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ABSTRACT

In 1828 the Duke of Wellington expressed the opinion that the country Great Britain was most likely to go to war with was the United States. With the election of Andrew Jackson in 1828, relations might reasonably have been expected further to deteriorate. After all, Jackson was a militarist, the Hero of New Orleans.

But some Britons actually welcomed Jackson's election. They believed, rightly as it turned out, that Jackson's election heralded a change in American policy. This belief was based on the nature of the Jacksonian opposition to the foreign and domestic policies of the Adams Administration. While pragmatic, this opposition was also founded on some principles which, if put into practice, would greatly alter the policy stance of the United States.

This study investigates the circumstances of the downturn in Anglo-American relations in the mid-1820s. Focusing on the economic nationalism of Adams and Clay, typified by their American system, it chronicles the developing crisis over the British West India trade. Jacksonian criticism of the foreign policy of Adams and Clay is detailed, and its contribution to the election of 1828 considered.

Once in power, the Jacksonians - whose principles included promotion of overseas commerce, small-scale government, and sectional harmony - brought about a considerable rapprochement with Great Britain. The diplomatic manoeuvrings surrounding the settlement of the West India trade question are considered. So too is the settlement of other issues. This wider rapprochement is interpreted as part of the harmony of Anglo-American interests in this period. To provide balance, factors influencing British policy at this time are also considered.

Overall, it is the intention of this thesis, by moving away from character-based interpretations and towards an amalgamation of foreign and domestic policies, to explain the rapprochement in Anglo-American relations presided over by Andrew Jackson.

THE ANGLO-AMERICAN RAPPROCHEMENT
OF 1830

BY

Peter Ian Wilson

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1. Introduction

Like all diplomatic relationships, that between Great Britain and the United States has had its ups and downs. Apart from the more obvious moments of acute disagreement, and two periods of warfare, there have also been periods of calm friendship and mutual understanding. During such periods sources of dissension were deliberately minimized and were kept firmly under control. Bradford Perkins has drawn attention to a number of these periods: in addition to the well-known "Great Rapprochement" of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, he has identified the decade which followed the Jay Treaty of 1794 as "The First Rapprochement", and pointed to the establishment of a second period of rapprochement in the years following the War of 1812.¹ It is the underlying thesis of this dissertation that a third rapprochement was brought about in the early 1830s, inaugurated by the agreement reached between the Jackson and Wellington administrations in 1830 concerning the British West India carrying trade.

The third rapprochement was necessary because Anglo-American relations had deteriorated substantially and rapidly during the Presidency of John Quincy Adams. Relations were far from the state they had been in back in 1823, when the British Foreign Secretary, George Canning, had approached Richard Rush, the American Minister in London, suggesting a joint declaration concerning the independence of the former colonies of Spain in South



America. One major problem involved the British West India carrying trade. The United States had long sought to be re-admitted to this trade on the same terms which had applied when, as the American colonies, she had been a component part of the British Empire trading system. The result of the Adams Administration's clumsy policy, however, was the total loss to the Americans of this direct trade. There were acute difficulties also along the border between Maine and New Brunswick. Relations were so bad that in July 1827 Sir Charles Vaughan, the British Minister in Washington, felt it necessary to warn his government against war with the United States.² In 1828 the Duke of Wellington believed that the country Great Britain was most likely to go to war with was the United States.³

If it is surprising that the deterioration took place under the supervision of the most diplomatically experienced of all American presidents, it is little short of astonishing that the restoration of good relations should have been the work of reputedly the least diplomatic. Andrew Jackson was widely held to be a man of violent character; it was expected that he would involve the United States in wars with foreign powers. Specifically, conflict was anticipated between the United States and Great Britain. Jackson was the quintessential Anglophobe. He was the Hero of New Orleans; he was furthermore the man who had in 1818 executed two British subjects in somewhat dubious circumstances. He received political support from Anglophobic elements in American society - such as Irish

immigrants in Northern cities.⁴ The Democratic Party whose candidate he was has a reputation for Anglophobia too. The "Manifest Destiny" espoused by Polk was founded at least in part upon suspicion of British interests in Oregon, California and Texas.

This curious historical phenomenon is especially worthy of investigation and explanation because it has been largely neglected by historians. Amongst the multitude of books, theses, and articles dealing with the various aspects of Jacksonian America, it has seldom been observed that there was this rapprochement in Anglo-American relations during the 1830s. Indeed, foreign policy in general has not been especially well dealt with in this particular period of American history, partly because historians are often too greatly attached to concepts. Thus there is usually a considerable amount of attention devoted to the circumstances surrounding the "Monroe Doctrine", followed by a gap until the historian reaches the "Manifest Destiny" of the 1840s. Thomas A. Bailey, for example, observes that "the record of American foreign affairs from 1825 to 1840 is not thickly dotted with sensational developments. During no other period of similar length prior to 1873 does the student of diplomacy find so little of a striking nature to chronicle."⁵

Many of the best and most famous books dealing with Jacksonian America neglect this rapprochement. Arguably the doyen of all, Arthur M. Schlesinger, Jr.'s The Age of Jackson⁶, scarcely mentions that the United States had a

foreign policy. Important studies written by Glyndon G. Van Deusen and Edward Pessen exhibit a similar neglect.⁷ Richard B. Latner correctly observes that historians have tended to focus their attention on the domestic programme of the Jackson Administration, before summarizing a successful foreign policy in just two sentences.⁸ In particular, historians mostly concern themselves with the major crises of the Jackson Presidency - the Bank War and the Nullification Crisis. A parallel obsession has been with the personality of Andrew Jackson. Probably because his reputation was established through military exploits, Andrew Jackson has been depicted by most historians as a man of inflexible, violent character. He defied his political opponents - over the Eaton Affair, Indian Removal, the Bank War, and the Nullification Crisis - and was rewarded with victory. He was truly, as John William Ward's study makes clear, "The Man of Iron".⁹ It is therefore not surprising that when historians bring themselves to consider Jackson's foreign policy, they focus their attention on the Franco-American crisis of the mid-1830s. In this dispute they can describe how Jackson took up a position and stuck to it, running the risk of war with France. He was, eventually, rewarded for his stance: France backed down. The Anglo-American settlement of 1830, and the resulting rapprochement in relations, do not fit into this character-based interpretation of the history of the period.

The biographers of Andrew Jackson have not greatly concerned themselves with his foreign policy. This is especially true of James Parton, William G. Sumner, and Marquis James. John Spencer Bassett devotes just one chapter out of thirty-three to foreign relations - less than 5% of his book.¹⁰ By contrast, Andrew Jackson, in his Annual Messages to Congress, devoted on average at least one third of his words to this subject. Recently, however, Robert V. Remini has given much fuller consideration to America's foreign relations in his multi-volume treatment of Andrew Jackson and his times.¹¹ Remini, though, clearly is of the opinion that the crisis with France of the mid-1830s was of considerably greater importance than the Anglo-American settlement of 1830. The former receives treatment in no less than four chapters; the latter constitutes only part of a general chapter.

As is suggested by Remini's work, in recent years the foreign policy of Jacksonian America has received more attention from historians. Detailed studies of Jacksonian foreign policy have been written by three historians: Douglas M. Astolfi, H. M. Neiditch, and John M. Belohlavek.¹² Astolfi's work is interesting, though focused primarily on territorial expansion. Neiditch provides by far the best treatment of the West Indian dispute since Frank Lee Benns,¹³ and even considers the agreement - briefly - from the British point of view. But he does not always convincingly combine domestic and foreign policies. Belohlavek produces a thorough

narrative, but fails to consider the wider consequences of the foreign policy pursued by the Jackson Administration. This study will therefore endeavour to present a more fully rounded view. It will attempt to emulate the example of George Dangerfield, whose two books superbly blend foreign and domestic politics during the period of the Monroe Doctrine¹⁴ In particular it will be suggested that the differing views on foreign policy which emerged in the United States in the 1820s can be related to partisan alignments, attitudes toward the tariff, and to widely differing views about the most beneficial course of development for the country. For example, Jackson's attempt to improve relations with Great Britain may be linked to his attempts to conciliate the South.

To any agreement of a diplomatic nature there must be at least two sides. The insularity of American historians, however, all too often means that only one side - the American - is considered. Although the 1830 settlement was considerably more important to the United States, the role played by Great Britain cannot be ignored. If for no other reason, it needs to be established why it was that the issue was settled in 1830 and not earlier. Clearly the fact that the United States was making concessions was significant. But the United States had previously offered similar concessions - even under Adams and Clay. By 1830, though, Great Britain was troubled by a number of problems. Some of these concerned the West Indies and other colonial possessions in North America; at home it was a time of

economic distress and mounting political crisis; European affairs were in a profoundly unsettled state.

The agreement concluded in 1830 was significant in itself, but was also instrumental in bringing about a decade of greatly improved relations. Other disputes were nearly settled - such as those over the Maine-New Brunswick border and the long-running question of impressment. In different times, the failure to settle such disputes might easily have led to conflict. This diplomatic rapprochement - which was typified by a request from the United States to use British diplomatic mailbags for American despatches¹⁵ - was closely linked to an increasing economic interdependence, which has been termed "informal empire".¹⁶ The rapprochement was sufficiently real to mean that peace was maintained despite several occasions for conflict which arose during the late 1830s during the Presidency of Martin Van Buren.

2. The Jacksonian Critique of Adamsonian Policy

No one can seriously have expected Andrew Jackson to prove more skilled in the ways of diplomacy than his predecessor, John Quincy Adams. The latter travelled extensively through Europe with his father, John Adams; he was schooled in France and Holland; he underwent a fourteen-month diplomatic apprenticeship in Russia; he represented his country in Prussia, Russia, and England; and, before becoming President, he served for two terms as Secretary of State.¹ While Adams had an ideal diplomatic pedigree and training, Jackson's reputation as a violent and uncontrollable military leader, and his record of volatile and militaristic rule in Louisiana and Florida, made him an unlikely man to engineer a rapprochement in Anglo-American relations. Yet some better-informed Britons appreciated that his accession to power would be likely to bring about a significant shift in the direction of American policy. This perception was possible because central to the formation of the Jackson party was controversy over the handling of American foreign policy under Adams and his Secretary of State, Henry Clay. Jacksonian leaders inside and outside Congress had consciously developed a thorough critique of the principles upon which Adams and Clay had managed the nation's foreign relations.

On the face of it, Jackson himself was most unlikely to disagree with the nationalistic Anglophobia underlying Adamsonian policy. He was, after all, widely popular

because he was perceived as the absolute expression of that spirit. He was, of course, the Hero of New Orleans; he was, furthermore, the executioner of Ambrister and Arbuthnot. He had a life-long history of Anglophobia. Without attempting a psychological analysis it is not at all unreasonable to assume that he was mentally scarred by his experiences during the Revolutionary War. He was certainly physically scarred. When he refused to clean the boots of a British officer he was struck with a sword. As he subsequently told Amos Kendall, "The sword reached my head, & has left a mark there as durable as the scull, as well as on the fingers."² The mental scars were probably deeper. Both of his brothers died during the hostilities, while his mother died of cholera in 1781. As a person of Scotch-Irish ancestry he presumably did not need any further motivation to be Anglophobic; these experiences are hardly likely to have tempered this feeling. Such was the depth of his hatred for Great Britain that he was one of only a handful of representatives who voted against a motion which called for a formal reply to be made to Washington's Farewell Address. Jackson greatly disapproved of the Jay Treaty which had been concluded with Great Britain in 1794. He believed that it had been unconstitutional; worse, it was degrading to the national honour of the United States. With Great Britain and France at war with one another, he profoundly objected to Washington's attempt to demonstrate that "all the Depredations on our commerce was done by the French." He preferred to put the blame on Great Britain.³ The attack

on the 'Chesapeake' particularly incensed him. He wrote of "this humiliating blow against our independence & sovereignty."⁴ When the United States went to war with Great Britain in 1812 the "hour of national vengeance" he had referred to on 7 March 1812 was indeed at hand.⁵ Having played his full part in the War of 1812, and famed as the Hero of New Orleans, Jackson was swept up in the tide of economic nationalism which spread across the United States in the succeeding years. By 1824 he was, it would appear, as much of an economic nationalist as either Adams or Clay. Explaining to his nephew, Andrew Jackson Donelson, why he would be supporting the proposed tariff, he said that he believed it "right and proper to feed our own labourers instead of those of Europe, and keep within us that capital that is drawn from us, and creates in part the wealth of England. The British merchants and British influence has had heretofore too much influence ..."⁶

However, Jackson's own views on many issues were to be modified by the character of the political movement whose candidate he was in 1828. That movement drew together the several elements of opposition to Adams and Clay, and inevitably it fastened upon the many foreign-policy embarrassments of the administration. Those difficulties became more acute as the years passed, so that by October 1827 Clay's brother-in-law, James Brown, commiserated that Clay was going to have "a bad account to render of our foreign relations in every quarter".⁷ Nearly all the leading Jacksonian politicians attacked some aspect or

other of the conduct of foreign policy under Adams and Clay. Martin Van Buren, John C. Calhoun, Robert Y. Hayne, John Randolph of Roanoke, James K. Polk, Thomas Hart Benton, Levi Woodbury, and Louis McLane were just some of these prominent opposition figures. In jointly assailing the administration of United States foreign policy, the various elements of the Jacksonian coalition assumed a new cohesiveness which lasted up to and for a short while beyond the election of 1828. The three main groups which thus came together were the original Jacksonians (such as Benton and John H. Eaton), the Crawfordites (especially Martin Van Buren), and the Calhounites (such as Ingham, Branch, and Hayne). Within this accumulation of politicians there was a link between the "planters of the South" and the "plain republicans of the North".⁸

It was often suggested that the Jacksonian coalition was united not behind any political principles, but rather only in spiteful opposition to Adams and especially Clay. Feelings about Clay ran high primarily because, it was argued, he had accepted the position of Secretary of State in return for allowing John Quincy Adams to become President in 1825. Thus it was that the Jacksonians claimed that their man, who had received more popular and electoral votes than anyone else in the election of 1824, had been deprived of his rightful inheritance by a "corrupt bargain". In Jackson's own words, "the Judas of the West has closed the contract and will receive the thirty pieces of silver".⁹ Opposition criticism of the foreign policy of

Adams and Clay was consequently construed by some as representing little more than an attempt to embarrass the two parties to the "corrupt bargain". One of Daniel Webster's correspondents, for example, believed that the opposition to the Panama Mission was unprincipled:

... I have for several months thot. if the president had not recommended that mission, the leaders of opposition, both in the senate & house, would have moved resolutions declaring such a mission necessary, & censured him for his neglect. Men predisposed to find fault with an administration are never at a loss for occasions to express their dissatisfaction ...

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In a similar vein, Nathan Sargent records the story of an opposition politician confronted just after the final vote confirming the commissioners to be sent to Panama. He reports him thus: "Yes, they have beaten us by a few votes after a hard battle; but if they had only taken the other side and refused the mission, we should have had them!"¹¹

Jacksonian criticism picked on points of failure in the Administration's policy even when there was no disagreement with the objectives of the policy. The prime example of this concerned Mexico. The American Minister in Mexico, Joel R. Poinsett of South Carolina, was charged by the Secretary of State, Clay, with the task of negotiating a new border, which would be more favourable to the United States. Few if any Jacksonian politicians disagreed with the fundamental thrust of this policy. They too wished to expand the frontiers of the United States in a southerly direction, and this could only mean that a new border had to be agreed with the Mexican authorities. Indeed two

Jacksonians, Benton and John Floyd of Virginia, were in the vanguard of those calling for such expansion. What the Jacksonians criticised, rather, was the failure of Poinsett to persuade Mexico to sell Texas to the United States. This failure, they argued, made it harder for the United States to expand into this region, because Poinsett's clumsy approaches had driven the Mexicans closer to Great Britain and away from the United States. Poinsett was castigated for having failed even to secure a commercial treaty with Mexico. As a result, claimed Benton, settlers from the United States could not travel down the Santa Fé trail in safety.¹² Poinsett's failure, claimed the Jacksonians, was typical of the conduct, or rather misconduct, of foreign policy under Adams and Clay. The safety of the nation, they alleged, could not be guaranteed under the leadership of men who were so obviously incompetent.

But, quite apart from such opportunism, there was also a principled basis to much of the criticism which was levelled at Adams and Clay by Jacksonian politicians. This can be illustrated by reference to an issue pre-dating the "corrupt bargain" of 1825. This was the question of whether or not the United States ought to recognise the independence of the Greek people from the Turkish Empire. This recognition would undoubtedly have been very popular - the United States experienced something of a "Greek fever" in the early 1820s. The Greeks were perceived as defenders of the Christian religion and a great culture against

heathen barbarians.¹³ President Monroe wished to back the Greek cause vigorously, and to give substance to this by sending a diplomatic representative to Greece. Daniel Webster introduced a resolution in the House of Representatives, calling for such an agent to be sent to lend moral support to the Greek insurgents. Monroe was restrained by his Secretary of State, John Quincy Adams. What is of great significance is the nature of the criticism which the projected policy received. Joel R. Poinsett of South Carolina argued that such a mission would be in violation of that part of the Monroe Doctrine (as it was later to be called) which called for hemispheric separation. The United States could hardly demand that European powers should not interfere in the affairs of the New World, if, at the same time, she was meddling in those of the Old World. Another line of argument was that employed by John Randolph of Roanoke. He insisted that an attack upon a European slavocracy - this was how Webster had depicted the Greek struggle - would set a precedent for an attack upon the slave system of the South by Northern congressmen.¹⁴ The arguments deployed in this instance were precursors of those used during the subsequent debates over the Panama Mission. Basically, Jacksonian politicians argued that the United States was violating Washington's principle that the foreign policy of the country should be restricted to commercial intercourse. This was the traditional "isolationist" argument, to which was added the argument of representatives of the South, who were concerned about the security of their half of the Union.

Although the Calhounites did not side with the nascent Jacksonian coalition over the Greek issue, it is nonetheless clear that those principles espoused by the Jacksonians in opposition to Adams and Clay had a principled basis, and were thus more than manifestations of personal feelings.

High principles were enunciated when Jacksonian politicians lambasted Adams and Clay for their readiness to desert the traditional foreign policy of the United States when they resolved to send representatives to the Panama Congress. Thomas Hart Benton recognised the enormous importance of this issue, which he called

a master subject on the political theatre during its day; [which] gave rise to questions of national, and of constitutional law, and of national policy ... It agitated the people, made a violent debate in the two Houses of Congress, inflamed the passions of parties and individuals, raised a tempest before which Congress bent, made bad feeling between the President and the Senate; and led to the duel between Mr. Randolph and Mr. Clay ...

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Opposition to the nomination of the ministers began when Van Buren insisted that the matter should be dealt with in public. When the final vote was taken there were some twenty votes against, including Benton, Berrien, Branch, Eaton, Hayne, Randolph, and Woodbury. As Benton observed, "It was very nearly a party vote, the democracy as a party, being against it ..." ¹⁶ All the names listed belonged to prominent Jacksonian politicians; more than half were to serve in one of Jackson's cabinets. Prior to the breakdown in relations with Great Britain over the West India trade, this was the major

issue upon which Adams and Clay were to be assailed by the developing Jacksonian movement. Although a convenient means of focusing criticism upon Adams and Clay, the debates over the Panama Mission saw principles of foreign policy laid down which were not forgotten when the Jacksonians were themselves responsible for the conduct of the nation's affairs.

