First Fruits of Republican Organization:

POLITICAL ASPECTS OF THE CONGRESSIONAL ELECTION OF 1794

In an earlier article in this magazine, the writer attempted to show that federalist denunciation of the Democratic Societies as fomenters of the Whiskey Insurrection was politically rather than judicially motivated—that it was essentially an effort to nip in the bud the strong republican movement to which the activities of the Societies had given such great impetus in 1794. What we shall attempt to indicate now, is the basis of federalist apprehension at that time, as revealed in some of the activities of the Societies and in the political consequences of those activities. Particular emphasis will be placed upon the situation in New York City, but the general conclusions to be drawn may be applied safely to other centers of democratic activity.

Many aspects of the history of the Democratic Societies have been investigated by various writers, but hardly anyone has men-


2 Space does not permit detailed examination of the activities of the Societies in more than one place and for historic reasons as well as for availability of material, New York City seemed most suitable for our purposes.

While not yet the first port of the United States, New York by 1794, was right at the heels of Philadelphia and was soon to establish its unchallenged supremacy in marine affairs. (See Adam Seybert, Statistical Annals . . . of The United States, 142; R. G. Albion, Rise of New York Port, 1815-1860, p. 8; Sidney I. Pomerantz, New York, An American City, 1783-1803, 158.) And if it was not the first port, New York was already the financial center of the Union. (See Joseph S. Davis, Essays in The Earlier History of American Corporations, I. 286-7.) It was besides, Hamilton's own bailiwick and perhaps the strongest seat of federalism up to 1794, thus giving peculiar importance to the development of republican strength there. (See George D. Luetscher, Early Political Machinery In The United States, 56-8.)

For the further importance, of New York, See below; and for a survey of a similar expansion of republicanism, in Boston, Philadelphia and Baltimore, see Luetscher, op. cit., 56-60.

3 For the most important works on the Democratic Societies, see Miller, loc. cit., 324. In addition to the works listed there, see Margaret Woodbury, “Public Opinion in Philadelphia, 1789-1801,” Smith College Studies in History, V. Nos. 1, 2 (Oct. 1919-Jan. 1920), 67-72; 111-20; 123; and Walter R. Fee, The Transition from Aristocracy to Democracy in New Jersey 1789-1829 (Somerville, N. J., 1933), particularly Chap. II.
tioned, let alone examined their direct political operations. One of the more recent writers on the political history of this period even denies that the Clubs were "party clubs," and states that they "had no direct connection with the republican party."

It may be well to inquire at the very outset, however, just what was the republican party in 1794, if it was not that organized by this interstate chain of Democratic Societies. For in so far as the republican party was a people's party, in so far, that is, as its success depended upon the organization of the large majority of small men whose individual concerns were too insignificant to attract the attention of the government unless they were effectually combined to exert pressure, that party existed as an organization only through the Democratic Societies. True there was the group that in Congress consistently voted in opposition to federalist measures; and at home, no doubt, individually commanded a republican following. But no one showed better than did these very Congressmen how important the Societies were to their political life when they defended them so warmly against the denunciation of Washington himself. If this evidence on the republican side is not sufficient, we have only to turn to federalist attacks upon the Societies, to learn in what respect they were held. The Essex Junto in Massachusetts, for instance, with the scornful Ames himself in the van, acknowledged with unmitigated fear the political threat of the clubs. And in New York City, literally not one federalist

4 William Orlando Lynch, Fifty Years of Party Warfare, 1789-1837 (Indianapolis, 1931), 37. And Gilbert Chinard, Thomas Jefferson . . . (Boston, 1929), 334 writes: "In the Democratic Societies established in large cities, he [Jefferson] placed very little confidence; they were fighting on his side, at least for the present, and were vociferous enough; but to a large extent they were made up of office holders. They did not and could not constitute a trustworthy bulwark for Republican institutions . . ."

Chinard, however, offers no evidence for this statement and I have been able to find none in the published writings of Jefferson. Indeed, these as well as those of Madison indicate a warm interest in the activities of the Societies, warmer even after the fall of Genêt than before. And if we grant that Jefferson was a great political organizer, I doubt very much that he would have lost interest in the Societies merely because they were (if they were) made up simply of office seekers. For office holders are and always have been the spine of any political party—men who are paid by the government and yet can stay at home and keep the political fences in constant repair. The appointment of Freneau in 1791 is a case in point.

5 Obviously too, this following was in republican sections, while it was recruits in federalist strongholds that the republicans most needed for national success. It was precisely in such places that the most active clubs were situated.

6 See n. 68 below.
writer failed to name the Democratic Society as the real enemy in
the congressional campaign of December, 1794. Against Livingston
personally I have no complaint, wrote one, after denouncing the So-
ciety,\(^7\)

\(\ldots\) but when I consider under whose auspices he comes forward, as a candidate
for public favor, I confess I must either doubt his sincerity with his party, or the
soundness of his politics \(\ldots\)

"But it is not to the man I wish to call your attention," wrote another,\(^8\)

\(\ldots\) it is to those by whose means he is brought forward. Who are the men that
bring him forward? By whose interest is he to be supported? By the interest
of those men whose secret machinations have brought on them the merited cen-
sure of the father of the people, a censure sanctioned by the voice of the Senate
and the House of Representatives \(\ldots\)

And still a third declared:\(^9\)

I am well informed the young gentleman whom you have nominated to be sup-
ported by the citizens at the ensuing election is a member of the democratic
society.

If I could be persuaded that this self-created society had already done no
injury to our country and that from Boston to Charleston, South Carolina, they
had not defiled their republican character by endeavors to influence elections and
control the sacred right of suffrage, I would not consider his political principles
so materially objectionable as to forget the esteem I had for him when we were
in sentiment \(\ldots\)

Federalist alarms raised by these electioneering activities were
well founded. For, as the following quotations from the published
minutes of the Societies will plainly show, the Clubs freely advertised
their interest in electing firm republicans to office, and, as we shall see,
it was they who, early in 1794, took the lead in organizing serious
efforts in that direction.

At least one Society was very specific in declaring its interest in the
matter of election. On June 7, 1794, the Democratic Society of Prince
William County, Virginia, unanimously resolved,\(^10\)

\(\ldots\) that the system of politics pursued in the present session of Congress by
Richard Bland Lee, the representative from this district, is such as in the opinion
of this Society, ought to meet the most pointed disapprobation of his constituents,
and that the said Richard Bland Lee as a public character is altogether unworthy
of the future confidence of good Republicans \(\ldots\)

\(^7\) *American Minerva* (New York) December 9, 1794.

\(^8\) Ibid., December 5, 1794.

\(^9\) *American Minerva*, November 27, 1794.

\(^10\) "The Democratic Societies \(\ldots\) In Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Virginia," *William
and Mary College Quar. Hist. Mag.*, II, ser. 2 (1922), 252. Lee was defeated for reelection.
See Luetscher, *op. cit.*, 59.
Another Virginia Society was hardly less forthright. On the Fourth of July, 1794, in an "Address to the People of The United States," the Democratic Society of Wythe County, declared: 11

... We hope the misconduct of the executive 12 may have proceeded from bad advice; but we can only look to the immediate cause of the mischief. To us, it seems a radical change of measures is necessary. How shall this be effected, Citizens? It is to be effected by a change of men. Deny the continuance of your confidence to such members of the legislative body as have an interest distinct from that of the people. To trust yourselves to stockholders, what is it, but like the Romans, to deliver the poor debtor to his creditor, as his absolute property. To trust yourselves to speculators, what is it but to commit the lamb to the wolf to be devoured...

