21 | THE PURITAN ETHIC AND THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION

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One connection that many, perhaps most, historians do acknowledge is between Puritanism and the American Revolution. The Puritans' legacy seems most demonstrable in the ideology of New England's patriots and especially (not surprisingly) among its Congregational clergymen. Charles W. Akers finds such a connection in the thought of Boston's Jonathan Mayhew (Called unto Liberty: A Life of Jonathan Mayhew, 1720–1776 *[Cambridge, Mass.; 1964]). Alice M. Baldwin* (The New England Clergy and the American Revolution *[Durham, N.C.; 1928]) discerned a similar influence on New England clergymen in general and through them on the whole region. From a very different perspective, Alan Heimert has explored the interplay of religious and political ideologies in* Religion and the American Mind: From the Great Awakening to the Revolution *(Cambridge, Mass.; 1966), a work that has stimulated extensive debate. The following selection investigates one of the links between Puritanism and Revolutionary thought.*

The American Revolution, we have been told, was radical and conservative, a movement for home rule and a contest for rule at home, the product of a rising nationality and the cause of that nationality, the work of designing demagogues and a triumph of statesmanship. John Adams said it took place in the minds and hearts of the people before 1776; Benjamin Rush thought it had scarcely begun in 1787. There were evidently many revolutions, many contests, divisions, and developments that deserve to be considered as part of the American Revolution. This paper deals in a preliminary, exploratory way with an aspect of the subject that has hitherto received little attention.[1] Without pretending to explain the whole exciting variety of the Revolution, I should like to suggest that the movement in all its phases, from the resistance against Parliamentary taxation in the 1760's to the establishment of a national government and national policies in the 1790's was affected, not to say guided, by a set of values inherited from the age of Puritanism.

These values or ideas, which I will call collectively the Puritan Ethic,[2] were not unconscious or subconscious, but were deliberately and openly expressed by men of the time. The men who expressed them were not Puritans, and few of the ideas included in the Puritan Ethic were actually new. Many of them had existed in other intellectual contexts before Puritanism was heard of, and many of them continue to exist today, as they did in the Revolutionary period, without the support of Puritanism. But Puritanism wove them together in a single rational pattern, and

Puritans planted the pattern in America. It may be instructive, therefore, to identify the ideas as the Puritans defined and explained them before going on to the way in which they were applied in Revolutionary America after they had emerged from the Puritan mesh.

The values, ideas, and attitudes of the Puritan Ethic, as the term will be used here, clustered around the familiar idea of "calling." God, the Puritans believed, called every man to serve Him by serving society and himself in some useful, productive occupation. Before entering on a trade or profession, a man must determine whether he had a calling to undertake it. If he had talents for it, if it was useful to society, if it was appropriate to his station in life, he could feel confident that God called him to it. God called no one to a life of prayer or to a life of ease or to any life that added nothing to the common good. It was a "foul disorder in any Commonwealth that there should be suffered rogues, beggars, vagabonds." The life of a monk or nun was no calling because prayer must be the daily exercise of every man, not a way for particular men to make a living. And perhaps most important, the life of the carefree aristocrat was no calling: "miserable and damnable is the estate of those that being enriched with great livings and revenues, do spend their days in eating and drinking, in sports and pastimes, not employing themselves in service for Church or Commonwealth."[3]

Once called to an occupation, a man's duty to the Maker Who called him demanded that he labor assiduously at it. He must shun both idleness, or neglect of his calling, and sloth, or slackness in it. Recreation was legitimate, because body and mind sometimes needed a release in order to return to work with renewed vigor. But recreation must not become an end in itself. One of the Puritans' objections to the stage was that professional players made recreation an occupation and thereby robbed the commonwealth of productive labor. The emphasis throughout was on productivity for the benefit of society.

In addition to working diligently at productive tasks, a man was supposed to be thrifty and frugal. It was good to produce but bad to consume any more than necessity required. A man was but the steward of the possessions he accumulated. If he indulged himself in luxurious living, he would have that much less with which to support church and society. If he needlessly consumed his substance, either from carelessness or from sensuality, he failed to honor the God who furnished him with it.

In this atmosphere the tolerance accorded to merchants was grudging. The merchant was suspect because he tended to encourage unnecessary consumption and because he did not actually produce anything; he simply moved things about. It was formally recognized that making exchanges could be a useful service, but it was a less essential one than that performed by the farmer, the shoemaker, or the weaver. Moreover, the merchant sometimes demeaned his calling by practicing it to the detriment rather than the benefit of society: he took advantage of his position to collect more than the value of his services, to charge what the market would bear. In short, he sometimes engaged in what a later generation would call speculation.

As the Puritan Ethic induced a suspicion of merchants, it also induced, for different reasons, a suspicion of prosperity. Superficial readers of Max Weber have often leapt to the conclusion that Puritans viewed economic success as a sign of salvation. In fact, Puritans were always uncomfortable in the presence of prosperity. Although they constantly sought it, although hard work combined with frugality could scarcely fail in the New World to bring it, the Puritans always felt more at ease when adversity made them tighten their belts. They knew that they must be thankful for prosperity, that like everything good in the world it came from God. But they also knew that God could use it as a temptation, that it could lead to idleness, sloth, and extravagance. These were vices, not simply because they in turn led to poverty, but because God forbade them. Adversity, on the other hand, though a sign of God's temporary displeasure, and therefore a cause for worry, was also God's means of recalling a people to Him. When God showed anger man knew he must repent and do something about it. In times of drought, disease, and disaster a man could renew his faith by exercising frugality and industry, which were good not simply because they would lead to a restoration of prosperity, but because God demanded them.

The ambivalence of this attitude toward prosperity and adversity was characteristic of the Puritans: it was their lot to be forever improving the world, in full knowledge that every improvement would in the end prove illusory. While rejoicing at the superior purity of the churches they founded in New England, they had to tell themselves that they had often enjoyed more godliness while striving against heavy odds in England. The experience caused Nathaniel Ward, the "simple cobbler of Aggawam," to lament the declension that he was sure would overtake the Puritans in England after they gained the upper hand in the 1640's: "my heart hath mourned, and mine eyes wept in secret, to consider what will become of multitudes of my dear Country-men [in England], when they shall enjoy what they now covet."[4] Human flesh was too proud to stand success; it needed the discipline of adversity to keep it in line. And Puritans accordingly relished every difficulty and worried over every success.

This thirst for adversity found expression in a special kind of sermon, the Jeremiad, which was a lament for the loss of virtue and a warning of divine displeasure and desolation to come. The Jeremiad was a rhetorical substitute for adversity, designed to stiffen the virtue of the prosperous and successful by assuring them that they had failed. Nowhere was the Puritan Ethic more assiduously inculcated than in these laments, and it accordingly became a characteristic of the virtues which that ethic demanded that they were always seen to be expiring, if not already dead. Industry and frugality in their full vigor belonged always to an earlier generation, which the existing one must learn to emulate if it would avoid the wrath of God.

