NOTES AND DOCUMENTS

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“SMALL PRODUCER THOUGHT IN EARLY AMERICA, PART II: WILLIAM DUANE’S ‘POLITICS FOR FARMERS AND MECHANICS.’”

Despite widespread social and economic change in the post-Revolutionary era, the small producer tradition persisted to guide the thoughts of many Pennsylvania farmers and artisans well into the nineteenth century. One of the best examples of the continuing relevance of small producer values in the early republic appeared in a series of political essays addressed to the farmers and mechanics of America by William Duane, a radical publicist and intellectual leader of Philadelphia’s early working-class movement.

Born on the rural frontier of upstate New York in 1760, Duane learned the printer’s trade in Ireland before emigrating to India where he became editor of the Bengal Journal. At this distant outpost of the British empire Duane first earned his reputation as a staunch advocate of political and economic democracy, a reputation that led in 1794 to his imprisonment and deportation to England for his writing in support of the French Revolution. Little more than a year after his arrival in London, Duane again faced arrest for his activities in the radical London Corresponding Society. Choosing to emigrate rather than face English justice a second time, Duane sailed for his homeland, arriving in Philadelphia in the fall of 1796. Two years later, after working briefly as a journeyman printer, Duane assumed editorship of the Aurora, the nation’s premier radical journal.

Whether in his capacity as editor of the Aurora or as a leader of Philadelphia’s early working-class movement, Duane voiced the concerns of America’s small producers and provided a forum for the
development of their thoughts and activities. As defender and spokesman for independent farmers and mechanics, Duane wrote the following series of essays on "Politics." Addressed to American small producers at a time when many political leaders clamored for war in retaliation for Britain's violation of American commercial neutrality, Duane offered the experiences of British working people during the recent Napoleonic Wars as a warning of what would befall their American counterparts should they succumb to the growing war fever.

Beginning with the cornerstone of small producer thought—the notion that the labor of farmers and mechanics was the source of all wealth—Duane recounted the many ways in which British politicians had employed wartime taxation against handworkers. Lack of vigilance on the part of British small producers, Duane argued, had driven them to the margins of subsistence and political impotence. If America were to avoid a similar fate, small producers must defend their own values and prevent the war party from dominating national affairs. Only by remaining vigilant and true to the small producer creed, Duane warned, could America's farmers and artisans reap the full reward of their labors.

Duane's "Politics for Farmers and Mechanics" appeared in the *Aurora* between January and March 1807 and were collected in book form later that year. The selections reprinted below are taken from the original newspaper columns. Spelling and punctuation are unchanged except where the meaning might otherwise be unclear.

**POLITICS FOR FARMERS**

No. I

[January 1, 1807]

You hear every day of men crying out for war—for navies—for extravagant expenditures of money—for alliances with one power, and for hostility against another power—and it is difficult sometimes to account for these strange fantasies.

There are certain *truths*, however, which the humblest man in point of information in the whole country can discover, and there are certain plain inferences to be drawn from the obvious facts, upon which no two men can honestly differ.

*No man will deny* that peace and the security and happiness which it produces in a free government is the most desirable state of human society: no man will deny, that America owes to her pacific policy, that prosperity which has rendered her the envy of the world, and to which
the unfortunate of the old world look for a safe refuge: *no man will deny*, that a pacific policy is that of all others inculcated by religion, and that nothing can be so foreign and destructive of religion and virtue as war and its concomitants.

A nation then must be opposed by some overwhelming necessity, some irresistible evil not to be avoided or guarded against, if it can be at all justifiable in deviating from the principles which ensure happiness—which are the causes of prosperity—which are the fundamental principles of religion.

Nothing but the obvious imminent danger of this happiness, and all the coincident blessings, can at any time justify a deviation from the system which produces so much good.

*These, we repeat it, are truths which no man can deny.*

Yet how are we to account for it, that every day you hear men crying out for war—for military navies—for armies—for extravagant establishments and expenditures—and incompatible with our *policy*, our *peace*, and our *morals*?

Why is it that men who affect to be the most violent sticklers for *religion*, are also the most vociferous declaimers for this anti-religious policy?

Can any man say that there is either piety, charity, virtue or religion in such conduct?

But then people are at a loss to account for it—no doubt: men innocent of the world and unacquainted with the depravity which is produced by the lust of inordinate wealth—cannot be expected to account for contradictions so gross and preposterous among rational and free minds.

But if the plain man will look a little into facts, as they are plainly laid before him, he will no longer be at a loss to account for such extraordinary proofs of human folly and vice.

The United States are affected not by any evil cause originating within themselves, but by external causes acting on the people.

The nations of Europe, have in a manner realized the fable of the Salamander, they have lived in fire for several centuries; no sooner has one corner cooled, but the fire of war broke out in some other; and this has been their miserable fate for ages.

A system of government like ours has never before existed. At no period of time has there been a government before our own, in which the interests or the wishes of those who are affected most by war had the least influence or effect.

The warlike cries and the rage for mad systems, do no proceed from
the people of the United States, from those whose interests and wishes are inseparable from peace and virtue; those ravings proceed from external impressions, and disease produced by those impressions here; and the causes are various.

Foreign governments, whose institutions and interests are dissimilar from ours—envy us, and endeavor to disturb our repose.

Nations whose policy is a combination of commercial monopoly and war, to maintain that monopoly, look upon the United States as other sects look upon the Quakers—with jealousy—because our Quaker policy exempts us from all the variety of evils to which the savage and unchristian policy of war exposes them.

Our policy so salutary for our own people, like all human things, admits of an alloy, it tempts numbers from those foreign governments to come hither merely for a temporary term—to profit by our policy, and being enriched, to go away; these persons spread through our sea ports, with the various propensities and habits of their own nations, and contaminate many of our own citizens.

Many of our citizens educated in the prejudices of the government which ruled us as colonies, still retain their early attachments and prejudices, and even the most pacific sect exhibits too many examples of the blindness of prejudice which can maintain a religious and a political sentiment at variance and destructive one of the other.

An disposition is evident in many to be discontented with a calm and tranquil prosperity; and a solicitude in others to bow down and rise upon the necks of their fellow citizens, over whom they fancy they possess either greater talents or greater riches, which conveys to them a more important idea than talents, genius, or virtue.

Many persons educated after the prejudices and habits of foreign countries, and hostile to the simplicity and equality of a free state, become speculators in commerce, and repay their commercial credit by infidelity to their country.

These various classes of men, wrought upon by foreign agents and emissaries—several in the receipt of stipends from foreign governments;—numerous presses indirectly bribed and kept in pay by mercantile and consular favor for the purpose of influencing our people and forming interests, either to retard the growth of our own nation to maturity, or to create interests or alliances with foreign governments.

It is from these various, and other subordinate sources, that we hear the cry for war—naval establishments—and extravagant systems.

The peaceable citizen, content with the blessings of liberty, and with that security which a wise and providential policy has preserved for us;
is never heard vociferating for war—it is not from the friends of civil liberty and equal rights—it is not from those who would be foremost in the fight, and bear all the brunt of battle with generous and noble ardor; it is not from such men that these ranting and ludicrous sallies issue.

Your hear them from men desperate in their fortunes or their hopes—and the moment you find an adventurer or speculator, on the verge of bankruptcy, or deprived of the wages of idleness; whether it is the gambler at hazard, or the rash hazard of illegal commerce; for this unfortunate and desperate description of men, their despair drives them to deeper calculations, and like the abandoned Cataline or the profligate Arnold—they turn their backs upon virtue; lay claim to honour while playing the knave, and end with becoming a sore on society and a disgrace to human nature.5

POLITICS FOR FARMERS

No. IV

[January 9, 1807]

Next to a due knowledge and consideration of your own internal concerns—the good you possess, the necessity of watching that good in order to preserve it, and to perceiving the absurdity of those who would lead you into measures that are utterly impossible of accomplishment, only to undermine your government—the accurate knowledge of the impulses which move those who treat you thus insidiously—is most important.

