Minerva editor, typical of the ingratitude that republics had often shown in the past.[45] Apparently buoyed by his own words,

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[43]Letter, Livingston to Washington, July 8, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[44]Webster referred to the public statement made by Jay and Rufus King which accused Citizen Genêt of having said that "he would appeal to the People from certain decisions of the President." See supra, p. 198-99.

[45]Governor Jay, the object of a national campaign of vituper-

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Webster turned optimistic the next day. He believed that the worst of the agitation had passed and that as the treaty was read and understood, it would be seen that Jay had gained as good a treaty as could have been obtained at the time. Confidently, or perhaps only hopefully, Webster concluded that the Jacobins had once again failed to shake the government.[46]

Webster's hope that the worst of the agitation had passed was momentarily feared to be true by a number of leading Republicans. Thomas Tillotson, one of the Chancellor's brothers-in-law, wrote to the latter from his Dutchess County home that he heard "little of the effects of the Treaty in the Country; but am inclined to believe that the Jayites (as they are called) will pretty generally support it whether they know anything of its tendency or not." Furthermore, he reported that another brother-in-law, John Armstrong, had been at Tillotson's home and supported the treaty, even Article 12, "with all his force and he says that H_____n [Hamilton] intends making that [Article 12] a point of rallyment in his defense of the instrument." The Chancellor, himself, in a letter to his brother Edward, remarked, with some annoyance, that "I find . . . that Hamilton has cowed you all at New York and that if America is saved it will not be by the

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ation almost unknown in previous American history, needed all of his vaunted powers of resignation to see him through this crisis. Showing those powers to the full, Jay wrote to General Henry Lee: "The treaty is as it is; and the time will certainly come when it will very universally receive exactly that degree of commendation or censure which, to candid and enlightened minds, it shall appear to deserve." (July 11, 1795, Papers of Jay, IV, 178.)

[46] American Minerva, July 10 and July 11, 1795.

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exertions of your capital."[47] The Chancellor also added the urgent wish that when Hamilton's defense of the treaty appeared, that it be sent to him "immediately by the post."[48]

In the midst of these difficulties in keeping contention alive, the Chancellor mentioned in passing an event that would re-fire the embers and produce an even greater blaze: "The flame I see is kindled at Boston and I doubt not will spread in spite of our ministerialists." What the Chancellor had reference to was a town meeting held in Boston in opposition to the treaty. Greenleaf reported the event in the Argus of July 17 and added the hope that he could get the complete resolutions soon. The same edition of the Argus also included the notice of a meeting to the citizens of New York. The meeting would be held on Saturday, July 18, in front of City Hall, for the purpose of allowing New Yorkers to join with the citizens of Boston in expressing "detestation of the Treaty, made with Great Britain," and of sending those views to the President of the United States. All the New York papers of July 17 or July 18 contained the same notice, which, though anonymous, was "known," according to one source, "to be put in the papers by P. R. Livingston," the Grand Sachem of Tammany.[49]

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[47] Hamilton's reputation had apparently reached Minister Adet, as well, for the latter wrote home that Hamilton had "not blushed to avow the treaty in the stock exchange, and in the coffee houses of New York" as if he were the "knight" of the treaty. Though Hamilton was no longer minister, Adet called him "the counsel and soul of the government." See Adet to CPS, July 17, 1795, "CFM" AHA, II, 746-47.

[48] Letters, Thomas Tillotson to R. R. Livingston, July 18, 1795 and R. R. Livingston to E. Livingston, July 19, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[49] Benjamin Walker to Joseph Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 197. Rufus King, writing to his old Boston

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In the case of the Minerva and the Daily Advertiser, however, additional comments were included. "A Firm Friend," in the Minerva, suggested that it would have been much better if all had been invited to an open discussion, rather than to a meeting which was to be a call upon one's passions. In the Daily Advertiser, two letters appeared which questioned how a fair and honest discussion could follow at an open air meeting crowded with masses of people. That, of course, was the exact point. The meeting had not been called for the purpose of discussion but for the purpose of registering public feeling against the treaty. Thus, the most famous mass meeting in early New York history was to begin with a basic misunderstanding of its purpose or a desire not to understand. One party came to condemn, the other to discuss; and some would become the targets of brickbats, not all of which were to be merely verbal.[50]

On the appointed day, a Saturday, editor Greenleaf seemed intent on making sure that his readers, at least, would arrive at the meeting in the proper spirit. No less than six articles appeared in the Argus in opposition to the treaty. Typical was one written by "Seventy Six," who introduced himself as a plain mechanic who had

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friend, Charles Gore, on July 25, 1795, expressed what he considered to be the exact importance of the Boston town meeting: "It is much to be regretted that Boston gave the example of a Town meeting on this subject--had they remained silent . . . we should have had no meeting here, and the country would have escaped that Fever into which it is likely to be thrown." In beseeching tones, King added: "Will not your merchants take any step to counteract the Opinion that Boston has been unanimous in their Condemnation." See Correspondence of King, II, 17.

[50]"A Firm Friend," American Minerva, July 17, 1795; Daily Advertiser, July 18, 1795.

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neither the time nor the ability to write letters. He found the time and the ability, apparently, for the treaty raised many questions in his mind. Did the President act unconstitutionally in sending Jay to England? If not, did it not mean that the Constitution needed amending? Regardless of constitutional questions, however, "Seventy Six" was certain that the Jay mission should never have been begun. He accused the Executive Branch and a certain junto of acting in secrecy and conspiring against the rights of the people. The treaty was aimed at aiding Britain against France, our true ally. The United States should be ashamed of aligning itself with a sinking throne--the sworn enemy to the rights and happiness of man. It was, altogether, a bad business. Therefore, in order to right the wrongs of the treaty and to prevent it from becoming law, the meeting had been called.[51]

The bare outline of the "town meeting before the City Hall" was described in diary entries by the Anderson brothers. Alexander Anderson noted that the object "was to condemn the Treaty with Great Britain.-but Colonel Hamilton having posted himself on a stoop and insisting on a discussion of the subject in opposition to those who were for appointing a committee, a noise was made to drown his words and the assembly broke up in confusion. One party march'd to the Battery and burnt the Treaty--" His brother John added only that "it was with difficulty some of the people were prevented from quarreling." The details of the meeting, however, were "fleshed out" in a

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[51]"Seventy Six," Argus, July 18, 1795.

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goodly number of eye-witness reports of the proceedings that appeared either in Monday's press or in private letters that were written shortly after the event.[52]

The anonymous organizers of the meeting, apparently wishing to establish the tone that they hoped would prevail throughout, began by displaying the colors of the United States and France in separate standards on the balcony of Federal Hall. The Argus then described how, "at the moment the clock struck twelve, Mr. Hamilton, who was mounted upon a stoop in Broad-street, supported by Mr. King, Mr. Hoffman, Mr. Harrison [sic] etc, attempted to harangue the people." Hamilton had gone no further than to express "his ignorance" of who called the meeting before he was interrupted by the call, "Let us have a chairman." The Argus then reported that Col. William S. Smith, as neutral a figure as could be found, was nominated, appointed, and "took his stand upon the balcony of Federal Hall"--the very place where President Washington had been inaugurated in April of 1789.[53]

With the chairman selected, both Hamilton and Peter R. Livingston attempted to speak, with "each party" insisting "upon their Orator speaking first." As a result neither could be heard, although Federalist Benjamin Walker noted that "it was . . . generally understood that one side wanted the Treaty should be read & discussed--whilst the other insisted upon putting at once the simple question all you that disapprove the Treaty say Aye." According to all sides, the

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[52]Diary of A. Anderson and Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 18, 1795.

[53]Argus, July 20, 1795.

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noise and clamor became so great that nothing could be done for a time. Peter R. Livingston, according to Walker, "then got a speaking Trumpet & bawled out for those against the Treaty to draw off." Walker ran up into the Gallery in order to judge the numbers "& saw evidently that he had with him but few of the respectable Inhabitants --not a majority even of the lower class."[54] According to other sources, P. R. Livingston moved "that those who disapproved of the treaty, should go to the right" and those who approved to the left. But even the friendly Argus could only report that a large body moved to the right while a large group did not move either way.[55]

The Argus now described how Hamilton, "supposing that the enemies of the treaty had all moved off, re-commenced his harangue upon the treaty," urging a full discussion before the citizens should form their opinions. But he could get few sentences out before "hissings, coughings, and hootings" prevented him from going on. Brockholst Livingston, however, did rise to oppose further discussion, observing that the treaty had been in print for two weeks and all should have come to a decision by then. In addition, Livingston noted that the outdoor site was not a proper one for discussion and the object of the meeting would be defeated by delay.[56] With the general tumult having broken out again, P. R. Livingston "got a flag on a long pole & proposed to go and burn the Treaty ; a number [the Argus gave

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[54]B. Walker to J. Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 197-98.

[55]New York Gazette, July 20, 1795; Argus, July 20, 1795.

[56]Ibid.

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the number at about 500] went with him paraded down to the battery & round the dock," where they formed a circle and did, indeed, burn a copy of the treaty.[57]

Meanwhile, at City Hall, a resolution was proposed by Hamilton, which the Argus said was reportedly "penned by Mr. King," stating that it was unnecessary to express any opinion on the Treaty inasmuch as the people had full confidence in the wisdom and virtue of the President, with whom, in conjunction with the Senate, treaty decisions resided. The Gazette reported that the voices raised for and against were numerous and loud, "but the noise and confusion were too great to make a judgment." The Daily Advertiser also agreed that, on division, the chairman found himself incapable of drawing a conclusion. The Argus, however, declared that when the citizens found out that the resolution asserted that it was unnecessary for them to give an opinion on the treaty, "they roared, as with one voice, 'we'll hear no more of it; tear it up, etc.'" Apparently the Federalists had hoped that by raising the President's name they might have been able to quiet emotions, but such was not to be the case at that moment nor, for that matter, during the months to come.[58]

The group that had gone down to the Battery to burn the treaty now returned, having augmented their forces to the point where at least one unfriendly observer characterized them as "a large mob." Webster, in the Minerva, also disparaged those "violent Whigs of

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[57]B. Walker to J. Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S.B. Webb, III, 197-198.

[58]Argus, July 20, 1795; New York Gazette, July 20, 1795; Daily Advertiser, July 20, 1795.

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1776," who were under the command of P. R. Livingston, and asserted that they had not been in the country "long enough to become citizens --others of them were not born on the day of Lexington battle. How many ever read a treaty in their lives?"[59] Whether they had ever read a treaty or not they knew what they liked and it was not Jay's effort. The meeting now became, if possible, more tumultuous than ever. According to one source the group that returned from the treaty burning "became riotous & threw Stones"; according to another, personal insults bordering on violence were part of the meeting; a third source reported that, in the course of the affair, three stones were thrown at Hamilton, the second of which "glanced his forehead but without material injury"; while a fourth account, recalled fifty years later, described a melodramatic scene (viewed from the vantage of a buttonwood tree that stood near the corner of Wall and Broad Streets) in which Hamilton was dragged through the streets by "the scum and offscouring of a foreign kingdom" while a malevolent Aaron Burr looked on with hardly suppressed pleasure.[60]

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[59] B. Walker to J. Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 198; American Minerva, July 20, 1795.

[60] Argus, July 20, 1795; New York Gazette, July 20, 1795; Daily Advertiser, July 20, 1795; Thorburn, Reminiscences, p. 25. The question of whether Hamilton was struck by stones directed at him during the July 18 meeting has become a minor issue all by itself. As recently as John C. Miller's biography, originally published in 1959, the statement was made that Hamilton was struck several times. (See Miller, Hamilton and the Growth of the New Nation, p. 424.) But only one of the contemporary eye-witness reports, the one in the New York Gazette, actually claimed that Hamilton was hit, although it was generally agreed that stones were thrown. If Hamilton had been hit, one would imagine that it would have been instantly repeated and would have made its way rapidly throughout the country. That same thought has already been expressed in Broadus Mitchell's Alexander Hamilton (2 vols.; New York: The Macmillan Co., 1962), II, 343.

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Whichever the version, however, it was generally agreed that in the midst of the uproar, Maturin Livingston, the brother of P. R., in the words of Benjamin Walker, "pulled a paper out of his pocket & read off a number of names" to be appointed as a committee to draft resolutions which would be sent to the President. The committee of fifteen was to submit its report at a noon meeting on that coming Monday at the same location. The Chairman apparently did not hear the resolution, however, and the meeting continued on its uproarious path.[61] Finally, Hamilton, according to the Argus, "finding the question of his resolutions could not obtain the great body, put the question (himself) to those around him, some of whom cried aye." He then called on "the friends of order to follow him, and they moved off the ground, but the number that followed was small." The friendly Gazette, however, reported that the "Friends of Fair Discussion," the Federalists, were invited to withdraw and many did so at the same time that the meeting was being terminated.[62]

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[61]The Committee of Fifteen set up without the Chairman's knowledge consisted of tried and true Republicans, among whom were a host of past, present and future officers of the Tammany and Democratic Societies. The list included Brockholst and P. R. Livingston, Col. H. Rutgers, William Denning, S. Osgood, D. Gelston, S. Simpson, I. Clason, J. Nixon and J. Broome.

[62]B. Walker to J. Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 198; Argus, July 20, 1795; New York Gazette, July 20, 1795, Oddly enough, Thomas Jefferson's version of the meeting, as learned "from a gentleman just from Philadelphia," proved to be one of the most favorable for the Federalist side. In a letter to Madison, dated August 3, 1795, Jefferson wrote that Hamilton spoke on behalf of the treaty "and his party carried a decision in favor of it by a small majority. But the Livingstonians [an unusual description of the opposition] appealed to stones & clubs & beat him & his party off the ground." Writings of Jefferson, VII, 23.

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The partisan descriptions of the July 18 meeting were strongly indicative of the feelings aroused. Edward Livingston, writing to his mother, told her to read Greenleaf's paper for "a very true and accurate account of their proceedings." He reported to her that "the English party [Livingston's use of that phrase to describe the Federalists was one of the first such examples by a New Yorker[63]] counted on Hamilton's eloquence and personal influence." If that failed they had planned "to raise a disturbance in the meeting and throw all the Odium of it on the republicans--they partly succeeded in the last object they created confusion but subsequent events have shewn who were the authors of it." Edward Livingston then described an incident that took place after the Saturday meeting at which Hamilton challenged "the whole 'Detestable faction' one by one." Maturin Livingston was supposed to have accepted the challenge but Hamilton said he already had a quarrel with Commodore Nicholson on his hands and would call on Maturin when the previous affair was settled. Edward Livingston concluded by telling his mother that she could "Judge how much he [Hamilton] must be mortified at his loss of Influence before he would

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[63]Charles Pettit, writing in another year of almost revolutionary importance for the United States--1800--recalled that the terms "English Party" and "French Party," which had become familiar soubriquets by 1800, had first derived "currency and importance" during the period when the Jay treaty had created such a storm on the American scene. Those terms, Pettit further noted, were "highly influential in marking the differences of the parties, and in exciting that spirit of animosity in opposing each other" that found fruition in the year 1800. [Charles Pettit], An Impartial Review of the Rise and Progress of the Controversy Between the Parties known by the names of the Federalists and Republicans (Philadelphia: John Ormrod, 1800), as reprinted in The Magazine of History, Extra no. 23, (New York: William Abbott, 1913), 338-39.

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descend [to] language that would have become a street Bully."[64]

Whether Edward Livingston's description was exact or not, there was no gainsaying the anger of the Federalists at that moment. "An Enemy to Confusion," in the Daily Advertiser, attacked such meetings as the one just held as dangerous to public peace and good order and to the regular conduct of public affairs. He hoped that few would attend such meetings in the future. The Daily Advertiser also editorialized that the measures pursued at the meeting to counteract discussion, which was necessary if the results were to be presented as the voice of the whole city, showed the true attitude of those behind the meeting. Webster was even clearer in his condemnation, calling the meeting "disgraceful to the city." He took refuge in the hope that it would "shew the world that the weight of sense, patriotism, talents, wisdom and numbers, is infinitely against the ridiculous method of deciding important national questions, by tumultuous and irregular assemblies."[65]

Private letters of Federalists displayed many of the same feelings. William Constable, writing to an English correspondent, began by noting that "We are all mad here about the Treaty." Constable then went on to describe "the french Party" as "numerous." Here was another early example of the use of the terms "French Party" and "English Party" that were to become so usual a form of designation

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[64] Letter, E. Livingston to Margaret Beekman Livingston, July 20, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll. For a full discussion of the incident between Hamilton and Commodore Nicholson that grew out of the heat generated by that Saturday meeting and that narrowly missed reaching duel status see Mitchell, Alexander Hamilton, II, 382-88.

[65] "An Enemy to Confusion," Daily Advertiser, July 20, 1795; American Minerva, July 20, 1795.

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as a result of the Jay Treaty imbroglio. "The french Party," according to Constable, consisted "of all possible french men and the mechanicks," and was "endeavouring to embroil us with Britain." Continuing his description, Constable declared that "the People of Property and the Commercial part of the Community chiefly wish for Peace and a ratification except the 12 article . . . but this perpetual agitation of the Publick mind is an unpleasant thing especially to a man who is indolent--and wishes for quiet." Constable, unfortunately for the Federalist leadership, was describing more of his party's supporters than himself when he used the word "indolent." Federalists were beginning to show a lack of staying power--the ability to see a political battle through to its ultimate conclusion--and it would ultimately cost them dearly. Constable had just attended the meeting in front of City Hall but he could only complain that he had "been vexing [his] spirit, and boiling in the Sun . . . out upon it--."[66]

Benjamin Walker, another Federalist participant in the Saturday events, also had complaints about the meeting and the opposition's part in it. He explained that "the friends to good order," as the Federalists liked to style themselves, had "determined to attend" and thus produce "a majority sufficient to prevent violent measures from being adopted." But he basically confessed failure when he observed that "our Demagogues always fix their meetings at the hour of Twelve in order to take in all the Mechanics & Labourers--over whom alone they have influence and who in public meetings have a great advantage

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[66]Letter, William Constable to Dr. W. T. Franklin, July 18, 1795, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.

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as they are not afraid of a black eye or broken head."[67] Walker's diagnosis of the failings of public outdoor meetings without rules and controls was perfectly apt but when he and William Constable used the word "mechanic" in a raw and undifferentiated manner to describe the mass of the opposition they were guilty of an attitude that would ultimately lead all but a few of the mechanics and cartmen to leave the Federalist Party in the belief that the latter had become unconcerned with, if not downright hostile, toward their interests.

Probably the strongest single statement of Federalist feeling towards the public demonstrations that had spread throughout the nation that summer could be found in a bitterly satiric poem called The Democratiad. Ascribed to Lemuel Hopkins, one of the so-called "Hartford Wits," the poem included a description of New York at the moment of the famous July 18th meeting:

> Full well I see how democrats will meet,
> And drink seditious toasts at every treat,
> Roar out to liberty to save the land,
> And damn a treaty they don't understand.
> Full well I see how every mother's son
> In wild disorder thro' New-York will run,
> While hosts of carmen, tinkers, sweepers, bawl,
> 'Damnation seize the Treaty, Jay and all.'

After a series of bitter invectives against Brockholst, Peter R., and Maturin Livingston[68] and the "IRISH WHIGS" who helped to burn the

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[67] B. Walker to J. Webb, July 24, 1795, Correspondence of S. B. Webb, III, 197.

[68] Peter R. Livingston, the new Grand Sachem of Tammany, whom Federalist Grant Thorburn described as "a tall fellow . . . (a regular opposer of the public good)," and his brother, Maturin, were both in their late twenties at this time. As newcomers to the New York political scene they had quickly made their mark through their name, connections, and political activity. Their fortunes were made, as

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treaty,[69] Hopkins completed his censure of the opposition with a developing Federalist view of men, parties, and French revolutionary politics:

> The time is come when Jacobins must make
> Their last exertions for Seditions sake,
> When Federal measures, Federal men must fall,
> Or Ruin seize ourselves, our plans and all,
> This Treaty cuts us off from every chance
> Of fighting Britain and of helping France,
> Of course, no hope of war will then remain,
> And we must be content with peace again.[70]

The week that followed the famous July 18 meeting could only be described as anti-climactic and yet it included two very important meetings that proved to be far more productive of actual results than did the hysterical events of Saturday. At noon on Monday, July 20, citizens of New York met again in front of City Hall and, in the words of John Anderson, "adopted a set of Resolutions against the treaty to be sent to the President with all speed." Edward Livingston described

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well, when both married into the family of the Chancellor of New York by the end of the decade. Peter R. Livingston, the older brother, married one of the Chancellor's sisters, Joanna, who was seven years her husband's senior. Maturin married the daughter of another of the Chancellor's sisters, Gertrude, the wife of Morgan Lewis. Thus, Peter R. and Maturin Livingston became, respectively, brother-in-law and nephew of one of the most distinguished figures in early New York history. See Dangerfield, Chancellor Robert R. Livingston, geneological fold-out chart.

[69]Federalist fear of the activities of Irish revolutionaries reached its height later in the decade during the days of the "quasi-war" with France. For the reaction of New York Federalists to the Irish, whom they believed were forming into United Irish societies which would unite the "wild Irish" and their "Jacobin" allies, see Joseph I. Shulim, John Daly Burk: Irish Revolutionist and American Patriot (Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society, 1964), pp. 22-30.

[70]A Gentleman of Connecticut [Lemuel Hopkins], The Democratiad (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1796), as reprinted in The Magazine of History, vol. 29, no. 3 (Extra number 115), 58-59, 64-65.

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the number at Monday's meeting as one-third more numerous than on Saturday--he gave as the figure "near 6000 respectable citizens." Livingston concluded by noting that "the English party having abandoned the ground, everything was conducted with perfect unanimity order and decorum."[71] The resolutions that that meeting approved unanimously and sent on, by express, to the President in the name of "the citizens of New York assembled," consisted of 28 reasons why the treaty should be condemned. In sum, the treaty was attacked as hostile to France, helpful to England, and an example of base ingratitude. At the same time the treaty was opposed for lack of reciprocity, thus adding up to the fact that the United States gained nothing by it. Moreover, the constitutional and legislative prerogatives of Congress in the area of commerce were described as having been illegally invaded. Finally, the Jay Treaty was accused of having contravened previous treaties entered into by the United States.[72]

The Daily Advertiser, in its review of the Monday meeting, admitted that a numerous body of citizens opposed to the treaty attended. It also noted, however, that the opposition, the friends of the treaty, who, "by their considerable number," had created such a great division on Saturday, and who had produced such a violent reaction from their opponents, had previously agreed to meet and express their sentiments elsewhere. Apparently what the Daily Advertiser referred

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[71] "A Citizen," Argus, July 20, 1795; Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, July 20, 1795; letter, E. Livingston to Margaret B. Livingston, July 20, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[72] American Minerva, July 25, 1795. For the full list of twenty eight reasons prepared by the committee in condemnation of the Jay treaty see the New York Gazette, July 27, 1795.

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to was a meeting that was held on Tuesday evening at the New York Chamber of Commerce. Both the Daily Advertiser and the Minerva, commenting on that Chamber of Commerce meeting, reported that a set of resolutions had been passed there by a great majority--some sixty ayes out of a total attendance of seventy members--and that those resolutions would be sent on to the President. The newspapers also noted that the resolutions were not passed until the whole treaty had been read aloud.[73]

With the two sets of resolutions now off by express to the President, the Minerva and the Argus assessed the situation as each saw it. Webster, using French events as a foil, compared the actions in the French capital with those in New York. Webster asserted that riots had become commonplace in Paris (he was probably referring to the events that covered the period from the riots of April 1 to the uprising of May 20-21, 1795), thereby forcing the Convention to pass laws "against the beating of the drum" and against giving orders to do the same in public "without authority from the Civil Powers." Webster completed his thought with this statement: "Mobs are now raised in that city [Paris] by Mr. Nobody, much as Townmeetings are called in this country."[74] If the Minerva mocked the recent outdoor

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[73]Daily Advertiser, July 21 and July 23, 1795; American Minerva, July 22, 1795. Joseph Bucklin Bishop, in his A Chronicle of One Hundred & Fifty Years: The Chamber of Commerce of the State of New York, 1768-1918 (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1918), p. 47, called the New York Chamber of Commerce meeting, coming as it did "at a critical stage of the treaty's progress," a major influence leading to similar actions "by other mercantile bodies throughout the country."

[74]American Minerva, July 23, 1795.

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meeting, the Argus did the same with that of the Chamber of Commerce and its resolves. The men who made up the majority vote in the Chamber, their backgrounds and their political attachments were called into question. After contrasting the Chamber's actions with that of the thousands of their fellow citizens who agreed to oppose the treaty, the Argus concluded with a serious warning that had no mock about it: "The time may come, when the chaff must be separated from the wheat!--Once more--be on your guard."[75]

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[75]Argus, July 27, 1795. Time has not cooled the ardor of those for whom the Jay Treaty and American foreign policy of the Federalist Era is still a live issue. A survey of five recent works on the topic is proof of that contention. Bradford Perkins, The First Rapprochement: England and the United States, 1795-1805 (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1955, 1967), stated his belief that it was a concerted effort on the part of both nations which overcame the still smoldering resentments of the American Revolution and produced the Jay Treaty and its immediate aftermath, a decade of peace. Alexander DeConde, in his work, Entangling Alliance: Politics and Diplomacy under George Washington (Durham, N. C.: Duke University Press, 1958), contended that the Federalist Era was not the "Golden Age" of American diplomacy but an era in which both parties, and the Federalists, in particular, were motivated by their own self-interests rather than by an essential isolationism. This latter contention has been opposed by both Felix Gilbert, To the Farewell Address: Ideas of Early American Foreign Policy (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1961) and Paul A. Varg, Foreign Policies of the Founding Fathers (East Lansing, Mich.: Michigan State University Press, 1963). Gilbert saw a clear line of isolationist development from Thomas Paine's Common Sense through the Farewell Address. In the 1790's, according to Gilbert, it was Alexander Hamilton who consistently enunciated the isolationist view based on "a realistic evaluation of America's situation and interests." Varg appeared to agree, contrasting Hamilton's realpolitik with Madison's idealistic failure "to balance goals with the power available." The most recent work on the decade's key foreign policy event, Jerald A. Combs, The Jay Treaty: Political Battleground of the Founding Fathers (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1970), has steered a middle course by arguing that both Federalist and Republican leaders sought "to balance goals with the power available" even as they disagreed over the Jay Treaty because of opposing domestic and foreign goals. These differing goals, Combs concluded, led each party to evaluate American and British power from opposite vantage points.

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CHAPTER XVII

"Equality is all that can be claimed from us."

"But the string which is most played on, because it strikes with most force the popular ear, is the violation, as they term it, of our engagements with France; or, in other words, the predilection shown by that instrument to Great Britain at the expense of the French nation." These were the words of George Washington writing to Alexander Hamilton at the end of July, 1795, regarding the most effective argument raised by the opponents of the Jay Treaty. Whether the facts jibed "in any degree or not" with that argument, Washington considered that it was in the interest of France, as long as she and England remained hostile towards each other, "to keep us and Great Britain at variance." He predicted "much embarrassment" to the United States government therefrom, and strongly urged "those who speak or write in favor of the treaty, to place this matter in its true light."[1]

Sounding like a confirmed Federalist and supporter of the Jay Treaty several weeks before he signed that document, Washington noted the contrast in activity "between the friends and foes of order and good government." The enemies always worked like busy bees while the friends often depended "too much and too long upon the sense and good

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[1]Washington to Hamilton, July 29, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 25-26.

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disposition of the people to work conviction, [while neglecting] . . . the means of effecting it." The President was happy to note, however, that there was a writer in a New York paper, one "Camillus," who had begun "in a clear, distinct and satisfactory manner" to defend the treaty (did Washington as yet guess that "Camillus" and Hamilton were one and the same?); but, the President warned, if the series did not receive proper dissemination it would not be able to counter the "poison" of the opposition pieces which had raised a cry against the treaty "like that against a mad dog."[2]

Washington's fears in relation to the dissemination of the writings of "Camillus" proved unnecessary. Hamilton-"Camillus" first managed the coup of beginning his defense of the treaty in the chief Democratic-Republican organ in New York City, Greenleaf's Argus. The series also ultimately appeared in every major New York City newspaper and in every major city in the nation, continuing on into the late autumn of 1795.[3]

Two weeks before the "Camillus" essays made their appearance, Hamilton had, in answer to the President's request for advice on each section of the treaty, produced a miniature preview of the famous series. It is to this miniature rather than to "Camillus," itself,

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[2] Ibid.

[3] "Camillus" began his defense of the treaty in the Argus of July 22, 1795. The series soon appeared in the New York Gazette, American Minerva, Daily Advertiser, and Diary. That gargantuan essay contained thirty eight separate numbers, to which Hamilton contributed numbers 1-22, 31-33, and 36-38 while Rufus King wrote the rest. The first twenty two numbers were published as Camillus, A Defence of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce, and Navigation entered into between the United States of America and Great Britain (New York: Francis Childs and Co., 1795).

