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THE NATURE OF VIRGINIA OPPOSITION
TO GREAT BRITAIN

by

Stella F. Duff

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The Nature of Virginia Opposition to Great Britain

It has long been recognized that American political theorists of the Revolutionary period derived their principles from British and French protagonists of the laws of reason and nature, the analysts of British law and Constitution - notably Locke, Montesquieu, Rosseau, and Sidney. Beyond this very reasonable and general assumption, however, there are these unanswered questions - how long had the colonists been interested in analyzing their position in the British empire; from what period had there been advocates of Republicanism; what aspects of the government were attacked; was there any correlation between political parties in England and the revolutionary movement here? By investigating the character of the news in the Virginia Gazette, reinforced by the separately published writings of leading Virginians, an effort has been made to define these problems within this royal colony, perhaps the most influential in the British empire.

I

We may perhaps best analyze the colonial Virginian's estimation of his political relationship with the government of the empire by making first the customary division in time of the years before and after 1765. This becomes particularly necessary when the contents of the Virginia Gazette are examined. The entire character of the news published changes with the inauguration of the new imperial policy. Before 1765, Virginians had little interest in British politics if the news they read is any criterion. Walpole's long years as prime minister (1721 - 1742) included four years (1736 - 1740) from

which there are extant copies of the Gazette, yet in these years there was no mention of his intrigues or even of his existence as prime minister. The perfection of the system of corruption was never discussed. Indeed, between 1736 and 1765, only one reference was made, and that obliquely, to the mounting bribery in the English political scene. In 1738, there was a reprint from the American Weekly Mercury of December 1, 1737, which quoted a speech of the Duke of Argyll made after some "reflections on his Grace" had been cast by the Lord Chancellor. "This fills me with greatest Astonishment and Surprise, especially, seeing I have always had the greatest Veneration for his Majesty's Person and Merit, and given no cause for Insinuations. I appeal this honourable House . . . whether in Justice they can brand me with the Title of Jobber, or Party-Man; am I a buyer of Boroughs, an Election Briber, or a Tool in any Respect?"¹. Perhaps this lack of journalistic notice of British internal politics may be partially accounted for by the prohibition against reporting parliamentary debates in British papers, from which the colonial editors lifted their news. This seems at best only a partial explanation, for this restriction was continued after 1765, yet there is later an abundance of political comment.

The kingship as an element to be reckoned with in colonial affairs was entirely missing in the Virginia Gazette in this first period. There were accounts of the royal family's entertainments, of their visits to Hanover, and their health. Apparently the succession was then as now a problem of interest to all Englishmen.

Occasionally the king was petitioned by his subjects in England - primarily by merchants who wanted action taken against the Spanish depredations. Throughout this period, the news of Britain's relations with Spain was extensive and detailed. The foreign relations of the empire, even the international intrigues of other countries, were the colonial newspaper reader's main fare. An intense interest in the Austro-Turkish war, and the troubles of the Russians on their western border was fed, or perhaps created, by all newspapers.

Park's Virginia Gazette, and in the 1750's that of William Hunter, did not reflect any dissatisfaction with British rule in America or at home. It is true that there were no imperial problems in the broad sense, but the struggle between the royal governors and the colonists was similarly absent from their pages. Reading them, one comes to the conclusion that Virginians had no complaints to make against their government. Such was not, of course, the case - prior to 1765, there were particular groups who chafed under British power, as well as special events which brought forth general colonial dissent.

The church was an institution whose resentment of authority exercised from Britain had begun before 1765. Religious organizations in Virginia fell into two classes - the Established Anglican church and the dissenting sects. Both had grounds for denying the supremacy of England. Virginia Anglicans evinced considerable and vocal dislike of the frequently recurring proposition of an American episcopate. The laity, having gained control of the clergy, did not wish to relinquish it to their English fathers-in-God. ². The vestrymen of

the church supplied many of the officials in county courts, the Burgesses, and the Council where they took a stand against the governor, the commissary, and the bishops. In the matter of appointment and induction of ministers, there was a continuous quarrel, with the vestries winning the major power by the right of annual appointments.³ In the Revolution out of one hundred Anglican clergy examined, 47 were attached to the patriot cause, some actively, 13 were royalists, and 39 were on neither side.⁴

The dissenting sects were the principal challengers of central authority. In the Valley of Virginia, the Scotch Irish and Germans had taken possession in the eighteenth century. Practicing democratic religious government, they became devoted to civil administration by the local majority rather than by Tidewater property-holders and king's friends. The Great Awakening welded them into a cohesive group, ready to demand redress for their grievances.⁵ After the ministry of Samuel Davies in Hanover County, dissenters' influence on the candidates for the legislature was noticeable.⁶ During the Revolution they became especially vociferous in their demands for religious toleration and a democratic state constitution. The Baptists produced one of the few religious leaders who wrote of political matters. John Leland was the author of an essay stating his belief in the compact theory of government, although it was not published until 1791.⁷ The Methodists were the only groups accused of Tory leanings and this because their English leader, Wesley, held that the colonists had no political powers beyond those possessed by their ancestors on emigrating.⁸

The controversy over the episcopate was aired in the Gazette by an exchange of letters which were in some cases quite bitter. They were also, however, concerned in great part with personalities and did not assume the proportions of a colonial resistance movement. Evidence of the dissenters' political movement is entirely lacking.

During the French and Indian war, general opposition to the British government developed.⁹ The Burgesses protested to Governor Dinwiddie, for example, against the fee which had been levied for affixing the official seal to land office patents. "The Rights of the Subject are so secured by Law, that they cannot be deprived of the least Part of their Property, but by their own Consent."¹⁰ If at this time the colonist could find a reason for opposing a tax on a purchase of land, it would not be hard to find adequate grounds against the taxation which later arbitrarily affected everyone. Compulsory military service was also a bone of contention. Virginians did not want to go to the aid of other colonists and were even lax in the prosecution of the war within their own colony. Men who enjoyed "the blessings of a British constitution, reduced to its original Purity," could not be depended upon to approve a draft.¹¹ It has been claimed that all the arguments used against the British policy after the passage of the Stamp Act were developed during this earlier instance of colonial antagonism.¹² In the incomplete files of the colony's newspapers in this period, there are, however, no references to such constitutional opposition to the war. Notices of desertions were printed but so also were those of intercolonial meetings of governors held in Alexandria to plan concerted action. The addresses of governors who urged the necessity of defense against

the French massacre were continually before the public. Such discontent as existed must have been recognized as local in character and the remedies necessary as matters of political expediency. In any case it was not directed against the kingship and due to its short duration did not develop into a full-fledged discussion of political theory.

The demand by Virginia farmers for free access to western lands was another potential source for the denial of the rule of Britain over the colony. The situation did not become critical until 1774, however, by which time the supply east of the Proclamation Line of 1763 had been exhausted. The wealthy planter and the frontiersman (probably also a dissenter) were alike interested in freedom from these restrictions. When the Lees organized the Mississippi Land Company, Dr. Arthur Lee became their principal agent in London. ^{13.} Dr. Lee was one of the Americans most aware of the connection between British opposition to the king and colonial grievances and most active in trying to secure the definite support of Wilkes and the Radicals. A change in the land policy of the royal government was widely supported. The powers of the king to control the land came under scrutiny along with the other powers of the British government. The bungling Indian policy of the Virginia royal government did not win the admiration of Valley settlers. ^{14.} None of these views on land policy were voiced in the Gazette. They are mentioned here to point out the presence of another discontent, economic in character and directed immediately against the government, which could be joined to the increasing political unrest after 1765.

II

With this background of antagonism to Great Britain in mind we may now deal more specifically with the years after 1765 when the scope of opposition was so much broadened, having as its basis the search for a solution to the problem of how to restore the "pure British constitution." Essentially this was to the colonist a problem of discovering which element in the mixed government had caused the corruption of its balance and attempting to correct it. It received attention on both sides of the Atlantic in strikingly similar manners. The traditions of Republicanism and the Glorious Revolution are evident in both. On April 28, 1775, John Pinckney published an editorial comment in his paper which cogently points out their common purposes. "The CRISIS, JUNIUS, and many other papers are daily published in London, against the bloody court, the bloody ministry, and the bloody parliament and in course in favor of America."¹⁵ Such a statement could have been dated any year after 1766 and would have been endorsed by any of the Virginia printers.

It should be stressed that British and American political theorists were all admirers of the British constitution. They had been schooled in the balanced government interpretation and believed that it assured the protection of the rights of the people.¹⁶ "It is the excellence of our most happy constitution that the prerogatives of the Crown, and the rights of the people, are so fully ascertained that no insult can be offered to the one, or encroachment made on the other, without either directly or indirectly interfering with some universally acknowledged custom or statute."¹⁷ This was addressed by an unidentified American to the printer, Purdie and Dixon.

