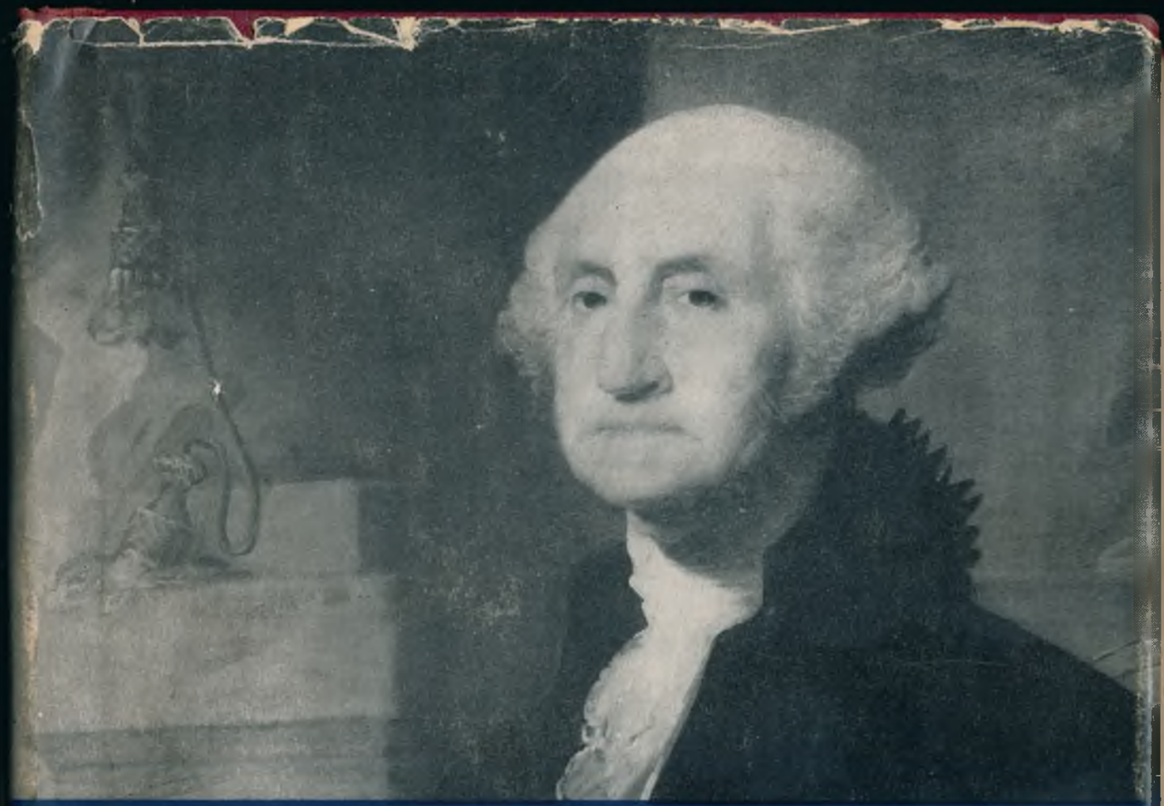

George Washington

Selections from His Writings

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION

BY PHILIP S. FONER PH.D.

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EDITED, WITH AN INTRODUCTION, BY
PHILIP S. FONER, PH.D.
INSTRUCTOR, JEFFERSON SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCE

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THE BUILDER OF THE REPUBLIC

BY PHILIP S. FONER

More perhaps than any other of the founding fathers the career of George Washington is inextricably woven with the establishment and building of the American Republic. Yet for all his greatness Washington has rarely been satisfactorily brought to life for the American people. Certainly the Washington who stood the test so nobly in the fire of a people's revolution had nothing in common with either the gilded legend of schoolbooks or the cynical version of the debunkers. It is high time that we know the real man and understand why Washington was more widely beloved in the early days of our Republic than any other leader.

George Washington was born at Bridges Creek, Westmoreland County, Virginia, on February 22, 1732, the eldest child of Augustine Washington and his second wife Mary Ball. Bound by family ties to the Fitzhughs, Lees, Carters and Balls, he was a member of the inner circle of the Virginia aristocracy. His father, however, had no station of special importance, hence George's education was different from that received by most sons of the planter aristocracy. He did not attend Oxford or any other English university as was the custom; indeed there is no real evidence that he attended school anywhere. His early education was supervised largely by his father and that all but ceased after his father's death when George was eleven years old. Left with a small inheritance, and equipped only with a knowledge of elementary subjects, business forms and enough

mathematics for surveying,[1] the young Washington had to shift for himself. He divided his time between his mother's farm on the Rappahannock, his elder half brother's Mount Vernon estate, and his relatives, the Fairfaxes. Much of his time at Belvoir, the Fairfax estate, was spent fox-hunting, a pursuit which enabled the young Virginian to become a magnificent horseman—"the best horseman of his age," Thomas Jefferson once observed, "and the most graceful figure that could be seen on horseback."

But the leisured life of a foxhunter was soon to give way to the hardships of frontier life, and Washington was to learn what it was "to sleep on the hard ground, lying well wrapped before a blazing fire, with no roof but the skies." In March, 1748, the sixteen-year-old lad left to explore and survey the western lands of Lord Fairfax which lay in the Shenandoah Valley beyond the Blue Ridge mountains. This was the first of many trips to the West during the course of which Washington came into close contact with the hardy pioneers who were to play such a crucial role in the building of America. As surveyor, land speculator, and public official, Washington was to contribute in no small measure to the development of the western territory. And very early in his life he reached the conclusion that the vast and unsettled regions of America offered a haven for those in the eastern sections of the colonies and in Europe who were searching for political freedom and economic security.[2]

A full-fledged surveyor at sixteen, one of the four adjutants of the Virginia militia with the rank of major when he was not quite twenty, Washington was commander of the Virginia military forces when only twenty-three. In part his rapid advance was due to the influence of the Fairfaxes. More im-

[1] Washington was quite conscious of what he himself referred to as his "defective education." See his letter to David Humphreys, July 25, 1785, in Worthington C. Ford, editor, *The Writings of George Washington* (N. Y., 1889), Vol. X, p. 473. (Hereafter cited as Ford.)

[2] John C. Fitzpatrick, *George Washington, Writings from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799* (Washington, 1931-1940), Vol. II, 450, 460. (Hereafter cited as Fitzpatrick.)

portant, however, was the keen rivalry that was developing between the businessmen of Virginia and of Pennsylvania for control of the Ohio Valley country. And this in turn was part of the bigger Anglo-French rivalry in America which was approaching a climax during the middle of the eighteenth century.

The principal activity of Virginia planters was the cultivation of tobacco, but because of soil exhaustion and increasing costs, this was rapidly becoming an unprofitable business. In Pennsylvania, meanwhile, businessmen who had organized industrial enterprises were finding it most difficult, because of British restrictions on colonial manufacturing, to make any headway. Looking about anxiously for new fields for capital investment, both groups of businessmen turned to the Ohio Valley which abounded in fur-bearing animals and was rich in arable land. A number of leading Virginia planters—including the Fairfaxes and the Washingtons—organized the Ohio Company, and in 1749 secured from the King a grant of 200,000 acres of land on both sides of the Ohio and a promise of 300,000 more if a hundred families were settled on the original grant within seven years.

Just as the Ohio Company was preparing to settle this land, the French moved into the region from Canada. In 1753 Robert Dinwiddie, royal governor of Virginia and himself a land speculator, sent Washington to the Ohio country to demand the withdrawal of the French and at the same time to ascertain just how powerful their forces were. Washington and his party arrived at the French fort a month later. He was wined and dined and permitted to inspect the fortifications. But to his demand that they get out of the country, the French replied politely but firmly in the negative.

After his return to Virginia, Washington was appointed lieutenant-colonel of a projected Virginia regiment, and was authorized to raise recruits to go after the French. In a letter to Dinwiddie he demanded that these recruits receive good pay and ample supplies. "We daily experience," he wrote, "the great necessity for clothing the men. . . . There are many without

shoes, others want stockings, some are without shorts, and not a few that have scarce a coat or waistcoat to their back." [3]

With a force of about two hundred men, Washington returned to the Ohio country where he met a French contingent and defeated them.[4] Discovering soon that the enemy was superior in numbers, he quickly withdrew to a place he called Fort Necessity. In July, 1754, the French attacked and captured the fort. The French and Indian War had officially opened.

Once again Washington marched back to Virginia, but this time he retired from military service. The remainder of the year was spent at Mount Vernon, which he had purchased from his half-brother's widow.

In the summer of 1753 General Edward Braddock arrived in Virginia from London with fifteen hundred British regulars to avenge the defeat suffered by Washington and to drive the French out of the Ohio Valley. Washington agreed to accompany the expedition as a volunteer without rank and so set out with the British troops and colonial militiamen for Fort Duquesne.

A brave and able general in the traditional European military methods, Braddock knew nothing of tactics of frontier warfare. Washington, who had mastered the technique, advised the British commander to divide his army, pushing on with his light column and leaving his heavy baggage and artillery to follow. But Braddock was not one to take advice from a mere colonist—one, moreover, who had never even attended an English military academy. The result, as every schoolboy knows, was a disastrous defeat for the Britsh who were surprised and routed by the enemy seven miles from Fort Duquesne. Fever-ridden though he was, Washington commanded the colonial troops throughout the battle, ordering them to take cover and

[3] Ford, Vol. I, pp. 212, 213, 395.

[4] In this encounter Washington was accused by the French of brutally murdering a Frenchman named Jumonville. For a scholarly study absolving him of this charge, see Gilbert F. Leduc, *Washington and the Murder of Jumonville* (Boston, 1943), especially pp. 149-53.

fight from behind rocks and trees. It was generally believed in America that only Washington's skill as a military leader saved the unit from complete annihilation.

When the Virginia House of Burgesses took steps to rebuild the military forces of the colony, Washington was appointed commander of the regiment. The twenty-three-year-old Virginian learned much during the next two or three years. He discovered quickly enough that victory was impossible without unity, and throughout his correspondence during this period runs the constant refrain that particularism had to give way before the need for defeating the common enemy.[5]

Military service on the frontier also taught the Virginian to understand the hardships endured by the common people in their struggles to build a new life in the West. The scenes of desolation and the plight of the people following Indian raids deeply moved Washington. In a frantic letter to Dinwiddie, he called upon the royal governor to assist families in need:

"I am too little acquainted with pathetic language, to attempt a description of the people's distresses, though I have a generous soul, sensible of wrongs and swelling for redress. But what can I do? If bleeding, dying! would glut their insatiate revenge, I would be a willing offering to savage fury, and die by inches to save a people! I *see* their situation, know their danger and participate [in] their sufferings, without having it in my power to give them further relief, than uncertain promises. . . ." [6]

He did what he could. Learning that Braddock had seized horses and wagons without paying for them, Washington urged Governor Dinwiddie to make good these debts, and reminded him that "the people are really ruined for want of their money, and complain justly of their grievances." At the same time he insisted that the governor meet the demands of the soldiers

[5] Fitzpatrick, Vol. I *passim;* Hayes Baker-Crothers, *Virginia and the French and Indian War* (Chicago, 1928), Chap. IV.

[6] Fitzpatrick, Vol. I, pp. 324-25.

for decent pay enabling them to provide their families with "the conveniences or necessaries of life." He also spoke out in favor of a pension system for men injured in battle. The soldiers, he observed, had just cause for complaint at a system under which they were discharged the moment they were "unfit for service . . . and turned upon an uncharitable world to beg, steal or starve." [7]

The difficulties he encountered in his efforts to persuade the indifferent crown authorities of the need to provide for the welfare of the colonists did much to convince Washington that the American people should demand a greater degree of political liberty and self-government than was accorded by England. Subsequent events were to strengthen that conviction.

Toward the close of 1758, after the French were driven from Fort Duquesne, Washington resigned his commission and returned to civilian life. On January 6, 1759, he married Mrs. Martha Custis, a wealthy widow, who owned considerable land and slaves, and Washington settled down to the management of his Mount Vernon estate. A scientific farmer, he carefully studied the leading authorities on the subject and corresponded with English experts regarding methods of improving American husbandry. Convinced of the evils of tobacco culture which had exhausted the soil of Virginia plantations, he introduced diversified farming and sheep-raising. Industrial activity also flourished at Mount Vernon—a grist mill for turning wheat into flour, a weaving shed for producing textiles from wool and flax, and a cider press and still-house for producing good Madeira for the stream of friends who took advantage of Mount Vernon's hospitality.

Washington's interest in diversified agriculture and industrial development was by no means a mere hobby. Rather it was an effort to extricate himself from threatening economic disaster. Together with other gentlemen planters he bore the full brunt of the English mercantile policy which was rapidly transforming this class into what Jefferson termed "a species of property annexed to certain mercantile houses in London."

[7] Ford, Vol. I, pp. 315-17.

With tobacco planting an unprofitable business, Virginia planters were compelled to obtain credit from British merchants who charged exorbitant interest rates. Each year a tribute payment of close to 120,000 pounds in interest alone went from Virginia planters to line the pockets of English merchants. Small wonder men like Washington regarded the British mercantilist system as "designed chiefly for the better exploitation of American producers."

In a desperate effort to free himself from the stranglehold of the British merchants, Washington, like other more efficient planters, turned from tobacco to wheat, flour, household manufactures, and investments in western lands. But the restraints upon American economic life imposed by the English capitalists who controlled Parliament dashed his high hopes. He discovered that it was impossible to develop manufacturing in Virginia as long as Parliamentary acts stifled industrial growth in the colonies. Speculation in western lands was also out of the question as long as the British government, by its Proclamation of 1763 which became a permanent policy in 1774, forbade settlement west of the Appalachian mountains. It is not surprising that so many Virginia planters were swept into the Revolutionary camp, and were so active in the struggle for American freedom from British domination.

Washington threw in his lot with the progressive upsurge of the American people early in the Revolutionary movement. In 1765 he spoke out in opposition to the Stamp Act, and four years later announced his readiness to take up arms "in defense of so valuable a blessing [as freedom] on which all the good and evil of life depends." [8] That same year he presented to the Virginia House of Burgesses a non-importation agreement, drafted by George Mason, the signers of which bound themselves to import no goods "which are, or shall hereafter be, taxed by Act of Parliament." Included in the agreement was the provision that no slave was to be imported in the colony after November 1, 1869.

Throughout this period Washington constantly called for

[8] Ford, Vol. II, p. 263.

intercolonial union to defeat British repressive policies. In 1774, when the British government attempted to starve the Bostonians into submission for their part in the Boston Tea Party, he called for action, pointing out that the basic question was whether Americans should "supinely sit and see one province after another fall a prey to despotism?" He publicly declared: "I will raise 1,000 men, subsist them at my own expense, and march myself at their head for the relief of Boston."

Elected in 1775 to the Second Continental Congress, the Virginian in his buff-and-blue uniform impressed his fellow delegates by his earnestness and military bearing. He was unanimously chosen on June 15, 1775, as "General and Commander-in-Chief of the Forces raised and to be raised in defense of American liberty." It was not lost upon the delegates that it was a Massachusetts man, John Adams, who presented the Virginian's name to Congress, an action which did much to cement friendly relations between the New England and Southern representatives. In nominating Washington, Adams characterized him as "a gentleman whose skill and experience as an officer, whose independent fortune, great talents, and excellent universal character, would command the approbation of all Americans, and unite the cordial exertions of all the colonies better than any other person in the Union." [9]

Upon being notified of his appointment, Washington assured Congress that he was ready "to enter upon the momentous duty and exert every power I possess . . . for the support of the glorious Cause. . . ." He still believed, however, that it was possible to settle the difficulties between the colonies and the mother country peacefully. Nor did he as yet favor independence; indeed, he pointed out in a letter during 1775 "that no such thing as independence is desired by any thinking man in all North America." Yet Washington did not share the fears of those aristocrats in colonial America who opposed inde-

[9] To his wife Abigail Adams, he wrote: "This appointment will have a great effect in cementing and securing the union of these colonies. . . ." Charles Francis Adams, ed., *Familiar Letters of John Adams and his Wife, Abigail Adams* (N. Y., 1876), pp. 65-66.

pendence because it would lead to the establishment of a Republican form of governmet in America and result in the advance of democracy. He was quite willing to join hands with artisans, mechanics, and small farmers in a joint struggle against tyranny, and he was not terrified when the common people included tyranny in America in their struggle for freedom.

Tom Paine's manifesto of the American Revolution, *Common Sense,* published on January 10, 1776, was an important factor in Washington's determination to support the movement for independence. He read and reread the document, and admitted that it had worked "a powerful change . . . in the minds of many men" including his own.[10] As early as February 10, 1776, Washington took an uncompromising stand in favor of independence, writing that if all men thought as he did, they would proclaim to the British government their "determination to shake off all connections with a state so unjust and so unnatural." Several months later, on July 2, 1776, he issued the following stirring order to his troops:

"The time is now near at hand which must probably determine whether Americans are to be Freemen or Slaves. . . . The fate of unknown millions will now depend, under God, on the courage and conduct of this Army. Our cruel and unrelenting Enemy leaves us no choice but a brave resistance, or the most Abject Submission. . . ." [11]

On the very same day this order was issued, Congress passed the Declaration of Independence. John Hancock, President of the Congress, wrote Washington on July 5, enclosing a copy of the Declaration and requesting him to "have it proclaimed at the Head of the Army in the Way you shall think most proper." According to Washington's own account in his "Order Book" he directed that "the several brigades are to be drawn up this evening on their respective Parades, at six o'clock when the Declaration of Congress, showing the grounds and reasons for

[10] Jared Sparks, ed., *The Writings of George Washington* (N. Y., 1848), Vol. III, p. 347.