Significantly, it was in the course of the debates on the propriety of the Panama Mission that the link was created between two key axes of the Jacksonian coalition. As Van Buren relates,

I called upon [Mr. Calhoun], at his residence in Georgetown, at the commencement of the session and found him as decidedly hostile to the Panama Mission as I was myself. Although nothing to that effect was then said there was also an obvious concurrence in opinion between us that opposition to so prominent a measure of the Administration could not fail to lead to an ultimate union of efforts for its overthrow. This followed and from that period to the election of Gen. Jackson there was a general agreement in action between us, except in regard to the Tariff policy ...

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Benton informs us that Vice-President Calhoun, although not having to express his opinions in the form of a casting vote in the Senate, "was full and free in the expression of his opinion against the mission".¹⁸

Many leading Jacksonians condemned Adams and Clay for having deserted the traditional axioms of American foreign policy laid down in Washington's Farewell Address. Indeed Benton goes so far as to claim that "the chief benefit to be derived from [the Panama question] is a view of the firmness with which was then maintained by a minority, the

old policy of the United States, to avoid entangling alliances and interference with the affairs of other nations ..."¹⁹ Van Buren drew upon the isolationist tradition when he argued that a pan-American confederacy would amount to a "political connexion ... at war with the established policy of our government."²⁰ Louis McLane argued that the ministers should be forbidden from discussing any sort of foreign alliance or from assenting to a binding declaration which would necessarily involve the compromising of American neutrality. He was of the opinion that the traditional neutral policy of the United States ought to be preserved; the Monroe Doctrine had to remain unilateral. Daniel Webster pointed out that McLane's attempt to instruct the ministers was itself unconstitutional.²¹ Nevertheless it is clear that McLane's argument was based on his belief that the traditional foreign policy of the United States was being deserted by Adams and Clay. Similarly, James K. Polk informed his Tennessee constituents that he had opposed the Panama Mission because he was "not prepared to say that the policy laid down by Washington, and steadily pursued by his republican successors, a policy under which the Country had been prosperous and happy, should be abandoned for untried and hazardous experiments ..."²² Andrew Jackson was of the opinion that "The moment we engage in confederations, or alliances with any nation, we may from that time date the down fall of our republic." The true policy of the United States, he believed, was "a friendly intercourse with the Republics of the South, commercial treaties with them on

the broad basis of reciprocity, but entangling alliances with none ..."²³ Joseph Gist of South Carolina said that he wished to follow "the advice of our Father, Washington, who, in his farewell address to the American people, said to them, Never enter into entangled alliances, by which we might be involved in war." As a South Carolinian, Gist was aware of a second argument against the Panama Mission: "It might affect Slavery in the Southern States ..."²⁴

This comprised the second major element of the attack made upon the proposed Panama Mission by Jacksonian politicians. Southern Jacksonians voiced their fears that the American diplomatic representatives might come into contact with black representatives from the Republic of Haiti; worse still, they might agree to recognise Haitian independence. Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee argued vehemently against too close an association with racially impure South Americans.²⁵ Senator Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina warned that the American ministers might discuss the contentious question of the suppression of the slave trade.²⁶ Benton summed up the thrust of these objections: "considerations of future relations with the government of Haiti ... would have been a firebrand in the southern half of our Union ..."²⁷ At a time when slavery was a sensitive issue - divisions opened up by the crisis surrounding the entry of Missouri into the Union²⁸ had been reinforced by the activities of the American Colonization Society - Southern Jacksonians were not likely to be content with a policy which promised to revive this issue. Nor was this

feeling restricted to Southern Jacksonians. Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire also believed that the Union was being endangered by the proposed policy of Adams and Clay.²⁹ The issue, then, was one which was seized upon by Jacksonian politicians because it exhibited evidence that Adams and Clay were not competent to preside over the foreign policy of the nation. They were departing from the traditional, established policy of the United States, and in so doing they were threatening to disrupt the harmony of the Union.

It was this identification with Southern interests which made many observers believe that the Jacksonians were also hostile to the protective tariff. Admittedly, many Jacksonian politicians devoted a good deal of time and effort to denying these allegations. Even Martin Van Buren, who was deeply sympathetic to the South, felt obliged to vote for the "Tariff of Abominations", because of the sheer pressure of public opinion in New York. Northern Jacksonian votes were critical in helping the Administration forces push this tariff through a Jacksonian-controlled Congress.³⁰ Furthermore, the Jacksonians fudged the tariff issue in the election of 1828. While the South wished to see a lowering of the tariff and a general reduction in the powers of the government - both had increased under Adams and Clay - the Jacksonians needed to receive the electoral support of such high-tariff states as Pennsylvania if they were to be successful. Thus no clear-cut position on the tariff issue was put forward. Southerners could feel sure that the

tariff would be less onerous under Jackson than under Adams; states such as Pennsylvania were confident that the principle of the tariff would not be abandoned. Yet the fact remained that a majority of Jacksonians in Congress had voted against the tariff, and that their candidate derived most of his support - and his most solid support - from that half of the Union which was more opposed to protection. It is little wonder, then, that some Northern newspapers claimed that some British business interests were spending gold so as to facilitate the election of Andrew Jackson.³¹

For these reasons the British in general were less apprehensive about the election of Jackson than his reputation might suggest. Because of his general character, and more specifically his history of Anglophobia, combined with the crisis in Anglo-American relations bequeathed by Adams and Clay, it is only natural to expect Great Britain to have been mortified at the prospect of Jackson's election. Some, doubtless, were worried. But others actually welcomed the outcome of the election. James Brown informed Albert Gallatin, his predecessor as Minister to France, that "the British are delighted with the choice." The reason for this delight, Brown explained, was that "They say Jackson will repeal the Tariff."³² The critique of Adamsonian policy which had been put forward suggested that a policy less directed towards building up pan-American solidarity, and more sensitive towards Southern concerns would be pursued. Such

a policy was more likely to lead to an improvement in Anglo-American relations.

3. The Rise and Fall of the Second Rapprochement

The rapprochement of 1830 in many ways represented a restoration of the good relationship established after the termination of the War of 1812. In this period, which covered the years 1815-23, there was a considerable improvement in Anglo-American relations. Many problems, some of them of long standing, were resolved, and a more settled relationship developed between the nations which had so recently been at war with one another. And yet, by the time Andrew Jackson was elected President, relations were once more in a parlous state. The extent of this deterioration in relations can only be appreciated by an understanding of how friendly the two nations had become in the preceding years.

The War of 1812 had broken out primarily because, in the course of their long war, France and especially Great Britain had interfered with the rights of neutral nations. The United States was the most important such nation. Relying on her principal strength, the might of her navy, Great Britain prosecuted the war with France with scant regard for the rights of neutrals. Determined to retain her seamen (without whom her naval power would be greatly diminished), she insisted on her right to stop and search vessels in the pursuit of runaway seamen. This policy resulted in a number of serious incidents with vessels from the United States. One such involved the American frigate, 'Chesapeake', which was fired upon prior to being boarded

by British sailors from the 'Leopard'. Four crew members of the American ship were removed, and, in total, the 'Chesapeake' sustained some twenty-one casualties while being hulled twenty-two times. American trade suffered as well. In attempting to starve one another into submission, France and Great Britain, by means of decrees and orders-in-council respectively, imposed blockades and generally disturbed neutral trade. This commercial warfare bore particularly heavily upon non-combatant nations such as the United States.

War eventually broke out - although only with Great Britain - in the summer of 1812. The War of 1812 was widely perceived as being fought in defence of the tarnished honour of the United States.¹ This was certainly the belief of John Quincy Adams. The newly-elected Senator from New York State, Martin Van Buren, "regarded the declaration of war as a step indispensable to the maintenance of our National honor." According to Albert Gallatin, the War of 1812 had precisely this effect. It "renewed and reinstated the national feelings which the Revolution had given and which were daily lessened." Because of the successful outcome of the war, he wrote, the people "are more American; they feel and act more like a nation ..."² As a man of foreign birth, Gallatin was particularly well placed to make such an observation. However, just because national honour had evidently been saved, it should not automatically be assumed that the

problems which had led to the outbreak of war in June 1812 had been resolved once and for all.

Because of Andrew Jackson's glorious triumph at the Battle of New Orleans, 8 January 1815, many Americans believed that they had won the war; that they had forced Great Britain to sue for peace. This confusion arose because news of the peace, which had been signed at Ghent on Christmas Eve, only reached the United States some six weeks later, in February 1815. Celebrations of Jackson's victory were already overshadowing the burning of the nation's capital and the calling of the Hartford Convention; now they became intertwined with the news of the Peace of Ghent. In actual fact the peace represented victory for neither side; it was, rather, a peace of exhaustion. It did not settle the main cause of the war, the violation of American neutrality. Great Britain did not yield her position on the central question of impressment. She was the world's leading naval power, and wished to remain in that position. In a sense, her vigilance was justified when, a few months later, Napoleon escaped from Elba and embarked upon his "Hundred Days". Once more Great Britain had to rally herself in order to put down this threat to both European peace and British interests.

Although the basic causes of the War of 1812 were not removed, it would be wrong to assume that there was no post-war rapprochement. Far from it. Over the next few years a whole series of issues was settled, contributing to

a considerable improvement in relations. The first step down this road was taken when, in July 1815, a commercial convention was signed by diplomatic representatives of the two nations. On the American side John Quincy Adams, Henry Clay, and Albert Gallatin appended their signatures to an agreement which provided for the mutual establishment of consuls; permitted to citizens of the United States the liberty of commerce in either British or American vessels engaged in trade between the United States and the European possessions of Great Britain; and allowed American ships to trade directly with the ports of the British East Indies (such as Bombay, Calcutta, Madras, and Penang) on most-favoured-nation status.³ Although this measure did not extend to trade between the United States and the British West Indies, it was nonetheless significant, representing as it did an important aspect of the post-war normalization of relations between the two recent adversaries.

In 1817 another important agreement was concluded, which did a great deal to better Anglo-American relations. At the conclusion of the War of 1812 a naval race had been started in the area of the Great Lakes. This was an area of the utmost strategic significance in North America, as the recent war had clearly demonstrated. When in 1814 the Duke of Wellington had been invited to take command of the area, he had described the Great Lakes as the key to the Canadian frontier.⁴ It was only to be expected, therefore, that there would be considerable rivalry between the United States and Great Britain in this region at the end of the

war. The danger was that there would be a full-scale, and hence extremely expensive, naval race between the two nations, as each sought to establish local supremacy. John Quincy Adams, American Minister in London, told Alexander Baring (the future Lord Ashburton), on 12 January 1816, that he was sorry to hear that the British "were increasing their armaments on the Lakes of Canada, because arming on one side would make it of course necessary to arm on the other, and we had been disposed, on the contrary, to disarm there."⁵

Adams was quite correct. The United States had proposed that the issue be settled in 1815. At last, in April 1816, Lord Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, agreed to bring naval construction to a halt, and to try to settle the matter by diplomatic means. Negotiations took place in the American capital between the British Minister, Charles Bagot, and Richard Rush (who acted as Secretary of State while the new appointee, John Quincy Adams, returned from London). In 1817 there was an exchange of diplomatic notes to the effect that existing naval forces would be dismantled, and in the future there would remain only enough naval power to enforce the revenue laws and police the area. Although it is wrong to say that this agreement led straight away to an undefended border - land fortifications were retained and developed for the next fifty years⁶ - between Canada and the United States, the Rush-Bagot agreement did much to reduce tension in a highly sensitive area.

Still another agreement was reached concerning the vexed and contentious question of fishing rights. As far back as 1783 Great Britain had granted to American citizens the right to fish off the coast of British North America. When war broke out between Great Britain and the United States in 1812, it was argued by the British that these fishing rights were no longer in force. When peace came, the United States claimed that the previous rights should be restored. The matter was brought to a head in July 1815. It was then that a British ship, the 'Jaseur', challenged some American fishing vessels pursuing their occupation off the coast of Nova Scotia. The 'Jaseur' warned the American vessels that they should not come within sixty miles of the Nova Scotian coast. John Quincy Adams clearly felt extremely passionately about this question. He told Bagot, when the two met, that "I am afraid we shall have to fight for this matter, in the end, and I am so confident of our right that I am for it."⁷

Matters did not come to this. The immediate problem was overcome when instructions were sent to British naval officers in the area, ordering them to allow American vessels to conclude their fishing without further molestation. The fishermen were to be warned, however, that in the future they would not be allowed to fish there. The whole issue was subsequently resolved. John Quincy Adams, under instructions from Washington, dropped the American demand that their vessels should be permitted, as of right, to fish off the whole coast of British North

America. In return, the British granted the United States the permanent liberty of fishing off parts of Newfoundland, along the Labrador coast, and around the Magdalen Islands. These were generally considered to be the prime fishing grounds in the area. Richard Rush believed that this was an agreement of the greatest significance. As he put it, "In settling the controversy about the fisheries, the calamity of a war was probably warded off."⁸ At the very least it can be said that a potential source of dispute was removed from the list of Anglo-American problems which had existed at the conclusion of the War of 1812.

This agreement over the question of the fisheries formed just one section of a wide-ranging convention concluded in 1818. Another section involved the renewal, for a period of ten years, of the commercial convention agreed upon in 1815. A third section concerned the question of slaves. These, specifically, were those slaves who had, during the War of 1812, come into the "possession" of British forces. Mostly they had been enticed away from their American masters. With the war over, their former masters demanded either the return of their property, or suitable compensation for their losses. It was agreed that this whole question should be referred to an independent arbitrator - in this case, Tsar Alexander of Russia.

The fourth section of the convention of 1818 dealt with the question of the border between the United States and British North America. The boundary line was in dispute along much of its length. The best map available to the

negotiators at Paris in the 1780s was far from perfect, based as it was on guesswork where no proper surveys had been carried out.⁹ As a part of the Treaty of Ghent three bi-national commissions were set up; in the event of disagreement a dispute was to be referred to a third party. One commission dealt with its particular problem, the boundary through Passamaquoddy Bay. But other problems remained unresolved in 1818. It was agreed to leave the north-west coastal region, the Oregon country (present-day Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia), "free and open, for the term of ten years ..., to the Vessels, citizens, and subjects of the Two Powers." This element of the convention, known as the Joint Occupation Treaty, dealt with the boundary west of the Rockies. East of the Rockies, a new border line was drawn along the fourth-ninth parallel and down to the Lake of the Woods. No agreement could be reached for that part of the border between the Lake of the Woods and Lake Huron. Another section was referred to an independent arbitrator, the King of the Netherlands. This was the section between two rivers, the Saint Croix and the Saint Lawrence. Subsequently the dispute over the exact line to be followed by the boundary in this area assumed major proportions - this was the source of the Maine-New Brunswick border dispute which was not settled until 1842.¹⁰ Serious problems over the border were, however, postponed until the late 1820s, and the even more dangerous period of the late 1830s.

The Anglo-American rapprochement of the post-war years was not just a series of diplomatic settlements. It went much deeper than that, and indeed laid the foundations of what has been called the Anglo-American "community of interests".¹¹ As had been the case after the War of Independence, the return of peace saw trade resume on a full scale between Great Britain and her former colonies. Goods that had been piled up in Liverpool and other British ports joined those from depots in British North America and flooded into the United States. In 1815 the United States and the British Empire shipped more goods to one another than they had in any year since the deterioration of commercial relations in the period immediately before the outbreak of the War of 1812. It has been calculated that in 1815 Great Britain shipped goods worth over £13 million to the United States.¹² Indeed, so many goods poured into the United States in 1815-16 that the young, developing industries were threatened with extinction. Consequently, there were calls for a protective tariff, which was introduced in 1816. The next year, as another indicator of the strengthening economic relationship, there was inaugurated a packet-line service between Liverpool and New York. From 4 January 1818, the Black Ball line ran fortnightly sailings between the two ports.¹³ Thus were the Old and the New Worlds brought a little bit closer together.

This rapprochement took place while Lord Castlereagh was the British Foreign Secretary. Traditionally, Castlereagh

has had a bad historical press. Usually portrayed as cold and aloof, he has been compared unfavourably to his successor, George Canning. This poor historical image derives in good part from Castlereagh's involvement in the domestic policy of Lord Liverpool's Government. As Leader of the House of Commons as well as Foreign Secretary, he was a leading spokesman of the Government, and had to defend actions and policies - such as the Peterloo Massacre and the Six Acts - taken at a time of extreme political and social unrest. It is probably for this reason that he was mercilessly lampooned by such satirists as Shelley and Byron. Canning was an altogether more attractive figure, though historians now argue that his foreign policy was more of a continuation of, rather than a departure from, Castlereagh's.

Certainly the United States had little cause for complaint with Lord Castlereagh. The most obvious example of Castlereagh's friendliness occurred in 1818. In March of that year Andrew Jackson marched into Spanish Florida, in pursuit of warlike Indians. The absence of order in Florida had resulted in frequent raids upon American territory carried out by Seminoles living in the Spanish territories. When in April he seized the Spanish fort of St. Marks he found there a British citizen named Arbuthnot. He subsequently captured another British citizen, Robert C. Ambrister. The two men were tried in late April. Found guilty of aiding the Seminoles, they were both executed.

It is abundantly clear that opinion in Great Britain was markedly hostile to Jackson's actions. According to Richard Rush, Adams' successor as Minister to London, the "public anger [was] exceedingly strong against us ..." The Minister reported that he saw placards in the streets, and told Castlereagh on 14 August 1818 that he "saw with concern the inflammatory comments of the public journals ..."¹⁴ Andrew Jackson was variously referred to by the English newspapers as "tyrant", "ruffian", and "murderer".¹⁵ The situation was clearly one which might have led to conflict between Great Britain and the United States. Castlereagh later told Rush that war might have occurred "if the Ministry had but held up a finger".¹⁶ The British Foreign Secretary, however, did not lift up a finger. He informed Rush that the Government formed its own views without regard to those expressed in newspapers. He decided that Ambrister and Arbuthnot had been "engaged in unauthorized practices of such a description as to have deprived them of any claim on their own Government."¹⁷ A potential cause of conflict thus did not assume such menacing proportions as had seemed likely. Lord Castlereagh appears to have decided that Anglo-American friendship was of greater importance than the case of the two British subjects. This opinion may have derived at least in part from the growing feeling in Great Britain that her future was somehow linked to that of the United States. As Lord Liverpool told the House of Lords, on 26 May 1820, "of all the powers on the face of the earth, America is the one whose increasing population and immense

territory furnish the best prospect for British produce and manufactures. Everybody, therefore, who wishes prosperity to England, must wish prosperity to America."¹⁸

Castlereagh's fostering of this Anglo-American relationship explains why Rush so lamented his suicide in August 1822. Speaking of the "candid and liberal spirit" which had been the hallmark of Castlereagh's dealings with the United States, Rush claimed that Anglo-American affairs had never been so mutually favourable:

Let those who would doubt it, consult the archives of the two nations since the end of our revolutionary war and point out the British statesman, of any class or party, who, up to the period of his death, made more advances or did more, in fact, towards placing their relations upon an amicable footing.

