THE ROLE OF THE ESSEX JUNTO IN THE FORMATION, DEVELOPMENT, AND FALL OF THE FEDERALIST PARTY, 1778-1801

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James Cary Page

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APPROVED BY:

SUPERVISOR OF THESIS Howard B Clay

DIRECTOR OF THE DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL STUDIES

Paul Murray

DIRECTOR OF GRADUATE STUDIES

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INTRODUCTION

Great Britain set the Massachusetts Bay Colony apart for exemplary discipline after that colony's act of defiance known as the "Boston Tea Party". Thereafter, punitive measure was followed by retaliatory counter-measure as the situation rapidly deteriorated toward armed conflict. Among the resulting casualties of empire were the expulsion of the royal governor and virtual stoppage of the judicial process. These arms of government were regarded by the aroused colonials as special symbols of imperial domination.

The taking of these extreme measures, however, produced a dilemma. Since Massachusetts considered an appointed judiciary and central executive to be instruments of tyranny and legitimate objectives for destruction by revolution, the colony neither made nor contemplated any effective substitution.

The resulting anarchy had not been anticipated by the majority of the propertied conservative independence leaders, and their desire for effective remedy gradually took concrete form.

An early manifestation of their reaction was the emergence in 1778 of a nucleus in Essex County, Massachusetts, which was to be known as the "Essex Junto". This articulate model of ultraconservatism materially assisted in the drafting of the Massachusetts Constitution of 1780 by which

there was established a strong central executive and an independent appointed judiciary.

Vigorously opposed to popular interests and staunchly holding that the reins of government should be only in the firm hands of "the good, the rich and the well born", the Junto denounced vehemently the democratic precepts of John Hancock, caustically condemned Shays' Rebellion, and were most vocal in the clamor for a strong federal government to curb the democratic tendencies of popularly elected state assemblies.

As the proposed Federal Constitution was submitted to the states, it soon became apparent that general adoption probably hinged on ratification by Massachusetts, a state considered to be pivotal. When the first informal polls revealed that the majority of the state ratifying convention was hostile to the measure, it was the resourceful Essex Junto, spearheading the proponent forces which gained sufficient delay of a final vote to accomplish the capture of John Hancock and Samuel Adams from the opposition.

By this coup and other demonstrations of assiduous effort, the Junto played a vital role in the ultimate Federalist victory.

In the new government, the Junto found a true champion in Washington's "prime minister", Alexander Hamilton. As the brilliant young statesman brought forward his projects

of government, they were enthusiastically espoused by the Juntoists in the Cabinet, in both houses of the Congress, in the state governments, and in the press. When the very existence of the Federalist party, if not of the union, was at stake over ratification of the Jay Treaty with Great Britain in 1795, it was an emotion-charged Juntoist speech in the House of Representatives that saved the day for the incumbents. When the opposition to Hamilton's policies found a head in the person of Thomas Jefferson, that champion of democracy was anathematized by the Junto.

In the presidential election of 1796, Adams was well aware of the Junto's active participation in the scheme of the Eastern Federalists to gain the first office for Pinckney. Although denouncing their machinations, he did not except them when, in a gesture of party loyalty, he adopted Washington's entire cabinet for his own. He was to regret deeply this act of forbearance, for when his epochal conflict with Hamilton became crucial, these very members betrayed his interests to those of Hamilton.

As the Federalists were overwhelmed in the great popular reaction of 1800, sometimes known as the Second American Revolution, the Junto, now expanded into a large sectional force, were most active in the vain attempt to thwart the will of the electorate and prevent the election of Thomas Jefferson.

It is the purpose of this thesis to assess the role and

to delineate the activities of this formidable neo-tory force, in the formation of the Federalist Party in 1778, in its growth during the Washington and Adams Administrations, and in its final downfall as a national force in 1801.

CHAPTER I

THE ESSEX JUNTO

At the outbreak of the War of American Independence, the Tories, although a relatively small minority, dominated the social, cultural, and educational life of Boston and other urban centers of the Massachusetts Bay area. Their talents were conspicuous and their ability manifest. In one short day, however, at Lexington and Concord, they fell as a force and their effective elements were borne away as refugees by Howe, on March 17, 1776, in the evacuation of Boston.[1]

The Vacuum Left by the Tories

At this time social leadership was synonymous with political leadership, and the forces of conservatism and wealth among the separatists sought to fill the void left by the departed Tories and to inherit their perquisites. Further, as the war progressed, conservative elements became increasingly apprehensive over the rapid progress of democracy and saw an imperative need for curbing this popular trend.[2]

Of those aspiring to new power, perhaps the most sanguine were the leaders of Essex County, an area which lay immediately north of Massachusetts Bay and from which the "Essex Junto" derived its name. With its port of Salem, this

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[1] Anson Ely Morse, The Federalist Party in Massachusetts to the Year 1800 (1909), pp. 12-13.

[2] Ibid., p. 16.

section had since 1630 vied intensely with Boston for leadership of the Colony.[3]

The Struggle for a State Constitution

The Whigs, with no opposition after 1776, went through the natural process of disintegration into constituent factions, based on democratic social philosophy. The rival groups became more clearly defined as the necessity for a new state constitution was demonstrated.[4]

After 1775 Massachusetts functioned somewhat clumsily under its colonial charter, without a governor, and with authority reposing in the hands of the General Court, "Committees of Safety," and revolutionary town meetings.[5] In many of the towns, in fact, the revolutionary zest had reached a point of self-government completely independent of the General Court (styled "General Assembly" during this period).[6]

In 1776 the General Assembly asked the towns to vest their respective delegates to the Assembly with authority to frame a state constitution for submission to the electorate.[7]

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[3] Morse, op. cit., p. 9.

[4] Ibid., p. 13.

[5] Theophilus Parsons, Memoir of Theophilus Parsons (1859), pp. 45-46.

[6] Frank W. Grinnell, "The Government of Massachusetts Prior to the Federal Constitution," Genesis and Birth of the Federal Constitution, Julian Alvin Carroll Chandler, (ed.) (1924), p. 22.

[7] Parsons, op. cit., p. 46.

After required consent by a majority of the towns, this was done. Upon its submission to the people, however, the proposed constitution was defeated by a five to one vote. The son and biographer of a leading member of the embryonic Essex Junto, analyzing the defeat, stated that:

> The reasons for this decisive rejection were, first, that the draft was very imperfect, and evidently made without due care and consideration. Next, the people preferred that it should be made not by a legislature but by a convention chosen for that express purpose. Then, that there was nothing prefixed in the nature of a Bill of Rights, defining and declaring the fundamental and inalienable rights of the citizens. And lastly, the proposed Constitution so carefully avoided a strong government that the Executive was a mere cipher. The Governor and Lt. Governor were both members of the Senate and the 22nd section contained an express provision that "the Governor shall have no negative as Governor in any matter pointed out by the Constitution to be done by the Governor and Senate, but shall have an equal voice with any Senator on any question before them."[8]

It was the last objection that weighed most heavily with the property-conscious conservatives and found its most articulate expression of disapprobation in Essex County, where in April, 1778, at Ipswich, an important protest meeting was held. Of the tremendous significance of this gathering, Anson Ely Morse wrote, "It was on April 15, 1778, at Ipswich at a meeting of delegates representing twelve towns of the County of Essex that birth of Federalist party took place."[9] It also marked the first strong stirrings of the still-embryonic Essex Junto.

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[8] Parsons, op. cit., p. 46.

[9] Morse, op. cit., p. 17.

The Essex Result

This body's reaction to the proposed constitution took shape in an elaborate constitutional counter-proposal to be known popularly as the "Essex Result".[10] The document was written by Theophilus Parsons, an able, ultra-conservative young lawyer of twenty-eight.[11]

As a statement of counterrevolutionary creed of the evolving Junto, some of the resolutions contained in the "Essex Result" are of particular interest. On the subject of the best in general society, this document, while not denyinf "that the bulk of the people, the farmers...the tradesmen and laborers are all honest and upright with single views to the public good,"[12] nevertheless maintained "that among gentlemen of education, fortune and leisure, we shall find the largest number of men possessed of wisdom, learning, and firmness and consistency of character."[13]

With respect to laws affecting persons and property with-

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[10] Parsons, op. cit., p. 47. (The entire report is contained in the appendix of this work, pp. 359-402) The full title of the "Essex Result" was "The Result of the Convention of Delegates holden at Ipswich in the County of Essex, who were deputed to take into Consideration the Constitution and Form of Government proposed by the Convention of the State of Massachusetts Bay." The Parsons work is believed to be the best existing source of the "Essex Result" in its entirety.

[11] Grinnell, op. cit., p. 222.

[12] Parsons, op. cit., p. 370.

[13] Ibid.

in the state, the position was taken that such laws were invalid without "The consent of a majority of the members, which majority should include those who hold a major part of the property of the State."[14]

Theophilus Parsons (1750-1813) of Newburyport, Essex County, the chief draftsman of this conservative manifesto, was a thorough scholar and skilled lawyer, destined to become Chief Justice of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts.[15] One of the most literate and astute members of the gradually forming effective force, he became its strongest hand in forming strategy and its most dedicated reactionary.[16]

Assisting Parsons on the drafting committee were fellow-Essexmen John Lowell, Benjamin Goodhue, George Cabot, and Jonathan Jackson, all in the nucleus of the developing "Junto".[17]

Before the Revolution, John Lowell, Sr., (1743-1802) was a distinguished lawyer and during the war, continued a most lucrative practice; at the same time, performing as a major in the colonial militia. A member of the Continental Congress, he became a particularly ardent Federalist and at the end of the century was appointed to the Federal Judiciary.[18] That

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[14] Parsons, op. cit., p. 375.

[15] Ibid., p. 113.

[16] Ibid., p. 132.

[17] Ibid., p. 82.

[18] William Sullivan, Familiar Letters on Public Characters and Public Events from the Peace of 1783 to the Peace of 1815 (1834), p. 318.

distinguished lifelong Federalist of later years and perennial defender of the Hartford Convention, Harrison Gray Otis, began his study of law in Judge Lowell's office in 1783.[19]

Benjamin Goodhue (1748-1814) was occupied chiefly in privateering during the war. He served through the eighties as a member of the Massachusetts General Court, as a State Senator, and became both a Congressman and a United States Senator. A dour personality, he became a devoted adherent of the tenets of counterrevolution.[20]

Of the remaining two, Cabot and Jackson, only the former achieved national stature. Born in 1751, Cabot went to sea early in life and soon came into command of his own ship.[21] Although leaving Harvard College after his sophomore year, he continued to read and study extensively, directing his efforts particularly toward works on politics and political economy.[22] He served as United States Senator from 1791 to 1796, received appointment as the first Secretary of the Navy, and presided at the Hartford Convention.[23] He was the Junto's

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[19] James Spear Loring, The Hundred Boston Orators Appointed by the Municipal Authorities and Other Public Bodies from 1770 to 1852 (1855), p. 198.

[20] Dumas Malone, (ed.), Dictionary of American Biography, XII, 386.

[21] Henry Cabot Lodge, Life and Letters of George Cabot (1877), p. 8 (hereinafter cited as Lodge, Cabot.)

[22] Ibid., p. 9.

[23] Ibid., pp. 38-39.

philosophical restraining hand.[24]

The Constitution of 1780

After the failure of the proposed constitution of 1778, a plan ultimately issued from the General Court proposing a constituent assembly to be elected to the same number as the General Court. For this election, however, the franchise was enlarged to include every freeman of twenty-one years. Further, the court provided that any proposed constitution issuing from the constituent assembly had to be approved by two-thirds of those qualified to vote for delegates to the assembly. Elections were duly held and the convention first met in September, 1779.[25]

Among the delegates were Samuel and John Adams, John Hancock, James Bowdoin, James Sullivan, Levi Lincoln, Caleb Strong, and Robert Treate Paine. Parsons led the Essex delegation of three including Jonathan Jackson and Samuel Phillips, all of whom served on the committee to draw up the "Declaration of Rights and Form of Government."[26]

The task of drafting a constitution eventually fell to John Adams and he worked for the establishment of a strong

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[24] Edward Payson Powell, Nullification and Secession in the United States (1897), pp. 130-131.

[25] Parsons, op. cit., p. 55.

[26] Ibid., quoting letter to author from James Savage dated May 4, 1857.

central government to rebuild much that his cousin Samuel Adams had once sought to destroy.[27] His early efforts, however, were strongly opposed by popular democratic elements constituting a majority of the delegates. Of this he wrote in later years:

...I found such a chaos of absurd sentiments concerning government that I was obliged daily, before that great assembly ...to propose plans, and advocate doctrines which were extremely unpopular with the greatest number.[28]

The Essex County delegates in their intense conservatism backed Adams earnestly and effectively. As he wrote later:

In short, I had at first no support, but from the Essex Junto. They made me draw up the constitution and it was finally adopted with some amendments...The bold, decided and determined part I took in this assembly in favor of good government acquired me the reputation of a man of high principles and strong notions in government, scarcely compatible with republicanism. A foundation was here laid of much jealousy and unpopularity among the democratical people in this state.[29]

The amendments referred to by Adams were drawn after his departure for France[30] and were written, for the most part, by Theophilus Parsons. Of the important contributions of the talented Essexman in the accomplishment of the final document, Chief Justice Parker of Massachusetts stated:

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[27] Grinnell, op. cit., p. 224.

[28] Adrienne Koch and William Harden Peden (eds.) The Writings of John and John Quincy Adams (2946), p. 155, quoting letter of John Adams to Benjamin Rush, April 12, 1809.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Grinnell, loc. cit.

Many of the most important articles of the constitution were of his [Parsons's] draft: and those provisions which were most essential, though least palatable, such as dignity and power to the Executive, Independence to the Judiciary, and a separation of the branches of the Legislative departments were supported by him with all the power of argument and eloquence.[31]

Hancock Names the Junto

On September 4, 1780, the first gubernatorial election under the new Constitution took place.[32] John Hancock, now having eclipsed Samuel Adams as the idol of the people, championed the revolutionary democratic popular cause,[33] while James Bowdoin, the President of the Constitutional Convention, led the Conservative forces.[34] Bowdoin had the ardent support of the Essexmen as Hancock had their intense and very vocal hostility. Upon this formidable group, which opposed him with unabated virulence, John Hancock bestowed the dramatic and intentionally opprobrious title, "The Essex Junto."[35]

While evidence exists as to a use of the term in the Colonial Period,[36] Hancock's appellation was apparently its

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[31] Parsons, op. cit., p. 56, quoting Chief Justice Isaac Parker's memorial address to the grand jury on the death of Theophilus Parsons.

[32] Lodge, Cabot, p. 17.

[33] Morse, op. cit., p. 16.

[34] Ibid., p. 22.

[35] Lodge, Cabot, p. 22.

[36] The term is believed to have originated during the period of charter government. Upon one of his favored measures being defeated, the Royal Governor blamed an "Essex Junto." Lodge, Cabot, p. 20.

first use in the new nation. The body referred to had no perceptible roots in any previous group.[37] John Adams used the term again in 1797, some seventeen years later, and many historians erroneously trace its origin to him. Adams was referring to a group which had extensively expanded from Hancock's nucleus and denoted the Hamiltonian extreme right wing of the flourishing Federalist Party.[38] The basis for this error can well lie in the following account by Timothy Pickering, a foremost leader of the Junto:

> I think the first time I heard the phrase [Essex Junto] was from the mouth of...President Adams just...when he succeeded GENERAL WASHINGTON in the Presidency. He had understood that the persons comprehended in the term "Essex Junto" had opposed...his election...Mentioning this to me with some warmth, and in language not very dignified, he pronounced the names of those gentlemen, who were confessedly the principals...which he called the "ESSEX JUNTO"...GEORGE CABOT, THOPH. PARSONS, and STEPH. HIGGINSON...[39]

Thomas Jefferson, in turn, used the term to refer to that opposition to his administration most intensely manifested in New England.[40] The term further was used in a generic sense to describe elements generally espousing Anglo-

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[37] Charles Raymond Brown, The Northern Confederacy According to the Plans of the "Essex Junto", 1796-1814 (1915), p.8.

[38] Ibid., p. 7.

[39] Lodge, Cabot, p. 21, quoting letter of Timothy Pickering to George Henry Rose, British Minister to the United States, March 22, 1808.

[40] Charles Warren, Jacobin and Junto or Early American Politics as Viewed in the Diary of Dr. Nathaniel Ames 1758-1822 (1931), p. 164.

phile, Gallophobe, neo-Toryism. An example of this would be John Adams's characterization, written in 1802, of opposition to the independence motion made before the Second Continental Congress in 1776. Of this he said:

> This Resolution I considered as an Epocha, a decisive Event. It was a measure which I had invariably pursued for a whole Year, and contented for, through a Scaene and a Series of Anxiety, labour, Study, Argument, and Obloquy, which was then little known and is now forgotten, by all but Dr. Rush and a very few who like him survive. Millions of Curses were poured out upon me, for these Exertions and for these Tryumphs over them, by the Essex Juntoes, for there were such at the time and have continued to this day in every State in the Union; who whatever their pretences may have been have never forgotten nor cordially forgiven me. By this Term which is now become vulgarly and politically technical, I mean, not the Tories, for from them I received always more candour, but a class of People who thought proper and convenient to themselves to go along with the Public Opinion in Appearance, though in their hearts they detested it. Although they might think the public opinion was right in General, in its difference with Great Britain, yet they secretly regretted the Separation, and above all Things, the Connection with France. Such a Party has always existed and was the final Ruin of the Federal Administration as will hereafter very plainly appear.[41]

Members of the Evolving Junto

The difficulty in identifying members of the group in any phase of its development stems from the fact that it was never an organized body meeting as such. At least there is no record of its having so met.[42] For the most part its plots, schemes, and conspiracies were carried on by correspondence

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[41] L. H. Butterfield, (ed.), Diary and Autobiography of John Adams (1961), III, 383.

[42] Lodge, Cabot, p. 17.

of which, unfortunately, a very large portion was discreetly destroyed.[43]

The group of which Hancock spoke, all men of Essex County, were: Theophilus Parsons, George Cabot, John Lowell, Sr., Timothy Pickering, Jonathan Jackson, Nathan Dane, and Benjamin Goodhue. Joining these, with the rising tide of Federalism, were Theodore Sedgwick, John Lowell, Jr., Caleb Strong, Caleb Cushing, Christopher Gore, James Lloyd, Uriah Tracy, Fisher Ames, Tristram Dalton, Stephen Higginson, Francis Dana, and Robert Treat Paine.[44]

Among the close affiliates of the growing force could be included Roger Griswold, James McHenry, the Wolcotts, Timothy Bigelow, James Hillhouse, William Plumer, Gouverneur Morris, and Tapping Reeve. Harrison Gray Otis and Josiah Quincy, although working closely with and for the Junto on many occasions, were definitely excluded from the inner circle.[45]

Parsons, Cabot, Lowell, Sr., and Goodhue have been sketched briefly.[46] For the period between the Second Treaty

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[43] Brown, op. cit., p. 5.

[44] Warren, op. cit., p. 164.

[45] Samuel Eliot Morison, Maritime History of Massachusetts, 1783-1860 (1921), p. 167 (hereinafter cited as Morison, Mar. Hist. Mass.)

[46] Supra, pp. 5-7.

of Paris in 1783, and the ratification by Massachusetts of the Federal Constitution, two Juntoists merit special mention: Higginson and Ames.

The first, Stephen Higginson (1743-1828) from Salem in Essex County, had made a fortune in privateering during the Revolution and thereafter removed to Boston and formed a mercantile partnership with fellow-Essexman Jonathan Jackson. He served in the Massachusetts legislature and the Continental Congress, and was a close friend of Alexander Hamilton and James Bowdoin. For the latter, who was governor at the time of Shays' Rebellion, he exerted himself materially in quelling that action. He became especially known as the author of letters under the signature of "Laco", in which he attacked John Hancock with caustic vigor.[47]

As to the virulence of these excoriations, James Spear Loring recounts an anecdote of an awakened sleeper stating that he had dreamed he was in the nether regions being welcomed by Lucifer himself, who inquired generally as to world conditions. Upon receiving the reply that efforts were being made to reelect Hancock, the Devil exclaimed, crying for his horse, boots, and spurs, "That will never do, but pray what has become of Laco?" Upon being told that Laco was on the scene busily at work, the Devil perceptibly relieved, ex-

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[47] "Letters of Stephen Higginson", Annual Report of the American Historical Association for the Year 1896, pp.705-706.

claimed, "Never mind--while Laco is in Boston, there is no need for my presence. He can perform the work of confusion to admiration, without my aid."[48]

Perhaps the most brilliant, the most literate, the most urbane of this coterie was Fisher Ames (1758-1808). This patrician scholar studied for the law, practiced it successfully, but never liked it. He served in the first four Congresses and became especially known for his speech in the House of Representatives in defense of the Jay Treaty of 1795 with Great Britain, perhaps the highlight of his career. Due to failing health, he did not stand for reelection to Congress in 1796 and declined the presidency of Harvard in 1805. He was, in Henry Adams's words, "the mouthpiece to the press of (the)...remarkably group."[49]

Of Ames's formidable talent as an effective political pamphleteer, Parsons's son and biographer recounts:

A slight incident occurred when I must have been a mere child; ...In my father's office a gentleman was urging him to do something. I forget what, but the answer I have never forgotten, "No, no. Go to Ames and tell him to take hold at once, and he will; and find him a column of a newspaper and he will do more than you and I and all of us can do by talking and writing for a month!"[50]

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[48] Loring, op. cit., p. 110.

[49] Henry Adams, History of the United States during the Administration of Thomas Jefferson, (1930), I, 88 (hereinafter cited as Adams, Hist. U. S.)

[50] Parsons, op. cit., p. 114.

Such was the remarkable nucleus of neo-Toryism that cradled the Federalist Party, savagely fought the emerging democracy, and gave no quarter to any opposition. Of them, in summary, Samuel Eliot Morison said:

> George Cabot was the Junto Oracle, Stephen Higginson...its practical merchant, Jonathan Jackson and John Lowell, Jr., ...its elder statesman and pamphleteer, and Chief Justice Parsons...its fount of legal learning. Timothy Pickering and Fisher Ames were admitted to full intimacy, Christopher Gore and James Lloyd hovered on the outskirts. Most of their families were intermarried...Life and politics they regarded as from the quarterdeck of an East-Indiaman. Harrison Gray Otis and Josiah Quincy were little more than their political chanteymen, and all Massachusetts scurried to furl topsails when the Essex Junto roared the command.[51]

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[51]Morison, Mar. Hist. Mass., p. 167.

CHAPTER II

THE JUNTO'S ROLE IN DEVELOPING FEDERALISM

The debates in the Massachusetts Constitutional Convention of 1780 had one odd note. While John Adams and his Junto supporters fought for a powerful single executive, the opposition, except John Hancock, desired executive power to issue mainly from a popularly elected assembly. Explaining this, Adams wrote in later years: "Lt. Governor Cushing was avowedly for a single [Executive] Assembly like Pennsylvania. Samuel Adams was of the same mind. Mr. Hancock kept aloof in order to be governor."[1]

In short, the Junto was facing the dilemma of arming a potential foe with power. Desiring to bestow upon the chief executive more power than that possessed by the governor of any other state, they had gained by Hancock's "aloofness," the tacit support of that strongest member of the opposition. Hancock's tactics were rewarded, for he became the first chief magistrate of the new Commonwealth by an astounding 9,475 votes out of a total of 10,383. The Essex Junto's candidate, James Bowdoin, polled but a paltry 888 votes.[2]

The immensely popular Hancock, moreover, was to continue to win the governorship with ease through the years 1781,

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[1]Koch and Peden, op. cit., p. 155, quoting letter John Adams to Benjamin Rush, April 12, 1809.