[11] Fitzpatrick, Vol. V, p. 211.

this measure is to be read with an audible voice. The General hopes this important event will serve as a free incentive to every officer, and soldier, to act with fidelity and courage, as knowing that now the peace and safety of his country depends (under God) solely on the success of our arms." [12]

It was Washington more than any other man who was responsible for securing that "success of our arms." Throughout that long and bitter struggle he kept his faith in final victory and inspired his men with his own dogged determination and belief in the justness of the American cause. Together with his troops he faced and overcame obstacles of every kind. Accustomed to the leisured life of a gentleman-farmer, he endured the hardship of campaigns with a fortitude and equanimity equal to that of any private in his ragged band of patriots.[13] During the heartbreaking days of the retreat through Manhattan, Westchester and New Jersey, in the very midst of defeat, he forged the coherence of a dissolving army and became the single-minded leader of a great people's war. Assisted by von Steuben, Lafayette, Pulaski, Kosciusko, and other military men of experience who had come from Europe to aid in the American battle for freedom, he gradually whipped the Continental army into an efficient, self-confident fighting machine which could pass from Valley Forge to Yorktown.

One needs but to remember Washington's touching description of the ragged continentals during their winter encampment to realize the obstacles that had to be surmounted before victory could be secured:

"To see men, without clothes to cover their nakedness, without blankets to lie on, without shoes, by which their

[12] Fitzpatrick, Vol. V, p. 245.

[13] John Adams wrote his close friend, Elbert Gerry, a member of the Massachusetts Provincial Congress: "There is something charming to me in the conduct of Washington. A gentleman of one of the first fortunes upon the Continent, leaving his delicious retirement, his family and friends, sacrificing his ease, and hazarding all in the cause of his Country." Peter Force, ed., *American Archives* (Washington, 1837-53), Fourth Series, Vol. II, p. 1020.

marches might be traced by the blood from their feet, and almost as often without provisions as with them, marching through the frost and snow, and at Christmas take up their winter-quarters within a day's march from the enemy, without a house or hut to cover them, till they could be built, and submitting to it without a murmur is a proof of patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarce be paralleled." [14]

Side by side white and Negro soldiers [15] suffered and died at Valley Forge. Washington, their Commander-in-Chief once remarked that when historians would write the full story of the American Revolution, readers would find it difficult to conceive that an army composed of starving and frozen men could finally overcome so powerful a nation as Britain. "Who, that was not on the spot," he asked when the war was over, "can trace the steps by which such a wonderful revolution has been effected, and such a glorious period put to all our war-like toils?" [16]

All the historian can say is that victory came only after a long and bitter struggle against incredible odds. Great Britain, the richest government in the world, furnished its soldiers and the hired Hessian mercenary troops with the finest equipment. Its army, moreover, was composed of professional soldiers, well-disciplined and enlisted for long terms. The army Washington commanded was ill-fed, ill-clothed, and ill-housed. Most of the soldiers enlisted for a short-term, and it was not at all unusual for farmers, who comprised the bulk of the Continental army, to enlist in the spring and return home by the

[14] Ford, Vol. VI, p. 487.

[15] More than 5,000 Negroes fought in the continental armies and about seven hundred fought with our French allies. In a Hessian officer's journal, the following statement was found: "No regiment is to be seen [among the Americans] in which there are not Negroes in abundance, and among them are able-bodied, strong and brave fellows." Quoted by George Livermore, *An Historical Research Respecting the Opinions of the Founders of the Republic on Negroes as Slaves, as Citizens, and as Soldiers* (Boston, 1863), p. 111.

[16] Ford, Vol. X, p. 331.

late summer or fall to harvest their crops. Washington consequently had to plan his military campaigns according to the terms of enlistments. "We dare not in the beginning of a campaign attempt enterprises," he groaned, "on account of the rawness of the men, nor at the latter end of it because they are about to leave us." Often he was left with only militiamen, who, he wrote, "come in you cannot tell how, go, you cannot tell when; and act, you cannot tell where; consume your Provisions, exhaust your Stores, and leave you at last in a critical moment." [17]

Even before the war opened, Washington had strongly recommended federal control of enlistment instead of the prevailing state system. A permanent army for the duration raised by conscription rather than by voluntary enlistment, he argued, would do much to change the existing state of affairs. On January 20, 1777, he informed the Governor of Rhode Island that he hoped the powers of government were such "as to compleat the New Levies by Draft, if they cannot be filled seasonably by voluntary enlistment." [18]

From the outbreak of the war local prejudices also hampered Washington. So strong were these prejudices at the beginning of the conflict that the Commander-in-Chief observed that "Connecticut wants no Massachusetts man in their corps; Massachusetts thinks there is no necessity for a Rhode Islander to be introduced among them." Washington fought this tendency constantly, never foregoing an occasion to speak out against particularism. On July 4, 1775, his general orders reminded the soldiers that they were "the Troops of the United Provinces of North America; and it is hoped that all Distinctions of colonies will be laid aside." Honored by the Massachusetts state legislature for raising the siege of Boston, Washington replied with a prayer that good fortune might smile "upon the whole of the United colonies." Finally, as he himself declared in a letter to Congress: "I have labored, ever since I have been in the service to discourage all kinds of local attachments and

[17] Fitzpatrick, Vol. VI, p. 403.

[18] *Ibid.*, Vol. VI, pp. 331-33; Vol. VII, p. 43.

distinctions of country, denominating the whole by the greater name of AMERICAN." [19]

Just as energetically as he fought particularism did Washington combat Toryism. "He constantly kept close watch of them [the Tories] in all sections," writes Wilbur H. Siebert, the outstanding authority on the subject, "and worked with the congress and other Revolutionary bodies and officers to suppress them, deprive them of arms and stop their dangerous activities." [20]

As early as 1775, when he served as chairman of a local Committee of Safety in Virginia, he moved against pro-British elements. Washington, the Tory historian Thomas Jones tells us, "enforced the resolutions and recommendations of Congress with a firm hand. Some who refused obedience to the Committee, he ordered punished, and others he imprisoned." [21] Upon being informed in January, 1776, that Connecticut had adopted stern measures to suppress counter-revolutionary Toryism, Washington called upon every colony to follow suit:

"Vigorous measures and such as at another time would appear extraordinary, are now become absolutely necessary, for preserving our country against the strides of tyranny making against it." [22]

During his stay in New Jersey Washington's strong anti-Tory position was again revealed. Having been authorized by Congress with the right "to arrest and confine persons . . . disaffected to the American cause," he issued a proclamation in January, 1777, ordering all who were loyal to the United States to take an oath of allegiance to it, and all others to withdraw with their families into the British lines. Those who failed to comply with the order within thirty days were to be "treated as the common enemies of these United States." Later

[19] Ford, Vol. V, p. 117.

[20] Wilbur H. Siebert, "George Washington and the Loyalists," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, New Series, Vol. XXXII, p. 47.

[21] Thomas Jones, *History of New York during the Revolutionary War* (N. Y., 1879), Vol. II, p. 346.

[22] Fitzpatrick, Vol. IV, pp. 215-17.

Washington decreed that persons who chose to go inside the enemy lines could only take with them their clothing and such furniture as they could move without the use of carts or wagons.[23]

Washington's orders were assailed in the Tory press which accused him of losing "all regard to the common forms of morality . . . and decency of conduct," and of forgetting that he "*once* was esteemed a gentleman. . . ." Even some squeamish patriots wailed that his proclamation was a "Violation of our Civil Rights" and went beyond the laws of Congress. But Washington understood full well that the American Revolution could not succeed if counter-revolutionary activities were not suppressed. Many years later, in 1808, Thomas Jefferson praised Washington highly for the dispatch with which he proceeded against traitors during the War for Independence. "Should we have even gained our Revolution," Jefferson asked, "if we had bound our hands by the manacles of the law, not only in the beginning, but in any part of the revolutionary conflict?" [24]

On several occasions the British attempted to bribe Washington in the hope that he would use his influence to effect a reconciliation between Britain and her colonies. Proposals were made to elevate him to the peerage, and it was even suggested in England that Washington be made a duke to induce him to desert the revolutionary cause.

But they did not get anywhere with Washington. That there were times when he felt that the obstacles he faced were insuperable is hardly surprising. "I am worried almost to death with the retrograde Motions of things," he wrote to a friend on one occasion, "and I solemnly protest that a pecuniary reward of 21,000 £ a year would not induce me to undergo what I do." [25] But it was not for pecuniary reward (he accepted nothing but his expenses for his revolutionary services) or for

[23] *Ibid.*, Vol. VII, pp. 61-62, 142-43, 189-90.

[24] Andrew A. Lipscomb and Albert E. Bergh, editors, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (Monticello edition, 1904-1905), Vol. XII, pp. 183, 418.

[25] Fitzpatrick, Vol. VI, pp. 245-46.

titles that he was fighting. Nor was he one to be easily demoralized. It was not for nothing that Tom Paine had written in the *American Crisis:*

"Voltaire has remarked that King William never appeared to full advantage, but in difficulties and in action; the same remark may be made on General Washington, for the character fits him. There is a natural firmness in some minds which cannot be unlocked by trifles, but which, when unlocked, discovers a cabinet of fortitude; and I reckon it among those kind of public blessings, which we do not immediately see, that God hath blessed him with uninterrupted health, and given him a mind that can even flourish upon care." [26]

Advocates of "negotiated peace" were to discover soon enough the meaning of Paine's words of praise. In 1778, after the King had learned through Silas Deane, a traitor to the American cause, that France had agreed to an alliance with America, a peace commission was sent to America. It was empowered to treat with Washington, Congress, the states individually or anyone who would accept terms which promised the Americans everything under the sun except independence.

Once again the enemy did not get very far with Washington. He branded the proposals as "meant to poison the minds of the people and detach the wavering, at least, from our cause." He hoped Congress would not merely reject the offer but "expose in the most striking manner, the injustice, delusion and fraud it contained." No Peace without Independence, Washington declared! The slogan was taken up in Congress which told the commission that there would be no negotiations until every British soldier and the British navy were withdrawn from American soil and waters.

In his efforts to achieve victory, Washington fought not only the Tories and the advocates of "negotiated peace," but also profiteering contractors. In the dark days of '76, in a letter to a friend, he charged that it was the "speculators, various

[26] James S. Allen, editor, *Thomas Paine: Selections From His Writings* (N. Y., 1937), p. 48.

type of moneymakers and stockjobbers" whose "avarice for thirst and gain" threatened the country's ruin. Later he wrote that he was "well convinced, that the public was charged with double what it received, and what was received was doubly charged. . . ." Upon discovering that Matthew Irwin, Deputy Commissary of Issues, was monopolizing the business of furnishing supplies to the troops, he wrote angrily to him:

"The cry of want of Provisions comes to me from every Quarter. General Maxwell writes word that his People are starving; General Johnston, of Maryland, yesterday inform'd me, that his People would draw none; this difficulty I understand prevails also at Chatham! What Sir is the meaning of this? and why were you so desirous of excluding others from this business when you are unable to accomplish it yourself? Consider, I beseech you, the consequences of this neglect, and exert yourself to remove this Evil." [27]

Failing to obtain supplies after appealing to the patriotism of the profiteers, Washington took action. Empowered by Congress "to take whatever he may want for the use of the Army, if the inhabitants will not sell it, allowing a reasonable price for the same," Washington impressed supplies from substantial farmers and solid citizens who refused to permit patriotism to stand in the way of making profits. Again, there were shrieks that the Commander-in-Chief was ignoring the rights of property. But, as Jefferson pointed out, Washington believed "that the laws of property must be postponed to the safety of the nation. . . ." [28]

Indeed, Washington was of the opinion that everything had to give way before the primary task of winning the war—factional disputes in Congress, class antagonisms, even personal quarrels. "The present situation of public affairs," he wrote, "affords abundant causes of distress, we should be very careful how we aggravate or multiply them, by private bickerings. . . .

[27] Fitzpatrick, Vol. VII, pp. 160-61, 183, 189.

[28] Philip S. Foner, *Thomas Jefferson: Selections from His Writings* (N. Y., 1943), p. 62.

All little differences and animosities, calculated to increase the unavoidable evils of the times, should be forgotten, or, at least postponed." [29]

No great student of military history, (he always spoke of the imperfect military knowledge of "all of us") [30] Washington's reputation as commander-in-chief grew in spite of the initial series of military setbacks that were all but fatal to the revolutionary cause. He knew that the British aimed to suppress the "rebellion" as speedily as possible, and hoped, by holding New York City and the Hudson Valley line and controlling the Chesapeake area in the South, to isolate the New England and middle states from the rest of the country. Consequently Washington's strategy was to resist the British at every point, especially in the vitally important Hudson area. He understood too that in order to triumph the British had to annihilate the American army. Therefore, as long as he could keep "an Appearance of an army" the American cause would still live, and the American nation would still continue in existence. The army might give ground, but as long as it continued to show signs of resistance the people could be rallied to continue the struggle.

Thus it was that Washington, who constantly longed to take the offensive, was forced constantly to retreat and await a favorable opportunity to strike. "On our side," he wrote in Sept., 1776, "the War should be defensive."

It was this patient vigilance, of course, that earned him the title of "Fabius." [31] At the same time, however, he realized that there was a limit to waiting. A master of political warfare, he knew that the morale of the people might completely disintegrate if they believed the enemy to be invincible.[32] On

[29] Fitzpatrick, Vol. VIII, pp. 21-22.

[30] Oliver L. Spaulding, Jr., "The Military Studies of George Washington," *American Historical Review,* Vol. XXIX, p. 675.

[31] Fabius Maximus Verrucosus, named Cunctator, "the delayer," Roman general who practiced a delaying tactic in the second Punic War.

[32] Before the battle of Trenton, Washington ordered his soldiers to be called together to listen to a reading of *The Crisis* by Thomas Paine.

December 23, 1776, Colonel Joseph Reed had written to him:

"We are all of opinion, my dear General, that something must be attempted to revive our expiring credit, give our cause some degree of reputation, and prevent a total depreciation of the Continental money, which is coming in very fast —that even a failure cannot be more fatal than to remain in our present situation. *In short, some enterprise must be undertaken in our present circumstances, or we must give up the cause.*" [33]

Washington shared Reed's opinion. Already he was making plans for "an important stroke" which would give to American affairs "a more pleasing aspect than they now have."

On Christmas eve, 1776, Washington and his decimated forces—about 2,400 men with horses and artillery—were rowed across the Delaware by the heroic Marblehead fishermen. Battling the floes, a blizzard, and the swift current of the river, the Americans reached the New Jersey shore and quickly launched a surprise attack upon the slumbering Hessians, wiping out their garrison below Trenton. By combining speed, secrecy, and surprise and using a small force in a daring and well-planned attack, Washington had delivered the enemy a serious blow. And by this same bold stroke he lifted the drooping spirits of the American people. Although there were to be many discouraging crises before final victory would be achieved, undoubtedly this daring action convinced many Americans that their nation would never lose. In a military sense the Battle of Saratoga was the turning point of the war, but it was at Trenton on that Christmas day that the fate of the Revolution was decided.

Washington again displayed the ability to combine patient vigilance with daring, speed and surprise at Yorktown in 1783, the battle which brought the war to a close. For many months he had been waiting for the moment when Cornwallis' sea communications would be cut off. The French naval force

[33] Peter Force, editor, *American Archives*, Fifth Series, Vol. III, p. 1361. (My emphasis—*P.S.F.*)

under de Grasse isolated Cornwallis who had taken up a stand at Yorktown and cut him off from fresh supplies from the sea. Seizing the opportunity, Washington threw the British off their guard by openly preparing for the siege of New York. Secretly he and Rochambeau slipped out and by forced marches brought the bulk of the American army and the French expeditionary force to Yorktown where they joined a small American army led by Lafayette. Outnumbered and cut off from escape by sea, Cornwallis was forced to surrender his army of eight thousand men. On October 19, 1783, the British soldiers lay down their arms while their band played *The World Turned Upside Down*. The War for Independence was over.

The war over, Washington wished only "to return speedily into that country, which gave me birth, and, in the sweet enjoyment of domestic happiness and the company of a few friends to end my days in quiet." He had grown in stature during the war but he had also grown old. He was not play acting when he told the unpaid and discontented troops at Newburgh at the beginning of an address, "Gentlemen, you will permit me to put on my spectacles, for I have not only grown gray, but almost blind in the service of my countrymen." Many present shed tears as they remembered the youthful six-foot-three Virginian who had been chosen as Commander-in-Chief of the forces of the united colonies in June, 1775.

Washington returned to his farm, but he did not remain there long. For soon he was to be called upon to help bring the United States under a strong national government.