Moving on to Charleston, the home of William Smith who led the attack upon Madison's commercial resolutions in Congress, we find the Republican Society in that city meeting on March 14, 1794 and resolving that 13

... this meeting view with indignation the conduct of certain members of Congress, one of them a representative from Charleston district; being convinced from the whole tenor of their actions and debates in Congress, they are possessed of the basest and most dangerous principles; that far from being republicans, they are indifferent to the repeated depredations committed on the property of the citizens of America; that in addition to such insults and depredations, the retention of the western posts contrary to express treaty; supplies to the Indians, our deadly foes; the treaty devised and concluded by the British government to set the Algerines upon our commerce, are to them but trifles when compared with the prosperity of the funds, in which they are become deeply interested...

Nor did the Societies in the northern centers of federalism fail to enunciate their interest. On June 12, 1794, the chief Society in the country, the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania, located in the nation's capital, resolved: 14

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12 In the appointment of Jay. See below.
14 Minutes of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania (H. S. P.), p. 117. In its address of November 27, 1794, in reply to Washington's denunciation, the same Society resolved: "Among other rights secured to the people by the Constitution, is the right of election. This, fellow-citizens, is certainly one of the most important. Political Societies, by combining the attention and exertions of the people to this great object, add much to the preservation of liberty..." (Ibid., published in Federal Orrery (Boston) January 1, 1795).
... That a committee be appointed to prepare and report an address to the citizens of the United States representing the material transactions of the General Government, and calling upon them to deliberate and decide at the approaching elections, how far their representatives are entitled to public confidence, by approving the good and dismissing the bad...

In Boston itself, the Massachusetts Constitutional Society, in a letter to the Democratic Society of the City of New York, declared:15

... We conceive it the duty of the people to watch the conduct of those with whom they have entrusted the administration of their government; being agents for this important business, they are accountable to their constituents for their measures and whenever they deviate from the great objects of their appointments, the people ought to be assiduous in exercising their constitutional authority, to remove them from office...

But the Society in New York did not need to be reminded of this sacred duty, for as early as March 18, 1794, it had publicly expressed itself as follows:16

... that it is a duty in the highest degree incumbent upon the people, when they have instituted a government for their benefit, carefully to watch the conduct of those to whom they intrust its administration and if they deviate from the great end of their appointment, to displace them and appoint others in their stead...

The interest of the Societies in electing republicans to office, therefore, was too frequently reiterated not to be clearly understood. And when they jumped into the breach created by the postponement of the debates on Madison's commercial resolutions, to organize powerful republican propaganda in the very strongholds of federalism,17 they were but initiating their campaign toward that end.

Nominally only retaliatory commercial measures against British restrictions on American trade, Madison's resolutions were avowedly political in purpose18 and as soon as they were introduced in Congress and published in the newspapers, sides were drawn and party conflict waxed.19 Federalists in Congress and out, declared adoption would plunge the country into certain and devastating war; these resolutions, they cried, will work havoc with the revenue system of the country and destroy its credit. Republicans responded deprecating


the possibility of war and begging federalists to "divulge the pleasant secret when the nation may make an exertion for the restoration of violated rights without alarms to revenue!"  

Quick to couple the recent Order-in-Council with more venerable grievances against Britain, they now lashed out at the whole "paper system" as dependent upon the favor of that liberticide government. And they took measures to give political force to their views.

Madison's resolutions were introduced in Congress on January 3, 1794. Debate began on the 13th of that month, when William Smith of Charleston, attacked them severely in a long and detailed speech, of which, as Jefferson said, "every tittle . . . except the introduction," was Hamilton's. Madison promptly replied with equal detail and severity and the battle was on. After a month of acrimonious debate, "several of the eastern members" who were "friendly to the objects" of the resolutions, decided they had better "learn the sense of their constituents" before committing themselves openly on the subject. They pressed republican leaders, therefore, to postpone decision upon the resolutions till March 3. To this, the leaders found it neces-

20 These are the words of Giles of Virginia. See Annals of Congress (as cited) 288; Charles A. Beard, Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy (New York, 1915), 280–81.

21 Madison's resolutions were very similar to those he had proposed in 1791 except that there was now a special provision in retaliation for "damages sustained by the operations of 'particular nations in contravention of the laws of nations.'" This, says Bemis, "referred only to the operation of the Order-in-Council of June 8, 1793. News of the more drastic Order of November 6, and the captures made under it had not arrived in Philadelphia" (op. cit., 188). For consequences of the news of the operation of the November Order, see below.

22 For the debates on these resolutions, see Annals of Congress January 13 to February 5, 1795. There is an excellent summary in Beard, op. cit., 274–81. See also Bowers, op. cit., 240–42. Not all republicans, of course, were as unwarlike as Madison. See the series of "Cato" papers in the New York Journal in January and February, 1794, particularly that of February 15.

As for the federalists, their fears were most succinctly expressed in the following letter of January 13, 1794, from Robert Troup to Rufus King: "If Madison's propositions be adopted, I have little doubt that they will lead us into war . . . " (Life and Correspondence of Rufus King (Charles R. King, ed., 6 volumes, New York, 1894–1900), L. 542.)

23 Annals of Congress (as cited), 155. These may be found in Bemis, op. cit., 188.


25 Smith's entire speech may be found in Annals of Congress (as cited), 174–210; Madison's Ibid., 210–26.
sary to consent, but they consoled themselves with the hope that in
the interval, intelligence would arrive from England that "would
strengthen the arguments for retaliation."Fortunately for them,
March 3 found Congress busy with naval armaments and fortifications
and it was not till the 13th, that the subject of the resolutions was
reopened. By that time, enormous changes had taken place. The news
from England was better than the republicans had dared to hope.
And so was the news from the people.

As soon as the decision was taken to postpone enactment of the reso-
lutions, both parties alike began with much energy to organize opinion
behind their conflicting views. Of course, the chief commercial cen-
ters were the scenes of the greatest activity and since these were vir-
tually all federalist strongholds, that party had the advantage in the
bitter newspaper campaign that ensued. The republicans, however,
were never without energy and it was at this crucial juncture that they
found in the ubiquitous Democratic Societies the means to overbal-
ance the federalist supremacy of the press.

In many smaller cities, but particularly in Charleston, Boston,
Philadelphia and "even New York," the Societies either arranged
huge town meetings to consider the resolutions, or attended in force,
those they did not arrange. Their object was directly to inform mem-

26 Madison to Jefferson, March 2, 1794, Letters and Other Writings of James Mad-
27 See Madison to Jefferson, as cited in n. 26 above; Marshall, op. cit., V. 554.
28 Of all the papers published in New York City in 1794, for instance, Greenleaf's
New York Journal was the only one with republican sentiments. It was published only
twice weekly and had to compete, among others, with the Daily Advertiser, Daily
Gazette, American Minerva. Cf. E. Wilder Spaulding, His Excellency George Clinton
(New York, 1938), 163; Pomerantz, op. cit., 510.
29 For satisfactory but not quite complete lists of the Societies and their locations, see
Hazen, op. cit., 195; Luetscher, op. cit., 33.
30 Madison to Jefferson, as cited in n. 26 above; Madison to Jefferson, March 26, 1794,
ibid. II. 9; Cf. Bowers, op. cit., 242-4.
31 None of these meetings was avowedly conducted by any of the Societies, for they
were intended to express to Congress the opinion of "the people" and not of any clubs of
questionable respectability. (Cf. Hazen, op. cit., 203). There can be little doubt, however,
that it was the Democratic Club in New York that organized the meeting in that city. (See
below.) In Boston, the committee that arranged the meeting and wrote the original resolu-
tions was almost identical with the one that arranged the "civic festival in celebration of
the success of our French allies." (See Columbian Centinel, February 15, 1794, and Inde-
pendent Chronicle, March 20, 1794.) We know the names of only five members of the
Massachusetts Constitutional Society (James Sullivan, Perez Morton, Benjamin Austin Jr.,
Samuel Jarvis and William Cooper) and all of them were on the committee of the meeting
bers of Congress of "the will of the people" and to remind them of their responsibility to that will. Their method was to pass, publish and transmit to their fellow-societies and to Congress, series of resolutions attacking the conduct of Great Britain, supporting Madison's propositions and urging whatever other measures must be taken to "support the independence of our nation, the honor of our flag and the dignity of our country and government." Perhaps the most successful of these meetings was that held in New York City. And not only did this foreshadow Edward Livingston's success in the congressional election in December, but federalist attacks upon the meeting and upon its resolutions were equally consistent with their subsequent attacks upon the republican candidate and his supporters. In both instances, it was the Democratic Society that bore the chief burden of abuse, which would seem to indicate that while the federalists retained their contempt for the republican "rabble," they had already acquired a measure of respect for their superior organization; particularly since, as they believed, the success of that organization would destroy the whole federalist system.

