

JOHN LEACOCK'S "THE FALL OF BRITISH TYRANNY"
//
IN THE WHIG PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE:
THE PERSONALIZATION OF THE REVOLUTION

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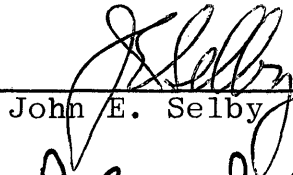
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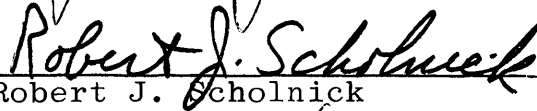


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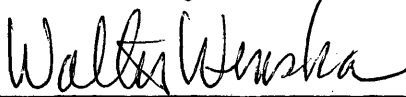
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	PAGE
ABSTRACT	v
CHAPTER I. THE PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE.	1
CHAPTER II. ORAL PROPAGANDA	19
CHAPTER III. THE PAMPHLET PLAY	31
CHAPTER IV. JOHN LEACOCK AND "THE FALL OF BRITISH TYRANNY"	36
CHAPTER V. THE BRITISH CONSPIRATORS.	44
CHAPTER VI. CONCLUSIONS	74
NOTES.	76
BIBLIOGRAPHY	91
VITA	98

ABSTRACT

By 1776, a large number of Americans had been moved to violently resist British rule in the colonies but the factors that provided the motivation for such drastic action remain complex. Prima facie evidence leads some to conclude that British provocations were responsible for the Revolution but a closer examination of the period indicates that there were other, more subtle factors involved as well as a small, creative element of Americans attempting to utilize fiction in behalf of the patriot cause. John Leacock was among this group of individuals and wrote a pamphlet play entitled the Fall of British Tyranny (1776) which was designed to transform the Revolution from a war of constitutional issues to a struggle against evil personalities. It succeeds in blaming the British ministry for the crisis and in confirming colonial suspicions that a conspiracy against their liberties had been launched. The overall importance of the play is difficult to determine but the work does illustrate the various techniques employed by the Whig propagandist to influence the masses of colonial Americans.

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CHAPTER I
THE PROPAGANDA OFFENSIVE

John Adams, reflecting on the American Revolution in his later years, believed that the war had been successful primarily because independence was "in the minds and hearts of the people."¹ Adams' memory, perhaps distorted by time, proved faulty, for the vast majority of Americans in 1776 were either neutral or opposed to a separation from Great Britain. Crane Brinton has argued that a mere 10% of the colonial population actively supported the war whereas the remaining inhabitants were "cowed conservatives or moderates."²

The lack of colonial unity on the issue of independence is hardly surprising when one considers the many factors conspiring against a united action or the development of a national consciousness. Geographical factors had led to the evolution of at least three separate and distinct economic regions. The New England area was dependent upon the fishing and shipbuilding industries while Southerners were immersed in a plantation system which relied heavily upon tobacco, slave labor, plentiful land, and easy credit from England.³ The Middle colonies depended upon small farms and an energetic trade centering in the major port cities of New York and Philadelphia.⁴ All three areas matured separately and produced an outlook that was essentially regional.

Unification was further hindered by the numerous benefits the colonies enjoyed from their membership in the British empire. Despite such regulative laws as the Navigation Acts, the American colonies were active participants in the massive trade routinely conducted between Britain and her global possessions. Fully one-third of all trade was transported on American merchant vessels, directly resulting in the development of a prosperous New England shipbuilding industry. Likewise, the coastal trade, carried on between the North American colonies was consigned to colonial merchants by English entrepreneurs who preferred to forsake such operations in favor of the larger and more lucrative international ventures.⁵

Despite an increase in British attention to the colonies after the French and Indian War which resulted in a proliferation of legislation, the vast majority of Americans did not feel oppressed by British rule. Most colonists believed that life in the American colonies was freer than in any other area of the world.⁶ Conservative leaders such as John Dickinson, Edward Rutledge, John Livingston, and James Wilson gave credence to such attitudes and mounted a prestigious and powerful opposition to any movement towards independence. The conservatives hoped to temper the emotions of the period and to prevent a separation from being imposed upon a population that was viewed as unready for such an irrevocable step.⁷ These individuals adamantly maintained

that a reconciliation with Great Britain was not only desirable but feasible. In Ralph Bordon Culp's words:

(the conservatives believed) that the answer lay in peace, not in war, in adjustment, not in separation. Apparently . . . the conservatives represented the view of a majority of Americans; only a handful of Americans were ready to give up non-importation agreements, remonstrances, and petitions for civil war.⁸

American independence was clearly not an inevitable outcome of events. Instead, the issue was clouded by the chaos of sectionalism and the diversity of opinions, obstacles that would have to be overcome before separation from Great Britain could be won. The proponents of separation organized an efficient and effective propaganda mechanism designed to gain the support of the people, a system that the conservative elements were never able to duplicate or effectively counter.⁹ Eric Robson states that:

In this struggle, the radicals exhibited an extraordinary technical skill in the practical organisation of revolution . . . (they) won the decisive victory; they were able to work on the masses, and effectively stir up grievances, and achieve their aim of independence.¹⁰

Such ultimate success was due primarily because radical Whigs were able to mobilize all forms of communication in support of the separation.

For propaganda purposes, colonial society was easily stratified into two distinct groups--the literate elite and the illiterate masses. Different methods and techniques

were required to coax and convince individuals in these two very different groups. The literate were sensitive to the written word and could be won by extended argument, rational appeal, and comprehensive logic readily conveyed in pamphlets, newspapers, and Congressional proclamations. Conversely, the illiterate masses depended upon oral media that included dialogues, sermons, oratory, and demonstrations. The Whigs were careful to direct the propaganda offensive at both groups in order to reach virtually every member of colonial society.

The most obvious extant artifacts of the radical offensive are the copious political pamphlets of the period. The pamphlet has become known as the literature of the American Revolution but only through the work of Bernard Bailyn has our understanding of the pamphlet's role been expanded to include the fact that these political tracts explain much of the theory that supported the radicals' belief in independence.¹¹ Bailyn believes that the pamphlets were "not merely positions taken but the reason why positions were taken; they reveal motive and understanding: the assumptions, beliefs, and ideas--the articulated world view--that lay behind the manifest events of the time."¹²

The pamphlet evolved into a distinct genre, different from all other forms of communication.¹³ Generally, pamphlets were composed by amateur writers whose strong opinions on an issue or crisis led them to attempt to express their

views in print. The authors' intent was simple--to convince the colonial reading public of the righteousness of their position through the use of extended arguments and a selective rendering of facts.¹⁴

The pamphlet was ideal for such propaganda purposes. Most were short, ranging from between 5,000 and 25,000 words with the pages bound together by stitching.¹⁵ Generally coverless many words even lacked a simple title page.¹⁶ Yet these austere methods produced a publication that could be distributed rapidly and inexpensively. Thus, many were written and printed during the heat of a crisis and frequently served to enlighten the reading public to the rebel position on an issue and the constitutional basis for it.¹⁷ Selling for a mere penny, the pamphlets were easily available to colonial audiences at diverse locations including inns, post offices, taverns, and coffee shops.¹⁸

The tone and theme of pamphlets varied widely. Pamphleteers who wrote early in the crisis were primarily concerned with establishing the constitutional validity of patriot positions against unjust taxes and ill-advised regulations. Consequently, the logic and style of these works tended to be sophisticated and scholarly, relying heavily upon subtle distinctions to show the folly of British policies. Daniel Delany, for instance, wrote a widely read pamphlet during the Stamp Act crisis in 1765 entitled, Considerations on the Propriety of imposing Taxes in the

British Colonies, for the Purpose of raising a Revenue by Act of Parliament. The work dealt exhaustively with the questions of taxation and legislation conceding the latter to Parliament but reserving the power of taxation for the colonial assemblies.¹⁹

As relations between the ministry in Britain and the American colonies worsened, pamphleteers became increasingly radical, venting their frustrations and anger in print while treading upon treasonous ground. John Allen's pamphlet, The American Alarm, or The Bostonian Plea, for the Rights and Liberties, of the People (1773), compared the rule of George III to that of his executed predecessor, Charles I. Allen warned George III that he would share the fate of King Charles if he did not cast off the evil policies of the ministry.²⁰

Seventeen Seventy-five brought a perceptible change in the style of radical pamphlets. The battles of Lexington and Concord opened a de facto war between the colonies and Great Britain. There was no longer a need for a rhetoric of constitutional rationalization to justify colonial positions but rather a more direct, less intellectual appeal was made to the patriotic sensibilities of the American people.²¹

Thomas Paine's Common Sense was indisputedly the greatest of this new generation of pamphlets.²² Paine wrote in a clear and direct style, personalizing the issues of the Revolution for the colonial populace. Consequently, Common Sense was a publication that was readily understood by most Americans.²³

Paine also skillfully used mockery and contempt to direct a verbal assault on the institution of monarchy.²⁴ The pamphlet, addressed to the "inhabitants of America," became the first major work to pose the question of the validity of the monarchical rule of King George III. It went on to broach the hitherto unmentionable subject of independence claiming "That it is the interest of America to be separated from Britain."²⁵ Paine's eloquence in Common Sense had a major impact in the colonies and illustrated the potential power of written propaganda.

Common Sense first appeared in Philadelphia, the site of the Continental Congress, in an edition printed by Robert Bell. The work sold so rapidly that Bell was forced to issue a second, unauthorized edition to meet the public's demand for the pamphlet. Simultaneously, William and Thomas Bradford were granted printing rights by Paine for an additional Pennsylvania edition.²⁶ Incredibly, Paine's Common Sense went through twenty-five editions and sold in excess of 150,000 copies--an unprecedented distribution for the period.²⁷ Subsequently, Paine boasted that his work had won many people over to independence.²⁸

For all of its importance and impact, the pamphlet as a propaganda weapon was seriously flawed. The medium's primary purpose according to Philip Davidson was to "unify the thinking of the leaders; [and it provided] a detailed, often obtuse, political argument [that] did not have popular

appeal."²⁹ Because of such apparent limitations, the radical Whigs sought to supplement the pamphlet form with other forms of written communication to convey the message of revolution to the people.

The newspaper proved to be a valuable addendum to the pamphlet despite the uneven development of printing in the colonies. In New England, printing was well established by the mid-seventeenth century because of the Puritans' zeal to publish and popularize their dissenting religious views. In the more orthodox Anglican colonies of the South, however, sparse settlement combined with the people's more traditional beliefs, stifled the establishment of a press until the 1730's.³⁰ Prior to that date, there was some governmental opposition to the printing trade. Governor Berkeley of Virginia saw printing as a potential organ of dissent and one capable of agitation. In a legendary statement, the Governor declared that "I thank God, there are no free schools nor printing, and I hope we shall not have these [for a] hundred years; for learning has brought disobedience, and heresy, and sects into the world, and printing has divulged them, and libels against the best government. God keep us from both."³¹

Berkeley's warnings ultimately proved prophetic for the newspaper was destined to become a major tool of the propagandist for instilling unrest in the colonies during the crisis with Great Britain. By 1775, there were forty-two newspapers publishing regularly within the American colonies.³²

Most were issued weekly and had modest circulations of around three hundred each. However, Benjamin Edes boasted that his publication, the Boston Gazette, regularly sold as many as two-thousand copies.³³

Colonial printers served the community in a variety of ways but the conveying of news was considered paramount in their responsibilities for the newspapers were relied upon to give credence to oral reports of significant events that were already circulating within a colony.³⁴ An impartial reporting of events was neither expected nor given by the press. As a result, the Whigs undertook a massive effort to gain access to the papers and were finally successful in controlling the vast majority of them.³⁵

Most papers depended heavily upon voluntary contributions for material, providing an opportunity for opinionated citizens to express their political positions in print.³⁶ The Whigs literally flooded the pages of the newspapers with letters and articles condemning British policies. As early as 1765, John Hughes, who held the dubious honor of being the stamp agent for Philadelphia, lamented that the newspapers were filled with "the most inflammatory pieces they could procure, and excluded every thing that tended to cool the minds of the people."³⁷

Samuel Adams was typical of the authors who so distressed John Hughes. Adams, one of the most prolific writers of the revolutionary era, recognized the power of the

newspaper in the influencing of public opinion. Historian Richard Buel believes that the press:

could play a special part in the welding together a united populace by disseminating knowledge of the constitution and of how their ruler's actions related to it. Without such knowledge, subjects would not know when their rights were invaded nor have a common principle on which to act.³⁸

Adams was intent upon informing the colonists of the numerous assaults on their rights by the British government. Working closely with Benjamin Edes, the publisher of the Boston Gazette, Adams contributed material to the newspapers under at least twenty-five pseudonyms.³⁹ He is credited with filling "the pages of the Boston Gazette, writing essays, clipping items from other papers, extracting pertinent bits from his private correspondence, editing news items--all with the one idea of arousing anti-British feeling."⁴⁰

The newspapers often flaunted their political philosophy in the masthead which contained the printer's slogan. Many were innocuous such as the motto of John Pinkney's Virginia Gazette "Open to ALL PARTIES, but influenced by NONE."⁴¹ But other newspapers proclaimed their opposition to British policies. During the Stamp Act crisis, the South Carolina Gazette and Country Journal, the Boston Post-Boy & Advertiser, and the New York Gazette, all expressed their individual sentiments against the imposition of a stamp duty with the common slogan "The United Voice of His Majesty's free and

loyal Subjects in AMERICA--LIBERTY, and PROPERTY, and NO STAMPS."⁴² Later, in 1769, the Newport Mercury utilized the Whig motto, "Undaunted by TYRANTS,--We'll DIE or be FREE."⁴³

With the arrival of British troops in Boston in 1768, newspapers throughout the colonies teemed with accounts of the "occupation" and condemned this action repeatedly as an affront to the colonies. As Philip Davidson explains in Propaganda and the American Revolution, the papers:

told how (the British troops) constantly insulted quiet, respectable merchants in the taverns and coffee-houses and rudely pushed them off the streets. It described how they mistreated children and leered at women, so that no one felt comfortable or safe on the streets. Peaceable Boston had become a garrisoned town.⁴⁴

Many newspapers regularly featured a "Poet's Corner" which also contained amateur writing for the enjoyment of the publication's readers. Most poems printed in these columns were pieces of harmless satire but as tensions increased, the Poet's Corner became politicized, frequently becoming a clarion call for patriotic action. A "Pseudo Patriot's" entry in the Virginia Gazette was typical:

The coward, when his country claims his aid,
Flies to some screen to hide his awful head.
Not so the brave; when TYRANNY alarms
FREEDOM'S true SON, and forces him to arms.

