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THE FIRST AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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By

JACK HARDY

Author of THE CLOTHING WORKERS, *etc.*

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Editor's Foreword

For the past century and a half various attempts have been made to interpret the American Revolution. Until very recently, most of these have followed the classic explanation of George Bancroft, a mid-nineteenth century historian, who analyzed the American upheaval in idealistic and patriotic terms. Reflecting the influence of his German university studies and of his Jacksonian political affiliations, Bancroft represented the Revolution as one phase in man's continuous struggle for political freedom and, as such, part of the grand "design of Providence." In 1776, so the theory runs, American patriots were entrusted with the divine mission of maintaining not only their own liberties but also those of the English people. The Lucifer in the case was George III who was resolved to coerce the thirteen colonies "though America were to be drenched in blood and its towns reduced to ashes. . . ."

Similarly, the Whig school of historians, Green, Trevelyan and others, sought to interpret the first American Revolution in terms of the diabolical character of George III. According to the argument, this tyrannical sovereign was aided in his satanic designs by the Tory statesmen of the day, whose stupidity, blindness and corruption caused the loss of the colonies. All would have been well if good Whigs had been in power; these angels of light would have saved the

Empire and preserved the unity of the Anglo-Saxon peoples. This over-simplified explanation neither coincides with the great mass of historical evidence at hand, nor does it do justice to the real American patriots of the period.

At the opening of the twentieth century, the thesis of both the Whig and Bancroft schools was rather successfully demolished by Sydney G. Fisher. In his *Struggle for American Independence* (1908), he urged historians to forsake partisanship and rhetoric for investigation and scholarship. To Fisher, the American Revolution "was not a contest between a dragon and a fairy settled once and for all in favor of the fairy. . . ." It was rather the work of "a long evolution of thought, experience and events," the result of a deliberate policy entered upon by the English nation.

As in the case of Fisher, so today most American historians reject the traditional interpretations of the Revolution. At present, newer explanations are in vogue; of these the most idealistic is the one propounded by Van Tyne and his followers. In his *Causes of the War of Independence* (1922), Claude Van Tyne attributes the American Revolution not to the actions of an arbitrary king and ministry but to differences concerning political liberty, ideals of human justice and the best interests of mankind. He emphasizes the importance of the "firm, though ill-judged effort" of England after 1763 to introduce a "new" imperial policy, a policy destined to end in colonial resistance and rebellion. On the whole, Van Tyne is very sympathetic to the American Tories whom he seeks to "rehabilitate." In fact, in an earlier work, *Loyalists in the American Revolution* (1902), he regards the banishment and death of over 100,000 of these "most conservative and respectable Americans" as a great "tragedy," since it deprived the young Republic of a

considerable number of individuals capable of putting its financial and political house in order.

Charles M. Andrews, like Van Tyne, rejects the traditional tendency of personalizing oppressive forces and tends to emphasize the significance of the "change" in British policy after 1763. In his "Present-Day Thoughts on the American Revolution" (1919), the Yale professor interprets the colonial upheaval in terms of a broad frontier thesis; to Andrews, the revolutionary contest was one between "an old settled country" and "an agricultural frontier," the former being characterized by a highly complex and conventionalized society, the latter by a primitive one "favorable to the development of man as an individual. . . ." It is interesting to note that a similar explanation may be found in certain portions of the writings of Van Tyne.*

The thesis of the liberal bourgeois school, as set forth by Arthur M. Schlesinger, is by far more realistic and tenable than either Andrews' or Van Tyne's. In his pioneer study, *Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution* (1917) and in his later work, *New Viewpoints in American History* (1922), Schlesinger definitely rejects the popular view of the revolutionary conflict as a great controversy over abstract governmental rights. He sees it rather as a clash between conflicting economic interests; on the one hand, colonial merchants and planters opposed to vested groups in old England and, on the other, small farmers and town artisans at variance with "ruling minorities in their own midst." The work of Schlesinger has been supplemented by James F. Jameson, whose book on *The American Revolution Considered as a Social*

* Compare C. Van Tyne, *Causes of the War of Independence* (Boston, 1922), pp. 105, 456, and C. M. Andrews, "Present-Day Thoughts on the American Revolution" in *Bulletin of the University of Georgia*, vol. xix, September, 1919, no. 11, pp. 7-9.

Movement (1926) shows how the struggle affected the position of social classes, the course of business and the intellectual "clime."

The work of the liberal bourgeois school, though containing much that is commendable, has one serious shortcoming. No definite effort is made to establish the inevitability of the Revolution; on the contrary, Schlesinger, leading exponent of the group, feels that the rupture between colony and mother country might have been averted if Pitt's counsel had been followed. This theme runs throughout the writings of other American historians and reaches its climax in the wishful thinking of Charles M. Andrews. "... Over and over again in studying the period from 1764 to 1774," writes Andrews, "we are driven to believe that a little more yielding, a little more of the spirit of friendship and compromise on both sides, would have calmed the troubled waters and stilled the storm that was brewing."

Marxist historians reject as naïve this theory of accommodation on the ground that under the existing economic set-up there could be no compromise. This view is set forth in the present volume, wherein a considerable mass of material is gathered to show how impossible it was for both British and American merchant capital to operate peacefully within the framework of a contracting economy. Under these circumstances, English statesmen from 1763 to 1775 were forced to support British interests in the Sugar Islands against the expanding commercial activities of northern colonial merchants. They were likewise compelled to aid English speculators and fur traders against the pressing need of southern planters for western lands, and to protect the interests of British merchant-manufacturers and creditors in opposition to colonial pressure

to expand industrially and develop financially. In fact, throughout the critical decade prior to the actual outbreak of the Revolution, the protection of British capital was by far more important than the raising of colonial revenue. The quick repeal of the Stamp and Townshend Acts indicates the validity of this conclusion.

The present work is designed to show not only the inevitable character of the Revolution but also the importance of the masses in bringing it about and in carrying it to a successful conclusion. This subject, though worthy of extended treatment, has in the past been either completely ignored or at best slighted. Most American historians have said little or nothing of the independent movement of the petty bourgeoisie and their artisan allies, of their importance in driving sections of the upper classes to decisive action and of their participation in the activities of revolutionary organizations. In fact, the work of the latter, as exemplified in the Sons of Liberty, the Committees of Correspondence, the Minute Men, Congresses and the Committees of Public Safety, has been treated in a cursory and almost apologetic fashion by most of our historians. The same may likewise be said concerning their treatment of the disappearance of the older governmental forms, the emergence of the newer administrative agencies and the use of dictatorial measures to save the Revolution.

All of these aspects of the revolutionary crisis and struggle have been included and emphasized in the present volume. In this way, Marxist historiography completes the work of bourgeois historians and at the same time preserves the revolutionary traditions of American history. In the present epoch of productive decline and increasing class oppression, the American people may well turn back to the first American Revo-

lution, learn from it and then carry on to completion the work begun by it.

This volume, like others subsequently to appear in the series, does not presume to be definitive or comprehensive. Limitations as to size and purpose greatly militate against such a possibility. In a book as small as this, some material had to be omitted; this will undoubtedly prove disconcerting to specialists in the field. Yet, it should be noted here that the present work has not been written for them but rather for the general reader; its originality lies not so much in the material offered as in the way that material has been presented. Written in as popular a fashion as possible, the book is designed to serve students and workers with a Marxist survey of the first American Revolution, and hopes to provoke further investigation along similar lines. Such work is particularly needed today in order to preserve the revolutionary traditions of the American people.

Richard Enmale

THE FIRST AMERICAN REVOLUTION

CHAPTER I

The British Commercial System

Mercantilism

The American Revolution of 1776 occurred in that period of English history when the domination of the merchant capitalists in the political affairs of the British Empire was rapidly declining. Although steam power was yet to be applied to industry, the English factory system was already in its infancy. The year 1776 witnessed the appearance of *The Wealth of Nations,*[1] written by Adam Smith, pioneer of the English school of classical economics. The book not only furnished the rising manufacturing interests with ideological weapons designed to justify the rapidly developing industrial economy, but also the necessary theoretical material to cut the fetters of mercantilist restrictions. In fact, *The Wealth of Nations,* like the American Declaration of Independence issued in the same year, preached the doctrine of natural rights and urged freedom from the encumbrances and restraints imposed by a dying and outmoded social and political régime. An understanding of the mercantile system is essential to an understanding of the background of the Revolution of 1776.

Mercantilism represented the ruling needs of the merchants and traders. In its various stages, it dominated the period of transition between feudalism and the industrial revolution—the era of the development of exchange relations.

As Marx has put it, " 'The balance of trade' [was] the watchword of the mercantile system" and "the settlement of surplus trade balances in gold and silver" became the end of all international trade.[2] In the mercantilist scheme of things, wealth was conceived in terms of gold and silver. Therefore, the great aim of the state became the regulation of economic relationships so as to attract the greatest possible monetary stock into the realm. This end, in a nation with few appreciable natural resources in precious metals, was to be achieved through a favorable balance of trade —an excess of exports over imports, the difference payable in bullion. Whereas, during the feudal middle ages, the policy had been "stay at home" and, where self-sufficiency was not possible, "import,"—the policy of the merchant was "go abroad," "sell," "export," "import as little as possible."

The Rôle of the State

The mercantilists saw in the unified state the strongest weapon for serving their class ends. Their epoch was marked by the formation and development of great states which waged constant warfare against the independent feudal rulers, whose harassing activities—such as tolls on rivers and highways, customs and other restrictions on trade between different provinces and endless other interferences—impeded the development of trade and industry during the feudal era. The state was used to promote such prime necessities for trade as good roads, uniform coinage, weights and measures, and the like. The state promoted the interests of its national ruling class in competition with other rival forces in different states, as evidenced in the almost continuous commercial wars of the seventeenth and

eighteenth centuries. This was the policy so well summed up in the old jingle:

We don't want to fight, but by jingo if we do,
We've got the ships, we've got the men, and we've got the money too.

In contrast with the laissez-faire principles of the ensuing industrialist era, the state policies were directed toward active protectionist principles. To promote home industry and the favorable balance of trade, colonies were to be compelled to depend upon the mother country for manufactured commodities. They were to be encouraged in the production of raw materials, agriculture and mining; and, while supplying the metropolis with raw materials, the colonies must buy back the more expensive finished products —the balance being payable in gold. The ruling class at home was thus under state protection; it benefited by commercial operations in both national and colonial fields.

The British Mercantile Policy in Operation

In keeping with the mercantilist principle of using state power to promote a colonial relationship which would insure England's industrial monopoly in the British world, and a favorable trade balance, a series of navigation and trade ordinances had been on English statute books for more than a century before the American Revolution. The first ordinance was passed in 1651, at the instigation of the London merchants of the East India and Levant Trading Companies after the triumph of the commercial bourgeoisie under Cromwell. Directed largely toward the protection and profit of capital invested in the carrying trade, this legislation provided that goods grown or manufactured in Asia,

Africa or America might be brought into England, Ireland, Wales and English possessions only in ships owned and manned by Englishmen; that European goods might be imported into England or British possessions only in English ships or ships of the nations in which the cargo was produced; that the coastwise trade in British possessions should be limited to British ships; and that certain articles such as salted fish, oil or whale products, could not be imported into or exported from the British possessions except in English vessels.*

Even during the Restoration (1660 to 1688), the influence of the merchants was powerful enough to win a continuance of the navigation and trade policies of Cromwell and the creation of a comprehensive regulating apparatus for colonial trade. Accordingly, a Council for Foreign Plantations to supervise governmental matters, and a Council of Trade to supervise colonial commerce, were set up in 1660. After several reorganizations, these bodies merged and continued as the Board of Trade after 1696. The latter met until the very eve of the Revolution—and from two to five times a week—to formulate policy and methods of controlling American affairs.

In 1660, an ordinance was passed reënacting the essential features of the act of 1651. Seeking to make England the *entrepôt* for colonial staples, the new law added the important amendment that certain colonial products—sugar, tobacco, cotton-wool, etc.—could be sent only to England or, if destined for a foreign port, must be first landed in England and from there reexported through an English middleman. Similarly, an-

* This act and that of 1660 were followed by so rapid an expansion of the British merchant marine that they were called by contemporary writers the "Sea Magna Charta" and the "Charta Maritima." See G. L. Beer, *The Old Colonial System*, vol. i, p. 58 (Part I).

other act in 1663 regulated trade in the other direction —from Europe to America. With a few exceptions, it required that European goods purchased by the colonists must first be landed in an English port and then reëxported to America in English or colonial ships. In 1673, as an act of enforcement, a law was passed requiring the captain of every ship carrying a cargo of tobacco, sugar or other enumerated articles to pay duties at the port of clearance unless a bond of £1000 to £2000, guaranteeing that they would be landed in England, was posted.

After the passage of the act of 1660, the list of articles falling within its scope was continually extended to include such commodities as rice, beaver skins and other furs, hides, naval stores, iron, copper and lumber. It finally included most products of the northern and southern colonies and the West Indies.

To protect English capital invested in British West Indian sugar plantations, Parliament passed the "Molasses Act" in 1733. This placed prohibitive duties upon molasses, sugar and rum exported by foreign colonies to British possessions in America. New England rum manufacturers had been importing sugar and molasses from the French and Dutch islands in the West Indies. The purpose of this act was to force the importation of these raw products exclusively from the British producers, regardless of price.

Supplementing the encumbrances and trade restrictions of the Navigation Acts, a policy of forestalling the growth of manufacturing in the colonies was developed as an integral part of the the mercantile system. In 1699, the export of wool, yarn and woolen cloth from one colony to another "or to any other place whatsoever" was accordingly prohibited. Thus, the possibility of exporting these commodities in competition with the growing woolen industry of England

was prevented, and the production of colonial yarn and cloth was limited to household production. In 1732, the export of hats was forbidden and hatters were not permitted to employ more than two apprentices. Finally, the growing iron industry was halted; in 1750, further legislation forbade the erection of any slitting or rolling mills and of plate, forge or steel furnaces. Colonial laws encouraging manufacture within a colony were similarly "thought improper," [3] and were both discouraged and annulled.* In all, about a hundred parliamentary statutes were passed to buttress and enforce the English colonial system and to regulate commerce and industry.

The objective of such legislation is obvious. The carrying trade was to be limited to British bottoms; the English ruling class was to be made the beneficiary of transactions throughout the British realm; Britain's rulers, by requiring that goods imported or exported by the colonies to or from the non-British world be first landed in an English port, would derive a middleman's profit even from such commerce. Moreover, the colonies were to be kept in the position of "plantations" for the ruling class at home; they were to act as agricultural communities supplying raw materials to English manufacturers, furnishing a market for finished products, and sending abroad an annual cash balance.[4]

* Colonial statutes encouraging home industries were constantly nullified by the Board of Trade. In 1705, a Pennsylvania law for building up the shoemaking industry was disallowed; one year later, a New York act for developing sail-cloth manufacturing was forbidden. Similarly, in 1756, a Massachusetts' ordinance for encouraging the production of linen was declared null and void. In its zeal to protect British manufacturers, the Board of Trade stopped at nothing. In 1706, 1707 and 1708, it went so far as to reject laws passed by Virginia and Maryland providing for the establishment of new towns on the ground that such new communities must invariably lead to the founding of industries.

CHAPTER II

Colonial Progress and Prosperity

Evasion of English Legislation

During the first half of the eighteenth century, English manufactured goods and other European commodities imported from British merchants averaged about £500,000 annually. This could be offset only in part by colonial commodities sent to England. It has been estimated that between 1700 and 1773 the colonies remitted upwards of £30,000,000 in settlement of their unfavorable balance of trade.* This amount, however, was not very considerable in view of the span of time and the size and extent of actual colonial trading operations. For, to a notable degree, the provisions of the English laws were evaded. The barriers were simply disregarded.

England at War

The mightiest power of the day would, under normal circumstances, have been in a position to enforce her legislative decrees. But for over a century England was engaged in a continuous life and death struggle to establish and maintain her supremacy in Europe and the colonial world. This was the period of the

* In the years immediately preceding the Revolution, England profited to the extent of about £3 million annually from American trade.

emergence of Great Britain to a position of world hegemony. Fighting desperately every inch of the way, she had little opportunity or resources with which to keep her colonial house in order. Thus, America was allowed to drift; mercantile laws graced British statute books but were not enforced.

In 1652-53, following the passage of the first Navigation Act, which cut deeply into Dutch commerce, England defeated the United Netherlands. During most of the régime of Oliver Cromwell, the British navy was busy in the Mediterranean suppressing the Barbary pirates of Tunis and Algiers, whose depredations upon English commerce were costing the British merchants and shippers dearly. Then, for a generation, there followed a policy of alliance with France and strained relations with Spain and the Dutch Republic. In the war with Spain (1655), Jamaica—later to become important in American affairs as the center of the British sugar industry—was seized and made part of the British Empire. And in 1665-1667 England was engaged once again in war with the Dutch.

When the possibility of serious world competition from her former rivals had been obviated, Great Britain switched allies and now sought to humble France. The English and the Dutch united in resisting the ambitions of Louis XIV, and England joined a coalition of European states against France. This was the beginning of what is called the "Second Hundred Years' War." For a century, England and France were busily fighting each other, as evidenced by the War of the League of Augsburg (1689-1697), the War of the Spanish Succession (1702-1713), the War of the Austrian Succession (1740-1748), the Seven Years' War (1757-1763) and, finally, French participation in the American Revolution. These struggles were world-wide in scope and took the participants far beyond the Euro-

pean continent, for each of the rivals was bent upon destroying the world commerce and annexing the colonies of the other.

Colonial Smuggling

The American colonists took full advantage of this preoccupation of the British government. The English laws remained on the statute books and formal gestures of compliance to the forms of customs and other administrative machinery were maintained. But in the face of no serious efforts at enforcement, smuggling became an established practice and a respectable occupation in the colonies. The "best people" in the community were engaged in the practice. John Hancock, for example, whose flourishing signature so conspicuously graces the Declaration of Independence, was known in and around Boston as the "Prince of Smugglers."

The business of smuggling was made easy by the size, extent and irregularity of the coastline, the vast ocean separating the colonies from England, and the temptations offered to customs officials (in the face of lack of supervision from the mother country) to feather their own nests through conniving deals.

It paid well for officials to shut their eyes at the right moments. In at least several instances, even provincial governors were known to have been bought out by the smugglers. Along the coast, from Massachusetts to South Carolina, the vice-admiralty courts were rather successfully managed by the Americans. Deliberate inefficiency of administration was fairly general among those in charge of enforcing the laws.

Thus it came about that, in the years following 1700, the ports of New England and the Middle Colonies were thronged with illicit traders. Large quantities

of European goods, together with tea, coffee and spices from the East Indies, were smuggled into the colonial communities.

The traffic took various forms: across the ocean directly to foreign countries; violation of the regulations requiring that certain colonial articles be sold to Great Britain exclusively; and circumvention of the laws requiring that incoming products of European or Asiatic origin reach the colonies only via England. A regular trade was carried on with Holland, Hamburg, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy and other centers. By far the greatest amount of illicit commerce, however, consisted of undutied imports of molasses and sugar from the foreign West Indies, in circumvention of the provisions of the Molasses Act of 1733. The molasses would be converted into rum. At Guinea, the Congo or Madagascar this was easily exchangeable for a cargo of slaves, palm oil or gold dust. The contraband molasses trade thus formed the backbone of the traffic in slaves which became an increasingly important feature of the commerce of Boston, Newport, New York and Philadelphia.

Economic Progress in the Colonies

Undoubtedly the mercantilist legislative restrictions of the English ruling classes somewhat impeded the development of trade in the American colonies and tended to raise the price of merchandise. In the main, however, England's concentration on foreign rivals with whom she was in a death grapple checked the effectiveness of legal impediments, and economic progress continued apace.

For one thing, the Seven Years' War helped greatly to enrich the colonists. The British government, in its fight against the French, poured into America thou-

sands of pounds, which proved the basis of many large colonial fortunes—such as that of John Hancock.

In 1774, the Americans admitted that neither the iron nor the hat and woolens acts had been obeyed in some colonies. Despite this, however, in a period when the factory system was still in its infancy even in Europe, there was little manufacturing of woolens, hats or steel for export, though this was due to natural conditions rather than to parliamentary prohibitions. However, the colonists continued to make, on a handicraft or household basis, many articles they might need for home use or for sale within a single colony.