The first session of the New York City meeting was held on February 27, 1794. It was scheduled for the Tontine Coffee House, but the crowd was so large that it had to be "moved to the upper part of

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on Madison's resolutions. (See also, federalist comment on the call for a meeting, in the Columbian Centinel, February 12, 1794.) Of the Philadelphia meeting, Madison wrote to Jefferson from that city on March 9, 1794: "... There was a large mercantile meeting last night in this city, for obtaining a vote of remonstrance against the propositions [Madison's]. A paper was accordingly introduced by Fitzsimmons, Bingham &c. It was warmly, and I am told ably, attacked by Swanwick, who explained and defended the propositions. He was clapped, and on the question, there were three or four noes for one aye to the paper ..." Madison, Letters . . . , II. 5.

Swanwick was one of the leaders of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania and the one who, with the aid of that Society, defeated Thomas Fitzsimmons for Congress in 1794.

On March 4, 1794, for instance, the New York Journal declared: "The great political question of the day is 'shall we bear with impunity British spoliations?' The people have met at Boston and Charleston on this subject . . . We learn that the same subject is to be taken into consideration by several other towns, the individuals of which feel themselves bound, in duty, to inform their representatives in Congress, what are the opinions of those they represent . . ." (Cf. Independent Chronicle, February 27, 1794.)


Lynch, op. cit., 63; Ames to Gore, December 17, 1794 Works of Fisher Ames (Seth Ames ed., 2 volumes, Boston, 1854), I. 156-7. See note 68 below.
Broad Street in front of the City Hall. There were at least 2,000 citizens at the town meeting," boasted the New York Journal. Speeches were made "concerning the vexations and embarrassments under which commerce labored or by reason of British spoliations lately committed," and a committee of twenty was selected "to consider what measures appear proper to be adopted in the present juncture and to report a set of resolutions expressive thereof, with a view that the same, when agreed to . . . may be forwarded to our representative in the Congress of the United States . . . These resolutions were to be published for public perusal on the fifth of March and another meeting was to be held on the sixth to express an opinion on the resolutions thus reported.

It was between February 27 and March 6, therefore, that the federalist papers in New York were particularly lavish with abuse. The burden of their attack was that the meeting was organized by "a paltry class of artful and designing men," and that its discussions were "the pitiful ebullitions of an incoherent mass of people." . . . It appears evidently from the persons who hatched and supported this meeting [wrote one federalist] that nine-tenths of them are the very men who met in the Fields and agreed to address Mr. Genet after he had grossly insulted . . .

\[35\] American Minerva, February 27, 1794; Daily Gazette, February 28, 1794; New York Journal, March 1, 1794.

\[36\] New York Journal, March 1, 1794. For federalist depreciation of this boast, see American Minerva, February 28, 1794.

\[37\] The keynote speech was made by White Matlack. It is not reported in the papers, but a federalist critic of the speech declared that Matlack proposed "that payment of British debts ought immediately to be suspended and the Western Posts taken possession of by force, while he made an assertion grounded on the exuberance of his own imagination that that haughty nation [Britain] was in the exercise of a deliberate plan to ship off all our cannon and then to attack us. Such nonsense," declared the writer, "can never be imposed on an enlightened and thinking people, who will never consent to be dragged into a war and to sacrifice their dearest interests merely to free a few individuals from those obligations which every civilized nation and every honest man have always deemed sacred . . ." (Daily Gazette, March 4, 1794.) See also ibid., March 6, 1794; American Minerva, March 3, 1794. For additional federalist criticism see Daily Gazette and Daily Advertiser, both of March 5, 1794, and reply in New York Journal of March 8, 1794. See also n. 37 below.

\[38\] See all papers referred to in note 35 above. The published membership of this committee aroused the federalists to sharp replies. "It appears from the names of the committee," wrote one, "that Mr. N. Cruger and Col. Smith and two or three others were thrown into the list to give the matter a coloring, but as all or most of the gentlemen were not present, they will unquestionably refuse the honor thus conferred upon them." (American Minerva, March 3, 1794, and Daily Gazette, March 6, 1794.)

\[39\] See all papers referred to in note 35 above; see also, New York Journal, March 5, 1794.

\[40\] American Minerva, March 1 and 3, 1794; Daily Gazette, March 4 and 6, 1794.
our government; that they are the men who abused the proclamation of the
President [Neutrality]; that they are members of the Democratic Society and
have been and still are opposed in politics to federal men and federal measures.
Is it not astonishing that these people, after reiterated trials and defeats, will
still attempt to control their fellow-citizens . . .

Another federalist inquired: 41

. . . Have you not chosen a man to represent your city in the House of Representa-
tives? Have you not delegated your powers irrevocably until the period expires
for which he was elected? Can you then instruct him? No, you have no such
right. You have only the right, at the end of two years, if he displeases you, to
leave him out and elect another in his place . . .

As if already afraid that that latter possibility might actually come
to pass, still a third declared: 42

. . . Nothing . . . seems to check their [the Democratic Society's] efforts to divide
the true friends to government. It may perhaps be once more expedient to unite
our force. Be assured by [sic.] fellow-citizens, there never was a time in which it [so ]
became your duty to support your government with your utmost exertions.
The object of these people ['a mere subdivision among us," he called them] is to
dragoon Congress into their measures; let it be ours by our words and actions to
evince that we have confidence in their talents, zeal and integrity and with respect
to our injuries from foreign nations, let us represent them in a manner govern-
ment has already pointed out . . .

The meeting in Boston was held before that in New York, and
when the federalists in the latter city learned of the extraordinary
filibuster of Harrison Gray Otis and that young man's success in thus
turning the Boston meeting from the republican resolutions, they lost
no time in singing the praises of Boston and recommending that New
Yorkers follow that excellent example. "The Bostonians have been
firm," wrote one federalist, 43

their sense has united them in the NEGATIVE of the improper measures pro-
posed to them. They have declared the regulation of commerce and all national
concerns to be vested in Congress and have decidedly avoided all interference. I
hope we shall imitate their example and act with their temper . . .

The republicans, however, replied with protestations of their inde-
pendence of Boston 44 and on March fifth, the Democratic Society

41 American Minerva, March 1, 1794; Daily Gazette, March 4, 1794.
42 American Minerva, March 3, 1794.
43 Daily Gazette, March 6, 1794. The federalists tried similar persuasion at the time
of the New York City election in December, after Ames had won in Boston. (See Daily
Advertiser, December 9, 1794.) Despite their defeat at the meeting, the Boston republicans
published a series of resolutions urging that Madison's proposals be passed. (See
Independent Chronicle, March 3, 1794.)
44 See "A Member of The Democratic Society" and other writers in Daily Advertiser,
March 6, 1794, and others in Daily Gazette, March 6, 1794.
published the hope that "... the VOTES of TOMORROW will prove that ... [the people] feel the INSULTS of the BRITISH government and that they dare to instruct their representatives."\(^{45}\)

On the sixth of March, as scheduled, the meeting was held in New York in "very stormy weather," "the resolutions read, unanimously agreed to [and] applauded with repeated cheers."\(^{46}\) Though this meeting did not follow the conservative action of Boston, some moderation was apparently achieved in the tone of the resolutions finally adopted. On March 8, 1794, for instance, John Laurance wrote to Rufus King:\(^{47}\)

... You no doubt have seen the resolutions [of the meeting.] They are different from the sett [sic] expected and were produced by some moderate men who are attached to the general government. Since the resolutions have passed, we have been tranquil & suppose will remain so...