Scorning soft pleasure and ignoble rest,
His country's wrongs with vengeance fire his breast;
Darts on his foe, and drives the SLAVES along;
For justice guides his arm, and truth his tongue.⁴⁵

Another technique that gained acceptance among many

printers was the serialization of popular pamphlets. Works that were seen to have particular significance were divided into smaller parts and printed over a period of several weeks, enhancing the pamphlet's effectiveness by increasing its audience and maximizing its distribution.⁴⁶

Finally, colonial assemblies and the Continental Congress relied upon the colonial press to publish government proclamations, petitions, resolves, and grievances.⁴⁷ Such material had to be circulated and publicized in order to achieve the intended effect. The Whig press frequently disseminated legislative documents and became the primary medium by which the colonial leadership could reach the people.

The radicals were also aware of the vital need to deny those with loyalist sentiments equal access to the press as well as to intimidate printers who refused to avow openly allegiance to the radical cause. Through a variety of extra-legal means and vigilante tactics, the Whigs "found new, informal ways of keeping opinions contrary to their own out of print."⁴⁸

The methods adopted by the radicals to discipline Tory printers frequently included mob action, boycotts, vandalism and personal assault. Numerous colonial printers were victimized in such a fashion. James Johnston of Georgia merely attempted to maintain neutrality in his publication. Nonetheless, the local Committee of Safety, seizing upon the

Congressional mandate to "frustrate the mischievous machinations, and restrain the wicked practices of (the loyalist)",⁴⁹ visited Johnston's establishment and conducted an illegal and random search of the premises for subversive material. Finding none, the patriots left Johnston and his print shop unharmed but the printer, seeing the Committee's action as merely a reprieve, chose to flee the colonies rather than risk the uncertainty of continuing in such a dangerous profession.⁵⁰ Similarly, John Mein of Boston was forced out of his publishing business as was Jemmy Rivington of New York both because they espoused the loyalist position.⁵¹

The meetings of the Continental Congress were another important aspect of the radical appeal to the colonists. These gatherings have been frequently overlooked in the analysis of colonial propaganda efforts, yet the convening of the Congress in 1774 during a period of increased hostility toward Britain had major significance in the publicizing and popularizing of the Whig position. The members of Congress who gathered in Philadelphia convened an assembly that was clearly illegal since no colonial charter, no portion of the British constitution, no law permitted such an inter-colonial assembly.⁵² The Congress had no authority to govern or make laws but it became a convenient and efficient forum for the colonies to express their collective anger over British provocations.⁵³

Marshall Smelser in his book The Winning of Independence, accurately describes the Congress as a "convention of the best propagandists in the country, which used every known technique of press and pen to keep the spirit of rebellion alive."⁵⁴ Likewise, Smelser argues that the Congress "spread the psychological contagion by acting as a fountain of propaganda publications appealing to every level of intelligence."⁵⁵ Through regular and systematic petition, the Congress appealed to both foreign and domestic audiences for support.⁵⁶ The petitions were masterful propaganda documents, competently publicizing the colonial arguments in the struggle and serving to justify boycotts, non-importation agreements, and similar economic measures designed to coerce concessions from the British government.

The conflict between British regulars and colonial militia at Lexington and Concord led many members of Congress fatalistically to abandon hopes of a reconciliation based on a return to the status quo ante-1763. Instead, the Congress recognized the urgency for raising a formal army to oppose the British forces and the members of Congress began to justify the need for an armed resistance to British rule. The first step in this propaganda campaign was to exonerate the Massachusetts militia from any culpability in the armed confrontation with the British army. The Congress gathered testimony from numerous people who had either witnessed or participated in the events of April 15th. Later, at

Congressional expense, twenty of these depositions were printed and circulated throughout the colonies, indelibly fixing fault upon the British for spilling the first blood of the revolution.⁵⁷

On July 6th, 1775, Congress issued "A Declaration by the Representatives of the United Colonies of North America, now met in Congress at Philadelphia, setting forth the causes and necessity of their taking up arms."⁵⁸ The document provided a persuasive appeal for public support in the crisis ahead:

Our cause is just. Our union is perfect. Our internal resources are great, and, if necessary, foreign assistance is undoubtedly attainable. We gratefully acknowledge, as signal instances of the Divine favour towards us, that His Providence would not permit us to be called into this severe controversy until we were grown up to our present strength, had been previously exercised in warlike operations, and possessed of the means of defending ourselves. With hearts fortified with these animating reflections, we most solemnly, before God and the world, declare, that exerting the utmost energy of those powers which our beneficent Creator hath graciously bestowed upon us, the arms we have been compelled by our enemies to assume, we will, in defiance of every hazard, with unabating firmness and perseverance, employ for the preservation of our liberties; being with one mind resolved to die freemen rather than to live slaves.⁵⁹

By July of 1776, Whig elements in the Congress had finally convinced the majority of delegates of the need to separate formally from Great Britain. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia introduced the resolution for independence that was

unanimously adopted on the 2nd of July. The delegates felt that a mere act of independence was inadequate and that there was a compelling need to elaborate and explain the reasons for the separation and to justify it before the people of America and the world.

A committee was formed to write essentially a propaganda document, the Declaration of Independence. John Adams, a member of the committee, expounded upon the purpose of Jefferson's work in a letter to his wife, Abigail, "You will see in a few days a Declaration setting forth the Causes, which have impell'd Us to this mighty Revolution, and the Reasons which will justify it, in the Sight of God and Man."⁶⁰

Jefferson's Declaration of Independence was both skilled and eloquent. The logic was impeccable, beginning with the preamble in which Jefferson outlined the purpose of the document to "declare the causes which impel (the people) to the separation."⁶¹ Following was a list of grievances which explained in extended detail the abuses perpetrated by the British government.⁶² Jefferson carefully proved that King George III had failed to fulfill the qualities of a good and benevolent ruler.⁶³ Rather, Jefferson believed that "A prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people."⁶⁴

The Declaration was printed shortly after its adoption by the entire Congress. On July 6th, the Pennsylvania Evening Post printed the document in its entirety. By

August 2nd, when the South Carolina and American General Gazette printed the document, the work had appeared in all of the major colonial papers and had been read in virtually all of the colonies. Thus, the official justification for independence was publicized throughout the colonies with amazing speed.⁶⁵ Abigail Adams recounted the reception of the Declaration in Boston:

Last Thursday . . . I went with the Multitude into King's Street to hear the proclamation for independence read and proclaimed [sic] . . . When Col. Crafts read from the Belcona of the State House the Proclamation, great attention was given to every word. As soon as he ended, the cry from the Belcona, was God Save our American States and then 3 cheers which rended the air, the Bells rang, the privateers fired, the forts and Batteries, the cannon were discharged, the platoons followed and every face appeared joyfull. Mr. Bowdoin gave a Sentiment, Stability and perpetuity to American independence . . . Thus ends royall Authority in this State, and all the people say Amen.⁶⁶

By 1776, the radicals had been successful in mobilizing the written word in behalf of the separation. The Whigs had been able to persuade the members of the Congress to commit the colonies to the uncertain fate of war with the world's most powerful nation. But it was also clear to the proponents of independence that while a mere handful of men could proclaim and orchestrate a revolution, it would take the support of the masses to secure the separation. Furthermore, the masses would be expected to fill the ranks of the military and to fight for the cause. To win the support of

these illiterate masses, the Whigs had to adopt other techniques to gain their countenance.

CHAPTER II
ORAL PROPAGANDA

Historians have long been frustrated in their efforts to discover the "common man" in colonial America. Since the early American masses left few written records, subsequent generations have been hindered in their efforts to resurrect that element of the past. Nevertheless, the Whig propagandists saw those masses as a vital element in their hopes for ultimate success in the struggle with Great Britain. The populace of the colonies would be depended upon to fight in the army, to deny harbor to the enemy, and to pay taxes in support of the war effort making it imperative for the patriot leadership to direct a significant amount of their propaganda towards eliciting the support of the masses. For this purpose, new and innovative techniques were devised to convey the message of revolution to the illiterate and semi-literate majority.

The effort to understand the oral culture of the colonies has been greatly enhanced through recent efforts of the historian Rhys Isaac. Isaac has convincingly shown the importance of viewing eighteenth-century America as a society composed primarily of illiterates. He maintains that in Virginia only one in four could sign his name.⁶⁷ Furthermore,

among women and slaves, a group when combined constituted a numerical, albeit impotent, majority, there was virtual total illiteracy.⁶⁸ Bruce Granger places the overall colonial literacy figure at 50% for male inhabitants and a mere 25% for females.⁶⁹ Isaac seems correct in asserting that "only a tiny proportion of the population . . . would have their information-orientation towards writing rather than speech."⁷⁰ The harsh realities of such a society forced the Whigs to include in the propaganda offensive tactics designed to reach individuals who were dependent upon the oral word for information.

Sophisticated concepts and subtle constitutional distinctions were impossible to convey information effectively to a populace that possessed only limited education. The pamphlets, newspapers, and proclamations that were so successful in the efforts to gain support among the elite, had only a marginal and indirect effect upon the masses. Isaac believes "the influence of the written word upon the preceptions of most persons remained comparatively weak. For them, access to knowledge could not be attained through print."⁷¹ The Whigs expertly included such things as demonstrations, oratory, songs, and plays in their revolutionary repertoire to motivate the less educated elements of the population.⁷² In a like manner the message was less theoretical and more directed at eliciting hatred of the British ministry and its surrogates. According to Philip

Davidson, the Whigs recognized that "the most important motive in war psychosis is not reason or justice, or even self-interest, but hate. An unreasoning hatred, a blind disgust, is aroused not against policies but against people."⁷³

The demonstration became one of the primary tools of the propagandists in stirring colonial dissatisfaction with Britain among the illiterate masses. Group gatherings and public displays were devised to provide relevant lessons despite the fact that these varied widely in substance and nature. Many displays consisted simply of the elite leadership of a colony making a conspicuous, public appearance before the people in a symbolic protest against a supposed outrage. Others, however, were more violent, relying upon a collective mob anger to vandalize property, to intimidate royal officials, and to persuade the masses.

The gentry actively participated only in the more benign demonstrations, leaving mob violence to lower-class surrogates. In 1774, the Virginia House of Burgesses declared a "Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer, devoutly to implore the divine Imposition for Averting the heavy Calamity, which threatens Destruction to our civil Rights; and the Evils of Civil War."⁷⁴ The purpose of the day was to show a collective solidarity with Massachusetts in protest of the imposition of the Intolerable Acts despite the fact that the laws affected only Massachusetts. The Virginia gentry desired to persuade the people that such actions were potentially dangerous to

representative government in all of the colonies. The Day of Fasting, Humiliation, and Prayer was consequently marked by a conspicuous display of concern by the Virginia leadership including George Washington. Such a powerful example had a significant effect upon the masses in socially stratified Virginia.⁷⁵

Such days were regularly declared during the revolutionary period. In March of 1781, the Continental Congress issued a proclamation for a day of prayer ostensibly to attain divine aid in the war with Britain. The Congress declared:

BY THE UNITED STATES
IN CONGRESS ASSEMBLED,
A P R O C L A M A T I O N.

AT all times it is our duty to acknowledge the overruling Providence of the great Governor of the Universe, and devoutly to implore his Divine Favour and Protection. But in the hour of calamity and impending danger, when by fire and the sword, by the savages of the wilderness, and by our own domesticks, a vindictive enemy pursues a war of rapine and devastation, with unrelenting fury, we are peculiarly excited, with true penitence of heart, to prostrate ourselves before our great Creator, and fervently to supplicate his gracious Interposition for our Deliverance.