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Rush even believed that Castlereagh had intended to settle the question of impressment, but had been diverted from this by European affairs.²⁰

Canning's initial policy was to extend this understanding by joining with the United States in a common stance over the newly independent states of South America. Great Britain had already established considerable economic interests in these former Spanish colonies. British trade with the colonies was worth less than \$25 million in 1808, but had risen to \$30 million by 1822. It has been calculated that British investors pumped something like £20 million into the region during the years 1815-30.²¹ Much of this must have been invested prior to 1823, for investment slowed down dramatically after 1825. There was

good reason, therefore, for Great Britain to view with concern the policy of the Holy Alliance. The Troppau Protocol of 1820 had established the policy of enabling the members of the Holy Alliance to intervene so as to bring back into the Alliance any other member which had fallen prey to revolutionaries.²² In April 1823 a French army crossed the border and invaded Spain; why should there not be armed intervention in the former Spanish colonies in South America as well? His warning to France against the invasion of Spain having been ignored, Canning sent his good wishes to the Spanish resistance from the floor of the House of Commons. The result, wrote his cousin from Washington, was to make "the English almost popular in the United States. The improved tone of public feeling is very perceptible ... I question whether for a long time there has been so favorable an opportunity - as far as general disposition and good will are concerned - to bring the two countries nearer together."²³

On 16 August 1823 there began a remarkable series of meetings between Canning and Rush. Within four days of the first meeting, Canning had proposed that Great Britain and the United States should make a joint statement warning the powers of the Holy Alliance to stay out of South America. As John Quincy Adams put it, at the time it "seemed to me a suitable occasion for the United States and Great Britain to compare their ideas and purposes together, with a view to the accommodation of great interests upon which they had heretofore differed."²⁴ However a problem arose over the

question of the recognition of the new republics. The United States had already recognised them, but Great Britain had not. Canning offered "future acknowledgement", but this would not suffice for the United States, which demanded that Great Britain recognise the republics before any joint declaration could be made.²⁵

In December 1823 the United States took unilateral action. President Monroe's Annual Message of 2 December contained what has come to be known as the "Monroe Doctrine".²⁶ The United States was not only faced with the prospect of Holy Alliance intervention in South America. There was also, since the issue of an imperial ukase, the possibility of Russian intervention in the Pacific North-West region. She resolved to make a statement of her policy. John Quincy Adams was the key figure in the formulation of the principles promulgated by President Monroe, although it was Monroe who wished to broadcast them to the world. During the cabinet discussion of the subject on 7 November 1823 Adams observed that "it would be more candid as well as more dignified, to avow our principles explicitly to Russia and France, than to come in as a cock-boat in the wake of the British man-of-war ..."²⁷ This was the nationalistic element of the Monroe Doctrine, and it was this which incensed George Canning. He disliked the implications of the non-colonization principle - preventing Great Britain from ever acquiring Cuba. Gallatin informed Clay some three years later that British national pride "was sorely wounded by that part of the late President's message, which

declared that America was no longer open to European colonization."²⁸ By way of revenge Canning publicised the hitherto secret Polignac Memorandum. This was an undertaking he had secured from France that she would not interfere in the affairs of South America, and was the more effective deterrent to Holy Alliance intervention because of the strength of the Royal Navy.

Gale W. McGee has argued, in a provocative article, that the Monroe Doctrine was not intended to prevent Anglo-American cooperation with regard to South America or even any other issue.²⁹ While it is possible that the Monroe Doctrine was a stop gap measure, McGee's theory is undermined when Monroe's Annual Message of 1823 is considered in its entirety. In a section that has received scant attention from historians, Monroe called for "a review of the tariff for the purpose of affording such additional protection to those articles which we are prepared to manufacture, or which are more immediately connected with the defense and independence of the country."³⁰ The House Committee on Manufactures duly reported a bill which had as its sole objective the protection of such manufactures as cotton bagging, hemp, and iron. The duty on manufactured goods was advanced by some 8%.³¹ The new tariff was signed into law by President Monroe on 22 May 1824. Obviously Great Britain, who was the world's leading manufacturer, would be the hardest hit by this tariff. Addington, the British Chargé in Washington, told Canning that the measure was aimed at

England, which was the source of three-quarters of American imports.³² The move towards diplomatic nationalism heralded by the non-colonization principle contained in the Monroe Doctrine was thus accompanied by a protective tariff - clear evidence of a shift towards economic nationalism.

Canning's advances had thus been met with the Monroe Doctrine on the one hand, and a new tariff on the other. In addition, the actions of Southern congressmen prevented an agreement being reached on the question of the right of search. In an attempt to stamp out the slave trade a convention had been signed, in March 1824, allowing American vessels to be searched by British ones. President Monroe recommended that the Senate approve the convention. However amendments were attached which made the convention useless. Recalling that it was the right of search which had been partially responsible for the outbreak of war in 1812, and sensitive to any measure weakening the institution of slavery, the convention passed the Senate in such a form as to prevent it from applying off the coast of the United States.³³ Thus the convention came to nothing, and served only as a further example of the sudden jolt to Anglo-American relations. If the growing dispute over the British West India trade is added to the failed slave convention, the Monroe Doctrine, and the tariff of 1824, it can be seen that British advances had been well and truly rebuffed.

This trend towards reducing British influence in American affairs was pressed even further under John Quincy Adams.

In view of Henry Clay's commitment to the American System , it should not be surprising that the economic nationalism espoused in the tariff of 1824 was maintained, indeed extended. Clay's enthusiasm for Latin American independence was of long standing, and linked neatly with Adams' determination to separate the Americas from European influence.

This interest in promoting hemispheric solidarity and blocking Britain's rapidly spreading influence in the Americas resulted in the controversial decision of the Adams Administration to take part in the Panama Congress. The original idea of a congress of the American nations was Simon Bolivar's. It was not, however, his intention that the United States should be invited. But while he was busy in Arequipa an invitation was sent to Washington by the governments of Colombia and Mexico. On 26 December 1825 John Quincy Adams submitted the names of Richard C. Anderson of Kentucky and John Sergeant of Pennsylvania to the Senate. These two men were to be Envoys Extraordinary and Ministers Plenipotentiary to the Congress of American Nations. In addition, William B. Rochester of New York was to be Secretary to the Mission.³⁴

Adams, Clay, and other National Republicans put forward several arguments in defence of their policy. The President believed that, in attending the Congress, the foreign policy interests of the United States would be promoted. He pointed to three areas: the "principles of a liberal commercial intercourse" would be laid out; there

would be an agreement on the freedom of the seas which would be highly satisfactory to the United States; and an all-American pact would be created to put into effect the non-colonization principle within the Monroe Doctrine.³⁵ Henry Clay, the arch-apostle of pan-Americanism, who had long championed the cause of the independent states of South America, was extremely keen that the United States should attend. He contributed an article to a Philadelphia newspaper, under his old pen-name, 'Scaevola', making his position clear. This piece was subsequently reprinted in the National Intelligencer. Clay argued that participation would result in "peace and power abroad, peace and happiness at home."³⁶ In a speech delivered at a public dinner in Lewisburg, Virginia, Clay gave two reasons why the United States stood to benefit from attendance. Firstly, there was a commercial argument. He observed that the independent nations of South America had a combined population of more than twenty million, and because of this population and their abundant national resources "offer to our commerce, to our manufacturers, to our navigation, so many advantages, that none can doubt the expediency of cultivating the most friendly relations with them." Secondly, there was the problem of Cuba. This, he said, "had much weight with the executive in the decision to accept the mission." It was believed that the questions surrounding the future of Cuba would be more easily dealt with by a meeting of all the American nations.³⁷ Both of these arguments contained an anti-British element, thwarting British economic interests and expansionary

desires respectively. Daniel Webster argued that participation in the Congress might further the spread of civil liberty in the region of South America.³⁸ John Scott of Missouri informed his constituents that he supported the nominations because he believed that the deliberations of the Congress would probably "fix all our future commercial relations and intercourse with [the South American] republics, [while introducing] some very important principles of national law ..."³⁹

It was widely expected, at least in Administration circles, that the nominations would be approved quickly by the Senate. The Mission was, in the words of Martin Van Buren, "well calculated, on first impressions, to be very popular."⁴⁰ It promised an American contribution to a pan-American movement which stood in stark contrast to the despotism of the Holy Alliance. It would be on the side of republicanism against monarchy, on the side of the New World against the Old. The Mission, in fact, was popular. Clay wrote to tell James Brown that "Towards the North and the West, you may ride many days without meeting a solitary individual disapproving the mission." A Kentucky correspondent of Clay's, Thomas Speed, informed the Secretary of State of opinion on the subject in that state: "As to the mission to Panama, there are few dissenting voices ..."⁴¹ However the nominations were only confirmed in March 1826, after bitter debate lasting some six weeks. Although eventually the Senate approved the nominations of the two Ministers, and money was voted with which to fund

the Panama Mission, Adams and Clay were thwarted in their intentions. Sergeant delayed his departure so as to avoid the hot months in the Isthmus of Panama. Anderson, on the other hand, set out from Bogota, but died at Cartagena in July 1826, of a tropical disease. As a consequence, the United States did not have a representative present at the Congress of Panama, which was, in any case, soon adjourned. What had seemed such a shining opportunity to Adams and Clay back in late 1825 was, in Benton's words, "an abortion"⁴², and British influence in Latin America continued to grow.

This desire to separate America from Europe underlay many aspects of Adamsonian policy. As we shall see, it inspired an attempt to weaken Britain's exclusive hold on the trade of its West Indian colonies. It also influenced attitudes to American domestic development, for the impulse to increase the self-sufficiency of the American economy prompted the popular movement which resulted in the new tariff of 1828. This raised the tariff barrier to unprecedented levels, to average levels markedly higher than any before 1860. This "Tariff of Abominations", as it was dubbed, was unpopular with the British. On hearing of the passage of the tariff legislation, British shipmasters at Charleston, South Carolina, lowered their flags to half-mast.⁴³ William B. Lawrence wrote to tell Henry Clay that William Huskisson had depicted the measure "as an indication of hostile feelings towards England." As a result of newspaper comments, Lawrence later informed Clay,

"The [British] public are ... given to understand that our late Tariff was passed in retaliation of the British West Indies restrictions ..."⁴⁴ The new American Minister to London, James Barbour, reported "great animosity" to the 1828 tariff. He subsequently remarked that it "is as unpopular here as it is in S-Carolina ..."⁴⁵ When Louis McLane, replacing Barbour, went to see the British Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen, he was told that the tariff was interpreted as being "peculiarly hostile" to Great Britain.⁴⁶

Compounding this sense of antagonism between the two nations was the crisis on the Maine-New Brunswick border. Tension in this disputed region was increased when there was an incident concerning a lumberman, John Baker. After an initial dispute over the ownership of some timber he had cut, Baker prevented a British mail carrier from trespassing on land he claimed was American. In September 1827 he was arrested by the British authorities in New Brunswick. He was brought to trial, and was fined and imprisoned. In a letter addressed to William B. Lawrence, Clay noted that the release of John Baker was demanded, together with reparations for his imprisonment. The United States "demanded that the Government of New Brunswick ... cease from the exercise of exclusive jurisdiction within the disputed territory" until the question of ownership in the area was decided. In April 1828 the Administration received a request from the area for a "military force to defend the north eastern frontier of the Union". Just

three days later, Clay informed Henry Middleton that Britain and the United States had resolved to refer the dispute to arbitration. He also noted, however, that "the President has directed a small portion of our military force to take position on our acknowledged territory ...". With troops in the area, the dispute clearly possessed the potential for actual armed conflict. Britain and the United States took a long time deciding on who was to be the arbitrator. In the meantime William B. Lawrence reported from London that, in the course of a conference, Aberdeen had said that he regarded it as an "extremely difficult" issue.⁴⁷ The matter had not finally been resolved when Jackson took over as President, and was not to be settled until 1842.

Not all the advantages of the former rapprochement were lost. The Adams Administration managed to reach a couple of settlements with Britain. At long last, late in 1827, Great Britain consented to pay the indemnity agreed upon for the slaves who had come into her possession during the War of 1812. Tsar Alexander of Russia, acting as arbitrator, had found for the United States some years before, but it was only in 1827 that Britain agreed to pay the compensatory sum of \$1,204,960. Even Thomas Hart Benton was full in his praise of the Administration for having brought this question to a successful conclusion:

The sum received was large, and ample to pay the damages, but that was the smallest part of the advantage gained. The example and the principle were the main points - the enforcement of such a demand against a government so powerful, and after so much resistance, and the condemnation which it carried, and

the responsibility which it implied - this was the grand advantage.

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Although the problem was not finally resolved until the 1840s, in 1827 it was agreed to prolong the Joint Occupation Treaty concerning the competing British and American claims to the Oregon country. All was not gloom then, with regard to Anglo-American relations, under Adams and Clay.

But it is undeniable that, overall, by the time Andrew Jackson was elected President, Anglo-American relations were in a state of crisis. Writing to Edward Everett in October 1826, Clay remarked that "Our affairs with England, in respect especially to the West India trade, do not stand as well as I could wish." Just a couple of days later Adams records a conversation with his Secretary of State during which "Mr. Clay spoke of the negotiations with Great Britain, which are in ill and threatening condition."⁴⁹ Opposition politicians readily acknowledged the existence of a crisis. Thus James K. Polk wrote in a letter addressed to his Tennessee constituents on the eve of the accession to office of the Jackson Administration: "There are now suspended, and in an unsettled state, several questions of national importance, between the United States and Great Britain, which it will require all the wisdom of those who are now selected to administer the government, to settle without prejudice to our interests."⁵⁰ These questions would have to be settled by the incoming Jackson Administration, in the light of the principles adopted

during the years of opposition to the policies of Adams and Clay.

4. The British West India Carrying Trade

On one issue above all others, the Adams Administration was hoist with its own petard. President Adams informed his first Minister to London, the aged Rufus King, that the success of his Administration depended upon the conclusion of a treaty with Great Britain. One of the most important elements of this treaty involved the British colonial trade.¹ But the attempt to force Great Britain into reducing its exclusive control over its colonial possessions in the New World resulted only in British retaliation which hurt the United States more than success would have benefited it. The Jacksonians made huge play with this diplomatic disaster, which George Dangerfield has described as being tantamount to "Burial at Sea" for the Presidency of John Quincy Adams. As James K. Polk told his constituents after the election,

Owing partly to the negligence, and partly to the diplomatic blunders of the administration, we have lost the benefits resulting from the British Colonial Trade, and consequently the revenue derived from that source. To reinstate this interest on its former basis, will be a matter of no little difficulty, if, indeed, it shall be practicable at all.

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It was the successful settlement of this issue in particular upon which the Jackson Administration built its record of almost unbroken diplomatic success.

The whole problem³ can be said to have resulted from the success of the American Revolution. Prior to this, during the first three-quarters of the eighteenth century, there

had grown up an extremely close economic relationship between the British West Indies and the British colonies in North America. The former produced coffee, indigo, molasses, rum, salt, and sugar. These were imported into the American colonies; the molasses, for example, formed the basis of New England's own rum production. In return, the American colonies exported bread, flour, livestock, and meat to the West Indies. A vigorous trade developed between the two colonial units, giving employment to some five hundred vessels and many sailors. It has been calculated that something like one third of all the vessels clearing the principal ports of the American colonies in the years immediately preceding the outbreak of the American Revolution were bound for the ports of the British West Indies.⁴

With the success - from the American point of view - of the American Revolution this economic relationship was fundamentally altered. The American colonies had benefited from their membership of the British Empire's economic system. But, as newly independent states, they were by definition excluded from this system. Consequently, they no longer received the considerable advantages they had previously enjoyed. Specifically, they were not able to trade with the British West Indies on the same advantageous terms as before. The first diplomatic steps were taken by the United States in 1786 in an attempt to restore this trade to its former footing. John Adams was chosen to undertake this arduous diplomatic task. Essentially what he proposed to Great Britain was full reciprocity.

However, Great Britain wished to maintain her colonial system, and so refused to settle the matter on the terms suggested by Adams.

Broadly speaking, this was the problem concerning the British West India trade which remained unresolved until 1830, and provided many diplomatic difficulties in the intervening years. Time and time again the United States demanded as of right that she should be allowed to participate in this trade as if she were still a fully-fledged part of the British Empire. Having recognised the independence of her former colonies, Great Britain refused to consent to this, as she saw it, presumptuous demand. American ships, therefore, were not allowed, as a general policy, to enter the ports of the British West Indies laden with goods. This is not to say, however, that American trade with these islands came to a complete standstill. At their own discretion the British West Indian authorities were empowered to open up their ports to American ships and goods by proclamation. This expedient was frequently adopted, in particular during the years in which Great Britain was engaged in her struggle with first Revolutionary and then Napoleonic France. The effect of this war on American trade with the British West Indies is clearly visible when the tonnage of American shipping entering the colonial ports from the United States in the years 1792-93 and 1793-94 is considered. In the former, peacetime, year this tonnage was less than five thousand; for the latter, wartime, year the figure soared to well

over fifty thousand.⁵ To give a specific example, Jamaica opened up her ports to American vessels in 1805 so as to admit much-needed flour. It is known that the subsequent Jacksonian politician, Samuel Smith, made money by shipping flour, lumber, and staples into the islands during the years prior to the outbreak of the War of 1812.⁶ Indeed it is quite probable that the reason why the United States did not resort to any retaliatory measures against Great Britain during this period was because her commerce with the West Indies was flourishing via the proclamations, even if it was not officially sanctioned by the legislation which comprised the colonial trading system.

This was the situation which pertained until the end of the War of 1812. Due to the difficulties in supplying her colonies in wartime, Great Britain had permitted the trade to continue on an ad hoc basis. The settlement at Ghent did not restore the United States to this trade, and although the commercial convention of 1815 was quite liberal regarding American trade with other British colonial possessions, this liberality did not extend to the British colonies in the New World. Great Britain, indeed, resolved to tighten up her colonial system, and vigorously enforced the legislation by which the shipping and produce of the United States were effectively excluded from the British West Indies. This strict enforcement of the colonial system by the British authorities had a marked effect on American shipping. Whereas back in 1806 over one hundred American vessels had set sail for the British West

Indies from Portsmouth, New Hampshire, by 1816 this number had fallen to less than fifty.⁷

American shipping suffered greatly, and not just because it was excluded from the direct trade with the British West Indies. It was effectively ruled out of the triangular trade as well. British ships could cross the Atlantic and unload their cargoes of British goods in the United States. They could then transport goods to the ports of the British West Indies, before returning home across the Atlantic laden with West Indian produce, such as sugar or molasses. The second and third legs of this triangular trade were the ones from which American shipping was excluded. Not allowed to enter the West Indian ports in the first place, it could hardly take produce from there to Great Britain. This further exclusion contributed to the mounting economic crisis in American shipping circles. American seamen were compelled to seek employment elsewhere, while carpenters were forced to go to British North America in search of work; commercial areas stagnated. In his Annual Message of December 1816 President Madison placed the blame for the depression afflicting the United States squarely on the shoulders of Great Britain: "The depressed state of our navigation is to be ascribed in a material degree to its exclusion from the colonial ports of the nation most extensively connected with us in commerce, and from the indirect operation of that exclusion."⁸

Although President Madison did not specifically recommend any retaliatory action on the part of the United States,

demands for this were soon forthcoming. John Quincy Adams had argued, back in December 1815, that the United States should "try a little the effect of exclusion on our side too."⁹ He was about twelve months ahead of public opinion. In January 1817 meetings were held in such leading commercial centres as New York, Portsmouth, and Hartford. Petitions were drawn up and memorials were submitted to Congress, demanding that retaliatory action be taken against Great Britain. The Senate Committee on Foreign Relations had already drawn up a non-intercourse bill; this was modified into the Navigation Act of March 1817. This measure provided that produce from the British West Indies could only be imported into the United States if transported in either American vessels or those belonging to West Indian merchants. The British Government professed not to be offended by this measure; this is what Castlereagh told John Quincy Adams.¹⁰ Indeed Great Britain went so far as to offer some concessions - albeit of a limited nature and extent - to the United States.