\(^{45}\) New York Journal, March 5, 1794.
\(^{46}\) Ibid., March 8, 1794; Daily Gazette, March 7, 1794. These resolutions were printed in full on March 5, 1794, in the New York Journal, American Minerva, Daily Gazette and Daily Advertiser.

The resolutions themselves complained about Britain's nonfulfillment of the Treaty of Peace especially in regard to the Western Posts and consequent excitation of the Indians and about her "violent infraction of the laws of nations," in satisfaction of which the offended neutral nation is justified "by the laws of nature and of nations to seek restitution in any mode the most likely to obtain redress." Then they come to the crux of their more immediate grievance: "Resolved that as far as the government of the United States have pursued measures to effect fulfillment of existing treaties, to preserve its neutrality, to obtain a restitution of property to its plundered citizens, it is entitled to the warmest approbation of the people. But that the delays which have been experienced in procuring relief from the evils complained of, however unavoidable on the part of government, have been productive of great distress to the people and that every day that passes finds us less prepared for decisive operations because every day discovers a new sacrifice to foreign rapacity and perhaps when forced to the last means of redress, we shall be found without ship, without seamen and in the poverty attendant upon a ruined trade."

Then came the rather surprising declaration, that if the government would really remedy this situation and seek to "place us as a nation above the fear of injury or the apprehension of insult" by proper defenses of our harbours, "that the citizens of New York, jealous for the honor and willing to support the dignity of their country and government, will cheerfully submit to any tax (if the present revenues of their country are incompetent) which in the wisdom of their representatives may appear necessary to defray the expense..." (Parenthetically, it may be noted that in Pittsburgh itself, the center of the disaffection over the excise, at a public meeting on April 16, 1794, an address was drawn up, which, after severe attacks upon Great Britain, stated: "It is hoped that our public councils will take advantage of these hints, and should a war take place with the British administration, Resolved, that we will submit to any direct tax and possible service to give it a successful termination." Independent Chronicle, May 19, 1794.)

The New York resolutions were sent to John Watts, in Congress and he acknowledged receipt of them on March 15, 1794. (See New York Journal, March 29, 1794.)

\(^{47}\) King, Life and Correspondence, I. 549.
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While on March 13, 1794, Edward Livingston\(^48\) voiced his partial dissatisfaction with the resolutions in the following letter to DeWitt Clinton, a letter that reveals as well, the electioneering purposes of the meeting:\(^49\)

We have been abused in verse and libelled in prose [he wrote] for daring to call the people only to express their sense of our injuries—but all would not do. Our perseverance has been crowned with success and tho' our resolutions (contrary to my opinion) said nothing, yet they have shewn we had a party and such a party as will force some of them ["the ministerialists"] to resign either their policies or their places . . .

It is impossible to say what might have been the result of the congressional election in New York City, if it had been conducted during the heat of this excitement instead of in December. What is clear, however, is that from this time, led by the zealous activity of the Democratic Societies, the republicans took full advantage of every opportunity to attack federalism and organize a solid republican phalanx.\(^50\) General Wayne's victory at Fallen Timbers on August 20, 1794, and desperate federalist efforts in November of that year to blame the Societies for the Whiskey Insurrection, were important setbacks,\(^51\) but

\(^48\) Edward Livingston was to be the republican candidate for Congress from New York City in December, 1794. He was an active member of the Democratic Society of New York, see The Writings of James Madison (Gaillard Hunt, ed., 9 volumes, New York, London, 1906) VI. 228-9; and a member of the Tammany Society of the same place. (See, Society of Tammany . . . in The City of New York, Constitutions and Roll of Members (MSS., New York Public Library).

\(^49\) DeWitt Clinton Papers (Columbia University Library), "Letters to Clinton," I. 25.

\(^50\) Beard, op. cit., 259; Luetscher, op. cit., 33.

\(^51\) Humphrey Marshall, federalist senator from Kentucky, for instance, writing of his victory in 1794, declared that "the majority [in the assembly] in favor of Marshall was but small. And without doubt, that he had the majority is to be ascribed to the recent success of federal measures under Generals Wayne and Lee." (Humphrey Marshall, The History of Kentucky (2 volumes, Frankfort, Ky., 1824), II. 161. The reference to Lee is to Harry Lee of Virginia who was in charge of the troops during the Whiskey Insurrection after Washington had returned to Philadelphia. Cf. William E. Connelley and E. Merton Coulter, History of Kentucky (Chas. Kerr, ed., 2 volumes, Chicago, New York, 1922), I. 353-4; Charles H. Ambler, Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861 (Chicago, 1910), 64-5; Lynch, op. cit., 44; Bemis, op. cit., Ch. VIII.

Having succeeded once before in throwing Gallatin out of the Senate on a technicality, the federalists, now in the House of Representatives, in the second session of the third Congress, tried to expel him, this time on the pretense that his election from Fayette County was unlawful because that county was in a state of insurrection in October, 1794, when the election was held. This time they failed. See Miller, loc. cit., 333-4; Henry Adams, The Life of Albert Gallatin (Philadelphia, 1879), 139-40. For Gallatin's excellent speech in self-defense, see Writings of Albert Gallatin (Henry Adams, ed., 3 vols., Phila. 1879), III, 1-56.
opportunities for the republicans were not lacking. Their first chance, indeed, came on the very day after the successful town meeting in New York City, for, on March 7, 1794, news began to arrive in that port of the devastation wrought upon American shipping by the enforcement of the British Order-in-Council of November, 1793. The Caribbean captures made under these secret orders and the consequent atrocities committed against American seamen in the West Indies, aroused the entire country in a united outcry against Britain. Even Hamilton declared the new order "atrocious" and in curious company with the Charleston Republican Society, suggested to Washington that immediate measures be taken to raise an army of 20,000 men and to build fortifications "sufficient to resist anything short of a regular siege."

If Madison's resolutions had led the federalists to denounce the possibility of war, this March news caused them to act on that possibility, and it was they who now introduced into Congress, measures against Britain more strict even than Madison's, measures like the

52 See Bemis, op. cit., 192; John B. McMaster, History of The People of The United States (8 volumes, New York, 1914), II. 165-8.
54 See references in note 53 above.

On March 10, 1794, Rufus King wrote to Christopher Gore: "It will be our object to preserve peace, but it is our duty to adopt measures to place the country in a state of greater security. We must and shall attempt to fortify our principle Harbors—to equip a number of stout frigates, to engage a respectable military force to be provisionally employed, and also to impose some internal taxes. We shall, when these arrangements shall have been taken, be able to insist upon our neutral rights with a greater prospect of success and by that means we shall possess a more rational foundation to expect the enjoyment of peace . . ." (King, Life and Corres., I. 550).

