by MARSHALL SMELSER
University of Notre Dame

The Federalist Period as an Age of Passion

THE YEARS of the administrations of Presidents Washington and Adams are usually regarded by the educated layman—although not by the few specialists in the era—as years in which public life was marked by statesmanlike decorum and a reliance on logic. This view has been encouraged by the overcompression of short popular accounts and the remarks of enthusiastic amateurs. While not wholly inaccurate, such a conception neglects to notice that the political activity of the Federalist period was strongly influenced by the passions of hate, anger and fear. It is possible to tell the story of this politically-conscious age so as to make it the narrative of a series of great statutes and treaties, enacted and ratified by heroes who set precedents which still serve us as guides. That is the way the tale is usually told. Yet the story can be organized quite differently by writing it as "emotional history," with the effect of emphasizing some almost forgotten motivations of the principal builders of the federal republic.

The ruling faction in the national politics of the United States, the group which controlled the three branches of government for the first twelve years of the federal republic (some months of congressional history excepted) were known as the Federalists—later, the Federalist Party. This group did not accept equalitarian principles. Their rejection was based on a theory of human nature which emphasized differences of individual abilities and the inherent depravity of passionate, self-interested human nature. When translated into the political jargon of the day this psychological analysis was much coarsened. For example, Edmund Burke's unfortunate epithet applied to the French people at large, "a swinish multitude," was widely used by the opposition party in America, the Republi-

cans, to illustrate the contempt in which aristocracy held the people everywhere. And the Republicans were not misusing the phrase.[1]

To select illustrations of this attitude toward the populace is almost to call the roll of the best minds of Federalism. Alexander Hamilton, Fisher Ames, George Cabot, Timothy Dwight, John Quincy Adams, James Iredell —all have left ample literary evidence of their real fear of equalitarianism. Some of them explained themselves psychologically, some theologically and in others—evidence is clear—snobbery was sufficient ground.[2] About the only notable exception to the demophobia of Federalism was the political theory of the most able of Federalist constitutional historians, John Adams. Adams did not fear democracy more than other forms of government. It was absolute power that he feared, whether despotic, oligarchic or democratic.[3] But few of his collaborators were so dispassionate.

Whether a republic could be made to work, even with promising human material, was a question which was complicated by American geography. The vast area of the United States discouraged many, both Republicans and Federalists. It seemed very likely that the interstate and intersectional jealousies which had vexed the old Confederation would prove too strong for the union. The difficulties seemed so great that at every particular crisis there were fears of disunion and threats of secession. At the time of the congressional debates over Hamilton's proposal that the federal government assume the state debts—the "Assumption" controversy—there was a hint that New England and South Carolina might secede if Assumption

[1]Merle Curti, *The Growth of American Thought* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1943), p. 189; Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France* (New York: P. F. Collier & Son, 1909), XXIV, 227; Thomas A. Bailey, *A Diplomatic History of the American People* (2d ed.; New York: F. S. Crofts & Co., 1942), p. 58.

[2]Samuel Eliot Morison, *Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution, 1764-1788* (2d ed.; Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1929), p. 259; Fisher Ames, "The Dangers of American Liberty," in Edwin H. Cady (ed.), *Literature of the Early Republic* (New York: Rinehart Co., 1950), pp. 108-16; Ames to Minot, July 9, 1789, Fisher Ames, *Works,* ed. Seth Ames (Boston, 1854), I, 62; Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., April 22, 1798, George Gibbs, *Memoirs of the Administrations of Washington and John Adams, Edited from the Papers of Oliver Wolcott* (New York, 1846), II, 46 (Hereafter cited: Gibbs, *Memoirs*); Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., March 23, 1790, *ibid.,* I, 42 illustrates a Federalist Congressman's contempt for the intellectual powers of his own constituents—see also Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Feb. 17, 1793, *ibid.,* I, 88; Edward Channing, *A History of the United States* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1932-36), IV, 65n. (Hereafter cited: Channing, *United States*); Cabot to King, August 14, 1795), April 10, 1797, Rufus King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King,* ed. C. R. King (New York, 1894-1900), II, 25, 170; Leon Howard, *The Connecticut Wits* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), pp. 345-46 (Hereafter cited: Howard, *Wits*); *ibid.,* pp. 368, 370; John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs of John Quincy Adams,* ed. C. F. Adams (Philadelphia, 1874-77), I, 83, where, among several mottoes at the head of his diary, is the sentence from the ancient writer Bias, "The many are evil."

[3]John Adams to Taylor, April 15, 1814, John Adams, *Works,* ed. C. F. Adams (Boston, 1850-56), VI, 477; Zoltán Haraszti, *John Adams and the Prophets of Progress* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1952), pp. 24, 198.

did not carry.[4] In 1792 George Washington was urged to accept a second term as President by Attorney General Edmund Randolph and by Secretary of the Treasury Alexander Hamilton because his presence would help to preserve the union, and this was no new idea to the President.[5] Northern Senators were again speaking privately of secession in the Third Congress.[6] During the hullaballoo over the Jay Treaty Virginians threatened secession if the treaty were ratified, and northerners threatened the same if southerners did not behave more responsibly.[7] In the presidential campaign of 1796 some Yankees hoped that New England would secede if Thomas Jefferson were elected to the presidency.[8] During the uproar over the X.Y.Z. Affair Jefferson thought that the Federalist outcry was aimed in part at justifying a secession which might soon occur, but he himself opposed secession when John Taylor of Caroline seriously suggested that Virginia and North Carolina leave the union.[9]

The leaders of the nation were dealing with hard facts when they contemplated the interstate and intersectional rivalries and jealousies. These were differences rooted in the psychology, the culture and the economy of the Americans. The weakness of the government under the Articles of Confederation had been its inability to harmonize local interests and to enforce a common will against stubborn sectionalism. With the ratification of the new constitution, national solutions of national problems might for the first time be possible. One national solution just *might* be the abolition of the states. Hamilton is well remembered as an extreme "consolidationist" who would have been pleased to see the states abolished. What is less well remembered is that he was not alone. Men of such views were disappointed when sectionalism did not quickly die. They did not think of sectionalism as the effect of deep and permanent causes but as the

[4]William Maclay, *Journal,* ed. E. S. Maclay (New York, 1890), [March 8, 1790] p. 209; Thomas Jefferson, "The Anas," *Writings,* Memorial edition, ed. A. A. Lipscomb (Washington: Thomas Jefferson Memorial Association of the United States, 1903-4), I, 274.

[5]Randolph to Washington, August 5, 1792, George Washington, *Writings,* ed. J. C. Fitzpatrick (Washington: U. S. Government Printing Office, 1931-44), XXXII, 135n.-136n.; Hamilton to Washington, July 30, August 18, 1792, Alexander Hamilton, *Works,* ed. Henry Cabot Lodge (New York: G. P. Putnan's Sons, 1904), X, 8, II, 465; Jefferson, "The Anas," ed. Lipscomb, I, 308.

[6]Henry H. Simms, *The Life of John Taylor* (Richmond: William Byrd Press, 1932), pp. 61-62.

[7]William Jay, *The Life of John Jay with Selections from his Correspondence and Miscellaneous Papers* (New York, 1833), I, 361n.; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., August 10, 1795, Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 23, 1795, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Hamilton, April 29, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 224, 269, 334; Jefferson, "The Anas," ed. Lipscomb, I, 422.

[8]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 21, 28, Dec. 12, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 397, 403, 409.

[9]Jefferson to Madison, March 21, 1798, ed. Lipscomb, X, 11; Jefferson to Taylor, June 4, 1798, *Jefferson Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society Collections,* Seventh Series, I (1900), 61-64.

product of selfishness or envy. Sectional opposition soon became malicious opposition or, at best, a quarrel of the "outs" and the "ins."[10]

Most of the sectional ill-feeling was the result of north-south clashes but there was also a discernible east-west jealousy. On the Federalist side its most articulate analyst was President Timothy Dwight of Yale who said that frontiersmen as a group were men who had been too shiftless for orderly society, men who were impatient of all restraints. Discouraged, fearing poverty, jail and public contempt, at length they went to the wilderness (where some of them were saved by acquiring property, since, to some extent, one must love property to have good morals).[11] Another Federalist disapproved of westward migration because a scattered population became "ignorant, savage, and ungovernable."[12] Whether they went because they were bad, or became bad because they went, westerners were generally odious.

Residence in Philadelphia was alone enough to excite provincialism in some of the northern executive officers and members of the Congress. For the first time some of them came into a genuine liberal atmosphere, Philadelphia being the first influential home of freedom in America.[13] Philadelphia had been a democratic center during the War for Independence. In the 1790's English republicans and revolutionary Irishmen were always to be found in Philadelphia.[14] Some Federalists were frank in expressing their mean opinions of the Pennsylvanians and their ill-informed and stormy politics.[15]

With their pessimistic view of human nature, their fear of localism and their almost universally held doubts of the permanence of the union, it is little wonder that the Federalists took an intolerant position regarding the opposition party, which seemed to be a race of marplots characterized by excessive ambition, unwholesome partisanship and a dangerous reliance upon the judgment of the voters. At best the Republicans often seemed

[10]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Dec. 23, 1789, Jan. 28, 1790, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Feb. 12, 1791, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Webster, May 20, 1793, Hopkins to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., August 21, 1793, Trumbull to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Feb. 16, 1795, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 33, 36, 63, 99, 105, 180; James Schouler, *History of the United States under the Constitution* (rev. ed; New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1894-1913), I, 219.

[11]Quoted in Howard, *Wits,* pp. 374-77.

[12]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., March 21, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 323.

[13]Samuel Eliot Morison, "John Adams and Thomas Jefferson," *By Land and by Sea, Essays and Addresses* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1954), p. 225.

[14]William Cobbett, *Letters . . . to Edward Thornton Written in the Years 1797 to 1800,* ed. G. D. H. Cole (New York: Oxford University Press, 1937), p. xxviii.

[15]Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Feb. 12, 1791, Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., June 17, 1793, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Nov. 27, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 62-63, 102, 401, Hamilton to King, Oct. 30, 1794, King, *Life and Correspondence,* I, 575.

governed by obstinacy, envy, malice or ambition. At worst they were seditious and treasonable. Federalist private correspondence was peppered with references to Republican disloyalty, insincerity, intrigue and demagoguery, and similar allegations were made in the pamphleteering war.[16] To Federalists it was obvious that Republican opposition was malicious mischief. The conclusion almost forced upon the reader of these and hundreds more of Federalist condemnations is that the two-party system is immoral. Since both parties could not be correct, one must be the foe of order.[17] Protestations of the loyalty of an opposition party were insincere. It became almost normal to consider opposition as seditious and, in extraordinary cases, as treasonable.[18]

The appearance of the Democratic-Republican societies in 1793 seemed sufficient proof of an organized conspiracy against the liberty of the nation. These political clubs were formed by city workers and western farmers and, as we now see, were the nuclei of the Republican Party. Called "demoniacal" as a pun on the word "democratical" their seditious character was assumed and their legality denied.[19] They needed only to take up arms to be a revolutionary army.