In the northern colonies most of the farmers pursued a trade when not at work on the farms. They and the villagers made most of their furniture, tools, household utensils, nails, brick for building, paper, glass, hats and shoes. The farm women, or village weavers, wove linen and coarser grades of woolen cloth from which their clothes were made. From New Jersey to Virginia, iron ore was mined and smelted into pig iron. The furnaces were fired with charcoal and, though the enterprises were very small, there were smelting furnaces, bloomeries for the production of wrought iron, and hammers for making bars which gave the colonists many of their agricultural implements, household utensils, tools and hardware. Rum was extensively manufactured in New England; in the early eighteenth century, well over a million gallons were made annually in Boston alone.

Almost a thousand ships were engaged in American coastal and trans-oceanic trade. In the northern colonies, a merchant class developed such centers as Boston, Providence, New York and Philadelphia, each the commercial metropolis of a quickly-developing back country. Virginia, and to a lesser extent Maryland, had their own rich commerce, of which the tobacco

trade was the base. South Carolina and Georgia were busily expanding the culture of rice, while North Carolina was growing prosperous from the by-products of the forest areas—tar, pitch, turpentine and a wide variety of lumber. The Middle Colonies were scarcely less active. Pennsylvania alone employed a fleet of four hundred vessels to carry goods from the docks of Philadelphia. New York had its own fleet of about two hundred ships.

The presence of wild animals, abounding in the forests of North America, made trade in their furs and skins a valuable source of colonial enterprise. They furnished a lucrative article of export in the northern colonies as well as an incentive for westward exploration and settlement. In 1770, exports of furs and pelts from North America, including Canada, were valued at approximately $670,000.

Thus, despite the Navigation Acts, colonial commerce developed rapidly and colonial trade prospered. Fish, food products, lumber, furs, tobacco, naval stores, rum and innumerable other colonial exports formed the base of an ever-growing and prosperous commerce. By the end of the colonial period, total annual exports from the American colonies amounted to $20,000,000.

Colonial ships flocked by the hundreds to the misty and perilous fishing banks of Nova Scotia and Newfoundland and the long voyages, involving ownership of a fairly large vessel and maintenance of a crew, required capital and organization. In some cases the ships were owned by those who sailed them, but the tendency was towards ownership by capitalists, who gave to the crew a share of the catch. Fish merchants became an increasingly important factor in the industry; they bought and exported the catch, sent out ships, hired the crews and reaped ever-increasing returns. The whaling industry, which had at first been

confined to off-shore fishing, especially around Nantucket, also attracted more capital. The whales soon deserted the American coast and it became necessary to follow the quarry to distant seas from Hudson Bay and Davis Strait to the coasts of Africa and Brazil. Large ships as well as voyages of months and even years made whaling an industry of first rate importance from a capitalist viewpoint. The fishing industry of New England was estimated to bring in a revenue of about $255,000 annually.

A great many of the ships in which the colonists conducted their foreign trade, as well as the largest part of their fishing fleet, had been built by themselves out of the splendid timber which stood almost everywhere in the American forests. Massachusetts had been known to complete as many as 150 ships within the space of a single year and ship building became one of the most important industries in the colonies. By 1775 the number of American ships was approximately 2,000, while American seamen numbered 33,000. The latter were recognized to be as daring, shrewd and hardy as those to be found anywhere else in the world.

Thus, all the colonies busied themselves in one manner or another best suited to their particular natural conditions of soil, climate and location. As the years went by, they became expanding, substantial and prosperous communities. Though by no means economically self-sustaining, they were fast developing an extensive commerce, shipbuilding, agriculture and industry.

Class Developments

Many colonial leaders in the field of politics and business were already able to see that the combined

colonies contained within themselves the seeds for independent economic activity and that in the future they would be able to sustain themselves accordingly. As early as 1754, a committee, headed by Benjamin Franklin, had unsuccessfully proposed a plan of union involving a federal council of delegates from all of the colonies. The proposed body was to be endowed with powers to meet annually, levy taxes, enact laws, raise armies, appoint officials and manage Indian affairs. Although the plan failed, joint colonial activity, and even quasi-independence, was even then in the offing.

In this dynamic social and economic milieu, class forces were developing with tremendous rapidity. A merchant-capitalist class was amassing fortunes by trade, land speculation, fishing, shipbuilding and allied activities. Throughout New England and the Middle Colonies there were wealthy merchant families who, together with their lawyer allies, dominated colonial society—a dominance shared in the case of New York with a landed gentry who still preserved a quasi-feudal hierarchy in the inland countries of that colony.

From Maryland to Georgia a planting aristocracy grew up. Native capital in these regions was almost exclusively invested in plantation production. The British laws in this section were least frequently violated with the consequence that—in contrast with other sections—southern economy fell deeper and deeper in debt to the English, until the planters were virtually in economic bondage to British merchants.*

Tied to the merchant and shipping interests, and dependent upon them for their livelihood, was a growing number of clerks, journeymen, day laborers,

*On the eve of the Revolution, the American colonies owed British merchant capitalists £5,000,000, of which at least five-sixths was owned by Southern planters.

small shopkeepers, ropemakers, sailors, sailmakers, barrel and cask makers, calkers, smiths, carpenters and similar workers. These groups were largely unorganized, without franchise, and unconscious of their class interests. Their day had not yet arrived.

CHAPTER III

England Attempts Enforcement

The British Empire at Peace

Until 1763, as we have seen, British commercial restrictions had been either evaded or not enforced. A century of exceptional opportunities had given the colonists a sense of power and a consciousness of identity of interests. In twenty-five years their population doubled and they eagerly anticipated the termination of the French and Indian Wars which they thought would give them even freer scope for increased material expansion.

Some forces in Britain had foreseen this contingency and, when England was about to make peace with France in 1763, proposed that France be permitted to retain Canada as a curb upon the colonists. That the latter were fully alert to the issues and possibilities of the times was evidenced by a pamphlet, *The Interest of Great Britain Considered,* written by Benjamin Franklin in 1760, indicating the economic roots of approaching friction. But it concluded that if the colonists were permitted to expand they would necessarily remain non-manufacturing communities for a long time to come, and therefore natural markets for British manufactures; and that they would never seek independence if treated with consideration. Bute, British Prime Minister when the treaty with France was finally signed, took Canada, but the English ruling class, then in the beginnings of the industrial revolu-

tion, were more determined than ever to monopolize the colonial market and to choke off even the possibility of competition. It was for such ends, indeed, that Britain's rulers had engaged in a century of expensive warfare and annexed a colonial empire.

In 1763 the Seven Years' War ended. England was not to be seriously challenged again in world affairs until the Napoleonic period. The breathing spell needed for careful attention to colonial matters was at hand. The expansion of the empire made such a policy more imperative than ever. The settlement of world affairs made colonial organization and enforcement possible.

The Costs of Empire

Supplementary to the basic factors in British policy at the close of the wars was the rising interest and principal of the British national debt. The national debt of a nation, as Marx observed, is the only "collective possession of modern peoples," [5] and England's had risen steadily. In 1755 the principal amounted to £74,571,840 and interest to £2,396,717. During the Seven Years' War, these figures had nearly doubled: principal *increased* by £72,111,004, interest by £2,444,104.

To protect the new empire, a large fleet and standing army would entail additional increasing expenditures. The duties collected in America were only about £2,000 a year; it had cost England £8,000 in administrative and other expenses to collect this sum. With increased revenue essential, the landed interests, who were in parliamentary alliance with the mercantilists, would tolerate no extension of taxes upon their domains, while the capitalist class was likewise adamant on imposts against their personal interests. The treasury officials could think of only one alternative

—to force the colonists to share in this imperial burden. The tax measures which followed provoked the events which led to the American Revolution.

Grenville's Policies

The man into whose hands the problem of imperial readjustment fell was George Grenville, Prime Minister in the cabinet of George III. He was a capable man of unquestioned integrity and conscientious in the interests of the class he represented. Hence he could be expected to tackle the problem before him with energy and dispatch.

But Grenville and everything he represented were out of step with the times. In spite of the Prime Minister's personal abilities, the reactionary interests of the class for which he spoke restricted his approach to the new imperial problems of his age. The needs of the period dictated a readjustment of state organization and policies consistent with a rapidly industrializing nation. England now owned an expanding empire, diverse and extensive. Changing times had created new problems which required new policies. The older English possessions were largely the private trading domains of the great commercial corporations such as the Hudson Bay Company and the East India Company. Among other demands the growing Whig party was clamoring for a new form of imperial organization which would reduce the independent power of these companies and bring them into more dependent relations with the home government.

But the mercantilist statesmen represented the interests of merchant capitalists and trading companies. Hence they had neither wisdom nor foresight to solve new problems created by dynamic changes in the industrial structure.

In state affairs Grenville epitomized the declining mercantilist power. The rising Whigs who, under the leadership of Newcastle and Pitt, had been building up a powerful parliamentary opposition, were shelved and isolated by George III. Through parliamentary manipulation in the form of titles, honors, decorations, offices and cold cash, organized opposition was temporarily disarmed and Grenville was able to consolidate a parliamentary majority in his support.

Mercantilist Policies Reënacted

At first, the laws already on the statute books, though long unenforced, were resorted to, and were supplemented by a series of measures designed to correct what were regarded as existing abuses. Provision was made for the enforcement of the navigation and customs laws in the colonies. To break up smuggling, ships of war were sent to patrol the American coastline. There was rigid scrutiny of the conduct of resident customs officials, and those found to be negligent or dishonest were replaced. To overawe the resentful Americans, Grenville further provided that a British army of 10,000 men should be maintained in the colonies. And to further enforce the Trade Acts, "Writs of Assistance" were issued. It was extremely difficult to detect smuggling where every neighbor sheltered the offender. Partly to overcome this, the Writs authorized officers to board any ship, and enter any warehouse or private dwelling to search for smuggled goods. These documents were general warrants, not directed against a specific suspect, and therefore enabled the officials legally to enter any home or place of business "on suspicion"—i.e., at will.

In 1764, the Molasses Act of 1733 received attention. Hitherto it had been successfully evaded. The

duties on foreign molasses were lowered from sixpence to threepence per gallon, but with the forewarning that the new schedules would be strictly enforced. Moreover the law was further enlarged; coffee, Spanish and Portuguese wines, and several other articles previously imported from the French and Spanish colonies, were brought within its scope.

In the same year, the growing colonial irritation was aggravated by a parliamentary prohibition against the issuance of paper money. Since the Americans had been permitted neither to establish their own mints nor to conduct their commerce and shipping in such a manner as to give them a favorable balance and thus obviate the necessity of exporting specie to England, there had been a steady drain of their currency to the mother country. Hence a pressing need for an exchange medium for local trade had long existed. Beginning in 1690, first Massachusetts and then other colonies had wrung reluctant permission from England to issue strictly regulated amounts of paper bills. Restrictive features of these concessions were partially evaded and this further augmented the amount of such paper currency which soon came into general circulation.

In some colonies, such as New York, these legal tender notes had been kept on a par with silver. In others they had depreciated steadily until they were at a discount of 40%. The assemblies in the latter colonies had been undertaking to compel acceptance of the depreciated currency for all debts. The upshot was that, upon complaint of the British merchants who were affected, an act was passed by Parliament in 1764 * "to prevent paper bills of credit hereafter to

* In 1751, Parliament passed an act forbidding the further issuance of paper money in New England except to cover current expenses or to finance war operations.

be issued in any of his Majesty's colonies . . . from being declared to be a legal tender in payment of money."

Next, Grenville tackled the vexing problem of western lands, upon which rich and poor Americans alike were casting covetous eyes.* First, the English deemed

* By the middle of the eighteenth century, the most desirable land in the old seaboard communities had been engrossed. With little or no good land available, newcomers, such as the Scotch-Irish and German immigrants, were forced to go to the foothills and at times cross over the Appalachian range in search of farms. Sometimes they were joined by hardy pioneers drawn from the older region, small-scale producers who were finding it difficult to make both ends meet because of rapidly deteriorating land.

The trans-montane territory attracted the rich also. The latter, however, did not intend to take up land and settle upon it as individuals; they rather wished to acquire it for the purpose of reselling and thus secure speculative profits. Even before the French and Indian War, a lively interest in the western country was shown, particularly by land speculators in Virginia. In 1745, 100,000 acres of western land were given to John Robinson and others; three years later 500,000 acres were granted to the Ohio Company organized by prominent Virginians and backed by British capitalists. The Loyal Company, composed of men like Lewis and Walker, was likewise given an 800,000 acre tract along the northern boundary line of North Carolina. In 1754, Governor Dinwiddie of Virginia promised 200,000 acres of land in the Ohio country to those who volunteered against the French.

When the Anglo-French struggle ended in 1763 with the British as masters of the trans-Allegheny West, American land speculators lost no time in attempting to gobble up the new lands. The Virginians immediately revived old claims and initiated new ones. Under the leadership of Colonel Washington, the soldiers of the "Old Dominion" petitioned for the land promised to them by Governor Dinwiddie in 1754. At the same time, Washington, with the Lees and Fitzhughs, founded the Mississippi Company; their object was to secure 2,500,000 acres of land out west. Meanwhile, Franklin, probably assisted by Baynton and Wharton and possibly by Galloway, tried to form a company to secure land in the new region for the purpose of speculation. Similarly, New York interests attempted to acquire a 300,000 acre tract to be sold at £50 for every 1,000 acres.

Whereas American capitalists were thoroughly alive in 1763 to the possibilities of western land speculation, a majority of Englishmen were either wholly indifferent or skeptical about the value of

it necessary to conciliate the Indian tribes who already inhabited the lands extending from the Appalachian Mountains to the Mississippi River (an area of some half a million square miles which had been acquired from France in 1763). Fearing that France might seek to regain its lost possessions, England strove to win over the Western Indians, former allies of France. Secondly, a valuable fur trade was developing with these Indians and the Crown was determined to keep this trading activity under English control while at the same time conserving British interests in the possibility of land speculation in the trans-Allegheny West. Further, it was deemed good policy by the British ruling class to keep colonial settlement confined to the seaboard, within easy reach of the trade of the mother country. Lastly, England desired to prevent the colonists from spreading out. A definite limitation of colonial expansion in the West made it easier to check possible manifestations of a spirit of rebellion against British authority.[6]

In October, 1763, the Grenville ministry accordingly proclaimed the closing of the whole Western territory. A line, subsequently known as the Proclamation Line, was drawn along the Allegheny watershed. Settlement west of this line was forbidden on the pretext that to plant settlements in the interior would make protection of the colonies difficult.

the newly acquired region. Yet, the Prime Minister, Grenville, and other English capitalists who later speculated in western lands, were too cautious to drop the trans-Allegheny country into the laps of American capital interests. The Proclamation Line of 1763 was the first in a series of ministerial acts which attempted to curb the ardor of American land speculators. (C. W. Alvord, *The Mississippi Valley in British Politics,* vol. i, pp. 84-89, 95-99.)

The Stamp Act

Additional revenue was needed to administer and enforce the new British laws. The authorities in London, for example, estimated that twenty British regiments would be required in America. This expense, plus others necessary to enforce the new policies, the English ruling class was in no mood to bear. Grenville decided that the time had arrived to compel the colonists to share the imperial tax burden.

In 1764, on Grenville's initiative, Parliament passed a resolution sanctioning the imposition of a Stamp Tax upon the colonies. The colonial agent, Benjamin Franklin, who was active in England at the time, protested vigorously, but would concede no other alternative tax scheme. Grenville therefore decided to push vigorously ahead. On March 22, 1765, the act received its final passage, effective on November 1 of the same year.

By the terms of this law, duties in the form of stamps were required to be affixed upon customs papers, legal documents, licenses, pamphlets, advertisements, newspapers, almanacs, playing cards, and a host of other specified items. The tax was expected to yield an annual revenue of about £60,000—which, of itself, was not a very considerable amount for a colonial population of more than a million. Both Grenville and the colonists, however, recognized the primary importance of the principle and precedent involved—the right of the crown to levy colonial taxes. The act was intended chiefly as an entering wedge to establish this principle.

There were, of course, many supplementary laws passed to complement the above legislation. The instances cited, however, constituted the broad outlines of Grenville's policy, the announcement and promulgation of which led to the American Revolution.

CHAPTER IV

American Opposition Begins

Effect on Colonial Economic Life

The cumulative effect of the successive legislative decrees of the Grenville ministry combined to fan the flames of colonial revolt. The efforts to bottle up the economic development of colonial society adversely affected nearly all classes in the colonies.

Some exception, of course, was inevitable in the case of certain forces whose interests were closely linked to those of the crown—merchants who served as the American agents for the British traders, certain of the large landed interests, appointed government officials, a large section of the clergy, and others. These—the reactionaries of their period—formed the backbone of a Tory Party which carried on widespread counter-revolutionary activity. But this group was summarily dealt with during the subsequent course of events by the well organized and determined progressive party of revolution.

In the measures announced for the strict enforcement of the Navigation Acts, the merchant class, whose prosperity had been built upon illicit imports, saw the threat of lost profits. The ships of war along the coast so efficiently guarded the ports of entry that any attempt to run the gauntlet of their vigilance was extremely hazardous and largely impossible.

The inevitable result was a gloomy state of business affairs. Trade decreased, money became scarce, some of

the mercantile establishments were driven into bankruptcy, others withdrew from business in fear of the effect of the new measures upon their resources. The general business tempo slowed down considerably in every direction.

Particularly obnoxious was the newly expressed determination to enforce the Molasses Act. To a considerable extent the smuggling carried on in molasses with the foreign West Indies, following the passage of the act of 1733, had been the cornerstone of the prosperity of New England and the Middle Colonies. As one authority on this phase of revolutionary history states: "If any serious attempt had been made to enforce the statute, the prosperity of the commercial provinces would have been laid prostrate. It was the West India trade, more than anything else, which had enabled them to utilize their fisheries, forests and fertile soil, to build up their towns and cities, to supply cargoes for their merchant marine, and to liquidate their indebtedness to British merchants and manufacturers." [7]

For one thing, prices in the British islands were from 25 to 40% higher than the prices of their competitors; nor did they produce sufficient quantities to fill the American demand. Even with the reduction from sixpence to threepence duty per gallon of molasses, as provided in the amended regulations of 1764, the rum manufactured at the added cost of "raw material" so increased the price of production that competing rum undersold the American product in Guinea, the Congo and other foreign markets.

The addition of coffee, wines, and other commodities to the revised version of the act was further cause for aggravation. For now duties were placed on nearly all of the chief articles which New England and the Middle Colonies imported in exchange for the fish, lumber and

food products sold to the French and Spanish colonies. And the duties which needed to be paid would practically wipe out the trade.

Consternation reigned in most sections of colonial society. The smuggling merchants saw their base of operations threatened. The "legitimate" merchants engaged in English trade needed a continuance of the West Indian commerce, for the cash proceeds from this trade alone made possible the payment of the large annual balances due for merchandise bought from England.

The adverse effect upon shipping which followed the cessation of trade is obvious—many ships became idle with inevitably disastrous consequences to shipowners, the shipbuilding industry, those who made their livelihood as sailors, those who supplied the shipping and shipbuilding industry and many others. The farmers also became involved, inasmuch as the merchants and distillers had purchased the farmers' surplus stock and products to ship to the foreign islands in payment for molasses.

Thus, larger and larger strata of society were drawn into the developing conflict. And the revolutionary "agitators" of the day were quick to point out how and why the cause of one was the cause of all.

The paper money restrictions added to the growing distress of the period. There had been, in the best of times, a steady drain of specie to England. Much of this had come from the West Indies in payment of favorable trade balances which the colonies maintained in that area. But under the new laws this West Indian source was being dried up. Customs inspectors were instructed to require payment in silver for the newly levied duties—still further draining the supply. It was the belief in America that this supply could not last

longer than a year after the new regulations went into effect.