It is a fashionable reply of the agents, emissaries, and adherents, of that nation, which has almost incessantly insulted, oppressed or plundered us on the seas, or corrupted our citizens and our presence on shore—it is the fashionable—it is the only argument, they use, in reply to all the facts—the damning and ever recurring facts we publish—'The AURORA is in French pay—the Aurora is the incessant eulogist and Panegyrist of Bonaparte.'

Why this mode of argument proves nothing—nay it proves that nothing can be said in refutation of what we say; and by admitting that nothing can be said in refutation of what we say, at once shows the motive for such argument!

We should scorn to notice such subterfuge, did it not afford us an opportunity to place facts in a new and stronger point of light.

We say that English emissaries are employed and paid for their services in the United States.
To this they reply there are French emissaries in the same situation and for similar purposes.

How is the matter to be decided? It is true of one, or both? These questions are easily decided by facts.

The intention of emissaries, as far as we have ever heard, have been always either to guard the foreign nation from injury, or to injure the nation where they are stationed—“By their deeds then you shall know them.”

We have never heard of a foreign nation employing emissaries to sustain a government, or to support its measures—or to vindicate its rights. We have rarely heard of a government reared up upon the ruin of democracy, paying agents to maintain a democracy in another country—nay, when those who effect to denounce this employment of French emissaries come here for no other purpose in the world then to destroy democracy.

Take it in another view; let us suppose that there is French gold employed as English gold was employed by Liston, on democratic Porcupines and Carpenters and Parkes⁶;—if these formidable emissaries only support the government—if they endeavor to inculcate principles of civil liberty, of virtue; of general justice, of the liberty of the press—it must then be admitted that there is no enmity in this conduct; if a foreign government pays persons in America, for vindicating the cause of peace, virtue and the principles of the revolution, it must at last be taken as proof of the falsehood of those who declare the hostile designs of that power; there is at least a greater degree of liberality in this military chief than there is to be found in the acts and deeds of the emissaries on the other side—for it is worthy of remark, that the only strenuous and consistent democrats who support the principles of the declaration of independence, are said to be in French pay, while those who say so, oppose the declaration of independence, damn democracy, and execrate the author of the declaration of independence, who they say is likewise a violent jacobin, and have a thousand times over accused of being in French pay also.

Either of these two positions must be false, either there are no French emissaries since there are no papers which uphold French policy in opposition to American policy.

Or if there is, France acts as a friend and not an enemy.

We have given these friendly emissaries a fair trial—let us see what we can say of our English “people’s friends.”

Under every administration of England, the agents and adherents of
that country, have *openly* and *unreservedly* avowed hostility to our *principles* and *form* of government.

Under an administration partial of that country, they sought to involve us in a desperate association with the combined powers of Europe.

They sought when that failed to involve us in a war with Spain.

Frustrated in that and in the efforts of their emissaries to produce civil war, (it was Porcupine who merited a statue of gold that first preached up the memorable badge of proscription, the black cockade) they labored to bring about a severation of the union.

Upon a change of public functionaries, greatly accelerated by the *detection* of the British intrigues; after using every effort to influence our presidential election, *Liston* slunk off—but the agents and emissaries continued to revile and asperse our free government, and to exercise an *influence in our elections*.

On all elections, the *papers* under English influence—the agents of England—those who depend upon the agents for mercantile favor—are all uniformly hostile to popular government and to those who advocate the administration upon the principles of the revolution.

These are *facts* palpable and indisputable—they defy controversion—and speak more than *volumes* of general argument.

Let us go even into circumstances more particular—we do not wish without *necessity* to use the name of any *individual* who is not an *obvious* *writer* or *publisher*, in vilification of American institutions, policy, and the existing administration; we do not mean to degrade men who are infatuated or blinded by early prejudices, or whose families perhaps, depend on English credits—we mean not to hang their effigies in the same *gibbet* with Porcupine and Cullen.

But we will ask—is it not a fact if an Englishman emigrates to this country with principles congenial to the American revolution, that if on his arrival he avows he is a friend of representative government; if his ideas are in unison with the first settlers of this country—he is immediately shunned, and branded with the name of *jacobin* by the principal part of the merchants here? Is not this a melancholy and a damming fact?

But if an Englishman arrives and naturalizes himself—(*we will not call it perjuring himself,* if he dams republican government and the administration of it in this country, which he has most solemnly in the name of God adopted—if he will cry up the blessings of *monarchy* in opposition to democracy[,] the *virtues* of George III, all of which he has
abjured, and libel Thomas Jefferson who he never saw—that with such Englishmen, will our federal merchants associate—bestow on them favor and applause!

It is true that many of them, and the insurance offices also have paid dearly for this folly—cases need not be mentioned—we know and could name them, snug as they think they are—but they are registered without abating the folly!

In no other country in the world would merchants be so infatuated as to hold that: coffee house, their exchange, their insurance offices, under the unwearied vigilance of notorious British spies—of men avowedly such—planted in our cities for the express purpose of spies—men whose business it is to wriggle in to the conversation of every knot of merchants assembled—to be always on the watch for their discourse—to find out the destination of their ships, their cargoes, and illicit adventures—to find out the policies made—indeed to be acquainted with every transaction on which British cruizers can or cannot justify capture—those discoveries are minutely joted down—they are daily reported to their employers—and expresses have been regularly forwarded to Halifax—to the West India islands to the cruizers blockading our ports, from such channels—by such information and thus acquired is it that our merchants and insurance offices meet many of their losses.

Are such men to be pitied—will our farmers go to war, or build navies for such idiots?

These are the miserable fautors who exclaim against the exposition of historical facts—the anticipation of events from a consideration of the sagacity and genius of one man, and the stupidity and folly of others—this they call eulogy!

Yet it is such men chiefly who bawl for fortifications and a navy—and who themselves, the adherents of Miranda, of Britain, of Burr, pour out against those who guard the country against them.?

Who sent for the British frigates from Halifax, when the French were there? What was the employ of the British after their arrival capturing American vessels!

Will our farmers, expend their property for such men?

As the last resource of Britain and her emissaries, every attempt will yet be made use of in her expiring struggle, still to lead us on to ruin. When Burr’s conspiracy is unravelled, as that of Yrujo and Corondolet’s has been, and as Liston’s was, what will the emissaries say.

Lucifer like, they wished to involve the whole world in her destruction. And every government that has but listened to her wiles has been destroyed.
The recapitulation is needless. It is for that reason, that in the New York memorial, they have intimated at this time an attack on France.

France never will view that attack but as the effusion of British spies. The British papers at New York avow their determination, they are beating the drum, for enlisting the off scum of America—and they openly threaten to erect the British standard.

And are they such fools as to believe that any but men like themselves, would erect such an ensign of disaster—to pass the seas, and like Austria, like Prussia, to run into the jaws of certain death.

If Americans were too wise before they had the experience of the 16 past years, to avoid their constant theme of hostility to France, hostility unprovoked will they now with all those dreadful facts, staring them in the face—are they willing now to shake hands with this all destroying power.

Certainly not—the hope of those who indulge it, is but the delusion of despair.

Let the agents of Britain muster all their strength, let us see their adherents, support their pretensions with consistency—why do they stay here where they must be in a minority if they were to live for two centuries, why do they not go and join a fifth crusade, it would be an advantage to the United States.