[2]Herbert S. Allan, John Hancock: Patriot in Purple (1948), p. 295.

1782, 1783, and 1784.[3]

The Deteriorating Economy

These victorious years, however, brought with them a deterioration in the economy. Following the Second Treaty of Paris, in 1783, the great economic slump began in earnest. A day of reckoning was at hand. The Bay Commonwealth was heavily in debt and an alarming segment of its population was on the border of insolvency. Public credit as well as private credit was drying up.[4]

Many of the other states, such as Rhode Island, resorted to the extreme measures of unlimited paper money. Popularly elected legislatures enacted such stopgap measures as declaring farm produce to be legal tender. Paper currency was sinking to rock bottom in value and specie was almost nonexistent.[5]

While the general economic situation was bad throughout the colonies, New England was the section most adversely affected, and Massachusetts, the state suffering most acutely in New England. Together with this there was little spirit of compromise between the classes in the Bay colony. Those in the economic ascendancy were stubbornly determined to preserve their every prerogative, and the debtor class were

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[3] John Stetson Barry, The History of Massachusetts: The Commonwealth Period (1857), pp. 186-187.

[4] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 2.

[5] Ibid.

equally determined to gain some form of relief in their very real distress. The mutual intractability was leading to genuine crisis.[6]

By 1785 the situation had become desperate. The state treasury was almost empty and the cries of the oppressed debtor class were rising in an ugly and ominous chorus.[7]

Hancock, essentially a politician and a symbolic popular figure, either unable or unwilling to take affirmative effective action against the tide, rode complacently with it, offering just sufficient token remedial legislation to escape the onus of total irresponsibility and to ensure reelection. Even for one endowed with vastly greater administrative and executive talents, as well as resolution, the task confronting Hancock would have been well nigh insurmountable.[8]

Hancock Steps Aside

By early 1785 his acute perception told him that real trouble was at hand. He determined, accordingly, that his own best interests would be served by a temporary exit from the Massachusetts political stage.[9] His gout obligingly furnished him a plausible excuse for thus vacating his office. His words to the General Court indicating his departure to be

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[6] James Truslow Adams, New England in the Republic, 1776-1850, Vol. III of The History of New England (1927), p. 122 (hereinafter cited as Adams, New Eng. in Repub.)

[7] Ibid., pp. 122-123.

[8] Allan, op. cit., p. 314.

[9] Ibid.

but temporary well revealed his mind. He said, "I am obliged, Gentlemen, to inform you that some relocation is absolutely necessary for me and that I must at present give up all attention to public business and pursue means of regaining my health."[10]

In the ensuing sharply contested campaign for the gubernatorial vacancy, Lieutenant-Governor Thomas Cushing was the Hancock candidate; James Bowdoin, his opponent. Stephen Higginson, fiercely leading the Junto vanguard against the despised democratic Hancockianism, gained with his pen the sobriquet of the "Salem Wizard". With salvos signed by "Civis", "Philo Civis", and "Brother Elector", the Essexman attacked the opposition generally as he later was to scourge Hancock personally, in his Philippics under the name of "Laco".[11]

In the heated exchange of epithets during the campaign, the Essex Junto was characterized as a "British Faction", a tag of which they were never able to rid themselves.[12]

Neither of the candidates won a majority. The decision went to the legislature, where the Senate supported Bowdoin and the House at first favored Cushing. The latter body, with Juntoist Nathaniel Gorham as Speaker,was finally won over and

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[10] Allan, op. cit., p. 315, quoting Boston Herald, Jan. 29, 1785.

[11] Morse, op. cit., p. 28.

[12] Ibid., p. 28.

Bowdoin was declared Governor.[13]

The Junto also did well in another election at this time. In a letter to Rufus King from Boston, Elbridge Gerry gave the tidings of his selection, together with three Juntoists, as Congressmen. He told King that he "had the highest number of votes, Gorham next, Sedgwick and Dane lowest."[14]

Proposals for Strengthening the Central Government

To the alarm of the propertied conservatives throughout the country, debtor elements were seeking and finding relief in measures issuing from popularly elected state assemblies. The patently obvious countermeasure for these social revolutionary acts was a stronger central government, thoroughly conditioned in conservatism and vested with powers superior to any state or combination of states. Higginson, probably one of the first to suggest this remedial action, recounted the following to General Knox: "As early as '83, while I was at Congress, I pressed upon Mr. Maddison and others the idea of a special convention for the purpose of revising the Confederation and increasing the powers of the Union..."[15]

James Bowdoin's message of May 31, 1785, set forth perhaps the first concrete proposals for a new or revitalized

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[13] Allan, op. cit., p. 318.

[14] Charles R. King, (ed.), The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King (1894), I, 54, quoting letter Elbridge Gerry to Rufus King dated June 16, 1785.

[15] Amer. Hist. Assn., Rept., 1896, p. 745, letter from Higginson to Gen. Henry Knox, Feb. 8, 1787.

national government. The ardently conservative new chief executive of the Bay Commonwealth specifically recommended that the central government be empowered to regulate foreign trade and to preserve the union of the states. Further, in view of the weak central powers given by the Articles of Confederation, that special delegates be sent by the states to a meeting designed to strengthen the central government.[16]

The legislature responded to the Governor's proposals with a series of implementing resolutions which were forwarded to Congressional Representatives Elbridge Gerry, Nathan Dane, S. Holden, and Rufus King to be placed before the Congress.[17]

The Congressmen refused to carry out the assigned mission and expressed, in their letters of protest, strong fears that a powerful Federal government could be a death knell to republicanism. Here can be perceived an early note of articulate antifederalism.[18]

Juntoist Congressman Nathan Dane feared that the proposals would be laid to the selfish motives of those engaged in trade. He was especially doubtful as to the public's willingness to accept the additional burdens of federal taxation.[19]

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[16] Morse, op. cit., p. 31.

[17] Ibid., p. 32.

[18] King, op. cit., I, 64.

[19] Ibid., p. 69.

The ill-fated Annapolis Convention, called in 1786 for the ostensible purpose of improving commercial ties, might well have performed the function accomplished in Philadelphia the following year, had Alexander Hamilton and others of his persuasion had their way. Although the disturbed economic conditions precluded the New England states' sending delegates, Juntoist Higginson's report of the Massachusetts nominees for that conclave is interesting. Maintaining the fiction that the convention was essentially for commercial purposes, he stated in a letter to John Adams:

> As this state from the nature and variety of its trade is more likely to be affected by general commercial arrangements, than any other of the states, some persons have been appointed to represent it in the proposed convention; they are Mr. Lowell, Mr. Dana, Mr. Theophilus Parsons, Mr. Gerry, Mr. George Cabot and myself...[20]

One may well speculate as to the extent Alexander Hamilton could have gone with his plan for a severely autocratic central government had he had this praetorian guard of Juntoists leading the attack with him!

The Massachusetts Insurrection

When the great insurrection of August, 1786, broke out in Western Massachusetts, the General Court was not only without funds to suppress the insurgents; but with half the populace in sympathy with the insurrectionist cause, it had little

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[20] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 733, letter Higginson to John Adams, July, 1786.

inclination toward effective action.[21]

The existing government and its supporters desperately needed an articulate advocate to plead its cause and denounce that of the insurrectionists. It was imperative that the public be informed and aroused to active resistance against forcible social revolution.[22] Theophilus Parsons had already designated the man for such a task, and that man was the "mouthpiece"[23] of the Essex Junto, Fisher Ames.

Writing under the name of Lucius Junius Brutus, Ames's talented pen scathingly denounced "Shaysism", its adherents and its sympathizers, set out to inflame the public and goad the feckless, irresolute administration to action.[24] As Brutus he pointed out that the task confronting the general court:

> ...is now become arduous indeed; the eyes of their country and of the world, are upon them, while they resolve, either to surrender the Constitution of their country without an effort, or by exerting the whole force of the State in its defense, to satisfy their constituents, that its fall (if it must fall) was effected by a force against which all the resources of prudence and patriotism had been called forth in vain.[25]

Despite the very undemocratic constitution of 1780,

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[21] Allan, op. cit., p. 323.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Supra, p. 14.

[24] Seth Ames, (ed.), The Works of Fisher Ames (1854), I, 9.

[25] Ibid,, II, 92.

under which the Bowdoin administration functioned, Ames warned that its destruction would be the end of civil society and that "A more popular form [of government] could not be contrived nor could it stand".[26]

In Shays' ranks were veteran officers and men of the late war. Ames, although eighteen years old at the time of independence, never felt the necessity to take up arms. Yet this fact did not deter him from characterizing the actions of the minutemen and "embattled farmers" of the Revolution as "treason against [the] constitution [which] implies a high degree of moral depravity."[27]

Stephen Higginson, a cousin of Juntoist John Lowell and a double first cousin of Juntoist George Cabot, was the Juntoist by far the most actively engaged in the suppression of the rebellion.[28] In late 1786, when the insurgents had come as far east as Concord, General Hichborn, with Higginson second in command, went forth to stop them. Their force left Boston on November twenty-ninth and surprised the insurgents, capturing Parker and Page in Concord, and after a forced march through a snowstorm, the rebel leader Shattuck in Groton.[29]

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[26] Ames, op. cit., II, 93.

[27] Ibid.

[28] Thomas Wentworth Higginson, The Life and Times of Stephen Higginson (1907), p. 49.

[29] George Richards Minot, The History of the Insurrections in Massachusetts in the Year Seventeen Hundred and Eighty Six and the Rebellion Consequent Thereon (1810), pp. 76-77.

Of the significance of this daring reconnaissance in which the Junto merchant acted in such an important capacity,[30] Minot, the classic chronicler of the Insurrection, made the following assessment:

> This expedition was a very important event. By it the sword of government was unsheathed, while the obstinate spirit of the malcontents, and the unlimited views of their opposition, seemed to afford but little prospect of an accommodation on their part. The advantages derived from the capture of the prisoners were material. The heart of the insurrection in Middlesex was broken...[31]

By the efforts of General Knox, the Secretary of War, troops were authorized by Congress to be raised for the purpose of "fighting Indians." In a letter of thanks to Knox, (he had negotiated with the general), Higginson said:

> Your letter 22d ult:...I rec^{d}. The measures proper, upon the view of a War with the Indians and the consequent requisition of Congress, obtained very speedily and with more ease than I expected. you have in this case taken the best ground. the money wanted for the men will, I trust, soon be raised.[32]

As to where the money for the troops was to be obtained, Higginson candidly states:

> the Treasurer has just opened his loan; and though monied men, like others, are more ready at profession than action, yet, I think their feelings and a regard to their beloved property will induce them to furnish what is immediately wanted.[33]

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[30] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 379.

[31] Minot, op. cit., p. 78.

[32] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 641, letter Higginson to Knox, November 12, 1786.

[33] Ibid.

Higginson, fully aware of the dangers to his society, threatened by the insurrection, saw also the opportunities offered. Of this he wrote further to Knox:

> The present moment is very favorable to the forming further and necessary Arrangements, for increasing the dignity and energy of Government. what (sic) has been done, must be used —as a Stock upon which the best Fruits are to be ingrafted. the (sic) public mind is now in a fit State, and will shortly I think become more so, to come foreward with a System competent to the great purpose of all Civil Arrangements, that of promoting and securing the happiness of Society.[34]

The venerable Baron Von Steuben quickly saw through the Higginson-Knox "Indian" subterfuge and exposed it in the New York newspapers under the name of "Belisarius." The eminent Prussian, sympathizing with the Shaysites, asked the pointed question as to whether the Congress would dare to be party to such a subterfuge if they knew that by such action they would perpetuate the contemptible oligarchy then in control of the Bay Commonwealth. The problem, he insisted, was one for solution by the state Legislature, not the Congress.[35]

Von Steuben performed a further interesting service at this time for a member of the Essex Junto. Nathaniel Gorham, then President of the Congress, apparently considering that conditions might very possibly necessitate the abandonment of republican government, had the great drill-master forward a

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[34] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 641, letter Higginson to Knox, November 12, 1786.

[35] Richard B. Morris, "Insurrection in Massachusetts," America in Crisis, Daniel Aaron, (ed.), (1951), p. 34 (hereinafter cited as Morris, Insurrection Mass.)

communication to Prince Henry of Prussia. Gorham desired to know if the Prince would accept the throne if a monarchy were to replace the republic.[36]

The Constitutional Convention of 1787

As the rebellion ended, Higginson speculated as to who would be delegates to Philadelphia the following May. It is not surprising that he listed the following as his candidates:

> Mr. King will probably be in it. Was (sic) I to nominate, I should write thus "King, Lowell, Dana, Parsons and Gerry." Mr. Jackson, Mr. Cabot and others if they would engage might be added or substituted in case of failure.[37]

Of particular interest is the fact that Higginson originated the idea that nine states should be the requisite number to constitute ratification. Of this he wrote to the Secretary of War:

> Should there be a general Convention in May and they proceed to form a federal Constitution, I wish to have them empowered to perfect the system, and give it immediate operation, if nine states in Convention shall agree to it, without a reference to Congress, or their Constituents...for much time must otherwise be lost, and perhaps such a difference of Sentiment may arise as to the report as may entirely defeat the object.[38]

Despite the physical suppression of Shays and his followers, the electorate proceeded to effect a bloodless revolution nevertheless. Of this Minot wrote:

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[36] Morris, Insurrection Mass., p. 35, citing Richard Kranel: "Prince Henry of Prussia and the Regency of the United States," American Historical Review, Vol. XVII (1911), 44-51.

[37] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 748.

[38] Ibid.

The hostilities of the field were succeeded by less destructive, though not less determined contests at the elections...When the business was over, such alterations were made in the representations of towns; such divisions appeared in the votes for senators; and the change in the chair was effected by so large a majority, as seemed to indicate a revolution in the Publick mind.[39]

"The change in the chair...effected by so large a majority"was indeed impressive. John Hancock, true to form, recovered his health with the crisis over, and running on a platform of "Amnesty for the Shaysmen", gained the governorship by a vote of three to one over Bowdoin.[40]

The Massachusetts delegation selected for the Constitutional Convention of 1787, were Francis Dana, Elbridge Gerry, Nathaniel Gorham, Rufus King, and Caleb Strong. Of these only King and Gerry were not of the Junto. Dana did not attend.[41]

In the calling of the convention at Philadelphia and the drafting there of the proposed instrument, there was a distinct cleavage. Some, shocked at popular demonstrations of recalcitrance, as manifested in the Massachusetts insurrection, sought central authority with its implementing force to meet the thrusts of what they considered imminent anarchy. Opposing these were strong elements who saw a powerful central government as an instrument for the destruction of liber-

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[39] Minot, op. cit., pp. 175-176.

[40] Morris, Insurrection Mass., p. 47.

[41] Barry, op. cit., p. 270.

ty. Further, the cleavage was fairly clean between debtor and creditor elements of the population. The former sought permanent relief or at least a moratorium on their obligations and believed that such would more likely issue from popularly elected state assemblies. Accordingly they espoused the principle of states rights. The creditor classes, on the other hand, perceived that the states were too much dominated by their popular democratic elements, whose outlook, they believed, tended to jeopardize both public and private credit. Accordingly, they supported the movement for a strong central government as an imperative means of restoring credit.[42]

The cleavage of delegates followed a pattern that was to mark the future parties of the new nation. The one great question was the extent to which the states should surrender their power to the new central government. The "Government Party", led by young Alexander Hamilton, and doubting republicanism itself, espoused the creation of a powerful central state. The "Liberty Party", on the other hand, desired a revision of the existing Articles of Confederation to a degree not materially affecting the substantial rights of the states.[43]

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[42]Max Farrand, The Fathers of the Constitution: A Chronicle of the Establishment of the Union (1921), pp. 147-148.

[43]Parsons, op. cit., p. 57.

The resulting draft was more to the liking of the "Government Party" than to the "Liberty Party", albeit true that Hamilton and his close supporters failed to reach the mark that they sought.[44] Of the Massachusetts delegates, only Elbridge Gerry refused to sign.[45]

Pennsylvania, Delaware, New Jersey, Georgia, and Connecticut had ratified the new instrument by January of 1788.[46] The big states, however, Massachusetts, Virginia, and New York, were in serious doubt.[47]

Massachusetts' Ratification of the Federal Constitution

Massachusetts was deemed a pivotal state, without whose ratification general adoption was doubtful.[48] Of this, Sullivan wrote that "...if it had been rejected in Massachusetts, such was the respect in which this state was then held, it cannot be supposed that the other states would have done different from this..."[49]

Henry Cabot Lodge stated emphatically that "Without the adhesion of Massachusetts, the scheme would have been broken down at the start, and the more perfect Union would have been

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[44] Parsons, op. cit., p. 57.

[45] Ibid.

[46] Farrand, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

[47] Parsons, op. cit., p. 59.

[48] Morison, Mar. Hist. Mass., p. 39.

[49] Sullivan, op. cit., p. 12.

"impossible."[50]

The Federalists in Massachusetts pressed for an early convention and in October, 1787, the Court resolved that a convention should meet in January, and that its members were to be elected by those eligible to vote for members of the state House of Representatives.[51]

The convention opened in early January, 1788, with storm clouds of controversy brewing. Once more Hancock, the chairman, conveniently found that his gout would not permit him to attend.[52]

The aggressive, intrepid and resourceful proponents of the constitution had in their vanguard Rufus King and Juntoists Fisher Ames, Theophilus Parsons, George Cabot, Francis Dana, and Caleb Strong.[53] They were soon embarrassed, however, by the discovery of the fact that they were probably in the minority and that an immediate vote on the proposed measures as a whole, probably would result in a defeat. Accordingly, they successfully delayed such a final vote by having the document debated section by section.[54]

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[50]Lodge, Cabot, p. 29.

[51]Charles Austin Beard, An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States (1925), p. 226 (hereinafter cited as Beard, Econ. Interp.)

[52]Adams, New Eng. in Repub., p. 176.

[53]Lodge, Cabot, p. 24.

[54]Beard, Econ. Interp., p. 227, citing Harding, The Federal Constitution in Massachusetts, p. 67.

The Anti-Federalists made an early move to strengthen their position by having Elbridge Gerry, a non-delegate, present during the debates. Gerry had been the sole non-signing Massachusetts delegate at Philadelphia, and the opponents to ratification stated that they wanted the able Continental Congressman present for the sole purpose of enlightening the delegates as to the facts regarding the Philadelphia Convention.[55] It was when Gerry started to speak, however, without being bidden, that the Federalists took violent exception. The Junto chose Francis Dana to step into the breach. Of this new turn of events, Rufus King reported the following to Madison:

> The opponents affirm to each other that they have an unalterable majority on their side. The friends doubt the strength of their adversaries, but are not entirely confident of their own. An event has taken place relative to Mr. Gerry, which without great caution may throw us into confusion. I informed you by last post on what terms Mr. Gerry took a seat in the Convention. Yesterday in the course of debate on the Constitution of the Senate, Mr. Gerry, unasked, informed the Convention that he had some information to give the Convention on the subject then in discussion. Mr. Dana, and a number of the most respectable members, remarked upon this impropriety of Mr. Gerry's conduct. Mr. Gerry rose with a view to justify himself. He was immediately prevented by a number of objectors; this brought on an irregular conversation whether Mr. Gerry should be heard. The hour of adjournment arrived and the President adjourned the house. Mr. Gerry immediately charged Mr. Dana with a design of injuring his reputation by partial information and preventing his having an opportunity to communicate important truths; this charge drew a warm reply from Mr. Dana, the members collected about them, took sides, as they were for or against the Constitu-

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[55] James Schouler, History of the United States (1880), I, 61.

tion and we were in danger of the utmost confusion...however, the Gentlemen separated, and I suppose tomorrow morning all will renew their discussion before the Convention.[56]

Madison, himself, was already thoroughly alarmed at the prospect of defeat. Writing to General Washington on the situation in the pivotal Bay Commonwealth, he said:

The Intelligence from Massachusetts begins to be very ominous to the Constitution. The anti-Federal party is reinforced by the insurgents, and by the province of Maine which apprehends greater obstacles to her scheme of a separate government from the new system, than may be otherwise experienced. And according to the prospect at the date of the latest letter, there was very great reason to fear that the voice of that state would be in the negative. The operation of such an event on this state [New York] may easily be foreseen...The decision of Massachusetts either way will involve the result in this State. The minority in Pennsylvania is very restless under their defeat. If they can get an Assembly to their wish, they will endeavor to undermine what has been done before. If backed by Massachusetts they will probably be emboldened to make some more rash experiment.[57]

As the Convention slowly debated the Constitution, paragraph by paragraph, the Federalists labored indefatigably on the delegates, in and out of session. In addition to the obviously persuasive effects of wining and dining, wavering delegates were warned that if there was a failure of ratification, no funds would be available for travel and daily expenses. For an impecunious member from a remote area of the state, this was a threat seriously to consider, regard-

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[56] King, op. cit., I, 314, letter King to Madison, Jan. 20, 1788.

[57] Parsons, op. cit., p. 60, quoting letter Madison to Washington, Jan. 20, 1788.

less of political conviction.[58]

In the debates, the Junto members, led by Theophilus Parsons, brilliantly pled the Federalist cause. Of Parsons's outstanding efforts as well as those of his fellow Essexmen, Judge Isaac Parker, who was a witness to the debates, said the following:

> This was the crisis of life or death to the union of the States and ruin or prosperity hung upon the decision. Parsons again appeared in the cause of order, law and government, the cause indeed of the people, though they did not recognize it, for no doubt was entertained that, at the first meeting of that convention, a great majority of its members were predetermined to reject the Constitution. I, then a young man, was an anxious spectator of these doings. I heard there the captivating eloquence of Ames, the polished erudition of King, the ardent and pathetic appeals of Dana, the sagacious and conciliating remarks of Strong, and the arguments of other eminent men of that body; but Parsons appeared to me the master spirit of that assembly. Upon all sudden emergencies, and upon plausible and unexpected objection, he was the sentinal to guard the patriot camp, and to prevent confusion from unexpected assault. He labored there in season and out of season, the whole energies of his mind being bent upon the successful issue of a question which was, he believed, to determine the fate of his country.[59]

Young John Quincy Adams took a more dispassionate view of Parsons's motivation and that of his Junto colleagues. In the first year of his three year study of law under Theophilus Parsons,[60] he made the following entry in his diary:

> He (Parsons) favors very much the Federal Constitution...nor

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[58] Morse, op. cit., p. 51.

[59] Parsons, op. cit., p. 415, quoting Judge Isaac Parker's memorial address to the Suffolk Grand Jury, Nov., 1813.