Washington had ample opportunity to learn some of the inadequacies of Congress during the War. And his letters reveal his reiterated demands for a stronger central government. Yet at no time did he share the belief of certain groups in the country that a monarchy was needed in America. In 1782, Washington was asked by a Colonel Lewis Nicola, who had held secret meetings with other officers, to assume the title of king. Assurances were even given that the army would back

the move on the ground that the only solution for America's difficulties was the establishment of a monarchy. The proposal drew a prompt and stinging rebuke from Washington. Nothing, he declared in his letter to Nicola, gave him "more painful sensations, than your information of their being such ideas existing in the army, as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence and reprehend with severity.... I am at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall any country."

A year later several reactionary politicians, including Gouverneur Morris and Alexander Hamilton, called upon Washington to lead a coup d'état and seize control of public affairs by armed force. In this way, he was assured by Hamilton, the officers could be properly rewarded for their sufferings and "justice [done] to the creditors of the United States." Hamilton ended his letter on a frank note: "In this the influence of the army, properly directed, may operate."

Washington was the "key figure" in the schemes of these men. And when in a dramatic speech to the officers, he rebuked the plotters the scheme was defeated. "... For without him," writes Merrill Jensen, "and the officers who were sure to follow him nothing could be done." [34]

Washington resigned his commission as commander of the army to the Continental Congress at Annapolis, Maryland, on December 23, 1783. By this act he showed he had no desire to become a dictator of the United States as some of his officers and conservative politicians had urged him to do.

Although opposed to the establishment of a monarchy and definitely hostile to any proposed armed coup d'état, Washington did favor the setting up of a strong, central government. He viewed with growing concern the weaknesses of the Articles of Confederation, believing that all the sacrifices of the war would be rendered useless if the government was too feeble effectively to organize a nation. "We are either a united people

[34] Merrill Jensen, "The Idea of a National Government during the American Revolution," *Political Science Quarterly*, Vol. LVIII, pp. 375-77.

or we are not so," he wrote James Madison on November 30, 1785. "If the former, let us in all matters of the general concern act as a nation with a national character to support." Together with other large property owners, he favored a government with sufficient centralized authority to protect private property against domestic insurrections of the debt-ridden yeomanry. Far from the scene of action, Washington was in no position to learn the truth concerning Shays' Rebellion, which took place in Massachusetts in September, 1786. Promoters of industrial enterprises and other extreme nationalists speedily took steps to convince Washington that the insurrection of the poor farmers of Massachusetts proved the need of a bulwark against the discontented masses. His close friend Henry Knox told Washington that the followers of Shays had taken up arms because "the property of the United States [had] been protected from the confiscation of Britain by the joint exertions of *all;* and therefore ought to be the *common property of all.*"

Knox, of course, aimed to alarm Washington in order to make certain that the influence of his name could be used by those who planned to "revise" the Articles of Confederation. Washington's correspondence is proof that Knox succeeded. Yet, unlike most of the large property-owners, Washington did not completely lose his head. He urged the Massachusetts authorities to redress the "real grievances" of the debt-ridden farmers, and he deprecated their severity in crushing the rebellion believing there was a real danger "of entirely alienating the affections of a people from their government." Repressive measures, he observed, would only "give birth to new [uprisings] instead of destroying the old leaven." [35]

Once again Washington reaffirmed his opposition to any plan which would lead to the establishment of a monarchy in America. Not only was he convinced that this would not solve the problems of the day but he saw clearly that any effort to set up a monarchy would result in civil war since the people would not simply sit back and allow the reactionaries to rob them of all the fruits of victory. It was impossible to

[35] Ford, Vol. XI, pp. 77-78, 81, 103-04; Fitzpatrick, Vol. XXIX, p. 191.

introduce a monarchy in America, he informed James Madison, "without shaking the peace of the country to its foundation." [36]

What Washington feared most was that the large property owners, "disgusted with the circumstances," would lend their influence and finances to any proposal which promised to protect their interests, including even a return to the British Empire. The need of the hour, as he saw it, was to "anticipate and prevent" such a disastrous eventuality by establishing a new government which would unite republicanism and nationalism. In November, 1786, he wrote:

"Thirteen sovereignties pulling against each other, and all tugging at the federal head, will soon bring ruin on the whole, whereas a liberal and energetic constitution . . . might restore us to that degree of respectability and consequences, to which we had a fair claim and bright prospect of attaining." [37]

Washington played an important role in securing that new constitution. He was among those responsible for calling the great Convention of 1787, and, although reluctant to leave Mount Vernon, he decided to attend its sessions in Philadelphia. He was elected presiding officer of the Convention and, according to James Madison who kept a journal of the proceedings, on only one occasion did he actively participate in the debates. This was towards the closing days of the convention, when a proposal was made to base representation in the House on one member for every 30,000 instead of every 40,000 persons. Washington spoke out in favor of this more democratic provision.

During the discussions and debates over the ratification of the new Constitution, Washington used his influence to secure its adoption. The new document, he declared, "is not free from imperfections, but there are as few radical defects in it as could well be expected, considering the heterogeneous mass of which the Convention was composed and the diversity of

[36] Fitzpatrick, Vol. XXIX, p. 190.

[37] Ford, Vol. XI, p. 82.

interests that are to be attended to. As a Constitutional door is opened for future amendments and alterations, I think it would be wise in the People to accept what is offered to them." He was convinced that the common people would not be influenced by the charge of certain opponents of ratification that the Constitution would usher in a monarchy. "It is a little strange," he declared, "that the men of large property in the south should be more afraid that the constitution will produce an aristocracy or a monarchy, than the genuine democratical people of the east." [38]

Nor did Washington agree with those conservatives who preached that a republic would never last long in America, and who busied themselves making preparations to replace the Constitution with a monarchy. There were times, to be sure, when Washington was to harbor doubts that the Constitution would outlive him. But never did he capitulate to those who argued that the people were "unequal to the task of governing themselves, and therefore made for a master." As Thomas Jefferson pointed out in 1824:

"George Washington was himself sincerely a friend to the republican principles of our constitution. His faith, perhaps, in its duration, might not have ben as confident as mine; but he repeatedly declared to me that he would lose the last drop of his blood in its support against any attempt which might be made to change its republican form...." [39]

Washington was exceedingly reluctant to accept the Presidency of the new government. It was only after he was convinced that many small farmers who had voted for ratification of the Constitution had done so with the understanding that "the General" would head the new government that he consented to leave his agricultural pursuits. He was elected unanimously by the Electoral College, and on April 30, 1789, before a huge crowd of cheering New Yorkers Washington took the oath of office as first president of the United States.

[38] Fitzpatrick, Vol. XXIX, pp. 131, 162.

[39] Lipscomb and Bergh, *op. cit.*, Vol. XXVI, p. 66.

No other person in America could have given the new government the prestige and stability it needed, or could have rallied such widespread backing for the "experiment." In the minds of the people his name was inextricably woven with the success of the Revolution, and he was regarded throughout the land as the emblem of national liberation. He knew the country well, having had frequent opportunities, first as surveyor and then as Commander-in-Chief of the Revolutionary Army to observe the needs of different sections and classes. Himself a slave-holding planter, merchant, industrialist, and land speculator rolled up in one, he was in a position to consider many problems with a broad outlook. Moreover, he appointed men to his cabinet who could speak for different classes in American society. Alexander Hamilton, the representative of big property and especially of the mercantile-financial interests, was appointed head of the Department of the Treasury. To Thomas Jefferson, the leading spokesman of small farmers, and artisans, was given the post of Secretary of State.

Uppermost in Washington's mind as President was the desire to prevent a disruption of the national unity that had achieved the Revolution and had established the new government. He was determined to disprove the assertion made by Lord Sheffield shortly after Yorktown "that without the protection of Great Britain," Americans would be unable to govern themselves or would "soon be involved in confusion." [40] Hence he continually sought to persuade Hamilton and Jefferson to bury their political differences for the sake of national unity.

But what Washington did not (and probably owing to his own conservative inclinations could not) understand, was that these two men were bound to clash because of diametrically opposite political views. Hamilton looked upon the masses with undisguised contempt, and his famous sneer, "the people is a great beast" was an accurate expression of his general belief in "the imprudence of democracy." He favored a gov-

[40] Fitzpatrick, Vol. XXXIV, p. 99.

ernment of, for, and by "the rich, and the well born," and was concerned more with the interests of the merchant capitalists than those of the nation. His colleagues and followers, wealthy merchants and gentlemen of property, were determined to use the new government to increase their riches and to keep the masses, the "irresponsible classes" they called them, in check. In their plans the great popularity of Washington played a large part. As early as 1790, the stanch Republican William Maclay observed that the name of Washington "was brought forward as the constant cover to every unconstitutional and irrepublican act." [41]

It was inevitable that Jefferson would bitterly oppose the schemings of the Hamiltonian faction and their oligarchic tendencies. For he believed firmly in the ability of the people to determine best the destiny of the nation and of themselves. He favored a government which would operate to promote the welfare of the great mass of the people as against one which would work to advance the interests of the opulent few. He watched with growing concern the frankness with which the Hamiltonians announced their "preference for kingly over republican government." The aristocratic receptions and brilliant banquets which featured the "Republican court" of the new administration together with the pro-British leanings of the Hamiltonians led him to conclude that a faction "not numerous but wealthy and influential" was attempting to subvert the Republican institutions of the country. He never associated Washington with these schemings; indeed he gave him credit for holding in check the anti-republican aspirations of the Hamiltonians.

Though Washington did not sympathize with the radical democracy of Thomas Jefferson and came more and more under the influence of the Hamiltonians, he was by no means the figurehead president pictured by many writers. He never, for example, accepted the anti-westward expansion views of the northeastern merchants for whom Hamilton spoke and

[41] Quoted by Eugene P. Link, *Democratic-Republican Societies, 1790-1800* (N. Y., 1942), p. 193.

acted. His interests as a planter and land speculator led him to favor projects for developing inland transportation which were bitterly opposed by mercantile elements who feared the growth of a democratic West. He lent his support to many plans for the building of turnpikes and the development of inland waterways.

A sharp conflict between Washington and the Hamiltonians over this very question of the opening of the West occurred during his first administration. When the Indians, inspired and instigated by the British, succeeded in preventing the surveys in Ohio, Washington commissioned "Mad Anthony" Wayne in 1791 to initiate an effective campaign to end the menace to westward expansion. The followers of Hamilton in Congress bitterly opposed Wayne's appointment, knowing that he would succeed where others had failed. But Washington stuck to his guns, thereby convincing many who were beginning to have doubts that he was not a thoroughgoing Hamiltonian.

Nor could he be. Hamilton's most ardent followers came from the mercantile groups who traded with England and with investors who held British securities. Depending as they did on British trade and credit, they showed little desire to defend the interests of their own country. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that their representatives in Congress took no steps to defend the frontier farmers from Indian attacks instigated by the British.

But Washington refused to overlook these attacks on America's sovereignty. Convinced that the British had inspired "murders of helpless women and children along our frontiers," he determined early in 1791 to adopt a firm policy to meet the problem. Hence he suggested to Jefferson the advisability of an alliance between the United States and the revolutionary government of France to put an end to British intrigues in the Ohio region and thereby preserve "the peace and safety to the inhabitants of their frontier."

Like other progressive Americans, Washington welcomed the French Revolution, and took pride in the thought that

the American war for liberation had influenced the people of France in their battle against despotism. Jefferson pointed out in a letter to William Short, dated January 3, 1793, "that he [Washington] *considered France as the sheet anchor of this country and its friendship as a first object.*" [42] But the French Revolution as it advanced and deepened became of necessity more violent than the American. The weight of centuries of oppression could not be overthrown by non-intercourse agreements and Boston Tea Parties. To overthrow tyranny and crush the counter-revolution the French people established a revolutionary dictatorship. Jefferson understood this; he deplored certain "excesses" of the French democrats, but he never lost sight of the main goal—the achievement of the revolution.

But Washington lacked Jefferson's understanding of popular movements. He fell victim on more than one occasion to lurid tales of the violence that was said to be occurring in France although they "did not blind him to the necessity and virtue and the essential soundness of the movement as a whole." [43] But he did begin to fear the repercussions of the French Revolution in America, and to accept the interpretation of men like Hamilton who charged that the popular support for France expressed by the Democratic-Republican clubs would result in insurrections against the government instituted by the Constitution. To Jefferson these popular societies were indications that the American people still firmly believed in democracy and were organizing to preserve it. To Washington they were evidences of internal dissensions which he had hoped to eliminate.

The American people also regarded France as this country's "sheet anchor." But they wished to do something to prevent this bulwark from being destroyed by reactionary European

[42] Lipscomb and Bergh, *op. cit.*, Vol. IX, pp. 9-11. (Emphasis in original.)

[43] Louis M. Sears, "George Washington and the French Revolution—The First Phase," *Essays in Honor of William E. Dodd* (Chicago, 1934), p. 15.

powers. Hence they insisted that the United States fulfill her obligations to assist France in protecting her possessions in the West Indies under the Franco-American treaty of 1778. Hence when the West Indies was endangered early in 1793 by a declaration of war by Great Britain, Spain, and Holland against the French Republic, the people demanded that their country stand by its pledge.

Washington, however, listened to the Hamiltonians rather than the people. Hamilton, who feared and hated the French Revolution, favored non-intervention, hoping thereby to crush the revolutionary movement in France. Jefferson opposed an immediate declaration of neutrality, but Washington refused to heed his advice, and on April 22, 1793, he issued an immediate proclamation of neutrality which asserted the intention of the United States "to pursue a conduct friendly and impartially towards the belligerent powers. . . ."

The proclamation was hailed by large property owners and wealthy commercial interests who both feared and hated the French Revolution. But among the plain people to whom the cause of France was dear, there was talk "of the importance of thoroughgoing change of men and measures in the government."

Shortly after the Neutrality Proclamation was announced the French ambassador, Citizen Genêt, arrived in this country. By his indiscreet and insolent conduct, this young diplomatic representative of the wealthy French bourgeoisie played right into the hands of the reactionary forces in America. They in turn convinced Washington that France rather than England was threatening America's independence.

Received enthusiastically by the people when he landed in Charleston, Genêt did not even bother to be received officially before he proceeded to organize expeditions on American soil against Spanish Louisiana and British Florida. And when he was sharply rebuked by the administration for violating the neutrality policy of the American government, the French minister threatened an "appeal to the people" over Washington's head. Eventually Genêt was removed by the Jacobins who

replaced the Girondists as the rulers of France. But the Hamiltonian faction made effective use of his activities in their campaign to convince Washington that "French gold" was being used to undermine the American government, and that the Democratic societies had been organized by Genêt to prepare for a revolution in America.

At about the same time, Scotch-Irish pioneers in Western Pennsylvania rose up in opposition to Hamilton's inquisitorial excise law of 1791 which proposed a tax on whisky-making, the principal occupation of small farmers who had no other means of transporting their grain across the mountains. Hamilton leaped at the opportunity to drive home his favorite argument that the new government had to convince the wealthy classes that it could deal with "Shaysite" uprisings. The demonstrations against the revenue officers, he assured Washington, was a major "insurrection" carefully organized by the popular societies. Unless promptly suppressed by stern action, Hamilton argued, it would result in the destruction of the government.

Alarmed by these reports, Washington dispatched 12,950 troops to the area, an action which, as one student of the subject has put it, "indicates in striking fashion the great influence of his secretary [of the treasury]." [44] Hamilton himself went with the soldiers, and after the movement was crushed ordered eighteen men brought to Philadelphia for trial. Only two were convicted and Washington pardoned both of them. Later in a message to Congress, the President blamed the "insurrection" on the Democratic-Republican clubs which he denounced as "self-created," "diabolical," and Genêt-inspired.

His conduct during the Whisky Rebellion and his denunciations of the popular societies hurt Washington's reputation more than they did the rising democratic movement. And the chorus of criticism increased when the people learned that the President had signed Jay's treaty with England. For this

[44] Bennett M. Rich, "Washington and the Whiskey Insurrection," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography,* Vol. LXV (1941), p. 340.

agreement, signed in London in November, 1794, obtained no assurance that the British would stop the seizure of American ships or the impressment of American seamen. In return for Britain's agreement to give up the Northwestern posts and for permission for American vessels to enter the British West Indies, Jay agreed to the prohibition of export from the United States, in American vessels, of sugar, coffee, cocoa and cotton. He also agreed to permit British creditors to collect private debts from southern planters in America.

Washington signed the treaty reluctantly; in fact, the Federalists were furious at his delay. He finally agreed to the terms only because he was led to believe that the only alternative was a war with England. But his action alienated many people including his fellow-planters in the South. The criticism of the President, heretofore subdued, was now openly expressed. He himself complained of being attacked in language that would not be applied to a common pickpocket.

Yet those in the democratic forces who knew Washington did not for a moment doubt his sincere devotion to his country. Jefferson referred years later to the fact that the Virginian was "deceived" by the "seductions" of the arch-conservatives who had carefully planned to use his prestige to further their anti-democratic purposes.

In 1792 Washington had decided to retire from politics and not accept a second term. But both Hamilton and Jefferson had urged him to forego his plans and to accept another four-year term. Now in 1795, increasingly under attack and utterly tired of politics, he determined to retire from the presidency when his second term was over. He had no serious objection to a third term,[45] but he was simply anxious to return to the quiet of Mount Vernon.