Another evidence of the bad intentions of the Republicans was that they went to some trouble to gain popularity, and disgraced themselves by seeking votes.[20] To run for office was plainly beneath the dignity of the well-born. Man must not seek office; office must seek the man. It was bad enough to canvass the opinions of the vulgar on the qualifications of men. It was worse to ask the mob to pass on questions of public policy. Young John Quincy Adams thought a victorious majority in a Boston Town Meeting "looked as if they had been collected from all the jails of the con-

[16]Gore to King, Dec. 3, 1789, *ibid.,* I, 369; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., July 11, 1793, Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., March 10, 1794, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 103, 131; Hamilton to Washington, Aug. 18, 1792, Hamilton, *Works,* II, 458-59; "Civis to Mercator," Sept. 5, 1792, *ibid.,* III, 29-30; "Camillus," No. 1, July 22, 1795, *ibid.,* V, 190-91; John Quincy Adams to Abigail Adams, May 16, 1795, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* ed. W. C. Ford (New York: Macmillan Co., 1913-17), I, 340n.

[17]Suggested by Eugene Perry Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1942), pp. 122-23.

[18]Quoted in John A. Krout and Dixon Ryan Fox, *The Completion of Independence, 1790-1830* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1944), pp. 156-57; Washington to Stone, Dec. 6, 1795, to Lafayette, Dec. 25, 1798, Washington, *Writings,* XXXIV, 385, XXXVII, 66-67; Carroll to McHenry, Dec. 5, 1796, Bernard C. Steiner, *The Life and Correspondence of James McHenry* (Cleveland: Burrows Brothers Co., 1907), p. 205.

[19]Washington to Ball, Sept. 25, 1794, Washington, *Writings,* XXXIII, 505-7; Murray to McHenry, Dec. 16, 1794, Steiner, *McHenry,* pp. 155-56.

[20]Gore to King, Oct. 23, 1790, King, *Life and Correspondence,* I, 393; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Feb. 14, 1792, Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., May 6, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 73, 337; Ames to Foster, Jan. 4, 1796, Ames, *Works,* I, 181-82.

tinent"[21] and a Federalist Secretary of State once stated it as a principle that the larger the attendance at a public meeting the less weight should be given to its resolutions.[22] It is hard now to imagine that an administration which was at once fearful and contemptuous of the people could expect to stay long in power. But the Federalists saw no weakness in their political theory. Weakness, they admitted, but it was a weakness of disposition and organization in their own followers whereby rich men evaded responsibility and thereby helped their natural enemies. Such renegades feared to make government strong enough to be workable and opposed a spirit of determination in government because they were too timid to risk the loss of public favor. One would gather that the American republic was dying of senility while still in its cradle.[23]

Once the newspapers had found their normal level of stridency, which had been pretty well established by the last year of Washington's first term, many Federalists felt that they lived permanently on the edge of doom. The harshness of partisanship made it seem unlikely that government could be administered or the union preserved.[24] Nevertheless, although they might claim to despise popularity-seeking and electioneering, Federalists worked hard to influence public opinion by means of the press. Hardly a Federalist leader can be named who did not at some time or other, over his own name or a pseudonym, engage in newspaper controversy. A reading of the polemics shows that a good deal of the writing was much less concerned with informing the intellect than it was with whipping up those same passions which the Republicans were accused of trying to arouse. The result was the publication of some of the ripest vituperation in American literary history.[25]

Before 1798 and the enactment of the Sedition Act, the Federalists had few remedies for the acute infection of the body politic. About the only constructive suggestions were those for the conduct of local political cam-

[21]John Quincy Adams to Thomas Boylston Adams, Feb. 1, 1792, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 110-14.

[22]Pickering to Williams, July [no day] 1795, Pickering to Washington, July 27, 1795, Charles W. Upham and Octavius Pickering, *The Life of Timothy Pickering* (Boston, 1867-73), III, 181-83.

[23]Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., July 9, 1795, April 22, 1798, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 210, II, 47; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, May 26, 1794, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 191; Ames to Gore, Dec. 17, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 156-57.

[24]Washington to Hamilton, Aug. 26, 1792, to Randolph, Oct. 16, 1794, to Henry, Oct. 9, 1795, Washington, *Writings,* XXXII, 132-34, XXXIV, 3, 335; Ames to Dwight, August 8, Sept. 3, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 146-48; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Jan. 5, 1794, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 178; Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., July 9, 1795, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Morse, Sept. 26, 1795, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Frederick Wolcott, Sept. 29, 1795, Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Feb. 21, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 210, 247-48, 304.

[25]For examples of the poetry of vituperation see Frank Monaghan, *John Jay, Defender of Liberty* (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1935), p. 396 and Curti, *Thought,* pp. 192-93.

paigns.[26] But it seemed probable that the malevolence of the Republicans could be explained and counter-attacked by moral theology. In their discussions of the infidelity and immorality of their opponents, the Federalists owed much in their thinking to foreign writers, particularly to Edmund Burke who, in his *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* had described a systematic plan of literary men to destroy Christianity. The same trend was noticed by some commentators in America and in the course of identifying infidelity in religion with democracy in politics, Jefferson's private life was slanderously attacked in prose and verse[27]—an attack which established a false tradition that is still alive.

It was strongly suspected that the turbulent demagogues and their depraved followers were untrustworthy on the subject of the rights of property.[28] There seemed to be many evidences for this, but the unreliability of the Republicans was sufficiently shown by their consistent opposition to the Hamiltonian design for safeguarding property and establishing the national credit.

If the opposition to administration measures had been limited to words and votes the Federalists, in time, might have come to accept partisanship as the normal state of American politics, but in 1794 and 1795 opposition erupted into violence which appeared to justify the worst fears of the ruling group. Violence was used to prevent the enforcement of the federal excise law in western Pennsylvania, and large crowds, perhaps mobs, demonstrated in many places to show their disapproval of the Jay Treaty.

The news of the Whiskey Rebellion sent a shock wave of alarm through the country. The appearance of rebellion and anarchy was what Federalists had been predicting and fearing.[29] After the rioters dispersed before

[26]The best tactical proposals appear to have been those of Fisher Ames, Ames to Dwight, Sept. 11, Dec. 12, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 150, 155.

[27]John Trumbull, *Autobiography,* ed. Theodore Sizer (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), pp. 173-75; See the allegedly anti-Christian clause, Article XI, of a treaty with the Dey of Algiers, negotiated by the Republican Joel Barlow in 1796-97, United States, Navy Department, *Naval Documents Related to the United States Wars with the Barbary Powers* (Washington, 1939), I, 178—for an outraged comment thereon, Steiner, *McHenry,* p. 470; D. M. Ludlum, *Social Ferment in Vermont,* 1791-1850 (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 30; Curti, *Thought,* pp. 195-96.

[28]Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies,* pp. 175-86; Jay to Duane, Sept. 16, 1795, Jay, *Jay,* I, 375-76; Hamilton, "Vindication of the Funding System," 1791[?], Hamilton, *Works,* III, 11-12; See also a perceptive essay in the form of a review of the new publication of Griffith J. McRee, *Life and Correspondence* of James Iredell (New York: Peter Smith, 1949) by Elisha P. Douglass, in *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, VII (July, 1950), 459-66.

[29]The best account is Leland D. Baldwin, *Whiskey Rebels: The Story of a Frontier Uprising* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1939); See also J. S. Bassett, *The Federalist System, 1789-1801* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1906), Vol. XI, of *The American Nation, A History,* ed. A. B. Hart, 107-10; Fisher Ames thought it premature, hence perhaps a Good Thing in the long run: Ames to Dwight, Sept. 3, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 148.

the approach of troops sent by the President, a great deal of talk and writing, both public and private, of Federalist leaders in the next few months was devoted to the motives, causes and dangers of the whiskey disturbance. Washington's opinions on the subject are valuable, because he had the responsibility for suppressing the insurrection and he also had the most widespread network of correspondents. He was convinced that the troubles were the work of a conspiracy organized by the Democratic-Republican clubs, but set in motion prematurely. He was gratified by the popular support of the government. His views were formally summarized in his annual message to the Congress in November, 1794.[30] (The true view of responsible Republicans was glumly expressed by James Madison who thought the leaders of the rebellion did a service to despotism. Insurrections "increase the momentum of power" as had been shown by Shays's Rebellion in the 1780's.)[31]

The Whiskey Rebellion had been quieted only briefly when sporadic violence broke out in many towns as part of the opposition to the Jay Treaty. Jay's character was symbolically and systematically defamed. A Philadelphia crowd demonstrated before the house of the British Minister and smashed windows elsewhere. Hamilton was stoned by a hostile mob in New York. Several disturbances in Boston led to a charge that Governor Samuel Adams evaded responsibility for keeping public order. Anti-Jay rioting extended as far north as Portsmouth, New Hampshire.[32] It was very hard for Federalists to believe that these outbursts, these lawless proceedings so uncomfortably reminiscent of the French Revolution, were spontaneous. There simply had to be a plot.[33]

The partisan press appeared to be a principal tool of organized malevolence. And as early as the end of Washington's first term it was a settled conviction of the Federalists that the *National Gazette,* edited by the poet Philip Freneau, was the trumpet of treason. Hamilton detected subversion in it as early as the summer of 1792, and he often appeared in print (over pseudonyms) in John Fenno's *Gazette of the United States* in controversy with Freneau's paper, questioning Freneau's integrity, and blaming Jeffer-

[30]Washington to Fleming, Cook and McLenahan, Jan. 30, 1793, to Thruston, August 10, 1794, to Henry Lee, August 26, 1794, to Daniel Morgan, Oct. 8, 1794, to Jay, November 1[-5], 1794, Washington, *Writings,* XXXII, 321, XXXIII, 464-65, 475-76, 524, XXXIV, 17; Washington, "Sixth Annual Address to Congress," Nov. 19, 1794, *ibid.,* XXXIV, 29, 34-35.