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that one may turn for the simplest and clearest presentation of the Federalist defense of the Jay treaty. For Hamilton, "the truly important side of this treaty is, that it closes, and upon the whole as reasonably as could have been expected, the controverted points between the two countries." He singled out for special praise the British pledge to return the Western posts by June 30, 1796, for that would give the United States the chance "of escaping finally from being implicated in the dreadful war which is ruining Europe, and of preserving ourselves in a state of peace for a considerable time to come." Peace was the sine qua non of Hamilton's thinking, for he considered the "commercial advantage which we may acquire by particular treaties, . . . of far less moment." War could "give a serious wound to our growth and prosperity," he declared, while the price that it would cost America "in the article of compensation for the debts, is not likely to bear any proposition to the expenses of a single campaign to enforce our rights."[4]

Calling the terms of the permanent articles (the first ten) in "no way inconsistent with national honor," while considering the temporary articles (numbers 11 through 28) which could be terminated by either party within two years after the European wars were ended, as having "no very positive character of advantage or disadvantage," except for the definite advantage of being allowed "to carry to the British dominions any article the growth or manufacture of another country," Hamilton concluded that this commercial treaty, compared

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[4]Hamilton to Washington, July 9, 1795, Works of Hamilton, V, 133-34.

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with all others previously entered into by the United States, contained solid advantages. Hamilton then dealt quickly and summarily with objections raised against the articles that extended the number of contraband goods and that ended the proposition that free ships make free goods. Those provisions, Hamilton noted, were only valid in a situation in which there was a declared state of war. Moreover, in reference to America's experience with France in the present war of combined powers, this country had learned what advantages were to be expected and what were not. One last point was raised by Hamilton. Despite the fact that he believed "it is the interest of the United States that the treaty should go into effect," he asked whether it would "give no umbrage to France?" He concluded that it could not do so "unless France is unreasonable; because our engagements with her remain unimpaired, and because she will still be upon as good a footing as Great Britain." How deplorable it would be, he asserted, "if we cannot secure our peace, and promote our own interests, by means which not only do not derogate from our faith, but which leave the same advantages to France as to other powers with whom we form treaties. Equality is all that can be claimed from us."[5]

Possibly Hamilton's most important task, in both his private letters and in the "Camillus" series, was to inject his version of reality into the debate over the treaty. The reality of "Camillus" included the startling view that since France was the only country to which Americans were drawn by a combination of sympathy, love and re-

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[5]Ibid., 134-36.

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publican fraternalism, it was against France that Americans had to guard themselves most carefully. As for England, it was not the dying and corrupting force that the anglophobes had pictured, but was a nation at war for her life who had both the power and right to assert her superiority on the high seas. A one-sided treaty with Great Britain could have been imposed only if the United States had won a war against the former. Thrusting aside a whole series of basic American prejudices in relation to the international situation, Hamilton succeeded in putting the Jay treaty into a totally different perspective--a perspective that allowed Hamilton to point out that treaties between nations could never be signed if both sides insisted on a total acceptance of their own points of view.[6]

With "Camillus" underway in his defense of the treaty, with another pro-treaty series, "Curtius,"[7] also running in the press, and with the resolves of the city's Chamber of Commerce on their way to the President, the Federalist counter-attack had swung into high gear. At this time, one additional theme began to be put forward with in-

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[6]Camillus, A Defence of the Treaty, pp. 6-7.

[7]Thomas Jefferson, in a letter to James Madison, dated Sept. 21, 1795, stated his belief that Hamilton, whom he called "a colossus to the anti-republican party," was the author of both "Camillus" and "Curtius." He was mistaken, however, in that belief, for "Curtius," or the Vindication of the Treaty of Amity, Commerce and Navigation with Great Britain, was the work of Noah Webster, with additional help from James Kent. (See J. Kent to Moss Kent, July 27, 1795, as quoted in John T. Horton, James Kent a Study in Conservatism, 1763-1847 (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1939), p. 106, n. 140.) B. F. Bache apparently made the same error, for Webster, in the Minerva of July 29, 1795, had called the former misinformed in writing that "Camillus" and Vindication were authored by the same person.

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creasing zeal by the Federalists of New York. It was a theme which clearly showed the fear that sans-culottism and Jacobinism had instilled in the minds of the American Federalists as they contemplated the originally glorious French Revolution and the destruction wrought upon it through the power of the mob. One might observe this theme in its simplest form in an observation made by William Constable to an English friend: "The Treaty has given rise to many Town meetings . . . , luckily it is only in the Cities that this Jacobinism has gone forth, the People in the Country are well pleased to see peace preserved, and a high price obtained for their produce." Writing to Robert Morris, Constable noted that he would buy up certain lands with a group of European friends "unless those d___d Town meetings etc etc alarm and no one who has not lately been in Europe can believe how much such foolish things affright the monied people who are haunted by the Spectre of Revolution."[8]

Fear of an American mob began to take on an increasingly realistic form in the minds of the Federalists as they nervously awaited the decision of the President on the treaty. Noah Webster, for example, gloomily noted at the end of July that the southern states were "governed very much by the French nation" and that "an ultimate separation between us [the northern states] and them" appeared a distinct possibility. In any event, the peace of the country hung in the balance. A rejection of the treaty would leave all the

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[8]Letters, William Constable to John Ingles, July 24, 1795 and Constable to Robert Morris, Aug. 10, 1795, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.

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causes of hostility "unadjusted," while a ratification threatened "civil commotion, at least in the southern states." Webster's negative attitude continued with the view that a rejection would sacrifice Jay and his friends, while ratification would threaten "the popularity of the President whose personal influence is now more than ever essential to our Union." Webster concluded on a note of almost total dejection: "Sorry I am that our predictions relative to the unstable nature of our republican governments are in too fair a way in fulfillment."[9]

Federalist fears of division and disaster were shaped, to an extent, by their posture of the moment--standing with their backs against the wall. Republicans had their own fears but their feelings were presented from the position of one on the offensive. Their wide-ranging attacks on the Federalists had, for the briefest of moments, a certain jaunty air about them. Part of the confidence of the Republicans lay in their feeling that they now represented the voice of the people. If the voice of the people could be represented in the person of the mother of the Chancellor of New York then there could be no uncertainty as to the correctness of that belief.

Margaret Beekman Livingston, after describing a hail storm that left her trees and gardens in a shambles, turned to a "more pleasing" national storm--the one aroused by the Jay treaty. Mrs. Livingston found that storm to her liking, for it was in the process of bringing down the hated "Idol"--John Jay. "Good Heavens," the

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[9]Letter, Webster to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., July 30, 1795, NYPL, Webster Correspondence.

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dowager mistress of Clermont contemptuously declared, "that an American should dare to think that our Independence our commerce and with it our liberties should stoop to the honor and magnanimity of George the 3d." Mrs. Livingston confessed that she might be "writing Treason" but she thanked heaven that "we have no star chamber yet."[10] Her eldest son, under the alias of "Cato," had developed the same idea at that very same time. Only one interest seemed "to have been attended to, throughout the whole negociation," he wrote, "--the interest of the British nation." If any good could come out of a treaty that had surrendered the fur trade and allowed Britain to continue to stimulate the "savages" against our frontier farmers, it would come only from the sufferance of the British majesty. That Americans had to rely on the good will of George III was an intolerable position in which to place this country, both mother and son wholeheartedly agreed.[11]

By the end of July, 1795, many Republicans proudly wore the epithet "hurled" at those opposed to the ratification of the Jay Treaty, "a detestable Faction." In fact, a writer appeared in the Argus using that soubriquet and accepting it as proof that he and others like him felt for the honor and dignity of their country; could not see a single advantage to be gained from the Jay Treaty; dared to exercise their own opinions and express them to the President; could place confidence in neither Hamilton nor his governor and "instru-

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[10]Letter, Margaret B. Livingston to Mrs. H. Gates, July 27, 1795, NYHS, Gates Papers.

[11]"Cato, no. IV," Daily Advertiser, July 29, 1795.

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ment," John Jay; would not stand in the broiling sun to hear "Camillus" discuss a treaty nor accept censure for a stone thrown at the latter, probably by "some vagabond . . . of his own party"; hated Tories and were alarmed at increasing British influence in American councils; and opposed every attack of the federal administration upon the Constitution. "A detestable Faction" was most proud to accept that epithet "principally," as he revealingly put it, "because we revere the cause of France and heartily . . . wish her success over the hosts of the tyrants leagued against her, and particularly over the despot of Great Britain, whom we consider as our greatest foe."[12]

The Federalists, however, gradually began to take heart as riots did not ensue, as open meetings came to an end, as the cities calmed, and as the arguments of "Camillus" began to get through to important mercantile and legal members of the urban society. John Armstrong noted, in a letter of early August to General Gates, that the treaty absorbed "every thing and everybody who interests themselves in public questions." He believed, nonetheless, that the "phlegm of the Country will . . . preponderate over its passions. The more common people listen to dissertations upon it--[they] shake their heads and acknowledge that they know nothing of it." If the President signed the treaty, Armstrong did not doubt that the people would approve "because the fact is that they never will or can reason 'till they feel. Bad or good down it goes."[13]

The cynicism of Armstrong could not hide the fact, however,

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[12]"A detestable Faction," Argus, July 29, 1795.

[13]Letter, Armstrong to Gates, Aug. 5, 1795, NYHS, Gates Papers.

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that a successful defense of the treaty was the tonic most needed by the Federalists. A comparison of two letters written by William Vans Murray, the Maryland Federalist, in early and late August showed that positive measures, as well as pain, could come to the Federalists from those urban storm centers. In the first letter, Murray wrote to Oliver Wolcott of the need for arguments and information from the major cities to the rest of the country in support of the Jay Treaty. "Mr. Hamilton might still do great good by giving the public his luminous pen," for though faction "shoots its poisoned arrows" from the cities, "from thence also ought truth to exert its arm." At the end of August, Murray's wish had been answered--for from New York City had come "Camillus" and "Curtius" who had supplied him with ammunition and, according to Murray, much changed the public mind. It was now clear to Murray, and, as he implied, to others, that the treaty with Great Britain was as good as the latter had given to any other power.[14]

With both sides having fully developed their arguments in order to urge on their own adherents as well as to convert the uncertain, partisans and general public alike now waited with increasing impatience for George Washington's decision. In this moment replete with partisan temper and reiterations of previously made points, a quiet voice on the New York scene was attempting the impossible. The editor of the second French language paper published in New York City

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[14]William Vans Murray to Wolcott, Aug. 7 and Aug. 29, 1795, Memoirs of the Administration of Washington and Adams, I, 222-23, 228.

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during the years covered by this study[15] noted that he had undertaken the laborious task of pleasing both his American and French readers. The Gazette Française et Américaine, printed with alternate columns in French and English, was a tri-weekly that was first published on July 6, 1795 and that continued its bilingual form until March 2, 1796. It attempted to be national in scope with its main office in New York but with subscriptions available in all the major towns in America. Its political attitude could be surmised from the fact that Moreau de St. Méry's bookshop in Philadelphia was the place for subscriptions in the nation's capital. It was both anti-Jacobin and anti-royalist, although its stress was much more strongly on the former.[16]

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[15]The first French language newspaper published in New York was the Journal des Révolutions de la Partie Française de Saint-Domingue. The Journal des Révolutions, however, published only a prospectus, dated August 29, 1793, and an issue, dated September 16, 1793. According to Clarence S. Brigham, History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, 1690-1820 (2 vols.; Worcester, Mass.: American Antiquarian Society, 1947), I, 659-660, "apparently the paper was discontinued at New York, and established at Philadelphia. . . . The first Philadelphia issue located is that of September 27, 1793."

[16]Gazette Française et Américaine, July 6, 1795, and Mar. 2, 1796. The first appearance of the French and American Gazette was greeted with high praise from Noah Webster. He believed that the newspaper would be useful for those studying the French language and also "in furnishing the earliest and most copious accounts of French affairs, which are now highly interesting." Webster went on to note that "the unhappy situtation of the [French] Refugees from their native country, demands our sympathy and aid, and we will cheerfully lend any assistance in our power to forward their laudable enterprise." The newspaper's editor, J. Delafond, in his first issue of July 6, 1795, promised to "avoid licentious and abusive invectives" and to accept political writings as long as they "contain no bitter reflections against individuals." The editor remained true to his word during the three months that he was in charge of the Gazette Française et Américaine. On October 2, 1795, new printers, Labruere, Parisot, and Co., took over the paper and remained in charge for the remaining six months of bilingual publication. They, too, made clear their non-controversial stance by immediately noting that they would avoid "care-

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As for American affairs, its main goal was to remain aloof. For example, in printing extracts from the Jay Treaty, the editor, J. Delafond, informed his readers that "with this sketch they will have it in their power to settle their opinion about that great diplomatical act, which gave rise to opinions so different in themselves, and upon which it would be improper for us to pronounce." Having determined to eschew American political controversies, Delafond found, in early August, when the European scene was quiet, that unless he engaged in "the discussion of an act, the reprobation or vindication of which, has for a month past filled up the papers of this continent," he had little of political interest to discuss. The editor obviously had reference to the Jay Treaty controversy, but he remained "faithful to the law which we have imposed on ourselves of speaking neither ill or [sic] well on that matter."[17]

The unwillingness of the Gazette Française et Américaine to enter into the controversial and exciting world of American politics, however, put it in a seriously non-competitive position vis-à-vis the American newspapers. As editor Greenleaf wrote at about the same time, the lack of European news proved fortunate for the multitude of political writers who had arisen during the controversy over the Jay

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fully whatever could hurt the prevailing opinion, by inserting such pieces as may set off the splendor of the two allied nations, and promote the improvement of those who wish to get perfect in the French and English language." The newspaper, reduced in size and title changed to Gazette Française, continued to be printed in New York until October 4, 1799. See Brigham, History and Bibliography of American Newspapers, I, 644.

[17] Ibid., July 8 and Aug. 3, 1795.

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treaty.[18] Finding the need to fill the available daily space in their newspapers, American editors of the New York press were only too happy to give over their pages almost exclusively to the most important American political issue of its time. Unfortunately for its own future, the Gazette Française et Américaine, having made its choice, remained true to it.

As the American public waited with increasing impatience for a presidential decision on the treaty, the British government seemed to be doing the best it could to make life more difficult for treaty supporters. So pro-treaty a commentator as Noah Webster ("Curtius," himself), felt compelled to note in early August that a report of the impressment of American seamen aboard a British frigate, which he published that day, was "the most barefaced outrage perhaps yet committed on our rights by the officers of that Nation." Speaking in terms that he had not used since the crisis months of March and April, 1794, Webster declared that though all wished "for peace, and some sacrifices ought to be made to preserve that blessing . . . there is a point beyond which moderation itself will be a crime."[19]

At the same time, "Camillus" was equally unhappy with British actions. Commenting privately on hostile British activities which suggested that the government of Great Britain had issued a new order that would, in effect, allow for the indiscriminate seizure of American ships carrying provisions, Hamilton suggested that exchange of

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[18] Argus, Aug. 12, 1795.

[19] American Minerva, Aug. 5, 1795.

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treaty ratification be withheld until the British order was rescinded or their hostile actions were halted. Among the reasons given by Hamilton for such a strong American stand was that acceptance of indiscriminate British seizures would "give cause of umbrage to France, because it would be more than merely to refrain from resisting by force, an innovation injurious to her; but it would be to give a sanction to it in the midst of war." It would rightly be construed in this country as an act of supineness and it would, in Hamilton's opinion, "destroy confidence in the government."[20]

Thus, both "Curtius" and "Camillus" showed that they were anything but British lackeys who would accept any treaty with Great Britain at whatever cost to American independence. Much more clearly, the statements of both essayists strongly indicated full support for a pro-American policy based on a desire for political and military ties with no one and commercial ties with the world--and that most certainly included the most important commercial nation in the world, francophiles notwithstanding.

While New York Federalists held firmly to a pro-American policy that generally saw the world without illusion, the Republicans held just as firmly to their own sense of reality. Two letters sent to Chancellor Livingston during the second week of August, 1795, were indicative of that Republican reality. The engineer and inventor, John Stevens, who had helped to produce the first United States patent law in 1790 and whose work on a steam engine was arousing the

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[20]Hamilton to Wolcott, Aug. 10, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 29-30.

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"Maecenas" in the Chancellor, wrote to his hoped-for benefactor that it was a dream to believe that a reciprocal commercial treaty could be formed with England. Great Britain, Stevens believed, was certain to lose her monopoly on the high seas in the near future. Therefore, the only explanation Stevens could find for what he called the American invitation to the British to renew her insults and injuries was cowardice on the part of the government. The other letter to the Chancellor came from James Madison, who, in no uncertain terms, informed Livingston that Jay's treaty proved "that the party to which the Envoy belongs and of which he had been more the organ than of the United States is a British party, systematically aimed at an exclusive connection with the British gov^t and ready to sacrifice to that object as well the dearest interests of our commerce, as the most sacred dictates of national honor." To Madison, the leaders of the Federalist or British party stood "self-condemned in their efforts to palliate the Treaty" by playing up both the need for British commerce and the inability of the United States to exercise greater control over British sea power.[21]

This Republican insistence upon a picture of the world that Federalists could not square with their own vision of reality combined with the seemingly endless depredations carried out against American shipping by the very country with whom the administration had just signed a tready of commerce and amity, placed the Federalists in a

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[21]Carl W. Mitman, "Stevens, John," DAB, XVII, 614-15; letters, John Stevens to R. R. Livingston, Aug. 8, 1795 and Madison to Livingston, Aug. 10, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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most unpleasant bind. The most difficult aspect of their situation remained, however, the President's delay in adding his signature to the treaty. The direction of Washington's thinking could have been surmised, nevertheless, from his manner of response to the two New York meetings of late July. To the set of resolutions sent to Washington from the outdoor meeting chaired by William S. Smith, the President responded rather coolly. Repeating what he had previously written to other town meetings in what had become almost a form letter, the President replied that though he weighed "with attention every argument which has at any time been brought into view," it was the Constitution that remained his fundamental guide. He and the Senate had to make their decision "without passion, and with the best means of information." Therefore, Washington made clear, the Senate and he "ought not to substitute for their own convictions, the opinions of others, or to seek truth through any channel but that of a temperate and well informed investigation."[22] Washington's letter of response to the resolutions in support of the treaty from the New York Chamber of Commerce was of a very different order. Writing to Comfort Sands, President of the Chamber, Washington regretted "the diversity of opinion which has been manifested on this subject" while noting with "satisfaction . . . that the commercial part of my fellow Citizens, whose interests are thought to be most directly affected, so generally consider the Treaty . . . , on the whole, to procure important advantages to our country."[23]

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[22] Daily Advertiser, Aug. 18, 1795.

[23] American Minerva, Aug. 22, 1795.

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If the President had still been uncertain of his decision--a proposition I do not believe was true--his mind was made up for him by the extraordinary news that Secretary of State Edmund Randolph had been caught in an intrigue with the former French Minister, Joseph Fauchet. The British had captured a diplomatic pouch containing several dispatches of Fauchet's which seemed to incriminate Randolph in his relationship with the French Minister to the United States. When the compromising documents reached the President's hands, he called a full cabinet meeting. Randolph was asked for his explanation of those passages which seemed to indicate an offer by the Secretary of State to supply Fauchet with state secrets in return for "some thousands of dollars." When Randolph was unable to respond to the satisfaction of the President and the rest of the cabinet he was allowed to resign. Immediately thereafter Washington signed the treaty with Great Britain.[24]

So it was that Oliver Wolcott was able to write to Hamilton on August 15, 1795 that the President "has decided that the treaty shall be ratified and transmitted for exchange immediately." Wolcott could only regret that it had not been done "long since," so that much of the recent outcropping of party spirit could have been prevented. As for the American negotiator of the treaty, John Jay seemed to breathe

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[24]For a summary of the Randolph-Fauchet incident see Irving Brant, "Edmund Randolph, Not Guilty!" William and Mary Quarterly, Third Series, VII (1950), 180-98. Whether Randolph was technically guilty or not, it is hard to disagree with John C. Miller's assessment that Randolph "had compromised himself so deeply with the French Minister that his usefulness to the government was at an end." See Miller, The Federalist Era, p. 170.

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a sigh of relief that his work had been upheld as he responded to Timothy Pickering's letter that had informed him of the President's decision. Jay believed that the President, "with the blessing of Providence," would now be able to bring the ship of state safely home through the storms prepared for it by "the clubs and their associates." For, he predicted, the latter would employ "their utmost malice and art . . . to misrepresent and vilify the government, and every character connected with it" and America might yet "become the theatre of scenes resembling those which have been exhibited by their brethren in France." In a "P.S." that referred directly to the New York scene, Jay returned to his more optimistic mood with the observation that there did not seem to be "much uneasiness or defection in the counties of this State, except in places where Jacobin societies have been set up, or in neighborhoods where some leading malcontents have influence."[25]

In any John Jay listing of "leading malcontents," the Governor of New York would surely have included a long list of Livingstons. As might have been expected, the Livingstons reacted sharply to the President's addition of his signature to the Senatorial ratification of the treaty. Maturin Livingston viewed the ratification of a treaty that excited so much agitation and discontent as foreboding "a dreadful issue." The treaty was nothing less than "a violation of the Constitution (which I have sworn to support) and in that view this

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[25]Wolcott to Hamilton, Aug. 15, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 30; Jay to Timothy Pickering, Aug. 17, 1795, Papers of Jay, IV, 183-85.

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Country is at the present moment in a revolutionary state." Rising to a fever pitch that was frightening for both its intensity and recklessness of feeling, Maturin Livingston declared that "the original compact between the people and the government is broken--There is no Constitution, nor are any bound to obey." The Chancellor, writing to James Monroe in Paris, announced the addition of the President's signature to that "fatal instrument hostile in every respect to our Liberties and in direct violation of all good Faith to France and in my opinion to our own constitution which gives many of those powers to Congress which are bartered away by treaty." The Chancellor concluded with some advice to Monroe that was not calculated to improve government to government relations: Let the French government and people know, Livingston urged, that despite the attitude of our Executive Branch and Senate "the people (who must ultimately direct the government) are warmly attached to them."[26]

Of course, the Livingstons were hardly the only ones disenchanted with the federal administration that had inaugurated, negotiated and ratified that "fatal instrument." David Gelston, for example, produced a running commentary of feeling throughout the summer months. Writing to Monroe, he called the treaty "such a one as perhaps never was made." Later, he reported to the Minister to France, "how compleatly the Greville [sic] Treaty is reprobated throughout the United States." To his mercantile clients, he sounded strongly pessimistic, noting "that from present prospects of the W. India trade

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[26]Letters, Maturin Livingston to R. R. Livingston, Aug. 17, 1795, and R. R. Livingston to Monroe, Aug. 25, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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& the Treaty considered it is my now determination to quit this business." Finally, after Washington's signature was affixed, Gelston took on the tones of the chastened Richard II and announced to a friend that he would pay him a short visit to "lament & mourn and Bewail our situation" in respect to the Treaty.[27] In the Argus, "Philo-Cinna" agreed that the treaty was an "infamous compact," that Jay had been unfit for his mission, and that certain leaders "have personal aggrandizement in view." The writer concluded by asserting that America's present situation was one in which we were experiencing more than half the evils of war and by warning that Great Britain might well assist a certain party in their attempts to introduce a more powerful central government and provoke a war with France.[28]

In the face of this constant Republican talk about "a certain party" or the British or English party, as well as Federalist remarks on the French party, it was clear that not only was party spirit and faction not dead or dying but that it had gained a public notoriety that was one step away from acceptance and respectability. Washington's signing of the Jay treaty increased the vituperative mood of the times and turned the weapons of faction and party more fully against the President and his administration.

Though Benjamin Franklin Bache and his Philadelphia-based Aurora proved to be the leading source of anti-Washington bile in the country, Greenleaf's Argus was not shy in reprinting Bache's venomous

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[27]Letters, David Gelston to Monroe, June 30, 1795 and Aug. 15, 1795, Gelston to Edward Hallam, Aug. 17, 1795 and Gelston to Col. Benjamin Hunting, Aug. 29, 1795, NYHS, David Gelston LB.

[28]"Philo-Cinna," Argus, Aug. 20, 1795.

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articles[29] or in producing original material of its own. In the Aurora mold was an Argus editorial at the end of September, 1795, in which Greenleaf asserted that the public had been held in check in its reaction against the Jay Treaty only because of veneration for the President and confidence that he would reject it. When the old hero signed "this degrading, injurious, reprobated instrument," Greenleaf indelicately remarked, one felt as a lover might who praised the "virtues and constancy" of his mistress for years only to wake up one day and find her "lockt in the arms of his rival, his bitterest enemy!" Not satisfied at that betrayal, Greenleaf continued, the unfaithful mistress brazenly consoled her lover with the thought that "the sacrifice of his honor, and her virtue" was the result of a "conscientious regard to his interest of which she was better able to

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[29]The Argus of September, 1795 was filled with Aurora-originated articles of the sharpest and most stinging vituperation yet seen in the newspaper wars of the constitutional period. These included "Belisarius," "Valerius," and "Hancock," with the latter two particularly singled out for the viciousness of their anti-Washington attitude. It was the tone and statements found in both of them that led William Willcocks to claim that they preached insurrection. This led to a challenge in the Argus that Willcocks produce facts about a conspiracy or face punishment for attempting "to alarm the fears and disquiet the minds of the good people throughout the United States." See William Willcocks, New York Gazette and Argus, Sept. 3, 1795, and Communication, Argus, Sept. 12, 1795. That Willcocks' fears were not simply paranoiac outpourings of a confirmed partisan of the administration was given credence in an unexplained passage of a diplomatic letter dated September 30, 1795 that was sent from Minister Adet to CPS, "CFM," AHA, II, 785. Adet, after predicting that Washington would resign, leaving the way open for the election of a new President who would conform more closely to the will of the people and assure both peace and the ruin of the English party, added that if Washington and his friends chose to remain, civil war would result between the two parties or one part of the country would break away. It was at that point that Adet stated that he knew that 6000 rifles were bought and distributed in the countryside, that more had been seen, and that they were not for the purpose of defending the cause of England and the President.

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judge than himself!" Returning directly to George Washington, Greenleaf concluded that the lesson to be learned from this rude awakening was never to place implicit trust in any one person. Unfortunately, according to the Argus editor, the public woke up only when they were already bound to British bondage. The world of the New York newspaperman had certainly come a long way from that moment in December, 1793, when Thomas Greenleaf had to fight for his very existence as an editor for printing a slanderous article against that very same President who was now openly being compared to an unfaithful mistress. No apologies were now required.[30]

In all of the extraordinary events of that summer of 1795 and in all of the essays and letters and exhortations written about the treaty, there was one issue that would not go away but either remained quietly, and yet persistently, in the background like the ground bass or continuo in so much of seventeenth and eighteenth century music, or, at intervals, flared into life as a constant accusation of American faithlessness and dishonor. Simply stated, that issue concerned the relationship between the Republic of France and the Republic of the United States.

One who was both persistent and inflammatory in his comments was the Chancellor of New York. Robert R. Livingston, now as "Cato, no. XI," could always be counted upon to remind the American public of its duty to France--a duty which he believed had been betrayed by a shameful treaty that had gained us nothing. France, he pointed out,

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[30]New York Journal, Sept. 28, 1795.

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was the only country to whom we could feel close and align ourselves. That was true not only because its government was similar to our own but also because its commerce was more advantageous to us than was the commerce of any other country. "Cato" could only wonder at our actions which now consigned France to starvation or worse despite the delicacy of that nation in helping us gain our independence while not demanding help from us in return. How, he questioned, could the United States have accepted a treaty which would aid Great Britain in establishing in Europe the system of barbarities that she had already carried wherever he flag had advanced in the world?[31]

On the same day that "Cato, no. XI" appeared in the Daily Advertiser, Noah Webster was busy defending President Washington from the abuse cast on him as a result of his signing of the Jay Treaty and his replies to the resolutions of the various town meetings. Webster warned, in tough language, that those traitors to their country were mistaking their strength when they accused the President of being untrue to the Constitution and to the people--not one-tenth of whom had spoken but whose true beliefs were clear. Equally clear was the manner in which the Convention of France had spoken to their Jacobins, much as Washington had to our own set of disrupters. Continuing on this theme the next day, Webster noted that the American Jacobins had expressed their fear of French reaction to the treaty. Reversing the thrust of Chancellor Livingston's statements and tossing the ball back across the Atlantic, Webster remarked: "Let the French prove

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[31]"Cato, no. XI," Daily Advertiser, Sept. 2, 1795.