The money pinch soon began to bear fruit. In New York, for example, the "poor classes were in distress. ... Property declined in value, and the merchants could with difficulty find the means of paying the duties or of meeting their obligations in England.... It was now impossible to pay in silver because there was no silver in the provinces." [8] Elsewhere the situation was even worse. But paper bills, backed by the credit of the colony, while needed possibly more than ever before, were now prohibited. Small wonder that the First Continental Congress held the repeal of the Currency Act of 1764 to be "essentially necessary." *

It was largely this same money legislation which brought the Southern plantation owners into the revolutionary camp. These gentlemen-planters bore the full fruits of the English mercantile policy. They sold their crops abroad, imported what manufactured goods they needed and fell deeply and permanently into debt to the British merchants. As the Virginia planter, Thomas Jefferson, declared: "The advantages made by the British merchants on the tobaccos consigned to them are so enormous that they spared no means of increasing these consignments. A powerful engine for this purpose was the giving of good prices and credit to the planter till they got him more immersed in debt than he could pay without selling his lands or slaves. They then reduced the prices given for his tobacco, so that, let his shipments be ever so great, and his demand of necessaries ever so economical, they never permitted him to clear off his debt. These debts had become hereditary so that the planters were a species of prop-

* When the First Continental Congress met in 1774, only £2,400,000 was available in the colonies for purposes of exchange and credit financing.

erty annexed to certain mercantile houses in London." [9]

To stave off disaster, the Southern legislatures had passed paper money legislation which was, in effect, partial repudiation. When, at the behest of the infuriated British merchants, Parliament passed the prohibitions upon further issues of colonial legal tender paper money, even this avenue of partial escape was blocked. The growing desperation of the planters saw no further alternative save revolt. And for similar reasons their ranks were swelled by the traditional cheap paper money devotees—indebted small farmers, shopkeepers and artisans.

The proclamation closing the western territories threw consternation in still other directions. New land was necessary for the continuation of the Virginian tobacco economy not only because of the problem of soil exhaustion but also because of the need of capital. The latter was chiefly secured from British merchants and took the form of credit. Short- and long-term capital was extended on the theory that Virginia planters would be able to pay their debts by securing profits from western land speculation. Immediately after the French and Indian War, powerful land speculating companies, backed by such prominent Virginians as Washington, Lee and Fitzhugh,[10] were actively at work preëmpting large areas of western land.[11] By the Proclamation of 1763 they saw their well laid plans going amiss and their anticipated profits in considerable jeopardy.

Discontent over the western regulations became widespread among the farmers and frontiersmen who foresaw a land famine if the settlement prohibitions remained. In the expanding economy of the eighteenth century there had been a steady westward movement. Much of it was of a squatter nature—the venturous pioneers knowing little and caring less about validity

of title or land office regulations and formalities. The only title they knew and respected was the dire need they had for the vacant land which lay on all sides, and the sweat and toil which settlement and improvement entailed. They were determined upon the rights of occupation and expansion—and they were not averse to achieving these ends by force if necessary.

In the Stamp Act and other tax measures lay the greatest threat to virtually every phase of independent colonial economic activity. For, as a Boston town meeting declared: "These unexpected proceedings may be preparatory to new taxations upon us; for if our trade may be taxed, why not our lands? Why not the produce of our lands, and everything else we possess?"

It was the struggle for repeal of the Stamp Act, in particular, that became the rallying ground for the growth and momentum of the first revolutionary agitation and activity. A purely fiscal measure, it was more obvious than some of the other taxes and its effects were upon all people in all of the provinces. Opposition to the Stamp Law was almost universal. The act proved to be the spark which set off the Revolution.*

*"Although the Massachusetts House of Representatives petitioned Parliament to repeal the Sugar Act, the country was far slower than the seaport towns in catching fire against Parliamentary trade duties. Bostonians complained that many of the country towns sent representatives to the General Court 'who are profess'd enemies to trade,' and Sam Adams found that many rural voters were 'so careles in the Choice of their representatives' as to send to Boston men who became Governor Bernard's tools against the patriots. Country delegates to the General Court, like Artemus Ward of Shrewsbury, who later became one of Adams' staunchest adherents in rural Massachusetts, showed little excitement over the Sugar Act. In attempting to arouse Massachusetts farmers against the British government in 1764, Boston agitators bumped their heads squarely against rural conservatism and the strong inclination of countrymen to regard trade as Boston's own concern. It required the Stamp Act to unite town and country and, by giving every class a grievance against the British government, enable Sam Adams to create a formidable revolutionary

In short, the enforcement of British policies made the American Revolution inevitable for it threatened American capital interests by tending to constrict the development of economic and social forces already in motion. British and American merchant capital were unable to operate within the colonial economic sphere. Commercial expansion of northern capitalists conflicted with the British capital interests in the Sugar Islands and other parts of the world. The American landed interests clashed with the British speculators and fur traders over western lands. The colonial development toward manufacture and development of adequate credit facilities collided head-on with the interests of British merchants, industrialists and bankers.

Revolutionary Leaders

The American Revolution was a thoroughly planned and coördinated social movement. There was nothing haphazard or accidental about its course.

In men of the stripe of Samuel Adams the colonists had leaders whose objective of liberty had become an all-absorbing passion. For the achievement of this end they sacrificed everything, fighting with a determination, a consistency, a singleness of purpose and an

party in Massachusetts with Boston at its head.... Clear-sighted observers on both sides of the Atlantic believed colonial unity impossible because of the great differences between the provinces in manners, religion, and interest. Nevertheless, when confronted by the Stamp Act, colonial particularism began to crumble, and America was 'awakened, alarmed, restless, & disaffected.' 'What a Blessing has the Stamp Act eventually... prov'd,' exclaimed Sam Adams. '... When the Colonys saw the Common Danger they at the same time saw their mutual Dependence.' From the frontier to the seaboard and from Pensacola to Quebec, there was scarcely a family who had not heard of the Stamp Act and who did not regard it with dread...." John C. Miller, *Sam Adams, Pioneer in Propaganda*, pp. 45-46, 50-51.

iron will that ranks them with the outstanding revolutionary leaders of all time.

Samuel Adams typifies an entire group. As early as 1743 he had chosen as the subject for his master's thesis at Harvard the affirmative of the postulate "Whether it be lawful to resist the Supreme Magistrate, if the Commonwealth cannot otherwise be preserved." He cared little about the affairs of business and was negligent and scornful of private pecuniary gain. He knew how to tap artfully and attentively every revolutionary reservoir, and he knew every device of the business of sedition—whether it demanded the eloquent arousal of passions or the calm ferreting out of material resources badly needed for the cause.

A master of organization, he left no stone unturned; he never overlooked an opportunity or an issue. He made speeches, he wrote pamphlets and state papers, he organized "seditionary" singing societies, he mingled and agitated among merchants, statesmen, the "mechanics" of the city and the fishermen about the harbor. He had a thorough and penetrating knowledge of history, politics and philosophy. And though often in the rôle of an impetuous master agitator who was impatient for action, he nevertheless knew how, when expediency demanded, to work slowly, calmly and methodically—cloaking his purpose and operating with master sagacity. He knew when not to force opinions as well as when to push them full steam ahead.

His radicalism was not of the parlor variety—though he knew how to plant sedition in the parlor, too, when occasion required. For never a moment, wherever he might be, did he have any objective or thought save that which was the moving purpose and driving force of his life—colonial liberty. "Damn that Adams," complained the royal governor, Francis Bernard, "every dip of his pen stings like a horned snake."

Adams and his compatriots operated in New England. In the Middle States men like Isaac Sears of New York were playing a similar rôle. Charles Thomson has been termed "the Sam Adams of Philadelphia."

The South had its own leaders of equal stature—among whom Patrick Henry, called by some the "Demosthenes of the Revolution," was unequaled in the task of rallying opposition to colonial wrongs, particularly in the agitational realm. Here was another outstanding revolutionary statesman and orator, in this case from the frontier of Virginia. A bitter fighter and an uncompromising partisan in the interests of colonial liberty, he became the leader of the Patriot Party in the southland.

Methods of Colonial Opposition

Under such leadership it is small wonder that revolutionary preparations and opposition tactics were all-embracing in their nature and scope. The party of revolution knew how to operate simultaneously on many fronts.

Indignation meetings were numberless—often taking the form of town meetings. Brushing aside the contention that matters pertaining to revolutionary agitation were illegal subject matter for a town in its corporate capacity,[12] town meetings were converted into revolutionary tribunals. And public indignation was thus aroused. "When the inhabitants are once assembled, they take upon themselves all matters of government," complained the royal governor of Massachusetts. Thus, by judiciously utilizing the town meeting, especially in New England, a widespread popular opinion gradually gained momentum.

Similarly, mass meetings were utilized in regions where town meetings were not common. Notices would

be posted throughout a community calling all and sundry to meet at a specified tavern, or upon the green, or in some other public place. At times riots followed in the wake of these meetings, but they were increasingly used to bring pressure upon representatives in local and provincial assemblies. Conservative forces feared this instrument which brought out the masses behind the radical discontent of the times. The impediments they devised, however, could not stem the growing use of the tactic.[18]

The colonial provincial assemblies also became organs of agitation and protest, in this case by the elected representatives of the people and on a more legalistic plane. The Assembly of Massachusetts, the House of Burgesses in Virginia, others in similar or lesser degree, were witness to some of the finest revolutionary parliamentarianism of all time. It was during the course of debate in the Virginia House, for example, that Patrick Henry uttered his memorable warning to the English crown: "Tarquin and Cæsar each had his Brutus; Charles the First his Cromwell; and George the Third [interruption from the Speaker and other members crying, "Treason, Treason!"]—may profit by their example. If this be treason, make the most of it." These words aroused all of Virginia and the resolutions for which he had risen to speak on that occasion were reprinted and broadcast in all directions. The Massachusetts Assembly, moreover, after many bitter sessions, locked its doors when a Governor's messenger arrived to dissolve it. It refused to adjourn until it had chosen a committee "to meet the committees appointed by the several colonies to consult together upon the present state of the colonies." This call resulted in the First Continental Congress, the convening of which has been adjudged by many to constitute the real beginning of revolution. The New York, Rhode Island,

and other colonial legislatures were taking equally significant steps on the road to revolt.

Much of what appeared to be the spontaneous action of town meetings, mass metings and assemblies, was carefully prepared in advance in caucuses. The leading revolutionaries met together in these caucus bodies prior to elections or open meetings. It was rarely that the policies or election tickets thus decided upon failed to carry.

Petitions, memorials and remonstrances were sent in almost innumerable numbers to colonial governors and agents as well as to the king. In them were stated in no uncertain terms the colonists' "rights as British citizens" and, in the language of the age, "prayed" for redress of the enumerated infringements of these rights.[14] These documents ably and frankly stated the colonial position and particularly appealed to those wedded to orderly methods and legal procedures. Such persons thus became engaged in one sphere of opposition activity. And when the Crown and Parliament, in whose justice these people had previously placed abiding faith, refused to heed their restrained petitions and "legitimate" demands, these "orderly" folk were forced by the sweep of history into decisive action.

Throughout the period preceding the outbreak of armed strife the colonies had active agents operating on the London scene, the most famous of whom were Henry Laurens of South Carolina, Josiah Quincy of Massachusetts, Arthur Lee, a young Virginian residing in London, and Benjamin Franklin of Pennsylvania. The latter was subsequently also named agent for Georgia, New Jersey and Massachusetts and thus became a sort of unofficial ambassador from the colonies to Great Britain.

These agents, particularly Franklin, did yeoman work for the revolutionary cause. They labored per-

sistently and in many directions. When, for example, Grenville proposed the Stamp Tax, Franklin and other colonial agents personally, though unsuccessfully, protested. In 1766, during the debates on the repeal of the Act, Franklin appeared before the bar of the House of Commons and ably argued for revocation. Simply and clearly he answered 174 questions put to him by friends and foes of the act and developed the view, during the course of his argument, that the tax was contrary to custom, unenforceable even with an army and likely to lead to rebellion. He also dangled before the British eyes, on the same occasion, the bait of trade and commerce—to which he knew the English would be particularly responsive. Americans, he pointed out, once used "to indulge in the fashions and manufactures of Great Britain"; now, because of British provocation, they "wear their old clothes over again, till they can make new ones."

Every tactic in defense of their cause was used by the American representatives. Franklin, for example, kept alive a continuous "foreign propaganda" in London. He published two satires in 1773, "An Edict by the King of Prussia" and "Rules by Which a Great Empire May be Reduced to a Small One,"[15] which greatly enraged the English ruling class. He caused Dickinson's *Farmer's Letters,* setting forth the moderate side of the colonial argument, to be also published in England—although later he repudiated them as not going far enough in their conclusions. "The more I have thought and read on the subject," he wrote from London as early as 1768, "the more I find myself confirmed in opinion, that no middle doctrine can be well maintained."[16]

When things at home were not proceeding smoothly, or when moderates shrank before certain advanced measures, Franklin sent back glowing letters about suc-

cessful headway being made in London. He undertook to strengthen the colonial backbone at times even through the dispatch to America of incorrect information. One such document advised the Americans that if "at the intended congress your Deputies are nearly unanimous in declaring your Rights . . . you cannot well fail of carrying your Point. This Ministry must go out, and give place to Men of juster and more generous Principles. If you divide, you are lost." [17] Many a doubting Thomas was thus brought into line behind precise demands.

Nor was the importance of proper London "connections" lost sight of for a moment. When, for example, the royal Governor Hutchinson of Massachusetts dispatched private letters to London deprecating the character of the local agitators, urging "an abridgement of what are called English Liberties" and suggesting a modification of the provincial charter,[18] Franklin had machinery of his own for privately securing these documents. He immediately dispatched them to the colonial political leaders whose publication of them stirred up a hornet's nest of public resentment against the royal governor.

In this interregnum period of English politics—between mercantilist and industrial supremacy—the colonial representatives on the English scene became adept in the art of nurturing and profiting by every inner difference and antagonism between the two. The rising Whigs, representing the industrialists, were at the time a growing parliamentary opposition committed to the principles that the mercantilist system was proving noxious, that the interests of industry would be best served if the colonists were permitted free development of their own interests and that this freedom from restraint would in the long run provide the utmost degree of expansion for industry and foreign trade.

Most of their politicians and theoreticians advocated conciliation. Driven by their antagonisms to the ruling mercantilist bloc, "the members of the Whig party in society and in both Houses of Parliament during [and prior to] the whole course of the war wished success to the American cause and rejoiced in the American triumphs." [19] Their propaganda became so effective that even a small part of Tory opinion concluded that matters had come to such a pass that separation was the only remedy.[20]

Utilizing every difference which divided the opposition and the government, Franklin, Arthur Lee of Virginia and other colonial agents squeezed the last ounce of revolutionary advantage. They encouraged the Americans to send remonstrances and petitions in order to keep the appetite of the parliamentary opposition whetted.[21] They maintained an interminable series of opposition acquaintances, intimates and connections. They aided Pitt in his efforts at conciliation. They worked closely with men like Edmund Burke, Isaac Barré, John Wilkes—all English agitators in their own right and as roundly denounced as traitors as were the Americans. These Englishmen kept up a continuous opposition on the British scene, which the American representatives knew how to utilize to the utmost.*

*It is of more than passing significance that the first Commander of the British forces in America, Sir William Howe, was a Whig sympathizer. The most ordinary vigilance and enterprise on his part could have compelled the chief American army in Long Island to surrender early in the war and he might easily have captured Philadelphia shortly thereafter. In that event the collapse of the Revolution by 1776 would have been probable. There has been considerable speculation, but no positive proof on the question of the deliberateness of his apathy and inactivity at a time when the Americans could not yet have furnished him any effectual opposition.

Other Methods

The American revolutionists were too realistic and determined a group of men and women to rest content either with political maneuvering or statements of grievance and petitions for relief. A host of other tactics was set afoot simultaneously.

Between 1765 and the end of 1769 every province with the exception of New Hampshire had adopted non-importation agreements in order to touch the pocket nerve of the British ruling class and thus force repeal of the objectionable trade restrictions and taxes. The boycotters variously agreed to abstain from importing goods from Great Britain; to countermand orders already placed; to withhold remittance of English debts, to refuse to handle goods sent to America on a consignment or commission basis. Simultaneously, measures were undertaken to encourage domestic manufactures. Societies to promote local production and to print articles and pamphlets on manufacturing methods were organized. Linen and woolen homespun showed marked increases in production. The masses agreed not to consume articles which could not be produced locally.

The leading Revolutionists regarded non-importation as primarily political rather than economic in purpose. "It is not the Quantum of the duty, nor the Number of articles taxed," they proclaimed in the New York *Gazette and Weekly Mercury* (July 30, 1770). They were striking at the heart of the principle involved—the right of the British Parliament to tax the colonies at all.

There seems to have been little infraction of these agreements. British merchants were soon loudly complaining to their government that orders were falling off. Some were compelled to close their establishments

entirely. In ports and industrial communities thousands were idle. Exports were falling steadily. Some sections of the British ruling class began to denounce more vehemently than ever the non-importation agreement as "illegal and hostile combinations." Others, however, in the face of the American boycott, began to join the colonial legislatures in demanding repeal of the obnoxious measures. Adam Smith pointed out that as a result of the pressure thus applied, the repeal of the Stamp Act was, "among the merchants at least, a popular measure."

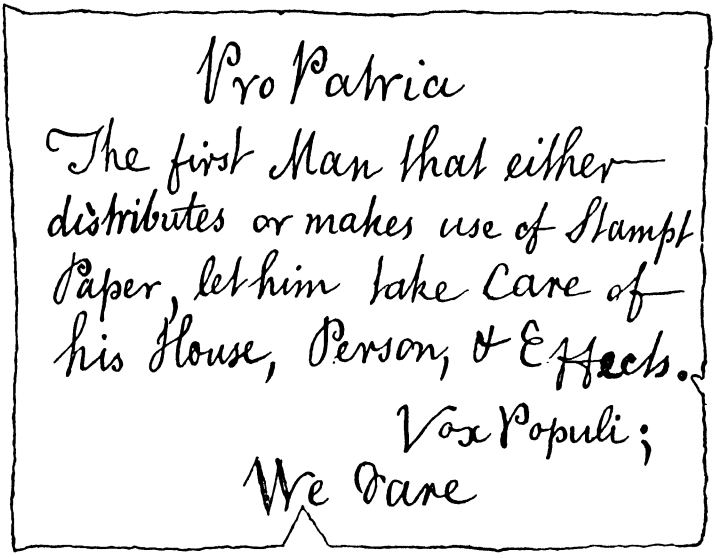
The staunch realists who stood at the head of American affairs recognized that the main factor toward ultimate success now consisted of organized and coordinated activity. Organization in the interest of revolutionary activity became the need of the hour. So the radicals of the day organized themselves as the "Sons of Liberty," a mass organization which met at times openly, at others secretly, to promote in a determined and uncompromising manner the work of revolution.

Recruited largely from the masses, the Sons of Liberty represented "the political and social upheaval of an artisan democracy." [22] Their vigilance committees "maintained a sort of Holy Inquisition into the sales and purchases of every man of business, into the outgoings and incomings of private households and into the reported opinions of individuals." [23] They simply asked no questions, did not bother about legal forms, usurped authority and issued resolutions and orders *which were obeyed.* They declared that they would "fight up to their knees in blood rather than suffer the Stamp Act to be enforced." [24] The New York City section of the society resolved, "We will do the utmost of our power to maintain the peace and good order of this city *so far as it can be done consistently with the preservation of our rights and privileges.*"

The Sons of Liberty organized and led the popular defiance of the royal government. Their agitation upon political matters was perennial. They served as the "spark plugs" and the moving and inspirational spirits of the times. While the officers of the Crown frantically strove to discharge the acts of parliament, "the Sons of Liberty were employed, with no less zeal, in providing means to prevent the execution of the Law." And after the first rumors began reaching America in 1765 that England planned to send troops and ships of war to quell the American disturbances, the Sons of Liberty laid plans of their own to meet force with force. Intercolonial secret military alliances were formed among the Sons of Liberty organizations against the British government.[25]

The societies flourished most widely during the Stamp Act period, but they reappeared openly on the scene whenever crises occurred. Perhaps some idea of the social composition of the group can be gauged from the report of an evening spent at one of their headquarters by John Adams, cousin of Samuel, who later became second president of the United States. He found present two distillers, two braziers, a painter, a printer, the master of a vessel and two jewelers.[26]

Not content with paper resolves, and determined upon firm enforcement as the surest means to formal repeal, the American people moved into direct action. There were riots in Boston, Newport, New York, Charleston and in many other communities. Stamp offices were razed, stamps were confiscated and burned, stamp officers were intimidated and compelled to resign. Distributors of the stamps were burned or hanged in effigy and their residences attacked and damaged. Admiralty courts were broken into, because the new acts gave additional powers to these bodies; and many of their records and files, containing lists of colonial



SONS OF LIBERTY POSTER

offenders against the acts, were confiscated and destroyed. In Boston the unpopular Lieutenant-Governor Hutchinson was compelled, on August 26, 1765, to flee for his life. He returned to find his home wrecked. Although the townspeople affected great grief to the Lieutenant-Governor, Hutchinson said that the loudest mourners were the very "villains" directly responsible for the wreckage. Crowds paraded through the streets of most of the colonies shouting such slogans as, "Liberty, property and no stamps."