[31]On the part played by the Democratic-Republican clubs see Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies;* Madison commented in Madison to Monroe, Dec. 4, 1794, James Madison, *Writings,* ed. Gaillard Hunt (New York, 1900-10), VI, 220-21.

[32]Bailey, *Diplomatic History,* p. 66; Monaghan, *Jay,* pp. 392-94; Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., July 28, 1795, Gibbs, *Memoirs, I,* 218-19; Cabot to King, July 27, 1795, Gore to King, Sept. 13, 1795, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 20, 31-32; Lawrence Shaw Mayo, *John Langdon of New Hampshire* (Concord, N.H.: Rumford Press, 1937), pp. 268-69.

[33]Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Washington, Sept. 26, 1795, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 246.

son for the foundation of a paper which existed only to calumniate and blacken the reputations of responsible administrators. Others—Fisher Ames, Timothy Dwight, even Washington—questioned the honesty of the editor's purposes.[34] In Philadelphia the *National Gazette* and its successor, the *Aurora,* set the tone for anti-administration newspapers elsewhere. According to Hamilton the Republican press had mastered the technique of repetition. No reputation, however good, could survive constantly repeated lies. In time the public tires of holding out against the detractions and decides that anyone so often accused "cannot be entirely innocent."[35]

What was poison in a Republican paper was more tolerable in a Federalist sheet. The Federalist editors included some uncommonly skilled vituperators, most violent of whom was the Englishman, William Cobbett, who used the pen name Peter Porcupine. Freneau once called him "Porcupine Peter/The democrat eater," but he was praised by Washington. In asperity, strength and coarseness no Republican editor successfully competed with this master of malediction.[36]

The Federalists were quite willing to get down to individual cases. Not only did they damn the Republican Party en bloc as subversive but, in private letters, they named the traitors personally. Aaron Burr, George Clinton, Albert Gallatin, Thomas Mifflin, John Langdon, James Madison and many lesser men were tagged as intriguing, vile, mischievous, disloyal, overly ambitious or intellectually dishonest.[37] Thomas Jefferson, of course, was the arch-anarch. A socially conscious intellectual, both his learning and his morals were mocked.[38] Possessed of such an unpromising character, the author of the Declaration of Independence could hardly help being

[34]Hamilton to John Adams, June 25, 1792, John Adams, *Works,* VIII, 514; T. L. [Hamilton] to Fenno, July 25, 1792, "Catallus [Hamilton] to Aristides," Sept. 15, 29, 1792, Hamilton, *Works,* VII, 229 252, 270-71; Ames to Minot, Feb. 20, 1793, Ames, *Works,* I, 128; Timothy Dwight to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., 1793, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 107; Washington to Henry Lee, July 21, 1793, to Pendleton, Sept. 23, 1793, Washington, *Writings,* XXXIII, 23-24, 95.

[35]John C. Miller, *Crisis in Freedom, The Alien and Sedition Acts* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), p. 58.

[36]Philip Freneau, *Poems,* ed. F. L. Pattee (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1907), III, 186; Washington to Stuart, Jan. 8, 1797, Washington, *Writings,* XXXV, 360; Cobbett's famous apostrophe to Democracy is quoted in Curti, *Thought,* p. 192.

[37]Hamilton, Sept. 21, 1792, Hamilton to Washington, Dec. 24, 1795, Hamilton, *Works,* X, 19-20, 138; Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Dec. 5, 1792, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Sept. 23, 1794, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 84, 159; John Adams to Cunningham, Feb. 11, 1809, *Correspondence Between the Hon. John Adams . . . and the Late Wm. Cunningham, Esq.* (Boston, 1823), p. 81, referring casually to the Whiskey Rebellion as "Gallatin's disturbance"; Bradbury to Parsons, April 13, 1796, Theophilus Parsons, Jr., *Memoir of Theophilus Parsons* (Boston, 1859), p. 474; Jeremiah Smith, quoted in Mayo, *Langdon,* pp. 248-49; Hamilton's explanation of the end of his collaboration with Madison is quoted in Alpheus Thomas Mason, "The Federalist—A Split Personality," *American Historical Review,* LVII (April, 1952), 626, 642.

[38]Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Oct. 3, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 385-86; Dumas Malone, *Jefferson and the Rights of Man* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1951), pp. 473-74.

a conspirator against his country, in short, a traitor. This point was persistently developed over the years, both in letters and in print, by Hamilton,[39] but Hamilton was not alone in the matter.[40]

The extravagance and ferocity of Federalist assaults on the motives, character and reputations of Republicans, collectively and singly, can be partly explained as the tactics of resentful self-defense. They were responding to pain, suffered directly or vicariously in sympathy with men they admired. Washington was reasonably sure that Republican malignity would destroy the union.[41] Oliver Wolcott, Senior, could hardly praise Hamilton enough for the immense national benefits of his economic program and regretted that he was subject to attacks because of that "basest and vilest of human affections envy."[42] He was also convinced of a plot to drive the President to resign "by giving him constant disturbance." Hamilton had the expanded theory that "an unprincipled and daring combination" was trying to destroy Washington's popularity as the first step to the destruction of national independence.[43] As for Hamilton himself, his letters to Washington and to some others show a constant feeling of being persecuted.[44] But a plea of self-defense would go down better if the private records of the Federalists did not so plainly reveal their arrogant prior assumption of a monopoly of patriotism.

Just as the Republicans accused the Federalists of being the tools of a foreign power so the Federalists charged the Republicans with being instruments of France. But there were differences. For one thing, the Federalists circulated their slurs much more frequently than did their opponents. Surviving records show three or four denunciations of alleged disloyalty by the Federalists for every one by the Republicans. Secondly, unlike the followers of Jefferson, the Federalists were in a position to act on their convictions, to use the engine of the state to defend the people against the subversive conspiracy they claimed to recognize.

The French Revolution provided the occasion for the imputation. At its beginning probably most Americans were sympathetic[45] but some were

[39]"Catallus [Hamilton] to Aristides," Sept. 29, 1792, Hamilton, *Works*, VII, 264-66; the complete indictment is in Hamilton to Carrington, May 26, 1792, *ibid.*, IX, 513-35; see also Leonard D. White, *The Federalists: A Study in Administrative History* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1948), p. 231.

[40]See particularly Oliver Wolcott, Jr., in Gibbs, *Memoirs*, I, 121-22.

[41]Washington to Randolph, Aug. 26, 1792, Washington, *Writings*, XXXII, 136-37.

[42]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., June 17, 1793, Gibbs, *Memoirs*, I, 101-2.

[43]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 9, 1795, *ibid.*, I, 264; Hamilton, "Explanation," Nov. 11, 1795, Hamilton, *Works*, VIII, 123-24.

[44]For example, Hamilton to Washington, April 9, 1794, *ibid.*, III, 192.

[45]Channing, *United States*, IV, 164-65; Irving Brant, *James Madison, Father of the Constitution, 1787-1800* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1950), p. 371.

skeptical and regarded the enthusiasm for France as unbecoming (and dangerous to) the citizens of a sovereign republic.[46] A pre-revolutionary suspicion of French political philosophy had invaded the minds of many thoughtful men long before the stirring events in Paris.[47] A politically-minded people soon introduced the issue into politics. Charges of dangerous attachment to France and to Britain were exchanged in the campaign of 1792, and the Republicans were permanently tagged as "Jacobins" in that year at the same time as Thomas Jefferson was singled out as the head Gallican of the country.[48]

The internal conflict over the French Revolution and its influence in the United States is not only an episode of our political history; it is also a chapter in the history of the American intellect, in the course of which, to the satisfaction of most conservatives, the Jeffersonians were temporarily but completely identified as revolutionary corruptors of morality.[49] Each side fired salvos of books. The first pair of combatants were imports: Thomas Paine's *Rights of Man* and the book to which it was a reply, Edmund Burke's *Reflections on the Revolution in France.* In America Paine's work was also considered an answer to John Adams' *Discourses on Davila,* a constitutional treatise which had been read by Republicans as a royalist tract. Twenty-four-year-old John Quincy Adams contradicted Paine with his eleven *Publicola Letters,* which were attributed to his father and with that attribution reprinted in London; and pseudonymously in Glasgow and Dublin. All of this by the end of 1791. Thereafter the French Revolution and its controlling ideas remained the chief topic of journalistic and literary controversy, with special reference to the loyalty of American admirers.[50]

More oil was poured on the flames by the arrival of Paine's contemptuous attack on revelation, the *Age of Reason.*[51] Another frightening book was *Ruins; or, A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires,* by the history professor

[46]Samuel Eliot Morison (ed.), *Sources and Documents Illustrating the American Revolution,* p. 259, where Hamilton is reported in Yates's notes of the Federal convention, 1787, as speaking of the danger of foreign influence. He never changed his mind.

[47]Brant, *Madison,* p. 249 on Madison's "Frenchified" politics early in 1789, and Robert Beverley's view of French influence, p. 371.

[48]William B. Hatcher, *Edward Livingston, Jeffersonian Republican and Jacksonian Democrat* (University, La.: Louisiana State University Press, 1940), pp. 17-18; Cabot to Parsons, Oct. 3, 1792, Parsons, *Parsons,* p. 469; Jefferson to Thomas Pinckney, Dec. 3, 1792, ed. Lipscomb, VIII, 443-44; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Frederick Wolcott, Dec. 15, 1792, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 84-85; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Feb. 10, 1793, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 135.

[49]Curti, *Thought,* p. 199; Vernon Louis Parrington, *Main Currents in American Thought* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1930), I, 292-356, is the best-known treatment.

[50]John Quincy Adams, *Memoirs,* I, 25-26; Gilbert Chinard, *Honest John Adams* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1933), pp. 238-39.

[51]Curti, *Thought,* p. 159.

Constantin Volney, a work strongly anti-clerical which concluded that there could be no certain determination of the true religion—with easily imagined effects on the conservative clergy in America. Even more shocking was the translation of Paul Dieterich, Baron Holbach's *Christianity Unveiled,* avowedly hedonistic and anti-Christian.[52]

Worse than words were deeds, such as the founding of Deistical Societies in the United States, and of the synthetic (and short-lived) religion called Theophilanthropy which—it was rumored—was to be exported to the United States from France.[53]

The defenders sallied vigorously from the citadel of New England orthodoxy, led by clergymen and the legal profession.[54] The world view most influential in shaping arguments against France and French ideas was that of Edmund Burke. Apart from theoretical generalizations there is a remarkable coincidence of Burke and the Federalists in most points of applied political science.[55] Burke's ideas were adopted and expanded for domestic consumption by able controversialists, among them Fisher Ames and Noah Webster.[56]

Burke had recommended looking into the workings of a group which has been blamed or credited with full responsibility for starting the French Revolution, the Society of Illuminati, of Bavaria.[57] This society, it was said, aimed to control the world by corrupting its morals. The notion captured the imaginations of Federalists everywhere when they read John Robison's *Proof of a Conspiracy* and Abbé Barruel's *Memoirs, Illustrating the History of Jacobinism,* both on the same subject, which were reprinted in the United States. Abigail Adams circulated Barruel, Phi Beta Kappa was suspected of illuminism, the President of Yale, Timothy Dwight, denounced Jacobinism in America.[58] Gallophobia had become an obsession

[52]Curti, *Thought,* pp. 163, 165.