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they are the generous disinterested nation that we used to think them and not attempt to impose shackels on our government."[32]

American-French relations, however, had now reached a point where disinterestedness and understanding were the least likely ingredients. The intercepted Fauchet dispatches, the general conduct of the French ministers to the United States, Monroe's anti-administration activities in France, the Jay treaty, and the growing openness of party warfare within the United States had produced a situation where heat, rather than light, had become the basic force in Franco-American relations. This is not to say that Americans came to hate France and love England--an impossibility for most Americans--but it is true that the deep feeling of mutual understanding and respect that had prevailed between Frenchmen and Americans since 1778 would no longer be unthinkingly accepted as the guiding rule of conduct between the two nations.

On the French side, one needlook no further than the official letters of Minister Adet for a tone of general contempt towards Americans that outdid even the more specific fulminations of Citizen Genêt and Joseph Fauchet. One of the influences on Minister Adet was the enigmatic Edmund Randolph, who visited the French Minister shortly before his forced resignation. Blaming his ruin on English intrigues and on his resistance to them, Randolph explained that he had always opposed the treaty[33] and had tried to open the President's eyes to the

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[32]American Minerva, Sept. 2 and Sept. 3, 1795.

[33]Randolph's strange behavior was the one constant during his term as Secretary of State. His opinions seemed to change as often as

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machinations of Hamilton and his creatures, Wolcott and Pickering. Randolph, in desperate tones that Adet duly communicated to Paris, "after having made these confidences and having confirmed me in the opinion that the President detested France and her revolution, . . . added that it was important not only to himself but also for French interests to justify his activities to the public." Adet agreed that Randolph could not be abandoned in these circumstances, particularly since the latter had assured him that if he was furnished with the means to justify himself, the House of Representatives would oppose the execution of the treaty.[34]

These already extraordinary intrigues and statements, however, were not the end of it. A week later, Adet wrote to the Committee of Public Safety of Washington's "dishonor" and "shame" in having signed the treaty. Adet believed that Washington hoped thereby to "expiate his sins against George III while leading the people he was elected to protect to the slaughter as if they were a herd of sleeping cattle." How Americans could be "the dupe of this phantom of a great man" would be totally inexplicable, Adet concluded, were one to forget that if

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the person with whom he spoke. His position on the Jay Treaty is just one such case in point. Despite his stated opposition to the treaty in his conversation with Adet, Randolph told Rufus King just the opposite during what may have been the course of the same day. King wrote to his friend, Charles Gore, that Randolph had resigned and was on his way to Rhode Island. Apparently not yet privy to the reasons for Randolph's resignation, King added that the former Secretary of State did not explain his sudden act. King assured Gore, however, that it was not due to dislike of the English treaty. What gave King that certainty was the fact that Randolph, himself, told King that he approved of the treaty in full. See King to Gore, Aug. 25, 1795, Correspondence of King, II, 30.

[34]Adet to CPS, Aug. 26, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 774-776.

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Robespierre had not been "such a wild and bloody tyrant," his control over public opinion would not have been so easily reversed.[35]

This last statement of Minister Adet gives one pause to remember that unlike Genêt or Fauchet, who were representatives respectively of the revolutionary expansionist Brissotins and the government of the Mountain, Adet's ministry came from the Thermidorian government of France. When it is noted, moveover, that the French Minister and his chief American advisors[36] expressed views that can only be described as showing a total and almost hysterical hatred of the federal government of the United States, it becomes an understatement to say that such attitudes boded ill for the future of Franco-American relations as long as the Federalists and the soon-to-be formalized Directory remained in power in their respective countries. It was now an unhappy fact that a basic disintegration in Franco-American relations had set in which would not be reversed until the end of the decade and the century.

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[35]Adet to CPS, Sept. 2, 1795, Ibid., 776-79. Another aspect of Adet's agreement with his immediate predecessor was in his attitude toward celebrations of French fête days. Adet believed that those celebrations held the French up to ridicule, for Americans were "by nature cool and treat everything with the same tranquil and phlegmatic attitude." How Adet could speak of "tranquil and phlegmatic" as a major aspect of the American character after the events of that summer leaves this reader puzzled. But Adet did believe it and he called for an end to French celebrations. The Federalists, he suggested, hoped, by those means, to point up the French as a factious, noisy mob, and to blame them for any incidents that might occur. They could thereby render the name of France odious and blame anti-Jay treaty feeling on French intrigues rather than on the discontent of the people. See Adet to CPS, Aug. 18, 1795, Ibid., 770-72.

[36]Adet mentioned that he had "learned the truth about Washington's ambition from men who know him closely." Adet then listed Samuel Adams, Governor of Massachusetts, and Mr. Beckley, Secretary of Congress, "among others," as his sources of information. See Ibid., 777.

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CHAPTER XVIII

BEWARE "wild ambition, or the pestilence of party."

The shocks produced in the world of the New Yorker during the long, hot summer of 1795 led, without a break, into horrors of quite another character as August turned into September. James Kent left a brief memorandum of that period when he took his family and fled the city for a month and a half. The summer, he noted, had been "the most remarkably and oppressively hot of any within my remembrance," with the heat continuing until October. By September, Kent added, "the city was also miserably affected with mosquitoes." Kent supposed that one half of the citizens of New York fled into the country, as "the terror for a few weeks was very great."[1]

The oppressive heat and the mosquitoes were only two signs of the fateful event that followed. In mid-August, a special Grand Jury reported on the neglected and offensive state of the city's streets and wharves. In early September, complaints were made of the destruction to shrubs and trees by goats which roamed the city at will. The citizens were advised that anyone who found goats at large could do with them as he wished. Heat, filth, and mosquitoes--they were the fatal trinity. And they produced immediate results. As John Anderson

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[1]Memoranda of my absence from New York in the Autumn of 1795 on account of the Yellow Fever, Letters of Kent, pp. 104-06.

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recorded in his diary in late August, "I am informed there is about 8, on an average, daily dying of a putrid disorder; chiefly those who live near Water Street."[2] Whether the sickness was called "a putrid disorder" or "a Billious fever of a malignant kind" or "the prevailing epidemic fever," it was, in actuality, that frightening and ofttimes fatal disease of uncertain origin which periodically swept the seaport towns of the United States, yellow fever.[3]

By the second week in October, when the autumn ships began to arrive daily, the city was reported to be "entirely deserted, no business of any kind going on, every day had the appearance of Sunday."[4] Economic disaster seemed about to be added to the toll of sorrows in the strickened city. In conjunction with the pile up of ships in the harbor and goods on the wharves, the Common Council had to admit that "by reason of the great sickness . . . and the absence of many of the Inhabitants," the collection of money for support of the poor "& other contingencies" was not equal to the amount required to defray current expenses. In late October, therefore, the Common Council had to secure a loan for 300 dollars from the Bank of New York. In late Novem-

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[2] Iconography, V, 1323; Diary of John Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 24, 1795.

[3] Diary of J. Anderson, Aug. 24, 1795; letter, R. Bogert to R. Ritzema, Sept. 15, 1795, NYHS, R. Bogert LB; Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Aug. 23, 1795. For other descriptions of the yellow fever epidemic of 1795 see letters, Jacob LeRoy to [probably G. Banyar], Aug. 24, 1795, NYHS, Banyar Coll.; Anthony Carroll to Denis Carroll, Sept. 24, 1795, NYHS, Anthony Carroll LB; Rudolphus Bogert to Mrs. Ann Barkins, Sept. 16, 1795, NYHS, R. Bogert LB.

[4] Letter, Joseph Dudley Webb to Noah Webster, Oct. 9, 1795, NYPL, Noah Webster Mss. Coll.

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ber, with tax collections two months behind schedule and still far below normal, a further loan of 5000 dollars proved necessary.[5]

The basic soundness and strength of the economy of New York City and the character of its people were shown, however, by the swift return of the city's normal autumnal bustle with the coming of November. Alexander Anderson noted on October 20 that he found the city beginning "to look more lively--numbers are flocking in." Four days later he reported that "a revival of business accompanies the return of health."[6] By October 27, Walter Rutherford wrote to his son that the town, to which he had now returned, "has again the animated appearance of business." As proof that a sense of normality had made its reappearance, the elder Rutherford included in his letter an attack against the Philadelphia papers which "teem with the most indecent abuse against the President." He concluded by asserting that "there appears a design to get rid of the President as there was to

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[5]Entries of Oct. 26 and Nov. 23, 1795, Minutes of the Common Council, II, 192, 200. See also a letter from Andrew Cock & Co. to Jas & Thos. Watson & Co., Nov. 24, 1795, NYHS, Andrew Cock & Co. Papers, for a confirmation of the difficulty created for business and for the city tax collection by the "contagious disorder."

[6]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Oct. 20 and Oct. 24, 1795. The diaries of both Anderson brothers provide the best continuing commentary on the yellow fever epidemic of that year. Alexander Anderson's diary, in particular, is a gold-mine of information since Dr. Anderson, as chief doctor at Bellevue during the epidemic, reported fully on events there from August 23 to November 13, 1795. For his services, Dr. Anderson was paid the sum of £126.8 or $4.00 per day. See Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Nov. 20, 1795. The best contemporary discussion of causes and cures of the fever can be found in Webster's American Minerva for the same period.

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get rid of Hamilton."[7]

Politics also found an entering wedge, as it had during the Philadelphia epidemic of 1793, in the general discussion that followed concerning the causes and cures of the "billious" fever. Noah Webster, who was busy compiling the views of various physicians on that subject, was attacked in the Argus both for acting in a political manner and usurping the role of physician. Webster answered both charges in a letter to the Argus in which he remarked that "humanity is a common cause and one that should level all distinctions of party." He was not encroaching on the business of the medical profession, he insisted, but acting only as a publisher and compiler of the public good. Thomas Greenleaf replied in the harshest terms that Webster and the Minerva were well-known for their daily abuse of every supporter for national liberty. Concluding with the view that Webster's "opulent connections" well showed the source of the Minerva editor's actions, Greenleaf made clear to the public that politics as had become usual was back in business.[8]

The inability of even the yellow fever epidemic to provide New Yorkers with more than a momentary escape from the harsh political realities of the day typified the manner in which inter-party hostility and bitterness overwhelmed all else during the last three months of 1795. The pro-French, strict constructionist party that

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[7]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Oct. 27, 1795, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[8]Argus, Nov. 11, 1795.

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saw republicanism, as proclaimed by the Declaration of Independence, in mortal danger had moved into the attack position against the party that held to a neutrality which included recognition of British commercial superiority while respecting the French for having a republican regime and which regarded the American Constitution as the bulwark of that strong central government which was deemed necessary for the survival of American republicanism.

Since President Washington was now the acknowledged bulwark of the national Federalist Party, the opposition felt it incumbent upon itself to show that the people's idol had feet of clay. As a result, the former impregnable figure of the President was subjected to a series of accusations that would have brought a shocked public down upon the heads of his accusers only a few months earlier. On October 26, 1795, the Argus reprinted a letter from Bache's Philadelphia paper which contained the serious and extraordinary charge that President Washington had borrowed on his salary far beyond the legalities of the matter and was abetted in that criminal act by both the former and present Secretaries of the Treasury. "A Calm Observer," the writer who made the charges, asked whether Washington had not taken to wearing the mask of political hypocrisy that had earlier been worn by Caesar and Cromwell. By early November, the writer had brought up the question of violation of federal oaths and began to hint strongly at the subject of impeachment.[9]

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[9]"A Calm Observer," Argus, Oct. 26, 1795 and Oct. 30, Nov. 4, and Nov. 7, 1795.

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Oliver Wolcott answered "A Calm Observer" in print and a running battle continued for several weeks. In private letters between Hamilton and Wolcott, both came to the conclusion that certain references found in "A Calm Observer" pointed in the direction of John Beckley and Edmund Randolph as the authors of the attack. "Aristides," in the Minerva, viewed the charges as a combination of mud-slinging on the part of the guilty [Randolph] to divert attention from his own crimes and as a smokescreen to hide the appearance of that true monster, Jacobinism. In editor Webster's view, the charges could have had no other purpose, since all members of the government received advances on their salary before they spent it.[10]

The charges against the President, whether a smokescreen or not, had political implications of the strongest sort. It was part of a concerted attack against the whole framework of the Federalist-directed government and of the leadership of the Federalist Party. Hamilton, whose defense of Washington against the charges of "A Calm Observer" smashed the opposition into impotence on this particular issue,[11] was himself the target for a revival of old charges of having used his public office for private gain. Under "Communications" in the Argus, "Camillus" was accused of having a relative who held up-

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[10]Reply of Oliver Wolcott, Diary, Oct. 27 and Oct. 29, 1795; Wolcott to Hamilton, Nov. 2, 1795 and Hamilton to Wolcott, Oct. 30, 1795 and "P.S.," dated Nov. 12, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 60, 57-59; "Aristides" and editorial, American Minerva, Oct. 28 and Oct. 29, 1795.

[11]Hamilton's Defense and Explanation of Treasury Policy, Argus, Nov. 20, 1795. In New York, Hamilton's "Defense" was also printed in the New York Gazette, the Diary, the American Minerva, and the Daily Advertiser.

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wards of $500,000 in funds and for whose interest every farm and house in America stood mortgaged. The writer hoped that in the upcoming session of Congress "the unconstitutional oath of secrecy" at the Treasury imposed by "Pacificus" would be set aside and the names of the holders in funds and their amounts held would be made known. Finally, "Camillus" was directly singled out as the protean force against whom Republicans had to direct their strength. The writer catalogued: "Is he not substantially President of the United States? Is he not Governor of New York? Is he not British agent at the United States? Is he not solely the defender of Faith, i.e. Jay's glorious TREATY?" The writer could only marvel that "Camillus," who was also a practicing lawyer at New York, "must be a wonderful genius indeed!" The writer, however, issued a concluding cautionary statement: "wait and see how his policy finishes--sinem respice (look at the end) was the wise man's motto, so emphatically mentioned in scripture."[12]

This atmosphere of suspicion and hostility worked its way into the very marrow of the Executive Branch of the federal government and into the minds of the men in charge of that government. Washington, for example, began to have a great deal of difficulty in finding cabinet replacements. He asked four different men to take the job of Secretary of State following the resignation of Edmund Randolph and was turned down by each. He then asked Hamilton to speak to Rufus King about taking the job, but the latter refused to consider the offer, both on the basis of circumstances of the moment and out of "the

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[12]"Communications," Argus, Nov. 11 and Nov. 13, 1795.

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disgust which a virtuous and independent mind feels at placing himself en but to the foul and venemous shafts of calumny, which are continually shot by an odious confederacy against virtue."[13] If it had not been for the willingness of the tough-minded, vigorously partisan and self-righteous Timothy Pickering to take the position, the job of Secretary of State might have long remained vacant.[14]

Still another aspect of the charged atmosphere could be seen in its effect on what should have been an act of simple courtesy but which became a matter of extreme delicacy for the President during the latter part of 1795. The son of the Marquis de LaFayette had been recently brought to the United States, and Washington had expressed a desire to bring the young man into his household, both for reasons of humanity and out of personal feeling for the young man's father. Hamilton counselled against it, however, for he feared "that the factious might use it as a weapon to represent you as a favorer of the anti-revolutionists of France; and it is inferred that it would be inexpedient to furnish at this moment any aliment to their slanders." The leading national Federalists were clearly finding themselves in an increasingly defensive position as Republican attacks continued in high gear.[15]

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[13]Hamilton to Washington, Nov. 5, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 61.

[14]Pickering to Hamilton, Nov. 17, 1795, Ibid., 67-69.

[15]Washington to Hamilton, Nov. 18, 1795, and Hamilton to Washington, Nov. 19, 1795, Ibid., 70-71. In reference to the sixteen year old son of LaFayette, Hamilton seemed to have a clear change of heart by April, 1796. At that time Hamilton wrote to the President that a meeting with LaFayette fils would afford "satisfaction . . . to all

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If political life had become difficult for the Federalist national leadership, the same situation held equally for the local and state leaders of the party. The pious Chief Officer of New York State, still filled with the horror of the yellow fever epidemic, felt the need for some public form of expression in praise of God's mercy for delivering the city from the wrath of the plague. Governor Jay, therefore, issued a proclamation designating November 26, 1795 as a day of prayer and thanksgiving.[16] On the surface it must have seemed difficult to find anything of a politically controversial nature in the Governor's proclamation. For the Republicans of New York City, however, such was not the case. The proclamation was unique in the respect that it was the first issued by a Governor of New York State on his own authority and without legislative provision. On this basis it was assailed by the Argus "as a party production" which "has

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the parties." (See Hamilton to Washington, Apr. 9, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 102.) The change in attitude noted here might have been helped along by a Republican plan to use the young LaFayette to strengthen their own position with the public. The ideas of Edward Livingston on that subject, as expressed in a letter to the Chancellor dated February 8, 1796 (NYHS, RRL Coll.), are most revealing:

> "The Marquis whenever released will most probably reside in this Country his popularity and interest whenever he does will be very great and will be an important accession of weight to the scale on which he may throw it in this view I should think it advisable to let the attention paid him appear as much as possible the act of the republican party in which he has many personal Friends.
>
> "I have therefore some thoughts of getting a Committee appointed to Enquire into the Circumstances of the young man and to afford him every necessary support and assistance."

[16] Daily Advertiser, Nov. 11, 1795; Iconography, V, 1326.

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disgusted multitudes of people." Greenleaf found no objection to the view expressed in the proclamation that the United States had many blessings for which the people ought to express their gratitude to the Divine Being, but he believed that that was what Sunday was all about.[17]

What appeared to disburb Jay's opposition most, however, was the Governor's recommendation that a prayer be included for the preservation "of the valuable life and usefulness of the President of the United States." Greenleaf did not think that suggestion "very delicate" at the very moment when "nine persons in ten are exasperated at his [Washington's] late conduct in ratifying an infamous treaty" which had been devised by "his excellency [Jay], or his coadjutor Camillus." That editor Greenleaf should rail at someone else's supposed lack of delicacy was ironic, indeed, but quite understandable in the context of the political climate of the times, which required that the Democratic-Republicans destroy Washington's image or drive him from public life if they were going to be successful in putting one of their own men into the Chief Executive's chair. Governor Jay's proclamation, as an opportunity for the opposition to make points against Washington, Jay and Hamilton, simultaneously, was certainly not going to be allowed to pass quietly.[18]

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[17] Argus, Nov. 18, 1795.

[18] Ibid., Nov. 18, 1795. Another criticism of Jay's proclamation came from "Juvenus" in the Argus of December 9, 1795. "Juvenus" objected to the heading of the petition which read: "His Excellency John Jay, Esq. Governor and Commander in Chief of the State of New York." "Juvenus" complained that the law was commander-in-chief and and not an individual person.

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Both sides, in fact, were given an extra opportunity for partisan display by means of the simple reason that Thanksgiving Day was immediately preceded by the anniversary celebration of Evacuation Day, the day on which the British troops had sailed from New York harbor twelve years before. After a non-partisan morning parade by the uniform companies which concluded with a feu de joie sounded by the cannon on the Battery, two of the military companies and one fraternal society sat down to dinners which shattered any further pretense at non-partisanship.[19]

The toasts given at the dinner of Capt. de la Montaignie's Company were as partisan in its Democratic-Republicanism as if the occasion were some future Jefferson-Jackson Day dinner of the Democratic Party. Toasted were the day, to which was appended the call for enemies of republicanism to leave these shores; the French and Dutch Republics, and oppressed Poland; printers of independent spirits and Republican principles; George Clinton; mistaken honest men among the Federal-Republicans; and the men of the people--"Our representatives in Congress." The President was significantly toasted as "General George Washington" with the rather indelicate addition: "May the President gain in retirement the confidence and affection he has lost by listening to the suggestions of the enemies of his country." As for Hamilton and his ilk, the Montaignie Company gave "Thanks to God that the apologists of Britain and her treaty are so few, and that our

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[19]Diaries of John Anderson and Alexander Anderson, NYHS, Nov. 25, 1795.

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Country did not produce the present Camillus."[20]

At the same time, the New York Rangers, commanded by Capt. G. H. Remsen, retired, produced a set that represented a very different political and ideological point of view. Quotations from two of the toasts should suffice to give a clear idea of their intent:

> 6. May the exertions of the French nation be crowned with such a government as will secure the true liberty of the citizen, and protect him equally from the tyranny of aristocracy, and from the anarchy of democracy.
> 13. May the abuse and clamour which designing men have raised against our best and truest patriots, be viewed by every good citizen as the rancourous complaints of the fallen angel, damnable enough to be regarded with detestation, yet too impotent to merit serious attention.[21]

The third and last set of toasts reported during the November 25, 1795 celebrations came from that organization which had been a non-partisan social organization in the not-too-distant past but which once again showed that it was now clearly in the camp of the Democratic-Republicans. The Tammany Society toasts produced for Evacuation Day told much in their failure to mention the President of the United States or the United States Senate while cheering the people of the United States and the House of Representatives. No opportunity was lost in damning Great Britain, as in the toast which called for all possible encouragement to American manufactures, not as an end in itself, but "as the surest means of procuring the destruction of British commercial and political influence." At the same time, praise and cheers went to the republics of France and Holland and to all the

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[20] Argus, Nov. 28, 1795.

[21] Daily Advertiser, Nov. 27, 1795.

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"virtuous and patriotic societies" in the United States. Three other toasts made very clear the direction of Tammany Society animus:

> 10. A speedy dissolution to the late disgraceful and unconstitutional treaty with Britain. . . .
> 14. Perpetual destruction and disgrace to those unprincipled and daring men who by sinister means hope to subvert the principles of public liberty in the interest of a foreign power [Great Britain]. . . .
> Volunteer. Union and firmness to the Republican representatives in Congress. May their efforts towards destruction of the late infamous treaty with Great Britain be crowned with success, for freemen of America view it as the grave of their liberty and independence.[22]

If even so local a celebration as the British evacuation of New York was no longer capable of stirring the single-minded response that once united New Yorkers at least for a day, what could have been expected of a Thanksgiving Day whose very proclamation had become the subject of fierce controversy? That it would produce its share of political rumblings was now certain. What was less certain was who would gain most thereby. If the success of the day could be measured in terms of general public support, there was no question but that the Governor had scored a triumph. By insisting upon making Jay's proclamation over into a work of political ideology, John Jay's political enemies gave him that victory. John Anderson reported that all members of his family went to Trinity Church on that "day of Thanks giving for deliverance from the late Epidemic"--and the Andersons were apparently typical. As Alexander Anderson noted, the day "was observ-

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[22] Ibid., Nov. 28, 1795. A week after the Tammany celebration, "Inquisitive," in the Daily Advertiser of Dec. 4, 1795, reported that Tammany was now much reduced and could not even raise a quorum for its meeting. Interestingly, if true, "Inquisitive" added that he had heard that members of the Democratic Society joined with the Tammanyites in order to muster thirty people for the dinner.

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ed with the greatest propriety by all ranks of citizens--scarce a shop was open or a cart appeared in the streets." Moreover, he concluded, the churches "were well filled."[23]

At one of those places of public worship, the New Dutch Church, Dr. William Linn delivered a discourse on the day that became as much an object of controversy as everything else associated with New York events of that time. In the preface to the printed edition, Dr. Linn wrote of the "misrepresentation" his sermon had suffered because of "desire to support the federal government, and to promote the continuance of national peace." Since Dr. Linn was an early and ardent supporter of the French Revolution and all things republican as well as a favored speaker at major events and celebrations of the various societies of the city, his new appearance as recipient of Democratic-Republican antagonism bears closer observation.[24]

Constantly using the sermons of other clergymen to reinforce his own words, Dr. Linn brought the whole weight of the religious community down upon the side of peace and neutrality. Calling for reconciliation with an unnamed nation that could only have been Great Britain, Linn asked whether it was "laudable to detest, and to nurse in the hearts of our children, a military rage against a nation that has been willing to destroy us."[25] Dr. Linn even had the temerity

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[23]Diaries of J. Anderson and A. Anderson, NYHS, Nov. 26, 1795.

[24]William Linn, A Discourse delivered on 26 November 1795 (New York: T. &. J. Swords, 1795), Preface, iii-iv.

[25]Ibid., pp. 11-12, 13n-14n.

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to praise the Jay Treaty as the wise way to settle disputes--"by accommodation." It was the highest wisdom, he believed, to remain aloof from the quarrels of others while "remembering that as a nation we are called the AMERICAN."[26]

If Dr. Linn's words up to this point had not angered any firm Democratic-Republicans in his audience, what followed surely must have. In a veiled reference to France, Dr. Linn compared the freedom of worship experienced in the United States with "the flood of infidelity which has overwhelmed part of Europe" and even begun to threaten America. He was glad to note, however, that as a nation "we have not cast off the profession of the Christian religion."[27] Praising the various American governments as containing the fewest defects of any in the world, Linn warned against "wild ambition, or the pestilence of party" which could destroy our blessings instantly. In a sharp attack against the abuse and calumny of the day, Dr. Linn was particularly bitter in his reaction towards the charges raised against President Washington. Linn called the stories "too much calculated to undermine, and to bring into disrepute all republican governments."[28] Dr. Linn concluded his written remarks with a defense of self in which he listed the "decided part" he took in the American Revolution, his republicanism "in principle," and his unchangeable feeling of friendship toward the French nation. At the same time

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[26] Ibid., pp. 15, 16-18.

[27] Ibid., p. 22.

[28] Ibid., pp. 28-29.

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Dr. Linn believed himself "perfectly consistent, as a man, as a citizen, and as a Christian, in submitting to the government of his country, and condemning the unjust abuse which is cast upon it."[29]

As events and feelings increasingly divided New Yorkers along sharply ideological lines, the garrulous and sociable nature of the gentlemen of New York must have craved the respite that congenial and harmonious society alone could provide. How could their oases of good fellowship be preserved from the ravages of political conflict? Two alternative answers were possible: either the representatives of the minority point of view found the situation uncomfortable enough to leave or both sides remained but with all threatening feelings and attitudes compromised away. The more usual alternative was the first and was exemplified by the anniversary celebration of the St. Andrew Society. As reported by the Society's President, Walter Rutherford, the anniversary day "went off uncommonly well, all extremely merry, the Gov^r highly pleased." Rutherford noted, however, that none of the Livingstons attended, which was undoubtedly one of the reasons why the President of the Society could add that things were "never so peacable [sic]." Hamilton, Governor Jay and the President of the United States were given three cheers and the toasts "were highly federal." Thus the St. Andrew's Day celebration was a great success, for the opposition stayed away and like-minded men could spend an evening in blessed conviviality and peaceful agreement.[30]

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[29] Ibid., pp. 32-33, 35n-36n.

[30] Letters, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, St. Andrew's Day, 1795 and Dec. 7, 1795, NYHS, Rutherford Coll. See the New York Gazette, Dec. 1, 1795, for the full list of toasts.

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The other approach, that of harmonizing disagreement, was followed by another group of New York Scotsmen, the members of the Caledonian Society. At their anniversary meeting, the Caledonians produced a series of carefully worded toasts of compromise. The following four might serve as model examples:

1. Free and united America--watch your public servants but be cautious in censure. . . .
10. The President of the United States--May he never tarnish the laurels acquired in the field, but long continue to receive and merit the approbation of his country, as an eminent and faithful guardian to the sacred right of man.
11. The Governor and State of New York.
12. The Late Governor of New York.[31]

To complete the evening, an oration was delivered before the Society by its President, the schoolmaster Donald Fraser, who was also a leader in the Democratic Society of the city, which provided enough generalizations and blandness to homogenize any group. Exulting in "the rapid progress" that science and reason were making in the world to dispel the "oppressive and delusive . . . feudal system," Fraser could not help but believe that "the clouds of ignorance, prejudice, and superstition" that had too long "shackled the rights of men" would soon give way to "general knowledge, equal representation, and rational liberty." Mankind would soon be free, Fraser predicted, to choose men of "virtue, talents, and patriotism" to lead them.[32]

At a time when proclamations of thanksgiving, minister's sermons, and seemingly every word found in the newspapers of New York

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[31] New York Gazette, Dec. 3, 1795.

[32] "An Oration, delivered before the Caledonian Society of New York by a member, Donald Fraser," Diary, Dec. 5, 1795.

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were cause for investigation and controversy, several New York City societies had found a successful way to enjoy an evening of good fellowship: rid the organization of all members of the opposition or generalize the proceedings into a bland homogenization that would offend no one.

While local controversies helped keep the flames of contention alive in New York City, the Congress of the United States was preparing to meet in a session that was expected to fan those flames into a roaring inferno. The Argus reported during the first week in December that copies of an anti-treaty petition to Congress were to be had at a number of places in each city ward. The Argus supplied its readers with both the places and the wording of the petitions. Two major areas of complaint in reference to the treaty were stressed by the petitioners. First of all, the treaty was opposed because of a tendency to involve the United States "in all the political intrigue of European nations, to infract the treaty of alliance with France, and to give occasion for . . . the sad spectacle of war, between the magnanimous Republic, and the Republic of the United States." Secondly, the sponsors of the petition stressed their apprehension over inroads "on the constitutional powers of Congress and the Rights of the People" that the treaty seemed to assure the President and the Senate.[33]

At about the time that the petition was being submitted to the citizens of New York for the purpose of preserving "our Constitution

[33] Argus, Dec. 5, 1795.

