TEARING DOWN STATUE OF GEORGE III.

THE First Continental Congress opened its first session on September 5, 1774, in Carpenter's Hall, a block and a half from the State House in Philadelphia. The delegates voted overwhelmingly to meet in this recently completed building, rejecting an offer of the State House from Assembly Speaker Joseph Galloway. The convenience of the Library Company of Philadelphia, then occupying the second floor of the building, undoubtedly was partially responsible for the decision. But the growing political importance of Philadelphia's mechanics and artisans—and, as a corollary, the decreasing influence of the merchant class—may also have influenced the choice. In the ten years since the beginning of this dispute between Great Britain and her American colonies, merchants in Philadelphia had seen their influence decline steadily. Their moderation was supplanted by more radical elements in Philadelphia society which were struggling to control the extra-legal revolutionary committees.

Even so, mercantile influence was still considerable when Congress assembled. Philadelphia radicals were disappointed by Pennsylvania's moderate delegation, though they won a significant victory in the selection of Charles Thomson as clerk of the Congress. The delegates quickly closed their proceedings to outsiders, a decision reflected in the Philadelphia newspapers. The only news available to the public came mainly from rumors and unofficial reports.

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The scarcity of official information did not mean that people remained unaware of these momentous proceedings. Henry Drinker, a leading conservative Quaker merchant, wrote contemptuously of the "August Assembly the Saviours of America" which, he suspected, would probably adopt a non-importation agreement. Americans had used similar measures to combat the Stamp Act and the Townshend Duties. Drinker heard that Congress was also considering a measure which would go even further and stop the export of lumber and flaxseed to Ireland, an act which would probably "reduce the already distressed poor of that Country, to the greatest extremities—Men & Christians what are we about?" Drinker also lamented the disappearance of freedom of speech and thought in Philadelphia and complained to an English friend that one spoke his sentiments cautiously since the "warm Heroes" tended to "interpret the most innocent . . . Actions as criminal and inimical to the prostituted word Liberty." To oppose a non-importation act by Congress, he reported, was now dangerous.

Drinker realized that Philadelphia merchants were not the only people subject to pressure. His New York friend Benjamin Booth distressingly wrote that the motto of the day in his city seemed to be "the more violent the better." Radicals in New York were exaggerating the importance of their cause, and according to Booth, blatantly lied. One rumor spread in New York alleged that Booth himself, a principal conservative New York merchant, had been held by a Philadelphia mob equipped with tar and feathers. Their design was prevented, according to the story, "only by the generous interposition of Mr. Secretary Thomson, who rescued [Booth just as he] was going to be put on the Cart." Booth called this story the "lie of the day."

Congress, meanwhile, requested merchants to refrain from ordering any further English goods until it reached a decision "on the means to be taken for the preservation of the liberties of America." Drinker and his business partner Abel James pre-

Speaker Joseph Galloway, Samuel Rhoads, Thomas Mifflin, Charles Humphreys, John Morton, George Ross, and Edward Biddle.

James and Drinker to Benjamin Booth, September 24, 1774, Henry Drinker Letters, Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP).

James and Drinker to Robert and Nathan Hyde, September 16, 1774, Henry Drinker Foreign Letterbook, HSP.

Benjamin Booth to James and Drinker, September 28, 1774, Henry S. Drinker Papers, HSP.
dicted "distress and Ruin" now that many people had "got into the Habit of speaking lightly of . . . War & Bloodshed." Nevertheless, they bowed to the pressure and instructed their English correspondents that it would be best if they stopped buying goods.7

Henry Drinker's statements give the false impression that the merchants of Philadelphia were almost unanimous in opposing Congress. Their former unity during the Stamp Act had evaporated. But there was still support for the revolutionary movement from many members of the merchant class. Drinker's pessimism, however, did reflect a changing situation in Philadelphia.