[53]Charles Downer Hazen, *Contemporary American Opinion of the French Revolution* (Baltimore, 1897), p. 268 (Hereafter cited: Hazen, *Opinion*); Curti, *Thought,* pp. 159-60; Lewis Leary, *That Rascal Freneau* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1941), pp. 281-82; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Feb. 17, 1798, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 255-56; Abigail Adams, *New Letters . . . 1788-1801,* ed. Stewart Mitchell (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1947), pp. 179-80, 180n.

[54]For example, Jedediah Morse in James K. Morse, *Jedediah Morse, A Champion of New England Orthodoxy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), pp. 51-58.

[55]For a parallel of Burke and Hamilton see Edmund Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* p. 303; there are many other instances, *passim.*

[56]Hazen, *Opinion,* p. 143n.; Fisher Ames, "The Dangers of American Liberty," in Cady, ed., *op. cit.,* pp. 108-16; Harry Warfel, *Noah Webster, Schoolmaster to America* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1936), p. 264.

[57]Burke, *Reflections on the Revolution in France,* p. 303n.

[58]Abigail Adams to Mercy Warren, Oct. 5, 1799, *Warren-Adams Letters,* 2 volumes, *Massachusetts Historical Society Collections* (1917-25), Vols. LXXII-LXXIII, II, 341 (Hereafter cited: *Warren-Adams Letters,* the roman numerals referring to these two volumes, not to the over-all series numbers); Abigail Adams, *New Letters,*

which confined the minds and colored the rhetoric of Federalists, blinding the leaders to American political realities and distracting them from the kind of practical politics necessary to keep them in power. The provincializing effect of the mania was shown by the rejection of the metric system in 1795 because it was too French.[59]

The war between France and Britain brought to a peak the excitement previously stimulated by the overthrow of the monarchy and the proclamation of the French Republic. Successive military victories won by the French so heated the blood of their American well-wishers that in at least eighteen American cities and towns such French events were the occasions of civic celebrations. To the Federalists war against Britain was war against the chief bastion of civilization and the excesses of Republican enthusiasm for France seemed hardly credible unless—unless, it was all a great plot to involve the United States in the war on the side of France.[60] A nationwide plot requires a highly placed plotter, so leadership was accorded to Citizen Charles Edmond Genêt, the newly arrived Minister of France, aided, no doubt, or even directed by that same Thomas Jefferson who had probably helped to start the French Revolution when he represented the United States in Paris during the first days of the uprising.[61] Whether the Republicans had been bought or flattered by the French, leading Federalists were sure they saw evidence on all sides that they were pliant agents of France.[62]

Western expansionist projects were taken up and promoted by Genêt (who was condemned for originating more of them than he actually did). Where they involved the use of armies against British or Spanish colonies in the new world it was feared that the armies were really to be used against the United States.[63] The decline and dismissal of Genêt eased Federalist nervous tension somewhat but it appeared that he had left a

p. xxxi; Howard, *Wits,* p. 349; Timothy Dwight, "The Duty of Americans at the Present Crisis," July 4, 1798, W. Thorp, M. Curti and C. Baker, *American Issues* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1944), I, 358-63; For a contrary view of Dwight's part in arousing the excitement see Charles E. Cunningham, *Timothy Dwight, 1752-1817, A Biography* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1942), pp. 396-97.

[59]Hazen, *Opinion,* pp. 281-82.

[60]*Ibid.,* pp. 164-73, 214; Ames to Dwight, May 6, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 143; John Adams, *Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams . . . and the Late Wm. Cunningham,* pp. 35-37; Charles Adams to John Quincy Adams, July 29, 1793, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 147.

[61]Oliver Wolcott, Jr. [undated memorandum] Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 121-22; Hamilton, May, 1793, *Works,* X, 44; Bailey, *Diplomatic History,* pp. 76-77, gives John Adams' opinion of the nearness of another American Revolution in 1793.

[62]Hopkins to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Aug. 21, 1793, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 104; Hamilton, "Pacificus," No. 6, July 17, 1793, Hamilton, *Works,* IV, 481-82; King to Hamilton, Aug. 3, 1793, King, *Life and Correspondence,* I, 492-93; John Quincy Adams, "Columbus," No. 2, Dec. 4, 1793, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 155-56, 160; Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies,* pp. 191-92.

[63]Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies,* pp. 133-38; Cabot to Parsons, Jan. 8, 1794, Parsons, *Parsons,* p. 470.

legacy—the network of Democratic-Republican societies which coincided with the term of his mission. "Gallic Jackals" were carrying on the bad work in these seditious societies. The analogy with the Jacobin Clubs of France and her satellites was only too apparent (actually the Jacobin Clubs owed more to American examples than vice versa).[64] A first fruit of the founding of the Democratic-Republican societies appeared to be the Whiskey Rebellion. The alarm of the administration was shown by the size of the force sent into the west. As Bernard De Voto put it, thirteen thousand men were more than were needed "to collect an excise."[65]

It was charged that an important element of Jacobin tactics was to attempt to destroy the Hamiltonian system of public finance, thus protecting southern planter-debtors, and making it difficult for a then impoverished administration to govern at home or to war abroad.[66] Another Jacobin operation was a smear campaign against President Washington, to destroy his popular reputation which was the chief obstacle against French domination.[67] When a clumsy French spy visited the western country, one of his purposes was to campaign for Jefferson for the office of president; Gallatin, it was said, drafted the instructions and itinerary.[68] The heat of the Republican attack on the Jay Treaty convinced some of the Federalists that the Republican rancor was inspired by France, an inspiration which extended into the House of Representatives.[69] Outside the Congress,

[64]Ames to Dwight, August, 1793, August 8, Sept. 3, Sept. 11, 1794, Ames, *Works,* I, 129, 146-48, 150; Bailey, *Diplomatic History,* p. 58; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, March 2, 1794, to Randolph, June 24, 1795, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 180, 363; Warfel, *Webster,* p. 228; Johnston to Iredell, Dec. 10, 1794, McRee, *Iredell,* II, 430-31; Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies,* pp. 19-20, 24; John Adams to Abigail Adams, May 5, 1794, John Adams, *Works,* I, 473; Washington to Ball, Sept. 25, 1794, Washington, *Writings,* XXXIII, 505-7; Hamilton, "France," 1796, Hamilton, *Works,* VI, 212-13.

[65]Washington to Henry Lee, August 26, 1794, Washington, *Writings,* XXXIII, 475-76; John Quincy Adams to Pitcairn, March 3, 1797, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 133; Hamilton alone hinted that the Whiskey Rebels were pro-British: Hamilton, "Tully," No. 2, Aug. 26, 1794, Hamilton, *Works,* VI, 418; Parrington, *Main Currents,* I, 392, quotes a sympathetic contemporary, Hugh Henry Brackenridge, on the fright it gave even him; Bernard De Voto, *The Course of Empire* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1952), p. 342; Ellsworth to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., April 5, 1794, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 134.

[66]*Ibid.;* Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., April 18, 1796, Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., May 22, 1796, Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Jan. 24, 1797, *ibid.,* I, 327, 341, 439; Ames to Gore, Dec. 17, 1794, Ames, *Works,* 157.

[67]John Adams to Abigail Adams, Jan. 9, 1794, John Adams, *Works,* I, 462; Hamilton, "Explanation," Nov. 11, 1795, Hamilton, *Works,* VIII, 123-24.

[68]George Victor Collot, "Plan for a Reconnaissance of the Ohio and Mississippi Valleys, 1796," trans. with an introduction by Durand Echeverria, *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, IX (Oct. 1952), 512-20; Memoranda, May 19, 21, June 15, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 350-54.

[69]Hamilton, "Horatius," May, 1795, Hamilton, *Works,* V, 182; Washington to Carroll, to Carrington, May 1, 1796, Washington, *Writings,* XXXV, 30, 32-33; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, June 6, 1796, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 491-92; Higginson to Pickering, Aug. 13, 1795, Williams to Pickering, July 17, 1795, Upham, *Pickering,* III, 195, 177-78.

French influence over the enemies of the Treaty was equally visible, whether in the press or, more alarming, in the riotous demonstrations against the administration.[70]

The office of Secretary of State very early showed its quality of making incumbents uncomfortable. The first Secretary retired out of frustration. The second resigned under a cloud, suspected of improper financial dealings with the French government. The third was dismissed for politicking against his President. It is with the second Secretary, Edmund Randolph, that we are here concerned. Of all high-ranking officers of government he was most severely damaged by the passions of the age. In the cabinet Randolph spoke in opposition to the Jay Treaty and seems to have persuaded the President to withhold assent until the British showed better faith by better treatment of American shipping. The British then intercepted a dispatch of the French Minister which appeared to show financial dealings with the American Secretary of State. The document was shown to Treasury Secretary Oliver Wolcott, Jr. To the fevered state of the Federalist mind "two" plus "x" immediately equalled "four." At a special cabinet meeting, without warning, the President confronted Randolph with the almost unintelligible dispatch in a way which amounted to a charge of bribery. Randolph resigned on the spot and prepared a poorly reasoned defense which had little effect. He argued irrelevancies, skipped over important points and weakened his case with misleading translations of French idioms. His guilt was easily accepted. Historians, up to the present decade, generally followed the contemporary Federalist opinion, or left the question open. (The truth was that he had asked the Minister to pay in advance for French purchases of western wheat so that certain western grain dealers could pay their debts to British creditors and be free to spy about for alleged British influence in fomenting the Whiskey Rebellion.)[71]

James Monroe, United States Minister to France, had almost as hard a time as Randolph had (but was consoled by prompt election to the office of Governor of Virginia and, later, by two terms in the White House).

[70]Monaghan, *Jay,* pp. 391-95; Hamilton, "Camillus," No. 2, 1795, Hamilton, *Works,* V, 202; Ames to Dwight, Sept. 13, 1795, Ames, *Works,* I, 174; Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Sept. 2, 1795, Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., March 21, April 25, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 230, 323, 332.

