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The Tertium Quids and the Election of 1808

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THE TERTIUM QUIDS AND THE ELECTION OF 1808

A Thesis
Presented to
the Faculty of the Department of History
The College of William and Mary

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Richard B. Reed
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APPROVAL SHEET

This thesis is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

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To my parents must go a deep obligation, for without their understanding and patience, this year of study would have been virtually impossible.

Williamsburg, Virginia
May 23, 1958

R.B.R.
I regret exceedingly Mr. Jefferson's resolution to retire, and almost as much the premature annunciation of that determination. It almost precludes a revision of his purpose, to say nothing of the intrigues which it will set on foot. If I were sure that Monroe would succeed him, my regret would be very much diminished.

- John Randolph to Albert Gallatin, October 25, 1805

These words, written by John Randolph, the Chairman of the Ways and Means Committee of the House of Representatives, to Thomas Jefferson's Secretary of the Treasury, are the perfect prologue to the drama of the election of 1808. Although Randolph's regret at the President's pending desire for retirement was soon to be erased, his prophecy of "intrigues" and his speculation about the successor, provide an introduction to one of the least studied presidential elections in American history.

By the end of Jefferson's first administration, the phenomenon of party politics had become a fairly well-established tradition. However, in studying the period of "Jeffersonian Democracy" most political scientists and historians have become so preoccupied with the struggle between the Republicans and the once-powerful Federalists, that they tend to ignore to some degree, or refuse to acknowledge, the two-fold significance of the development of what Jefferson, himself, called the "schism"
within his own party.²

This defecting group, under the leadership of John Randolp­
holph of Roanoke, became in time the first third-party move­
ment in our political history,⁵ as well as the precursor of
that spirit of sectionalism which was eventually to erupt into
deadly conflict a half-century later. Combining an abhorrence
of Federalist centralization with an extreme states-rights
philosophy of government, the Tertium Quids,⁴ as this group
has come to be styled, charted a course of opposition that
could not be consistent with either of the major parties, and
which nurtured the embers of state sovereignty for future gen­
erations to fan into the flames of violence and bloodshed.

The Quiddist movement was essentially a Southern reaction⁵
against what was considered to be Jefferson's abandonment of
his strict constructionist, agrarian ideals of 1800, for the
embrace of the opposition's centralizing tendencies. The Quids
represented the conservative land-holding aristocracy of the
ultra-state's rights school, and looked (with varying degrees
of moderation) upon popular government as at best, a necessary
evil, to be inflicted upon the electorate with as little pain
as possible. Edmund Burke was their political and philosophical
mentor, and in his conservative declarations they found the
principles upon which a sound political foundation for the pres­
ervation of their society might rest. Essentially Anglophili­
in their foreign perspective, they could not abide the pro-French
outlook of the Jeffersonians, and they adjudged Napoleon Bona-
parts to be the "great deflowerer of the virginity of repub-
lies."6

The opposition of the Tertium Quids embraced less than a
decade in American history, from the opening attacks against
the administration's compromise on the Yazoo land claims in
1804, to the futile efforts to stem the ambitions of the War-
hawks in the Twelfth Congress. However, the culmination of
the movement was reached in the election of 1808. In their
abortive efforts to elect James Monroe to the presidency over
the candidacy of Jefferson's Secretary of State and "heir appar-
ent", James Madison, the Quids achieved an initial unity of
purpose that they had not possessed at any other time.

After the election which resulted in a decisive victory
for Madison, the Quids were a broken and divided group. Var-
ious members returned to the old party and the new administration,
others retired from active participation in political affairs,
until by the time of the debates preceding the declaration of
war in 1812, John Randolph could not depend much more than upon
the sterile Federalists for support. His opposition to the War
of 1812 occasioned his defeat for re-election to the Thirteenth
Congress, and with his temporary retirement the last active ves-
tiges of Quiddist reaction ceased.
The leader and most influential member of the Tertium Quids was the brilliant and erratic John Randolph of Roanoke. The scion of an aristocratic, conservative Virginian family of ancient and proud antecedents, Randolph was one of the most remarkable men of his day. He was the matchless orator of the House of Representatives in his early years, the most opinionated individual of his time, a man who glorified in the role of denunciator and antagonist. Possessed of an emaciated and ghostlike countenance; continually racked with physical infirmities; with a temperament of violent hostility and extreme sensibility, Randolph was (and still is) one of the most controversial political figures of his era. In his enthusiasm and devotion to the principles which he established for himself, he exhibited a consistency that was rare among both his associates and his adversaries. The word *compromise* did not occupy a prominent place in his extensive vocabulary. Once he had determined the course which he intended to pursue, no amount of criticism or argument could temper his position.

The late Claude Bowers has said that "In the armory of his oratorical genius the weapons most feared by his victims were those of wit, satire, sarcasm, and invective. In the use of these no other man in American history has been so ruthless and devastating." The same author continues: "No human being
ever was a greater master of vituperation, and none ever had a greater vocabulary of acidic words. None ever matched his verbal abuse and his fierce and savage and contemptuous manner. In another generation Thad Stevens was to crush the wavering with a meat-axe; but Randolph used rapier and dagger and cut his victims to shreds bit by bit, salting the wounds as he proceeded.\textsuperscript{10}

John Randolph has not fared particularly well in the judgement of history. His biographers, with one exception, have tried to present him in a most favorable light, but in almost every other instance he comes off with more tarnish than lustre. The biographers of James Madison, Henry Clay, and the others with whom he came in conflict, generally present him in a most unflattering attitude. This is indeed unfortunate because John Randolph deserves impartial consideration if anyone ever did, for his convictions were too deep-rooted to be tossed off merely as evidence of "neurotic jealousy"\textsuperscript{11} and his actions certainly transcend the level of the "beardless eccentric" or the "unrivalled bully."\textsuperscript{12}

As chairman of the powerful House Committee on Ways and Means, Randolph was an influential lieutenant of Thomas Jefferson's during the first administration, and to him may be credited much of the ease with which the President's legislative programs were enacted, but his independent spirit often rose to the fore and occasioned some feelings of resentment on the part of
his colleagues. Although his oratorical powers were early recognized, it is only after the "break" with the administration that his viperous tongue really made its sting felt. In spite of his genius, he was not a leader.

Randolph's philippic addresses before the House are classics of their kind. He was the master of the art of sarcasm, caring not a whit whom he attacked, nor in what direction his invective was directed. His remark upon the occasion of Richard Rush's appointment as Comptroller of the Treasury is an excellent example - "never were abilities so much below mediocrity so well rewarded; no, not when Caligula's horse was made Consul."13

This, then, was the man most responsible for the Tertium Quids. His personality is reflected in every action taken by that group, and when he faltered, the whole movement collapsed. John Randolph so dominated Quiddism that his associates and colleagues pale by comparison, but there are two at least who are certainly worthy of notice.

John Taylor of Caroline has been termed the "philosopher" of the Quiddist movement.14 His position was essentially peripheral since he was not an active politician and lived in virtual retirement on his estate in Virginia. Like Randolph he was an aristocrat, but his convictions were not so consistent, and on occasion the two men differed strongly. Taylor was more amenable to the exigencies of a situation, and could view a given
circumstance with a detachment and serenity completely impos-
sible for Randolph.

He was an original supporter of Thomas Jefferson, but
as the President steadily retreated from his early ideals, Tay-
lor lost confidence in him, and looked upon a continuance of
his policies (by Madison) as detrimental to the best interests
of the nation. His animosity towards James Madison occasioned
his championing Monroe for the presidency, although he was
fully aware of the enormous risk attendant upon a realization
of that objective. Taylor never really identified himself out-
wardly with Randolph's faction, but in his antagonism toward
the administration and his support of Monroe, he is generally
accorded the reputation of being a Quid. For all intents and
purposes their ideals were identical, although Taylor exhibited
a moderation that was foreign to the majority of the Monroe
supporters.

A closer friend of Randolph's, and a more active Quid,
was Nathaniel Macon of North Carolina,15 the Speaker of the
House of Representatives during the Seventh, Eighth, and Ninth
Congresses. Macon had been a devoted follower of Jefferson
and his policies, but with the disclosure of the Yazoo frauds
in 1804, he began to follow the lead of Randolph and allied
himself with the dissidents. Jefferson tried to reconcile him,
but Macon persisted in his opposition and was written off by the
administration forces. Although he was a consistent Quid and open-
ly advocated the retirement of Madison from further public life, his choice of a successor was not Monroe, but the Secretary of the Treasury, Albert Gallatin. During the debates over Jefferson's embargo in 1807, he broke with Randolph and eventually became an open supporter of the war with Great Britain, even though he consistently opposed all military and naval appropriations for defense and preparation.