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of government in its present limited and happy form," other voices were being raised in support of the treaty and the government that had produced it. An editorial in the Daily Advertiser, addressing itself to the new session of Congress that was about to convene, looked with pride on an administration that had kept the United States at peace. Peace, the Daily Advertiser asserted, had brought in its train prosperity and tranquility, an overflowing treasury, and a decreasing debt. Moreover, the attachment of the people to the Constitution and the laws had prevailed over attempts to diminish that feeling by "secret and open enemies of our glorious independence." In the Minerva, Webster acknowledged that Britain had done many indefensible things in relation to this country but Webster believed that to be no reason not to make a treaty with England for our benefit. Best of all, such a treaty was more likely than not to keep us out of war or difficulties with an England that clearly controlled the seas.[34]

These last views, expressed by Federalist-oriented editors, were not shared by New York City's new representative to Congress, Edward Livingston. The latter, who would become a leader among the anti-treaty opposition, left for the opening of the Congressional session in Philadelphia during the first week of December to the sound of catcalls from the Federalists of New York. Walter Rutherford repeated a rumor that the new Congressman had gone off to the nation's capital "in State with four Horses, and richly plaited." Webster, repeating the rumor in somewhat different form, reported with undis-

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[34]Daily Advertiser, Nov. 30, 1795; American Minerva, Dec. 8, 1795.

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guised relish that the "Poor man's friend [Livingston]," who left the city to take his seat in Congress, was expected to grace his entrance into political life with "a new and splendid charriot [sic] and four." Webster then added a sardonic commentary on Livingston's known taste for high living: "Liberty, Equality & democracy forever!"[35]

If the Federalists of New York were quick to find a weak link in the younger Livingston's armor, the latter's eldest brother was equally quick to advise and suggest. The Chancellor of New York, sounding not unlike Polonius counselling Laertes, informed the new Congressman that he was expected to be punctual in correspondence for it would be a severe reflection "for one of my standing in the political world not to have the earliest and best intelligence." The Chancellor also reminded brother Edward, his junior by eighteen years, that his own experience in life and politics might be helpful at times. And, in fact, the Chancellor did offer Edward Livingston some very sound advice. In what seemed to be a reference to Aaron Burr, Robert R. Livingston believed that Edward should "return his civility but be cautious of him[;] he has no principles whatever but is ready to close with any party that will take him up." The new Congressman was also advised to form no plans until he arrived at Philadelphia and could talk with Madison "and some of the most prudent members of Congress so as to act in concert." In another letter, written shortly after the session had begun, the Chancellor praised his brother for

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[35]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Dec. 7, 1795, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; American Minerva, Dec. 8, 1795.

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not impugning the character and motives of the President who would always be supported by the great body of the people and who might, thereby, be forced to rely ever more fully on those "whose influence the country has most reason to dread." Suggesting also that Edward Livingston retain the friendship of his political enemies and never give way to sarcasm, the Chancellor proved once again the efficacy of that cliché-ridden homily: "Do as I say, not as I do."[36]

The focus of attention in early December, having moved with Edward Livingston to the nation's capital, now centered upon the President's State of the Union message, which greeted the new Congress on December 8, 1795. President Washington's description of the state of the national health bordered on the euphoric. It was a time "for mutual congratulation," he asserted. Listing reasons for that feeling, he included "burthens so light as scarcely to be perceived with resources fully adequate to our present exigencies, with governments founded on the genuine principles of rational liberty, and with mild and wholesome laws." What led Washington to feel so optimistic about the country and its future was an easing of many of the major problems discussed in his previous State of the Union message. Internal peace had returned, he noted, in a reference to the late insurrection in Western Pennsylvania, and domestic happiness had increased. The major portion of the President's seventh annual message, however, was given over to a review of foreign affairs. In that area, Washington took

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[36]Letters, R. R. Livingston to E. Livingston, Oct. 30 and Dec. 20, 1795, NYHS, RRL Coll.

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delight in the end to the "long, expensive, and distressing war" with the Indian tribes northwest of the Ohio River; in the expected arrival of a treaty with Spain that would "lay the foundation of lasting harmony with a power whose friendship we have uniformly and sincerely desired to cultivate"; and in the treaty of amity, commerce, and navigation negotiated with Great Britain, to which he assented after "full and mature deliberation" as to the public interest. Thus, President Washington felt it possible to ask his audience whether it was "too much to say that our country exhibits a spectacle of national happiness never surpassed, if ever before equaled?"[37]

The American Minerva was quick to give the President the reply he was looking for. That Federalist paper believed that the President had managed "a complete answer to all the calumnies of his enemies." Webster favorably compared "the moderation and justice" of the American government with "the intemperate zeal of violent party men, and the barbarous rage for war and plunder which is found among unprincipled men in all societies."[38] Walter Rutherford saluted the President for "truly a proud speech," the truth of which "needed no Embellishment."[39]

That this was not a unanimous view was also made clear by Rutherford who reported on a call he paid to a home "where civility

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[37] A Compilation of the Messages and Papers of the Presidents, I, 182-84.

[38] American Minerva, Dec. 11, 1795.

[39] Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Dec. 11, 1795, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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ought to have held my Tongue." He could not help, however, "echoing some of the Sentiments" expressed by the President, whereupon a lady also present remarked "that it was needless to make such a Harangue." Rutherford's reply to the lady lacked something in chivalry when he answered that though all knew that the President spoke the truth, "yet nobody was so blind as those who would not see." Both growing "a little warm," Rutherford decided that it was time "to wave the Subject."[40] The subject was not about to be waved in the press, however, for the lady was not alone in her objection to the rosy picture painted by the President. In the Argus, "1776" remarked that America's prospects could be joyous only to speculators and British agents and emissaries. The President, he continued, did not even see fit to mention our good old allies, the French and the Dutch. "Camillus," he concluded, would now have to write a goodly number of essays simply to apologize for and explain away the President's speech.[41]

But neither "Camillus" nor any other leading Federalist felt the least need to apologize for the President's latest speech-making efforts. In fact, they began to relax as the expected explosion in the House of Representatives over the Jay Treaty ratification did not at first materialize. Rufus King showed that optimism in a letter to John Lawrence in which he took note of the fact that the session had

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[40] Ibid.

[41] "1776," Argus, Dec. 12, 1795. The Aurora also made note of the fact that Washington had left France completely out of his speech. Attacking the President for that omission, editor Bache was himself attacked by Webster, who asked what public transaction had there been with France during that year? See American Minerva, Dec. 15, 1795.

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begun "without an exhibition that was wished for and expected by the Opposers of the Treaty." King believed that it was now shown, as he had suspected all along, "that the great Body of the People have been free from those heats on this subject which have distracted our large Cities."[42] The ever-cautious John Jay, in a letter to Washington, found the public mind "becoming more and more composed" as it indignantly rejected "certain virulent publications" and "factious leaders." But Jay was not so sanguine as to believe that the Federalist millennium had arrived. He noted that those "factious leaders" continued to "persevere with great activity," albeit "with less noise and clamour."[43]

An additional reason for Federalist optimism near the close of 1795 lay in the fact that Fauchet's captured documents, which had led to the dismissal of Edmund Randolph as Secretary of State, and the latter's pamphlet of vindication[44] had appeared in the press at that time and did nothing to help the anti-government cause. Walter Rutherford, reporting that Randolph's pamphlet was the general topic of conversation during that Christmas season, commented with some sarcasm that "the Patriots" appeared quite down-at-the-mouth as

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[42]Letter, King to Lawrence, Dec. 20, 1795, NYHS, King Papers.

[43]Jay to Washington, Dec. 14, 1795, Papers of Jay, IV, 197.

[44]See supra, p. 513 for previous reference to the Fauchet-Randolph incident. Randolph's pamphlet of self-defense was called A Vindication of Mr. Randolph's Resignation (Philadelphia: Samuel H. Smith, 1795).

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Randolph had made "but a poor Figure in every shape."[45] The merchant, William Rhinelander, enclosed Randolph's defense in a letter to a friend in the British West Indies and commented ironically on the quality of that defense. Rhinelander believed that it could only enhance the public's "confidence in the President and the other officers of government." Flattering himself that "Democratick Politicks," which had run very high, was beginning to ebb, Rhinelander added that "the security of our government" depended upon it. Randolph's failure to shake the government by his vindication had thus left supporters of that government in a more confident state than they had been in since Jay's Treaty first burst upon the public six months before.[46]

In the public press, as well as in private letters, the Federalists concluded the year in an attack position that strongly reversed the mood of only a few weeks earlier. William Willcocks returned to the essay wars with a scathing series of letters against such Republican writers as "Cicero," "A free-Born Yankee" and "Montgomery" of New York and "Valerius" of Philadelphia. Willcocks, accusing them of being foreigners of short duration in this country, warned his fellow Americans that they must not allow Europe to entangle this country in the old continent's web of eternal wars and alliances. Continuing the attack in the same manner, "Hortensius," in the first edition of the Minerva for the new year, claimed that "Cicero," who wrote "in the

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[45]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Dec. 22, 1795, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[46]Letter, William Rhinelander to C. Robert, Jan. 6, 1796, NYHS, Wm. Rhinelander LB. See also Hamilton to Washington, Dec. 24, 1795, Works of Hamilton, VI, 79.

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vilest of terms" against the President and the government, was a recent emigrant from England. "Hortensius" further described him as a shoemaker in Broad Street with a sorry reputation for keeping the peace, and concluded with a damning list of charges against shoemaker "Cicero": he was notorious in every porter house in town; had attempted meetings in the street in front of his shop; had tried to bring the French form of religion to this country; and had sought to entangle this country in the "mire of faction."[47]

The battle of the quill became inter-city when Willcocks and the Pennsylvania Secretary of State, A. J. Dallas, became embroiled in a name-calling contest wherein the latter called Willcocks "the libeller of New York" (for suggesting that Dallas and "Valerius," one of Washington's most vicious attackers, were one and the same) while Willcocks recalled Dallas' role in denying that Genêt had told the Philadelphian of his plan to appeal to the people over the head of the President. Besides branding Dallas a liar for that, Willcocks rang out the old year by accusing the former--along with Randolph and Fauchet--of having been party to a conspiracy to oppose the government of the United States by force of arms.[48]

The defensive position in which the Republicans suddenly found

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[47]William Willcocks, Daily Advertiser, Dec. 18, 1795; "Hortensius," American Minerva, Jan. 1, 1796.

[48]William Willcocks, Argus, Dec. 31, 1795. If "Valerius" and Dallas were the same persons, Willcocks was stretching a point in accusing the former of being a foreigner. Dallas had come to the United States from Jamaica in the West Indies in 1783 at the age of twenty four. Republicans, however, were also not loath to accuse post-revolutionary Federalist immigrants of being foreigners whenever the political situation made such a charge useful.

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themselves after months on the offensive was fully discussed by an observer with more than a passing interest in the outcome of the Federalist-Republican rivalry. The French Minister to the United States, Pierre Adet, although he described the majority in the House of Representatives as "guided by hostility to England and the treaty and by a love of France," noted that things were quieting down and the public now seemed willing to submit to any decision. While the Federalists and Washington regained both strength and calmness, Adet asserted, "our friends begin to show discouragement." How was it possible, Adet wondered, that at a moment when France triumphed and all Europe seemed bound to submit to her laws, all was so quiet in the United States and the American friends of France could not sustain the requisite energy of action? Adet's extraordinary answer consisted of one word, "Hamilton." The latter, according to Adet, had single-handedly kept the United States from joining its "natural ally," France; had controlled and still controls the President; was "deceitful . . . audacious, without shame or morals," and an "enemy of liberty and equality"; and counted the people only as "a herd of sleeping beasts."[49]

The interested spectator of this period realizes the inherent

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[49]Adet to CPS, Dec. 2, 1795, "CFM," AHA, II, 794-96. Adet reiterated the basic complaint of all the French Ministers to the United States in a letter dated December 23, 1795. ("CFM," AHA, II, 807-08.) Telling how the friends of France in Congress constantly asked him for the reaction of the French government to the Jay Treaty and other issues, Adet reported that he was forced into a state of perpetual embarrassment by the failure of his government to send him any advice. In fact, Adet ironically reported, it was only in those parts of the English papers that were printed in the United States that he could find any usable news of the reaction of the French government.

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exaggeration of Adet's statement. Even so extraordinary a personage as Alexander Hamilton could not have singlehandedly silenced the friends of France and turned American policy around. Hamilton did, however, touch a sympathetic nerve in the American character with his pro-America appeal and was thereby able to bring the American public along with him. Noah Webster of the Minerva touched a similar chord when, in a late December editorial, he struck a theme which would find increasing support in the years ahead. Webster was angered by those who said that Americans had to take care not to offend France. We are not "children or hirelings" who operate out of fear, Webster chided. We defeated subservience to Great Britain in the past and we must fight against those who now called for a similar subservience to France. Webster scoffed at the idea that anyone could seriously believe that the combined despots would turn against the United States if they defeated France or that France would make war against us for displeasing them.[50] Increasingly, for Noah Webster, Alexander Hamilton, and a host of other Federalists, the watch word for American policy was independence. American self-interest was to be the fixed star by which the Federalists hoped to continue to guide our foreign policy.

At the same time, the Republicans helped to create an untenable position for themselves through a calculated campaign of shrill vituperation that sought to destroy public faith in the two sources of greatest governmental stability--the figure of George Washington and the policy of neutrality. Worse yet, the Republicans offered the

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[50]American Minerva, Dec. 21, 1795.

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public no equivalent points of security and thus seemed content to destroy for political gain. The Federalist reaction, which was based on a comparatively calm and reasoned defense of Washington and neutrality, served to reassure the public at a time when they needed such reassurance. Thus, the Federalists had again turned defeat into victory and regained the laurels. Victory, however, in the last half of the Federalist era, was a notoriously short-lived proposition.

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PART VII. DOWN CAME THE LIBERTY CAP, INTERTWINED FLAGS AND ALL (WINTER 1796 - WINTER 1797)

CHAPTER XIX

"'What, you rascal, insult your superiors!'"

The Republicans of New York, though clearly disappointed in finding that their opponents had emerged comparatively unscathed from a six month period of severe political attack, did not find themselves devoid of issues with which to continue their pressure. "Brutus," in an emotional letter that appeared in the Argus in the first week of the new year, showed that issues were still plentiful as he called upon the shade of Franklin to look upon the present scene of his country and despair. America, which had once led the way in the destruction of kingly power and despotism, now shamefully courted an alliance with the former despots, spurned a connection with her warmest friends, concluded a treaty with her enemy that was detrimental to national trade and commerce, and turned over the freedom of the country to a host of avaricious speculators.[1]

More than matters of national concern, however, was on the mind of "Brutus." Turning to the local scene, he charged that a situation existed where aldermen punished citizens for daring to speak to them, refused citizens a fair trial, and whipped them like slaves. "Brutus"

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[1] "Brutus," Argus, Jan. 4, 1796.

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also accused the Mayor of New York of putting local prisoners on board a British frigate "to serve a tyrant, and in irons, without their consent, and in contradiction to the laws of the United States." What "Brutus" was referring to were two separate but interrelated incidents that were to create a major social and political storm over the next three months and that had just begun to agitate the public mind at the turn of the year. As a result of such events, "Brutus" warned, the democrats of New York should be on their guard in order to be ready to fight, if necessary, to stem the tide of aristocracy. "Brutus" concluded by asking how general grievances against the federal government might be redressed "while local ones are suffered to exist."[2]

The local incidents to which "Brutus" had referred were perfect examples of the all-pervasive influence that the French Revolution and certain of its more striking events had upon New York political life and its developing political parties. One side, the Republicans, saw in the aldermen's and the Mayor's incidents examples of ministerial action that "smacked" of those very arbitrary activities that the French had originally rebelled against. If the French masses could be aroused from their torpor to take group action in their own interest, New York Republicans were certain that the more enlightened American citizenry would be able to act to help themselves that much more easily. The Federalists, for their part, were particularly stunned by the very inconstancy of the forces at work in France--forces that seemed to make and unmake the government and its leader-

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[2]Ibid.

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ship at will. The actions of the Parisian mob in influencing the nation's elected representatives and the presumed activities of the Jacobin clubs in arousing those mobs were visions from which many New York Federalists never recovered. Thus, the French Revolution, and all that that name now conjured up on both the conscious and subconscious levels for all New Yorkers, could no longer be divorced from any event of major importance to the New Yorker of 1796. The citizens of New York, whatever their party or stratum of society, had simply been overawed and overwhelmed in the years since 1789 by that extraordinary revolution which was still shaking the world of the Atlantic Civilization.

The merchants and businessmen of New York, who were already in a state of extreme uneasiness brought on by the continuing European war and the inflation which followed in its wake,[3] were not made to feel any easier by such writings as those of "Brutus" which appeared to be part of a growing threat to their position and property. The New York mercantile firm of Alsop and Hicks hardly found much reason for optimism when they observed "the hot and high-minded politicians of the present age who seem disposed to forfeit the property and lives of thousands to gratify an haughty and imperious ambition."[4] Bringing the uneasiness of the times home in the most personal manner possible,

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[3]For confirmation of the mercantile mood, see letters, A. Carroll to James Carroll, Dec. 20, 1795, NYHS, Anthony Carroll LB; J. LeRoy to Goldsbrow Banyar, Dec. 16, 1795, NYHS, Banyar Coll.; Gouverneur and Kemble to Jona. Jones, Jan. 20, 1796, NYHS, Gouverneur and Kemble LB.

[4]Alsop and Hichs to Micajah Coffin, Feb. 2, 1796, as quoted in Robert Davison, "Isaac Hicks, Capitalist and Quaker, 1768-1820" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, New York U., 1956), pp. 280-281.

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William Constable wrote to a friend that he had decided to send his sons to a school away from home. Their mother was spoiling them, Constable explained, "and I wish to have them learn their way in the world in case they may some day or other stand in need of it. Property," Constable concluded with no mincing of words, "is but a precarious thing since Revolutions have come into fashion."[5]

What added to the immediate nervousness of the New York property holder were those two local incidents previously alluded to by "Brutus." Centered about the charge of magisterial wrongdoing, these issues kept local citizenry in an excited state throughout much of the winter and early spring of 1796. The first of the charges accused Mayor Varick of having ordered nine prisoners in Bridewell, the city jail, transferred against their will to the British frigate, Thetis, which was lying-at-anchor in the harbor.[6] The Mayor answered the sworn statements of the two accusers, John Clark and Andrew Myer, with accusations of his own. Clark was described by Varick as a former peace officer of the city "who was displaced for a breach of his duty," while Myer was labeled a "drunken carpenter." Both Clark and Myer were summed up as "turbulent and bad citizens." Mayor Varick also made use of a sworn statement by a visiting trader who stated that he was at Bridewell seeking the release of a prisoner when the nine men in question, eight of whom were British subjects, sought

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[5]Letter, W. Constable to H. Sargeant, Mar. 4, [1796], NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.

[6]"A Citizen of New York," Argus, Dec. 18, 1795; Sworn statement by John Clark and Andrew Myer, Ibid., Dec. 19, 1795.

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their release by asking to be allowed to go on board one of the British frigates in the harbor. Captain Cochran of the Thetis applied to the Mayor for release of the men, found that Varick did not have the authority to do so, but then went directly to Bridewell, himself, where he procured the release of the prisoners. All were brought on board the Thetis, excepting the American citizen who was not allowed to do so.[7]

Just as this complaint seemed to be dying down for want of necessary proof of mayoral wrongdoing, the second allegation appeared in print and struck a much more responsive chord among the citizenry. Paralleling the Jay treaty debates of that winter and spring in New York City, the Burk-Crady or ferrymen's affair, as it came to be called, raised important questions concerning governmental power and its abuse. The ferrymen's incident also served to bring back an issue that had been seriously raised by the Democratic Society of New York during March and April, 1794, when war with England threatened. Were elected representatives subject to public will during their term of office or were they independent souls free of such influence until their next election? Interwoven into this complicated fabric was a question with still broader implications: What would be the future of international republicanism if the pretensions of a pro-British aristocracy succeeded in undermining constitutional government at home, thereby destroying that necessary ingredient of world-wide republican survival, Franco-American unity?

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[7]Reply of Mayor Richard Varick along with sworn statement of William Francis, Ibid., Dec. 22, 1795.

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The Burk-Crady affair was brought before the public on December 25, 1795 by a writer who styled himself "One of the People" and who presented the case as a clear example of the abuse of official power. Thomas Burk and Timothy Crady were ferrymen on the Brooklyn-Manhattan route who were accused of verbally abusing Alderman Gabriel Furman while the latter, as he was to claim, was in the execution of his office. Furman had the two arrested and taken to Bridewell. On the way to the city jail, a grocer at the Fly Market swore that he saw Furman "punch them [his prisoners] in their back with his cane, saying, move on you rascals, I'll fix you."[8]

At the jail, several aldermen and the Mayor held what "One of the People" called "a bridewell court," in which the officials, using epithets such as "Rascals, we'll trim you, we'll learn you to insult men in office," tried the defendants without asking them for statements in their own defense. Jacob Hicks, the conductor of the ferry, came forward as a character witness for Burk, while Alderman Furman, who had brought the charges, also interceded on Burk's behalf. The decision of the court was to give Crady twenty five lashes and both Burk and Crady a sentence of two months imprisonment. Mayor Varick then closed the court, according to "One of the People," by declaring that if he had his way he would give the ferrymen's master, Hicks, or any other interceder for like offenders, the feel of thirty nine lashes. "One of the People" concluded his description by stating his

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[8]"One of the People," Ibid., Dec. 25, 1795; sworn statement of John Bennett, Ibid., Dec. 30, 1795.

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belief that the punishment was carried out "to gratify the pride, ambition, and insolence of men in office." Two of his fellow citizens, he believed, had been condemned illegally and given punishments that should only have been meted out for proven felonies.[9]

The many levels of meaning that this affair held for so many New Yorkers was summed up in two separate articles put forward by a Federalist and a Republican writer. "Z," writing in the Federalist Daily Advertiser, complained that it had become fashionable to "lampoon" men in public life. He singled out the Argus as the major source for such attacks. That paper, "Z" wrote, was rarely at a loss for denunciations against supposed encroachments upon the Constitution or supposed abuses of official power. The President was an old target, "Z" noted, while Governor Jay, Mayor Varick, members of the city corporation, and local religious figures were now daily subjected to the animosity of editor Greenleaf. The attack on the Mayor and some aldermen for alleged past errors, "Z" asserted, without explanation, was set in motion by none other than Citizen Genêt and had been kept going by the political friends of the new Long Island farmer. "Z" closed with a now favorite Federalist warning against the licentiousness of the press as an evil that required constant watchfulness.[10]

In the Argus, the very lair of press licentiousness as viewed by New York Federalists, a Republican writer attacked the magistrates on two grounds. First, "Sidney" argued, it went against the Constitu-

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[9]"One of the People," Ibid., Dec. 25, 1795.

[10]"Z," Daily Advertiser, Dec. 29, 1795.

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tion of the State of New York that the defendants should not have been granted a jury trial--one of the basic rights under common law. The writer then delivered his second point in the form of a stern warning that "too long has this city groaned under the hand of oppression; too long have we submitted to the insolence of official dignity."[11]

One state official who did not take this attack personally but, in fact, seemed to delight in it, was Robert R. Livingston, the Chancellor of the State of New York. Writing to his brother in Congress, the Chancellor noted, with unfeigned pleasure, that application was made on January 5, 1796 to the city's Grand Jury "on the subject of the Mayor's and Alderman's new court and tomorrow if the Legislature form a house it will be brought before them so that his worship is now in no worshipful situation." With this two-pronged attack firmly under way, Chancellor Livingston could afford the rare luxury of expressing some sympathy for the Mayor's plight even while he was exulting in it. Referring to Varick and his situation, Livingston remarked that "he seems to feel it so much that I almost pity him." In the political climate of the time, however, "almost" was as close as the Chancellor was able to get to actual feelings of pity.[12]

Throughout January the Burk-Crady affair and its Bridewell-Thetis companion lay dormant while the New York Grand Jury and the State Legislature prepared to judge the actions of the city's Corporation and Mayor. Finally, on January 30, the newspapers carried the

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[11]"Sidney," Argus, Jan. 5, 1796.

[12]Letter, R. R. Livingston to E. Livingston, Jan. 5, 1795 [misdated], NYHS, RRL Coll.

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Grand Jury's report as given out by its foreman, Nicholas Gouverneur. It stated that the charges by John Clark and Andrew Myer against Mayor Varick, which accused the latter of ordering nine prisoners aboard the British frigate, the Thetis, were both "malicious and groundless." Furthermore, the Grand Jury found that complaints about the trial and punishment of Thomas Burk and Timothy Crady were "unsupported" in fact. As for the State Legislature, a full debate on the complaints of "One of the People" took place during the second week in February. On February 13 the newspapers reported that the Assembly had decided that the magistrates did not have corrupt intentions and that there was insufficient evidence for impeachment. The petition of "One of the People" was therefore dismissed by a vote of 52 to 10.[13]

"One of the People," the man who revealed the ferrymen's incident to the public, was William Keteltas, a young lawyer "of veracity and reputation"[14] or of pride and ambition depending upon the beholder's view of the charges. Defending his actions in a letter to the Argus, Keteltas insisted that the Assembly should have judged on the question--"shall the people enjoy equal rights in this state or not?" He then accused the committee of the House to which the case had been referred of suppressing testimony which would have proven that Burk and Crady had been illegally sentenced. Continuing on in the same injudicious manner, Keteltas declared that the Assembly acted less out of the feeling that Varick and the others were innocent than

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[13] Argus, Jan. 30, 1796, Feb. 13 and Feb. 16, 1796.

[14] "Cleon," Argus, Dec. 29, 1795.

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out of concern for the effect of impeachment on their careers. Justice should be blind, Keteltas agreed, but if it leaned towards mercy, "the poor claim the preference: the rich having a consolation in wealth to soften the anguish of distress, while the poor are left without hope to perish." Keteltas, however, was unlikely to win over many of those whose help he needed, by the enunciation of a doctrine that clearly seemed to validate Aristotle's conclusion that democracy was the perversion of constitutional government because it acted not in the common interest but in the special interest of the needy. Having lost the Assembly, however, Keteltas' goal had now become something quite different. After reviewing the whole case in the light of the guilty rich versus the innocent poor, Keteltas concluded by appealing to the people to influence their representatives in this case of "the most flagrant abuse of . . . popular rights ever remembered in this state, since the establishment of its freedom and independence."[15]

The members of the Assembly, as might have been expected, did not take kindly to the printed suggestions of William Keteltas. They complained that his publication tended "to criminate the conduct of certain committees of this house" and resolved, unanimously, that the statement was "unfounded and slanderous." Keteltas returned to the attack on March 5, however, defending his actions, denying that he used the word "suppress" with any criminal intent, and calling the punishment of Burk and Crady "illegal" and a "malignant crime." The

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[15]William Keteltas, Ibid., Feb. 22, 1796.

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assemblymen took even less kindly to the continued disputatiousness of Keteltas and declared, on March 8, that his publications were a breach of its privileges. Moreover, the Assembly, by a vote of 33 to 27, ordered Keteltas to answer for that breach at the bar of the House. The time set for his appearance was noon on March 9, 1796.[16]

The interest aroused in the city by these proceedings reached its first high-water mark on the day of Keteltas' appearance when an overflow crowd filled the visitors' gallery of the Assembly room an hour before the scheduled start of the proceedings. The arguments in the debate that followed brought back memories of a trial held in the city over half a century earlier which argued similar questions of the right to criticize authority and have that criticism printed in the local newspapers without fear of arrest. The supporters of Keteltas warned of the harm that might result to the freedom of the press and the right of the individual to differ with actions of the legislature and to express those differences both verbally and in writing if the young lawyer was punished by the Assembly. The opposition, however, saw the issue as one in which the good name of the House had been called into question and in which its honor was at stake. The latter view won the day and Keteltas was sentenced to Bridewell "until the further order of this house."[17]

Given the opportunity to ask for the pardon of the Assembly, Keteltas refused, declaring himself innocent of any criminal act. At

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[16] *Argus*, Mar. 1, Mar. 5, and Mar. 9, 1796.

[17] *Ibid.*, Mar. 10, 1796.