In September, 1796, on the eve of the presidential election, Washington announced his withdrawal from public life. On this occasion he delivered his oft-quoted Farewell Address

[45] For an interesting discussion of this subject see Robert S. Rantoul, "What Washington Thought of a Third Term," *Essex Historical Collections*, Vol. XXXVII (1900), pp. 321-38.

which was written by Hamilton following an outline furnished him by Washington. In the course of the address Washington spoke of the value and blessings of the Union, the danger of disunion, and the need "to steer clear of permanent alliances with any portion of the foreign world. . . ." Since those words were uttered there have been many attempts to make Washington appear as an isolationist. The facts, of course, are otherwise. Washington constantly emphasized that mankind was bound in "one great family." As Professor Evarts B. Greene has recently pointed out:

"Washington, no sentimentalist, called himself 'a citizen of the great republic of humanity at large.' He looked for a time 'not very remote' when free and liberal commerce would 'pretty generally succeed to the devastation and horrors of war. . . .' " [46]

When Washington assumed the Presidency, the country was not yet really unified. Two states—North Carolina and Rhode Island—had not ratified the Constitution and Vermont had representatives in England who were negotiating for its recognition as an independent state. Nor was the territory of the United States entirely under the control of the American government. Great Britain still had control of the forts in the Northwest Territory even though the peace treaty of 1783 required that she surrender them. At the same time Spain was seeking to separate the western country from the Union and refused to abandon spheres of influence in the United States. France too sought a foothold upon American territory.

When Washington became President there was considerable doubt expressed in conservative circles that the new government would last more than four years. And there was a widespread belief that sectional animosities would split the country wide open.

Such was the United States when Washington took hold in 1789. When he left there was a nation intact throughout its borders. Many of the problems still remained to be solved

[46] Evarts B. Greene, *The Revolutionary Generation* (N. Y., 1943), p. 418.

when Washington retired from the Presidency and even at his death in 1799. But even among those who criticized him most sharply for some of his actions while in office, there was general agreement that Washington had established a solid foundation for the Republic to rest upon. It was the United States rather than a feeble association of separate, antagonistic states that was now firmly established among the nations of the world. It was with considerable pride, therefore, that Washington could now say:

"We are known by no other character among Nations than as the United States. Massachusetts or Virginia is no better defined, nor any more thought of by Foreign Powers than the county of Worcester in Massachusetts is by Virginia, or Gloucester in Virginia is by Massachusetts." [47]

The national concept, Washington declared, was the justification of his entire career. For the victory in the War for Independence would have been barren had it not resulted in the establishment of a stable, democratic nation. And in very truth, it was in no small measure due to Washington that such a nation was created. In the establishment of that nation, George Washington occupies a position of the first importance.

On February 22, 1943, President Franklin D. Roosevelt, in a broadcast to the American people, declared:

"We Americans of today know that there would have been no successful outcome of the Revolution, which gave us liberty, had it not been for George Washington's faith and the fact that that faith overcame the bickerings and confusion and doubts which the skeptics and cynics provoked."

The courage and inflexible will that characterized Washington are needed today to preserve the nation he worked so hard to establish. In our present war for national survival we understand all the more clearly the fundamental principle the builder of our republic constantly emphasized—that victory in a people's war can be achieved only through national unity.

[47] Fitzpatrick, Vol. XXVII, p. 50.

The writings of George Washington included in this book have been arranged in five sections: The War for Independence, Democracy, Education, Religious Freedom, and Slavery. Within each section the utterances of Washington are preceded by headings furnished by the editor. All footnotes to the Washington text have been supplied by the editor. Spelling, capitalization, and punctuation have ben modernized whenever deemed necessary.

I. *THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE*

THE RIGHTS OF THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

An intimate spirit of freedom first told me, that the measures, which administration hath for some time been, and now are most violently pursuing, are repugnant to every principle of natural justice; whilst much abler heads than my own hath fully convinced me, that it is not only repugnant to natural right, but subversive of the laws and constitution of Great Britain itself, in the establishment of which some of the best blood in the kingdom hath been split.

FROM LETTER TO BRYAN FAIRFAX, AUG. 24, 1774 [1]

What is it we are contending against? Is it against paying the duty of three pence per pound on tea because burthensome? No, it is the right only, we have all along disputed.

. . . If, then, as the fact really is, it is against the right of taxation that we now do, and, (as I before said), all along have contended, why should they suppose an exertion of this power would be less obnoxious now than formerly? And what reasons have we to believe, that they would make a second attempt, while the same sentiments filled the breast of every American, if they did not intend to enforce it if possible?

. . . I think the Parliament of Great Britain hath no more right to put their hands into my pocket, without my consent, than I have to put my hands into yours for money; and this being already urged to them in a firm, but decent manner,

by all the colonies, what reason is there to expect any thing from their justice?

. . . I should much distrust my own judgment upon the occasion, if my nature did not recoil at the thought of submitting to measures, which I think subversive of every thing that I ought to hold dear and valuable, and did I not find, at the same time, that the voice of mankind is with me.

FROM LETTER TO BRYAN FAIRFAX, JULY 20, 1774 [2]

I have always thought that by virtue of the same power (for here alone the authority derives) which assumes the right of Taxation, they may attempt at least to restrain our manufactories; especially those of a public nature; the same equity and justice prevailing in the one case as the other, it being no greater hardship to forbid my manufacturing, than it is to order me to buy Goods of them loaded with Duties, for the express purpose of raising a revenue.

FROM LETTER TO GEORGE MASON, APR. 5, 1769 [3]

THE STAMP ACT

As to the Stamp Act, taken in a single view, one, and the first bad consequences attending it I take to be this. Our Courts of Judicature must inevitably be shut up; for it is impossible (or next of kin to it) under our present Circumstances that the Act of Parliament can be complied with were we ever so willing to enforce the execution; for not to say, which alone would be sufficient, that we have not Money to pay the Stamps, there are many other Cogent Reasons to prevent it; and if a stop be put to our judicial proceedings I fancy the Merchants of Great Britain trading to the Colonies will not be among the last to wish for a Repeal of it.

FROM LETTER TO FRANCIS DANDRIDGE, SEPT. 20, 1765 [4]

The Repeal of the Stamp Act, to whatsoever causes owing, ought much to be rejoiced at, for had the Parliament of Great Britain resolved upon enforcing it the consequences I conceive

would have been more direful than is generally apprehended both to the Mother Country and her Colonies. All therefore who were Instrumental in procuring the Repeal are entitled to the Thanks of every British Subject and have mine cordially.

FROM LETTER TO ROBERT CARY & COMPANY, JULY 21, 1766 [5]

Those therefore who wisely foresaw this, and were Instrumental in procuring the repeal of it, are, in my opinion, deservedly entitled to the thanks of the well wishers to Britain and her Colonies; and must reflect with pleasure that through their means, many Scenes of confusion and distress have been avoided. Mine they accordingly have, and always shall have, for their opposition to any Act of Oppression, for that Act could be looked upon in no other light by every person who would view it in its proper colours.

FROM LETTER TO CAPEL AND OSGOOD HANBURY, JULY 25, 1767 [6]

ON BOYCOTTING BRITISH GOODS

The northern Colonies, it appears, are endeavouring to adopt this scheme. In my opinion it is a good one, and must be attended with salutary effects, provided it can be carried pretty generally into execution; but how far it is practicable to do so, I will not take upon me to determine. That there will be difficulties attending the execution of it every where, from clashing interests, and selfish designing men (ever attentive to their own gain, and watchful of every turn that can assist their lucrative views, in preference to any other consideration) cannot be denied; but in the Tobacco Colonies where the Trade is so diffused, and in a manner wholly conducted by Factors for their principals at home, these difficulties are certainly enhanced, but I think not insurmountably increased, if the Gentlemen in their several Counties would be at some pains to explain matters to the people, and stimulate them to a cordial agreement to purchase none but certain innumerated Articles out of any of the Stores after such a period, not import nor purchase any themselves. This, if it did not

effectually withdraw the Factors from their Importations, would at least make them extremely cautious in doing it, as the prohibited Goods could be vended to none but the non-associator, or those who would pay no regard to their association; both of whom ought to be stigmatized, and made the objects of public reproach.

The more I consider a Scheme of this sort, the more ardently I wish success to it, because I think there are private, as well as public advantages to result from it; the former certain, however precarious the other may prove.

FROM LETTER TO GEORGE MASON, APR. 5, 1769 [7]

IN DEFENSE OF LIBERTY

At a time when our lordly Masters in Great Britain will be satisfied with nothing less than the deprecation of American freedom, it seems highly necessary that some thing should be done to avert the stroke and maintain the liberty which we have derived from our Ancestors; but the manner of doing it to answer the purpose effectually is the point in question.

That no man should scruple, or hesitate a moment to use arms in defence of so valuable a blessing, on which all the good and evil of life depends; is clearly my opinion; yet Arms . . . should be the last resource; the denier resort. Addresses to the Throne, and remonstrances to parliament, we have already, it is said, 'proved the inefficacy of; how far then their attention to our rights and privileges is to be awakened or alarmed by starving their Trade and manufactures, remains to be tried.

FROM LETTER TO GEORGE MASON, APR. 5, 1769 [8]

I would heartily join you in them, so far as relates to a humble and dutiful petition to the throne, provided there was the most distant hope of success. But have we not tried this already? Have we not addressed the Lords, and remonstrated to the Commons? And to what end? Did they deign to look at our petitions?

. . . Does it not appear, as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness, that there is a regular, systematic plan formed to fix the right and practice of taxation upon us? Does not the uniform conduct of Parliament for some years past confirm this? Do not all the debates, especially those just brought to us, in the House of Commons on the side of government, expressly declare that America must be taxed in aid of the British funds, and that she has no longer resources within herself? Is there any thing to be expected from petitioning after this? Is not the attack upon the liberty and property of the people of Boston, before restitution of the loss to the India Company was demanded, a plain and self-evident proof of what they are aiming at? Do not the subsequent bills (now I dare say acts), for depriving the Massachusetts Bay of its charter, and for transporting offenders into other colonies or to Great Britain for trial, where it is impossible from the nature of the thing that justice can be obtained, convince us that the administration is determined to stick at nothing to carry its point? Ought we not, then, to put our virtue and fortitude to the severest test?

FROM LETTER TO BRYAN FAIRFAX, JULY 4, 1774[9]

WE WILL NOT SUBMIT TO SLAVERY!

With respect to myself, I have never entertained an idea of an accommodation, since I heard of the measures, which were adopted in consequence of the Bunker's Hill fight. The king's speech has confirmed the sentiments I entertained upon the news of that affair; and if every man was of my mind, the ministers of Great Britain should know, in a few words, upon what issue the cause should be put. I would not be deceived by artful declarations, nor specious pretences; nor would I be amused by unmeaning propositions; but in open, undisguised, and manly terms proclaim our wrongs, and our resolution to be redressed. I would tell them, that we had borne much, that we had long and ardently sought for reconciliation upon honorable terms, that it had been denied us, that all our at-

tempts after peace had proved abortive, and had been grossly misrepresented, that we had done every thing which could be expected from the best of subjects, that the spirit of freedom beat too high in us to submit to slavery, and that, if nothing else could satisfy a tyrant and his diabolical ministry, we are determined to shake off all connexions with a state so unjust and unnatural. This I would tell them, not under covert, but in words as clear as the sun in its meridian brightness.

FROM LETTER TO JOSEPH REED, FEB. 10, 1776 [10]

When the councils of the British nation had formed a plan for enslaving America, and depriving her sons of their most sacred and invaluable privileges, against the clearest remonstrances of the constitution, of justice, and of truth, and, to execute their schemes, had appealed to the sword, I esteemed it my duty to take a part in the contest, and more especially on account of my being called thereto by the unsolicited suffrages of the representatives of a free people; wishing for no other reward, than that arising from a conscientious discharge of the important trust, and that my services might contribute to the establishment of freedom and peace, upon a permanent foundation, and merit the applause of my countrymen, and every virtuous citizen.

FROM ANSWER TO AN ADDRESS FROM THE MASSACHUSETTS LEGISLATURE, MARCH, 1776 [11]

THE ISSUE AT STAKE

The Honor and safety of our bleeding Country, and every other motive that can influence the brave and heroic Patriot, call loudly upon us, to acquit ourselves with Spirit. In short, we must now determine to be enslaved or free. If we make Freedom our choice, we must obtain it, by the Blessings of Heaven on our United and Vigorous Efforts.

FROM ADDRESS TO THE OFFICERS AND SOLDIERS OF THE PENNSYLVANIA ASSOCIATORS, AUG. 8, 1776 [12]

The hour is fast approaching, on which the Honor and Success of this army, and the safety of our bleeding Country depend. Remember officers and Soldiers, that you are Freemen, fighting for the blessings of Liberty—that slavery will be your portion, and that of your posterity, if you do not acquit yourselves like men. . . .

Remember how your Courage and Spirit have been despised, and traduced by your cruel invaders; though they have found by dear experience at Boston, Charlestown and other places, what a few brave men contending in their own land, and in the best of causes can do, against base hirelings and mercenaries.

FROM GENERAL ORDERS, AUG. 23, 1776 [13]

Our cause is noble, it is the cause of Mankind! and the danger to it, is to be apprehended from ourselves. Shall we slumber and sleep then while we should be punishing those miscreants who have brought these troubles upon us and who are aiming to continue us in them, while we should be striving to fill our Battalions, and devising ways and means to appreciate the currency; on the credit of which every thing depends? I hope not.

FROM LETTER TO JAMES WARREN, MAR. 31, 1779 [14]

I am happy to be informed by Accounts from all Parts of the Continent, of the agreeable Prospect of a very plentiful Supply of almost all the Productions of the Earth. Blessed as we are with the Bounties of Providence, necessary for our support and Defence, the Fault must surely be our own (and great indeed will it be), if we do not, by a proper Use of them, attain the noble Prize for which we have so long been contending, the Establishment of Peace, Liberty and Independence.

FROM LETTER TO THOMAS MCKEAN, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, JULY 21, 1781 [15]

NO PEACE WITHOUT INDEPENDENCE

To discerning Men, nothing can be more evident, than that a Peace on the principles of dependence, however limited, after what has happened, would be to the last degree dishonourable and ruinous. . . .

. . . Nothing short of Independence, it appears to me, can possibly do. A Peace, on other terms, would, if I may be allowed the expression, be a Peace of War. The injuries we have received from the British Nation were so unprovoked; have been so great and so many, that they can never be forgotten. Besides the feuds, the jealousies; the animosities that would ever attend a Union with them. Besides the importance, the advantages we should derive from an unrestricted commerce; Our fidelity as a people; Our gratitude; Our Character as Men, are opposed to a coalition with them as subjects, but in case of the last extremity. Were we easily to accede to terms of dependence, no nation, upon future occasions, let the oppressions of Britain be never so flagrant and unjust, would interpose for our relief, or at least they would do it with a cautious reluctance and upon conditions, most probably, that would be hard, if not dishonorable to us. France, by her supplies, has saved us from the Yoke thus far, and a wise and virtuous perseverence, would and I trust will, free us entirely.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN BANNISTER, APRIL 21, 1778 [16]

The draughts of bills as mentioned by you, and which have since passed into acts of British legislation, are so strongly marked with folly and villany, that one can scarce tell which predominates, or how to be surprised at any act of a British minister. This last trite performance of Master North's * is

* On February 17, 1778, Lord North, prime minister of England, proposed, and Parliament approved, a measure of conciliation, granting Americans everything but independence. No revenue taxes were to be levied, the coercive measures and the tea duty were to be repealed, full pardon was to be granted, and all acts of Parliament relating to the colonies adopted after February, 1763, were to be suspended. Commissioners were sent from England to present these terms.

neither more nor less than an insult to common sense, and shows to what extremity of folly wicked men in a bad cause are sometimes driven; for this rude Boreas, who was to bring America to his feet, knew at the time of draughting these bills, or had good reason to believe, that a treaty had actually been signed between the court of France and the United States. By what rule of common sense, then, he could expect that such an undisguised artifice would go down in America I cannot conceive. But, thanks to Heaven, the tables are turned; and we, I hope, shall have our independence secured, in its fullest extent, without cringing to this Son of Thunder, who I am persuaded will find abundant work for his troops elsewhere; on which happy prospect I sincerely congratulate you and every friend to American liberty.