On September 16 Paul Revere rode into the Quaker City with the Suffolk Resolves which Congress immediately adopted. The unconstitutionality of Parliament's acts, the subsequent right to ignore them, and the necessity of non-importation and non-exportation were all affirmed.8 The threat of this action worried British merchants as well as Americans. Many British merchants admitted that the colonists sincerely desired to preserve their liberties. Richard Champion, a Bristol merchant associated with the Philadelphia firm of Willing and Morris, advised that the fate of the colonies depended upon their firmness even though he hoped it would be "tempered with moderation." Non-importation, Champion felt, would probably help the colonists' cause. Non-exportation, however, should be reserved for a last resort since it was "like a violent medicine administered in the last stage of a fever, and the Chance of Life or Death is equal."9

While Congress debated the advisability of imposing non-importation, Philadelphians held their annual assembly elections. Gloom pervaded conservative ranks as they awaited the results. Most unsettling for Henry Drinker was the action of many "Citizens of weight and Fortune," who apparently did

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8 James and Drinker to Pigou and Booth (London), September 28, 1774, Henry Drinker Foreign Letterbook, HSP.
7 James and Drinker to Benjamin Booth, September 29, 1774, Henry Drinker Letterbook, HSP.
not even bother to vote, while "the lower Class of People . . . were generally muster'd by the Presbyterian party." In the contest for representatives from the city of Philadelphia, Thomas Willing and Edward Pennington, both substantial merchants, received only 631 and 266 votes respectively, while that "inf... fellow C. Thomson had 670 & T. Mifflin 1105 Votes." The latter two were elected to serve in the assembly: "To what a shamefully depraved state are we arrived."\(^8\)

Mifflin and Thomson were also merchants. But they drew much support from people outside the mercantile community. The elections baffled Benjamin Booth in New York: "it will give such strength and vigor to the Republican Party as I fear will one day bring you to rue the consequence of your supineness." He predicted that "this circumstance alone" would decrease Philadelphia property values by 20 percent.\(^9\)

From the conservative point of view the events following the election mounted in seriousness. Though Congress had not yet voted officially for non-importation, everyone assumed that they soon would. Those merchants who opposed this action dared not express any opposition for fear of being "treated as a Traitor and hang'd without Judge or Jury on the first high Tree." How unjust it seemed that nothing would be done to smugglers "while the hands of the fair Trader is to be tied."\(^10\)

In these October elections John Dickinson was also elected to the assembly and then was promptly added to the Pennsylvania delegation in Congress. Although he had been the choice of a radical convention of committees of correspondence from throughout the colony, the conservative assembly had originally excluded him by restricting delegates to assembly members. Dickinson was now finally in Congress. But events had taken an unexpected course which made him uneasy.\(^11\)

On October 20 Congress finally agreed on a non-importation agreement and adopted The Association.\(^12\) Unlike the non-

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\(^8\) James and Drinker to Benjamin Booth, October 4, 1774, Henry Drinker Letters, HSP.
\(^9\) Benjamin Booth to James and Drinker, October 5, 1774, Henry S. Drinker Papers, HSP.
\(^10\) James and Drinker to Benjamin Booth, October 8, 1774, Henry Drinker Letters, HSP.
\(^11\) Israel Pemberton to John Pemberton, October 19, 1774, Pemberton Papers, XXVI, 1778, HSP.
\(^12\) Ford, Journals of the Continental Congress, I, 75.
importation agreements of 1765 and 1769, this one was not the work of merchants who voluntarily signed up. Instead, it was the work of Congress which then imposed it upon merchants irrespective of their wishes. Previously, the opposition to Great Britain had been almost exclusively in the hands of merchants who had determined its course. Now merchants in many cases were pawns of other groups who were attempting to oppose the legislation of Parliament.