Richard Henry Lee wrote in the same year that the three forms of the constitution were so "finely blended" that each was prevented from extending its claims over the others.¹⁸ Lee especially stressed the importance of the Lords in maintaining a balance between monarchy (the king) and democracy (the Commons).¹⁹ He went on to say that the constitution in Virginia had no such equilibrium since the governor and council were appointed by the Crown and the members of the Council were the judges of the General Court. Only the Burgesses was an independent body, and it had to be called by the governor, thereby violating Montesquieu's express dictates.²⁰ He indicated here a desire to see the constitution in Virginia reformed, a sentiment echoed by Robert Carter Nicholas who emphasized that the colony had reached a state of manhood.²¹ On another occasion Nicholas wrote of the "beautiful harmony in the British constitution which is so much admired by all and which we endeavor to imitate" and advocated the separation of the speakership of the Burgesses and the treasury to further balanced government in Virginia.²² But Benjamin Grymes argued against the separation of the two offices, also to preserve the balance.²³ Perhaps this indicates that "balance of power" like all Republican terms, was used by both sides in public questions. Nicholas in his Considerations on the Present State of Virginia Examined importuned the public not to lose sight of the differences between legislative, executive, and judicial in government. These two gentlemen implied what Virginians later recognized as their goal - the establishment of a separate, perfect balanced government in Virginia. This would have meant dividing the king's sovereignty and that of the country

into two parts which Britons refused to think possible. Indeed since sovereignty did not actually rest in the English people, but in the Crown, and since the balance of the three sections had long been disturbed, it was impossible at the time. This was stated by a writer to the Gazette in 1769 who called himself a British American. " I do not say that there is not a medium between a good constitution, and simple despotism; but I say the Americans would not possess that medium . . ." ²⁴. Officially, the colony took the position that the principles of the constitution had been established in Virginia and that their liberties had been protected by it for years. Listing what they considered violations, they pointed out that these anti-constitutional powers might prove dangerous to other parts of the empire if they went unopposed in the colony. ²⁵.

When the arbitrary acts of parliament continued, it was recognized that the constitution, although most excellent, when violated could produce excessive tyranny. ²⁶. From 1768 on, the Gazette published a multitude of reflections, all aiming at the reestablishment of this constitution and sometimes stating that American action would be responsible for its future. The connection with Great Britain was stressed as essential to the happiness of both. ²⁷. The various violations of the constitution were cited by Americans and British. ²⁸. Steps had always been taken by the offended people whenever measures subversive of the constitution had been enacted, as in the reigns of the Stuart kings. ²⁹. Here we have emphasized what was then widespread knowledge - the connection of the controversy in colonial Virginia with a similar conflict in the mother country.

The theory of balanced government had from its promulgation recognized a fact which might seem self-contradictory - that it was

more than likely that one of the elements could gain a preponderance of power.³⁰ In England therefore this conception of government had been a weapon used against the king in the dispute between king and parliament.³¹ In 1643, Philip Hunton published his Treatise of Monarchie in which he stated that there were three cases in which the other estates could "lawfully assume the force of the Kingdome, the King not joyning, or dissenting."³² In the event that "the Fundamentall Rights of either of the three Estates be invaded by one or both the rest,"³³ this could be done. Michiavelli's Discourses, published in England in 1636, had idealized the Roman republic and many republican sentiments. After reading such publications, Englishmen were forced to become either supporters of a divine right king - thereby lifting him above the logic of a mixed government - or, on the other hand, republicans who aimed to create in England an ideal mixed polity.³⁴ These classical republicans of the seventeenth century include Harrington, Milton, and Sidney.³⁵ Following the death of Sidney in 1683, republicanism disappeared as a program actively supported. The Whigs espousing William of Orange, took over many of the classicists' ideas - balanced government came between the Whig Theory of the constitution after the Revolution of 1688. They looked with favor upon a project to reduce the king's power to that of a Venetian Doge. After the turn of the century, in the reigns of George I and II, this was accomplished. Thus began a period wherein mixed government was made an English concept, applicable to monarchy and adopted even by the Tories. With the exposition of Montesquieu, the concept was yet more firmly established. The American colonists believed in its perfection and in their analysis of the British government in the

years between 1765 and 1776, they attempted to find out which element of the three was out of balance. It is possible that they came to the same conclusions as their predecessors, the classical republicans - that the kingship would always corrupt the balance. On the other hand, they were subjected also to the Tory and Whig philosophies of the eighteenth century which premised their recognition of mixed government with the idea that monarchy might be balanced - indeed, that the British monarchy was the epitome of such a government. What element in British politics the Virginians attacked will be the aim of the next section of this paper to determine.

Discussions of parliamentary supremacy are legion among colonial political writers. Subordination of the colonies was usually denied by any good colonial patriot - the only variance was the degree of denial. Some writers felt that parliament could levy external but not internal taxes on the colonies. Others maintained that there was no such distinction, that the colonists were entirely outside the bounds of the British legislature. Whatever their particular attitude, these discussions revolved around the question of taxation without representation, and did not in themselves involve a discussion of the constitution.

The more thoughtful essayist went beyond the particular grievance of taxation to a discussion of the causes of this sudden interference in American affairs. Among Virginians, the majority blamed the ministry. Between 1769 and 1775, it is possible to cite both British and American references to "ministerial oppression." In November, 1768, a gentleman in London wrote to his friend in Virginia that "the affair of Boston being totally ministerial,

when it comes to be fully debated and all the papers are before the House, it is very possible the Ministry may be overset—for they have only the Bedford landed interest for them, and I think they have not the confidence of the mercantile interest." 36. The king was defended as wanting to promote the happiness of his people but being perverted from his task by the "baseness of his servants." 37. If the Whig elements united, these bad servants would be forced out of power. An extract from the North Briton, Number CVIII, republished in the Gazette, pointed out that a limited prince always spoke the sentiments of his ministers, who could be held responsible for the executive branch of the government. The king should be neutral and conciliate the outbreaks in his country. The ministers were sacrificing the king's interest to their own. 38.

The Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights was a London organization formed to promote the cause of Wilkes and the Radicals. Upon his resignation as secretary of this society, Robert Morris wrote that much was wanting to make their opposition to the ministers successful. 39. In Westminster a meeting of the electors was held, with Wilkes chairman, at which resolutions were drawn up for the impeachment of Lord North "who exerted an undue and corrupt influence over the legislative body." A petition to the king requested him to aid them in redressing their grievances. 40. In the London Chronicle in 1769 the scope of an attack on the ministry was broadened to the office itself, the corruption of which had raised the ministers far above their rightful position as servants. The office should be destroyed forever and the government of kings, Lords,

and Commons restored.^{41.} The Public Ledger of October 19, 1769 blamed the discontent of the nation upon the retirement of Pitt.^{42.}

From these citations, it is evident that there were British accusations published in the Gazette against the ministry, as the corrupter of the balance of power. What is more, these complaints came in several instances from the Radical element in England whom one might expect to point a finger at the responsibility of the kingship.

There were numerous Americans in the same period who echoed the sentiments of the Britishers. Junius Americus wrote in the Gazetteer that the people of Virginia were resisting not the constitution of Great Britain, but her "wicked Counsellors, a weak and despotic Ministry," which was taking daring strides towards arbitrary power.^{43.} In 1770, A Friend to Liberty wrote to Mr. Rind enunciating the doctrine that "there is not a wiser maxim in the English constitution than that the king can do no wrong."^{44.} Therefore it was the ministers who were responsible for arbitrary measures advanced by various artifices which from time immemorial, at least from Charles II's day, they had used. Again in 1774, the ministry was attacked by British American^{45.} in the pages of the Gazette. Like the Britishers who believed in a restoration of the crown's authority to equal that of the other two branches, he said that the first step taken to end the constitution had been the loss of the crown's independence. Monarchs were forced to corruption to gain any influence and thus the power of the minister was increased. Walpole had perfected this machine so that an absolute aristocracy existed in the hands of the few who controlled the seats in parliament. Pitt was cited as the man who could have restored the independence of the kings. British American ended this diatribe

against the ministry by remarking that only America could "preserve Great Britain from becoming the prey of the most despotic aristocracy that ever yet was erected."⁴⁶ After the occupation of Boston by the troops of General Gage, we might suppose that Virginians would have felt even more strongly against the British. Pinckney published a letter addressed to these troops in February 1775. The author stated that the cause now engaged in was the most important since the Glorious Revolution. Its consequences must be either the separation from Great Britain or complete subservience to mother country. Americans would never acknowledge dependence on parliament, dominated by a "venal majority" and a corrupt ministry, but only on the king. The latter might see the day when through his ministers' bungling, he would resemble Philip II of Holland.⁴⁷ In June, 1775, Pinckney inserted in his paper, at the request of his customers, an address to the people of Henrico County, signed A Friend to Liberty. He pointed to the force of "ministerial vengeance," but firmly stated that the people of Virginia did not want to see the power of the Crown increased, not did they wish to become independent of the mother country.⁴⁸ In September, the same thought was expressed in verse:

" Since naught else will do, our swords must confute
The merciless measures of Mansfield and Bute,
.
And tho' some may think that we threaten the throne,
His majesty George, and him only we'll own; . . ." ⁴⁹

Throughout 1775, indeed, Pinckney printed innumerable comments

against the ministry, its corruption, and arbitrary conduct.