The United States in Congress assembled, therefore do earnestly recommend, That THURSDAY, the THIRD of MAY next, may be observed as a Day of Humiliation, Fasting, and Prayer.⁷⁶

By the true intent of the proclamation, to inspire the people to persevere in a time of crisis, was clearly revealed in a later portion of the act. The proclamation stated that

the Congress desired "To inspire all our citizens with a fervent and disinterested love of their country, and to preserve and strengthen their union."⁷⁷ The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania fervently supported this action and urged "all persons within this State (to) abstain from servile labour and recreation on the said day."⁷⁸

Violence, frequently orchestrated but occasionally spontaneous, intruded into demonstrations characterized by large gatherings of the masses. The imposition of the Stamp Act in 1765 levied taxes on such items as leases, contracts, liquor licenses, pamphlets, newspapers, and almanacs and affected the masses only slightly but the Whigs adroitly incited the people's anger.⁷⁹ Through public displays and effigies the evil intentions of the British policy were made apparent. John Rowe described one such exhibition in Boston:

(a mob) assembled at Deacon Elliots Corner . . . to see the Stamp Officer hung in effigy with a Libel on the Breast, on Deacon Elliot's tree & along side him a Boot stuffed with a representation, which represented the Devil coming out of Burk--this stamp officer hung up all Day--at night they cut him down, layd him out & carried in Triumph admidst the acclamations of many thousands who were gathered together on that occassion. . . they pull'd down a New Building which some people thought was building for a Stamp Office & did some Mischief to Mr. Andrew Oliver's house Which I think they were to blame.⁸⁰

Isaac Bangs likewise recorded an assault on a statue of

King George III by a New York mob in the 1770's:

Last night the statue in the Bowling Green representing George Ghwelps, alias George Rex, was pulled down by the populace. In it were 4,000 pounds of lead, and a man undertook to take 10 ozs. of gold from the superficies, as both man & horse were covered with gold leaf. The lead, we hear, is to be run up into musket balls for the use of the Uankies, when it is hoped that the emanations from the leaden George will make deep impressions in the bodies of some of his redcoated and Tory subjects, and that they will do the same execution in poisoning and destroying them as the superabundant emanations of the folly and pretended goodness of the real George, have made upon their minds, which have, effectually poisoned their souls . . . 81

Other methods of public arousal notwithstanding, oratory was perhaps the most common technique used by the Whig propagandists to motivate the illiterate masses. Throughout the revolutionary period, countless nameless individuals addressed gatherings of the people, urging true Americans to actively resist British rule. Unlike the logical arguments of the pamphlets or the rational debates in Congress, the speakers relied heavily upon emotional statements to influence the general public. One such individual incited a gathering at the Pennsylvania State House with the following appeal:

Countrymen! The Men who now invite you to surrender your rights into their hands are the Men who have let loose the merciless Savages to riot in the Blood of their Brethern--who have dared to establish Popery Triumphant in our Land; who have taught treachery to your Slaves, and

courted them to assassinate your wives and children.⁸²

Similar speakers increased tensions by rendering an extended and often exaggerated account of British atrocities--all carefully calculated to achieve maximum effect.⁸³

Of all the colonial orators, Patrick Henry was the most potent and widely known. Henry had achieved national prominence during the Stamp Act crisis when he authored a series of radical resolves that were adopted by the Virginia House of Burgesses and then widely circulated throughout the colonies. But Henry's fame was enhanced by the power of his speech and his remarkable ability to simplify the complex issues concerning British imperial policies to a form that could be readily understood by the illiterate masses. John Randolph praised Henry's oratorical abilities claiming that Henry was "a Shakespeare and Garrick combined . . . of Henry, it may be safely said that he belongs to the same category of supreme orators as Demosthenes, Cicero, Chatham, and Mirabeau."⁸⁴

Henry's eloquence and his ability to sway public opinion was clearly evident at the Second Virginia Convention in 1775. Initially, his address began with an enumeration of colonial grievances against Great Britain.⁸⁵ As he progressed, his speech became more intense. Henry Stephens Randall explained:

His voice rose louder and louder, until the walls of the building, and all within them, seemed to shake and rock in its tremendous

vibrations. Finally, his pale face and glaring eye became terrible to look upon. Men leaned forward in their seats, with their heads strained forward, their faces pale, and their eyes glaring like the speaker's. His last exclamation, 'Give me liberty, or give me death!' was like the shout of the leader which turns back the rout of battle.⁸⁶

Henry's utilization of emotional appeals was hardly coincidental. Instead, his speeches were theatrical in nature, carefully orchestrated to achieve maximum impact. John Roane, a citizen who witnessed the St. John's speech, described Henry's technique:

He slowly bent his form yet nearer to the earth, and said, 'I know not what course others may take,' and he accompanied the words with his hands still crossed . . . After remaining in this posture of humiliation long enough to impress the imagination . . ., he arose proudly, and exclaimed, 'but as for me,'--and the words hissed through his clenched teeth, while his body was thrown back, and every muscle and tendon was strained against the fetters which bound him . . . then the loud, clear, triumphant notes, 'give me liberty,' electrified the assembly. It was not a prayer, but a stern demand, which would submit to no refusal or delay . . . And, as each syllable of the word 'liberty' echoed through the building, his fetters were shivered, his arms were hurled apart; and the links of his chains were scattered to the winds . . . His countenance was radiant; he stood erect and defiant; while the sound of his voice and the sublimity of his attitude made him appear a magnificent incarnation of Freedom . . . After a momentary pause, only long enough to permit the echo of the word 'liberty' to cease, he let his left hand fall powerless to his side, and clenched his right hand firmly, as if holding a dagger with the point aimed at his breast. He stood like a Roman

senator defying Caesar . . . and he closed the grand appeal with the solemn words, 'or give me death!' which sounded with the awful cadence of a hero's dirge . . . he suited the action to the word by a blow upon the left breast with his right hand, which seemed to drive the dagger to the patriot's heart.⁸⁷

Unlike most speakers, Henry's words affected more than the immediate audience because of his ability to invent a multitude of easily remembered slogans which could be readily conveyed to the masses. After St. John's the refrain "Liberty or Death" echoed throughout the colonies and was adopted by various patriotic groups as an ideal motto which captured the essence of Whig philosophy. Many units of the Virginia militia displayed the slogan on the front of their uniforms as they marched to confront British regulars.⁸⁸ Similarly, Henry's statement at the Continental Congress, "The distinctions between Virginians, Pennsylvanians, New Yorkers, and New Englanders, are no more. I am not a Virginian, but an American"⁸⁹ provided the colonists with an easily understood summary of the current political climate.

Yet even Henry's dramatic oratory was limited to secondary accounts due to the geographical and technological realities of the period. The message that Henry and other Whig speakers were attempting to convey was nonetheless transmitted throughout the colonies through informal centers of communication. Perhaps the most important was the tavern, a place which provided the masses with diversion, drink, and

solace as well as an important source of information concerning local and national happenings.⁹⁰ The tavern was a place for citizens to gather and debate the central issues of the day. It was also a location where the newspapers, pamphlets, and broadsides of the day were commonly read to the illiterate, allowing for an effective transmission of political ideas.⁹¹ Nicholas Cresswell recorded that in 1774 he "went to the Tavern to hear the Resolves of the Continental Congresses."⁹² John Adams likewise recounted that he frequently "went to the Coffee House . . . (to) read the News Paper, &c."⁹³

The political ballad was a subordinate form of propaganda employed by the Whigs. These verses were long renditions of strained rhyme put to music. Nancy Robson maintains that these songs were nonetheless valuable pieces of propaganda aimed primarily at stirring "patriotic feeling to new heights, strengthening the determination to resist, spreading news of current events in the 'proper' perspective, capitalizing on humiliations suffered by the enemy, or simply indulging in pure, malicious invective."⁹⁴

Colonial songs initially appeared in verse form in the poet corners of the newspapers or in printed broadsides. Invariably, the words were adapted to fit well-known popular tunes to facilitate learning and the transmission of the inflammatory words.⁹⁵ Remarkably, many of the best known patriot leaders engaged in the composing of patriotic songs despite the medium's less sophisticated appeal. John

Dickinson, Thomas Paine, and Benjamin Franklin all wrote verses in response to British provocation.⁹⁶ Dickinson's piece was entitled "The Liberty Song" and first appeared in 1768. The lyrics effectively denounced British taxation policies while commanding the colonists to resist.⁹⁷

Come join hand in hand, brave Americans all
And rouse your bold hearts at fair Liberty's call;
No tyrannous acts shall suppress your just claim
Nor stain with dishonor America's name.
In freedom we're born and in freedom we'll live;
Our purses are ready, Steady, friends, steady,
Not as slaves but as freemen our money we'll give.⁹⁸

Benjamin Franklin's political ballad, "The Mother Country," bitterly criticized Great Britain for her treatment of the colonies:

We have an old Mother that pevish is grown
She snubs us like Children that scarce walk alone;
She forgets we're grown up and have sense of our own;
Which nobody can deny, deny,
Which nobody can deny.

Let's bear with her Humours as well as we can;
But why should we bear the Abuse of her Man?
When Servants make Mischief they earn the Rattan,
Which nobody can deny, &c.⁹⁹

Franklin's most interesting attempt at song writing was a piece entitled "The King's Own Regulars, and Their Triumph over the Irregulars."¹⁰⁰ The verse first appeared in the Pennsylvania Evening Post in March 1776 and was prefaced with the contemptuous statement:

The ministry have boasted much of their regulars, their disciplined troops, which they fancied capable of beating all the irregulars in the world. One would wonder how men of any attention to what has passed could deceive themselves into such an opinion,

when so many FACTS within the memory of men
not very old evince the contrary.¹⁰¹

Franklin's verse followed, skillfully mocking and lampooning
the British offensive at Lexington and Concord:

Since you all must have singing and won't be
said, "Nay,"
I cannot refuse when you beg and you pray.
I will sing you a song (as a poet might say),
Of King George's old soldiers who ne'er run
away.
We're the old soldiers of the King,
And the King's own regulars.

At Lexington we met with Rebels one day,
We got ourselves up in our finest array,
Our heads bid us stand, and our hearts bid us
stay,
But our legs were strong-minded and took us
away.
We're the old soldiers of the King,
And the King's own regulars.

'Tis true that we turned, but that shouldn't
disgrace us,
We did it to prove that the foe couldn't face us,
And they've nothing to boast, it's a very plain
case,
Though we lost in the fight, we came first in
the race.
We're the old soldiers of the King,
And the King's own regulars.¹⁰²

The radicals directed a great deal of effort towards
eliciting the support of the illiterate and semi-literate
masses. The presence of a large, uneducated population
required techniques aimed at this segment of the population.
One, the pamphlet play, is a genre unique to the Revolutionary
period that bears extensive examination. As a tool aimed at
swaying public opinion, it provides a valuable insight into
the Whig propaganda effort as well as revealing the many
powerful emotions of the era.

CHAPTER III
THE PAMPHLET PLAY

Barrett Wendell stated that "Englishmen and Americans in 1775 were honestly unable to understand one another . . . this deep national misunderstanding naturally gave rise to a great deal of publication."¹⁰³ As with most revolutions, the literature of the nation became heavily political and the forms that were most popular were those that were adaptable to the expression of partisan ideals. Nine such literary expressions encompass the literature of the American Revolutionary era--correspondence, state papers, oral addresses, political essays, political satires in verse, lyric poetry, minor literary facetiae, drama, and prose narratives of experience.¹⁰⁴ The pamphlet play, categorized under drama, remains one of the more interesting, albeit misunderstood, literary efforts of the period.

The pamphlet play has traditionally been dismissed by American historians as either insignificant or merely a curious aberration of colonial drama. Such modern perceptions are partly based on the fact that only six of the Whig plays were apparently written between 1770 and 1776.¹⁰⁵ Scholars also point to the fact that few records exist to indicate that there were dramatic performances of these

works. Such evaluations of the genre, however, are distorted because they evaluate the words out of their social contexts and ignore the true intent of the authors. It is imperative to view the plays not as dramatic efforts but rather as propaganda--part of the overall Whig strategy to win the support of the populace and as a fragment of the intricate and complicated mosaic that constituted the radicals' efforts at indoctrination. Although these literary efforts did not constitute a major influence on the coming of the revolution, it seems likely that "the prescriptions for behavior in these dialogues, plays, and exhibitions both found an audience and helped crystalize America's attitudes of independence. In so doing, they helped America formulate its decision to revolt."¹⁰⁶

The term "play" when applied to these unique pamphlets is an unfortunate misnomer since the plays that were performed during the colonial period were distinctly non-political. The American Company, a group of professional actors who enjoyed modest success in the urban areas of the colonies, did not include a single piece of political commentary or satire in their repertoire.¹⁰⁷ Furthermore, the players abandoned the mainland for the West Indies in 1775 because of the increasing politicalization of American life and the resulting hostility towards Great Britain.¹⁰⁸

Dramatic productions were discouraged in the colonies by the Continental Congress after delegates to the convention

passed a resolution urging citizens to refrain from engaging in such frivolities as gaming, cock-fighting, horse racing, and play-acting.¹⁰⁹ The colonial legislatures eagerly supported the Congressional action and, except for New York and Georgia, passed similar resolutions.¹¹⁰ Conventional colonial drama was effectively ended until after the Revolution when the nationalistic stage emerged, resurrected by native-born authors.