FROM LETTER TO LANDON CARTER, MAY 30, 1778 [17]

Great Britain understood herself perfectly well in this dispute but did not comprehend America. She meant as Lord Campden in his late speech in Parliament clearly, and explicitly declared, to drive America into rebellion that her own purposes might be more fully answered by it but take this along with it, that this Plan originating in a firm belief, founded on misinformation, that no effectual opposition would or could be made, they little dreamt of what has happened and are disappointed in their views; does not every act of administration from the Tea Act to the present Session of Parliament declare this in plain and self evident Characters? Had the Commissioners any powers to treat with America? If they meant Peace, would Lord Howe have been detained in England 5 months after passing the Act? Would the powers of these Commissioners have been confined to mere acts of grace, upon condition of absolute submission? No, surely, No! they meant to drive us into what they termed rebellion, that they might be furnished with a pretext to disarm and then strip us of the rights and privileges of Englishmen and Citizens. If they were actuated by principles of justice, why did they refuse indignantly to accede to the terms which were humbly supplicated

before hostilities commenced and this Country deluged in Blood; and now make their principal Officers and even the Commissioners themselves say, that these terms are just and reasonable; Nay that more will be granted than we have yet asked, if we will relinquish our Claim to Independency. What Name does such conduct as this deserve? and what punishment is there in store for the Men who have distressed Millions, involved thousands in ruin, and plunged numberless families in inextricable woe? Could that which is just and reasonable now, have been unjust four Years ago?

They must either be wantonly wicked and cruel, or (which is only another mode of describing the same thing) under false colours are now endeavouring to deceive the great body of the people, by industriously propagating a belief that Great Britain is willing to offer any, and that we will accept of no terms; thereby hoping to poison and disaffect the Minds of those who wish for peace, and create feuds and dissensions among ourselves. In a word, having less dependence now, in their Arms than their Arts, they are practising such low and dirty tricks, that Men of Sentiment and honor must blush at their Villainy, among other manoeuvres, in this way they are counterfeiting Letters, and publishing them, as intercepted ones of mine to prove that I am an enemy to the present measures, and have been led into them step by step still hoping that Congress would recede from their present claims.

FROM LETTER TO BRYAN FAIRFAX, MAR. 1, 1778 [18]

THE PEOPLE'S ARMY

Men, therefore, who are not employed, as mere hirelings, but have stepped forth in defence of every thing that is clear and Valuable, not only to themselves but to posterity, should take uncommon pains to conduct themselves with uncommon propriety and good Order, as their honor, reputation, etc., call loudly upon them for it.

FROM LETTER TO ISRAEL PUTNAM, AUG. 25, 1776 [19]

I have communicated in general orders, to the officers and soldiers under my command, the thanks of Congress for their good behavior in the service; and I am happy in having such an opportunity of doing justice to their merit.

They were indeed, at first, "a band of undisciplined Husbandmen," but it is (under God) to their bravery and attention to their duty, that I am indebted for that success which has procured me the only reward I wish to receive; the affection and esteem of my Countrymen.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, APR. 18, 1776 [20]

It has been represented to me, that the free Negroes who have served in this Army, are very much dissatisfied at being discarded.* As it is to be apprehended that they may seek employ in the Ministerial Army, I have presumed to depart from the Resolution respecting them and have given licence for their being enlisted.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN HANCOCK, PRESIDENT OF CONGRESS, DEC. 31, 1775 [21]

It is the General's express orders that if any man attempt to skulk, lay down, or retreat without Orders he be instantly shot down as an example, he hopes no such Scoundrel will be found in this army; but on the contrary, every one for himself resolving to conquer, or die, and trusting to the smiles of heaven upon so just a cause, will behave with Bravery and Resolution. Those who are distinguished for their Gallantry, and good Conduct, may depend upon being honorably noticed, and suitably rewarded. And if this Army will but emulate, and imitate their brave Countrymen, in other parts of America, he has

* The reference is to General Gates' order excluding Negroes from enlistment. For an interesting example of how Washington's statement was used during the Civil War by the Abolitionists in their campaign to permit Negro soldiers to fight in the Union army, see Henry Carey Baird, *General Washington and General Jackson on Negro Soldiers* (Philadelphia, 1863).

no doubt they will, by a glorious Victory, save their Country, and acquire to themselves immortal Honor.

FROM GENERAL ORDERS, AUG. 23, 1776 [22]

Be strict in your discipline; that is, to require nothing unreasonable of your officers and men, but see that whatever is required be punctually complied with. Reward and punish every man according to his merit, without partiality or prejudice; hear his complaints; if well founded, redress them; if otherwise, discourage them, in order to prevent frivolous ones. Discourage vice in every shape, and impress upon the mind of every man, from the first to the lowest, the importance of the cause, and what it is they are contending for.

FROM LETTER TO COLONEL WILLIAM WOODFORD, NOV. 10, 1775 [23]

The General most earnestly entreats the officers, and soldiers, to consider the consequences; that they can no way assist our cruel enemies more effectually, than making division among ourselves; That the Honor and Success of the army, and the safety of our bleeding Country, depends upon harmony and good agreement with each other; That the Provinces are all United to oppose the common enemy, and all distinctions sunk in the name of an American; to make this honorable, and preserve the Liberty of our Country, ought to be our only emulation, and he will be the best Soldier, and the best Patriot, who contributes most to this glorious work, whatever his Station, or from whatever part of the Continent, he may come: Let all distinctions of Nations, Countries, and Provinces, therefore be lost in the generous contest, who shall behave with the most Courage against the enemy, and the most kindness and good humour to each other—If there are any officers, or soldiers, so lost to virtue and a love of their Country as to continue in such practices after this order; The General assures them, and is directed by Congress to declare, to the whole Army, that such persons shall be severely punished and dismissed [from] the service with disgrace.

FROM GENERAL ORDER, AUG. 1, 1776 [24]

I must entreat your attention . . . and your exertions to do away [with] the unhappy pernicious distinctions and jealousies between the troops of different governments.* Enjoin this upon the Officers, and let them inculcate, and press home to the Soldiery, the Necessity of Order and Harmony among them, who are embarked in one common Cause, and mutually contending for all that Freeman hold dear. I am persuaded, if the Officers will but exert themselves, these Animosities, this Disorder, will in a great Measure subside, and nothing being more essential to the Service than that it should, I am hopeful nothing on their Parts will be wanting to effect it.

FROM LETTER TO PHILIP SCHUYLER, JULY 17, 1776 [25]

I shall still continue to exert all my influence and authority to prevent the interruption of that harmony which is so essential, and which has so generally prevailed between the Army and the Inhabitants of the Country; and I need scarcely add that in doing this, I shall give every species of countenance and support to the execution of the Laws of the Land.

FROM LETTER TO GEORGE CLINTON, GOVERNOR OF NEW YORK, OCT. 19, 1782 [26]

The Army and the Country have a mutual Dependence upon each other and it is of the last Importance that their several Duties should be so regulated and enforced as to produce not only the greatest Harmony and good Understanding but the truest Happiness and Comfort to each.

FROM LETTER TO THOMAS WHARTON, JUNIOR, MAR. 7, 1778 [27]

No Order of Men in the thirteen States have paid a more sanctimonious regard to their proceedings than the Army; and, indeed, it may be questioned, whether there has been that scrupulous adherence had to them by any other, for without arrogance, or the smallest deviation from truth it may be said, that no history, now extant, can furnish an instance of an Army's suffering such uncommon hardships as ours have done,

* The reference is to conflicts among soldiers who came from different states.

and bearing them with the same patience and Fortitude. To see men without clothes to cover their nakedness, without Blankets to lay on, without Shoes, by which their Marches might be traced by the Blood from their feet, and almost as often without Provisions as with; Marching through frost and Snow, and at Christmas taking up their Winter Quarters within a day's March of the enemy, without a House or Hut to cover them till they could be built and submitting to it without a murmur, is a mark of patience and obedience which in my opinion can scarce be paralleled.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN BANNISTER, APR. 21, 1778 [28]

If Historiographers should be hardy enough to fill the page of History with the advantages that have been gained with unequal numbers (on the part of America) in the course of this contest, and attempt to relate the distressing circumstances under which they have been obtained, it is more than probable that Posterity will bestow on their labors the epithet and marks of fiction; for it will not be believed that such a force as Great Britain has employed for eight years in this Country could be baffled in their plan of Subjugating it by numbers infinitely less, composed of Men oftentimes half starved; always in Rags, without pay, and experiencing, at times, every species of distress which human nature is capable of undergoing.

FROM LETTER TO NATHANAEL GREENE, FEB. 6, 1785 [29]

A contemplation of the complete attainment (at a period earlier than could have been expected) of the object for which we contended against so formidable a power cannot but inspire us with astonishment and gratitude.

... The disadvantageous circumstances on our part, under which the war was undertaken, can never be forgotten. The singular interpositions of Providence in our feeble condition were such, as could scarcely escape the attention of the most unobserving; while the unparalleled perseverance of the Armies of the United States, through almost every possible

suffering and discouragement for the space of eight long years, was little short of a standing miracle.

FAREWELL ORDERS TO THE ARMIES OF THE UNITED STATES, NOV. 2, 1783 [30]

Seconded by such a body of yeomanry as repaired to the standard of liberty, fighting in their own native land, fighting for all that freemen hold dear, and whose docility soon supplied the place of discipline, it was scarcely in human nature, under its worst character, to have abandoned them in their misfortunes: Nor is it for me to claim any singular title to merit, for having shared in a common danger, and triumphed with them, after a series of the severest toil and most accumulated distress, over a formidable foe.

FROM LETTER TO SOUTH CAROLINA CONVENTION, MAY 31, 1790 [31]

The glorious task for which we first flew to Arms being thus accomplished, the liberties of our Country being fully acknowledged, and firmly secured by the smiles of heaven, on the purity of our cause, and the honest exertions of a feeble people (determined to be free) against a powerful Nation (disposed to oppress them) and the Character of those who have persevered, through every extremity of hardship; suffering and danger being immortalized by the illustrious appellation of the *patriot Army:* Nothing now remains but for the actors of this mighty Scene to preserve a perfect, unvarying, consistency of character through the very last act; to close the Drama with applause; and to retire from the Military Theatre with the same approbation of Angels and men which have crowned all their former virtuous Actions.

FROM GENERAL ORDERS, APR. 18, 1783 [32]

THE TORIES

The Connecticut Assembly are very unanimous in the common cause, and among others have passed . . . [an] act for restraining and punishing persons inimical to us, and directing proceedings therein; no person to supply the ministerial army

or navy, to give them intelligence, to enlist, or procure others to enlist, in their service, to pilot their vessels, or in any way assist them, under pain of forfeiting his estate, and an imprisonment not exceeding three years; none to write, speak or act against the proceedings of Congress, or their acts of Assembly, under penalty of being disarmed, and disqualified from holding any office, and be further punished by imprisonment, etc.; for seizing and confiscating, for the use of the colony, the estates of those putting or continuing to shelter themselves under the protection of the ministerial fleet or army, or assist in carrying on their measures against us....

The situation of our affairs seems to call for regulations like these, and I should think the other colonies ought to adopt similar ones, or such of them as they have not already made. Vigorous measures, and such as at another time would appear extraordinary, are now become absolutely necessary, for preserving our country against the strides of tyranny making against it.

FROM LETTER TO NICHOLAS COOKE, JAN. 6, 1776 [33]

Severe examples should, in my judgment, be made of those who were forgiven former offences and again in Arms against us.

FROM LETTER TO HENRY LAURENS, MAR. 20, 1779 [34]

WOMEN AND THE WAR

The contributions of the association you represent * have exceeded what could have been expected, and the spirit that

* The reference is to an association of ladies of Philadelphia, organized by Mrs. Esther Reed, to collect contributions to aid the soldiers. Close to $300,000 was raised and this money was used to make shirts for the fighting men. The effect these contributions had on the morale of the men in the Continental Army is indicated in the following letter from an American officer in camp, which appeared in the Pennsylvania *Packet*, July 18, 1780: "The patriotism of the women of Philadelphia is a subject of conversation with the army. Had I poetic genius I would sit down and write an ode in praise of it....Nothing has been more discouraging for some time past, than to believe we were neglected, or almost lost from the remembrance of our fellow citizens."

animated the members of it entitles them to an equal place with any, who have preceded them in the walk of female patriotism.... It embellishes the American character with a new trait; by proving that the love of country is blended with those softer domestic virtues, which have always been allowed to be more peculiarly *your own.*

You have not acquired admiration in your own country only; it is paid you abroad; and you will learn with pleasure by a part of your own sex, where female accomplishments have attained their highest perfection, and who from the commencement have been the patronesses of American liberty. The Army ought not to regret its sacrifice or its suffering when it meets with so flattering a reward as in the sympathy of your sex; nor can it fear that its interests will be neglected while espoused by advocates as powerful as they are amiable. I can only answer for the sentiments which you do me the honor to express for me personally, that they would more than repay a life devoted to the services of the public and to testimonies of gratitude to yourselves.

FROM LETTER TO MRS. ANNE FRANCIS, MRS. HENRIETTA HILLEGAS, MRS. MARY CLARKSON, MRS. SARAH BACHE, AND MRS. SUSAN BLAIR, [FEB. 13, 1781] [35]

Amidst all the distresses and sufferings of the Army, from whatever sources they have arisen, it must be a consolation to our *Virtuous Country Women* that they have never been accused of withholding their most zealous efforts to support the cause we are engaged in, and encourage those who are defending them in the Field. The Army do not want gratitude, nor do they Misplace it in this instance.

FROM LETTER TO MRS. SARAH BACHE, JAN. 15, 1781 [36]

ON CIVILIANS IN WAR

When I consider that the City of New York, will in all human probability very soon be the Scene of a bloody Conflict; I cannot but view the great Numbers of Women, Children

and infirm Persons remaining in it, with the most melancholy concern.... It would relieve me from great anxiety, if your Honorable Body would Immediately deliberate upon it and form and execute some plan for their removal and relief; In which I will cooperate and assist to the utmost of my Power.

FROM LETTER TO THE NEW YORK LEGISLATURE, AUG. 17, 1776 [37]

THE FRENCH ALLIANCE

An immediate declaration of war against Great Britain [by France], in all probability could not fail to extricate us from our difficulties, and to cement the Bond of Friendship so firmly between France and America, as to produce the most permanent advantage to both—certainly nothing can be more the true Interest of France than to have a weight of such magnitude as America taken out of the Scale of British Power and opulence and thrown into her own.

FROM LETTER TO N. DAMOURS, JUNE 19, 1777 [38]

This is a decisive moment; one of the most (I will go further and say, *the most*) important America has seen. The Court of France has made a glorious effort for our deliverance, and if we disappoint its intentions by our supineness, we must become contemptible in the eyes of all mankind. Nor can we after that venture to confide that our allies will persist in an attempt to establish what it will appear we want inclination or ability to assist them in. If we do our duty, we may even hope to make the campaign decisive on this continent. But we must do our duty in earnest or disgrace and ruin will attend us.

FROM LETTER TO JOSEPH REED, MAY 28, 1780 [39]

I very much fear that we, taking it for granted that we have nothing more to do, because France has acknowledged our Independency and formed an alliance with us, shall relapse into a state of supineness and perfect security.

FROM LETTER TO ALEXANDER MCDOUGALL, MAY 5, 1778 [40]

UNITY FOR VICTORY

The cause of America, and of liberty, is the cause of every virtuous American citizen; whatever may be his religion or descent, the United Colonies know no distinction but such as slavery, corruption and arbitrary dominion may create.

FROM MESSAGE TO THE INHABITANTS OF CANADA, SEPT. 1775 [41]

The hour therefore is certainly come when party differences and disputes should subside; when every Man (especially those in Office) should with one hand and one heart pull the same way and with their whole strength.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN ARMSTRONG, MAY 18, 1779 [42]

I am under more apprehensions on account of our own dissentions than of the efforts of the Enemy.

FROM LETTER TO BENEDICT ARNOLD, DEC. 13, 1778 [43]

We must not despair; the game is yet in our own hands; to play it well is all we have to do, and I trust the experience of error will enable us to act better in future. A cloud may yet pass over us, individuals may be ruined; and the Country at large, or particular States, undergo temporary distress; but certain I am, that it is in our power to bring the War to a happy conclusion.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN MATTHEWS, JUNE 7, 1781 [44]

If I may be allowed to speak figuratively, our Assemblies in Politics are to be compared to the Wheels of a Clock in Mechanics; the whole for the general purposes of War should be set in motion by the great Wheel [Congress] and if all will do their parts the Machine works easy; but a failure in one disorders the whole, and without the large one (which set the whole in motion) nothing can be done; it is by the united wisdom and exertions of the whole, in Congress, who, I presume, do justice to all (but if they fail by being disproportionate in the first instance it should in my opinion be sought

for and remedied in the Second rather than derange the whole business of a Campaign by the delays incident to contention) that we are to depend upon. Without this we are no better than a rope of Sand and are as easily broken asunder.

FROM LETTER TO ARCHIBALD CARY, JUNE 15, 1782 [45]

ON WAR PROFITEERS

Can *we* carry on the War much longer? certainly NO, unless some measures can be devised, and speedily executed, to restore the credit of our Currency, restrain extortion, and punish forestallers.

Without these can be affected, what funds can stand the present expences of the Army? And what Officer can bear the weight of prices, that every necessary Article is now got to? A Rat, in the shape of a Horse, is not to be bought at this time for less than £200; a Saddle under thirty or Forty; Boots twenty, and Shoes and other articles in like proportion. How is it possible therefore for Officers to stand this, without an increase of pay? And how is it possible to advance their Pay when Flour is selling (at different places) from five to fifteen pounds per Ct., Hay from ten to thirty pounds per ton, and Beef and other essentials, in this proportion.