[60] Koch and Peden, op. cit., p. xviii.

do I wonder at all...as it is calculated to increase the power and wealth of those who have any influence. If this Constitution be adopted, it will be a grand point in favor of the aristocratic party. There are to be no titles of nobility but there will be great distinctions and those distinctions will soon be hereditary and we shall consequently have nobles...but no titles...it is hard to give up a system which I have always been taught to cherish.[61]

In the debates George Cabot made special argument for the fourth section of the first article of the constitution, which provided that "the times, places and manner of holding elections" for senators and representatives, was to be determined by state legislatures. This section, however, further provided, "but the congress may, at any time, by law, make or alter such regulations." This later provision was considered by members to be hazardous to the cherished New England concept of free representation.[62]

In his defense of the highly controversial section, Cabot presented the following most interesting logic:

I consider the democratic branch of the national government, the branch chosen immediately by the people, as intended to be a check on the federal branch, which latter is not an immediate representation of the people of America, and is not chosen by them, but is a representation of the sovereignty of the individual states, and its members delegated by the several State Legislatures; and if the State legislatures are suffered to regulate conclusively the elections of the democratic branch, they may, by such an interference, first weaken, and at last destroy, that check. They may, at first

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[61] Morse, op. cit., p. 49, quoting from John Quincy Adams, Life in a New England Town, p. 46.

[62] Lodge, Cabot, p. 26.

diminish, and finally annihilate, that control of the general government which the people ought always to have through their immediate representatives.[63]

Continuing his attack against the States, Cabot cleverly identified states rights with slavery and the new constitution as its solution, saying: "As to the slave trade, the Southern States have the slave trade and are Sovereign States. The Constitution is the best way to get rid of it."[64]

Before two weeks of debate had passed, the Federalists saw that ratification could be gained only by the introduction of amendatory resolutions as conciliation to the opposition.[65] Further, it was patent that someone other than their group should be the one to introduce such proposals.[66]

John Hancock with his enormous influence, popularity, and prestige, was the person selected for the job. The Junto went into action. Judge Parker's recital that Theophilus Parsons worked "in season and out of season" was a mild account of the talented jurist's activities. He knew Hancock well, and how to appeal to the governor's every vanity and weakness.[67]

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[63] Lodge, Cabot, pp. 27-28, quoting History of Massachusetts Convention 1788.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Of no actual effect on the main document.

[66] Adams, New Eng. in Repub., p. 176.

[67] Allan, op. cit., p. 328.

As to Hancock's disposition and indisposition at the time, Rufus King wrote the following: "Hancock is still confined, or, rather, he has not yet taken his seat; as soon as the majority is exhibited on either side I think his health will suffice him to be abroad."[68]

Consequently, employing both fear and reward as stimuli on Hancock, the Junto first made him apprehensive that the Constitution might be ratified without his being present and participating. Rufus King recited the tender of reward in the capture of the tractable governor: "Hancock has committed himself in our favor, and will not desert the cause. We told him that if Virginia does not unite, which is problematical, he is considered as the only fair candidate for president."[69]

Parsons wrote a speech for Hancock and prepared the amendments or resolutions. Hancock's health miraculously "sufficed for him to be abroad" and he proceeded to exploit the dramatic value of the situation to the utmost. According to Gerry's biographer:

> ...the charm was irresistible. Wrapped in his flannels Hancock...took the chair of the Convention and a scene ensued more in the character of a dramatic presentation...In a speech wise and plausible enough in itself but sufficiently ludicrous to those behind the scenes, the Governor...an-

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[68] Allan, op. cit., p. 328, quoting letter Rufus King to George Thatcher, Jan. 20, 1788.

[69] King, op. cit., I, 319, letter King to Knox, Feb. 1, 1788.

nounced the anxiety of his mind, his doubts, his wishes, his conciliatory plan.[70]

Colonel Joseph May, Hancock's nephew by marriage, adds the following in his Journal:

Then he read the speech which Parsons had written for him, and from Parsons' manuscript and sat down. One of his friends took the manuscript from him afraid that the looker-on might see it was not in Hancock's hand.[71]

King, who was well in on the scheme, gave the following account of the incident:

The famous Conciliatory Propositions of Mr. Hancock, as it was called, was then prepared by the advocates [of the Constitution] and adopted by him; but the truth is, he never was consulted about it, nor knew its contents before it was handed to him to bring forward in Convention. At the appointed time, Mr. Hancock with all the parade of an arbiter of states, came out with the motion, not only in the words but with the very original paper which was given to him, and with a confidence astounding to all who were in the secret, he called it his own, and said it was the result of his own reflections on the subject in the short intervals of ease which he had enjoyed during a most painful disorder. In this pompous and farcical manner did he make that famous proposition upon which he and his adherents have arrogated so much.[72]

When Hancock's estate was settled, the administrator,

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[70]James T. Austin, The Life of Elbridge Gerry (1829) II, 75-76.

[71]Allan, op. cit., p. 330, quoting W. V. Wells, Life of Samuel Adams, III, 258-259.

[72]King, op. cit., I, 320, letter King to Knox, Feb. 3, 1788. The amendments, sometimes known as the Conciliatory Propositions, provided for reservation of power to the states not specifically delegated; indictment by grand jury in capital offenses; civil actions between citizens of different states to be tried by jury on request of either party, and the prohibition against federal office holders receiving titles of nobility. They were of no actual effect on the document itself. Allan, op. cit., pp. 330-331.

Colonel Joseph May, found the original draft in Parsons's handwriting among the Hancock papers.[73]

That Juntoist Cabot had a pre-hearing of the amendments was demonstrated in the following scene witnessed by the younger Parsons:

> A member took a copy (of the amendments) from his pocket and began to read it with vast praise of Hancock as the savior of the country. A young niece of my aunt was in the room. She was one of those bright observing and outspoken children...those enfants terribles...who do a good deal of mischief without intending it...When the reading was going on she plucked at my Uncle's coat (saying) 'Why, Uncle, is not that the paper that Uncle Theoph was reading to Mr. Cabot last Wednesday Night?' Again and again in after years would my uncle laugh at his niece about her 'letting the cat out of the bag.'[74]

Samuel Adams presented a far more difficult problem than the vain Hancock. He could stand up to the best the Junto had to offer and was not to be won over by either intimidation or flattery. He was, however, acutely conscious of the sentiments of the Boston electorate and it was here that the Junto labored assiduously. Hints and promises spread about the city to the effect that upon ratification of the Constitution, extensive contracts would be let on shipbuilding. As a result, a meeting of several hundred mechanics passed a resolution endorsing ratification. Paul Revere himself brought this intelligence to Adams in such time that Adams was ready to second Hancock when the latter

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[73] Parsons, op. cit., p. 77.

[74] Ibid.

presented his "amendments."[75]

With Hancock and Adams won and the "Hancock Amendments" adopted, Rufus King was able to report to James Madison in early February, "that on the final question of assenting to the ratification of the Constitution" the "Convention divided and 187 were in the affirmative and 168 in the negative."[76] Thus victory was achieved in the pivotal state and possible defeat of the Federal Constitution averted, by the narrow margin of ten votes in a total vote of 355.

Such was the role of the Essex Junto in the march of events leading to the adoption of the Federal Constitution. Without the resourceful intrepidity of Theophilus Parsons, George Cabot, Fisher Ames, and others of the Junto, it is most unlikely that Massachusetts would have ratified. Without the ratification of the Bay Commonwealth, it is further unlikely that the instrument would have been adopted.[77]

In the new Federal Government under the Constitution, the Essex Junto was to play a most prominent role. Washington's Secretary of the Treasury, Alexander Hamilton, was for all practical purposes to be the administration's "Prime Minister", and this was to the entire satisfaction of the

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[75] Lodge, Cabot, p. 25.

[76] King, op. cit., I, 319, quoting letter King to Madison, Feb. 6, 1788.

[77] Supra, pp. 30-31.

Junto. The talented, resourceful West Indian Scot was their new-found champion from whom they, in turn, received sympathy and favor. "From 1789 to 1799", according to Samuel Eliot Morison, "Hamilton dictated the financial and foreign policies of the Washington and Adams Administrations, and his privy council was the Essex Junto."[78]

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[78] Morison, Mar. Hist. Mass., p. 162.

CHAPTER III

THE JUNTO WITH HAMILTON IN POWER

The brilliant victory of the Massachusetts Federalists in winning ratification of the Federal Constitution abruptly turned the tide of social revolution apparent in that state's election of 1787. For the Junto, however, there was a problem presented in the person of John Hancock. Hancock had successfully ridden on both the flow and the ebb of the tide, having been overwhelmingly chosen in 1787 and having achieved virtual immortality for his "Hancock Amendments" coup at the ratifying convention. In his new exalted status, he donned the full habiliments of a Federalist. Had he not, in his bargain with the Junto, been promised the Presidency should Virginia not ratify?[1] The sight of this man basking in the glory of victorious Federalism galled the Junto. Higginson, in particular, was almost beside himself. To him, Hancock's gouty legs rested on feet of clay and he would not rest until he could make others see this. This service he attempted to perform in the "Laco" letters, anonymously appearing in the February and March, 1789, issues of the Massachusetts Centinel.[2]

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[1] Austin, op. cit., II, 79.

[2] Higginson, op. cit., p. 125. The failure of "Laco" to influence the masses was illustrated by a prank of some Boston draymen. Knowing Higginson passed down State Street every day, they trained a parrot to recognize the Juntoist and to shout as he passed, "Hurrah for Hancock. Damn Laco." Loring, op. cit., p. 110.

The Junto's Power in Massachusetts

The Constitution having been adopted upon ratification of the requisite number of states, Massachusetts proceeded to choose her members for the new Congress.[3] United States Senators were elected by the legislature, of which the Senate was controlled by the victorious Federalists. The strength of the Junto in that conservative body was reflected in Christopher Gore's communications to Rufus King, the first of which stated.

> On Friday the House chose Senators Mr. Strong and Mr. Jarvis. The Senate concurr'd the former and negativ'd the latter, sending to the house Lowell...the house negativ'd Lowell and returned Jarvis...Senate non-concurred and sent down Dalton...[4]

In short, the House had sent up two names, one of whom, Juntoist Caleb Strong, was approved. Thereafter the Senate continued to reject House nominees and return Junto nominees to the lower chamber. On the progress in the selection of a second senator, Gore further wrote:

> In my last, I informed you that the senate had sent to the House Mr. Dalton as Senator...the House non-concurr'd and sent up Dane. On Monday morning, the Senate non-concurr'd and repeated Dalton with much trouble, owing mostly to the Essex members,[5] we carried Dalton who is now Senator.[6]

Thus the two United States senators for the Bay State were

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[3]Barry, op. cit., p. 302.

[4]King, op. cit., I,343, letter Gore to King, Nov. 23,1788.

[5]The defeat of Dane caused one of the few rifts within the Junto. Petulant as it was, it soon quieted down. King, op. cit., I, 347, Letter Gore to King, December 14, 1788.

[6]Ibid., p. 346, letter Gore to King, November 26, 1788.

solid Juntoists. As for the Senate's rejection of Juntoist Nathan Dane, it is to be remembered that he declined to take affirmative action on the Bowdoin proposals for a Federal Constitutional Convention.[7] Further, Gore mentions the existence of a whispering campaign against the congressman regarding his official conduct in office.[8]

The elections for the Federal House of Representatives likewise reflected a strong Junto hand, as Claude G. Bowers notes in his account of the struggle between Hamilton and Jefferson: "Fisher Ames, exuberant over his unhorsing of Samuel Adams and eager to try his lance on others, reached New York to take his place in the House of Representatives."[9] The victory of the young arch-conservative champion of vested interests over the great patriarch of the Revolution demonstrated a significant anti-democratic trend.

Elbridge Gerry, despite his long service in the Continental Congress, had been marked as an Anti-Federalist because of his refusal to sign at Philadelphia. In his first contest, chiefly against Juntoist Gorham, there were too many other candidates splitting the vote to give anyone a majority. In a second vote, the future Jeffersonian Republican, despite Junto opposition, gained victory by a slight

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[7] Supra, p. 21.

[8] King, op. cit., I, 346, letter Gore to King, Nov. 26, 1788.

[9] Claude G. Bowers, Jefferson and Hamilton (1925), p.1.

margin.[10] This was the only Junto failure. With Ames, two other Juntoists were elected to the House, Theodore Sedgwick and Benjamin Goodhue.[11]

John Fenno's "Gazette of the United States"

Despite their new power, the Federalists did not enjoy a good public image. A "court press" was needed to champion their cause and, if not successful in popularizing the policies of the dominant party, at least to make them more palatable. This need was filled by John Fenno and his Federalist subsidized "Gazette of the United States."[12]

Sponsoring Fenno, Juntoist Gore recommended the partisan journalist to Rufus King (now a New York senator) in the following message hand-delivered by Fenno and setting forth his proposed functions:

This will be handed you by my friend, Mr. John Fenno, who has conceiv'd a plan, of publishing a newspaper in the city of New York or in such a place as Congress may reside, for the purpose of disseminating favorable sentiments of the federal constitution and its administration...His literary accomplishments are very handsome, and from long acquaintance, I am confident his honour and fidelity are unquestionable. His talents, as the editor of a public paper, are unrivall'd in this commonwealth...and the cause of truth and federalism are much indebted to his pen for various and honourable supports...The particular and definite objects of his plan, as well as the manner of prosecuting it, he will...lay before you...he is in hopes of obtaining the patronage of Congress ...in the printing of their journals and official papers.-- If, in these objects you can promote his designs, you will aid a sensible & deserving man; who, in my opinion, is capable of performing essential service in the cause of feder-

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[10] Austin, op. cit., II, 20.

[11] Barry, op. cit., p. 303.

[12] Lewis Leary, That Rascal Freneau (1941), p. 167.

alism & good government and you will greatly oblige.[13]

The Essex Junto and the New Federal Government

On April second, 1789, the House of Representatives under the new government, having a quorum, began its operations.[14] James Madison, through his great prestige gained at the Constitutional Convention, assumed almost immediate leadership in the lower chamber.[15]

Of paramount interest to the new government with its empty treasury was the enactment of revenue measures. Under the provisions of the new Constitution, these were required to originate in the House. Discussion began within the first week.[16]

Madison proposed a tariff measure designed to realize early revenue. To accomplish this it was to become effective before the heavy importing in the spring. Worthy and meritorious as his idea may have been, haste was not precisely in accord with the interests of the mercantile elements.[17] In the ensuing debates, Fisher Ames, a staunch champion of

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[13] King, op. cit., I, 357-358, letter Gore to King, Jan. 18, 1789.

[14] John Spencer Bassett, The Federalist System 1789-1801 (1906), p. 8.

[15] Ibid., p. 14.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Ibid., p. 15.

those elements, sought delay in the effective date until after the spring imports. Ames pointed out the Junto's view of the paramount commercial purpose of the Constitution. He reminded the House that the Constitution came into being essentially for "the want of an efficient government to secure the manufacturing interests and to advance our commerce."[18]

The tariff bill was debated until July fourth, when it was finally passed with a clause delaying its effective day of operation until August first. This was to make certain that the affected interests could get in their imports.[19]

Among the revenue measures considered in the first session of the Congress was that of an excise tax. Ames expressed in the following his opinions as to the merits of such a measure and the dangers to interests cherished by the Junto, without one:

> An excise is a topic on which my zeal is beginning to kindle. I see, or think I see, the most evident necessity for drawing from that resource some part of the revenues. The southern people dread it, and say that the excise is an odious, unpopular tax, and will fall unequally on them. They are afraid for their whiskey. Madison will oppose this, and it will be a work of labor and some responsibility. But I dread the consequence of leaving it untouched, and at the mercy of State governments, who can by that measure, defeat the operation of our protecting duties, and excise our manufacturers at their markets.[20]

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[18] Charles Austin Beard, Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (1927), p. 7, quoting from P.W. Ames, Speeches of Fisher Ames, p. 12 (hereinafter cited as Beard, Econ.Origins).

[19] Bassett, op. cit., p. 16.

[20] Ames, op. cit., I, 37, letter Ames to Minot, May 14, 1789.

By midsummer, the keenly observant Ames had appraised and categorized the growing opposition to the Administration. He expressed the following analysis of the forces that would form the basis of the Republican party:

> Three sorts of people are troublesome. The antifeds, who alone are weak...The dupes of local prejudices who fear eastern influence, monopolies and navigation acts. And lastly, the violent republicans, as they think fit to style themselves, who are new lights in politics; who would not make the law, but the people, king; who would have a government all checks; who are more solicitous to establish, or rather to expatiate upon, some high sounding principle of republicanism, than to protect property, cement the union, and perpetuate liberty...This is the republicanism of the aristocracy of the southern nabobs. It breaks out daily, tinctures the debates with the hue of compromise, makes bold, manly energetic measures very difficult. The spectre of Patrick Henry haunts their dreams. They accuse the eastern people with despotic principles, and take no small consequence to themselves as the defenders of liberty...
>
> The three classes I have described are strong when united. This does not happen frequently. In all assemblies the indolent class is numerous, though seldom strong. All these are combined and divided by chance, and seldom move in phalanx. It is pleasant to notice that the division is seldom by States.[21]

The states in ratifying the Constitution had done so with the moral understanding that a Bill of Rights would shortly be enacted by the new government. Faced with their promises on the necessary implementing amendments, the Junto led the forces of evasion and delay in the matter. Ames was particularly flippant in his dismissal of their importance.[22]

By September of 1789, Washington had selected his Cabinet. Thomas Jefferson, American Minister to France at the

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[21] Ames, op. cit., I, 62, Letter Ames to Minot, July 8, 1789.

[22] Schouler, op. cit., I, 103-104.

time, was appointed Secretary of State; General Knox continued as head of the War Department. Edmond Randolph of Virginia was named Attorney General, and most important, Colonel Alexander Hamilton became Secretary of the Treasury in the well-nigh bankrupt new government.[23]

Hamilton was the man of the hour in the eyes of the Junto. They, as did the mercantile and non-agricultural forces throughout all the nation, gave their complete allegiance to the talented new executive. Weary of democratic license, they sought the security Hamilton offered in a strong, consolidated state.[24]

The wealthy commercial elements of the East, to which the Junto was connected by blood as well as cultural and business ties, had supported the Constitution for the obvious reason that they sought protection of their property, with no mobocracy or Shays jeopardizing their interests. Hamilton was ideally suited to implement their principles.[25]

Hamilton likened the people to a "great beast". In one

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[23] George Gibbs, (ed.), Memoirs of the Administration of Washington and John Adams: Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott (1846), I, 18.

[24] Samuel Eliot Morison, The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis (1913), I, 46-47 (hereinafter cited as Morison, Otis).

[25] Adams, New Eng. in Repub., p. 208.

of the very last communications in his life, he would warn Theodore Sedgwick "...our real disease is democracy".[26] He was completely in accord with George Cabot's vehement denunciation of democracy, in which the philosopher Juntoist would say, "I hold Democracy in its natural operation to be the government of the worst".[27]

With no faith or reliance in the masses, Hamilton sought to establish a ruling aristocracy of wealth, not necessarily affiliated with any party, but "bound", in Lodge's words, "to the government as a government by the strongest of all ties, immediate and personal pecuniary interest".[28] His nucleus of strength, accordingly, were those whom the Junto termed generally "the wise", "the good", "the rich" and the "well born".[29]

Hamilton had long sought opportunities presented him now and had carefully planned for them. Upon his appointment he,

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[26] John C. Hamilton, (ed.), The Works of Alexander Hamilton (1851), VI, 568, letter Hamilton to Sedgwick, July 10, 1804 (hereinafter cited as Hamilton, Works).

[27] Lodge, Cabot, p. 341, letter George Cabot to Timothy Pickering, Feb. 14, 1804.

[28] Henry Cabot Lodge, Alexander Hamilton (1893), p. 91 (hereinafter cited as Lodge, Hamilton).

[29] Adams, New Eng. in Repub., p. 212. The Junto, especially Ames, were wont to use the terms "the wise" "the good" "the rich" and the "well born" as being those elements of general society best fitted to rule. This expression originated with John Adams in 1786 in the following somewhat innocuous sentence: "The rich, the well-born, and the able, acquire an influence among the people that will soon be too much for simple honesty and plain sense in a house of representatives." John Adams, "A Defense of the Constitutions of Government of the United States", Koch and Peden, op. cit., p. 84.

at great personal sacrifice, proceeded to implement his formulated concepts.[30] With Jefferson absent, he was unquestionably the most able of those about Washington. The President was essentially a soldier and a planter, making no pretense of familiarity with government finance. Having great affection for his former lieutenant in arms, he placed the utmost confidence in his policies. Hamilton accordingly proceeded forthwith to take charge, not only of his own treasury Department, but of the entire government.[31]

Of the great scope of responsibility placed on Hamilton and of his previous preparation and diligent efforts to accomplish the missions assigned him, Lodge wrote that "Hamilton had a policy for the new government in every direction as well as in financial affairs, and he strove to put each...into effect."[32] As to his ambitions and to the role which he assumed, Lodge further wrote: "He could not rid himself of the idea that he was really the prime minister."[33] This notion flourished as problems were increasingly passed to him by the Congress and the President for resolution.[34]

In his own department he proceeded to put together a

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[30] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 85.

[31] Edward Channing, A History of the United States (1926), IV, 65-66.

[32] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 158.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

highly efficient and carefully detailed machine. Systems of accounts were established and persons in responsibility were given the personal supervision and training by the great financial genius.[35]

Oliver Wolcott, Jr.

Among those entering the Treasury at this time was Oliver Wolcott, Jr., of Connecticut. Of a distinguished family in his state, he was the son of a popular conservative perennially elected lieutenant-governor of Connecticut.[36] On his own account, he had been admitted to the Bar, but his experience was limited to clerical financial work in the State Legislature Committee on the Pay Table.[37]

Wolcott was employed by Hamilton as auditor and proved to be a smiling sycophant with Machiavellian principles. In less than a year, he was promoted to comptroller and in 1793, succeeded his great preceptor as Secretary. He served throughout the entire Adams administration (unhappily for Adams), betraying the President's interests at all times to those of Hamilton.[38] With his cunning, he adroitly survived Adams's Cabinet purge of 1800.[39]

So much of a man Friday was the devious Wolcott, that in

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[35] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 158.

[36] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 12.

[37] Ibid., p. 15.

[38] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 332-334.

[39] Ibid., pp. 456-457.

his voluminous correspondence, one can determine at any time what Hamilton's views were, by those expressed by his satellite.[40]

Although essentially a completely devout Hamiltonian, Wolcott worked so closely with the Junto in mutual subserviency to the great statesman, that one could properly infer that during the Adams administration, at least, Wolcott belonged to the Essex Junto.[41]

Hamilton's First Report

The Act of September 2, 1789, establishing the Treasury Department, provided that on request of either House of Congress the Secretary of the Treasury was to furnish financial reports and accounting.[42] Within ten days after his appointment Hamilton received a request pursuant to the Act, to furnish a report on the financial status of the nation.[43]

During the Fall of 1789 he worked on his plans for revitalizing the economy, and when the second session of the Congress convened on January 8, 1790, he presented his First Report on the Public Credit, part of which was to be known as the "American Funding System". The Secretary's proposals were to occupy the Congress for the greater part of the session.[44]

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[40] Bowers, op. cit., p. 59.

[41] Infra, V.

[42] Beard, Econ. Origins, p. 65.

[43] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 85.

[44] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 31.