Such universal condemnation and tactics of direct action made the Stamp Act impossible of enforcement. The Governor of Massachusetts reported to the Board of Trade in London, on October 12, 1765, that "the real authority of the Government is at an end; some of the principal ringleaders in the late riots, walk the streets with impunity; no Officers dare attack them; no Attorney General prosecute them; and no judges sit upon them." The militia, called out by the Governor, "refused to obey his orders." [27] The Sons of Liberty and others had done their work effectively.*

Throughout this time, as well as the ensuing period, a profuse pamphlet literature appeared which served as auxiliary material to agitate, organize and lay the necessary ideological base. In 1764 there appeared James Otis' *The Rights of the British Colonies Asserted and Proved.* The same year Stephen Hopkins wrote *The Rights of the Colonies Examined.* John Dickinson's *The Late Regulations Respecting the British Colonies* (1765) and his *Farmer's Letters* (1768),

* Though the Sons of Liberty practically disappeared before the outbreak of the Revolution, the spirit of the organization continued to live on and its tradition invoked on numerous occasions in American history. For example, during the presidential campaign of 1856, a group of American radicals, supporting Fremont, identified their cause with that of these colonial revolutionaries in a pamphlet entitled *Sons of Liberty in 1776 and 1856.*

while rather moderate in their program, were widespread in their effect. Somewhat later (January, 1776) the publication of Thomas Paine's *Common Sense Addressed to the Inhabitants of America,* did more than any other single force to prepare public opinion in the direction of independence. Not less than 100,000 copies of the latter pamphlet were sold. Washington himself was among those who described it as "working a powerful change there [Virginia] in the minds of many men." [28]

Revolutionary journalism also achieved a high level of effectiveness. Newspapers such as the *Boston Gazette* fairly drenched the country with columns of lively agitation which the dull conservative sheets found it impossible to counteract.

Nor did these "agitators" underestimate the revolutionary value of good slogans. "Natural Rights"; "Constitutional Rights"; "Taxation without Representation"; "Liberty or Death" and other equally effective phrases were on every revolutionist's lips and went far to dramatize in succinct fashion the immediate demands of the struggle.

The Road to War

Repeal of the Stamp Act

In the meantime the struggle had been widened from a colonial to a national base. Sensing with true revolutionary instinct the need for transforming the struggle from a series of movements in separate colonies into a single, all-embracing structure, a national gathering was arranged at the suggestion of the Massachusetts House of Representatives. The Stamp Act Congress, as it was called, convened in New York on October 7, 1765.

Delegates appeared from all of the colonies except New Hampshire, Georgia, North Carolina and Virginia —and from these unofficial messages of endorsement were received. This first national revolutionary gathering issued a declaration of American rights and petitioned the Crown and Parliament for the redress of grievances. For the first time the Americans had united on a national scale for common purposes and in its "Declarations of Rights and Grievances" the Stamp Act Congress gave to the world the colonies' first joint and united document.

By the time these petitions were given consideration in London, the effects of the American boycott against English goods were showing the full force of their relentless pressure. British merchants were in distress and were frightened by the continued and stubborn resolu-

tion of the colonists to take no cargoes unless the Stamp Tax was repealed.

The mass pressure upon Parliament, both from home and abroad, was so strong that early in 1766 the Stamp Act was rescinded. But accompanying the repeal there appeared an ominous note. Parliament, while making the immediate concession, was surrendering none of its theoretical rights. Included in the repeal was a "Declaratory Act" reaffirming the right of Parliament to pass legislation binding upon the colonies "in all cases whatsoever." The British ruling class had no intention of restoring to the Americans the commercial conditions of the days prior to 1763. The issue was merely being postponed. The ax had not yet been laid at the root of the principle involved in the fight.

Toward Revolt

The ruling class of England was determined, at whatever cost, to invoke its own particular theories and methods of colonial exploitation. The repeal of the Stamp Act, accordingly, only left matters in a state of suspended animation. It was merely a question of awaiting the opportune moment.

The rejoicing in America over the Stamp Tax repeal did not last long. In New York trouble arose over the billeting of English troops at the expense of the colony. In Massachusetts there was conflict over a demand for damages resulting from the Stamp Act riots. Illegal trade with Holland was steadily increasing,[29] to the great annoyance of the Crown. In most of the colonies there was incessant trouble over one issue or another. The more farsighted of the American leaders saw all of the dangers lurking in the shadow of the Declaratory Act. Men like Samuel Adams were working feverishly

in organizational preparation for the struggle, which they clearly saw was bound to come.

Their fears soon bore fruit when, in 1766, Charles Townshend became Chancellor of the Exchequer and head of the British ministry. He shortly proposed and secured, in May, 1767, three acts relating to the colonies. In one a list of enumerated articles—glass, red and white lead, painters' colors, paper and tea—were to be taxed by a port duty. The proceeds, anticipated at £40,000, Townshend proposed to use for the payment of the salaries of crown officers and judges in the colonies who had hitherto been dependent upon American legislatures for their remuneration—a detail which the assemblies had used as a whip over recalcitrant officials to good effect. Next, he again took measures to enforce the Navigation Acts and established a "Board of Commissioners of the Customs" with broad powers to regulate and superintend the trade laws in America. Lastly, the functions of the New York Assembly were suspended until that colony complied with the act requiring it to billet English soldiers.

The colonies saw all of the significance of these acts, and there was a new wave of protest. There were new petitions, meetings, pamphlets, violence. At the initiative of New England and New York, non-consumption and non-importation agreements against British goods were again made by most of the colonies.

It was simply impossible to enforce the new regulations. Violent outbreaks in Boston and elsewhere caused the revenue acts to collapse. When, for example, a cargo of foreign wine was landed in 1768 and openly carried through the streets of Boston under popular guard, the revenue and other officers did not dare to interfere.

In September, 1768, about 1,000 British troops were landed at Boston to intimidate the town. The masses, determined to accord the invaders the same courtesy

they would to "Serpents and Panthers," refused to obey the billeting law and the soldiers had to be quartered in hired buildings. There was much bad blood between them and the thoroughly aroused inhabitants. The Sons of Liberty serenaded them almost daily. Early in 1770 trouble started. It culminated on March 5 in an open conflict between an aroused crowd and all of the troops in Boston. Five Americans were killed and six were wounded on that day—the event is known in American history as the "Boston Massacre." Among those who headed the colonials on this occasion was Crispus Attucks, a Negro who was killed at the first British volley. News of this incident, in greatly exaggerated form, traveled like wild-fire over the American continent. In Boston the victims were given a public funeral. Everywhere protest and indignation meetings were held. The New England militia prepared to drive out the British troops by force. The influence of the incident was probably unparalleled in the march of immediate events leading to the revolution. The protest and the pressure were so strong that the soldiers were shortly thereafter withdrawn from the town.

The revenues from America, the British cabinet soon learned to its dismay, were only £295 more than the administrative expenses involved in collection. Moreover, the military expenses in America were £170,000, and the spirit of resistance was increasing. Although Lord North, who now headed the ministry—due to the death of Grenville in September, 1767—had declared that the Townshend Acts would not be repealed "till we see America prostrate at our feet," he, like his predecessors, was compelled to yield. All of the duties levied by the Townshend Acts were repealed save the one on tea. That, like the Declaratory Act, was retained for the sake of the principle involved—the maintenance of the parliamentary right to levy such taxes.

Colonial Unity

In the meantime the colonies were drawing closer together in the common cause of resistance. In February, 1768, two years prior to the Boston Massacre, the Massachusetts House of Representatives had sent a circular letter to the other colonial legislatures urging the necessity of unity in order that the activities of each colony "should harmonize with each other." [80] The letter was rather moderate in tone and still recognized Parliamentary authority. However, colonial unity was the revolutionists' big objective of the moment and they recognized that this could as yet be achieved only on moderate ground. Men like Samuel Adams were taking no chances of isolating themselves by proceeding too far ahead of public opinion. They were still laying the groundwork with extreme care, and biding their time.

On that occasion more than half of the colonies had returned sympathetic answers. The colonial governors had been ordered by England to forbid all such "unwarrantable combinations." They threatened dissolution of assemblies as the penalty for failure to treat the Massachusetts suggestion "with the contempt it deserves." Every colony defied this injunction and reendorsed the idea of united action.

Now, in 1772, Samuel Adams conceived another practical plan in the same direction. Noting that protest was still largely localized, he determined to accomplish the goal of setting up the machinery necessary to bring about concerted action in all localities and colonies. He therefore proposed the formation of Committees of Correspondence—a revolutionary machine which proved to be so effective as to call forth from a contemporary Tory pamphleteer the invective: "the

foulest, subtlest and most venomous serpent that ever issued from the eggs of sedition."

It was late in November, 1772, that Adams was able to induce the town meeting of Boston to create such a Committee of Correspondence to exchange views and information with other Massachusetts towns and, if necessary, plan joint action. In the few remaining weeks of the year, over eighty towns responded to the suggestion and set up similar committees. The following year Virginia, Rhode Island, Connecticut, New Hampshire and South Carolina also endorsed and carried out the suggestion.

Here was a central, permanent revolutionary apparatus. Before long, it developed, that Adams' suggestion * had brought into being the most powerful engine yet devised for arousing sentiment throughout the colonies. The inter-colonial committees became leagues through which to direct and control events. They developed opinion and originated action on a municipal, provincial and inter-provincial plane. They consolidated the masses, brought about harmony of action and saw that their dictates were obeyed. "Whoever does not comply with anything proposed by them," reported General Gage to the British ministry, "their persons and property were not safe." † By this time the revolutionary leaders had concluded that the time to strike for free-

*Some evidence has been advanced to prove that the plan really originated eight years earlier in New York. See H. B. Dawson, *The Sons of Liberty in New York,* pp. 60-64, 86. For additional information on the Committees of Correspondence, see J. C. Miller, *Sam Adams, Pioneer in Propaganda,* pp. 256-275.

† The American scheme of Committees of Correspondence was later used by European radicals to spread revolutionary doctrines. In the 1790's and 1800's, English radical leaders founded a Corresponding Society for the purpose of developing British opinion and of consolidating the masses. In 1845, Marx and Engels established a Communist Correspondence Committee which blossomed forth two years later as the Communist League.

dom had come. They were busily and systematically at work provoking a crisis, which they knew full well must lead to war and eventual separation.

The Boston Tea Party

The colonial radicals well realized that the ruling class of Great Britain had not relaxed in its determination to fit colonial exploitation into the mercantilist pattern. In 1773, the expected came to pass in connection with the tea tax, which had been retained when the other Townshend Acts were repealed.

The new tea tax proposed and passed by Lord North had a twofold purpose: to help the East India Company out of the dire financial straits into which it had fallen—partly due to the accumulation of a surplus stock of tea amounting to seventeen million pounds—and to break through the American resistance to parliamentary taxation. In this way the issue would be forced once and for all.

The company was therefore permitted to bring its tea into England, duty free,* but the threepence a pound import duty in America was retained. Moreover, the company was no longer to be required to sell this tea to an English middleman for reëxport, but was permitted to handle the entire transaction itself and to organize its own direct agencies in America.

By eliminating the English merchant and the American importer, and selling directly to the American retailer, profits formerly paid by the ultimate consumer were thus removed. This, plus the withdrawal of English import duties, would have enabled the company

* It had formerly been required to pay twelvepence per pound duty on all tea imported, whether the tea was sold in England or not. The necessity of first landing the tea cargo in England, regardless of its ultimate destination was, of course, in accordance with requirements of the Navigation Acts.

BOSTON, JUNE 22d, 1775.

SIR,

THE Committee of Correſpondence of the Town of *Boſton*, conformable to that Duty which they have hitherto endeavoured to diſcharge with Fidelity, again addreſs you with a very fortunate Important Diſcovery; and cannot but expreſs their grateful Sentiments in having obtained the Approbation of ſo large a Majority of the Towns in this Colony, for their paſt Attention to the general Intereſt.

A more extraordinary Occurrence poſſibly never yet took Place in *America*; the Providential Care of that gracious Being who conducted the early Settlers of this Country to eſtabliſh a ſafe Retreat from Tyranny for themſelves and their Poſterity in *America*, has again wonderfully interpoſed to bring to Light the Plot that had been laid for us by our malicious and inſidious Enemies.

Our preſent Governor has been exerting himſelf (as the honorable Houſe of Aſſembly have expreſſed themſelves in their late Reſolves) "by his ſecret confidential Correſpondence, to introduce Meaſures "deſtructive of our conſtitutional Liberty, while he has practiced every "method among the People of this Province, to fix in their Minds "an exalted Opinion of his watcheſt Affection for them, and his "unremitted Endeavours to promote their beſt Intereſt at the Court "of Great-Britain." This will abundantly appear by the Letters and Reſolves which we herewith tranſmit to you; the ſerious Peruſal of which will ſhew you your preſent moſt dangerous Situation. This Period calls for the ſtricteſt Concurrence in Sentiment and Action of every individual of this Province, and we may add, of THIS CONTINENT; all private Views ſhould be annihilated, and the Good of the Whole ſhould be the ſingle Object of our Purſuit—"By uniting we ſtand," and ſhall be able to defeat the Invaders and Violaters of our Rights.

We are,

Your Friends and humble Servants,

Signed by Direction of the Committee for Correſpondence in *Boſton*,

William Cooper } *Town-Clerk.*

To the Town-Clerk of , *to be immediately delivered to the Committee of Correſpondence for your Town, if ſuch a Committee is choſen, otherwiſe to the Gentlemen the Selectmen, to be communicated to the Town.*

CIRCULAR OF THE BOSTON COMMITTEE OF CORRESPONDENCE

to sell tea in America about 50% cheaper than the smuggled product—which was being illegally brought in in great quantities from Holland. By thus making the arrangement attractive to the American consumer, it was expected that on purely economic grounds the entire plan could be quietly slipped over and accepted by the masses.

But by this time the revolutionary acuteness of the Americans was too well developed to be taken in by so obvious a political trick. They were not going to surrender the taxation principle in return for the saving of a few pennies per pound on tea. The colonials were now determined to resist English oppression. They could not be bribed into surrender.

Moreover, as a contemporary writer pointed out, the Americans well realized that "Tho' the first Teas may be sold at a low Rate to make a popular Entry, yet when this mode of receiving Tea is well established, they, as all other Monopolists do, will mediate a greater profit on their Goods, and set them up at what price they please." [81] It was also very clearly understood that success in the tea venture would soon be reflected in every other phase of colonial economic activity.

Meetings of protest and widespread newspaper discussion prepared a hostile public opinion for the arrival of the first tea shipments under the act. Resolutions were passed that the tea must not be permitted to land and that no duty be paid. Friction and violence were inevitable. In New York, the first ship to arrive with tea under the act was forced by the Sons of Liberty to return without unloading its cargo; a second cargo was dumped into the harbor by an aroused crowd. At Philadelphia, the captain of a ship with a cargo of tea, when confronted by an indignant meeting of eight thousand people, saw the wisdom of returning home without undertaking to unload. In Charleston the tea

was landed but was sent to warehouses where it remained untouched for three years, whereupon it was expropriated and auctioned for the benefit of the revolutionary government.

Most far-reaching in its influence and effect was the destruction of the tea brought into Boston on the ship "Dartmouth"—the Boston Tea Party. On December 16, 1773, the largest meeting ever held in Boston—nearly eight thousand people—had assembled to induce the governor of the province to permit the owner of the ship to leave, as he desired to do, without unloading. When efforts to prevail along these lines were unsuccessful, Samuel Adams adjourned the meeting with the fateful declaration, "This meeting can do nothing more to save the country." [32]

These words were apparently a prearranged signal. Immediately there were shouts such as "Boston harbor a tea-pot tonight." [33] Instantly a disciplined crowd of men, disguised as Indians, hastened to Griffin's Wharf where the tea lay on board the "Dartmouth" and two other ships which had also arrived with tea. They clambered aboard and for two hours silently and systematically hoisted the tea chests from the holds, broke them open and dumped the contents into the harbor.

A great crowd silently watched these proceedings from the shore. The whole affair was conducted quietly and methodically. No person was harmed, no property save the tea was injured, no tea was carried away. And when the job at hand was concluded, order prevailed and the "Indians" vanished.

Property to the value of £15,000 belonging to the East India Company had gone overboard that night. The participants could not be "identified" but it is accepted that citizens of high position and merchants as well as carpenters, masons, farmers, blacksmiths and

barbers had all been numbered among the "Mohawks" who had taken this action.

From the moment of the sinking of the tea in Boston harbor, American revolutionary activity took a new and more radical turn. Evidence was clear that the colonists were ready to resist, by violent means if needs be. Six additional colonies hastened to appoint Committees of Correspondence to keep in touch with the revolutionary center at Boston—leaving only Pennsylvania still holding off. The Americans were clearly preparing for struggle. They had crossed the Rubicon.

The Five "Intolerable Acts"

The challenge to Great Britain was clear and direct. And the mightiest imperial power of the day, recognizing that the period of conciliation and concessions was passed, met it with equal firmness. The British ruling class finally stiffened its attitude and determined to see the struggle through to the bitter end. The five "Intolerable Acts" were forthcoming almost immediately.

When the news reached London of what had happened in Boston, the fury of the ruling class knew no bounds. "Boston ought to be knocked about their ears and destroyed," shouted one parliamentary representative. He would "burn and set fire to all their woods." Another could now see that "the Americans were a strange set of people . . . instead of making their claim by argument they always . . . decide the matter by tarring and feathering." [84] In any event, although the Whig minority, represented by Chatham in the House of Lords and by Burke in the Commons, was reluctant to take punitive measures, the inevitable consequence of which they were farsighted enough to envisage,[85] the reactionaries in power set their faces against the "agi-

tators" on the American side of the Atlantic. The ruling party of commercial monopoly was intent upon prosecuting a policy which inadvertently pushed ahead the date of its own doom. Accordingly, measures of the most stringest nature were adopted.

The first measure closed the port of Boston, moved the customhouse to Salem, forbade the landing or shipping of merchandise through the harbor of Boston and stationed ships of war on the spot to enforce the law. Thus, the town, which owed its prosperity to commercial activity, was forbidden to engage in sea commerce. The ban was to be lifted only when compensation was made for the destroyed tea and the Crown's officers were satisfied as to the likelihood of future obedience to royal authority.

Next, the charter of Massachusetts was remodeled. Members of the Council, or upper chamber, hitherto chosen by the elected assembly, were henceforth to be appointed by the Crown. And since, as Lord North put it, "If the Governor issued a proclamation, there is hardly found a magistrate to obey it," the judges, sheriffs and magistrates were made appointable by the royal governor and removable at his pleasure. At the same time, to strike at the revolutionary actions which were emanating from town meetings, the rights of those bodies were seriously abridged. Recognizing that the town meetings were the originators of the measures striking at royal government, Lord North decided that they must be definitely curbed. For one thing they might not meet at all, save for elections, without the consent of the governor and no subject might be discussed, even when they were convoked, without his specific authorization.

In anticipation of trouble and even open resistance, Lord North moved to protect officers brought to trial for capital offenses committed in the execution of their

duties. It was provided that should persons be indicted for acts committed while aiding a magistrate to suppress tumult or riot the Governor might send them for trial to another colony or to England.

