

CHAPTER 4

CONSERVATIVE REACTION, c.1792-1820: THE CASE FOR REJECTION

We defy the most learned chronologist, the most intelligent annalist, the most industrious antiquary, and the most diligent inquirer into the facts and records of past times, to produce from history, ancient or modern, any parallel for such situations. In truth, no such nation as the United States, all circumstances considered, has ever been discovered in the political hemisphere.¹

So the *Anti-Jacobin Review* summed up the enigma that the American republic continued to constitute for conservative observers in Britain in the early decades of its existence. In this particular instance, months before the outbreak of the Anglo-American War of 1812, the writer was both confounded and outraged that ‘a nation, insignificant in the scale of power, in the infancy almost of civilization, and with a circumscribed revenue, arising from sources over which she had not absolute controul’ should be ‘publicly discussing, in her legislative bodies, not only the propriety and necessity of war with a friendly state, but the means of carrying it on, and the objects to which it should be directed!’² How to square the circle of presumed American incompetence with a rising anxiety regarding its potential was an unspoken (and perhaps unrecognised dilemma) for British conservative commentators during these decades.

Conservative writers articulated a largely hostile attitude towards the United States of America between 1792 and 1820. They admitted that there were some reasons to admire the achievements of the new republic; and apprehension, which was also expressed, implies some form of respect. It proved to be much too soon yet, however, for writers at this end of the British political spectrum to admit the reality of the establishment of a successful federal republic in place of their thirteen colonies, to ‘embrace closure’, and to accept that they had departed from the British empire without disintegrating into inter-state conflict, political collapse, economic ruin and loss of all international stature. They had been convinced that an American republic was not viable,

and they had fully expected the attempt to result in disaster. Their response to its realization and flourishing was a mixture of resentment, contempt and fear. Moreover, their stance on British political issues which emerged during these decades – parliamentary reform, defence of the British empire, and the question of free trade – also determined that their attitude towards America was unlikely to be appreciative. Indeed, for much of the time they were really discussing British politics through the prism of America. The American constitution, American party politics, American grievances concerning the British navigation laws, Canada, emigration to North America, and the Anglo-American relationship were all deeply interesting matters in themselves. But they also allowed conservative writers to expound scorn for representational politics involving a wide franchise and weak central government; suspicion of reformers; support for protectionist commercial policy, imperialism, conservation of traditional practices and values; pride in Britain's place in the Napoleonic and post-Napoleonic world; and dismissal of former colonists who believed that they could succeed as a nation apart from their mother country.³

The writers who comprise the main witnesses to the conservative attitude towards the United States of America between 1792 and 1820 in this chapter are George Canning, John Wilson Croker, John Gifford, Sir John Barrow and, to a lesser extent, Arthur Young. They are supplemented liberally by some of the main conservative review periodicals of these decades, which carried substantial articles on American issues, and which Canning, Croker, Gifford and Barrow either wrote for or were instrumental in establishing or editing: the *Anti-Jacobin* (1797-8) and the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, later the *Anti-Jacobin Review and True Churchman's Magazine* (from 1798); the *Quarterly Review* (from 1809); and *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* (from 1817). Of the writers discussed in Chapter Three, none continued to publish considerations of the

United States after 1791. Samuel Johnson died in 1784, and Josiah Tucker in 1799; Adam Ferguson lived until 1816 but, like Burke, he had moved his attention completely to the Revolution in France and the war in Europe in this period. Even his correspondence betrays no trace of a continuing curiosity about America. Knox concentrated on British North American territories till his death in 1810, acting as agent for New Brunswick from 1783 till 1808, and for Prince Edward Island from 1801 till 1807, though he continued to lobby government ministers with the view that the interests of British territories and their trade should not be sacrificed to the interests of American commerce.⁴

John Gifford (1758-1818), historian of France, was the ‘arch-Tory editor and chief writer’ of the monthly *Anti-Jacobin Review*, the successor to the *Anti-Jacobin; or, Weekly Examiner*.⁵ Both, as their titles suggest, were established as prominent Church-and-King polemical weapons against the ideology and example of the Revolution in France. Gifford continued to edit and write many articles for the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, as well as for the *Quarterly Review*, until his death in 1818. He held two consecutive police magistracies and a pension of £300 a year as a result of his services to government in his journalism and pamphleteering; though, as Emily Lorraine de Montluzin has written, it seems unlikely that the deep and viciously conservative political convictions apparent in his writing were produced simply by Treasury money.⁶ Arthur Young (1741-1820), an agricultural reformer and writer, was similarly primarily interested in the Revolution in France, which had transformed his liberal and reformist attitudes into counter-revolutionary conservatism – indeed, he seemed to suggest that he had initially been more enthusiastic about the new American constitution until events in France made him think more cautiously.⁷ He wrote one of the most famous and influential British pamphlets of the 1790s propaganda war on the French Revolution, *The Example of France a Warning to Britain* (1793).

His agricultural concerns had led him not only to investigate France in the years leading up to the Revolution, but also to take an interest in America: he corresponded at some length with George Washington about farming in Pennsylvania and Virginia.⁸

Canning (1770-1827), a protégé of the Younger Pitt and an MP from 1793, was Under-Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs between 1796 and 1799, and Foreign Secretary between 1807 and 1809, the latter in particular a period of rising tension between Britain and America over the maritime rights of neutral nations during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic wars. He founded the *Anti-Jacobin* in 1797 to counter the liberal *Monthly Magazine* and ‘to set the mind of the people right upon every subject’. In 1809 he established the *Quarterly Review* with the novelist Walter Scott in direct opposition to the liberal *Edinburgh Review*.⁹ The *Quarterly Review* was an organ which consistently criticized the new American constitution and argued that Britain was too conciliatory towards America in the long-running dispute. Although Canning was a leading contributor to the short-lived *Anti-Jacobin*, he wrote very little himself for the *Quarterly Review*, and his own pronouncements on America were chiefly made to the House of Commons both during and after his tenure as Foreign Secretary.¹⁰

John Wilson Croker (1780-1857) was Canning’s colleague both in Parliament and on the *Quarterly Review*. He entered Parliament in 1807, and held the post of Secretary to the Admiralty between 1809 and 1830, in which capacity he, like Canning, had much to say about American diplomacy. His *Key to the Orders in Council* (1812) was written at the request of the Prime Minister, Spencer Perceval, to explain government policy towards America, and published at the expense of the Treasury. Thousands of copies were said to have been sent to America as well as to British coastal towns.¹¹ Although his other pamphlet on the War of 1812, a collection of letters he had published in the *Courier* under the pseudonym *Nereus* (the Greek god of the

sea), was written to defend the Admiralty against British charges of neglect and incompetence during the conflict, it none the less caused John Quincy Adams to describe him as ‘an inveterate and rancorous enemy to America’.¹² Croker also wrote many articles for the *Quarterly Review*. Sir John Barrow (1764-1848), a civil servant also at the Admiralty, and a promoter of exploration (and author of *Mutiny on the Bounty*, 1831), was another prolific contributor to the *Quarterly*. Although he claimed in his *Autobiography* to have ‘avoided touching upon politics as much as possible, almost, I might say, altogether’ in his articles for the review, confining himself to the discussion of voyages, travels and inventions, in fact he was central to two lengthy and important articles on America which proposed at the start of the War of 1812 that a secret understanding existed between President Madison and Bonaparte, and, later, that Madison was playing France and Britain off against each other, as well as to some later articles discussing American commerce and society.¹³

The *Quarterly Review* was by design not a party organ; although it had strong links with the government, it was independent. It was a political publication as much as it was a literary journal, however, and the views expressed in it emanated from a broadly conservative or Tory position. It supported the administrations which led Britain through the long wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France as well as through the short war against America in 1812-14, but it was more concerned to oppose liberalism than to defend the government.¹⁴ By 1818 its circulation was 13,000, and its readership far in excess of that.¹⁵ While Croker, Gifford and Barrow were regular contributors to the *Quarterly*, not all of its articles have yet had their authors identified, including some substantial and important papers on the United States.¹⁶ *Blackwood’s Edinburgh Magazine*, founded in 1817, was another partisan Tory periodical, which also aimed to weaken the influence of the *Edinburgh Review*, publishing both satirical and

reflective pieces by writers of such stature as Thomas De Quincey, James Hogg and J.G. Lockhart.¹⁷

As Massimiliano Demata has suggested, discussing travel literature and works on foreign policy allowed the review periodicals to consider many of their interests at once – literature, culture, foreign policy and the place of Britain in the wider world.¹⁸ American affairs retained an irresistible fascination even for conservatives who would rather not have had to deal with them – the regular paragraphs on news from the United States published in *Blackwood's*, for instance, were placed ahead of those on 'British North America', or Canada. The following discussion will consider in turn the writings and speeches of these conservative politicians and journalists on the subjects of the American Revolution in retrospect, the American political system, the international role of the United States, the War of 1812, the American economy and society, and the prospects for British emigrants to America.

I The American Revolution

Conservative periodical writers continued to nurse a resentment for the American Revolution in the decades following the ratification of the American constitution. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* was particularly unforgiving. While most British loyalists managed to produce largely positive obituaries when George Washington died, John Gifford wrote a venomous piece, denouncing him as a 'traitor', and the *Anti-Jacobin Review* continued to disparage him for years to come. He was hypocritical regarding financial benefits; his military talents had been greatly over-rated; and the review was still describing him as a rebel and a traitor in 1814 – 'for we shall ever call persons and things by their proper names'.¹⁹

Commenting unfavourably on American election politics in 1800, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* expressed the view that ‘the first fruit of their independence’ had been ‘decrepitude and disgrace’.²⁰ A letter purporting to have been reprinted from the *Montreal Courant* in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in 1813 succinctly summarized the review’s opinion of the American Revolution. It had ‘originated in base ingratitude, founded upon a speculative apprehension of oppressions’, despite the complete absence of such tyranny by the British government. On the contrary, ‘the fostering care of the mother country, had been manifest in every step of the progress to maturity, of her unnatural children’, not least in rescuing the American colonists from the grasp of France in the Seven Years’ War, after which the colonists had ‘ungenerously refused to contribute one penny’. America had achieved independence only at the cost of the ‘sacrifice of [its] moral character’.

Still worse were the wider consequences of the Revolution for which America was to be held responsible. It had turned out to be

A Pandora’s box of evils, from which issued *the accursed French Revolution*, with all its horrid train of enormities, of fatal consequences, *which* has made Europe to bleed at ever[y] pore, and has now laid the continental part of it prostrate at the feet of the merciless usurper, dignified by the titles of emperor and king.²¹

John Gifford, for instance, explained, in his history of the reign of Louis XVI and of the French Revolution, that the French entry into the War of Independence on the side of America had been significant, largely because of its financial consequences, but also because ‘the minds of men become attached to those principles which the causes they are embarked in require them to support’, and so the French nation had ‘naturally imbibed a love of freedom, nearly incompatible with royalty’. Gifford, however, was more nuanced than others in recognising also that some members of the French National Assembly had rejected American political principles as not

precisely suitable to French circumstances, and in showing that the French Revolution was ultimately derived from first principles rather than in imitation of the American example.²² By the time he came to write his *Second Letter to the Hon. Thomas Erskine* (1797), he was ready to be very critical of Erskine's claim that 'America and France began their revolutions *upon the same principles*'. According to Gifford, 'An attentive perusal of the French Declaration of the Rights of Men, and the American Declaration of Independence, will suffice to demonstrate the inaccuracy of ... your affirmation, by proving the two revolutions to have been founded on *opposite principles*', i.e. 'Retention' in the American case and 'Destruction' in the French.²³ In fact Gifford traced the political principles of the revolution in America in some measure back to the English Puritans of the seventeenth century, in any case.²⁴ None of this, of course, disproved the notion that the French Revolution had been inspired by the broad example of liberation set by the Americans, and still less did it contradict the case that the financial crisis in France which had been partly responsible for the revolution had been aggravated by the part taken by France in the American War of Independence.