The Report created a split in both Houses. The most acute issues arose over whether the government debt certificates should be liquidated at market or face value; whether distinctions were to be made between original holders of the certificates and present holders [largely speculators]; federal assumption of state debts incurred in prosecuting the War of Independence; and finally, the period of payments and amount of interest to be employed in the liquidation of national debt.[45]

Since it greatly favored those interests espoused by the Junto, the Report met with the approbation of Eastern Federalists, as evidenced by the following from Higginson:

> The report of the Secretary of the Treasury has much engaged the attention of our Assembly, and of the people abroad. it (sic) is very generally admired; and men of information, I find, grow more attached to it upon reflection. the (sic) rate of interest proposed, the assumption of the State Debts and adjustment of Accounts between the States and the Union, and the distinction made between foreign and domestic Creditors are very generally pleasing.[46]

Higginson further saw that the measures would enhance the prestige of the Federal Government as an institution "to look up to...for safety and protection and the importance of the state legislatures thereby lessened in the eyes of the people."[47]

When Hamilton's proposals for redemption of the certifi-

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[45] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 31.

[46] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 773, letter Higginson to John Adams, March 1, 1790.

[47] Ibid.

cates were brought up in the House of Representatives, the galleries were packed with speculators.[48] William Maclay, an ardently democratic senator from Pennsylvania and a violent critic of the measure, made the following observation: "Tis said a committee of speculators in certificates could not have found it more for their advantage. It has occasioned many serious faces."[49]

James Madison sought through amendment to establish a differential between the rights of the original holders and the present holders. Maclay noted that Madison proposed "that the whole should be funded, but that in the hands of speculators at the highest market price only; and the surplus to the original holder who performed the service."[50]

The Madison proposal at first dumbfounded the Juntoists. However, on the fifteenth, Congressmen Ames and Sedgwick rose to the counter-attack. Of this, Maclay recorded the following:

> Adjourned and went to hear the debates in the lower house. Sedgwick, Smith and Ames took the whole day. They seemed to aim all at one point, to make Madison ridiculous. Ames delivered a long string of studied sentences,but he did

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[48] The certificates had been issued by the Continental Congress in lieu of money. The original holders, the soldiers, small farmers, and merchants had surrendered this depreciated paper at from seven to fifteen cents on the dollar. Under Hamilton's proposal, present holders would realize a hundred cents on the dollar. Compounding this inequity, the original holders would be among those taxed to pay the obligation. Edgar S. Maclay (ed.),Journal of William Maclay (1890),p.177,fn.

[49] Ibid., diary entry of Jan. 14, 1789.

[50] Ibid., p. 195, diary entry of Feb. 11, 1790.

not use a single argument that seemed to leave an impression. He had "public faith", "public credit", "honor and above all justice", as often over as an Indian would give the "Great Spirit" and, if possible, with less meaning and to as little purpose. Hamilton, at the head of the speculators, with all the courtiers, are on one side. These I call the party who are actuated by interest. The opposition are governed by principle, but I fear in this case interest will outweigh principle.[51]

Madison's proposed amendment was defeated by a vote of almost three to one in a House in which twenty-nine members were, of record, security holders standing to benefit by enactment of Hamilton's original proposal.[52] Fisher Ames himself was heavily involved in the speculation as an agent for his fellow-Juntoist, Christopher Gore, now the richest lawyer in Massachusetts.[53]

On the whole, Hamilton had won a somewhat easy victory against Madison for redemption at par and now eagerly pursued his next step, assumption of the state debts. In the flush of triumph, however, he paid scant heed to the fact that his opposition had stiffened both in the government and out. Madison gained stature in his vain struggle, and the farmer, the veteran, and the man in the street began to see who had his interests and, most important, who did not.[54]

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[51] Maclay, op. cit., p. 197, diary entry of Feb. 15, 1790.

[52] Beard, Econ. Origins, p. 147, citing Annals of Congress, Vol. II, p. 1344.

[53] Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), Writings of John Quincy Adams (1913), I, 56-59, letter of John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Sept. 21, 1790.

[54] Bowers, op. cit., p. 58.

By assumption of the state debts, the national debt would be augmented by half.[55] The Eastern States had by far the greater amount of such debt and were the section specifically designed to benefit. The Assumption measure, naturally, was looked on with great disfavor by the Virginia-led Southern and Western States. On this sectional division, Wolcott wrote the following: "The Northern States seem generally to favor the plan. In Virginia and some other states, there is a determined and stubborn opposition. They fear a consolidation of the government..."[56]

Leading the forces in the battle for assumption was the Junto spearhead of Ames, Goodhue, and Sedgwick. Their task did not appear to be unduly arduous since informal polls favored passage by a small margin. So certain was the Massachusetts Legislature that the measure would pass, they made no provisions for maturing state obligations.[57]

Juntoist Gore was particularly pleased at the prospect of enactment, because of the discomfiture of the opposition. Writing to King of their desperation, he said, "The anti-Feds think the advantages to be derived to the State, from a retention of the debt are so great and important, that they stand

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[55] Beard, loc. cit.

[56] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 39, letter Wolcott to Nathan Strong, Feb. 1, 1790.

[57] Schouler, op. cit., I, 137.

"ready to accede to any terms which the creditors may propose."[58]

Gore's only concern about assumption was that the interest on the Federal obligations be sufficiently attractive. He warned that if Congress could not better the State's terms of four percent, there might be trouble with Massachusetts creditors' preferring State paper.[59]

Hamilton as well as his followers ignored the defeated Madison in their high confidence of successful passage. The Virginia constitutionalist, although now opposing Hamilton's projects, was still the recognized leader of the administration in the Congress. Undaunted by his previous defeat, he proceeded with discreet but effective work against the second measure.[60]

Vote on assumption was taken on April twelfth, and to the consternation of the proponents, it was defeated by a vote of thirty-one to twenty-nine.[61]

Maclay graphically described the shocked reaction of Hamilton's partisans in his diary:

> Sedgwick, from Boston, pronounced a funeral oration over it. He was called to order; some confusion ensued; he took his hat and went out. When he returned his visage, to me, bore the visible remarks of weeping...Ames's aspect was truly hippocratic...a total change of face and features; he sat

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[58] King, op. cit., I, 386, letter Gore to King, Jan. 24, 1790.

[59] Ibid.

[60] Schouler, loc. cit.

[61] Maclay, op. cit., p. 235, diary entry of April 12.

torpid, as if his faculties had been benumbed.[62]

Elbridge Gerry, better contained than his Junto colleagues, declared that the delegates from"Massachusetts would proceed no further, but send to their state for instructions."[63]

An immediate result of the upset was the panic of the speculators. With their agents, they had been scouring the hinterland buying state paper at great discount. Now their schemes were thwarted.[64]

Sedgwick must have been particularly piqued at the Centinel's account of his failure to deliver Hamilton's brain child. Writing of the death of "the bastard of Eastern Speculators", the opposition paper reported that "the unfortunate child was presented to the baptismal font by Granny --- Sedgwick, who officiated as priest, baptized the infant, and his name stands on the books as Al-ex-der Assumption".[65]

George Cabot, on hearing the news of the defeat from Goodhue, wrote despairingly of the national government ever becoming an effective entity until its supremacy over the states was established. "Till this takes place," he wrote to Goodhue, "I cannot think the country completely safe from the danger of division, and consequently anarchy and wretched-

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[62] Maclay, op. cit., p. 235, diary entry of April 12.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Bowers, op. cit., p. 63.

[65] Ibid., pp. 63-64, quoting Centinel, June 19, 1790.

ness."[66]

Wolcott expressed fear as to the government's ever regaining its prestige,[67] and Gore predicted that the Congress's refusal "to fund their own debt...would make antifeds of the Eastern towns."[68] Of Sedgwick's wailing in defeat, Gore said, "...Poor Sedgwick! Wonderfully exercised! But he has enjoyed the satisfaction of declaring it to the world."[69]

Writing to King some ten days later, he recounted his efforts to force a passage of assumption: "I have been writing to our mutual friends Dalton and Ames, on the subject of attempting a delay to fund that part of the debt called Continental until the State debts have been assumed."[70]

In the great clamor and struggle over the implementation of Hamilton's first projects, a little-noted event had taken place that would lead to the salvation of assumption but would also harken a titanic conflict ending with the death of the Junto's dream of rule by and only by "the good," "the rich" and "the well born". A prominent New York newspaper reported that event quite simply: "On Sunday last,

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[66] Lodge, Cabot, pp. 35-36, letter Cabot to Goodhue, April 6, 1790.

[67] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 46, letter Wolcott to Wolcott, Sr., April 14, 1790.

[68] King, op. cit., I, 386, letter Gore to King, April 25, 1790.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., letter Gore to King, May 6, 1790

"arrived in this city, Thomas Jefferson, Esq. Secretary of State for the United States of America."[71]

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[71]Bowers, op. cit., p. 64, quoting Daily Advertiser, March 24, 1790.

CHAPTER IV

THE JUNTO AND THE SHOALS OF JEFFERSONIAN DEMOCRACY

The belated, inauspicious arrival of Washington's Secretary of State at the seat of government in March, 1790, had little about it to indicate, in Morison's words, that:

> Opposition to the triumphant Federal party developing as Hamilton unfolded his wonderful system, found a leader in 1790 in the person of Thomas Jefferson...fresh from Revolutionary Paris. We may fix the date of Jefferson's return...March 1790...as the birth of the two national parties...that occupied the stage for the next quarter of a century. The Federal or Federalist party[1] under the head of Hamilton and the Republican or Democrat party under the guidance of Jefferson.[2]

Inference should not be drawn that Jefferson plunged right into the breach. He was determined, on the contrary, to enter the turbulent political waters slowly and with great caution. Fresh from the French Revolution in its more idealistic first year, he was somewhat bewildered by the counter-revolutionary climate he found in New York. Of this reaction to his concept of the natural evolution of republicanism, he recorded:

> Politics were the chief topic, and a preference of kingly over the republican government was evidently the favorite

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[1] The Federalist Party in 1787-89 comprised those favoring the adoption of the Federal Constitution. The Anti-Federalists opposed adoption and failing, ceased to exist after adoption because their raison d'etre ceased. The Federalist Party under Hamilton were a new group albeit true they were in many respects derivative of the earlier group. The opponents of the Hamiltonian program became Democratic Republicans. Bassett, op. cit., p. 42.

[2] Morison, Otis, I, 46.

sentiment. An apostate I could not be, nor yet a hypocrite; and I found myself, for the most part, the only advocate on the republican side of the question.[3]

The Assumption measure was defeated in the House shortly after Jefferson assumed office, and the Virginian recorded that as a result, "So high were the feuds excited by this subject, that on its rejection, business was suspended."[4] Because of the bad blood between the factions, the two houses of the Congress would meet only to adjourn almost immediately.[5] Of the disaffected representatives of the Junto's section of the country Jefferson wrote, "The Eastern members particularly, who, with Smith from South Carolina, were the principal gamblers in these scenes, threatened a secession and dissolution. Hamilton was in despair."[6]

Hamilton in his desperation at seeing his plans about to fail, came to Jefferson to save his program. Of the important talk between the future great protagonists, Jefferson recounted:

As I was going to the President's one day, I met him [Hamilton] in the street. He walked me backwards and forwards before the President's door for half an hour. He painted pathetically the temper into which the legislature had been wrought; the disgust of those who were called the creditor States; the danger of the secession of their members; and the separation of the States. He observed that the members of

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[3] H. A. Washington (ed.), The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (1854), IX, 91-92.

[4] Ibid.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Ibid.

the administration ought to act in concert;...that the President was the center on which all administrative questions ultimately rested, and that all of us should...support... measures approved by him; and that the question having been lost by a small majority only, it was probable that an appeal from me to the judgment and discretion of some of my friends, might effect a change in the vote, and the machine of government, now suspended, might be again set into motion. I told him that I was really a stranger to the whole subject; that not having yet informed myself of the system of finances adopted, I knew not how far this was a necessary sequence; that undoubtedly, if its rejection endangered a dissolution of our Union at this incipient stage, I should deem that the most unfortunate of all consequences, to avert which all partial and temporary evils should be yielded. I proposed to him, however, to dine...the next day, and I would invite another friend or two, bring them into conference together, and I thought it impossible that reasonable men...could fail by some mutual sacrifices of opinion, to form a compromise which was to save the Union.[7]

Hamilton gained Jefferson's support by agreeing in turn to the establishment of the new capitol on the Potomac. Of this bargain, Jefferson wrote in later years, that of "all the errors of his political life, this occasioned the deepest regret."[8]

Hamilton could now move to his next step, an excise tax on spiritous liquors.[9] This was the measure considered by Ames in 1789[10] and the one to cause such violent commotion in Western Pennsylvania in 1794. Ames, Gerry, Goodhue and Sedgwick formed the advance phalanx to push the measure through.[11]

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[7]Washington, op. cit., IX, 93-94.

[8]Washington, op. cit., III, 460, letter Jefferson to Washington, Sept. 9, 1792.

[9]Beard, Econ. Origins, p. 248.

[10]Supra, Chapt. III.

[11]Beard, Econ. Origins, pp. 249-250.

On Hamilton's next proposal, the establishment of a National Bank, the team of Ames and Sedgwick spearheaded the proponents of the legislation in the ensuing debates in the House.[12] Ames's argument was directed essentially toward the expediency of the measure, that it "would be useful to trade ...almost essential to revenue, and...indispensibly necessary in times of public emergency..."[13]

Sedgwick, piqued by academic criticism of the bill, heatedly observed that:

> If we attempted to proceed in one direction, our ears are assailed with the exclamation of "the constitution is in danger", if we attempt to obtain our objects by pursuing a different course, we are told the pass is guarded by the stern spirit of democracy.[14]

There was little difficulty in the passage of the bill in the Senate, and after much debate, it was passed in the House by an almost two to one vote. Washington, after receiving reports from both sides and giving the subject thorough consideration, signed the measure.[15]

Among the directors of the National Bank were the deserving Fisher Ames and Rufus King.[16] George Cabot, now a senator,

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[12] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 74-76.

[13] Beard, Econ. Origins, quoting Annals of Congress, II, 1953 ff.

[14] Ibid., 1961 ff.

[15] King, op. cit., I, 396.

[16] Ibid., p 403, letter Gore to King, Dec. 25, 1791.

having replaced Dalton, declined the Presidency.[17]

Jefferson, perceiving now that the opposition had to be completely organized in order to halt the Hamilton march, began correspondence and held conferences with fellow dissenters.[18] He and Madison ventured forth on May 17, 1791, ostensibly on a botanical expedition to the north.[19] During the trip, Jefferson wrote cryptically from Bennington, "We are more pleased, however, with the botanical objects, which continually present themselves." The "botanical objects" were the leading anti-administration men in New York, Governor George Clinton, the Livingstons, and the chief of the Sons of St. Tammany, Aaron Burr. Clinton, although Governor, was most handicapped by his record of antifederalism and consequently enjoyed no federal patronage. He readily allied himself with Jefferson.[20]

As important as the forging of political alliances was the necessity of establishing a voice of the press at least to neutralize the Federalist-subsidized John Ward Fenno and his United States Gazette.[21] This task fell to Madison, Henry Lee, and Aaron Burr. They visited their Princeton classmate, the poet-journalist Phillip Freneau, and persuaded him to set

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[17] Lodge, Cabot, p. 38.

[18] Bowers, op. cit., p. 144.

[19] Henry S. Randall, The Life of Thomas Jefferson (1858), I, 10.

[20] Samuel Eliot Morison and Henry Steele Commager, The Growth of the American Republic (1937), I, 343.

[21] Supra, Chapt. III.

up a newspaper in Philadelphia.[22]

Jefferson materially assisted in the accomplishment of the project by giving the impecunious Freneau a position in his department which, although paying a modest salary, would "not interfere with any other calling the person might choose."[23]

By the fall of 1791, Freneau, initiating a new style of journalism, was gaining a nationwide circulation with his National Gazette.[24] The initiative was won from Fenno as the new publication, by poetry and prose, invective and satire, excoriated Hamilton and Hamiltonian Federalism.[25]

Jefferson's tools of opposition became increasingly effective, with the Federalists frequently having very real difficulty in getting their measures through the Congress. The vice-president on many occasions had to break a tie in the Senate to give his party the advantage on a bill.[26]

The Junto's despair grew, as block after block was thrown in their path. Sedgwick wrote somberly to senior Juntoist Theophilus Parsons that he feared "the national government has seen its best days", and that:

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[22] Bassett, op. cit., p. 46.

[23] Washington, op. cit., IV, 215, letter Thomas Jefferson to Phillip Freneau, Feb. 28, 1791.

[24] Bowers, op. cit., p. 155.

[25] Bassett, op. cit., p. 47.

[26] Lodge, Cabot, p. 40.

...the distance at which it stands removed from the affections of...the people; that opposition of so many great, proud, and jealous sovereignties; the undistinguished, perhaps indistinguishable, boundary between national and State jurisdictions; the disposition which both may possess to encroach; and above all, the rancorous jealousy that began with the infancy of the government, and grows with its growth, arising from an opposition, or supposed opposition, of interests,--produce in my mind serious doubt whether the machine will not soon have some of its wheels so disordered as to be incapable of regular progress. This disagreeable event...and the consequences which are to result from it, have made an unpleasant impression on my mind.[27]

Although at bay and increasingly on the defensive, the Federalists continued to control the government. The hard fact was that the opposition had no one who could best Hamilton in the field of finance, the area to which attention, so far, had been chiefly directed. From across the ocean, however, a new force entered to affect the status quo.[28]

The Impact of the French Revolution on American Politics

By December of 1792, news of the epochal events in the great French Revolution reached American shores. Intervention had been repulsed at Valmy, and a Republic proclaimed.[29]

The masses of the American people thrilled at the revolutionary triumphs. The "Spirit of '76" lived again as liberty caps were donned, liberty poles set up, and "Ça Ira" became the song of the day.[30]

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[27] Parsons, op. cit., p. 467, letter Sedgwick to Parsons, June 16, 1792.

[28] Bowers, op. cit., p. 206.

[29] John Allen Krout and Dixon Ryan Fox, The Completion of Independence 1790-1830 (1944), p. 155.

[30] Faulkner, op. cit., p. 136.

However, the Junto looked with unmixed horror upon the growing excesses of the great Gallic upheaval. "Behold France," Ames frantically warned, "that open hell, still ringing with agonies and blasphemies, still smoking with sufferings and crimes in which we see their state of torment and perhaps our future state".[31]

Almost pathological on the subject, Ames foresaw all that he cherished drowning in the blood of the mob's guillotine. Henry Adams wrote that Ames's obsession "degenerated into a morbid illusion. During the last few months of his life this dying man could scarcely speak of his children without expressing his fears of their future servitude to the French."[32]

As to the political significance of Gallophile demonstrations in the East, Stephen Higginson reported to Hamilton that in Massachusetts, those espousing the French cause were "inveterate anti-federalists and men desperate in their circumstances," who would align themselves with any combination designed to "embarrass the Union."[33]

Sympathies or antipathies, however, soon gave way to the more important problems presented by two events that came about in March: news that France had declared war on England,

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[31] Ames, op. cit., II, 112, Laocoon, No. 1, April, 1799.

[32] Adams, Hist., I, 82.

[33] Hamilton, op. cit., V, 51-52, letter Higginson to Hamilton, July 26, 1793.

and the arrival in Charleston of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the French Republic, Edmond Charles Genet.[34]

Washington, confronted with the obligations of the treaties of 1778 and the arrival of the very earnest if incorrigible young diplomat to implement them, nastily summoned his cabinet for their views.[35]

Hamilton argued strongly that since France had changed her form of government, invoking the obligations of 1778 would impose duties not contemplated by the original signatory parties.[36]

Jefferson considered that the treaties continued to be binding. It made no difference that Louis Capet, with whom the treaties had been made, was now beheaded,[37] with the reins of government in the hands of his executioners.[38]

President Washington, having considered the grave problem thoroughly, issued his famous proclamation of neutrality on April 23, 1793.[39]

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[34] Schouler, op. cit., I, 243-245.

[35] Richard Hildreth, The History of the United States of America (1851), I, 412.

[36] Ibid., p. 414.

[37] Warren, op. cit., p. 48.

[38] Hildreth, loc. cit.

[39] Morison, Otis, I, p. 50.

In the meanwhile, Genet, having landed in the ship l'Embuscade at Charleston on April 8, began his wondrous and varied activities on behalf of his country. After impressive receptions, public and private, he proceeded to outfit privateers and issue letters of marque. Consuls were conferred admiralty jurisdiction and steps taken for aggressive military action against Spanish America.[40]

After two weeks in Charleston, Genet set forth overland to Philadelphia, taking the inland route where the opposition to the Administration was strongest. He was warmly received along the way and on May sixteenth entered the capitol city escorted by thousands who had gone out to meet him.[41]

The popularity of Genet's cause among the democratic elements of the populace was demonstrated by the mushrooming growth of sympathetic clubs about the country.[42] These bodies, known as "Constitutional Societies" and "Democratic Societies", came to be known as "Jacobin Clubs."[43]

Pursuing its policy of neutrality, the Administration was most embarrassed by these organizations, and their Gallophile demonstrations incurred the particular wrath of the

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[40] Bassett, op. cit., pp. 79-80.

[41] Ibid., pp. 90-91.

[42] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 97.

[43] Warren, op. cit., p. 55. The first known such club was organized by Peter S. Duponceau, a Republican lawyer, and was established along the lines of the Jacobin Club of Paris. Ibid.

Junto as well as the Federalists generally.[44] In an exhortation to Theodore Dwight, Ames urged:

> Such strong grounds...be taken against those clubs that it ought not to be delayed. They were born in sin, the impure offspring of Genet. They are the few against the many, the sons of darkness (for their meetings are secret) against those of the light; and above all, it is a town cabal, attempting to rule the country.[45]

Cabot had evil forebodings as he wrote:

> We have seen...the general will of a great society silenced, the legal representatives of the people butchered and a band of relentless murderers ruling in their stead...Will not this ...be the wretched fate of our country...? I know of no security individuals can have for the enjoyment of their equal rights but the force of the laws, there being so many declarations of the general will fairly and constitutionally made. But if this general will is superseded by faction, and its supremacy can be no longer maintained there is an end of that equality of rights which is the very essence of liberty.[46]

Cabot particularly deplored the success of the pro-French propaganda being disseminated, and admitted that "the propagators of a falsehood are the most industrious, and for the moment, the most successful..."[47] The Junto Senator resignedly pointed out that no one "can doubt on which the victory will be in such a contest."[48]

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[44] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 97.

[45] Ames, op. cit., I, 150, letter Ames to Theodore Dwight, Sept. 11, 1793. The feeling was mutual. In their detestation of the Junto "mouthpiece", the clubs in New York and Charleston burned his effigy with that of Benedict Arnold and the Devil. Warren, op. cit., p. 57.

[46] Lodge, Cabot, p. 79, letter Cabot to Parsons, Aug. 12, 1793.

[47] Ibid., pp. 74-75, letter Cabot to King, Aug. 2, 1793.

[48] Ibid.