The letters of Richard Henry Lee in the period between April, 1774 and May, 1775 also point to the ministry as the scape-goat of American problems. In writing to Sam Adams, he expressed the opinion that the wise and good in Britain would prove their support of America in the next election by failing to return the Tory party.⁵⁰ In June, 1774, he drew up a set of resolves to be offered to the Burgesses voicing their horror at the Boston Port Bill. The fourth one read, "That a Virtuous and steady opposition to this Mini [ste]rial Plan of governing America is Absolutely-necessary to preserve even the Shadow of Liberty, and is a Duty which every Freeman in America owes to his country, to himself, and to his Posterity."⁵¹ He later hoped that the resolutions of the Continental Congress would prove the ruin of the "Ministerial Enemies."⁵² In February, 1775, he wrote a letter to his brother, Arthur, in London stating, "The wicked violence of the Ministry is so clearly expressed, as to leave no doubt of their fatal determination to ruin both countries . . ."⁵³ Again he hoped that the people of England would be moved by the measures of the Continental Congress to repudiate the ministry and save their empire from destruction. When Lee received news of the proscription of Americans, he wrote Landon Carter attacking the lying practices of this "profligate Administration" and assuring him that their plan was to compel the colonies to submission before the Association, in which he placed great faith, had time to work.⁵⁴ The events of April 19th in Massachusetts only further increased his "resentment against this Savage Ministry and their detestable Agents," and

his belief that these officers of the crown would be destroyed when the cause of American rights was won.⁵⁵ By April, 1776, however, Lee had begun to refer to the "despotism of the British Court."⁵⁶

In October, 1775, a statement appeared in Pinckney's lead article from London which emphasized the feelings of many Virginians with regard to the question of where to place the responsibility for their unfortunate relationship with the mother country. "The truth is, they [the colonists] insist upon a change of ministers prior to any accommodation whatever . . . If the friends of the constitution are put into the ministry, the Americans will probably readily repose confidence in their assurances, and return to their allegiance on the footing they were governed in the late reigns."⁵⁷ Whether this was not a very rosy outlook, which almost any political thinking colonist would have at least privately denied, we may perhaps ascertain by examining the references to the kingship in this same period.

Praise of the king was frequent. Much of it, of course, was mere formula with which it was customary to preface or close any official document. But beyond this, it is not difficult to see a reluctance upon the part of the Virginian to deny the traditional relationship. Most of the panegyrics were from colonial sources although this is probably not a significant fact when the necessary winnowing of British news by the printer is considered. Many of these references to the king's rights denied that parliament had any authority over the colonies. From New York in 1766 there was an item denouncing parliamentary sovereignty but recognizing the constitutional right of the king, to which the colonies would always submit.⁵⁸ From Northampton

there was a similar commentary - " I honour his present Majesty King George the third; I despise sycophants, and all kind of servility; I contend for an exemption from taxes laid on without my consent." 59. The resolutions of the meetings of the Sons of Liberty, the committees of correspondence, etc., were always prefixed by such protestations of loyalty. 60. In November, 1766, the House of Burgesses drew up an address to the Hon. Francis Fauquier, governor. They acknowledged the king for " protecting the constitutional privileges of his subjects, even in the most distant part of his realm. . . and at the same time declare our constant readiness to devote our lives and fortunes in defence of his sacred person, crown, and dignity against all enemies." 61. This interesting similarity to the language of the Declaration of Independence was repeated in the resolves of the Norfolk Sons of Liberty (and doubtless in other cases) when the " lives and fortunes" of the subscribers were pledged to maintain it. 62. In the London news of Purdie and Dixon's paper of December 22, 1768, there appeared a letter from Virginia professing the sovereignty of the king and recognizing his constitutional right to bestow lands as he pleased. 63. British American also supported the Crown's right to the disposition of territory as well as to the establishment of terms by which colonists could live. The principal point of this statement was a denial of parliamentary authority - it does not give a carte blanche to a dictatorship of the king as might appear. 64.

In British American's last letter, he advocated a divorce from Great Britain if the sovereign paid no attention to colonial claims. 65. In many cases protestations of loyalty were undoubtedly as much for

self-assurance as for the benefit of George III. It might be worthwhile to note the most reactionary of these if only to show that these indications of homage came from all sides. * I have never yet heard it debated, whether we are not bound to the King by the most sacred tie of allegiance . . . † Civis, the author, was supporting the removal of the powder by Governor Dunmore.⁶⁶ As far as I know this is the only obviously Tory statement in the Virginia Gazette.

These instances of reference to the king indicate a reluctance on the part of Virginians to deny his sovereignty, although they might roundly criticize every other aspect of the British government. This does not make a great deal of sense historically speaking. It was an obvious fact that parliament had for years legislated for the colonists and its authority had not been denied. In fact the colonists had even claimed rights derived from British law - as, for example, religious toleration. Furthermore, since 1660 there had been a notable absence of a close relationship between the king and the colonists. It would appear, therefore, that printed evidences of loyalty to the monarch were either made with the tongue in cheek or by people who deliberately refused to look beyond their hope that some alternative to disowning the king would be offered. This interpretation is substantiated by the fact that Thomson Mason, who had in Jefferson's estimation a very good mind, was willing only to give a sidelong glance at the necessity of withdrawing from the empire. There is also the possibility that in their veneration for the Whig theory of balanced government, the colonists overlooked as long as they reasonably could, any factor which would indicate that it would not work. Eventually, of course, they were driven to the idea that a balanced government was not possible,

at least under the existing concept of the colonies. Their continuing faith in mixed government is shown by the adoption of what was thought to be a perfect system of balance in the Constitution of the United States.

Open reference to the corruption of the crown appeared on occasion in the Gazette but principally from English sources. The most frequently noted of the latter are the letters of that scurrilous commentator, Junius. This is ironic in a way since Junius was a partisan of Grenville on the question of American taxation, a strong supporter of monarchy, and did little more than reproduce common arguments on constitutional questions.⁶⁷ His first letter attacking the king appeared June 17, 1770. He inferred that the king, when repudiating the intercessions of the people and trampling on liberty, should realize that stronger forces than entreaty could be used against him.⁶⁸ Later, he called the ministers the "private domestics" of the sovereign.⁶⁹ In a letter addressed to Mansfield, he accused him of serving the Jacobite cause well by devoting his life to enlarging the power of the crown.⁷⁰ In 1775, he pointed out that freedom was inconsistent with the subordination of two parts of the constitution. The crown did not wish to be independent of parliament, but to rule in parliament by a majority secured through the corruption of the rotten boroughs.⁷¹ Lord Chatham had spoken against the odious character of the Commons in a speech requesting the dissolution of parliament, reprinted in August 1771. "The influence of the Crown is become so enormous, that some stronger bulwark must be erected for the defence of the constitution."⁷² The resolutions of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights in the same year stated, "the corrupt correspondence between the House of Commons and

the court is notorious.* There followed a list of grievances, one of which referred to the plight of America and one to Ireland.⁷³ These British references to the personal influence on behalf of corruption and the control of parliament, appearing as early as 1770 and in such straightforward, bitter terms, could not fail to have directed the minds of Virginian readers to a critical attitude toward the king. They were probably as aware as we are today that they came from all shades of opposition politicians - Junius, a reactionary unknown, descending consistently to personal diatribes; Chatham, a liberal statesman of known colonial sympathies; and the Society of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, a Radical organization associated with Wilkes. The popular interest in sensational slander is indicated by Rind's placement of Junius' articles on page one, column one.