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* was convinced that 'The independency of America may, in all probability, be one of the greatest misfortunes that ever befel it', leaving it economically isolated and politically at the mercy of faction, discord, anarchy and despotism; whereas, despite everything, Britain had benefited from the separation, being rid of 'a nursery of discontent' and freed to act more fully to pursue its own real interests.²⁵ As Arthur Young put it, 'a country may lose the monopoly of a distant empire, and rise from the imaginary loss more rich, more powerful, and more prosperous!'²⁶ Yet the *Quarterly Review* noted – midway through the War of 1812-14, when anti-American bitterness was reinforced – that the revolution in America had also

‘introduced a dangerous change of feeling in this country. It placed a portion of the English people in mental alliance with the enemies of England’.²⁷

II The American Political Model

In 1817 Jeremy Bentham caricatured the British conservative reaction to the thriving United States of America:

There they are – but happily with the Atlantic between us and them – the never-sufficiently-accursed United States. There they are – living, and (oh horror!) flourishing – and so flourishing! flourishing under a reproach to legitimacy! Oh what a reproach, a never-to-be-expunged reproach, to our own Matchless Constitution – matchless in rotten boroughs and sinecures! Oh! had they but one neck – these miscreants!²⁸

The satire was exaggerated, but Bentham’s capture of conservative fear of the example of a successful republic in America was not far wide of the mark, more than three decades after independence had been ceded, and more than two decades after the outbreak of the Revolution in France, but at a time of continuing economic discontent and political restlessness at home, and of popular protest against illiberal governments in Europe.²⁹

Twenty-five years earlier, in the immediate aftermath of the eruption of the French Revolution, Mark Philp has argued, British loyalists had not quite known how to deal with the American model. It was impossible to ignore it after the publication of Thomas Paine’s *Rights of Man, Part Two*, in which Paine handled the increasing volatility and unpredictability of the French revolutionary model by paying more attention to America as an example to be emulated than to France. The loyalists’ strategy was to attack Paine *ad hominem* and to counter his arguments with various reasons why the American example was inapplicable to other governments in pamphlets published in 1792 and 1793; and then to ignore America in later discussions of the

French Revolution, as if to shut it out of the discussion, because it was not obvious how its example could be properly repudiated.³⁰ Nevertheless, as David Wilson has written, it was vital for conservatives to overturn the image of America as a land of liberty and a model to be followed by the Old World.³¹ The conviction that British radicals and, indeed, the British public, required to have their illusions regarding America dispelled was frequently expressed by the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, which explained in 1799 that it wished

to remove the film of prejudice from the eyes of thousands in this country, who have been accustomed to consider the United States as a model for all political institutions, as the asylum of liberty, and the last refuge of *persecuted* patriotism.³²

The suggestion that conservatives of the 1790s did not have complete confidence in their own arguments against the American example, however, is perhaps supported by the fact that they sometimes admitted that its political character was not wholly objectionable. Some even claimed that its constitution was edging closer to the British system. The presidency was taking on characteristics of monarchy, and the Senate those of aristocracy, a few years having proved that simple democracy was not perfect – developments that radicals were also concerned they could detect.³³ Arthur Young contended that the American revolution had not, as Paine suggested, created its constitution experimentally from first principles: ‘for there is not now in the world a constitution so near the British as that of the United States’. Even its suffrage was limited by property qualifications, although the French Revolution had shown that the American constitution must be inferior to the British in its greater vulnerability to the monster of popular power.³⁴ One of the regular contributors to the *Anti-Jacobin Review* was the Rev. Jonathan Boucher, a colourful British-born Loyalist in America during the Revolution. Despite his experiences of Patriot antagonism towards him in America, Boucher did acknowledge that the American Revolution had been more moderate than the French, expressed the hope that an

Anglo-American alliance against the revolutionary French might emerge, and even speculated that such a coalition might lead to a federal union of some kind between Britain and America.³⁵

By 1810 the *Quarterly Review* admitted American peace and stability since its revolution, if (grudgingly) only by comparison with France, and for reasons not particularly to its own credit:

It was, perhaps, natural to suppose that the spell which had worked such wonders was liberty [But] It is, indeed, plain that the infant republic of America was nearly precluded from warlike exertion, by the combined effect of its weakness and of its remoteness from the great theatre of political contention.³⁶

The reviewer also referred to America's vast and underpopulated territory to explain its internal stability, explaining that the almost unlimited opportunities for 'enterprize and exertion', offered by land to be cleared and cultivated, acted as

so many sluices to draw off that superfluous humour, that *disposable unquietness*, if it may be so called, which had been excited by war, and would not subside with peace. Here, all the adventurous, the busy, and the troubled spirits, found either a resting-place, or a safe range. ... Thus a part of the community, which, under other circumstances, would have been most noxious to the rest, was rendered not only harmless but useful.³⁷

America, in other words, was exceptional, and the precedent claimed on its behalf by radicals was 'misapplied'.³⁸ In any case, the American experiment was yet too young to be judged properly. 'We have no convictions, no proof, it is in the womb of time – THE EXPERIMENT IS NOT YET MADE', warned Arthur Young in 1793. Nearly thirty years later, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* still thought that 'the republican system of America, which has not experienced the trials of half a century, and was almost destroyed by a little piratical war of a couple of years' duration, scarcely afforded means of forming a proper judgement'.³⁹

This approach was favoured by more moderate loyalists who acknowledged that the United States had not quite sunk into anarchy, chaos and ruin since obtaining its independence, and who therefore wished to explain that its circumstances were quite different from those of Britain and

other European countries, who could not and should not try to copy its model. The enormous tracts of land still available in America presented not only occupation to the restless, but also opportunity to the ambitious, and the possibility of greater economic equality than could be offered in the Old World. It was this resource, and the progress of commerce, not its political constitution, which gave America its character of liberty; and it was trade with America, not the American example of republican government, which was of consequence for Europe.⁴⁰

By far the most common conservative response to the American republican constitution, however, was trenchant criticism – and indeed, Troy Bickham suggests that, by 1812, conservatives were comfortable in using the American Republic as a better cautionary tale than the French, because of the cultural heritage and similarities shared by Britain and America.⁴¹ Substantial analysis of the constitution was rare, perhaps reflecting the difficulty conservatives found in dealing with the American example. It was much more common for them to point out disadvantages which they claimed had resulted from the representative system. The most damaging aspect of republicanism, in their view, was that it awarded too much power and influence to the people and too little to the executive government. Such popular liberty as it created was better termed ‘licentiousness, bordering upon brutality’, and it was unquestionably worse than ‘the occasional abuse of magisterial power in a monarchical government’. With so little formal power to support them, administrations were likely to resort to using the mob to enforce their wills, according to the *Quarterly Review*, which suggested that President James Madison was doing exactly that on the outbreak of war in 1812.⁴²

His policy is represented as ... vibrating to the feelings and the sentiments of a set of adventurers in the seaport towns, men without character and without a country; as appealing to the opinion of the mob, and the bending to that opinion. – In one word, America is said to be, at this moment, as much swayed by the clamorous rabble and the democratic clubs of the seaport towns, as the Directory of France was in the very worst periods of the Revolution.⁴³

The lack of power and reward for government service in the American republican system resulted in men of inferior quality offering themselves as delegates and standing for office. The House of Representatives was mainly composed of lawyers, according to the *Quarterly*, who spent most of their time in the House studying their briefs rather than government policy; but at least they were orderly. 'At times, nevertheless, the harmony of the house is interrupted by some turbulent Irishman, or some back-settler whom a keg of brandy may have sent to Congress, which in these wild and almost desolate regions is an irresistible canvasser'. The caucus system of elections was believed to be corrupt, and it made a mockery of the American claim to popular representation and universal manhood suffrage. It was 'a great fallacy, and a complete fraud on the people ... the Turkish constitution which calls a leader to his post by acclamation, may just as well be called a popular representation'.⁴⁴

Representative government also produced abusive factionalism, according to conservatives. 'The Americans ... are for ever cavilling at some of the public measures; something or other is always wrong, and they never appear perfectly satisfied. ... Party spirit is for ever creating dissensions among them', stated the Rev. Samuel Henshall in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in 1799. He accused the American public of crude, dogmatic political opinions, 'borrowed from newspapers, which are wretchedly compiled from the pamphlets of the day'. 'The canvassing preparative to the *election of president* (which will take place in October next)', reported John Gifford in August 1800, 'is conducted with that rancour and indecency, which are peculiar to American politics'.⁴⁵ Moreover, suggested the *Quarterly* in 1814, the federal structure of the United States was almost designed to produce division, and might even lead to the dissolution of the Union in time.⁴⁶

American republicanism was also flawed by a corrupt system of justice. The *Quarterly Review* claimed that, because the judges were elected by the President and the Senate, and because they were not salaried, but received ‘only an uncertain “compensation, at stated periods, for their services”’, they became ‘the creatures of the president and senate’. Moreover, the lesser courts were entirely swayed by party politics and the allegiance of the presiding magistrate. ‘The justices of the peace are not, as with us, respectable country gentlemen. No such character, in fact, is known in America.’ In republican America, the review claimed, it was unnecessary for judges – or attorneys, doctors or preachers – to have had any training or qualification to practise. As a consequence of all these factors, it was not uncommon for the American people to take the law into their own hands.⁴⁷

The conservative reviewers also pointed out the rivalry and strife they noticed between northern and southern American states, ‘between whom some luxuriant seeds of jealousy and irreconcilable enmity were deeply sown, even before they united’. In 1798 the *Anti-Jacobin Review* expressed astonishment that the Union had lasted as long as it had.⁴⁸ Both reviews favoured the inhabitants of the New England states, whom they considered to be the most like Europeans in their sentiments and manners, characterising them as ‘active and enterprising’, over their ‘luxurious and indolent’ southern neighbours.⁴⁹ It helped, of course, that the northern states generally preferred a policy of restraint towards Britain in the years before the War of 1812-14, while the southern states favoured France. Indeed, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* suggested that the internal division was a root cause of the war of 1812-14, and that otherwise it would probably have resulted in an American civil war by 1812. The northern and eastern states had profited disproportionately from the long European war, which caused great jealousy in the southern and

inland states, whose inhabitants predicted the rise of undue northern political influence in the Union as a result.⁵⁰

III The International Role of the United States

Conservatives, then, were very clear in their advice that Britain had nothing to gain by adopting American constitutional principles. Canning cited the example of America as well as that of France to illustrate ‘the effects of any attempt at the practical application of theoretic notions of democratic reform’.⁵¹ These conservative writers and reviews generally also expressed disdain for the quality and weight of the American republic in the scale of nations. It was, the *Quarterly Review* maintained in 1809, rather less powerful than either it or its British friends imagined, and John Barrow later reported gleefully that Americans were viewed only as ‘second-chop Englishmen’ in China, partly because (he alleged) they lacked commercial integrity, and partly because they allowed the Chinese to sell them poor quality tea leaves.⁵² Nevertheless, conservative commentators devoted significant space to criticising American ‘francophilia’ and explaining that it was, by contrast, in the interests of both the United States and Britain to cultivate a good relationship, which suggests that beneath the contempt they expressed lay a degree of fear of the growth of American power on the international stage.