Cabot believed that "the propagators of falsehood" had made a deliberate misrepresentation of French motivation. Of this he asked:

> Why have they not always told the truth, at least so much of it as would have enabled the people to understand that France, in the aid she gave to the U.S., was actuated by policy, or, to speak out, by ambition? Why has it been concealed that from the first moment of her connection with us, she inserted herself into all our councils, that by her influence there she procured measures that placed the most precious interests of our country at her own mercy; that she obstructed our commercial views; and, in a word, that she has constantly aimed to keep us low, imbecilic, and dependent.[49]

The Jay Treaty

As if the problems with the French and their American sympathizers were not enough to plague the Federalist administration, they were further harassed by flagrant British violations of American neutrality. British pursuit of an amicable policy toward the United States would have bolstered the status of her staunchest supporters, the Federalist Party. Instead, however, of following such a policy, thereby serving her paramount interests, she blindly sought to avenge the humiliation of defeat suffered in the War of American Independence. Her abuse of American rights played right into the hands of her enemy, France, and its sympathizers in the United States.[50]

As 1793 neared its end, Anglo-American relations deteri-

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[49] Lodge, Cabot, pp. 74-75, letter Cabot to King, Aug. 2, 1793.

[50] Ibid., p. 65.

orated dangerously. On November 6, a British order in council, designed to destroy neutral trade with the French Colonies, was published.[51] The relationship was further strained by the appearance in March, 1794, of a speech made by Lord Dorchester to a council of Indians held at the rapids of the Maumee. His Lordship, recently arrived from England, predicted an early passage at arms between Great Britain and the United States.[52]

If war was to be averted, it was imperative that a diplomatic mission be sent to England. Of such a measure, Ames wrote:

> The English are absolutely madmen...They act, on almost every point, against their interests and their real wishes. I hope and believe such extreme absurdity of conduct will be exposed with success. Should a special minister be sent from this country...much will depend on his character and address. Who but Hamilton would perfectly satisfy all our wishes? This idea...should be locked up in your bosom. I know not that such a thing will happen; I...wish it may. He is ipse agmen.[53]

Ames felt strongly, as did Cabot, that the true relation between France and the United States was not known in England and that the British merchants should be accordingly informed and shown that the policy followed by their government was bad:

> ...that they ought to raise their policy from the ground,

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[51] Hildreth, op. cit., I, 481.

[52] Ibid., p. 384.

[53] Ames, op. cit., I, 139, letter Ames to Gore, March 26, 1794.

where it now grovels, to the height from whence the statesman can see clearly and very far. I am full of a book on this subject. I wish I could make John Bull read it; such ideas, fully dilated, repeated, pressed, and diffused would aid the extra messenger, and would help the cause of peace.[54]

Ames was particularly annoyed at the prevalent American complacence over French outrages against American neutrality. Pointing out that France had stopped more than a hundred American vessels at Bordeaux, he chided:

We sit still; we say nothing; we affect to depend on their justice; we make excuses. England stops our vessels with a provoking insolence; we are in a rage. This marked discrimination is not merited by the French. They may rob us;they may, as it is probable they will, cut off Tom Paine's head, vote out the Trinity, kill their priests, rob the merchants, and burn their Bibles;...we stand ready to approve all they do, and to approve more than they can do. This French mania is the bane of our politics, the mortal poison that makes our peace so sickly. It is incurable by any other remedy than time. I wish we may be able to bear the malady till the remedy shall overcome it.[55]

Cabot's evaluation of the situation was that:

...our public affairs become daily less favorable. The Hazard to which the French faction...were exposing us...and the spirit they excited last summer...must have...great effects upon the temper and disposition of the British...[56]

Taking advantage of a lull in the gathering storm, Washington sought Hamilton's recommendation on the sending of a mission to England. Hamilton referred the question to Cabot, who, after conferring with Rufus King, Oliver Ellsworth, and

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[54] Ames, op. cit., I, 139, letter Ames to Gore, March 26, 1794.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Lodge, Cabot, p. 76, letter Cabot to Samuel Phillips, March 8, 1794.

Caleb Strong, fully endorsed the project. In due course, John Jay was nominated and confirmed for the mission.[57]

The subsequent Grenville-Jay negotiations brought forth a treaty that Henry Adams called "a bad one [that] few persons even then ventured to dispute."[58] Among its controversial aspects, it was silent as to indemnification for slaves carried off by the British during the Revolution; the hotly disputed right of the British to search, seizure and impressment was not disturbed; American vessels of more than seventy tons were not permitted to enter ports in the British West Indies; entry was denied all American vessels in the harbors, ports and rivers of British North America. (British vessels were granted complete access to ports, harbors and rivers in the United States.) The unliquidated debts incurred by Americans with British creditors were to be paid by the American Government, and Loyalists of the Revolution were to be indemnified for their losses of property.[59]

Of this flagrantly inequitable compact, Henry Adams stated that, subsequent to 1810, there has been no evidence that the United States:

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[57] Lodge, Cabot, p. 67, letter Cabot to Samuel Phillips, March 8, 1794.

[58] Henry Adams, The Life of Albert Gallatin (1879), p. 158 (hereinafter cited as Adams, Gallatin).

[59] John Bach McMaster, A History of the People of the United States (1921), II, 245-246.

would have hesitated to prefer war rather than peace on such terms. No excuse in the temporary advantages which the treaty gained can...palliate the concessions of principle...and no considerations of...war with England averted or postponed can blind history to the fact that...peace was obtained by the sacrifice of national consistency and by the violation of neutrality towards France.[60]

Bad as the bargain was, it had to be defended by the Federalist Administration, since its adoption was imperative to their survival. Their position was that the new nation's continued existence was held together by Hamilton's financial system and that credit, the lifeblood of the economy, depended on tariff from imports, mostly from Great Britain. A war with Great Britain would cut off the greater portion of tariff revenue and as a result the treasury would be compelled to suspend payment of its obligations. Credit would then be strangled.[61]

The treaty, with its contents closely guarded, was received in America in March, and Washington thereafter convened a special session of the Senate for the required ratification.[62] On June 24, the Senate, after secret debate, ratified, by the bare requisite two-thirds.[63]

The provisions of the treaty had been kept completely confidential by Jay, and, with full realization of its ex-

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[60] Adams, Gallatin, p. 158.

[61] Samuel Flagg Bemis, Jay's Treaty: a Study in Commerce and Diplomacy (1924), p. 270.

[62] Beard, Econ. Origins, p. 283.

[63] Schouler, op. cit., I, 293. Article XII, relating to the West Indies trade, was not included in the ratification.

plosive potential, the Senate had placed it under a bond of secrecy. However the Aurora, a Republican paper edited by Benjamin Franklin Bache and William Duane, published the text of the controversial document on July 1, 1795. Senator Stevens Thomson Mason of Virginia had furnished Bache with a copy.[64]

Now outrage spread across the land like prairie fire. Alarmed, Higginson wrote to Juntoist Timothy Pickering[65] of the agitation in Boston:

> Before receipt of this you will have...heard of high doings in this Town...against the Treaty...resolutions... passed at our town meeting...were sent off by express in hope that the Pres. may not have signed it, and if not that he will be deterred.[66]

Cabot was particularly piqued at the demonstrated belligerence of mercantile men who, he said, had not yet come to the realization that American commerce "is not such as would enable us to dictate the terms on which an intercourse is to be held with the nations of Europe."[67]

Having heard from King of the particularly turbulent protest meetings in New York, Cabot wrote that "it was not wholly unexpected that our mob should inflame yours: all society is full of combustible materials."[68] Noting the presence of

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[64] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, p. 788, fn. 1.

[65] Now Secretary of War.

[66] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, pp. 787-788, letter Higginson to Pickering, July 14, 1795.

[67] Lodge, Cabot, p. 81, letter Cabot to King, July 25,1795.

[68] Ibid., letter Cabot to King, July 27, 1795.

men of substance among the intransigents, the Junto philosopher wrote scornfully: "It cannot be sufficiently regretted that some of our respectable men have on this occasion joined the Jacobins, and very many of them acquiesced in their measures."[69]

Fisher Ames was particularly bitter about the merchants' participation in the assemblies of protest. Of a projected town meeting he wrote:

> I expect its proceedings will be marked with folly and violence. I could neither repress my indignation, nor disguise my contempt for the...gullibility of the rich who...lend their strength to the party which is thirsting for the contents of their iron chests.[70]

Cabot became vexed at the employment of the time-honored New England town meeting as an instrument of protest against a national measure.[71] Heatedly he voiced his often quoted stricture on the validity and propriety of such assemblages for such a purpose:

> ...where is the boasted advantage of representation system over the turbulent mobocracy of Athens, if the resort to popular meetings is necessary? Faction...will be too strong for our mild and feeble government.[72]

Learning in early August, to his disappointment, that Washington had not yet signed the treaty despite the trenchant arguments in its favor, Cabot expressed his surprise as

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[69] Lodge, Cabot, p. 81, letter Cabot to King, July 27, 1795.

[70] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 210-211, letter Ames to Oliver Wolcott, July 9, 1795.

[71] That is, a Federalist-sponsored measure.

[72] Lodge, Cabot, p. 85, letter Cabot to King, Aug. 14, 1793.

to any reservations held about the desirability of ratification:

Although we have neither a Curtius nor a Camillus,[73] yet the explanations given by Gore...have so well aided the investigations of individuals that the subject is pretty well understood, and its friends increased in a corresponding ratio...[74]

If the treaty were not ratified, Higginson saw a maelstrom to disaster:

I think the present moment a very critical one with our country, more so than any that has passed, if the Treaty is not ratified, in (sic) that case indeed our race will be finished, for we shall certainly be at war with Britain...[75]

Of the nature of the Administration's dilemma so plaintively voiced by the Juntoists, Henry Adams wrote:

No Federalist Administration would have made war on England, for it was a cardinal principle with the Hamiltonian wing of the party that only through peace with England could their ascendancy be preserved, while war with England avowedly meant a dissolution of the Union by their own act.[76]

President Washington having signed and Great Britain having ratified the treaty, it was duly published as the law of the land on March 1, 1796. The struggle, however, was not over, for the House of Representatives now entered the picture.[77]

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[73] "Camillus" was the name used by Hamilton in his articles in his able defense of the treaty. Cabot's correspondent, Rufus King, materially assisted writing some of the "Camillus" papers himself. Lodge expresses the belief that King was also the author of "Curtius". Lodge, Cabot, p. 84, fn. 1.

[74] Ibid., pp. 83-84, letter Cabot to King, Aug. 4, 1795.

[75] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, pp. 792-793, letter Higginson to Pickering, Aug. 16, 1795.

[76] Adams, Gallatin, p. 165.

[77] King, op. cit., II, 39.

In that body, Robert Livingston set off a bombshell. He moved that the President be directed to lay before the House all correspondence and memoranda of negotiations on the treaty.[78]

The debate on the motion began on March 7, with Albert Gallatin leading the Republicans in their argument that the lower house with its general powers under the Constitution could and should properly serve as a check on the treaty-making powers. Ingeniously Gallatin pointed out that by other construction the Senate and the President could, by incorporating appropriate provisions in a treaty with any Indian tribe, bypass the House on any law.[79]

Juntoist Uriah Tracy led the Federalists in hot opposition to the motion. It was passed, however,by a vote of sixty-two to thirty-seven,[80] and Washington, after consulting with his Cabinet and with Hamilton, refused the request, stating that it had been the intention of the Constitutional Convention of 1787 to confine the treaty-making power to the President and the Senate.[81]

The Federalists now attempted to have all treaties then pending lumped together in one appropriation. This thrust being parried, they now resorted to a strategy of stagnation.

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[78] King, op. cit., II, 39.

[79] Adams, Gallatin, p. 161.

[80] Schouler, op. cit., I, 308-309.

[81] King, loc. cit.

The Senate refused any plan of adjournment or consideration of any House measures; and in this state of affairs the House now entered a second phase of debate, consideration of the merits of the treaty and an appropriation thereon.[82]

Madison, who, on the question of the constitutionality of House intervention, bowed to no one in knowledge as to what was said, done, and intended in Philadelphia in 1787, argued now on the merits. He maintained that the treaty was wanting in reciprocity with respect to the second treaty of Paris, with respect to the international rights of neutrals, and with respect to commercial advantages.[83]

The situation had again become desperate for the Federalists. Cabot wrote plaintively from Philadelphia to his brother Juntoist Senator, Caleb Strong, predicting defeat. Ending his letter, he exhorted, "I pray you come on without a moment's delay as you would wish to save us from defeat, and our country from disgrace and ruin."[84]

Of the desperation of the Federalists and the dark portents of national dissolution, Thomas Jefferson recorded the following in the Anas:

...Mr. Tazewell tells me that when...the British treaty [was] on the carpet, and very uncertain in the Lower House, there

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[82] Schouler, op. cit., I, 310-311.

[83] Ibid.

[84] Lodge, Cabot, p. 95, letter Cabot to Strong, April 27, 1796.

being at that time a number of bills in...committees of the Senate, none reported...he...called on the committees to report and particularly on Mr. King...King said that it was true the committees kept back their reports, waiting...the question about appropriation; that, if that was not carried they considered legislation as at an end; that they might as well... consider the Union as dissolved. Tazewell expressed his astonishment at these ideas and called on King to know if he had misapprehended him. King rose again, and repeated the same words. The next day, Cabot took an occasion in debate, and so awkward a one as to show it was a thing agreed to be done, to repeat the same sentiments in stronger terms...declaring a determination on their side to break up and dissolve the government.[85]

The Federalists needed a miracle and they got one. Parsons had exhorted, "go to Ames"[86] and to the stricken man, too ill previously to join in debate, his colleagues went. And Ames went onto the floor to save the day almost lost.[87]

Ames's sunken eyes and pallor served immeasurably to enhance the dramatic effect[88] of what Edward Channing termed "the greatest speech that was made in this debate--and one of the greatest speeches ever made in Congress."[89]

Gallatin, whose previous address Jefferson considered the most definitive on the subject, made the following memorandum on that of the Junto orator:

...The most brilliant and eloquent speech was undoubtedly that of Mr. Ames; but it was delivered in reference to the expediency of making the appropriations, and treated but in-

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[85] Washington, op. cit., IX, 190.

[86] Supra, Chapt. I.

[87] Hildreth, op. cit., I, 603.

[88] Ibid.

[89] Channing, op. cit., IV, 145.

cidentally of the Constitutional question...[90]

Ames's deeply emotional peroration struck fear in Western breasts. In it he pictured the British allied with the Indians, handing torches to the savages to set the frontier aflame. With his special talent for short phrases of imagery, the articulate Juntoist warned: "You are a father,--the blood of your sons shall fatten your cornfield. You are a mother,--the warwhoop shall wake the sleep of the cradle."[91]

The Juntoist exploited fully his cadaverous and emaciated appearance in his closing gloomy forecast:

> If however, the vote should pass to reject, and a spirit should rise, as it will, with the public disorders to make "confusion worse confounded", even I, slender and almost broken as my hold upon life is, may outlive the government and constitution of my country.[92]

Of its tremendous emotional impact Schouler wrote that "this speech, whose pathetic utterances were wrung from a suffering heart, carried the day, not without compassion for the sufferer...there was scarcely a dry eye in the House."[93]

The opponents of the Treaty, keenly sensing the effect achieved by the Juntoist, sought and gained an immediate adjournment. Prior to Ames's taking the floor, they had counted on a majority of ten. As he spoke the lead was cut to six,

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[90] Adams, Gallatin, p. 153.

[91] Ames, op. cit., II, 64, speech delivered April 28,1796.

[92] Ibid., p. 71.

[93] Schouler, op. cit., I, 314.

and when the vote was taken the following day, there was a tie of forty-nine to forty-nine. After some attempted amendments, the motion for the appropriation was carried fifty-one to forty-eight![94]

Thus by the effective oratory of the "mouthpiece of the Junto", without which this treaty or any treaty with Great Britain would have almost certainly failed, the life of the Federalist Party and their program of counterrevolution was probably saved.

The Jefferson-Hamilton conflict now reached Homeric proportions. Of its mortal nature Henry Adams wrote:

> The two brilliant men who led the two great divisions of national thought...never for a moment misunderstood each other; they were in deadly earnest, and no compromise between them ever was or ever will be possible. Mr. Jefferson meant that the American system should be a democracy...this principle... to him represented all that man was worth...Mr. Hamilton considered democracy a fatal curse, and meant to stop its progress. The partial truce which the first Administration of Washington had imposed on both parties,...was finally broken only by the arrival of Mr. Jay's treaty. From that moment repose was impossible until one party or the other had triumphed ...it was easy to see which of the two...must triumph in the end.[95]

Washington, for his part, was surfeited with the titanic struggle. Signing the treaty was probably the most unpopular act of his career and because of it he was subjected to such abuse from the opposition that he resolved to leave public office at the expiration of his term.[96]

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[94] Hildreth, op. cit., I, 614-615.

[95] Adams, Gallatin, p. 159.

[96] Faulkner, op. cit., p. 141.

His declared intention created a void that was embarrassing to the Federalists. Adams had the advantage of a concept, naturally without precedent, that the vice-presidency was the next step to the presidency. He was not, however, favored by the Hamilton wing of the Federalist Party. This segment felt that Adams was aging and was demonstrably vain, pompous, and irrascible.[97] Most of all he was intractible and would not be a Hamilton puppet.[98]

Not being able to ignore the Vice-President, his opponents devised a plan to contain him and secure the nomination for Pinckney. The role of the Eastern States in the scheme was delineated in the following:

> ...our electors...will vote unanimously for Adams and Pinckney...I am inclined to think...that Mr. Adams will not succeed; but we have Mr. Pinckney completely in our power if our Eastern friends do not refuse him some of their votes...Upon this subject, we are writing to all our Eastern friends and endeavoring to make them accord with us in voting unanimously both for Mr. Adams and Mr. Pinckney.[99]

With Pinckney and Adams gaining equal votes in the East, the South was expected to favor Pinckney, a South Carolinian, who would accordingly be elected President, and Adams Vice-President.[100]

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[97] Dr. H. Von Holst, The Constitutional and Political History of the United States (1889), I, 132-133.

[98] Koch, op. cit., p. 169.

[99] King, op. cit., II, 110, letter Robert Troup to Rufus King, Nov. 16, 1796.

[100] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 328. Adams later spoke heatedly of the Junto's opposing him. Supra, Chapt. I.

The choice between Adams and Pinckney, however, became of far less concern to the Federalists than the dread possibility of Thomas Jefferson's being elected to the presidency. Of this the elder Wolcott, now lieutenant-governor of Connecticut, wrote to his son, "The election of Mr. Jefferson, I consider as fatal to our independence."[101]

So strong were his feelings that he suggested dissolution of the Union in the event of Jefferson's election:

> ...if French agency places Mr. Jefferson in the seat of the Chief Magistrate,...the government of the United States ought at that moment to discontinue its operations, and let those who have placed him there take him to themselves; for although I am sensible, by our last revolution, of the evils which attend one, I sincerely declare that I wish the northern states would separate from the southern the moment that event shall take effect, and never reunite with them except...for military operations.[102]

The elder Wolcott's fears were entertained by many of the Eastern Federalists as they appraised the inherent dangers in the scheme to relegate Adams to second place. With sectional feelings quite strong, the southern electors might cast their ballots for Jefferson and Pinckney and thereby elect a Southern Administration. In view of this apprehension, eighteen northern electors cast their second ballots to candidates other than Pinckney.[103]

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[101] Gibbs, op. cit., I, 397, letter from Wolcott, Sr., to son, Nov. 19, 1796.

[102] Ibid., p. 399, letter Wolcott, Sr., to son, Dec. 3, 1796.

[103] Channing, op. cit., IV, 173.

In the final tally, Adams received seventy-one votes, Jefferson sixty-eight, Pinckney fifty-nine, and Aaron Burr thirty. Under the provisions of the Constitution at that time, Jefferson, having the second number of electoral votes, became Vice-President.[104]

The Federalists had won the first office, but the Eastern wing of the party was confronted with a stark fact: Thomas Jefferson was to join the Administration as Vice-President of the United States. Their apprehensions were surpassed only by their almost morbid animosity. Of this Lodge wrote:

> The Federalists hated Jefferson with no common political hatred, but rather with the vindictiveness of men toward a deadly foe who, as they firmly believed, sought the ruin of all they most prized and cherished. Right or wrong, such were the honest feelings of New England Federalists toward Jefferson.[105]

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[104] Channing, op. cit., IV, 173.

[105] Lodge, Cabot, p. 426.

CHAPTER V

THE JUNTO IN THE SCHEMES AGAINST ADAMS'S POLICIES

Adams's victory over Jefferson in 1796 gave the incumbent party a four-year extension of executive control. Those Federalists who had opposed Adams, including the majority of the Essex Junto[1] now sought influence "from behind the throne ...greater than the throne itself."[2] That influence would be in the person of Alexander Hamilton, now practicing law in New York City. As for John Adams, this coterie of opposition seriously doubted the aging patriot's essential fitness for the presidency.[3] It would take Adams two years to become fully aware of this hostility and of Hamilton's power, influence, and control within the Administration.

Crisis with France

The nation was confronted with a major crisis as the president-elect assumed office. Relations with France had deteriorated to a point that without remedial action, war seemed inevitable. The Jay Treaty had infuriated the French; and they had not only refused to receive the new American Ambassador, General Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, but had treated that Southern Federalist with contempt. Further, French naval

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[1] Supra, p. 86.

[2] Austin, op. cit., II, 146.

[3] Ibid.

forces were committing outrages on the high seas against American neutrality.[4]

The new president earnestly sought an honorable settlement of differences with France; and to accomplish this, he first considered a bipartisan national approach. This required a rapprochement with the opposition party, led by the newly elected Vice-President.[5]

Of Adams's efforts in this direction, Jefferson recorded that on March third, immediately prior to the Inauguration, the President-elect told him of his plans to send a mission to France. Adams desired that two Republicans, Elbridge Gerry and James Madison join Pinckney in the mission. He asked Jefferson to consult with Madison as to his willingness to serve.[6]

Adams's bipartisan views were apparently short-lived, for Jefferson wrote that when he saw Adams again on the evening of March sixth:

I told him of my negotiation with Mr. Madison. He immediately said, that on consultation, some objections to that nomination had been raised which he had not contemplated; and was going on with excuses which evidently embarrassed him...and we took leave; and he never after that said one word to me on the subject, or ever consulted me as to any measures...The opinion I formed...was, that Mr. Adams, in the first moments of the enthusiasm of the occasion(of his inauguration) forgot party sentiments...he thought, for a moment, to steer impar-

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[4] Adams, Parties in the U.S., p. 237.

[5] Gilbert Chinard, Honest John Adams (1955), pp. 260-261.

[6] Washington, op. cit., IX, 187.

tially between the parties; that Monday, the 6th of March, being the first time he had met his cabinet on expressing ideas of this kind, he had been at once diverted from them, and returned to his former party views.[7]

Jefferson's speculation that Adams had been influenced by his Cabinet earlier in the day, was significant. This was Washington's Cabinet, and three out of the four were Hamilton's men. Claude Bowers graphically sketched this group and Adams's dilemma with them:

> It is a pity that in the days of the Adams Administration it was not the fashion to paint group portraits of the President and his Cabinet...the result would have been a fascinating study...the domineering arrogance on the cold Puritan countenance of Pickering;the suave and smiling treachery in the eyes of Wolcott, and the effeminate softness and weakness in the physiognomy of McHenry...
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> Ali Baba among his Forty Thieves is no more deserving of sympathy than John Adams shut up within the seclusion of his Cabinet room with his official family of secret enemies. No other President has ever been so environed with a secret hostility; none other so shamelessly betrayed by treachery.[8]

Dominating this awesome clique was perhaps the most uncompromising zealot of the Essex Junto, the dour, intense Secretary of State, Timothy Pickering. Of Pickering's intense partisanship Lodge wrote:

> So firmly did Pickering believe he was right that he conceived there could be no honest difference of opinion, and he was thoroughly convinced that all he had done was solely in behalf of an abstract truth, where neither personal interests nor opinions entered. To him the conflict did not appear as a conflict between opposing views, for both of which there was something to be said. Victory to him was not party victory but a triumph of the principles of immutable justice. Defeat was not party defeat, but an overthrow of the powers

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[7] Washington, op. cit., IX, 187.