Next, a quartering Act was passed. Local authorities were required to find suitable quarters for English troops sent into the colony. Also, General Gage, Commander-in-Chief of the English army in America, was appointed Governor of Massachusetts and made responsible for executing the coercive policies of Parliament.

At about the same time Great Britain promulgated the Quebec Act. The land ceded by France in 1763 between the Appalachians and the Mississippi was made part of the province of Quebec and within it the Catholic religion was established by law. Massachusetts, Virginia, New York and Connecticut all claimed lands under their charters—with their rich fur trading and land speculating possibilities—in the region between the Ohio and the Great Lakes. They thus saw their claims, and their plans to extend and expand westward into the Mississippi Valley, shattered at one fell swoop.* In addition, the religious aspects of the bill

* Economically speaking, of all the colonies, Virginia was the most adversely affected by the Quebec Act of 1774. By uniting the old Northwest with Quebec province, the British government not only shattered the dreams of land speculators in Virginia but also sounded the death knell of the plantation system in the "Old Dominion." From the very beginning, the Virginia planting economy was conducted on a narrow margin of profit which, by the second half of the eighteenth century, had reached almost the vanishing point. Yet, during this time, the plantation system had been able to maintain itself chiefly on the basis of credit drawn from British sources. English capitalists had been willing to extend short- and long-term capital largely because they believed that Virginia planters would be able to pay their debts by garnering profits derived from speculative land ventures in the West. In short, the solvency of the Virginia plantation system had been dependent upon the subsidiary activity of land speculation. With the passage

fanned the anti-Catholic flames of New England Protestantism. The slogan "no popery" became additional grist for the revolutionary mill.

The First Continental Congress and the Outbreak of War

By this time America was on the verge of open war. The colonials realized that their happiness and prosperity hung in the balance and the radicals among them saw that the time for open resistance was at hand.

A shower of denunciatory pamphlets immediately appeared. Wheat, corn, flour, meat and other commodities were shipped from as far as Virginia and South Carolina to aid the poor of distressed and blockaded Boston —people thrown out of employment through the closing of the port. "The heads of the nobility grow dangerous to the gentry, and how to keep them down is the question," commented the aristocratic Gouverneur Morris as he saw the masses taking greater power into their own hands and the issue shift from a demand from mere trade reform into political channels with a mounting sentiment for independence. "The mob begin to think and to reason," he continued. "Poor reptiles! it is with them a vernal morning; they are struggling to cast off their winter's slough, they bask in the sunshine, and ere noon they will bite, depend upon it. The gentry begin to fear this." [86]

of the Quebec Act all hope in such activity was virtually ended. The plantation economy of the "Old Dominion" began to reel as English capitalists began to think twice before extending credit. Was it any wonder that the Quebec Act drove Virginians "almost unanimously into the party of the American revolutionists"? (See L. M. Hacker, "The First American Revolution" [*Columbia University Quarterly*, September, 1935, vol. xxvii, no. 3, pp. 269-271]. For the effect of the act itself upon Virginia as well as for the quotation cited consult C. W. Alvord, "Virginia and the West" [*Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, vol. iii, no. 1, p. 25].)

VOTES and PROCEEDINGS

the Town of

BOSTON,

JUNE 17, 1774.

AT a legal and very full meeting of the freeholders and other inhabitants of the town of Boſton, *by adjournment at* Faneuil-hall, *June* 17, 1774.

The Hon. JOHN ADAMS, Esq; Moderator.

UPON a motion made, the town again entered into the conſideration of that article in the warrant, Viz. "To conſider and determine what meaſures are proper to be taken upon the preſent exigency of our public affairs, more eſpecially relative to the late edict of a British parliament for blocking up the harbour of Boſton, and annihilating the trade of this town," and after very ſerious debates thereon,

VOTED, (With only one diſſentient) That the committee of correſpondence be enjoined forthwith to write to all the other colonies, acquainting them that we are not idle, that we are deliberating upon the ſteps to be taken on the preſent exigencies of our public affairs; that our brethren the landed intereſt of this province, with an unexampled ſpirit and unanimity, are entering into a non-conſumption agrement; and that we are waiting with anxious expectation for the reſult of a continental congreſs, whoſe meeting we impatiently deſire, in whoſe wiſdom and firmneſs we can confide, and in whoſe determinations we ſhall chearfully acquieſce.

Agreeable to order, the committee of correſpondence laid before the town ſuch letters, as they had received in anſwer to the circular letters, wrote by them to the ſeveral colonies and alſo the ſea port towns in this province ſince the reception of the Boſton port bill; and the ſame being publicly read,

VOTED, unanimouſly, That our warmeſt thanks be tranſmitted to our brethren on the continent, for that humanity, ſympathy and affection with which they have been inſpired, and which they have expreſſed towards this diſtreſſed town at this important ſeaſon.

VOTED, unanimouſly, That the thanks of this town be, and hereby are, given to the committee of correſpondence, for their faithfulneſs, in the diſcharge of their truſt, and that they be deſired to continue their vigilance and activity in that ſervice.

Whereas the Overſeers of the poor in the town of Boſton are a body politic, by law conſtituted for the reception and diſtribution of all charitable donations for the uſe of the poor of ſaid town,

VOTED, That all grants and donations to this town and the poor thereof at this diſtreſſing ſeaſon, be paid and delivered into the hands of ſaid Overſeers, and by them appropriated and diſtributed in concert with the committee lately appointed by this town for the conſideration of ways and means of employing the poor.

VOTED, That the townclerk be directed to publiſh the proceedings of this meeting in the ſeveral news papers.

The meeting was then adjourned to Monday the 27th of June, inſtant.

Atteſt,

WILLIAM COOPER, Town Clerk.

Meanwhile, town meetings were being held despite their prohibition. Workmen of Boston refused through their Committee of Mechanics to provide labor with which to erect barracks for Gage's troops and, when the General in turn sought to recruit the necessary labor in New York, the workers of that city refused to be transported to do "scab" work of this type.[87] Councilors appointed under the new acts were finding life most uncomfortable. Gage sent a hurry call to England for an additional 20,000 troops.

It soon became evident that the colonies were not to be intimidated by the coercive legislation and that the acts directed against Boston were tending to draw the colonies closer together. Riots broke out almost daily. Conspicuous Tories were roughly handled. The Committees of Correspondence were increasingly active. A "Solemn League and Covenant" was entered into, pledging all its signers to abstain from trade relations with England. "The die is now cast," wrote the King. "The colonies must either submit or triumph." The Americans similarly recognized that the hour had come. "It must come to a quarrel with Great Britain sooner or later," said Samuel Adams, "and if so, what can be a better time than the present?" [88]

Meanwhile, the people were rapidly arming themselves. Guns and munitions were being collected, militias were organizing and drilling, volunteers called "Minute Men" were pledging themselves to be ready for any emergency at a moment's notice. The British ministry was fast learning that the people with whom it was dealing could not be broken or intimidated.

In anticipation of the breaking of the storm the revolutionists saw the need of a national congress which would represent all of the colonies—after the model of the earlier Stamp Act Congress. Virginia took the lead and when the House of Burgesses was dissolved by

the Governor for acts of solidarity with blockaded Boston, the members reassembled at the Raleigh Tavern and issued a call to the other colonies for a general Congress.

Every colony except Georgia was represented when the First Continental Congress assembled in Philadelphia on September 5, 1774. The delegates were variously selected—some by their provincial assemblies, others by rump bodies. As Joseph Galloway, delegate from Pennsylvania, later observed, the conservative forces present were quickly pushed into the background and "measures for independence and sedition were soon after preferred to those of harmony and liberty, and no arguments . . . could prevail on a majority of the Colonies to desert them." [39]

The first fruit of the Congress was the issuance of a "Declaration of Rights," in which the views of the colonials were stated and defined. They defended the American position, "by the immutable laws of nature, the principles of the English constitution, and the several charters or compacts," [40] demanded internal self-regulation, and conceded to Parliament the rights of regulation only in such matters as may relate to "external commerce, for the purpose of securing the commercial advantages of the whole Empire." [41] As to the acts passed since 1763, however, the Congress declared in unmistakable language: "To these grievous acts and measures Americans cannot submit." [42]

The members of the Congress next bound themselves and their constituents to what they called the "Continental Association," and declared unanimously that until such times as redress might be made "there be no importation into British America, from Great Britain or Ireland of any goods, wares or merchandise whatsoever." [43] To non-importation was added a non-consumption agreement and arrangements were made

to abolish extravagances of all kinds, promote frugality and encourage local manufacture.

Powerful addresses were sent to the Crown and to the English people and a reaffirmation was made of the colonial ties and basic loyalty to Great Britain. Before adjourning, arrangements were made for convening a Second Continental Congress the following May (1775) to give further consideration to the affairs of the colonies.

Meanwhile, in England, all efforts of the Whig minority in Parliament to effect some sort of reconciliation were defeated by large majorities.* Benjamin Franklin, sensing the uselessness of further efforts, returned to America. Parliament, taking measures to compel obedience, declared Massachusetts in a state of rebellion, arranged for the dispatch of additional armed forces to America, and answered the American "Association" by a counter act restraining the colonies from trade with Great Britain.

On the night of April 18, 1775, General Gage, commanding the troops at Boston, sent about 800 men to seize the military stores which the provincials had collected at Concord, eighteen miles north of Boston. As soon as they set out, riders sped in every direction to warn the inhabitants. As the British passed through Lexington, on the road to their objective, they found armed villagers behind every fence, corner and wall. From every sort of ambush volleys were fired at the on-coming Britishers. The latter were able to move on to Concord from where, however, they were forced to retreat to Boston, with a loss of close to three hundred killed, wounded or prisoners. The American loss was about 90 men.

The war was on. When the Second Continental Con-

*On an American question this opposition could muster only about 90 votes out of approximately 350.

WILLIAM JACKSON,

an *IMPORTER*; at the

BRAZEN HEAD,

North Side of the TOWN-HOUSE,

and *Oppoſite the Town-Pump, in*

Corn-hill, BOSTON.

It is deſired that the SONS and DAUGHTERS of *LIBERTY*, would not buy any one thing of him, for in ſo doing they will bring Diſgrace upon *themſelves*, and their *Poſterity*, for *ever* and *ever*, AMEN.

BOYCOTTING POSTER

gress gathered in May, 1775, there was no longer any question of ways and means of peaceful resistance. Organization of the war was the only order of the day.

The job in hand was tackled with energy and haste. George Washington, a somewhat reticent but extremely sagacious member of Congress, who had had military experience in the French and Indian Wars, was appointed Commander-in-Chief. Arrangements were entered into for the importation of munitions and supplies. A call for volunteers was sent forth. Provisions were made for financing the war—through the issuance of floods of paper money. The war machinery was put into gear and prepared for action.

In the Throes of Revolution

The Dual Government

The bodies which organized and prosecuted the American Revolution operated outside of the existing channels of established English law. Not authorized—and even prohibited—by the Crown, they were without legal bases or sanction. In their very existence they constituted a defiance of authority—a revolutionary usurpation and seizure of political power. They epitomized Civil War.

The members of the Stamp Act Congress, the First Continental Congress and the Second Continental Congress were variously selected. Some, to be true, were elected by their colonial assemblies—but usually in defiance of an express prohibition from the superior authorities. Sometimes these assemblies reconvened without being called by authority and under these irregular conditions, in extra-legal bodies of one type or another unknown to the law, selected their representatives. Others were delegated by their Committees of Correspondence or directly elected by defiant voters in their town or country voting places. In each of the colonies the revolutionists, determined upon the end they had in view, adapted themselves to local exigencies. When delegates could not be selected in one manner, another was resorted to—legal precedent and established procedure notwithstanding. Besides Continental Congresses, there were county and provincial

bodies. The dual power was thus cutting through the body politic.

Whatever their status in the eyes of the English law, these revolutionary bodies nevertheless immediately took up the tasks in hand. They passed governmental acts, took the established militia out of the authorities' hands, organized and drilled a new militia, appointed military officers, set up committees, drove out or otherwise punished traitors to the Colonial cause and took over all of the functions of government.

Throughout the colonies, the revolutionary government and its delegates were regarded as the real representatives of the country—at least by the Patriot Party. Though without formal authority, the Continental Congress was recognized as the supreme power in America and it was obeyed as if it was a regularly elected and duly constituted authority.

To enforce its authority and decrees, to ensure a system of surveillance and to deal with recalcitrants, the Second Continental Congress provided that in each colony Committees of Safety be chosen in every city, town or county, dependent upon the colony's local system of administration. These bodies were charged with the duty of seeing that revolutionary edicts were obeyed and of dealing with evaders. This local committee system, operating under the guidance of the colonial Committees of Correspondence, became so well organized and vigilant that no person could escape its eyes.

Since the Congress was without legal sanction, special penalties had to be evolved. Disregard of the nonimportation policy meant publication of one's name as an "enemy to American Liberty" and the position of traitor in the community. Though lacking in organized police power, the Committees of Safety had the backing and support of the masses in each com-

munity—the "mob" as they were contemptuously dubbed by the Crown's officials.

Judges representing the King, sheriffs attempting to enforce the English law and loyalists who gave aid or comfort to the enemy received many a visit from this "mob"—the mass enforcement apparatus of the revolution. Great numbers of loyalists were in this manner driven from their estates or had their other property and businesses confiscated. Many suffered bodily harm. In all New England and in large sections of the remainder of the country it was difficult for those disloyal to the revolution to find peace or safety. "There is not a justice of peace in Virginia," reported the Earl of Dunmore to the Crown, "that acts except as a committee-man." The dictatorship of the revolutionary party was the effective order of the day.

The Committees of Safety

The local arms of the Revolutionary Government were the aforementioned Committees of Safety. The duty of these bodies was to exercise supervisory military and police powers within a province or local community. The general orders and decrees of the Continental Congress were left to them for execution with the responsibility for devising measures—strenuous or otherwise—needed to effect the desired ends.

There were Committees of Safety for an entire province or state and local committees for minor political divisions. There were also special temporary and emergency committees. The bodies were appointed by the Patriots at town, county, district, or other local meetings, taking over revolutionary authority in whatever happened to be their particular local area of jurisdiction. Local committees took advice and instruction from their State bodies while in inter-provincial mat-

ters all observed the authority of the Continental Congress. The revolutionary machine was thus given uniformity of policy and action.

A loyalist officer in Virginia thus described the work of these groups in his area: "A Committee has been chosen in every County," he wrote, "whose business it is to carry the Association of the Congress into execution, which Committee assumes an authority to inspect the books, invoices, and all other secrets of the trade and correspondence of Merchants; to watch the conduct of every inhabitant, without distinction, and to send for all such as come under their suspicion into their presence; to interrogate them respecting all matters which, to their pleasure, they think fit objects of their inquiry; and to stigmatize, as they term it, such as they find transgressing what they are now hardy enough to call the Laws of the Congress, which stigmatizing is no other than inviting the vengeance of an outrageous and lawless mob to be exercised upon the unhappy victims." [44]

The Committees sat in judgment; they inflicted penalties; they administered and executed the laws of the revolutionary legislative bodies; they restrained and punished the activities of the Loyalist Party. They diligently cared for every need of the movement. They gathered supplies for the army, fitted out privateers, recruited men for the service and carried on a popular agitation. They fixed prices; they confiscated Loyalist property.

Their powers were absolute; their decrees and activities struck terror in the hearts of the Revolution's enemies. The bitter enmity of the latter well attests to the system's effectiveness. "I would," wrote the royal governor of New York in 1777, "were I in authority, burn every Committee Man's house within my reach, as I deem those Agents the wretched in-

IN COUNCIL OF SAFETY,

PHILADELPHIA, *December* 8, 1776.

SIR.

THERE is certain intelligence of General Howe's army being yeſterday on its march from Brunſwick to Princetown, which puts it beyond a doubt that he intends for this city —This glorious opportunity of ſignalizing himſelf in defence of our country, and ſecuring the Rights of America forever, will be ſeized by every man who has a ſpark of patriotic fire in his boſom. We entreat you to march the Militia under your command with all poſſible expedition to this city, and bring with you as many waggons as you can poſſibly procure, which you are hereby authorized to impreſs, if they cannot be had otherwiſe—Delay not a moment, it may be fatal and ſubject you and all you hold moſt dear to the ruffian hands of the enemy, whoſe cruelties are without diſtinction and unequalled.

By Order of the Council,

DAVID RITTENHOUSE, Vice-Preſident.

To the COLONELS *or* COMMANDING OFFICERS *of the reſpective* Battalions *of this* STATE.

TWO O'CLOCK, P. M.

THE Enemy are at Trenton, and all the City Militia are marched to meet them.

CIRCULAR OF PHILADELPHIA COUNCIL OF SAFETY

struments of the continued calamities of this Country, and in order the sooner to purge this Colony of them, I am willing to give twenty silver dollars for every acting Committee Man who shall be delivered up to the King's Troops." [45]

To the counter-revolutionaries' cry that these "pragmatical committee men" constituted a "lawless power" without the authority of any lawful sovereign and that they were set up beyond any accepted law, answer was given in terms of the revolutionary philosophy of the times—"The people rule; these are the instruments of the people." To the charge that in the execution of their allotted work they were at times seemingly tyrannous and despotic, that in the silencing of enemies they sometimes suppressed freedom of speech and liberty of the press, the answer was again made that any temporary tyranny involved was a tyranny which the people were themselves erecting for the common good. And that in a struggle between progress and reaction the Revolution could allow no quarter to the conservative enemies within their own domain.

The revolutionaries were not, as reactionary historians depict, wild mobs. They were organized in trained, orderly, and highly disciplined bodies. Their leadership was purposeful and competent. They constituted an extra-legal instrumentality of government, backed by the unbreakable weapon of the popular will.

Thus, supported by the armed popular power, the Revolution had a mighty machine, with wheels turning within wheels. Congress decreed; the Committees of Correspondence made known these decrees and then executed them through the Committees of Safety. "What an engine!" commented John Adams in the calm speculation of later years. "France imitated it and produced a revolution.... And all Europe was in-

clined to imitate it for the same revolutionary purposes." [46]

Declaration of Independence

Although the colonists were in a state of rebellion against long constituted legal authority, they were as yet merely seeking a redress of grievances—an armed demand for reform. When war broke out, and for over a year thereafter, there was no public demand for political separation.*

As early as 1765, Samuel Adams is alleged to have privately advocated the logic and eventual necessity for colonial independence. Although he was astute enough to keep his views to himself for the time being, he had recognized the inevitability of independence since the first British troops had been landed in Boston in 1768.[47] Other leaders, such as Benjamin Franklin, were, at about the same time, beginning to formulate the philosophy ultimately proclaimed in the Declaration of Independence.† But the times were not yet ripe and these leaders, and others who shared their views, deemed it prudent to conceal their ultimate purpose until more favorable circumstances had matured. Being master politicians, they knew how to adjust their pace and wait until the iron was hot before striking. Their avowed purpose was to wait "till the fruit is ripe before we gather it."

Even the First Continental Congress discountenanced independence. Its sessions were secret, but it is known that a group of delegates, led by those from Virginia and Massachusetts, urged a fight for independence. However, the conservatives, led by Jay,

* For a record of the Patriots' repeated disavowals, between the years 1764-1776, that independence was their objective, see *American Historical Review*, vol. i, pp. 40-42.

† See above p. 51.

Duane, Colden, Galloway and Edward Rutledge, still prevailed, and the public declarations of the body professed complete loyalty to the Crown and affirmed attachment to Great Britain. "You have been told that we are seditious, impatient of government and desirous of independency," declared the Congress to the people of England. "Be assured that these are not facts. . . . Place us in the same situation that we were at the close of the last war, and our former harmony will be restored." [48]

The second Congress, somewhat less obsequious by virtue of the actual outbreak of hostilities and a maturing mass sentiment, was still held in leash by the conservative forces who hesitated to declare for independence and would have rested content with imperial home rule. To preserve harmony, the radicals agreed to defer the final revolutionary step. The war was continued without a declaration of complete independence. All united on a series of manifestoes still expressing deep loyalty to the king while asserting their grievances.[49]

But the public unanimity of the acts of Congress were accompanied by bitter divisions in the secret debates. The radicals were content for the present to keep these differences from the world. Astute politicians that they were, they saw that the march of events was leading to inevitable separation. And so the impetuous Patrick Henry and Samuel Adams held their peace, while waiting for public sentiment to form.