Most British conservative commentators thought of the Americans as ‘Jacobinical’ during the 1790s, including, reportedly, the Prime Minister, William Pitt.⁵³ Gifford believed that the French action on behalf of America during the War of Independence had had the effect of securing ‘a grateful and potent ally’ to France.⁵⁴ In May 1798, as hostilities threatened between the United States and France (which it chronicled with pleasure), the *Anti-Jacobin, or Weekly Examiner* expressed great anxiety that the Adams administration would be tempted to pursue negotiations

with France because of public sympathy for the French republic.⁵⁵ It was after the election of ‘Citizen’ Thomas Jefferson, however, ‘that stout republican and stern philosopher of the new school’, as the third president of the United States in November 1800, that American ‘francophilia’ was thought to have taken off in earnest. As the *Anti-Jacobin Review* put it in September 1805, ‘When a people are so degenerate as to *chuse* for their governor an Atheist and a Jacobin, they certainly deserve every calamity which can befall [*sic*] them’.⁵⁶ Jefferson, the *Quarterly Review* claimed, was infected by the ‘incurable malady’ or ‘real jacobinism’, manifested in ‘a spirit of hatred against England. He ha[d] invited and encouraged her most inveterate enemies to settle in America’, such as Thomas Paine (‘this loathsome and blasphemous outcast’) and the Irish revolutionary, Robert Emmet.⁵⁷

According to these British conservative commentators, however, it was in American interests to nourish its friendship with Great Britain rather than pandering to French policies. The *Quarterly*, for instance, was convinced that ‘in America, whatever is civilized, whatever is intellectual, whatever is ennobling, whatever is good or great is, and must ever be, of English origin’. The flourishing of America was founded in the English constitution and laws.⁵⁸ American commercial prosperity, such as it was, should also be credited to Britain because of the volume of Anglo-American trade and because of various British concessions and relaxations of its navigation laws in America’s favour.⁵⁹ But interest in the relationship was not all one-sided. The *Anti-Jacobin Review*, belying its often-expressed disdain for America and disgust at its alleged francophilia, wrote in August 1799 that the United States and Britain were as ‘firmly attached to each other as we could wish the two countries once more to be, in affection as well as in interest’.⁶⁰ Ten years later, it was severely critical of British ministers for failing to put sufficient effort and resources into seeking a rapprochement with the United States. Similarly, even on the

point of the outbreak of war against the United States in 1812, when most of its American content was concerned to condemn American belligerence, the *Quarterly Review* was also convinced that Britain itself ought to maintain and pursue the transatlantic friendship. This was because the interests of Britain and the United States were ‘intimately blended with each other’ and also, crucially, because America was the state most likely after Britain to oppose Napoleonic France. ‘The people of this country being derived from the same stock, speaking the same language, breathing the same spirit of liberty, have qualities quite sufficient to rivet [Bonaparte’s] hatred.’⁶¹

The long conflict against revolutionary and Napoleonic France was the major determinant of British official and conservative attitudes towards America while it continued, and it explains conservative interest in a strong Anglo-American relationship, although the context of substantially increasing Anglo-American trade since 1783 should not be forgotten. As John Ehrman has pointed out, ‘For the first time in a European war there was a legally independent United States’, and it was vital to ensure that it did not aid and abet France, whether by supplying the French or by some more substantial movement away from neutrality. An Order in Council was passed within months of the outbreak of war in 1793, regulating the rights of neutral nations in maritime commerce during the war.⁶² Here it is necessary to set out some of the diplomatic background between the three nations during these decades in order to understand this aspect of British conservative (and, in the next chapter, liberal) attitudes towards the United States. Peter Marshall has argued that British colonial policy in the eighteenth century was almost wholly driven by the need to finance defence, particularly against France, and by the ambition to build international standing and power, again largely in competition with France.⁶³ He has also shown that many British government ministers and politicians became much less interested in

the United States after American independence.⁶⁴ It might then be asked whether Britain continued to cultivate its ties with America to the extent that it did, post-independence, primarily for the purpose of surpassing France. On the other hand, earlier historians of the Anglo-American relationship on both sides of the Atlantic, such as Robert Mowat and Charles Ritcheson, perhaps conscious of the twentieth-century importance of the connection, emphasized its value over time since 1783, maintaining that a firm friendship between Great Britain and the United States was part of 'the natural order of things' which statesmen of both nations recognized as valuable in its own right, and in which the War of 1812 was merely an 'anomaly'.⁶⁵ In fact it is possible to see both evidence of a strengthening Anglo-American relationship in the early years of the nineteenth century and proof that Britain would, nonetheless, lay this association down if necessary to fortify its hand against France. Certainly, in the two decades before the outbreak of the Napoleonic war in 1803, British policy towards America had been marked by neglect except when really necessary. Although John Adams represented the United States in London from 1785, Britain did not bother to send a minister to Philadelphia (the American seat of government until 1800) until George Hammond was assigned to the post in 1791, because of the threat of increased American protectionism. Both Adams and his successor, Gouverneur Morris, tried to negotiate a commercial treaty with the British government, but the attempt was unsuccessful until John Jay arrived in July 1794 with the sole purpose of averting imminent war by securing a commercial agreement. An American trade embargo had already been in place for two months by the time he arrived. Such a pitch had been reached by Britain's failure to evacuate forts in the north-west of the United States where there were fur-trading posts, contrary to the 1783 treaty of peace, and by its refusal to allow the United States to trade with the British West Indian islands, now that America was no longer part

of the British empire. American debts to British merchants and loyalists still remained unpaid, as did American claims for compensation for slaves removed by the British during the War of Independence.⁶⁶

British hostilities against France from 1793 introduced further issues. Anxious to restrict Franco-American trade and to keep their own navy supplied with manpower, under 'the Rule of 1756' the British impeded neutral American shipping which they suspected might be trading with France, and pressed significant numbers of seamen in the employment of American merchant ships who were assumed to be deserters from the British navy.⁶⁷ Several concessions were offered on both sides by the Jay Treaty of 1794. Permission was granted for smaller American ships to trade with the British West and East Indies; while free trade was established within the American continent, giving Britain most favoured nation status with the United States, and various items such as munitions, arms and shipbuilding materials were declared contraband for the duration of the Anglo-French war and not to be carried by neutral shipping. The treaty was not well received in America because it was thought to concede too much to Britain. It was, however, almost wholly ratified by Congress, and hostilities were probably averted more by American efforts than by British, although Robert Liston, the British minister in Philadelphia from 1796-1800, did accrue credit for Britain by organising the withdrawal of the British from the north-west trading posts. The Washington and Adams presidencies, despite British conservative disparagement, were pacific and pro-British in sympathy.⁶⁸

In fact the French also deserve credit for the avoidance of an Anglo-American war in these years, because they did nothing to endear themselves to the American government. The National Convention's minister in America in 1793, Edmond Charles Genêt, caused so much affront to a government perhaps less radical than he had expected, that President Washington requested his

recall.⁶⁹ Moreover, just as the British were endeavouring to restrict American trade with France, so France also tried to curb American trade with Britain, if not necessarily so effectively. Formal conflict was eventually averted by the accession to power of Napoleon in 1799, who was anxious to avoid hostilities with America, and by the election of the Francophile Republican, Thomas Jefferson, to the American presidency in 1800.⁷⁰ In fact, Jefferson himself was more inclined to favour whichever of the two European nations had more to offer his own political objectives (in particular, the acquisition of New Orleans, Louisiana and Florida), but British conservatives outside government circles gave him little credit for this open-mindedness, while those inside government circles were unable to escape the need to retain British maritime dominance and refused to back down over the rights of neutral shipping. Sailors were increasingly desperately needed by the British navy as the war progressed, and, as *The Times* put it in 1807,

[W]ar has nothing terrible in it, when compared to the surrender of our maritime rights. We would recommend peace and conciliation with the Americans, but it must be such a peace as leaves us in the free and undisputed possession of all the advantages resulting from our naval superiority: such a conciliation as borders pretty much on concession on their part.⁷¹

To those who might complain that Britain was already at war with too many of the world's nations to risk hostilities with another, *The Times* replied: 'And what does that signify? We are at war with the whole world's master, and no wonder therefore if we are at war with the whole world.'⁷²

The British government did try to negotiate a solution to its disagreements with America rather than revert to war in the early years of the nineteenth century, at a time when Britain's European trade was increasingly circumscribed by the Berlin and Milan decrees of 1806 and 1807.

Canning argued in Cabinet, together with the Duke of Portland, against retaliation against neutral shipping which carried goods bound for or from France, in order not to antagonise the United

States. He sent George Rose, junior, as a special emissary to Washington to discuss reparations for the *Chesapeake – Leopard* affair of June 1807, in which the British naval commander had clearly been in the wrong.⁷³ He even supported the repeal of the British Orders in Council, passed in 1807 and 1809 in response to the Berlin and Milan decrees, for the sake of improving relations with America as well as for relieving economic distress at home. The end of Jefferson's presidency raised hopes in Britain of easier relations with the United States, and Canning discussed a draft agreement with the British minister in Washington, David Erskine, in 1809.⁷⁴ Erskine, however, ignored several of Canning's conditions and qualifications, departing 'widely not only from their Letter but from their Spirit', as Canning put it to him, rejecting the agreement shortly before recalling him from his post.⁷⁵ It is clear that the points at issue between Britain and America were all caused by Britain's war against France, and that for this reason Britain was unwilling to concede much, if anything, to American demands. Canning objected strongly to the American Intercourse Bill put forward by the Talents Ministry in 1806 to appease American grievances. His comment to Erskine in January 1809 on the subject of the newly arrived Madison administration is telling:

In this case, as in respect to the Subject of my other Dispatches, you will see that the Sincerity of the good Disposition professed by the Persons composing the New Administration, is the Point the most important in the View of the British Government.

If such a Disposition really exists, all Difficulties will (as Mr. Galater [*sic*] has expressed himself) be easily smoothed away.

If unfortunately this Hope should be disappointed, Great Britain has only to continue the System of Self Defence and Retaliation upon her Enemies to which she has been compelled to have Recourse, with the Consciousness of having eagerly seized the first Opportunity that appeared to be offered to her, of obtaining, through an amicable Arrangement, the Object for which that System was established.⁷⁶

Evidently, despite his efforts to avoid conflict, Canning's view of what might constitute a 'good Disposition' in the new American government had much to do with its willingness to concede

points held to be essential to the British government in its heightening economic war with France. In the end, British official and conservative attitudes towards America during the war against revolutionary and Napoleonic France were chiefly determined by that conflict.⁷⁷ The Anglo-American hostilities of 1812-15, however, generated substantial conservative commentary in their own right.