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his words of defiance, three cheers and clapping of hands "comme un éclair" burst from the spectators. To many a horrified observer this immediately brought to mind visions of the French Convention overawed and ruled by the Parisian mob. Thomas Greenleaf must have realized the resounding echoes that such action was capable of producing in many minds for he called this display of feeling both "unadvisable and indiscreet" as to the best interests of the cause. Order was quickly restored, and the resolution of the Assembly put into immediate execution.[18]

The events of the day were not yet concluded, however, as several eyewitness accounts attested. According to Greenleaf, Keteltas was carried off to jail "in triumph, in a handsome ARM CHAIR, borne and supported by eight citizens, as a testimony of their approbation of his spirited conduct, amidst loud acclamations, and repeated cries of 'THE SPIRIT OF SEVENTY SIX,' etc."[19] A rather more jaundiced account emanated from the pen of Alexander Anderson, who was now a distinguished personage in the city as a result of his Bellevue service. Anderson's succinct summary stated: "There has been a considerable stir among the mobility about the affair of Keteltas who was this day committed to Jail for a publication in the Argus. They [the mob] would not suffer him to walk but carried him there in a chair." Anderson also noted that a carriage was brought to the City Hall "with the intention of drawing home two of the Members of the Assembly who

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Ibid.

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had advocated his [Keteltas'] cause." Anderson concluded his diary entry with a notation that indicated how seriously those in authority viewed the incident. Meeting Governor Jay on Broadway "dress'd in his Regimentals and sword at his side," Anderson was asked by the former whether it was true, as rumor had it, that the people had gathered in front of Mayor Varick's house. Finding that such was not the case, Governor Jay proceeded to City Hall to learn the exact state of affairs.[20]

At City Hall, where the winter session of the State Legislature was meeting, Governor Jay undoubtedly found a group of assemblymen still angered by Keteltas' defiance and the outburst of the spectators. Those responsible for that breach of behavior, according to the Assembly leadership, had to be brought to justice lest mob rule become the order of the day. A week later, therefore, two of the leaders of the cheering and applauding throng were brought before the House to answer charges that they were guilty of insulting that legislative body. Thomas Gilbert, a starch and hairpowder manufacturer, who was one of the two leaders, immediately asked for the pardon of the House. The other accused, Azarias Williams, merchant and secretary of the New York Democratic Society, at first refused to ask for pardon but finally did so after a lawyer was called to defend him, two witnesses were cross-examined, the Assembly found him guilty, and he was about to be taken away to Bridewell. Williams recanted of his actions and both he and Gilbert were released upon payment of fines to

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[20]Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Mar. 9, 1796.

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the sergeant-at-arms.[21]

This ended the formal phase of action in the ferrymen's case but the issues that were raised by the affair had only just begun to be developed. Azarias Williams took out an advertisement in several of the New York newspapers to explain his behavior at the time of the sentencing of Keteltas. Disclaiming any intention of insulting the assemblymen, Williams nevertheless asserted that the virtue of Ketaltas' action in declaring his right to speak his mind--"notwithstanding the threat of punishment"--took precedence over the respect due to the legislative body.[22] In the Minerva, "A Citizen" was quick to reply with a series of allegations that broadened the discussion considerably. In relation to Keteltas, the writer asked whether he had acted purely out of virtue? Was he not "always in hot water" when he lived in Dutchess County? Had he not been supported by subscription in his attack on the Mayor and Aldermen? Was he not "merely a Catspaw of a certain family?" The writer grew even more specific when he charged that "a certain Mr. L_____ [one of the Livingstons?]" was so interested in the prosecution of the Mayor that during the debate on the subject that "certain Mr. L_____" called a member of the Assembly to the bar and offered him books to prove his arguments. As for Azarias Williams, "A Citizen" called him an Englishman who was said to have formerly been a tory, although he was now Secretary of the Democratic Society. The writer warned that the

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[21] American Minerva, Mar. 16, 1796.

[22] Azarias Williams, Argus and American Minerva, Mar. 16, 1796.

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"real patriots" were exasperated at such "insolence," and would use "every legal method to chastise it." "A Citizen" closed with an attack on party views that held law and government in contempt and on the licentiousness that "pervades a great portion of the citizens who compose the clubs."[23]

The fears aroused by club activity in both France and the United States--whether real or imagined--constantly returned as a theme to haunt Federalist hearts. This fear was presented with the utmost clarity by "A Friend to Order." Writing in dismay at the cheering and applauding crowds who interrupted the official meeting of elected representatives of the people, "A Friend to Order" believed it boded ill for the continued development of republican principles. Raising the conservative's eternal fear of anarchy, the writer predicted that if American republicanism turned in that direction through the "licentiousness of unprincipled men," then the people would ultimately fall "into the arms of despotism." Adding the threat of foreign intervention to his dire picture, "A Friend to Order" noted that more than one foreign government would like to control the destiny of the United States. What would defer them from attempting direct influence through the American legislatures, he asked, if any single group was found capable of gaining their way through improper mob behavior? The point of all this, according to "A Friend of Order," was that the United States could continue in a proper republican path only if the nation's elected representatives were allowed

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[23]"A Citizen," American Minerva, Mar. 16, 1796.

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to govern without threats or influence from any source.[24]

A diametrically opposite view of the relationship between public and elected representatives was developed at the same time by the individual storm center of the ferrymen's affair, William Ketaltas. Still residing in a Bridewell cell, Keteltas had returned to the literary wars with a series of five essays which first appeared in the Argus on April 4, 1796. Keteltas based his defense of himself on the fact that neither he nor Burk and Crady had had a jury trial before any of them were sentenced and imprisoned. The key to his defense, however, was the much broader issue of legislative responsibility which was developed in his fourth essay. Keteltas here referred to the rights of the people vis-à-vis authority as verified by both the American and French Revolutions. For him those two great events forcefully, and for all time, proved John Locke's contention "that the people, and not an abstract body of them, are the sovereigns . . . ; who can make, and unmake, at their pleasure agents to execute their will, and that kings, Parliaments, and all political bodies, are . . . created by them [the people] for the particular purpose of serving them." William Keteltas concluded with the familiar phrase, "all power is derived from the people," but by the time he reached that idea he had made it quite clear that he meant far more than Federalist

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[24]"A Friend to Good Order," American Minerva, Mar. 15, 1796. For a discussion of the dilemma faced by educated New Yorkers who believed that "freedom of investigation, and boldness of remarks . . . [were] amongst the many advantages of a free government" even while they lamented that "the effects arising from it are frequently mischievious," see Remarks on the Newspaper Attacks against the Mayor, by "W," with a review of the remarks by James Swords, Records of the Calliopean Society, NYPL, Mar. 18, 1796.

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legislators would have been willing to grant. Federalists could never have approved of an attitude that encompassed the making and unmaking of legislative bodies at the pleasure of the public.[25]

On April 12, 1796, the day that "Defence, no. V," appeared in the Argus, the legislature adjourned and William Keteltas was "liberated from prison by a writ of habeas corpus." The liberation scene, moreover, was possibly the most remarkable of all the events in this affair for it brought together a variety of revolutionary republican symbols and paraphenalia which made clear that more was now at stake than the fate of two ferrymen and the career of a lawyer. As reported by Thomas Greenleaf, a number of citizens met Keteltas at the prison and "forced him into a phaeton, in which they paraded him in triumph." On the phaeton were displayed the French and American flags, the cap of liberty (which was carried by the guest of honor), and a painted representation of a man being beaten at a whipping post, "after the Bridewell mode, with a scroll . . . over the head of the whipper--'What, you rascal, insult your superiors!'" The phaeton was then pulled through the "principal streets in the city, drums beating, with a numerous body of attendants" until the crowd reached Hunter's Hotel. There, Keteltas thanked the people for giving him the honor of carrying the standard of liberty, for their attachment to the Constitution, and for the decorum with which they conducted themselves. Keteltas was next drawn to his own door, where he was given three cheers by the

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[25]William Keteltas, "Defence, Nos. I and IV," Argus, Apr. 4 and Apr. 8, 1796.

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company. Greenleaf closed his description by noting that the crowd "retired in the utmost order, enraptured with the virtues of their fellow-citizen, who had endured near five weeks imprisonment, by what has been called an arbitrary edict."[26]

In the face of the warm public display of feeling that greeted Keteltas on his release from Bridewell, it would have been unreasonable to have expected that the young lawyer could now remain aloof from politics. Keteltas did not surprise anyone, therefore, when he offered himself as a candidate for the same State Assembly which had so recently, and so firmly, rebuked him. By this time, no one doubted that Keteltas would throw in his lot with the Republican Party. Interestingly enough, however, Keteltas originally seemed willing to be welcomed by either party. In early February, for example, the Argus published "A Dialogue, between 1776 and 1796" which consisted of praise for Keteltas both in his lineage as the son of a patriotic minister father of '76 and in his own person as a fighter against the power of the wealthy in '96. Since the leadership of both parties, as one authority has shown,[27] came basically from the same stock, neither remark necessarily tied young Keteltas to either the Federal Republicans or the Democratic-Republicans. The author of the dialogue certified that view when he remarked that Keteltas belonged to neither party, adding that both federals and anti-federals were guilty of what each accused the other. In this non-partisan atmosphere, the author reiterated that the

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[26] Argus, Apr. 13, 1796.

[27] See Willis, "Social Origins of Political Leadership in New York City," for a full statement of this view. See also supra, Pt. IV, ch. XII, n. 39.

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ferrymen's affair was not a party question but one of the right of the people to question the Mayor and aldermen. Thus, William Keteltas seemed free to accept offers from any and all sides.[28]

Two months later, however, with Keteltas himself a cause célèbre who seemed, in his own person, to threaten respect for law and authority, it became clear that the Federalists were not about to take him unto their bosom. Any lingering doubts became a certainty when Keteltas was triumphantly drawn through the streets of New York bearing the liberty cap aloft in his own hands. On that same day, April 12, 1796, a "political catechism" was offered in the Argus by one "De Kalb," for the consideration of Noah Webster and all his disciples. It could well have been the catechism of that newly self-proclaimed spokesman for the people, William Keteltas. It consisted of a dialogue between "a plain, honest Mechanick" and an aged veteran. How different did the April dialogue prove to be from the mild, generally non-partisan flavor of the previously noted February dialogue between 1776 and 1796.[29]

"De Kalb's" mechanic wondered why the aged veteran was considered an anti-federalist, an enemy to the general government, and a friend to domestic contention and foreign wars. The veteran of '76 answered that he had been labeled thus by tories, monarchy men and sycophants because they claimed to be federalists; because he did not adopt the sentiment that kings and rulers could do no wrong; and because he would not brook the daily insults offered his country by the British. Pulling no verbal punches, the aged veteran described the tories and monarchy men

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[28]"A Dialogue between 1776 and 1796," Argus, Feb. 5, 1796.

[29]"De Kalb," Ibid., Apr. 12, 1796.

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who congregated in American cities, "as on so many dunghills," as enemies to the American Revolution who wished to destroy republicanism. "De Kalb" then brought his list of charges to a conclusion by describing the tories and so-called federalists as joining together to "drown the voice of public gratitude [to France], and banish the right of thinking and speaking [to their true republican opponents]."[30]

Having described a formidable enemy of republicanism and revolution and having placed that enemy squarely in the Federalist camp, it was with no difficulty at all that "De Kalb" and, for that matter, William Keteltas could now make their choice of the Democratic-Republicans as the party which could best serve their needs. The hope was that the honest mechanic and the old soldier would remember the slogan, "What you rascal, insult your superiors!" and would join with them in that choice. A clear plea had been made on the basis of rank in society, and the Burk-Crady affair seemed to have given it viability.[31]

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[30]Ibid.

[31]In realization of the capacity of the ferrymen's affair to cause long-lasting damage to the Federalists of New York, the most astute Federalist leader of the decade, Alexander Hamilton, singlehandedly attempted to deflect any possible anti-Federalist reaction. In a letter to Rufus King, written immediately after the local election of that April, Hamilton noted that "the vile affair of whipping Burke [sic] and McCredy [sic] made our election, in the view of the common people, a question between the rich and the poor. You will easily conceive how much this must have embarrassed and jeoparded." As part of his campaign of deflection, Hamilton worked quietly for a satisfactory settlement of that "vile affair." On the one hand the Federalists, undoubtedly under the direction of Hamilton, put out a handbill which professed sympathy for the plight of Burk and Crady and promised to work to ameliorate their situation. Even more surprisingly, Hamilton, in an unexpected passage of a letter written by William Keteltas early in 1797, was described as "council [sic] for Burk" and directly involved in forcing the Mayor and five aldermen involved in the case to pay Burk five hundred dollars in damages. With this unexpected turn of events, the ferrymen's affair came to its legal conclusion. See Hamilton to King, May 4, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 144; Handbill of the Friends of the Federal Republican Ticket, Argus, Apr. 26, 1796; William Keteltas, Argus, Feb. 7, 1797.

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CHAPTER XX

"Proud alone of the name of AMERICANS"

Franco-American relations had thrived on a sense of shared adventure. Even though New Yorkers did not generally find pleasure in every twist and turn of French revolutionary activity, their overall delight in French success could not be denied. France was our sister republic, our friend-in-need, and our best-beloved. As this dissertation has been at pains to point out, that curious mixture of relationships was enough to have produced a very special tie between the two countries. In spite of such feelings, however, relations between the governments of the two republics seemed to have taken a steady, downward path during the course of the previous few years.

That downward curve suddenly seemed to have been arrested and even reversed on all levels during the winter of 1796. Two events, in particular, appeared to indicate a restoration in government-to-government cordiality that other actions, such as the Jay Treaty ratification and the activities of the French ministers to the United States, had threatened to destroy. On the national level, Minister Adet presented President Washington with a flag of the French Republic as token of that nation's feeling and friendship for the United States. On the local level, a civil festival given by Consul Rozier, the French Consul in New York, was greeted with phrases of mutual admiration by the citizens of both nations.

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The presentation of the French flag, as an event of national importance, received the greatest possible publicity. Minister Adet's words were unusually gracious as he gave credit to the American government for its precedent-setting battle against aristocratic tyranny and in favor of republican liberty. President Washington responded in a similar vein, speaking in the most glowing terms of the French gift, the French Revolution, and the newly established Constitution of that sister republic. This happy interlude was greeted rapturously by a public that had been fed for the past half year on little save reports of the imminent collapse of relations between the two republics.[1] A correspondent in the Gazette Française et Américaine made that very point as he described those testimonies of mutual friendship as being all the more precious since "many have represented the affections of our allies as alienated by a recent transaction [Jay's Treaty]." Moreover, he observed, the President's reply showed the falsity of the charges laid against Washington which questioned his attachment to the French nation and even to republican government, itself.[2]

The extent of the pleasure that this flag-presentation ceremony aroused could also be observed in the praise given both sides by two such political opposites as the American Minerva and the Democratic Society of New York. Editor Webster found the French Minister's statement to be as agreeable and judicious as the President's reply. In

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[1] American Minerva, Jan. 8, 1796; Daily Advertiser, Jan. 9, 1796; Argus, Jan. 9, 1796.

[2] Gazette Française et Américaine, Jan. 13, 1796.

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fact, Webster noted, "since the dissolution of the Private Clubs in France and the administration of the [French] government by the legal Representatives of the nation," American Federal-Republicans were recovering from their feelings of "alienation" towards the French Republic.[3] Webster could not refrain from adding that the Federal-Republicans had been driven from their former attachment to France by the intrigues of Citizen Genêt and the threats of civil convulsion brought about by the American version of the French private clubs. Webster closed his editorial with a rare example of his verbal exultation--an example which joined together his two ideals of government: "Vivat Respublica. Vivat Lex!" In a rare show of harmony, the Democratic Society of New York passed a resolution praising Washington's reply to the presentation of the French colors as "truly worthy of an enlightened American citizen." It had been a long time since the Society had found the President worthy of anything except excoriation and quite as long a time since Noah Webster and the Democratic Society had found themselves in public agreement.[4]

The local event alluded to previously, the civil festival given by Consul Rozier, produced its own glow of warmth in which to encircle Franco-American relations. The festival, held on March 18, 1796, was organized for the specific purpose of giving the French citizens residing in New York City the opportunity of swearing allegi-

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[3]See infra, pp. 575-76 and 581, for another reason for Webster's restored faith in the French Revolution--the Constitution of the Year III.

[4]American Minerva, Jan. 9, 1796; Argus, Jan. 14, 1796.

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ance to the new Constitution of the French Republic, that of the 5th of Fructidor of the year III. In a speech filled with happy turns of phrase, Rozier called America "this friendly and hospitable land" where "the first spark of [French] liberty was enkindled--where the Rights of Man were first proclaimed." The only rivalry between the two nations, Rozier concluded, should be a "rivalship in virtue."[5]

This new hopeful feeling in Franco-American relations was mirrored in the editorials of Noah Webster, who went so far as to state his belief that, as a result of the new French Constitution, "in the great outlines . . . the two countries agree." Webster listed as basic points of agreement the abolition of hereditary power and office; the recognition that it was "the exclusive right of the people to originate, form and modify their government"; the division of the legislature into two houses and the separation of the national government into three branches; and such republican ideas as trial by jury, responsibility of public officials, frequency of elections, and the subordination of military to civil power. The Constitutions of both countries, Webster believed, could now be considered to have improved upon the principles of the philosophers of England and France of the preceding two centuries.[6] Webster did add a caveat, however, and one which the Federalists had begun to stress with a new constancy. In order to keep both countries on the friendly terms that each desired, the French had to allow the American government the right to pursue

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[5]American Minerva, Mar. 19, 1796; Argus, Mar. 19 and Mar. 22, 1796.

[6]American Minerva, Jan. 27, 1796.

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an independent policy, "and suffer us to be on good terms with all other nations."[7]

Noah Webster's editorials were but one sign of the new confidence which the Federalists displayed that winter both in themselves and in Franco-American relations. This confidence was enhanced in late January with the news that Thomas Pinckney had successfully concluded a treaty between the United States and Spain. John Jay saw the results as "an agreable [sic] circumstance and together with the Restoration of peace with Algiers and the Indians will tend greatly to compose and gratify the public mind." As for the ratification of his own treaty, Jay believed that its chances would be improved by delaying a little longer in bringing it forward as "things seem to work together for good."[8] Noah Webster also used the happy news of a Spanish-American treaty as an opportunity to praise the continued success of the American government and to take to task "our French partizans who wished and used every exertion, to plunge us into a war to take Florida and open the Mississippi."[9]

In this mood of positive pleasure, the Federalists of New York were delighted to find that the approach of the President's birth date gave them additional reason for celebration. As Walter Rutherford noted on the eve of those festivities, "Many are the Balls going on

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[7] Ibid., Jan. 22, 1796.

[8] Letters, Jay to King, Jan. 27, 1796 and Feb. 2, 1796, NYHS, King Papers.

[9] American Minerva, Jan. 22, 1796.

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to-morrow in gratitude to our beloved President." Though the New York ball proved to be a notable success with nearly two hundred ladies and "above 200 Gentlemen" in attendance, Rutherford wrote his son that he had heard that the one in Philadelphia included many more participants. Was it possible, he asked, that four hundred ladies were present, "considering the number of Quakers and disaffected?" If so, Rutherford believed, "it would be seasonable to introduce the Treaty tho. everyday it gains popularity."[10] Certainly the birthday celebrations in New York appeared wholehearted. In addition to the several large-scale parties, the theater was reported full by John Anderson, "it being the Presidents Birth-day; and the evenings entertainment made up for that occasion."[11] The Union Society of the city[12] also celebrated the day, including a number of toasts that could stand as typical of the Federalist view on several of the major issues of that winter:

> 5. Confidence in the constituted authorities of our government.
> 6. Absolute independence for the United States--May it never be in the power of any nation "with a few thousand dollars to decide for them the questions of peace or civil war [an apparent reference to the Randolph-Fauchet affair]."
> 7. The Republic of France--in peace as distinguished as in war.
> 12. May the American Eagle be supported by the standard of reason, and may all good patriots rally under her banner.[13]

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[10]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Feb. 21, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Feb. 27, 1796, Family Records and Events, p. 166.

[11]Diary of J. Anderson, NYHS, Feb. 22, 1796.

[12]The Union Society, born as a fraternal order, seemed to have become the Federalist equivalent of the now fully Republican Tammany Society. As one example, the Union Society took over Tammany's relinquished role as the chief club celebrating the President's birthday.

[13]American Minerva, Feb. 23, 1796.

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Although controversy between Federalists and Republicans, particularly as it related to Franco-American relations, quieted considerably during the winter days of 1796, it was a calm that could be considered as such only in comparison with the extremely high decibel levels reached by the quarrels of the preceding six months and that would again be attained in late March and April of 1796. The chief source of a new Republican-Federalist controversy as it related to France was a letter written by John Jay to Robert Goodloe Harper of South Carolina that was given wide-spread publicity at the end of February.[14] The letter was a major statement by a leading Federalist of the development of his thinking in relation to the French Revolution. As such it was certain to be interpreted not simply as one man's opinion but as the view of the entire Federalist party leadership. In this writer's opinion that would be a most just interpretation. Certainly the Federalists were only too happy to claim Jay's views as their own. Walter Rutherford's reaction, for example, was one of sheer delight, stating that Jay's letter "blazens his Character higher than ever." Rutherford further reported, a trifle optimistically as it turned out, that he had not heard "a squeak against it, tho I have seen some of his Adversaries."[15]

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[14] An Address from Robert Goodloe Harper of South Carolina to his Constituents . . . to which is added, A Letter from Governor Jay to the Author, explaining his sentiments respecting the French Revolution (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1796). The letter from Jay to Harper, dated January 19, 1796, was published separately in the Argus on February 24, 1796.

[15] Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Feb. 21, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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Jay's "confession of Principles," as Rutherford called it, began with a denial that he was strongly attached to Great Britain and hostile to France. He was not, he claimed, a partisan of any foreign court or nation but was and would continue to be an independent and genuine American who thought it "unwise and improper to meddle in foreign politics." Conversely, he believed just as firmly that all foreign interference in American affairs was dangerous and intolerable. At the same time, Jay acknowledged the debt that this country owed to British institutions, laws, and principles of government. The French, too, despite their arbitrary monarchy, had contributed importantly to the ideas of mankind. Although Jay had been negative in his attitude towards the French government and court of the Old Régime, he had still wished that country well for its important favors to the United States. With the arrival of a revolution that ended the arbitrary powers of the king and the government of France while restoring liberty to the people, Jay found much reason to rejoice. He had the highest hopes "for the ultimate success and perfection of the Constitution and government which they established." Unfortunately, according to Jay, a second revolution followed which gave him no pleasure. The king, who had done the United States an essential service was executed, and the Constitution and government that had first been established was abolished. In addition, "torrents of blood and tears" produced by atrocities against liberty, morality and humanity became the chief legacy of the new revolution.[16]

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[16] An Address from Robert Goodloe Harper, etc., pp. 35-37.

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Though Jay admitted to strong dissatisfaction with the government established by the Jacobins, he also declared that he could wish success to the revolution, or any revolution, which had for its object "not the disorganizing and managing of other states," as the combined powers had tried to do, "but the exclusive ordering of all internal affairs, and the establishment of any constitution which the nation should prefer." Disheartened by the French Republic's pursuit of an expansionist foreign policy, Jay was now once again sanguine that the French had lately established a system which intended to give "permanent peace, liberty, and good government to France." As to the war that still raged on the European continent and in the West Indies, Jay declared his wish that no country should dominate, for the welfare and safety of the United States depended upon the ability of each major nation to limit and repress the ambitions of the others. The basic American foreign policy goal, as Jay saw it, was to "cultivate friendship with all nations." He therefore concluded with an America-first statement that was now basic to all Federalist thinking on the subject: the United States should treat all nations fairly while, at the same time, preserving its self-respect by not yielding to the influence or policy of any one of them.[17]

Jay's views on the French Revolution, the new Directory government and the war between France and the combined powers were echoed in the writings of that key New York spokesman for the Federalists, Noah Webster. Using a statement by the French Minister of the Inter-

[17] Ibid., p. 37.

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ior as the basis for his comments, Webster saw in those plans by the Directory to aid orphans, the sick and the aged "a very exact conformity to the institutions in favor of the poor established in many of the United States." Webster then boldly asserted that for more than a year past (since the fall of Robespierre), the French had been "moulding" their political and civil institutions "after the modles [sic] which are found in America." The Directory, Webster fully believed, was now "approximating to ours" in most respects. He could think of "no finer encomium" for our federal government "than that other nations imitate the system."[18] In relation to the war, Webster once again echoed John Jay's views. When France had been fighting for liberty and her own existence, the Minerva's editor declared, she commanded "the esteem as well as the admiration of all disinterested nations." Now, however, Webster could only descry a French ambition for power that threatened the independence and neutrality of those very same nations.[19]

Jay's letter to Robert Goodloe Harper was just as strenuously attacked by an essay printed in the Argus only two days after the Governor's own statement had appeared in Greenleaf's paper. The rejoinder, from one "Aristophanes," attacked the Governor in tones that at times verged on the hysterical. Jay was particularly taken to task for his approval of the first French Revolution, which limited the monarchy, while opposing the second, which created the republic.

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[18] American Minerva, May 10, 1796.

[19] Ibid., Apr. 7, 1796.

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Curiously, however, in deploring "the atrocities and excesses that had been committed" during the progress of the French Revolution, "Aristophanes" sounded not as unlike John Jay as he may have thought. The friends of the revolution, "Aristophanes" contended, denied that "cruelty and barbarity" were necessary concomitants of revolutionary republicanism. They blamed "the political hypocrites--the Robespierres and Marats--"for many of the evils of the Revolution. In view of "Aristophanes'" harsh judgment of John Jay, one is forced to ask how different sounding was the conclusion reached by the former from that of the detested object of his comments? "It cannot be denied," "Aristophanes" stated in words with a distinct Jayite cast, "that the revolution has been attended with its evils.--But that it will produce most good is anxiously hoped and expected."[20]

If the new hope of unity, which had crept back into Franco-American relations on the basis of several pleasant events and general public approval of the new French Constitution and the new Directory government, began once again to seem nothing more than a hope, there was one area where unity of feeling had never left New Yorkers. That was the area which concerned the progress of the European war and its effect on the future of republican France. Winter was a drought

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[20]"Aristophanes," Argus, Feb. 26, 1796. Jay was also attacked in a five part series by "Publius" that appeared in the Argus between March 29 and March 31, 1796. This series was unusual for its time in that the author praised Robespierre for strengthening France internally while conducting a successful war against the combined powers outside of France. "Publius" also insisted that the French Revolution had to be treated as one great whole and had to be approved or condemned "in toto."

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season for Americans in the reporting of European news and the winter of 1796 proved one of the most arid on record. On January 6, Thomas Greenleaf stopped the presses to announce the receipt of a French newspaper which contained an account of events in Germany regarding "the situation of the ARMY, and detecting FALSITIES, which much pains had been taken to circulate respecting them." The good news, Greenleaf reported, "revives our hopes." It was also the last news on the war to reach New Yorkers for seventy five days. Not until March 23 was the Argus able to report that a vessel had once again arrived bringing intelligence from Europe. Editor Greenleaf has happily left to posterity a description of the public greeting of the long-awaited ship. At about 5:00 P.M. on the 22nd, merchants and politicians "were set upon the wing" hearing that the ship Hunter, twenty nine days out of Liverpool, was coming into port. The decks of the vessel were soon crowded with citizens with one purpose in mind--to learn the news. Greenleaf reported that the captain and passengers

> were apparently so struck with astonishment at the eagerness of all those assailants to be informed in one sentence, who are the conquerors on the Rhine--are there any prospects for peace-- is [sic] the sedition bills passed--are the people yet quiet--how are the prices current, &c. &c. that they did not satisfy an individual with respect to any one of these important circumstances.

Greenleaf then proceeding to give his readers a brief summary of the news along with a promise that copious extracts would start in the next day's edition.[21]

Democratic-Republican Greenleaf, however, was not the only edi-

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[21]Argus, Jan. 6 and Mar. 23, 1796.

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tor who felt the need to satisfy a feverish public demand for European news. The sober-sided Noah Webster showed by his response that little was deemed more important by his public, aswell. In the midst of one of the most vital debates in the early history of the House of Representatives, Noah Webster announced that he had so much foreign intelligence yet unpublished--information that he considered "highly necessary to enable our readers to form a just idea of European Transactions the winter past"--that he would suspend publication of the debates for a few days to make room for the European extracts.[22] Nothing could more strongly make the point of the continuous and almost hypnotic strength of the public's insatiable thirst for news--and news, above all else, of the French fight against the combined armies --than this decision taken by the Minerva's scholarly editor. As it was to turn out, this moment was one of the last in which that sense of shared Franco-American adventure filled the vast majority of New Yorkers with the emotion of loving concern.

The debate that editor Webster broke into was in many respects the climactic moment in the early history of the development of political parties in the United States. Coming together in this historical watershed were the rivers of feeling and thought that had first surfaced during the battle over the American Constitution, that rose in level with the additional arguments that surrounded the adoption of Hamilton's financial program, that became a flood tide of emotion as the French Revolution turned its passionate torrents loose

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[22]American Minerva, Apr. 8, 1796.