Because so little, from the American point of view, was offered by Great Britain, President Monroe called upon Congress, in his First Annual Message, to take further retaliatory action. Thus on 18 April 1818 Congress approved a bill which closed American ports to British vessels arriving from colonies excluding American vessels. In order to offset the adverse effects of this measure, Great Britain declared ports in New Brunswick and Nova Scotia to be free ports, thereby enabling the British West

Indian colonies to be supplied with essential foodstuffs by way of other West Indian colonies, such as those belonging to Denmark and Sweden. As a result of this evasion, and the failure of Richard Rush to bring about a diplomatic settlement of the issue in London, Congress resorted to yet another piece of retaliatory legislation. On 15 May 1820 President Monroe signed into law a measure which provided for complete non-intercourse in British vessels with all British colonies in North America.

Great Britain retreated from her position in 1822. This move can be interpreted in terms of the general drift of the policy of Lord Liverpool's Government in the direction of a more liberal Toryism. It has been generally argued by historians, notably W. R. Brock, that in the early 1820s there was a shift towards a more liberal approach in nearly all areas of policy.¹¹ It would certainly be difficult to deny that there were clear signs of at least freer trade, if not actually of free trade. The presentation by Alexander Baring in May 1820 of a petition bearing the signatures of leading London merchants is often considered to have inaugurated a movement towards free trade. This petition protested against "every restrictive regulation of trade, not essential to the revenue."¹² In June 1821 a plan was laid before the House of Commons by which the whole navigation system was to be substantially reformed. The measures forming that system were, in some cases, archaic to say the least; many dated from the seventeenth century, when they had been introduced so as to protect

Great Britain from the commercial and shipping might of the Dutch nation. There were calls from the British West Indies for the reform of the navigation system. Faced with slumping property prices, and general economic hardship, the islands cried out for relief. The Jamaican assembly, for example, sent petitions and memorials to London to this effect in December 1821. The legislature of Grenada recommended that free trade be established between the islands comprising the British West Indies and the United States.¹³ Bowing to this pressure to a certain extent, in April 1822 the British Government introduced further legislative measures to deal with the navigation system. The West Indian and American Trade Bill, which became law on 24 July 1822, opened up the islands of the British West Indies to foreign vessels and their produce. This measure was highly advantageous to the United States, which possessed a shipping fleet and economy capable of meeting the demands of the colonists.

This concession, however, was accompanied by a measure which granted to the King in Council the power to deny these privileges to any nation which did not reciprocate the rights and privileges extended by Great Britain in her magnanimity. The United States, at the time, imposed extra duties on British vessels trading with American ports under its existing legislation. In effect, Great Britain was asking the United States to shelve these duties, to treat British shipping as she would treat shipping from any other country. But this was a sensitive issue in the United

States. Stratford Canning reported to Castlereagh that "Few questions are capable of exciting a more lively interest in the United States."¹⁴ The response of the United States to this British demand came in what has come to be called the "elsewhere" act, which was passed in March 1823. Contained in this legislation was the claim on behalf of the United States that her vessels and goods should be admitted into British colonial ports on exactly the same terms as applied to vessels and goods from parts of the British Empire, including Great Britain herself. This demand, according to William Huskisson, then the President of the Board of Trade,

was a pretension unheard of in the commercial relations of independent states. It was just as unreasonable as it would be on our part to require that sugar or rum, from our West India islands, should be admitted to New York upon the same terms and duties as the like articles, the growth and production of Louisiana ...

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Great Britain clearly was of the opinion that the United States was demanding too much. The "elsewhere" act was a rebuff to the friendly advances of the Liverpool Government; indeed it was just one of several rebuffs delivered in 1823-24. The downturn in relations that naturally followed was typified by the imposition, by both Great Britain and the United States, of new levies and duties on the British West India trade.

Anglo-American relations concerning the colonial trade were in this sorry state when John Quincy Adams became President in 1825. There was some trade, but it was burdened with

many hindering duties and restrictions. It was, however, precisely because of these barriers to trade that Adams and his Secretary of State, Clay, did not initially do much with regard to the trade. Adams believed that the extra duties would result in hardship for the West Indian planters. This hardship would be converted into political pressure upon the British Government, which would eventually be forced to come to an understanding with the United States, based upon the terms of the Act of Congress of March 1823. However while the United States was inactive, Great Britain was not. She introduced further legislation of her own. In the summer of 1825 Parliament passed measures scheduled to come into effect in the following January, which substantially altered the regulations concerning the colonial trade. Free ports were opened up in British North America and the British West Indies which would be able to import American goods via Great Britain at less than the full duty for similar goods imported directly from the United States. The trade between Great Britain and her colonial possessions was restricted to British vessels. Significantly, the act of 1822 was repealed, so that, if the United States did not make concessions, sometime in 1826 American shipping would be prohibited altogether from the British West Indies. No concessions were made, however, and so on 27 July 1826 the British Government issued an order-in-council which interdicted trade in American vessels with all British colonies, except those in British North America.

This measure came into effect just days before the new American Minister arrived in the country. Albert Gallatin was sent to replace Rufus King, and arrived at Liverpool on 31 July 1826.¹⁶ Henry Clay had previously expressed doubts as to the wisdom of the American policy towards the British colonial trade. Thus in May 1825 he wrote to Samuel Smith: "Do we not contend for too much in insisting upon the introduction into the W. Indies of our produce on the same terms with that of Canada?"¹⁷ The instructions Gallatin were given marked an appreciable retreat in the American position. As Clay informed James Brown, "His instructions were framed so as to admit of an amicable arrangement of that subject ..."¹⁸ He was to suggest that the various duties be withdrawn, and he was to drop the demand that the United States be treated on equal terms with the British Empire.

Interestingly, this was remarkably similar to the terms upon which the issue was to be settled in 1830. The terms, of course, were severely criticised by Adams and especially Clay. When the subsequent critics were in charge of the nation's affairs, however, the terms were not accepted by Great Britain. She maintained that she had made a generous offer, which the United States had turned down. She was also influenced by the economic crisis of 1825-26. There were several failures among the country banks in 1825, culminating in December 1825 when some of the larger London banking houses were forced to close. The true cause of this crisis was probably excessive speculation, but it was

popularly believed to have been caused by the free trade measures with which Huskisson was so closely associated.¹⁹ Albert Gallatin reported to Clay that "The distress of the Country is by many ... ascribed to the removal of restrictions in the navigation laws which Mr. Huskisson has already effected, and he is apprehensive that this is not the proper time to carry on further the system of enlargement."²⁰ William B. Lawrence provides further evidence for the argument that adverse economic circumstances explain the reluctance of Great Britain to deal with the United States at this time. The true reason for the suspension of the trade, he told Clay, "grew out of the state of things in England and resulted from nothing which was done or omitted on our part."²¹ By refusing to deal with the United States, Huskisson could be seen as less of a free trader and more of a protector of British interests.

In December 1826, in his Second Annual Message to Congress, John Quincy Adams referred the question to the members of the two branches of the legislature. "The refusal ... of Great Britain to negotiate, leaves the United States no other alternative than that of regulating or indicting altogether the trade on their part."²² No action was taken by Congress, however. So the President was obliged, under the terms of the act of March 1823, to reintroduce the measures of 1818 and 1820. This he did on 17 March 1827. Further attempts were made to negotiate on the subject with Great Britain by Gallatin and his successor, James Barbour.

The latter's Mission was a disaster from the start. As soon as he arrived, he discovered that Lawrence, Secretary to the Mission, was on the point of resigning. He also learned that Gallatin, in departing, had taken his instructions.²³ Great Britain refused to negotiate in any case. Thus, when John Quincy Adams left the White House in March 1829, the position was that the ports of the British West Indies were totally closed to American vessels, while American ports were closed to British vessels coming from any British colony in the Western Hemisphere.

The position was not so desperate, from the American point of view. The produce of the United States still entered the British West Indies indirectly, via British North America and the other West Indian colonies. But the loss of the direct trade provided a valuable point of attack for the Jacksonian opposition to Adams and Clay. As James Brown observed from Paris, "The Colonial question has been a fortune to the opponents of the Administration." Daniel Webster remarked, somewhat ungrammatically, "I see attempts are making, in New York & other places, to produce an impression that the National interests have, in this instance, been overlooked."²⁴ Leading Jacksonian politicians seized their chance. Martin Van Buren inquired, in the Senate, why Adams had refused to accept the generous British offer? Privately, he accused Adams and Clay of "having trifled with a very valuable portion of our commerce."²⁵ John C. Calhoun, although Vice-President himself, suggested that the trade had been lost by "the

neglect of the administration".²⁶ Samuel Smith argued that the British act of 1822 "gave us all that we wanted", and wished to see "a spirit of conciliation on our part", rather than the measures taken by the administrations of Monroe and Adams.²⁷ John Quincy Adams records Richard Rush saying that he "had seen the hand of Mr. Tazewell in some comments of the Southern papers charging the Government of the United States with failing to meet the liberal offers of Great Britain upon this subject ..."²⁸ Newspapers drew attention to the adverse impact upon American commerce. The Boston Daily Advertiser claimed that "we are cut off from one of the markets for our surplus produce, and from a considerable field for the employment of our shipping." The National Palladium said that merchants were "groaning under the loss of [the West India] trade." The New York Evening Post referred to Adams' "sacrifice of the colonial trade."²⁹ Southern newspapers were especially vehement in their criticism of the Administration. The Richmond Enquirer, for example, pointed out that the fact that American staples would no longer be able to enter the ports of the British West Indies would bear "very hardly upon the Southern States." It blamed Adams for the "elsewhere" clause, which it claimed was intended to promote "the interest of the owners of the lumber and live stock of the Northern States."³⁰ The Administration, then, was accused of having committed a blunder. Thus the Cincinnati periodical, Friend of Reform, claimed that "this bungling

diplomatic administration had by its culpable neglect deprived the nation of the British Colonial trade ..."³¹

According to the New York Evening Post, the "first constitutional opportunity to remove the present Executive of the United States" ought to be grasped, in order that the nation might gain re-entry into the direct trade with the British West Indies.³² Frank Lee Benns argued that the loss of the British West India carrying trade in 1826, and the fact that the considerable diplomatic efforts of the Adams Administration to regain it failed, were contributory factors to the defeat of Adams in the election of 1828. He stated that the Jacksonian politicians let it be known that their man, if elected, would restore the trade.³³ Most historians have followed this line, arguing that the issue was raised, and that it exerted an influence on the result. Martin Van Buren, in February 1827, predicted that as a result of the loss of the trade, "Mr. Adams' re-election is out of the question."³⁴ The implication is that the Jacksonians should have received support from the merchant interests. Lowell J. Ragatz has made precisely this claim.³⁵ It is certainly true that within the ranks of the Jackson party after the election of 1828 there were politicians with commercial and shipping interests - Samuel Smith of Maryland and Churchill C. Cambreleng of New York were just two such men. At the very least it can be said that the commercial community was not unanimously behind the candidacy of John Quincy Adams, as might have been expected.

The foregoing suggests that issues played a considerably more important part in the election of 1828 than has traditionally been believed. Some historians are beginning to claim that issues were significant in the preceding presidential election.³⁶ The leading historian of the election of 1828, Robert V. Remini, claims, however, that issues were of secondary importance. He devotes considerable attention to improved electioneering techniques such as cartoons, barbecues, and parades. Through such techniques a kind of political mass hysteria was produced, and was focused primarily on the personalities of the leading candidates.³⁷ But, in fact, the attack on the incompetence of John Quincy Adams was buttressed by concrete examples of this alleged incompetence. His handling of the foreign affairs of the nation was thus discussed. The most conspicuous example of the failure of his foreign policy was the loss of the direct trade with the British West Indies.

By studying the Washington press, in the crucial year of 1828, H. M. Neiditch has substantiated Bennis' claim: the failure of the Adams Administration with regard to the colonial trade was a tangible issue frequently raised during the campaign.³⁸ While it is difficult to be certain how influential this issue was in deciding the outcome of the election, it is clear that Jackson and his advisers felt that he was placed under some obligation to tackle the problem by the emphasis placed on it during the election. As he told members of the New York legislature in 1832,

the influence [this branch of trade] was believed to have had in the elections, which terminated in the change of the administration, and the general expectation on the part of the people, that renewed efforts, on frank and decisive grounds, might be successfully made to recover it, imposed upon me the duty of undertaking the task.

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A similar view was expressed in the instructions Van Buren provided for Louis McLane, the Minister to London. Believing that the electorate had applied a "constitutional corrective", the instructions referred to the trade issue having been "submitted to the people of the United States, and the counsels by which your conduct is now directed are the result of the judgment expressed by the only earthly tribunal to which the late administration was amenable for its acts."⁴⁰

5. Untying the Gordian Knot

Towards the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth century the Providence Patriot was able, legitimately, to describe the Anglo-American dispute over the British West India carrying trade as "a Gordian Knot, which will require an Alexander in diplomacy to untie if it is ever untied by negotiation."¹ The leading contender for the role of Alexander, it may safely be assumed, was John Quincy Adams. And yet, by the end of the Adams Administration, the problem was of an even more serious nature. Rather than John Quincy Adams it was Andrew Jackson who brought about an agreement with the former colonial master, and in so doing paved the way for a decade of improved relations.

This result was most certainly not widely anticipated at the time of Jackson's accession to power. As Thomas Hart Benton recalled,

[Jackson's] election had been deprecated as that of a rash and violent man, who would involve us in quarrels with foreign nations; [and the West India question] was a dissension with a great nation lying in wait for him - prepared to his hand - the legacy of his predecessor - either to be composed satisfactorily, or to ripen into retaliation and hostility; for it was not to be supposed that things could remain as they were.

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The charge of "military chieftain" had often been levelled against Andrew Jackson. Asked why he had preferred to back Adams rather than Jackson in 1824, Henry Clay remarked that he deemed Jackson "unfit for civil rule."³ This view was

shared by Albert Gallatin. While admitting that Jackson was "An honest man", Gallatin felt that he was "the idol of the worshippers of military glory." He was, "from incapacity, military habits, and habitual disregard of laws and constitutional provisions, altogether unfit for the office [of President]." ⁴ Andrew Jackson was well aware that he was the subject of such attacks. In June 1823 Colonel Charles P. Tutt wrote to tell him that his political enemies "have labored hard to produce an impression, that you were a man governed alone by Passion and impulse ..." ⁵ James Brown wrote to Clay from Paris, in April 1825, telling the Secretary of State that the election of John Quincy Adams had been welcomed in Europe. While personally acknowledging that "The character of Genl. Jackson was considerably mistaken ...," Brown observed that "It was believed that his education had been entirely military and that he would if elected declare war on the slightest pretext or provocation." ⁶ This was, of course, constitutionally impossible, but it exhibits a widely-held fear concerning Jackson's character. In the English periodical, the Quarterly Review, Sir John Barrow referred to Jackson as a man of "ungovernable temper, a ferocious courage and a contempt for the constitution and laws." ⁷ This view was expressed in 1828, when the prospect of Jackson's election was far from welcome in Europe. This impression is given by one of Henry Clay's correspondents, Joseph Hill Clark. He assured Clay that if Jackson were victorious, "our character will sink dreadfully in the estimation of all those in Europe who have been looking to

our country as the last hope & refuge of all that is enlightened & wise in Government." Jackson was portrayed, unflatteringly, as a man "who sets all laws at defiance, who is unable to control his own violent passions and who has shown himself utterly incapable of civil employment ..."⁸ When Jackson won in 1828, Jesse B. Harrison repeated this line. He reported from Hanover that "all the Liberals in Europe have been mortified at the late election of our President. In France the lovers of America freely express their condoling sentiments to us in conversation ..."⁹ More reactionary opinion in England was highly alarmed. Jackson's "levelling" spirit produced much apprehension, and the near riotous behaviour at the White House on his inauguration did little to calm British nerves.¹⁰

In the words of Jackson's first Secretary of State, Martin Van Buren, "[Jackson's] election produced great alarm in England but the forebodings out of which it sprung were speedily and happily falsified by legitimate means ..."¹¹ From the outset of the Jackson Administration, its pacific intentions were made clear. The tone was established early on by the note which James A. Hamilton sent to Great Britain concerning the Maine-New Brunswick border crisis. Hamilton acted briefly as Secretary of State, until 4 April 1829 in fact, while Martin Van Buren, who had been elected Governor, tidied up his affairs in New York State. Hamilton had received a communication from Sir Charles Vaughan, Stratford Canning's successor as British Minister in Washington. Hamilton realised that the reply to this

"presented to the President a good opportunity to disabuse the public mind; and to give an assurance of the spirit in which his negotiations with Great Britain and other powers would be conducted." Having checked with the President to ensure that his proposed reply accurately reflected the feelings of the Administration, Hamilton sent off his reply, dated 11 March 1829. This referred to "the sincere regret which [the President] feels at the existence of any difference or misunderstanding between the United States and Great Britain, upon the subject matter of this letter or any other whatever", and assured the British that "in all the measures which may be adopted on his part toward their adjustment, he will be entirely actuated and governed by a sincere desire to promote the kindest and best feelings on both sides; and to secure the mutual and lasting interest of the parties ..."¹² Vaughan called in at the State Department to say that he was sure this reply would be appreciated in London, and wrote to tell Lord Aberdeen, the British Foreign Secretary, of the impact of Andrew Jackson's election upon the Maine-New Brunswick frontier area: "the complaints on the part of the Government of the State of Maine of the encroachments by British authority, upon the disputed territory, which were so frequent under the preceding administration, have been discouraged, and have ceased ..."¹³

In his Inaugural Message to Congress, dated 4 March 1829, Andrew Jackson gave the first statement of the aims of the foreign policy he would pursue. He declared that, in the

sphere of foreign affairs, it was his intention "to preserve peace and to cultivate friendship on fair and honorable terms, and in the adjustment of any differences that may exist or arise to exhibit the forbearance becoming a powerful nation rather than the sensibility belonging to a gallant people."¹⁴ This message was restated in early April at a reception held for the diplomatic community resident in Washington. When he had finally arrived in the nation's capital, Martin Van Buren, the new Secretary of State, had found that the resident diplomats were still unsure of the good intentions expressed by the President at his inauguration. Thus a reception was arranged for Monday, 6 April 1829. The President was coached by his Secretary of State, and delivered the following brief speech:

I am happy that an occasion has presented itself which enables me to reiterate to you, Gentlemen, respectively, the sentiments expressed in that part of my Inaugural Address relating to the foreign policy of this Government, and to add that I am quite sure the true interests of this country will be best promoted by preserving the relations of peace with all nations, so long as that can be done with a due regard to its own honor; and by commercial intercourse founded on principles of just reciprocity.