IV The War of 1812

Both before and after the Anglo-American War of 1812, British conservative analysis of its causes ignored the British contribution, unsurprisingly, except to suggest that Britain had been too generous in its concessions to America, and attributed responsibility instead to American francophilia and French machinations. The United States had borne all kinds of abuse of their maritime commerce from France without complaint, although it had taken grave offence at limits imposed by the British which had included special concessions in favour of America. It had helped France to maintain its own trade with French colonies at a time when Britain had prevented French ships from trading. It had seized every opportunity to take umbrage against Britain, even at accidents, such as the shooting of an American civilian by the crew of HMS *Leander* in 1806.⁷⁸ In his *Key to the Orders in Council* (1812), written partly with an American readership in mind, Croker argued that Napoleon's Milan decree of 1807 had been 'entirely directed to America' and 'a menace to her'; but he criticized their government for repeatedly falling in with French propaganda regarding the legitimacy or otherwise of British and French economic blockades. He marvelled at its 'almost miraculous deafness and blindness to the insults of France', and he warned:

There are now but two free nations on the face of the globe, Great Britain and America – let the latter beware how she raises her parricidal hand against the parent

country; her trade and liberty cannot long survive the downfall of British commerce and British freedom. If the citadel which now encloses and protects all that remains of European liberty be stormed, what shall defend the American union from the inroads of the despot?⁷⁹

Barrow and others at the *Quarterly* went so far as to express the conviction that ‘a secret understanding existed’ between Madison and Bonaparte, and they claimed that Madison displayed a ‘gross partiality for France’, dating back to the American War of Independence. Even more boldly, they stated unequivocally that

this war of Mr. Madison is, to all intents and purposes, a French war, and not an American one: ... he has plunged into it ... for French interests; nay more, that he has plunged into it in conformity with repeated orders from France.⁸⁰

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* agreed with this diagnosis, describing Madison’s administration as ‘these sottish blockheads, ... the tools and agents of a foreign tyrant’.⁸¹ Canning lamented at length in the House of Commons America’s renunciation of neutrality in the European war in order to lend ‘her aid to crush those principles to which she owes her own existence, and to support the most desolating tyranny that ever afflicted the race of man. ... I fear, that in the republic of America we look for the realization of our visions of republican virtue in vain’, he added. He predicted loss of character, loss of prosperity, military and naval losses, and even loss of liberty for the United States by its ‘heartless and selfish policy’ in taking the wrong side in this war.⁸²

Another *Quarterly* writer, however, while confirming the closeness of the Madison government to France, disputed the suggestion that Madison had been Bonaparte’s puppet, or that America was acting primarily in support of French objects rather than its own. This reviewer was convinced that Madison and Bonaparte had much in common, not least hatred of England. Much more important, however, was their shared thirst for conquest and a common desire to extend

their empires to their natural limits – in Madison’s case, from the Gulf of Mexico to the north coast of Canada. In other words, the War of 1812 was not a response to such irritants as the Orders in Council or British impressment of American sailors – ‘*territorial* reprisal for *oceanic* outrages’ – but rather it was ‘*a war of conquest*’.⁸³ Canning, too, expressed suspicion that the desire to acquire Canada had been ‘the real motive’, the ‘grand and favourite design’, behind what he told the House of Commons had been an American ‘predetermination to war’.⁸⁴

The United States was also accused of attempting to destroy the British navy by seducing British sailors into committing treason by joining the American service, although the *Anti-Jacobin Review* defended the British impressment of American sailors as perfectly legitimate, since Britain only impressed men who had already deserted the British service for American shipping.⁸⁵ By July 1813 the *Quarterly Review* estimated that the United States had ‘robbed’ Britain of between 40,000 and 60,000 seamen, and that the quality of sailors manning the smaller American navy was beginning to outweigh significantly that of sailors in the much larger British navy because of this practice.⁸⁶ Since the Royal Navy was the ultimate guarantor of the rights of Britons, this American objective struck at ‘all that is dear to man’.⁸⁷

A further opinion expressed in the *Quarterly* was that American hostility towards Britain was not to be attributed primarily to French dictates, nor to such causes as naval concerns or territorial conquest, but rather, fundamentally, to the internal politics of the United States.⁸⁸ This view returned to the distinction between the northern and southern states of America.

It must be borne in mind that America is divided into two great parties, the federal party composed of the most respectable merchants and farmers of the northern states, and the anti-federal party, which embrace all those of the southern states, mostly in the interest of the French, together with the motley mob of all the sea-port towns.⁸⁹

The northern states demonstrated ‘a firm and decided abhorrence of French principles and French alliance’, but Jefferson and Madison were both Virginians, and wished to secure southern power over the north within the Union. As the *Anti-Jacobin Review* put it, therefore, ‘It is, then, to preserve the power of the landholder to the south-ward, by the destruction of American commerce and navigation, that war has been declared against Great Britain’.⁹⁰

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* claimed repeatedly from 1806 onward that Britain had been too generous to the United States in relation to the neutral carrying trade, its policy looking ‘more like the patience of the ass, than the contempt of the lion’.⁹¹ This liberality may have emanated from ‘the imbecile theory and flimsy systems’ of the liberal Ministry of All the Talents under Grenville and Fox in 1806-7, but the more conservative governments of Portland, Perceval and Liverpool which succeeded it – during which time Canning served as Foreign Secretary in the Portland administration – were not immune from criticism in this regard.⁹² The British government that it would lose less by going to war against America than it would by continuing to make concessions.⁹³ A major article in the *Quarterly* in March 1812, however, written by John Barrow with the help of Canning, Croker and others, contended that Britain ought to avoid war with America if at all possible, because such a war was likely to benefit only France. They did not admit any apprehension regarding America – the prospect of diverting troops and ships to Canada and the United States was sufficient reason to call for caution – but such an argument, made by such a group of eminent commentators on America, may imply a certain respect for the capability of the United States by 1812, mixed in with conservative conviction of British superiority and American jacobinism.⁹⁴

Neither stance, however, admitted any suggestion that Britain carried any responsibility for the conflict with America. ‘The orders in council were not the true cause of the war’, the *Anti-*

Jacobin Review insisted; ‘– they were made use of by the American Government as a mere cloak or stalking horse to conceal their views, which in truth are aimed at the destruction of the British navy.’⁹⁵ In any case, the repeal of the Orders in Council had been insufficient to forestall the outbreak of war, Canning argued, ‘for this plain reason that the American government was not to be satisfied. They had an itch for war with this country, and they were determined to have it’.⁹⁶ When British shipping had been to blame, as in the case of the dispute between HMS *Leopard* and the US frigate *Chesapeake* in 1807, Britain had been willing to make reparations, but America had immediately closed its harbours to all British shipping, an over-reaction which Britain required to have lifted before it would make reparations. While Britain’s dealings with the American government were marked, Croker wrote, by ‘a spirit of frankness and candour’, it could not be said that the American Government had accepted British concessions ‘with either dignity or grace’.⁹⁷ The conservatives defended Britain’s absolute right to uphold traditional maritime regulations, which had been accepted by all other nations in the past, for the sake of its naval power and dominance.⁹⁸ It was feared that repealing the Orders in Council would lead to the demise of British trade, shipping interest and manufacturing, in favour of France and America which, between them, ‘would divide the trade of the globe’.⁹⁹

Moreover, insults from a new state to a powerful, established one could not be tolerated. The

Anti-Jacobin Review expostulated:

there never was, from the origin of civil society, to the present time, a nation, insignificant in the scale of power, in the infancy almost of civilization, and with a circumscribed revenue, arising from sources over which she had not absolute controul, publicly discussing, in her legislative bodies, not only the propriety and necessity of war with a friendly state, but the means of carrying it on, and the objects to which it should be directed! This is a novel spectacle in the civilized world! A new feature in the history of nations! A rare specimen of Transatlantic policy!¹⁰⁰

Canning explained to his electors in Liverpool at the start of the conflict ‘that to seek peace through humiliation is a course neither of honour nor of advantage’. Such aggression was proof of profound American hostility to Britain, and could only properly be met by greater force. The Americans were beginning to think themselves far more powerful than they were and, worse, that Britain was afraid of them or unable to counter their threat.¹⁰¹ ‘There is, then, we repeat, but one mode of reply to such language’, agreed the *Anti-Jacobin Review*. Yet the same periodical declared later in the war: ‘Regardless of the present imbecility of the infant nation, we should crush it, ere manhood has endued it with power to make us feel the effects of its inveterate hatred’.¹⁰² Despite its confident language, the implication again is detectible that the United States was not to be considered without a certain respect; it might not always remain ‘imbecile’ as it grew out of infancy, and Britain must enforce its own superiority while it could. As Bickham points out, it was important to the British government and its supporters that America should remain a client rather than a rival.¹⁰³

Such concern was generally subordinate to the general puffing of British confidence in American weakness and British strength, however. From early on in the crisis, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* voiced the firm belief that American commerce would suffer from a conflict against Britain, while British trade would remain largely unaffected: for instance, America could not do much to damage Britain by withdrawing its cotton, since (it airily suggested) the British West Indies could resume cotton production in place of sugar within a year. It was under no anxiety that the United States would be capable of taking the British West Indies; nor did it think that they could prevent Britain from continuing to fish off Newfoundland, another longstanding irritant. It was confident that the Royal Navy was well able to protect British merchant shipping, but expressed colourful contempt for the American navy (‘consisting of *two or three frigates* and *half a dozen*

sloops and brigs') and army. Canada was not seriously endangered, since the regular American army was too small, and its militia was not trained for offensive operations.¹⁰⁴ The *Quarterly*'s reviewers agreed. The American army was 'yet a project on paper' and so it was unlikely to accomplish the conquest of Canada; its 'warlike navy' did not yet 'appear to be quite competent to such an achievement' as the capture of the British West Indies; and its economy would suffer far more from hostilities than its trade would benefit.¹⁰⁵ Canning suggested that it was premature to expect such a new nation to survive a major conflict: 'I would not have asked her to risk her tender and unconfirmed existence in a war'.¹⁰⁶

Post-war analyses by conservative commentators concentrated on abusing American conduct during the conflict, in contrast to their praise for the bravery and merit of the British troops involved. The *Quarterly Review* accused the American troops of barbarity towards native Americans fighting on the British side and towards Canadian civilians, and of cowardice in the face of British military resistance, while the *Anti-Jacobin Review* complained of their ill-treatment of British prisoners of war.¹⁰⁷ The United States had, however, in British conservative opinion, gained little by the war and, indeed, had lost substantially by it, not least nearly fifty thousand men killed, wounded or taken prisoner. They claimed that America had gained none of the objects for which it had gone to war, while British objects (the protection of British colonies and the maintenance of maritime rights) were 'completely secured', despite the flaws of the British military and naval command. The United States was also suffering economic depression as a direct result of the conflict.¹⁰⁸ More abstractly, Canning asserted that the 'hard features of transatlantic democracy' had debased the reputation of republics and republican virtue.¹⁰⁹ The *Quarterly*, somewhat exaggerating the closeness of the Anglo-American diplomatic relationship before the crisis, advised rather bitterly that, after the war, Britain must learn to live in mistrust

of the United States: 'to live with one who has been an unprovoked enemy as if he had never ceased to be a dear friend, would indeed be a piece of foolishness which no warmth of blood could excuse'.¹¹⁰

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* agreed that British ministers must be firm over the terms and even the timing of this peace treaty, ensuring that the ban on American trade with the British West Indies was reinforced, and that British maritime rights must not be conceded in any detail. 'The tone of firmness, of decision, of dictation, on our part, is the only one suitable to our own dignity, and to the relative circumstances and situation of the two countries.'¹¹¹ Moreover, the danger to Canada had been reinforced, and writers commenting on the war some years after its end reflected upon this, discussing how Canada might be better protected against American invasion in the future or against the baleful effects of too great an influx into Canada of American emigrants. Once more, the note of fear of an increasingly powerful and not necessarily benign United States was sounded, even if it was almost entirely dominated by a symphony of confidence in superior British power and influence.¹¹² In 1818, the *Quarterly Review* warned:

There is a nation without the limits of Europe, to whom, for the sake of our kindred race and common language, we would gladly wish prosperity; but whose hope of elevation is built on our expected fall, and who even now do not affect to conceal the bitterness of their hatred towards the land of their progenitors. Already we hear the Americans boasting that the whole continent must be their own, that the Atlantic and the Pacific are alike to wash their empire, and that it depends on their charity what share in either ocean they may allow to our vessels.¹¹³

V American economic development

British conservatives, however, doubted the American claim to economic greatness as yet.