Do those people believe that our farmers, are unacquainted with who pays the taxes even in necessary wars—with who are burthened; or that they are ignorant of the easy mode which merchants have of avoiding their proportion of taxes.

In case even of a necessary war, who would pay the permanent taxes—the farmer.

Who even in Britain, pays the land tax, the poor rates, and all the other permanent taxes?—The farmer.

Who would have to pay them, in the U States, in the event of a war?—The farmer.

The excise laws, window and hearth tax, the land tax, and a thousand others, all to be paid by the farmer.

Whilst the British emissary would rejoice at the destruction he brought the deluded American into, he could transfer his stock to some other country, and there exultingly exclaim, against the country he had betrayed, and roar out those are the blessings of democracy, like the Moore’s and Welds, those reptiles brought to life in the hot beds of monarchical odure—they would go and proclaim abroad, that the worms in our dunghills are the most congenial animals they met with.
In Britain the consequence of those eternal wars, which she has engaged in, have been the total enslavement of her population, to the paper money, the mercantile, and the banking system.

The poor unoffending farmer, is only the slave and vassal, of his noble or ignoble landlord.

Crushed by taxes, the once independent farmer, is sent in his old age to the poor house—his children are scattered over the world to fight the mercantile battles of their despots.

Farmers of America, such would be your fate, the moment a majority of your legislators would be found fools, or corrupt enough to hearken to the deception of British emissaries.

Like the yeomanry of Britain, you would sink to destruction.

By you then it is that the United States will preserve her liberty—you will defend her real, and your real interests.

Agriculture and commerce in their real utility.

But charge your representatives never to be the dupes of cumbrous navies or armies—nor of British influence—for either would be your destruction.

POLITICS FOR FARMERS.

No. VI.

[January 15, 1807]

At the commencement of the coalition formed at Mantua, and Pilnitz against France in the year 1791, the plan of partition and plunder was not at first avowed; and it was understood that Great Britain should be allowed time, to work up the national temper which was there in favor of the French reforms of government; Burke's famous and infamous writings were the fuel used to excite this universal conflagration; and very soon, by the excitement of terror and fear—addresses against levellers and republicans, covered the tables of the British parliament.

These addresses made a great noise, as was intended; their numbers appalled the farmers of England, who were adverse to a war, and indeed adverse from interest to any concern with the internal affairs of other nations—for which they could see no purpose or end, and the expenses of which they knew must ultimately fall upon themselves.

However after counting up the number of signatures to those voluminous addresses, it was found that the whole of the advocates for war and destruction were less than 35,000—out of all the population of Great Britain!—that is, out of eleven millions!

It was this small number of 35,000 which playing into the hands of
the placemen and pensioners of St. James’s, who plunder the whole population of that devoted nation, that put England in the high road to that destruction which she now rapidly approaches.

The clergy of the established church, petitioned for war.

Those men feared for their tythes, the tenth part of the farmer’s produce in England and Ireland is theirs—this would possibly have been superseded by an equitable stipend in the event of a reform.

The insurance offices petitioned for war.

Those institutions gain ten times the profits by war that are gained by peace risques.

The merchants petitioned for war.

They hoped to monopolize the commerce of the world, and to double the usual peace profits.

The banking traders, petitioned for war.

Those hoped to profit by the paper money loans—and by the employment of banking funds in underhand usury.

The monied interest petitioned for war.

Because they expected to receive 8 per cent. interest.

Every idle fellow, above the “dull pursuits of civil life” petitioned for war.

Because he expected to live on the sweat, and the labour, and the industry, and the talents of the virtuous part of the nation.—Bankrupts in fortune and character; gamblers of all descriptions; men of desperate fortune and profligate life; all petitioned for war. Because in peace and prosperity they could not exist.

Nine tenths of the public papers were in the pay of the clergy, the insurance offices, the banks, the merchants, and monied interest.

They of course obeyed the mandates of their employers and they petitioned for war—and they inflamed the minds of the people with fear and misrepresentation; because that was rendering homage to the views of their patrons.

All those men knew that the taxes and expenses of the war would fall not on themselves, but on the farmers.

In opposition to this small, corrupt, heterogeneous, but active body of civilized savages, was opposed the representations of but few—and of those few some were men, screened by their parliamentary privileges; for the great proportion of the population were terrified into silence by ministerial libels—by the burning down of dissenting meeting houses, by the seizure of men upon artificial and fictitious accusations—or the charge of jacobinism, and being the adherents of France.

However some were found bold enough to raise their voices, against
this REIGN OF TERROR—this artificial terror. Whenever we have it in our power to do justice by shewing their going deeds—nothing can afford us more pleasure than to speak well of the QUAKERS: to their immortal honor they boldly, in opposition to the current of war, then bearing down or paralyzing every virtue before it, without "fear or trembling" approached the foot of the throne of George III and there in spite of the frowns of courtiers, and the menaces of renewed intolerance, they entered their protest against the bloody measures.

A truly great man, who, from his entrance into the cabinet of George III, seems to have sickened at the revelation of uniquitous deeds, of which his station forced upon him the knowledge.

Charles Fox and those who sheltered themselves under his name, who held the skirt of his garment (but to whom he has not left his mantle!) likewise advocated peace; and in that famous and prophetic speech which he made, the night before the declaration of hostilities against France, that great man too [?] foretold that the destruction of the old monarchies of Europe would be the consequence of their deplorable rashness and infatuation.

But what avails the exhortations of wisdom to a stupid or a besotted people—to a people who suffer their liberties to be destroyed and their power and rights frittered away by executive encroachment and corruption—the court prevailed, the petitions of the clergy, the banks, the merchants, the insurance offices, the lazy, preponderated—and to use the metaphor of an adherent, she threw her "sword into the scale"—but the effect has been not to maintain the balance—the scales themselves are destroyed.

The charge of jacobins, of agents of France, of cowards, was resounded from all quarters by the deluded and appalled population of Britain, against the Quakers, the dissenters, (that is the Calvinists, Methodists, &c) and the party of peace of every civil and religious denomination.

The bill of rights so much boasted of, fell beneath the fangs of a profligate and unfeeling minister—the habeas corpus act was suspended—sedition bills, and licenses of the press on such principles as were advocated by McKean in his late speech, passed the British houses of parliament—and proclamations were sent forth as laws, tho' Charles I had perished on a scaffold for that among other offences.8

It was a reign of terror indeed—dismal and gloomy!

Well, war they have had; and after pursuing war for twelve years with every consequence that had been predicted by Fox—with her 700
sail of ships of war—with her 250,000 soldiers—with her battle of the Nile—the cabinet of Britain supplicated for peace—from that nation which it had by means unheard of in civilized times, sought to destroy and extinguish—to blot out from the map of Europe as the great apostle of wickedness, Edumund Burke declared to be the purpose.

But unfortunately for them they found too late that such was the corruption generated by war, such was the number of dependants on war, such the number of pensioners of half pay officers, of excisemen, of the younger branches of the families of the wellborn, who were by war educated in habits of vain idleness and luxurious iniquity, such the influence of the insurance offices, of the contractors, of the money lenders and other blood suckers—and such the slavery and wretchedness, and supineness and broken heartedness, of the poor miserable farmers, who with barracks erected in every town were under the constant apprehension of the bayonets and sabres of a standing army, THEN DARE NOT SPEAK!

A peace was indeed made—a hollow peace—for it was found that this heap of corruption could feed and be supported, only by war.