Monroe is the least consistent and understandable member of the Quiddist movement. Unlike Randolph, Taylor, and Macon, his defection from the Jeffersonian ranks was not based upon any moral or political principles, nor did he engage in open debate with the President and the Secretary of State. On the contrary, Monroe's identification with the schism, as we shall see, may be laid almost exclusively to personal reasons, and when events indicated that his own ambitions might suffer as a result of his defection he was quick to compromise and play both sides to his own advantage. Of the whole group, Monroe was by far the most accomplished politician. He recognized the dangers of sacrificing expediency for principle, and in this re-
spect, in contrast to almost all the others, he emerged from the funeral-pyre of the election with his own reputation and influence relatively intact.

The course of James Monroe's candidacy for the presidency in 1808 as the major factor in the opposition of the Tertium Quids is the essential substance of this study. However, to understand how this came about, we must first briefly examine the circumstances which prompted the break with the administration and the ultimate decision of the malcontents to alienate themselves from the Republican majority and pursue an independent course of opposition.

ii.

The whole executive government has had a bias to the Yazoo interests ever since I had a seat here. This is the original sin which has created all the mischief which gentlemen pretend to throw on the impeachment of our seamen and God knows what! . . . The Yazoo business is the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega of our alphabet.

- John Randolph, March 29, 1806.

Despite the fact that John Randolph himself has given us a point of departure through his first reference to "quiddism" and a third party in 1806, it is relatively difficult to establish a particular moment when the concerted opposition of the Roanoke planter and his few dissident followers began to achieve
the proportions of actual rebellion within the Republican Party. A myriad of dates within the years 1804 and 1805 might be presented which could be conveniently taken to represent a definite breach in agreement with the administration, but the real extent of the disaffection extends back as far as the infamous Yazoo land scandals of 1795. As Randolph rather propheticly put it, this was "the beginning and the end, the Alpha and Omega of our alphabet."  

In January, 1795, the Georgia Legislature authorized the Governor of that state to convey to the representatives of four land companies the title to more than thirty-five million acres of frontier land extending to the Mississippi River for the sum of five hundred thousand dollars. This bargain rate of approximately one and one-half cents per acre, coupled with the fact that the legislature had been bribed almost to the man to effect the authorization, brought about a storm of public indignation in Georgia which culminated in the election of an entirely new legislature in 1796. The new assembly nullified the previous sale, but only after several million acres of the land had been disposed of by the land company speculators, mostly to New Englanders, at a profit of over one million dollars. 

To further complicate matters, the United States Government, in 1798, appropriated much of the disputed area into the newly organized Mississippi Territory, ignoring the claims
which the state of Georgia had asserted to its jurisdiction over the land in its constitution of that same year. When Jefferson came to the presidency in 1801, he appointed a commission composed of three members of his cabinet: James Madison, Secretary of State; Albert Gallatin, Secretary of the Treasury; and Levi Lincoln, Attorney-General, to investigate the conflicting claims of jurisdiction over the area in question.

In April, 1802, the commission secured an agreement whereby Georgia agreed to the cession to the federal government of the disputed territory in return for a payment of one million two hundred and fifty thousand dollars. The understanding was that the government of the United States would, among other things, assume the obligation of investigating the validity of the grants of the many claimants (both individuals and land speculators) who had invested in the land prior to the rescinding action of the Georgia Legislature in 1796. It was further stipulated that a total of five million acres of land in the Mississippi Territory was to be set aside to satisfy any titles or claims that might arise as a result of the transfer.

On the basis of this agreement, the President's commission proceeded to examine and consider the validity of both individual and company titles. On February 14, 1803, the commissioners reported that although in their estimation the titles
to the land were not valid, the interests of the United States, "the tranquility of those who may hereafter inhabit that territory, and various equitable considerations which may be urged in favor of most of the present claimants, render it expedient to enter into a compromise on reasonable terms." In effect, the claimants were to be offered what remained of the five million acres of land after established settlers had been satisfied, or else they might accept their indemnity in the form of land certificates of an appropriate value.

To John Randolph this was a compromise with corruption and fraud. As a visitor in Georgia when the scandal broke, he had witnessed at first-hand the revulsion with which the citizens of that state had greeted the revelations, and had himself been horrified at the disclosures of bribery and collusion that accompanied the grants. By effecting a compromise, the administration was closing its eyes to corruption, and he determined to resist such a dealing with all the power and influence at his command.

The report of the commissioners was presented to Congress in February, 1803, but it was not until the next year that actual debate on the proposals began. Meanwhile, Randolph had offered several resolutions aimed at defeating the compromise, and on February 20, 1804, he presented a series of eight resolves which ranged variably over the whole field
of his opposition. In the first place, he maintained that the Georgia Legislature had not had the right to alienate territory except for the public good; that consequently the Legislature of 1796 had the power to abrogate the improper actions of its predecessor; and that the rescinding action was not in conflict/constitutional principles. He demanded, therefore, that no portion of the five million acres set aside by the agreement of 1802 be used to compensate the claimants whose titles rested on the irresponsible action of the Legislature of 1795.26

On March 7, Randolph delivered the first of several speeches before the House in support of his resolutions. He set the tenor of his position thus: "No course that can be pursued shall prevent me from bringing out the sense of the House. Whether the question on these resolutions shall be attempted to be got rid of by the previous question, or by a postponement, I will have the sense of the House expressed to the public; for this is one of the cases which, once being engaged in, I can never desert or relinquish till I have exercised every energy of mind and faculty of body I possess in refuting so nefarious a project."27

His arguments were characteristically distinguished more by their moral indignation than by sound legal reasoning. Political expediency was never a factor in Randolph's conduct, and as his biographer says, "it is impossible not to feel the
glow of his kindling imagination and fine moral passion; but along with it, is communicated to the reader the inevitable reflection that... it was impossible for a man to continue to be the master of the House of Representatives, who unalteringly opposed a compromise in a dubious controversy... 28 On March 12, the House voted to postpone further debate until the next session of Congress. 29

In January, 1805, Randolph renewed his attack on the compromise, and struck out viciously at Gideon Granger, the Postmaster-General, who had been seen openly soliciting votes in favor of the commissioner's report. Alluding to Granger's previous interests in the Western Reserve speculation, Randolph lashed out at "His gigantic grasp (which) embraces with one hand the shores of Lake Erie and stretches with the other to the Bay of Mobile." 30 He asked, "Are heads of executive departments of the government to be brought into this House, with all the influence and patronage attached to them, to exhort from us now what was refused at the last session of Congress? I hope not, Sir, but, if they are, and if the abominable villainy, practiced upon and by the Legislature of Georgia in 1795, is now to be glossed over, I, for one, will ask what security they by whom it shall be done can offer for their reputations better than can be given for the character of that Legislature. I will pin myself upon this text, and preach upon it as long as I have life." 31
Dildaining to feel compassion for the purchasers of the land from the speculating companies, Randolph maintained that since the circumstances of the original grant were public knowledge, "They [the purchasers] offer, indeed, to virtue, the only homage which she is ever likely to receive at their hands -- the homage of their hypocrisy."\(^{32}\)

Turning to the purchase of the land by the federal government in 1802, he maintained that a recompense to the speculators would, in effect, "record a solemn acknowledgement that Congress has unfairly and dishonestly obtained from Georgia a grant of land, to which that state no longer possessed a title, having previously sold it to others for a valuable consideration, of which transaction Congress was at the time fully apprised. Are you prepared to make this humiliating confession? To identify yourselves with the swindlers of 1795? To acknowledge that you have unfairly obtained from another that to which you know he had no title?"\(^{33}\) This was the crux of his legal argument against the compromise, and had he pursued it more determinedly and abandoned some of the personal abuse and tone of high moral principles in his speeches, he might have been more effective in his opposition.

Despite Randolph's best efforts, the House, on February 2, 1805, voted to direct the commissioners to proceed with their proposals and attempt a final settlement of the outstanding claims.\(^{34}\) The vote was close, sixty-three to fifty-eight
in favor of the resolution, with all but two of the Virginia
delegation voting with Randolph on the side of the opposition.

The Yazoo debates represent the opening wedge in the
split within the Republican Party that led to internal opposi-
tion to the Madison candidacy in 1808. Prior to 1804 there
had been little disagreement among the leading figures of
the administration and Congress, but after the revelation of
what had transpired in Georgia, and the subsequent efforts of
Jefferson's commissioners to repair some of the damages, there
was an irreparable rift that threatened a serious rupture. John
Randolph was primarily responsible for this turn of events.
Such future Quids as Nathaniel Macon, Joseph Nicholson (the
author of the original resolution incorporating the compromise),
and Caesar Rodney of Delaware, were for the most part mere sym-
pathetic observers. The "Baron of Roanoke" fought this battle
with very little assistance from his supporters.