Meanwhile, as the war proceeded, the conservatives were being driven to the last ditch by the intransigent policies of the English ministry and the ruling faction in Parliament. The petition of the Second Continental Congress was not received; the Americans were declared rebels; American ports were blockaded; foreign mercenaries from the petty sovereignties then compris-

ing Germany were enlisted to serve in America under English officers; Falmouth (Portland), Maine, and Norfolk, Virginia, were burned; and on every score an unyielding and coercive attitude was displayed toward the Americans. Driven by their class considerations, the political representatives of British merchant capital were forcibly pressing toward a point at which the mass of Americans recognized that compromise was not possible for either side and the struggle for political separation merely a matter of time.

In the face of these developments, the conservatives were able to hold influence only in the older and wealthier sections of the Middle Colonies. New England, Virginia and South Carolina veered sharply toward outright independence and began authorizing their delegates toward this end.

The popular attitude was very considerably influenced by the appearance in January, 1776, of a pamphlet, *Common Sense,* written by Thomas Paine, an Englishman who had lived in America for about a year. The pamphlet swept the colonies, the hundred thousand copies passing from hand to hand. Written in the plainest language, it carried unprecedented weight and influence among the masses with its simple message that a king is nothing but the "principal ruffian of some restless gang." It lashed away at the British constitution and system of government, arrayed every wrong suffered by the Americans, and concluded, " 'Tis time to part."

Paine's pamphlet turned the tide. From that time events moved inexorably toward independence. The organized propaganda of the Patriot Party was set afoot in a hundred simultaneous directions. The revolutionists struck while the iron was hot—and they carried the day.

On June 7, 1776, Richard Henry Lee, on behalf of

Virginia, submitted to the Continental Congress three resolutions, the first of which declared that "these United States are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved." The other two resolutions declared for foreign alliances and the adoption of an interstate plan of confederation.

Three days later the resolution was referred to a committee to "prepare a declaration to the effect of the first said resolution." This committee, headed by Thomas Jefferson, had its work accepted by Congress on July 2, 1776. On July 4 all modifications were made and the document known as the Declaration of Independence was sent forth for final signature.*

The Declaration not only proclaimed independence but enumerated to the world America's reasons for so acting. In addition, it formulated the general political philosophy of the American people. "We hold these truths to be self-evident," stated the second paragraph, "That all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.... Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to

* The Declaration of Independence, calling upon the masses to defend the Revolution, was preceded by another declaration of freedom. The latter, embodying the dominant interests of American merchant capitalists, was passed by the Second Continental Congress on April 6, 1776. It consisted among other things of a series of resolutions nullifying the Acts of Trade and Navigation. These proposals meant but one thing, and that was independence from the hampering restrictions of mercantilist imperial-colonial relations.

them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

In such unmistakable language the founders of the United States of America proclaimed the right of revolution. When an existing governmental structure had outlived its period, they frankly asserted the right of the people "to alter or to abolish it." This by virtue of the fact that all governments "derive their just powers from the consent of the governed."

The Declaration formulated a political philosophy of democracy in government. Revolution and independence were therefore justified in the light of specific infringements upon this basic tenet.

The Declaration thus became a clarion call to revolution and a philosophic statement of human rights.[50] It had a practical end in view and it justified this end with a practical philosophy which was destined to sweep the world in the ensuing century. The United States became the forerunner in that stage of the struggle for human emancipation which economic and social developments of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries had presaged.

With the issuance of the Declaration of Independence the American Revolution passed into its highest stage. It now changed its avowed purpose and its form. From a struggle for the correction of existing evils and a mere demand for reform, it now reached the inevitable stage of armed struggle for outright separation from England and the establishment of a new government.

The Crystallization of Parties

For the first ten years of revolutionary agitation—from the passage of the Grenville Acts until the outbreak of war—virtually all forces in the colonies except

the direct royal representatives and their lackeys were in the ranks of the opposition. For one thing, the agitation was accompanied by a perpetual disavowal of any motive for independence. The rectification of bad ministerial policy, the redress of grievances and peaceful constitutional reform, were the only alleged aims and objectives of the American Whigs. On such a program many, like Joseph Galloway, who merely wanted colonial home rule, were willing to coöperate. During this period not a few who were later numbered among the Loyalists were in the ranks of the opposition.

But as time went on, it became clearer that there could be no peaceful understanding between the opposing forces. The reactionary class considerations of the King and his ministers precluded any yielding or conciliatory disposition on the part of England, and many persons of privilege and of wealth in the colonies began to reject any philosophy or activity which might lead to eventual rebellion. They were much too comfortable or advantageously connected with English interests to harbor or abet any such ends. They would rather tolerate grievances.

This group first began to reflect upon ends and consequences at the time of the Stamp Act riots. Although they had accomplished their ends, they recoiled at the dangers inherent in the "mob" violence which had occurred. After all, they concluded, "These men might not cease their shouting when purely British restrictions were removed." [51] The colonies were themselves based upon class privilege and there was no telling where a stop could be made if certain ideas concerning "liberty" and "oppression"—along with tumultuous methods of correction—took hold among the masses.

Still other rifts occurred in the opposition as a result of the non-importation agreements. The large, legal merchants who served as American agents for British

imports saw their profits dwindle as stocks became exhausted and new supplies were prohibited. They accordingly began an active campaign of opposition to trade interference, while the Sons of Liberty, composed largely of the smuggling merchants, nonmercantile interests and the propertyless population, became increasingly fired by the revolutionary agitation and activity of the times.

The tea riots brought further division. Again a large section of the "legitimate" merchant class "was shocked into remorseful silence by the anarchy that had laid profane hands upon property belonging to a private trading company." [52] Those profitably connected with English trade, however much they chafed under growing English restrictions, began to draw apart from their fellow Americans. As one authority on the Loyalist Party has pointed out, "This hostility did not mean, necessarily, that England's course was approved, but, for the most part, simply indicated that the loyalists did not sanction Whig methods of seeking the redress of grievances." [53]

The formation of a Loyalist Party, therefore, dates from the gathering of the First Continental Congress in 1774.[54] Just as the radical committees were now becoming increasingly active, in the same way many, who had previously hung back or who had taken part in the opposition movement in a hope of controlling or at least directing it, now began drawing together. Loyalist opinion suddenly crystallized and organized. The years 1774 and 1775 were marked by the appearance of an unprecedented amount of loyalist literature.

Between the outbreak of war in April, 1775, and the Declaration of Independence, the chasm constantly widened. Some who would even take arms to redress grievances and force reform shrank from the renuncia-

tion of British citizenship which acceptance of the demand for independence implied. Hence the Declaration finally solidified both the patriot and the loyalist ranks. Between the two positions there was no longer any half-way or impartial attitude. After July, 1776, a war of extermination between the two parties was begun.

The merchant class was split wide open in this party division. They were the original instigators of the demands for trade reform and, to carry out their objectives, had formed alliances with their natural enemies within the colonial social structure. But they saw the movement get out of bounds—particularly after the passage of the five Intolerable Acts, which now made the issue largely political and involved the right of Parliament to suppress "mob violence"—a right dear to the hearts of capitalists generally.

Thereafter there was a strong drift among this group to the British point of view. The largest section of such loyalist merchants were those importing goods from England,* and the large scale operators who dreamed of expanding trade in a powerful world-spanning British Empire kept in order by a strong central government.

The radical merchants who joined the Patriot cause were those who, not involved in the vortex of British trade relations, looked toward the consequences of independence as meaning "trade with every nation," "a free and unlimited trade; a great accession of wealth, and a proportional rise in the value of land; the establishment, gradual improvement and perfection of manufactures and science.... Where encouragement is

* In the city of Philadelphia the chief importers of British goods were Quakers. The Quaker sect as a whole was officially loyalist in sympathy. See *American Archives*, 4 Series, vol. i, pp. 1903-1904.

given to industry; where liberty and property are well secured." [55] Those involved in illegal trade were nearly all to be found in this wing of the merchant class.

The organizational backbone of the Loyalist Party were the royal or proprietory officials. Governors, lieutenant governors, military officers, appointed justices, down to petty district squires, were in this group. They clung to traditional English, rather than colonial, ways of life, habits of thought and social connections. Tied to them was a huge army of colonial politicians, or "placemen," who, anticipating success of the British arms, counted on lucrative days to come as the reward of their fidelity to the Crown.

The great landowners of the northern seaboard, the clergy of the Established Church, the large merchants, the socially elect, those of rank and hereditary wealth, the aristocratic, the prosperous and the privileged generally, who saw in the revolt a rising of those from whom they expected acquiescence and obedience, recoiled from revolution and embraced the British cause. They already had every reason to feel satisfied with the existing order of things.

The strength of the Patriots lay in the masses and in certain sections of the bourgeoisie. Those who foresaw the huge potentialities of the American continent, and the vast commercial, financial and industrial possibilities of its exploitation, and who saw the necessities of Americans having an independent future if they were to be allowed to flower, all joined in the move for freedom. The non-English traders, farmers, innkeepers, artisans, and those of lowly origin, all did battle for their rights. The propertyless masses saw in the philosophy of the Declaration of Independence the portal to a dream of democracy which has never been realized. And in an effort to achieve it they

starved and froze at Valley Forge and were in the front ranks of every campaign in those fateful days of war and death when the American nation was born.

In the South, the planting class also joined the Patriots. Hopelessly indebted to the British merchants, the planters saw themselves falling deeper and deeper into the mire. The revolution presented an opportunity for a new lease on life—a chance to tear away from that relationship which was slowly strangling them. It likewise meant a chance to speculate in western lands and accumulate a more abundant supply of capital.

The strength of the relative groups has been variously estimated. An English historian has termed the work of the Revolution that of "an energetic minority, who succeeded in committing an undecided and fluctuating majority to courses for which they had little love." [56] John Adams, on the other hand, claimed "two thirds of the people to have been with us." [57] Modern historians usually accept the relative strength of the opposing groups at one-third for the Revolution, one-third against and one-third neutral.

In any event, the loyalist opposition was numerically strong. But the Patriots were riding the crest of the historical wave. Their organization was nearly perfect, whereas the moderates and conservatives, committed by their own position to an avoidance of extra-legal organization, floundered about in distress unless they were surrounded by the British Army. The Patriots knew what they were after, were organized to get it, did not scruple about the "constitutionality" of their authority and resolutely took whatever steps the needs of the times seemed to dictate.

The Loyalists

As the fires of revolution burned hotter and hotter, the chasm between radicals and conservatives became unbridgable. To attempt to thwart the will of Revolutionary America became dangerous business after the firing of the first shots in 1775.

While the mass of patriots were rallying to the colors, freezing, starving and dying in the struggle to repel the British and win liberty, large bodies of the counter-revolutionary Americans, the loyalists, were actively promoting the cause of reaction. To the very end of the contest they lurked on all sides—undermining, sabotaging, urging upon the English a more vigorous prosecution of the war and doing all within their power to bring about the defeat and destruction of their fellow-Americans.

These people were largely of high social position, hereditary wealth, officials, clergy of the established church and large landowners or substantial men of business whose privileged position made them satisfied with things as they were. Earlier in the century some of them had even favored moderate reform; others preserved an arrogant silence; many had been openly hostile to the "propertyless rabble," as they termed the American agitators. But after the outbreak of arms, and particularly following the Declaration of Independence, they made no secret of their views. They wanted the Patriots put to the sword, their property plundered, their cause crushed. As one of them put it, "It would be a joy to ride through American blood to the hubs of my chariot wheels." [58]

In their efforts to undo what the revolution was in process of accomplishing, the number and variety of loyalist services to the British were nearly endless. They took oaths of allegiance to the British Crown.

Many companies of loyalist militia were formed. Thousands of others enlisted directly in the English regiments. In New York alone 41,633 loyalist soldiers were numbered among the British regulars and the militia.[59] Loyalist soldiers fought in nearly every battle of the war.

The English made it a policy to arm all loyalists and, conversely, loyalist groups raised arms, supplies and equipment for the British army and navy. They welcomed the English army wherever it went,[60] entertained the English officers in their homes and gave information and advice to the invaders. Many loyalists served in the capacity of night patrol in the occupied areas. Others acted as armed police. United in intercolonial associations, they served as English spies among the Patriot forces. Much of the sparse American supply of arms and munitions was ruined by these operatives during the course of the war.

All sorts of "tory plots" abounded throughout the land. Loyalist connections and plans enabled many British prisoners of war to escape. Wherever the situation warranted, they actively canvassed and agitated in city, town and country or along docks and wharves in behalf of every conceivable British interest.

Until the revolutionists occupied an area, forcing loyalist journalists and pamphleteers to flee and destroying their presses, a widespread loyalist literature poured through the land. The flood of vituperation which they unloosed against the Patriots much resembled a Hearst editorial about the revolutionary movement of our own times. "We see the country we live in," wrote one of them in 1775, "now governed by the barbarian rule of frantic folly, and lawless ambition. We see freedom of speech suppressed, the liberty and secrecy of the press destroyed, the voice of truth silenced. A lawless power established throughout the

colonies . . . pushing on with precipitation and madness in the high road of sedition and rebellion which must ultimately terminate in their misery and ruin." [61] Another described all revolutionists as "those numerous swarms of restless men, who are naturally engendered in free governments, as serpents and other fierce and noxious animals are in warm climates! To such men it is sufficient objection to the whole of any government, that in some of its parts it is imperfect. . . . Their taste, like their talents, is directed only to the pulling down; and their reforms terminate in destruction. They are also as active and persevering as they are dangerous." [62]

The Patriots regarded their traitorous fellow-Americans with greater hatred, aversion and scorn than they did the British. Regarded as traitors and renegades, as well as enemies, no measures were considered too severe to be visited upon them. No quarter was allowed to Americans who dared to oppose the revolutionary authority. Even after peace was finally made with England, every effort was made to drive *these* people out of the land.

In the opening months of the war, the loyalists merely had their pamphlets burned, or found broadsides being printed against them, or—if physical punishment was used—they were tied to a post. But as a greater realization of the seriousness of the struggle was driven home upon America and as the activities of the loyalists increased, firmer methods of handling them became necessary.

Authority and a general policy for handling the problem came from the Continental Congress. Each colony was in turn empowered to devise its own ways and means of executing the general program.

Generally, the state Committees of Safety had special sub-committees to deal with this vexing problem.

These in turn appointed county or other regional committees which were in many cases exempted from the interference of even civil and military authorities. They were authorized to seize, try and punish the obnoxious loyalists, calling upon the military for help when need arose. They had their own secret service. Money and troops were granted to them freely.

These commissioners and committees became the dread of every disloyal American. They were overwhelmed with work—usually sitting daily to receive information and reports of the counter-revolutionary plots and schemes which were hatching in every direction. Some of them did circuit duty, moved about from place to place, ferreted out plots, arrested domestic enemies, heard cases and punished offenses.

In all of their activities and work they had the full support of George Washington. "The situation of our affairs," he wrote, "seems to call for regulations like these.... Vigorous measures, and such as at other times would appear extraordinary, are now become absolutely necessary for preserving our country against the strides of tyranny." He characterized the loyalists as "abominable pests of society" and urged the strongest measures against them.[68]

Some death sentences were imposed against loyalist spies. Jails in some localities were crowded with those who had enlisted with the British. Many were transported to other colonies where they were in some cases jailed and in others released on parole.

For less severe cases, tar and feathers, ducking or rail-riding through the streets were applied as punishment. Lists of the disloyal were published, and they were boycotted, their homes fired, their presses broken, their live stock and personal property confiscated or destroyed.

Those whose names were published by the commit-

tees were not only denounced by their neighbors but were denied every manner of social and commercial intercourse. Laborers and servants refused to work for them. Nobody would grind their corn. People would neither buy from nor sell to them. They "lead a devil of a life," wrote a contemporary.[64] Some fled the country. Many, who for one reason or another could not follow them, preferred suicide to life under such circumstances.

Many of the measures taken were ruthless and severe, but the exigencies of the times made quick action and harsh methods imperative. The enemy was at the gates and American freedom hung in the balance. The Patriots proceeded with revolutionary realism.

Financing the War

Financing military operations and other expenditures incidental to the revolutionary struggle, cost in the vicinity of twenty millions a year.[65] All expenses made the net cost of the conflict, reduced to specie value, between $135,000,000 and $140,000,000.[66] To raise such a sum was a staggering and herculean feat.

The colonies had undertaken the conduct of the war without any means whatsoever. The government was new and its apparatus hastily improvised. Governmental processes were in a state of confusion. The customary machinery for the levying and collection of taxes or the normal operations of public loans did not exist. At the beginning there was not even a fiscal system through which revenues could be collected and expenditures properly disbursed.

Inasmuch as the struggle was associated in the popular mind with opposition to oppressive taxation, leaders feared the effects of new and burdensome taxes. And normal tax resources tended to become dried up.

British naval power darkened the likelihood of customs revenues. The disruption of the West Indian trade and the general business depression which followed in the wake of Lexington and Concord diminished the possibility of receipts from commercial activity. At best taxation was bound to have limited possibilities in a country beset with tories, an enemy army in the very heart of the land, a superior navy along the coast and both agriculture and commerce consequently nearly ruined. Finances hung by a slender thread indeed—but the revolutionary ardor of the Americans clung to the end and managed somehow always to carry through when things seemed darkest.

The central revolutionary government improvised its financial apparatus as time passed and experience dictated. In October, 1776, it established a loan office, with an officer in each state, charged with the task of borrowing money against the issuance of certificates for the redemption and repayment of which the faith and credit of the United States was pledged. This organization proved inadequate and clumsy and Congress had to give almost daily consideration to questions of finance.

Experience having taught that finances could not be administered as a branch of the legislative body, Congress established a Board of Treasury in 1779, which was to consist of five commissioners, any three of whom could transact business. But the officers quarreled, they charged each other with incapacity, laziness and inattention to public interests. It required inordinate amounts of time to transact business and there was no unity of policy or centralized authority and responsibility.

At the beginning of 1781, all other devices having been proven inadequate, Congress decided to appoint a single competent officer to the position of Financier

who was to take complete charge of finances and replace all committees, boards and other financial agencies of the revolutionary government. Finances were in a state of collapse and immediate action was necessary. Despite many congressional qualms and prejudices against centralized authority, the position of Superintendent of Finance was created and Robert Morris was selected for the post. The position, usually abbreviated to "Financier," was continued through to the end of the conflict with Morris at the head.

To release itself from the necessity of levying taxes as much as possible, Congress created and poured into circulation paper continental notes. In 1775 it issued $6,000,000 worth of these notes; in 1776 it issued $19 million additional; in 1777, $13 million; 1778, $63 million; 1779, $140 million.[67] The country was flooded with paper. When the Continental Congress finally took steps to halt the avalanche in March, 1780, the face value of its paper currency still in circulation was estimated at around $242,000,000.

The separate States were also issuing a great variety of paper money, in addition to that emitted by Congress. Such state issues totaled at least $200,000,000.

The excess of paper clogged all channels of circulation and the country fell headlong into violent inflation. Prices rose sharply and every effort was made to conduct transactions on a barter basis and thus avoid using the new paper at all. In July, 1779, it took fourteen paper dollars in New York to equal a single dollar in specie. Six months later the ratio was thirty to one and by March, 1780, it was forty to one. A year later seventy-five to one was difficult to command. By July, 1781, the paper was no longer passing as currency, while such little as did somehow manage to circulate was as low in value as a thousand to one.

By 1780-1781, the financial stringency of the revo-

lution was so intense that a complete collapse of the cause would not have occasioned any surprise. But revolutionary determination would admit of no defeat on such scores. Congress desperately pushed on to additional devices.

In 1777, Congress had passed legislation requiring the acceptance of the paper on a par with gold and silver. The various states passed similar acts as well as laws seeking to fix prices and punishing "forestallers and engrossers." But laws could not maintain unsecured paper at face value and these artificial devices largely failed of their purpose. It was eventually realized that the only way out of the impasse was to take the paper out of circulation and to levy taxes instead of issuing notes.