Nor were their preparations limited to congressional measures, for while apparently accusing the republicans alone of fomenting war, federalists were not averse to taking commercial advantage of it themselves. On March 19, 1794, LeRoy wrote to King: "... Our political affairs wear really a gloomy aspect and I do not see how it is possible for us to avoid the general calamity that threatens ... The Livingston's are clear for war—John is in consequence, buying up all the salt he can lay his hands upon and if a war takes place it must be a good one. What do you think of such a speculation? If there is a probability of war, salt must rise; but if I was to speculate in it, I shall be for storing it at Hartford or some other place safe from the seashore. This city, not being fortified, will undoubtedly be much exposed, and the forts the General Government mean to build here are deemed altogether inadequate ..." (Ibid., I. 554.)
embargo, which Sedgwick himself recommended.\textsuperscript{55} One federalist even went so far as to propose sequestration of British debts,\textsuperscript{56} and while that won him the hatred and suspicion of his party,\textsuperscript{57} it probably aided him to retain his seat in Congress.\textsuperscript{58} These federalist efforts to atone for their previous truckling to Britain, however, did not impress the Democratic Societies at all, and on receipt of this March news, they turned upon their hated enemy and her American supporters with dithyrambic abuse. Washington himself and his neutrality proclamations soon suffered a like fate. For when that august figure dared to attempt to negotiate with the monstrous government of Britain

\\textsuperscript{55} This measure was embodied in a series of resolutions introduced by Sedgwick on March 12, 1794. These resolutions had proposed as well as an embargo, an army of fifteen regiments, each of a thousand men. (\textit{Annals of Congress}, 3 Cong. 1 Sess., 474.) They were apparently inspired by Hamilton (See Madison to Jefferson, quoted below) who had proposed such measures in a letter to Washington, dated March 8, 1794 (See note 53 above), and they had as well, the approval of Jay himself. (See King, \textit{Life and Corres.}, I. 555–6.)

Concerning these resolutions and his own, Madison wrote to Jefferson on March 14, 1794: “The paper of yesterday inclosed will give you a clue to the designs of the party which has used Sedgwick for its organ. His immediate prompter will be seen both in his speech and in his propositions. Whether more be seriously aimed at than to embarrass the others [Madison’s own propositions] . . . is by some doubted. Perhaps this may be one of the objects; but you understand the game behind the curtain too well not to perceive the old trick of turning every contingency into a resource for accumulating force in the Government. It would seem, however, that less subtlety has prevailed in this than in some other instances. The ostensible reason for the provisional army is not only absurd, but remote from the present sensations of the public; and at the same time, disarms the projectors of the cavil and calumny used with most success against the commercial propositions, to wit, that they tended to provoke war by an unnecessary alarm and irritation to Great Britain . . . ” (Madison, \textit{Letters etc. . . .}, II. 7.)

For additional republican criticism of the army and the pending navy plans, see Edward Livingston to DeWitt Clinton, March 13, 1794 (DeWitt Clinton Papers, Columbia University Library; \textit{New York Journal}, February 15, 1794.\textsuperscript{56})

\textsuperscript{56} That was Jonathan Dayton of New Jersey. See \textit{Annals of Congress} (3 Cong. 1 Sess.), 535, and Beard, \textit{op. cit.}, 40.

\textsuperscript{57} Cf. note 37 above. On March 30, 1794, LeRoy wrote to King: “I was really sorry to perceive the rash and premature motion made by Mr. Dayton & William Smith to sequester all British debts, public and private. The arrival here of the Proclamation of the 8th of Jany. [a British Order alleviating the severity of the Order-in-Council of November] started our funds generally 6 pr. ct., and the news of the above motion lowered them again as much on Saturday. I have my doubts whether such measures would be justifiable were the British even to confirm the condemnations and object to compensate. It would undoubtedly occasion many rascality amongst us and prove ruinous to our public credit, which most certainly is our interest to preserve in any point of view . . . ” (King, \textit{Life and Corres.}, I. 557.

\textsuperscript{58} See Madison to Jefferson, January 26, 1795, Madison, \textit{Writings}, (Hunt ed.), VI. 232.
and then to select, of all people in the land, John Jay, to carry on that negotiation, the flights of democratic invective knew no bounds. The societies were, however, vouchsafed yet another opportunity to vent their spleen when the news of Lord Dorchester’s speech to the Indians in February, 1794, and the publication of Hammond’s correspondence with Secretary Randolph attempting to justify that speech became known. Each of these manifestations of what they considered the British plague and evidences of its contagion in America, led to a crescendo of democratic vituperation. And the federalists, far from looking on in silence, replied in kind.

In the midst of this tremendous excitement, the State Assembly elections were held in New York in April. In New York City, they resulted in a clean sweep for the federalists, but the republicans could find sufficient reason to rejoice, for their leading candidate had polled the unprecedented total of 1,381 votes as compared to 537, the best any republican could get in 1793.

Without doubt, the Democratic Society was instrumental in achieving this result and thus encouraged, it immediately turned its attention to...
tion to the Congressional election in December. The first requirement
was to augment and strengthen its organization, and toward that end,
as soon as the election results were known, it published in the New
York papers, a long and moderate address fully explaining the pur-
poses and beliefs of the Society, inevitably attacking Great Britain
and her American supporters and exhorting all lovers of freedom to
join with the Society if they would safeguard their threatened rights.62
There is evidence to show that these efforts did not attract many fed-
eralists to the organization, but republican success in December was
to reveal what was accomplished in getting out the republican vote.63

Jay embarked for London on May 12, 1794, and Congress ad-
journed soon after.64 There can be little doubt that both events to-
gether resulted, in most parts of the country, in abatement of the
intense political excitement of March and April. It was not long,
however, before the nation was again rent in two, this time by an im-
passe in domestic affairs that had been brewing for a long time and

New York State," New York History, XV (July, 1934), 263-4; Robert Troup to Rufus
King, February 4, 1794 (King, Life and Corres. I, 544).

On December 2, 1794, a writer in the American Minerva, while attacking Livingston's
candidacy, declared: "... No man acquainted with the machinations of certain char-
acters among us at the last contest for Assemblymen, can be at a loss to know why and
by whom this competitor of Mr. Watts has been brought forward. It was boasted by one
of them—a member of the Democratic Society—that their favorite object had nearly
been accomplished; and he entertained no doubt, that vigorous efforts at the next elec-
tion would crown them with success . . ."

And a writer in the New York Journal of May 14, 1794, stated: "Finding a report
industriously circulated, that Commodore Nicholson, the President of the Democratic
Society of this City, had declared to General Web [sic] that he believed the President
of the United States had received British gold, or words to that amount," he, the writer,
immediately sought to check that report and he found it entirely unfounded on fact. He
recited his findings and continued: "From this statement of facts (as the report was
propagated on the eve of an election) is it not fair to suppose that this falsehood was
spread abroad to serve some electioneering purpose and at the same time expose the
reputation of the Society by this infamous attack upon the conduct of the President
thereof. . . ." See Samuel Webb to James Nicholson, May 18, 1794 (Correspondence and
Journals of Samuel Blachley Webb, (3 volumes, New York, 1894), III. 192-4.) See also,
resolution of the Democratic Society of New York, quoted p. 122 above.

63 See below.
64 Congress adjourned on June 9, but not before passing some internal revenue legisla-
tion that probably was influential in precipitating the rebellion in Western Pennsylvania.
(See Madison to James Madison, May 19, 1794. Madison, Letters . . ., II. 16; Miller, loc.
cit., 327-8.)
was at last to create hotter entagonisms even than had the European situation. In July, 1794, the first shots of the Whiskey Insurrection were fired in Washington County, Pennsylvania, and a few weeks later Hamilton made his alarming report to Washington. On August 7, the Commander-in-Chief ordered the militia to be gathered; and on the failure of peaceful negotiations with the insurgents, 15,000 men were ordered to march on September 25. The republicans saw in this uprising the ripe fruit of the oppression of the "paper system." The federalists saw it as the first tangible evidence of the revolutionary machinations of the Democratic Societies. And again the party battle raged. The press controversy this time was not nearly so boisterous as it had been over Britain, for the Societies dared not now attack the government while it was engaged in putting down rebellion. When they discovered in November, however, what uses the federalists were attempting to make of the insurrection, they burst forth with their most ambitious publications. For with Washington in harness and Hamilton in the saddle, the federalists, jubilant over their success in the west and with their eyes on the December elections, set out to crush the Democratic Societies.