[71]Channing, *United States,* IV, 144, 144n.-145n.; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Hamilton, July 28, 1795, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 219; Ames to Dwight, Sept. 22, 1795, Ames, *Works,* I, 176; Murray to McHenry, summer, 1795, Steiner, *McHenry,* pp. 159-60; Dana to Parsons, Jan. 20, 1796, Parsons, *Parsons,* p. 472; Hamilton to Washington, Dec. 24, 1795, Hamilton, "France," 1796, Hamilton, *Works,* X, 137, VI, 213; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Jan. 14, 1797, to Abigail Adams, Feb. 22, 1798, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 85-86, 261-62.

But see what appears to be the final word, a century and a half later, in Irving Brant, "Edmund Randolph, Not Guilty!" *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, VII (April, 1950), 180-98.

Monroe's trouble was that while serving in Paris he could not bring himself to be enthusiastic about administration policies. The cabinet in Philadelphia came to believe that his reporting was inaccurate, that he misrepresented the United States to France, and France to the United States, in order to promote the interests of the Republican Party. From the first his behavior in France vexed the administration. His final undoing was his tepid and perfunctory defense of the Jay Treaty, an agreement which he cordially detested. He was recalled when the Cabinet memorialized President Washington to the effect that the public interest was not safe in his hands. Their opinion was based in part on a private letter written by Monroe to a friend, which showed an anti-federalist spirit. Back came Monroe to write an attack on Federalist foreign policy. As usual in such controversies he convinced his friends but not his enemies.[72]

Before the heat generated by the Jay Treaty contest had cooled, the election of 1796 occurred. Put in an elementary and almost oversimple way, the Anglo-French war was the central issue. On the one hand the nation was threatened with Jefferson and a French alliance to bring war on Britain, and, on the other, it was Adams and a continuation of the Jay Treaty spirit of appeasement to involve us in a war with France. It is reasonably certain that the French government actively interested itself in the result of the presidential election, through interference in the United States by its Minister, Adet. John Adams, heir presumptive to Washington, had predicted French opposition, and his fellow Federalists said the same.[73] For once they were right about French activity. As a reprisal against the Jay Treaty, in a note of very menacing tone, Adet announced that the French would treat American shipping in the same manner in which the United States allowed Britain to treat American shipping. The note was simultaneously given to the Republican press. Infuriated Federalists cried

[72]Monroe's first offense was the tone of his "Address to the National Convention," August 14, 1794, James Monroe, *Writings,* ed. Stanislaus M. Hamilton (New York, 1898-1903), II, 13-14. For the gathering of the storm see the following: Pickering to Washington, July 21, 1796, Monroe to Logan, June 24, 1796, to Jefferson, Jan. 8, 1798, *ibid.,* II, 482n., III, 6-7, 96-97; Washington, *Writings,* XXXV, 123n.-124n., and marginal notes on Monroe's vindicatory book, probably in March, 1798, a series of texts which gives one of the best insights into Washington's rarely revealed private thoughts, *ibid.,* XXXVI, 194-237; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Hamilton [no date] Brant, *Madison,* 442, *cf.* 443; Freneau, "The Republican Festival," *Poems,* III, 151, 151n.; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, April 3, 1797, to Abigail Adams, Feb. 22, June 27, 1798, to Murray, Dec. 8, 1798, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 157, 261-63, 323-25, 379-80.

[73]Chinard, *Adams,* p. 256; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1913), I, 70-71; John Adams to Abigail Adams, Jan. 20, 1796, John Adams, *Works,* I, 485; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, April 4, Aug. 13, 1796, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* I, 486, II, 17-18; Cabot to King, Sept. 24, 1796, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 91; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Oct. 17, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 386; Upham, *Pickering,* III, 209.

that this was an electioneering trick arranged by the Republicans. Except that it was not arranged by the Republicans, the conjecture was reasonable, even obvious, since the note was published on the Monday before the Friday when Pennsylvanians were to choose their presidential electors.[74] Federalist anger was almost boundless.[75]

Meanwhile, back in the American legation in Paris, more trouble. Charles Cotesworth Pinckney had been sent to succeed Monroe but his presence was ignored by the Directory. Eventually he withdrew to the Netherlands. The rejection of Pinckney could only be part of the American Jacobin plot and Monroe was suspected of having arranged the humiliation.[76]

A good deal of the responsibility for the Federalist obsession with the American Jacobin plot must be attributed to the Adams family. Practically every time one of their letters touched on Franco-American relations it revealed an explicit or implicit conviction of the existence of a pro-French American faction which was a grave threat to the nation. John Quincy Adams, abroad in the foreign service, was their main source of information. For several years the younger Adams stated flatly in almost every one of his letters to the United States from his successive legations that a conspiracy existed between the French government and certain Americans. This correspondence flowed in a steady stream to two Secretaries of State, to Vice President and President Adams, to his mother, Abigail Adams and to neighboring Americans in the foreign service. The high regard in which he was held made his reports the more credible, and gained him the unofficial position of being the Department of State's chief expert on the French Revolution. The tone of his letters can be illustrated by his conclusion that a third of the members of the House of Representatives loved France and French doctrines more than their own country; no greater calumniation of the Congress has been put in writing by an American official since that time.[77]

[74]Brant, *Madison,* p. 445; Pickering to King, Nov. 14, 1796, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 108-9; Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Nov. 15, 1796, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 394.

[75]Oliver Wolcott, Sr. to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 21, 28, Dec. 12, 1796, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Nov. 27, 1796, Tracy to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Jan. 7, 1797, *ibid.,* I, 397, 403, 409, 401, 415-16; Carroll to McHenry, Nov. 28, 1796, Steiner, *McHenry,* p. 203; Bingham to King, Nov. 29, 1796, Hamilton to King, Dec. 16, 1796, King to Pinckney, Jan. 14, 1797, Cabot to King, March 19, 1797, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 113, 126, 129, 161; Hamilton, "The Answer," Dec. 6, 1796, Hamilton, *Works,* VI, 215; Washington to Stuart, Jan. 8, 1797, Washington, *Writings,* XXXV, 357-59.

[76]Pinckney to Pickering, [no date] Timothy Pickering, *Review of the Correspondence between the Hon. John Adams . . . and the late Wm. Cunningham, Esq.* (Salem, 1824), p. 113; John Quincy Adams to John Adams, Feb. 23, April 30, 1797, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 126-27, 160-61.

[77]This paragraph is based on eighteen letters of John Quincy Adams, Feb. 15, 1795 to Jan. 8, 1798, *Writings,* I, II. For the estimate of the House of Representatives see John Quincy Adams to Murray, Jan. 27, 1798, *ibid.,* II, 244-45.

The Federalists kept up their high clamor, both publicly and privately. In his newspaper Noah Webster printed eleven of his own pieces on the French revival of the Roman institution of vassal states, and graphically described the coming partition of the United States. Hamilton wrote a series of newspaper articles entitled "The Warning," in which he cautioned against Americans who were heated enough to try to provoke war with Great Britain although they could excuse anything French. In private letters he supported the idea of sending another mission to France to succeed Pinckney, because the French might soon have an idle army which could be employed in America, assisted by an "INTERNAL INVASION. . ."[capitals his]. President Adams in his Inaugural Address expressed his fear for the freedom of American elections. To the first session of the Fifth Congress he said the French Directory revealed a hope of separating the American people from their government. Minister John Quincy Adams, in letters to his father, continued to sniff treason in the breezes and told how French policy was the joint product of the French government and the American Jacobins. But signals were sometimes confused. When President Adams decided to send a three-man mission to France, Hamilton suggested that Madison be appointed but Oliver Wolcott, Jr. wrote to Hamilton to tell him that Madison's name had been put in nomination by the French. Washington wrote of France "encouraged . . . by a party among ourselves." Secretary of War McHenry told Washington that France planned to dismember the American union, and himself received the identical news some months later from William Vans Murray, United States Minister at the Hague. Murray also blamed Vice President Jefferson's personal charm for much of the moral deterioration of the Senate. Writing to the younger Adams he confided—"His influence . . . does I am convinced immense mischief in the Senate." He invited Senators to "philosophising dinners," and blended "theories of universal benevolence and philanthropy . . . easily with the politics of the day." William Henry Harrison, Captain, First Infantry Regiment, the same who was to be called "Tippecanoe," advised the Secretary of War that it was the duty of all to expose traitors. But Fisher Ames had good news for his friends: Jacobinism was declining in Dedham.[78]

[78]Warfel, *Webster,* pp. 229, 231; Hamilton, "The Warning," No. 1, Jan. 27, 1797, No. 2, Feb. 7, 1797, No. 4, Feb. 27, 1797, No. 6, March 27, 1797, Hamilton, *Works,* VI, 232-33, 238-39, 245-46, 259; Hamilton to Pickering, March 22, 1797, J. C. Hamilton, *History of the Republic of the United States as Traced in the Writings of Alexander Hamilton* (New York, 1864), VII, 17, to McHenry, March 1797, *ibid.,* VII, 18; John Adams, "Inaugural Address," "Special Session Message," May 16, 1797, James D. Richardson (ed.), *Messages and Papers of the Presidents, 1789-1897* (Washington: Bureau of National Literature and Art, 1909), I, 230, 235-39 (Hereafter cited: Richardson, *Messages and Papers*); John Quincy Adams to John Adams, March 4, 1797, Murray to John Quincy Adams, Aug. 23, 1797, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 136, 193n.-194n.; Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to

While the President, the ex-President, cabinet officers and diplomatists were aggravating each other's quasi-paranoia, the judiciary did not remain silent. Supreme Court Justice James Iredell warned the Philadelphia Grand Jury against those Americans who had foreign attachments, and his colleague of the same bench, Samuel Chase, fretted about "a licentious press."[79]

Thus was an unstable compound balanced for detonation. The concussion which set it off has become memorable as the "X.Y.Z. Affair." Its touches of comic relief went unnoticed in the 1790's as, in the tension of the time, it produced an explosion which almost blew away the First Amendment. Put briefly the story was this. In 1797 the President sent a three-man mission to France, which was not received by the French Foreign Minister, Talleyrand. Instead the Americans were approached by several unofficial characters who told them that unless a private bribe and a public loan were offered there could be no negotiation. The Americans refused to be parties to this kind of diplomacy (which was standing procedure with the French Directory) and two of them, Charles Cotesworth Pinckney and John Marshall, withdrew. The third, Elbridge Gerry, stayed in Paris, apparently because he feared that a total severance would inevitably bring on war. In the United States the dispatches from the commissioners were published with the names of the French extortionists deleted and the letters "X," "Y" and "Z" substituted. The public reaction was, one might say, *bouleversé*. Forceful addresses from civic groups poured in upon the President and were answered with equal ardor. That remarkable woman his wife, Abigail, in letters to her sister and to the historian Mercy Warren showed great excitement; she saw conspirators everywhere.[80]

Federalist reaction in the Congress was equally intense. A pamphlet by Harrison Gray Otis, successor to the seat of Fisher Ames, warned of a French plan to establish Trans-Appalachian and Cis-Appalachian Republics. The Speaker of the House announced to the Representatives that an

Hamilton, March 31, 1797, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 487; Washington to Pinckney, May 28, 1797, to Pickering, Aug. 29, 1797, to Pinckney, Dec. 4, 1797, Washington, *Writings,* XXXV, 452-53, XXXVI, 19, 90; McHenry to Washington, July 9, 1797, Murray to McHenry, Aug. 7, Sept. 22, 1797, Harrison to McHenry, Aug. 13, 1797, Steiner, *McHenry,* pp. 246, 257, 276-77, 264; Ames to Dwight, Oct. 25, 1796, to Pickering, Oct. 4, 1797, Ames, *Works,* I, 204, 217.