Finally, on March 16, 1781, Congress met the problem by resolving that all debts be thereafter payable in specie or whatever might be the current rate of exchange between specie and other currency. This was in effect an act of partial debt repudiation. It spelled the death knell of the paper "continental" and the collapse of the old currency. For the remainder of the war the office of the Superintendent of Finance somehow or other always managed—largely through foreign borrowing—to maintain a specie valued currency.

During this entire period, Congress and the States, besides issuing paper money, contracted loans wherever and whenever lenders could be found. Devoted supporters of the cause purchased government securities on a limited scale. Foreign borrowings kept the ship afloat at many a critical juncture.

By 1777 Congress had agents in all of the principal countries of Europe negotiating loans from governments or private individuals. About 18 million livres were borrowed from France—not counting the stupendous costs to France of raising and equipping her

military forces in this country * and a gift to America of six million livres in 1781. Spain and Holland were also tapped for all that the traffic would bear.† During the closing years of the struggle, the country lapsed into almost complete dependence upon these foreign borrowings. A final loan in Holland had come when the need was greatest and enabled the country to carry through to the finish.

A host of additional emergency measures were resorted to as need dictated. At one point Congress had turned in desperation to a lottery; but a not very great sum was raised in this way and future possibilities along this line were exploded when it developed that Congress had no money with which to pay off the holders of the winning numbers. Beginning around 1780, when paper money had virtually ceased to pass, Congress began voting requisitions upon the states for specific supplies. Each state was called upon to furnish the army with specified quantities of the staples which it produced—like flour, corn, etc. Taxes were made partially payable in such specific articles. On the whole, however, the requisition system met with only moderate success, due to lack of sufficient governmental organization. Much more was achieved by the revolutionary Committees of Safety through a system of simple impressment of goods and supplies. Wagons, horses, boats, arms, blankets, food and other necessary commodities were impressed by revolutionary representatives and military officers, and certificates of value and indebtedness usually issued to the owners.

* The war is estimated to have cost France around $60,000,000.

† During the war $5,352,500 was borrowed by the central government from France; $1,304,000 from Holland; $174,017 from Spain. Domestic loans of the central government totaled $28,353,832—an amount which was considerably augmented through unpaid interest.

In large part this system of impressment took the place of regular finance.

Efforts at federal taxation bore rather trivial fruit, though a moderate program of state, city and county taxation was carried out after the adoption of State constitutions following 1776. New York State, for example, is estimated to have raised $10,000,000 in taxes.[68] The seizure and sale of property belonging to loyalists also brought substantial sums to the State treasuries for war uses.

It was Robert Morris who kept the money machine going when things looked blackest following 1781. A business man of considerable experience, he knew all the tricks of financial manipulation. He successfully borrowed abroad, he reduced expenses at home, he established the credit of the federal government and he arranged for the collection, transportation and distribution of commodities needed for the war. To him goes the credit for having extricated the country's finances from a state of bankruptcy and of restoring them in a manner which enabled the Revolution to carry on.

The Soldiery

America undertook armed resistance against the authority of a country of considerable military experience, whose army was large and whose navy was of the very best. The British navy was of particular significance in the conduct of the war since the colonial coastline was long, open and poorly fortified. The provincials, by contrast, were inexperienced and untrained in military affairs, and even such experience as some of them had had in the French and Indian Wars was not calculated to be of great value in the type of war now at hand.[69]

The revolutionists undertook the arduous task of creating an army able to meet so formidable a foe with every conceivable difficulty in their way. They had no money; they had few provisions or military stores; they had no regularly organized and established government. Yet, despite all these handicaps and many more, they did accomplish the seemingly impossible job of putting an army in the field and maintaining it for years.

In the period of agitation preceding the outbreak of armed hostility, the more far-sighted revolutionists had recognized the inevitable and prepared for it. They had called upon the masses to organize local militia, collect stores, and to become versed in the art of war. Under the direction of committees, outlines for a militia system were completed and executed—often under the very nose of a British garrison. The fiction of fearing another war with France was used to screen the purpose of the colonists' more obvious military activity. But while talking about the French menace, the Revolutionists were in reality getting ready to grapple with Great Britain.

So successfully did this preparatory work proceed during the years 1773-1775 that the actual outbreak of hostilities found the country covered with a network of local organizational committees, post riders and militia companies all prepared for instantaneous action. It is reported that when the call for action was heard on the day of the Battle of Lexington, there were some towns in which not a half-dozen able bodied men had remained at home.[70] Washington had about 19,000 men under his command in the movements around Boston during the latter part of 1775.

Aside from provincial arrangements for the general defense, provision had to be made for a national army. In October, 1775, Washington began laying plans for

the ensuing year. January 1, 1776, has been called the "birthday of the Continental army." Over the force thenceforth recruited Congress began to exercise direct authority. The country now had a national army, distinct from the local militia.

The new army was a democratic, people's force. There were close personal contacts between officers and privates.[71] There was little glory; much privation and suffering. Pay was small and irregularly received in almost worthless paper instead of specie. Only revolutionary ardor and enthusiasm for the cause kept the group together for so many years. And in this the Negro people as well as the whites played a lastingly heroic rôle. "The moment a call for men went out the black men presented themselves for service," [72] and performed conspicuous work for American liberty under particularly trying and adverse circumstances.[73]

The well known privations at Valley Forge during the winter encampment in 1777-1778 are typical of what the entire army sustained during the greater part of the long war. The men suffered the extremes of cold, hunger, lack of blankets and other equipment. Lafayette commented in his memoirs: "The unfortunate soldiers were in want of everything; they had neither coats, nor hats, nor shoes; their feet and legs froze till they grew black, and it was often necessary to amputate them.... The army frequently passed whole days without food, and the patient endurance of both soldiers and officers was a miracle which every moment served to renew." [74]

A large part of the army was barefoot and barelegged. The southern armies often fought in their naked skins. Added to all of this was a perpetual scarcity of arms and ammunition.

The privations of army life became doubly unbearable through the worry caused by the suffering of the

In *Provincial Congreſs, Watertown, June* 17th, 1775.

WHEREAS the hoſtile Incurſions this Country is expoſed to, and the frequent Alarms we may expect from the Military Operations of our Enemies, make it neceſſary that the good People of this Colony be on their Guard, and prepared at all Times to reſiſt their Attacks, and to aid and aſſiſt their Brethren: Therefore,

RESOLVED, That it be and hereby is recommended to the Militia in all Parts of this Colony, to hold themſelves in Readineſs to march at a Minute's Warning, to the Relief of any Place that may be attacked, or to the Support of our Army, with at leaſt twenty Cartridges or Rounds of Powder and Ball. And to prevent all Confuſion or Delays, It is further recommended to the Inhabitants of this Colony, living on the Seacoaſts, or within twenty Miles of them, that they carry their Arms and Ammunition with them to Meeting, on the Sabbath and other Days, when they meet for public Worſhip:——*Reſolved*, That all Vacancies in the ſeveral Regiments of Militia, occaſioned by the Officers going into the Army, or otherwiſe, be immediately filled up: And it is recommended to the Regiments where ſuch Vacancies are, to ſupply them in manner and form as preſcribed by the Reſolutions of Congreſs.

A true Copy from the Minutes,

Atteſt. SAMUEL FREEMAN, Secr'y.

NOTICE TO MILITIA

soldiers' families at home. The women and children had to maintain themselves during the period that their farm-hands were away at the front; taxes were going up and prices of commodities rising skyward. Field as well as house duties had to be performed by the harassed women. Frequent rumors of Indian raids upon their homes further preyed upon the minds of the farmer-soldiers.

It was under such circumstances as these that the American revolutionists fought their oppressors in many battles. They were put to the severest tests of allegiance to freedom's cause and proved loyal and courageous.

Profiteering—As Usual

While the patriots were spilling their blood for the cause or sacrificing the last of their worldly goods in the interests of independence, unscrupulous speculators were making fortunes out of the miseries of the times. These people were described by Washington as "murderers of our cause" [75] and worthy to be gibbeted. Paine became frantic on the subject. The masses lumped extortionists with the loyalists and had the tar pot and feather bag—or sometimes a harsher punishment—handy for such people. But, in one manner or another, the speculators managed to exercise the "rights of the merchant" and to gamble, corner the market, hoard badly needed commodities for a rise in price and exercise all of the other prerogatives of "legitimate business."

The needs of the war machine and the inevitable scarcities of wood, hay, lumber, textiles, meat, flour and countless other necessities immediately created a field day for the unscrupulous. "The war has thrown

All Friends, to, Liberty, and the Good, of their Country. ——

Are Desire'd to take Notice, that there, is men in this City, that, in Order

1779 to Ruin our Cause, and to Distress us as much as possible, has Lateley

May Consulted, together, and Did Actualy Raise the price, of the most, Nesesary Articles, of Life — on the News of the Enemys apearing on our Coast: and if and, orderley, Malitia will Bring them Before the Civil Magestrates, ——

I will point out and appear against them

Terra Firma

N B
Some Nesesary article has Rose Double the price, in three weeks if these; men pass with impunity, where will it End ——

The Militia are determined, by solemn Pledge of Honor to prosecute their Plan with Decorum

The Battalions.

Long live the United States!

WARNING TO PROFITEERS

property into channels," observed one contemporary commentator, "where before it never was, and has increased little streams to overflowing rivers. Rich and numerous prizes, and the putting six or seven hundred per cent on goods bought in peace time, are grand engines. Monies in large sums, thrown into their hands by these means, enables them to roll up the snow ball of monopoly and forestalling." [76]

Furnishing the army immediately provided a most profitable avenue for business and speculation. Contracts had to be let hastily and the contractors piled up rapid fortunes. The firm of Otis & Andrews of Boston, for example, sold £200,000 worth of clothing to the government within seven months at profits of one and two hundred per cent.[77] Flour was being purchased at $5 a barrel and resold after trans-shipment for $28 to $34.[78] Countless numbers of similar cases were agitating the public mind in virtually every state.[79]

Very large fortunes were made from the smallest investment during this period. Attempts at price regulations brought pressure and remonstrances from the merchants. Then, as today, their dictum was, "commerce should be perfectly free and property sacredly secure to the owner." [80] With this principle in mind, many merchants traded steadily with the enemy throughout the entire contest. Hamilton, for instance, estimated in 1782 that the interior of New York State traded with the city, which was occupied by the British, to the extent of £30,000 per annum.[81] Others exercised this freedom by not only charging the government and the public enormous prices but "callous to the feeling of humanity, and untouched by the suffering of their countrymen, exposed to a winter campaign in defense of the common liberties of their country," refused to sell on credit or make deliveries to the

army * "until they had got the cash." [82] Frequently they used government wagons, which should have been delivered to the wagon-master of the army, to transport their private property.

Even some of those in the highest councils of the mercantile wing of the Patriot Party were bitten by the profit bug. Silas Deane and other commissioners of Congress profited in various commercial ventures under cover of their public office.[83] Despite his supposed superpatriotism, John Hancock announced his intention of retiring from the presidency of Congress in 1777 "in order to return to supervise his extensive business interests in Boston." [84] When Robert Morris was asked in the country's darkest moment to take over supervision of the nation's fast crumbling finances, he became very explicit as to where his first love lay. "It becomes indispensably necessary to make such stipulations as may give ease to my feelings, aid to my exertions," he wrote to the President of Congress before accepting the office. "If, therefore, it be in the idea of Congress, that the office of Superintendent of Finance is incompatible with commercial concerns and

* The callousness of American war-profiteers is ably illustrated by the case of Brown and Company of Providence. In December, 1776, Colonel Stewart was sent by Congress to buy cannon for Schuyler's forces situated at Ticonderoga. He was instructed to pay no more than £40 per ton; the best price he could get at Salisbury (Conn.) was £70 to £80 a ton. Disappointed, Stewart went to Brown and Company in Providence which agreed to make the cannon at £100 per ton. This offer Stewart was eventually forced to accept despite the fact that he found the firm "wholly bent on their [sic] own interest and entirely regardless of the Public Good." Not only did the company make a handsome profit from the transaction, getting two and a half times what was paid in colonies south of New York, but the firm demanded "cash" before the cannons were sent to Ticonderoga. (*Stewart Mss.*, vol. i, Letter from Committee of Congress to Stewart, Dec. 31, 1776; Letter of Stewart to the Committee of Congress, Feb. 24, 1777 and Letter from Brown to Stewart, Feb. 8, 1777.)

connections, the point is settled; for I cannot on any consideration consent." [85]

Because of his great prominence in public affairs, the case of Robert Morris epitomizes the position and attitude of the merchants who were allied with the masses in the revolutionary struggle. Through his firm, Willing and Morris, he became rich contracting with Congress for the importation of arms, ammunition and supplies for the army. He was charged from time to time with banking transactions for Congress. His ships did considerable personal privateering and he derived a huge fortune from the British booty. "At the beginning of our revolution," related John Adams about him, "his commerce was stagnated, and as he had overtraded, he was much embarrassed. He took advantage of the times, united with the Whigs, came into Congress, and united his credit, supported by my loans from Holland, and resources of the United States. By these means he supported his credit for many years." [86]

The value of the services of Robert Morris in evolving financial order out of the chaos into which the country had fallen was inestimable. But whereas the masses laid down their lives and the last of their worldly goods on the altar of American democracy, the forces of private profit would, in large part, make no move without the incentive of private gain.

The story is told of how the humble masses pooled their smallest resources in selfless revolutionary devotion. "Men of small means in a New England village would club together to buy an ox... and herds of cattle gathered in this way were driven slowly to camp." [87] The contrast is clear with those who made no move without a profit on the deal and whose services must always command a commission.

The Revolution Succeeds

Foreign Help

During the period preparatory to the outbreak of armed conflict, the astute diplomacy of American revolutionists had utilized to the last ditch through its agents in England the inner conflicts, antagonisms and contradictions of English social, economic and political development.* With the recourse to war, full advantage was now taken of England's external contradictions—her rivalries with foreign powers anxious to humble her for their own economic and political advantage.

Lenin has pointed out the full significance of the foreign arrangements entered into during the course of the conflict:

When America waged its great war of liberation against the English oppressors, it was confronted with the French and Spanish oppressors, who owned a portion of what is now the United States of North America. In its difficult war for freedom, the American people, too, made "agreements" with one group of oppressors against the other for the purpose of weakening oppressors and strengthening those who were struggling in a revolutionary manner against the oppression—in the interest of the oppressed *masses*. The American people utilized the differences that existed between the French, the Spanish and the English, at times even fighting side by side with the armies of French and Spanish oppressors against the English oppressors. First it vanquished

* See pp. 52-53.

the English and then freed itself (partly by purchase) from the French and the Spanish.[88]

From the beginning of the war Americans counted upon foreign—and particularly French—aid. One of the very important considerations influencing many in Congress in their decision to declare independence was the advantageous position in which such a step would place the Americans in the conclusion of foreign alliances.

France, humbled as a world power after 1763, had not despaired of regaining her place in the sun. Her trade and credit with India were gone. She had lost the most precious pearls in a formerly world-wide colonial empire. She was deeply in debt. Her interests and desires in the diplomacy of Europe now went unheeded. Her commerce was being shattered. Besides, a strengthened British Empire would further shut her out from world markets and endanger her remaining possessions in the West Indies and Africa. Unless England were humbled and the world decisions of the previous epoch reversed, France was doomed. The Americans knew this very well—and counted upon it to serve their own ends.[89]

During the tempestuous years following 1763, the American continent harbored many a French spy and secret emissary. These men sent home careful reports on American affairs, fostered the dissatisfaction among the Americans, and laid military plans for the future. Every move made by both America and England was in this manner chronicled by French agents and carefully studied in the French foreign office.[90]

Nor was France the only threat to England. Success had isolated England so that in whatever direction she might look throughout the world there were enemies anxious to pounce upon her on the least pretext.

While still in England during the pre-war period, Franklin fostered the good-will of the French embassy. From the very outbreak of hostilities practically all of the American leaders foresaw that the international situation made likely the possibility of alliances with England's enemies.

In the autumn of 1775, Congress formed a secret committee to contact friends of the American cause in all parts of the world.[91] In March, 1776, Silas Deane was sent as an American agent to France. Although the French government was as yet careful to withhold from him any official recognition, he was privately well received. Franklin was all the while working feverishly promoting the interests of the American cause in France.

About that time there was formed in the French capital the firm of "Hortalez et Cie," which began to sell general merchandise. Its largest customer was one "Timothy Jones" of Bermuda to whom was sold large quantities of arms, munitions and other sinews of war. Those "in the know" were aware, however, that "Timothy Jones" was in reality Silas Deane; that the merchant house of Hortalez was a cover-up for secret aid from the French government operating through the person of Beaumarchais; and that the money with which "Jones" paid for his wares came from secret loans from the kings of France and Spain.[92]

For over eighteen months preceding a treaty of alliance and open aid, America was able to secure great European help. Money was loaned by France and Spain and purchases were made from the royal arsenals. The commerce of the insurgent colonies was given every possible advantage in French ports. American privateers, preying upon English ships with telling effect, were sheltered and prizes were secretly sold in French harbors. Spain, under the influence of France, rendered

much similar aid. Frederick of Prussia took great pains to discourage the enlistment of German mercenaries in the English army. Holland supplied many of the commodity needs of the insurgents. It was this secret aid in the early years of the war which prevented American collapse in the face of the superior power of Great Britain.

It also became quite the fashion in European courts for young noblemen to offer their services to the American army. The Marquis of Lafayette arrived, along with Kalb and twelve other French officers,* and was appointed major-general by Congress. Kalb and Pulaski, a Pole, fell in the cause. Among the many others who served the Americans in good stead was Baron von Steuben, a Prussian officer who organized and drilled the American army and did much to make it an efficient working unit.

After 1776, France was anxious to conclude an open alliance with America, but news of American reverses delayed the move. Finally, on December 7, 1777, arrived the news of Burgoyne's defeat at Saratoga and Beaumarchais is said to have been so overcome with joy that he dislocated his arm in his haste to advise the French king. In the spring of 1778, France entered into formal political, military and commercial alliance with the United States. In 1779 Spain also declared separate war on England, though not as an American ally.

Dutch help, which was covertly being given to the Americans through loans, sheltering of American ships and other expressions of sympathy, soon precipitated

* Among the French officers, who served in America at one time or another, were Rochambeau, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, Berthier, later to become Napoleon's chief of staff, Saint-Simon, future advocate of utopian socialism, Chastellux, described by Franklin as "a friend of humanity" and Ségur, the well-known historian.

a British declaration of war against Holland. England was now at arms with the three greatest naval powers, outside of herself, in the world.

Thus the lone struggle of the Americans was converted into a European war. A large part of England's forces was locked up in various parts of the world, materially impairing its efficiency on this side of the Atlantic. A French army, in addition, was sent to America. These French forces and the French fleet were of invaluable aid when Cornwallis finally surrendered to Washington at the siege of Yorktown on October 19, 1781. Successful utilization of world antagonisms by the American emissaries had brought about a state of affairs which resulted in the victory of the revolution.

England Offers Compromise

The American triumph at Saratoga had its influence in London as well as in Versailles. After Burgoyne's surrender, and with a European war inevitable, it was recognized that America could not be subdued by force and that unconditional surrender was no longer possible.

As a consequence, on February 17, 1778, Lord North proposed, and Parliament approved, a measure of conciliation granting to America everything that had ever been asked except independence. The coercive measures and the tea duty were to be repealed, no revenue taxes were to be levied, full pardon was to be granted and all acts of Parliament relating to the colonies passed subsequently to February, 1763, were to be suspended. All of those policies which the Whig minority had vainly advocated three years earlier were now advanced by Lord North with the approval of the Cabinet and the Crown.

Everything save independence was conceded. Com-

missioners of pacification were dispatched to Philadelphia, but the concessions were too late. The die was cast for full independence and Congress unanimously declined to entertain consideration of any peace offer short of the recognition of full and unconditional independence.

The End of the War

The surrender of Cornwallis' land and naval forces to the Americans and French at Yorktown in October, 1781, brought final realization to both sides that the struggle would end in victory for the Americans. English resistance was broken and the subsequent history of the war was largely a matter of marking time.