The necessity for The Association and the justification for forcing it on unwilling merchants was explained in the preamble:

... various acts of parliament have been passed, for raising a revenue in America, for depriving the American subjects, in many instances, of the constitutional trial by jury, exposing their lives to danger, by directing a new and illegal trial beyond the seas, for crimes alleged to have been committed in America: and in prosecution of the same system, several late, cruel, and oppressive acts have been passed, respecting the town of Boston and the Massachusetts-Bay, and also an act for extending the province of Quebec, so as to border on the western frontiers of these colonies, establishing an arbitrary government therein, and discouraging the settlement of British subjects in that wide extended country; thus, by the influence of civil principles and ancient prejudices, to dispose the inhabitants to act with hostility against the free Protestant colonies, whenever a wicked ministry shall chuse so to direct them.15

None of these grievances was specifically related to mercantile affairs, but American commerce was to be the primary weapon for preserving the rights of Americans. Since non-importation was the only method Americans had used successfully to defeat Britain in the past, they would try it again.

According to the agreement, after December 1, 1774, goods from Great Britain and the West Indies and East India tea would be excluded. If this economic pressure did not bring about a redress of grievances by September 10, 1775, the colonies would impose export penalties as well. To their credit the Pennsylvania delegation was not among those demanding concessions in favor of the commerce of their particular colonies before agreeing to non-exportation. The delay of one year, however,

15 Ibid., 1, 76.
may have helped make this provision more acceptable to many delegates. To make it possible for Americans to survive, Congress added recommendations designed, for instance, to encourage domestic sheep raising, to "discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation," and to give up the customary imported mourning dress used for funerals. To insure that the provisions were actually carried out, the agreement called for a committee in every town and county, elected by all qualified voters, "whose business it shall be attentively to observe the conduct of all persons touching this association." Anyone found guilty by one of these committees of breaking the agreement would be condemned as an enemy of the people with whom no one should do business. It was left up to the respective committees and conventions to determine whether further punitive action would be necessary. In conclusion, the signers of The Association agreed to "bind ourselves and our constituents" to the provisions contained in the agreement.\(^1\)

Having adopted The Association, Congress then drew up two lengthy memorials, one to the people of Great Britain and the other to the people of America, explaining the reasons for their action.\(^2\) They adopted similar addresses to the people of Quebec and to the king a few days later. Their work completed, Congress adjourned with the recommendation that a second Congress assemble the following May if their grievances had not been redressed by then.\(^3\)

It remained for people in each colony to enforce these important decisions of the First Continental Congress. The Philadelphia committee of correspondence then in existence called a general meeting of the citizens at the State House on November 12, 1774, for the purpose of selecting an enforcement committee. Until that time the agreement was in essence voluntary. The funeral of Mrs. Jane Knox, for example, "was conducted in the plainest manner, without any of that pomp or parade too frequently gone into on such occasions." This simplicity was observed even though the woman's husband, Robert Knox, a

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\(^1\) Ibid., 1, 75-81, emphasis added; Edmund Cody Burnett, *The Continental Congress* (New York, 1941), 55.
\(^3\) Ibid., I, 114.
merchant, could have afforded an elaborate funeral. Similarly, the funeral of Catherine Keppele, the wife of Lutheran merchant Henry Keppele, omitted "mourning of any kind [with] no gloves or scarfs."19

Burying one's wife was a sad occasion. It was not the ultimate test for a merchant to show his support of The Association. Thomas Wharton, a moderate merchant, conceded that he was not happy with the proceedings of Congress. Some of their measures he "looked upon as too Violent" and showing "a disposition in a particular sett of ruling this Continent," a prospect almost as alarming as the actions of the British ministry. Even so, he admitted, Americans were united in the belief that no one should submit to "those Acts of Parliament."20 In Wharton's view, Congress should have emphasized that Americans "did not wish a separation but a Constitutional Connexion with preserving our rights & priviledges."21

The more conservative Quaker merchants looked upon the proceedings of Congress and the plans for a new committee to enforce The Association with great apprehension. Quakers were already somewhat suspect among the populace as a whole. Samuel Sansom hoped that his coreligionists would not aggravate matters by protesting too violently against The Association. He wanted the Quaker meeting to confine itself to advising Friends who did not wish to serve on the projected committee on a course of action. He warned that "if any Thing should be done by way of Testimony against the general Proceedings of the People I shall dread the Consequences." Sansom advised Friends to keep quiet since they were not being forced to take part.22 He was a bit naïve in the belief that the radicals, determined to draw all Philadelphians into active opposition, would tolerate pacifism or neutrality.