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Following this address the assembled diplomats sat down to dinner, which was presided over by Jackson. Nor was this the end of the courtship of the diplomatic corps. There followed a series of informal dinners at which, Jackson and Van Buren hoped, the diplomatic representatives would finally be convinced of the sincerity and good intentions of the Jackson Administration. This seems to have been the

outcome in the case of the British Minister at least. Vaughan was present at the initial dinner, and reported favourably upon the occasion to Aberdeen. In Van Buren's words, "it did not take him long to become convinced of the extent to which the General's character and temper has been misrepresented ...". Indeed Vaughan went so far as to claim that Jackson had reassured the diplomats, himself included, far more than had his diplomatically more experienced predecessor, John Quincy Adams.¹⁶

On his arrival in Washington, Van Buren discovered that the President had, on his own initiative, made some diplomatic appointments. Among those completed were two key ones, to London and Paris. The former post had been offered to Littleton W. Tazewell of Virginia; the latter to an old comrade of Jackson's, Edward Livingston of Louisiana. Hurried into making prompt decisions by Van Buren, each man turned down his proposed appointment. A further factor contributing to Tazewell's decision was his belief that he would not have been able to resolve satisfactorily the West India trade dispute. It seems that Van Buren hoped to introduce Louis McLane of Delaware into the cabinet, but in order to accomplish this objective he first had to persuade John M. Berrien, the prospective Attorney General, to undertake the Mission to London. When Berrien refused, the position was offered to McLane. Having been led to believe that he would receive a cabinet appointment, McLane was sorely disappointed. Consequently, his acceptance of the London post was far from graceful. As Van Buren put it,

"Mr. McLane's reply addressed to me in an unofficial letter, did not come up to my anticipation ..." ¹⁷ John Quincy Adams was not at all impressed by this appointment. Referring to this "painful incident", he claimed that "McLane is utterly incompetent to the mission to London, and if he does not disgrace the country, will effect nothing for her interest." He concluded that McLane would "give [Jackson] and Van Buren trouble. No Administration can make bad appointments abroad with impunity." ¹⁸ There was praise, however, from Francis X. Baylies, a Jacksonian politician. He summed up McLane's strengths: "His talents certainly are of a high order. In the H. of R. no man could compete so successfully with Webster ... He is correct, conciliatory and spirited; he would give no insult, and he would receive none." These attributes would seem to have fitted him for a diplomatic career. In addition, he was admirably suited to the London post in view of his former Federalism: "that is a circumstance in his favor. In the settlement of our difficulties with G.B. much depends on good will, and you well know that the Federalists labour under the stigma of British partialities." ¹⁹ McLane's Federalism caused him difficulties when Andrew Jackson embarked upon the Bank War. McLane was to be Secretary of the Treasury, and was opposed to Jackson's policy towards the Bank of the United States.

With the London post filled, the next task facing the Jackson Administration was to draw up McLane's

instructions. Several politicians were involved during the preparation of these. James A. Hamilton, no longer acting as Secretary of State but still an important adviser, was consulted. So was the New York City Jacksonian, Churchill C. Cambreleng, of the House Committee on Commerce. Most of the ideas, however, seem to have come from McLane himself. McLane too canvassed opinion. He thanked Samuel Smith for the suggestions he made.²⁰ While Cambreleng proposed that the United States should offer to lower its tariff, McLane disagreed. He regarded the tariff as a matter of domestic policy, which ought not therefore to be used as a negotiating tool in dealings with foreign powers. He did not object, though, to informing Great Britain that it was the intention of the new Administration to modify the tariff as a part of its domestic policy. In order to regain the British West India carrying trade, McLane proposed that the Jackson Administration should divorce itself from the position adopted by its predecessor. The British might then be willing to re-open the trade on the terms previously offered. Nor should the United States insist on settling the matter by treaty. Rather, if the British preferred, the two sides would pass separate legislation in order to bring about a resolution of the crisis.²¹

McLane's suggestions reached Van Buren in June 1829. The actual instructions were written by Van Buren, and dated 20 July. They closely followed McLane's recommendations. After a survey of the dispute, Van Buren summarized the

position of the Jackson Administration: "[the President] is willing to regulate the trade in question upon terms of reciprocal advantage, and to adopt for that purpose those which Great Britain has herself elected, and which are prescribed by the act of Parliament of 5th July, 1825 ...". He also dealt with the form the agreement might take: "This Government has heretofore strenuously contended for an arrangement by treaty, and that of Great Britain has as strenuously opposed any other mode than that of separate legislation. The President is willing to adopt either mode." In explaining this new approach to the whole problem, McLane was instructed to inform the British that the matter had been submitted to the American electorate in 1828. The policy pursued by Adams had been decisively rejected; the new Administration was not making the same impossible demands. The instructions thus referred to "our too long and too tenaciously resisting the right of Great Britain to impose protecting duties in her colonies."²²

These instructions possessed both diplomatic and political importance. Diplomatically, they enabled the long-running controversy over the West India trade to be resolved in late 1830. Their political significance came to light in 1831-32. In the summer of 1831 a series of articles was published in the Philadelphia newspaper, United States Gazette. These articles, written by Edward Ingersoll, accused McLane of "begging" to the British.²³ Early in 1832 the Senate voted not to confirm Martin Van Buren's appointment as Minister to London. Daniel Webster left the

Senate chamber in order that the vote would be tied, and John C. Calhoun, presiding over the Senate, cast his deciding vote against Van Buren.²⁴ During the preceding debates, Van Buren had been assailed by the great triumvirate of Calhoun, Clay, and Webster. The last-named argued that, in the instructions he had composed for McLane, Van Buren had sacrificed patriotism to party. He regarded this as the "first instance in which an American minister has been sent abroad as the representative of his party, and not as the representative of his country."²⁵ Clay argued that the President had exceeded his authority when he had nominated Van Buren during a Senate recess. But the brunt of his attack was based upon the contention that the instructions had resulted in "prostrating and degrading the American eagle before the British lion ..."²⁶ This was, frankly, hypocritical. Clay's instructions to Albert Gallatin were remarkably similar. Van Buren wrote to Jackson in March 1832 making precisely this point:

... I wish you would ask Mr. Livingston [Secretary of State] to shew you Mr Gallatins letter to Mr Clay of the 22d Sepr 1826. In the third paragraph of that letter you will find the concessions as to the points in which we were in the wrong, of which so much complaint is made, distinctly stated by Mr Gallatin and if you refer to Mr Clays subsequent instruction to him you will find that Mr Gallatins views are in effect acquiescd in by him ...

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Ironically, it was probably John C. Calhoun who took the most principled stand on the question. He voted out of personal spite, to be sure. But he was at least honest in his opposition to Van Buren, blaming him - quite correctly

- for having engineered the dissolution of Jackson's first cabinet. The Calhounites - Hayne, Miller, Moore, and Poindexter - opposed Van Buren's nomination because they sincerely believed that his politicking had been a corrupting and detrimental influence in the Jackson Administration.²⁸ John Quincy Adams expressed himself in a hostile manner upon Van Buren - "[he had] disgraced himself, when Secretary of State, by pandering to palm a prostitute [Mrs. Eaton] upon decent society, and disgraced the country by his instructions to McLane upon his mission to England" - but he argued against rejecting the nomination. The result of such an outcome, he believed, would be to "bring him back with increased power to do mischief here ..."²⁹ Adams' warning was not heeded. Whether or not as a result of this rejection by the senate, Van Buren fulfilled Adams' prophecy by being elected first Vice-President and then President.

All this was in the distant political future when Louis McLane, armed with his instructions, set sail for England from New York. He reached London on 17 September 1829. He did not, however, meet his British counterparts until October, due to an illness he had picked up during the long sea journey. But, on 14 October, he was finally presented to King George IV by Lord Aberdeen. McLane assured King George of President Jackson's intention to improve Anglo-American relations. Two days later, on 16 October, McLane had his first major meeting with Aberdeen. In the course of a meeting which lasted some two hours, McLane put

forward the American case. He told Aberdeen that the United States did not dispute the right of Great Britain to regulate the West India trade as she saw fit, but objected to the regulations treating the United States differently to other nations. This difference in treatment was the result of a piece of British legislation which had granted concessions to nations which offered reciprocal concessions in their colonies to Great Britain. Not (yet) being a colonial power, the United States was thus excluded from these concessions. When Aberdeen raised the question of the American tariff of 1828, McLane followed his instructions closely, replying that this was a domestic policy issue. Besides, he pointed out that certain British legislation, notably the Corn Law, was equally unpopular in the United States. At the end of the meeting nothing had been agreed, and Aberdeen suggested that McLane should have some discussions with William Vesey Fitzgerald, President of the Board of Trade.³⁰

This proved to be difficult. Traditionally, autumn was that time of the year when the leading political figures - in this period the leading social figures as well - retired to their country estates. In the words of the novelist, Washington Irving, who was Secretary to the Legation,

It is the season of field sports, when every English gentleman ... makes a point of absenting himself as much as possible from town, to enjoy the hunting and shooting, which are pursued with a kind of mania from one end of the kingdom to the other. The frequent absence of cabinet ministers on excursions of the kind, have repeatedly delayed interviews and interrupted and protracted negotiations.

William Vesey Fitzgerald was an Irish landlord, and it was consequently more than a fortnight before McLane was able to have a meeting with him. This having taken place, it was a further week before McLane was able to meet Aberdeen again. At this meeting, McLane informed Aberdeen that he would recommend the passage of American legislation that would comply with the British act of 1825, if Aberdeen could assure him that, in response, Great Britain would open up her colonial ports to American vessels on the same terms that applied to the vessels of other, colonial, countries. Aberdeen promised that he would present this proposal to a meeting of the cabinet council.³²

McLane, in his instructions, had been urged to try to settle the whole matter as speedily as possible. But the instructions seemed not to have taken into full consideration the pace, or rather lack of pace, at which the British diplomatic decision-making process operated. McLane heard nothing. On 12 December 1829 he addressed a communication to Lord Aberdeen, beginning "I had flattered myself with the hope of receiving before this time a decisive answer from his majesty's Government to the propositions which I had the honor to make some time since for an arrangement of the trade between the United States and the British American colonies ...". He went on to repeat his offer of separate legislation as a means of breaking the deadlock, and hinted that "delay can only tend to increase the difficulties on both sides to any future adjustment ..."³³ Lord Aberdeen replied that he would, for

his part, "lose no time in bringing the propositions contained in your letter under the consideration of his Majesty's Government."³⁴ The matter seemingly had not yet been discussed. But McLane received no prompt reply to his renewed proposition.

At this point President Jackson's First Annual Message was delivered to Congress. This contained the general statement that, in the realm of foreign affairs, he would "ask nothing that is not clearly right and ... submit to nothing that is wrong ..." He then moved on to deal with specific countries, and the hopes he entertained with regard to relations with them:

With Great Britain, alike distinguished in peace and war, we may look forward to years of peaceful, honorable, and elevated competition. Everything in the condition and history of the two nations is calculated to inspire sentiments of mutual respect and to carry conviction to the minds of both that it is their policy to preserve the most cordial relations. Such are my own views, and it is not to be doubted that such are also the prevailing sentiments of our constituents.

35

This was extremely well received in Great Britain. Writing to James A. Hamilton, McLane reported that "The Message has produced an immense effect here." He informed the President that, at a dinner party hosted by the Home Secretary, Sir Robert Peel, he had heard much praise for it.³⁶ The London Times declared that "never since Washington's day, had a message included so much that was valuable and so little that was offensive."³⁷ This comment

was made on the fifteenth anniversary of Andrew Jackson's resounding triumph at the Battle of New Orleans.

McLane continued his negotiations with Wellington, Aberdeen, and Herries - the new President of the Board of Trade. This occurred throughout the winter of 1829-30; still McLane received no official answer to his propositions. When, then, he learned that the Board of Trade was to make a report on the subject, he decided once again to present a written statement of the American position. On 16 March 1830 he addressed himself once more to Lord Aberdeen, reminding him of his previous submission, and urging that the British take action to settle the matter before Congress adjourned at the end of its session. He hinted, moreover, at the possibility of a further deterioration in Anglo-American relations if the matter were not settled. While denying that he was threatening Great Britain, he summed up the American position as requesting

participation in a direct, rather than a circuitous trade, upon terms which Great Britain deliberately adopted in 1825 as beneficial to her colonies, and which she continues to the present day to allow to all the rest of the world. A rejection of [this proposition] would appear to result, not from any condemnation of the direct trade, or any conviction of the impolicy of permitting it with the West Indian colonies, but rather from a determination of excluding from it the commerce of the United States alone.

38

It seems that McLane did not anticipate prompt British action. On 22 March 1830 he informed Van Buren of his recent communication to Aberdeen, and went on to recommend

"prospective legislation" that would enable the President to issue a proclamation if the British reply were received during the Congressional recess. Thus the President would be empowered to repeal the legislation providing for the imposition of discriminating duties, and to open up American ports to British vessels sailing from the British West Indies.³⁹

With Congress nearing the end of its session, on 26 May 1830 the President sent a message to Congress. The message suggested that

Although no decision has been made at the date of our last advices from Mr. McLane, yet from the general character of the interviews between him and those of His Majesty's ministers whose particular duty it was to confer with him on the subject there is sufficient reason to expect a favorable result to justify me in submitting to you the propriety of providing for a decision in the recess. This may be done by authorizing the President, in case an arrangement can be effected upon such terms as Congress would approve, to carry the same into effect on our part by proclamation ...

40

The President's communication was referred to the House Committee on Commerce. Its chairman, Cambreleng, had already been informed by McLane that such legislation would probably be required, and he was ready with a suitable bill. This was duly reported, and passed into law on 30 May 1830. It is significant to note how co-operative Congress was; in the mid-1830s President Jackson did not receive such prompt support during the French Debts Crisis, when the Jacksonians no longer controlled the Senate. The bill enabled Jackson, if during the Congressional recess

news should come from London to the effect that the British would open up her West Indian colonial ports on the terms of the act of 1825, to reciprocate by Presidential proclamation, thereby repealing the American acts of 1818, 1820, and 1823. Significantly, another measure introduced by Cambreleng reduced American duties on some produce that would be exported from the British West Indies into the United States.⁴¹

Martin Van Buren informed McLane of the passage of this legislation in a letter dated 18 June 1830. Why he delayed for so long is not clear. However he enclosed copies of Jackson's Message to Congress and the resulting legislation. He wrote that

It is confidently hoped that the law referred to, with the motives in which it originated ..., added to the frank and liberal offer and explanations already made to the British Government on the part of the Executive Department of this, will, of themselves, be regarded by that Government as affording sufficient ground for its changing [its position on the colonial trade question, thereby enabling] the speedy and mutually advantageous revival of trade between the United States and the West Indian possessions of Great Britain ...

42

McLane received this note on 29 June, and communicated it to Aberdeen in 1 July 1830. Within the next week McLane had had meetings with the Prime Minister (Wellington) and with the King.

During the course of the meeting with Aberdeen, it was again suggested that the American Minister should provide a written statement of the proposals being made by the Jackson Administration. McLane duly obliged with a letter

to Aberdeen, dated 12 July 1830. He described the enabling legislation which Congress had passed, and also detailed the new, reduced, tariff schedules. The American action, he contended, was "a voluntary and leading step in the conciliating policy of the two nations ..."43 On 17 August the whole issue was provisionally settled. On 20 August McLane communicated Aberdeen's letter of 17 August to Washington:

I have the satisfaction to forward herewith a letter from the Earl of Aberdeen ... by which it will be perceived that my negotiation for the colonial trade is successfully closed; and that this Government consents to restore to us the direct intercourse with her American colonies, upon the terms of the proposition submitted by me on the 12th of December last.

44

Armed with this news from London, Jackson issued a proclamation on 5 October 1830. Having explained that the conditions laid down in the act of May 1830 had been fulfilled, he continued:

Now, therefore, I, Andrew Jackson, President of the United States of America, do hereby declare and proclaim ... that the ports of the United States are, from the date of this proclamation, open to British vessels coming from the said British possessions, and their cargoes, upon the terms set forth in the said act; [and that the acts of 18 April 1818, 15 May 1820, and 1 March 1823] are absolutely repealed ...

45

Louis McLane received a copy of this proclamation on 2 November 1830. The very next day he communicated it to Aberdeen. A meeting of the King's council, held on 5 November 1830, duly revoked the orders-in-council of 1826-27. As a result of this action, McLane was able to write

to Van Buren on 6 November, informing him that the appropriate action had been taken by the British authorities. This had the effect, he wrote, of "fully closing the negotiation upon this important part of our relations."⁴⁶

The Jackson Administration had successfully untied the Gordian Knot, and the President could lay claim to being "an Alexander in diplomacy". In the words of Thomas Hart Benton, "The great object was accomplished. The trade was recovered; and what had been lost under one administration, and precariously enjoyed under others, and been the subject of fruitless negotiation for forty years ... was now amicably [settled by Andrew Jackson]"⁴⁷

6. The Republican Roots of Rapprochement

Notwithstanding plentiful evidence of his earlier Anglophobia, it is quite clear that Andrew Jackson genuinely wanted to bring about an improvement in Anglo-American relations. It is difficult not to believe his many statements professing his desire to preside over a rapprochement between the two nations. Few, even his most bitter political opponents, would argue that he was not always honest and truthful. He has been condemned mostly for the single-minded way he pursued his aims; very few have doubted the sincerity of his belief in those aims. Writing to Louis McLane, just after the President's First Annual Message to Congress (the one which was so warmly received in Great Britain) Van Buren observed that

there certainly never was a time better calculated for the improvement of the relations between the two countries than the present. The solicitude sincerely felt by the President upon this head, is greater than the occasion referred to would allow him to express: and I am persuaded that there has been no event in his public life that has caused him as much regret as he would experience in failing to be instrumental in the establishment of the very best understanding between the United States and Great Britain.

1

To explain this apparent volte face on the part of the Hero of New Orleans leads to the heart of the philosophy underpinning the Jacksonian Democratic Party in both its foreign and domestic policies.

The idea, or at least the rhetoric, of democracy was of great importance to Andrew Jackson and his followers. They

were in favour of a greater responsiveness - when it suited them - to the public will. In overthrowing Adams and Clay in 1828, the Jacksonians believed, the American electorate had provided them with a mandate. The Adams Administration had been violently condemned for having lost the direct trade with the British West Indies. The Jacksonians promised to do better; to try to regain the trade. Jackson believed that the outcome of the election imposed upon him and his followers the duty of acting to recover the trade. This duty was particularly important to Jackson. He was of the opinion that a person ought not to solicit public office: "The course ever pursued by me and which I have always thought congenial with the republican principles of my country, was on no occasion to solicit for office ...". However, if there were a public demand, this could not be declined. He believed that the office of President was of such importance that "it cannot with propriety be declined when offered by those who have the power of selection..."² The power vested in the people was, for Jackson, so important that he was hostile to the idea of party caucuses making decisions on behalf of the people. As he wrote to John Coffee in 1824:

I am happy to see the good people of america are puting their faces against these congressional caucuses, and I do hope the one last held will put this unconstitutional proceeding to sleep forever, and leave to the people their constitutional right of free suffrage. should this not be the case, it will introduce into our Government, a sistematic system of intrigue and corruption ... that will ultimately destroy the liberty of our country, a central power will arise here; who under patronage of a corrupt, and venal administration, will deprive the people of their liberties; and place into the executive chair whom they

may will ..."

3

In 1825, from a Jacksonian point of view, the popular will had been thwarted by the "corrupt bargain" between Adams and Clay. Had not Andrew Jackson received more votes, both popular and electoral, than any of the other candidates? But the election, thrown into the House of Representatives, had resulted in plotting and bargaining that had thwarted the popular will. The sincerity of Jackson and his party upon this issue is manifested by the proposal made, in the First Annual Message to Congress, to reform the electoral system:

To the people belongs the right of electing their Chief Magistrate; it was never designed that their choice should in any case be defeated, either by the intervention of electoral colleges or by ... the House of Representatives. Experience proves that in proportion as agents to executive the will of the people are multiplied there is danger of their wishes being frustrated ... I would therefore recommend such an amendment of the Constitution as may remove all intermediate agency in the election of the President and Vice-President.