These ideas and attitudes were not peculiar to Puritans. The voluminous critiques of the Weber thesis have shown that similar attitudes prevailed widely among many groups and at many times. But the Puritans did have them, and so did their descendants in the time of the

Revolution and indeed for long after it. It matters little by what name we call them or where they came from. "The Puritan Ethic" is used here simply as an appropriate shorthand phrase to designate them, and should not be taken to imply that the American Revolutionists were Puritans.

The Puritan Ethic as it existed among the Revolutionary generation had in fact lost for most men the endorsement of an omnipresent angry God. The element of divinity had not entirely departed, but it was a good deal diluted. The values and precepts derived from it, however, remained intact and were reinforced by a reading of history that attributed the rise and fall of empires to the acquisition and loss of the same virtues that God had demanded of the founders of New England. Rome, it was learned, had risen while its citizens worked at their callings and led lives of simplicity and frugality. Success as usual had resulted in extravagance and luxury. "The ancient, regular, and laborious life was relaxed and sunk in Idleness," and the torrent of vices thus let loose had overwhelmed the empire. In modern times the frugal Dutch had overthrown the extravagant Spanish.[5] The lesson of history carried the same imperatives that were intoned from the pulpit.

Whether they derived their ideas from history thus interpreted or from the Puritan tradition or elsewhere, Americans of the Revolutionary period in every colony and state paid tribute to the Puritan Ethic and repeated its injunctions. Although it was probably strongest among Presbyterians and Congregationalists like Benjamin Rush and Samuel Adams, it is evident enough among Anglicans like Henry Laurens and Richard Henry Lee and even among deists like Franklin and Jefferson. Jefferson's letters to his daughters sometimes sound as though they had been written by Cotton Mather: "It is your future happiness which interests me, and nothing can contribute more to it (moral rectitude always excepted) than the contracting a habit of industry and activity. Of all the cankers of human happiness, none corrodes it with so silent, yet so baneful a tooth, as indolence." "Determine never to be idle. No person will have occasion to complain of the want of time, who never loses any. It is wonderful how much may be done, if we are always doing."[6] And Jefferson of course followed his own injunction: a more methodically industrious man never lived.

The Puritan Ethic whether enjoined by God, by history, or by philosophy, called for diligence in a productive calling, beneficial both to society and to the individual. It encouraged frugality and frowned on extravagance. It viewed the merchant with suspicion and speculation with horror. It distrusted prosperity and gathered strength from adversity. It prevailed widely among Americans of different times and places, but those who urged it most vigorously always believed it to be on the point of expiring and in need of renewal.

The role of these ideas in the American Revolution—during the period, say, roughly from 1764 to 1789—was not explicitly causative. That is, the important events of the time can seldom be seen as the result of these ideas and never as the result solely of these ideas. Yet the major developments, the resistance to Great Britain, independence, the divisions among the successful Revolutionists, and the formulation of

policies for the new nation, were all discussed and understood by men of the time in terms derived from the Puritan Ethic. And the way men understood and defined the issues before them frequently influenced their decisions.

I. THE ORIGINS OF AMERICAN INDEPENDENCE

In the first phase of the American Revolution, the period of agitation between the passage of the Sugar Act in 1764 and the outbreak of hostilities at Lexington in 1775, Americans were primarily concerned with finding ways to prevent British authority from infringing what they considered to be their rights. The principal point of contention was Parliament's attempt to tax them; and their efforts to prevent taxation, short of outright resistance, took two forms: economic pressure through boycotts and political pressure through the assertion of political and constitutional principles. Neither form of protest required the application of the Puritan Ethic, but both in the end were affected by it.

The boycott movements were a means of getting British merchants to bring their weight to bear on Parliament for the specific purpose of repealing tax laws. In each case the boycotts began with extralegal voluntary agreements among citizens not to consume British goods. In 1764-65, for instance, artisans agreed to wear only leather working clothes. Students forbore imported beer. Fire companies pledged themselves to eat no mutton in order to increase the supply of local wool. Backed by the nonconsumers, merchants of New York, Philadelphia, and Boston agreed to import no British goods until the repeal of the Stamp Act. The pressure had the desired effect: the Stamp Act was repealed and the Sugar Act revised. When the Townshend Acts and later the Coercive Acts were passed, new nonconsumption and nonimportation agreements were launched.[7]

From the outset these colonial boycott movements were more than a means of bringing pressure on Parliament. That is to say, they were not simply negative in intent. They were also a positive end in themselves, a way of reaffirming and rehabilitating the virtues of the Puritan Ethic. Parliamentary taxation offered Americans the prospect of poverty and adversity, and, as of old, adversity provided a spur to virtue. In 1764, when Richard Henry Lee got news of the Sugar Act, he wrote to a friend in London: "Possibly this step of the mother country, though intended to oppress and keep us low, in order to secure our dependence, may be subversive of this end. Poverty and oppression, among those whose minds are filled with ideas of British liberty, may introduce a virtuous industry, with a train of generous and manly sentiments. . . ."[8] And so it proved in the years that followed: as their Puritan forefathers had met providential disasters with a renewal of the virtue that would restore God's favor, the Revolutionary generation met taxation with a self-denial and industry that would hopefully restore their accustomed freedom and simultaneously enable them to identify with their virtuous ancestors.

The advocates of nonconsumption and nonimportation, in urging austerity on their countrymen, made very little of the effect that self-

denial would have on the British government. Nonimportation and nonconsumption were preached as means of renewing ancestral virtues. Americans were reminded that they had been "of late years insensibly drawn into too great a degree of *luxury* and *dissipation*."[9] Parliamentary taxation was a blessing in disguise, because it produced the nonimportation and nonconsumption agreements. "Luxury," the people of the colonies were told, "has taken deep root among us, and to cure a people of luxury were an Herculean task indeed; what perhaps no power on earth but a British Parliament, in the very method they are taking with us, could possibly execute."[10] Parliamentary taxation, like an Indian attack in earlier years, was thus both a danger to be resisted and an act of providence to recall Americans from declension: "The Americans have plentifully enjoyed the delights and comforts, as well as the necessaries of life, and it is well known that an increase of wealth and affluence paves the way to an increase of luxury, immorality and profaneness, and here kind providence interposes; and as it were, obliges them to forsake the use of one of their delights, to preserve their liberty."[11] The principal object of this last homily was tea, which, upon being subjected to a Parliamentary duty, became luxurious and enervating. Physicians even discovered that it was bad for the health.[12]