[8] Bowers, op. cit., p. 315.

of light by the powers of darkness. To him the maxim that there are two sides to every question seemed an insult to the understanding. There was right and wrong and the eternal battle between them;there could be nothing else.[9]

Of Pickering's viewpoint on good and evil, Morison wrote:

The social structure of eighteenth-century New England and the principles of Federalism were the Good, French philosophy and Democracy the Evil. Statesmen of this type of mind are absolutely devoid of tolerance and careless of the means they employ to gain their ends, witness the career of John Calvin and Robespierre, Pickering's spiritual ancestor and political brother.[10]

Wolcott has been previously sketched.[11] Charles Lee, although an honest lawyer, was almost a political cipher, playing no important part in the unfolding dramas.[12] Washington had selected McHenry as a third choice.[13] This genial Irishman idolized Hamilton, and like Pickering and Wolcott, was completely in Hamilton's debt for all that he had gained in the Federal Administration. To Adams these three owed nothing. There was, accordingly, no question as to whom they gave their allegiance.[14] Of their conspiracies against the President, Claude Bowers made the cryptic evaluation that "Pickering was

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[9] Henry Cabot Lodge, "Timothy Pickering", The Atlantic Monthly, XLI (June, 1878), 745-746 (hereinafter cited as Lodge, Pickering)

[10] Morison, Otis, I, 183.

[11] Supra, p. 52.

[12] Bassett, op. cit., pp. 137-138.

[13] Bernard C. Steiner, Life and Correspondence of James McHenry (1907), pp. 2-3.

[14] Bowers, op. cit., p. 338.

"a conspirator against Adams and did not care who knew it, and Wolcott a conspirator trying to conceal it...James McHenry...was a conspirator and scarcely knew it."[15]

The Selection of the Mission

In early February, Hamilton had written to Sedgwick expressing his views on a mission to France. Advocating such a step, he had stated that "it should consist of three persons: Mr. Madison, Mr. Pinckney, and Mr. Cabot."[16]

George Cabot had made himself particularly unacceptable for the mission by his joining the forces most vocal in their clamor for immediate war.[17]

In accordance with Hamilton's proposals and his conversation with Jefferson, Adams proposed Madison. The Cabinet peremptorily rejected the eminently qualified Virginian, and Adams acquiesced. Next Adams proposed the name of Elbridge Gerry for consideration. Gerry, an anti-federalist Essex County Republican, was anathema to the Essex Junto and the frosty reception of his nomination was recounted by Adams: "I then called the heads of the departments together and proposed Mr. Gerry. All voices unanimously were against him.

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[15] Bowers, op. cit., p. 234.

[16] Hamilton, Works, VI, 209, Hamilton to Theodore Sedgwick, Feb. 26, 1793.

[17] Adams, Gallatin, pp. 183-184, letter Gallatin to James Nicholson, May 28, 1797. Gallatin wrote, "I am of opinion that Wolcott, Pickering, Wm. Smith, Fisher Ames, and perhaps a few more were disposed to go to war..." Ibid.

"Such inveterate prejudice shocked me."[18] Adams was determined to have a Republican on the mission, however, and disregarding his Cabinet's advice, selected Gerry.[19]

The intransigence Adams found in his Cabinet over the proposed French mission demonstrated that there was a third force, led by the Essex Junto, in complete accord with neither Hamilton nor Adams, but strongly leaning toward the former. Of this force Lodge wrote "its representative and most active leader was Colonel Pickering, and it found its principal support among the Federalists of New England."[20]

Hamilton was too astute a statesman to countenance a declaration of war against France, much as he disliked the new Republic. On the other hand, "The Cabinet faction going beyond Hamilton in their hatred of French principles believed that the sooner...committed to open hostilities...the better."[21]

The special session of Congress called to meet on the French crisis convened on May 13. It was the consensus that of the three commissioners sent to France, one had to be Pinckney in order to assuage the previous indignities accorded that plenipotentiary. Dana[22] of the Junto was tendered the

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[18] Lodge, Cabot, p. 101, quoting Adams's Works, IX, 287.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 202.

[21] Ibid.

[22] At this time Chief Justice of Massachusetts.

nomination but declined. John Marshall of Virginia was finally selected, as was Gerry.[23] Three of the six votes in the House in opposition to Gerry's nomination were those of Sedgwick, Goodhue, and Tracy.[24]

With two of its three members belonging to a party openly hostile to France and unsympathetic with their revolution, it was hardly likely that such a body would meet with a warm reception from Talleyrand.[25]

The winter of 1797-1798 was one of increasing strife between the Federalists and the Republicans, as news of the French negotiations was awaited. What information there was, gave indication that Talleyrand was treating the American mission with studied contempt.[26] Cabot renewed his zeal against the new revolutionary republic. Under articles signed, "A sincere lover of his country", the philosopher Juntoist exhorted:

> The commissioners of conciliation from the United States sent to France to accommodate differences, it is said, will return re infecta. This is credible; for those who have done to others the most atrocious injuries are generally implacable...although the ultimate measures of France toward us will

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[23] Bassett, op. cit., pp. 226-227. Hamilton had wanted an Eastern Federalist and a Southern Republican to be joined with Pinckney. Instead, a Northern Republican and a Southern Federalist went. Lodge, Hamilton, p. 203.

[24] Adams, Gallatin, p. 185, letter Gallatin to his wife, June 23, 1797.

[25] Brown, op. cit., p. 15.

[26] Lodge, Cabot, p. 143.

depend on their future condition, yet the success under Providence will wholly depend on ourselves. Five millions of people, just to all the world, and determined to be free if united, are not likely to be attacked, and surely they can never be conquered.[27]

Cabot fully exploited the situation to condemn the Republicans. He contrasted the corruptibility of democracy represented by the party of Jefferson with the probity of aristocracy represented by the Federalists:

...the writers of ancient history inform us that in old times the demagogues were zealous advocates for the most popular forms of government, because under such forms they could easily exercise all the powers of the State without any responsibilities.

In Athens, the most democratic of the Grecian republics, DEMOSTHENES and PHOCION were the only leaders who refused the gold of PHILIP. Those two men were such as are now called Aristocrats: they were lovers of liberty and the best friends of the people, but they hated their vices and would not flatter them, while all the demagogues without exception were the pensioners of a foreign nation which was then taking measures to enslave their country.

In Rome, it is well known that the tribunes and other democratic leaders were so scandalously venal as to induce one who bribed them to say "that Rome would sell herself whenever a purchaser should appear."[28]

The Lyon-Griswold Affair

At least one exchange of views between a Federalist and a Republican ended in physical violence at this time. Juntoist Roger Griswold[29] of Connecticut and Republican Matthew

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[27]Lodge, Cabot, p. 586, quoting Massachusetts Mercury, Jan. 12, 1798.

[28]Ibid., Jan. 16, 1798.

[29]Griswold "was one of the ablest members of the Federal Party, and also one of the most violent in his political orthodoxy..." Adams, Gallatin, p. 192. He, with Pickering and Uriah Tracy, were leaders in the plot for a northern confederacy in 1804. Morison, Otis, I, 264-265.

Lyon of Vermont fought savagely after the Irish-born Lyon had spit in Griswold's face over an insulting remark. Failing to have Lyon expelled from the House, the Federalists waited for their opportunity to avenge the insult.[30]

The XYZ Affair

In March the President reported to the Congress that negotiations with the Directory had failed and that the nation should prepare for war. The Republicans, insisting on further information, pressed too hard; and as a result of their importunacy, the President released the famous XYZ messages relating the loan and bribe demanded by Talleyrand's agents.[31]

The populace was instantly inflamed and the Republicans were crushed. The war faction chortled at the cry ringing through the land of "millions for defense but not one cent for tribute."[32] Adams himself was full of the new war spirit and preened himself in military regalia to the adulation of the people. All things Republican became anathema as Benjamin Franklin's statue was desecrated and Jefferson excoriated.

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[30] McMaster, op. cit., II, 364-365.

[31] Ibid., p. 143.

[32] The much quoted phrase originated with an unknown newspaperman and was erroneously attributed to C.C. Pinckney. Pinckney's actual words in outraged protest to the demand for a douceur were "No, no, not a sixpence." John C. Miller, The Federalist Era 1789-1801 (1960), p. 212.

France was expected to declare war any day.[33]

Cabot was immensely pleased. By articles in newspapers and by personal addresses he labored to stimulate the war frenzy. The publication of the XYZ letters he considered a most fortunate event for the country.[34] Ames, now retired from public life,[35] exhorted that it was war now "or we shall be lost."[36]

Preparations for War

In the spring and early summer of 1798, there issued some twenty legislative war acts designed to augment and strengthen the armed forces of the United States. An Army of ten thousand men was authorized (Hamilton wanted twenty thousand) and a Navy was established.[37] George Cabot was offered the post of first Secretary of the Navy and Pickering, in forwardint the commission, strongly urged him to accept.[38] Cabot, however, declined, pleading simple indolence.[39]

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[33] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 366-369.

[34] Lodge, Cabot, pp. 143-144.

[35] Morison, Otis, I, 58.

[36] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 51, letter Ames to Wolcott, June 8, 1798.

[37] Bassett, op. cit., p. 237.

[38] Lodge, Cabot, p. 155, letter Pickering to Cabot, May 5, 1798.

[39] Ibid., pp. 156-158, letter Cabot to Pickering, May 11, 1798. Cabot officially held the office for one month before the position was tendered to Stoddert. Ibid., p. 144.

By December the authorized new Navy became a force of fourteen men-of-war and eight converted merchant-men. All existing treaties with France having been denounced, the new sea arm could move against French depradations and did so with telling effect.[40] The creation and effective employment of the navy was perhaps one of the major accomplishments of the Adams administration. Politically, the counterattack was highly significant. France could see that the United States would go to war if necessary. On the other hand, it was soon apparent that while the Directory might use bullying tactics, there was actually no French will to open, declared war.[41]

This last fact was most unfortunate for the war faction who placed too much reliance on John Marshall's assurance that the Directory would initiate a declaration of war. Cabot wrote, "T. Sewell with other good men were so strongly impressed with the advantage of such a declaration by them [the French], that they cou'd (sic) not be persuaded to relinquish the belief in it."[42] Jefferson wrote that by a majority of five, the Federalist Senators in caucus voted against a declaration of war.[43]

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[40] Bassett, loc. cit.

[41] Ibid., pp. 238-239.

[42] King, op. cit., II, 543, letter Cabot to King, Feb. 16, 1799.

[43] Washington, op. cit., IX, 195-196.

The Adams-Hamilton Schism over the Major-Generals

While the creation of the new Navy was brilliantly accomplished, efforts to implement the authorization for a new Army were hopelessly muddled. At the very top level, a breach soon developed between Hamilton and Adams on the question of seniority of general officers in the land force.[44]

As a condition to accepting command, Washington, under McHenry's persuasion, demanded the power to select his own general officers. Adams unwarily consented to this provision, not seeing the hand of Hamilton operating through his satellite, McHenry. The latter personally called on Washington at Mount Vernon and brought back the names of the three Major-Generals, with their old order of seniority changed, from Knox, Pinckney, and Hamilton to Hamilton, Pinckney, and Knox, in that order.[45]

Knox immediately protested to Adams, and the President, having no desire for Hamilton to be second only to Washington, listened with obvious sympathy.[46] Pickering, thoroughly alarmed at the possibility of Adams's intercession, sought Junto assistance. As he wrote confidentially to Cabot,

The object of this letter is to engage you in this matter in such way as you and one or two confidential friends (say Hig-

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[44] Bassett, op. cit., pp. 239-240.

[45] Bowers, op. cit., p. 413.

[46] Lodge, Cabot, p. 145.

ginson and Ames) shall deem most eligible to prevail on the President to acquiesce in the first arrangement,--Hamilton, Pinckney, Knox...The President has committed himself so far, it will be difficult to retreat...Hamilton will not serve, if superseded by Knox. Yet this is a fact which may not be expedient to communicate to the President for he personally dislikes Hamilton and may in this way be willing to get rid of him.[47]

Pickering further expressed the hope that "Knox could be persuaded that the voice of the country, even of New England, requires Hamilton to be placed second to General Washington..."[48] With respect to Knox's right of precedence, Pickering, deprecating it, urged, "that the old rules will not legally apply to the present case--and that if they do, they are decidedly in favor of Hamilton--perhaps he [Knox] may be induced to withdraw his claim."[49]

Cabot promptly answered Pickering's communication, explaining that much of Knox's support had come from friends such as General Lincoln, who had endorsed Knox's many promissary notes. Cabot, in conclusion, stated that he proposed to write to Adams personally and that "Mr. Higginson, who is with me, thinks of nothing better at present, and I shall call Ames to cooperate with us either by taking a similar step, or by making a visit for the purpose."[50]

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[47] Lodge, Cabot, p. 163-4, letter Pickering to Cabot (confidential) Sept. 20, 1798.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid.

[50] Ibid., p. 164-5, letter Cabot to Pickering, Sept. 27, 1798.

Two days later the philosopher-Juntoist addressed his plea to the President, arguing strongly against the error of holding the old line of precedence. He then warned Adams of the sectional view of the question:

I would not venture to say what is the opinion of the most enlightened men through New England, concerning the character of every individual of the major-generals; but, on the comparative merits and talents of Hamilton and Knox, I am well persuaded there is a remarkable uniformity of sentiment in favor of the former.[51]

Reporting to Pickering of his letter and of general activity of the Junto on the problem, Cabot wrote:

I sent by the post some days ago the letter I promised you I would write to the President. Mr. Higginson and Mr. Ames approved it; and I have, by their advice sent a copy of it with yours, to Mr. Goodhue, accompanied with a request that he would make a visit to Quincy, to enforce the ideas of mischief which we all entertain from any attempt to derange the order of general officers which now is established. When I get my copy back from Goodhue, it shall be transmitted to you, that you may see precisely what it is.[52]

As the Juntoists in New England campaigned in that section, Hamilton argued his case strenuously to Washington, and had Wolcott, McHenry, and Pickering do the same. At last Washington wrote peremptorily to the President, demanding that the new order of seniority stand. Adams bowed, not without bitterness. He had lost this issue; but his eyes were opening.[53] From the beginning of his term of office, he

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[51] Lodge, Cabot, p. 167, letter Cabot to John Adams, Sept. 29, 1798.

[52] Ibid., p. 170, letter Cabot to Pickering, Oct. 6, 1798.

[53] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 414-415.

had been blind as to how extensively Hamilton had been controlling the policies of his administration.[54] Recalling this state of affairs in later years, Adams wrote:

> I cannot review that tragicomic farce, grave as it was to me, without laughing. I was as president a mere cipher, the government was in the hands of an oligarchy consisting of a triumvirate who governed every one of my five ministers;[55] both houses of Congress were under their absolute direction.[56]

The Alien and Sedition Laws

In the flush of victory the Federalists, among war measures, forced through a series of Draconian domestic acts that came to be known as the Alien and Sedition laws. Of the Army schism just related and the Alien and Sedition laws, John Quincy Adams said:

> The Alien and Sedition Laws were two engines which the Federalists borrowed from the British government and put into the hands of their adversaries to be used with extraordinary power and efficiency against themselves and against the administration. The army was the first decisive symptom of a schism in the Federal Party itself; which accomplished its final overthrow and that of the administration.[57]

The measures embraced by the Alien and Sedition laws were the Naturalization Act of June 18, 1789, the Act Concerning Aliens of June 25, 1798, the Act Respecting Alien Enemies of July 6, 1798, and the Act for the Punishment of

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[54] Morison, Otis, I, 157.

[55] There were but four at the time.

[56] Morison, Otis, I, 158 (no citation given by author)

[57] Adams, Parties in the U. S., p. 329.

Certain Crimes, of July 14, 1798. (The last-named was the Sedition Act.)[58]

Although their necessity was not yet apparent, the Alien Acts could be justified as necessary for the protection and defense of the nation. On the other hand, the Naturalization Act and the Sedition Act were but thinly disguised political weapons against the Republicans. Of the public's eventual reaction to these measures, Morison held that "they were the principal cause of the Federalist defeat in 1800."[59]

The Junto eagerly seized upon the extreme measures as long-needed effective weapons to wage war to the death on all Francophiles and Republicans. Timothy Pickering, eminently suited for the task, led the van of those charged with the enforcement of the Acts. John Miller stated that of all his contemporaries Pickering was:

> ...the best equipped to play the role of a counterrevolutionary: he fought fanaticism with fanaticism and matched the revolutionists' single-minded devotion to the attainment of their objectives with a similar devotion to the preservation of the established order.[60]

Assiduously this implacable latter-day Puritan screened Republican periodicals and earnestly solicited friends and

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[58] Morison, Otis, I, 106.

[59] Ibid. Morison freely admitted that his ancestor whom he so extensively admires, Harrison Gray Otis, was as responsible as any man for these measures and "therefore must share their obloquy." Ibid.

[60] John C. Miller, Crisis in Freedom (1951), pp. 87-88.

admirers to transmit any and all suspect matter. Not trusting effective enforcement of the measures to lawyers, the zealous Secretary of State literally supervised the United States District Attorneys in their prosecutions under these acts.[61]

Pickering's efforts gained him the sobriquet of "The Scourge of Jacobinism," and he was singled out by the Republicans for his predatory malevolence. Of his effectiveness the Aurora wrote that "even the tyger [sic] who crouches before he strikes his prey will inscribe [Pickering's] name on some adamantine niche in his horrid den."[62]

Among the foreign born, the Irish with their traditional hostility toward Great Britain, gravitated toward the party of native democracy. By so doing they incurred the particular wrath of the Anglophile Federalists. Apprehensive of the growing Celtic immigration, Otis wrote to his wife, "If some means are not adopted to prevent the indiscriminate admission of wild Irishmen and others to the right of suffrage, there will soon be an end to liberty and property."[63]

Uriah Tracy wrote, "I have seen many, very many Irishmen, and with very few exceptions, they are United Irishmen,

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[61] Frank Maloy Anderson, "The Enforcement of the Alien and Sedition Laws", Annual Report of the American Historical Association 1912, p. 116.

[62] Miller, Crisis in Freedom, p. 89, quoting Aurora, Sept. 18, 1798.

[63] Morison, Otis, I, 107.

Free Masons, and the most God-provoking Democrats on this side of Hell."[64]

In an effort to destroy the foreign vote, the Federalists proposed a tax of twenty dollars on naturalization certificates. Defending this measure in what was to be known as "Otis's Wild Irish Rose Speech", Otis argued, "I do not wish to invite hordes of wild Irishmen, nor the turbulent and disorderly of all parts of the world, to come here with a view to disturb our tranquility, after having succeeded in the overthrow of their own Governments."[65]

Fisher Ames had occasion to deal with defiance of the hated measures. Led by one David Brown, a group of Republicans planted a liberty pole publicly in Ames's town of Dedham, with a placard attached, exhorting, "No Stamp Act, no Sedition and no Alien Acts...downfall to the tyrants of America."[66]

After the pole had stood for nearly a week, the Federalist marshal applied to Juntoist Federal District Judge John Lowell for authority to remove it. Before the order could be carried out, however, a Federalist mob tore down the pole.[67]

Ames recounted the incident to Christopher Gore and

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[64] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 399, letter Uriah Tracy to Wolcott, Aug. 7, 1800.

[65] Morison, Otis, I, 108.

[66] Ibid., p. 114.

[67] Warren, op. cit., pp. 105-106.

criticized the government for its slow action. Advocating the initiation of a stringent policy he wrote:

> The insult on the law was the cause of sending out the marshal with his warrant; but the Federalists...had previously cut down the pole...There is at least the appearance of tardiness and apathy on the part of Government, in avenging this insult on law...The Government must display its power in terrorem... so much villainy will explode at last and the issue will be tried, like the ancient suits, by wager of battle.[68]

Brown had escaped after the liberty pole incident but was finally brought to trial. Fisher Ames's brother, Dr. Nathaniel Ames (strongly and vocally opposed to the Juntoist, politically) was summoned as a witness in the trial. He ignored the summons, was arrested, jailed, and brought before John Lowell and William Cushing.[69] Upon being fined for contempt, the irate Republican doctor protested vigorously to Cushing who, according to Dr. Ames's diary entry, "refuses redress for gross injury and adds insult by referring me to F. A." [Fisher Ames][70]

The Prosecutions of Lyon and Cooper

Matthew Lyon and Thomas Cooper were probably the most prominent Republican writers actively prosecuted under the Sedition Act.[71] Lyon was a marked man after his attack on

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[68] Ames, op. cit., I, 247, letter Fisher Ames to Christopher Gore, Dec. 18, 1798.

[69] Cushing was a Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, Warren, op. cit., p. 111.

[70] Ibid., Dr. Ames's diary entry of Nov. 13, 1799. The hostility between the two brothers was implacable. Ibid., p. 18.

[71] Anderson, op. cit., p. 121.

Griswold.[72] The opportunity for Federalist vengeance came as a result of an article published by Lyon in the Vermont Journal, in which the New England Republican stringently castigated the President. As a result, he was indicted under the Sedition Act.[73]

Undaunted by his indictment, Lyon established a magazine entitled "Lyon's Republican Magazine" and with this new medium continued to excoriate Adams and his administration.[74]

Upon being brought to trial under Justice Paterson of the United States Supreme Court, the aggressive congressman and editor expected conviction; but due to his legislative position, anticipated no imprisonment. Not only was he imprisoned for four months, but was not even permitted the opportunity to gather his personal belongings and wind up his personal affairs before incarceration.[75]

The Federalist extremists saw to it that his confinement was served under particularly degrading circumstances. This persecution served only to make him a martyr; and as a candidate for Congress while still in jail, he was re-elected by a heavy margin over his nearest opponent.[76]

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[72] Supra, p. 97.

[73] Miller, Crisis in Freedom, pp. 106-107.

[74] Ibid.

[75] Ibid., p. 108.

[76] Ibid., p. 109-110.

Thomas Cooper was probably the most defiant of any Republican tried under the Sedition Act. When William Duane was summoned to appear before the Senate for allegedly libelous statements, he asked that Cooper serve as his counsel.[77] Cooper declined, saying that he would not degrade himself by appearing "before the Senate with their gag in my mouth."[78]

Timothy Pickering sanguinely hoped to prosecute the foreign-born Cooper under the so far unused Alien Act, but was disappointed to find that the editor had become a citizen. The Juntoist Secretary of State then personally instructed William Rawle, the United States Attorney for the District of Eastern Pennsylvania, to prosecute Cooper for sedition.[79]

Cooper, in a flagrantly unfair trial before Justice Samuel Chase, opening on April 19, 1800, called for the President himself as a witness, as well as Pickering. Through the latter he hoped to prove that aggressive enforcers of the Act were rewarded with diplomatic posts.[80]

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[77] Miller, Crisis in Freedom, p. 74. Duane had taken over the Aurora upon the death of Benjamin Franklin Bache.