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on the Atlantic Civilization, and that reached its high water mark with the coming of the Jay treaty and the bitter debates which that document set in motion. The moment had now arrived when the House of Representatives--deciding whether to vote funds to put the treaty into operation--would determine on what terms the United States would face the world and itself. The debate over acceptance of the Jay Treaty would also prove to be the dividing line which would forever demarcate that United States which refused to accept the existence of full-scale internal political division from the country which would acknowledge that change by recognizing and ultimately embracing the existence of political parties. A two-party system was about to become a basic law of the land--no matter how unwritten that law would remain.

One of the leading figures in that lengthy and climactic debate over House acceptance of the Jay Treaty was the recently installed Congressmen from New York City, Edward Livingston. That member of the important New York Livingston family, however, often seemed to be acting as proxy for his older brother and quasi-father, Robert R. Livingston. The advice that the Chancellor of New York included in his letters to his youngest brother often bore fruit in a way that would seem to make credible the conjecture that the elder produced the ideas which the younger carried out. In January, 1796, for example, the Chancellor wrote to Edward Livingston that the Jay Treaty had to be reprobated in the strongest terms when it came before the House of Representatives. Though fearing that it would be "difficult to

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prevent its taking effect" and doubting a policy that would give the British "a further pretence to withold [sic] the posts," the Chancellor devised a plan of action for his brother to carry out. Basically, the idea was to compel the President to place before the House all executive papers referring to Jay treaty negotiations.[23]

By early March, the situation had arrived at the point where Edward Livingston would have to act. The Treaty, with the signature of King George III attached, arrived from England and President Washington almost immediately issued a proclamation declaring the Jay Treaty to be the law of the land.[24] The President's action greatly surprised Minister Adet, which probably meant that it surprised many of the leading Republicans who were Adet's chief source of information. The French Minister confessed to his home office that he had been led to believe that Washington wished to retire and would do nothing that might place his popularity in jeopardy. It was thought likely that the President would allow his successor "to disengage the country from the Labyrinth into which the intrigues of Jay and Hamilton had led the American government." Adet now reported that he was going to talk with the leaders of the Republican Party about the problem and press upon them the need to delay final action long enough so that he could receive word from the French government of their strong opposition to the treaty. This would insure that the balance would be tipped in favor of the anti-treaty forces. In passing, Adet noted

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[23]Letter, R. R. Livingston to E. Livingston, Jan. 21, 1796, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[24]Argus, Mar. 5, 1796.

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that Mr. Livingston of New York had presented a resolution to the House which called on the executive to place all papers regarding the Jay mission and treaty at the disposal of the representatives. The first phase of the House battle had been joined.[25]

In reference to that same Mr. Livingston, Minister Adet picked up a bit of gossip which once again emphasized the role that family pride played in New York politics. Edward Livingston's leadership in the anti-treaty battle was guided "by other motives than pure love of France," or so the French Minister had been told. Moving into that byzantine world of New York geneology and politics, Adet reported that John Jay had married one of Edward Livingston's cousins. According to Adet's information, the treatymaker's character, pride, and actions all joined to produce a strong feeling of hatred between Jay and the Livingstons. The Livingstons therefore hoped that a disclosure of Jay's instructions would show a wide gap between those instructions and the treaty in its final form--a comparison that would forever destroy the New York Governor politically.[26]

Whatever Edward Livingston's chief motivation for his resolu-

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[25]Adet to MFR, Mar. 7, 1796, CFM, AHA, II, 834-37.

[26]Adet to MFR, Apr. 6, 1796, Ibid., II, 887-88. Adet, who showed his disdain for John Jay and the Federalist leadership throughout his lengthy diplomatic correspondence, used Jay's letter to Robert Goodloe Harper as another example of the monarchical bias of the Federalists. Jay's remarks to Harper had made his attachment to monarchy clear, Adet declared, for did it not show that he turned against the French Revolution when the monarchy was overthrown? Jay had always preferred an alliance with a monarchy to one with a republic, Adet charged. The French Minister concluded by making the same charges against all the leaders of the American government, including the President of the United States.

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tion, there was no doubt that Federalist reaction was swift and sharp. James Kent angrily denounced Livingston, calling him an "unprincipled and malicious incendiary," while he labeled the notion that the House of Representatives could refuse to carry out the treaty as a "cursed doctrine." Walter Rutherford reported that "we are much agog here about Ned's [Edward Livingston] motion, the expression of Impeachment was heard with the greatest indignation." As for Alexander Hamilton, he immediately wrote the President that "the opinion here of those who think, is, that if the motion succeeds, it ought not to be complied with." Hamilton reasoned that compliance would "be fatal to the negotiating powers of the government" for it could not fail "to start a new and unpleasant game."[27]

These early reactions were followed by a full-scale newspaper debate which stressed two questions: who were the true representatives of the people and what should be the power relationship between the House of Representatives on the one hand and the Senate and the President on the other? Noah Webster carried the full brunt of the Federalist argument in New York with a series of editorials in the American Minerva. The idea that the public's safety depended upon the actions of the House of Representatives was patently false, according to Webster. On the contrary, all history proved "that the popular branch of a legislature is as liable to error, and more liable to

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[27]Kent to M. Kent, Mar. 12, 1796, as quoted in Horton, James Kent, p. 110; W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Mar. 14, 1796, Family Records and Events, p. 168; Hamilton to Washington, Mar. 7, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 90.

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corruption, than a Senate." In a strongly-worded formula, Webster declared that the more dependent the individual representative upon the people, "the more liable to be biassed [sic] by their whims and mistakes, against his own judgement [sic]."[28] Webster next attacked the notion raised by some that the members of the House of Representatives were "the immediate Representatives of the people" and therefore had to have a voice in determining the propriety of treaties. Every member of Congress, Webster claimed, was as much the representative of all parts of the nation, "as of the people or the legislature that elected him." Webster thus dismissed the distinction between immediate and mediate representatives as artificial and the work "of artful men."[29]

Webster then turned specifically to the Livingston resolution as a perfect example of the need for a two-house legislature and of the tendency of the popular branch of the legislature to be "most disposed to rashness and injustice." Here, in this "direct attack" on the Constitution and this "bold attempt to usurp the exclusive powers of the other branches of the government," lay the ultimate proof, for Webster, of the need for the checks-and-balance system. Turning to a French legislative example to bolster his case, Webster described how, under the new French Constitution, the Council of Elders was able to reject a rash resolution of the Council of 500 which would have authorized sequestration of properties owned by the relatives of

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[28] American Minerva, Mar. 17, 1796.

[29] Ibid., Mar. 24, 1796.

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émigrés.[30] Summing up his position, Webster declared his belief that if the recent attempts of the House of Representatives "to usurp the rights of the other branches--and concentrate in themselves" treaty-making powers expressly vested in the President and the Senate did not convince the people "that the most violent preachers of liberty are rank tyrants at heart," it was because the people were "still doomed to be the prey of hypocrites."[31]

If Webster's goal, and that of the Federalists, was to protect executive and senatorial power against what they conceived to be threats of mob rule and anarchy, the Republicans saw their purpose as that of safeguarding the people against the monarchical and aristocratic tendencies displayed by the Executive Branch and by the Senate, respectively. A writer in the Argus, with a long memory, reminded his readers that a certain gentleman (Hamilton) had come back to New York in the midst of the Constitutional Convention "because there was not enough of Royalty, Monarchy, or Aristocracy in the proposed Constitution." Prevailed upon by his friends to return to the convention and acquiesce in the results, Hamilton, the writer declared, could now well say that through the use of executive power the Constitution had been manipulated substantially to reach his original goal. The writer concluded by remarking that if the Jay teaty was ultimately accepted by the House, Hamilton could then assert that "the instrument [the Constitution] . . . 'worked' compleatly to [his] satisfaction, as well

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[30] Ibid., Mar. 31, 1796.

[31] Ibid., Apr. 14, 1796.

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as to the almost full satisfaction of [his] north and south British friends and supporters."[32]

The Republican attitude was further developed by "A Native American," who added another complication to the issue. The Jay treaty, he noted, included clauses that dealt with the matter of commerce with foreign nations, and if the President and the Senate had exclusive powers in the area of treaty-making, contradictions in authority were certain to be raised. If, in a single treaty, several powers of Congress could be usurped, "A Native American," declared, "can we hesitate . . . to pronounce, that this treaty-making power must eventually . . . swallow up and absorb every other power vested by the constitution in the general government . . . just as the President and majority of the Senate may think it proper and expedient." This fear of what a treaty might be capable of doing led "A Native American" finally to imagine the direst of possibilities: tyranny of the executive and the Senate, which might ultimately invite a foreign power in to protect their position.[33]

The House of Representatives, itself, after what Minister Adet called "a bitter battle," passed the Livingston resolution without amendment by a vote of 62 to 37. Based on this vote, Adet was able to infer reasonably that things augured well "for the ultimate condemnation of the Jay Treaty as unconstitutional and injurious to American interests and honor."[34] At the same time, it was reported that the

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32"Communication," Argus, Mar. 19, 1796.

33"A Native American," Ibid., Apr. 5, 1796.

34Adet to MFR, Ar. 24, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 881-82. Minister

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House voted for a committee of two, composed of Livingston and Albert Gallatin, to call on the President and personally ask him to send all the papers relating to the English treaty to the House. The delight of the Republicans, both in and out of Congress, at this decision was mirrored in the following verbal rhapsody from the pen of Thomas Greenleaf:

> Good God!--an old tory was heard to exclaim . . . , with jaws as long as your arm--sixty-two to thirty-seven! Well, I did think, to be sure, that those damn'd sons of liberty would have soon been done over in this country, but I now fear, that this stripling of a Livingston will rekindle the spirit of '76--and all our plots be stifled in their embrio! our influence lost forever![35]

If not rhapsodic in their response, the Federalists of New York were fully as unanimous as their Republican counterparts. Walter Rutherford, after reporting that Livingston and Gallatin "went in Triumph to the President," declared that every Federalist in the city was "Positively of opinion that he [Washington] should not gratify them." The President's reply did not disappoint his Federalist supporters. Washington's refusal, based on his constitutional authority and expressed with a firmness that left his readers gasping in delight or dismay at his boldness, was another in that long list of major

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Adet also reported that the heads of the Republican Party had shown him every courtesy and confidence, allowing him to sit in on discussions of their plans. Adet, however, was not able to give his government total assurance of victory for he was "wary of the fickleness of human nature" and of the seductive powers of the Executive Branch and of English gold. America, he noted, was a country where everyone speculated and where love of riches was the dominant motivation.

[35] *Argus*, Mar. 28, 1796.

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precedent-setting decisions of the first President.[36]

Alexander Hamilton wrote the President that he rejoiced in the decision, for whatever the House might ultimately decide to do, the decision was "right in itself, will elevate the character of the President, and inspire confidence abroad." John Jay, also corresponding with the President, declared that Washington's reply met with "very general approbation" in New York, and added that he considered the "prevailing party" in the House "to be digging their political grave." In a foreign policy aside, Jay expressed his belief that France would find the United States "less easy to manage than Holland or Geneva." Summing up the Federalist mood of the moment, Walter Rutherford announced that he and his fellow Federalists were all "in high Spirits."[37]

Even though the second and major phase of the Jay treaty debate remained, at least one Federalist businessman now viewed the results as a foregone conclusion. William Constable, writing to a merchant friend in the British West Indies, remarked that prices for American stocks depended upon European demand which in turn was affected by the confidence placed in the American government. That confidence, Constable believed, had been enhanced "by the conduct of our President." Constable had no doubt that the House would reply to

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[36]Letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Mar. 29, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll. For an example of a gasp of dismay, see Adet to MFR, Mar. 31, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 883-84.

[37]Hamilton to Washington, Apr. 2, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 100; Jay to Washington, Apr. 18, 1796, Papers of Jay, IV, 208; letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Apr. 4, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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Washington's statement by declaring their right to take part in the treaty making process. In the end, however, Constable assured his correspondent, the House would "carry the treaty into full effect."[38] Nevertheless, despite Constable's confident air, much hard work still needed to be done if the substantial anti-treaty majority in the House of Representatives was to be turned around.

In the midst of the brief lull between phases of the Jay Treaty debate, New York City prepared for its annual State Legislative elections. On April 7, editor Greenleaf reported to his readers that the electioneering campaign had already started in the northern and western parts of the state. It was mainly the work of that party, he declared, "which is for cramming British politics down the throats of the people." Apparently the Federalists still retained the organizational lead they had gained over their opposition as early as the first post-Constitutional election in 1789. Greenleaf believed that the coming election was one of particular importance because the new State Legislature that would meet in November would choose electors for President and Vice-President. Greenleaf therefore suggested that "the friends to . . . the hard earned liberties . . . of this country" be alive to the need for immediate action on their own local slate of candidates.[39]

On the same date, a notice in the Minerva announced that "the friends of a Federal Republican Ticket" were invited to meet at the

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[38]Letter, W. Constable to J. Capper, Apr. 10, 1796, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.

[39]Argus, Apr. 7, 1796.

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assembly room of the city the next day "to consider of characters proper to be supported" at the upcoming election. The Federalist notice listed as one important aspect of the upcoming election the same reason that Greenleaf had mentioned: that the new legislature would be the one to choose the state's presidential electors. It also added the need to choose a United States Senator as one more reason why this election was "deserving the zealous attention of all good citizens." Thus, on April 8, 1796, at the usual "numerous and respectable meeting" of the friends of the Federal Republican ticket, with Matthew Clarkson in the chair, a slate of four State Senate nominees for the Southern District and thirteen candidates for the Assembly from the city and county of New York was chosen. The list consisted of leading lawyers, merchants, mechanics and tradesmen, many of whom were among the most respected names in the Southern District of New York.[40]

Though another "very large and respectable meeting of citizens and Freeholders" met that same Friday night--at Hunter's Hotel and

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[40] American Minerva, Apr. 7 and 9, 1796. The Federal Republican Ticket included James Watson, Revolutionary War veteran and Merchant for State Senator from New York County and the following list for Assemblymen: Gulian Verplanck, Merchant and President of the Board of Directors of the Bank of New York; Jotham Post, Apothecary; Jacob Morton, Lawyer; Henry Will, Dry Goods Store Tradesman; Herman LeRoy, Merchant and a Director of the Bank of New York; Richard Furman, Collector for the Out Ward; J. O. Hoffman, Lawyer; Alexander Lamb, Fruiter and Cartman; Jonathan Little, Merchant, First Vice-President of the Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen and President of the Union Society; James Roosevelt, Merchant; James Tylee, Inspector of Leather and Vice-President of the Union Society; James Kent, Lawyer; and Leonard Bleecker, Broker and Merchant. The vocations listed for each man are as found in the two separate editions of the New York Directory of 1796. One version was edited by David Longworth and published by T. &. J. Swords; the other was edited by John Low and published by John Bull.

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with David Gelston in the chair--this gathering was not reported in either the Argus or the Minerva until Monday, April 11. The Democratic-Republicans, whose name was not attached to this list but whose ticket it was, apparently had difficulty in selecting an assembly slate, for only the State Senate list was published. It was not until the April 18th issue of the Argus that the Republican assembly slate appeared.[41] Though the Republicans seemed optimistic, privately as well as publicly, it appeared from at least one letter that complete pre-planning was not yet a Republican forte. The long-time anti-federalist and Republican, Melancton Smith, wrote to his friend in Suffolk County, John Smith, telling the latter of his [J. Smith's] nomination for State Senator from Suffolk. The meeting, which Melancton Smith called "the largest and most respectable I ever attended on a similar occasion," had approved John Smith's nomination "with the utmost unanimity and cordiality." Melancton Smith hoped, therefore, that the nominee would make no objections to his nomination, for if he did "confusion will be the consequence." Smith closed with the plea that his friend not oppose "the republican Interest . . . and the

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[41] American Minerva, Apr. 11, 1796; Argus, Apr. 11 and Apr. 18, 1796. The Argus did not publish the Federal Republican ticket until April 16, even though the list was probably in Greenleaf's hands in time for the issue of April 9, 1796. The complete Republican slate included Aaron Burr as State Senator for New York County and the following Assembly list: Henry Rutgers, President of the Democratic Society and Colonel of the First Regiment of New York Militia; Peter Elting, Merchant; P. R. Livingston, Lawyer and the Grand Sachem of Tammany; Francis Van Dyke, Chocolate Maker; Thomas Storm, Merchant; DeWitt Clinton, Lawyer; William Denning, Merchant and a Director of the Bank of New York; E. S. Burling, Assistant Justice; William Keteltas, Lawyer; Ebenezer Stevens, Merchant; Tunis Wortman, Lawyer and Notary Public; General James Alner, Assistant Justice; and William Boyd, Merchant and the Treasurer of Tammany.

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views of your republican fellow Citizens."[42]

With their ticket now chosen, the Republicans turned to a broad-based appeal which stressed the national implications of the local campaign. The Republican essay which seemed best to tie together the several strands of Republican argument was written by "Unite and Conquer." Calling the upcoming election the most important since the Declaration of Independence, he declared that nothing less than the security of the American republican system, in its struggle against aristocratic and monarchical encroachments, was at stake. He saw a sinister plot afoot "to draw closer the cords of amity and affection" between the United States and England at the expense of "national honor, justice, and impartiality." At the same time that the Federalists were intent upon tying this country closer to England, "Unite and Conquer" declared, they were attempting to alienate American minds from France, our true and only friend. France saved us from England once before and, he confidently asserted, would do so again if called upon. That was true even though this country had played the base traitor to France and had done all that it could to alienate her through an infamous treaty of amity and commerce with England. Returning to the election that was about to take place, "Unite and Conquer" melodramatically declared that it was "NOW OR NEVER" with the fate of our country, our liberty, our freedom, and our very existence at stake. Not disaffected from the national government but from the British interest that would enslave us to that power, "Unite and Con-

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[42]Letter, M. Smith to J. Smith, Mar. 12, 1796 [misdated], NYHS, John Smith Papers.

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quer" concluded with the declaration that if united, the Republicans would indeed win.[43]

For their own part, the Federalists contented themselves with sniping at the Republican ticket. Noah Webster reported that he had heard that three of the Republican candidates for Assembly, Stevens, Denning, and Clinton, did not wish to be on the ticket. Webster observed that he could well understand such an attitude, for any ticket that included P. R. Livingston and William Keteltas was not one in which respectable people could have any confidence.[44] Though this type of attack seemed petty, it did contain an important germ of Federalist feeling towards their political opposition. A key word for the Federalists was respectability, an attribute which they believed their opponents singularly lacked. Noah Webster, as an instance, characterized the treaty battle as a contest "between property, steady principles and wisdom on one side, and numbers without property, led by noisy demagogues and influenced by party-zeal on the other." Those members in Congress opposed to the treaty, Webster suggested, did not represent "the real sense of one third of their constituents, nor one tenth of the property . . . at stake, nor a tenth of the wisdom and sound discretion in the districts which elected them." Webster closed with the confident assertion that the "vast majority" of

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[43]"Unite and Conquer," Argus, Apr. 22, 1796. See also "A Friend to Order," printed in the Argus of April 26, 1796, for a similar Republican review of their own and their opponents' positions on the major issues.

[44]American Minerva, Apr. 23, 1796.

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Americans favored fulfilling the terms of the Jay treaty. He predicted that "this fact will soon appear."[45]

Webster's confidence was quickly proved to be correct. In New York City, at least, the Federalists had taken the political initiative by mid-April and were not to relinquish it again during the remainder of the debate period. That initiative consisted of a series of clear-cut local and national plans directed by the Federalist leaders. On April 15, Alexander Hamilton suggested to Rufus King that the merchants meet in the cities, "second by their resolutions" the actions of the President and the Senate, and urge the cooperation of their fellow citizens. The climax of the campaign, Hamilton stated, should be a petition in support of favorable House treaty action that would be circulated throughout the United States.[46] On April 18 a meeting of the insurance companies of New York was held, at which, according to one merchant, it was announced that "in consequence of supplies not being granted for putting the British treaty in force," the companies "have stopt underwriting." The same source, Jacob LeRoy, declared that the underwriter's action could "have a great tendency to depress the price of our produce." In addition to the economic pressure put forward by the insurance companies, the merchants and traders of New York declared that they were ready to meet to pre-

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[45] Ibid., Apr. 18, 1796. See also a letter from Gouverneur & Kemble to Richard D. Jennings, Apr. 14, 1796, NYHS, G & K LB, for a similar expression of feeling that despite the fact that the opposers of the treaty had "found means to command a majority in the House," the advocates of the treaty included "the most sensible discreet men and the men of property."

[46] Hamilton to King, Apr. 15, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 104.

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pare the necessary pro-treaty petitions to be circulated among their fellow citizens.[47]

The petition meeting, which one correspondent called the largest assemblage of merchants in New York City history, was held at the Tontine Coffee House with Gulian Verplanck in the chair. It was there resolved that the resolution before the House against making provision for the British treaty was a "cause of anxiety and alarm," that the House be informed that the commerce, agriculture, peace, and honor of the United States was at stake, and that "execution" of the treaty proceed "with punctuality and good faith." In addition, the meeting decided to appoint a committee of correspondence "with the various counties of the state." The committee was also given the task of sending petition bearers throughout the city. The petition, itself, basically repeated the points stated in the resolves, adding only that a durable peace was necessary for continued American prosperity and that the Jay Treaty was security for that peace.[48]

The irony of Federalists petitioning representatives whom they had previously declared to be independent of their constituents during their term of office did not apparently prove troublesome, for, on the day after the meeting, Alexander Hamilton wrote that an atmosphere of "unexampled unanimity" prevailed, that "the current appears to be strong with us" and that the city was now "in motion

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[47]Letter, Jacob LeRoy to Goldsbrow Banyar, Apr. 18, 1796, NYHS, Banyar Coll.; Hamilton to King, Apr. 18, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 106.

[48]American Minerva, Apr. 19, 1796.

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against the plan of the majority in the House of Representatives."[49] Within two days, Noah Webster was able to observe with pleasure "the unanimity with which all parties subscribe the petition." He included "almost all the respectable citizens" who first opposed the treaty, "the minority of the Chamber of Commerce" who opposed the favorable resolution of the previous summer, and many of "the decided, but moderate oppositionists." These people had changed their minds, Webster asserted, because they believed that the treaty, as the law of the land, ought now to be carried out. Webster declared that in the face of such unity, the distinction made between Whig merchants and Tory merchants was now all the more artificial.[50]

This massive display of Federalist activity and energy served to overshadow the efforts of the New York Republicans but the latter did not simply fold their tents and silently steal away. In need of a patriotic occasion to stimulate their forces, the New York Republicans found it in an event which had never previously occasioned a similar New York celebration. It was the anniversary of the "ever-memorable and glorious 19 April 1775 (battle of Lexington)" and it resulted in a gala dinner for one hundred "old Whigs" and their guests of honor, former Governor Clinton, now restored to health, Consul Rozier of the French Republic, a number of French naval officers, General Horatio Gates, and that gentleman-farmer, Citizen Edmond

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[49]Hamilton to King and Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Apr. 20, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 107-07.

[50]American Minerva, Apr. 19, 1796.

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Genêt.[51] Among the toasts that aroused the greatest approval were those to "all nations amicably disposed to the United States and France, and show it by their actions"; to the Constitution and Government of the French Republic; to republican principles--may they destroy monarchy and aristocracy; and to "our unfortunate fellow-citizens who have been impressed, and are now in slavery on board British vessels." The volunteer toast of especial pertinence at that moment read: "May the House of Representatives never want wisdom to discern, nor firmness to assert, their constitutional rights."[52]

In addition to this celebration, the Argus included essay after essay which attempted to place Federalist actions in what was considered to be an improper pro-British light. April 21, 1796 might be considered a sample day with four essays of that nature. "An Artillery Man" reminded the young men of New York that in the summer of '94 they had joined together for the defense of their country against the possible scourge of British tyranny. It was time again, "An Artillery Man" warned, to prepare yourselves and show the British faction where you stand. In even greater need of immediate attack was the pro-treaty petition that was making the rounds of the wards of the city on April 21. The petition was attacked in letters from "A Citizen," "Thousands," and "A Friend to Equality." Ending with variations on the phrase "Let no true American sign!" the letters referred to the petition as the work of "British merchants, tories, underwriters, and stockjobbers." Gulian Verplanck, who had chaired

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[51] Argus, Apr. 20, 1796.

[52] Ibid., Apr. 21, 1796.

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the petition meeting, was censured for not having done anything during the American Revolution, while the President of the United States, who could hardly have been accused of that, was called a dupe whose actions, if concurred in by the House, would deliver America into British hands.[53]

The success of the Federalist petition, however, could not be denied, even as the Republicans decried the methods employed to gain signatures. According to correspondents in the Argus, the people were asked if they wanted war or peace. When they most certainly answered that they wanted peace, they were told that unless the treaty was approved there would be none. The Argus also charged that threats were made that the merchants would close up shop, that the underwriters would not insure, and that economic life would come to a standstill if the treaty failed. As a result, even boys and servants who could hardly write their names were adding their "John Hancocks" to the list. In an effort to counter Federalist success, the Republican leadership called an outdoor meeting for noon on April 22, 1796.[54]

The purpose of this meeting in the fields was to endorse the actions of the anti-treaty forces in the House of Representatives with regard to the British treaty. Noah Webster and William Willcocks, apparently not completely confident of the success of their side, warned "the real friends of our constitution and government" not to

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[53]"An Artillery Man," "A Citizen," "Thousands," and "A Friend to Equality," Ibid., Apr. 21, 1796.

[54]Argus, Apr. 23, 1796.

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attend.[55] Alexander Anderson, however, did attend, but to all intents and purposes he might well not have. His one comment: "could hear nothing distinctly." An only slightly sharper picture was given by Walter Rutherford, but his description did contain one important point. Reporting that a meeting in support of the House was held at noon, an hour "when the Irish Labourers will attend with chips and Brick bats," Rutherford added that he was told by one George Gosman, a mason and master builder, that he planned to "watch outside to caution those employed by him and to discharge those that went." With such obvious economic pressure creating an immensely effective leverage for the merchants and tradesmen when they felt their economic interests to be at stake, it was no wonder that Rutherford could report that the pro-treaty petition "is most generally signed thro' the wards."[56]

The meeting in the fields was reported for the Argus by Thomas Greenleaf, who called those present a "very numerous and respectable" group. He praised them for acting with decorum and unanimity. The unanimity concerned a declaration of the group's disapproval both of the treaty and of the scare tactics used to force people to sign the pro-treaty petitions. Though chaired by Francis Van Dyke, a Republican candidate for Assembly, reports indicated that the meeting's main speaker was Peter R. Livingston, who read off the names of a

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[55] American Minerva, Apr. 21, 1796.

[56] Diary of A. Anderson, NYHS, Apr. 22, 1796; letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Apr. 22, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

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group of distinguished men who were to make up a committee in opposition to the treaty and to gather information on that subject for public consumption. A counter-petition was also to be circulated expressive of the meeting's resolves. The meeting, however, proved still-born as questions about it began to be raised. The list of distinguished men who agreed to serve on the committee was never published, and it was rumored, a number of them had already signed the petition in favor of the treaty. As for the counter-petition, it, too, died aborning. In New York City, at least, the battlefield of activity and accomplishment had been won by the Federalists. Whether they would win thewar as well was a question that was still filled with much uncertainty.[57]

Republican nervousness and unease did not decrease as reports of Federalist activity in the cities increased and as the pro-treaty petitions began to pour in to Congress. Now that they had the momentum, the pro-treaty forces refused to relax it for a moment. The

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[57] Argus, Apr. 23, 1796; "One of the Meeting," Daily Advertiser, Apr. 26, 1796. That the success of the Federalists in New York City was not a local phenomenon could be seen in a series of letters between leading state and national Federalists at that time. From Virginia, that center of anti-treaty feeling, John Marshall sent a letter to Hamilton, describing how, at an all-day meeting in Richmond with the largest turnout ever, a resolution in favor of the treaty based on national honor and welfare was passed by a majority. Previously, Marshall noted, the pro-treaty forces had feared bringing the issue up. From Albany, General Schuyler reported that he had been busy sending petitions all across the state and was confident of getting vast numbers of signatures; while in Watervliet, New York, Lieutenant-Governor Van Rensselaer announced that he had forwarded to Congress pro-treaty petitions containing 3000 names of substantial farmers and expected to send 3000 more, if necessary. See Marshall to Hamilton, Apr. 25, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 108-09; letter, Schuyler to King, Apr. 1796, NYHS, Van Rensselaer Papers.