In these appeals for self-denial, the Puritan Ethic acquired a value that had been only loosely associated with it hitherto: it became an essential condition of political liberty. An author who signed himself "Frugality" advised the readers of the *Newport Mercury* that "We may talk and boast of liberty; but after all, the industrious and frugal only will be free,"[13] free not merely because their self-denial would secure repeal of Parliamentary taxes, but because freedom was inseparable from virtue, and frugality and industry were the most conspicuous public virtues. The Americans were fortunate in having so direct and easy a way to preserve liberty, for importations, it now appeared, were mainly luxuries, "Baubles of Britain," "foreign trifles."[14] By barring their entrance, "by consuming *less* of what we are not really in want of, and by industriously cultivating and improving the natural advantages of our own country, we might save our *substance, even our lands*, from becoming the property of others, and we might effectually preserve our *virtue* and our *liberty*, to the latest posterity." Americans like Englishmen had long associated liberty with property. They now concluded that both rested on virtue: while liberty would expire without the support of property, property itself could not exist without industry and frugality. "Our enemies," they were assured, "very well know that dominion and property are closely connected; and that to impoverish us, is the surest way to enslave us. Therefore, if we mean still to be free, let us unanimously lay aside foreign superfluities, and encourage our own manufacture. SAVE YOUR MONEY AND YOU WILL SAVE YOUR COUNTRY!"[15]

There was one class of Americans who could take no comfort in this motto. The merchants, on whom nonimportation depended, stood to lose by the campaign for austerity, and it is not surprising that they showed less enthusiasm for it than the rest of the population. Their lukewarmness only served to heighten the suspicion with which their

calling was still viewed. "Merchants have no country," Jefferson once remarked. "The mere spot they stand on does not constitute so strong an attachment as that from which they draw their gains."[16] And John Adams at the Continental Congress was warned by his wife's uncle that merchants "have no Object but their own particular Interest and they must be Contrould or they will ruin any State under Heaven."[17]

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The merchants actually had more than a short-range interest at stake in their reluctance to undertake nonimportation. The movement, as we have seen, was not simply a means of securing repeal of the taxes to which merchants along with other colonists were opposed. The movement was in fact anticommercial, a repudiation of the merchant's calling. Merchants, it was said, encouraged men to go into debt. Merchants pandered to luxury. Since they made more on the sale of superfluous baubles than on necessities, they therefore pressed the sale of them to a weak and gullible public. What the advocates of nonimportation demanded was not merely an interruption of commerce but a permanent reduction, not to say elimination, of it. In its place they called for manufacturing, a palpably productive, useful calling.

The encouragement of manufacturing was an accompaniment to all the nonimportation, nonconsumption movements. New Yorkers organized a society specifically for that purpose, which offered bounties for the production of native textiles and other necessaries. The nonconsumption of mutton provided new supplies of wool, which housewives turned into thread in spinning matches (wheelwrights did a land-office business in spinning wheels). Stores began selling American cloth, and college students appeared at commencement in homespun. Tories ridiculed these efforts, and the total production was doubtless small, but it would be difficult to underestimate the importance of the attitude toward manufacturing that originated at this time. In a letter of Abigail Adams can be seen the way in which the Puritan Ethic was creating out of a Revolutionary protest movement the conception of a self-sufficient American economy. Abigail was writing to her husband, who was at the First Continental Congress, helping to frame the Continental Association for nonimportation, nonexportation, and nonconsumption:

> If we expect to inherit the blessings of our Fathers, we should return a little more to their primitive Simplicity of Manners, and not sink into inglorious ease. We have too many high sounding words, and too few actions that correspond with them. I have spent one Sabbeth in Town since you left me. I saw no difference in respect to ornaments, etc. etc. but in the Country you must look for that virtue, of which you find but small Glimerings in the Metropolis. Indeed they have not the advantages, nor the resolution to encourage their own Manufactories which people in the country have. To the Mercantile part, tis considerd as throwing away their own Bread; but they must retrench their expenses and be content with a small share of gain for they will find but few who will wear their Livery. As for me I will seek wool and flax and work willingly with my Hands, and indeed their is occasion for all our industry and economy.[18]

In 1774 manufacture retained its primitive meaning of something made

by hand, and making things by hand seemed a fitting occupation for frugal country people who had always exhibited more of the Puritan Ethic than high-living city folk. Abigail's espousal of manufactures, with its defiant rejection of dependence on the merchants of the city, marks a step away from the traditional notion that America because of its empty lands and scarcity of people was unsuited to manufactures and must therefore obtain them from the Old World. Through the nonimportation movements the colonists discovered that manufacturing was a calling not beyond the capacities of a frugal, industrious people, however few in number, and that importation of British manufactures actually menaced frugality and industry.

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While engaged in their campaign of patriotic frugality, Americans were also articulating the political principles that they thought should govern free countries and that should bar Parliament from taxing them. The front line of defense against Parliament was the ancient maxim that a man could not be taxed except by his own consent given in person or by his representative. The colonists believed this to be an acknowledged principle of free government, indelibly stamped on the British Constitution, and they wrote hundreds of pages affirming it. In those pages the Puritan Ethic was revealed at the very root of the constitutional principle when taxation without representation was condemned as an assault on every man's calling. To tax a man without his consent, Samuel Adams said, was "against the plain and obvious rule of equity, whereby the industrious man is intitled to the fruits of his industry."[19] And the New York Assembly referred to the Puritan Ethic when it told Parliament that the effect of the sugar and stamp taxes would be to "dispirit the People, abate their Industry, discourage Trade, introduce Discord, Poverty, and Slavery."[20] In slavery, of course, there could be no liberty and no property and so no motive for frugality and industry. Uncontrolled Parliamentary taxation, like luxury and extravagance, was an attack not merely on property but on industry and frugality, for which liberty and property must be the expected rewards. With every protest that British taxation was reducing them to slavery, Americans reaffirmed their devotion to industry and frugality and their readiness to defy the British threat to them. Students of the American Revolution have often found it difficult to believe that the colonists were willing to fight about an abstract principle and have sometimes dismissed the constitutional arguments of the time as mere rhetoric. But the constitutional principle on which the colonists rested their case was not the product either of abstract political philosophy or of the needs of the moment. In the colonists' view, it was a means, hallowed by history, of protecting property and of maintaining those virtues, associated with property, without which no people could be free. Through the rhetoric, if it may be called that, of the Puritan Ethic, the colonists reached behind the constitutional principle to the enduring human needs that had brought the principle into being.