The pamphlet plays were never intended to be staged in the traditional sense and the authors of such works made few efforts to tailor the pieces to accommodate theatrical productions. Instead, the plays were polemical in nature and designed to elicit a patriotic response from the people while providing a convenient forum for the playwrights to express their own partisan political sentiments. The characters through whom the authors spoke delivered "living speeches" and soliloquies that appealed to the emotions.¹¹¹

Unlike earlier productions of the colonial theater, the pamphlet plays utilized contemporary characters and current events to construct plots which would lead colonial readers and audiences to resist British rule.¹¹² The plays also served to revive old wounds and past slights through docu-drama portrayal of past incidents. Ralph Bordon Culp maintains that the plays "probably reinforced partisan beliefs and kept alive British 'misdeeds' and inflammatory incidents long after these should have been forgotten."¹¹³

The overall impact of the genre remains difficult to assess. Norman Philbrick acknowledges the problem stating that "the answer can never be supplied adequately, any more than the precise effectiveness of other kinds of tracts can be ascertained."¹¹⁴ Culp similarly asserts that "theatrical exhibitions such as those on record could have stimulated partisans of the whig cause seems a matter of fact, that they did persuade remains a matter of conjecture."¹¹⁵

It is probable that the pamphlet plays had an appeal to both literate and illiterate audiences. The publication of the pieces in pamphlet form certainly allowed for a widespread and rapid circulation of the material permitting what Arthur Schlesinger Jr. terms "fireside reading".¹¹⁶ The works were also circulated for communal consumption as Philbrick reports:

An interested reader who could not afford the price probably took advantage of the opportunities for free reading supplied by the inns, barber shops, post offices, taverns, and coffee houses, where the latest public prints were available. These places of community service became very popular, particularly at times of crisis when people met to read, to discuss the latest news of the day, and to argue the merits and consequences of actions in London and in the colonies. Pamphlets and newspapers reflecting different persuasions were scattered about and the plays were no doubt among them.¹¹⁷

The plays emphasized characterization as a vehicle to move the plot along. Speeches delivered by key individuals provided for a form that was easily adaptable for public

reading of the material and enabled the playwright to convey his message to the semi-literate and illiterate elements of colonial society. Norman Philbrick asserts that "There were many illiterate men and women in the colonies, but if they could not read or write, they could be read to, as often occurred at public gatherings. And what is better designed for reading aloud than a play--an argument in dialogue?"¹¹⁸

Apparently, the pamphlet plays did have a certain usefulness in the Whig propaganda effort. It is also possible to speculate on the importance and impact of individual plays based upon such things as advertisements, number of editions, and distribution although conclusions are by no means conclusive.¹¹⁹ It is reasonable, however, to acknowledge that the genre "must have influenced partisans of the whig cause by stimulating, vivifying, or reinforcing patriotic or anti-British attitudes and frames of reference."¹²⁰

CHAPTER IV

JOHN LEACOCK AND "THE FALL OF BRITISH TYRANNY"

Of the six works that constitute the pamphlet play genre, John Leacock's The Fall of British Tyranny survives as the most illustrative. Leacock's masterful piece is both entertaining and politically instructive, skillfully constructed to achieve maximum impact among colonial readers and audiences. As such, Fall deserves in-depth analysis in the evaluation of the pamphlet play's role in the Whig propaganda effort.

Leacock remains an enigmatic figure whose background is shrouded in ambiguity because of the sparse colonial records concerning him. It is clear, though, that like the vast majority of American authors, Leacock was a writer only by avocation and derived his livelihood from other sources.¹²¹ Some historical material, including John F. Watson's Annals of Philadelphia, maintain that John Leacock worked as a coroner in Philadelphia, but most contemporary scholars have dismissed these earlier claims and have concluded that the author was, in fact, a gold- and silversmith who died in 1802.¹²²

Leacock established his Whig credentials early, becoming active in the Philadelphia Sons of Liberty during the Stamp

Stuart tyranny.¹²⁶ Bute is linked in a conspiracy with the devil, providing an interesting prelude to Leacock's more elaborate attack in The Fall of British Tyranny.

This tickl'd his fancy, he tho't it would suit,
To commune with his friends such as H.sk and
dear B.te.
Who pleas'd with the Scheme, on wickedness bent,
All three to the Devil they lovingly went.
Taral Laddey, &c.

The Devil surpriz'd and almost struck mute
Yet rejoic'd at the sight of his old friend,
J.hn B.te:
He kindly receiv'd them for better for worse,
And told them be sure put the Stamp-Act in force.
Taral Laddey, &c.

Recommended it strongly as a Scheme that would fit,
But told them like Devils to out-brazen Pitt,
And not fail to oppose him on ev'ry occasion,
Else his tongue like the serpents would beguile
the whole nation.
Taral Laddey, &c.

Now alas! it is thruth tho' odd it doth seem,
From old Devils, young Devils certainly came;
The old Devil plann'd it, but H.sk, Gr.nv.lle and
B.te
Three Devils incarnate were to execute.
Taral Laddey, &c.¹²⁷

The piece concludes with a final condemnation of Bute and his cohorts:

Thus you see from whose hands the Stamp-Act first
came,
And which of those four Devils was most to blame:
The old serpent plann'd, but H.sk, Gr.nv.lle and
B.te,
Two Traytors, and a Rebel, beat old Cloven-foot.
Taral Laddey, &c.¹²⁸

Leacock's A New Song coupled with his continued activism in the ultra-patriotic Sons of Liberty led to frequent contact with such notable figures as Benjamin Rush, John Dickinson,

and Benjamin Franklin.¹²⁹ Leacock's radicalism correspondingly increased with the growing rift between the colonies and Great Britain. After the battles of Lexington and Concord, Leacock once again became an author, writing The Fall of British Tyranny, a far-reaching pamphlet designed to sway the people to the Whig cause by openly expressing contempt for the British ministry and its political appointees and soldiers.

The Fall of British Tyranny endures as a work of considerable interest. Many critics consider it to be the last significant work of colonial literature since it first appeared just prior to the adoption of the Lee Resolution for independence.¹³⁰ The play also was one of the earliest instances of an American author employing local settings, native dialects, and colonial idioms, significantly contributing to the development of a nationalistic literature.¹³¹ In addition, it helped establish the precedent for the portrayal of Americans as a "new breed" of man--heroic, noble, and uncorrupted.¹³²

The first time the American commander, George Washington, appeared in a fictionalized setting was in Leacock's play. The portrayal of Washington as the selfless, heroic champion of American liberty is clearly evident in the final scene of the play. Washington, when confronted by the British army, nobly asserts: "I have drawn my sword, and never will I sheath it, till America is free, or I am no more."¹³³ The persona of George Washington created by Leacock provided

an early prototype for the subsequent glorification of the future president and for the resulting cult of personality that would soon become entrenched in the new republic's national myth.

The propaganda appeal of the Fall of British Tyranny results from the use of explicit language and undisguised anger to clearly illustrate the Whig contempt for British policies and personalities. One of Leacock's anonymous characters states:

Horrid murders stain American soil with blood . . . and spread desolation, fire, flames and smoke in every corner--(General Gage) was the wretch, that waster of the world, that licens'd robber, that blood stain'd insulter of a free people, who bears the name of Lord Boston, but henceforth shall be called Cain, that pillag'd the ruins and ragg'd and murder'd the infant, the aged and inform (Fall III.vii.327).

For modern readers the play provides a unique glimpse into the emotions of the pre-revolutionary period and allows for many useful insights into the factors that motivated the American patriots in their struggle against Great Britain.

It is vital to understand that the Fall of British Tyranny was not written for posterity nor for future audiences. As a propaganda tool it lacks a timeless quality and appears somewhat anachronistic because of its journalistic portrayal of events.¹³⁴ Yet it is important to remember that the events, personalities, and issues contained within Leacock's play, were of vital interest to colonial readers

and audiences. The author's concern for the immediate led him to subtitle the piece "The First Campaign" and dictated that he end it without resolution of the conflict, providing a prelude to future great events which would be dealt with in subsequent offerings.

It is difficult to assess the individual impact of Leacock's pamphlet play on the American populace since the work was not intended for theatrical presentation.¹³⁵

Norman Philbrick describes the structural difficulties in the Fall of British Tyranny:

Characters and events spring up and vanish like targets in a shooting gallery. The scene leaps from Boston to London to Fort Ticonderoga to Virginia to Canada, presenting diverse military figures, literary types, social classes, religious groups, and nationalities who speak everything from Negro dialect to sailor's bawdry to Roman oratory.¹³⁶

As a result, no playbills or theatrical announcements exist but there are indications that the play was read periodically to group gatherings. Frank Pierce Hill maintains that "The Fall of British Tyranny . . . apparently was performed before it was printed, for there is a prologue and an epilogue with names of speakers. It was performed [that is, read] by amateurs in Philadelphia in 1776."¹³⁷ A contemporary account by Claude C. Robin supports the claim of public reading. The Frenchman wrote in his journal that the Harvard students "often act tragedies, the subject of which is generally taken from

their national events, such as the battle of Bunker's Hill, the burning of Charlestown, the Death of General Montgomery, the capture of Burgoyne, the treason of Arnold, and the Fall of British Tyranny."¹³⁸ J.H.J., a resident of Philadelphia during the Revolution, remembered "John Lacock [sic]" as the author of "a play with good humour, called 'British Tyranny'."¹³⁹

The potential for other public recitals of the Fall of British Tyranny was surely increased by the large distribution of the play. First printed in May of 1776 by Styner and Cist of Philadelphia, the work was in such demand that the printers issued at least one other edition of the play.¹⁴⁰ J. Douglass McDougall of Providence and John Gill, and Powars and Willis of Boston similarly issued subsequent editions of the play.¹⁴¹

Advertisements provide further indication as to the play's popularity. The major colonial cities of Providence, Philadelphia, and Boston were markets where the Fall of British Tyranny was heavily publicized. The Boston Gazette and Country Journal repeatedly ran the following advertisement:

This Day Published
And told by John Gill and Powars and Willis,
in Queen Street, Boston, and by B. Edes, in
Watertown,

The FALL of
BRITISH Tyranny
OR, AMERICAN LIBERTY TRIUMPHANT
A Tragi Comedy, of Five Acts, containing
twenty six Scenes.
"A humorous scene between the Boatswain, and,
a Sailor on board a man of war, near Norfolk

in Virginia."

"Two very laughable scenes between the Boatswain, two Sailors and the Cook, exhibiting specimens of seafaring oratory, and peculiar eloquence of those sons of Neptune, teaching TORRIES, CONVICTS, and black Regulars . . ."

"A very black scene between Lord Kidnapper and Major Cudjo."¹⁴²

Likewise, the advertisement promised its readers:

A dedication, preface, address of the Goddess of Liberty to the Congress, dramatic persona, prologue, dialogue . . . A truly dramatic performance, interspersed with wit, humour, burlesque and serious matter, which cannot fail of affording abundant entertainment to readers of every disposition.¹⁴³

The play's significance in the propoganda offensive is greatly enhanced by the fact that Benjamin Franklin, the new nation's most distinguished citizen, owned a copy. Although it is impossible to assume that he actually read the piece, he can be at least associated with it.¹⁴⁴

The impact of Leacock's play on the colonial population can only be guessed at. It is apparent, though, that the Fall of British Tyranny received a decent circulation during the colonial period. Most assuredly, it was welcomed by the Whig leadership as an additional tool to confirm their assertions of British depotism.

CHAPTER V
THE BRITISH CONSPIRATORS

Leacock's propaganda effort uses contemporary characters placed in fictionalized settings. Such notable figures as Lord Bute, Lord Dunmore, and Thomas Hutchinson are shown as willing figures in a major conspiracy to subvert American liberty. Leacock freely fabricates conversations for his British rogues in which they openly reveal their true motives and confirm colonial suspicions. The effect is to assist in transforming the perception of the revolution from a revolt of rabble rousers to a struggle against tyranny.

The inflammatory tone of the Fall of British Tyranny is established at the outset. Borrowing heavily from Thomas Paine's Common Sense, Leacock begins with an emotional appeal and a call to arms.¹⁴⁵

Soloman said, 'Oppression makes a wise man mad,' but what would he have said had he lived in these days, and seen the oppression of the inhabitants of Charlestown, Falmouth, Stonnington, Bristol, Norfolk, &c . . . What would he have said of a freeborn people butchered--their towns desolated, and become a heap of ashes--their inhabitants become beggars, wanderers and vagabonds--by the cruel orders of an unrelenting tyrant, wallowing in luxury, and wantonly wasting the people's wealth, to oppress them the more? Would he not have said, it was oppression and ingratitude in the highest degree, exceeding the oppression of the children of Israel? and, like Moses, have cried out, let the people go? Would

he not have wondered at our patience and long-suffering, and have said, 'Tis time to change our master!--Tis time to part!' (Preface.287.).

Pseudonyms are applied to the principal British leaders with appropriate adjectives describing each individual's villainous characteristics. Fall asserts that the chief villain in the struggle with Great Britain was John Stuart, 3rd Earl of Bute, a close friend and advisor to King George III. Leacock brands Bute with the sarcastic title of "Lord Paramount". Other villains include the royal governors, John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore, and Thomas Hutchinson. Dunmore appears in the play as "Lord Kidnapper" in reference to his efforts to raise an army of runaway slaves for use against Virginia's "rebellious" citizens while the native-born Massachusetts governor, Thomas Hutchinson, has the distinction of being called "Judas" due to his betrayal of his fellow citizens. Such portrayals of the play's principal characters served to confirm the suspicions of many colonists concerning the evil intentions of the British ministry and its political deputies as well as validating the numerous innuendoes and rumors that were freely circulating throughout the colonies.