FROM LETTER TO GOUVERNEUR MORRIS, OCT. 4, 1778 [46]

It gives me very sincere pleasure to find that the Assembly [of Pennsylvania] . . . are so well disposed to second your endeavors in bringing those murderers of our cause, the monopolizers, forestallers, and engrossers, to condign punishment.*

It is much to be lamented that each State long ere this has not hunted them down as the pests of society, and the greatest Enemys we have to the happiness of America. I would to God that one of the most atrocious of each State was hung in Gibbets upon a gallows five times as high as the one prepared by

* Joseph Reed was president of the Supreme Executive Council of Pennsylvania.

Haman. No punishment in my opinion is too great for the Man who can build his greatness upon his Country's ruin.

FROM LETTER TO JOSEPH REED, DEC. 12, 1778 [47]

Nothing I am convinced but the depreciation of our Currency proceeding in a great measure from the foregoing Causes, aided by Stock jobbing, and party dissensions has fed the hopes of the Enemy and kept the British Arms in America to this day. They do not scruple to declare this themselves, and add, that we shall be our own conquerers. Cannot our common Country . . . possess virtue enough to disappoint them? Is the paltry consideration of a little dirty pelf to individuals to be placed in competition with the essential rights and liberties of the present generation, and of Millions yet unborn? Shall a few designing men for their own aggrandizement, and to gratify their own avarice, overset the goodly fabric we have been rearing at the expence of so much time, blood, and treasure? and shall we at last become the victims of our own abominable lust of gain? Forbid it heaven! forbid it all and every State in the Union! by enacting and enforcing efficacious laws for checking the growth of these monstrous evils, and restoring matters, in some degree to the pristine state they were in at the commencement of the War.

. . . Punish Speculators, forestallers, and extortioners, and above all sink the money by heavy taxes. To promote public and private economy; Encourage Manufacturers, etc. Measures of this sort gone heartily into by the several States would strike at once at the root of all our evils and give the coup de grace to British hope of subjugating this Continent, either by their Arms or their Arts. The first, as I have before observed, they acknowledge is unequal to the task; the latter I am sure will be so if we are not lost to every thing that is good and virtuous.

FROM LETTER TO JAMES WARREN, MAR. 31, 1779 [48]

II. *DEMOCRACY*

THE BANNER OF FREEDOM

Born, Sir, in a land of liberty; having early learned its value; having engaged in a perilous conflict to defend it; having, in a word, devoted the best years of my life to secure its permanent establishment in my own country; my anxious recollections, my sympathetic feelings, and my best wishes are irresistibly excited, whensoever, in any country, I see an oppressed nation unfurl the banners of Freedom.

FROM LETTER TO THE FRENCH MINISTER, JAN. 1, 1796 [1]

Should the conduct of the Americans, whilst promoting their own happiness, influence the feelings of other nations, and thereby render a service to mankind, they will receive a double pleasure.

FROM LETTER TO COMTE DE SEGUR, JULY 1, 1790 [2]

A spirit of equal liberty appears fast to be gaining ground everywhere, which must afford satisfaction to every friend of mankind.

FROM LETTER TO RECTOR ST. JOHN DE CREVECCEUR, APR. 10, 1789 [3]

The preservation of the sacred fire of liberty, and the destiny of the Republican model of Government, are justly considered as *deeply*, perhaps as *finally* staked, on the experiment entrusted in the hands of the American people.

FROM FIRST INAUGURAL ADDRESS, APR. 30, 1789

The Citizens of America, placed in the most enviable condition, as the sole Lords and Proprietors of a vast Tract of Continent, comprehending all the various soils and climates of the World, and abounding with all the necessaries and conveniencies of life, are now by the late satisfactory pacification, acknowledged to be possessed of absolute freedom and Independency; They are, from this period, to be considered as the Actors on a most conspicuous Theatre, which seems to be peculiarly designated by Providence for the display of human greatness and felicity; Here, they are not only surrounded with every thing which can contribute to the completion of private and domestic enjoyment, but Heaven has crowned all its other blessings, by giving a fairer opportunity for political happiness, than any other Nation has ever been favored with.

...The foundation of our Empire was not laid in the gloomy age of Ignorance and Superstition, but at an Epocha when the rights of mankind were better understood and more clearly defined, than at any former period, the researches of the human mind, after social happiness, have been carried to a great extent, the Treasures of knowledge, acquired by the labours of Philosophers, Sages and Legislatures, through a long succession of years, are laid open for our use, and their collected wisdom may be happily applied in the Establishment of our forms of Government; the free cultivation of Letters, the unbounded extension of Commerce, the progressive refinement of Manners, the growing liberality of sentiment, and above all, the pure and benign light of Revelation, have had a meliorating influence on mankind and increased the blessings of Society.

FROM CIRCULAR TO THE STATES, JUNE 8, 1783 [5]

From the public papers it appears, that the parliaments of the several provinces [of France], and particularly that of Paris have acted with great spirit and resolution. Indeed the rights of Mankind, the privileges of the people, and the true principles of liberty, seem to have been more generally discussed

and better understood throughout Europe since the American revolution than they were at any former period.

FROM LETTER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, JAN. 1, 1788 [6]

The American Revolution, or the peculiar light of the age seems to have opened the eyes of almost every nation in Europe.

FROM LETTER TO RECTOR ST. JOHN DE CREVECCEUR, APR. 10, 1789 [7]

A REPUBLIC OR A MONARCHY

Republicanism is not the phantom of a deluded imagination: on the contrary . . . under no form of government, will laws be better supported, liberty and property better secured, or happiness be more effectually dispensed to mankind.

FROM LETTER TO EDMUND PENDLETON, JAN. 22, 1795 [8]

With a mixture of great surprise and astonishment I have read with attention the Sentiments you have submitted to my perusal.* Be assured Sir, no occurrence in the course of the War, has given me more painful sensations than your information of there being such ideas existing in the Army as you have expressed, and I must view with abhorrence, and reprehend with severety. For the present, the communication of them will rest in my own bosom, unless some further agitation of the matter, shall make a disclosure necessary.

I am much at a loss to conceive what part of my conduct could have given encouragement to an address which to me seems big with the greatest mischiefs that can befall my Country. If I am not deceived in the knowledge of myself, you could not have found a person to whom your schemes are more disagreeable; at the same time in justice to my own feelings I must add, that no Man possesses a more sincere wish to see

* The reference is to Nicola's letter calling for the establishment of a monarchy in America and indicating that Washington would have the support of the army if he set himself up as a king.

ample justice done to the Army than I do, and as far as my powers and influence, in a constitutional way extend, they shall be employed to the utmost of my abilities to effect it, should there be any occasion. Let me conjure you then, if you have any regard for your Country, concern for yourself or posterity, or respect for me, banish these thoughts from your Mind, and never communicate, as from yourself, or anyone else, a sentiment of the like Nature.

FROM LETTER TO LEWIS NICOLA, MAY 22, 1782 [9]

I am fully of opinion that those who lean to a Monarchial government have either not consulted the public mind, or that they live in a region where the levelling principles in which they were bred, being entirely irradicated, is much more productive of Monarchial ideas than are to be found in the Southern States, where, from the habitual distinctions which have always existed among the people, one would have expected the first generation, and the most rapid growth of them.

FROM LETTER TO JAMES MADISON, MAR. 31, 1787 [10]

I am told that even respectable characters speak of a monarchial form of Government without horror. From thinking proceeds speaking, thence to acting is often but a single step. But how irrevocable and tremendous! what a triumph for our enemies to verify their predictions! what a triumph for the advocates of despotism to find that we are incapable of governing ourselves, and that systems founded on the basis of equal liberty are merely ideal and fallacious!

FROM LETTER TO JOHN JAY, AUG. 1, 1786 [11]

It appears to be incompatible with the principles of our national constitution to admit the introduction of any kind of Nobility, Knighthood, or distinctions of a similar nature, among the Citizens of our republic.

FROM LETTER TO JEAN DE HEINTZ, JAN. 21, 1784 [12]

THE WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE

It is a wonder to me, there should be found a single monarch, who does not realize that his own glory and felicity must depend on the prosperity and happiness of his People. How easy is it for a sovereign to do that which shall not only immortalize his name, but attract the blessings of millions.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, JUNE 19, 1788 [13]

If there are any circumstances in the law, which, consistently with its main design, may be so varied as to remove any well-intentioned objections that may happen to exist, it will consist with a wise moderation to make the proper variations. It is desirable on all occasions, to unite with a steady and firm adherence to constitutional and necessary Acts of Government, the fullest evidence of a disposition, as far as may be practicable, to consult the wishes of every part of the Community, and to lay the foundations of the public administration in the affection of the people.

FROM THIRD ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS, OCT. 25, 1791 [14]

Whatever my own opinion may be on this, or any other subject, interesting to the Community at large, it always has been, and will continue to be, my earnest desire to learn, and to comply, as far as is consistent, with the public sentiment; but it is on *great* occasions *only,* and after time has been given for cool and deliberate reflection, that the *real* voice of the people can be known.

FROM LETTER TO EDWARD CARRINGTON, MAY 1, 1796 [15]

From the gallantry and fortitude of her citizens, under the auspices of heaven, America has derived her independence. To their industry and the natural advantages of the country she is indebted for her prosperous situation. From their virtue she may expect long to share the protection of a free and equal government, which their wisdom has established, and which

experience justifies, as admirably adapted to our social wants and individual felicity.

FROM LETTER TO THE CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH AND SOCIETY AT MIDWAY, GEORGIA, MAY 13, 1791 [16]

THE CONSTITUTION

Notwithstanding the cup of blessing is thus reached out to us, notwithstanding happiness is ours, if we have a disposition to seize the occasion and make it our own; yet, it appears to me there is an option still left to the United States of America, that it is in their choice, and depends upon their conduct, whether they will be respectable and prosperous, or contemptible and miserable as a Nation; This is the time of their political probation, this is the moment when the eyes of the whole World are turned upon them, this is the moment to establish or ruin their national Character forever, this is the favorable moment to give such a tone to our Federal Government, as will enable it to answer the ends of its institution, or this may be the ill-fated moment for relaxing the powers of the Union, annihilating the cement of the Confederation, and exposing us to become the sport of European politics, which may play one State against another to prevent their growing importance, and to serve their own interested purposes.

For, according to the system of policy the States shall adopt at this moment, they will stand or fall; and by their confirmation or lapse it is yet to be decided, whether the revolution must ultimately be considered as a blessing or a curse; a blessing or a curse, not to the present age alone, for with our fate will the destiny of unborn millions be involved.

FROM CIRCULAR TO THE STATES, JUNE 8, 1783 [17]

We now stand an Independent People, and have yet to learn political Tactics. We are placed among the Nations of the Earth, and have a character to establish; but how we shall acquit ourselves time must discover; the probability, at least I fear it is, that local, or state Politics will interfere too much

with that more liberal and extensive plan of government which wisdom and foresight, freed from the mist of prejudice, would dictate; and that we shall be guilty of many blunders in treading this boundless theatre before we shall have arrived at any perfection in this Art. In a word that the experience which is purchased at the price of difficulties and distress, will alone convince us that the honor, power, and true Interest of this Country must be measured by a Continental scale; and that every departure therefrom weakens the Union, and may ultimately break the band, which holds us together. To avert these evils, to form a Constitution that will give consistency, stability and dignity to the Union; and sufficient powers to the great Council of the Nation for general purposes is a duty which is incumbent upon every Man who wishes well to his Country, and will meet with my aid as far as it can be rendered in the private walks of life.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, APR. 5, 1783 [18]

The disinclination of the individual States to yield competent powers to Congress for the federal government, their unreasonable jealousy of that body and of one another, and the disposition, which seems to pervade each, of being all-wise and all-powerful within itself, will, if there is not a change in the system, be our downfall as a nation. This is as clear to me as the A, B, C; and I think we have opposed Great Britain, and have arrived at the present state of peace and independency, to very little purpose, if we cannot conquer our own prejudices. The powers of Europe begin to see this, and our newly acquired friends, the British, are already and professedly acting upon this ground; and wisely too, if we are determined to persevere in our folly. They know that individual opposition to their measures is futile, and boast that we are not sufficiently united as a nation to give a general one! Is not the indignity alone of this declaration, while we are in the very act of peacemaking and conciliation, sufficient to stimulate us to vest more extensive and adequate powers in the sovereign of these United States?

For my own part, although I am returned to, and am now mingled with, the class of private citizens, and like them must suffer all the evils of a tryanny, or of too great an extension of federal powers, I have no fears arising from this source, in my mind; but I have many, and powerful ones indeed, which predict the worst consequences, from a half-starved, limping government, that appears to be always moving upon crutches, and tottering at every step. Men chosen as the delegates in Congress are, cannot officially be dangerous. They depend upon the breath, nay, they are so much the creatures of the people, under the present constitution, that they can have no views, (which could possibly be carried into execution), nor any interests distinct from those of their constituents. My political creed, therefore, is, to be wise in the choice of delegates, support them like gentlemen while they are our representatives, give them competent powers for all federal purposes, support them in the due exercise thereof, and, lastly, to compel them to close attendance in Congress during their delegation. These things, under the present mode for and termination of elections, aided by annual instead of constant sessions, would, or I am exceedingly mistaken, make us one of the most wealthy, happy, respectable, and powerful nations, that ever inhabited the terrestrial globe. Without them, we shall, in my opinion, soon be everything which is the direct reverse of them.

FROM LETTER TO BENJAMIN HARRISON, GOVERNOR OF VIRGINIA, JAN. 18, 1784 [18]

The war, as you have justly observed, has terminated most advantageously for America, and a fair field is presented to our view; but I confess to you freely, my dear Sir, that I do not think we possess wisdom or justice enough to cultivate it properly. Illiberality, jealousy and local policy mix too much in all our public councils for the good government of the Union. In a word, the confederation appears to me to be little more than a shadow without substance, and Congress a nugatory body, their ordinances being little attended to.

To *me,* it is a solecism in politics: indeed it is one of the

most extraordinary things in nature, that we should confederate as a Nation, and yet be afraid to give the rulers of that nation, who are the creatures of our making, appointed for a limited and short duration, and who are amenable for every action, and recallable at any moment, and are subject to all the evils which they may be instrumental in producing, sufficient powers to order and direct the affairs of the same. By such policy as this the wheels of Government are clogged, and our brightest prospects, and that high expectation which was entertained of us by the wondering world, are turned into astonishment; and from the high ground on which we stood, we are descending into the vale of confusion and darkness. That we have it in our power to become one of the most respectable nations upon earth, admits, in my humble opinion, of no doubt, if we would but pursue a wise, just, and liberal policy towards one another and keep good faith with the rest of the world.

FROM LETTER TO JAMES WARREN, OCT. 7, 1785 [20]

The various and opposite interests which were to be conciliated; the local prejudices which were to be subdued, the diversity of opinions and sentiments which were to be reconciled; and in fine, the sacrifices which were necessary to be made on all sides for the General welfare, combined to make it a work of so intricate and difficult a nature, that I think it is much to be wondered at, that anything could have been produced with such unanimity as the Constitution proposed.

FROM LETTER TO CATHERINE MACAULAY GRAHAM, NOV. 16, 1787 [21]

A candid solution of a single question, to which the plainest understanding is competent, does, in my opinion, decide the dispute; namely, Is it best for the States to unite or not to unite? If there are men, who prefer the latter, then unquestionably the constitution which is offered must, in their estimation, be wrong from the words, *"We the people,"* to the signature, inclusively; but those, who think differently, and yet object to parts of it, would do well to consider, that it does

not lie with any *one* State, or the *minority* of the States, to superstruct a constitution for the whole. The separate interests, as far as it is practicable, must be consolidated; and local views must be attended to, as far as the nature of the case will admit. Hence it is, that every State has some objection to the present form, and these objections are directed to different points. That which is most pleasing to one is obnoxious to another, and so *vice versâ*. If then the union of the whole is a desirable object, the component parts must yield a little in order to accomplish it. Without the latter, the former is unattainable; for again I repeat it, that not a single State, nor the minority of the States, can force a constitution on the majority. But, admitting the power, it will surely be granted, that it cannot be done without involving scenes of civil commotion, of a very serious nature.

Let the opponents of the proposed constitution in this State be asked, and it is a question they certainly ought to have asked themselves, what line of conduct they would advise to adopt, if nine other States, of which I think there is little doubt, should accede to the constitution. Would they recommend, that it should stand single? Will they connect it with Rhode Island? Or even with two others checkerwise, and remain with them, as outcasts from the society, to shift for themselves? Or will they return to their dependence on Great Britain? Or, lastly, have the mortification to come in when they will be allowed no credit for doing so?

The warmest friends and the best supporters the constitution has, do not contend that it is free from imperfections; but they found them unavoidable, and are sensible, if evil is likely to arise therefrom, the remedy must come hereafter; for in the present moment it is not to be obtained; and, as there is a constitutional door open for it, I think the people (for it is with them to judge), can, as they will have the advantage of experience on their side, decide with as much propriety on the alterations and amendments which are necessary, as ourselves. I do not think we are more inspired, have more wisdom, or possess more virtue, than those who will come after us.