We may perhaps understand better the urgency both of the constitutional argument and of the drive toward independence that it ultimately generated, if we observe the growing suspicion among the colonists that

the British government had betrayed its own constitution and the values which that constitution protected. In an earlier generation the colonists had vied with one another in praising the government of England. Englishmen, they believed, had suffered again and again from invasion and tyranny, had each time recovered control of their government, and in the course of centuries had developed unparalleled constitutional safeguards to keep rulers true to their callings. The calling of a ruler, as the colonists and their Puritan forbears saw it, was like any other calling: it must serve the common good; it must be useful, productive; and it must be assiduously pursued. After the Glorious Revolution of 1688, Englishmen had fashioned what seemed a nearly perfect instrument of government, a constitution that blended monarchy, aristocracy, and democracy in a mixture designed to avoid the defects and secure the benefits of each. But something had gone wrong. The human capacity for corruption had transformed the balanced government of King, Lords, and Commons into a single-minded body of rulers bent on their own enrichment and heedless of the public good.

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By the time the First Continental Congress came together in 1774, large numbers of leading Americans had come to identify Great Britain with vice and America with virtue, yet with the fearful recognition that virtue stands in perennial danger from the onslaughts of vice. Patrick Henry gave voice to the feeling when he denounced Galloway's plan for an intercolonial American legislature that would stand between the colonies and Parliament. "We shall liberate our Constituents," he warned, "from a corrupt House of Commons, but thro[w] them into the Arms of an American Legislature that may be bribed by that Nation which avows in the Face of the World, that Bribery is a Part of her System of Government."[21] A government that had succeeded in taxing seven million Englishmen (with the consent of their supposed representatives), to support an army of placeholders, would have no hesitation in using every means to corrupt the representatives of two and one half million Americans.

When the Second Congress met in 1775, Benjamin Franklin, fresh from London, could assure the members that their contrast of England and America was justified. Writing back to Joseph Priestley, he said it would "scarce be credited in Britain, that men can be as diligent with us from zeal for the public good, as with you for thousands per annum. Such is the difference between uncorrupted new states, and corrupted old ones."[22] Thomas Jefferson drew the contrast even more bluntly in an answer rejecting Lord North's Conciliatory Proposal of February 20, 1775, which had suggested that Parliament could make provisions for the government of the colonies. "The provisions we have made," said Jefferson, "are such as please our selves, and are agreeable to our own circumstances; they answer the substantial purposes of government and of justice, and other purposes than these should not be answered. We do not mean that our people shall be burthened with oppressive taxes to provide sinecures for the idle or the wicked. . . ."[23]

When Congress finally dissolved the political bands that had con-

nected America with England, the act was rendered less painful by the colonial conviction that America and England were already separated as virtue is from vice. The British Constitution had foundered, and the British government had fallen into the hands of a luxurious and corrupt ruling class. There remained no way of preserving American virtue unless the connection with Britain was severed. The meaning of virtue in this context embraced somewhat more than the values of the Puritan Ethic, but those values were pre-eminent in it. In the eyes of many Americans the Revolution was a defense of industry and frugality, whether in rulers or people, from the assaults of British vice. The Puritan Ethic, in the colonists' political as in their economic thinking, prepared the way for independence.

II. WHO SHOULD RULE AT HOME

Virtue, as everyone knew, was a fragile and probably fleeting possession. Even while defending it from the British, Americans worried about their own uneasy hold on it and eyed one another for signs of its departure. The war, of course, furnished the conditions of adversity in which virtue could be expected to flourish. On the day after Congress voted independence, John Adams wrote exultantly to Abigail of the difficulties ahead: "It may be the Will of Heaven that America shall suffer Calamities still more wasting and Distresses yet more dreadfull. If this is to be the Case, it will have this good Effect, at least: it will inspire Us with many Virtues, which We have not, and correct many Errors, Follies, and Vices, which threaten to disturb, dishonour, and destroy Us.—The Furnace of Affliction produces Refinement, in States as well as Individuals."[24] Thereafter, as afflictions came, Adams welcomed them in good Puritan fashion. But the war did not prove a sufficient spur to virtue, and by the fall of 1776 Adams was already observing that "There is too much Corruption, even in this infant Age of our Republic. Virtue is not in Fashion. Vice is not infamous."[25] Sitting with the Congress in Philadelphia, he privately yearned for General Howe to capture the town, because the ensuing hardship "would cure Americans of their vicious and luxurious and effeminate Appetites, Passions and Habits, a more dangerous Army to American Liberty than Mr. Howes."[26]

Within a year or two Americans would begin to look back on 1775 and 1776 as a golden age, when vice had given way to heroic self-denial, and luxury and corruption had not yet raised their heads. In revolutionary America as in Puritan New England the virtues of the Puritan Ethic must be quickened by laments for their loss.

Many of these eighteenth-century lamentations seem perfunctory—mere nostalgic ritual in which men purged their sins by confessing their inferiority to their fathers. But in the years after 1776 the laments were prompted by a genuine uneasiness among the Revolutionists about their own worthiness for the role they had undertaken. In the agitation against Britain they had repeatedly told themselves that liberty could not live without virtue. Having cast off the threat posed to both liberty and virtue by a corrupt monarchy, they recognized that the republican

governments they had created must depend for their success on the virtue, not of a king or of a few aristocrats, but of an entire people. Unless the virtue of Americans proved equal to its tasks, liberty would quickly give way once again to tyranny and perhaps a worse tyranny than that of George III.

As Americans faced the problems of independence, the possibility of failure did not seem remote. By recalling the values that had inspired the resistance to British taxation they hoped to lend success to their venture in republican government. The Puritan Ethic thus continued to occupy their consciousness (and their letters, diaries, newspapers, and pamphlets) and to provide the framework within which alternatives were debated and sides taken.

Next to the task of defeating the British armies, perhaps the most urgent problem that confronted the new nation was to prove its nationality, for no one was certain that independent Americans would be able to get on with one another. Before the Revolution there had been many predictions, both European and American, that if independence were achieved it would be followed by bloody civil wars among the states, which would eventually fall prostrate before some foreign invader. The anticipated civil war did not take place for eighty-five years. Americans during those years were not without divisions, but they did manage to stay together. Their success in doing so, exemplified in the adoption of the Constitution of 1787, demonstrated that the divisions among them were less serious than they themselves had realized. Without attempting to examine the nature of the debates over the Constitution itself, I should like to show how the Puritan Ethic, while contributing to divisions among Americans, also furnished both sides with a common set of values that limited the extent and bitterness of divisions and thus helped to make a United States Constitution possible.

In the period after 1776 perhaps the most immediate threat to the American union was the possibility that the secession of the United States from Great Britain would be followed by a secession of the lower Mississippi and Ohio valleys from the United States. The gravity of the threat, which ended with the fiasco of the Burr Conspiracy, is difficult to assess, but few historians would deny that real friction between East and West existed.