And war, was again commenced with new horrors and on pretenses impious and confuted by the very terms employed to justify reaggression—and, behold the effect; with her 700 sail of ships of war—with her 250,000 soldiers—with her three hundred millions of dollars annual expenditure—with her battle of Trafalgar—Britain as before was defeated; and that arch fiend the Robespierre of Britain, Pitt, appalled and confounded with the ruin he had brought on all the monarchies who had fallen into the “embraces of the harlot” terrified at the impending prostration of his own country from her once proud place in the political map of Europe—was dying of despiar when the roaring of the cannon of Austerlitz, hastened his haunted and ensanguined spirit—to his account.9

The use of history is example—to shun what is evil, to pursue what is good:—how gloriously and happily different is the fate of America and her Farmers—compared with that of England or any other nation.

We see here as in Britain, printers and others sold to the destructive influence and corruption of Britain.

We have seen her emissaries almost trample on the necks of our citizens in the highways and streets.

Men the uniform advocates of war.

Men who like the descriptions of these we have counted in Britain, are tossing their infuriated torches, and like fiends of Hell, breathing
slaughter and destruction, where they have no provocation; but who seal up their lips and muzzle their presses, when the cloven foot of the political Devil of Europe, is discovered, beneath the traitor.

But, thank God, they are the minority—not only as they were in Britain, always in numbers; but here in influence. War, standing armies, navy, fortifications.

Whenever these become items in our fundamental policy—then, as in Britain, will our farmers no longer bear perhaps not even the name of Freemen—but, like the Cappadocians they will become willing slaves.

The farmers of America, are 17 parts of 20, of the population of the United States.

The farmers of America, never will give up their right to the revenue of the United States, into the hands of British emissaries, or to their iniquitous and perfidious claims.

The farmers of America, will always count their strength, they will not be affrighted, by the miserable factions that countenance such emissaries as the Cobbetts and the Cullens, nor will they be imposed upon by being called Jacobins, or with being friends of peace, in common with the author of the declaration of independence.

Major Jackson recommends the hanging of all Spanish spies—why and wherefore does he not make it a common proscription of all foreign spies and incendiaries, of whatever nation they may be, who conspire against the peace and liberties of this only free nation.

Why are Bronson, and Relf, and Burke, and Cullen, chopfallen?

Farmers of America—"this silence is eloquence"—you see in it the only source from which real danger is to be apprehended—from that nation which can command, by her influence, direct or indirect—the plaudits or the silence of our presses.

If then the quakers in England, if Charles Fox, if every good man, who was an enemy to war, and all its horrors, were branded with the epithets of Jacobins, of atheists, of deists, of agents in the pay of France—for their opposition to a ruinous and unprovoked (?) should we not be proud that the Aurora, does not escape—that it is signalised by the hatred and the rage of every ruffian, blinded by power, by profligacy, or venality.

The principles of the Aurora, are those of Penn, of the quakers of England, of such as Charles Fox inculcated in the early stage of the memorable war of the coalitions.

All our solicitudes are peace—war only on the defensive.

Let then the advocates of war rave, be they of what sect they may.

Tired with war, last year on the death of Pitt, that man Charles Fox,
that man who was loaded with as much abuse as the president of the U. States has been by British agents—who was like him, called atheist, deist, agent in the pay of Bonaparte, was called by the awakened population of Britain to take the reins of power to rescue the nation from the verge of destruction.

**POLITICS FOR MECHANICS**

No. I.

[January 29, 1807]

Under the denomination of mechanic, is properly comprehended, every person who practices an art or manual operation by known rules; for the word is derived from a Greek word signifying art: so that whoever understands and executes any works by rules of art is a mechanic. Some mistakes have prevailed on this term, through a frivolous effort to created distinction, between mechanics, and artists, and handicraftsmen, and manufacturers, words which are in fact of the same original meaning, only adopted from different languages.

In this strict sense, therefore a farmer who performs the labor of agriculture by rules of art, whether those rules were acquired from imitation, or instruction, or by rules adopted from reasoning and comparison, and various made of practice by others, is in fact a mechanic, who practises an useful and important art.

We have thought it fit to preface a series of papers particularly addressed to mechanics by these definitions, as in the course of what we shall have to say, the discriminations that have been artificially or cunningly made, between various classes of men, will be illustrated by and illustrate the observations which we shall offer to the mechanics of the United States.

In addressing our series of papers to the FARMERS of the United States, we were well aware that a farmer was also a mechanic; and that the importance and interests of actual industry, are common to the whole body of industrious men who are not above the dull pursuits of civil life. But as it tends to convenience, and went immediately to the agricultural body, we addressed that body by their favorite application of farmers; although with us the word farmer, bears a very different meaning from the meaning of the same word in the country from which we derive our language. There a “FARMER is a person who rents out an estate or portion of land at a stated rent per year.” With us the FARMER may be called the noble of nature for every American farmer is the lord of the soil. The various discriptions of persons employed in the
useful arts of social life, in the manufactures of all that contribute to comfort and to rational gratification, from the builder of the house to the manufacturer of needles—from the maker of watches to the makers of stockings and shoes—the weaver, the hatter, the smith of various classes and branches, all these are alike generally denominated artisans, manufactures, handycraftsmen—we comprehend them all under one word—MECHANICS—and to these we address this series of papers; noting at the same time, that every farmer is as much interested in the facts that we shall state and discant upon; as these mechanics who are not practical agriculturists, but mechanics in the vulgar use of the term.

D. FRANKLIN, who may be considered with propriety as the great exemplar and glory of MECHANICS, as well as of his country, lays down the following principles as the true sources of national wealth—

“The earth and the waters are the sources from which all true riches are produced. The maintenance, enjoyments, and even in a measure the superfluities of life are properly speaking real riches. But the earth and the waters would be improductive without labor; therefore the labor of tillage is the first, and the labor of manufactures the second means of acquiring national and individual wealth.”

Adam Smith, who wrote on the subject of national wealth, with so much merited celebrity, opens his valuable work, with this fundamental principle;—“The annual labor of every nation, is the fund which originally supplies it with all the necessaries and conveniences of life, which it annually consumes, and which consists always either in the immediate produce of the labor, or in what is purchased with that produce from other nations.”

It would be superfluous to refer to any other authorities, in support of principles that require only to be stated to be understood—Principles, which being universally admitted, even by those who are themselves above the dull pursuit of mechanical labor, declare at the same instant the self-respect which every mechanic should feel, as forming part of that great basis upon which society is erected and without which society could not exist in a social and happy order. The acknowledged principle also must be taken in another point of view, as it relates to the propensity of the idle, the imbecile and the profligate speculator to treat with affected contempt those classes of men—mechanics and farmers, to whose virtue and toil those excrescent part of society owe their very existence.

Many men are almost stupified by the adoption of foreign ideas and applying them to our own condition, with which they cannot enter into association. In countries whose governments are founded and maintained for the gratification or aggrandizement of a few, which is the real
character of every government in Europe at this moment, under such governments, a hatred of the dull pursuits of civil life is a necessary consequence of the system. The rulers have an interest in degrading and ridiculing, and promoting distinctions, and exciting jealousies among the various classes of men who are not above labor and usefulness.

They have an interest in their ignorance; and in their poverty, as the means of perpetuating that ignorance; for if all minds were well improved, that is not ignorant, the mechanic and the farmer might discover that they were the strength and the base of society; and without which, the privileged orders could not be released from the dull pursuits of civil life.

The reflecting man must often be astonished at the supercilious insolence of idlers and speculators in a society of freemen, where all men are equally entitled to the protection of the laws and to the honors and trusts and respect due to genius[,] talents, or established virtue.

The observing man must be surprised, to find the same habits of contempt and asperity towards the useful members of society, constantly displayed by numbers, who either go into office on the shoulders of hypocrisy, or acquire the wealth which pampers their insolence, by means which virtuous men would disdain to truckle too.