4

The verdict of the American electorate in 1828, then, provided one reason for Andrew Jackson and his political supporters wishing to settle the West India trade question. Another reason was that the Jackson Administration sought to conciliate, even appease, the South. The Administration was avowedly pro-Southern. This is not to say that it was deliberately hostile to the interests of the North, but that, in its quest to secure the harmony of the whole Union, it pursued policies which were reassuring to the

South. The South had become extremely disenchanted with the drift of the policies of the Adams Administration; so disenchanted, in fact, that even Jacksonian efforts at reassurance did not completely succeed. Just because one of the most famous crises in American history - Nullification - occurred during the Presidency of Andrew Jackson, it should not be overlooked that much was done to appease the South.⁵ Indeed, even during the Nullification Crisis the actions taken by Andrew Jackson were not so much anti-Southern as pro-Union. It was Andrew Jackson who stood for a "judicious revision" of the tariff.⁶ Southerners understood this to mean a revision of the tariff schedules in a downwards direction, which was precisely what they wanted. It was Andrew Jackson who, in his Third Annual Message to Congress, delivered in December 1831, called for a "modification of the tariff which shall produce a reduction of our revenue to the wants of the Government and an adjustment of the duties on imports with a view to equal justice in relation to all our national interests ..."⁷ When the proposed revisions to the tariff were "nullified" by South Carolina, Andrew Jackson was primarily concerned with the threat to the viability of the Union. It was for this reason that he sought the passage of the Force Bill; not so that he could impose military force on the South. He did not stand in the way of Clay's compromise tariff. It was only because of the militancy of South Carolina that Jackson's conduct during the Nullification Crisis appears to be anti-Southern.

The President gave satisfaction to many Southerners by his policy of vetoing federally-sponsored measures of internal improvements, such as the Maysville Road. The South was extremely concerned about John Quincy Adams' centralizing tendencies. Too powerful a central government might legislate on the vexed subject of slavery. Andrew Jackson's stricter interpretation of the Constitution was more favourably received. Jackson was not opposed to internal improvements in themselves; he did not, however, approve of federal aid for purely local projects. From the Southern point of view he was clearly to be preferred to Adams on this issue at least. This was more particularly the case in the South East, which had readier access to natural transportation systems than had the newer states of the South West. The President's policy of Indian Removal was greatly appreciated in such states as Mississippi and Alabama. Jackson argued, in his Annual Message of December 1830, that this policy "will incalculably strengthen the southwestern frontier ... It will ... enable [such states] to advance rapidly in population, wealth, and power."⁸ Georgia had good reason to be content with Jackson's reluctance, indeed refusal, to enforce the decision of Chief Justice John Marshall with regard to the Indians within its borders.⁹ The effect of this was to allow Georgia freedom to rid itself of Indians.

Andrew Jackson was, along with most of his party, "sound" on the issue of most importance to the South: slavery. He and other leading Jacksonians - such as Kendall, Blair, and

Taney - either were or had been slaveholders. Once the American Anti-Slavery Society began its policy of agitation, in the mid-1830s, Jacksonian politicians loudly and roundly condemned such disruptive action. Amos Kendall, as Postmaster General, did not intervene to enforce the distribution of abolitionist material in the South. It can be argued that Jacksonian Democracy inherited much from the political legacy of Thomas Jefferson. Included in this inheritance was a strong attachment to the institution of slavery.¹⁰ It may be significant, in this regard, that support for the Jacksonian Democrats in the South ceased to be solid and dependable when Martin Van Buren, a Northerner by birth, ran for President in 1836. The candidate for Vice-President, Richard M. Johnson of Kentucky, was even more of a handicap: he lived with his Negro mistress, by whom he had several children. On the whole, however, the South could feel fairly secure while Andrew Jackson was President.

The restoration of the direct trade with the British West Indies formed a not inconsiderable part of this policy of appeasing the South. There was considerable dissatisfaction in the South with the American System of Adams and Clay. Robert Y. Hayne of South Carolina complained to Andrew Jackson in June 1827 that "Mr. Clay's American policy has degenerated into a plan for granting to a few overgrown Incorporated Companies in New England an exclusive monopoly of the home market ..."¹¹ It was argued

that, in their adherence to the protective tariff and other discriminatory legislation, Adams and Clay might have been looking after the interests of nascent Northern industry, but they were neglecting the interests of the South in the process. In a speech delivered on 2 July 1827 in Columbia, South Carolina, Thomas Cooper pointed out that by such policies "our best customers abroad, are likely to be provoked into justifiable retaliation ...". Robert J. Turnbull observed, in a similar vein: "Every planter knows that for his cotton he must look to Europe, and to England particularly, for a market ... Only close the European trade against us, and where shall we look for a market?" The true interest of the United States, he believed, was in "a free and uninterrupted commerce with the whole world, and particularly with England."¹² With the loss of the direct trade with the British West Indies, Southern producers lost a market for their produce. Or, at the very least, this trade was severely restricted. What was mostly exported to the colonial islands was perishable, and hence needed to be transported by the most direct route to ensure maximum freshness. Produce could still arrive, but only indirectly. This was time-consuming, and also involved extra shipping and insurance charges. There was the risk, furthermore, that general trade relations with Great Britain would suffer. John C. Calhoun had written, in December 1826, of his fear that "the whole of our commercial relations with England [would] be involved in difficulty ..."¹³ By returning the direct trade Jackson could assist Southern producers in the short-term, by

providing for them once again a natural market. In the longer term he ensured that Southern-grown cotton could continue to be exported to its best market, in Great Britain. The recovery of the direct trade with the British West Indies thus marked an important step along the road away from the American system, with its intense economic nationalism, and towards a less restricted commercial intercourse with the markets of the Old World.

This was a basic tenet of the policies of Andrew Jackson and his party. The Jacksonians favoured the promotion of international commerce. This is not to say that Adams and Clay had been opposed to such commerce. A number of trade treaties were concluded by the Adams Administration. Clay boasted in a speech delivered at Frederick, Maryland, that "more have been actually signed than had been during the thirty-six previous years of the existence of our present constitution."¹⁴ Sweden, Denmark, Prussia, Austria, the Papal States, and the Confederation of Central America were just some of the countries with whom commercial treaties were concluded. But this policy had co-existed with the high-tariff American System, which hindered its successful operation. The Jacksonians too were pro-commerce, but were not so devoted to the accompanying protection. This was not a new attachment to international commerce, adopted once in power. The criticisms which had been levelled in opposition to Adams and Clay contained elements of this devotion to commerce. During the debate on Webster's motion urging recognition of Greek Independence, Samuel

Breck, a "Jacksonian" representative from Pennsylvania, argued that this policy might hinder American trade with the Turkish Empire. More specifically, he was concerned that the port of Smyrna, in Anatolia, might be closed to American vessels.¹⁵ Although Henry Clay argued that attendance at the Panama Congress could be justified in terms of commercial opportunity, some Jacksonians railed against the proposal on the same grounds. The Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, according to Thomas Hart Benton, argued that these commercial treaties sought by the Administration "would be more readily obtained from each nation separately; and that each treaty would be the more easily kept in proportion to the smaller number of parties to it."¹⁶ This Committee was dominated by Jacksonian sympathisers, including as it did Littleton W. Tazewell, Gaillard of South Carolina, and Hugh Lawson White of Tennessee. Each was opposed to the American System. Early demands that the United States should assume control of Oregon and Texas - made by such politicians as Thomas Hart Benton and John Floyd of Virginia - were rooted in the belief that such expansion would be commercially advantageous.¹⁷ Once in power, the Jacksonians did not hesitate to take account of merchant opinion on matters of foreign and commercial policy. Thus Samuel Smith and Churchill C. Cambreleng were among those canvassed while McLane's instructions were being drawn up. Similarly, Van Buren engaged in correspondence with Preserved Fish, the

New York City merchant, when deliberating over the policy to be pursued with regard to the French Claims.¹⁸

The Jackson Administration devoted a good deal of diplomatic time and attention to the pursuit of trade treaties. Agreements were made with Great Britain, France, Russia, and Spain. One of the reasons why Andrew Jackson so earnestly sought a settlement of the French Claims Crisis was to facilitate a new commercial agreement. The instructions given to John Randolph, Minister to Russia, stressed the importance of the successful negotiation of a commercial treaty which would have the effect of boosting American trade in the Black Sea region. When Randolph left Russia early, the burden of arranging this treaty fell upon James Buchanan of Pennsylvania. In his First Annual Message to Congress Jackson declared that "we can not be insensible to the great benefit to be derived by the commerce of the United States from unlocking the navigation of the Black Sea ..."¹⁹ Consequently the Administration also sought a treaty with the Turkish Empire: "sensible of the importance of [commerce in this region] I felt it my duty to leave no proper means unemployed to acquire for our flag the same privileges that are enjoyed by the principal powers of Europe ..."²⁰ Sent to Madrid, Cornelius P. Van Ness of Vermont was instructed to bring about a new commercial treaty between Spain and the United States. It seems that commercial opportunity was the major impetus behind the decision taken to sponsor the mission of Edmund Roberts. Levi Woodbury of New Hampshire, who was Roberts'

brother-in-law, had been the first to suggest such a mission, to the Far East, in 1831. Edward Livingston, when Secretary of State, sanctioned the mission. Roberts was appointed to take charge of the expeditions. His instructions charged him with the task of securing commercial treaties with Siam, Cochin-China, and Muscat - all on the basis of most-favoured-nation.²¹

It should not be surprising, therefore, that Jackson made much of the commercial benefits which might be expected to result from the settlement of the British West India trade question. Thus, in his Second Annual Message to Congress, delivered in 1830, he stressed that

The trade will be placed upon a footing decidedly more favorable to this country than any on which it ever stood, and our commerce and navigation will enjoy in the colonial ports of Great Britain every privilege allowed to other nations. That the prosperity of the country so far as it depends on this trade will be greatly promoted by the new arrangement there can be no doubt.

22

In telling Van Buren of the successful conclusion of his diplomatic efforts, McLane observed that he had, by his efforts, placed "the navigation of both countries ... upon an equal footing. We may safely rely upon the skill and enterprise of the American merchants to accomplish the rest." He concluded with the boast that he had "faithfully contributed to succor the enterprise of my fellow-citizens."²³ Replying, Van Buren assured McLane that the President "cherishes the most lively anticipations of the solid benefits which will flow from the trade that is about

to revive."²⁴ In his Third Annual Message to Congress the President was able to put some figures to this revived trade:

The trade thereby authorized has employed to the 30th September last upward of 30,000 tons of American and 15,000 tons of foreign shipping in the outward voyages, and in the inward nearly an equal amount of American and 20,000 only of foreign tonnage ... Advantages, too, have resulted to our agricultural interests from the state of the trade between Canada and our Territories and States bordering on the St. Lawrence and the Lakes ...

25

There was subsequently debate over the exact value of this new trade. Daniel Webster claimed that Maine actually lost out by the settlement of the dispute, while Samuel Smith claimed that American shipping was prospering and that Maine was thriving too.²⁶

Opponents of the Jackson Administration and the 1830 settlement argued that the trade had never actually been lost, but had continued in a clandestine, roundabout manner. This was true to a certain extent. But the way in which the trade had been carried on was itself a factor in Jackson's decision to try to recover the direct trade. With the restoration of the trade, produce could again be transported in a more virtuous, proper, way. This ties in with the Jacksonian drive to preserve the endangered republican virtue of the American people.²⁷ Robert V. Remini has argued that the period immediately preceding the Presidency of Andrew Jackson should be called "the Era of Corruption."²⁸ There is evidence that many Jacksonians shared a similar view. Thus Andrew Jackson in 1823:

"altho I have great confidence in the virtue of the people, still from local precedants we have a right to fear that the people in some parts have become degenerate and demoralised ...". It is perhaps significant, in this regard, that Jackson chose to refer to Henry Clay as "Judas" following the "corrupt bargain" of 1825. He asked, "Was there ever witnessed such a bare faced corruption in any country before?" Looking at the result of this election, Jackson told John Coffee that "I weep for the liberty of my country ...". This corruption increased during the course of the Adams Administration, so Jacksonians believed, and reached its apogee in the American System. Consequently, the election of 1828 was seen in almost apocalyptic terms by Andrew Jackson. As he told John Coffee, just months before this vital contest:

The patronage of the government for the last three years has been wielded to corrupt every thing that comes within its influence, and was capable of being corrupted, and it would seem, that virtue and truth, has fled from its embrace. The administrators of the Govt has stained our national character, and it rests with the people to work it out, by a full expression of their disapprobation. The present is a contest between the virtue of the people, and the influence of patronage ... for the perpetuity of our republican government ...

29

The election won, Jackson's first major measure was, significantly, the revival of the system of rotation in office. It was hoped that this would reduce the corruption among office-holders of long-standing. Thus Jackson's attempt to promote international commerce, exemplified by the settlement of the British West India trade question,

was an integral part of his policy of restoring the virtue of the nation.

Congratulating Jackson for having settled the contentious colonial question, James A. Hamilton wrote that "the increase of our impost revenues is not to be overlooked. This will [amongst other things] afford the means, more rapidly than was anticipated, of absorbing the public debt ..."³⁰ Abolition of the national debt was one of Jackson's major goals. Holding a simple view of personal and national finances, he believed - ever since burning his own fingers in 1819 - that debts were dangerous. Writing to John Coffee in 1824 he observed that the national debt "ought to be extinguished to prevent a monied aristocracy growing up around the administration of our government, dangerous to the perpetuity of our liberties." The national debt was, in fact, "a national curse".³¹ Quite apart from boosting revenues and thereby allowing the national debt to be paid off, trade agreements symbolised improved relations generally. Such improved relations reduced the necessity to spend federal money on military and naval budgets. As a consequence, the scope of government could be reduced. This was a favourite Jacksonian objective (which, ironically, was pursued by means of vastly expanding the powers of the President). Thus, when a new Jacksonian mouthpiece was established, the Globe, it took as its motto the dictum "The world is governed too much." This formed the basis of Jackson's argument against too great a federal involvement in the

internal-improvements programme which stood at the heart of the American System. Such involvement, Jackson claimed, was fundamentally dangerous:

The power which the General Government would acquire within the several States by becoming the principal stockholder in corporations, controlling every canal and each 60 or 100 miles of every important road, and giving a proportionate vote in all their elections, is almost inconceivable, and in my view dangerous to the liberties of the people.

32

A reduced scale of government would not require such large revenues from taxes and the tariff, thereby enabling these to be lowered. This would contribute to sectional unity by appeasing the South, while simultaneously enabling people to become more self-sufficient. Free from the burden of government taxation, citizens would be able to look more to their own interests. The independent farmer, for example, would be helped. One logical conclusion of yeoman farming is the export of surpluses. While the American System, with its emphasis on the creation of a domestic market for manufactured articles, had hampered this through its policy of tariffs, the more agrarian alternative put forward by such economic theorists as John Taylor of Caroline, and espoused by the Jacksonians, promised greater prosperity and independence through trade with the best customers. A policy which lowered duties and generally removed barriers to the free flow of trade was required; this was exactly what Jackson's agreement of 1830 with Great Britain amounted to. International commerce, the Jacksonians believed, was good for the United States in that it led

away from the American System, which threatened to corrupt the nation.

George Dangerfield offers a fascinating interpretation of the election of 1828.³³ He sees it as the defeat of the American system by "agrarianism". If the American System is defined in terms of a national bank, a high tariff, and a large programme of internal improvements sponsored by the federal government, this is a fair verdict on the election, in view of what followed throughout the Presidency of Andrew Jackson. The Bank of the United States, in its second version, was believed by the Jacksonians to be an engine of corruption; the tariff was reduced; and federal aid for internal-improvement schemes dried up. This was all in the future when Andrew Jackson was elected President in 1828, but, looking back, Dangerfield's is a convincing analysis of the election. Jackson can be seen as the symbol of the Southern agrarian conscience that felt so neglected by the American System policies of the Adams Administration. Viewed in this light, and given that a majority of Jackson supporters in Congress voted against the higher tariff of 1828, the favourable reaction of some Britons to Jackson's election becomes a little more understandable.

By settling outstanding problems and increasing overseas trade the United States could reasonably hope to rise in the estimation of the rest of the world, and especially that of the monarchical powers in Europe. There was, in this respect, a nationalistic element to Andrew Jackson's



foreign policy. Lester D. Langley has argued that Jackson might have been "the supreme nationalist of his age, if not the most articulate."³⁴ Adams and Clay were undoubtedly nationalists too. But they were economic nationalists, firm in their devotion to the American System. The Jacksonians argued that the result of this economic nationalism was sectional disharmony, in that the South was thereby alienated. They were nationalists as well, but of a very different type. They were democratic nationalists.³⁵ They wished to compete, on level terms, with the rest of the world. Their resulting triumph in world markets, they believed, would prove the success of the republican experiment and of American democracy.

This Jacksonian nationalism is clearly exhibited in the vigorous pursuit of claims for damages done to American shipping and goods by other countries in the past. During the Napoleonic Wars French naval vessels had inflicted a good deal of damage upon American merchant ships and their cargoes. Presidents Madison, Monroe, and Adams had each failed to secure compensation for this damage. Outstanding claims were interpreted by the Jackson Administration as an affront to the republican dignity of the United States. The culprit, moreover, was the former ally of the United States, the country of Lafayette, albeit now one of the monarchies of the Old World. The vital diplomatic appointment to France went to William Cabell Rives of Virginia. On 4 July 1831 he concluded a treaty settling the claims question. This settlement demonstrated that the

United States was being taken seriously as a world power. But the problem was not so easily solved. Franco-American relations deteriorated sharply when the French failed to pay the first instalment of the money she owed to the United States. The depths to which relations slumped indicate the resolve of the United States to see proper treatment. President Jackson followed his maxim: "Ask nothing but what is right and permit nothing that is wrong." This, he believed, was the "only way to preserve our national honor ..."³⁶

National honour was also at stake with regard to claims against other countries. One such was Denmark. Henry Wheaton, a National Republican disproving the theory that Jackson immediately inserted his own followers in every available post, secured the payment of \$650,000 to the United States. He was greatly aided by the President's forthright declaration that "the present Executive would not be wanting in all suitable exertions" in bringing about the settlement of the matter.³⁷ The obvious implication was that the Adams Administration had not tried hard enough to solve this problem. By the time he left the White House, Andrew Jackson had secured on behalf of the United States, apart from \$4.5 million from France, \$2 million from Naples, and \$600,000 each from Denmark and Spain in payment for spoliation claims unpaid under previous administrations.

American nationalism was also evident in the Pacific Ocean. In February 1831 an American merchant vessel, ironically

named 'Friendship', was attacked by natives from Sumatra. Jackson sent a frigate, 'Potomac', to the area. The captain, not following the orders he had been given, attacked the Sumatran settlement of Quallah Battoo on 6 February 1832. Only then did he work out a peace settlement. In his Fourth Annual Message to Congress, Jackson reported these incidents. As a result of the swift and decisive American action, he argued, there was "an increased respect for our flag in those distant seas and additional security for our commerce."³⁸ This use of naval power amply demonstrates Jackson's devotion to the United States Navy. Under Adams the naval budget had amounted to \$4 million. By 1836 it had risen to almost \$6 million; by 1837 it was nearing \$7 million.³⁷ This increase in naval expenditure was defended by Jackson in his Farewell Address:

Your Navy will not only protect your rich and flourishing commerce in distant seas, but will enable you to reach and annoy the enemy and will give to defense its greatest efficiency by meeting danger at a distance from home ... We shall more certainly preserve the peace when it is well understood that we are prepared for war.