Though after Jay's departure for London, political conflict lost some of its stridency for a time, the Societies, as we have seen, maintained the wonted tenor of their publications as well as the pace of their organizing activities. The federalists were quite aware of this,

66 The whole question of the implication of the Societies in the Whiskey Insurrection has been carefully examined elsewhere. See William Miller, "The Democratic Societies and The Whiskey Insurrection," loc. cit. p. 1 above, and the attempt to unseat Gal- latin, note 51 above. See also, Leland D. Baldwin, Whiskey Rebels (Pittsburgh, 1939), p. 112.
67 Between January, 1794 and February, 1795, the Massachusetts Constitutional Society in Boston met at least twenty times (See Thomas Coffin Amory, Life of James Sullivan, (2 volumes, Boston, 1859), II. 143). In the period from January to December, 1794, the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania met as often (MSS. Minutes of The Dem. Soc. of Pa., H. S. P., passim); and the Democratic Society of the City of New York, between April and December, 1794, met at least fifteen times. (See New York Journal, passim.) Aside from these regular meetings, the Societies took full advantage of all opportunities to hammer home their ideas. They celebrated with gusto, the recapture of Toulon by France; the Fourth of July found them ready with zealous republican addresses and toasts and the fourteenth of July was equally honored. (See New York Journal, March 3, 12; July 7, 9, 1794.) If the federalists had most of the clergy on their side, the republicans had the theater. (For the great ado over the staunch republicanism of the prologue and epilogue of the opera "Tammany," see Daily Advertiser, March 7, 1794; New York
but were in a quandary as to what to do about it. They turned to the Insurrection for salvation. As early as October 11, 1794, Edmund Randolph had written to Washington, who was still at the scene of the uprising:

Journal, March 12, 1794; and Edwin P. Kilroe, Saint Tammany . . . in The City of New York (New York, 1913), 194-5.) The party conflict over the reception to Joseph Priestley, refugee scientist from England, reveals how alert both sides were to take full advantage of every opportunity. (See New York Journal, June 7, 1794; American Minerva, June 7, 10, 1794.)

In addition to these propagandizing activities, the Clubs were apparently very active in direct political organizing. The federalist press, at the times of elections, for instance, constantly exhorted federalists to action since the other side "are all active . . . every nerve is in motion by them . . ." (See Daily Gazette, December 2, 1794, and p. 127 above; pp. 140-41 below; Columbian Centinel, November 3, 1794.)

As early as May 8, 1794, Jeremiah Smith, federalist from New Hampshire, wrote from Philadelphia: "The democratic societies have undertaken the guardianship of the rights of the people. They are ever and anon blowing the trump of faction, and warning the people of their danger, puffing members of Congress, who are for sequestering British debts, and widening instead of healing the breach between Great Britain and us. Need I add that this renders our situation uncomfortable—to me it is hateful. This zealous attachment to the rights of the people, this bellowing against monarchy, aristocracy, national debt, &c, this scorching fire of patriotism would be suspected with us in New Hampshire, but here it answers a good purpose . . ." To William Plummer in John Morison, Life of Hon. Jeremiah Smith (Boston, 1845), 64.

Fisher Ames declared that the Clubs were "born in sin, the impure offspring of Genet" (Ames, Works, I. 150) and that they were "despised by men of right minds" (Ibid., I. 148). But he also wrote: "It is not safe to make light of your enemy. They [the Clubs] poison every spring; they whisper lies to every gale; they are everywhere, always acting like Old Nick and his imps. Such foes are to be feared as well as despised . . . They will be as busy as MacBeth's witches at the election, and all agree the event is very doubtful . . ." (Ibid., I. 148). And on September 11, 1794, he wrote to Dwight: "Such strong ground may be taken against these clubs, that it ought not to be delayed . . . Some Hampshire ink should be shed against them. They are rather waning here. Yet their extinction is more to be wished than expected; and if they exist at all, it will be like a root of an extracted cancer, which will soon eat again and destroy . . . Plainly then, I think it necessary they should be written down and utterly discredited, that they should have less than no influence . . . The Democratic Clubs [at the next election] will not neglect to support the only two faithful of the Massachusetts members . . ." (Ibid., I. 150. The "two faithful" were Henry Dearborn of Maine District, and William Lyman, both democrats and both reelected in 1794. See ibid., I. 157.)

See also, George Cabot to Theophilus Parsons, August 12, 1794, in Henry C. Lodge, Life and Letters of George Cabot, (Boston, 1877), 79; also in Theophilus Parsons, Memoir of Theophilus Parsons (Boston, 1859), 471; Hazen, op. cit., 204; Charles Warren, Jacobin and Junto (Cambridge, Mass., 1931), 54-7; Luetscher, op. cit., 59; Albert J. Beveridge, Life of John Marshall (4 volumes, Boston, New York, 1919), II. 40.


Nor was this Randolph's last attempt to destroy the clubs. Early in 1795, Monroe's
... As I remarked to you in conversation, I never did see an opportunity of destroying these self-constituted bodies, until the fruits of their operations were disclosed in the insurrection of Pittsburg. Indeed I was and am still persuaded that the language which was understood to be held by the officers of government in opposition to them, contributed to foster them. They may now, I believe, be crushed. The prospect ought not to be lost...

To this Washington replied on October 16:

... My mind is so perfectly convinced that if these self-constituted societies cannot be discountenanced they will destroy the government of this country, that I have asked myself, whilst I have been revolving on the expense and inconvenience of drawing so many men from their families and occupations, as I have seen on the march, where would be the impropriety of glancing at them in my speech...

Apparently Washington found no "impropriety" in thus "glancing at them," and his denunciation of the Societies in his speech to both houses of the lame duck Congress on November 19, 1794, was manna to desperate federalists. "I inclose the President's speech,"

dispatches on the fall of the Jacobins in France (See Writings of James Monroe (S. H. Hamilton ed., 7 volumes, New York, London, 1898-1903), II. 80-87, 108), were received by Randolph as Secretary of State. "In acknowledging," as he said, the first of these, Randolph wrote to Monroe: "... Your history of the Jacobin Societies was so appropriate to the present times in our country, that it was conceived proper to furnish the public with those useful lessons, and extracts were published, as from a letter 'of a gentleman in Paris to his friend in this city.'" (Ibid., II. 81.)

On March 11, 1795, however, Madison wrote to Monroe: "... You will perceive in the newspapers that the parts of them [the dispatches of October 16 and November 7] relating to the Jacobin Societies have been extracted and printed. In New York, they have been republished with your name prefixed. The question agitated in consequence of the President's denunciation of the Democratic Societies will account for this use of your observations. In New York, where party contests are running high in the choice of a successor to Clinton, who declines, I perceive the use of them is extended, by adroit comments, to that subject also. It is proper that you should be apprized of these circumstances, that your own judgement may be better exercised as to the latitude or reserve of your communications..." (Ibid., II. 81; Madison, Letters etc... II. 37.)

On March 21, 1795, Joseph Jones wrote to Madison: "It is somewhat extraordinary that Monroe's letters should be published to serve electioneering purposes which I should suppose could not be done but by permission of the P——t or S——y of State. With respect to him it is an uncandid and ungenerous perversion of his intention and sentiments..." ("Letters of Jos. Jones to James Madison, 1788-1802," W. C. Ford, ed., Proceedings of the Massachusetts Historical Society, 2 ser., XV. 150; Richard Hildreth, History of The United States (6 volumes, New York, 1849-52), IV. 531.)

Washington, Writings, XII. 475; Beveridge, op. cit., II. 38; Miller, loc. cit., 335; Beard, op. cit., 259-60.
wrote Jeremiah Smith to Samuel Smith on November 20, 1794, "It is very popular with the friends to government; we consider what he says of self-created societies and combinations, disregarding truth &c., stirring up insurrections &c. as too applicable to democratic clubs &c., to admit of any mistake as to the application of it; we smile and they pout. They feel it. Let their mortification be increased tenfold . . ."  