[79]McRee, *Iredell,* II, 501-2; Chase to McHenry, Dec. 4, 1796, Steiner, *McHenry,* p. 203.

[80]Morison, *Otis,* I, 110-11; some of the President's replies to public addresses are quoted in Manning J. Dauer, *The Adams Federalists* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1953), pp. 159-61; James Morton Smith, *Freedom's Fetters* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1956), pp. 16-20, correctly attributes much of the popular excitement to the tone of Adams' replies; Abigail Adams, *New Letters,* March 20, 27, April 4, 7, 13, 1798, pp. 147-48, 151, 154, 156; Abigail Adams to Mercy Warren, April 25, June 17, 1798, *Warren-Adams Letters,* II, 337-39.

army had been assembling on the coast of France, not to invade Britain as previously believed, but for the invasion of the United States ("confirmed" in the *Gazette of the United States* a month later). Representative Robert G. Harper gave out tantalizing hints of treasonable correspondence between Americans and Frenchmen. Harper it was who also apologized to the House for attacking an opponent only verbally; the opposition Congressman was too old to be physically beaten.[81]

John Quincy Adams, now stationed in Berlin, expressed himself in his usual vein in several letters on the subject. William Vans Murray, Minister at the Hague, suggested a security measure to the President—organized counter-espionage. Rufus King, Minister at London, wrote to an English correspondent that much of the trouble in America was owing to the ease with which lower-class Irish immigrants could be organized for mischievous purposes. Governor John Jay of New York was convinced that American "Jacobins" were "numerous," "desperate," "active."[82]

These public officials were heartily supported by leading private citizens, the most influential and articulate being Hamilton, Ames and ex-President Washington. Hamilton returned to the press with sulphuric phrases—"Gallic faction," "subaltern mercenaries"—and an oblique reference to Vice President Jefferson as "so prostitute a character." Fisher Ames thought the Federalist leadership should take care to rouse the public. The government needed more force, more revenue, a more warlike use of ships, repudiation of the French treaties of 1778, presidential authority to embargo trade with the French West Indies, a sedition law, "more decision and dispatch." Half measures were weak. The country must wage full but undeclared war. Ex-President Washington, in letters to eminent friends, showed himself in general agreement with the Federalist world view.[83]

To blame all dangers on the Republican Party apparently did not give full emotional satisfaction. There had to be a personal culprit, scapegoat or sacrificial victim. He was easily identified as Elbridge Gerry, the uneasy gentleman-Democrat of Massachusetts, who lingered in Paris after Pinckney and Marshall left, motivated by the hope of making the mission a success

[81]Harrison Gray Otis, "Letter to General William Heath," March 30, 1798, Morison, *Otis,* I, 68-69; Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* p. 150; Jefferson to Madison, June 21, 1798, ed. Washington, IV, 250.

[82]John Quincy Adams to Murray, June 7, 19, to Pickering, June 25, to Abigail Adams, June 27, to Murray, July 3, Aug. 14, 1798, Murray to John Quincy Adams, July 10, 1798, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 300, 309-10, 321-22, 323-28, 330-31, 339n.-40n., 350n.; King to Jackson, Aug. 28, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 645-46; Monaghan, *Jay,* p. 417.

[83]Hamilton, "The Stand," "Detector," "A French Faction," *Works,* VI; Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., April 22, 1798, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 47; Ames to Pickering, June 4, 1798, Ames, *Works,* I, 226-28; Washington to McHenry, March 27, to Pickering, April 16, to Hamilton, May 27, to Lafayette, Dec. 25, 1798, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVI, 191-92, 248-49, 272, XXXVII, 66-67.

alone, and by fear of war if he failed. A random sampling of the opinions of ten leading contemporaries who privately expressed decided views on Gerry's conduct shows that six regarded him as a dishonorable, deceitful *intriguant,* three—all southerners—thought he showed very bad judgment and only one acquitted him. (Fortunately for Gerry this solitary vote for acquittal was cast by the President of the United States who had employed him.) When Gerry came home he found himself boycotted by the Massachusetts Federalists. His family had been hooted at, obscenities shouted under Mrs. Gerry's window and effigies hung from the elms around his house. His mail was tampered with and his movements watched.[84]

Other men also felt the sanction of social ostracism. Chief Justice McKean, of the Pennsylvania judiciary, was removed from the Vice Presidency of the Order of the Cincinnati in Pennsylvania. Vice President Jefferson found life in Philadelphia almost unendurable.[85]

To a large number of the Federalists the one thing lacking was a declaration of war—a decision which has never been reached in this country except on the request of the executive. There were obvious advantages to be gained: a monopoly, with Britain, of world trade, weakening of the Republican Party, suppression of the domestic opposition, distraction from an otherwise probable civil war (to be started by Virginia). But the President did not ask it and the House of Representatives refused to consider it.[86]

One question remains to be examined. Just how spontaneous was the combustion of 1798? Almost everything that happens in practical politics is arranged to happen. Both John C. Miller and Gilbert Chinard have suspected that the hysteria was induced.[87] Events and opinions of 1797 can be marshaled to support a conclusion that the sentiment was whipped up by men who were themselves cool and calculating. The Bank of England was in distress and some were alarmed by the thought that Britain might therefore make peace with France. The hypothesis can be advanced

[84]Arthur B. Darling, *Our Rising Empire, 1763-1803* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940), pp. 290-91; Lloyd to Washington, July 4, 1798, Vol. 289, Washington Papers, Library of Congress; McHenry to Washington, June 26, 1798, *ibid.;* Higginson to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Sept. 11, 1798, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 107; Pinckney to King, April 4, 1798, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 277n.; Pinckney to Pinckney, April 4, 1798; Hamilton, *Hamilton,* VII, 207n.; Pickering to King, June 12, 1798, Pinckney to King, July 18, 1798, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 347, 369; Pickering to Marshall, Sept. 4, 1798, Albert Beveridge, *Life of John Marshall* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin Co., 1916-19), II, 366; Leonard D. White, *The Federalists, A Study in Administrative History,* pp. 250-51; Morison, "Elbridge Gerry, Gentleman-Democrat," *By Land and By Sea,* pp. 192-196.

[85]Lloyd to Washington, July 4, 1798, Vol. 289, Washington Papers, Library of Congress; Jefferson to Lewis, May 9, 1798, ed. Washington, IV, 241; Jefferson to Martha Jefferson Randolph, May 17, 1798, Feb. 11, 1800, Sarah N. Randolph, *The Domestic Life of Thomas Jefferson* (New York, 1871), pp. 249, 262-63.

[86]Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* pp. 168-70, 191, 195, 198-99, 208, 223-24.

[87]John C. Miller, *Crisis in Freedom, The Alien and Sedition Acts,* pp. 21-22 (Hereafter cited: Miller, *Crisis*); Chinard, *Adams,* p. 274.

that the British financial strains encouraged the American Federalists to use violence against France and terror against the Democratic-Republicans as a support of Britain, for economic reasons and for moral reasons that were equally if not more weighty in their minds. Letters of George Cabot, Alexander Hamilton, Chauncey Goodrich and Oliver Wolcott, Jr. in the first quarter of 1797, rumble and mutter with hopes and fears of the attitude of the Fourth Congress toward military matters. Certainly the enactments of that Congress were unsatisfactorily parsimonious to this group. Military and naval appropriations were cut, not raised. There had been hopes for enlargement of the army and the navy, for a policy of arming and convoying merchant shipping, for the fortification of ports and for a firm line with the French, but they were not fulfilled before the X.Y.Z. Affair. Certainly the emotional turbulence of 1798 could have been seen as a very opportune circumstance for the promotion of the military measures of 1797—that is, military measures and "some others" as Hamilton cryptically put it.[88]

But whether the passions were spontaneous or caused deliberately, they existed. The United States in the year 1798 was a scene of fear and hate, warmed by seven or eight years of heating. Then, subject to these temperatures and surrounded by political commotion, the Congress of the United States sat to enact laws for the internal security of the nation.

The year 1798 was a year of crisis in the history of constitutional liberty. It was a year in which fear of a foreign ideology and of its effects on fellow citizens goaded a party in power to attempt by statute to destroy free speech and a free press. In the same year there was legislation severely restricting the privileges of aliens but the Alien Laws are not our chief concern. Although harsh and probably impolitic, the Alien Laws were undoubtedly constitutional. But the Sedition Law of 1798 attempted to achieve what the First Amendment was written to prohibit. It is not necessary here to analyze the passage, provisions and enforcement of the Sedition Act. The story of that law, and of the three acts applicable to aliens, has been definitively written by James Morton Smith in his *Freedom's Fetters.*[89] It is sufficient to observe of the prosecutions under the Sedition Act that every defendant was a Republican, every judge and practically all jurors were Federalists.[90] The results of the prosecutions support the historical

[88]King to Low, June 6, 1797, Cabot to King, March 19, 1797, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 185, 160 (and *passim.*); Goodrich to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., Jan. 27, Feb. 10, 1797, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Oliver Wolcott, Sr., March 29, 1797, to Hamilton, March 31, 1797, Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., April 5, 1797, Cabot to Smith, April 17, 1797, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* I, 441, 441-42, 482, 486, 490 (the "some others" letter), 495.