Quaker leader James Pemberton had already noticed "the spirit prevailing" which made it impossible to engage in "a cool dispassionate way of think[in]g." Friends could do little more

19 *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, November 9, 1774.
20 Thomas Wharton to Samuel Wharton, October 25, 1774, Thomas Wharton Letterbook, HSP. The particular passage from which this paragraph was taken is crossed out in the letterbook and was probably not included in the letter actually sent.
21 Thomas Wharton to Samuel Wharton, November 7, 1774, *ibid*.
22 Samuel Sansom to James Pemberton, November 7, 1774, Pemberton Papers, II, 9, HSP.
than try to influence other Friends "to keep out of these bustles & commotions." He had to admit, however, that "there have been instances of some few who claim a right of membership with us who have not kept within such limits & bounds as we could wish."\footnote{2}

Quaker apprehensions and fears increased on November 12, 1774, when the general meeting of the people took place in the State House yard. A previous meeting hastily called on November 7 had already determined that the new committee should consist of sixty persons chosen by ballot to represent the city of Philadelphia.\footnote{24} Sixty-four people were actually elected since the suburb of Southwark complained of under-representation and was allowed four additional committeemen. A few days later the suburb of Kensington was also allowed to choose two representatives, bringing the total to sixty-six.\footnote{25}

Unquestionably this new committee of inspection, as it was sometimes called, was more radical than the former committee of correspondence. But the extent of the shift has been overemphasized by previous scholars.\footnote{26} Many years ago Arthur Schlesinger, Sr., mistakenly wrote that only sixteen of the forty-three members of the committee of correspondence were selected for this new committee (the number was actually 18). The implication was that fifty of the sixty-six members were new.

\footnote{23} James Pemberton to Joseph Oxley, November 6, 1774, Dreer Collection, HSP.
\footnote{24 The Pennsylvania Gazette, November 9, 1774.}
\footnote{26 The committee of correspondence, dominated by merchants, was made up of forty-three men chosen by a meeting held at the State House. See Robert Francis Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants and the American Revolution, 1765-1776" (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Southern California, 1970), 143-145.}
men and that the committee was, therefore, a reflection of a radical change in leadership. What Schlesinger and other scholars seem to have forgotten is that opposition to British measures did not begin with the forty-three members of the committee of correspondence. The opposition since the Stamp Act had attracted many people besides those who served on committees. Thirty-one members of the new committee of sixty-six had signed earlier non-importation agreements; three others had served on previous committees. Only thirty-two of the sixty-six, slightly less than half, had had no previous history of opposing Great Britain. While this figure still may justify the conclusion that a significant shift in the leadership of Philadelphia had occurred, the shift was not nearly so pronounced as Schlesinger implied.27

The extent of this shift can be demonstrated by comparing the men who opposed Parliamentary legislation at the time of the non-importation agreement of 1769 with those who took an active part in the opposition movement in 1774. The men included in the 1774 group were substantially different from the men who signed the non-importation agreement against the Townshend duties in 1769 (the major demonstration of opposition in that year). For purposes of comparison, the men included in the 1774 group were those who served on one of the many committees of correspondence or the committee of inspection. This group consists of 102 individuals compared with the 255 who signed the agreement in 1769. The data confirms that there were significant changes in the nature of the revolutionary leadership, though these changes were not as radical as Schlesinger believed.