The role of the Puritan Ethic in the situation was characteristic: each side tended to see the other as deficient in the same virtues. To westerners the eastern-dominated governments seemed to be in the grip of speculators and merchants determined to satisfy their own avarice by sacrificing the interests of the industrious farmers of the West. To easterners, or at least to some easterners, the West seemed to be filling up with shiftless adventurers, as lazy and lawless and unconcerned with the values of the Puritan Ethic as were the native Indians. Such men were unworthy of a share in government and must be restrained in their restless hunt for land and furs; they must be made to settle down and build civilized communities where industry and frugality would thrive.

The effects of these attitudes cannot be demonstrated at length here, but may be suggested by the views of a key figure, John Jay. As early as

1779, the French Ambassador, Conrad Alexandre Gérard, had found Jay one of the most reasonable members of Congress, that is, one of the members most ready to fall in with the Ambassador's instructions to discourage American expansion. Jay belonged to a group which suggested that Spain ought to close the Mississippi to American navigation in order to keep the settlers of the West "from living in a half-savage condition." Presumably the group reasoned that the settlers were mostly fur traders; if they were prevented from trading their furs through New Orleans, they might settle down to farming and thus achieve "an attachment to property and industry."[27] Whatever the line of reasoning, the attitude toward the West is clear, and Jay obliged the French Ambassador by volunteering the opinion that the United States was already too large.[28]

In 1786 Jay offered similar opinions to Jefferson, suggesting that settlement of the West should be more gradual, that Americans should be prevented from pitching their tents "through the Wilderness in a great Variety of Places, far distant from each other, and from those Advantages of Education, Civilization, Law, and Government which compact Settlements and Neighbourhood afford."[29] It is difficult to believe that Jay was unaffected by this attitude in the negotiations he was carrying on with the Spanish envoy Gardoqui over the right of the United States to navigate the Mississippi. When Jay presented Congress with a treaty in which the United States agreed to forego navigation of the Mississippi in return for commercial concessions in Spain, it seemed, to westerners at least, that the United States Secretary for Foreign Affairs was willing to sacrifice their interests in favor of his merchant friends in the East.

Fortunately the conflict was not a lasting one. Jay was misinformed about the West, for the advance wave of fur traders and adventurers who pitched their tents far apart occupied only a brief moment in the history of any part of the West. The tens of thousands of men who entered Kentucky and Tennessee in the 1780's came to farm the rich lands, and they carried the values of the Puritan Ethic with them. As this fact became apparent, conflict subsided. Throughout American history, in fact, the West was perpetually turning into a new East, complete with industrious inhabitants, spurred by adversity, and pursuing their callings with an assiduity that the next generation would lament as lost.

Another sectional conflict was not so transitory. The South was not in the process of becoming northern or the North southern. And their differing interests were already discernible in the 1780's, at least to an astute observer like James Madison, as the primary source of friction among Americans. The difference arose, he believed, "principally from the effects of their having or not having slaves."[30]

The bearing of the Puritan Ethic on slavery, as on many other institutions, was complex and ambivalent. It heightened the conflict between those who did and those who did not have slaves. But it also, for a time at least, set limits to the conflict by offering a common ground on which both sides could agree in deploring the institution.

The Puritans themselves had not hesitated to enslave Indian captives

or to sell and buy slaves. At the opening of the Revolution no state prohibited slavery. But the institution obviously violated the precepts of the Puritan Ethic: it deprived men of the fruits of their labor and thus removed a primary motive for industry and frugality. How it came into existence in the first place among a people devoted to the Puritan Ethic is a question not yet solved, but as soon as Americans began complaining of Parliament's assault on their liberty and property, it was difficult not to see the inconsistency of continuing to hold slaves. "I wish most sincerely," Abigail Adams wrote to her husband in 1774, "there was not a Slave in the province. It allways appeard a most iniquitous Scheme to me—fight ourselfs for what we are daily robbing and plundering from those who have as good a right to freedom as we have."[31] Newspaper articles everywhere made the same point. As a result, slavery was gradually abolished in the northern states (where it was not important in the economy), and the self-righteousness with which New Englanders already regarded their southern neighbors was thereby heightened.

Although the South failed to abolish slavery, southerners like northerners recognized the threat it posed to the values that all Americans held. Partly as a result of that recognition, more slaves were freed by voluntary manumission in the South than by legal and constitutional abolition in the North. There were other reasons for hostility to slavery in both North and South, including fear of insurrection, humanitarianism, and apprehension of the wrath of God; but a predominant reason, in the South at least, was the evil effect of slavery on the industry and frugality of both master and slave, but especially of the master.

A perhaps extreme example of this argument, divested of all considerations of justice and humanity, appeared in a Virginia newspaper in 1767. The author (who signed himself "Philanthropos"!) proposed to abolish slavery in Virginia by having the government lay a prohibitory duty on importation and then purchase one tenth of everyone's slaves every year. The purchase price would be recovered by selling the slaves in the West Indies. Philanthropos acknowledged that slaves were "used with more barbarity" in the West Indies than in Virginia but offered them the consolation "that this sacrifice of themselves will put a quicker period to a miserable life." To emancipate them and leave them in Virginia would be fatal, because they would probably "attempt to arrive at our possessions by force, rather than wait the tedious operation of labour, industry and time." But unless slavery was abolished in Virginia, the industry and frugality of the free population would expire. As it was, said Philanthropos, when a man got a slave or two, he sat back and stopped working. Promising young men failed to take up productive occupations because they could get jobs as overseers. By selling off their slaves in the West Indies, Virginians would get the money to import white indentured servants and would encourage "our own common people, who would no longer be diverted from industry by the prospect of overseers places, to [enter] agriculture and arts."[32]

Few opponents of slavery were so callous, but even the most humane stressed the effect of slavery on masters and the problems of instilling the

values of industry in emancipated slaves. Thomas Jefferson hated slavery, but he hated idleness equally, and he would not have been willing to abolish slavery without making arrangements to preserve the useful activity it exacted from its victims. He had heard of one group of Virginia slaves who had been freed by their Quaker owners and kept as tenants on the land. The results had been unsatisfactory, because the ex-slaves had lacked the habits of industry and "chose to steal from their neighbors rather than work." Jefferson had plans to free his own slaves (after he freed himself from his creditors) by a gradual system which provided means for educating the Negroes into habits of industry.[33] But Jefferson never put his scheme into practice. He and most other Southerners continued to hold slaves, and the result was as predicted: slavery steadily eroded the honor accorded work among southerners.

During the Revolutionary epoch, however, the erosion had not yet proceeded far enough to alienate North from South. Until well into the nineteenth century Southerners continued to deplore the effects of slavery on the industry and frugality at least of the whites. Until the North began to demand immediate abolition and the South began to defend slavery as a permanent blessing, leaders of the two sections could find a good deal of room for agreement in the shared values of the Puritan Ethic.

. . .