Leacock identified John Stuart, the 3rd Earl of Bute, as the central culprit in the conspiracy to deprive the colonies of their liberty despite the fact that Bute had lost power fully ten years before the outset of the Revolution.

Leacock, however, asserted that the Earl remained the power behind the throne and continually influenced British policy.¹⁴⁶ Such attitudes had become firmly entrenched in the colonial mind by the time Fall first appeared. Bernard Bailyn writes in the Ideological Origins of the American Revolution that the "idea of Bute as the central plotter became one of the keystones in the structure of opposition ideology . . . [and] that an active conspiracy against the constitution was underway."¹⁴⁷

Leacock borrowed heavily from John Allen's 1773 pamphlet, the American Alarm, for the theme of the play and to support his allegation that Bute was the master conspirator. Allen's pamphlet had attempted to warn George III of the danger to his rule:

. . . you will not be oppressed or imposed upon by Lord BUTE'S despotic dictation in the cabinet, or by any of the spirit of blood of the Stuarts' family which flows through the veins of the British ministry, that you will sooner lose your lives than your liberties. Ask them in the name of the Most High, what right, either by the law of GOD, of nature, or of nations, they have to rule over you?¹⁴⁸

In Act I of his play, Leacock quickly established Bute's culpability when Lord Paramount delivers a telling soliloquy at the Court of St. James in England:

Many long years have rolled delightfully on, whilst I have been basking in the sunshine of grandeur and power, whilst I have imperceptibly (tho' not unsuspected) guided the chariot of state, and greased with the nation's gold the imperial wheels.

'Tis I that move the mighty engine of royalty
(Fall I.i.291).

Paramount's speech continues with the startling revelation that his motive is no less than to "reign in Britain, I'll be king of their counsels, and chief among the princes" (Fall I.i.291).

In scene two, Leacock uses a conversation between Paramount and Mocklaw (Mansfield) to reveal Bute's master plan for the seizure of power and the elevation of the Stuart dynasty. Paramount confides to Mocklaw:

I propose to begin first by taxing America as a blind--that will create an eternal animosity between us, and by sending over continually ships and troops, this will of course, produce a civil war--weaken Britain by leaving her coast defenseless, and impoverish America; so that we need not fear any thing from that quarter. Then, the united fleets of France and Spain with troops to appear in the channel, and make a descent, while my kinsman, with thirty thousand men lands in Scotland, marches to London, and joins the others (Fall I.ii.294).

This sardonic plot was a masterful creation for it exploited the fears, hatreds, and prejudices of Leacock's readers.

Bute proved to be a likely villain for the Fall of British Tyranny. Appointed by King George III to the ministry in May 1762, he became one of the young king's closest confidants and George III's "dearest friend".¹⁴⁹ Bute, however, was never accepted by the British citizenry since his family name of Stuart still evoked fears of the despised Catholic monarchy.¹⁵⁰

The distrust of Bute reached a climax due, in part, to the zealous efforts of John Wilkes, the publisher of the tabloid North Briton.¹⁵¹ In the forty-five issues of the paper published between June 1762 and April 1763, Wilkes repeatedly asserted that the king's ministry reeked from Scottish influence.¹⁵² He mercilessly attacked Lord Bute by accusing him of a wide variety of misdeeds, and Wilkes used his newspaper as a forum "to expose the new government's conduct of affairs; to harry the Scots on each and every occasion; to heap all manners of abuse and ridicule on the government and its friends--on Lord Bute in particular."¹⁵³

In 1763, Wilkes printed an advertisement for a spectacular forthcoming issue. He posed the following questions:

The North Briton makes his appeal to the good sense, and to the candour of the English nation . . . The SCOTTISH minister has indeed retired. Is his influence at an end? or does HE still govern . . . ?¹⁵⁴

The North Briton #45 answered these questions with reckless abandon, asserting that Bute craved power: "The Stuart line has ever been intoxicated with slavish doctrine of the absolute, independent, unlimited power of the crown."¹⁵⁵ Wilkes then charged that Bute was having an intimate relationship with the king's mother, implying that the affair was the source of the Scotsman's power over George III.¹⁵⁶

George III was furious with Wilkes over the publication of the North Briton #45 and ordered him arrested. The

publisher was forced to flee the country but returned in 1768 to run for Parliament. After winning a seat in the House of Commons, Wilkes was arrested for his earlier publications and was confined to the Tower of London.¹⁵⁷ Parliament applauded the king's actions, condemning Wilkes for printing "false, scandalous, and seditious libel."¹⁵⁸ The legislature then ordered that all copies of the offensive issues be confiscated and burned by the public executioner.¹⁵⁹

Wilkes, already popular in both Britain and America because of his Whig outlook and opposition to general warrants, became a hero. Furthermore, his North Briton exploited the ethnic prejudices of the people, serving to confirm the general belief in Scottish malfeasance. When officials attempted to burn offensive copies of the North Briton, a mob rioted and pelted the authorities with dirt, effectively saving the papers from the flame.¹⁶⁰

Throughout London, the number "45" appeared in thousands of shops and homes providing symbolic support of Wilkes.¹⁶¹ In New York, 45 residents gathered "on the 45th day of the year 1770 (and) consumed 45 pounds of beefsteaks cut from a bullock 45 months old."¹⁶²

Leacock exploited the public's sympathy for Wilkes in the Fall of British Tyranny by including the publisher in the play and bestowing upon him the title "Lord Patriot". Wilkes is depicted in Fall as the individual primarily responsible for uncovering the Bute conspiracy to deprive

America of its liberty. Wilkes gallantly states:

Of Britain I fear liberty has taken its
farewell, the aspiring wings of tyranny
hath long hovered over, and the over-
shadowing influence of bribery hath
eclips'd its rays and dark'ned its lustre;
deity, that golden calf, finds servile
wretches enough so base as to bow down,
worship and adore his gilded horns;--let
'em e'en if they will:--But as for me,
tho' I should stand alone, I would spurn
the brute, were he forty-five times greater
than he is; I'll administer, ere long, such
an emetic to him, as shall make the monster
disgorge the forty millions yet unaccounted
for, and never shall it be said that Patriot
ever feared or truckled to him, or kept a
silent tongue when it should speak (Fall II.ii.308).

The glorification of Wilkes in the Fall of British
Tyranny depended upon a strong anti-Bute/anti-Scot theme.
Leacock establishes this early in the play with a mock
dedication.

And ye Macs, and ye Donalds upon Donalds,
go on, and may our gallows-hills and
liberty poles be honour'd and adorn'd
with some of your heads (Fall Dedication.286).

The effectiveness of the theme results from Leacock's
exploitation of colonial prejudices. Anti-Scottish
sentiments developed early in the colonial period after the
Act of Union (1707) allowed the Scots to participate in the
lucrative tobacco trade conducted between Britain and
America. Scotland enjoyed a remarkable geographic advantage
that permitted their merchants to sail to the colonies via
a northern route. By passing Canada and New England in order
to reach the plantations on the Chesapeake, the route still

was much shorter and less dangerous than the southern route the prevailing trade winds and currents required of London merchants. It was also free from interference from the French and Spanish who periodically conducted punitive raids against British shipping. As a result, the Scottish tobacco trade proved to be remarkably efficient and profitable producing a dramatic increase in the Scottish share of the trade from a mere 10% in 1738 to a substantial 51.8% by 1769.¹⁶³

The Scots established agents or factors in the Chesapeake colonies to handle their affairs while allowing these individuals to make their fortunes by selling imported goods to the American planters at substantial markups.¹⁶⁴ An increasing number of planters became indebted to the Scots, causing Ezra Stiles to lament that "Two Thirds of Virginia and Mary^{1d.} mortgaged or otherwise engaged to them or was owned in Scotland . . . the Scotch would in a very few years have all the Property in Virginia if not in gen. or North America."¹⁶⁵

Compounding the problem of the debt was a growing perception that the Scots were a foreign minority.¹⁶⁶ The factors had refused to assimilate into colonial society and, instead, exhibited the clannishness of their native Scotland.¹⁶⁷ This was viewed with distaste by many Americans who began to vent their anger publicly. In October 1774, the Virginia Gazette printed:

. . . Irish impudence is of downright genuine and unadulterated sort. The Scotch Impudence is of a different species. A Scotchman, when he first is admitted into a house, is so humble that he will sit upon the lowest step of the staircase. By degrees he gets into the kitchen, and from thence, by the most submissive behaviour, is advanced to the parlour. If he gets into the dining room, as ten to one but he will, the master of the house must take care of himself; for in all probability he will turn him out of doors and, by the assistance of his countrymen, keep possession forever.¹⁶⁸

The literature of the period logically reflected the colonial attitude towards Scots. John Trumbull's M'Fingal, A Modern Epic Poem attacked the Scots with a vengeance and accused them of conspiring to:

Pull down the empire, on whose ruins
They meant to edify their new ones,
Enslave th' Amer'can wilderness,
And rend the provinces in pieces.¹⁶⁹

Only Robert Munford attempted to illustrate the moral absurdity of holding a nationality responsible for America's woes. In his play, the Patriots, three Scots--M'Flint, M'Squeeze, and M'Gripe--are shown as being unjustly treated by a local Committee of Safety, composed of a tribunal of the lesser Virginia gentry. When asked of the charges brought against the Scots, their accuser responds:

The nature of the offense, gentlemen, is, that they are Scotchmen; every Scotchman being an enemy, and these men being Scotchmen, they come under the ordinance which directs an oath to be tendered to all those against whom there is just cause to suspect they are enemies.¹⁷⁰

Munford's fictional treatment of the Scots in America was quite accurate. In the Virginia Gazette throughout 1775 a series of letters concerning Scots was published by the editor. An elderly Scot wrote a revealing column in which he addressed the recurrent racial attacks on his countrymen:

Mr Pinkney:

At a time when the press in general, and your paper in particular, teems with abuse against the Scotch, permit an old fellow . . . to have a few minutes hearing on the otherside of the question . . . I have long expected, and earnestly wished, that some of my countrymen, who have greater abilities . . . would take up the quill in defense of their abused country . . . yet I hope the cause will not be wronged by what little I shall say on the subject, and which, I hope from the impartiality you boast of¹⁷¹, in the conduct of your paper, you will not refuse to insert.

In vulgar and uncultivated minds nothing is more prevalent than national prejudice; they imbibe it, as it were, with their mother's milk, and it generally sticks by them to the end of their lives . . . I judge a man's principles from his conduct, not from the spot on which he first drew breath . . . It is a general observation, that of all nations under the sun, the English, amongst the lower ranks, are most commonly addicted to this low, illiberal manner of thinking. Ask them their sentiments of the French: They are a race of faithless coxcombs. Of the Spanish: They are a set of stiff, formal fools. Of the Dutch: They are a dull, plodding nation, whose only pursuit is gain. Of the Scotch: They are a selfish, beggarly people. And of Americans, or rather Bostonians: They will tell you that they are a set of enthusiastic, unprincipled knaves . . . (The English) are the nation from which most of the Virginians boast their descent, and a nation which, take it all in all, is, I

believe inferior, in few respects, to any which the sun visits. From this we ought to learn to be cautious how we form general characters of any nation, or set of men, from vulgar prejudice . . .

Forgive me, Mr. Pinkney, if I have transgressed upon the bounds of your paper. The public, I hope, will forgive an old grey-headed fellow, who has not troubled them before these twenty odd years; and if I have been a little too warm, every Virginian, who knows what it is to possess the love of his country, will, I am sure, forgive me. I am, Mr. Printer, as I formally told you,

A SCOTCHMAN. 172

Another Scottish national, writing under the pseudonym "An American", contributed a similar article to the Virginia Gazette, complaining to the editor:

It is with pain that I have lately heard, in many companies, the men of a particular nation abused without distinction. Because some low born factors amongst them have been base and ungrateful enough to turn against the country which has afforded them the blessing next to existence, their support, every man, however amiable in his character, however active in his endeavours to defend and preserve the liberties of mankind, whom the Divine Providence allotted to draw his first breath in Scotland, is doomed to cruel suspicion, deemed unworthy of the smallest trust or confidence, and loaded often with obloque and reproach. Is this the behaviour of a generous people struggling for liberty? Is it not rather the characteristic of a selfish, narrow-spirited people, whose minds were never expanded to comprehend the great and christian principles of universal charity and benevolence? Heaven, surely, has not been so partial in its dispensations as to deny to any country or clime the virtues which it grants to others; and through particular circumstances may obscure, or sometimes in a great measure destroy them, yet the proper cultivation will always

produce the same natural effects. A Scottish breast is a soil equally favourable to the growth of liberal sentiments with that of an American, and many of our own countrymen, educated amongst them, fully demonstrate that their mode of education is by no means calculated to curb the generous purpose. Why then is the cruel stigma of enemies to American freedom universally fixed upon them?¹⁷³

Despite such eloquent appeals for tolerance, anti-Scot feeling in America remained high. Leacock contributed to such attitudes in the Fall of British Tyranny by utilizing traditional stereotypes and characterizing Lord Bute as the archetypal Scot--mercenary, scheming, and power-hungry. The Lord Paramount character freely exhibits these traits throughout the play. In Act I, Paramount boasts:

Now, by St. Andrew! I'll strike a stroke that shall surprise all Europe, and make the boldest of the adverse party turn pale and tremble--Scotch politics, Scotch intrigues, Scotch influence, and Scotch impudence (as they have termed it), they shall see ere long shine with unheard of splendour, and the name of Lord Paramount the might, shall blaze in the annals of the world with far greater lustre (as a consummate politician) than the name of Alexander the Great, as an hero! (Fall I.ii.292-293).