In 1769, 67 percent of the signers were merchants. By 1774 only 50 percent were merchants. The significance lies in the fact that merchants still made up the largest single occupational

27 Arthur Meier Schlesinger, The Colonial Merchants and the American Revolution (New York, 1918), 458. Schlesinger's conclusion is accepted almost word for word in John F. Roche, Joseph Reed, a Moderate in the American Revolution (New York, 1957), 52. Merrill Jensen, The Founding of a Nation (New York, 1965), 526, adopts a somewhat more cautious approach but still emphasizes a comparison between the two committees. He says that seventeen members from the former committee were on the new one. Arthur L. Jensen, The Maritime Commerce of Colonial Philadelphia (Madison, Wisconsin, 1963), 216, on the other hand, claims that most of the members of the new committee had also been members of the old.
group, rather than in the observation that their influence had declined. Merchants did not disappear from the picture. More significant figures showed that Quakers continued to "drop-out" of public affairs, a phenomenon which began soon after the Stamp Act. In 1769 nearly 40 percent of those for whom religion can be determined were Quakers. By 1774 this figure had dropped to 29 percent. Another interesting finding is that lawyers became much more important by 1774. Only one-half of one percent of the 1769 group were lawyers. By 1774 they accounted for more than nine percent (see Chart 1).

CHART 1

**OCCUPATIONS 1769 AND 1774**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(percentage)</th>
<th>1769</th>
<th>1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Merchant</td>
<td>66.8</td>
<td>50.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lawyer</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>9.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clergy</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artisan</td>
<td>18.4</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shopkeeper</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>(14.9)</td>
<td>(13.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

A higher percentage of the 1774 group supported the Revolution (see Chart 3). And, as mentioned above, Quakers were less active in the latter year (see Chart 2), though a majority of both groups were later classified as Whigs of varying degree of fervor. It is true that only about 15 percent of those signing the non-importation agreement in 1769 were still active in 1774. But, because of the smaller total of individuals involved, those thirty-seven individuals who did carry over from 1769 to 1774 accounted for more than one-third of the second group.

The figures presented so far support accepted opinions about the nature of the revolutionary movement in Philadelphia. It is not surprising to learn that Quakers and merchants became less significant as time passed. It may be surprising that merchants

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28 The figures are in adjusted percentages, discounting those individuals for whom no data could be obtained ("Missing"). The 1769 group contains 255 individuals, the 1774 group 102.
continued to play as large a role as they did. Also, those men active in 1774 turned out to be Whigs more often than those active in 1769. The second, more radical group was slightly younger than the first. In 1765 members of the 1769 group averaged thirty-six years old while those of the 1774 group averaged thirty-three.

Looking at the wealth of the two groups, the results may be surprising. Leaders of the 1774 group were younger, more likely to be non-merchants, and generally more "radical." One would assume that this group would not be as wealthy as the less radical group, since wealth is often considered a mark of conservatism. From 1765 to 1769 those men who withdrew from active opposition tended to be wealthy. The opposite is true from 1769 to 1774. The men participating in 1774 had a significantly higher mean assessed property valuation (in the year 1774) than did those signing the 1769 non-importation agreement (using the same year, again for a valid comparison) and an even higher property valuation than the signers of the first non-importation agreement against the Stamp Act in 1765. The average assessed 1774 valuation of those men who signed in 1769 was £71. For those active in 1774 it was £111, an increase of more than 50 percent (see Chart 4). Comparable figures show similar results for all religious and occupational groups as well.

CHART 2

RELIGIOUS BACKGROUND 1769 AND 1774

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Religious</th>
<th>1769</th>
<th>1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quaker</td>
<td>39.4</td>
<td>28.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anglican</td>
<td>42.4</td>
<td>43.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presbyterian</td>
<td>10.6</td>
<td>13.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lutheran</td>
<td>0.8</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jewish</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>0.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>10.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>(48.2)</td>
<td>(35.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants," chapter III.