The first Virginian to speak in the Gazette of the "undue influence of the Crown in Commons" was Senex in 1769. He pointed out that this interference by the king was the result of most ministries' activities and therefore little help would come from a change in that quarter. Relief could be expected from the king alone.⁷⁴ Arthur Lee, who had lived in London for years and was well acquainted with Radical activities, wrote to Sam Adams in 1773 that there was nothing in George III's reign to prove him anything but a tyrant over his people. "You may depend upon it that the late American Act of Revenue, moved from the throne with an insidious view of dividing the American opposition."⁷⁵ In December of the same year, he wrote to Adams that the East India Company's wealth directed by the crown would pour into the "direct channel for

our destruction." His only consolation was that liberty might still flourish in America.⁷⁶ After the passage of the Boston Port Bill a most scathing denunciation of the king was published in Rind. It was in the form of a letter from Phocion to the king. "Your ministry I shall release, and charge on your majesty alone the execution of measures which promise to disgrace your government, and disturb your throne - - to you we look for protection; you are our sovereign and ruler, and not our fellow subjects in Parliament . . . We trace [their grievances] up to the throne, from whence, though they may not originate, they have ultimately issued, nor could they have affected us without your approbation."⁷⁷ Publicus recommended to the Convention in August 1775, the formation of a constitution. He pointed out that they no longer had any government, the last Burgesses having adjourned in June.⁷⁸ In October, 1775, the rising tide was indicated by another plain-spoken letter, addressed to the inhabitants of Virginia by Cato questioning how long moderation could be preserved. "It must have been shamefully notorious to the whole world that he [the King] was the infernal author, and had all along been (though a secret yet) the most strenuous supporter of all these diabolical measures which had been adopted and pursued against America."⁷⁹ He urged the abandonment of peaceful policy. The meaning of these last two quotations cannot be missed. It is more than likely that they represented a thought which had been at the back of the Virginians' minds before late 1774 but which most were not ready to express. Probably many were not willing to give voice to such republican feelings even on the eve of July 4, 1776.

The members of the Continental Congress realized that the Declaration of Independence would have to be written as an attack on the king. The only published pamphlet discussing the rights of the British colonists to overthrow the king was an anonymous one called A Summary View of the Rights of British America, printed in August, 1774, in Williamsburg.^{80.} Virginia delegates knew this to be written by Thomas Jefferson. It had been taken to the August meeting of the Virginia Convention to be suggested as the instructions for the delegates to the Philadelphia Congress. It was felt that it was too radical a departure from the customary discussions of the rights and privileges of British subjects to be used at that time. But after its tabling, friends of Jefferson took it to Mrs. Rind to be printed. The editors wrote in the preface that this pamphlet expressed the opinion of every free American, while refusal to adopt it showed the moderation of the Virginia Convention.^{81.} The colonist held back from any radical interpretation of the organization of the British empire, just as he did not publicly express contempt of the king. Isolated letters to the editor in the latter vein had appeared by this time, but an official document still had to be conservative. Jefferson spoke first of parliament's oppression of the colonies before 1765 when it passed laws to carry out Great Britain's mercantile policy. (These were recognized by many as rightful adjuncts of the mother country's commercial powers.) * But a series of oppressions, begun at a distinguished period, and pursued unalterably through every change of ministers;^{82.} too plainly prove a deliberate and systematical plan of reducing us to slavery.*^{83.} An appeal was

then made to the king as the only mediatory power between the states of the British empire. His majesty should have exercised his veto power over the two branches of the government, and prevented the passage of laws by parliament which denied the rights of the colonial legislatures. ⁸⁴. Jefferson was trying to recognize two separate balanced governments - one in England, one in Virginia-- in both of which the king was the executive power. This was not the traditional colonial theory of mixed government in the British empire. It introduced a new idea - that of the king as the only bridge between two almost independent units. This indicated that the colonists had rights as Virginia subjects, Massachusetts subjects, etc., rather than as British subjects as they had traditionally claimed. Obviously then the parliament should not have been legislating at all for the colonies and it was up to the king to check this seizure of power by the British legislature. His own authority to grant land in the colonies or to station armed troops among them was rejected. ⁸⁵.

George III was then accused of listening to the opinions of individuals but paying no attention to the welfare of the country, a "shameful abuse of a power trusted with his majesty for other purposes." ⁸⁶. Kings should be the servants of the people. ⁸⁷. "This is the important part in which fortune has placed you, holding the balance of a great, if a well poised empire." ⁸⁸. Again, Jefferson said ". . . he [the king] is no more than the chief officer of the people, appointed by the laws, and circumscribed with definite powers, to assist in working the great machine of the government, erected for their use, and consequently subject to their

superintendence." 89.

This concept of the British empire - in which the colonists were really independent but looked to the crown as to a benevolent father for protection from the other parts of his government - bears a surprising resemblance to the Commonwealth which Great Britain eventually developed. Certainly there were then few protagonists of this idea in England. People either assumed the economic importance of the colonies in which case they wished to regulate them; or were willing to recognize the inexpediency of parliamentary control and therefore approved abandoning taxation; or believed that the colonies should be independent. In America, there were not many in late 1774 ready to strip the king and the empire of so much power. Even the preface to the London edition of A Summary View, written by Tribunus, identified as Arthur Lee,^{90.} did not accept this radical interpretation. Lee for one thing was very realistic in his attitude toward the colonial controversy and probably knew that few Englishmen would credit such an idea. He wrote that he was sending the pamphlet to the king in hopes that his majesty and his ministers might learn some wisdom in Government. Then, however, he went on to the customary declaration against the ministry as having attacked his majesty's prerogatives, broken down the constitution, and destroyed balanced government.^{91.} This does not seem to indicate a grasp of Jefferson's broader Commonwealth idea.

It was not, however, this concept of the relationship of the king to the empire which pointed so directly to revolution. This

was a theory which did not even recognize the king's authority, and hence there would be no need to revolt against it. It was in the Declaration that Jefferson used the more conventional statement of the rights and privileges of any subjects of the king.^{92.}

But there was in the Summary View the suggestion that the king had an obligation to all his subjects, a duty which because of his office he must perform. One might therefore have inferred that if the king failed in this, he had forfeited the right to the office which required it. Bolingbroke's Idea of a Patriot King, written to oppose the corruption of Walpole's administration, presented this same idea. It was also to be found in the Virginia Gazette in more specific terms than Jefferson's. Bolingbroke claimed that the king had divine power only as long as he was worthy of it since it sprang from national reverence rather than personal merit.^{93.}

By definition, the patriot king had to be unselfish and therefore would automatically raise the barriers against any show of arbitrary power.^{94.} In a mixed government the authority of a prince came only from popularity and could not be given him independent of the people.^{95.} If he enslaved the people, he had forfeited his privilege of governing and the people secured the right to revolution.^{96.} He admitted that even the best governments had in them the seeds of their own destruction. They could be prevented from dissolution only by a frequent return to the "first good principles."^{97.} This idea of periodic shake-ups in the government both Jefferson and Bolingbroke probably drew from Machiavelli. Bolingbroke felt in 1736 that the people had lost the spirit of the constitution and were accepting from the ministry what in years before they would

not have allowed royal authority.^{98.}

In 1766, Richard Bland had published a pamphlet which might have been influenced by Bolingbroke but which certainly contained the germ of Jefferson's ideas on the nature of the connection with the mother country. Jefferson regarded it as the first work to attack this problem,^{99.} but also recognized that Bland had failed in the last analysis to follow his reasoning to its logical conclusion.^{100.} He claimed that the king had some prerogatives which he should exercise without the consent of parliament and that it was from these that the colonies through their charters derived their existence. At the same time, however, he acknowledged the supremacy of parliament.^{101.} In spite of this, we may again infer that if the king failed to look after the colonies he might expect them to assert themselves.

Even Junius, in his opposition to the king, deplored his majesty's loss of personal honor in always uttering what people claimed were the sentiments of the ministry. It was not usual for the king to be involved in personal altercations with his subjects; he should have been beloved.^{102.} In a June, 1771, issue of the Gazette Junius suggested that only a return of the constitution to its original principles would restore its authority. If the king had any honor, he would bring this about by dissolving parliament. If he had none, the forms of the constitution might as well be renounced as the only method of obtaining justice for the people.^{103.} Such responsibility of the king for the preservation of a balanced, uncorrupt government had been set forth in the days of the Walpole-Bolingbroke controversy in, among many other publications, the

Freeholder's Political Catechism. This was reprinted twice in the Gazette, once by Rind in 1770, secondly by Dixon and Hunter in February, 1775. After stating a belief in government by the king, Lords, and Commons and a staunch loyalty to George III (changed from George II), the catechism stated that the king was under a strict obligation not to screen his ministers from public justice. He was not above the laws since what was not legal must be arbitrary.¹⁰⁴ In 1773, a letter was addressed to the parliament of Virginia, signed Hampden, in which the Burgesses were assured that they had no superior but the king who would forfeit his office in Virginia if he invaded their rights.¹⁰⁵ Pinckney published in June, 1775, an "Essay on the first Principles of Government," unsigned, which stated that the king must be invested with a public character. If he did not recognize the distresses of the people, he would have no political power.¹⁰⁶ The Whisperor addressed a letter to the king in July, listing the grievances against him and calling him despicable for allowing himself to be governed by his ministers. A king was only a man unless he had "kingly virtues". Blessings had in the past resulted from the overthrow of a monarch who had protected his ministers and therefore was as guilty as they of their crimes.¹⁰⁷ Surely these British and American references in the Gazette to the responsibility which a king had to his people could not fail to create a feeling that George III should (and could if he wished) understand the colonists' interests and do something to promote them.