There is no need here to discuss in detail the congressional contest over this phase of the President's speech, nor the long addresses published by the Democratic Societies in self-defense. What is clear is that this remarkable castigation of the Societies, if not actually arranged by Hamilton and his coterie, was avidly pounced upon by them as wonderful campaign material. It aroused republicans to hot rebuttal and made the Societies the major issue of the congressional campaign that was already underway in some states and was ready to begin in New York. Jefferson himself, in retirement at Monticello,

71 Morison, op. cit., 65; and Hazen, op. cit., 205.


There are good summaries of these debates in Miller, loc. cit., 335-9; Hildreth, op. cit., IV. 523-8; Beard, op. cit., 260-64.

73 See Miller, loc. cit., 340-41; and Madison to Jefferson, December 21, 1794; Madison, Letters etc., II. 28.

None of these addresses appeared before the election in New York or in most other places. They all denied the complicity of the Societies in the insurrection, declared that their members had been in the van of those who had taken up arms to suppress it, and concluded with bold statements of which the following is typical. It is from the Address of the Democratic Society of Washington County, Pennsylvania, the Society nearest the Insurrection:

"We always have and always shall consider ourselves amenable to the constitutional laws of that government from which we have the honor to derive the appellation; our institutions we are resolved to support; our public men and measures we are resolved to watch over; our sentiments to the world we are resolved to publish; and free communication of thoughts and opinions (one of our most invaluable rights) we are resolved to maintain; these resolutions we consider as the result of true democracy, and perfectly compatible with our constitution." (Aurora (Philadelphia), January 31, 1795; American Daily Advertiser, January 31, 1795; note 14, above.)

For similar resolutions of other Societies, see New York Journal, January 17, 1795; American Daily Advertiser, January 20, 1795; Independent Chronicle, January 5, 29, 1795; Aurora, December 27, 1794. See also, letter written from the Democratic Society of the City of New York to the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania (undated, but obviously written soon after the debates on the Societies in the House of Representatives; N. Y. C. Misc. MSS., Box 14, New York Hist. Soc.).
now raised his voice on a political question for the first time in many months.\(^7\)

In Philadelphia, the congressional election had been held before the debate on the denunciation of the Democratic Societies, and Thomas Fitzsimons, who opened the federalist charge in that debate, was already a defeated man, having lost his seat to John Swanwick, a member of the Democratic Society of Pennsylvania.\(^7\) In Boston, the election also antedated this debate and while the republicans lost in that city, they revealed much greater strength than ever before and it is probable that fraud contributed materially to the federalist victory, if, indeed, it was not responsible for it.\(^7\) It remained, therefore, for New York City, to test the effect of Washington’s denunciation upon the political fortunes of the nascent republican party. And in this third citadel of federalism, the campaign was a bitter one. Personal issues, issues of war and peace, Britain and France, excise and insurrection—none were lacking. But except for the first, all were associated with the attitude of the Democratic Society.\(^7\)


On December 17, 1794, Jefferson wrote to Giles: "... The attempt which has been made to restrain the liberty of our citizens meeting together, interchanging sentiments on what subjects they please, and stating their sentiments in the public papers, has come upon us a full century earlier than I had expected. To demand the censors of public measures to be given up for punishment is to renew the demand of the wolves in the fable that the sheep should give up their dogs as hostages of the peace and confidence established between them. The tide against our constitution is unquestionably strong, but it will turn. Everything tells me so, and every day verifies the prediction. Hold on then, like a good and faithful seaman till our brother sailors can rouse from their intoxication and right the vessel. Make friends with the trans-Alleganians. They are gone if you do not. Do not let false pride make a tea-act of your excise law..." (Jefferson, Writings, VI. 515–16, 516–9; VII. 15–17).

\(^7\) Luetscher, op. cit., 56; Bowers, op. cit., 258.

\(^7\) Luetscher, op. cit., 59; Bowers, op. cit., 257. For the fraudulent aspects of this election, see Independent Chronicle, November 6, 1794; Columbian Centinel, November 8, 1794; Madison to Jefferson, November 16, 1794 (Madison, Letters etc..., II. 19); Madison to Jefferson, December 21, 1794; Madison, Writings (Hunt ed.), VI. 229.

\(^7\) It is important to note that these were by no means the only issues that caused political division at this time, but they were the only ones that were prominently dramatized in the newspapers, at least in New York, Massachusetts and Pennsylvania, for electioneering purposes. Other important questions which had caused sharp divisions concerned the Bank of United States (See Annals of Congress, 3 Cong. 1 Sess., 32); and the free navigation of the Mississippi River. (See E. Merton Coulter, "The Efforts of the Democratic Societies of The West to Open the Navigation of The Mississippi," Mississippi Valley Historical Review, XI, 376–89.) See also, Beard, op. cit., Chapters VII, VIII.
The Federalists proclaimed Edward Livingston young and untried. To which the republicans replied that John Watts, his opponent, had been tried and found wanting. Livingston is of the French party, shouted the federalists. Watts is a hated Britisher, replied the republicans. Livingston and his family are unprincipled speculators; Watts is a “paper man,” retorted the republicans. Livingston is a great orator; Cicero with the code of Cataline, replied federalists. Watts is dependable; a robot without a tongue in his head, retorted republicans. But personal issues, however pungently stated, did not decide this election.

Edward Livingston was nominated for Congress at a meeting at Hunter's Hotel on November 14, 1794. Announcement of this nomination, however, did not appear in the papers till November 26, when the New York Journal carried it along with the notation that “Mr. John Watts, the present member, is also in nomination for Congress from this district.” The newspaper campaign commenced on the very next day, November 27, and came to its noisy conclusion on December 10, the day after voting began. The polls were kept open till December 11 and the ballots were then sent to Albany where they were counted early in February. The results were published in detail in the New York Journal on February 7, 1795. The final totals were Livingston, 1843; Watts, 1638. Livingston's majority, therefore, was 205.

All these charges and counter charges may be read in the New York Journal, American Minerva, Daily Advertiser and Daily Gazette for the last week in November and the first two weeks in December, 1794. To the charge that due to his heavy losses in speculation, he had failed to pay his creditors all that was due them, Livingston found it necessary to reply publicly. He said, in part: “... Those who know me are acquainted with the punctuality with which, in spite of heavy losses, my pecuniary engagements have been fulfilled; but others of my fellow-citizens, whose good opinion I have ever been solicitous to preserve, might credit the malignant falsehood, if I should not, as I do now, explicitly deny that I have ever refused payment of a just debt, or discharged one with less than the whole amount.” (Daily Advertiser, December 6, 1794.) A writer in the same paper, issue of December 9, 1794, challenged this. For the merits in the matter, see Davis, op. cit., I. 303-5; Charles H. Hunt, Life of Edward Livingston. (New York, 62-3.)

It has been declared over and over again that political divisions in New York were always “intensely personal” (See McBain, op. cit., 31; Flick, loc. cit., 261; James Parton, The Life and Times of Aaron Burr (2 volumes, Boston, 1892), I. 168-9; De Alva Stanwood Alexander, A Political History of New York (4 volumes, New York, 1906-23), I. Preface, iii—v). But with George Clinton's power and influence at its very nadir in 1794 (see references to Council of Appointment in n. 61 above) the election of Edward Livingston cannot be explained in terms of a Livingston-Clinton conquest over the forces of the Schuyler clan. Nor can any other element of personal power or popularity be given much credit for Livingston's success. It has never been noted that Edward Livingston was nominated for the State Assembly in New York on both the mechanics' and merchants' tickets in 1791 and nominated again in 1792 and 1793. In 1792, he either refused to run or gathered too few votes even to be listed among the unsuccessful candidates. For 1793, he is listed, but with a total of 214 votes, a very meager number when compared even
campaign, it is impossible to avoid the conclusion that it was the Clubs that were on trial; that the federalists were fighting republican policies indeed, and the republican candidate, but primarily republican organization. As Bowers writes: “Wherever there was a Democratic Society, the fight was a hard one for the federalists. For the first time they faced an organization, disciplined, practical, aflame with enthusiasm.”