[78] Ibid., p. 200, quoting Aurora, March 25, 1800.

[79] Ibid., pp. 202-203.

[80] Ibid.

In his trial the courageous editor vainly sought to assert, as a defense, the truth of everything said by him. Chase, however, acting far more the prosecutor than the impartial judge, blocked him effectively and made conviction a certainty.[81] Convicted, the editor was sentenced to serve six months in jail.[82]

Later in the year, when Hamilton wrote his famous criticism of the administration of John Adams, Cooper eagerly challenged the Administration to prosecute under the Sedition Act, as he, himself had been prosecuted.[83]

The Apostasy of John Marshall

The Junto were among those extremists who held that honest patriots would not criticize the Sedition Act. Criticism or even doubt expressed as to the propriety of the drastic legislation was deemed of itself, *prima facie* evidence of seditious sentiment.[84]

John Marshall came in for his share of Juntoist spleen in the fall of 1799, when a candidate for Congress in Virginia. During the campaign, when asked his opinion of the Alien and Sedition Laws, Marshall stated that he was not an advo-

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[81] Miller, *Crisis in Freedom*, pp. 209-210. The jury itself was probably packed. Anderson, *op. cit.*, p. 125.

[82] Miller, *Fed. Era*, p. 263.

[83] Miller, *Crisis in Freedom*, p. 226.

[84] *Ibid.*, pp. 88-89.

cate of the measures, and would work for their repeal.[85]

This position infuriated the New England Federalists and, in Beveridge's words, "Ames whetted his rhetoric to razor edge and slashed without mercy."[86] The able pamphleteer charged that:

> ...no correct man--no incorrect man, even--whose affections and feelings are wedded to the government, would give his name to the base opposers of the law--This [Marshall] has done. Excuses may palliate--future zeal in the cause may partially atone--but his character is done for.[87]

"Moderates", like Marshall, said Ames, "are the meanest of cowards, the falsest of hypocrites."[88]

Theodore Sedgwick accused Marshall of being motivated by political expediency: "He is disposed on all popular subjects to feel the popular pulse...He is disposed to express great respect for the sovereign people, and to quote their opinions as sovereign truth."[89]

Far more strongly to Pickering, Sedgwick charged that Marshall had "degraded himself by a mean and paltry election-

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[85] Albert J. Beveridge, The Life of John Marshall (1916), II, 388-389, citing Alexandria, Virginia, Times and Virginia Advertiser, Oct. 11, 1798.

[86] Ibid., p. 390.

[87] Ames, op. cit., I, 345, letter Fisher Ames to Christopher Gore, Dec. 18, 1798.

[88] Ibid.

[89] King, op. cit., III, 237, letter Sedgwick to King, Oct. 21, 1798.

eering trick."[90]

Juntoist Goodhue raised the question as to Marshall's true character in a letter to Pickering:

> We meet with ups and downs in our political prospects, and I confess nothing has given me more surprise and regret than that General Marshall should so far degrade himself...by... his opinion so decidedly against the Alien and Sedition Bills. What does he mean?...have we been mistaking hitherto his true character? I sometimes have been led to think that none of the Virginia Federalists are little better than half-way Jacobins.[91]

Of all the Junto expressing opin'on on Marshall's apostasy, the philosophical George Cabot showed the most charity in the following:

> Mr. Marshall I know has much to learn on the subject of a practical system of free government for the United States. I believe, however, he is a man of so much good sense that... he cannot fail...to discern and pursue a right course, and therefore that he will eventually prove a great acquisition.[92]

The Junto's Reaction to the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions

Whatever ire Marshall might have aroused by his criticism of the Junto's pet statutes it was nothing compared with the fury engendered by Madison's Virginia Resolutions and Jefferson's Kentucky Resolutions. These manifestos of November, 1798, and December, 1798, respectively, asserted that the Congress was without authority to enact the Alien and Sedition Laws; that the federal government was not the sole

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[90] Beveridge, op. cit., II, 391, quoting letter Sedgwick to Pickering, Oct. 23, 1798, Pickering MSS., Mass. Hist. Soc.

[91] Lodge, Cabot, p. 179, fn., quoting letter Goodhue to Pickering, Oct. 26, 1798.

[92] Ibid., p. 175, letter Cabot to Pickering, Oct. 31, 1798.

or final authority to determine the powers granted to itself; and that the states themselves could determine the extent of such delegation.[93]

The Junto was in the van of the Federalist attack on these nullification doctrines. Sedgwick characterized the interposition expressions as "little short of a declaration of war."[94] When the Massachusetts legislature gave a "stern and sharp reproof...to the seditious Virginians",[95] Cabot proudly pointed out that their action was one well to be emulated by the national government.[96] Dana, in presiding over a trial in a state court, characterized members of the Massachusetts Legislature who had failed to vote for the censure of the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions, as "worse than infidels" and sympathizers with "a traiterous enterprise to the government of this country."[97]

Cabot deeply regretted that the administration had not goaded the two southern states to arms. Of this he wrote, "it cannot be sufficiently regretted that this...temper, which was excited by the Federal administration may subside

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[93] Morison, Otis, I, 124.

[94] King, op. cit., III, 518, letter Sedgwick to King, Jan. 12, 1799.

[95] Lodge, Cabot, p. 218, letter Cabot to Pickering, Feb. 15, 1799.

[96] Ibid.

[97] Warren, op. cit., p. 127, quoting Independent Chronicle, March 7, 1799.

"for want of a proper nutriment from the same source."[98]

Tracy too, was disappointed at the inaction following the resolutions. Of this he said, "I had wished that all the discontented would have made an effort at this time to overturn the federal government."[99]

As Virginia strengthened her defenses, ostensibly against the French, Hamilton could perceive a wonderful opportunity to be exploited. As a major-general with an army and no foreign foe, he could, by crushing his incubus, Virginia, accomplish once and for all his ultimate aim of an all-powerful central government. Eagerly he urged that Federal forces be gathered "toward Virginia, for which there is an obvious pretext, then let measures be taken to act upon the laws and put Virginia to the test of resistance."[100] Adams, having no interest in furthering Hamilton's ambitions, accommodated him neither in movement of armed forces, nor in prosecutions of members of the Virginia government for sedition.[101]

Adams Considers the Possibilities of Peace

Invasion of Virginia was not Hamilton's only objective

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[98] Lodge, Cabot, p. 218, letter Cabot to Pickering, Feb. 15, 1799.

[99] Miller, Crisis in Freedom, p. 173, quoting letter Uriah Tracy to Trumbull, Jan. 2, 1799, Trumbull MSS., Conn. Hist.Soc.

[100] Ibid., p. 175, quoting Hamilton, Works (Lodge), X, 340-342.

[101] Miller, Crisis in Freedom, p. 175-6.

for the new army, once it could be brought up to strength, supplied, and organized. The ambitious Federalist leader with the earnest support of Pickering, was scheming with the revolutionist Francisco de Miranda to invade Spanish North America. Any such move would have certainly brought on war with Spain and quite probably with France.[102]

Hamilton chafed as army enlistments dragged and war loans were not being subscribed. Impatiently he goaded McHenry who, in turn, pressed the President for action. Adams testily answered his Secretary of War:

> Regiments are costly everywhere and more so in this country than any under the sun. If this nation sees a great army to maintain, without an enemy to fight, there may arise an enthusiasm that seems to be little foreseen. At present there is no more prospect of seeing a French army here, than there is in Heaven.[103]

During the war fever following the release of the XYZ dispatches, Adams had been as militant as the most sanguine warhawk. However, the affair of the major generals tended to open his eyes to the true situation respecting the aims of Alexander Hamilton and the Essex Junto. As the summer of 1798 waned, the President was afforded the opportunity to reflect on the actual state of affairs, foreign and domestic.[104]

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[102] Chinard, op. cit., pp. 278-279, citing Adams, Works, VIII, 583-585.

[103] Steiner, op. cit., p. 128, letter Adams to McHenry, Oct. 22, 1798.

[104] Chinard, op. cit., p. 278.

One factor giving Adams pause was the report of Dr. James Logan, Jefferson's friend, relative to French dispositions toward peace. In his capacity as a private citizen, Logan had gone to Paris in the summer and sought out official views. He returned with the news that an amicable settlement of problems between the two republics could be effected.[105] So seriously did the war faction consider Logan's action that they saw to it that appropriate legislation (to be known as the "Logan Acts") was enacted proscribing any future private missions of such a nature.[106]

Logan's information corroborated the reports which Elbridge Gerry gave to the President.[107] Gerry was liked and respected by Adams and this fact made the Essex Republican especially anathema to the Junto. Strongly they feared his pacifying influence on Adams and public opinion.[108]

When Gerry had protracted his stay in France after the departure of Pinckney and Marshall, the Junto became most apprehensive. Thoroughly vexed, Timothy Pickering as Secretary

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[105] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 425-426.

[106] Morison, Otis, I, 155-156.

[107] Lodge, Cabot, p. 169, fn. Adams believed that adverse criticism of Gerry generally originated with the Essex Junto. The Junto, in turn, were convinced that their hostility toward Gerry engendered Adams's sympathy and admiration for the Eastern Republican. Ibid.

[108] Ibid., pp. 172-174.

of State and Gerry's superior, saw to it that the pay of the dilatory Republican envoy was terminated. Cabot wrote to Wolcott stating that all were anxious to learn "what course Gerry intends to steer, that we may shape our own accordingly." Cabot expressed the hope that the President would really see Gerry for what he was as he, Cabot, saw him,--totally unfit "for all great affairs."[109]

On October sixth he informed Pickering that Gerry had returned to America and that he, (Cabot) had been "informed credibly that since he [Gerry] had left France, he has maintained strenuously the ridiculous and dangerous opinion that peace might have been preserved if our government had not proceeded so far in the measures of hostility."[110]

Cabot was quite exercised over the fact that Adams was trying "to palliate Mr. Gerry's errors,"[111] by holding the three "envoys as having conducted equally well and equally ill."[112] He considered it further imperative "for some person to inform the President of the danger to which he exposes the government and himself, by attempting to vindicate

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[109] Lodge, Cabot, p. 168, letter Cabot to Wolcott, Oct. 6, 1798.

[110] Ibid., p. 171, letter Cabot to Pickering, Oct. 6, 1798.

[111] Ibid., p. 172, letter Cabot to Pickering, Oct. 12, 1798.

[112] Ibid., p. 172, letter Cabot to Wolcott, Oct. 16, 1798.

"Mr. Gerry at the expense of his colleagues."[113]

Cabot discussed the problem with his brother Juntoists, Higginson and Samuel Sewall,[114] and it was determined to urge Harrison Gray Otis "to make a visit to Quincy for the purpose of communicating freely to the President what passes abroad on this subject, and how his frankness exposes him and his friends."[115] Otis dutifully carried out his mission.[116]

Pickering, ever ready to compile a case against an enemy, asked Cabot to report to him as necessary "of Gerry's deportment", and asked that Gerry's "derelictions [be] minuted for future use."[117]

Adams Asserts His Authority

Supporting Gerry's and Logan's encouraging reports were the dispatches of William Vans Murray, the Minister to The Hague. From the early summer, Murray had been informally in touch with the Frenchman, Pichon, relative to a resumption of amicable relations between the Republics. Pichon, however, at first had not disclosed that he was vested with any authority from the Directory. On August 24, Murray reported the

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[113] Lodge, Cabot, p. 172, letter Cabot to Wolcott, Oct. 16, 1798.

[114] Ibid.

[115] Ibid.

[116] Morison, Otis, I, 153.

[117] Lodge, Cabot, p. 173, letter Pickering to Cabot, Oct. 20, 1798.

following to the Secretary of State:

M. Pichon was sent here as I suspected from the first conversation which I had with him in June, by his government to aid, as he avows, his government in bringingg about an amicable adjustment of disputes with the United States.[118]

On September sixth, Pichon formally disclosed to Murray that he had been ordered by Talleyrand to act for the French government in dealing with the American Minister.[119]

In mid-October Adams submitted two questions to Pickering to be taken up by the Cabinet. Should the nation declare war against France, and, if not, should a second mission be sent to France. The Hamiltonian triumvirate, afraid to declare for war openly, vigorously protested the initiation of any American gesture toward a resumption of diplomatic relations.[120]

The Junto, in and out of the Cabinet, wanted war with France and a Hamiltonian-led army to wage hostilities. Further, they wanted no interference by John Adams. Sedgwick brazenly presented himself to the President and proposed that the rank of General of the Army be established, that Hamilton be given that position, and that Adams thereafter delegate to such high officer his prerogatives as Commander-

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[118] Worthington Chauncey Ford (ed.), "Letters of William Vans Murray", American Historical Association Report for the Year 1912, p. 458, letter Murray to Pickering, Sept. 1, 1798.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Bowers, op. cit., p. 429.

in-Chief of the Armed Forces. The exasperated chief executive exploded:

> What! Are you going to appoint him [Hamilton] General over the President? I have not been so blind that I have not seen a combined effort among those who call themselves the friends of government to annihilate the essential powers given to the president.[121]

In January Pickering officially reported on the Talleyrand-Gerry negotiations. After minimizing their importance, and denigrating the motivation of the principals, he was flagrantly abusive of Gerry. When urged to temper his castigation of the Essex Republican, he refused. Adams then called on his Secretary of State to prepare the draft of a tentative treaty with France. The obstinate Juntoist simply ignored the direction of his superior.[122]

Without further consultation of any kind with his Cabinet, and to the chagrin, surprise, and consternation of the Essex Junto and others of the war party, the President, on February 18, 1799, nominated William Vans Murray to the United States Senate as Minister Plenipotentiary to the Republic of France.[123]

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[121] Hamilton, Works, VI, 392-394, letter Sedgwick to Hamilton, March, 1799.

[122] Bowers, op. cit., p. 430.

[123] Morison, Otis, I, 163.

CHAPTER VI

THE DOWNFALL OF THE FEDERALIST PARTY AND THE JUNTO

Adams's proposals for a second mission to France completely stunned the Junto. Morison wrote that "words cannot describe the feelings of mingled rage, astonishment and disappointment with which they received [the news] !"[1]

The President had very good reason for not bringing the cabinet into his confidence when making this important decision. With a clear perspective at last as to the true situation of affairs, he saw that Hamilton was a *deus ex machina* controlling cabinet opinion,[2] and that any disclosures made to this disloyal coterie would be tantamount to disclosing strategy to an enemy.[3]

A few days after the nomination was announced, Pickering plaintively protested to George Cabot:

> You will be shocked, as we are, by the President's nomination of Mr. Murray as minister plenipotentiary to negotiate a treaty with the French Republic. *I beg you to believe* that it is the sole act of the president..not one officer about him had any knowledge of his design.[4]

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[1] Morison, *Otis*, I, 163.

[2] Lodge, *Cabot*, p. 199.

[3] John C. Miller, *Fed. Era*, p. 244.

[4] Lodge, *Cabot*, p. 221, letter Pickering to Cabot, Feb. 21, 1799.

Lamenting the irreparable damage to Junto aspirations, Pickering asked, "How is [the country's] honor thus prostrated in the dust to be recovered?"[5] Demonstrating complete disloyalty to his chief, the Junto zealot added, "The President's character can never be retrieved. He cannot recover the confidence of the Federalists."[6]

Cabot, in anguish, replied:

> Indignation, grief, and disgust, in a rotary succession, are the only sentiments excited by the nomination of Mr. Murray in the breasts of well-informed, decided Federalists. The half-informed and the feeble see no harm in any measure which professes to have peace for its object...While the temporizing trimmers and French Hypocrites with Jacobin hearts rejoice in an opportunity to throw off the mast...[7]

Upon receipt of the President's nomination, the Senate referred the matter to a five-man committee of which Sedgwick was chairman.[8] As a sole minister, Murray was not accepted,[9] and after some heated exchanges between Adams and Sedgwick, a commission of three (including Murray) was finally agreed upon.[10]

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[5] Lodge, Cabot, p. 221, letter Pickering to Cabot, Feb. 21, 1799.

[6] Ibid.

[7] Ibid., p. 224, letter Cabot to Pickering, March 7, 1799.

[8] Ibid., p. 221, letter Pickering to Cabot, Feb. 21, 1799.

[9] Amer. Hist. Assn. Rept., 1896, letter Higginson to Pickering, March 3, 1799.

[10] Miller, Fed. Era, pp. 245-246.

In May, word arrived that the French would welcome the mission, and Adams directed Pickering to expedite its dispatch. Having hope of a restoration of the monarchy in France, Pickering deliberately put off the execution of the directive throughout the summer and early autumn. Losing all patience, Adams ended his vacation in Braintree, hastened to the seat of government, and with no further ado, personally dispatched the emissaries.[11]

As a result of this precipitate action, the breach within the party was now complete. Hamilton and the Junto thereafter sought Adams's defeat in the next Federalist nomination caucus.[12] Pickering wrote to Cabot on Oct. 22, 1799:

> There is but one way these evils can be prevented--it is the only way in which the mischiefs of this French mission can be repaired, the only atonement which the President can make to his country for this fatal error--his announcing publicly, at the close of the next session of Congress, that he will retire. Then the Federalists uniting in one man for his succession, might yet save the country from ruin.[13]

Wolcott, predicting a gloomy future for Adams, wrote: "The president will gain no new supporters, his former friends will be in disgrace with the public and the administration of John Adams, so much extolled, will end by a transfer of the

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[11] Morison, Otis, I, 167.

[12] Ibid., p. 182.

[13] Lodge, Cabot, p. 248, letter Pickering to Cabot, Oct. 22, 1799.

"powers of the Government to the rival party."[14]

Adams Purges His Cabinet

The weakening of Federalist strength was demonstrated in the New York State elections in the late spring. The Republicans were victorious and of particular alarm to the Federalists, the State legislature, which would choose the presidential electors, was now Republican. Adams had counted on the votes of New York as necessary to his reelection in 1800.[15]

This blow convinced the President the time had come to purge his disloyal cabinet. His keenly perceptive wife had particularly urged him to rid himself of Timothy Pickering. Her opinion of the Junto Secretary was expressed in the following:

> There is a man in the cabinet whose manners are forbidding, whose temper is sour and whose resentments are implacable, who neverless [sic] would like to dictate every measure. He has to deal with one, who knows full well their respective departments--and who chuses [sic] to feel quite independent, and to act so to, but for this He is abused. But I am mistaken if this dictator does not get himself ensnared in his own toil. He would not now remain in office, if the President Possesst [sic] such kind of resentments as I hear from various quarters...From this fountain have flowed all the unpopularity of the Mission to France...[16]

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[14] Lodge, Cabot, p. 248, letter Wolcott to Cabot, Nov. 4, 1799. One of the first persons considered to replace Adams was Oliver Ellsworth. Adams received an anonymous letter dated March 11, 1800, to the effect that Hamilton, Pickering, Wolcott, Dayton, Harper, Hillhouse, McHenry, Carroll, and Sedgwick were campaigning for Ellsworth. Morison, Otis, I, 185.

[15] Steiner, op. cit., p. 346, letter McHenry to his nephew, John McHenry, dated May 20, 1800.

[16] Stewart Mitchell (ed), New Letters of Abigail Adams 1788-1801, (1947), letter Abigail Adams to her sister Mary Smith Cranch, Dec. 11, 1799.

Adams first called in the Secretary of War and delineated his derelictions. After a caustic exchange with the President, McHenry submitted his resignation on May 6, to be effective on June 1.[17] The parting with Pickering was decidedly more summary. The Juntoist leader recounted the following to Hamilton on May 15:

> Last Saturday I received a summons to resign, and a desire that I would myself name the day. But I did not incline to accept this insidious favor. The President desired my answer on Monday morning, and I sent it, mentioning that some important matters would render my services useful in the office till about the close of the present quarter, but that "I did not feel it to be my duty to resign." In an hour I received a peremptory discharge and on Monday evening I quitted the office...[18]

Wolcott with his cunning had not been found out by Adams. The Secretary of the Treasury was simply shrewder in his treachery, and because of this, more useful to Hamilton and the Junto for the future.[19]

With Adams's summary removal of McHenry and Pickering from the Cabinet, his quarrel with Hamilton and the Junto

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[17] Steiner, op. cit., p. 346, letter McHenry to his nephew, John McHenry, dated May 20, 1800.

[18] Hamilton, Works, VI, 442, letter Pickering to Hamilton, May 15, 1800. The discharged Secretary of State settled in Western Pennsylvania for the next two years. His partisans in Massachusetts, however, in 1802 took up a popular subscription and purchased enough of his land to enable him to reestablish himself in his state of birth. Soon back in politics, he became in Morison's words, "the evil genius of the Federal Party." Morison, Otis, I, 188.

[19] Brown, op. cit., p. 19.

broke out into open, outspoken, and undisguised public hostility. Infuriated by his humiliating treatment at the President's hands, Pickering circulated letters to important Federalists vilifying Adams.[20] Hamilton in a letter to Sedgwick (now Speaker of the House) stated the conviction that by his precipitate action, Adams had lost all standing with the Federalist Party; that "most of the influential men of that party consider him as a very unfit and incapable character."[21] Nevermore would Hamilton "be responsible for him by his direct support even though the consequence should be the election of Jefferson."[22] Explaining this last strong sentiment, Hamilton pointed out that with Jefferson in power, the true Federalists could be unfettered in their opposition.[23]

Sedgwick in reply avowed that with Adams "every tormenting passion rankles in the bosom of that weak and frantic old man."[24] The Junteist added that he had "good reason for believing that Pickering and McHenry had been sacrificed as

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[20] Lodge, Cabot, p. 260.

[21] Hamilton, Works, VI, 441, letter Hamilton to Sedgwick, May 10, 1800.

[22] Ibid.

[23] Ibid.

[24] Ibid., p. 442, letter Sedgwick to Hamilton, May 13, 1800.

"peace offerings."[25]

Cabot for his part considered that Adams's peremptory purge was a deliberate and calculated act of hostility toward the entire Federalist Party.[26] He would have been perhaps more accurate had he said that it was such an act against the Essex Junto.[27]

Adams was enraged by his critics and outdid them in intemperate speech. Ames wrote that Adams's "language is bitter even to outrage and, swearing and calling names... he inveighs against the British faction and the Essex Junto like one possessed."[28]

Needing every ally he could muster, Hamilton went to the home territory of his praetorian guard, the Essex Junto. His purpose was to organize his staunchest supporters into an effective force to win C. C. Pinckney's nomination as the Federal candidate for the presidency.[29] The Junto received him cordially, and "the most honorary dinner ever

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[25] Hamilton, Works, VI, 442, letter Sedgwick to Hamilton, May 13, 1800.

[26] Lodge, Cabot, p. 260.

[27] Cabot's biographer was of the opinion that Adams's mistake lay in not dismissing Wolcott as well, and doing so a year earlier. Ibid., p. 259.

[28] King, op. cit., XXI, 276, letter Ames to King, June, 1800.

[29] Morison, Otis, I, 188.