Arthur Young disputed Paine's argument that it was wealthier and cheaper to govern as a direct result of its republican government. Paine had said that the American poor were better able to pay taxes than those in England: Young returned that it was far more expensive to gather taxes

from the poor in the wilds of the American outback than the tax could be worth, while the circulation of money was a great deal more rapid in Britain. Indeed, he argued, the amount of tax paid was less relevant than how much a country's people had left in their own pockets after paying tax, and on this estimate, Englishmen were a great deal better off than Americans. In any case, he pointed out, picking at an old British sore point,

No comparison can be drawn justly, between a new country that did not form itself and an old one that did, and now pays the expence of forming that new one. Let the American account be charged with the expence of the war of 1756, or one hundred millions, and then compare taxation.¹¹⁴

If there were few really indigent poor in America, Young emphasized, this was not because the United States was not saddled with a monarchy, but rather because of its vast expanse of fertile land and thinly scattered population, which made it 'idle to cite the example of America' since its economy was therefore so unlike any in Europe.¹¹⁵ In fact, 'unfortunately for [Paine's] argument, there are poor, and even slaves, in America', while the current state of republican France hardly supported Paine's argument for the effect of representative government on the welfare of the poor.¹¹⁶

The *Anti-Jacobin Review* was considerably more disparaging about American economic achievements or potential, and it based this opinion in part on a sourer view of American resources than Young's. It asserted that the quality of American land was poor and the climate difficult, relying on Richard Parkinson's *Tour in America in 1798, 1799, and 1800* (1805), which detailed Parkinson's disappointment with his attempts to farm in Virginia and Maryland. Poor land meant that commerce, rather than agriculture, must be the staple of the American economy. In turn, trade would require a powerful navy to defend merchant shipping; and, since only Britain possessed such a navy, and the greatest proportion of American trade was carried on with Britain, the economy of the United States was to some extent in Britain's power. Moreover,

nothing was yet made in the United States that Britain did not already make, transport, and sell in America more cheaply than its own domestic products, partly because of the very high taxation levied in America.¹¹⁷ Both the *Anti-Jacobin Review* and the *Quarterly Review* took a dim view of American commercial integrity. In the *Quarterly*, it was argued that the boasted freedom enjoyed by American merchants was ‘a freedom from the wholesome laws of honest dealing’ and their behaviour was contrasted with the ‘public liberality, private munificence, fair dealing, and urbanity of manners’ exhibited by the British ‘and, generally speaking’, the European merchant.¹¹⁸ Furthermore, in John Barrow’s opinion, the United States had no principal towns worth describing or discussing – to do so ‘would contribute neither to the information nor amusement of our readers’ – and in 1800 the *Anti-Jacobin Review* ridiculed the imminent move of the seat of federal government from Philadelphia to ‘a wood in Maryland, called the *city of Washington*’, predicting that, ‘if any thing would hasten the down-fall of this tottering fabric of a government, it certainly would be the ridiculous removal in question’.¹¹⁹

Despite these withering assessments of American economic progress, hints of British conservative apprehension that American commerce was growing significantly also emerged, particularly in the *Quarterly Review*. Some of this concern may be explained by rising tension in the years leading up to the War of 1812, but, even in 1823, an article to which Barrow contributed warned that America was rapidly taking over the carrying trade from Britain, and expressed the fear that Canada and Britain’s other American colonies in particular would suffer by this development.¹²⁰ Very occasionally, admiration for American economic practice crept in, such as the *Anti-Jacobin Review*’s applause for American regulation of sales in urban markets, which it even recommended that Britain would do well to imitate.¹²¹

VI American society: slavery, character, religion and intellectual life

George Canning was a convinced abolitionist – ‘no man was more anxious than himself to see this detestable traffic completely destroyed’ – and he complained that the United States was an obstacle to the abolition of the international slave trade; but his objection was that the United States would not allow Britain to retain the sole right to stop and search international shipping suspected of carrying slaves. He was concerned that to agree to reciprocal rights of stop and search would be to allow American privateers the opportunity of creating ‘an intolerable annoyance to our whole trade’. (He ignored the possibility that British privateers might perpetrate a similar mischief on American shipping). This anxiety was perhaps understandable in the context of the crisis leading up to the War of 1812. Later, as Foreign Secretary in the 1820s, he pressed the United States to agree to a bilateral convention suppressing the slave trade which was signed in March 1824, but it never came into force because of difficulties created over Canning’s insistence on this very point.¹²²

The reviews were also critical of the retention of slavery in America, though only after Britain had abolished its own slave trade, and they did not devote much space to discussing the subject. It is difficult to escape the perhaps uncharitable thought that they often seized on the issue rather because they wished to deploy any powerful argument they could to denigrate the United States, than because they were committed abolitionists, although of course there were exceptions.¹²³

They often listed it simply as one of a series of flaws in American society and government; and they rejected any imputation of blame to Britain for the introduction of the institution – ‘the blame of it’, according to the *Anti-Jacobin Review*, ‘ought to lie at the door, not of the Mother Country, but of the Colonial Legislatures themselves, who alone encouraged the trade’.¹²⁴

Slavery, the *Quarterly* stated in 1809, hardened the hearts and corrupted the morals of the people

of the southern states, and rendered society hostile to improvement. While giving the United States credit for banning the importation of slaves from 1808, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* noted that as many as possible had been imported into the south before the turn of that year, and it criticized the restrictions upon slaves still held in the country, and the inhumanity with which they were often treated. John Barrow agreed that the brutal treatment of black slaves in the United States ‘proved this new continent to be some centuries behind in civilisation’, ignoring cruelty to slaves still held on British West Indian plantations. The northern states were not given much credit for outlawing slavery: there, noted the *Anti-Jacobin Review* rather primly, ‘they only avoid, or treat the blacks, as Brahmins do Parias [*sic*] in the east, and we can hardly say which is the worst’.¹²⁵ Moreover, conservative complaints about the treatment of black slaves was combined with criticism of the practice of ‘white slavery’, or indentured servitude, and the difficulty of redeeming oneself from its bonds in ‘this freedom-breathing country’.¹²⁶

American behaviour towards native Americans tended to be minimized, and it was not a subject considered at any length by these conservative commentators. One review published after the War of 1812, whose writer wished to stress that Britain ought to be the arbiter of the boundaries between American, Canadian and native American territories, acknowledged the ‘injuries and persecutions sustained by the Indians from the practised frauds, and systematic encroachments of the Americans’. Otherwise, the struggle to push native Americans further westward was dismissed as ‘a petty Indian war’ and a ‘trifling exception’ to the peace and calm obtainable by a state with the great expanse of land at the disposal of the United States.¹²⁷

The conservative reviews had little positive to say about American society more generally. ‘The national character of America has nothing attractive, nothing commanding, nothing great, belonging to it’, declared the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in March 1814. The *Quarterly Review* of

January that year had also expanded upon the alleged vulgarity and coarseness of American society. It might be suggested that these judgements were coloured by the fact that the War of 1812-15 had been ongoing for nearly two years when they were written; but loyalist literature of the 1790s, including Gifford's life of Paine, had also depicted the inhabitants of the United States as 'all the refuse of the nations, the issues and sweepings of the prisons, the nuisance of society, and the scum of kingdoms', and they had cited the treatment of American Loyalists during the Revolution and the slowness of Americans to pay their debts to British merchants as indicative of American barbarity, greed and dishonesty.¹²⁸ The *Quarterly Review* pointed out that the American character ought to be distinctive, since they were neither an old people nor in strict terms a new race, but rather 'a new people made of old materials'. The distinction the conservative reviews found, however, was entirely negative and consisted of brutality, arrogance and lack of refinement. Passages on the squalor, drunkenness, rudeness and popularity of tobacco found by dissatisfied travellers in America received lengthy quotations in reviews of their books. One writer pondered whether the wildness of their surroundings had somehow entered into the character and even the physiognomy of Americans. The *Anti-Jacobin Review* admitted that it was not a blanket condemnation of all Americans, yet it was adamant that the exceptions were few and inadequate to the task of improving the rottenness of the majority.¹²⁹

Similarly, conservative reviewers were highly critical of the inattention to religion they claimed was rife in the United States (even to the point of doing without baptismal and burial services in the southern states, it was said).¹³⁰ This irreligion was largely blamed on the republican constitution of the United States, which preferred to 'see piety shocked and christianity reviled, than its fantastical notions of religious and civil liberty exposed or counteracted'. The division of church and state was censured, because it removed religion from the constitutional code, an act

which was embodied in the election of Thomas Jefferson as third president, whom the conservative reviews assumed to be an atheist. 'We have no hesitation in advancing this proposition as a maxim, THAT NO STATE WHICH HAS NOT RELIGION FOR ITS BASIS, EITHER CAN STAND, OR OUGHT TO STAND', the *Anti-Jacobin Review* stated, and it pointed out the irony of a nation whose first British settlers arrived with high Christian motivation having descended to be governed by men who professed 'a liberal indifference whether there be any religion in the country or none'.¹³¹

Nor were they pleased by the religion which they did find – as the *Quarterly* put it, there was 'scarcely any medium in America between over-godliness and a brutal irreligion'.¹³² Where religion was practised, it was manifested in a multiplicity of denominations (termed 'illegitimate sects' by the *Quarterly Review*). The episcopal church was weak and itself too 'republican' in its form, in its permission of discussion of forms and doctrines, and in its anxiety not to offend political republicans.¹³³ *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* pointed out that the lack of an established church meant that there was no obligation to provide religious instruction. There were therefore too few religious teachers, and many of them were inadequately educated, 'being fanatics and pretenders to immediate inspiration'.¹³⁴ Fanaticism, particularly in the form of Methodism, was 'a growing evil', and the conservative reviews took care to reprint lengthy descriptions of Methodist meetings where all kinds of outlandish behaviour took place.¹³⁵

The American intellect was not inferior, *Blackwood's* allowed; Americans were the equal of any people in respect of 'practical cleverness and business', as their ingenuity in mechanics, commerce and law showed. The American intellect was not, however, applied to traditional scholarly pursuits, in the view of all three reviews. It was somewhat grudgingly agreed that the works of Charles Brockden Brown and Washington Irving should be better known, and that some

very good books on religion, history and criticism had emerged from the United States; but it was argued that none of these was of the highest order or expected to achieve lasting honour, with the possible exception of the writings of the pre-Revolution preacher and theologian Jonathan Edwards.¹³⁶ The general British conservative assessment of American literature and learning was deeply disparaging: they were ‘the scorn of Europe’, according to the *Quarterly*. ‘If the whole stock of their literature were set on fire tomorrow, no scholar would feel the loss’, declared *Blackwood’s*.¹³⁷ A particularly rude verdict on an American pamphlet on European economic warfare was published by the *Anti-Jacobin Review* in 1807:

This is the wretched effusion of some whining Yankee, written in a kind of mongrel English, intelligible, for aught we know, on the banks of the Delaware, but scarcely so on the banks of the Thames! It is written in the same spirit as the subject of the preceding article, but without the same ability. In short, it is equally destitute of argument and of sense, and is one of the most contemptible productions that we have had the mortification to read for some time.¹³⁸

Similar examples could be multiplied. The most charitable reviews noted patronisingly that American culture was yet too young to have produced any really profound or seminal works of art or literature.¹³⁹ The least sympathetic criticized American literature for treating the English language barbarously, for exaggerating the facts, and for emerging from the press with monotonously uniform thinking.¹⁴⁰ Aside from the youth of America’s development, other causes suggested for the inadequacy of its literary productions were the poor quality of its schools and libraries. These had been overlooked while the new polity was established, which was perhaps excusable, but it was no longer acceptable that they should be neglected in favour of commercial priorities.¹⁴¹ Nor was it only the arts which were ignored. The United States had been surprisingly slow to develop scientific achievements, other than Benjamin Franklin’s – and the foundation of his knowledge, it was claimed, had been laid in London, not America. The

Quarterly Review was very critical of the Jefferson administration for not having sufficiently equipped the Lewis and Clarke expedition from the Missouri to the Pacific coast (1804-6) so that it could bring back a much fuller record of data.¹⁴²

VII The United States of America for emigrants: ‘this is the real world, and no poetical Arcadia’

The basis for a significant volume of writing on the United States in the reviews was works of travel writing. British conservatives reviewed works directed at potential British emigrants to the United States favourably or unfavourably depending on whether they recommended it as a destination; predictably, they favoured those works which disparaged its reputation as a ‘Land of Promise’. The reviews lost no opportunity to traduce British radicals who emigrated to the United States and criticized Britain from afar.¹⁴³ Conservatives felt a responsibility to disabuse those who might be taken in by radical claims for the new republic, and to explain to potential emigrants that they were being disloyal to Britain in departing, as well as naïve.¹⁴⁴ (If Britons must emigrate, the reviews offered Canada as a far superior destination.)¹⁴⁵ Reviewers therefore drew happily and at length upon the writings of emigrants and travellers who claimed to have learned the true nature of life in America by hard experience.

The land was barren, the climate was difficult, and emigrants were likely to be ruined.¹⁴⁶

American territory became a byword for wildness and savagery in conservative writing: when Arthur Young wanted to convey the remoteness of the lands around Limoge in France, he called it ‘an American scene; wild enough for the tomahawk of the savage’, and when he wanted to communicate the disorder of the National Convention, he reported Marat as having said that even an American would have thought it ‘an assembly of madmen and furies’.¹⁴⁷ Servants, and

‘the lower classes of people’ generally, were insolent, because of notions of their own liberty and equality.¹⁴⁸ Conditions for travellers were poor, with bad roads and crowded, dirty inns.¹⁴⁹

American towns were filthy, ‘bespeak[ing] a corruption of mind and heart which must extort our reprobation’.¹⁵⁰ Readers were warned of unscrupulous agents and writers who had an interest in luring emigrants, and of the dangers posed by indentured servitude. The United States was accused of sending ‘emissaries’ to ‘lure the peasantry from their rustic labours’ to work in America.¹⁵¹

In a vituperative review of Morris Birkbeck’s controversial and optimistic *Notes on a Journey in America*, the *Anti-Jacobin Review* emphasized the passages where he had admitted flaws in his adopted country, and summed up:

So that this, after all, is the real world, and no poetical Arcadia after all. ... Of the chances of success in life by emigration, we shall say nothing ... the old world must vomit its idle population into the new The sum total of Mr. Birkbeck’s experience is, that in the wilds of Illinois, *a backwoods*’ man and his family, with a sufficient sum to begin the world, may vegetate coarsely, solitarily, and sullenly.¹⁵²

John Barrow, in the *Quarterly*, meanwhile, cast aspersions on Birkbeck’s character, and similarly managed to spend all of his twenty-five pages on anything Birkbeck had found less than perfect in realising his American dream, concluding that, ‘In spite ... of his forced attempt to make the best of America, every now and then the truth peeps out in some sarcastic remark on the character or the condition of the people’.¹⁵³

VIII Conclusion

Conservative reviewers did not always paint in unremitting shades of black when conveying their views of the United States of America during these decades. They did admit from time to time that there were numbers of admirable people in America, despite their strictures on

American politics and society. In particular, they often wished to draw a distinction between a 'respectable minority' and the 'democratical majority, composed of Frenchified natives and renegado foreigners', and, although the Republican presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison were depicted as untrustworthy characters, their political rivals George Washington and John Adams were often portrayed as statesmen who had seen the flaws in the American constitution but who had been overruled.¹⁵⁴

These conservative commentators, then, whether Westminster politicians or journalists, inserted into the long-term British view of the United States a potent combination of resentment and contempt, laced with a certain element of unease. The years between 1791 and 1820 were dominated by the wars against Revolutionary and Napoleonic France, and America was viewed principally through that lens and through the prism of British domestic politics and the struggle against the emerging force of radicalism. Because the United States could be portrayed by reformers as an ideal republican government with some sympathy for France in the long European war, it was difficult for British conservatives to view it with anything but suspicion, which easily descended into bile. But the blithe conviction of conservatives writing and speaking before the 1790s, that the new American republic was doomed to failure and inadequacy, was now spiked with periodic shots of apprehension that in fact the United States might prove a more difficult factor in various spheres for British politicians than they had hitherto imagined.

¹ *Anti-Jacobin Review and True Churchman's Magazine*, 41:164 (February 1812), p. 196.

² *Ibid.*, p. 197.

³ cf. Gould, *Persistence of Empire*, p. 208.

⁴ Bellot, *William Knox*, pp. 210-11.

⁵ E. L. de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800: The Early Contributors to the 'Anti-Jacobin Review'* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1988), p. 93. Where articles in the *Anti-Jacobin Review* are attributed in this chapter, I have relied upon de Montluzin's research in this book (pp. 165-96), and in her article, 'The *Anti-Jacobin* Revisited: Newly Identified Contributions to the *Anti-Jacobin Review* during the Editorial Regime of John Gifford, 1798-1806', *Library*, 4:3 (2003), pp. 278-302.

⁶ de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800*, pp. 26, 94.

- ⁷ A. Young, *The Example of France a Warning to Britain*, third edition (Bury St Edmunds: J. Rackham, 1793), p. 168.
- ⁸ G.E. Mingay, 'Arthur Young (1741-1820)', *ODNB*; *Letters from his excellency General Washington, to Arthur Young, Esq. F.R.S. containing an account of his husbandry, with a map of his farm; his opinions on various questions in agriculture; and many particulars of the rural economy of the United States* (London: B. McMillan, 1801).
- ⁹ Canning to George Ellis, 19 October 1797, quoted in W. Hinde, *George Canning* (London: Purnell Book Services Ltd, 1973), p. 58.
- ¹⁰ S. M. Lee, *George Canning and Liberal Toryism, 1801-27* (Woodbridge, Suffolk: The Boydell Press, for the Royal Historical Society, 2008), p. 122.
- ¹¹ A. Aspinall, *Politics and the Press c.1780-1850* (London: Home and Van Thal Ltd, 1949), p. 154.
- ¹² J. W. Croker, *The Letters on the Subject of the Naval War with America, which appeared in the Courier, under the signature of Nereus* (London: B.M. Swyny, 1813). Published in the *Courier* between 1 and 14 Jan. 1813. John Quincy Adams quoted in Aspinall, *Politics and the Press*, p. 200.
- ¹³ Sir J. Barrow, *An auto-biographical memoir of Sir John Barrow, bart., late of the Admiralty* (London: J. Murray, 1847), p. 504.
- ¹⁴ M. Demata and D. Wu, 'Introduction', in idem (eds), *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review: Bicentenary Essays* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), p. 5; W. Scott, 2 November 1808, quoted in *The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals 1824-1900*, ed. W. E. Houghton, 5 vols (London: Routledge, 1966-89), vol. 1, pp. 696-7. See also O. E. Holloway, 'George Ellis, the Anti-Jacobin and the Quarterly Review', *Review of English Studies*, 10:37 (1934), pp. 55-66, at p. 61.
- ¹⁵ C. Lloyd, *Mr Barrow of the Admiralty: a life of Sir John Barrow, 1764-1848* (London: Collins, 1970), p. 168; cf. J. Shattock, *Politics and reviewers: The Edinburgh and The Quarterly in the early Victorian age* (Leicester: Leicester University Press, 1989), pp. 11-12.
- ¹⁶ E.g. its review of *Inchiquen, the Jesuit's Letters, during a late Residence in the United States of America* (New York, 1810), in which the *Quarterly's* contributor took the opportunity to expound at length and in detail the flaws of American politics and society (*Quarterly Review* [hereafter *QR*], 10:20 (January 1814), pp. 494-539). Where authors of articles in the *QR* are identified, I have relied upon: *The Wellesley Index*; H. Shine and H. C. Shine, *The Quarterly Review under Gifford: identification of contributors, 1809-1824* (UNC Press: Chapel Hill, 1949); J. B. Cutmore, 'The early *Quarterly Review* under Gifford: some new attributions', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 24 (1991), pp. 137-42; idem, 'The early *Quarterly Review* 1809-24: new attributions and sources', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 27 (1994), pp. 308-21; idem, 'The early *Quarterly Review* 1809-24: new attributions of authorship', *Victorian Periodicals Review*, 28 (1995), pp. 305-29.
- ¹⁷ Demata and Wu, 'Introduction', pp. 5-6; N.T. Phillipson, *The Scottish Whigs and the Reform of the Court of Session* (The Stair Society: Edinburgh, 1990), p. 163.
- ¹⁸ M. Demata, 'Prejudiced Knowledge: Travel Literature in the *Edinburgh Review*', in *British Romanticism and the Edinburgh Review: Bicentenary Essays*, eds Demata and Wu (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2002), pp. 82-101.
- ¹⁹ T. Bickham, 'Sympathizing with Sedition? George Washington, the British Press, and British Attitudes during the American War of Independence', *William and Mary Quarterly*, 59:1 (2002), pp. 101-22; De Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800*, pp. 94, 96; *Anti-Jacobin Review and Magazine* [hereafter *AJR*], 5:22 (April 1800), p. 548; *ibid.*, 24:97 (July 1806), p. 266; *ibid.*, 45: 176 (January 1813), p. 93; *ibid.*, 46:190 (March 1814), p. 251; *ibid.*, 47:199 (December 1814), p. 557.
- ²⁰ Gifford, 'Summary of Politics', in *ibid.*, 6:26 (August 1800), p. 478. Thirteen years later, the *AJR* echoed this thought when, quoting Fauchet, it asked of the United States, 'If thus corrupt and decrepit in its youth, what will its old age be?' *Ibid.*, 45:176 (January 1813), p. 97.
- ²¹ *Ibid.*, 45: 176 (January 1813), p. 93.
- ²² J. Gifford, *The Reign of Louis XVI; and complete history of the French Revolution. With notes, critical and explanatory; by John Gifford, Esq., and other able historians* (second edition, London: C. Lowndes, J. Parsons, 1795), pp. 179-80, 329-30, 340-1.
- ²³ Idem, *A Second Letter to the Hon. Thomas Erskine, containing farther strictures on his 'View of the Causes and Consequences of the War'* (London: Longman, 1797), p. 2.
- ²⁴ Idem, *The History of England*, 2 vols (London: Harrison & Co., 1790), vol.2, p.380.
- ²⁵ *AJR*, 22:87 (September 1805), p. 29, reviewing and quoting R. Parkinson, *A Tour in America, in 1798, 1799, and 1800*, 2 vols (1805); *ibid.*, 45:176 (January 1813), p. 93. See also Gifford, *Reign of Louis XVI*, p. 127.