There is more of unconscious imitation and the effect of habit, and of the association of foreign ideas to things totally dissimilar in these things than of vice or criminality. But the evils consist in this, that while it is prevalent or not scouted, or not resisted, it enjoys a kind of tolerance that is construed into an express sanction; while those who either do not or cannot, or will not think on the subject, act as if this unnatural state of society were natural; and that our national written institutions were only masks for cheating the million, and that the actual state of society were intended as a satire on the principles of our government.

In the next and subsequent numbers we shall go into an illustration, by specific examples of the principles here suggested—and apply them to the circumstances of the public, the exemplification of facts, and accompany them by such illustrations as the subject, naturally exuberant, presents to the mind in the progress of rumination.

POLITICS FOR MECHANICS

No. IV.

[February 7, 1807]

Intelligent writers on political economy, or the principles of national wealth, have demonstrated, that the English government could not have sustained the burthen of its immense debts and enormous expenditures,
for thirty years past, had not MECHANICAL GENIUS and INDUSTRY, devised means by which the labor of man could be multiplied to an incredible extent. This assertion is indeed demonstrable, by well established facts, in the application of MACHINERY to the arts of the worker in iron, in wood, in cotton, in flax, in short in every branch of art and manufacture. Indeed lord Lauderdale, a very able and ingenious writer, has been led so far into admiration of machinery, by its effects, as to consider machinery as a new principle of national wealth, and separate from the principle of labor. The mistake is however, very palpable on a consideration, that machinery is itself, a production of labor and of mechanical rules of art; and that even in its most perfect state, labor is necessary to its operation, as well to contrive and make, as to keep in order and put it in motion. Upon the same principle, the iron spade or hoe, would be considered as coming under a different principle from the wooden or the clumsy stone instruments of a rude state of society.

The use of these remarks, is to shew that in monarchies, in oligarchies, or in aristocracies, those who are the main strength of the nation are always depreciated, and as much as can be done degraded. A very distinguished federal character, once a senator of the U.S. said the working people, should be allowed so little for their labor as to reduce them to subsist on “potatoes and herrings”; and in 1797, 1798, and 1799, mechanics were proscribed and refused employment, who dared to hold a republican opinion. Some of the men proscribed in those days, have however truckled and become the instruments of a factious aristocracy, and by their blind and base desertion of principle, afforded too much encouragement for those who wished to make the mechanics as abject slaves, as they are in other countries.

We set out in this series of papers, with the purpose of exposing errors and mistakes of a dangerous tendency to the nation. The example of England in the case of her mechanics, is perhaps as stupendous a monument of national slavery, as has existed from the earliest epocha of time. The mechanics of America will remember, that what is called the mercantile interest holds the all controuling and all subduing influence of that nation.—That speculation has enslaved industry.

By an act passed in the British parliament only in the last year, every labourer, artisan, tradesman, mechanic and manufacturer, who earns by daily or weekly wages, by himself, his wife, or his children under age—4 dollars and 30 cents per week—shall pay on oath—for the support of that government and its royal family—5 per cent from the sweat of his brow.

Five dollars out of every 100—or five cents out of every dollar.
And this without any deduction for his extra expenses, of sickness or the various other incidental expenses of human life!

Suppose he does not earn this mighty sum of 4 dollars and 30 cents—per week—(and there are hundreds and hundreds of thousands who do not) what then?—Why then American mechanics hear, and remember it, and remember the case of the shoemakers.

*He is registered as a SLAVE!*

Let no falsifier or deceiver impose a doubt upon you as to the solemn truth of what we here state—no man of the least profession to honesty will attempt it, because it is solemnly registered in the law of England—we copy it from an authentic book. Kearsley’s tax tables for 1805—second edition—appendix, page 189 rule XVII.—section 4.

“Labourers, artisans, handicraftsmen or tradesmen, mechanics, and manufacturers, for daily or weekly wages—shall, in order, to be exempted from payment of the duties, produce to the commissioners a declaration signed by himself, with a certificate annexed to it by the master or employer in the following form:

I, A. B. do declare, that I exercise and follow the employment of a labourer in husbandry—or other work—[naming it]—or artisan, handicraftsman or mechanic in the trade of [naming it] for daily or weekly wages; that I have not received in any one week within the year preceding, for my work or labour, any sum exceeding [name the sum] except in employment in husbandry in time of harvest, and that within the time above mentioned I have worked for ________ of ________, and that I have not received within the preceding year, any sum or sums of money from any source, other than labour as aforesaid. So help me God.

**MASTER’S CERTIFICATE.**

I, ________ of ________ hereby certify, that the above signed was in my employ as a ________ for ________ within the year preceding, and that the wages paid by me did not exceed the rate above mentioned, and to the best of my belief, the matters contained in the above declaration are true as far as the same are within my knowledge. So help me God.

The intent of these certificates is, that no mechanic shall dare to move a mile without the consent of the government, that they may know where to meet with them when wanted, to be sent to perish in the West Indies by the yellow fever, in fighting the mercantile battles of West India nabobs.
Here American mechanics is a specimen of the effects of the most stupendous fabric of human wisdom—of the checks and balances, privileged orders, nobility holes, and order and regular government.

But the mechanics of Britain need not starve said Dundas, the [illegible] and the navy for them—and workhouse for their wives and children!!

In the English house of lords in 1793, it was stated in debate, that one magistrate had attested, as soldiers 12,000 mechanics, all of whose families were left behind; another lord said that a single magistrate in one town of Lancashire had attested 23,000 in one year.

What has been the reason, why the abolitionists in Britain could not get forward with the abolition of the black slave trade in England?

Wilberforce uniformly supported Pitt, in every measure which enslaved the mechanics and others in England.¹⁰

Well, after making a long speech, respecting the miseries of the blacks in the West Indies—

Some shrewd advocate for slavery answers him with this knock-down answer.

*The slaves in the West-Indies, are better clothed and better fed, than the poor and the mechanicks and labourers in Britain.*

Again Wilberforce, complains of the stowage in the middle passage. What’s the answer given? Pray Mr. Wilberforce, do just step out of the house into the work house in your own parish—not two minutes walk—you will there see—closer packing of poor Englishmen and women than of negroes in the middle passage.

Wilberforce is dumb. *Vital religion,* is put in [a] state of suspended animation.

Every mechanic and labourer, says *Cobbett is a pauper*—and COBBETT, speaks truth.

*One million* of the unhappy population of Britain, are perishing in the work-houses, or famishing out of them—for every man who earns 430 cents must pay one fifth to the tax gatherer!

This is *John Adams’s,* stupendous monument of human wisdom.

This all comes from men of birth and extraction.

This all comes from taxes, taxes—These are among the glorious consequences of constitutional fortifications, navies!

This comes from unnecessary standing armies!

This comes from the mechanic, the manufacturer or the labourer being so stupified as to suffer himself to be trodden upon and to believe that any man is better than himself who is not more virtuous.

This comes from giving way to birth and extraction.
Pray, which is of most consequence in society, the farmer or the 
mechanic or the sailor, or ship builder, who can turn too and earn their 
mush, any hour of the day.

Or the man who takes the room and place of a female, and whilst 
measuring out ribbons, or laces, or counting needles or pins, or sells 
these productions of industry by the invoice or pacel exclaims

“They are nothing but mere mechanics!”

At the close of the election before last in this city of the brotherhood, 
many of those men of a good birth and extraordinary extraction—were 
in high spirits, they did not hesitate to assert openly—to this effect “now, 
we will manage those porters, and draymen and the mechanics—those 
men earn too much—if they did not earn half as much it would be better 
for us.”