That the transactions in Georgia were perpetrated under
the most questionable of circumstances in 1795 there could be
no doubt. The fact that the legislature was bribed by the pur-
chasers was enough to give the whole affair an aura of indecency.
The subsequent interference by the federal government was en-
tirely too much for Randolph to take. Through the rescinding
action of the Legislature of 1796 the people of Georgia had
attempted to abrogate the grants of the preceding year and re-
store the land to its original jurisdiction. By what right then
did the federal government organize this land into a new territory? The title was back in the hands of the state, and that state had not given up her claim to the land when the United States attached it for other purposes.

The compromise was, in itself, an anomaly because the action of the federal government in taking the land proved that it had considered the original grant to the speculators to be invalid. Yet the administration was attempting to provide compensation for purchasers whose title, therefore, was not, and could not, be recognized by the United States. As Randolph said, "With what face could the President recommend or Congress endeavor to obtain from Georgia a cession of the whole or any part of the land within her Indian boundaries, if they believed that the land in question had been conveyed to others by a fair and bona fide sale; if they attached to the act of January, 1795, any idea of validity?"

The part that James Madison played in this affair identified him in Randolph's mind with corruption and fraud. As Secretary of State, Madison was the ranking member both of the cabinet and of the commission which reported the compromise. Randolph considered him almost entirely responsible for the report, as well as for the speech delivered in its favor by his brother-in-law, Representative John Q. Jackson of Virginia. Just how or why Gallatin escaped the wrath of Randolph at this time is not entirely clear, but the two men remained fairly
close friends until the Virginian tried to involve the Secretary in his later intrigues, at which time the latter abstained from any further intercourse with the Quid's leader.

Randolph's opposition was a natural reaction when one considers his personality and background, but this is not to say, as Mr. Brant does, that "His ten-year assault on Madison as a 'Yazoo man' was a calculated prostitution of the truth to political demagogy and neurotic jealousy," nor that the reasons for Randolph's animosity to the Secretary of State "lie... in the realm of psychiatry."

The intensity of John Randolph's opposition to the Yazoo compromise had certainly not escaped the eye of Thomas Jefferson. Writing to Wilson Cary Nicholas on March 26, 1805, the President expressed his opinion that the emerging division within Republican ranks were "distressing," but "not unexpected to me." However blase Jefferson may have appeared at this time, his later letters indicate that the defection was causing him no little concern, and that he regretted considerably Randolph's determination to follow an independent course of action.

John Randolph was not yet prepared to engage in open controversy with the administration and alienate himself and his followers completely from the Republican majority. On the contrary, he wished to cooperate with Jefferson as well he could without being inconsistent with his principles. However, the
President's policy with regard to Spanish Florida soon pro-
vided the stimulus for an open breach, and the subsequent
formation of the Tertium Quid.
Chapter II. The Break.

I came here prepared to cooperate with the Government in all its measures. I told them so. But I soon found there was no choice left, and that to cooperate in them would be to destroy the national character. I found I might cooperate or be an honest man. I have therefore opposed and will oppose them.

- John Randolph, April 7, 1806.

When the first session of the Ninth Congress opened on December 2, 1805, Nathaniel Macon was re-elected Speaker of the House, but only after three ballots had been taken, and a concerted effort to depose him had been defeated. Macon's inconspicuous identification with the anti-compromise forces during the Yazoo debates of the preceding session and his intimate friendship with John Randolph had prompted a definite movement to replace him in the Speaker's chair with someone more amenable to the administration's wishes. There is no indication, however, that Jefferson took any personal interest in the effort to oust the Speaker. On the contrary, he still appeared to hold the North Carolinian in high regard, both as an individual and as a party member.

With Macon's election assured, Randolph's appointment as Chairman of the Committee on Ways and Means was a certainty. Furthermore, Macon saw to it that the other members of the committee were either Federalists or strong adherents of the
Chairman such as Joseph Nicholson, David H. Williams of South Carolina, and Robert Brown of Pennsylvania. The sole spokesman for the administration was a freshman congressman from Massachusetts, Barnabas Bidwell.

With the two key positions of leadership in the House of Representatives securely held by men who were not fully in accord with his policies, Jefferson might well have proceeded with some prudence in proposing legislation for congressional approval. However, in his initial recommendations to the new congress, he provided the stimulus for the final break between the administration and the Quids.

On December 3, the day following the opening of the Ninth Congress, President Jefferson presented his annual message to both houses of that body. It was an alternatingly optimistic and pessimistic message, reflecting the exigencies of the day, with the executive's recommendations for resolving the most pressing of the country's problems. At a time when France and England were engaged in a great struggle to determine the destiny of Europe, Jefferson devoted considerable time to a discussion of the injuries the United States had suffered at the hands of these two belligerents. He then turned with warlike tones to Spain.
Antagonisms along the border of Spanish Florida between the inhabitants of that province and the frontiersmen of the Southern states had been common since early in the Colonial Period. It had been hoped that with the signing of Pinckney's Treaty (the Treaty of San Lorenzo) in October, 1795, the United States' relations with Spain would be placed on a more amicable basis; however, this expectation proved to be illusory. The natural aggressiveness of the Yankee, coupled with the inability of Spain to control her Indian inhabitants effectively, made for an explosive situation. Efforts to obtain a satisfactory recognition of the boundaries of the Louisiana Territory by the Spanish government had also failed, and the American minister in Madrid, Charles Pinckney, had been unable to secure any settlement of the outstanding differences. James Monroe, who had been sent to aid Pinckney in his negotiations, fared no better.

After enumerating the United States' grievances, Jefferson declared he had "found it necessary at length to give orders to our troops on that frontier to be in readiness to protect our citizens, and to repel by arms any similar aggressions in future." He then called for a strengthening of the coastal defences, additions to the fleet of gunboats, and the placing of the militia on an emergency basis.

Very little objection was raised to the President's rec-
omissions, but, unknown to the majority of the legislators, including John Randolph, another message relating to Spanish affairs had been prepared and was to be presented confidentially to the Congress within a few days. In contrast to the strong stand assumed in the first document, the tone of the second was conciliatory, recognizing that it was more expedient to deal through the channels of diplomacy than through war. Jefferson shifted the responsibility for any show of force to the legislature, saying "Considering that Congress alone is constitutionally invested with the power of changing our condition from peace to war, I have thought it my duty to await their authority for using force in any degree which could be avoided." Taking into account the fact that Spain was considerably under the influence of France, he urged that the United States would do well to consider the willingness of the Paris government to settle the issues at hand. The negotiations in Madrid had not gone unnoticed in the French capital, and Jefferson pointed out that "we have reason to believe that the [France] was disposed to effect a settlement on a plan analogous to what our ministers had proposed, & so comprehensive as to remove as far as possible the grounds of future collision & controversy on the Eastern as well as Western side of the Mississippi." The message closed with an anti-climatic shifting of responsibility to the Congress: "But the course to be pursued will require
the command of means which it belongs to Congress exclusively to yield or to deny. To them I communicate every fact material for their information, & the documents necessary to enable them to judge for themselves. To their wishes then I look for the course I am to take, and will pursue with sincere zeal that which they shall approve." 7

Gallatin had suggested that a request for an appropriation be included in the message, but Jefferson declined and left it to the Secretary's discretion to obtain the money to deal with France. 8 It was finally decided that Joseph Nicholson should be asked to introduce a resolution offering the administration's request for an appropriation of two million dollars to sustain negotiations with the French government.

Meanwhile Gallatin received the following note from Jefferson the day after the presentation of the secret message:

"J. Randolph has just called to ask a conversation with me, for which purpose he will be with me tomorrow morning; everything therefore had better be suspended till that is over." 9

Randolph was in a defiant mood when he called at the Executive Mansion. He declared that he would never support any attempts to purchase Florida from either France or Spain, and that the President had deceived the country by calling for strong war-like measures in a public declaration, and then secretly placing the responsibility for any action on the shoulders of the Congress. 10 This was the end as far as John Randolph and Thomas
Jefferson were concerned. It only remained now for the formal break to be effected, and the Tertium Quid would become a reality.

ii.

Jefferson's second message with its accompanying documents, was referred by the Speaker to Randolph's Committee on Ways and Means. It was destined to remain there for several weeks, despite the President's determination to secure the necessary congressional approval with as much speed as possible.

During this time, Randolph paid Madison a visit and was informed that the only method by which Spain could be induced to relinquish her claim to Florida was through the payment of the two million dollars to France. Randolph later explained in a speech before the House that Madison had told him "France would not permit Spain to adjust her differences with us; that France wanted money, and that we must give it to her, or have a Spanish and French war."11

On December 14, Randolph abruptly left Washington for Baltimore on an errand which has various unsatisfactory explanations and interpretations, and did not return for a full week.12 Nicholson, who was second to the chairman in rank, refused to act or recommend action on the message, and since
he was in possession of Gallatin's memorandum requesting the financial appropriation, he was in a position to delay any decision by the committee until Randolph's return.