- ²⁶ A. Young, *Travels during the years 1787, 1788 and 1789*, 2 vols (Dublin: R. Cross *et al*, 1793), vol. 2, p. 432; cf. *ibid.*, p. 434.
- ²⁷ *QR*, 10:19 (October 1813), p. 135.
- ²⁸ Bentham, *Plan of Parliamentary Reform*, in *Works of Bentham*, vol. 3, p. 437.
- ²⁹ Crook, *American Democracy in English Politics*, pp. 16-17.
- ³⁰ Philp, 'The Role of America in the "Debate on France" 1791-5', pp. 231, 235.
- ³¹ D. A. Wilson, *Paine and Cobbett: the transatlantic connection* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1988), p. 90.
- ³² *AJR*, 2:10 (April 1799), p. 563.
- ³³ Wilson, *Paine and Cobbett*, pp. 91-2; J. Gifford, *A Plain Address to the Common Sense of the People of England, containing an interesting abstract of Pain's life and writings* (London: C. Lowndes, H. Symonds, 1792), p. 20. For the radicals, see below, pp. 000.
- ³⁴ Young, *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 168.
- ³⁵ de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins 1798-1800*, pp. 63-6; *AJR*, 3:12 (June 1799), pp. 179-80; J. Boucher, *A View of the Causes and Consequences of the American Revolution* (London: G.G. and J. Robinson, 1797), p. lxxvi.
- ³⁶ *QR*, 4:7 (Aug. 1810), p. 237.
- ³⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 238.
- ³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 237.
- ³⁹ Young, *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, p. 344; *AJR*, 55:248 (January 1819), p. 399.
- ⁴⁰ Wilson, *Paine and Cobbett*, pp. 90-1; Philp, 'Role of America', pp. 231-4; Young, *Example of France a Warning to Britain*, pp. 61 n., 62, 88; *QR*, 4:7 (Aug. 1810), pp. 237-8.
- ⁴¹ Bickham, *Weight of Vengeance*, p. 52.
- ⁴² *AJR*, 46:190 (March 1814), p. 252 – the second of these quotations was cited in this article from the work under review, John Lambert, *Travels through Canada and the United States of North America*, 2 vols (1814); *QR*, 8:15 (September 1812), pp. 199-201; cf *ibid.*, 10:20 (January 1814), p. 496.
- ⁴³ J. Barrow and others, including Croker and Canning, in *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 33.
- ⁴⁴ *QR*, 10:20 (January 1814), pp. 501-2. Cf. *AJR*, 55: 248 (Jan. 1819), p. 399; *ibid.*, 55:249 (Feb. 1819), pp. 522-6.
- ⁴⁵ S. Henshall, in *AJR*, 2:7 (January 1799), p. 52; [Gifford], in *AJR*, 6:26 (August 1800), pp. 478-9. See also *AJR*, 45:176 (January 1813), p. 93.
- ⁴⁶ *QR*, 10:20 (January 1814), p. 496. See also L. Fraser, 'English Opinion of the American Constitution and Government (1783-1798)' (PhD dissertation, Columbia University, New York, 1915), pp. 94-5.
- ⁴⁷ *QR*, 10:20 (January 1814), pp. 505-6, 508-9. Cf *AJR*, 55:248 (Jan. 1819), p. 399; *ibid.*, 55:249 (Feb. 1819), pp. 526-7.
- ⁴⁸ *AJR*, 1:6 (December 1798), p. 832.
- ⁴⁹ *QR*, 10:20 (January 1814), p. 464; *AJR*, 46:193 (June 1814), p. 672.
- ⁵⁰ *AJR*, 46:193 (June 1814), pp. 665-78.
- ⁵¹ Canning, 21 May 1810, in *Parliamentary Debates*, eds W. Cobbett and T.C. Hansard [hereafter *PD*], 1st series, vol. 17:158-9, cf. cols 143-4.
- ⁵² *QR*, 2 (1809), p. 248; Barrow, in *QR*, 8:16 (Dec. 1812), p. 276.
- ⁵³ J. Erhman, *The Younger Pitt*, vol. 2, *The Reluctant Transition* (London: Constable, 1983), p. 515 n. 6, citing the *Morning Chronicle*, 20 June 1794 as the source of the report on Pitt; Philp, 'The Role of America in the "Debate on France" 1791-5', p. 234; Fraser, 'English Opinion of the American Constitution and Government', pp. 101-2.
- ⁵⁴ Gifford, *Reign of Louis XVI*, p. 82.
- ⁵⁵ *The Anti-Jacobin; or, Weekly Examiner*, 28 May 1798, pp. 398-402; *ibid.*, 11 June 1798, pp. 469-71; *ibid.*, 9 July 1798, pp. 613-4; Gifford, in *AJR*, 1:1 (July 1798), pp. 3, 4; de Montluzin, *The Anti-Jacobins*, p. 28. The United States and France descended into what became known as the 'phoney war' or 'quasi-war' from around July 1798 until September 1800, but Gifford was still abusing Adams's supposed deference to Talleyrand in the *AJR* in August 1800 (6:26), p. 477.
- ⁵⁶ Gifford, 'Summary of Politics', in *AJR*, 24:95 (May 1806), p. 109; Barrow *et al*, in *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 1; *AJR*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), p. 31. In fact, Gifford predicted a marked increase in American support for France should Jefferson win the American presidential election in 1800: *AJR*, 6:26 (Aug. 1800), p. 479.
- ⁵⁷ *QR*, 10 (Jan. 1814), pp. 498-9.
- ⁵⁸ *QR*, 8 (Dec. 1812), p. 355; *ibid.*, 21 (January 1819), p. 2.
- ⁵⁹ Barrow *et al*, in *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 4.

- ⁶⁰ *AJR*, 3:14 (Aug. 1799), p. 578.
- ⁶¹ *AJR*, 32:127 (Jan. 1809), p. 101; Barrow *et al.*, in *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 31; *ibid.*, 7:15 (Sept. 1812), p. 213. Cf also *AJR*, 25: 102 (Dec. 1806), pp. 467-8.
- ⁶² Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, vol. 2, *The Reluctant Transition*, pp. 277, 507.
- ⁶³ Marshall, 'Britain and the World in the Eighteenth Century: I, Reshaping the Empire'; cf. D. Baugh, 'Great Britain's "Blue-Water" Policy, 1689-1815', *International History Review*, x (1988), pp. 33-58.
- ⁶⁴ Marshall, *Remaking the British Atlantic*, e.g. pp. 64, 312.
- ⁶⁵ C. R. Ritcheson, *Aftermath of Revolution: British Policy Toward the United States 1783-1795* (Dallas: Southern Methodist University Press, 1969), p. 358; R. B. Mowat, *The Diplomatic Relations of Great Britain and the United States* (London: Arnold, 1925), e.g. pp. 54, 69.
- ⁶⁶ Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, vol. 2, *The Reluctant Transition*, pp. 507-12. Britain's role in the Portuguese treaty with Algiers (whose pirates harassed American merchant shipping) was a further irritant.
- ⁶⁷ Between 1793 and 1811 nearly 10,000 seamen sailing on American ships were impressed by British crews. Of these, 6,000 were impressed between 1803 and 1811. See F. Cogliano, *Revolutionary America 1763-1815* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 173.
- ⁶⁸ Ehrman, *The Younger Pitt*, vol. 2, *The Reluctant Transition*, p. 378.
- ⁶⁹ L. Frey and M. Frey, "'The Reign of the Charlatans is Over': The French Revolutionary Attack on Diplomatic Practice', *Journal of Modern History*, 55 (1993), pp. 706-44.
- ⁷⁰ Cogliano, *Revolutionary America 1763-1815*, p. 157.
- ⁷¹ *The Times*, 26 August 1807.
- ⁷² *Ibid.*
- ⁷³ W. B. Taylor, 'The Foxite Party and Foreign Politics, 1806-1815' (PhD dissertation, University of London, 1974), p. 168.
- ⁷⁴ Canning to Sir David Erskine, 23 Jan. 1809 (1), printed in *Correspondence between Mr Secretary Canning and the Hon. D. Erskine as printed and laid before the House of Lords* (London: Ridgway, 1810), p. 18.
- ⁷⁵ Hinde, *Canning*, pp. 185-6; Canning to Erskine, 22 May 1809, printed in *Correspondence between Canning and Erskine*, p. 47.
- ⁷⁶ Canning to Erskine, 23 Jan. 1809 (4), printed in *Correspondence between Canning and Erskine*, p. 27. 'Galater' presumably refers to Albert Gallatin, the American Secretary of the Treasury. On his opposition to the American Intercourse Bill, see Taylor, 'The Foxite Party and Foreign Politics, 1806-1815', pp. 64, 110.
- ⁷⁷ These were made clear to Erskine in a separate letter of the same date (23 Jan. 1809 (2), in *ibid.*, p. 23: America must withdraw its ban on British warships in US harbours, in return for the British withdrawal of its Orders in Council of 1807 with respect to America; it must renounce the carrying trade with the colonies of countries from which it was excluded during peacetime; and it must allow Britain to capture all shipping attempting to trade with its enemies, to demonstrate its good faith.
- ⁷⁸ Barrow *et al.*, *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 1-3, 6.
- ⁷⁹ [Croker], *A Key to the Orders in Council* (London: John Murray, 1812), p.1 n., pp. 7, 13-16, 18.
- ⁸⁰ Barrow *et al.*, *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 2-3, 10-11, 32; *ibid.*, 7:15 (Sept. 1812), pp. 193-5, 199, 203, 209-10.
- ⁸¹ *AJR*, 46:190 (March 1814), p. 253. Cf. *AJR*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), p. 88.
- ⁸² Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, in *PD*, 1st series, 24:641-2, 644.
- ⁸³ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 535-7. The *QR* continued to hold this view of the War of 1812 in the years following the conflict – e.g. *ibid.*, 27:54 (July 1822), p. 405: 'the real object was the conquest of the Canadas'. The *AJR*'s comment on American territorial ambition was that 'America has no juster pretensions to a foot of Territory *beyond the rocky Mountains*, than to extend Louisiana to the Moon' (*AJR*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), p. 97).
- ⁸⁴ Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, *PD*, 1st series, 24:639.
- ⁸⁵ Gifford, in *AJR*, 44:181 (June 1813), p. 644; *ibid.*, 46:193 (June 1814), p. 650. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 663; *ibid.*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), p. 88; Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, *PD*, 1st series, 24:635-6.
- ⁸⁶ *QR*, 9:18 (July 1813), p. 294.
- ⁸⁷ *AJR*, 46:193 (June 1814), pp. 654-5.
- ⁸⁸ Barrow *et al.*, *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 32-4.
- ⁸⁹ *QR*, 7:15 (Sept. 1812), p. 199.
- ⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.213; *AJR*, 46:193 (June 1814), pp. 669-70, 674-8.
- ⁹¹ *AJR*, 28:114 (Dec. 1807), p. 418; cf. *ibid.*, 24:97 (July 1806), pp. 272-3; *ibid.*, 24:98 (Aug. 1806), pp. 415-6; *ibid.*, 27:109 (July 1807), pp. 277, 286.