The party divisions of 1778-79 seem to indicate that although most Americans made adherence to the Puritan Ethic an article of faith, some Americans were far more assiduous than others in exemplifying it. Since such men were confined to no particular section, and since men active in national politics could recognize their own kind from whatever section, political divisions in the early years of the republic actually brought Americans from all over the country into working harmony within a single group. And parties, instead of destroying the union, became a means of holding it together.

Recent studies have shown that there was no continuity in the political divisions of the 1770's, 1780's, and 1790's, by demonstrating that the split between Federalists and Republicans in the 1790's cannot be traced to the preceding splits between reluctant and ardent revolutionaries of 1776 or between Federalists and Antifederalists of 1789. The continuity that a previous generation of historians had seen in the political history of these years has thus proved specious. It is tempting, however, to suggest that there may have been a form of continuity in American political history hitherto unnoticed, a continuity based on the attitudes we have been exploring. Although the divisions of 1778-79 did not endure, Americans of succeeding years continued to show differing degrees of attachment to the values of the Puritan Ethic. By the time when national political parties were organized in the 1790's, a good many other factors were involved in attracting men to one side or the other, far too many to permit discussion here. But the Puritan Ethic remained a constant ingredient, molding the style of American politics not only in the 1790's but long afterwards. Men on both sides, and seemingly the whole population, continued to proclaim their devotion to it by mourning its decline, and

each side regularly accused the other of being deficient in it. It served as a weapon for political conflict but also as a tether which kept parties from straying too far apart. It deserves perhaps to be considered as one of the major reasons why American party battles have generally remained rhetorical and American national government has endured as a workable government.

III. AN ECONOMIC INTERPRETATION OF THE CONSTITUTION

As the Puritan Ethic helped to give shape to national politics, so too it helped to shape national policy, especially in the economic sphere. Before 1776 the economic policy of the American colonies had been made for them in London: they had been discouraged from manufacturing, barred from certain channels of trade, and encouraged to exploit the natural resources of the continent, especially its land. After 1776 the independent states were free to adopt, singly or collectively, any policy that suited them. At first the exigencies of the war against England directed every measure; but as the fighting subsided, Americans began to consider the economic alternatives open to them.

There appeared to be three possible kinds of activity: agriculture, manufacturing, and commerce. Of these, agriculture and commerce had hitherto dominated the American scene. Americans, in accepting the place assigned them under the British Navigation Acts, had seen the force of their own environment operating in the same direction as British policy: as long as the continent had an abundance of unoccupied land and a scarcity of labor, it seemed unlikely that its inhabitants could profitably engage in manufacturing. The nonimportation agreements had done much to dispel this opinion in America; and the war that followed, by interdicting trade in some regions and hindering it in others, had given a further spur to manufactures. By the time peace came numerous observers were able to point out fallacies in the supposition that manufacturing was not economically feasible in the United States. From England, Richard Price reminded Americans that their country contained such a variety of soils and climates that it was capable of "producing not only every *necessary* but every *convenience* of life," and Americans were quick to agree.[34] They acknowledged that their population was small by comparison with Europe's and the numbers skilled in manufacturing even smaller. But they now discovered reasons why this deficiency was no insuperable handicap. People without regular employment, women and children for example, could be put to useful work in manufacturing. Moreover, if Americans turned to manufactures, many skilled artisans of the Old World, losing their New World customers, would move to America in order to regain them. Immigrants would come in large numbers anyhow, attracted by the blessings of republican liberty. And scarcity of labor could also be overcome by labor-saving machinery and by water and steam power.[35]

A few men like Thomas Jefferson continued to think manufacturing neither feasible nor desirable for Americans, but the economic vicissitudes of the postwar years subdued the voices of such men to a

whisper. No one suggested that the country should abandon its major commitment to agriculture in favor of manufacturing, but it became a commonplace that too many Americans were engaged in commerce and that the moral, economic, and political welfare of the United States demanded a greater attention to manufacturing. The profiteering of merchants during the war had kept the old suspicions of that calling very much alive, so that long before the fighting stopped, people were worried about the effects of an unrestrained commerce on the independent United States. A Yale student reflected the mood in a declamation offered in July 1778. If the country indulged too freely in commerce, he warned, the result would be "Luxury with its train of the blackest vices, which will debase our manliness of sentiment, and spread a general dissolution of manners thro the Continent. This extensive Commerce is the most direct method to ruin our country, and we may affirm that we shall exist as an empire but a short space, unless it can be circumscribed within narrow limits."[36]

The prophecy seemed to be on the way to swift fulfillment within a year or two of the war's end. As soon as the peace treaty was signed, American merchants rushed to offer Americans the familiar British goods which they had done without for nearly a decade. The British gladly supplied the market, extending a liberal credit, and the result was a flood of British textiles and hardware in every state. As credit extended from merchant to tradesman to farmer and planter, Americans were caught up in an orgy of buying. But at the same time Britain barred American ships from her West Indies possessions, where American cattle, lumber, and foodstuffs had enjoyed a prime market. The British could now buy these articles in the United States at their own prices and carry them in their own ships, depriving the American merchant and farmer alike of accustomed profits. Hard cash was rapidly drained off; debts grew to alarming proportions; and the buying boom turned to a sharp depression.[37]

Casting about for a remedy, some states turned to the old expedient of paper money. But to many Americans this was a cure worse than the disease and no real cure anyhow. The root of the trouble, they told themselves, was their own frivolity. Newspapers and pamphlets from one end of the continent to the other lamented the lost virtues that had inspired resistance to tyranny a few short years before. While Rome had enjoyed a republican simplicity for centuries, the United States seemed to have sunk into luxury and decay almost as soon as born. And who indulged this weakness, who coaxed Americans into this wild extravagance? It was the merchants. Shelves bulging with oversupplies of ribbons, laces, and yard goods, the merchants outdid themselves in appealing to every gullible woman and every foolish fop to buy. There was an oversupply, it seemed, not merely of ribbons and laces but of merchants, a breed of men, according to Hugh Williamson of North Carolina, "too lazy to plow, or labour at any other calling."[38] "What can we promise ourselves," asked another writer, "if we still pursue the same extensive trade? What, but total destruction to our manners, and the entire loss of our virtue?"[39]

The basic remedy must be frugality. The laments over luxury were a

summons to Americans to tighten their belts, as they had done before in the face of adversity. And as they had also done in the earlier campaigns, they again linked frugality with nonimportation and with manufacturing for themselves, but this time with somewhat more confidence in the result. Manufacturing was now freed of the restrictions formerly imposed by the British; if once firmly established in the United States, it would help protect the very virtues that fostered it. An industrious, frugal people would manufacture for themselves, and in turn "Manufactures will promote industry, and industry contributes to health, virtue, riches and population."[40] Although the riches thus gained might constitute a danger to the virtues that begot them, they would not be as great a danger as riches arising from trade or speculation: "the evils resulting from opulence in a nation whose inhabitants are habituated to industry from their childhood, will never be so predominant as in those nations, whose riches are spontaneously produced, without labour or care. . . ."[41]