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change in mood among the New York merchants and tradesmen within a five day period clearly showed the exhilaration that the petition campaign had produced in them. On April 22, William Constable noted that "our people in trade begin to Suffer . . . from the stagnation of business in Consequence of the Treaty question in Congress." By April 26, Walter Rutherford received reports from Philadelphia that events had taken a much more optimistic turn "after former dismal account." As a result, wheat rose in price, which to Rutherford "denotes the Hopes of our merchants." Even jokes and witticisms seemed to become part of the Federalist repertory. A member of the Calliopean Society produced the following bit of ridicule for private consumption:

> It is reported that all the members of Democratic Societies and opposers of the treaty in general, intend next summer to discard the articles of breeches, and appear litterally [sic] 'Sans Culottes.' This will be a measure perfectly characteristic of that party who have hitherto taken so much pains to expose their nakedness on all occasions.[58]

As rumors of individual flights from the Republican position began to gain credence, even Edward Livingston was forced to answer for his present feelings. Reassuring his eldest brother on "the silly reports" that he intended to vote for the treaty, the younger Livingston restated his position that the treaty was "an ignominious sacrifice" of the national interest, "destructive to our neutrality" and a major step towards "a closer connection with Britain." He therefore continued firm in his determination to oppose treaty execu-

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[58]Letter, William Constable to Mr. Fitzsimmons, Apr. 22 [1796], NYPL; Wm. Constable LB; letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, Apr. 26, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.; "The Medley No. 4," NYPL, Calliopean Society Records.

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tion by every constitutional means in his power. Congressman Livingston could not help but feel, however, that "the agitation of this question will . . . have an unfortunate effect on our Election."[59]

In New York City, where the polls had opened and election week had begun, Thomas Greenleaf still continued in his attempt to tar the opposition with the brush of subservience to British interests, the strongest Republican weapon of the moment. Charging that the merchant groups had spread a war alarm throughout the union in order to force acquiescence in the British treaty, Greenleaf bewailed "the intrigues of a British faction" whose purpose was "to swindle Americans . . . out of every thing that ought to be held dear." Similarly, a communication in the same issue of the Argus accused anyone who could have signed or approved of the Jay treaty of either "blind partiality for Great Britain" or the possessor of "some more corrupt motive."[60]

As the tension built with the now daily expectation of news of a congressional vote, the Federalists answered in kind the Republican charge of subservience to British interests. William Willcocks, returning to the essay wars, pointed out the ties which bound the treaty's opposition to the French interest. Reviewing briefly Franco-American relations, Willcocks noted that among Americans there had always been "a general partiality" in favor of the French Revolution.

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[59]Letter, E. Livingston to R. R. Livingston, Apr. 28, 1796, NYHS, RRL Coll.

[60]Argus, May 2, 1796.

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This, he agreed, was natural and commendable. Unhappily, he continued, a faction developed which wished to involve this country in the European conflict in order to promote the welfare of France regardless of the consequences for the United States. Some of those men were now "in respectable public situations," Willcocks added, pointing a particular finger at Albert Gallatin, whom he called "a foreigner . . . capable of dark and dangerous designs." In sum, Willcocks declared, "all the opposition to the treaty originated, not from principle, but from party spirit and intrigue."[61]

On this note of harsh inter-party condemnation, in which each side accused the other of an English or French bias which acted to the detriment of America's interests, the local Jay Treaty debate among New Yorkers came to a close. All that the people of New York could now do was wait. In actuality, the fate of the treaty appropriations bill had already been decided in the Committee of the Whole of the House of Representatives on April 29 and confirmed in a vote of the House proper on the next day, April 30, 1796. But it was not until May 3 that the news became common knowledge via the newspapers of New York. On that day the Argus printed a simple announcement that the resolution to carry the British treaty into effect was carried by three votes in the House of Representatives. (Actually the key vote had occurred earlier when the House voted down, by the casting vote of Speaker Muhlenberg, a resolution declaring the treaty highly objectionable and unacceptable.) Two days later, Thomas

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[61]William Willcocks, Argus, May 3, 1796.

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Greenleaf, apparently still drained of emotion, merely noted that the question which the House had since determined "has produced more sensibility in the public mind thro' out the Union, and more warmth and debate in that House, than in any other since the commencement of the present government."[62]

Webster, in the Minerva,[63] proved much less reticent in his immediate reaction. On the same day that the news reached New York, Webster contributed a long editorial which began positively--business will revive, the peace of the nation will not be interrupted, American commerce will move more freely--but which soon became a warning to all Americans, whatever their party. The course of the long debate, Webster declared, had "been marked with improper conduct." Webster then repeated an earlier assertion that "the appeal to the people by the disorganizers of the last summer, was a gross violation offered to Freedom of Deliberation, in the constituted authorities." Showing surprising impartiality, Webster also chastised his fellow Federalists for "the recent appeal to the people by the friends of the Constitution," calling it "less improper because it was in favor of an acknowledged Law of the land," but "irregular," nonetheless. Finally, Webster declared that such a resort to the people weakened "the operations of law and constitution" and diminished confidence on all

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[62] Argus, May 3 and May 5, 1796.

[63] Minerva, May 3, 1796. The name of Webster's newspaper was changed on May 2, 1796 from the American Minerva and Evening Advertiser to The Minerva, & Mercantile Evening Advertiser. There was also a change of publisher from George Bunce & Co. to Hopkins, Webb & Co.

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sides in the national government. Two days later, however, Webster allowed himself to be swept up in the general pleasure with which the New York citizenry greeted the House vote. Reporting that not since the days immediately after New York's ratification of the Constitution had the public allowed itself such displays of self-congratulation, Webster declared that approval of the treaty had saved the character of our nation's agreements and would "leave us free and prosperous."[64]

Webster's remarks about the self-congratulatory mood that pervaded the city was confirmed by a spate of private letters whose tone could well be described in that way. William Constable called the decision for carrying the treaty into effect an event "at which all the Commercial parts of America sincerely rejoice." William Rhinelander thought that the voice of the people was responsible for the victory, claiming that the opposition came to believe it "too great a risque of popularity to persist." Describing it as "a great Triump[h] to the friends of order and good government," Rhinelander added that peace and prosperity would be the happy consequence. Gouverneur & Kemble added their voice, announcing "with infinite pleasure" that the treaty has been accepted by the House of Representatives, while James Kent wrote that "the faith of the nation is preserved, the law obeyed and our peace and prosperity confirmed."[65] As for

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[64] Ibid., May 5, 1796.

[65] Letter, William Constable to John Ingles, May 5, [1796], NYPL, Wm. Constable LB; letter, William Rhinelander to C. Robert, May 8, 1796, NYHS, Wm. Rhinelander LB; letter, Gouverneur & Kemble to Hamilton & Reid, May 16, 1796, NYHS, G & K LB; J. Kent to Moss Kent, Jr., May 8, 1796, Horton, James Kent, p. 110. From upstate New York came similar words of rejoicing. See letters from K. K. Van Rens-

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the attitude of those Republicans who were not hard-liners in the anti-treaty struggle, no statement could better express their feelings than the quiet hope of Evert Bancker that the treaty as finally confirmed "may turn out for the good of the United States at large."[66]

With the long and multi-phased battle over the Jay treaty now a part of history, a well-deserved moment of relaxation from tension eased the mind and spirit of the New Yorker. Moment was the key word, however, for a citizenry whose lifeblood depended upon freedom of the seas knew that they could never enjoy true repose until the maritime nations of Europe chose peace over war. Therefore, while Gouverneur and Kemble, for one, greeted the final ratification of the Jay Treaty with extreme pleasure, that mercantile firm included a curious addendum to their praise. Hoping for "uninterrupted" peace with England, Gouverneur and Kemble nevertheless added the caveat, "at least until We have the ability of meeting them if they become an Enemy upon more equal ground for they have become compleat Mistress of the Ocean in defiance of the World." It was this realization of English power, which had begun to dawn upon more and more New Yorkers, which explains in part the change in attitude that led to public acceptance of the Jay Treaty.[67]

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selaer to John Sanders, May 6, 1796, NYHS, John Sanders Papers and Stephen Van Rensselaer to William Cooper, May 6, 1796, NYHS, Wm. Cooper Papers.

[66]Letter, E. Bancker to A. B. Bancker, May 6, 1796, NYHS, Bancker Papers.

[67]Gouverneur & Kemble to Hamilton & Reid, May 16, 1796, NYHS, G & K LB.

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Although Americans might have begun to accept the Jay treaty as part of a world balance-of-power system that stressed reality in politics, it was understandable that the French Minister to the United States could feel only frustration and anger at a defeat that came within a hair's breadth of victory. Labeling "fear and corruption" as the twin pillars of British influence in the United States and seeing only disaster ahead, Adet reported that the friends of France viewed American liberty as strongly menaced. He himself had heard it said that Federalist senators, with John Adams at their head, had spoken loudly enough for others to hear that monarchy was the only government suitable for all the people. The rumor mill even turned out one to the effect that a minority senator had been warned by leading Federalists that as he would not prove to be a good subject, he would either have to have his head cut off or be made king. Adet, reporting this without the least hint that he did not take it with the utmost seriousness, added that "our friends" prophesied a future in which liberty would die little by little, and which would ultimately produce a revolution that would pit the two factions against each other.[68]

"What shall we do?" Adet asked, getting to the heart of the French dilemma. First of all, the French should not break off relations with the American government. That would harm French glory and dignity as well as the interests of the American people. The latter Adet ominously believed ought to be saved by France from oppres-

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[68]Adet to MRF, May 3, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 900-02.

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sion, as France had previously saved the people of Batavia. In addition, since England freely prevented all shipping between the United States and France and no longer followed the rule that "free ships make free goods," France should reciprocate against all American shipping destined for British ports. This would not harm the French position but would serve to discredit the pro-British forces behind the Jay treaty who claimed that France would do nothing even if the treaty passed. If those forces for the British interest then raised an outcry against France, the Republican Party could answer that the mercantile class, filled with former tories and present Anglophiles, had brought their troubles upon themselves. This would redound against both the present American government and the English party that led it. It would also lead to the election of a president friendly to France and liberty. Adet concluded with the assertion that his plan would enable France to regain her power over the American cabinet and force a remaking of the treaty of commerce with the United States.[69]

The American dilemma had now shown through with the utmost clarity. Caught between the haughty "mistress of the seas," who made her own rules of warfare and commerce and expected the world to comply, and the messianic revolutionary "mistress of the European continent," who demanded that all countries be sister republics and place their first allegiance in her hands, the United States faced a for-

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[69] Ibid., 903-05.

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midable decision as to its future course. In such circumstances the American people would have been wise to have allowed themselves to be guided by the words of Noah Webster, which stressed that as a nation we should neither side with France nor Great Britain but be "proud alone of the name of AMERICANS." As a unifying motto for its time it could hardly have been surpassed.[70]

[70] *Minerva*, Jan. 12, 1797.

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CHAPTER XXI

CONCLUSION

> Human knowledge and morals have "exalted the human character to a state of splendid greatness and perfectibility, that no former age has ever yet realised."
>
> Let things "be done soberly, by sober and discreet men, and in due manner, measure, and proportion."

On April 30, 1796 the House of Representatives voted the funds to carry the Jay treaty into effect. Seven years earlier, to the very day, George Washington had been sworn in as first President of the United States by the Chancellor of New York, Robert R. Livingston. Now, as the United States entered its eighth year of existence under its first President, the city where his oath had been administered, as well as the nation, found themselves embarked upon a dangerous period of political transition and change.

In New York, at the beginning of May, Alexander Hamilton was the recipient of new and unpleasant information that would mark a fundamental turning point in Franco-American relations and make a mockery of such pleasantries as the French flag ceremony of January or Consul Rozier's graceful words about rivalry only in virtue. Gouverneur Morris was the source of the bad news. Writing to Hamilton from London, Morris reported that he had heard from an unimpeachable source that the French government was "highly displeased with ours"

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and planned to send a fleet "to our shore with a new minister" who would demand an explanation of American policy. Morris believed that if the French persisted in threats of the nature he had just described, "America will be obliged to take part in the war." It would be "madness" on our part, he declared, to "risk our commerce against the great navy of the world." Moreover, Morris continued, though Americans should always feel kindly towards those (the French) who stepped forward in our defense, albeit "at the bidding of their prince," could we rightly support that French group "which now tyrranizes over France, and reduces her inhabitants to unheard of misery?"[1]

The President, the recipient of a similar letter from Morris, immediately asked Hamilton and Jay for their opinion on the "imperious" manner that the French had taken with this country. Washington also added a verbal assault against "some of our own intemperate people, who seem to have preferred throwing themselves into the arms of France (even under the present circumstances of that country), to that manly and neutral conduct which is so essential, and would so well become us, as an independent nation." Hamilton's reply, after consultation with Jay and other Federalist leaders of New York, was a model of caution. He suggested that President Washington send the French government a calm summation of the American position through the years with a particular stress on the advantages that France had gained from American neutrality. In addition, Hamilton asked that

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[1]Letter, G. Morris to Hamilton, Mar. 4, 1796, as included in a letter of Hamilton to Washington, May 5, 1795 [misdated]. Works of Hamilton, V, 634-35.

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France be reminded of American economic aid that would have been impossible if we had not remained neutral and of "the merely peace views which influenced our treaty with Great Britain."[2]

This dangerous situation was discussed from the French point of view in two letters that Minister Adet sent to his superiors in mid-June. Adet first noted that the news that France might send an envoy-extraordinary to the United States backed up by a naval force had visibly upset the American government. Adet then reported on a meeting between Washington and Senator William Blount in which Washington was quoted as saying that if war should break out between France and the United States the fire would have been lighted by the francophiles of this country--people who would not be satisfied until the United States had become a department of France. When, shortly thereafter, news arrived that the Directory had cancelled its plans to send a fleet and an envoy-extraordinary, Adet reported that it had produced "great relief" in government circles and among members of "the English party." This led the French Minister once again to remind his government that only by the most firm and consistent conduct could the Directory force the United States to honor its responsibilities to France and return to that happy relationship which once existed between the two republics.[3]

In the midst of the worsening Franco-American situation, which would lead before the end of the year to a break in diplomatic

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[2]Washington to Hamilton, May 8, 1796, and Hamilton to Washington, May 20, 1796, Ibid., VI, 117-18, 122-25.

[3]Adet to MFR, June 9 and June 16, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 919-21, 922, 924.

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relations, other changes were in the works. Two of the changes involved the diplomatic representation between the United States and England. A new British ambassador arrived in New York on May 2 to the sounds of "a mutual Salute of guns."[4] The Minister, Robert L. Liston, reached New York at a most propitious time for furthering an increasingly satisfactory Anglo-American relationship. Liston proved astute enough to be able to take advantage of the changing situation he found in this country, turning out to be an excellent replacement for the American-baiting George Hammond.[5] Walter Rutherford, for one, was immediately pleased by the ambassador, a fellow Scotsman, who was made an honorary member of the St. Andrew's Society and given a small dinner party by Governor Jay. Rutherford reported that "little of politics" was discussed but enough so that Liston could "discover we were all Feds and friends of the Treaty."[6] At about the same time, Rufus King, tired of Senatorial "drudgery" and separation from his family, announced his availability for the post of Minister to England. With the New York legislature safely in Federalist hands, King's offer was gladly taken up by the adminis-

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[4]Diary of Henry Laight, NYHS, May 2, 1796.

[5]William Strickland, one of the previously quoted British travelers to this country, after two extended conversations with George Hammond, felt able to confirm what he believed to be a generally held view that Hammond "harboured a most decided dislike to the country, the government, and the people" of the United States. See William Strickland Journal, NYHS, Sept. 22 and Oct. 3, 1794.

[6]W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, May 7, 1796, Family Records and Events, pp. 168-69.

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tration and he sailed for England with his family on June 19, 1796. Writing to a friend in England, William Constable assured him that King carried "the sentiments of Jay and Hamilton with whom He is on the Strictest intimacy." General Schuyler, though regretting the void that would be produced in the Senate by King's departure, believed that King would make the British "sensible how much It is their interest to conciliate our good will."[7]

The description of the character of Rufus King which Minister Adet sent home to Paris was powerfully at odds with the view of King's fellow New York Federalists. King was described as "ambitious" and "dangerous" and one who had risen in society from being the son of a laborer but who was not yet satisfied with his position in life. King, Adet continued, wished to tie the United States strongly to England, thus serving as link between the Court of St. James and the Federalists, or, as Adet called them, the "monarchist party." Adet also repeated a rumor that James Monroe was about to be recalled from France and replaced by Senator Bingham of the "monarchist faction." Happily, Adet concluded, not even Washington would dare to recall Monroe. Adet, however, proved to be wrong, for still another change loomed, with Monroe's recall already in the works and with Charles Cotesworth Pinckney soon to be named to take his place.[8]

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[7]King to Hamilton, and Hamilton to King, May 2 and May 4, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 113, 114; letter, William Constable to Alex. Ellice, June 11, 1796, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB; letter, Schuyler to King, May 23, 1796, NYHS, King Papers.

[8]Adet to MFR, June 19, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 924-26. It was the Directory's refusal to recognize C. C. Pinckney when he reached Paris at the end of the year that precipitated the worst Franco-

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Even more changes and breaks in continuity were in the offing. With the House of Representatives' favorable action on the Jay treaty completed, the Federalists had finally begun to accept the fact that George Washington would really retire at the end of his present term. King reported to Hamilton that discussions had been held to put forward Patrick Henry as a possible Federalist candidate for President. Henry, who had become a firm constitutionalist, was not willing to run, however. King then suggested that Thomas Pinckney be put forward, for the latter's stock had risen greatly due to the successful Spanish treaty that he had negotiated. Pinckney, moreover, expressed a desire to return home after several years abroad in the service of his country. Hamilton's reply, that Pinckney "ought to be our man," set in motion a series of events that would split the Federalist Party into armed camps of Adams and Hamilton supporters and help to turn a viable political entity into a bleeding trunk.[9]

As for the Republicans, they had decided on a Jefferson-Burr ticket by early June, thus creating a combination that would, in not too many years, have a major role to play in the political history of this country. While Jefferson, whom Greenleaf called "that firm Republican statesman" and, more fancifully, "this bright Constella-

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American crisis of the decade. Minister Adet's hostile reports may have added no small amount of fuel to the growing fire between the two nations.

[9]King to Hamilton, and Hamilton to King, May 2 and May 4, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 113, 114. Hamilton's father-in-law, Philip Schuyler, was not yet in on the plan to have the Federalist electors choose Pinckney over Adams for President. In a letter to King, dated May 3, 1796 (NYHS, King Papers), Schuyler asked whether Thomas Pinckney would not add to Adams' support if the former Minister to Great Britain ran for Vice-President on the Federalist ticket.

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tion in the Columbian Hemisphere," was the almost unanimous choice of New York Republicans, Clintonians and Livingstonians greeted the Burr candidacy with a good deal less than total enthusiasm. The Chancellor, in particular, was reported by Walter Rutherford to have been "much displeased" by the selection.[10] The French Minister, however, was satisfied with the Republican ticket. Showing his deep involvement in Republican Party politics, Minister Adet told his government that "our friends [the Republicans] do not doubt their success if the Executive Directory makes known its opinion in the conduct of the Federal government." This would, in Adet's words, give new force to those American leaders who were devoted to the French and show that the past silence of the French government was neither a sign of weakness nor of indifference.[11]

The "Executive Directory" of France did indeed begin to show its power to the American public when a French privateer seized the American merchant ship, Mount Vernon. Bound from Philadelphia to London, the ship and its cargo were estimated by David Gelston to be worth 130,000 dollars. Gelston also reported that the French seizure had "so stagnated business that almost nothing is doing." Instead of blaming the French for this act and for many others that soon followed, staunch Republicans and Francophiles like Gelston defended such French action as being the result of "the treatment they have re-

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[10] Argus, June 17, 1796; letter, W. Rutherford to J. Rutherford, June 27, 1796, NYHS, Rutherford Coll.

[11] Adet to MFR, June 9, 1796, "CFM," AHA, II, 920-21.

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ceived from our government."[12] In other words, the Jay treaty was made the scapegoat for any French activity that flew in the face of their treaty obligations to the United States. New York Federalists came off a good deal better on this occasion as they damned both England and France for their destructive actions against American shipping. As the Daily Advertiser editorialized, it mattered not "from what quarter" the aggression came. If both the English and the French desired to harrass our trade to weaken their opponent or wished to influence American political opinion by their acts, it became all the "more necessary for us to be united." The Daily Advertiser solemnly warned its readers not to "sacrifice tamely at the shrine of foreign politics, their most valuable privileges."[13]

The Daily Advertiser's sensible advice in the face of provocation once again showed the Federalists in single-minded pursuit of their policy of non-involvement--a policy they held to even though the French were the prime aggressors in this instance. Alexander Hamilton, writing to his successor at the Treasury Department, showed

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[12]Letter, Gelston to Colonel Benjamin Hunting, June 16, 1796, NYHS, D. Gelston LB.

[13]Daily Advertiser, June 16, 1796. Federalist exasperation over British depredations had been as strongly felt in March and April, 1796, as their feelings towards French seizures were in June, 1796. For example, Webster had complained of British impressments as the work of "sea robbers" which must "excite universal indignation." (American Minerva, Mar. 16, 1796.) Early in April, William Constable had written to a British correspondent that "your people in the West Indies continue to Pirate our Commerce and to press our Men, when we are able, Will pay you all." (William Constable to John Capper, Mar. 3, [1796], misdated, should be Apr. 3, 1796, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB.) Neither Webster's nor Constable's statements could be remotely considered as the words of a servile follower of the British interest.

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his own careful support of basic Federalist foreign policy when he stressed the highest priority be given to averting war. James Monroe had to be replaced but his successor should be someone who was "not yet obnoxious to the French, and has been understood formerly to have had some kindness towards their revolution." Though admitting it to be an unusual step, Hamilton suggested that the President write a letter to the Directory "explaining the policy by which he has been governed, and assuring [France] of the friendship" of this country. Above all, Hamilton reminded Oliver Wolcott, and through him, the entire Executive Branch of government, "the favorable opinion" of the American people had to be secured "as a primary motive of action." Hamilton well understood that government action, whether against France or anyone else, could not be successfully carried off without the consent of the governed.[14]

While these events of national concern continued to arouse New Yorkers to passionate feelings and divisions, local activities served ceaselessly to reinforce those passions. The Tammany Society, considering its officers, general membership and anniversary toasts, was now solidly in the Republican camp and may well have begun to play a policy making role for that party. For its anniversary festival on May 12, 1796, the Society requested that the captains of French and American vessels in the harbor display the Tammany colors in honor of the day.[15] Tammany even went so far as to request that Governor Jay

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[14]Hamilton to Wolcott, June 15, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 130-31.

[15]Argus, May 11, 1796.

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"order the flags on Governor's Island and also on the Battery, to be hoisted," also in honor of the day. The Governor turned down the request while expressing the hope that the Society, "upon mature reflection," would not wish "arbitrary preferences." One might well guess that the Tammany Society, which now prided itself on being one with the people, did not take kindly to Governor Jay's lecture on proper Republican behavior.[16]

The toasts at the dinner celebration of the Tammany Society were an additional reminder of the divisions that were alive among the New York City citizenry in the spring of 1796. One toast included praise for the Congress of 1776 as the friend of the people "who dared revolt from the corrupt and arbitrary government of England," while another cheered the French Republic, asking that "its enemies be humbled and lukewarm friends and false patriots disenfranchised." Perhaps the most interesting part of the toasting concerned the group of men who received the accolades of the assembled Tammanyites--or rather the one who did not. Citizens Thomas Jefferson, George Clinton, Robert R. Livingston and Edward Livingston were toasted but Aaron Burr

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[16]Jay to the Tammany Society, May 11, 1796, Papers of Jay, IV, 213. Governor Jay spent a busy spring denying requests of New York organizations for special privileges. The Tammany Society, which was possibly the best known organization in New York City, was at one end of the spectrum. At the other was the short-lived New York Hibernian Volunteers which was formed on January 12, 1796 for the purpose of forming a "Military Corps to assist in the defence and Protection of the United States its Constitution & Laws against all Enemies whether Foreign or Domestic." The last official entry in the Society's records was dated March 17, 1796. On that date a deputation was sent to Governor Jay respecting the Volunteers' request to be allowed to dress themselves in fancy grass green, yellow and white uniforms. The Governor forbade "any further progress in geting [sic] any more uniforms of the Color we had chose . . . and thus ended the New York Hibernian Volunteers." See NYHS, Records of the New York Hibernian Volunteers.

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received no mention from this Society which some supposed to have already been under Burrite domination.[17]

Aaron Burr, about to become Jefferson's running mate in the Presidential campaign of 1796, had run for the position of New York State Senator from the Southern District in the election that had been held the last week in April. By early June the results of the state elections were tabulated and showed another elective defeat for Burr. The latter, however, was not alone, for the Republican failure was almost total as the Federalists swept to a massive state-wide victory. Since the campaign had fallen in the midst of the Jay Treaty battle the results seemed to indicate strong public support for that document and for a peaceful resolution of Anglo-American difficulties. In New York City, the Federalist State Senate candidate, James Watson, won over Burr by a margin of 1534 votes. The size of the victory can be told in terms of a simple comparison: the Federalist State Senate margins in the previous two years had been 397 and 360 votes, respectively. As for the State Assembly margins, the difference between the lowest Federalist candidate and the highest Republican was 290 votes. This was consistent with the totals of the two previous years, despite the enlivening presence of William Keteltas as a Republican Assembly candidate. Measured on a state-wide basis, the Federalist victory was as complete as possible in a viable two-party system.[18] William Constable wrote elatedly to an English friend

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[17] *Argus*, May 11, 1796.

[18] *Minerva*, June 3 and June 4, 1796.

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that "out of upwards of 100 Senators and Representatives not more than 16--have been chosen of the Democratic Party." To Constable, this showed "in the strongest manner the Publick opinion." William Rhinelander summed it up when he reported to a West Indian friend that the "Treaty Business went down at last handsomely" and the Federalists had won their "most decided majority . . . since the Establishment of our Constitution." In a moralistic mood, Rhinelander concluded that the destroyers were destroyed--"'the wicked shall be taken in their own Land'--Amen, so be it."[19]

"How enviable the tranquility [sic] of our country, flourishing in the midst, as it were, of those contending parties!" The "contending parties" referred to in this Daily Advertiser editorial of June 21, 1796 were England and France. The two other sets of contending parties, however, made it most unlikely that either Americans or New Yorkers would be able to retain much of their new found tranquillity during the months immediately following the date of the Daily Advertiser's editorial. On both the national and local levels, the contentions of Federalists and Democratic-Republicans played havoc with the serenity of the nation, while on the local scene the contending forces, as represented by Webster and his Minerva and Greenleaf and his Argus, kept up a steady stream of anxiety-producing disagreements. In early 1797, both newspapers produced editorial summaries of their political and social positions that can stand today

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[19]Letter, William Constable to John Ingles, June 15, 1796, NYPL, Wm. Constable LB; William Rhinelander to C. Robert [undated, but internal evidence places the letter in June, 1796], NYHS, Wm. Rhinelander LB.

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as basic presentations of the point of view that each represented.

By March, 1797, much more had occurred to make a rupture in Franco-American relations a distinct possibility. French seizures of American ships had become an everyday act of harrassment and destruction. James Monroe had been recalled but his replacement, C. C. Pinckney, had not yet been accepted by the French government and, in fact, would not be. The French Minister, Pierre Adet, had announced the suspension of full diplomatic relations with the United States, but remained in the country in order to inject himself into the presidential campaign. Coming down hard on the Democratic-Republican side, Adet attempted to swing the election to Jefferson by publishing a review of Franco-American relations that blamed the Federalists for the events that turned friends into enemies. Adet failed to make Jefferson President but he did arouse the Federalist Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering, who produced a detailed rebuttal that dealt harshly with French pretensions for favored treatment and did much to exacerbate even further the tensions between the two nations. Finally, George Washington's retirement left a void in the prestige of the office of President that an Adams-Jefferson pairing and an Adams-Hamilton split would do little to restore. In the midst of these new and pressing anxieties, Greenleaf and Webster stated those firm foreign policy beliefs that now governed the rival parties.

In the last of a series of articles entitled To the People of the United States, Noah Webster discussed the general Federalist view that American peace and independence depended upon our continued detachment from Europe and its influence. To explain the basis for this

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policy, Webster reviewed the stages of his changing position on the French Revolution. Going back to the assembling of the Estates General and its "glorious object" of reforming the French government and raising the French people "from their degraded state of vassalage," Webster recalled an original feeling of exultation in those events and pleasure in their success. His faith "in the goodness of the cause and the purity of the intentions of the reformers continued unabated," Webster declared, until late in the year 1792. It was then, he asserted, that France developed "the impious project" of spreading the revolution to other countries which were both independent and unwilling to join with the French. Nevertheless, Webster continued, he still held to a "belief in the utility of the revolution," found reasons to excuse its increasing violence, and could not believe that France would force its views down the throats of free countries and allies. The Genêt mission to the United States, however, "compelled" him to abandon his belief in the special sanctity of French actions.[20]

The activities of Genêt and the later representatives of the French nation left no doubt in Webster's mind that the French wished "to gain a controling [sic] interest over all nations" in order to humiliate their rivals and add to the glory of their own republic." In the United States, Webster asserted, this led to the establishment of the popular societies which were ultimately to defy constitutional

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[20]"To the People of the United States, signed W.," Minerva, Mar. 1, 1797.