Mechanics, this is fact—and the case of the shoemakers is only 
another proof, of the tendency of lazy luxury to enslave the men of 
industry who acquire their bread by labor.

“We will take care, to regulate the votings at the ensuing legislature.”

Exclaimed another.

“They do not vote nor receive half the pay in England that mechanics 
do here”—says a raw imported British emigrant—just landed with his 
knob full of self sufficiency and contempt for all the world.

“No, nor shall they have it here either long” says a “tory” and “warm 
federalists.”

Farmers, merchants, labourers, all classes take care—suffer no man to 
trench on your right, your privilege of voting.

Two pence a pound of tea was the spring that set this new world in 
motion—but there are villaines practised every day ten thousand degrees 
more dangerous and equally inquitous. If you once give way, it is all 
over with you.

The laborers in husbandry in Britain are as much sold and as 
substantially slaves to the soil of their despots, as the population of 
Russia—If they earn more than 430 cents a week, five per cent must go 
to the government; and if they wish to emigrate and go where they can 
earn more, the law forbids it, and they are liable to imprisonment for 
attempting to be more happy!

Burr’s conspiracy gives to you a warning, “We are men above the dull 
pursuits of civil life,” said Burr to Eaton.

And how were those men of “birth and extraction” to be supported? 

Why

Judge Workman tells you—

“Establish a despotism”
That is, make the farmers and mechanics toil for men above industry and labor as they do in Britain.

Dr. Johnson's definition of words is the criterion of most Englishmen—altho' there are some Englishmen who are as true to the principles of the revolution as if they had bled in the cause—but we speak of the general predominant sentiment and feeling of those who adhere to the tottering fabric.

What are the toasts and sentiments of the sons of St. George? What are their private toasts at their tavern suppers? The federalists many of them, we do not mean the "warm federalists," call Burr a traitor.

But he could have not established a more horrid or despotic government, than that of Britain.

Would he not have taken the register of this number as the ground work for judge Workman's despotism. Then why do such men condemn Burr? Or is it only the name? Burr is not George III.

No man who is hankering after the British government, that stupendous monument of human wisdom, can consistently condemn Burr—or call him a traitor.

Farmers and mechanics, be always cautious when you hear an adherent of Britain, calling Burr a traitor.

You see what was here intended for you. You were to have been the registered slaves of men of birth and extraction—above the dull pursuits of civil life—or as Mr. Barclay would have it, "warmly federal."

Burr's plans are foiled—be you then on the watch—Watch your privileges—guard against men who would wean you from your free institutions.

Watch every encroachment on the price of your labour. Tell them you are entitled to independence as well as themselves.

Ask in your minds, who are they in America, with so many hundreds of millions of acres of lands that can best do without each other?—farmers and mechanics—or merchants!

Watch every attempt to contract your privilege of election—For it was intended.

McKean has not only undertaken to set the will of the majority at naught, but to appoint a commission of his own creatures to set aside the majority of your suffrages?"11

Burr, Workman, and the daily speeches you hear, give you notice—
the farmers of the west by their breath on a signal from the executive have annihilated a daring treason.

If you once give but the least way or opening to men without any more, and often not equal merit, who affect to be your superiors, step by step, you will be completely enslaved.

POLITICS FOR FARMERS.
No. XIII.
[February 9, 1807]

That was a most animating spectacle which was lately exhibited in Baltimore. A musical festival was held, to which each person who chose to be an auditor, subscribed a small sum for admission. The proceeds were destined to purposes of charity—and congenial with so benevolent a purpose, the performers were composed of the members of various Christian churches, and the auditors of every religious denomination. In what other country could such a spectacle be seen? Where but in this could the voices of various sects be found united in the sweet concord of charity and toleration?—FARMERS, you owe this all to your principle of government—such concord you could not see nor hear any where else—the interests of other governments depend upon imposture, religion is employed only as an engine of the state—the machinery of state is constructed upon principles the reverse of concord;—it is constructed upon principles of discord. And a state church is employed at once to aggrandize one sect at the expence of all the rest, and to aid by its spiritual influence, the political influence of other classes or fractions of oppressors—by the revolution of 1776 you escaped this most impious of all the arts of state quackery.

In Britain (for it is the example held out to us) no one tax is found to consolidate together the energies of such a good government, so well as tythes—that is, the tenth part of the produce of every farmer does, by law, belong to a clergyman of the established church—no matter whether the farmer belongs to that church or to another. The state church must be supported—because it combines both temporal & spiritual influence. And the established clergy, in return for the favor of the state, act as spies to deliver over, with the assistance of the parish lawyer and parish exciseman for punishment every declaimer against too much energy in government.

The privileged clergyman adds spiritual excommunication in Britain—to the terrors of regular government.

The tythes are wholly paid by the farmer—be he Calvinist or
Quaker—Methodist or Shaker—he pays the tenth to the established church.

Supposing a farmer were to rent three hundred acres of land, and offer the clergyman one hundred of them instead of tythes—and beside paying the rent for the clergyman—think you he would accept the land, even with the rent paid?

No, he would not!

His tenth of the produce would be better in Britain than one third of the land after defraying charges of cultivation—for farmers in England are generally renters—

The farmers, in the first place, pay the rent—

Secondly, the land tax, and all the other taxes, we have enumerated, in preceding numbers.

Thirdly, the wages of his servants, and the expence of his house and farming utensils.

Fourthly, plowing, manuring and sowing.

Fifthly, reaping.

And after the farmer has incurred all this expense and labor—then comes the established clergymen—but not till then!

The farmer, when his wheat is cut must put it up in the field in sheaves of ten in each heap—

Then the clergyman comes and picks out one of the best; if there is one heap in every ten that looks bigger than the others, that is certain to go to the established church.

The farmer is obliged to put his barley, and oats, and hay also in heaps; and the clergyman gathers up every tenth heap in like manner—he takes his choice, one out of every ten!

The farmer dares not touch any of his own property, the produce of his labor and expense, till he has given notice to the clergyman; and even then the parson may suffer his tenth parts to remain in the field—48 hours—and the poor farmer dares not turn in his hogs, or his turkeys, or poultry, the whole!

These various articles, however, are only what are called the great tythes!

After that the farmer is obliged to pay to the established church a composition for feeding, and pasturing his own cattle, &c &c.—and these are called the little tythes!

Then, for the farmer's wife—

She, poor woman, comes under the parson's clutches.

She must carry to the parson's house—every tenth chicken—

Every tenth goose, turkey and duck—
Every tenth egg, and roasting pig—
The tenth of her apples, and peaches, and pears, and cherries
And more, she must pay a composition for the cabbage, thyme, onions, celery, parsley &c. &c. of her garden.
If a poor man has only one hen, and that hen hatches seven chickes, the parson takes one, notwithstanding; it was not the parson’s fault if the hen had not ten instead of seven—the same of the litters of pigs; the same of geese, &c.—the laws give it him.
This must be a stupendous fabric of human wisdom—for the parsons of the established church!!!
Then the clergyman, takes the tenth calf—also for the established church.
He has the tenth part of the milk every day.
Or if the parson chooses the whole mile of every tenth day—he may make the choice.
Many a poor calf and hog goes with a hungry belly in England, every tenth day—but who will be so jacobinical as to say the government was made for calves? Or that John Bull is only a GREAT CALF for submitting to it?
Then comes Easter dues.
Farmers of America, do you know what Easter dues are?
It is curious to see the poor agricultural laborers (the clodpoles) in Britain, whose children are almost starving, or feeding on their barley cakes, lugging the tenth of their scanty produce, of their gardens—their eggs, their poultry, and with tears, knocking at the door of a minister of a churched called Christian!
There is energy for you! “O! how degraded are the United States, by a jacobinical democratical government, such as they now have,” said a “warmly federal” friend lately.
Had the system of 1797, 1798 succeeded, we should have had more energy—and in time, farmers of America, your children might have paid Easter dues—what a misfortune that Burr missed the empire!. the vicar general of Mexico no doubt made tythes a part of the convention—It was a part of the CONCORDAT of the quid empire!
Well, the clergyman prefers receiving tythes of one tenth of the produce, rather than to have one third of a plantation for a gift!!
But the clergyman of the established church, is a political arithmetician, the taxes are so heavy that he is considerably the gainer, by deferring one third of the land and taking a tenth of the produce.
The farmers often have bad crops in Britain, like other countries—by bad crops, bad harvest by heavy poor rates, or the death of his horses and
cattle, he is as elsewhere a considerable loser, by his farm; and very often
his stock is seized to pay the rent, to the "best blood of the country."