The power under the constitution will always be in the people. It is intrusted for certain defined purposes, and for a certain limited period, to representatives of their own choosing; and, whenever it is executed contrary to their interest, or not agreeable to their wishes, their servants can and undoubtedly will be recalled. It is agreed on all hands, that no government can be well administered without powers; yet the instant these are delegated, although those, who are intrusted with the administration, are no more than the creatures of the people, act as it were but for a day, and are amenable for every false step they take, they are, from the moment they receive it, set down as tyrants; their natures, they would conceive from this, immediately changed, and that they can have no other disposition but to oppress. Of these things, in a government constituted and guarded as *ours* is, I have no idea; and do firmly believe, that, whilst many *ostensible* reasons are assigned to prevent the adoption of it, the real ones are concealed behind the curtains, because they are not of a nature to appear in open day. I believe further, supposing them pure, that as great evils result from too great jealousy as from the want of it. We need look, I think, no further for proof of this, than to the constitution of some, if not all, of these States. No man is a warmer advocate for proper restraints and wholesome checks in every department of government, than I am; but I have never yet been able to discover the propriety of placing it absolutely out of the power of men to render essential services, because a possibility remains of their doing ill.

FROM LETTER TO BUSHROD WASHINGTON, NOV. 10, 1787 [22]

I begin to look forward, with a kind of political faith, to scenes of National happiness, which have not heretofore been offered for the fruition of the most favoured Nations. The natural political, and moral circumstances of our Nascent empire justify the anticipation.

... We have an almost unbounded territory whose natural advantages for agriculture and Commerce equal those of any on the globe. In a civil point of view we have unequalled

priviledge of choosing our own political Institutions and of improving upon the experience of Mankind in the formation of a confederated government, where due energy will not be incompatible with unalienable rights of freemen. To complete the picture, I may observe, that the information and morals of our Citizens appear to be peculiarly favourable for the introduction of such a plan of government.

FROM LETTER TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM, AUG. 29, 1788 [23]

NATIONAL UNITY

There are four things, which I humbly conceive, are essential to the well being, I may even venture to say, to the existence of the United States as an Independent Power:

1st. An indissoluble Union of the States under one Federal Head.

2dly. A Sacred regard to Public Justice.

3dly. The adoption of a proper Peace Establishment, and

4thly. The prevalence of that pacific and friendly Disposition, among the People of the United States, which will induce them to forget their local prejudices and policies, to make those mutual concessions which are requisite to the general prosperity, and in some instances, to sacrifice their individual advantages to the interest of the Community.

Whatever measures have a tendency to dissolve the Union, or contribute to violate or lessen the Sovereign Authority, ought to be considered as hostile to the Liberty and Independency of America, and the Authors of them treated accordingly.

FROM CIRCULAR TO THE STATES, JUNE 8, 1783 [24]

It should be the highest ambition of every American to extend his views beyond himself, and to bear in mind that his conduct will not only affect himself, his country, and his immediate posterity; but that its influence may be co-extensive with the world, and stamp political happiness or misery on ages yet unborn. To establish this desirable end, and to estab-

lish the government of *laws,* the *union* of these States is absolutely necessary; therefore in every proceeding, this great, this important object should ever be kept in view; and so long as our measures tend to this; and are marked with the wisdom of a well informed and enlightened people, we may reasonably hope, under the smiles of Heaven, to convince the world that the happiness of nations can be accomplished by pacific revolutions in their political systems, without the destructive intervention of the sword.

FROM LETTER TO LEGISLATURE OF PENNSYLVANIA, SEPT. 5, 1789 [25]

Differences in political opinions are as unavoidable, as, to a certain point, they may perhaps be necessary; but it is exceedingly to be regretted, that subjects cannot be discussed with temper on the one hand, or decisions submitted to without having the motives, which led to them, improperly implicated on the other; and this regret borders on chagrin, when we find that men of abilities, zealous patriots, having the same general objects in view, and the same upright intentions to prosecute them, will not exercise more charity in deciding on the opinions and actions of one another. When matters get to such lengths, the natural inference is, that both sides have strained the cords beyond their bearing, and that a middle course would be found the best, until experience shall have decided on the right way, or (which is not to be expected, because it is denied to mortals) there shall be some infallible rule by which we could forjudge events.

Having premised these things, I would fain hope, that liberal allowances will be made for the political opinions of each other; and, instead of those wounding suspicions, and irritating charges, with which some of our gazettes are so strongly impregnated, and which cannot fail, if persevered in, of pushing matters to extremity, and thereby tearing the machine asunder, that there may be mutual forbearance and temporizing yielding on all sides. Without these, I do not see how the reins of government are to be managed, or how the Union of the States can be much longer preserved.

How unfortunate would it be, if a fabric so goodly, erected under so many providential circumstances, and in its first stages having acquired such respectability, should, from diversity of sentiments, or internal obstructions, to some of the acts of governments (for I cannot prevail on myself to believe, that these measures are as yet the deliberate acts of a determined party) be brought to the verge of dissolution. Melancholy thought! But, at the same time that it shows the consequences of diversified opinions, when pushed with too much tenacity, it exhibits evidence also of the necessity of accommodation, and of the propriety of adopting such healing measures as may restore harmony to the discordant members of the Union, and the governing powers of it.

FROM LETTER TO ALEXANDER HAMILTON,* AUG. 26, 1792 [26]

The Unity of Government which constitutes you one people is also now dear to you. It is justly so; for it is a main Pillar in the Edifice of your real independence, the support of your tranquility at home; your peace abroad; of your safety; of your prosperity; of that very Liberty which you so highly prize. But as it is easy to foresee, that from different causes and from different quarters, much pains will be taken, many artifices employed, to weaken in your minds the conviction of this truth; as this is the point in your political fortress against which the batteries of internal and external enemies will be most constantly and actively (though often covertly and insidiously) directed, it is of infinite moment, that you should properly estimate the immense value of your national Union to your collective and individual happiness; that you should cherish a cordial, habitual and immoveable attachment to it; accustoming yourselves to think and speak of it as of the Palladium of your political safety and prosperity; watching for its preservation with jealous anxiety; discountenancing whatever may suggest even a suspicion that it can in any event be abandoned, and indignantly frowning upon the first dawn-

* Washington wrote to both Hamilton and Jefferson urging them to bury their political differences in the interest of national unity.

ing of every attempt to alienate any portion of our Country from the rest, or to enfeeble the sacred ties which now link together the various parts.

For this you have every inducement of sympathy and interest. Citizens by birth or choice, of a common country, that country has a right to concentrate your affections. The name of AMERICAN, which belongs to you, in your national capacity, must always exalt the just pride of Patriotism, more than any appellation derived from local discriminations. With slight shades of difference, you have the same Religion, Manners, Habits and political Principles. You have in a common cause fought and triumphed together. The independence and liberty you possess are the work of joint councils, and joint efforts; of common dangers, sufferings and successes.

... While then every part of our country thus feels an immediate and particular Interest in Union, all the parts combined cannot fail to find in the united mass of means and efforts greater strength, greater resource, proportionably greater security from external danger, a less frequent interruption of their Peace by foreign Nations; and, what is of inestimable value! they must derive from Union an exemption from those broils and Wars between themselves, which so frequently afflict neighbouring countries, not tied together by the same government; which their own rivalships alone would be sufficient to produce, but which opposite foreign alliances, attachments and intrigues would stimulate and imbitter. Hence likewise they will avoid the necessity of those overgrown Military establishments, which under any form of Government are inauspicious to liberty, and which are to be regarded as particularly hostile to Republican Liberty: In this sense it is, that your Union ought to be considered as a main prop of your liberty, and that the love of the one ought to endear to you the preservation of the other.

FROM FAREWELL ADDRESS, SEPT. 19, 1796 [27]

THE RIGHT TO CHOOSE ONE'S OWN GOVERNMENT

I wish well to all nations and to all men. My politics are plain and simple. I think every nation has a Right to establish that form of Government under which It conceives It shall live most happy; provided it infracts no Right or is not dangerous to others. And that no Governments ought to interfere with the internal concerns of Another, except for the security of what is due to themselves.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, DEC. 25, 1798 [28]

My conduct in public and private life, as it relates to the important struggle in which the latter nation [France] is engaged, has been uniform from the commencement of it, and may be summed up in a few words; that I have always wished well to the French revolution; that I have always given it as my decided opinion that no Nation had a right to intermeddle in the internal concerns of another; that every one had a right to form and adopt whatever government they liked best to live under themselves, and that if this country could, consistently with its engagements, maintain a strict neutrality and thereby preserve peace, it was bound to do so by motives of policy, interest, and every other consideration, that ought to actuate a people situated and circumstanced as we are; already deeply in debt, and in a convalescent state, from the struggle we have been engaged in ourselves.

FROM LETTER TO JAMES MONROE, AUG. 25, 1796 [29]

The basis of our political systems is the right of the people to make and to alter their Constitutions of Government. But the Constitution which at any time exists, 'till changed by an explicit and authentic act of the whole People, is sacredly obligatory upon all. The very idea of the power and the right of the People to establish Government presupposes the duty of every Individual to obey the established Government.

FROM FAREWELL ADDRESS, SEPT. 19, 1796 [30]

Under an energetic general Government such regulations might be made, and such measures taken, as would render this Country the asylum of pacific and industrious characters from all parts of Europe, would encourage the cultivation of the Earth by the high price which its products would command, and would draw the wealth, and wealthy men of other Nations, into our bosom, by giving security to property, and liberty to its holders.

FROM LETTER TO THOMAS JEFFERSON, JAN. 1, 1788 [31]

Rather than quarrel about territory let the poor, the needy and oppressed of the Earth, and those who want Land, resort to the fertile plains of our western country, the *second Promise*, and there dwell in peace, fulfilling the first and great commandment.

FROM LETTER TO DAVID HUMPHREYS, JULY 25, 1785 [32]

It is a flattering and consolatory reflection, that our rising Republics have the good wishes of all the Philosophers, Patriots, and virtuous men in all nations: and that they look upon them as a kind of Asylum for mankind. God grant that we may not disappoint their honest expectations, by our folly or perverseness.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX, APRIL 25 [MAY 1], 1788 [33]

It is a point conceded, that America, under an efficient government, will be the most favorable Country of any in the world for persons of industry and frugality, possessed of a moderate capital, to inhabit. It is also believed, that it will not be less advantageous to the happiness of the lowest class of people because of the equal distribution of property, the great plenty of unoccupied lands, and the facility of procuring the means of subsistence.

FROM LETTER TO RICHARD HENDERSON, JUNE 19, 1788 [34]

THE QUALIFICATION FOR PUBLIC OFFICE

If private wealth, is to supply the defect of public retribution,* it will greatly contract the sphere within which, the selection of Characters for Office, is to be made, and will proportionately diminish the probability of a choice of Men, able, as well as upright: Besides that it would be repugnant to the vital principles of our Government, virtually to exclude from public trusts, talents and virtue, unless accompanied by wealth.

FROM EIGHTH ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS, DEC. 7, 1796 [35]

THE FAMILY OF MANKIND

As the member of an infant empire, as a Philanthropist by character, and (if I may be allowed the expression) as a Citizen of the great republic of humanity at large; I cannot help turning my attention sometimes to this subject. I would be understood to mean, I cannot avoid reflecting with pleasure on the probable influence that commerce may hereafter have on human manners and society in general. On these occasions I consider how mankind may be connected like one great family in fraternal ties. I indulge a fond, perhaps an enthusiastic idea, that as the world is evidently much less barbarous than it has been, its melioration must still be progressive; that nations are becoming more humanized in their policy, that the subjects of ambition and causes for hostility are daily diminishing, and, in fine, that the period is not very remote, when the benefits of a liberal and free commerce will, pretty generally, succeed to the devastations and horrors of war.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, AUG. 15, 1786 [36]

The impressions naturally produced by similarity of political sentiment are justly to be regarded as causes of national sympathy; calculated to confirm the amicable ties which may otherwise subsist between nations. This reflection, independent of its more particular reference, must dispose every benevolent

* The reference is to the need for compensation for public officials.

mind to unite in the wish, that a general diffusion of true principles of liberty, assimilating as well as ameliorating the condition of Mankind and fostering the maxims of an ingenuous and virtuous policy, may tend to strengthen the fraternity of the human race, to assuage the jealousies and animosities of its various subdivisions, and to convince them more and more, that their true interest and felicity will best be promoted by mutual good will and universal harmony.

FROM LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY OF FRANCE, JAN. 27, 1791 [37]

It is more consonant to all the principles of reason and religion (natural and revealed) to replenish the earth with inhabitants, rather than to depopulate it by killing those already in existence, besides it is time for the age of knight-errantry and mad-heroism to be at an end. Your young military men, who want to reap the harvest of laurels, don't care (I suppose) how many seeds of war are sown; but for the sake of humanity it is devoutly to be wished, that the manly employment of agriculture, and the humanizing benefits of commerce, would supersede the waste of war and the rage of conquest; and the swords might be turned into plowshares, the spears into pruninghooks, and, as the Scripture expresses it, "the nations learn war no more."

FROM LETTER TO THE MARQUIS DE CHASTELLUX, APR. 25, 1788 [38]

III. *EDUCATION*

A BASIS FOR PUBLIC HAPPINESS

There is nothing which can better deserve your patronage than the promotion of science and literature. Knowledge is in every country the surest basis of public happiness. In one in which the measures of Government receive their impression so immediately from the sense of the Community as in ours it is proportionably essential. To the security of a free Constitution it contributes in various ways: By convincing those who are instructed with the public administration, that every valuable end of Government is best answered by the enlightened confidence of the people: and by teaching the people themselves to know and to value their own rights; to discern and provide against invasions of them; to distinguish between oppression and the necessary exercise of lawful authority; between burthens proceeding from a disregard to their convenience and those resulting from the inevitable exigencies of Society; to discriminate the spirit of Liberty from that of licentiousness, cherishing the first, avoiding the last, and uniting a speedy, but temperate vigilance against encroachments, with an inviolable respect to the Laws.

Whether this desirable object will be the best promoted by affording aids to seminaries of learning established, by the institution of a national University, or by any other expedients, will be well worthy of a place in the deliberations of the Legislature.

FROM FIRST ANNUAL ADDRESS, JAN. 8, 1790 [1]

Promote then as an object of primary importance, Institutions for the general diffusion of knowledge. In proportion as the structure of a government gives force to public opinion, it is essential that public opinion should be enlightened.

FROM FAREWELL ADDRESS, SEPT. 19, 1796 [2]

I cannot forbear to recommend a repeal of the tax on the transportation of public prints. There is no resource so firm for the Government of the United States, as the affections of the people guided by an enlightened policy; and to this primary good, nothing can conduce more, than a faithful representation of public proceedings, diffused, without restraint, throughout the United States.

FROM FIFTH ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS, DEC. 3, 1793 [3]

The Arts and Sciences essential to the prosperity of the State and to the ornament and happiness of human life have a primary claim to the encouragement of every lover of his Country and mankind.

FROM LETTER TO JOSEPH WILLARD, MAR. 22, 1781 [4]

I am not a little flattered by being considered by the Patrons of literature as one in their number. Fully apprised of the influence which sound learning has on religion and manners, on government, liberty, and laws, I shall only lament my want of abilities to make it still more extensive.

FROM LETTER TO THE PRESIDENT AND FACULTY OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF PENNSYLVANIA [APRIL 20, 1789] [5]

Nothing can give me more pleasure, than to patronize the essays of Genius and a laudable cultivation of the Arts and Sciences, which had begun to flourish in so eminent a degree, before the hand of oppression was stretched over our devoted Country. And I shall esteem myself happy, if a Poem, which has employed the labour of Years, will derive any advantages, or bear more weight in the World, by Making its appearance under dedication to me.

FROM LETTER TO TIMOTHY DWIGHT, JUNIOR, MAR. 18, 1778 [6]

FREE SCHOOLS FOR THE POOR

To the Trustees (Governors, or by whatsoever other name they may be designated) of the Academy in the Town of Alexandria, I give and bequeath, in Trust, four thousand dollars, or in other words twenty of the shares which I hold in the Bank of Alexandria, towards the support of a Free school established at, and annexed to the said Academy; for the purpose of Educating such Orphan children, or the children of such other poor and indigent persons as are unable to accomplish it with their own means; and who in the judgment of the Trustees of the said Seminary, are best entitled to the benefit of this donation.

FROM WASHINGTON'S WILL, JULY 9, 1790[7]

A NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

The assembly to which I address myself is too enlightened not to be fully sensible how much a flourishing state of the arts and sciences contribute to national prosperity and reputation. True it is, that our Country, much to its honor, contains many Seminaries of learning highly respectable and useful; but the funds upon which they rest, are too narrow, to command the ablest Professors, in the different departments of liberal knowledge, for the Institution contemplated, though they would be excellent auxiliaries.

Amongst the motives to such an Institution, the assimilation of the principles, opinions and manners of our Country men, but the common education of a portion of our Youth from every quarter, well deserves attention. The more homogeneous our Citizens can be made in these particulars, the greater will be our prospect of permanent Union; and a primary object of such a National Institution should be, the education of our Youth in the science of *Government*. In a Republic, what species of knowledge can be equally important? and what duty, more pressing on its Legislature, than to patronize a

plan for communicating it to those, who are to be the future guardians of the liberties of the Country?