Tax assessment figures were obtained from the 1774 tax lists, Division of Archives, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

See footnote 28.
The figures seem to suggest that through the end of 1774 changes in the structure of the revolutionary leadership were not affected by wealth as much as they were by occupational and religious criteria. Wealth would be an important factor later. But in 1774 wealthier individuals apparently did not feel that the struggle against Britain was a threat to their positions in the colonies.32

CHART 3

STATUS IN REVOLUTION33

(percentage)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Whig</th>
<th>Tory</th>
<th>Missing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signers 1769</td>
<td>74.8</td>
<td>23.5</td>
<td>(54.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active 1774</td>
<td>84.0</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>(20.6)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

CHART 4

MEAN ASSESSED VALUATION34

(pounds Pennsylvania currency)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1769</th>
<th>1774</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signers 1769</td>
<td>58.7</td>
<td>71.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Active 1774</td>
<td>84.7</td>
<td>111.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

32 Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants," chapter IX.
33 For the purpose of this study, whigs are defined as people who actively supported the Revolution or took an oath of allegiance; tories are those who either actively opposed the Revolution or who—like many Quakers—attempted to remain neutral.
34 The figures given in the lists are the actual assessments, not the tax paid, as many historians have assumed. It is difficult to estimate an individual's worth from his assessment since it was based on real property, plus a head tax and a few personalty items (horses, cows, slaves, servants) and did not include such important items as stock in trade or money on loan. Consequently, a merchant might be considerably wealthier than his assessment would indicate. In comparing groups of individuals, however, this caveat is not so important. Since the same criteria were applied to all, the mean assessed valuation of Quaker merchants, for example, can be related to the mean assessment of Presbyterian merchants. It may be less valid when comparing merchant assessments to lawyer assessments since merchants were more likely to have inventory investments. In comparisons such as these, the merchants should probably be rated even higher. Also, it should be remembered that an assessed valuation was, like today, just that, and not an estimate of true worth. Houses and rent received from property were assessed at 60 percent of their real value, horses at thirteen shillings four pence, slaves at four pounds each, and servants at one pound ten shillings. The tax was then eighteen shillings on
A plausible explanation for the greater wealth in 1774 may be reflected in the way the two groups were selected. The two non-importation agreements were signed voluntarily, apparently by just about anyone who wished to do so. Most of the substantial merchants signed both agreements. There were also many "little" men whose estates were so small that they paid almost no taxes. The group active in 1774, on the other hand, were generally elected to their positions. The opportunity was not open to anyone. It seems reasonable to assume that even the radicals would have been more inclined to choose men of reputation whenever possible. Possessing substantial wealth was the main method of achieving reputation. The "little" man with no wealth had less chance of being selected. Disregarding all those who had small taxable estates would automatically raise the mean assessment for the group. Significantly, while the mean valuation is greater for the 1774 group than for the earlier groups, the people having the very largest assessments did "drop-out" between 1769 and 1774. The data suggests that as late as 1774 the revolutionary movement in Philadelphia did not produce any substantial increase in social mobility just as it did not produce any substantial decrease in the influence of the merchant class.

If the new committee of inspection can be called revolutionary, the term must be applied to the actions it took and not to the nature of its membership. Its first decision set prices at the level of the previous twelve months so that no merchant could profit unjustly from stock he had on hand when non-importation inevitably produced shortages. Henry Drinker complained of this "novel power." But Christopher Marshall, whose son was on the committee, claimed that Philadelphians were "determined to adhere closely to the directions of Congress" and that the purpose of the committee was simply to "prevent any male practices [sic]." In spite of the "many discreet brave Patriots in this City," Marshall knew that there were also many the pound (seven and one-half percent). For further information on taxation see Sam Bass Warner, Jr., The Private City: Philadelphia in Three Periods of its Growth (Philadelphia, 1968), 9. For further information on the wealth of Philadelphia merchants see Oaks, "Philadelphia Merchants," chapter I.