On March 5, 1782, Parliament decided to make peace. Fifteen days later Lord North resigned. The broken Whig party united and took over the government with Rockingham as Prime Minister and a ministry all of whose members were committed to American independence.

The negotiations between the envoys dragged on. The American commissioners broke their instructions from Congress not to come to terms without the approval of our French ally, and dealt only with the English representatives. Boundaries, fishery disputes, the question of American loyalists, and the repayment of American debts owed to Englishmen were each settled in turn. Finally a provisional treaty was signed on November 30, 1782, although the definitive treaty was delayed until September 3, 1783.

In the terms of the treaty the independence of the United States was recognized and its boundaries were fixed. Independence was definitely won.

America's Revolutionary Heritage

Results of the Revolution

Independence brought to a successful culmination the struggle in which the masses, at any rate, had fought and bled in order to establish the principle, in the words of the Declaration of Independence, that: "All men are created equal" and endowed "with certain unalienable Rights; that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.... That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it...."

A new political philosophy was in the air which was destined to burst the dams of stratified and outmoded relationships and move society along its progressive upward path—at this stage of history the full blossoming of productive capacities under capitalist relationships. The bourgeoisie in the French Revolution and elsewhere in Europe was inspired by the American example. Within forty years nearly all of Spain's colonies in the New World had taken the cue from America and had revolted.

Whatever restraining forces may have later set in and taken hold, for a long time, at any rate, America became the symbol of political freedom and the land of social opportunity to which lovers of liberty began to emigrate as soon as the Revolution ended. It became the asylum of the downtrodden and the oppressed.

It shone throughout the world as the beacon of freedom and progress.

The government which was established on American soil was, for its day, the most advanced and liberal in the world. Many of the state constitutions written following 1776 were distinctly keyed toward the well-being of the masses. Particularly in the newly developing frontier territories there was "a thoroughly democratic spirit intolerant of the cautious and conservative policies of wealthy and aristocratic people." [93] Artisans, workers, farmers, frontiersmen, mechanics, who had seen in the Revolution the hope of democratic control, now began to combine as well against the forces of privilege at home and to demand the right to participate in the government and to have a voice in the affairs of state.

The Pennsylvania constitution, for example, was the most remarkable document of its kind in the world. The culmination of a long period of internal class strife, fought simultaneously with the war to cast off the economic yoke of Britain, its political victories represented "a revolution within a revolution." "All governments ought to be instituted and supported for the security and protection of the community," it began in language reflecting the influence of the Declaration of Independence, and it further reaffirmed that "whenever these great ends of government are not obtained, the people have a right by common consent to change it." It then proceeded to enact broad extensions of religious liberty, a guarantee of freedom of speech, a unicameral legislature, greatly liberalized suffrage and a judiciary whose term of office and powers were carefully circumscribed.[94]

Throughout the states, suffrage was still limited at the close of the war. However, religious and so-called moral qualifications for voting had fast broken down

when the state constitutions were written. These constitutions were comparatively free of all qualifying phrases relative to voting save those concerning property. But even here vast strides were made. Whereas earlier restrictions had limited voting to owners of real estate, there was now a widespread substitution of low taxpaying of any kind for real estate ownership. Even with this remaining restriction, however, the forces had been set afoot which led to a closer and closer approach to universal manhood suffrage with the passage of every decade. At the turn of the century tax paying as well as property qualifications were rapidly disappearing.

As a consequence of the spirit of the times, the Bill of Rights—the principles of which had already been written by the masses into state constitutions during the Revolution—was forced by mass pressure into the Federal Constitution which was subsequently enacted. In addition to guarantees of other civil liberties, disestablishment of the church led to a wider degree of religious toleration and freedom.

Confiscation and sale of loyalist estates to the common people during and after the war did much and went far to break up the land monopolies and the landed aristocracy which English policy had fostered. Many large landholders, such as the DeLanceys, some of the Van Cortlandts, the Philipsees, Coldens, Rapaljes, Robinsons, Johnsons, some Morrises and many other American landed aristocrats who had been loyalists, found their estates sequestered and broken up. These manors and lands were for the most part cut up into relatively small parcels and sold to small holders. The sale of plots of over 500 acres each to one individual was generally frowned upon. In this way the estate of James De Lancey in southern New York, for example, was sold to 275 different persons; that of

Roger Morris in Putnam county to nearly 250 persons.[95] The sale of the property of Sir William Pepperell in Maine, the Penn family of Pennsylvania and other estates suffered a similar fate "thus leveling, equalizing and making more democratic the whole social structure." [96]

A large number of these estates had been previously rented to tenants by the relatively few families who held them under established relations of a quasi-feudal nature between proprietor and tenant, with the proprietors enjoying privileges of lords of manors. As a result of this condition, much state legislation was passed during the post-revolutionary period which made illegal all feudal obligations and tenure. "Wardships, fines for alienation, tenure by homage, charges arising out of tenure by knight's service, knight's service itself, scutage, relief, aids and *socage in capte,* were specifically proscribed." [97]

The weakening of the feudal hold on the American social system and the democratic tendencies in land tenure and political rights were further augmented by legislation abolishing entail and primogeniture. These feudal customs prescribed that lands be not divided and that they be fixed inalienably upon a person, his descendants or a certain line of descendants. To keep the estate large and undivided the eldest son had sole right to land inheritance, exclusive of female and younger male descendants.

Earlier onslaughts against these practices had not proven very tangible in their results but "the American Revolution was a fillip to renewed legislative efforts. The Jeffersonian offensive in Virginia in 1776 bore immediate fruit. Georgia in 1777, North Carolina in 1784, Virginia in 1785, Maryland and New York in 1786, South Carolina in 1791, Rhode Island in 1798, all under the influence of the back-country party, abol-

ished primogeniture; and during the same period the New England group of states, together with Pennsylvania . . . by statutes provided for equal division among the children." [98] All such legislation had for its purpose the abolition of monopolies in land as well as the end of vassalage. Its direct result was to hasten the defeudalizing process.

Changes in the voting system tended to make the masses further politically independent of landlords or employers. The English system of *viva voce* voting by show of hands still existed in many regions in gubernatorial and other elections. The state constitutions adopted during or immediately after the Revolution provided for the election of officials by the use of written ballots.[99]

Moreover, the fact of independence finally burst the fetters which English attachment had placed upon the productive forces of the country. These were once and for all released. The western lands were now open for settlement and development. However true it may be that for a long time to come the economic dependence of the United States upon England continued, these relationships were upon a voluntary basis. The invigorated and growing capitalist class which emerged from the revolutionary struggle was now able to determine its own existence. It could manufacture what it pleased, limited only by natural—rather than man-made—restrictions. It could buy in the cheapest market, sell where it could, trade, ship and generally operate with a government to foster and protect it rather than, as formerly, to restrict and confine it. The barriers were shattered and the pathway was cleared to the development of the greatest industrial nation in the world.

Heritage of the Revolution

In a society struggling toward social, political and economic freedom, the "Spirit of 1776" represented the forefront of human progress in its time. The need of the age was to free a rising capitalism from the fetters that bound it in. In this way the productive forces of mankind would be raised to a new and higher level.

The revolutionists of 1776 were thus the shock troops of progress. They refused to submit to a decay and repression which spelt death. They proclaimed the task imposed upon them by their epoch. And they established the tradition of America—revolt against oppression. As Lenin has pointed out in his famous address to American workers:

> The history of modern civilized America opens with one of those great, really liberating, really revolutionary wars of which there have been so few among the large number of wars of conquest that were caused . . . by squabbles among kings, landowners and capitalists over the division of seized lands and stolen profits. It was a war of the American people against English robbers who subjected America and held it in colonial slavery. . . .
>
> The American people has a revolutionary tradition. . . . This tradition is the war of liberation against the English in the 18th and the Civil War in the 19th century.[100]

Earl Browder has put it as follows:

> Around the birth of our country as an independent nation cluster such heroic names as those of Patrick Henry, whose famous shout, "As for me, give me liberty or give me death!" re-echoes down the corridors of time; of Thomas Paine, whose deathless contribution to our national life of a militant anti-clericalism has long survived . . . ; of Thomas Jefferson, whose favorite thought revolved about watering the tree of liberty with the blood of tyrants . . . ; of all the founding fathers, whose chief claim to glory lies in their

"treason" to the "constitutional government" of their day, and among whom the most opprobrious epithet was "loyalist."

These men, in their own time, faced the issues of their day, cut through the red tape of precedent legalism, and constitutionalism with a sword, made a revolution, killed off a dying and outworn system, and opened up a new chapter in world history.

Our American giants of 1776 were the "international incendiaries" of their day. They inspired revolutions throughout the world. The great French Revolution, the reverberations of which filled Europe's ears during the entire nineteenth century, took its first steps under the impulse given by the American Revolution. The Declaration of Independence was for that time what the Communist Manifesto is for ours. Copy all the most hysterical Hearst editorials of today against Moscow, Lenin, Stalin; substitute the words America, Washington, Jefferson; and the result is an almost verbatim copy of the diatribes of English and European reactionary politicians in the closing years of the eighteenth century against our American founding fathers. Revolution was then "an alien doctrine imported from America" as now it is "imported from Moscow." [101]

The American Revolution was fought and won by the humble and underprivileged masses who took up arms to secure freedom. They found themselves caught in the countless oppressions and constrictions of class society and sought some measure of release and the opening of opportunities for themselves and their families through revolt against the English system of restriction and oppression. These people were the forerunners of the working class and its allies of the present period in American history.

Today the productive forces created by capitalism are in their turn choking and destroying further progress. Under capitalist property relations, the possibilities of expansion and of human happiness have passed

their zenith and have entered the stage of reaction and decline. The time has come to discard the outworn and the decaying—to press forward to the vital, the living, the expanding.

Capitalism in its declining stage no longer has service for the achievements of the American Revolution. It no longer desires freedom of the press, freedom of speech, freedom of assembly. Instead it gives birth to institutions and organizations of which the Black Legion and the program of William Randolph Hearst are typical. These represent a creed from which our forefathers fought to free themselves. The proletariat and its allies have become both the inheritors and the only defenders of the historic American traditions.

The working class claims this heritage and upon it builds the future. It will fight for and defend all of the traditional liberties of the American people. It will fight relentlessly for the maintenance of every civil liberty and every American right. It will keep alive that other basic American principle so fearlessly emblazoned in the Declaration of Independence: "Whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness."

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APPENDICES

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Virginia Stamp Act Resolutions
May 30, 1765

[It was in connection with the debate upon these resolutions in the Virginia House of Burgesses that Patrick Henry made his famous "Cæsar and Brutus" speech.]

Resolved, That the first adventurers and settlers of this his Majesty's Colony and Dominion of Virginia brought with them, and transmitted to their posterity, and all other His Majesty's subjects since inhabiting in this His Majesty's said Colony, all the liberties, privileges, franchises, and immunities, that have at any time been held, enjoyed, and possessed, by the people of Great Britain.

Resolved, That by two royal charters, granted by King James the First, the colonists aforesaid are entitled to all liberties, privileges, and immunities of denizens and natural subjects, to all intents and purposes, as if they had been abiding and born within the realm of England.

Resolved, That the taxation of the people by themselves, or by persons chosen by themselves to represent them, who can only know what taxes the people are able to bear, or the easiest method of raising them, and must themselves be affected by every tax laid on the people, is the only security against a burthensome taxation, and the distinguishing characteristick of British freedom, without which the ancient constitution cannot exist.

Resolved, That His Majesty's liege people of this his most ancient and loyal Colony have without interruption enjoyed the inestimable right of being governed by such laws, respecting their internal polity and taxation, as are derived from their own consent, with the approbation of their sovereign, or his substitute; and that the same hath never been forfeited or yielded up, but hath been constantly recognized by the kings and people of Great Britain.

Resolved therefore, That the General Assembly of this Colony have the only and sole exclusive right to lay taxes and impositions upon the inhabitants of this Colony, and that every attempt to vest such power in any person or persons whatsoever other than the General Assembly aforesaid has a manifest tendency to destroy British as well as American freedom.

Resolved, That His Majesty's liege people, the inhabitants of this Colony, are not bound to yield obedience to any law or ordinance whatever, designed to impose any taxation whatsoever upon them, other than the laws or ordinances of the General Assembly aforesaid.

Resolved, That any person who shall, by speaking or writing, assert or maintain that any person or persons other than the General Assembly of this Colony, have any right or power to impose or lay any taxation on the people here, shall be deemed an enemy to His Majesty's Colony.

New York Sons of Liberty Resolutions on Tea
November 29, 1773

[These resolutions typify the methods used in many of the colonies. They were passed in connection with the same British acts which lead to the Boston Tea Party on December 16, 1773.]

... To prevent a calamity which, of all others, is the most to be dreaded—slavery, and its terrible concomitants—we, subscribers being influenced from a regard to liberty, and disposed to use all lawful endeavors in our power, to defeat the pernicious project, and to transmit to our posterity, those blessings of freedom which our ancestors have handed down to us; and to contribute to the support of the common liberties of America, which are in danger to be subverted, *do,* for those important purposes, agree to associate together, under the name and style of the *sons of liberty of New York,* and engage our honor to, and with each other, faithfully to observe and perform the following *resolutions, viz.*

1st. *Resolved,* That whoever shall aid, or abet, or in any manner assist in the introduction of tea, from any place whatsoever, into this colony, while it is subject, by a British act of parliament, to the payment of a duty, for the purpose of raising a revenue in America, he shall be deemed an enemy to the liberties of America.

2d. *Resolved,* That whoever shall be aiding, or as-

sisting, in the landing, or carting, of such tea, from any ship or vessel, or shall hire any house, storehouse or cellar or any place whatsoever to deposit the tea, subject to a duty as aforesaid, he shall be deemed an enemy to the liberties of America.

3d. *Resolved,* That whoever shall sell, or buy,... tea, or shall aid... in transporting such tea,... from this city, until the... revenue act shall be totally and clearly repealed, he shall be deemed an enemy to the liberties of America.

4th. *Resolved,* That whether the duties on tea, imposed by this act, be paid in Great Britain or America, our liberties are equally affected.

5th. *Resolved,* That whoever shall transgress any of these resolutions, we will not deal with, or employ, or have any connection with him.

Pennsylvania Resolutions on the Boston Port Act June 20, 1774

[These resolutions were enacted by a convention attended by over eight thousand persons which inaugurated the Revolution in Pennsylvania following the passage of the Intolerable Acts, of which the Boston Port Bill was the most significant.]

Philadelphia, June 1774

At a very large and respectable meeting of the freeholders and freemen of the city and county of Philadelphia, on June 18, 1774. Thomas Willing, John Dickinson, chairmen.

I. Resolved, That the act of parliament, for shutting up the port of Boston, is unconstitutional, oppressive to the inhabitants of that town, dangerous to the liberties of the British colonies, and that therefore, considering our brethren, at Boston, as suffering in the common cause of America.

II. That a congress of deputies from the several colonies, in North America, is the most probable and proper mode of procuring relief for our suffering brethren, obtaining redress of American grievances, securing our rights and liberties, and re-establishing peace and harmony between Great Britain and these colonies, on a constitutional foundation.

III. That a large and respectable committee be immediately appointed for the city and county of Philadelphia, to correspond with the sister colonies and with

the several counties in this province, in order that all may unite in promoting and endeavoring to attain the great and valuable ends, mentioned in the foregoing resolution.

IV. That the committee nominated by this meeting shall consult together, and on mature deliberation determine, what is the most proper mode of collecting the sense of this province, and appointing deputies for the same, to attend a general congress, and having determined thereupon, shall take such measures, as by them shall be judged most expedient, for procuring this province to be represented at the said congress, in the best manner that can be devised for promoting the public welfare.

V. That the committee be instructed immediately to set on foot a subscription for the relief of such poor inhabitants of the town of Boston, as may be deprived of their means of subsistence....

The Virginia Bill of Rights
June 12, 1776

[This famous Declaration of Rights, adopted by the Virginia Convention of 1776, exerted a very wide influence both in this country and in France.]

A declaration of rights made by the representatives of the good people of Virginia, assembled in full and free convention; which rights do pertain to them and their posterity, as the basis and foundation of government.

1. That all men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights, of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot by any compact deprive or divest their posterity; namely, the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety.

2. That all power is vested in, and consequently derived from, the people; that magistrates are their trustees and servants, and at all times amenable to them.

3. That government is, or ought to be instituted for the common benefit, protection, and security of the people, nation, or community; of all the various modes and forms of government, that is best which is capable of producing the greatest degree of happiness and safety, and is most effectually secured against the danger of maladministration; and that when any gov-

ernment shall be found inadequate or contrary to these purposes, a majority of the community hath an indubitable, unalienable and indefeasible right to reform, alter or abolish it, in such manner as shall be judged most conducive to the public weal.

4. That no man, or set of men, are entitled to exclusive or separate emoluments or privileges from the community, but in consideration of publick services; which, not being descendible, neither ought the offices of magistrate, legislator or judge be hereditary.

5. That the legislative and executive powers of the state should be separate and distinct from the judiciary; and that the members of the two first may be restrained from oppression, by feeling and participating the burthens of the people, they should, at fixed periods, be reduced to a private station, return into the body from which they were originally taken, and the vacancies be supplied by frequent, certain, and regular elections, in which all, or any part of the former members to be again eligible or ineligible, as the laws shall direct.

6. That elections of members to serve as representatives of the people in assembly, ought to be free; and that all men having sufficient evidence of permanent common interest with, and attachment to the community, have the right of suffrage, and cannot be taxed or deprived of their property for publick uses, without their own consent, or that of their representatives so elected, nor bound by any law to which they have not, in like manner, assented for the public good.

7. That all power of suspending laws, or the execution of laws, by any authority without consent of the representatives of the people, is injurious to their rights, and ought not to be exercised.

8. That in all capital or criminal prosecutions a man hath a right to demand the cause and nature of his

accusation, to be confronted with the accusers and witnesses, to call for evidence in his favour, and to a speedy trial by an impartial jury of his vicinage, without whose unanimous consent he cannot be found guilty; nor can he be compelled to give evidence against himself; that no man be deprived of his liberty, except by the laws of the land or the judgment of his peers.

9. That excessive bail ought not to be required, nor excessive fines imposed, nor cruel and unusual punishments inflicted.

10. That general warrants, whereby an officer or messenger can be commanded to search suspected places without evidence of a fact committed, or to seize any person or persons not named, or whose offense is not particularly described and supported by evidence, are grievous and oppressive, and ought not to be granted.

11. That in controversies respecting property, and in suits between man and man, the ancient trial by jury is preferable to any other, and ought to be held sacred.

12. That the freedom of the press is one of the great bulwarks of liberty, and can never be restrained but by despotick governments.

13. That a well-regulated militia, composed of the body of the people trained to arms, is the proper, natural and safe defense of a free state; that standing armies in time of peace should be avoided as dangerous to liberty; and that in all cases the military should be under strict subordination to, and governed by, the civil power.

14. That the people have a right to uniform government; and, therefore, that no government separate from, or independent of the government of Virginia, ought to be erected or established within the limits thereof.

15. That no free government, or the blessings of

liberty, can be preserved to any people, but by firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles.

' 16. That religion, or the duty which we owe to our Creator, and the manner of discharging it, can be directed only by reason and conviction, not by force or violence; and therefore all men are equally entitled to the free exercise of religion, according to the dictates of conscience; and that it is the mutual duty of all to practice Christian forbearance, love, and charity towards each other.

Declaration of Independence
July 4, 1776

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bonds which have connected them with another, and to assume among the Powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed. That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations,

pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.

He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.

He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their Public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.

He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.

He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative Powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the meantime exposed to all the

dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.

He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws of Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.

He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary Powers.

He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.

He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our people, and eat out their substance.

He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies, without the Consent of our legislature.

He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil Power.

He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended legislation:

For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:

For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from Punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:

For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:

For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:

For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:

For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offenses:

For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a

neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:

For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:

For suspending our own Legislature, and declaring themselves invested with Power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.

He has abdicated Government here by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.

He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.

He is at this time transporting large armies of foreign mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.

He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.

He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free People.

Nor have We been wanting in attention to our Brit-

ish brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.

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