FROM EIGHTH ANNUAL ADDRESS TO CONGRESS, DEC. 7, 1796 [8]

That a National University in *this* country is a thing to be desired, has always been my decided opinion; and the appropriation of ground and funds for it in the Federal City, have long been contemplated and talked of.

FROM LETTER TO THE VICE PRESIDENT, NOV. 15, 1794 [9]

That as it has always been a source of serious regret with me, to see the youth of these United States sent to foreign Countries for the purpose of Education, often before their minds are formed, or they had imbibed any adequate ideas of the happiness of their own; contracting, too frequently, not only habits of dissipation and extravagance, but principles unfriendly to Republican Government and to the true and genuine liberties of mankind; which, thereafter are rarely overcome.

For these reasons it has been my ardent wish to see a plan devised on a liberal scale which would have a tendency to spread systematic ideas through all parts of this rising Empire, thereby to do away [with] local attachments and state prejudices as far as the nature of things would, or indeed ought to admit, from our national councils. Looking anxiously forward to the accomplishments of so desirable an object as this is, (in my estimation), my mind has not been able to contemplate any plan more likely to effect the measure than the establishment of a University in a central part of the United States to which the youth of fortune and talents from all parts thereof might be sent for the completion of their education in all the branches of polite literature in arts and sciences—in acquiring knowledge in the principles of Politics and good Government and (as a matter of infinite importance in my judgment) by associating with each other and forming friendship in Juvenile years, be enabled to free themselves in a proper degree from those local prejudices and habitual jeal-

ousies which have just been mentioned and which when carried to excess are never failing sources of disquietude to the Public mind and pregnant of mischievous consequences to this country.

Under these impressions so fully dilated I give and bequeath in perpetuity the fifty shares which I hold in the Potomac Company (under the aforesaid acts of the Legislature of Virginia) towards the endowment of a UNIVERSITY to be established within the limits of the District of Columbia, under the auspices of the General Government, if that government should incline to extend a fostering hand towards it.*

FROM WASHINGTON'S WILL, JULY 9, 1790 [10]

* Washington's legacy never became effective. Congress did not act, and in time the Potomac Canal Company shares became valueless.

IV. *RELIGIOUS FREEDOM*

THE RIGHTS OF CONSCIENCE

I have often expressed my sentiments, that every man, conducting himself as a good citizen, and being accountable to God alone for his religious opinions, ought to be protected in worshipping the Deity according to the dictates of his own conscience.

FROM LETTER TO THE GENERAL COMMITTEE OF THE UNITED BAPTIST CHURCHES IN VIRGINIA [MAY, 1789] [1]

The liberty enjoyed by the People of these States of worshipping Almighty God agreeable to their consciences is not only among the choicest of their *blessings* but also of their *rights.*

FROM LETTER TO THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY CALLED QUAKERS, [SEPT. 28, 1789] [2]

Avoid all Disrespect to or Contempt of the Religion of the Country [Canada] and its Ceremonies. Prudence, Policy, and a true Christian Spirit, will lead us to look with Compassion upon their Errors without insulting them. While we are contending for our own Liberty, we should be very cautious of violating the Rights of Conscience in others, ever considering that God alone is the Judge of the Hearts of Men, and to Him only in this Case, they are answerable.

. . . As the Contempt of the Religion of a Country by ridiculing any of its Ceremonies or affronting its Ministers or Votaries has ever been deeply resented, you are to be particularly careful to restrain every Officer and Soldier from such Imprudence and Folly and to punish every Instance of it.

On the other Hand, as far as lays in your power, you are to protect and support the free Exercise of the Religion of the Country and the undisturbed Enjoyment of the rights of Conscience in religious Matters, with your utmost Influence and Authority.

FROM INSTRUCTIONS TO COLONEL BENEDICT ARNOLD, SEPT. 14, 1775 [3]

Government being, among other purposes, instituted to protect the persons and consciences of men from oppression, it certainly is the duty of Rulers, not only to abstain from it themselves, but according to their stations, to pervent it in others.

FROM LETTER TO THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY CALLED QUAKERS [SEPT. 28, 1789] [4]

It shall still be my endeavour to manifest, by overt acts, the purity of my inclination for promoting the happiness of mankind, as well as the sincerity of my desires to contribute whatever may be in my power towards the preservation of the civil and religious liberties of the American People.

FROM LETTER TO THE BISHOPS OF THE METHODIST EPISCOPAL CHURCH [MAY 29, 1789] [5]

We have abundant reason to rejoice that in this Land the light of truth and reason has triumphed over the power of bigotry and superstition, and that every person may here worship God according to the dictates of his own heart. In this enlightened Age and in this Land of equal liberty it is our boast, that a man's religious tenets will not forfeit the protection of the Laws, nor deprive him of the right of attaining and holding the highest Offices that are known in the United States.

FROM LETTER TO THE MEMBERS OF THE NEW CHURCH IN BALTIMORE [JAN. 27, 1793] [6]

ON RELIGIOUS DIFFERENCES

Of all the animosities which have existed among mankind, those which are caused by a difference of sentiments in religion appear to be the most inveterate and distressing, and ought most to be deprecated. I was in hopes, that the enlightened and liberal policy, which has marked the present age, would at least have reconciled *Christians* of every denomination so far, that we should never again see their religious disputes carried to such a pitch as to endanger the peace of Society.

FROM LETTER TO SIR EDWARD NEWENHAM, OCT. 20, 1792 [7]

It gives me the most sensible pleasure to find, that, in our nation, however different are the sentiments of citizens on religious doctrines, they generally concur in one thing, for their political professions and practices are almost universally friendly to the order and happiness of our civil institutions.

TO THE CONVENTION OF THE UNIVERSALIST CHURCH, LATELY ASSEMBLED IN PHILADELPHIA [JULY, 1790] [8]

THE JEWISH PEOPLE

The citizens of the United States of America have a right to applaud themselves for having given to mankind examples of an enlarged and liberal policy: a policy worthy of imitation. All profess alike liberty of conscience and immunities of citizenship. It is now no more that toleration is spoken of, as if it was by the indulgence of one class of people, that another enjoyed the exercise of their inherent natural rights. For happily the Government of the United States, which gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance, requires only that they who live under its protection should demean themselves as good citizens, in giving it on all occasions their effectual support.

It would be inconsistent with the frankness of my character not to avow that I am pleased with your favorable opinion of my Administration, and fervent wishes for my felicity. May

the Children of the Stock of Abraham who dwell in this land, continue to merit and enjoy the good will of the other Inhabitants; while everyone shall sit in safety under his own vine and fig-tree, and there shall be none to make him afraid. May the father of all mercies scatter light and not darkness in our paths, and make us all in our several vocations useful here, and in his own due time and way everlastingly happy.

FROM LETTER TO THE HEBREW CONGREGATION OF NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND [1790] [9]

THE CATHOLICS

As mankind become more liberal, they will be more apt to allow, that all those, who conduct themselves as worthy members of the community are equally entitled to the protection of civil government. I hope ever to see America among the foremost nations in examples of justice and liberality. And I presume, that your fellow-citizen will not forget the patriotic part which you took in the accomplishment of their revolution,* and the establishment of their government; or the important assistance, which they received, from a Nation in which the Roman Catholic religion is professed.... May the members of your Society in America animated alone by the pure spirit of Christianity, and still conducting themselves as the faithful subjects of our free government, enjoy every temporal and spiritual felicity.

FROM LETTER TO A COMMITTEE OF ROMAN CATHOLICS [MARCH 15, 1790] [10]

* For further evidence on the role of Catholics in the Revolution, see "Catholic Patriotism in the Revolution," *Catholic Historical Review*, Vol I, pp. 431-40.

V. *SLAVERY*

EMANCIPATION

The scheme . . . which you propose as a precedent, to encourage the emancipation of the black people of this Country from that state of Bondage in which they are held, is a striking evidence of the benevolence of your Heart. I shall be happy to join you in so laudable a work.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, APR. 5, 1783 [1]

The benevolence of your heart . . . is so conspicuous on all occasions, that I never wonder at any fresh proofs of it; but your late purchase of an estate in the colony of Cayenne, with a view of emancipating the slaves on it, is a generous and noble proof of your humanity. Would to God a like spirit would diffuse itself generally into the minds of the people of this country; but I despair of seeing it. Some petitions were presented to the Assembly, at its last Session, for the abolition of slavery, but they could scarcely obtain a reading. To set them afloat at once would, I really believe, be productive of much inconvenience and mischief; but by degrees it certainly might, and assuredly ought to be effected; and that too by Legislative authority.

FROM LETTER TO MARQUIS DE LAFAYETTE, MAY 10, 1786 [2]

I hope it will not be conceived . . . that it is my wish to hold the unhappy people who are the subject of this letter, in slavery. I can only say that there is not a man living who wishes more sincerely than I do, to see a plan adopted for the

abolition of it; but there is only one proper and effectual mode by which it can be accomplished, and that is by Legislative authority; and this, as far as my suffrage will go, shall never be wanting. But when slaves who are happy and contented with their present masters, are tampered with and seduced to leave them; when masters are taken unawares by these practices; when a conduct of this sort begets discontent on one side and resentment on the other, and when it happens to fall on a man, whose purse will not measure with that of the Society, and he looses his property for want of means to defend it; it is oppression in the latter case, and not humanity in any; because it introduces more evils than it can cure.

FROM LETTER TO ROBERT MORRIS, APR. 12, 1786 [3]

I never mean (unless some particular circumstance should compel me to it) to possess another slave by purchase; it being among my first wishes to see some plan adopted, by which slavery in this country may be abolished by slow, sure, and imperceptible degrees.

FROM LETTER TO JOHN FRANCIS MERCER, SEPT. 9, 1786 [4]

The present prices of land in Pennsylvania are higher than they are in Maryland and Virginia . . . because [among other reasons] there are Laws here for the gradual abolition of Slavery, which neither of the two States above mentioned have, at present, but which nothing is more certain than that they must have, and at a period not remote.

FROM LETTER TO SIR JOHN SINCLAIR, DEC. 11, 1796 [5]

I am sorry to hear of the loss of your servant; but it is my opinion that these elopements will be MUCH MORE, before they are LESS frequent. . . . I wish from my soul that the Legislature of this State could see the policy of a gradual Abolition of Slavery. It would prevent much future mischief.

FROM LETTER TO LAWRENCE LEWIS, AUG. 4, 1797 [6]

I have no scruple to disclose to you, that my motives to these sales (as hath been, in part, expressed to Mr. Young) are to reduce my income, be it more or less, to specialties, that the remainder of my days may, thereby, be more tranquil and freer from cares; and that I may be enabled (knowing precisely my dependence) to do as much good with it as the resource will admit; for although, in the estimation of the world I possess a good, and clear estate, yet, so unproductive is it, that I am oftentimes ashamed to refuse aids which I cannot afford unless I was to sell part of it to answer the purpose. (Private) Besides these, I have another motive which makes me earnestly wish for the accomplishment of these things, it is indeed more powerful than all the rest: namely to liberate a certain species of property which I possess, very repugnantly to my own feelings; but which imperious necessity compels; and until I can substitute some other expedient, by which expences not in my power to avoid (however well disposed I may be to do it) can be defrayed.

FROM LETTER TO TOBIAS LEAR, MAY 6, 1794 [7]

LETTER TO A SLAVE POETESS

Your favor of the 26th of October * did not reach my hands till the middle of December. Time enough, you will say, to have given an answer ere this. Granted. But a variety of important occurrences, continually interposing to distract the mind and withdraw the attention, I hope will apologize for the delay, and plead my excuse for the seeming, but not real neglect. I thank you most sincerely for your polite notice of me in the elegant lines you enclosed; and however undeserving I may be of such encomium and panegyric, the style and manner exhibit a striking proof of your poetical talents; in honor of which, and as a tribute justly due you, I would have

* The reference is to a letter sent to Washington by Phillis Wheatley enclosing a poem she had composed in his honor. For the text of her letter and poem, see C. F. Heartman, *Phillis Wheatley: Poems and Letters* (New York, 1915).

published the poem, had I not been apprehensive that, while I only meant to give the world this new instance of your genius, I might have incurred the imputation of vanity. This, and nothing else, determined me not to give it a place in the public prints.

If you ever come to Cambridge, or near headquarters,* I shall be happy to see a person favored by the Muses, and to whom nature has been so liberal and beneficent in her dispensations. I am, with great respect, your obedient, humble servant.

LETTER TO MISS PHILLIS WHEATLEY, FEB. 28, 1776 [8]

* According to Benson J. Lossing (*Field Book of the Revolution* [New York, 1855], Vol. I, p. 556), Miss Wheatley accepted the invitation and "passed half an hour with the Commander-in-Chief from whom and his officers, she received marked attention."

REFERENCE NOTES

All references to Fitzpatrick are to John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, George Washington. Writings from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1775-1799, *thirty-seven volumes, Washington, 1931-1940. All references to Ford are to Worthington C. Ford, editor,* The Writings of George Washington, *fourteen volumes, New York, 1889-93. While the Ford edition of Washington's writings is not complete, it has been included in the references for the reason that many libraries do not possess the authoritative and definitive edition in thirty-seven volumes. All references to Sparks are to Jared Sparks, editor,* The Writings of George Washington, *twelve volumes, New York, 1848.*

THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE

1. Fitzpatrick, III, 240; Ford, II, 434-35.
2. Fitzpatrick, III, 232-34; Ford, II, 420-26.
3. Fitzpatrick, II, 500; Ford, II, 265.
4. Fitzpatrick, II, 426; Ford, II, 210.
5. Fitzpatrick, II, 440.
6. *Ibid.*, 466.
7. Fitzpatrick, II, 500; Ford, II, 263-64.
8. *Ibid.*
9. Fitzpatrick, III, 228; Ford, II, 448-49.
10. Fitzpatrick, IV, 321; Ford, III, 414-15.
11. Fitzpatrick, IV, 440; Ford, III, 498-99.
12. Fitzpatrick, V, 398.
13. Fitzpatrick, V, 479-80.
14. Fitzpatrick, XIV, 313; Ford, VII, 388-89.
15. Fitzpatrick, XXII, 405; Ford, IX, 315.
16. Fitzpatrick, XI, 287; Ford, VI, 480-81, 484-85.
17. Fitzpatrick, XI, 494; Ford, VII, 39-40.
18. Fitzpatrick, XI, 3; Ford, VI, 389-93.
19. Fitzpatrick, V, 488; Ford, IV, 368.
20. Fitzpatrick, IV, 389; Ford, IV, 28.
21. Fitzpatrick, IV, 195; Ford, III, 307.
22. Fitzpatrick, V, 480.
23. Fitzpatrick, IV, 80; Ford, III, 209.
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26. Fitzpatrick, XXV, 277; Ford, X, 98-99.
27. Fitzpatrick, XI, 47; Ford, VI, 396.
28. Fitzpatrick, XI, 291; Ford, VI, 487.
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31. Fitzpatrick, XXXI, 67.
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33. Fitzpatrick, IV, 215-27; Ford, III, 322-24.
34. Fitzpatrick, XIV, 266; Ford, VII, 370.
35. Fitzpatrick, XXI, 221; Ford, IX, 138-39.
36. Fitzpatrick, XXI, 162; Ford, IX, 113.
37. Fitzpatrick, V, 444; Ford, IV, 347.
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39. Fitzpatrick, XVIII, 435.
40. Fitzpatrick, XI, 352; Ford, VII, 6.
41. Ford, III, 127.
42. Fitzpatrick, XV, 99; Ford, VII, 457.
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44. *Ibid.*, XXII, 176; Ford, IX, 273.
45. Fitzpatrick, XXIV, 347; Ford, X, 29-30.
46. Fitzpatrick, XIII, 21; Ford, VII, 208-09.
47. Fitzpatrick, XIII, 383; Ford, VII, 282.
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DEMOCRACY

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2. *Ibid.*, XXI, 67.
3. *Ibid.*, XXX, 281.
4. *Ibid.*, 294; Ford, XI, 385.
5. Fitzpatrick, XXVI, 485; Ford, X, 255-56.
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7. Fitzpatrick, XXX, 281.
8. *Ibid.*, XXXIV, 99; Ford, XIII, 34.
9. Fitzpatrick, XXIV, 272; Ford, X, 21-22.
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11. Fitzpatrick, XXVIII, 503; Ford, XI, 55.
12. Fitzpatrick, XXVII, 310.
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18. Fitzpatrick, XXVI, 398; Ford, X, 217.
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20. Fitzpatrick, XXVIII, 290; Ford, XI, 1-2.
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EDUCATION

1. Fitzpatrick, XXX, 493-94; Ford, XI, 457-58.
2. Fitzpatrick, XXXV, 218; Ford, XIII, 309.
3. Fitzpatrick, XXXIII, 109; Ford, XII, 355.
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2. *Ibid.*, XXX, 416*n*.
3. *Ibid.*, III, 495; Ford, III, 124-25 (not complete).
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9. *Publications of the American-Jewish Historical Society*, No. 3, pp. 90-92.
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SLAVERY

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3. Fitzpatrick, XXVIII, 408; Ford, XI, 24.
4. Fitzpatrick, XXIX, 5; Ford, XI, 62.
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