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Seen in this nationalistic light, the British West India trade settlement of 1830 was highly significant. The relatively amicable resolution of this dispute showed the world that Great Britain and the United States could settle some of their differences. It was highly prestigious for the United States, and might persuade other countries to settle too. This was particularly the case with France,

who was faced with, in diplomatic terms, a united Great Britain and United States. Great Britain had usurped France's traditional position as the ally of the United States. The importance of the British agreement to the Jackson Administration was revealed when the Senate rejected Van Buren's appointment as Minister to London. Quite apart from the personal insult, President Jackson was fearful that the Senate, by its action, had damaged the image of the United States abroad. Writing to James A. Hamilton he referred to "The injury done to our national character by their wanton act in all Europe ...". Opposition speeches in the Senate, he informed the rejected Minister, "were disgraceful ... and degrading to the senate, and humiliating to our nation, and national character, and insulting to all Europe, but particularly to England ...". Endorsing a letter of March 1832 he remarked that he had not nominated a replacement for Van Buren because he was waiting to hear "whether under the direct insult offered by the Senate, by their rejection of Mr V. B. ... A minister would be received ..."⁴¹

Such an agreement as that concluded with Great Britain in 1830 demonstrated the success of democratic nationalism. It had brought about a settlement prevented by the economic nationalism which was the hallmark of the policies of Adams and Clay. The Jacksonian success provided increased potential for American commerce, promised to be less of a corrupting influence upon the American people, and brought increased respect for the United States. This was the

accomplishment not of John Quincy Adams, but of Andrew Jackson. In the partisan symbolism of the election of 1828, the ploughman had triumphed over the professor.⁴²

7. Albion's Anxieties

It is too easy to explain the settlement of 1830 purely in terms of American diplomatic skill. Admittedly, Louis McLane handled the negotiations with considerable deftness. In a debate in the House of Commons on 17 December 1830 Mr. George Robinson argued that "Our Ministers had been completely outdone by the superior diplomatic skill of Mr. Maclean, who had shown himself far better informed than our negociators in all that concerned the interests of our colonies, as well as in all that concerned the interests of the United States."¹ Washington Irving wrote of the "manly frankness" of McLane's manner, "the courtliness of his deportment, and the force and perspicuity of his reasoning."² McLane's diplomatic skills were of such a high order that he was to return to London, under Polk, to try to resolve the Oregon Crisis, in the mid-1840s. In addition, the Jackson Administration made a series of well-calculated concessions. The position adopted by the Adams Administration - demanding re-entry into the trade as of right - was repudiated. Moreover, Jackson agreed to have the matter settled by whatever method Great Britain preferred. In other words, the nationalistic posturing of Adams and Clay was replaced by something quite different. Speaking to the House of Commons on 12 November 1830, Herries claimed that "Concessions had been made by the United States, which previously had been refused ..."³ It is certainly the case that concessions were made: above

all, Great Britain retained her right to impose protective duties on imports into her colonial possessions in North America. But these concessions were not new ones. Clay's instructions to Albert Gallatin were remarkably similar to those which Van Buren wrote for McLane. There were, clearly, further factors leading Great Britain to agree to settle the matter in 1830.

The depressed and distressed state of the British West Indian colonies further contributed to the feeling of the British Government that it should accept the hand of friendship extended by the United States. It had been the belief of previous American administrations that the trade restrictions would be detrimental to the interests of the West Indian planters. Even out of office, John Quincy Adams continued to believe that "The restoration of the West India trade would force itself upon the British Government by the sufferings of the islands themselves ..."⁴ It was partly because of this belief that Adams was so hostile to the final settlement. Believing that Great Britain would eventually have been forced to recede from her position, as she had done in 1822, Adams felt that the concessions made by the Jackson Administration were completely unnecessary, and merely displayed weakness. He had a point, but this policy of awaiting distress had borne little fruit since 1822 - and absolutely no fruit during his own years.

The planters in the British West Indies were involved in a close economic relationship with the United States. In

order to feed their slave labourers they required American foodstuffs. Because of the geographical proximity of the United States to the colonial islands it was only natural that this was so. Imported food from the United States did not have to be transported far, and so shipping and insurance charges were relatively low. The foodstuffs would arrive in a fresh state, too. As James Allen wrote in 1784, "Flour in particular will not keep in the West Indies, and requires a constant supply by as short a voyage as possible ..."⁵ The planters also needed American lumber so that they could crate and barrel their exports. Suitably packaged, these exports needed a market. One of the most important of these, again due to reasons of geography, was the United States. McLane reminded Aberdeen of this, pointing out in a letter

that the consumption, in the United States, of West India produce is very considerable; ... of foreign sugar alone, it is certainly little less than sixty millions of pounds per annum; of foreign molasses, it is not less than thirteen millions of gallons; and of foreign rum, it is equal to three millions and a half; and yet, in consequence of the present embarrassments of the direct trade, the importation of British West Indian produce has substantially ceased.

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William B. Lawrence informed Henry Clay in April 1828 that Joseph Hume, M.P., had argued that England was doing "the greatest injury to the Islands" by forcing them "to pay 30% more for every article" than it cost in the United States.⁷ The Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, received a letter stressing the crisis in the West Indies. His correspondent, John Vernon, described the distress of the

West Indian planters as "great and almost universal ..."
On Antigua, where he himself had a plantation, "there is scarcely a single Proprietor who is not labouring under severe distress and embarrassment..." With his income greatly reduced, Vernon had been obliged to sell his Army commission, and no longer lived in the West Indies. He attributed the distress of the planters in part to "The increased prices of Lumber and Provisions consequent upon the suspended intercourse between the United States, and the British West India Colonies ..."⁸

Sir Robert Peel, replying to a question in the House of Commons from Lord Chandos concerning a possible committee of inquiry into the distress of the British West Indies, referred to the "distress which it was understood existed in the West India colonies."⁹ Mr. Marryat, seconding a proposal of Lord Chandos, believed that "The case of the West-India planter was one not of mere distress, but of absolute annihilation ..." This was partly because he was "obliged to receive his timber and flour from the British provinces in North America, instead of through the foreign West Indies, or directly from the United States ..."¹⁰ The Duke of Wellington seems to have come to the view that there was genuine distress in the colonies.¹¹

When the crisis with the United States reached its greatest extent Great Britain attempted to supply her West Indian colonies through British North America, or Canada. It might be thought, then, that the West India settlement of 1830 would work to the disadvantage of Canada. Louis

McLane was well aware of this complicating factor; he regarded it as one of his major problems, to persuade Great Britain that she should settle the matter regardless of this lobby. The Times of 11 February 1830 suggested that McLane would not succeed in his negotiations because of the harmful effects of a settlement upon the prosperity of "the Canadas"; McLane told Rives that the Wellington Government was under considerable pressure from this Canadian lobby, and that the Lieutenant Governor of New Brunswick was putting forward the Canadian point of view; in a letter to Churchill C. Cambreleng he referred to "the influence brought to bear against me from Canada, New Brunswick, and the shipping interests here ..."¹² McLane was greatly helped in his task by the determined, nationalistic stance adopted by President Jackson and his Administration. In the spring of 1830, impatient at the slowness with which Great Britain was responding to McLane's advances, Jackson sent a memorandum to his Secretary of State.

On the subject of our negotiation with great Britain, we ought to be prepared to act promptly in case of a failure. [Generous American advances not having been responded to] ... let a communication be prepared for congress recommending a non intercourse law between the United States and Canady, and a sufficient number of Cutters commanded by our naval officers and our midshipmen made revenue officers, and a double set on every vessel, etc. etc. This adopted and carried into effect forthwith and in six months both Canady and the Westindia Islands will feel, and sorely feel, the effects of their folly in urging their Government to adhere to our exclusion from the West India trade ...

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Although this measure was never put into effect, for McLane's suggestion of "prospective legislation" was taken

up with successful results, it was highly significant. When he wrote to tell McLane of the passage of the "prospective legislation" (after an inexplicable delay), Van Buren warned that if there were no suitable British response, "the President will consider it his duty ... to recommend to Congress an extension of the interdict now existing as to the West India possessions of Great Britain to those which she holds in the northern parts of this continent, and the adoption of proper measures for [its enforcement]."¹⁴ McLane told Aberdeen of this "reserve" legislation as well as the "prospective legislation".¹⁵

Quite simply, Great Britain could not afford such trouble over Canada. In the event of the outbreak of actual conflict, Great Britain would have to meet any American invasion with a large army. During the winter months, however, the St. Lawrence was blocked beyond Quebec, thereby preventing the introduction of either troops or provisions there. These were problems which had long vexed British strategists.¹⁶ More immediately, there were severe financial problems which helped persuade Great Britain that she could not afford conflict over Canada. Great Britain was in the middle of a severe economic crisis. The origins of this crisis went back to the beginning of the war with France. The economic impact of the Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, covering most of the years 1793-1815, was enormous. The national debt had been £228 million by 1793; by 1815 it had soared to £876 million.¹⁷ The accompanying annual interest charge more than trebled, to £30 million.

This figure represented more than the entire annual expenditure for 1792, and over half that of 1815. One possible means of paying off this debt was income tax, the expedient adopted by Pitt to help fund the war in the 1790s. But, in 1816, this was abolished (and was not to be introduced again until 1842). The deficit was tackled, instead, by means of the sinking fund, another of Pitt's innovations. However the attempt to pay off the enormous national debt - whose enormity was greatly contributed to by the highly inefficient and even more highly expensive poor law - by means of this fund was likened in the House of Commons to "the attempt of a wooden-legged man to catch a hare."¹⁸ When Robinson became Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1823 the budgetary outlook had not greatly improved.¹⁹ Although there was some improvement due to the stimulus of the free trade measures introduced by Huskisson and Robinson, earning the latter the nickname 'Prosperity', this improvement was offset by the commercial and financial crisis of the mid-1820s. Economic circumstances were, by 1830, peculiarly bad. There was over-production in the manufacturing sector of the economy. Faced with difficulties in selling their large stocks of goods, manufacturers sought to increase their profits by reducing wages. This resulted in increased hardship for many of the poorer elements in society. Thus when Palmerston proposed a motion concerning Portugal in March 1830, Jekyll commented: "Palmerston makes good speeches - but the People want bread and don't care about Portugal."²⁰ It was a similar concern about wages and food prices which was

partly responsible for the outbreak, in the autumn of 1830, of the "Captain Swing" agitation.²¹

The Wellington Government was well aware of the economic problems facing the country. It tackled these problems the only way it knew how. Government expenditure was cut back. Wellington announced the Government's policy in a speech of 6 May 1830 during a debate on the national debt and revenue: "... I can assert that it is the intention of the Government to ... both reduce the national expenditure and the National Debt to the utmost of our power."²² There had already been considerable reductions in military expenditure. Wellington informed the House of Lords on 4 March 1830 that his Ministry had done all that they could "to reduce the expense of the country to the smallest possible amount." He informed their Lordships that such expenditure had been cut during the previous three sessions of Parliament by £2 million to £12 million.²³ When Parliament met in February 1830 a reduction in overall expenditure of £1.3 million was announced. Of this figure, some £750,000 was made up by reductions on the expenditures on the Army, Artillery, and Navy. Over four years, £2.5 million had been saved on such expenditure.²⁴

In this climate of acute concern over government expenditure, it should not be surprising that the question of colonial expenditure was raised. A group of radical M.P.s, led by Joseph Hume, appointed itself watchdog of the public purse. During debates on colonial appropriations the issue of expenditure on British North America was

raised. Defensive fortifications and their accompanying garrisons were extremely expensive. The British government, it has been estimated, paid for 20% of the total annual cost of civil establishments abroad. But it paid 80% of the cost of military establishments. While the radical M.P.s were using these figures to argue that the colonists should be given greater independence, and would then shoulder more of this spending burden, they nevertheless demonstrated that Great Britain had considerable interests in Canada, which ought not to be jeopardised. In March 1830 the Wellington Government bowed to this pressure, and appointed a commission to investigate the whole issue of colonial expenditure.²⁵

Writing to Andrew Jackson in March 1830, James A. Hamilton remarked on the favourable circumstances pertaining in Europe in 1830. He observed that "The excitement in France from plethora, and a spirit of liberty, and in England from starvation, cannot fail to produce important results ..."²⁶ It would appear that the economic difficulties which Great Britain was facing, and her consequent desire to reduce expenditure where possible, made her reluctant to hold out on an issue which might produce costly conflict in North America. If this were not sufficient reason, the fact that the United States consented to allow Great Britain to retain imperial preferential duties meant, in effect, that she could continue to protect her Canadian interests. Herries pointed out to the House of Commons that this right had been retained: "all parties were at all times given to

understand that the British Government reserved to itself the right of altering those duties without responsibility to any foreign state." - In order to avoid any future disagreement over this, "the claim to exercise this right had been especially impressed upon the government of the United States ..."²⁷ The American side conceded this point because they could respond with higher duties of their own; besides, the higher duties would again bear heavily upon the West Indian planters.²⁸

It is at first sight strange that such an amicable settlement was concluded between the Jackson Administration and the Wellington Government. Traditionally, there had been a closer friendship between the Whigs and America. Charles James Fox, for example, had been an enthusiastic supporter of the cause of the rebellious American colonists in the 1770s. But, it should be remembered, it was the Liverpool Government which made several friendly advances to the United States. It was Liverpool who had pointed out that the economic futures of Great Britain and the United States were inextricably linked together. It was Castlereagh who chose to ignore the provocative executions of Ambrister and Arbuthnot by Andrew Jackson in 1818. The crisis in Anglo-American relations came about only when the United States had rebuffed Canning's offers of a joint policy with regard to South America. Once this breakdown in relations had occurred, however, it was not to be expected that the ultra-Tory administration of the Duke of

Wellington would preside over the resolution of this problem.

But this was exactly what happened. Indeed it could be argued that it was precisely because Wellington led an ultra-Tory government that a settlement was reached. James Barbour reported to Henry Clay in September that "the present Administration is completely Tory ..." ²⁹ This was so because Huskisson, Goderich (the former F. J. Robinson), and Dudley were no longer in office. These Huskissonite politicians were the principal architects of the legislation of the mid-1820s which effectively ended the direct trade between the United States and the British West India colonies. The economic crisis of 1825-26 having been blamed on the free trade measures for which Huskisson and Robinson had been responsible, this legislation was politically astute. Huskisson had put forward free trade measures, thereby satisfying those who were in favour of more liberal trade policies; when the Americans failed to fall into line with his measures, he was able to resort to the orders in council, and thus be seen to be protecting British interests. Because the Huskissonites were out of office in the summer and autumn of 1830, it was relatively easier for the Wellington Government to reach a settlement that involved the reversing of this legislation from the mid-1820s.

The Wellington Government, furthermore, was a strong one. This provided valuable continuity. McLane, for example, only had to deal with one Foreign Secretary, Lord Aberdeen.

Ever since Lord Liverpool had suffered a stroke, British politics had been in a state of flux. His immediate successor was George Canning, under whom several leading politicians refused to serve.³⁰ When Canning died of a cold caught at the funeral of the Duke of York, he was in turn succeeded by the weak and ineffectual Lord Goderich.³¹ It was only when the Duke of Wellington became Prime Minister, early in 1828, that stability was briefly restored. James Barbour reported to Henry Clay that he deemed the Wellington Government "the strongest which has existed for years."³² Before returning to the United States, Barbour informed the new Secretary of State, Martin Van Buren, that Wellington was "the most potent man now in Europe."³³ It was this stability and potency which enabled Wellington to preside over changes which were, in their way, revolutionary. The Test and Corporation Acts were repealed, allowing Dissenters to hold public offices; the Catholic Emancipation Act of 1829 made similar provisions for Roman Catholics. It was also Wellington who persuaded many Tories in the House of Lords to accept the Great Reform Bill. Once the attention of the British politicians had been attracted by McLane, on behalf of the Jackson Administration, the British West India trade issue was resolved. The stability of Wellington's Government made this task somewhat less difficult, and ensured that Great Britain was able to fulfil her part of the diplomatic bargain which was reached.

The change in British political personnel worked to the advantage of the United States. Lord Aberdeen, who replaced Lord Dudley as Foreign Secretary in June 1828, was far more sympathetic to the United States than was his predecessor. While Aberdeen has been accused of sharing the anti-American prejudices of his class³⁴, he was also "more tractable" than others, and "susceptible to friendly feelings about the United States."³⁵ In one of his last communications to Henry Clay, James Barbour reported that he had just had a meeting with Lord Aberdeen. The latter had referred to his wishing to have "the colonial trade judiciously adjusted."³⁶ This contrasted sharply with the attitude of Lord Goderich. He had refused even to discuss the matter. Aberdeen was subsequently to be accused of having "given in" to the United States, by compromising over Maine in the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842, and by not having made more of the 'Caroline' affair.³⁷

McLane may have been helped in his task of persuading the British Government to settle this problem by the troubled state in which Europe found itself. James Brown reported to Henry Clay in September 1830 that the French Revolution might make the British Government more likely to yield "on the subject of the Colonial trade in order to put aside ... causes of difference with the United States."³⁸ The unrest occasioned by the French Revolution throughout Europe endangered the peace that had existed since 1815. There were revolts in Poland and in Italy; Belgium was soon in a state of crisis.³⁹ Great Britain was above all concerned

that Europe should remain peaceful, so that no power would again attempt to dominate the entire continent. Even worse than conflict with a united Europe, from a British perspective, would be conflict with Europe and the United States combined. It was, after all, the same combination - France and the American colonies - which had brought about Great Britain's only defeat, some fifty years earlier. With good relations existing between Great Britain and the United States there would be plentiful supplies of essential raw materials, such as cotton, and little danger of naval conflict in the Atlantic Ocean. Great Britain could thus devote her full attentions, as James Brown had implied, to European affairs.

In the second half of 1830 the British West India trade problem was solved. The United States retreated from her previously-held position, and agreed to the conditions set down by Great Britain. The Wellington Government, aware of distress among the West Indian planters, and financially unable to risk conflict with the United States over Canada, met the American advances. She was further persuaded to resolve the issue by the extremely unsettled state of European affairs following the French Revolution.

The issue was settled in 1830 because the Wellington Government was fully occupied with matters of domestic policy. In addition to the economic crisis there was also a growing demand for the reform of Parliament.⁴⁰ So while the Wellington Government was a strong one, it was also beset with political problems. The agreement was finally

concluded just a matter of weeks before the fall of Wellington in November 1830. While the succeeding ministry, presided over by Earl Grey, might well have concluded a similar agreement, it could not have done so without a considerable delay. McLane managed to keep the issue before the Wellington Government, and persuaded Aberdeen and his colleagues that they should re-admit American vessels into the direct trade.

8. The Rapprochement of 1830-37

The settlement of 1830 was highly symbolic. It heralded almost a decade of greatly improved Anglo-American relations, during which time there was considerable progress on many issues of dispute and disagreement between the two nations. Almost as importantly, the failure to resolve similar issues, such as the one concerning the Maine-New Brunswick border, was not the cause of military conflict. Underlying this rapprochement at all times was the growing interdependence of the two economies. This interdependence was so great that it has, in fact, been claimed - with good reason - that there was just the one, Atlantic, economy.¹ Anglo-American relations largely followed the course Andrew Jackson had hinted at when he wrote to Anthony Butler just after the successful conclusion of the negotiations over the British West India carrying trade:

This event is hailed with great and deserved joy by our citizens, not only on account of the direct benefit which they will derive from it, but as indicating a disposition on the part of Great B to meet us half way in establishing the relations between the two countries upon that fair and reciprocal basis which is the only sure guarantee for their future peace and the steady advancement of their prosperity and fame ...