On December 21, Randolph arrived back in Washington and was immediately presented with a copy of Gallatin's financial statement on the Florida purchase, which he promptly tossed aside, declaring that he would resist any attempt to deliver "the public purse to the first cut-throat that demanded it," that he could not "understand this double set of opinions and principles, -- the one ostensible; the other real: I hold true wisdom and cunning to be utterly incompatible."13

Over the protests of Bidwell, the Committee on Ways and Means prepared a resolution that ignored the President's request for a peaceable approach: "Resolved, That such number of troops (not exceeding ___________) as the President of the United States shall deem sufficient to protect the Southern frontiers of the United States from Spanish inroad and insult, and to chastise the same, be immediately raised."14

On January 3, 1806, the resolution was placed before the House, and after a considerable debate, was rejected by a vote of seventy-two to fifty-three.15 Bidwell immediately proposed a counter-resolution granting the President's request for money to deal with foreign powers, which was passed on January 16 and sent to the Senate where it was approved with little opposition. Jefferson had won the first round, but only
at the price of a considerable amount of dissension, which invoked the outspoken hostility of John Randolph.

In addition to the Spanish problem, Jefferson’s annual message of December 5, 1805, had contained a review of the grievances arising out of the British and French depredations on United States’ commercial vessels on the high seas. The British practice of impressing American seamen into the royal navy had a particularly galling effect upon the congressional leaders. In order to make an end of this abuse without resorting to force, Andrew Gregg of Pennsylvania offered a resolution in the House on January 29, 1806, which called for the non-importation of British commodities until the United States had been properly assured that such violations would cease in the future.

John Randolph immediately seized upon the Gregg resolution as being motivated strictly by the commercial interests without due regard for the nation’s agricultural citizens; that the Spanish incursions were much more deserving of censure than those of England since they violated the actual territory of the United States; that this country was by nature not a naval power, and that to antagonize the British navy in its own element was to court disaster; and, finally, that
commercial restrictions against Great Britain would be of great benefit to France: "How far is it politic in the United States to throw their weight into the scale of France at this moment; to make her mistress of the sea and land; to jeopardize the liberties of mankind? Sir, you may help to crush Great Britain; you may assist in breaking down her naval dominion; but you cannot succeed to it. The iron scepter of the ocean will pass into his hands who wears the iron crown of the land."16

Sensing that the Gregg resolution was too all-encompassing, the administration induced Nicholson to offer a substitute measure which called for non-importation only of those goods which could be manufactured in the United States. The Maryland congressman was only lukewarm in his acquiescence, however, and voted for his own measure only after it became certain that it would be fruitless to oppose its passage.

In his speeches against the adoption of the Gregg resolution, Randolph did not confine his remarks to the issue directly at hand. On the contrary, he took advantage of his debating privilege to cast some very uncomplimentary observations in the direction of Jefferson and his Secretary of State. Still nursing the bitterness of the Florida affair, he assailed the administration in no uncertain terms:
I have before protested, and I again protest, against secret irresponsible, overruling influence. The first question I asked when I saw the gentleman's Resolution was, Is this a measure of the Cabinet? Not of an open declared Cabinet, but of an invisible, inscrutable, unconstitutional Cabinet, without responsibility, unknown to the Constitution. I speak of back-stairs influence, -- of men who bring messages to this House, which, although they do not appear on the Journals, govern its decisions. Sir, the first question that I asked on the subject of British relations was, What is the position of the Cabinet; what measures will they recommend to Congress? -- well knowing that whatever measures we might take they must execute them, and therefore we should have their opinion on the subject. My answer was (and from a Cabinet minister too), 'There is no longer any Cabinet!' 17

Referring to a pamphlet that Madison had written concerning the rights of neutrals, Randolph declared, "Some time ago, a book was laid on our tables, which, like some other bantlings, did not bear the name of its father . . . . If, sir, I were the foe -- as I trust I am the friend of this nation -- I would exclaim, 'Oh, that mine enemy would write a book!' 18 He asked for a copy of the pamphlet, looked at it for a brief moment, and then threw it to the floor. 19

Nicholson, who was pursuing a most inconsistent and contradictory congressional career, took the floor of the House and proceeded to uphold Randolph's every argument despite the fact that his own resolutions were little less than the same as Gregg's. Holding that the carrying trade was "a trade totally unconnected with agriculture and enjoyed by a few merchants
only," he characterized the resolution as an "olive branch with a dagger in its boughs. 20 Macon also spoke against the Gregg proposals, expressing identical sentiments with Randolph and Nicholson. 21 On March 11, Macon argued against the resolutions, calling them, in effect, a declaration of war, and adding, "We talk of war with an almost empty treasury; no two things can be less connected, except that they are both bad." 22

Nicholson's substitute resolve was passed after three readings on the House floor, with the author voting for it half-heartedly. The vote was ninety-three to thirty-two, with Nicholson, Gray, Winston, and Wynn voting in favor of it, and Randolph, Garnett, and Stanford opposing its passage. 23

On March 15, Randolph, after a prolonged harangue on party politics, announced his willingness to be considered a "quid," or member of a third party. 24 And on April 5, the final irrevocable attack upon Madison was made. 25 Speaking in defense of his measure to have Jefferson's secret message on Florida placed on the records of the House, Randolph alluded to his conversation with the Secretary of State in which the latter had stated his proposition of buying off France to avert a war. Randolph declared: "From the moment I heard that declaration, all the objections I originally had to the procedure were aggravated to the highest degree. I considered it a base prostration of the national character to excite one
nation by money to bully another nation out of its property, and from that moment, and to the last moment of my life, my confidence in the principles of the man entertaining these sentiments died never to live again."26 From this point on, there was no turning back. The estrangement was complete, and the battle for the presidency was on.

iv.

Throughout the remainder of the Ninth Congress and the first session of the Tenth, the Quids' opposition was designed primarily to embarrass the Jefferson administration and to discredit Madison's candidacy for the presidency. Their arguments lacked the high moral foundations and the righteous indignation that had characterized the Yazoo and Florida debates. It was opposition based on personal prejudice, and political gain was the primary concern.

Randolph's denunciations became more violent and erratic as time went on. He deliberately introduced a resolution calling for the repeal of the duty on salt in order to embarrass an already financially hard-pressed treasury, and he and Macon argued most vehemently against the administration's naval appropriation recommendations. The Committee on Ways and Means kept urgent legislation from being presented on the floor of the House, and the Quids often absented themselves from voting.
rather than acknowledge a defeat. Clearly, Randolph was allowing his prejudice against the administration and Madison to affect his better judgement. In fact, it might not be too improper to suggest the possibility that the curious mental disease that was later to affect his mind was beginning to make itself apparent.

Despite his frequent excursions into oratorical defamation, John Randolph still exerted considerable influence among his congressional colleagues. As long as he retained his committee chairmanship, and Macon the Speaker's chair, the Quids could maintain there opposition with very little hindrance. This, however, could not last indefinitely. When the last meeting of the first session of the Ninth Congress ended on April 22, 1806, Randolph knew that his position was precarious and that every effort would be made to unseat him the following winter.

During the summer recess the Quids kept in constant communication with each other. While this correspondence did reflect pessimistic attitudes in some respects, there was evident, nevertheless, a great deal of enthusiasm for Monroe's candidacy. Randolph's letters to Nicholson particularly show this optimism and on June 24, 1806, he was able to write that "if the other States leave it to Virginia, he [Madison] never will be President."28

With the re-convening of Congress in December, 1806,
an attempt was made to have committee chairmanships dependent upon the choice of the majority of the committee's membership. However, the proposal failed, and with Macon still occupying the Speakership, Randolph was able to retain his position of leadership.

The second session of the Ninth Congress was extremely mild in comparison to the first. The Quids, including their voluble leader, had little opportunity to express their opinions of the administration. Jefferson gave them very little occasion to strike at him or his policies. In fact, in his annual message of December 3, he substantially justified the Quids' position in some respects by recommending legislation which they were known to favor. He asked for presidential power to suspend the Non-Importation Bill at his own discretion and for the repeal of the salt tax. Things were going so well that Macon was able to write to Nicholson on December 26 that "The doings here will hereby convince every candid man in the world that the Republicans of the Old School were not wrong last winter. Give truth fair play and it will prevail." And in the important debates concerning the slave trade, the Quids remained uncommonly silent. John Randolph broke loose only once to argue against the bill as an infraction of the rights of private property.

The Ninth Congress terminated its deliberations in March, 1807, and almost immediately Randolph was appointed foreman
of the Grand Jury that was to indict Aaron Burr for treason.

His attention was occupied with this for most of the summer,
although both he and John Taylor found the time to corres-
pond regularly with Monroe in London. Slowly they increased
the pressure on him, by appealing to his vanity and patriot-
ism, to return to the United States and declare his inten-
tions with regard to the coming election.