In attempting to discover what aspect of the British government Virginians considered responsible for the colonial controversy,

reason points to the king in spite of the fact that the vast majority of references in the Gazette castigate the ministry. In the first place, Virginians believed in the balanced theory of government and associated it with the British constitution. It would, therefore, have been logical to assume that in a perfect balance, the king would have offset what almost all colonists felt to be the tyrannical legislative program of the Lords and Commons. The colonists recognized this responsibility of his as we have seen above. His veto power was the only force which could in the last analysis change the course of events other than the simple expedient of electing the new Commons. The latter reform the British liberal Whigs and Radicals had tried to secure along with the Radical program for triennial parliaments. The Tory party and the king, however, steadfastly opposed it. It was, furthermore, an actual fact that bribery and corruption in elections had increased since the beginning of George III's reign and that the king himself had taken part in the naming of the candidates in the first general election after his coronation.^{108.} The colonist could not but have seen that the king would never support a liberal colonial position. The Radical program and the defeats it suffered were well covered by the Virginia Gazette.^{109.} The king also controlled the ministry which was not one of the independent segments of the government but attached to the executive department. According to Blackstone, whose commentaries on English laws were known in Virginia, the king was the sole magistrate of the nation, all others acting in subordination to him.^{110.} Although this had not been the case in the reigns of George I and II, George III contended that he could exclude ministers whom he did not personally like. Pitt,

a friend of the colonies, had thus been deposed. It was only after the bungling of this monarch that popular government by the ministry was firmly established whereby England lost all resemblance to a mixed government.

Here was, then, a case of control by the king of the other two branches of government. There was no impartial king to whom the colonists could have recourse. Classical republican writers in the previous century had recognized that what was supposed to be a balanced monarchy would become dominated by the kingship and they had, therefore, been led to exclude it from their outlines of the ideal mixed polity. Thus the colonists came to realize that to control their own politics they would have to be independent of such a dominant executive. The severe criticisms of his majesty, previously noted in Virginia, do not seem anachronistic in the light of these factors.

Although it cannot be said with certainty that all the criticisms of the ministry, which did continue to the eve of the Declaration of Independence, were the outward expression of an inward hatred of the king, it seems not unfair to assume that this was true in increasing measure after 1770. The Wilkes' scandal, Junius' plain spoken letters, and the other clear reports of British politics showed the way the wind was blowing in England. The reopening of colonial taxation indicated no change in the king's policy. By the fall of 1774, there were scathing attacks on his majesty himself in the Virginia Gazette. Jefferson's Summary View pointing to the responsibility of the king (which had been noted in the Gazette

at an earlier date and from other sources) was the viewpoint of most people even though they were not so courageous in speaking about it. It was only natural that the American colonists should feel a reluctance to leave the British empire. Life, liberty, and property had for 150 years been protected by the king. Any denunciation of him must lead to independence, a hard fact for many to face. After late 1774, however, Virginians realized they were well on the road to repudiation, a path which they had been subconsciously travelling for some time.

III

From the foregoing discussion, Virginian acquaintance with the Republican doctrines of the seventeenth century and the exposition of the British constitution in the eighteenth century is very apparent. To illustrate this more specifically, one has only to look at writers in these fields cited in the Gazettes, the sale of their publications in Virginia, the use of typical Republican expressions, and the praise and respect accorded to ancient and modern attacks on despotism everywhere.

It has long been acknowledged that colonial American political writers drew their theories and often their phraseology from the many who preceded them. A letter in the Gazette in 1774 shows that contemporaries were aware of this too. Americanus admitted that he had made use of the "Impressions which remain from reading and observation," but he did not regard this as plagiarism, which of course it was not.¹¹¹ Most frequently referred to in the Gazette were Sidney, Locke, Hume, and Montesquieu.¹¹² Of these only Sidney was a Republican, known to have advocated a Commonwealth form of government to follow Charles II. All the arguments necessary to support revolution could be found in Sidney - as for example the inalienable right of a man to choose his own ruler.¹¹³ Sidney's works were never sold in Virginia, perhaps because having been executed for treason, he was beyond the pale and not reprinted. The other three, eighteenth century writers and never advocates of overthrowing the crown permanently and specifically, all were

advertised among the books for sale by Williamsburg printers. From 1752-76, Locke appeared eleven times. Hume was listed eight times between 1771-76. In 1771, his History of England was to be published in America. Montesquieu's works were listed for sale eighteen times between 1768-77. Actually the number of entries might have been in reverse to the popularity of the writer since many times the same lists appeared week after week with the titles sold omitted. On the other hand, perhaps new shipments of the popular men were continually received. Since Virginians were so well versed in the balance of power theory of government, Montesquieu's prominence does not seem unusual. In this connection it might be said that Sidney believed in the supreme power of parliament and felt that the closer the connection between legislator and people, the more perfect the government.¹¹⁴ This was certainly a denial of mixed government and serves to illustrate again how the eighteenth century Whig theorists had built up a rationalized concept of the British government based on early seventeenth century Republicanism. Machiavelli was quoted in the Gazettes and in 1771, his History of Florence (which expounded the balance of power theory before Montesquieu) was advertised for sale. His theory that governments should return periodically to their first principles in order to be healthy seems to have been the most widespread of his doctrines. Bolingbroke was cited a few times but his volumes were not for sale in Virginia until 1775. Blackstone and Swift were cited and for sale. Those referred to, but not for sale, included Coke, Burnet's History, Rapin's History, Tacitus (probably Thomas Gordon's, referred to by Caroline Robbins as a political classic of the eighteenth century), and Mrs. Macaulay.

The works of the following liberals were sold in Virginia but not quoted in the Gazette - Shaftesbury, Milton, Adam Ferguson (a popularizer of Montesquieu, whose Essay on the History of Civil Society was to be published here in 1771) and Burke. The latter's Considerations on the Causes of the Present Discontent, and Mrs. Macaulay's answer, were advertised in 1771. Many of Burke's speeches in parliament were quoted from the London news, of course, but perhaps it is significant that colonial theorists recognized his essential conservatism and his expediency policy.

There were several terms used by seventeenth century Republicans, indeed by classical Republicans of all ages and by the opposition parties (whether Whig or Tory) in the eighteenth century, which appeared regularly in the Virginia Gazette. Reiterated endlessly was the word "corruption"- applied principally to the British ministry by English and colonial writers alike. "Tyranny" was also very common. These two words were used so often that they might be called the pass words of any dissatisfied political writer. "Natural rights," the "abuse of power," the "laws of nature and reason," "arbitrary power," "ministerial despotism," the Glorious Revolution and "balanced government" were constantly employed. This terminology supported or opposed all causes in Britain or the colonies. These were the magic words which would command the attention of their hearers. Of course, they were primarily used in the Gazette by the liberal or radical groups because these were accorded the widest hearing. Their frequent, somewhat indiscriminate, appearance robs them of some significance but, on the other hand, there is no doubt that they belonged principally to his majesty's loyal opposition. The word "independence" or even a thought implying it was

very rare. Working in a frame of loyal opposition and in a situation so different from that of the originators of their terminology, most colonials, as has been pointed out above, did not openly express the idea of revolt until later.

British classical Republicans in the seventeenth century had derived their ideas, as their name implies, from the ancient states of Greece and Rome. These they glorified as the epitome of Republicanism, carefully analyzing at the same time what had caused their downfall. It was through this investigation that many of these phrases became common parlance. In the Gazette, references to the glory of Greece and the grandeur of Rome were numerous. In contemporary affairs, the struggles of Ireland and Scotland against the king were occasionally mentioned, particularly the grievances of the former which had been championed by the Radicals in England. Perhaps most romanticized was the struggle of Geneva, France and Corsica. There had been detailed accounts of the Corsican revolt since the publication of the first newspaper in Virginia in 1736. In the late 1760's, General Paoli's triumphs were reported with much approval - the picture of the "brave Corsicans" fighting for their liberty was popular. It seems to have inspired the British as the struggle of Greece did in the nineteenth century.

Virginians did not have to look so far afield, however, to find supporters of liberty against despotism. Within the empire, in England, were the British Radicals whose cause they well understood from its weekly reporting in the Virginia Gazette. This

party's activities undoubtedly had immense influence on their state of mind, particularly as the Gazette usually printed extracts from the Whig papers which had the proper attitude toward colonial affairs. None of the printers needed to write editorials to indicate their political bias in British politics - the present day reader, however, is probably better able to distinguish this one-sided character of the news than the printer's contemporaries. Not only were events reported sympathetic to the opposition party, but there were numerous indications that the link between their activities in Britain and Virginia dislike of parliament's colonial legislation was understood. This recognition is also evidence that reform rather than revolution was thought of as a possible, although perhaps not a probable, solution to Virginia problems.