You would naturally conclude then, that the parson would make some
little allowance; and if the law had neither justice nor generosity in it,
that the Christian parson would have some little feeling—that he would
come in for some little share of the loss.

But no, not a cent—the church like the king can do no wrong—the
church of England is not like the pope infallible—it can only do no
wrong.

The farmer might be ruined, his wife and family, turned out of doors,
his children crying for bread, but the parson's crop much or little; be the
weather, wet or dry—sweep off wheat, hay, barley, calves, turkeys, duck,
geese, hogs, eggs, apples, pears, and parsley!

The farmer may starve, but the tythe must be paid.

This is the system held up for your admiration, more admirable than
the discovery of the compass and all that—this is the state you farmers of
America would have been reduced to ere long, had it not been for
Jefferson's election and wise democratic policy of his administration.

Tythe and excisemen proctors always go hand in hand—they are the
chief support, the janizaries of energetic government—read this brief
statement—it contains a monument that ought to excite more curiosity
and astonishment than the existence of the pyramids of Egypt—for its
stupendous base.

When the British agents and papers, and spies, and Cullens, call for
an energetic government, they mean by it, all which we have enumer-
ated—and more that we shall enumerate.

Many federalists who know nothing of Britain or British government
but hearsay—federalists really well meaning men, but who fancy
themselves "a little bit of blood," those poor deluded men, we have seen
gaping and swallowing and crediting the "cock and bull stories" of
British spies—and believing every report of Britain which the papers in
British may relate.

Are those federalists ready to bend the neck to the taxes and the tythes
we have enumerated.

Our expositions in the farmer's politics, we are happy to find cut
close—there are wretches up for hire who advertise themselves by
reviling farmer's politics—they cannot controvert, they cannot deny the
truth of a fact stated in them—but they are hankering after the "flesh
pots,"—and they reprobate these essays, as an unfortunate class of
another sex hang out a signal.
And why, because we relate facts, undeniable facts, which cannot be palliated.

POLITICS FOR MECHANICS

No. V.

[March 27, 1807]

An argument has been constantly in the mouth of warm federalists and in their papers, that the building of a navy and fortifications would give employment to mechanics.

The notion is plausible at first sight, but like every other idea borrowed from Britain, misery, woe and destruction to the mechanic lurks underneath. We will not dally with plain men in the tricks of sophistry or declamation.

Take the following case—it is an abstract of a report made, to the Manchester Medical Society, by an eminent physician.

"I was sent for," say he, "to the house of a poor weaver, who was in the last stage of mental derangement—on enquiry into the case, I found the poor man had been bitten twelve months before, by a dog supposed to be mad, but that no inconvenience had before arisen from the bite.

"On enquiry further into the whole circumstances of the man's family, which I was induced to do from their extreme wretchedness and poverty—the following facts occurred which induced me to attribute his madness to other causes than the bite of a dog a year before. The high price of bread had deprived him of that article of subsistence, and he could not earn sufficient even to procure barley for his family to eat. He had six children, and his wife was taken sick. For the convenience of procuring work he did not reside in his own parish, he got up early one morning and walked several miles to his native place, to endeavor to procure some assistance from the overseers. When he applied to them, they refused him any—and he immediately returned to his habitation in a state of hunger and despair, for he had not money to purchase any food from his setting out to his return. He then applied to his employers to advance him subsistence 'till his piece was finished, this was also refused—he then returned to his loom, determined not to quit it before his work was finished, when without any other sustenance than a little water and a barley cake, he persevered almost unceasingly for 36 hours! By that time, despair, hunger, the sickness of his wife, and starving children, so operated on his distracted spirits, that evident symptoms of madness made their appearance. In this condition I was sent for to him;
and at this time it was suggested that the bite of the dog a year before,
was the cause of his malady. But though every assistance was rendered
to him, in a short time he died raving.

"I made enquiry respecting the dog which was said to have bitten
him, and found that he had been immediately killed after the accident,
and that no certain proofs of his having been really mad had even
occurred.

"Combining every circumstance, I was clearly of opinion that his
madness did not arise from the bite of the dog, but from those
circumstances which I have mentioned."

Such, mechanics of America, are among the effects of that stupendous
monument of human wisdom, as called for by John Adams.

See here what would be your fate, had you a government so mad as
that which is recommended for imitation.

Britain boasts of supplying the whole world with her manufactures—
to profit whom? Not the weavers; for here you see what are the rewards
of her weavers—

It is starvation and madness!—the weavers dare not meet to regulate
the price of their own labor, even when it was too little to buy bread; the
case of the shoemakers is a precedent set up in advance to prepare you
for such a fate, but as the legislature has not unhorsed the recorder who
was the advocate of such a detestable decision, the legislature is bound to
establish a law forbidding decisions repugnant to the constitution, and
making the offence a forfeiture of the public station of any person who
dares to attempt such despotic decisions.  

But let us enquire about ship builders.

Britain boasts of building ships of war to command the ocean.

But her shipwrights may work double and treble tides, as the poor
weaver worked without ceasing 36 hours—they may labor all their life
time for a scanty subsistence, and in their old age they pass in review
before some naval commissioner, and then are dischared as not capable
of performing their tasks—and all the miseries of a British work house,
are the only rewards for having spent the prime of their days in a king's
dock yard.

The sail makers, the rope makers, the ship carpenters, the riggers, the
caulkers, the plumbers, the joiners and every other class of artisans may
return home to their habitations from their toil, there they will find that
taxes, taxes, follow them, more numerous and as dreadful as the plagues
of Pharoah—if by the boasted and deceptive demand for their extra
labour and double tides, they earn 1 cent additional wages, by all the
different bearings and ramifications of harpies of every description, their comforts are abridged full 10 cents!

But should mechanics, artisans, or workmen of any description being single men, resort to a tavern to forget the present, and attempt not to look forward for the anticipation of the future, and join in the song or the dance.

What then think you?

Why constables will rush in under the new sedition acts, and seize every dancer and every other person present, haul them to prison for that night, and in the morning they are guarded before some of his majesty's judges, and if they cannot give what is called in the mild term of British liberty, a good account of themselves—that is if they are strangers! come from a distance, they are under a charge of breaking the peace by dancing, sent as volunteers into the army or navy—and the poor tavern keeper is often deprived of his license.

For no farmer or mechanic is suffered to dance but in a licensed room.

How much better off is the negro in the West Indies, than the mechanic in Britain—the negro can dance, without fear of prison—in Britain the white slaves cannot!