As manufactures were linked to virtue, so both were linked to the independent republican government for which Americans had been fighting. "America must adopt [a] new policy," David Ramsay insisted in 1785, "or she never will be independent in reality. We must import less and attend more to agriculture and manufactures."[42] It was now possible to see a new significance in England's old restraints on colonial manufacturing. Why had she prevented Americans from "working up those materials that God and nature have given us?" The answer was clear to a Maryland writer: because England knew "it was the only way to our real independence, and to render the habitable parts of our country truly valuable. What countries are the most flourishing and most powerful in the world? Manufacturing countries. It is not hills, mountains, woods, and rivers that constitute the true riches of a country. It is the number of industrious mechanic and manufacturing as well as agriculturing inhabitants. That a country composed of agricultivators and shepherds is not so valuable as one wherein a just proportion of the people attend to arts and manufactures, is known to every politician in Europe: And America will never feel her importance and dignity, until she alters her present system of trade, so ruinous to the interests, to the morals, and to the reputation of her citizens."[43]

Britain's extension of credit to American merchants, it now seemed, was only part of a perfidious plan to undermine through trade the independence she had acknowledged by treaty. Samuel Adams had once detected a British plan to destroy American liberty by introducing luxury and levity among the people. Having been thwarted in 1776, the British were now on the verge of success. As a South Carolina writer charged, they had let loose, "as from Pandora's box, a ruinous luxury, speculation, and extravagance, vitiated our taste, corrupted our manners, plunged the whole state into a private debt, never before equalled, and thro' the means of their trade, luxury, influence, and good things, brought the Republic into a dilemma, an example of which has not before happened in the world."[44] From France, where he was serving as ambassador, Thomas Jefferson could see that Britain by her liberal credits had put the whole United States in the same economic thralldom

in which her merchants had held (and still held) the Virginia tobacco planters. From economic thralldom back to political thralldom was only a step. Unless the United States could break the grip, her experiment in independence was over.

Jefferson, while joining in the hymns to frugality (he thought extravagance a "more baneful evil than toryism was during the war"),[45] had a peculiar prejudice against manufacturing and hoped to break the British grip and achieve economic independence by gaining new commercial treaties with other countries.[46] But few of his countrymen shared his prejudice. In every state they told themselves to manufacture. Even if it cost more to make a coat or a pair of shoes or a plow or a gun in America, the price of foreign imports was independence. "No man," warned Hugh Williamson, drawing upon another precept of the Puritan Ethic, "is to say that a thing may be good for individuals which is not good for the public, or that our citizens may thrive by cheap bargains, while the nation is ruined by them." Considered in the light of the national interest, "every domestic manufacture is cheaper than a foreign one, for this plain reason, by the first nothing is lost to the country, by the other the whole value is lost—it is carried away never to return."[47]

. . .

There were, of course, many forces working simultaneously toward the establishment of an effective national government in the 1780's, and perhaps economic forces were not the most important. It has been shown that Charles Beard's interpretation of the economic forces leading to the Constitution was without adequate foundation, and economic interpretations thus far advanced in place of Beard's have been only more complex versions of his. But another economic interpretation of the Constitution may be suggested: Americans from the time of their first nonimportation agreements against England had been groping toward a national economic policy that would bestow freedom from domination by outsiders. Long before the country had a national government capable of executing it, the outlines of that policy were visible, and the national government of 1789 was created, in part at least, in order to carry it out. Only an independent national economy could guarantee the political independence that Americans had declared in 1776, and only an independent national economy could preserve the virtue, the industry, frugality, and simplicity that Americans had sought to protect from the luxury and corruption of Great Britain. By 1787 it had become clear that none of these objectives could be attained without a national government empowered to control trade—and through trade all other parts of the national economy.

It is altogether fitting that the United States, which first acted as a government when the Continental Congress undertook the nonimportation, nonexportation, nonconsumption Association of 1774, gained a permanent effective government when Americans again felt an urgent need to control trade. There was in each case an immediate objective, to bring pressure on the British, and in each case a larger objective, to build American economic and moral strength. As the Philadelphia Convention

was drafting its great document, Tench Coxe expressed a hope which many members of that body cherished equally with the members of the First Continental Congress, that the encouragement of manufacturing would "lead us once more into the paths of virtue by restoring frugality and industry, those potent antidotes to the vices of mankind and will give us real independence by rescuing us from the tyranny of foreign fashions, and the destructive torrent of luxury."[48] Patriotism and the Puritan Ethic marched hand in hand from 1764 to 1789.

The vicissitudes of the new national government in carrying out a national economic policy form another story, and one full of ironies. Alexander Hamilton, the brilliant executor of the policy, had scarcely a grain of the Puritan Ethic in him and did not hesitate to enroll the merchant class in his schemes. Hamilton, for purely economic and patriotic reasons, favored direct encouragement of manufactures by the national government; but the merchants whom he had gathered behind him helped to defeat him. Thomas Jefferson, devoted to the values of the Puritan Ethic but prejudiced against manufactures, fought against governmental support of them, yet in the end adopted the measures that turned the country decisively toward manufacturing.

The Puritan Ethic did not die with the eighteenth century. Throughout our history it has been there, though it has continued to be in the process of expiring. One student of the Jacksonian period has concluded that politics in the 1830's and 1840's was dominated by an appeal for restoration of the frugality and simplicity which men of that generation thought had prevailed in the preceding one. The most popular analysis of American society after the second World War was a lament for the loss of inner-directedness (read simplicity, industry, frugality) which had been replaced by other-directedness (read luxury, extravagance). The Puritan Ethic has always been known by its epitaphs. Perhaps it is not quite dead yet.

A problem that Morgan raises but does not entirely solve is the extent to which the ethic he discerns in the Revolutionary mind is Puritan or simply Protestant or Christian or even universal. There is also an increasing awareness that much of the Puritan legacy—where it can be identified as such—may have been more harmful than beneficial to American development. Richard Slotkin, in Regeneration Through Violence: The Mythology of the American Frontier, 1600–1800 *(Middletown, Conn., 1973), has argued forcefully that much of what is deplorable in the American experience can be traced to Puritan modes of thought.*

Disagreement over the Puritan legacy—both its extent and its desirability—is not likely to lessen. The debate will last as long as the American past is studied by scholars of diverse backgrounds, assumptions, and disciplines. From such debate, however, should come a still better understanding of the nature of Puritan New England and of the legacy it bequeathed to the American nation.

NOTES

1. The author is engaged in a full-scale study of this theme. The present essay is interpretative, and citations have for the most part been limited to identifying the sources of quotations.