One of the most newsworthy subjects in Great Britain for several years was the vivid political character, John Wilkes. He had few serious convictions and his methods of acquiring fame were opposed by liberal Whigs like Pitt and Burke. Pitt's opinion of Wilkes was apparently warmly reciprocated. In October, 1769, there appeared in the Gazette a "character" of the Earl of Chatham by Wilkes, describing him as a mercenary who sold people for large pensions, whose speeches were popular because of his theatrical manner, and who had no principles that did not contribute to his own advancement.¹¹⁵ Wilkes' first recognition was achieved by the founding in 1762 of the North Britain which originated the practice of printing the full names of statesmen whom it mentioned.

The general public at first gave him little support except by rioting. From the beginning of George III's reign, the growing violence of mobs had been noticeable even verging at times on revolution. Wilkes fanned this flame, making the most of his disqualification from parliament. This action on the part of the Commons has been characterized historically as unconstitutional, and it met strong opposition at the time. The Middlesex election question was particularly important since it stimulated political opposition outside the Commons. Petitions to the king were regarded as the most effective means of appeal. Partly as a result of the Wilkes rabble-rousing and partly due to the unpopular nature of the Tory ministry, in the years 1769-1770, open popular meetings were held to attempt to influence parliament. Many small political societies were formed which met at different taverns. In the city of London, these were united in the Society for the Supporters of the Bill of Rights, among whose grievances were listed those of Ireland and self-taxation for America. These groups were the Radical party. Actually, they were very weak since most liberal Whigs refused to have anything to do with them although they were forced in a later period to advocate parliamentary reform because of the Radicals. In the activities of Wilkes and these agitators can be seen all the methods used by American politicians - petitions to the king, riots, popular meetings, political societies, even tavern sessions. A glance at the dates will show that the colonists did not use these techniques solely in imitation of Wilkes but they must certainly have been encouraged by reading of their friends' tactics, especially of their advocacy of American grievances.

Upon Wilkes' return to London from his exile in Europe, the details of his reception were printed in the Virginia Gazette.¹¹⁶ His letter to the Livery of London requesting his reelection was published the following week.¹¹⁷ From this time on, his letters and speeches to the Livery and to the freeholders of Middlesex were continually placed before the colonial eye. When he won the election on account of the votes was given as well as his victory speech.¹¹⁸ Then when he was refused his seat and Luttrell took his place, he addressed the Livery again, bitterly criticising "this slavish Parliament."¹¹⁹ Some of the Liverymen were, interestingly enough, called "Sons of Liberty."¹²⁰ Wilkes' defense before the Court of King's Bench on the republication of the North Briton No. 45 was given in full.¹²¹ The mob of London rallied heavily to his support and on one occasion forced the entire city of London to be illuminated for two nights in celebration of his election.¹²² Rind printed a comment, whether his own or taken from a British paper it is not clear, that the election of Wilkes was alarming to the men in power who for several years past had been laboring to promote a change in the English constitution.¹²³ Reprints of his speeches and accounts of other radical activities were continued. In Boston, it was noted, the "mystical number," forty-five, appeared on all windows and doors.¹²⁴ There are innumerable other references to this number of the North Briton as well as to seventy-two (a later issue authored by Wilkes), which indicate his tremendous mob popularity.

The introduction to the contested candidate's History of England was published in two issues in Rind. Therein he cited Milton,

Sidney, and Locke as among the most notable authors on English government. British political liberty was due to the Glorious Revolution, " but we may justly regard its continuance as too precarious, its security as ill established."¹²⁵ Through 1771, the papers printed these speeches and new items including some letters written from the King's Bench prison, which were full of popular appeal. The bets made in London on the probability of reelection were recorded.¹²⁶ Many elaborate gifts were made to Wilkes. In fact, accounts of his living conditions in prison would not arouse a great deal of sympathy since his friend often brought him huge banquets and provided him with other comforts. It was rumored from Liverpool that forty-five gentlemen of Virginia had sent Wilkes forty-five hogheads of tobacco.¹²⁷ In 1773, Wilkes again announced his candidacy for reelection to the Commons as representative of Middlesex. His long years of struggle were finally climaxed in 1774 by achievement of the posts of member of parliament for Middlesex and lord mayor of London. After several years of faintly derogatory comments, the description of his triumph on Lord Mayor's Day was printed in the Gazette in March 1775.¹²⁸ When Lord North requested an address from parliament to the king against America, Wilkes made a speech in the Commons declaring the laws of nature and the principles of the English constitution to be repugnant to taxation of the colonies.¹²⁹ His previous published remarks had referred only in passing, if at all, to the American problem. But they had included continual attacks on the despotism,

tyranny, and corruption of the parliament and the ministry. Between 1768 and 1771, Wilkes was discussed and quoted in the Virginia Gazette more than any other single man. His outspoken opposition to the government, together with the apparent fact that he was supported overwhelmingly by many Englishmen,^{130.} was interesting and undoubtedly influential reading for many Virginians.

Reports of debates in parliament were among the less startling items of news reprinted from the British papers. Sometimes these were disguised, in accordance with the contemporary British practice, as debates in the Robinhood Society or the Areopagus of Athens. Items concerning England alone were copied as well as the comments on any phase of the colonial problem. Addresses and petitions from the London boroughs, especially those referring to the despotic administration or corruption in the government were popular selections for reprint. The letters of Junius on these subjects have been mentioned above. There were also anonymous comments of the same nature. One writer claimed that "jobbing and sordid scheming" were more notorious than at any time since the Revolution."^{131.} Sarcasm was liberally used, especially in a bitter attack on Lord North's proposal to overcome the scarcity of provisions in England.^{132.} Remarks against the influence of the Scotch were fairly common. The fair-minded owner of one Virginia Gazette had starred one of the diatribes and added his remembrance of the usefulness of the Scotch "in the last war." Although in summary these items do not appear as forceful as the blow by blow description of the Wilkes controversy, taken together they served to give the Virginian reader a substantial knowledge of political conditions in his mother country. In spite of the emphasis on Radical and Whig

activities, it was always apparent that a tremendous controversy was going on within the ranks of native Englanders which bore resemblance to the Virginian's own with the British government.

All of this points strongly to the community of interests of the opposition in England and America. That this was recognized by contemporaries in both countries is apparent from the Virginia Gazette and letters of private individuals. "The cause of America is the common cause of every friend to liberty . . . [is] the King's dominions."^{134.} Perhaps had communication and transportation been as rapid as in the twentieth century, the British movement might have achieved real reform in home politics then, instead of sixty-odd years later, and a modern imperial organization, instead of revolution. Jefferson's Summary View might have been the blueprint of the new empire. Since British Radicalism was in its infancy it was impossible for it to make such accomplishments alone. Many Radicals, however, felt a kinship for America. Mrs. Macaulay had written that she would like to spend her last days on the banks of the Ohio. This incidentally indicates the Britisher's lack of knowledge of American geography - the Ohio was certainly no place for an elderly British gentlewoman. All of Mr. Wilkes' friends spoke of coming to the new world to live.^{135.} This sympathy for the American cause arose in part at least from the admirable publications of colonial writers - from books to petitions. Mr. Dickinson's Farmer's Letters had been circulated all over the British empire. The attitude of Arthur Lee was well known in England because of two series of letters which he had written under the pseudonyms of Junius Americanus and Monitor's letters. The style of all American

political writers received high praise from one Londoner who said it was not to "be equalled in the British dominions." 136.

In 1770, the Supporters of the Bill of Rights replied to a gift of £1500 from the South Carolina Assembly by affirming their causes to be the same. "In every constitutional struggle, on either side of the Atlantick, we wish to be united with you, and are as ready to give as to receive assistance." They then echoed Mrs. Macaulay's desire to come to America when the British constitution was destroyed at home.¹³⁷ The Livery of London was well versed in the similarity of the two causes. Alderman Oliver assured his colleagues that if the system of despotism was successful against America, it would next be exercised at home.¹³⁸ Reports came to Philadelphia that the city of London was uniting its cause with the American.¹³⁹ In petitions and addresses to the king, the freeholders of Middlesex and other London areas often included the grievance of taxation of America. An editorial comment from London in September, 1769, assured the public that this was the most critical era since the Revolution in which British liberties, the constitution, and the fate of the colonies was at stake.¹⁴⁰