35 James and Drinker to Pigou and Booth (London), November 15, 1774, Henry Drinker Foreign Letterbook, HSP.
"ill inclined . . . Snakes in the grass" who would try to undermine The Association.\(^{38}\)

To carry out The Association, Philadelphia's committee divided the city into six districts and made certain members responsible for each district. One member from each district met at the Coffee House every day "to inspect the arrival of all vessels, and to make every other necessary enquiry." All packages arriving after December 1 were to be inspected, and all importers had to apply to the committee of the district in which the vessel was docked for instructions on whether the cargo should be sent back, stored, or sold.\(^{37}\)

Committeemen attempted to carry out the price fixing recommendation of Congress. They did not realize that their efforts were unrealistic. They provided no incentives for farmers or merchants and depended only on persuasion. Consumers were not pressured to reduce consumption, which meant that price levels would be artificially imposed. The move was unfair since it did not try to bring prices into uniformity with other colonies nor did it consider the possibility that the existing price relationship might have been unstable.\(^{38}\)

In spite of the impracticality, Thomas Wharton reported that most Americans were accepting the measures recommended by Congress. He questioned, however, the wisdom of a decision to give profits from the sale of illegal goods to the people of Boston. Since it was generally supposed that Britain would continue "those Oppressive Acts of Parliament" and would "block up every other Seaport in this Continent," these funds ultimately would be needed to support the poor in Philadelphia.\(^{39}\)

By the end of December the army and navy were reportedly spending so much money in Boston that "the Labouring poor . . . [had] not known such plenty of money among them for many years." The possibility of having their port closed next caused concern among Philadelphia merchants. Rumors that General Gage had received orders to effect this measure drove

\(^{36}\) Christopher Marshall to William Miller, November 17, 1774, Christopher Marshall Letterbook, HSP.

\(^{37}\) *The Pennsylvania Gazette*, December 7, 14, 1774.


\(^{39}\) Thomas Wharton to Charles Mifflin, December 8, 1774, Thomas Wharton Letterbook, HSP.
Thomas Wharton, for one, to work night and day. With the harbor full of ships he and his friends hoped to get them loaded and under way before the blockade was imposed.\footnote{Thomas Wharton to Samuel Wharton, December 21, 1774, \textit{ibid}.}

Wharton was a good example of the changing sentiment among Philadelphia merchants. Since the Stamp Act he had consistently opposed the measures of the British government. The rights of the colonies were being attacked, he felt. And he had suggested that Americans should have their own legislature to act for the colonies as Parliament did for the mother country. By the end of 1774, however, the course of events was beginning to pass by him. Americans "Undoubtedly had a right to Expect & Insist on a redress of grievance." But the methods increasingly being used would not bring about that redress "without the greatest distress." The British, too, were responsible for increasing tensions. If the ministry continued to insist upon "Executing those Unjust Laws respecting Massachusetts and Quebec," Wharton sadly admitted that he saw no way to prevent "a scene of Blood, which will tend to destroy both the parent state & Us." New England would probably resort to force, and the other colonies would then be obligated to contribute men and money. He urged the repeal of the Coercive Acts and the establishment of a constitutional union between America and Britain. Such a "prudent & just plan . . . would so lessen the Number of Violent men" that peace would be possible. As the situation then stood, "if severe measures are adopted . . . Nothing less than a positive resistance throw this Continent will take place."\footnote{Thomas Wharton to Samuel Wharton, December 26, 1774, \textit{ibid}.} How ironic that Thomas Wharton, who was as opposed to the actions of the British government as anyone in Philadelphia, would be branded a Tory during the Revolution and included in a group of Quakers sent into exile in Virginia.\footnote{See Robert F. Oaks, "Philadelphians in Exile: The Problem of Loyalty During the American Revolution," \textit{The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography}, XCVI (July, 1972), 298-325.}

The Association, meanwhile, was in operation. Most merchants faithfully abided by non-importation. Some of them even benefited from the agreement. As long as merchants could export their goods to England, they had an opportunity to pay off their English creditors without incurring any new debts. Peter and Isaac Wikoff hoped to liquidate their English debt in a few
months if only Parliament would "Suffer us to Trade with you as in times past." Other merchants, however, were hurt badly. Matthew Irwin had lost "considerable sums" by the end of 1774. He would have been happy simply to collect the debts which were owed to him but doubted that he would be able to do so since everyone would soon begin to suffer if the disputes with England were not settled quickly. Like many other merchants, Irwin believed the actions of Parliament would determine the course of events. Americans "were determined to retain their Liberty & property as long as their Lives" and would not "submit to the smallest duty or Tax, laid by the British Parliament." Since the American position was firm, it was up to the ministry. If the British tried to enforce their measures, Irwin dreaded the consequences.