And then on Sundays if the mechanic or artisan is disposed to take a walk, to amuse himself on that day which the God of nature appropriated in forgetfulness of toil and for intercourse and social communication with his fellow men, he dares not enter the walks, privileged to the best blood, and warm federalism of Britain; they are not contented with their own palaces and forests and lawns and vast estates—the public grounds are denied to him who labors—just as was intended here in Philadelphia a few years past, with the state house yard—to exclude from it the check apron women and the leather apron men.

In the English public grounds there are boards stuck up at the entrance of those gardens and privileged walks—to this effect—"NO SERVANTS, DOGS, MEN WITH COLOURED HANDER-CHIEFS ROUND THEIR NECKS, NOR YE MEN WITH CHECKED APRONS, ADMITTED HERE!!"

To support those walks for the British nobility, the contractors, the excisemen, the lawyers, the established clergy, is it that the poor mechanic is ground to dust.

And when by the very operations of those taxes, laid on for this luxury, the mechanic, has not wherewithal to dress like a gentleman..." The toe of the clodhopper treads so close "On the heel of the courier, that it galls his kibe."
And that very cause is given as a reason why he should not be suffered to walk there.

*Mechanics* of America, will you ever bend your necks to these British yokes?

The *mason*, may labour at fortifications, but the workhouse received him and his family at last.

The *labourer in husbandry*, may be chained to his parish for life and his scanty pittance; the workhouse receives him also—his children die of the yellow fever in the West or East Indies. The *smith* or *worker in hardware*, may forge implements for *war*, they may receive a trifling advance of wages, for a short time, but alas, the poor house, is eventually their tomb.

For they dare not attempt to raise their wages—according to the rise in provisions, and if they attempt to emigrate to any country where they can get better wages and raise their families, they care subject to imprisonment in the same dens of misery with felons.

Such are the blessings to the mechanics in a nation, which boasts the dominion of the ocean and the exclusive trade of the world.

And pray, what does this distress to mechanics arise from?

Why from *taxes*, *war*, *fortifications*—*navy*.

To carry on a war, to build a navy, to erect fortifications, *taxes must be laid on*.

That encreases the price of *food*, of *clothing*, of every *necessary* of life.

The poor *British* shipwright or mechanic, who was at first duped by the same fallacious ideas, as men *warmly federal* attempt to deceive the shipwrights of the United States by, *that it would give them employment to build ships of war and erect fortifications*, finds, alas, too late that if his *wages* encreased in *one ratio* by the demand for labor, the price of provisions encreased on him in a *ten fold ratio* his wages is raised from 20 to 22 or 24 shillings; but the loaf of bread is raised from three pence to six pence the pound; and other food in proportion:—occasioned by that very employment which he had been deceived into as being of benefit to him!

Here then *mechanics of America*, is the hypocrisy of your enemies, at once detected and laid bare to you.

The *British spy Cullen*, at *New York*, than whom no person is louder for *war*, *fortifications* and a *navy*, knows all this, he knows every one of its effects—he knows that by such deception as his, it is that the *mechanics of Britain*, have been brought to *wretchedness*, *madness* and *slavery*. 
Those men, who have been bawling for war, navies, fortifications—have rose as contractors and pensioners and excisemen, on the necks of the poor mechanics—they have been reaping the fruit of the taxes laid on to pay for those ships and fortifications, to live in luxury and laziness on the sweat of their brow.

And the poor shipwright deceived by them, has when too late found, that what those damnable deceivers, had held out to him as for his benefit, was only intended for his destruction.

It is for this that British spies and warm federalism are always holding up the example of Britain—surely they could never hold up a better example, to answer their own purposes—for in Britain it has fully answered their purposes. And what are these purposes?—Why RUIN, to those, whom those wretches, impiously and blasphemously term the LOWER RANKS.

When Judas betrayed Christ, he said hail master and kissed him. Cullen the British spy, terms himself the PEOPLE'S FRIEND.

And mechanics can you be deceived by them, will you not doubt every proposition which comes from such a creature as Cullen, from a disguised but detected spy and emissary of the British government.

Mechanics of New York, the whitened bones of your forefathers now lie unburied before your eyes.

Hearken to the wiles of warm federalism and British spies, and Jersey prison ships will receive you also, as they did your forefathers, you must be slaves to the well born, to toryism, to Britain.

For never whilst breath remains in the body of your old would be tyrant George III. will that government cease to vex, to plague, or the councils of her cabinet and spies to endeavor to ruin the United States.

From Doctor Johnson's dictionary, we gave you specimens of the construction of words, as they are understood in Britain.

All the warm federalists in the United States construe them in the same manner.

Mechanics are low bred tradesmen, the vulgar.
Farmers are brutes, and clowns, or clodhoppers.

To the farmers of America we have exhibited the blessings of British politics, in tythes, in taxes, in poor rates.

To the mechanics of America, we have exhibited the treatment, experienced by their brethren in England.

The same treatment to both is anxiously strove for by the warm federalists, and the admirers of “the stupendous monument of human wisdom.”
The same causes, will produce the same effects, here, as in Britain, if you submit to them.

TO OUR COUNTRY—

The Aurora, has performed an important duty, and the people we are proud to perceive feel it.

We have warned every class, not by mere assertions, but by proofs and quotations from authors mentioned, and by pointing to facts, which all our enemies, or your enemies cannot gainsay or disprove—

For the present we shall take our farewell of you with this necessary advice.

Guard your liberties, let every man if he is virtuous, deem himself equal to say—STUDY PEACE.

NOTES


2. For Duane’s role in the formation of Philadelphia’s working class, see Schultz, “Thoughts Among the People,” chapters 5–6.

3. The only biography of Duane is Kim Tousley Phillips, “William Duane, Revolutionary Editor” (Ph.D. diss., University of California, 1968), from which this account is taken.


5. Sergius Catilina led a seditious conspiracy against Ciceronian Rome in 63 B.C. Benedict Arnold, who earned the enmity of his contemporaries by betraying the defensive plans of West Point to the British during the American Revolution, was particularly despised by Philadelphia artisans for his blatantly Tory sympathies while military commander of the city in 1778.

6. Robert Liston, the British minister to the United States, was widely rumored to have funded the Federalist press and its anti-democratic writers, including William Cobbet (who signed his articles “Peter Porcupine”), Carepenter, and Parkes.

7. Francisco de Miranda, leader of the Venezuelan revolution, lobbied British authorities in support of Alexander Hamilton’s plan for the formation of a joint Anglo-American military expedition that would liberate the rest of Latin America from Spanish rule and open new markets for British and American merchants and manufacturers. Aaron Burr, Jefferson’s Vice President, was charged with treason in 1807 for this alleged conspiracy with the British to lead America’s new western territories out of the union. The allegations were never proven and Chief John Marshall ruled that since Burr had committed no “overt act,” he could not be tried for treason.

8. Charles I was executed in 1649 for his attempts to bring England under absolutist rule.

9. In the Battle of Austerlitz (Dec. 2, 1805), Napoleon defeated the combined armies of Austria and Russia. Many contemporaries saw this as a victory of republicanism over monarchy.
10. William Wilberforce was a leader of the struggle for abolition of the British slave trade. At the same time, however, he staunchly advocated economic liberalism (laissez faire) against the claims of a "moral economy" favored by many working people.

11. Thomas McKean was elected Governor of Pennsylvania in 1799 and served in that office until defeated by Simon Snyder in 1808. McKean, whose politics wavered between that of the Federalists and the Democrats, lost the support of Duane and his working-class followers by his conservative actions and corrupt administration.

12. Duane supported the Philadelphia journeymen cordwainers who, in 1806, were tried and convicted for forming a union and conducting a strike. Moses Levy, Recorder of the City of Philadelphia, acted as presiding judge in the Mayor's Court and conducted the trial with an anti-labor bias.