[89]James Morton Smith, *Freedom's Fetters, The Alien and Sedition Laws and American Civil Liberties.*

[90]Bassett, *Federalist System,* pp. 263-64.

generalization that in state trials, courts and juries have generally thought it a mark of patriotism to find the defendants guilty.

Although a few Federalists favored conciliation and moderation, the public mood was too excitable for them to prevail. Outside the courtrooms there was widespread social paranoia. A motion to censure Representative John Randolph of Roanoke for denouncing the manners of the military lost in the House by only two votes.[91] Minister Rufus King warned the Secretary of State that several suspicious French characters were leaving Hamburg for Charleston, with dispatches from the Directory concealed in tubs with false bottoms, which report was widely printed as a "diabolical plot" to incite a slave insurrection. The passengers went on from Charleston to Guadeloupe as they had intended, but no Federalist newspaper printed a correction of the story of the great Tub Plot.[92] In an outburst of personal passions, Federalist Representative Rufus Griswold and Republican Representative Matthew Lyon exchanged insults and twice fought on the floor of the House.[93] There was armed resistance—the Hot Water Riots, or Fries Rebellion—to direct federal taxation in Pennsylvania, led by one John Fries who was convicted of treason but pardoned by President Adams.[94]

Alexander Hamilton was zealous to change the nature of the federal republic in the interest of national security.[95] Perhaps because of his money troubles, [96] more likely out of a genuine fear of impending anarchy and civil war,[97] he proposed a vast extension of federal power.[98] He also seems to have been in the center of a scheme to conquer South America.[99] It is not impossible that the failure of Hamilton's political career prevented the prussianizing of the American state.[100]

At this point in their grand ascent John Adams tripped the Federalists and cast them down from the pinnacle by nominating William Vans Mur-

[91]Gerald W. Johnson, *Randolph of Roanoke, A Political Fantastic* (New York: Minton, Balch & Co., 1929), pp. 106-11.

[92]King to Pickering, Nov. 5, 1798, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 457; Charles Warren, *Odd Byways in American History* (Cambridge, Mass., 1942), pp. 117-26; Washington to Spottswood, March 25, 1799, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVII, 156; Miller, *Crisis,* pp. 146-50.

[93]Bassett, *Federalist System,* pp. 254-55.

[94]*Ibid.,* p. 280; McRee, *Iredell,* II, 575; Tracy to McHenry, May 6, 1799, Hamilton to McHenry, March 18, 26, 1799, Steiner, *McHenry,* pp. 433, 436, Hamilton, "John Adams," 1800, Hamilton, *Works,* VII, 353-55.

[95]Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* p. 211; Sedgwick to King, November 15, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 147—on lack of results see Sedgwick to King, May 11, 1800, *ibid.,* III, 236.

[96]Cabot to King, April 26, 1799, Troup to King, June 5, 1799, *ibid.,* III, 8, 34.

[97]Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* pp. 208, 208n.-209n.; Miller, *Crisis,* p. 175.

[98]Hamilton, *Hamilton,* VII, 280-85; Morison, *Otis,* I, 162.

[99]Marshall Smelser, "George Washington Declines the Part of El Libertador," *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, XI (Jan., 1954), 42-51.

[100]Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* p. 196.

ray to negotiate with France. This was shocking news to the Hamiltonian wing of his party. If peace with France were formally made, the Federalist position on domestic sedition and foreign foes was untenable. But from public officers and from private citizens the President had good reasons to think the French were ready to be conciliatory.[101] The best that outraged extremists of his own party could accomplish was to get the nomination of a commission of three instead of Murray alone.[102] In the Hamiltonian group all was execration. Their bitterness almost passes belief. Frantic, almost hysterical, they used the strongest polemic language yet heard or read in that decade. After the nomination, Secretary of State Timothy Pickering wrote letters to Hamilton and Washington dissociating himself from the decision. Hamilton expressed regret to Washington. Robert Troup, one of Hamilton's closest confidants, wrote to Rufus King in London that Adams' decision would lead to an attempt to prevent his re-election to the presidency—a pregnant remark. Treasury Secretary Wolcott revealed a lack of competitive spirit—he was beaten thirteen months before the presidential electors were to vote—as he predicted Federalist paralysis and Republican victory.[103] Senator Uriah Tracy threatened to quit the Party.[104] Ex-Senator George Cabot privately blamed the peace move on defects of Adams' character but defended him in the press.[105] Theodore Sedgwick, Speaker of the House, alluded to Adams' vanity and then burst into a colorful display of vituperative fireworks.[106] Fisher Ames and Jedediah Morse, the geographer, were dismayed and angry.[107]

[101]Darling, *Our Rising Empire,* pp. 333-40; Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 192; Channing, *United States,* IV, 201-3; Frederick B. Tolles, "Unofficial Ambassador: George Logan's Mission to France, 1798," *William and Mary Quarterly,* Third Series, VII (January, 1950), 20-25; Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* pp. 190, 228; Ames to Gore, July 28, 1798, Jan. 11, 1799, Ames, *Works,* I, 237, 250; Barlow to Watson, July 26, 1798, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 111-12, see also a quotation from John Adams, *ibid.,* II, 198; Washington to John Adams, Feb. 1, 1799, Washington, "Memorandum of an Interview," Nov. 13, 1798, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVII, 119-20, 18-20; King to Troup, Sept. 16, 1798, to Hamilton, July 14, 1798, to Pickering, Jan. 14, April 12, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 365, 415, 511, 594; John Quincy Adams to Bourne, Aug. 31, 1798, to Abigail Adams, Sept. 14, 1798, to Pickering, April 14, 1799, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 355, 360-63, 407; Lloyd to Washington, June 18, 1798, Vol. 288, Washington Papers, Library of Congress; Richardson, *Messages and Papers,* I, 282-83, 283n.

[102]Channing, *United States,* IV, 203-4; Pickering to King, March 6, 1799, to Hamilton, Feb. 25, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 548-49, 552n.

[103]*Ibid.;* Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* p. 232; Pickering to Washington, Oct. 24, 1799, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Cabot, Nov. 7, 1799, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 280, 286-87, and see also, *ibid.,* II, 279; Hamilton to Washington, Oct. 21, 1799, Hamilton, *Hamilton,* VII, 335; Troup to King, Nov. 6, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 141-42.

[104]Tracy to McHenry, June 24, Sept. 2, 1799, Steiner, *McHenry,* pp. 393, 416-17.

[105]Cabot to King, March 10, April 26, June 2, Sept. 7, Oct. 6, 16, 1799, also a selection from the Boston *Gazette,* King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 551, III, 8, 27-28, 101, 113-14, 134-35, 39n.

[106]Sedgwick to King, Nov. 15, 1799, *ibid.,* III, 145-48; Darling, *Our Rising Empire,* p. 342.

[107]Ames to Pickering, March 12, Oct. 19, Nov. 5, 1799, Ames, *Works,* I, 253, 257, 260; Morse to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 8, 1799, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 287.

Despite delays deliberately arranged by several in the Cabinet, delays equivalent to contumacy,[108] the mission went to France. The political reaction, and the phrase is used literally, opened the eyes of the Adams family to the warlike and frenzied spirit of that part of the Federalist group which looked to Hamilton for inspiration.[109] Peace was made with France in the "Convention of 1800" but Federalist Senatorial die-hards unsuccessfully fought it to the last ditch.[110] It began to appear that Federalism was irreparably split. Adams regarded the French peace as his greatest achievement[111] which, perhaps, it was.

We can better understand the bitterness of the Hamiltonian Federalists when we realize how high they sat after the X.Y.Z. Affair. It seemed that everyone was anti-Gallican. The composition of the new Sixth Congress, elected in 1798, caused exultation in Federalist hearts and the elections in the spring of 1799 brought further cheer.[112] But all this was merely the last flare of the ember before it turned black. As Adams proved adamant on the question of his mission to France the Federalist correspondence lost its buoyancy and sank, until by the end of 1799 it began to show querulousness and irritation.[113] The drama played to its almost inevitable climax, an open break between Adams and the Hamiltonians, which began with a purge of two of his Cabinet who were more loyal to Hamilton than to him. His patience exhausted, in May, 1800, Adams rid himself of his Secretaries of State and War, Pickering and McHenry.[114] Thus in the year of a national election the angry President shook the pillars of the

[108]Cabot to King, Sept. 23, Oct. 16, 1799, Pickering to King, Nov. 7, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 110, 134, 143; John Adams, *Works,* IX, 255, John Adams to Boston *Patriot,* No. 10, 1809, to Abigail Adams [early 1799], *ibid.,* IX, 270-71, I, 547; John Adams to Abigail Adams, Feb. 22, 1799, J. Q. Adams and Charles Francis Adams, *The Life of John Adams* (Philadelphia, 1874), II, 276.

[109]John Quincy Adams to Murray, May 14, 1799, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 420; John Adams to Boston *Patriot,* No. 4, No. 9, 1809, Stoddert to John Adams, Sept. 13, 1799, John Adams, *Works,* IX, 248, 267-68, 28; Henry Adams, *The Life of Albert Gallatin* (New York: Peter Smith, 1943), p. 221.

[110]Channing, *United States,* IV, 207, 207n.; Cabot to King, Dec. 28, 1800, Pickering to King, Feb. 17, 1801, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 354, 392; Gallatin to Hannah Gallatin, Feb. 5, 1801, Adams, *Gallatin,* p. 259.

[111]*Adams-Cunningham Correspondence,* Feb. 22, 1809, p. 93.

[112]Johnston to Iredell, Nov. 21, 1798, Davie to Iredell, June 17, 1799, McRee, *Iredell,* II, 540, 577-78; Hindman to King, Dec. 13, 1798, Sedgwick to King, Jan. 20, 1799, Pickering to King, May 4, 1799, Troup to King, June 5, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 492, 516, III, 13, 35; Washington to Bushrod Washington, May 5, 1799, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVII, 200-1; Tables showing at least nominal party affiliations of members of the Congress are in U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States, 1789-1945* (Washington, 1949), p. 293.

[113]For example, Sedgwick to King, Dec. 12, 29, 1799, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 154-55, 162-63.

[114]Bassett, *Federalist System,* pp. 207-8; Channing, *United States,* IV, 217, 217n., 239-41; Wilfred Binkley, *President and Congress* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1947), pp. 46-47; Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* pp. 229, 239-42, 250-51; Goodhue to Pickering, June 2, 1800, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 263-64; John Adams to Boston *Patriot,* No. 17, No. 18, 1809, John Adams, *Works,* IX, 301, 303-4.