Arthur Lee, while resident in London, did a good deal to promote the united action of Britains and Americans against the government. He reported to his brother, Richard Henry, in detail and frequently, any situation in England which could "conduce to the intelligent action of that spirit of resistance, that his brothers and their patriotic coadjutors were endeavoring to rouse. . . ."141. Lee was a member of the Supporters of the Bill of Rights and, in fact, wrote their resolutions on several occasions. It is small wonder that they showed so

much sympathy for the colonial problem. When the House of Commons summoned the aldermen of London to appear at their bar to answer questions concerning their conduct, the society resolved against this outrage. The address was written by Mr. Lee.¹⁴² In writing to Richard Henry, he had said that he was induced to join the society because of its espousal of all public causes. Lee was a friend of Wilkes, whom he quoted on one occasion as having "spoken wisely of America."¹⁴³ The Virginian believed that had he been agent for Massachusetts Bay in 1768, he could have made the cause of America that of Middlesex "for they are in truth the same." American agents had failed in this opportunity - they were lazy, unknown, and not able men.¹⁴⁴ None of the Gazette references to the common cause of the two countries appear before 1769 - these may all be the influence of Arthur Lee. He felt keenly the weakness of his cause - perhaps realizing that Wilkes was rather a shallow political figure whose words, once he had achieved popular acclaim, would mean little. He wrote that he had dined frequently at King's Bench prison where he met "declared patriots of whom I shall be satisfied if we find one Sidney in twelve elect."¹⁴⁵ Thus Lee recognized the inherent possibilities of the British Radicals but also the futility of his attempt to develop them. In Monitor XI he pictured a discouraging state of affairs in England. Lord Shelburne, whose opposition was grounded on true principles, was the only political figure from whom Americans might expect anything. There was no chance of his gaining any power.¹⁴⁶ This faith in Shelburne alone he also expressed in letters to Richard Henry Lee.¹⁴⁷ After the Revolution, in writing his "Memoir," Lee outlined his plan of connecting himself with the

British opposition. He believed that the arbitrary views of the crown affected in the same manner the colonies and the mother country. He procured the listing of American grievances in the various London petitions and commenced the series of articles signed Junius Americanus in order "to keep them alive in the popular mind."¹⁴⁸ His brother was elected to the Livery. These activities of the Lees in London impressed Richard Henry at home. He wrote to Sam Adams of the plan of despotism which applied to both sides of the Atlantic.¹⁴⁹ Other Virginians who heard of Arthur's activities by private channels and read the Virginia Gazette for the very specific accounts of Wilkes' doings, his support by Middlesex and the London Livery, parliamentary debates-in short, of all British liberal or Radical political activity - must certainly have received encouragement. A struggle in England using many of the same techniques developed locally must have resulted in attaching more significance to this agitation than it rightly deserved. It, furthermore, undoubtedly lessened the strangeness with which the ordinary Virginian would regard forceful opposition to his king's government. The colonists eventually passed the British Radicals on their road to revolution. Arthur Lee, along with many thinking Virginians, seems to have realized that this would happen.

It has been the purpose of this paper to analyze the nature of Virginian opposition to Great Britain's rule. As a preface, we noted the dislike of certain aspects of British dominance before 1765, but we found that these grievances were within a narrow compass and that they were never climaxed by a theory of revolution. The newspapers

reflected none of these elements of controversy nor did they indulge in reporting discord in British domestic politics. Thus is emphasized the fact that the colonists were content to be within the empire, to receive the many benefits which such a status brought them, and to avoid the responsibilities of their position. It is also a fact, however, that in this same period Virginians were developing a political theory. In a mature society in which leisure and its use in the pursuit of knowledge became possible, men read the classical Republicans of the seventeenth century and their Whig adaptors of the eighteenth century. They made acquaintance with the well-known French writers of government.

With the inauguration of a new imperial policy after the French and Indian war, there developed abundant political discussion, both in the notation of events on the London scene and in the essays and petitions concerning the colonists' place in the empire. Virginians then began to apply to their own case the theories they had been reading and formulating without specific aim for years. At the basis of their political theory was the conception of the British government as a balanced one in which king, Lords, Commons each had the power to overrule the others in the event that one assumed arbitrary power. The taxation of the colonies, the quartering of troops, the new and enforced restrictions on American trade were all considered evidences of this tyranny. The logical question for the Virginian then was - who was to be considered responsible for this despotism. That it could exist must be due to the deterioration of the balance in the British government. Which of the three branches was exercising such

power and which was failing in the duty of curbing it?

As we have seen, the largest number of references in the Virginia Gazette were to the despotism of the ministry. Coming from British and American sources, they would enable one to make a good case for the contention that the colonists from 1765 to 1776 saw in the ministry the responsibility for their plight and transferred their hatred to the king only at the last minute to make a spectacular recital in the Declaration of Independence. It is true that Virginia denunciations of the king do not appear in any comparable number in the Gazette, but there was one as early as 1769 and scathing criticisms in 1774 and 1775. The latter questioned how long moderation could be preserved, as if it were a front for the true opinion of Virginians. That this was the case was reiterated in the preface to Jefferson's Summary View. In this unusually advanced expression, which the editors claimed to be the opinion of many, Jefferson had pointed out the responsibility of the king to prevent the exercise of any arbitrary authority in his kingdom. By so doing only could he maintain the right to be king. Such a theory had been enunciated by Machiavelli, Bolingbroke, and Junius, whose writings were known in separate editions and in reprints in the Virginia Gazette. Anonymous writers had often expressed the same viewpoint. Richard Bland in his Inquiry had touched upon it although he had shied away from its full implications. The Virginians, furthermore, were acquainted with Blackstone's legal interpretation that the ministry was an adjunct of the king, not of parliament. It is understandable that the feeling that the king was the author of British despotism was not often put into words before 1776. It was much simpler and more orthodox to criticise the ministry by whom reforms

could have been made. When it became apparent that the ministry and its attitude were to remain unchanged, attention was turned to the king as the independent branch of the mixed government which must curb the others. This was a logical step, and it does not seem too rash to say that it was at the back of Virginians' minds during the entire colonial controversy as the last resort. Knowing their understanding of the concept of balanced government which included the classical Republican interpretation of the kingship, it could hardly have been otherwise.

Virginian knowledge of the politics of the opposition in England in the same period was significant in that it provided examples for the criticism and denunciation of governmental authority. There was a community of interest on both sides of the Atlantic and had there been better leaders and a wider electorate to strengthen the Radicals in England, some reform through parliament and the ministry might have been achieved. The colonists could read in the newspapers of the use by Radicals of the same techniques of revolt which were so effective in America. Such a man as Arthur Lee worked hard to make a united cause of the two, always realizing the impossibility of the task because of the limitations in England. Awareness that this was essentially an ineffectual political movement which could accomplish nothing against the ministry (and this is apparent in the Gazette) must have further crystallized the conviction of Virginians that the kingship was the only source of redress. Since George III had refused to exercise his power to check the despotism of the other branches,

the advantage of a mixed government had been destroyed. Thus, the colonists reached the classical Republican doctrine of the seventeenth century that it was impossible to control, under the existing British system, a king who wished to support tyrannical measures. Since he refused to protect them against the ministry, he must be repudiated.

NOTES

1. Virginia Gazette, February 17, 1738, p. 2, col. 1. All references to newspapers are to the Virginia Gazette, which hereafter will be cited by date, with the editor listed in years in which there was more than one Gazette published.
2. Claude H. Van Tyne, England and America (Cambridge, 1929), 70.
3. Wesley M. Gewehr, The Great Awakening in Virginia (Durham, 1930), 31-32.
4. Van Tyne, 77.
5. Gewehr, 29.
6. Ibid., 89.
7. Ibid., 189.
8. Ibid., 158.
9. Eugene I. McCormac, Colonial Opposition to Imperial Authority During the French and Indian War (Berkeley, 1914).
10. Ibid., 75.
11. Ibid., 84.
12. Ibid., 95.
13. Isaac S. Harrell, Loyalism in Virginia (Durham, 1926) 9.
14. Freeman H. Hart, The Valley of Virginia in the American Revolution, 1763-1789 (Chapel Hill, 1942), 83.
15. Pinckney, April 28, 1775, p. 3, col. 2.
16. This was, of course, a fallacious attitude in that Britain did not have a perfect mixed government, and it could not have been the savior of colonial rights.
17. Purdie and Dixon, July 11, 1766, p. 1, col. 1.
18. Also found in almost the same words in an "Extract from a pamphlet produced by Mr. Dickinson, author of Farmer's Letters in Pinckney, January 19, 1775, p. 3, col. 1.
19. In Lee's use of terms can be seen the original classical Republican concept of balanced government (Aristocracy, Monarchy, Democracy) converted to the British-American concept (legislative, executive, judicial). The same phraseology was used in Letter V of the British American in Rind, June 30, 1774, p. 1, col. 1. Here, however, it was further noted that corruption had set in and the "vitals of the constitution" were wounded.