When the first meeting of the Tenth Congress convened
on October 26, 1807, Mason was defeated for re-election as
Speaker of the House. This, of course, barred Randolph's
being appointed to his former position at the head of the
Committee on Ways and Means. Both men were naturally embittered,
and the relative calm which had prevailed in the preceding
session was destined to be shattered.

Previous to the calling of Congress, Jefferson had made
a successful attempt to bring Joseph Nicholson back into the
fold. An appointment to a federal judgeship had been offered
and accepted. Strange as it may seem, however, Randolph did
not break off his friendship with Nicholson; the correspon-
dence between the two men continued as if nothing had occurred.
It appears that the only immediate effect Nicholson's depa-
ture had was to diminish somewhat the Quide's power in the
House. As far as the presidency was concerned, Nicholson con-
tinued to support Monroe, although his letters do show a dis-
tinct restraint not in evidence before,
The great event of this session of Congress was the passage of the President's embargo. The attack by the British ship Leopard on the American frigate Chesapeake on June 22, had aroused the ire of the nation as no event since the Revolution had done, and John Randolph was among the most vociferous of those who demanded that Jefferson immediately take retaliatory steps against Great Britain. When the President hesitated and continued to act through diplomatic protests and proclamations, Randolph, Macon, and others condemned him for his caution, while the New England Federalists abused him for doing too much.

When Congress met, the high feeling of indignation had subsided somewhat. However, the news of a new set of British Orders in Council, coupled with the fact that Napoleon was attempting to enforce the Berlin Decree, revived the demands for retaliation. The return of James Monroe to the United States with very little to show for the time spent in England, persuaded the administration that drastic measures were needed to uphold the dignity and rights of the American people.

On December 17, 1807, the cabinet met, and after considerable discussion, Jefferson drafted the embargo message to Congress. It was read before a joint session of both houses on the next day, and within three or four hours the Senate had given its overwhelming approval.

When the message was presented to the House, Randolph
immediately proposed a resolution that "an embargo be laid on all shipping of the property of citizens of the United States now in port and which shall hereafter arrive." But before a vote could be taken on this resolution, the one that the Senate had passed was brought into the House. Randolph's proposal was tabled and debate immediately began on the upper house's resolve. Unfortunately the conclave was held in secret session and we know nothing of the actual circumstances of the debate. However, it is known that John Randolph warmly opposed the Senate substitute, even though it was almost identical with his own resolution. In a letter to Nicholson, dated December 24, 1807, he gives a hint of his feelings: "Come here I beseech you," he wrote, "I will then show you how impossible it was for me to have voted for the embargo. The circumstances under which it presented itself were peculiar and compelled me to oppose it; although otherwise a favorite measure with me, as you well know." Some writers have seized upon this statement as an indication that Randolph's opposition was based entirely upon his resentment that his own resolution was not adopted, but the evidence is so incomplete as to preclude any valid conclusions concerning Randolph's opposition.

By the close of this session of Congress, the Quasi potancy had lessened considerably. However, the year 1808 was
an election year, and the most important work of the deflect-
ors was done not in the halls of the legislature, but rather
in the political campaign that was rapidly gaining momentum.
Chapter III. The Election.

I feel with the gratitude and sensibility I ought the confidence which you and other friends repose in me, as it is the strongest proof which can be given of your and their approbation of my past conduct in public life. I feel proud also in a belief that I shall do nothing hereafter to forfeit this good opinion.

- James Monroe to John Randolph, June 16, 1806.

The primary result of the Quiddist reaction against the Jefferson administration was a distinct movement to prevent James Madison from enjoying the presidential succession. His role in the Yazoo debate and the Florida purchase affair had completely alienated him from John Randolph and his followers and had instilled in them a deep desire to keep the Secretary of State from further perpetuating the Jeffersonian brand of Republicanism. To oppose Madison in his bid for the presidency they chose the American minister in London, James Monroe, the only man who could possibly contest the Secretary of State in his home state of Virginia.

Monroe had been assigned to the position of minister at the Court of St. James in 1805, after having spent several months in Paris in an attempt to negotiate the United States' differences with Spain. In this, he and his associate, the American minister to Madrid, Charles Pinckney, had been singularly unsuccessful. When it became obvious that he was wasting his time in Paris, Jefferson instructed Monroe to proceed to
London and attempt to settle the long-standing American grievances resulting from British commercial depredations. After a series of prolonged diplomatic negotiations, Monroe consented, in December, 1806, to sign a treaty that was little better than the ill-received Jay Treaty of 1794. Although he had been instructed to obtain a guarantee that the British would abandon the practice of impressment, the best he could do was to obtain the assurance that the English would henceforth be more discriminating in their habit of seizing American seamen. No indemnity was arranged for previous outrages on American shipping, and the administration was to be obliged to abandon for a period of ten years any commercial restrictions that might be imposed against Great Britain. The final major concession on the part of Monroe came in the form of a British amendment which stated that unless the United States refused to recognize Napoleon's Berlin Decree, His Majesty's government would not adhere to the terms previously determined upon.²

Monroe knew that he had violated his instructions and had negotiated an agreement that left much to be desired. He signed in the belief that a poor treaty was preferable to none at all. His feelings may be gauged by a letter to Jefferson in January, 1807, in which he defended his actions as follows: "I trust it will be seen that we have . . . done as much as could reasonably have been expected. It is important for us
to stand well with some power. I think the U States have sustained the attitude they took with dignity, and that by this arrangement they will terminate a controversy, not in favor of themselves alone, but of neutral rights, with some degree of credit." Four years later his attitude had not changed, and he wrote to John Taylor of Caroline that "The treaty was an honorable and advantageous adjustment with England. I adopted it in the firm belief that it was so, and nothing has since occurred to change that opinion."  

Jefferson and Madison, however, failed to perceive the "honorable and advantageous" aspects of Monroe's treaty, and the President refused even to submit it to the Senate for confirmation. He had written Madison on February 1, 1807, saying that "the sine qua non we made is that of the nation, & that they would rather go on without a treaty than with one which does not settle this article Amereament."  

Meanwhile, as we have seen, Randolph was expressing his preference for Monroe as early as October, 1805. In February, 1806, John Taylor wrote a lengthy letter to Monroe in London in which he mentioned the emergence of a third party composed of disaffected Republicans and some Federalists. Taylor also mentioned that it was rumored that the Clinton supporters in New York were favorable to his candidacy. Monroe, however, was not willing at this point to commit himself to any course of action in opposition to the administra-
tion. He preferred to maintain a cordial relationship with all concerned without placing himself under obligation to anyone.

Jefferson knew the situation, and as soon as he was certain that Monroe had been contacted regarding the coming election, he wrote him a detailed analysis of Randolph's defection and the inherent dangers of Monroe's becoming too involved with the Quicks' leader. This letter deserves to be quoted at length, not only for the advice that it contains for Monroe but also as an indication of the President's feelings toward the whole Quiddist movement:

Our old friend, Mercer, broke off from us some time ago; at first professing to disdain joining the federalists, yet, from the habit of voting together, becoming soon identified with them. Without carrying over with him one single person, he is now in a state of as perfect obscurity as if his name had never been known. Mr. J. Randolph is in the same track, and will end in the same way. His course has excited considerable alarm. Timid men consider it as a proof of the weakness of our government, & that it is to be rent into pieces by demagogues, & to end in anarchy. I survey the scene with a different eye, and draw a different augury from it. In a House of Representatives of a great mass of good sense, Mr. A's popular eloquence gave him such advantages as to place him unrivalled as the leader of the house; and, altho' not conciliatory to those whom he led, principles of duty & patriotism induced many of them to swallow the humiliations he subjected them to, and to vote as was right, as long as he kept the path of right himself. The sudden defection of such a man could not but produce a momentary astonishment, & even dismay; but for a moment only. The good sense of the house ral-
lied around it's principles, & without any leader pursued steadily the business of the session, did it well, & by a strength of vote which has never before been seen. Upon all trying questions, exclusive of the federalists, the minority of republicans voting with him has been from 4. to 6. or 8., against from 90, to 100.; and altho' he yet treats the federalists with ineffable contempt, yet having declared eternal opposition to this administration, & consequently associated with them, in his votes, he will, like Mercer, end with them. ... The great body of your friends are among the firmest adherents to the administration; and in their support of you, will suffer Mr. R to have no communications with them. My former letter told you the line which both duty and inclination would lead me sacredly to pursue. But it is unfortunate for you to be embarrassed with such a saillionant friend. You must not commit yourself to him. ... and I verily believe it would be to your advantage to be just that much withdrawn from the focus of the ensuing contest, until it's event should be known.5