"known in Boston was given to him by the magistrates."[30] Here were his shock troops, and to them Hamilton could talk. Higginson was master of ceremonies; Governor Caleb Strong[31] was there along with Chief Justice Dana, Theophilus Parsons, Fisher Ames, John Lowell, George Cabot, and Christopher Gore. Among his idolators, Hamilton grew expansive and predicted that within four years he "would either lose his head or be the leader of a triumphant army."[32]

Hamilton's Attack on Adams

In his castigation of Hamilton and the Junto as a "damned British faction," Adams had found a particularly sensitive area.[33] This appellation had always incensed Hamilton and his wing of the Federalist Party, and the warm-tempered Scot girded his loins for a showdown. Counterattacking, Hamilton now demanded by letter that Adams either disavow the allegation or prove it. Upon receiving no response from the President, he determined to fight Adams openly, re-

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[30] King, op. cit., III, 289, letter Robert Troup to King, Aug. 9, 1800.

[31] Juntoist Strong in the previous winter had defeated Elbridge Gerry in the Massachusetts gubernatorial election by only a handful of votes (19,630 to 19,530). Austin, op. cit., II, 302.

[32] Bowers, op. cit., p. 458, quoting Centinel, June 21, 1800.

[33] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 376, letter Hamilton to Wolcott, July 1, 1800.

gardless of cost to the Federalist Party.[34]

As a retaliatory step in this direction and as a means toward his vindication and further toward promoting Pinckney's election, Hamilton now considered a detailed written attack on Adams's conduct of office and his essential fitness for the Presidency. This opprobrium was set forth in a letter which he circulated among the Junto, soliciting their opinion as to the desirability of publication.[35] Fisher Ames urged anonymity, writing, "I am therefore clear that you ought not with your name, nor if practicable, in any way that will be traced to you, to execute your purpose of exposing the reason for a change of the executive."[36] George Cabot opposed any attack on Adams and, like Ames, stringently disapproved of one written under Hamilton's own name.[37]

The question of publication of the controversial letter ("Letter concerning the Public Conduct and Character of John Adams") was not resolved within the Federalist Party. Colonel Aaron Burr surreptitiously obtained a copy and had it published.[38] This exposure brought the schism within the

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[34] Chinard, op. cit., p. 304.

[35] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 421, letter Hamilton to Wolcott, Sept. 26, 1800.

[36] Ames, op. cit., I, 282, letter Ames to Hamilton, Aug. 26, 1800 (note: editor surmises this to be to Hamilton.)

[37] Lodge, Cabot, p. 260.

[38] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 429.

Federalist Party into the public arena. It is surprising that with this handicap their candidates did as well as they did in the fall Presidential elections. In the final count, Jefferson and Burr tied for first place with seventy-three votes each. Of the remaining votes, Adams received sixty-five and Pinckney, sixty-four.[39]

South Carolina was pivotal in the election. As to how the integrity of the Federalists in the legislature of that State had been a determining factor in the party's defeat, Pickering wrote:

> General Pinckney might have been chosen--at least have stood on a par with Mr. Jefferson, if the Federalists in the legislature of South Carolina would have consented to have placed Mr. J. on the ticket but the latter considered themselves pledged to vote for Mr. Adams & General Pinckney. But as it was manifest that So. Carolina held the scales--that Mr. A. could not possibly be elected--and that Mr. P. might be--the principle of the federalists of the Union, to ensure a federal president would have warranted a departure from an implied agreement (explicit on the part of a few leading men) predicated on the ground of their commanding the votes of that state.[40]

The Junto and Aaron Burr

Despite their defeat in the election, the Federalists

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[39] Morison, Otis, I, 190.

[40] King, op. cit., III, 352, letter Pickering to King, Dec. 27, 1800. General Pinckney, demonstrating a refreshing integrity for the times, had declined to be coupled with Jefferson in South Carolina. Morison, Otis, I, 190. "Now it appears that South Carolina would willingly have voted for Jefferson and Pinckney, but General and Major P., with singular good faith and honor, adhered to the compact and rejected the offer." Ames, op. cit., I, 287, letter Ames to Gore, Dec. 29, 1800.

were not yet done. The outgoing Congress had one more session during which the House of Representatives, voting by states, had the task of resolving the tie vote and electing Burr or Jefferson for the presidency. This presented the incumbents with the opportunity of even extending their powers despite defeat. In Morison's words, "the federal party always marched straight forward, without paying much attention to the vox populi, which it deemed a very different thing from the vox dei."[41]

The Junto with other arch-Federalists were becoming convinced that their best interests would be served by placing their strength behind Burr. The New Yorker was considered an opportunist, corruptible, and open to a bargain that would throttle Jacobinism.[42]

The Junto Abandons Hamilton

It was over the choice of Burr or Jefferson that Hamilton began to discover to his humiliation and chagrin that the Junto had abandonned his leadership and, led by Theodore Sedgwick, the Junto Speaker of the House, were assuming control of his wing of the party.[43]

On hearing that the choice of Burr was being favored by an increasing number of Federalists, Hamilton wrote to Wol-

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[41] Morison, Otis, I, 149.

[42] Ibid., p. 194.

[43] Bowers, op. cit., pp. 491-493.

cott on December 16:

It is...circulated here, that...Federalists in Congress... talk of preferring Burr. I trust New England at least, will not so far lose its head as to fall into the snare. There is no doubt but that, upon every virtuous and prudent calculation, Jefferson is to be preferred. He is by far not so dangerous a man, and he has pretentions to character.

As to Burr, there is nothing in his favour. His private character is not defended by his most partial friends. He is bankrupt beyond redemption, except by the plunder of his country. His public principles have no other spring or aim than his own aggrandizement, per fas et nefas. If he can, he will certainly disturb our institutions, to secure to himself permanent power, and with it WEALTH. He is truly the Cataline of America...[44]

Having no real apprehensions that any significant number of his segment of the party would seriously support Burr, Hamilton even countenanced the move that Burr be tempted, saying, "Yet it may be well enough to throw out a line for him, in order to tempt him to start for the plate, and thus lay the foundation of dissention [sic] between the two chiefs." In closing, Hamilton stated that Wolcott might "communicate this letter to Marshall and Sedgwick."[45]

Almost immediately, however, Hamilton learned the extent to which his erstwhile followers had joined the forces for Burr. On the seventeenth the alarmed Hamilton wrote again to Wolcott:

Your last letter...has given me great pain... to learn that the opinion in favour of Mr. Burr was increasing among

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[44] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 458, letter Hamilton to Wolcott, Dec. 16, 1800.

[45] Ibid.

the Federalists...if [they] shall seriously attempt to support Mr. Burr in opposition to Mr. Jefferson [and] it fails ...it will expose them to the disgrace of a defeat in an attempt to elevate to the first place in the government, one of the worst men in the community.[46]

Hamilton chided the Burr Federalists, asking, "When will men consult their reason rather than their passions. Whatever they may imagine, the desire of mortifying the adverse party must be the chief spring of their disposition to prefer Burr."[47] His exhortation ended with the caveat: "Adieu to the Federal Troy, if they once introduce this Grecian Horse into their citadel."[48]

Wolcott answered Hamilton on Christmas Day and promised nothing:

I have received your favours of the 16th and 17th. That of the 16th I communicated to Mr. Marshall and Mr. Sedgwick. The first had yet expressed no opinion; the last mentioned gentleman has been inclined to support Mr. Burr, and this I find appears to be a prevailing and increasing sentiment of the Federalists.[49]

The Essex Junto presented an almost solid Burr front as the forces were aligned. Samuel Sewall, who had recently resigned from Congress to go on the bench of the Supreme Judicial Court of Massachusetts, argued cogently, if cynic-

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[46] Gibbs, op. cit., II, 458-460, letter Hamilton to Wolcott, Dec. 17, 1800.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid.

[49] Ibid., p. 460, letter Wolcott to Hamilton, Dec. 25, 1800.

ally for Burr:

...sentiment on this subject...generally here is that Burr must be voted for by the federalists as being the least of two evils. I think Burr's objectionable qualities will be more dangerous in the station of v.p. than as chief. He will govern without the responsibility which might check his proceedings...On the other hand as chief, if he has less principle and political integrity than the other, as some suppose, yet he has less enthusiasm and philosophy, and is wholly free, I am told, from the nonsense of democratic plans.[50]

Sewall proposed another tactic for the Federalists: to keep the voting in a dead heat and prevent any election at all in the House. Seeing the revolutionary but desirable possibilities of such a move, he pointed out: "Another purpose may be effected by a steady and decided vote of the federal party for Mr. Burr. It is possible that an election at this time and with the materials you will be confined to, may be wholly prevented. This is most desirable."[51]

Within the next month Theophilus Parsons, in declining a federal judgeship tendered by Otis, avowed his strong preference for Burr and expressed the hope that "the federalists in Congress will form an impenetrable phalanx and standing on a higher ground than we occupy, will decide with wisdom and vigor."[52]

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[50] Morison, Otis, I, 211-212, letter Samuel Sewall to Otis, Dec. 29, 1800.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Ibid., p. 213, letter Theo. Parsons to Otis, Jan. 23, 1801.

Timothy Pickering followed faithfully the Burr line. The dismissed Cabinet officer was of the opinion that Burr would not oppose the interests of the Federalist party as zealously as Jefferson, and that in case of war there was no question in his mind that Burr would prosecute hostilities with substantially more vigor than Jefferson.[53]

Hamilton fought on relentlessly despite the fact that his erstwhile praetorian guard, the Essex Junto, now actively opposed his wishes in the forthcoming House election. His arguments to them against Burr and in favor of Jefferson, evoked only tolerant, patronizing smiles.[54] Hamilton could no longer serve Junto purposes and they were done with him.[55]

Dismissing the rumor that Burr might refuse to stand against Jefferson in the House contest, Uriah Tracy cynically pointed out that those who really knew the Tammany chief "can perfectly understand this. Burr is a cunning man. If he cannot outwit all the Jeffersonians, I do not know the man."[56]

With arch-Federalist Gouverneur Morris, however, Hamilton's efforts were rewarded. In a letter to the distinguished

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[53] King, op. cit., III, 366, letter Pickering to King, Jan. 6, 1800.

[54] Bowers, op. cit., p. 497.

[55] Brown, op. cit., pp. 27-28.

[56] Steiner, op. cit., pp. 483-484, letter Uriah Tracy to James McHenry, Dec. 20, 1780.

diplomat, Hamilton had written that if there were any man "in the world I ought to hate, it is Jefferson. With Burr I have always been personally well. But the public good must be paramount to every private consideration."[57]

In sympathy with Hamilton's problems with his erstwhile following, Morris replied: "You, who are temperate in drinking, have never perhaps noticed the awkward situation of a man, who continues sober after the company are drunk."[58]

Displaying a forthright, statesmanlike integrity in the midst of party machinations, Morris stated his views:

> The object with many is to take Mr. Burr, and I should not be surprised if that measure were adopted. Not meaning to enter into intrigues, I have merely expressed the opinion, that since it was evidently the intention of our fellow citizens to make Mr Jefferson their President, it seems proper to fulfil that intention.
>
> The answer is simple...but it is not conclusive to unimpassioned sentiment. Let the representatives do what they may, they will not want arguments to justify them.
>
> Mr Burr will, it is said, come hither, and some who pretend to know his views think he will bargain with the Federalists. Of such bargain I shall know nothing, and having declared my determination to support the constitutionally appointed administration, so long as its acts shall not in my judgment be essentially wrong, my personal line of conduct gives me no difficulty, but I am not without serious apprehension for the future state of things.[59]

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[57] Richard B. Morris (ed.), Alexander Hamilton and the Founding of the Nation (1957), p. 541, letter Hamilton to Gouverneur Morris, Dec. 26, 1800. (hereinafter cited as Morris, Hamilton.)

[58] Jared Sparks, The Life of Gouverneur Morris (1832), III, 134, letter Gouverneur Morris to Hamilton, Jan. 5, 1801.

[59] Ibid.

With Sedgwick, Hamilton gained no ground. Now leading the Burr Federalists, the Junto Speaker of the House admitted to Hamilton that with respect to Burr "there was no disagreement as to his character...that he was ambitious...selfish... profligate."[60] The main point, however, was that the "Jacobins dislike Mr. Burr as President" even more than Pinckney.[61]

Sedgwick answered Hamilton's vehement protests with the argument that the nation, as it was intended to be, could not endure with leaders elected by the democratic process:

> It is impossible to preserve the honor of our country or the principles of our Constitution by a mode of election which was intended to secure to prominent talents and virtues the first honors of our country...We had at one election placed at the head of our government a semimaniac who...was the greatest marplot in nature [John Adams]; and at the next a feeble and false enthusiastic theorist [Jefferson], and a profligate without character and without property, bankrupt in both.[62]

Hamilton argued vainly with Sedgwick, in a personally handwritten exhortation:

> I beg of you, as you love your country, your friends, and yourself, to reconsider dispassionately the opinion you have expressed in favor of Burr.
>
> I never was so much mistaken as I shall be if our friends, in the event of their success, do not rue the preference they will give to that Cataline.[63]

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[60] Hamilton, Works, VI, 511, letter Sedgwick to Hamilton, Jan. 10, 1801.

[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Morris, Hamilton, p. 541, letter Alexander Hamilton to Theodore Sedgwick, Jan. 21, 1801.

In mid-January, Albert Gallatin gave his observations of Federalist sentiments in the forthcoming balloting:

> The most desperate wish [is] to [prevent] an election altogether, which they may do either by dividing the votes of the states where they have majorities or by still...voting for Burr...and the next object...would...be to pass a law by which...would vest the Presidential power in...some man of their party. But a more considerable number will try actually to name Burr President...Hamilton [has] openly declared against the project...[64]

Respecting the crucial power of the Junto in case of successful efforts to prevent any election, Gallatin continued:

> I infer that there will be an election...in favor of Mr. Jefferson. If not, there will be either an interregnum... or in case of usurpation by the present Congress...a dissolution of the Union if that usurpation shall be supported by New England.[65]

The voting began in the House on February 11, and through thirty-five ballots a deadlock prevailed, with Jefferson having the votes of eight states, Burr those of six, and those of two states being divided.[66] The break came when Federalist Bayard of Delaware, who had been voting for Burr, made the independent decision to cast a blank for his state in the next ballot.[67] The announcement of his decision to his

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[64] Adams, Gallatin, p. 253, letter Gallatin to wife, Jan. 15, 1801.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Ibid., p. 261, letter Gallatin to wife, Feb. 16, 1801.

[67] Randall, op. cit., II, 607, citing letter James Bayard to Alexander Hamilton, March 8, 1801.

colleagues brought on pandemonium. The Junto members and many of their following swore that they would abandon the Constitution and risk civil war before voting for Jefferson. After much discussion an arrangement was worked out in which Jefferson could gain the election without a single Federalist vote's being cast for him.[68]

The Junto, however, never departed from their adherence to Burr. Reporting to Hamilton, Bayard said that "because Connecticut insisted on continuing the ballot for Burr, New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island refused to depart from their former vote."[69]

The deadlock having been broken, Gallatin gave the tidings of victory and how it was accomplished:

> We have this day, after thirty six ballots, chosen Mr. Jefferson President. Morris of Vermont, withdrew; Craik, Dennis, Thomas, and Baer put in blank votes; this gives us ten states. The four New England States voted to the last for Mr. Burr. South Carolina and Delaware put in blank ballots...Thus has ended the most wicked and absurd attempt ever tried by the Federalists.[70]

Sedgwick, as Speaker of the House of Representatives, had the galling duty of making the formal announcement that Thomas Jefferson had been elected President of the United States.[71] At the time of the Inauguration, the thwarted

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[68] Miller, Fed. Era, p. 273.

[69] Randall, loc. cit.

[70] Adams, Gallatin, p. 262, letter Gallatin to wife, Feb. 17, 1801.

[71] Bowers, op. cit., p. 506.

Juntoist had either left the Capitol City or was in seclusion.[72]

In Henry Adams's words, with the election of Jefferson:

> The struggle was completely over. All the dangers, real and imaginary had vanished. The great Federal party which had created, organized, and for twelve years administered the government...was prostrate, broken and torn by dying convulsions.[73]

The Essex Junto, too, was finished as a force within the national framework of government. Henceforth its efforts, and very real efforts they were, manifested themselves exclusively on a sectional front.[74]

With their demonstrated contempt for the popular will, the Junto could never expect again to be welcomed as an asset by any person or group seeking endorsement at the polls in a nation-wide contest. As for their almost frantic hopes to gain permanent control of the government by means of oppressive legislation such as the Alien and Sedition Acts, Henry Adams wrote:

> They were probably mistaken, for, as their correspondence shows, there never was a time when the political formulas

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[72] Bowers, op. cit., p. 509.

[73] Ibid.

[74] The successive manifestations were: the plot for secession of the eastern states and a formation of a northern confederacy in 1804; nullification of Jefferson's embargo and threat of secession in 1809; and the manifestations of nullification and secession in New England in the War of 1812, climaxed by the Hartford Convention of 1814.

Hamilton, George Cabot, Fisher Ames, Gouverneur Morris, and Rufus Griswold could have been applied...with a chance of success.[75]

Hamilton's lengthy written castigation of Adams just before the campaign of 1800 was a serious, perhaps mortal blow to the incumbent party. Of this Lodge wrote, "If anything was needed to make the overthrow of the Federalists certain, this unfortunate pamphlet would have done it."[76] Of Hamilton's dual nature and factors that influenced it, Brown held that, "Washington brought the best out of the fiery West Indian; Adams stirred him to do his worst."[77]

The greatest problem of the Adams Administration was the French crisis, and the second President, with complete honesty of purpose, sought honorable peace with the Directory. On the other hand, Hamilton saw war with France as a basis for a large army which he could lead. The Essex Junto, for their part, would pursue any means to destroy the growth of democracy under Jefferson.[78]

Brown in his dissertation, assessed the sacrifice Adams made to gain his high objective:

Adams, therefore, succeeded in putting down the Junto plots of this period and thus prevented a war with France,

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[75] Adams, Gallatin, p. 199.

[76] Lodge, Hamilton, p. 235.

[77] Brown, op. cit., p. 24.

[78] Ibid.

but the price was his defeat and also that of the Federalist Party. I think that it would not be unjust to Hamilton and the Junto to say that they broke up their own party because they could not control and dictate the whole of its policy.[79]

When the time came for quitting his office, the defeated, embittered Adams left Washington in the early morning hours before Jefferson's Inauguration. In later years, having mellowed toward his great successor, he entered into a correspondence with him. In one missive, he speculated on whom he should like to see again in the hereafter:

After all, I hope to meet my wife, and friends, ancestors and posterity, sages, ancient and modern. I believe I could get over all my objections to meeting Alexander Hamilton and Tim Pick, if I could see a symptom of penitence in either...[80]

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[79] Brown, op. cit., p. 24.

[80] Koch and Peden, op. cit., p. 208, letter John Adams to Thomas Jefferson, May 29, 1818.

CONCLUSION

With the downfall of the Federalist Party in 1801, the Essex Junto, for the most part, withdrew from the national area of politics and concentrated its efforts in leading the East in resisting the federal policies of Thomas Jefferson and James Madison. This resistance resulted in varied threats of secession by the northeastern states and plots for the establishment of a Northern Confederacy, all culminating in the resolutions of the Hartford Convention in 1814. While it is with these manifestations of disunion that the Essex Junto is particularly identified and is best known to history, its role in the formation, development, and fall of the Federalist Party is certainly of equal significance. There would probably have been no federal government which the Junto could oppose, had it not been for its nurturing of the political entity which in turn promoted the adoption of a federal constitution establishing a central government.

With respect to this beginning of the Federalist Party, Professor Anson E. Morse held that it was born when the future members of the Essex Junto met at Ipswich, Massachusetts in 1788 to formulate their Essex Result.

The cells germinating toward a federal compact could quite possibly have died if the rebellion led by Daniel Shays had been permitted to go unchecked and had spread to other states. But for the pen of Fisher Ames and the ener-

getic action of Stephen Higginson, the insurrection might have so progressed.

When the adoption of the Federal Constitution hinged upon ratification by Massachusetts, it was the indefatigable work of Theophilus Parsons, Fisher Ames, George Cabot, Francis Dana, and others of the Junto which won Massachusetts' ratification and thereby cleared the way for general adoption of the instrument of union.

It is difficult to conceive of Alexander Hamilton's comprehensive plans for a framework of stable government being accomplished without the very real implementing efforts of Ames, Sedgwick, Cabot, and other Juntoists on the floor of the Congress.

In 1795, when war with Great Britain seemed inevitable without some diplomatic intervention, the Jay Treaty, costly as its terms were to the new republic, offered the only solution to prevent hostilities. When the House of Representatives threatened to block ratification of that covenant, it was Fisher Ames who stepped into the breach and, by the power of his oratory, saved the treaty. By this dramatic act the Federalist Party also was saved; for the life of that political entity depended on continued peaceful intercourse with the former mother country.

After the inauguration of John Adams, the crack in the structure of the party widened with the breach between the President and Alexander Hamilton. The Essex Junto, ever anx-

lous to do any and all things to promote its interests, eagerly embraced two measures which would hasten the fall of the party: the acts for heavy augmentation of the nation's armed forces and the Alien and Sedition Acts. While it is quite true that the new navy proved to be an indispensable tool in finally bringing France to an amiable disposition, the fact remains that there was, as Henry Adams asserted, reason to believe that the more sanguine warhawks, which included the Junto, "aimed at a war with France and an alliance with England for the purpose of creating an army and a navy to be used to check the spread of democracy in America."[1]

In the measures to enlarge the army, the Junto could visualize a Hamilton on horseback, leading an irresistible, all-conquering fighting force, suppressing once and for all, the hated mushrooming democracy.

As to the ultimate effect of the Alien and Sedition Acts, John Quincy Adams said that they were "two engines which the Federalists borrowed from the British government...to be used with extraordinary power and efficiency against themselves and against the administration."[2] It was not so much the nature of the acts themselves, but the witch-hunting practices in their enforcement that proved disastrous. With the zealot Pickering in their van, the Junto exploited these

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[1] Adams, Gallatin, p. 211.

[2] Adams, Parties in the U.S., p. 239.

draconian measures to the fullest; and the public reaction to their sanguine excesses was only too clearly demonstrated at the presidential election in the fall of 1800.

As the schism between Hamilton and Adams grew, the Junto in its ardent partisanship of the former, assigned no importance to the fact that Adams was titular head of the party. In and out of the cabinet itself, the Essexmen did not stop at any disloyalty to the President in the furtherance of their intrigues against his leadership.

When Hamilton was no longer useful to their interests, the Junto unhesitatingly sought to compromise the integrity of the Federalist Party by a secret collaboration with Aaron Burr. So frenzied were they in their almost pathological abhorrence of Jefferson and democracy, that some of their extremists, notably Griswold, Seawell, Sedgwick, and Tracy, plotted a revolutionary coup in order to prevent the election of anyone. Unlike Gouverneur Morris, they would not accept the will of the electorate.

In its last gambits to preserve its power in the national government, the Essex Junto had comported itself meanly. Certainly its actions were hardly consonant with the ethical standards expected of the "wise", "the good", and the "well born."

While the members of the Junto held themselves to be representatives of the aristocracy and persons of aristocratic

precepts, their pretensions can be questioned as one scrutinizes their record. They signally failed to demonstrate one quality essential in an aristocrat: they showed no consciousness of the concept of noblesse oblige.

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