20. James C. Ballagh, ed., Letters of Richard Henry Lee (New York, 1911), 19ff.
21. Purdie and Dixon, September 5, 1766, p. 2, col. 1.
22. Purdie and Dixon, June 27, 1766, p. 1, col. 2.
23. Ibid., October 10, 1766, p. 3, col. 1.
24. Rind, April 20, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
25. Ibid., February 2, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
26. Ibid., January 12, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
27. The Monitor, VIII, in Rind, April 14, 1768, p. 1, col. 1; Atticus, No. 1 in Rind, May 4, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
28. Atticus, No. 1, Ibid.; Petition of Freeholders of Middlesex County to King, in Rind, August 17, 1769, p. 2, col. 1; Petition of Livery of London to King, in Rind, September 21, supplement, 1769, p. 1, col. 2.
29. Rind, June 30, 1773, p. 2, col. 1.
30. Zera S. Fink, The Classical Republicans (Evanston, 1945), 10.
31. Ibid., 24.
32. Ibid., 26.
33. Ibid. This invasion of the rights of one estate was often cited by Americans as the cause of the despotism of the mother country after 1765.
34. Ibid., 27.
35. See below, pp 31-35, for evidence of their influence in Virginia.
36. Rind, February 23, 1769, p. 2, col. 1.
37. Purdie and Dixon, July 13, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
38. Rind, September 14, 1769, p. 2, col. 1. The North Briton, founded in 1762 by Wilkes, was one of the chief organs of the opposition to the government. The London Radicals here touched on the idea of the king as above the embroilments of politics, but failed to point out specifically that he was obliged to prevent the tyrannical exertion of authority of one group over another. Jefferson later did this. Here, the ministry was held responsible

39. Rind, January 17, 1771, p. 1, col. 1.
40. Rind, February 7, 1771, p. 1, col. 1.
41. Purdie and Dixon, December 28, 1769, p. 2, col. 1. This same idea is expressed again in an extract from the Political Register of November, 1772, in Rind, February 18, 1773, p. 1, col. 1.
42. Rind, January 18, 1770, p. 1, col. 2.
43. Rind, December 14, 1769, p. 1, col. 1. This was the pseudonym of Arthur Lee.
44. Rind, April 26, 1770, p. 1, col. 1-2.
45. The pseudonym of Thomas Mason, Burgess of Loudoun County, one of the best legal minds of revolutionary Virginia. Author of nine letters on colonial rights.
46. Rind, July 7, 1774, p. 1, col. 1.
47. Pinckney, February 9, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
48. Pinckney, June 22, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
49. Ibid., September 14, 1775, p. 3, col. 2.
50. Ballagh, 107.
51. Ibid., 115.
52. Ibid., 124.
53. Ibid., 130.
54. Ibid., 133.
55. Ibid., 134.
56. Ibid., 173, 176.
57. Pinckney, October 6, 1775, p. 1, col. 3.
58. Purdie and Dixon, March 14, 1766, p. 3, col. 1.
59. Ibid., April 14, 1766, p. 2, col. 3.
60. For example, see ibid., p. 3, col. 2.
61. Ibid., November 20, 1766, p. 1, col. 1.

62. Ibid., April 4, 1766, p. 3, col. 2.
63. Ibid., December 22, 1768, p. 1, col. 2.
64. Rind, April 13, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
65. This is the same man, Thomson Mason, who wrote in 1769 as British American, his progress towards a repudiation of the King is marked in these six years. Rind, July 28, 1774, p. 1, col. 1. Although he had advocated the strengthening of the crown in a previous letter in 1774 (see p. 11), in his last, he provided the only possible alternative if the king would not try to restore balanced government.
66. Dixon and Hunter, April 29, supplement, 1775, p. 4, col. 1.
67. William H. Lecky, A History of England in the Eighteenth Century (New York, 1878), III, 254.
68. Rind, June 7, 1770, p. 1, col. 2.
69. Rind, August 23, 1770, p. 1, col. 1.
70. Ibid., February 21, 1771, p. 1, col. 1.
71. Pinckney, May 11, 1775, p. 2, col. 1.
72. Rind, August, 15, 1771, p. 1, col. 2.
73. Ibid., September 26, 1771, p. 2, col. 2.
74. Ibid., November 23, 1769, p. 1, col. 3.
75. Richard Henry Lee, Life of Arthur Lee, LL.D. (Boston, 1829), 231-32.
76. Ibid., 261.
77. Rind, September 15, 1774, p. 1, col. 1.
78. Pinckney, August 17, 1775, p. 2, col. 1.
79. Ibid., October 19, supplement, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
80. Thomas Jefferson, A Summary View of the Rights of British America, Introduction and Bibliographical Note by Thomas P. Abernethy (New York, 1943), ix.
81. Perhaps one of these men may have been the Phocion who contributed the above mentioned letter to the Gazette in September of the same year.

82. See Senex above, p. 20, for an early expression of this idea.
83. Jefferson, 11
84. Ibid., 16.
85. Ibid., 21.
86. Ibid., 17.
87. Ibid., 22.
88. Ibid., 23. (Italics mine)
89. Ibid., 5.
90. Ibid., xi.
91. Ibid., ix. The preface to the London edition was reprinted in Pinckney, March 2, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
92. Ibid., x
93. Letters on the Spirit of Patriotism; on the Idea of a Patriot King... (London, 1775), 88.
94. Ibid., Letter II ff.
95. Ibid., 212-13.
96. Ibid., 171.
97. Ibid., 136.
98. Ibid., 38.
99. Randolph G. Adams, Political Ideas of the American Revolution (Durham, 1922), p. 43.
100. Richard Bland, An Inquiry into the Rights of the British Colonies, edited by E. G. Swem (Richmond, 1922), vii.
101. Ibid., 21.
102. Rind, June 7, 1770, p. 1, col. 1.
103. Ibid., June 20, 1771, p. 1, col. 1.

104. Ibid., July 12, 1770, p. 1, col. 1. and Dixon and Hunter-February 18, 1775, p. 1, col. 1. In 1770, this is attributed to the Earl of Bath, Henry Pulteney, who united with Bolingbroke against Walpole although he had been a leading Whig. He wrote regularly in the Craftsman. In 1775, Bolingbroke is cited as author.
105. Rind, November 11, 1773, p. 1, col. 1.
106. Pinckney, June 22, 1775, p. 1, col. 2.
107. Ibid., July 6, 1775, p. 2, col. 1.
108. Lecky, III, 58 and 24.
109. See below, pp. 35-43.
110. Lecky, III, 18. Blackstone went to the ridiculous extreme of not recognizing any connection between ministry and parliament.
111. Rind, November 17, 1774, p. 1, col. 1.
112. In Van Tyne, the following statistics are given for quotations in the works of leaders of the American Revolution - Locke-22, Hume-20, Montesquieu-10, Sidney-6. In the Gazette, there are approximately the same number of references to each of these.
113. For an explanation of Sidney's politics, see Caroline Robbins, "Algernon Sidney's Discourses concerning Government," William and Mary Quarterly, 3d ser., 4 (1947), 267-96.
114. Ibid., 289.
115. Rind, October 26, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
116. Purdie and Dixon, May 19, 1768, p. 2, col. 1.
117. Ibid., May 26, 1768, p. 1, col. 1; Rind, May 26, 1768, p. 2, col. 4.
118. Rind, June 16, 1768, p. 1, col. 4 and p. 2, col. 1.
119. Purdie and Dixon, June 16, 1768, p. 1, col. 2.
120. Ibid., p. 1, col. 3.
121. Rind, June 23, 1768, p. 1, col. 3.
122. Ibid., June 30, 1768, p. 2., col. 3.
123. Ibid., July 14, 1768, p. 2, col. 2.

124. Ibid., September 15, 1768, p. 2, col. 1.
125. Ibid., September 1, 1768, p. 2, col. 1.
126. Ibid., May 4, 1769, p. 2, col. 3.
127. Ibid., January 11, 1770, p. 2, col. 2.
128. Pinckney, March 9, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
129. Ibid., April 28, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
130. His influence was probably overestimated by any colonist reading the Gazette. Therein he appeared as the leading British political figure whereas actually he had no official position most of the time (none during 1768-71) and was not harkened to by the majority of the Whig opposition. When he did become a member of parliament and Lord Mayor, he quieted down and was properly a small frog in a big puddle.
131. Rind, September 23, 1773, p. 2, col. 1.
132. Ibid., February 17, 1774, p. 2, col. 1.
133. Pinckney, July 13, 1775, p. 1, col. 1.
134. Rind, June 14, 1770, p. 2, col. 2.
135. Rind, April 27, 1769, p. 2, col. 1.
136. Ibid., p. 2, col. 2.
137. Purdie and Dixon, September 20, supplement, 1770, p. 1, col. 1.
138. Rind, September 27, 1770, p. 1, col. 1.
139. Ibid., October 11, 1770, p. 2, col. 3.
140. Purdie and Dixon, December 7, 1769, p. 1, col. 1.
141. Lee, 22.
142. Ibid., 22, 30.
143. Ibid., 189.
144. Ibid., 192.
145. Ibid., 199.
146. Rind, June 1, 1769, p. 2, col. 3.

147. Lee, 185, 197, 199.

148. Ibid., 245.

149. Ballagh, 109.

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