The Philadelphia committee called the committees from all Pennsylvania counties together on January 23, 1775, in order to discuss the growing crisis. Thomas Wharton observed "great Uneasiness to Considerable Numbers" who feared the next step would be "the raising of men & Money." These were the very activities Wharton abhorred. He and other Quakers who had resisted the pressure of their society by supporting opposition to Great Britain now found the talk of war embarrassing. Schlesinger implied that the Quaker merchants had inspired the pacifism of the yearly and monthly meetings to promote their own economic ends. The merchants were opposed to The Association, he wrote, but "were too shrewd to expose themselves to the rigors of the boycott through personal infraction." Consequently, they campaigned against non-importation "by controlling the official utterances" of the Society of Friends.

This interpretation stands the situation on its head. Merchants were not imposing their economic ideas upon fellow Quakers. On the contrary, Quaker leaders tried to impose their political and pacifistic views on their merchant members. There is overwhelming evidence in the merchants' letters that their

43 Peter and Isaac Wikoff to John Ewer, December 27, 1774, Cadwalader Collection, Phineas Bond, Ewer, HSP.
44 Matthew Irwin to Charles [Carruthers?], December 30, 1774, Society Collection, HSP.
45 The Pennsylvania Gazette, December 28, 1774.
46 Thomas Wharton to Samuel Wharton, December 31, 1774, Thomas Wharton Letterbook, HSP.
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religious beliefs were more important in determining their views than were their economic positions. Thomas Wharton is again a superb example of a man whose conscience was torn between his opposition to the measures of the British government and his religious beliefs against violence and war. Only after war became a possibility were Quaker leaders who supported Great Britain successful in keeping their members in line.47 Until that time many Quaker merchants were in the vanguard of the opposition.

The Philadelphia monthly meeting debated the question of proper conduct for their members and concluded that Friends should "pay all humble and dutiful obedience unto the king and his ministers' mandates." Furthermore, Quakers were not to serve on any of the various committees. Anyone violating this instruction was "to be dealt with as walking contrary to their discipline."48 So in spite of their political views many Quaker merchants withdrew from any further activity. Non-Quaker merchants, however, continued to serve a while longer.

The committee of inspection, which included many merchants, dominated the politics of Pennsylvania in early 1775. The provincial assembly remained in session, but its business was largely irrelevant to the emergencies of the day. While most Philadelphians were disturbed over the actions of the British Parliament, the assembly of Pennsylvania spent days debating a bill to outlaw the firing of guns in celebration of New Year's Day. One positive action was the selection of delegates for the Second Continental Congress scheduled to convene in May, 1775. The delegation was the same as that of the First Congress with the exception of Samuel Rhodes, who was dropped because he had been elected mayor of Philadelphia and would have found attendance difficult. Conservatives still dominated the Pennsylvania delegation, but radicals were represented by Charles Thomson and Anthony Wayne on the assembly committee to instruct the delegates. This committee took five months to draw up instructions which were less restrictive than those given the delegates to the First Congress. There were no warnings about

47 Schlesinger, Colonial Merchants, 495-496.
placating the king. Instead, the delegation was given broad discretion "to agree upon, and recommend, such further Measures, as shall afford the best Prospect of obtaining Redress of American Grievances. . . ."49

As the winter of 1774-1775 turned to spring, Philadelphia merchants remained the principal agents of opposition to Great Britain even though they were becoming an increasingly divided group themselves and were steadily losing sympathy with the movement. The committee of inspection was running the city of Philadelphia, and plans were being made for a meeting of all the county committees which would assume direction of affairs. The radicals were not yet firmly in control of the situation. But the trend was definitely in their favor.