The detached manner in which the President viewed the defection of Randolph was in direct contrast to an earlier letter that he had written to William Duane, in which he stated that "Our situation is difficult; & whatever we do is liable to the criticism of those who wish to represent it awry. If we recommend measures in a public message, it may be said that members are not sent here to obey the mandates of the President, or to register the edicts of a sovereign. If we express opinions in conversation, we have then our Charles Jenkinsones, & backdoor counsellors. If we say nothing, 'We have no opinions, no plans, no cabinet.' In truth it is the fable of the old man, his son & ass, over again."9
This letter, however, is the only instance in which Jefferson displayed real concern over the Quids' opposition to his administration. His other frequent references to Randolph and his followers are all in the same relatively unconcerned manner in which he wrote to Monroe. To Caesar Rodney he wrote in March, 1806, "The separation of a member of great talents and weight from the present course of things, scattered dismay for a time among those who had been used to see him with them. A little time however enabled them to rally to their own principles & to resume their track under the guidance of their own good sense." He further minimized the danger of the Quids in a letter to Wilson Cary Nicholas in April, 1806:

... The H of R is as well disposed as I ever saw one. The defection of so prominent a leader, threw them into dismay & confusion for a moment; but they soon rallied to their own principles, & let him go off with 5. or 6. followers only. One half of these are from Virginia. His late declaration of perpetual opposition to this administration, drew off a few others who at first had joined him, supposing his opposition occasional only, & not systematic. ... On the whole, this little trial of the firmness of our representatives in their principles, & that of the people also, which is declaring itself in support of their public functionaries, has added much to my conviction, that, should things go wrong at any time, the people will set them to rights by the peaceable exercise of their elective rights."

And to John Tyler he wrote that "Republicanism may perhaps have lost a few of its anomalous members, but the steadiness
of it's great mass has considerably increased on the whole my confidence in the solidity & permanence of our govern-
ment."12

In March, 1806, began the long series of correspondence between Monroe and various members of the Quiddist faction relative to his prospective candidacy in 1808. John Randolph led off the campaign on the 20th of that month with a letter to Monroe which vividly portrayed the Quids' resentment toward the administration. After reciting some of the evils of Madison's tenure as Secretary of State, he continued with the assertion that, "There is no longer a doubt but the principles of our administration have been materially changed. The compass of a letter ... cannot suffice to give you even an outline. Suffice it to say, that everything is made a business of bargaining and traffick, the ultimate object of which is to raise Mr. Madison to the presidency."13 Then came the proposition: "Need I tell you that they [the Old Republicans] are united in your support? That they look to you, Sir, for the example which this nation has yet to receive to demonstrate that the government can be conducted on open, upright principles without intrigue or any species of dis-
ingenuous artifice. ... Your country requires, nay, demands, your presence. It is time that a character, which has proved invulnerable to every open attack, should triumph over insid-
ious enmity."14
On April 21, Monroe received another communication from Randolph in the same vein as the first. The Quiddist leader advised the Minister that only through his own presence in this country could he see for himself the disreputable condition in which the government had found itself. Since he was not certain just exactly how Monroe felt about the possibility of his name being entered as a candidate in opposition to Madison, Randolph hedged a bit and declared that "My object at present is merely to guard you, which your known prudence perhaps renders an unnecessary caution, against a commitment of yourself to men in whom you cannot wholly confide." 15

On June 16, Monroe reciprocated with a lengthy discussion of the situation in Washington, which clearly indicated that he was not totally adverse to identifying himself with the "Old Republicans." Although he professed that propriety should indicate his determination to withdraw his name from the contest completely, he left the door open to further communication by stating that "The cause may sometimes derive more support from the retirement of individuals than from any service they might render; though it would be far from my disposition altogether to retire." Private interests would consume his time immediately after his return to the United States, but he desired to confer with Randolph upon various topics as soon after his return as possible,
so that "the ultimate course will be decided on and pursued with becoming firmness."\(^{16}\)

Randolph took heart and penned an enthusiastic reply in July in which he confided that Virginia was almost solidly behind Monroe: "There have been schisms and divisions amongst us which do us very little honor, but, in regard to yourself, there is but one sentiment -- at least amongst the mass of the people."\(^{17}\) The next letter became even more persuasive, with Randolph calling upon Monroe's sense of public duty and the necessity for him to seek the Republican nomination:

If, heretofore, I had been at a loss to fix upon the individual the most disinterested & virtuous whom I have known, I could, now, find no difficulty in determining; nor do I hesitate to declare that the very arguments, which you adduce to dissuade your friends from supporting you at the next presidential election, form, with me, an invincible motive for persisting in that support: since they exhibit the most irrefragable proof of that superior merit which you alone are unwilling to acknowledge. Yet, I must confess there are considerations, amongst those presented by you, that would have great, & perhaps, decisive influence upon my mind, where the pretensions of the candidates were nearly equal. But in this case, there is not only a strong preference for one party, but a decided objection to the other. It is not a singular belief among the republicans, that to the great & acknowledged influence of this last gentleman we are indebted for that strange amalgamation of men & principles which has distinguished some of the late acts of the administration & proved so injurious to it. Many, the most consistent & influential of the old republicans, by whose exertions the present men were brought into power, have beheld with immeasurable disgust the principles for which they had contended, & (as they thought) established, neutralized at the touch of a cold & insidious moderation.\(^{18}\)
As the time of the election drew nearer, Randolph's letters to London grew more indelicate and blunt. In an effort to derive some definite word from Monroe as to his willingness to support actively his own candidacy, he began to "sow the tares" that Jefferson had so heartily complained of in his letters to Macon and Duane. In an effort to minimize Monroe's confidence in the administration's backing of his negotiations with the British government, Randolph insinuated that "exertions to diminish the value of your character and public services have been made by persons and in a manner that will be scarcely credible to you." When you return, you will hardly know the country. A system of espionage and denunciation has been organized which pervades every quarter; distrust and suspicion generally prevail in the intercourse between man and man. All is constraint, reserve and mystery. Intrigue has arrived at a pitch which I hardly supposed it would have reached in five centuries. Hypocrisy and treachery have reached their acme amongst us.

In an effort to place him in less prominent circumstances, Jefferson offered Monroe the position of Governor of the Louisiana Territory, but the latter refused on the grounds of personal inconvenience. Monroe knew that the President's motives were not purely the result of his concern for his (Monroe's) financial position, as was alleged. Acceptance of the
New Orleans appointment would be tantamount to political exile. The long-range advantages of such a position did not influence his attitude at the time, and he hastened to advise the President not to keep the appointment open for him.

Monroe returned to the United States in December, 1807, and immediately retired to his home near Richmond. He received a letter from Randolph dated December 24, in which he was warned against any further communication between himself and Randolph except through personal interviews. Randolph was afraid that his own letters to Monroe might inadvertently fall into the wrong hands.22

On January 21, 1808, the partisans of Madison in the Virginia State Legislature held a caucus at the Bell Tavern in Richmond. William Branch Giles moderated the meeting which was attended by one hundred and nineteen members of the legislature. The caucus enthusiastically recommended Madison to be Jefferson's successor, with George Clinton of New York as the vice-presidential choice. On the same day, sixty of Monroe's supporters in the legislature met at the Capitol and declared their endorsement of him as the Republican candidate. This was the first positive test of strength between the two men in the state of Virginia, and it clearly showed that Madison's prospects were infinitely better than those of Monroe. If the latter could not command a majority in the Old Dominion, then his chances were relatively slim throughout the rest of
the country. Madison's decisive majority in the legislature caused many of the Monroe partisans to abandon his candidacy and support the Secretary of State.

Two days later, on January 25, a congressional caucus convened in Washington under the direction of Senator Bradley of Vermont. Again Madison was the presidential choice, receiving the support of eighty-three of the eighty-nine members attending the meeting. A resolution was proposed and passed which recommended the formation of a committee of correspondence in each state to stimulate enthusiasm for Madison's candidacy.23

Monroe's adherents lost no time in condemning the caucus as being unconstitutional and opposed to the best interests of the people. In the interest of their own candidate they issued a statement denouncing the meeting:

As being in direct hostility to the principles of the constitution:

As a gross assumption of power not delegated by the people, and not justified or extenuated by any actual necessity:

As an attempt to produce an undue bias in the ensuing election of President and Vice-President, and virtually to transfer the appointment of those officers from the people, to a majority of the two Houses of Congress.

And we do in the same manner protest against the nomination of James Madison, as we believe him to be unfit to fill the office of President in the present juncture of our affairs.24
This declaration was signed by John Randolph, Richard Stanford, Littleton Waller Tazewell, Edwin Grey, and others. Against the eighty-three who had endorsed Madison's candidacy, there were only nineteen who signed the protest for Monroe. Although this was not a positive indication of the relative strength of the two candidates on a national scale, it showed which way the wind was blowing. Randolph's extravagant claims of support for Monroe were proving to be more illusion than fact. Yet it was precisely at this point that Monroe chose to declare himself definitely available for the nomination.