Federalist house. His political career was to perish in the wreckage of his party.

Thus far we have seen how the faction which administered the government attempted to discredit and suppress the other faction, and simultaneously suffered a serious internal cleavage. The national political events leading to the election of 1800—the publication of the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions, the case of "Jonathan Robbins," the continued existence of endemic Anglophobia, the dislike of the tax load, the relevant local elections—all these things have been well studied and need no repetition. Only an emphasis on certain occurrences as part of the national emotional storm is here necessary to complete the picture of an age of passion.

There was, for example, John Marshall's "defection" from Federalism. Oddly enough the first effective blow at the repressive statute concerning sedition was his, in a letter to the press written while he was a Federalist candidate for the Congress. He thought the Sedition Act useless and disunifying. Northern Federalists showed by their fury that they felt betrayed,[115] by one who had so lately been a hero of the X.Y.Z.

When the Virginia and Kentucky Resolutions were passed, copies were sent to all the legislatures of the union. The result could only have been disappointing to Jefferson and Madison, the authors. Every state north of Virginia, and even North Carolina, condemned the Resolutions. So warm was the reaction that the Virginia sponsors feared for their personal liberty and took the precaution of passing a law which required state judges to issue the writ of habeas corpus whenever a legislator was arrested. They also strengthened the militia. Judge Iredell promptly predicted civil war and other Federalists responded in similar fashion.[116] To the extreme Federalists the Virginians and Kentuckians were merely pushing the same old plot. Massachusetts Federalists, in particular, took the matter very hard.[117]

Republican industry and confidence in this period made a sharp con-

[115]Beveridge, *Marshall,* II, 386, 387n., 574-77; Sedgwick to Pickering, Oct. 23, 1798, but see also, Pickering to Sedgwick, Nov. 6, 1798, *ibid.,* II, 391, 394; George Cabot [?], "A Yankee Freeholder," *Columbian Centinel,* Oct. 24, 1798, *ibid.,* II, 391-93; Ames to Gore, Dec. 18, 1798, Ames, *Works,* I, 246; John Quincy Adams to Murray, March 26, 1799, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 397.

[116]Channing, *United States,* IV, 227-28; Brant, *Madison,* p. 464; James Iredell to Hannah Iredell, Jan. 24, 1799, McRee, *Iredell,* II, 543; Washington to Henry, Jan. 15, 1799, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVII, 87-90; Hamilton, *Hamilton,* VII, 278-79.

[117]Pickering to King, Dec. 14, 1798, Sedgwick to King, Nov. 15, 1799, Hamilton to King, Jan. 5, 1800, King, *Life and Correspondence,* II, 493, III, 147-48, 173-74; Washington to Fairfax, Jan. 20, 1799, Washington, *Writings,* XXXVII, 92-94; John Quincy Adams to Murray, March 30, 1799, John Quincy Adams, *Writings,* II, 398; Channing, *United States,* IV, 228-29; Ames, "Laocoön," Boston *Gazette,* April, 1799, Ames, *Works,* II, 109-28.

trast with Federalist defeatism. An economic downturn caused a certain loss of confidence among the followers, and the Adams mission to France had certainly shaken the Federalist leaders.[118] One can only repeat the conclusion that their obsession with the French danger had blinded these men to their own excesses and to Republican tactics. While the Federalists stamped out a nonexistent treasonable conspiracy their opponents built a good political machine. Face-to-face with that machine the Federalists were quitters. There is plenty of evidence of defeatism, while all felt a consciousness of impending climax—the presidential election of 1800. Psychologically the Federalists were at a disadvantage in any election; for that kind of work they were too fastidious.

But before that event Alexander Hamilton indulged in the most eccentric bit of self-gratification in American political history. In the midst of the presidential campaign in which he and his friends were gravely interested, he published an attack on the competence of the incumbent who was his party's candidate for re-election. Hamilton took offense at Adams for having implied that Hamilton was pro-British. Against the advice of his wisest allies he wrote a fifty-three-page pamphlet for private circulation among party leaders, in which he enlarged on Adams' errors of judgment, bad temper, jealousy and "unfounded accusations," all of which, he concluded, were undoing the work of the great Washington.

The efficient Manhattan Republican organization, headed by Aaron Burr, put a copy of the pamphlet in Burr's hands before it reached the mails. Burr had it reprinted for wide distribution, to the glee of Republican partisans everywhere.

Hamilton's closest friends regretted his maneuver. The arrogant tone of the work and the self-praise of the author did nothing to restore their confidence in the judgment of the man they looked to as their natural leader. To the twentieth-century student it seems that a psychiatrist might build an interesting hypothesis on this episode considered in the light of illegitimate birth, insecure childhood, chronic gastric complaints, easy entrapment in Mrs. Reynolds' "badger game," contempt for the common people, yearning for military glory and some recent political shocks.[119] As

[118]Channing, *United States,* IV, 111; Taxation is mentioned as a grievance in Ames to Gore, Dec. 18, 1798, Ames, *Works,* I, 246-47; Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., [tax grievance] Jan. 12, 1800, [the shattering effect of Adams' behavior is apparent in:] June 12, 1800, Oliver Wolcott, Jr. to Bingham [Federalist defeatism]: July 28, 1800, Ames to Oliver Wolcott, Jr. [the same]: Aug. 3, 1800; Bingham to Oliver Wolcott, Jr. [this and the next reveal defeatism]: Aug. 6, 1800, McHenry to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., Nov. 9, 1800, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 320, 368, 393, 396, 398, 445.

[119]Bassett, *Federalist System,* pp. 288-90; Cabot to Hamilton, Aug. 21, 1800, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 407-8; Hamilton, "John Adams," *Works,* VII, [his summary] 361-62; Troup to King, Nov. 9, Dec. 31, 1800, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 331, 359; A gastric note is in Lawrance to King, Oct. 15, 1796, *ibid.,* II, 98-99.

for the effect of the pamphlet on the national election it is imponderable, but certainly the Federalists might have exploited the "Jacobin Phrenzy" more profitably if the issue had not been partially eclipsed by the more interesting acrimony among the self-chosen wise, good and rich.

The Federalist press worked hard to influence the legislators who chose presidential electors, the presidential electors and the small body of voters at large. The *Columbian Centinel* of Boston had a department devoted solely to attacking Jefferson's morals, opinions and public record. Several newspapers carried a serial feature called "The Jeffersoniad" and intended to destroy his reputation. The *Connecticut Courant* and the *Gazette of the United States* were especially ferocious. The Philadelphia *Monthly Magazine* in November reviewed four pamphlets on Jefferson's atheism.[120]

But it was hate's labor lost. The final electoral count was Jefferson seventy-three, Burr seventy-three, Adams sixty-five, Pinckney sixty-four and Jay one. Burr's superb management in New York had been decisive. Outside of New York Adams ran as well or better, than he did in 1796 when he carried this state. Losing New York in 1800 he lost the presidency.[121] Of course the electoral vote did not settle the presidential contest, for Jefferson and Burr were tied (in a manner later made impossible by the Twelfth Amendment). The decision now had to be made in the House of Representatives—a "lame duck" House be it noted—where each state had one vote only.

The Federalists were going out of power, and nothing in their term of office so ill became them as the manner of their leaving it, for many congressional Federalists now decided to support Burr, who had been intended by the Republicans to be Vice President. Neither party in New York approved of this course, but even Hamilton's expostulations (legend to the contrary notwithstanding) had little weight.[122] As for Burr, he held his tongue and pen and waited it out. The votes of nine states were needed to elect. On the first ballot and on the next thirty-four ballots, Jefferson received eight and Burr six. At length Representative Bayard, sole member from Delaware, managed to learn indirectly that Jefferson had no thought of undoing every Federalist legislative work, and arrangements were made

[120]For a typical calumny see a quotation from the *New England Palladium* in Frank L. Mott, *Jefferson and the Press* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1943), pp. 38-39.

[121]Channing, *United States,* IV, 235-37; Dauer, *The Adams Federalists,* p. 257; U. S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States,* p. 290.

[122]Hamilton to Oliver Wolcott, Jr., December 16, 1800, Gibbs, *Memoirs,* II, 458-60; Troup to King, Feb. 12, 1801, King, *Life and Correspondence,* III, 391; For the notion that Burr's reputation for dishonesty made him more eligible for the presidency than the quasi-doctrinaire Jefferson see Hale to King, Jan. 21, 1801, *ibid.,* III, 372.

by Bayard and friends to elect Jefferson on the thirty-sixth ballot.[123] And so was completed the "Revolution of 1800."

The Federalist period of American history can thus be presented as a span of twelve years in which every great public decision, every national political act, was somehow governed by fierce passions, by hatred, fear and anger. Although this view must not be stretched beyond proportion, certain it is that the founding fathers had less confidence in each other and in the Constitution than our generation has in both. From suspicion of each other it was a short step to fear and hate.

The Democratic-Republicans feared a centralization which would lead to monarchy. Their fear caused them to make angry and fantastic charges against men now venerated. They thought of their opponents as tools of the British crown, turned against republicanism and the rights of man. Their accusations wounded contemporaries but did no particular damage to posterity because they were not in control of the state; they could only write, speak and, occasionally, riot.

The Federalists feared democracy as mobocracy. They hated the French Revolution and its sympathizers. They could do much harm because they were in charge of the government and could make their enemies feel its force. They jailed and fined in a manner which the First Amendment was intended to prohibit, and they fired off accusations of treason or sedition like birdshot. The most extreme among them justified suspicions of a plot to new-model the government as a unitary, militarized state. They honestly believed that political opposition was founded on sloth, envy, senseless rage or treason. Fear of the "mob," and fear of subversives, made it impossible for them to build a real political engine capable of keeping them "in" and the Republicans "out." Their tragedy was that they were the prisoners of their own propaganda.

These verbal blows were not just "campaign oratory," but were delivered, on both sides, in dead earnest. The evidence is in their private letters to friends, close collaborators and relatives, and in memoranda noted privately for their own guidance. These private documents used the same passionate rhetoric as did the public literature. Some believed so intensely that —blinded by emotion—they willingly destroyed their party rather than admit to errors or excesses.

[123]John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York, 1883-1926), II, 524n.; Nathan Schachner, *Aaron Burr, A Biography* (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1937), pp. 204-9; William Sullivan, *Familiar Letters on Public Characters and Public Events, 1783-1815* (Boston, 1834), pp. 420-21; Baer to Bayard, April 19, 1830, *ibid.*, p. 424.