2. I have chosen this term rather than the familiar "Protestant Ethic" of Max Weber, partly because I mean something slightly different and partly because Weber confined his phrase to attitudes prevailing while the religious impulse was paramount. The attitudes that survived the decline of religion he designated as the "spirit of capitalism." In this essay I have not attempted to distinguish earlier from later, though I am concerned with a period when the attitudes were no longer dictated primarily by religion.

3. William Perkins, *Workes* (London, 1626-31), I, 755-756.

4. Nathaniel Ward, *The Simple Cobbler of Aggawam in America* (London, 1647), 41.

5. Purdie and Dixon's *Virginia Gazette* (Williamsburg), Sept. 5, 1771. Cf. *Pennsylvania Chronicle* (Philadelphia), Feb. 9-16, May 4-11, 1767; *Newport Mercury*, Mar. 7, 1774; and *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 30, 1767.

6. To Martha Jefferson, Mar. 28, May 5, 1787, in Julian Boyd *et al.*, eds., *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson* (Princeton, 1950-), XI, 250, 349.

7. Arthur M. Schlesinger, *The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution, 1763-1776* (New York, 1918), remains the best account of these movements.

8. To [Unknown], May 31, 1764, in James C. Ballagh, ed., *The Letters of Richard Henry Lee* (New York, 1911), I, 7.

9. *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 16, 1767.

10. *Va. Gazette* (Purdie and Dixon), June 1, 1769 (reprinted from *New York Chronicle*).

11. *Newport Mercury*, Dec. 13, 1773.

12. *Ibid.*, Nov. 9, 1767, Nov. 29, 1773, Feb. 14, 28, 1774.

13. *Ibid.*, Feb. 28, 1774.

14. *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 9, 16, 1767; To Arthur Lee, Oct. 31, 1771, in H. A. Cushing, ed., *The Writings of Samuel Adams* (New York, 1904-08), II, 267.

15. *Boston Evening Post*, Nov. 16, 1767; *Pennsylvania Journal* (Philadelphia), Dec. 10, 1767.

16. To Horatio Spafford, Mar. 17, 1817, quoted in Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, XIV, 221.

17. Cotton Tufts to John Adams, Apr. 26, 1776, in L. H. Butterfield *et al.*, eds., *Adams Family Correspondence* (Cambridge, Mass., 1963-), I, 395.

18. Oct. 16, 1774, in Butterfield, ed., *Adams Family Correspondence*, I, 173.

19. [*Boston Gazette*, Dec. 19, 1768] in Cushing, ed., *Writings of Samuel Adams*, I, 271.

20. E. S. Morgan, ed., *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis, 1764-1766* (Chapel Hill, 1959), 13.

21. Sept. 28, 1774, in L. H. Butterfield *et al.*, eds., *Diary and Autobiography of John Adams* (Cambridge, Mass., 1961), II, 143.

22. July 6, 1775, in E. C. Burnett, ed., *Letters of Members of The Continental Congress* (Washington, 1921-36), I, 156.

23. July 31, 1775, in Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, I, 232.

24. July 3, 1776, in Butterfield, ed., *Adams Family Correspondence*, II, 28.

25. John to Abigail Adams, Sept. 22, 1776, *ibid.*, II, 131.

26. Same to same, Sept. 8, 1777, *ibid.*, II, 338. Cf. pp. 169-170, 326.

27. John J. Meng, ed., *Despatches and Instructions of Conrad Alexandre Gérard . . .* (Baltimore, 1939), 531. Gérard reported of this group in February, 1779, "qu'ils desiroient fortement que Sa Majesté Catholique tint la clef du Mississippi de sorte que personne n'entrat du Mississippi dans l'Ocean ni de l'Ocean dans ce fleuve; mais qu'il falloit du Commerce aux peuplades dont il s'agit; que par là seulement on pourroit les empêcher de demeurer à demi Sauvages en les attachant à la propriété et à l'industrie."

28. *Ibid.*, 433-434, 494.

29. Dec. 14, 1786, in Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, X, 599.

30. In Convention, June 30, 1787, in C. C. Tansill, ed., *Documents Illustrative of the Formation of the Union of the American States* (Washington, 1927), 310.

31. Sept. 22, 1774, in Butterfield, ed., *Adams Family Correspondence*, I, 162.

32. Reprinted in *Pa. Chronicle*, Aug. 31-Sept. 7, 1767. The Virginia paper in which it originally appeared has not been found.

33. To Edward Bancroft, Jan. 26, 1788, in Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, XIV, 492.

34. Richard Price, *Observations on the Importance of the American Revolution* . . . (London, 1785), 75. Cf. *New Haven Gazette and Connecticut Magazine*, Nov. 16, 23, 1786; *American Mercury* (Hartford), Aug. 13, 1787.

35. Hugh Williamson, *Letters from Sylvius to the Freemen Inhabitants of the United States* . . . (New York, 1787); Tench Coxe: *An Address to an Assembly of the Friends of American Manufactures* . . . (Philadelphia, 1787); *An Enquiry into the Principles on which a commercial system for the United States of America should be founded* . . . (Philadelphia, 1787); and *Observations on the Agriculture, Manufactures and Commerce of the United States* . . . (New York, 1789).

36. Declamation, July 18, 1778, Yale University Archives, New Haven, Conn.

37. This picture of the economic history of the 1780's seems to have been universally accepted at the time. A typical statement is in Coxe, *Observations*, 59-64.

38. Williamson, *Letters from Sylvius*, 30.

39. *The American Museum*, I (Feb. 1787), 124.

40. *Am. Mercury*, Aug. 13, 1787.

41. *New Haven Gazette and Conn. Mag.*, Nov. 23, 1786.

42. R. L. Brunhouse, ed., *David Ramsay, 1749-1815, Selections from his writings*, American Philosophical Society, *Transactions*, LV, Pt. 4 (1965), 87.

43. *Am. Museum*, I (Feb. 1787), 124-125.

44. [Anonymous], *A Few Salutary Hints, pointing out the Policy and Consequences of Admitting British Subjects to Engross our Trade and Become our Citizens* (Charleston printed, New York reprinted, 1786), 4.

45. To John Page, May 4, 1786, in Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, IX, 445.

46. These views are scattered throughout Jefferson's letters during his stay in France. See Boyd, ed., *Jefferson Papers*, VIII-XV. For a typical statement see letter to Thomas Pleasants, May 8, 1786, *ibid.*, IX, 472-473.

47. Williamson, *Letters from Sylvius*, 13-14.

48. Coxe, *An Address to Friends of Manufactures*, 29-30. Coxe was not a member of the Convention. He was addressing, in Philadelphia, a group "convened for the purpose of establishing a Society for the Encouragement of Manufactures and the Useful Arts."