After pursuing a policy of vacillation, Monroe selected the moment of Madison's apparent triumph to write the following letter to Dr. Walter Jones. Monroe undoubtedly was aware of the results of the caucuses in Richmond, although it is not certain that he knew of the results of the Washington meetings. At any rate, on January 24, three days after the Richmond meetings, and one day following the congressional caucus, he wrote Dr. Jones:

That I have not offered myself a candidate for the office to which you allude is most certain, as it likewise is that I have entered into no arrangement or compact with any one on that subject. My opinion is that the nation should be left perfectly at liberty to make its own selection, without any the slightest interference, on the part of those to whom the public attention may be in any degree drawn in reference to that object. On this principle I have acted invariably whenever I have been applied
to respecting it. At the same time it has been far from my intention to withhold my services from my country in case they should be called for by it. On the contrary, I have been heretofore and shall continue to be, perfectly willing to serve it in case I should be elected in the manner above stated, which alone is consistent with the principles of our government, & honorable to the nation and the person who may be the object of its choice.

Resting on this ground I shall maintain it let the consequences to myself be what they may. I am under no obligation of any kind to shrink from a publick duty with a view to favor the pretensions of any one. I hold it to be equally improper to take that step, as to endeavor to promote my own election, in the course which is too often practices. \[Italics supplied.\]

Here is the first clear-cut statement by Monroe as to his availability for the nomination, and it came at a time when his prospects had dimmed considerably as a result of Madison's great show of strength. Why did he choose this particular time to write such a letter? By making a positive declaration of his position, he might have had in mind an effort to sway to his side those who had heretofore hesitated because of the uncertainty of his intentions. But whatever his motivation, he soon changed his mind again and retreated to his former position of non-commitment.

One of his most ardent supporters, John Taylor of Carolina, was quick to recognize the hopelessness of Monroe's candidacy. After observing the results of the Richmond and Washington caucuses, he wrote Monroe advising that he with-
draw his name. After elaborating the difficulties that would be encountered if he persisted in his determination to challenge Madison, Taylor observed that "an unsuccessful attempt will probably both close upon you for ever the avenue to the presidency, and utterly demolish your private fortunes. Consider well therefore whether these great stakes ought to be betted upon the chance of success. From what I can learn, it is certainly bad, probably desperate."26

Taylor urged Monroe to accept the post offered at New Orleans, arguing that the West would certainly be a potent force in national politics in the near future, and that the Louisiana appointment would identify him with western interests that would conceivably support his next bid for the presidency. He also pointed out that the remuneration offered would be more than adequate to satisfy the needs of Monroe's financial condition. He concluded with a reference that left no doubt as to his loyalty and his opinion of Monroe's chances for the presidency: "Though such are my opinions, I have no idea of withdrawing from the ticket as a supporter should you persevere, but shall contentedly immolate my little popularity in the funeral pile which will consume yours."27

Evidently Taylor's advice had a sobering effect upon Monroe, for he immediately dispatched a letter to Jefferson assuring him that his loyalty to the administration was not impaired, and that he was ready and able to support Mr. Madison
in the presidency:

In regard to the approaching election I have been and shall continue to be an inactive Spectator of the movement. Should the nation be disposed to call any citizen to that station it would be his duty to accept it. On that ground I rest. I have done nothing to draw the attention of any one to me in reference to it, nor shall I in future. No one knows better than I do the merits of Mr. Madison, and I can declare that should he be elected he will have my best wishes for the success of his administration, as well on account of the great interest which I take in what concerns his welfare as in that of my country. It will not lessen my friendship for him which is sincere & strong. 28

(Italics supplied)

These sentiments are hardly consistent with those voiced to Dr. Walter Jones in January, when Monroe had explicitly stated his position with regard to his candidacy. He was emphatic in his assertion that he was "under no obligation of any kind to shrink from a publick duty with a view to favor the pretensions of any one." Presumably the "any one" included the Secretary of State. If, as he wrote to Jefferson, he had done "nothing to draw the attention of any one to . . . himself in reference to it [the nomination]," how can the letter to Jones be explained? Clearly he had indicated his availability in the Jones letter, yet he advised Jefferson that he had done nothing to favor his own pretensions. The evidence appears to indicate that he was quite willing to play both sides at the same time. Presumably this
was the case, because Taylor found it necessary to caution him again on March 20, by advising that "The opinion of all your friends whom I have seen is, that a difference with Mr. Jefferson will destroy your popularity. Many have never even conceived its possibility. And a multitude would desert you, if it was avowed that you would change, and Mr. Madison adhere to, the system of his administration." Unfortunately we do not have any of Monroe's observations with regard to Taylor's admonitions, but there is an indication that he was heeding this latest piece of advice, because he wrote Jefferson again on March 22, giving a detailed explanation of his conduct in London, and apologising for any misconception he might have had regarding the President's confidence in his abilities. It is interesting to note that Taylor's letter implies that some of Monroe's strength lay among those who were not critics of the administration, but who apparently preferred Monroe to Madison for personal reasons only.

On March 23, Monroe wrote Randolph saying "On political topics I have nothing to communicate being a distant and inactive spectator of the movement." With this, the correspondence between the two terminated abruptly until after the election. During the summer Monroe and the President continued on friendly terms, and in September he sent to Jefferson copies of all the letters he had written to Randolph, saying "You will perceive that they were not intended for your
view, as there are passages in them which may not be agreeable. You will however perceive that there is nothing in them to sanction what has been by some most ungenerously insinuated."

With this action Monroe confirmed the fears that Randolph had previously expressed regarding their correspondence, although the latter undoubtedly did not anticipate the agent by which his confidence would be betrayed. The only thing that can be said in Monroe's favor concerning this transaction, is that he did not divulge the contents of Randolph's letters to him. By making certain that Jefferson was fully apprised of his dealings with Randolph, Monroe completely cut any ties that remained with the Quids, and allied himself fully with the administration. For all practical purposes, his opposition to Madison's presidential aspirations was completely abandoned. While this action may be considered to have been an astute political maneuver, nevertheless, it does not reflect very highly on Monroe's trustworthiness as a political cohort or confidant.

During all of this time an interesting newspaper war was being carried on in the columns of the Richmond Enquirer between the partisans of both Madison and Monroe. Randolph, Taylor, Tazewell, and Leigh, were actively endorsing Monroe's candidacy under such pseudonyms as Decius, Hermodaeus, Aristides, Tullius, Hortensius, and Publicola. They attacked the
administration's record, the Yazoo frauds, the Florida affair, and the embargo, as well as the assumption by Jefferson that he could hand-pick the next Republican nominee for the presidency. However bitter the accusations were that flowed from the pens of the Quids, it is evident that they had very little effect upon the final results. The administration forces, led by William Branch Giles, the Madison leader in Virginia, answered most of the charges and unstintingly upheld their candidate with great fervor. The President himself was not adverse to joining in the fray, although he preferred to answer his critics in private letters to his own followers.33

By the middle of the summer of 1808, it was evident to any observer of the political scene that there was really no question as to the final outcome of the election. It was merely a case of how large Madison's majority would ultimately be. The Federalists could hold no hope of achieving any substantial gains for their party, and even the most die-hard Quids such as John Randolph could see that the Secretary of State was clearly on his way to the presidency. The various Republican splinter groups outside of Virginia had conceded the election -- the Quids of Pennsylvania and the Clinton-backers in New York had resigned themselves to token opposition only.

As was expected, Madison easily swept to victory over
the Federalist candidate, Charles Pinckney, and the insurgent Republicans, Monroe and Clinton. There are no official records of the popular vote; but according to the Virginia Argus of November 22, in Virginia Madison received 12,451 votes; Monroe, 2,770; and Pinckney, 435. Unfortunately we do not know the geographical distribution of the votes, but the figures indicate that Monroe probably received many votes that otherwise might have gone to the Federalist candidate. Out of a total possible electoral count of 176; Madison received 122; Pinckney, 47; and Clinton, 6. Kentucky failed to send one of its allotted electors, so that only 175 electoral votes were actually cast. Madison, of course, carried Virginia, as well as most of the other Southern states, the Middle-Atlantic states, and Vermont. Pinckney carried all of New England except Vermont; and Clinton's 6 votes came from New York. Clinton was elected vice-president with an electoral vote of 113, while the rest of the votes were scattered among Rufus King (Federalist), Langdon, Madison, and Monroe (he received 3 votes from New York) for the vice-presidency.
Epilogue.

Madison's triumph, for all practical purposes, annihilated the Tertium Quaيد. Monroe resumed his law practice which he pursued until he was elected Governor of Virginia in 1811; Randolph returned to the House of Representatives and kept up a spirited but ineffectual opposition to Madison's administration until his defeat for re-election in 1812; Macon and Nicholson had long since been reconciled with Jefferson and his followers; and John Taylor returned to quiet retirement at his estate in Caroline County. With the exception of Monroe, never again were any of these gentlemen to play a really significant role in national politics. It is true that John Randolph's retirement from the House was only temporary, but after his return he failed to regain the power that he had once held, and as the years passed by it became increasingly evident that his mental condition was deteriorating rapidly.