In the following scene, Paramount reveals his intentions and methods:

How do we shew our authority? how do we maintain the royal prerogative? keep in awe the knowing ones of the opposite party, and blind the eyes of the ignorant multitude in Britain? Why, by spirited measures, by an accumulation of power, of deception, and the shaking of the keys, we may hope to succeed, should that fail, I'll enforce them with the pointed bayonet; the Americans from one end to the other shall

submit, in spite of all opposition; I'll
listen to no overtures of reconciliation
from any petty self-constituted congress . . .
I will never soften; my inflexibility
shall stand firm, and convince them the
second Pharaoh is at least equal to the
first . . . I'll draw in treasure from
every quarter, and, Solomon-like, wallow
in riches; and Scotland, shall be the
paradise of the world. Rejoice in the name
of Paramount, and the sound of a bawbee
shall be no more heard in the land of my
nativity (Fall I.iii.296-297).

The Fall of British Tyranny additionally attempts to
associate Lord Bute with a conspiracy to promote Catholicism
in America. The Quebec Act (1774) was seen by many Americans
as a major victory for the papacy and further proof of a
despotic plot by "granting toleration to Canadian Roman
Catholics."¹⁷⁴ The law became inevitably associated with
the Intolerable Acts and reaction was swift and drastic.
William Lee wrote his brother that "As the first blow is
struck by the Ministry, and every tie of allegiances is
broken by the Quebec Act, which is absolutely a dissolution
of this Government, the compact between the King and the
people is totally done away with."¹⁷⁵ The colonial
newspapers raged against George III and the ministry accusing
them of cultivating "popery, slavery, and arbitrary power."¹⁷⁶

Leacock's inclusion of the Catholic issue in the play
adds further inflammatory rhetoric and enhances the evil
depiction of Lord Bute. The consummate villain, Lord
Paramount confides in Mocklaw his plans for Ireland, stating
"I shall grant the Roman Catholics, who are by far the most

numerous (in Ireland), the free exercise of their religion, with the liberty of bearing arms, so long unjustly deprived of, and disarm in due time all Protestants in their turn" (Fall I.ii.295).

Leacock portrays Lord Bute as an utterly despicable figure, one easily hated by all colonial readers. At the same time, the character of Lord Paramount is used to confirm a vast array of colonial prejudices and suspicions while substantiating John Adams' statement that "We never can be happy while the Lords Bute, Mansfield and North are (the King's) confidants and counselors."¹⁷⁷

The most effective characterization in the Fall of British Tyranny is that of Lord Kidnapper, representing John Murray, fourth earl of Dunmore. Leacock included Dunmore as a character because of the intensity of emotions that the Virginia governor evoked from colonial readers. Dunmore's uncompromising personality coupled with his punitive raiding expeditions and his desire to recruit an "Ethiopian" regiment of runaway black slaves, had made him one of the most hated men in America.

Dunmore joined the British imperial service in order to make his fortune and to provide a comfortable inheritance for his children. In 1770, Dunmore was appointed to the governorship of the colony of New York, a lucrative post which would allow him to actively pursue his financial investments. However, Dunmore was soon relegated to

Virginia, an assignment that he clearly did not relish.¹⁷⁸ With characteristic candor and lack of diplomacy, Dunmore openly complained about the Virginia appointment, causing many inhabitants of the colony to question the wisdom of the transfer.¹⁷⁹

Upon arrival in Virginia, Dunmore moved quickly to allay the fears of the citizenry by actively pressing the colony's claims to western lands. Such efforts caused his popularity to soar and led James Parker, a fellow Scot, to state "(Dunmore) is as popular as a Scotsman can be amongst weak prejudiced people."¹⁸⁰

The events that had alienated other colonies, had likewise radicalized the Virginia populace. Dunmore, as the king's official representative, was forced to support the crown's policies causing the disillusionment of many of the Virginia gentry. Furthermore, in 1775 Dunmore addressed the crisis in the colony in a blunt letter to Lord Dartmouth in which he urged that Virginia's government be suspended and a strict blockade be enforced.¹⁸¹ Although the entire content of the letter was not revealed until the summer, the document was seen to corroborate charges that the governor had become a tyrant.

Dunmore further exasperated the tense situation when he ordered the captain of a British warship to seize the colony's store of gunpowder and to remove the twenty kegs to the protection of British vessels in the James River.

The impact of the incident was increased by news that a similar British effort in the North had resulted in the battles of Lexington and Concord.¹⁸² Fearing a British conspiracy to subvert colonial rights, a distinguished group of the Virginia gentry led by Peyton Randolph visited Dunmore at the palace in Williamsburg, to petition for a redress of the colony's grievances. The group argued:

My Lord: We, His Majesty's dutiful and loyal subjects, the Mayor, Recorder, Aldermen, and Common Council of the City of Williamsburgh, in Common Hall assembled, humble beg leave to represent to your Excellency that the inhabitants of this city were this morning exceedingly alarmed by a report that a large quantity of gunpowder was, in the preceding night, while they were sleeping in their beds, removed from the publick magazine in this city, and conveyed under an escort of marines on board one of His Majesty's armed vessels lying at a ferry on the James River.

We beg leave to represent to your Excellency that as this magazine was erected at publick expense of this Colony, and appropriated to the safekeeping of such munition as should be lodged from time to time, for the protection and security of the country, by arming thereout such of the militia as might be necessary in case of invasions and insurrections, they humbly conceive it to be the only proper repositiory to be resorted to in times of imminent danger.

We further beg leave to inform your Excellency that from various reports at present prevailing in different parts of the country, we have too much reason to believe that some wicked and designing persons have instilled the most diabolical notions into the minds of our slaves, and that, therefore, the utmost attention to our internal security is become the more necessary.

The circumstances of this city, my Lord, we consider as peculiar and critical. The inhabitants,

from the situation of the magazine in the middle of their city, have for a long tract of time been exposed to all those dangers which have happened in many countries from explosions and other accidents. They have, from time to time, though it incumbent on them to guard the magazine. For their security, they have for some time past judged it necessary to keep strong patrols on foot. In their present circumstances, then, to have the chief and necessary means of their defence removed cannot but be extremely alarming.

Considering ourselves as guardians of the city, we therefore humbly desire to be informed by your Excellency upon what motives and for what particular purpose the powder has been carried off in such a manner: and we earnestly entreat your Excellency to order it to be immediately returned to the magazine.¹⁸³

Dunmore, unmoved by the eloquent plea to return the powder, issued a broadside on May 2nd justifying his actions:

Comotions and insurrections have suddenly been excited among the people, which threaten the very existence of his Majesty's government in this colony; and no other cause is assigned for such dangerous measures than that the gunpowder which had, some time past, been brought from on board one of the king's ships to which it belonged and was desposited in the magazine of this city, hath been removed . . . by my order, to whom, under the constitutional right of the crown which I represent, the custody and disposal of all public stores of arms and ammunition along belong.¹⁸⁴

Dunmore's inability to compromise further aggravated the situation. Despite attempts to fortify the Governor's Palace, he abandoned Williamsburg in the summer of 1775 and sought safety on the British man-of-war H.M.S. Fowey, then anchored in the York River. Aided by royal navy, Dunmore prowled the Virginia coast making periodic raids.¹⁸⁵

Dunmore seized the presses of the Norfolk based Virginia

Gazette or, Norfolk Intelligencier, and began issuing proclamations and a newspaper from his government in exile.¹⁸⁶

In a broadside declaration that further alarmed Virginians, the governor raised the spectre of slave rebellion by attempting to recruit runaway black slaves.

As I have ever entertained Hopes, that an Accommodation might have taken Place between Great Britain and this Colony, without being compelled by my Duty to this most disagreeable but now absolutely necessary Step, rendered so by a Body of armed Men unlawfully assembled, firing on His Majesty's Tenders, and the formation of an Army, and that Army now on their March to attack His Majesty's Troops and destroy the well disposed Subjects of this Colony. To defeat such treasonable Purposes, and that all such Traitors, and their Abettors, may be brought to Justice, and that the Peace, and good Order of this Colony may be again restored, which the Ordinary Course of the Civil Law is unable to effect; I have thought fit to issue this my Proclamation, hereby declaring, that until the aforesaid good Purposes can be obtained, I do in Virtue of the Power and Authority to Me given, by His Majesty, determine to execute Martial Law, and cause the same to be executed throughout this Colony: and to the end that Peace and good Order may the sooner be restored, I do require every Person capable of bearing Arms, to resort to His Majesty's Standard, or be looked upon as Traitors to His Majesty's Crown and Government, and thereby become liable to the Penalty the Law inflicts upon such Offences; such as forfeiture of Life, confiscation of Lands, &c. &c. And I do hereby further declare all indented Servants, Negroes, or others, (appertaining to Rebels), free that are able and willing to bear Arms, they joining His Majesty's Troops as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing this Colony to a proper Sense of their Duty, to His Majesty's Crown and Dignity. I do further order, and require, all His Majesty's Leige Subjects, to retain their quitrents, or any other Taxes due or that may become due, in their own Custody, till such

Time as Peace may be again restored to this at present most unhappy Country, or demanded of them for their former salutary Purposes, by Officers properly authorised to receive the same.

Given under my Hand on board the Ship William, off Norfolk, the 7th Day of November, in the Sixteenth Year of His Majesty's Reign.

Dunmore.

God Save the King.¹⁸⁷

Despite Dunmore's claim that "The negroes are also flocking in from all quarters," only about eight hundred actually joined his forces.¹⁸⁸ The governor, however, became a "secret hero to American blacks and a monstrous beast in the minds of American whites."¹⁸⁹ One Virginian published a revealing letter in the Gazette which detailed the folly of blacks answering Dunmore's call.

If they were told, that the ministry, so far from desiring to set them free, are endeavouring to enslave their masters; that, if the, ministry should get the better of us, our estates must be forfeited, and, of consequences, that our negroes will be sold as part of our estates, probably in the West Indies where their condition will be ten times worse than it is now; if they were told (which is the truth) that lord DUNMORE has been heard to wish that he had an excuse for cutting them all off; that, till his scheme of calling on them for assistance, he was cruel to his own, and was frequently heard to wish that there was not one negro in the country; if they were told what a risk they run of being hanged if taken, and of having their wives and children cut off by our riflemen from the back country, who never wish to see a negro, and who will pour out their vengeance upon them whenever it is desired; and lastly, if they were reminded of their duty, as enjoined by the apostles, Servants, obey your masters . . . they would be contented with their situation and expect a better condition

in the next world, and not run a risk of being unhappy here and miserable hereafter. I am certain, if they had been told these things, not one slave would have joined our enemies.¹⁹⁰

Leacock saw Dunmore's actions in recruiting runaway slaves for his "Ethiopian Regiment" as fertile ground for propaganda. In the Fall of British Tyranny, Dunmore appears as Lord Kidnapper on board the warship, H.M.S. Fowey. In Act IV, the figure of Kidnapper plays a prominent role. The act is also the most effective portion of the play containing graphic dialogue which renders the idioms and accents of the period. An exchange between a servant and boatswain is illustrative.

BOATSWAIN. Where's his Lordship?

SERVANT. He's in the state-room.

BOATSWAIN. It's time for him to turn out; tell him I want to speak to him.

SERVANT. I dare not do it, Boatswain; it's more than my life is worth.

BOATSWAIN. Damn your squeamish stomach, go directly, or I'll go myself.

SERVANT. For God's sake! Boatswain--

BOATSWAIN. Damn your eyes, you pimping son of a bitch, go this instant, or I'll stick my knife in your gammons.

SERVANT. O Lord! Boatswain. (Servant goes)

BOATSWAIN. (solus) What the devil--keep a pimp guard here, better station the son of a bitch at the mast head, to keep a look out there, lest Admiral Hopkins be upon us (Fall IV.ii.328-329).

The quality of Dunmore's troops is denigrated in the play in order to reinforce the perception that the American cause was a noble struggle against an enemy constituting little more than the scum of the earth recruited for pay. Boatswain describes the governor's soldiers as the "scrapings of Newgate, and the refuse of Tyburn, and when the wind blows aft, damn 'em, they stink like polecats" (Fall IV.ii.329). Leacock continues his unfavorable representation of Dunmore's troops by portraying them as hungry and despondent. A sailor laments that the troops have "no fire, nothing to eat or drink, but suck our frosty fists like bears, unless we turn sheep-stealers again, and get our brains knock'd out" (Fall IV.iii.330). In the same scene the cook complains "What signifies . . . the big pot or the little pot, if there's nothing to cook? No fire, coal or wood to cook with?" (Fall IV.iii.331).

The climax of Act IV occurs with a meeting between Lord Kidnapper and Cudjo, a new slave recruit. The latter, representative of Leacock's perception of Dunmore's "Ethiopians", is an ignorant, despicable person, capable of murder upon command of the governor.

KIDNAPPER. Very well, what was your master's name?

CUDJO. Me massa name Cunney Tomsee.

KIDNAPPER. Colonel Thompson--eigh?

CUDJO. Eas, massa, Cunney Tomsee.

KIDNAPPER. Well then I'll make you a major--and what's your name?

CUDJO. Me messa cawra me Cudjo.