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authority. Webster compared those clubs to political Jesuits, disciplined to the orders of chiefs whose views were concealed even from the members themselves. The democratic societies, however, alarmed the public through leadership in such events as the Whisky Rebellion, which opened up "the insidious wiles of our secret foes" for all to see. Once the public understood the danger, the danger was past. Now the people were becoming undeceived about the present object of the French government. They were beginning to see that though the French began the revolution "with honest views of acquiring their rights-- . . . they have overleaped this limit, and are contending for plunder and for empire." Those who once rejoiced as French arms overran Germany, Italy and Holland, now felt the wounds themselves and began to acknowledge that they were deceived as to the views of the French. To Webster the seizure of one hundred and fifty American ships "has done what the insults of French Ministers here could not do; it has brought Americans to their senses." This meant, he added, that Americans now esteemed and confided in the French "as little as they do in the English, the Russians and Spaniards." Webster concluded by proudly noting that the incessant object of his labors had begun to bear fruit. As a result of this new understanding, a mature American citizenry "will be free and our republic an independent and respected nation."[21]

Thomas Greenleaf used his Argus as the sounding board for views so diametrically opposed to those of Webster that conciliation

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[21] Ibid.

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was an object that now seemed out of the reach of mortal powers. Surveying the European scene, Greenleaf pronounced a benediction upon the gains of the French republican forces against the "coalesced despots." All who have "an Idea of an over-ruling providence," he exclaimed, know that "the God of Joshua leads the republican bands." Completely reversing Webster's description of recent European events, Greenleaf explained the deaths of hundreds of thousands of fellow mortals as the result of being sacrificed in support of tyranny's "claim of right to impose on an independent nation [France] a government that it wills not!" At home, Greenleaf described a gloomy political scene in which he pictured the federal government as attempting to separate this country from our old ally. Waxing biblical again, Greenleaf reviewed the steps whereby British spoliations "begat" a British treaty, which in turn "begat a French order to treat us as we suffer the British to treat us." Our task, Greenleaf declared, should have been to hold our friendship with France "most dear," even though that would not be to the liking of the British faction. Rousing himself to a mood of increased excitement, Greenleaf called upon the friends of the equal rights of man and the representatives of a free people to "spurn" British influence "and remember 1776!" Greenleaf's conclusion warned not against entanglements with the world but against Britain and aristocracy. Let us support republicanism, Greenleaf asserted, "nor suffer British influence to contaminate the principle." Only then, he summed up, shall we "hand to posterity a boon which exceeds all price."[22]

[22]Argus, Jan. 2, 1797.

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If Webster and Greenleaf spoke for the opposing political forces that guided the nation's policies, two other persons summed up the abstract differences in spirit that separated the two groups as surely as did any specific policy iss One of the two was Tunis Wortman, the Republican theorist, who gave a lengthy oration "on the Influence of Social Institutions upon Human Morals and Happiness" before the Tammany Society gathered at the Old Presbyterian Church on May 12, 1796. The other was the Governor of New York, John Jay, who wrote of his own theoretical views of mankind in a letter to the English merchant, William Vaughan.[23]

Wortman, the chief thinker behind the New York Democratic Society's Preamble and Constitution, briefly noted the European situation when he recalled to his listeners the attempts by the "tyrant," George III, to tyrannize over Americans and reminded them of that monarch's pursuit of "a war of extermination against a great and generous nation [France], because they nobly burst the chains of slavery, and with one voice magnanimously resolved TO LIVE FREE OR DIE."[24] One might note here how even the language of the Democratic-Republicans changed when France and her revolution were mentioned. Even the simplest thought became cause for a full-scale apostrophe to liberty and reason, couched in the most emotionally-charged language. Praise of France, however, was only a side matter in Wortman's oration. His

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[23]Tunis Wortman, An Oration on the Influence of Social Institutions Upon Human Morals and Happiness, delivered before the Tammany Society . . . on the Twelfth of May, 1796 (New York: C. C. Van Allen & Co., 1796); Jay to William Vaughan, May 26, 1796, Papers of Jay, IV, 215-16.

[24]Wortman, An Oration, p. 15.

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main theme was the expression of the eighteenth century "liberal" viewpoint that human knowledge had reached new heights unexpected years before by even the greatest optimists and that a moral light had "exalted the human character to a state of splendid greatness and perfectibility, that no former age has ever yet realised or experienced."[25]

Wortman put his faith in man's perfectibility because he saw human kind as the end product of education and society. It was through evil political establishments and social environment that mankind was debased. Mankind's leaders should therefore work for the improvement of man through a constant improvement in his social environment. This could only be accomplished, according to Wortman, in a democratic society. By this he meant a representative democracy, which Wortman called the basic hope on which "the amelioration of the conditions of the world must be rested." In such a society only two means would exist of acquiring "superior influence and distinction --the possession of exemplary virtue, and the possession of extraordinary talents."[26] Merit alone had to be the guide of a true and good society. Filled with his own visions of a world of order and beauty, Wortman closed his joyous glimpse into the capabilities of man in a paroxysm of utopian fancy. When Republican principles will rule the earth and virtue and talent be the only distinction among men, then all will flourish and war, persecution and superstition will disap-

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[25] Ibid., p. 3.

[26] Ibid., pp. 4-6, 12n, 18.

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pear. Commerce, "unrestrained by treaties, and unshackled by partial provisions, will become as extensive as the wants and intercourse of nations." First, however, all men must become teachers so that their children will learn "to reverence TRUTH, LIBERTY and JUSTICE" even more than they regard Constitutions.[27]

How similar and yet how different was John Jay's summation of his own views on man and his perfectibility. Many of the same beliefs were present in Jay's thoughts but tone, feeling and temperament were worlds apart. Jay also expected that the millennium would ultimately come, but his optimism was strongly tempered by a view of human nature that made him unwilling to put much faith in man's reason as a weapon against his governing passions and prejudices. Jay also did not believe that any one form of government was most suitable for all mankind. Just as he would "not think that man wise who should employ his time in endeavoring to contrive a shoe that would fit every foot," Jay did not see the wisdom of those who expected that one government "would suit every nation." Moreover, he minded those who insisted on mending his shoes or his government to suit their own changing fancies. All men, great and small, should be equally free to enjoy the same rights, but nothing struck Jay as more ludicrous "than projects to stretch little men into big ones, or shrink big men into little ones." Even liberty and reformation might run mad, "and madness of any kind was no blessing." Nevertheless, Jay granted that there was a time for change and reformation just as there was a time

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[27] Ibid., pp. 24-25, 30.

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for standing still and contemplation. What he contended for, he insisted, was that things "be done soberly, by sober and discreet men, and in due manner, measure and proportion." Jay admitted that that could not always be the case, which was regrettable. He concluded, however, with his temperamental trademarks of sobriety and of proportion: "we must take men and things as they are, and act accordingly--that is, circumspectly."[28]

Here then was one of the keys--the difference in temperament that separated Federalists and Republicans. Realism and idealism seemed to be their respective fortes and the writings of Jay and Wortman, among others, constantly brought those differences home. How could those who believed that mankind's millennial dream was a distinct and near possibility ever doubt for long that the torch of liberty was capable of being passed from people to people so that a world-wide chain of representative democracies were within the world's grasp? How could they, as well, deny that France and her revolution--in all its phases--was a good and necessary part of the drive for utopia? Thus, support of the French Revolution and its world-wide effects was the sine qua non of Democratic-Republican belief.

Conversely, Federalists, who could not share in such a wholehearted belief in man's imminent perfectibility were much more prone to agree that each country had the right to choose the system that best suited them. Were not republics the same as other governments in that they, too, were made up of men? In fact, since representative

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[28]Jay to William Vaughan, May 26, 1796, Papers of Jay, IV, 215-16.

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republics were even more dependent upon the virtue of the populace at large, how could Federalists demand that this be the form of government for all parts of a world that was still basically sunk in ignorance and superstition? When messianic revolutionary France turned from protection of its own borders and a preservation of its Republican gains to a demand that all nations either follow the French lead or be forced to do so, the Federalists found it increasingly difficult to distinguish between France and all other expansionist nations, whatever their form of government. Therefore, when Thomas Jefferson, in his first inaugural address as President, declared that "We are all Republicans, we are all Federalists," he could not have been referring to those temperamental and spiritual differences which separated the membership of both parties and which continues to separate their present day successors more truly than any other factor.

With the installation of the Directory in France and with the completion of the battle over the Jay treaty in the United States, an end had come to the Franco-American world that had been set in motion in the spring of 1789 by events in New York City and Paris. As a result, it is now possible to attempt a summary of the influence of the French Revolution on the existing and developing political structures, attitudes and life in the city of New York during those first years under the Constitution.

First of all, a close study of the era discloses that there was no anti-French group of major size in New York City throughout this period, nor was there, conversely, a major pro-British force

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among New Yorkers. Those who became Federalists and Republicans were both strong original supporters of the French Revolution, although one might note a miniscule group of philosophical Federalists[29] who early questioned the directon of that revolution in the manner of an Edmund Burke. A strong division did appear, however, with the arrival of Genêt and the growing expansionist tendencies of the revolutionary French government. But--and this distinction is of key importance--it was a division based upon the question of support for the revolutionary governments of France, particularly the Montagnard regime, and not a distinction based upon the support of France against the combined powers. The love of New Yorkers for France held fast throughout this period, if only as an abstraction, but feelings severely divided over the question of support for the acts of the revolutionary French governments, both domestically and internationally, and the insistence by some that the fate of the United States was both mystically and literally tied to the fate of France. The word "Jacobin," by the middle years of the decade, had become a pejorative and even libelous term with which to designate one's enemy. To critics, "Jacobinism" as a concept had come to stand for all that was considered despicable about the events of the Revolution.

As for the effect of the French Revolution on the development of political parties in New York throughout this period, the key word is catalyst. Questions over Hamilton's financial policies, the power of the federal government, and John Adams' supposed aristocratic views

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[29]The miniscule but influential group of philosophical Federalists of New York consisted of Alexander Hamilton and Gouverneur Morris.

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were major issues by the time of the Presidential campaign of 1792. The French Revolution was not. After the deposition of the monarchy and the outbreak of the European war, however, French revolutionary events helped to accelerate a growing pattern of division which ultimately resulted in the appearance of full-fledged political parties. Events such as Genêt's interference in domestic American politics, the involvement of other French diplomats in American affairs, the rise of Jacobinism in France and the appearance of the democratic societies in the United States all served to spur the development of political parties in New York and the nation. British spoliations against American shipping added their part to an atmosphere ripe for division. All had been in readiness, therefore, when the Jay treaty burst upon the scene and made New York and the other leading coastal cities into major political battlegrounds where each side could view the other as either the "English" or the "French" party. Thus, the French Revolution, and even more importantly, the war of the "combined despots" against the French Republic, played a major role in transforming the crucial battle--that of the federal government in maintaining American neutrality, whatever the cost, in the face of a pro-French sentiment of rip-tide proportions--into a party matter of national significance. Out of such crises do major turning points arise. Out of this crisis grew the national party system.

The development of local party organization in New York followed along similar lines although it evolved ahead of the national system. The first phase of local party development covered the years 1789-1792. During this period there were no formal parties but a

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general divergence of opinion based on one's approach to the Constitution and to both family and federal-state relationships. Opponents called each other federalists or anti-federalists. There was also a tendency to form behind a leader for an election and remain together for the campaign. This tendency reached its culmination in the New York gubernatorial campaign of 1792 when the terms Clintonians and Jayites were used to represent those two bitterly opposed political forces. The second phase, in New York City, appeared as a result of that harsh gubernatorial election and its even harsher aftermath, as a result of the campaign for Vice-President, and the increasingly strong division over Hamilton's financial policies, and finally, as a result of an aggressive republican France represented in the United States in the person of Citizen Genêt. During this period, lasting until the spring of 1794, the terms "Federalist" and "Republican" were used by this writer to designate the developing political groups. The "party" titles were placed within quotation marks because they were self-descriptive terms without any official sanction. In New York City the words Federalist or Federal Republican and Republican or Real Republican were used officially for the first time in the local election campaign of April 1794. From that point on it seemed logical to drop the quotation marks that surrounded the terms of party designation. The third phase, which was marked by the appearance of local parties with more than rudimentary organizational continuity, was underway.

As a second addendum to the local political battles of the 1790's, a powerful combination of New York merchants, mechanics and

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tradesmen formed the basis of support for that policy which kept alive trade with England and made certain that neutrality was warmly supported. Interestingly, the upper and middle levels of mechanics and tradesmen were firm supporters of the Federalist Party throughout those years. Among Republicans, only Edward Livingston seemed capable of gaining major backing from these two groups. As for the General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of New York, that organization was one of the major forces behind the continued success of the Federalist Party in the city during much of the first decade under the Constitution, sharing fully in the patronage and the commercial prosperity of that period.

Another political point in relation to the Federalists of New York was that they presented anything but that cliché-ridden picture of a band of wealthy aristocrats who met quietly and secretly to control events in the city and nation. The leadership of both parties was very much the same in background, but it was the Federalist leadership, under the direction of Alexander Hamilton, that turned out to be the innovative force in New York politics. Political committees of correspondence, political rallies and political buttonholing were stocks-in-trade of the Federalists. Republicans copied and ultimately saw these tactics through to their logical political conclusions, while the Federalists retired in fright from the consequences of actions which smacked too much of mob rule and anarchy. As the Federalists developed a fear of the mob through events in France, Pennsylvania, and even in the state Assembly meeting in City Hall during the Keteltas affair, their spirit of innovation and rol-

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led-up sleeves disappeared, with only Alexander Hamilton left on the street-corner trying to drum up votes.

Intertwined with the politics of public meetings, rallies, petitions, and the like, was the broader question of the right of the public to influence their elected representatives during their terms of office. When the Federalists drew back from direct action politics, they also drew back from the view that the people had the right to influence representatives between elections. The Republicans, late starters in this area of activity, found such direct action most suited to their developing philosophy that the people most certainly had the right to rule directly through their representatives. The Republicans received ideological buttressing for this view from the Democratic societies. In New York, the local Democratic Society firmly developed the concept of direct legislative responsibility to the people during the crisis period of March and April, 1794.

Those societies, the subject of great controversy then and now, were, in my view, formed in direct response to French revolutionary fervor and the influence of Citizen Genêt. France was not the only influence on these clubs--English societies and our own revolutionary experience played important roles--but the general belief at the time and the words of the participants clearly seem to indicate that without the French Revolution there would have been no Democratic societies.

These societies rose and fell in power and prestige in a matter of a few years. In New York, the Democratic Society helped give ideological focus and organizational strength to the local Re-

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publican Party. The leadership of the Democratic Society, in its first several years, included men of the highest Republican caliber in the city of New York. When that organization came under severe attack, however, it lost much of its respectability and its most important leaders. Where did those dedicated Republicans go? Once again controversy wreathes the possible answers. At that moment, the winter of 1795, a major argument over President Washington's attack against "self-created" societies tore apart the non-partisan, non-political Tammany Society. I believe that gradually, over a period of several years, Tammany became the home of many of those same leading Republican Party figures. Certainly Tammany's toasts changed startlingly by the spring of 1795, gaining a strong Republican flavor. The toasts that the Democratic Society once delivered, filled with a theoretical and ideological fervor, were now the toasts given by the Tammany Society. Tammany did lose membership and it did lose prestige after the walk-out of the Federalists but it did provide a "wigwam" and a viable organization in which like-minded Republicans could meet and devise plans. By 1796 a number of the leadership positions of the Democratic and Tammany Societies of New York were held by the same men. By 1798 the Democratic Society disappeared. The Tammany Society was the logical place for the New York Republicans to set up shop.

Among the greatest pleasures of the New Yorker, regardless of party affiliation, were the city's newspapers. Remarkably, for a town of 40,000 people, upwards of seven daily, bi- tri- and weekly newspapers were supported each year throughout the first constitution-

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al decade. Though the editors might have interjected that the public loved their handiwork more than their monetary compensation showed, there can be no gainsaying the fact that seven newspapers were published throughout the year 1794, four of which were dailies. The Republicans liked to complain that the press was overwhelmingly Federalist, but the facts do not bear out that oft-repeated statement. Using the year 1794 as a sample year, there were three Federalist newspapers, the American Minerva, the Daily Advertiser and the Daily Gazette and three Republican newspapers, the Journal, the Diary and the Columbian Gazetteer. In addition, there was one weekly newspaper, the Weekly Museum, which was literary rather than political or mercantile in its orientation. Not one of those papers, however, opposed the French Revolution. Greenleaf's Journal tended to support every twist and turn of French policy over the years, while Loudon's Diary was only slightly behind the Journal in its fervor for all things French. The Columbian Gazetteer also lent firm support but strongly objected to the reign of terror, which they accused Robespierre of bringing to France. As for the three Federalist newspapers, time and time again they made clear their support of a revolution that freed the French people from "vassalage," ignorance, and superstition. The Federalist newspapers differed from the Republican prints, however, in that they expressed a clear-cut objection to domestic and international Jacobinism and to the growing interference of the French government in the internal affairs of other countries. It is certain, however, that no New York newspaper could have survived during those years, whether it was Federalist or Republican, if it had not provided

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New Yorkers with the latest French military news or if it had shown a decided anti-French bias.

The final two points to be discussed are really opposite sides of the same coin--the theoretical and practical differences between Federalists and Republicans. In terms of theory or philosophy Federalists could not temperamentally accept a utopia-oriented philosophy based on the near approach of the millennium. Mankind was filled with too many flaws to allow for such hopes to take wing. Mankind was capable of improvement but a long, slow process remained. In addition, government had to be carefully circumscribed with laws and constitutions in order to prevent the double threat of anarchy and mob rule. Temperamentally, Republicans were the direct opposite. Fervent believers in man's perfectibility and the millennial dream, they saw Republicanism as the great emancipator which would break the chains of superstition, ignorance, and tyranny and give the people the power to control their own destinies.

Republicans and Federalists also differed in their approach to foreign policy. Here we see the practical distinctions that their theories wrought. By 1796 the Federalists had developed a full-blown "America-first" position--a viewpoint which Alexander Hamilton summerized, as he did so often for the Federalists of New York and America, in a classic manner: "We are laboring hard to establish in this country principles more and more national, and free from all foreign ingredients, so that we may be neither 'Greeks nor Trojans,' but truly Americans."[30] Though this stress on neutrality-above-all-

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[30]Hamilton to King, Dec. 16, 1796, Works of Hamilton, VI, 189.

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else could sometimes appear cold-hearted when applied equally to beloved France and hated England, it should be reiterated that the vast majority of New York Federalists felt no "love-lost" for England. They realized, in terms of bread-and-butter issues, that England was more necessary to the commercial well-being of this country than was any other country in the world. Since the New Yorker's well-being depended upon mercantile health, the realistic New Yorker--more often than not the Federal-Republican New Yorker--understood the need to continue, at almost all costs, that economic relationship with England. To the idealistic and moralistic Republican, this often seemed to be a mask for a pro-British, aristocratic and tory attitude. Republican detestation of England was so great that any slighting of France, whether real or imagined, was duly considered an act of betrayal. It was the refusal of the New York Republicans in the spring of 1796 to accept the Jay treaty and neutrality, raising, through their threats to that document, the spectre of war, that led the New York public to hand the Republicans their worst political defeat since the anti-federalist losses in the battle over the Constitution many years before. France might still have been the beloved sister Republic but most New Yorkers had come to see neutrality as their own source of salvation.

One final incident can serve to point up the transformation of feeling that was in the process of occurring throughout the last half of 1796 and the beginning of 1797. In June, 1793, in an attempt to ease the tensions and stop the brawling that had developed in the city as a result of the arrival of British and French naval vessels

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in the harbor, a liberty cap was put up in the Tontine Coffee House. Later, the intertwined French and American flags were added to the cap and a full display was set up. When the French flag was removed by a mischief-maker two years later a stormy public reaction of almost riot proportions followed. A new and more brilliant display was then erected as part of a full-scale public festival. This was where the emblem of Franco-American friendship remained until March 1797. On March 8 of that year Noah Webster suggested that the French flag at the Tontine Coffee House be peaceably taken down and removed forever from sight. Only the American flag should be displayed on American territory, Webster declared, for our independent status required it. If Webster had made such a declaration even a year before he would have faced the most serious sort of public condemnation. Two days later, however, another flag incident gave Webster a chance to reiterate his point and also show his own neutrality. This time, the English flag, painted on a card with its American counterpart, "was affixed to the side of the Exchange Room" in the Coffee House. Webster wrote that he could not believe that it might have been the work of an American for "it is a low pitiful business, equalled only by the meanness of putting up a French flag." Given the opportunity Webster made the most of it as he asked Americans if they did "not blush for your servility . . . plundered as your merchants are by both flags, whenever it suits their interest?" Sternly he inquired as to when Americans would "unite under their own flag, and learn to be a nation?"[31]

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[31] *Minerva*, Mar. 8 and Mar. 10, 1797.

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APPENDIX

LIST OF SOURCES FOR QUOTATIONS USED TO HEAD DISSERTATION PARTS AND CHAPTERS

Part I, "Hortensio," New York Magazine, II (Sept., 1791), 532.

Chapter II, "Ode Sung on the Arrival of the President of the United States," New York Journal, Apr. 30, 1789.

Chapter III, Conversation with Thomas Jefferson, Aug. 13, 1791, The Papers of Alexander Hamilton, ed. by Harold C. Syrett and Jacob E. Cooke (15 vols.; New York: Columbia U. Press, 1961-), IX, 34.

Part II, Chapter V, Alexander Hamilton to William Short, Feb. 5, 1793, Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 7.

Chapter VI, Letter, John Armstrong to Horatio Gates, Mar. 14, 1793, New York Historical Society, Gates Papers.

Part III, John Steele to Alexander Hamilton, Apr. 30, [1793], Papers of Hamilton, XIV, 359.

Chapter VII, Comte d'Hauterive to Minister of Foreign Affairs, June 14, 1793, as quoted in Roger L. Williams, "Three Papers Pertaining to the Genêt Affair," New York Historical Society Quarterly, XXXIII (Apr., 1949), 89.

Chapter VIII, Edmond Genêt to Minister of Foreign Affairs, Aug. 2, 1793, "Correspondence of the French Ministers to the United States, 1791-97," ed. by Frederick J. Turner, Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1903 (2 vols.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1904), II, 235.

Chapter IX, Letters, A. J. Dallas to Albert Gallatin, Nov. 8, 1793, NYHS, Albert Gallatin Papers, and James Constable to William Constable, Nov. 2, 1793, NYHS, William and James Constable LB.

Part IV, Chapter X, Letter, George Clinton to Cornelia Clinton, Jan. 18, 1794, NYHS, Genêt Papers.

Chapter XI, "Constitution of the Democratic Society of the City of New York," New York Journal, Feb. 19, 1794.

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A week later the newspapers carried reports of further activities at the Tontine Coffee House where the French and American flags still hung entwined with the cap of liberty. Apparently the proprietor of the house decided to take down the plaque and did indeed do so. An attempt was then made to "reinstate it" but the attempt failed. A brawl resulted and the city watch was forced to arrest several of those involved. The actions of the proprietor were sustained, however, and the entwined flags never returned to their place of honor at the Tontine Coffee House.[32] Here was the true sign of the distance which relations between the two nations had travelled since the heyday of Franco-American intimacy. New Yorkers' feelings towards France would have many ups and downs in the years to come but the relationship would never again contain the same intensity of emotion that so extraordinarily held New Yorkers in its thrall during the years when Washington was President and the great French Revolution held sway in the world of the Atlantic Civilization.

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[32] Register of the Times, Mar. 17, 1797. The Register of the Times was the weekly edition of the Diary.

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Chapter XII, Letter, Abraham Bancker to Evert Bancker, Apr. 9, 1794, NYHS, Bancker Papers.

Part V, Chapter XIII, Samuel B. Webb to James Nicholson, May 18, 1794, Correspondence and Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb, ed. by Worthington C. Ford, 3 vols. (New York: n.p., 1893), III, 194.

Chapter XV, "Electioneering," Calliopean Society Records, New York Public Library, Apr. 8, 1795.

Part VI, Letter, William Constable to Robert Morris, Aug. 10, 1795, NYPL, William Constable Letterbook.

Chapter XVI, A Gentleman of Connecticut [Lemuel Hopkins], The Democratiad (Philadelphia: Thomas Bradford, 1796) as reprinted in The Magazine of History, vol. 29, no. 3 (Extra Number 115), 58.

Chapter XVIII, William Linn, A Discourse delivered on 26 November 1795 (New York: T. & J. Swords, 1795), p. 29.

Part VII, Chapter XIX, Argus, Apr. 13, 1796.

Chapter XX, Minerva, Jan. 12, 1797.

Chapter XXI, Tunis Wortman, An Oration on the Influence of Social Institutions Upon Human Morals and Happiness, delivered before the Tammany Society . . . on the Twelfth of May 1796 (New York: C. C. Van Alen & Co., 1796), p. 3; John Jay to William Vaughan, May 26, 1796, Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay, ed. by Henry P. Johnson (4 vols.; New York: n.p., 1890), IV, 216.

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Anderson, Alexander

Anderson, John

Anspach and Rogers

Armstrong, John

Bailey, Theodorus

Bancker Family

Banyar

Bard, Samuel

Bauman, Sebastian

Bayard-Boudinot-Pintard

Bayard, Nicholas, Jr.

Bayard, William

Beekman Family

Benson Family

Bogert, Rudolphus

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Boudinot, Elias

Boudinot, Elisha

Broome, John

Burr, Aaron

Carroll, Anthony

Clarkson, Matthew

Clinton, DeWitt

Cock, Andrew

Colden, Cadwallader

Constable William

Cooper, William

Cozine, John

Cruger, Henry

Cruger, Nicholas

Dallas, A. J.

d'Hauterive, Alexandre Comte

De Peyster

de Wolf, C. J. M.

Duane, James

Fairlie, James

Fish, Nicholas

Gallatin, Albert

Gates, Horatio

Gelston, David

Gelston and Saltonstall

Genêt

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Giles, Aquila

Gouverneur and Kemble

Harison, Richard

Hicks, Isaac

Hobart, John Sloss

Hoffman, J. O.

Jay, John

Jones, Samuel

King, Rufus

Laight, Henry

Lamb, John

Lansing, John, Jr.

Lawrence [Laurence], John

Lawrence, Jonathan

Leake, John G.

Lenox, Robert

LeRoy, Herman

Lewis, Morgan

Livingston, Robert R. and Family

Loudon, Samuel

Low, Nicholas

Lynch and Stoughton

McKesson, John

Macomb, Alexander

Mersereau, Joshua

Mitchill, Samuel Latham

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Morris, James

Morris, Richard

Morton, John

Neilson, William

Nicholson, James

Niles, Nathaniel

North, William

Osgood, Samuel

Pintard, John

Platt, Richard

Post, Jotham, Jr.

Ray, Cornelius

Rhinelander, William

Rivington, James

Rodgers, John

Rogers, John

Rutgers, Henry

Rutherford

Sands, Comfort

Schuyler, Philip J.

Schuyler and Jones Families

Seton, William

Smith, John

Smith, Melancton

Smith, William S.

Stevens, Ebenezer

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Stewart and Jones

Strickland, William

Strong Family

Tillotson, Thomas

Townsend Family

Troup, Robert

Van Gaasbeck, Peter

Van Rensselaer

Van Schaack, Henry

Van Schaack, Peter

Van Vechten

Varick, Richard

Watson, Elkanah

Watson, James, Jr.

Watts Family

Webster, Noah, Jr.

Willett, Marinus

In the New York Public Library:

Backus, R. and J.

Bayard-Campbell-Pearsall

Clinton, DeWitt

Clinton, George

Coit, Levi

Colden Family

Constable William

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Constable, William and James

Davenport Family

Duyckinck

Edgar, William

Emmet

Ford

Genêt Family

Glen, Henry

Gouverneur and Kemble

Hudson

Jay, John

Jones, Samuel

Livingston Family

McGregor, Colin

Ogden, Lewis

Pierrepont-Constable

Pfister and Macomb

Schuyler, Philip J.

Scovel, Noah

Stewart and Jones

Taylor, Moses

Van Cortlandt, Pierre, Jr.

Van Zandt, Wynan, Jr.

Webster, Noah, Jr.

Yates, Abraham, Jr.

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