Nowhere was this more true than in New York City, and throughout the campaign federalism was on the defensive.

Federalists frequently anticipated events to claim great success for Jay’s mission. But republicans knew better and said so.

Federalists reiterated the official version of the responsibility for the late insurrection. But the Societies had already refuted that argument.

Federalists significantly juxtaposed Democratic Clubs and Jacobin Societies but were ignored. They called the Societies “warmongers,” and received the appellation “fair-weather patriots,” for their trouble.

But the marrow of their complaint was that the Clubs were “electioneering engines” created truly enough to sow discontent with federalist (they called them “government”) measures—and that, too, for private ends.

“On every side,” wrote one discomfited federalist, in an article that bears lengthy quotation,

... we behold a general prosperity and happiness; the arts and sciences flourishing and dispensing their benign influence; commerce expanding her wings and every

with the votes of a half dozen other unsuccessful republicans in that year. On the other hand, John Watts, Livingston’s opponent for Congress in 1794, was also his opponent for the Assembly in 1791 and 1792, and both years he was elected, in 1792, with more votes than any candidate in the field, republican or federalist. In the Congressional election of 1792, Watts easily defeated William S. Livingston, polling 1,872 votes to the latter’s 707.

(For the nominations in 1791, 1792, and 1793, see, respectively, New York Journal, April 27, 1791; March 24, 1792; April 6, 1793. For the results in 1793, see ibid., May 29, 1793. For 1791, the papers give only the names of the successful candidates. Livingston was not among them. (Ibid., June 4, 1791.) For 1792, winners and losers are given with details of the vote, but his name does not appear there either. For the results of the Congressional election of 1792, see ibid., February 20, 1793.)

81 Bowers, op. cit., 257.


83 American Minerva, December 8, 1794; Daily Advertiser, December 3, 8, 1794; New York Journal, December 17, 20, 1794. Cf. n. 73 above.

84 American Minerva, November 29, 1794. Cf. note 69 above.

85 American Minerva, December 2, 3, 4, 1794; Daily Advertiser, December 8, 9, 1794; New York Journal, December 3, 1794.

86 Daily Advertiser, December 3, 9, 10, 1794.
tide wafting her treasures to our shores; the laws administered with purity and justice, and the sacred voice of religion generally regarded; and Peace diffusing her bounties with infinite profusion around us . . .

But in these great and halcyon times,

. . . the good citizen who obeys the laws and thinks all men as honest as himself, little dreams that treason and sedition are at work and when he hears the outcries of danger, regards them as the idle suggestion and clamor of groundless apprehension . . .

But let him not be deceived, for

. . . in the malice of their hearts and in the rage of their disappointments, there are many among us who have sworn enmity to the government and to those laws which are the glory of this country and the basis of our private happiness. Such vipers we have nursed in our bosoms and some of them we have elevated to offices of the first influence . . .

And what has been our reward?

. . . Under the mask of zeal to maintain our rights and to guard them from invasion or abuse, they have instituted clubs and societies wherever their influence could extend, while their secret designs are to overturn the government and laws; to introduce anarchy and mis-rule, and to establish despotism on the ruins of our liberties. By all the artifices their craft and cunning can devise they have endeavoured to debauch and seduce many of our well meaning citizens into their plots; many have had sense enough to perceive their designs and have withdrawn from their connection and too many are still held in the snares which were artfully spread for them. From this faction has proceeded that torrent of abuse (which has disgraced the American press and character) of men the most respectable for their abilities and patriotism. Even that name which posterity will ever hold sacred and which should never be lisped by an American but with veneration and love, has been blackened by the vilest calumnies that malice could invent . . .

And all to what purpose?

. . . They labor incessantly to strengthen their party and their industry is equalled by nothing but their wickedness. Their design is to elevate to office those of the most consideration among them, and to gain a possible majority in our public councils. Should they succeed in such an attempt, farewell your boasted liberties, farewell to Peace, to Law and Order, and all the blessings of good Government . . .

Without a doubt it was the activity of the Democratic Societies that dominated the elections of 1794. But the importance of that activity was not so much in the victories it won, as in the fact that victory, where it was won, was achieved by organizing the numerical majority into a republican majority. For it was in this that the ultimate threat

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87 American Minerva, December 9, 1794.
to federalism lay, in that no matter how well it kept its own forces in line, it could not hope, in the end, to triumph over greater numbers, when those numbers were as strictly organized for political action.\textsuperscript{88} Such organization was at the root of the federalist defeat in New York City in 1794, as an analysis of the vote in that year compared with that of 1792 and 1796, will readily disclose. It will reveal as well, how well founded was federalist apprehension over the activities of the Societies and how well justified, from their point of view, were their bold intrigues to destroy them.

That the federalist vote in New York City was fairly constant in relation to the republican vote in the three years we have mentioned, is shown by the following figures:\textsuperscript{89} In 1792, the federalist candidate for Congress received 1,872 votes; in 1794, 1,638; in 1796, 1,812. On the other hand, the republican candidate in 1792, had 707 votes; in 1794, 1,843; in 1796, 2,362. In 1792, the federalist candidate had a majority of 1,165 votes; which in 1794 was almost completely cancelled by an increase of 1,136 in the republican total. The second and third wards in New York City, were the most powerful seats of federalism. In both together, Watts had a total majority (not a total vote) in 1792, of 698. In 1794, that majority was reduced to 303, but the federalist vote in the two wards in 1794, was only 51 less than in 1792. The sixth ward was the only strong republican one in the city. Watts, however, in 1792, had a majority in it of 59 votes. In 1794, Livingston won the ward by 242 votes, though Watts' total of 96 was only 70 less than in 1792. The remaining four wards, up to the republican victory of 1797, were also consistently federal, but not with the predominance of the second and third. In them in 1792, Watts had a total of 882 votes, while William S. Livingston had 474. In 1794, however, while Watts' total was still 769, Edward Livingston had 1,015 votes.

Commenting on the republican victory in New York City in 1797, Jefferson wrote to Burr (June 17, 1797): "If a prospect could be once opened upon us of the penetration of truth into the eastern states; if the people there, who are unquestionably republicans, could discover that they have been duped into the support of measures calculated to sap the very foundations of republicanism, we might still hope for salvation and that it would come, as of old, from the east. But will that region ever awake to the true state of things? Can the middle, southern and western states hold on till they awake? These are painful and doubtful questions ..." (Jefferson, \textit{Writings}, VII. 147; Cf. Jefferson to Giles quoted in note 74 above); and Luetscher, \textit{op. cit.}, 60.

\textsuperscript{88} The data used for 1792, 1794 and 1796, in all that follows, are from the \textit{New York Journal} of February 20, 1793; February 7, 1795, and January 21, 1797.
Thus not only did the republicans make large gains in the traditional federalist strongholds in New York City (and those gains not at federalist expense), but they got out an overwhelming vote in their own. And if we grant, as the federalists did and as I think we must, that the Democratic Society was responsible for this, then we must acknowledge that it was under its auspices that there was organized, really for the first time, an effectual republican "electioneering engine," an engine that betokened great things for the future and in 1800, although in different vestments, lived up to that token.

If like Moses, the Societies were denied entrance into the Promised Land, at least, like him, they had shown distinctly to the "Pilgrims going toward Mecca" (as Fisher Ames dubbed the "mob" on its way to the polls) the way thither.

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