KIDNAPPER. Cudjo?--very good--were you ever christened, Cudjo?

CUDJO. No massa, me no crissen.

KIDNAPPER. Well, then I'll christen you--you shall be called Major Cudjo Thompson, and if you behave well, I'll soon make you a greater man than your master, and if I find the rest of you behave well, I'll make you all officers, and after you have serv'd Lord Paramount a while, you shall have money in your pockets, good clothes on your backs, and be as free as them white men there . . . To-morrow you shall have guns like them white men--Can you shoot some of them rebels ashore, Major Cudjo?

CUDJO. Eas, massa, me try.

KIDNAPPER. Wou'd you shoot your old master, the Colonel, if you could see him?

CUDJO. Eas, massa, you terra me, me shoot him down dead (Fall VI.iv.332-333).

To further alarm of American readers, Lord Kidnapper reveals his intentions to subvert the American cause by triggering internal disorder.

KIDNAPPER. These blacks are no small acquisition, them and the Tories we have on board will strengthen us vastly; the thoughts of emancipation will make 'em brave, and the encouragement given them by my proclamation, will greatly intimidate the rebels--internal enemies are worse than open foes.

CHAPLAIN. Very true, My Lord: David prayed that he might be preserved from secret enemies.

KIDNAPPER. Aye, so I've heard; but I look upon this to be a grand maneuver in politics; this is making dog eat dog--thief catch thief--the servant against his master--rebel against rebel--what think you of that parson?

CHAPLAIN. A house divided thus against itself cannot stand, according to scripture--My Lord, your observation is truly scriptural (Fall IV.vi.333-334).

Leacock includes another colonial governor in the Fall of British Tyranny to illustrate the internal threat caused by royal appointees. Thomas Hutchinson of Massachusetts appears in the play as Judas but is the least developed of the British characters, granted only a brief comment on the quality of American soldiers. Yet his inclusion was significant for Hutchinson was "one of the most hated men on earth--more hated than Lord North, more hated than George III (both of whom, it was believed, he had secretly influenced), and more feared than the sinister Earl of Bute."¹⁹¹

The play's most damning pseudonym, Judas, was used to describe Hutchinson. Whereas Bute's and Dunmore's tyranny could be explained (although certainly not excused) by their Scottish heritage, Hutchinson was a fifth generation American whose prestigious lineage included some of the earliest settlers of the Bay Colony.¹⁹²

Hutchinson was one of twelve children.¹⁹³ At the age of twelve he entered Harvard College and received an education appropriate for a person who wished to pursue a career in government service.¹⁹⁴ But Hutchinson had the misfortune

to have his career peak simultaneously with the crisis between Britain and the colonies, placing the governor in an awkward position of trying to balance the wishes of his constituents with the realities of British rule. Interestingly, Hutchinson opposed both the Sugar and Stamp Acts as both ill-advised and economically shortsighted.¹⁹⁵ He eloquently argued that the colonies need not contribute additional revenue to the support of the British empire since the mercantile relationship between them already provided ample wealth.¹⁹⁶ However, Hutchinson balked at civil disobedience as a method of protest, insisting that authority must be respected and the supremacy of Parliament could not be denied.¹⁹⁷

During the Stamp Act crisis, Hutchinson became a symbol of British rule. When the emotions of the period gave way to violence, Hutchinson was not spared. A mob stormed his house forcing him to flee with his family to the relative safety of a nearby house.¹⁹⁸ Their home was vandalized by the mob.

The hellish crew fell upon my house with the rage of devils and in a moment with axes split down the door and entered. My son being in the great entry heard them cry, "Damn him, he is upstairs, we'll have him!" Some ran immediately as high as the top of the house, others filled the rooms below and cellars, and others remained without the house to be employed there . . . Not contented with tearing off all the wainscot and hangings and splitting the doors to pieces, they beat down the cupola or lanthorn and they began to take off the slate and boards from the roof and were prevented only by the

approaching daylight from a total demolition of the building. My garden fence was laid flat and all my trees etc. broke down to the ground. Such ruins were never seen in America. Besides my plate and family pictures, household furniture of every kind, my own children's and servants' apparel they carried off about f900 sterling in money and emptied the house of everything whatsoever except a part of the kitchen furniture, not leaving a single book or paper in it, and having scattered or destroyed all the manuscripts and other papers I had been collecting for 30 years together, besides a great number of public papers in my custody.¹⁹⁹

Hutchinson's reputation was seriously impugned in 1773 when radical elements surreptitiously obtained a series of letters the governor had written to Thomas Whately, a member of Parliament. Sir John Temple, a staunch Whig who opposed British imperial policies, surrendered the letters to Benjamin Franklin, then the head of the postal service, who immediately recognized both their significance and propaganda value.²⁰⁰ Although Franklin later maintained that his intent was to keep the letters secret, he nonetheless forwarded them to Thomas Cushing, Speaker of the Massachusetts House.²⁰¹ The letters contained a damning discourse on the status of the American colonies and on the need for the British government to take strong, retaliatory measures against rebellion in Massachusetts and other colonies. One of Hutchinson's most candid letters stated:

I never think of the measures necessary for the peace and good order of the colonies without pain. There must be an abridgement of what are called English liberties: I relieve myself by considering that, in a remove from the state of nature

to the most perfect state of government, there must be a great restraint of natural liberty.²⁰²

The Massachusetts House, incensed by the content of the Hutchinson letters, ordered that the material be printed in the Boston Gazette, the Spy, the Boston Evening-Post, and the Essex Gazette.²⁰³ At the urging of Samuel Adams, the House then approved a resolution that officially recognized that a conspiracy against American rights had been undertaken.

It is manifest that there has been, for many years past, measures contemplated, and a plan formed, by a set of men, born and educated among us, to raise their own fortunes, and advance themselves to posts of honor and profit, not only to the destruction of the charter and constitution of this province, but at the expense of the rights and liberties of the American colonies.²⁰⁴

Hutchinson angrily denounced the actions of the assembly maintaining that "the principal design of this whole proceeding was to make the governor obnoxious to the people of the province."²⁰⁵

The action of the Massachusetts House helped transform the public's opinion of Hutchinson as a traitor. Mercy Warren Otis contributed to these perceptions in a poem entitled "Self Love" in which she writes:

. . . that stimulus to noblest aims
Bids Nero light the capital in flames,
Of bids H----- sell his native land
And his vile brother lend his perjured hand
While freedom weeps and heav'n delays to shed
Its awful vengeance on the guilty head.²⁰⁵

Hutchinson's reputation was further tarnished with the imposition of the Intolerable Acts in 1774. The laws, designed primarily to coerce the citizens of Massachusetts to pay for tea destroyed during the Boston Tea Party, placed the colony under martial law. General Gage and a strong contingent of British regulars were sent to enforce the measures. Hutchinson was forced to relinquish his civil duties to the military, and he left his homeland on June 1st to return to London.²⁰⁷

While in virtual exile, Hutchinson continued to behave in a manner that incensed American patriots. In 1776, the former governor wrote and published a pamphlet entitled, Strictures upon the Declaration of Congress at Philadelphia.²⁰⁸ The piece was designed to discredit the actions of the Continental Congress through a point-by-point refutation of Jefferson's logic in the Declaration. Hutchinson ultimately concluded that the populace had been victimized by a massive propaganda effort in which loyalist ideology had been virtually forbidden.

. . . though the professed reason for publishing the Declaration was a decent respect to the opinions of mankind, yet the real design was to reconcile the people of America to that Independence, which always before, they had been made to believe was not intended. This design has too well succeeded. The people have not observed the fallacy in reasoning from the whole to part; nor the absurdity of making the governed to be governors . . . facts misrepresented have passed without examining. Discerning men have concealed their sentiments, because under the present free governments in

America, no man may, by writing or speaking, contradict any part of this Declaration without being deemed an enemy to his country, and exposed to the rage and fury of the populace.²⁰⁹

Hutchinson remained an unapologetic elitist, scornful of the mob mentality that was now rampant in the rebellion.²¹⁰ In the colonies, Hutchinson's continual treacherous behavior resulted in his effigy being hung not only in his native Massachusetts but in far away Princeton and Philadelphia as well.²¹¹

Leacock includes the odious figure of Judas in only one scene of the Fall of British Tyranny. In a conference with Lord Paramount and the other principal British conspirators, Judas is seen by the others as an expert on the American colonies and is asked his candid opinion concerning the quality of American troops currently opposing British forces.

The same that I have every told you, my Lord; as to true courage they have none, I know 'em well--they have a plenty of a kind of enthusiastic zeal, which they substitute in the room of it: I am very certain they would never face the regulars, tho' with the advantage of ten to one (Fall I.v.301).

The scene concludes with Lord Paramount delivering the play's most revealing soliloquy:

The fate of England and America is now fixed, irrevocably fixed; the storm is ready to burst; the low'ring clouds portend their fate my glory, their fall my triumph--But I must haste to be gone, the ceremonies await my presence; deeds of darkness must be done by night, and, like the silent mole's work, under

ground: Now rushing forth in sober twilight
gray, Like prowling wolf, who ranges for his
prey (Fall I.v.302).

Leacock's portrayals of Bute, Dunmore, and Hutchinson in the Fall of British Tyranny provided valuable support for the Whig cause. By placing these figures in fictionalized settings, Leacock was able to fabricate conversations that supported the assertions that a conspiracy against liberty had been instituted as well as reaffirming the negative perception of the principal British plotters. Accordingly, the play is an effective piece of propaganda, inflaming the emotions of the people while sustaining the nobility of their opposition to British despotism.

CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSIONS

John Leacock's pamphlet play remains an interesting example of fiction being utilized in support of the Whig cause during the American Revolution. In the Fall of British Tyranny, Leacock was not bound to either a factual or accurate rendering of events and was able to fabricate conversations between key characters that served to confirm American suspicions that an evil conspiracy had been launched against their traditional charter rights.

The characters of Paramount, Kidnapper, and Judas are identified as the individuals most culpable for the Revolutionary crisis. In their conversations and soliloquies, the three unknowingly alert the colonists to the dangers to American liberty by willingly revealing their evil motives. The result is a transformation of the Revolution from a complicated disagreement over constitutional issues to a struggle against diabolical forces intent upon establishing tyranny in America effectively elevating the American effort to a noble, even holy, cause.

The Fall of British Tyranny was, assuredly, effective propaganda since it served to corroborate a vast array of colonial fears and prejudices. It also reaffirmed the

righteousness of resistance to British rule. As such, the Fall of British Tyranny deserved inclusion in scholarly evaluations of the American Revolution.

FOOTNOTES: CHAPTER I

¹John Adams quoted in Lynn Montross, The Reluctant Rebels: The Story of the Continental Congress, 1774-1789 (New York: Barnes and Noble, Inc., 1970), p. 1.

²Crane Brinton quoted in Robson, p. 41.

³North Carolina, based upon its economic interests, must be excluded from the Southern, plantation colonies. Roger Ekirch explains that North Carolina "in contrast to neighboring provinces . . . produced only a small amount of tobacco . . . slaves, who constituted at most a sixth of the population, were little relied on." North Carolina was significantly poorer than its southern neighbors and relied heavily upon the production of naval stores. See A. Roger Ekirch, "Poor Carolina", Politics and Society in Colonial North Carolina, 1729-1776 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1981), pp. 4-18.

⁴Esmond Wright, Fabric of Freedom, 1763-1800, American Century Series (New York: Hill and Wang, 1978), pp. 13-19.

⁵Eric Robson, The American Revolution in its Political and Military Aspects, 1763-1783 (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1966), pp. 3-5.

⁶Gordon Wood, "Rhetoric and Reality in the American Revolution," William and Mary Quarterly, 3rd Ser., XXIII (1966), p. 5.

⁷Montross, p. 130.

⁸Ralph Borden Culp, "Drama-and-Theater as a Source of Colonial American Attitudes toward Independence, 1758-1776" (unpublished PhD dissertation, Cornell University, 1962), p. 37.

⁹Marshall Smelser, The Winning of Independence (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1972), p. 96.

¹⁰Robson, pp. 41-42.

¹¹Bernard Bailyn, ed., Pamphlets of the American Revolution, 1750-1776, vol. I (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1965), p. 9.

¹²Bernard Bailyn, The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 1982), p. vi.

¹³George Orwell and Reginald Reynolds, eds., British Pamphleteers: From the Sixteenth Century to the French Revolution, vol. I (London: Allan Wingate, Ltd., 1958), p. 7.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 11.

¹⁵Bailyn, Pamphlets, p. 4.

¹⁶Norman Philbrick, ed., Trumpets Sounding: Propaganda Plays of the American Revolution (New York: Benjamin Bloom, Inc., 1976), p. 7.

¹⁷Bailyn, Pamphlets, p. 5.

¹⁸Philbrick, pp. 8-9.

¹⁹Edmund Morgan and Helen Morgan, The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution (New York: Collier Books, 1978), p. 115.

²⁰John M. Bumstead and Charles E. Clark, "New England's Tom Paine: John Allen and the Spirit of Liberty," WMQ, 3rd Ser., XXI (1964), p. 568.

²¹Philip Davidson, Propaganda and the American Revolution, 1763-1783 (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, Inc., 1973), p. 212.

²²Orwell, p. 247.

²³Montross, p. 113.

²⁴John Richard Allen, The American Revolution, The New American Nation Series (New York: Harper and Row Publishers, Inc., 1962), p. 76.