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When Jackson had become President, two immediate issues dominated Anglo-American relations. The first of these, concerning the West India trade, had been resolved to the satisfaction of both countries. The second, however, was

not so easily dealt with, and was indeed not finally settled until the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. What is particularly significant is that the non-settlement of this second issue, which might easily have resulted in a breakdown in relations, occasioned little recrimination. The King of the Netherlands, who had been appointed arbiter in 1827, made his decision early in 1831. He drew a line between the conflicting claims of Great Britain and the United States, erring slightly in favour of the United States. It is clear that President Jackson wanted to accept this offer. He instructed Van Buren, the new Minister to London, to ask the British Government if it would approve the offer first. He later wrote to Francis Preston Blair that he "had determined to accept the award ... but my whole cabinet remonstrated against my decision recommending me, as the Senate was in session, to lay it before them. I yielded to this recommendation, but sincerely have I regretted it since ..." ³ His regret was due to the fact that the Senate effectively blocked this settlement of the question. Inspired by Senator Peleg Sprague of Maine, that body resolved first that the adjudication of the King of the Netherlands was not binding, and then that the President should re-open negotiations with Great Britain. In March 1833 the position was further complicated when the state legislature of Maine insisted that the people of Maine ought to have the right to vote, in town meetings, whether or not to accept any proposal made. Thereafter the problem was not

solved during Jackson's time as President, and he bequeathed it to his successor, Van Buren.

But this failure did not result in a diplomatic crisis, and did not degenerate into armed conflict. During his meetings with Palmerston, Van Buren had warned the British Foreign Secretary that Maine might object to the proposed settlement.⁴ Sir Charles Vaughan evidently understood the difficulties which faced the Jackson Administration. Writing to Lord Goderich in February 1833 he observed that,

There are certain difficulties attending all negotiations with the United States, peculiar to their Constitution of Government, which ought to induce a reluctance in Foreign Powers hastily to embark in negotiations with them. I allude to the subserviency of the Executive to the dictates and interests of the State to be principally affected by the result, and to the share or participation which the Senate has in making Treaties ...

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Informed comment such as this must have made it clear that the failure to settle the boundary question was not the fault of the Jackson Administration. The President was disposed to accept King William's award. It was the Senate and Maine that stood in the way of a settlement. Jackson hoped that the Senate would reject the Webster-Ashburton Treaty of 1842. This "odious treaty" was, he believed, "disgraceful" and "humiliating to our national character ..." In short, it was less advantageous than the award of 1831.⁶

The improved relations enabling this potential crisis to be overcome originated with McLane's time in London. At a dinner, Washington Irving reported, "Mr. McLane and the

King became so thick that some of the 'Corps Diplomatique' showed symptoms of jealousy. The King [William IV, the 'Sailor King'] took to him especially when he found he had begun the world by being a midshipman."⁷ It was in such an amicable climate that minor, niggling, diplomatic problems were resolved. When, for example, Captain Edmund Bulkley was wrongly charged tonnage duties, in contravention of the 1830 trade settlement, McLane protested to Palmerston. Within three weeks he had received a satisfactory reply, and the matter was settled. Again, when an American vessel was searched off the coast of Ireland, 'Yankee Doodle' was played, offending the crew of the American ship. McLane protested, and the Admiralty resolved the matter, reprimanding the captain of the search vessel.⁸

Van Buren's spell in London further contributed to the growing rapprochement in Anglo-American relations. Vaughan informed the British government in advance that the new Minister would display the same "spirit of harmony" which he had already exhibited in his dealings with Great Britain as Secretary of State.⁹ Van Buren himself explained the friendly nature of his reception and whole stay in Britain:

Sincere respect for the character of Gen. Jackson, and an earnest desire that liberal and friendly intercourse should be cultivated between the two Countries were not only prevailing but active feelings on the part of the Government and People of Great Britain at the period of my arrival, and consideration of the close relations existing between the General and myself, of which they were well informed, doubtless had its influence, before they knew anything of me personally, in securing the marked courtesy and kindness with which I was treated during my entire stay in that Country.

Although, in the words of Dabney S. Carr, Editor of the Baltimore Republican, "The harvest [in Great Britain had] already been reaped",¹¹ Van Buren tackled several issues while he was in London. Admittedly there was not much to be done concerning the boundary question, but other diplomatic business occupied his attention. He intervened on behalf of the owners of 164 slaves who had been shipwrecked off the Bahamas. Once ashore, the Bahamian authorities had emancipated the slaves, who had been on their way to Louisiana from Virginia. Van Buren pressed for compensation for their owners. He also sought cooperation from Great Britain in the construction of aids to navigation in the Florida Straits. Thirdly, he looked into the possibility of establishing further consular agencies, in some of Britain's chief manufacturing centres. This idea was taken up and put into effect. Less successfully, he raised the question - clumsily - of whether British courts could try cases resulting from the actions of American citizens on board American vessels.¹²

Indicative of the significantly improved state of Anglo-American relations was Van Buren's raising of the contentious question of impressment. He records that

Several interviews took place between Lord Palmerston ... and myself, in which the whole subject was talked over with much freedom and candor. Views equally liberal in their general bearing with those recently acted upon by the British Government in regard to the right of search question, were expressed in those interviews by his Lordship in the sincerity of which I placed entire confidence. That the preservation of pacific and cordial relations between the two countries was an object of more importance to the welfare of both than the claim of either in relation

to the subject matter under consideration was a starting point in our deliberations ...

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These discussions were hindered by the other pressing issues with which the British government had to deal. There was, for example, the European conference dealing with Belgium, as well as the domestic political crisis over Parliamentary reform. Remarkably, Van Buren believed that the matter might actually have been settled: "I have never doubted that my utmost wishes would have been realized if their success upon the reform question had been unqualified and if I had remained at the post assigned to me."¹⁴ Relations seem not to have been damaged, as Jackson feared, by the Senate's rejection of Van Buren as Minister to London. Washington Irving commented that, "to the credit of John Bull ... Everyone seemed to understand and sympathize in his case ..." Both the King and the Prime Minister warmly praised the departing Minister.¹⁵

In the early 1830s there arose a crisis which might, in different circumstances, have resulted in the implementation of the Monroe Doctrine by the United States. The country with whom there could have been conflict was none other than Great Britain. She and Spain had long disputed the ownership of the Falkland Islands. In the 1820s the newly independent United Provinces of South America, subsequently called Argentina, claimed that ownership had passed to them. In 1820 the Argentine frigate, 'Heroína', was sent to take over the Falkland Islands. This proved to be a difficult task, and so, in

1828, the Argentine authorities ceded much of the Falkland Islands to one Louis Vernet, a naturalized Argentine. In June 1829 he was formally made Commandant of this territory. News of this appointment was published in the New York Journal of Commerce in the winter of 1830-31, together with a warning from Vernet that there was to be no hunting or fishing within the territory over which he ruled. The whole matter was drawn to the attention of the Jackson Administration by Noyes Barber, a Congressman. He had learned of the situation from a Connecticut seal merchant, Trumbull, who was concerned about his sealing business based in the Falkland Islands. While American diplomatic representatives were investigating the situation, American vessels approaching the Falkland Islands were seized. The captain of one of them managed to escape to Buenos Aires, and reported the seizures to the American Consul. The 'Lexington' was already in the area; she was ordered to proceed to the Falkland Islands. On 1 January 1832 the remaining American captives were rescued. Meanwhile, diplomatic relations were broken off.

Additional troops sent to the Falkland Islands by Argentina were thrown off the islands by British troops. Two sloops, 'Clio' and 'Tyne', had been sent by the British government, and on 3 January 1833 they took possession of the Falkland Islands. This was tantamount to a breach of the Monroe Doctrine. The authorities in Buenos Aires clearly believed this, for they appealed to the American Government to join with them in resisting this invasion of the New World by

the Old. But the Jackson Administration chose not to invoke the Monroe Doctrine. It claimed that the sovereignty dispute predated Monroe's Annual Message of December 1823, and that therefore the British invasion was not a breach of it. In addition, British occupation of the Falkland Islands ensured that American ships could go about their business without fear of molestation from Argentine vessels. It is hard to imagine such intervention in the New World having been condoned by the ultra-sensitive Adams Administration. But, in the wake of the West India trade settlement of 1830, Anglo-American relations were so vastly improved that this incident could pass off almost unnoticed. Nor was this the only example of British encroachment in the New World. The boundaries of Belize were pushed outwards; Great Britain laid claim to the Bay Islands and to the Mosquito Coast. Evidently convinced that no American interests were being endangered, Great Britain was allowed by the United States to act in seeming contravention of the principles laid down in the Monroe Doctrine. Had relations not been so good, much more might have been made of these actions in the New World.¹⁶

It was this improved climate that enabled Great Britain to make a significant and decisive intervention in the French Debt Crisis of the mid-1830s. Although William C. Rives had, in the summer of 1831, reached an agreement with France over the outstanding spoliation claims, the issue was not thereby ended. In February 1833 the first instalment of the \$25 million reparation was not, as had

been arranged, paid. The French Minister of Finance was unable to pay the amount agreed upon because the necessary funds had not been appropriated by the Chamber of Deputies. Edward Livingston, former Secretary of State, was sent to Paris to settle the issue. An appropriation bill was introduced into the Chamber, and recommended by a committee; but the bill was defeated. In his Annual Message of December 1834 President Jackson asked that, if the French Chamber did not pass an appropriation measure in its next session, he be given the power to confiscate French shipping and property. The Senate Foreign Relations Committee, chaired by Henry Clay, deemed such a move to be "inexpedient at this time."¹⁷ When a bill was introduced to prepare the nation's defences for possible conflict with France, the Senate refused to agree to such a measure. Although the French Chamber eventually passed an appropriation measure, it insisted on Jackson explaining the meaning of his Annual Message of December 1834. Jackson refused to explain what he had meant, and there ensued a diplomatic stalemate.

With tension rising, and newspaper discussions of Franco-American conflict, Great Britain intervened. Lord Palmerston, British Foreign Secretary, was highly concerned about the whole situation. The tension resulted in increased insurance rates for British shipping, and threatened to disrupt world trade. But, more importantly, Palmerston was attempting to unite the powers of Western Europe so as to counter Russian expansionist desires in the

Near East.¹⁸ France was vital to his plans. In de Broglie he had found a French leader willing to assist him. In April 1835 de Broglie asked Palmerston for help, so that war with the United States might be avoided. Palmerston's offer to mediate in the dispute was accepted. On 15 February 1836 news reached the United States that Jackson's Seventh Annual Message, of 3 December 1835, was acceptable to the French, and the matter was speedily resolved. This news was passed on to the Jackson Administration by Charles Bankhead, the British Chargé d'Affaires in Washington. Even Henry Clay praised Great Britain's "noble part" in settling this dispute.¹⁹ Without the better relations occasioned by the settlement of the West India trade issue in 1830 such an intervention would not have been possible. Nor was this an isolated example of Anglo-American cooperation. When the United States encountered difficulties, in the late 1830s, in securing compensation for damage done to American property during the Belgian Revolution of 1830, collaboration with the British Minister in Brussels enabled the successful resolution of the problem.²⁰

The diplomatic rapprochement came about at a time when Great Britain and the United States were increasingly thought of as comprising a single Atlantic community. British radicals in particular felt a close affinity to the United States. Benthamite ideas, for example, were very popular in the United States. Bentham himself corresponded with many leading American politicians, such as John Quincy

Adams and Richard Rush. He wrote to tell Andrew Jackson that he felt he was more of a "United States man" than he was an Englishman.²¹ He was a big influence on Edward Livingston, when the Louisiana politician was reforming the laws of his state. Radicals pointed to the American electoral system, with its regular elections and relatively wide franchise; they praised the freedom of the press which pertained in the United States; and they highlighted the religious freedom which contrasted so sharply with the established religion existing in Great Britain. Many utopians and visionaries tried out their ambitious schemes in the United States: Robert Owen with his New Harmony colony, was perhaps the most famous example; when Southey and Coleridge contemplated establishing their Pantisocracy, it was to be next-door to the colony previously established by the famous scientist, Joseph Priestley.²² There was a good deal of co-operation between the respective anti-slavery movements. The American Anti-Slavery Society was based on the English version which was to be ultimately successful, in the 1830s. William Lloyd Garrison journeyed to London in search of backing, and recruited George Thompson to assist him in organising agitation in the United States. World Anti-Slavery Conventions were to be held in the 1840s, demonstrating the close links between British and American anti-slavery movements. Richard Cobden was highly impressed by the American education system, and, on his return to Great Britain, campaigned for the introduction of that system.²³

Apart from a joint political heritage - after all, the American Revolution had taken place so as to defend the rights and liberties of free-born Englishmen - there was also a shared cultural heritage. Prior to the development of a fully-fledged American literary tradition, both countries shared the tradition exemplified by Chaucer and Shakespeare. More popular novelists, such as Charles Dickens and Sir Walter Scott, enjoyed enormous followings in the United States. In the early 1850s Great Britain imported some American literary culture. Harriet Beecher Stowe's Uncle Tom's Cabin sold remarkably well in Great Britain, to the extent of one million copies in its first year. It was said to have been thrice read by Palmerston, and its huge popularity paved the way for its author's three successful visits during the 1850s.²⁴ Technological information also passed across the Atlantic. Henry Burden was born in Stirlingshire, Scotland, but went to live in the United States in 1819. In his head he took with him a great deal of technological information and knowledge. But he evidently did not take quite enough, for he returned to Great Britain in the late 1820s. Back in his native country he learned much about rolling and slitting mills, and on his return to the United States was able to introduce these new methods, thereby improving barrel-making procedures.²⁵

Above all, however, it was in the economic sphere that there was a close link between Great Britain and the United States. So close was this link, in fact, that it has been

suggested that the United States formed a part of the "informal British Empire". This suggests that there was some kind of a colonial relationship, even though the political connection had long been severed.²⁶ The essential component part of this Anglo-American trade was cotton. The United States was capable of producing cotton in vast quantities. By the time Andrew Jackson became President, the mills of Lancashire were supplied principally by the cotton grown in Georgia and South Carolina. It was this cotton trade which was chiefly responsible for the rise of Liverpool as Great Britain's leading port. Over three-quarters of the British raw cotton supplies emanated from the United States. These cotton exports amounted to one half of all American exports.²⁷

In return for this cotton, Great Britain exported finished manufactured goods to the United States. Britain provided approximately two-fifths of all American imports.²⁸ Woollen and worsted goods were exported to the United States, which comprised the leading market for hosiery produce. Agricultural tools and cutlery made in Sheffield were also exported across the Atlantic, forming nearly all of the market for these goods. Staffordshire pottery found by far its largest market in the United States. In the 1850s Great Britain began exporting vast amounts of iron and steel to the United States, which formed the basis of many American railroads.²⁹ Another major export to the United States was British investment capital. The United

States had excellent potential for the investment of capital. It was very stable, with limited debts; above all, however, it possessed vast, undeveloped, natural resources. Enormous amounts of capital flowed across the Atlantic to earn reasonably high rates of interest and to finance the state-sponsored internal-improvement schemes. In the process intermediaries such as the House of Baring flourished.³⁰

These economic links eventually proved to be too great. Nemesis arrived in the form of the Panic of 1837. More radical Jacksonian Democrats blamed this upon the too-close involvement of Great Britain in the American economy. With the tariff no longer such an important political issue, monetary matters assumed predominance in American politics. The Panic of 1837, not surprisingly, provoked an agrarian reaction within the Democratic Party. Naturally, this tended to be rather Anglophobic. One response to the Panic of 1837 was the Independent Treasury Bill. When this controversial piece of legislation eventually became law, it was hailed as the "Second Declaration of Independence". Martin Van Buren, some believed, had delivered the American people from the bondage imposed by British financial interests.³¹ Van Buren, one of the architects of the settlement of 1830, did not become an Anglophobe. As President he did his utmost to avoid diplomatic and military conflict with Great Britain. Indeed, the maintenance of peace in the period 1837-42 owed much to the earlier rapprochement.

There were a number of opportunities for conflict, mostly along the northern border of the United States. First, there was the 'Caroline' incident. This was an American vessel captured and sunk by Canadian-British forces suspecting that it had been used to aid the Canadian insurgents of 1837. National honour was deemed to have been violated: an American had been killed in the fracas; the vessel had been destroyed on the American side of the river. No sooner had this matter been dampened down when a second arose. This was to be known as the 'Aroostook War'. American volunteers seized the disputed territory on the Maine-New Brunswick border, and there was a widespread clamour for war with Great Britain. President Van Buren sent one of his most experienced military men, General Winfield Scott, to the area, and managed to restore order and peace. The third crisis was connected to the first. Alexander McLeod, a Canadian sheriff, was accused of murder and arson during the raid on the 'Carolina' in 1837. He was imprisoned, much to the chagrin of Great Britain. Since he was held on a state charge, however, Van Buren could do nothing to ensure his release. Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary, warned Andrew Stevenson, the American Minister, that a collision was possible. This did not come about; in October 1841 McLeod was found not guilty.³² Van Buren did his best to reduce Anglo-American tension while he was President: even the crisis over Texas failed to provoke Anglo-American conflict. However, in the mid-1840s the Democrats, under Tyler and Polk, became ardently Anglophobic. The expansionism espoused by Polk

exploited Anglophobia to a great extent, and there was a major diplomatic crisis concerning the future of the Oregon Territory.

This subsequent Democratic Anglophobia contrasts sharply with the good relations of the Jacksonian period. Jackson experienced a remarkable degree of success in his conduct of American foreign policy. In the words of Thomas Hart Benton:

... From no part of his administration was more harm apprehended, by those who dreaded the election of General Jackson, than from [the area of foreign diplomacy]. From his military character they feared embroilments; from his want of experience as a diplomatist, they feared mistakes and blunders in our foreign intercourse. These apprehensions were ... entirely without foundation. No part of his administration, successful, beneficial, and honorable as it was at home, was more successful, beneficial, and honorable than that of his foreign diplomacy.

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Under his Presidency American trade thrived, and there was increased respect for the United States. Relations with Great Britain, encouraged by the settlement of the West India trade question in 1830, were much improved. The old President engaged in an unlikely correspondence with Princess, soon to become Queen, Victoria.³⁴ Praise was heaped upon Jackson by British politicians. Aaron Vail, American Chargé in London, informed Vice-President Van Buren in January 1836 that "our venerable President occupies a higher place than ever in British estimation ... General Jackson and his message [the Seventh Annual, December 1835] were a standing topic of admiration and praise."³⁵ Even Palmerston was satisfied with the

President's dealings with Great Britain. As a consequence largely of the settlement of 1830, he told Minister Van Buren that Great Britain had experienced better treatment from Jackson than from any of his predecessors.³⁶ This was praise indeed for the "war-mongering, militaristic, Anglophobic" Hero of New Orleans. The praise was earned, primarily, by the responsibility Jackson displayed in settling the contentious question of the British West India carrying trade.

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33. McLane to Aberdeen, 12 December 1829, in Trade Appendix, clxxii-clxxiii
34. Aberdeen to McLane, 14 December 1829, in Trade Appendix, clxxiii

35. Israel, State of Union Messages, i, 294-95
 36. McLane to Hamilton, 4 February 1830, in Hamilton, Reminiscences, 161; McLane to Jackson, 22 January 1830, quoted in Munroe, McLane, 274
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 39. McLane to Van Buren, 22 March 1830, quoted in Munroe, McLane, 275
 40. Richardson, Messages and Papers, ii, 480-81
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 42. Van Buren to McLane, 18 June 1830, in Trade Appendix, clxxxiii
 43. McLane to Aberdeen, 12 July 1830, in Trade Appendix, clxxxiv
 44. McLane to Van Buren, 20 August 1830, in Trade Appendix, clxxxv
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 46. McLane to Van Buren, 6 November 1830, in Trade Appendix, cxci
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 3. Jackson to John Coffee, 28 March 1824, in Jackson Correspondence, iii, 242
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