- ⁹² *AJR*, 27:109 (July 1807), p. 275; cf. *ibid.*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), pp. 90-1; George Barrow and William Gifford, in *QR*, 5:9 (1811), p. 237.
- ⁹³ *AJR*, 27:109 (July 1807), p. 288; cf. Gifford, in *ibid.*, 24:95 (May 1806), p. 109; *ibid.*, 24:98 (Aug. 1806), p. 415.
- ⁹⁴ Barrow *et al.*, *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 30-1.
- ⁹⁵ *AJR*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), 88.
- ⁹⁶ Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, *PD*, 1st series, 24:639.
- ⁹⁷ [Croker], *Key to the Orders in Council*, pp. 10, 13.
- ⁹⁸ Canning, 24 June 1808, *PD*, 1st series, 11:1051; *idem*, 15 June 1810, *ibid.*, 17:742-3; *idem*, 18 Feb. 1813, *ibid.*, 24:635, 637; *QR*, 2:4 (1809), p. 230; *ibid.*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 4-5, 14, 17-25.
- ⁹⁹ [Croker], *Key to the Orders in Council*, p. 17.
- ¹⁰⁰ *AJR*, 41:164 (Feb. 1812), pp. 196-7.
- ¹⁰¹ Canning, 17 October 1812, in *Speeches of the Right Honourable George Canning delivered on public occasions in Liverpool* (Liverpool: Baldwin, Crock and Joy, 1825), p. 35.
- ¹⁰² *AJR*, 41:164 (Feb. 1812), p. 199; *ibid.*, 46:93 (June 1814), p. 662.
- ¹⁰³ Bickham, *Weight of Vengeance*, pp. 10-11, 19, 74, 226.
- ¹⁰⁴ *AJR*, 24:98 (Aug. 1806), p. 415; *ibid.*, 28:113 (Nov. 1807), pp. 239-41; *ibid.*, 24:95 (May 1806), p. 109; *ibid.*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), p. 29; *ibid.*, 28:114 (Dec. 1807), p. 418; *ibid.*, 46:190 (March 1814), pp. 253-4.
- ¹⁰⁵ *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), pp. 29-31.
- ¹⁰⁶ Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, *PD*, 1st series, 24:641.
- ¹⁰⁷ *QR*, 27:54 (July 1822), pp. 431, 434-7; *AJR*, 26:189 (Feb. 1814), pp. 159-69.
- ¹⁰⁸ *QR*, 27:54 (July 1822), pp. 405, 412-6, 419, 449; *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), pp. 540-1, 550.
- ¹⁰⁹ Canning, 18 Feb. 1813, *PD*, 1st series, 24:641-2.
- ¹¹⁰ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), p. 539.
- ¹¹¹ *AJR*, 46:193 (June 1814), pp. 661-2; *ibid.*, 47:194 (July 1814), p. 39.
- ¹¹² *QR*, 23:46 (July 1820), pp. 390-3; *ibid.*, 27:54 (July 1822), pp. 406, 449; *ibid.*, 29:57 (April 1823), p. 8.
- ¹¹³ *QR*, 19:37 (April 1818), p. 177.
- ¹¹⁴ Young, *The Example of France*, pp. 120-4.
- ¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 125; Young, *Travels*, vol. 2, p. 262.
- ¹¹⁶ Young, *The Example of France*, p. 125.
- ¹¹⁷ *AJR*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), pp. 28-9. A correspondent to *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine* [hereafter *BEM*] agreed that Britain had benefited economically from American independence, 1:1 (April 1817), pp. 26-7.
- ¹¹⁸ Barrow, in *QR*, 8:16 (Dec. 1812), p. 276; *ibid.*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 513-4; *AJR*, 30:122 (Aug. 1808), p. 404.
- ¹¹⁹ Barrow, in *QR*, 5:10 (May 1811), p. 497; Gifford, in *AJR*, 6:26 (Aug. 1800), p. 480.
- ¹²⁰ M. Fletcher, with Barrow, in *QR*, 28:56 (Jan. 1823), pp. 434-40; also *ibid.*, 3:5 (Feb. 1810), pp. 51, 230; *ibid.*, 5:9 (Feb. 1811), p. 237.
- ¹²¹ *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), p. 542.
- ¹²² Hinde, *Canning*, pp. 259, 342; D. Beales, 'George Canning (1770-1827)', *ODNB*; Canning, 12 March 1810, in *PD*, 1st series, 16:139-40; Canning, 15 June 1810, in *ibid.*, 17:684-5.
- ¹²³ Notably James Stephen, author of the pamphlets *War in Disguise: the fraud of the neutral flags* (1805) and *Coup d'oeil on an American War* (1812), and indeed author of the policy of the Orders in Council. He later admitted that this policy had been a mistake, however, having provoked the USA to declare war; and his priority was not the war, but always the abolition of the slave trade and then of slavery itself. See 'Stephen, James (1758-1832)' in R. G. Thorne, *The House of Commons 1790-1820*, 5 vols (London: Secker and Warburg for the History of Parliament Trust, 1986), vol. 5, pp. 262-4; P. C. Lipscomb, III, 'Stephen, James (1758-1832)', *ODNB*.
- ¹²⁴ E.g. *AJR*, 55:248 (Jan. 1819), p. 399; *ibid.*, 1:6 (Dec. 1798), p. 829.
- ¹²⁵ *QR*, 2:4 (Nov. 1809), p. 334; *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), pp. 544, 547-9; *ibid.*, 55:249 (Feb. 1819), pp. 528-9; Barrow, in *QR*, 27:53 (April 1822), p. 85.
- ¹²⁶ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 519-20.
- ¹²⁷ *AJR*, 47:194 (July 1814), pp. 41-2; *QR*, 4:7 (Aug. 1810), p. 237.
- ¹²⁸ W. Lewelyn, *An Appeal to Men against Paine's Rights of Man*, 2 vols (Leominster: F. Harris, 1793), vol. 2, p. 125, quoted in Wilson, *Paine and Cobbett*, p. 92; Gifford, *Plain Address*, pp. 16, 18. Cf. *AJR*, 30:122 (Aug. 1808), p. 404; *ibid.*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), pp. 546, 552; *QR*, 27:53 (April 1822), pp. 79-80.
- ¹²⁹ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), p. 511; *ibid.*, 2:4 (Nov. 1809), pp. 331-2; *AJR*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), p. 31.
- ¹³⁰ *QR*, 2:4 (Nov. 1809), p. 335.

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- ¹³¹ *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), p. 555; *ibid.*, 28:111 (Sept. 1807), p. 111; *ibid.*, 5:22 (April 1800), pp. 551-6.
- ¹³² *QR*, 2:4 (Nov. 1809), p. 335.
- ¹³³ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), p. 509; *ibid.*, 23:46 (July 1820), pp. 551-2.
- ¹³⁴ *BEM*, 4:24 (March 1819), pp. 644-6.
- ¹³⁵ *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), pp. 553-5; *ibid.*, 55:248 (Jan. 1819), pp. 401-3; *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 510-11.
- ¹³⁶ *BEM*, 4:24 (March 1819), pp. 641-2, 645-6; *ibid.*, 6:35 (Feb. 1820), pp. 554-61; *AJR*, 28:112 (Oct. 1807), pp. 185, 187-8.
- ¹³⁷ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), p. 523; *BEM*, 4:24 (March 1819), p. 646.
- ¹³⁸ *AJR*, 28:114 (Dec. 1807), p. 417.
- ¹³⁹ *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 462-3.
- ¹⁴⁰ *AJR*, 18:73 (July 1804), p. 306; *ibid.*, 28:113 (Nov. 1807), p. 243; *ibid.*, 46:193 (June 1814), p. 651; *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 527-9, 533; *ibid.*, 27:54 (July 1822), p. 407; *BEM*, 4:24 (March 1819), p. 647.
- ¹⁴¹ *BEM*, 4:23 (Feb. 1819), pp. 347, 352-3; *ibid.*, 4:24 (March 1819), p. 641-9.
- ¹⁴² *BEM*, 4:24 (March 1819), pp. 647-8; *QR*, 12:24 (Jan. 1815), p. 318.
- ¹⁴³ *AJR*, 1:6 (Dec. 1798), p. 829; Barrow *et al*, *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 33.
- ¹⁴⁴ *AJR*, 2:10 (April 1799), p. 563; *ibid.*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), pp. 22-3; *QR*, 15:30 (July 1816), pp. 555-6; *ibid.*, 16:32 (Jan. 1817), p. 516; *ibid.*, 21:41 (Jan. 1819), pp. 125, 146-8; *ibid.*, 23:46 (July 1820), pp. 374-5.
- ¹⁴⁵ *AJR*, 2:9 (March 1799), pp. 241-8; *ibid.*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), p. 30; *QR*, 23:46 (July 1820), p. 377.
- ¹⁴⁶ *AJR*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), pp. 23-4, 26, 28, 30; *QR*, 27:53 (April 1822), pp. 79, 89-90.
- ¹⁴⁷ Young, *Travels in France*, vol. 1, p. 29; *idem*, *The Example of France*, p. 12.
- ¹⁴⁸ *AJR*, 55:249 (Feb. 1819), p. 528; *ibid.*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), p. 551; *ibid.*, 24:97 (July 1806), pp. 264-5.
- ¹⁴⁹ *AJR*, 2:7 (Jan. 1799), p. 53.
- ¹⁵⁰ *AJR*, 47:199 (Dec. 1814), pp. 544-6.
- ¹⁵¹ *QR*, 27:53 (April 1822), pp. 71-5; *AJR*, 2:7 (Jan. 1799), pp. 49-51, 53; *ibid.*, 22:87 (Sept. 1805), pp. 24-6, 31; *QR*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 519-20.
- ¹⁵² *AJR*, 54:243 (Aug. 1818), pp. 500, 502, 505.
- ¹⁵³ Barrow, in *QR*, 19:37 (April 1818), pp. 54-78, quotation at p. 71; cf *ibid.*, 27:53 (April 1822), pp. 90-4.
- ¹⁵⁴ *AJR*, 45:176 (Jan. 1813), p. 92. Cf. 22:87 (Sept. 1805), p. 27; *ibid.*, 28:111 (Sept. 1807), p. 112; *ibid.*, 46:190 (March 1814), p. 252; *QR*, 7:13 (March 1812), p. 32; *ibid.*, 7:15 (Sept. 1812), p. 199; *ibid.*, 10:20 (Jan. 1814), pp. 494-9; *ibid.*, 15:30 (July 1816), pp. 555-6. See also Fraser, 'English Opinion of the American Constitution and Government', pp. 95-8, 102.