²⁵Thomas Paine, Common Sense: The Call to Independence, ed. Thomas Wendel (Woodbury: Barron's Educational Series, Inc., 1975), p. 122.

²⁶Thomas Scharf and Thompson Westcott, History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884, vol. I (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts and Company, 1884), p. 309.

²⁷Eric Foner, Tom Paine and Revolutionary America (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 79.

²⁸Ibid., p. 79.

²⁹Davidson, pp. 209-210.

³⁰Cynthia Z. Stiverson and Gregory A. Stiverson, "The Colonial Retail Book Trade in Virginia," Printing and Society in Early America, eds. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), p. 139.

³¹William Berkeley quoted in Stiverson, p. 140.

³²Davidson places the regional distribution of the colonial newspapers at fifteen in New England, thirteen in the Middle Colonies, and fourteen in the South. Davidson, p. 225.

³³Ibid., p. 226.

³⁴Rhys Isaac, "Dramatizing the Ideology of Revolution: Popular Mobilization in Virginia, 1774-1776," WMQ, 3rd Ser., XXXIII (1976), p. 369.

³⁵David D. Hall, "The Uses of Literacy in New England, 1600-1850," Printing and Society in Early America, eds. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), p. 19.

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⁴⁰Davidson, p. 5.

⁴¹Virginia Gazette (Pinkney), March 23, 1775.

⁴²Davidson, p. 234.

⁴³Ibid., p. 235.

⁴⁴Ibid., p. 237.

⁴⁵Virginia Gazette (Pinkney), August 3, 1775.

⁴⁶Robert M. Weir, "The Role of the Newspaper Press in the Southern Colonies on the Eve of the Revolution: An Interpretation," The Press and the American Revolution, eds. Bernard Bailyn and John B. Hench (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1981), p. 119.

⁴⁷Ibid., p. 109.

⁴⁸Buel, p. 60.

⁴⁹Resolution of the Continental Congress, January 2, 1776 quoted in Montross, p. 111.

⁵⁰Weir, p. 103.

⁵¹Wright, p. 95.

⁵²Montross, p. 8.

⁵³Garry Wills, Inventing America: Jefferson's Declaration of Independence (New York: Vintage Books, 1979), p. 54.

⁵⁴Smelser, p. 374.

⁵⁵Ibid., p. 96.

⁵⁶Wills, p. 55.

⁵⁷Smelser, p. 51.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 51.

⁵⁹"Declaration of Causes of Taking Up Arms," in Samuel Elliot Morison, ed., Sources and Documents illustrating the American Revolution, 1764-1788, and the formation of the Federal Constitution (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 144-145.

⁶⁰John Adams quoted in L. H. Butterfield, Marc Friedlander, and Mary-Jo Kline, eds., The Book of Abigail and John: Selected Letters of the Adams Family, 1762-1784 (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1975), p. 139.

⁶¹Declaration of Independence in Morison, p. 157.

⁶²Wills, p. 63.

⁶³Barry Bell, "Reading, and 'Misreading', The Declaration of Independence," Early American Literature, XVIII (Spring, 1983), p. 79.

⁶⁴Declaration of Independence in Morison, p. 160.

⁶⁵Arthur M. Schlesinger, Prelude to Independence: The Newspaper War on Britain: 1764-1776 (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1980), pp. 282-283.

⁶⁶Abigail Adams quoted in Butterfield, p. 148.

CHAPTER II

⁶⁷Isaac, "Dramatizing", p. 362.

⁶⁸Rhys Isaac, The Transformation of Virginia: 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982), p. 123.

⁶⁹Bruce Ingham Granger, Political Satire in the American Revolution: 1763-1783 (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1960), p. 6.

⁷⁰Isaac, "Dramatizing", p. 362.

⁷¹Rhys Isaac, "Books and the Social Authority of Learning: The Case of Mid-Eighteenth Century Virginia," Printing and Society in Early America, eds. William L. Joyce, David D. Hall, Richard D. Brown, and John B. Hench (Worcester: American Antiquarian Society, 1983), p. 231.

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⁷³Davidson, p. 139.

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⁷⁵Rutherford Goodwin, A Brief and True Report Concerning Williamsburg in Virginia (Richmond: August and Charles Dietz, 1980), p. 66.

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⁷⁹Morgan, p. 96.

⁸⁰John Rowe, "Diary of John Rowe", Proceeding, 2d. ser., X (1895), pp. 88-89.

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⁸²Davidson, p. 196.

⁸³Ibid., p. 199.

⁸⁴John Randolph quoted in Norine D. Campbell, Patrick Henry: Patriot and Statesman (New York: The Devin-Adair Company, 1969), p. 66.

⁸⁵Robert Douthat Meade, Patrick Henry: Practical Revolutionary (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott, Col, 1969), p. 32.

⁸⁶Stephens Randall quoted in Moses Coit Tyler, Patrick Henry, Vol. III, The American Statesman Series (Cambridge: Riverside Press, 1898), p. 146.

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⁸⁸Meade, p. 43.

⁸⁹Patrick Henry quoted in Meade, p. 2.

⁹⁰Gretchen Sullivan Sorin and Ellen Kirven Donald, Gadsby's Tavern Museum: Historic Furnishing Plan (Alexandria: City of Alexandria, 1980), p. 1.

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⁹²Nicholas Cresswell quoted in Rice, p. 122.

⁹³John Adams quoted in Rice, p. 122.

⁹⁴Carolyn Rabson, Songbook of the American Revolution (Peaks Island: NEO Press, 1974), p. 1.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 1.

⁹⁶Schlesinger, p. 37.

⁹⁷Rabson, p. 6.

⁹⁸John Dickinson quoted in Rabson, p. 7.

⁹⁹Benjamin Franklin quoted in Thomas Fleming, ed., Benjamin Franklin: A Biography in His Own Words, The Founding Fathers Series, Vol. I. (New York: Newsweek, 1972), pp. 233-234.

¹⁰⁰Davidson, p. 191.

¹⁰¹Pennsylvania Evening Post, March 30, 1776.

¹⁰²Benjamin Franklin, "The King's Own Regulars," in Oscar Brand, Songs of '76: A Folksinger's History of the Revolution (New York: M. Evans and Company, Inc., 1972), p. 89.

CHAPTER III

¹⁰³Barrett Wendell and Chester Noyes Greenough, A History of Literature in America (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), pp. 94-95.

¹⁰⁴Ibid., p. 95. Also see W. Gairns, A History of American Literature (New York: Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 104.

¹⁰⁵Culp, p. 101.

¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 204.

¹⁰⁷Davidson, p. 193.

¹⁰⁸Thomas Clark Pollack, The Philadelphia Theatre in the Eighteenth Century (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1933), p. xvi.

¹⁰⁹Kenneth Silverman, A Cultural History of the American Revolution: Painting, Music, Literature, and the Theatre in the Colonies and the United States from the Treaty of Paris to the Inauguration of George Washington (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell, 1976), p. 246.

¹¹⁰Philbrick, p. 14.

¹¹¹Ibid., p. 7.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 2.

¹¹³Culp, p. 245.

¹¹⁴Philbrick, p. 8.

¹¹⁵Culp, p. 203.

¹¹⁶Schlesinger, p. 40.

¹¹⁷Philbrick, p. 9.

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 9.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 8.

¹²⁰Culp, p. 204.

CHAPTER IV

¹²¹John F. Watson, Annals of Philadelphia, and Pennsylvania in the Olden Time; Being a Collection of Memories, Anecdotes, and Incidents of the City and its Inhabitants, and of the Earliest Settlements of the Inland Part of Pennsylvania (Philadelphia: Edwin S. Stuart, 1905), p. 104.

¹²²Carla Mulford Micklus, "John Leacock's 'A New Song, On the Repeal of the Stamp-Act,'" Early American Literature, XV (Fall 1980), p. 188. Also see Silverman, p. 310.

¹²³Ibid., pp. 188-189.

¹²⁴John Leacock, "A New Song, On Repeal of the Stamp Act," quoted in Micklus, p. 189-190.

¹²⁵Ibid., p. 190.

¹²⁶Pauline Maier, From Resistance to Revolution: Colonial Radicals and the Development of American Opposition to Britain, 1765-1776 (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972), p. 101.

¹²⁷Leacock in Micklus, p. 190.

¹²⁸Ibid., p. 191.

¹²⁹Silverman, p. 310.

¹³⁰Fall was written between January 10th and March 17th, 1776. This is apparent due to the internal occurrence contained within the play. See Granger, p. 107 and Silverman, p. 310.

¹³¹Paul Leicester Ford, Some Notes Towards an Essay on the Beginnings of American Dramatic Literature, 1606-1789 (New York: Burt Franklin, 1971), p. 19. Also see Culp, p. 353.

¹³²Philbrick, p. 4.

¹³³All references to John Leacock's the Fall of British Tyranny are from Montrose J. Moses, ed., Representative Plays by American Dramatist (New York: Benjamin Bloom, Inc., 1946). Act V.iv., p. 348. All further citations appear parenthetically in the text.

¹³⁴Philbrick, pp. 4 and 12.

¹³⁵Ford, p. 20.

¹³⁶Philbrick, p. 312.

¹³⁷Frank Pierce Hill, American Plays Presented, 1714-1830: A Bibliographical Record (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1934), p. 57.

¹³⁸Granger, p. 107. Also see Culp, p. 104.

¹³⁹J.H.J. quoted in Watson, p. 104.

¹⁴⁰At least two editions of the play were printed. Subtle differences between the two editions are apparent in syntax and type set.

¹⁴¹Charles Evans, American Bibliography, vol. V (Chicago: Hollister Press, 1909), pp. 243-244.

¹⁴²Boston Gazette, September 16, 1776.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Franklin's copy of Leacock's play is bound together with four other pamphlets of unrelated material. However, the play, the Better Sort, is among them.

CHAPTER V

- ¹⁴⁵Silverman, p. 313.
- ¹⁴⁶Granger, p. 17.
- ¹⁴⁷Bailyn, Ideological Origins, p. 148.
- ¹⁴⁸John Allen, The American Alarm, or the Bostonian Plea, for the Rights and Liberties of the People, Humbly Addressed to the King and Council and to the Constitutional sons of Liberty in America (Boston: D. Kneeland and N. Davis, 1773), p. 12.
- ¹⁴⁹Andres Hook, Scotland and America: A Study of Cultural Relations, 1750-1835 (Glasgow: Blackie and Sons Ltd., 1975), p. 54.
- ¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 54.
- ¹⁵¹George Rude, Wilkes and Liberty: A Social Study of 1763-1774 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), p. 20.
- ¹⁵²Hook, p. 55.
- ¹⁵³Rude, p. 21.
- ¹⁵⁴John Wilkes, A Complete Collection of the Genuine Papers, Letters, etc. in the Case of John Wilkes, Esq.: Late Member for Aylesburg, in the County of Bucks (Paris: Chez J. W. Imprimeur, 1777), p. 206.
- ¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 219.
- ¹⁵⁶Rude, pp. 21 and 33.
- ¹⁵⁷Maier, p. 163. Also see Rude, p. 25.
- ¹⁵⁸Rude, p. 33.
- ¹⁵⁹Ibid., p. 33.
- ¹⁶⁰Ibid., p. 34.

- 161 Ibid., p. 43.
- 162 Schlesinger, p. 36.
- 163 Hook, p. 9.
- 164 Isaac, Transformation, p. 137.
- 165 Ezra Stiles quoted in Hook, p. 48.
- 166 Courtland Canby, "Robert Munford's 'The Patriots'," WMQ, 3rd Ser., VI (1949), p. 438.
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- 170 Robert Munford, "The Patriots: A Comedy in Five Acts," WMQ, 3rd Ser., VI (1949), Act II.i.461.
- 171 The motto of the Pinkney edition of the Virginia Gazette was "Open to All Parties, but influenced by none".
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- 173 Virginia Gazette (Pinkney), December 10, 1775.
- 174 Lawrence Henry Gipson, The Coming of the Revolution, The New American Nation Series (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1962), p. 226. Also see Maier, p. 225.
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- 176 Maier, p. 238.
- 177 John Adams quoted in Commager, p. 48.
- 178 Dumas Malone, Jefferson the Virginian, Vol. I, Jefferson and His Time (Boston: Little, Brown, and Company, 1948), p. 169.
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- 180 James Parker quoted in Selby, p. 19.
- 181 Selby, p. 20.
- 182 David Mays, Edmund Pendleton, 1721-1803: A Biography, Vol. II (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1952), p. 13. Also see Malone, p. 198.
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- 184 Lord Dunmore quoted in Benjamin Hillman, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia: June 20, 1754-May 3, 1775, Vol. VI (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1966), p. 580.
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- 186 Weir, "The Role of the Newspaper," p. 110.
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- 189 Smelser, p. 92.
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¹⁹²James K. Hosmer, The Life of Thomas Hutchinson: Royal Governor of the Province of Massachusetts Bay (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, and Company, 1896), p. 1.

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¹⁹⁵Wright, p. 269.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 272.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 277.

¹⁹⁸Galvin, p. 102.

¹⁹⁹Hutchinson quoted in Galvin, p. 103.

²⁰⁰Thomas Fleming, ed., Benjamin Franklin. The Founding Father Series, Vol. II (New York: Newsweek, Inc. 1972), p. 241. Also see Galvin, p. 253.

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