The funereal pile that Taylor had predicted if Monroe persisted in his opposition did not materialize, of course, and as history has shown, Monroe's national political career was just beginning. During the War of 1812 he served as Secretary of War with considerable distinction, then as Secretary of State, and finally as President of the United States. And it might be added that he was elected to the presidency under
almost identical circumstances as Madison; he became the "heir apparent."

From the very beginning the Quids had undertaken an impossible assignment. For a mere handful of men to attempt to overthrow one of the most popular and powerful presidential administrations in American history appears today to be almost ludicrous, despite the noble sentiments that might have inspired them. Thomas Jefferson was too much of an obstacle even for John Randolph in his hey-day of political power, as he certainly was in his early congressional years.

With Randolph as their leader, the Quids may be justly accused of acting purely out of political motivation in many instances; however, it must also be recognized that their opposition was substantially based upon sound principles. Their basic beliefs in a strict-constructionist, state's rights, agrarian society cannot be dismissed as mere political expediency. That they were sincere in their belief that the Jeffersonians were abandoning those ideals is a truthful assertion. It is not fair to the individuals involved to condemn their actions in sweeping generalizations without a clear understanding of the motives behind them. In the Yazoo debates, and to a lesser extent in the Florida affair, they did have a valid argument on their side, but unfortunately they permitted their emotions to gain the upper hand and pro-
pel them into position where personality rather than ideals was the dominant factor. A rational point of view would have shown them that they could not hope to defeat Madison in 1808, but because of the intense personal antagonisms engendered in the course of their opposition, they could look in no other direction. From a really sound moral opposition they allowed their passions to drag them into petty partisan politics, and hence to their ultimate destruction.

As an effective third party, the Quids failed to materialize, but they did show the way. They proved that even the greatest of political leaders must watch not only the organized opposition, but also the members of his own following. And in another respect, they also proved to be the forerunners. At a time when centralization appeared to be making its mark on American life, the Quids remained faithful to the principles of state sovereignty. They kept alive those ideals which later inspired Calhoun and Hayne -- ideals which have remained fairly constant with us today.
Notes

Chapter I. The Background.


3. It has been felt necessary to characterize the Quids as being a third party *movement* rather than a third party *party*. The latter label connotes an organized group such as the Anti-Masons, the Free-Soilers, Populists, Progressives, etc., which the Tertium Quids definitely were not.

4. John Randolph first used this term in a speech delivered before the House of Representatives on March 15, 1806, in which he said "There is another question relative to what is generally called quiddism. I am willing to meet gentlemen on that ground. If we belong to the third party, be it so." *Debates and Proceedings in the Congress of the United States, 1789-1824*, 9th Congress, 1st session, 775, hereafter cited as *Annals of Congress*. Most of his biographers have insinuated or implied that Randolph used the exact term "Tertium Quid" in this speech, however, this reader has been unable to find a single instance of this in the speech under consideration. The reference is almost always in the context as Randolph stated above, and the designation "Tertium Quid" appears to have been a latter-day innovation.

5. At the time of the Quiddist defection among the Southern Republicans, there was also a reaction among anti-Madison Republicans in Pennsylvania and New York. However, since they supported George Clinton in preference to Monroe for the presidency in 1808, and since they were in no way affiliated with the Randolph faction, they are not seriously considered in this study, except in connection with the final electoral vote count.


7. The most complete biography of John Randolph is William Cabell Bruce's *John Randolph of Roanoke*, 2 vols. (New York and London, 1922). This by far the most complete and authoritative study that we have on the man, although it suffers from a distinct lack of organization and is somewhat pro-
Randolph in its complexion. Nevertheless, until a more objective biography comes along, Bruse's work will stand as the most important and useful study that we have. Henry Adams' John Randolph (Boston, 1894), is somewhat overly critical and does not conform to the high standard set by the eminent historian's previously praised works. Hugh Garland's Life of John Randolph (many editions), is still useful, but suffers from an entirely too laudatory and biased approach. Russell Kirk's Randolph of Roanoke is an excellent discussion of the Virginian's political philosophy. The definitive biography of John Randolph of Roanoke has yet to be written.

8 The Randolph family was (and still is) a very prominent Virginian institution. Its genealogy may be traced back to Pocahontas, and includes some of the most illustrious names in colonial and early American history, including Thomas Jefferson and Robert E. Lee. See: Bruse, John Randolph, I, chapter I.

9 Quoted in Claude Bowers, Jefferson in Power (Boston, 1936), 104.

10 Ibid., 111.

11 Irving Brant, James Madison: Secretary of State, 1800-1809 (Indianapolis and New York, 1955), 240.

12 Bernard Mayo, Henry Clay: Spokesman of the New West (Boston, 1937), 408.


15 William E. Dodd's The Life of Nathaniel Macon (Raleigh, 1903), is old but good.


17 The best secondary account of the Yazoo affair is to be found in Charles R. Haskins, "The Yazoo Land Companies," Papers of the American Historical Association, V, no. 4 (October, 1891), 61-103. Most of the official documents are reproduced in the American State Papers, Public Lands, I, 132-247. See also: S.G. McLendon, History of the Public Domain of Georgia (Atlanta, 1924); and, Payson J. Treat, The

18 The four companies were known as the Georgia Company, the Tennessee Company, the Upper Mississippi Company, and the Georgia-Mississippi Company.


21 Treat, National Land System, 359.

22 When the question of the legality of the resinding action of the Georgia Legislature finally reached the United States Supreme Court in 1810, in the case of Fletcher v. Peck, 6 Cranch 87 (1810), Chief Justice John Marshall delivered the opinion of the Court in a decision which held that the grant to the speculators, although obtained under scandalous and corrupt conditions, was valid, and that the action of the Legislature of 1796 was an impairment of the contract, and thus void within the meaning of the United States Constitution. See: Robert E.ushing, Leading Constitutional Decisions, 8th ed. (New York, 1947), 176.

23 Haskins, "Yazoo Land Companies," 89.

24 American State Papers, Public Lands, I, 114.


26 Annals of Congress, 8th Congress, 1st session, 1040.

27 Ibid., 1104.

28 Bruce, John Randolph, I, 198.

29 Annals of Congress, 8th Congress, 1st session, 1176.

30 Ibid., 2nd session, 1031.

31 Ibid., 1031.

32 Ibid., 1024.

33 Ibid., 1027.

34 Ibid., 1175.
Chapter II. The Break.


4. The full text of this message along with the accompanying documents may be found in Ford, ed., *Works of Jefferson*, X, 198-205.

5. Ibid., 203.

6. Ibid., 204.

7. Ibid., 205.

8. Ibid., 200.

9. Ibid., 201.


12. Those who tend to be pro-Randolph pass over this absence with little or no comment, while those who are critical of his actions tend to blame it on his contrariness and his desire to confound Jefferson.


15 Ibid., 340.
16 Ibid., 559.
17 Ibid., 561.
18 Ibid., 565.
19 Bruce, John Randolph, I, 245; Adams, History of the United States, III, 161.
21 Ibid., 683.
22 Ibid., 706.
23 Ibid., 877.
24 Ibid., 775; see: Chapter 1, note 4.
26 Ibid., 947.
27 This generalization appears to be fairly accurate, however, further intensive investigation in the actual roll-call votes might indicate some change.
32 Bruce, John Randolph, I, 311-12.
33 Annals of Congress, 10th Congress, 1st session, 1237.
35 Adams, John Randolph, 227-229; Bowers, Jefferson in Power, 441.
Chapter III. The Election.


2 William Pinckney had been sent to London to aid the minister in his negotiations; however, Monroe always considered the treaty as his own product, and complained bitterly that Jefferson had lost faith in his /Monroe's/ capabilities by sending him an assistant.

3 Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, V, 2.


6 See page 1, Chapter I, "The Background".

7 John Taylor to James Monroe, February 27, 1806, "Letters of John Taylor, of Caroline County, Virginia," The John P. Branch Historical Papers of Randolph-Macon College, II (June, 1908), 290-91.


9 Ibid., 243.

10 Ibid., 245-46.

11 Ibid., 245fn.

12 Ibid., 252.


14 Ibid.

15 John Randolph to James Monroe, April 21, 1806, Ibid.

16 Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, IV, 460-68.


18 Hamilton, ed., Writings of Monroe, IV, 465fn.

20 Ibid.


24 Ibid., March 7, 1808.


27 Ibid., 294.


31 Ibid., 35-36.

32 James Monroe to Thomas Jefferson, September 27, 1808, Ibid., 63-64.


34 Quoted in Dix R. Anderson, *William Branch Giles* (Monasha, Wis., 1914), 128.

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May 1958

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