

Federalist Party Unity and the War of 1812

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There is no comprehensive study of Federalist opposition to the War of 1812. The fragmentary studies that exist suggest a party divided between New England extremists on the one hand and moderates in the Middle and Southern States on the other. In this interpretative framework, Federalists to the south and west are invariably portrayed as "good" Federalists, that is, as patriots who consciously and decisively rejected New England's leadership in order to support the war or at least maintain a discreet neutrality.¹ A closer examination of the subject, however, sug-

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¹ The older studies focus on New England's opposition, giving the impression that Federalists elsewhere supported the war. See Henry Adams, *History of the United States during the Administrations of Jefferson and Madison*, 9 vols. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1889-91), 6, 399-403, 8, 1-23, 287-310; John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States*, 8 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1883-1913), 3, 543-53, 4, 210-52; James Schouler, *History of the United States under the Constitution*, 7 vols., rev. ed. (New York: Dodd-Mead, 1894-1913), 2, 395-96, 461-76; Edward Channing, *A History of the United States*, 6 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1905-25), 4, 543-63; Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Life and Letters of Harrison Gray Otis, Federalist, 1765-1848*, 2 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1913), 2, 53.

More recent studies show a greater awareness of Federalist opposition in the Middle and Southern States, but still tend to discount this opposition or to emphasize its tame and patriotic cast. See Albert J. Beveridge, *The Life of John Marshall*, 4 vols. (Boston and New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1916-19), 4, 30-31; Dixon Ryan Fox, *The Decline of Aristocracy in the Politics of New York* (New York: Columbia Univ. Press, 1919), pp. 176-77; Sanford W. Higginbotham, *The Keystone in the Democratic Arch: Pennsylvania Politics, 1800-1816* (Harrisburg: Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, 1952), p. 279; Norman K. Risjord, "The Virginia Federalists," *Journal of Southern History*, 33 (1967), 510-11; Marvin R. Zahniser, *Charles Cotesworth Pinckney, Founding Father* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1967), p. 260; John A. Munroe, *Federalist Delaware, 1775-1815* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1954), p. 259, and *Louis McLane: Federalist and Jacksonian* (New Brunswick: Rutgers Univ. Press, 1973), p. 52; Thomas P. Abernethy,

gests that this view is largely false. New England did indeed oppose the war, but instead of abandoning her, Federalists elsewhere followed her lead. Far from degenerating into sectional factions, the Federalist party presented a united front. The result was the most vigorous and sustained party opposition to a war the United States has ever experienced.

I

The declaration of war against England in June of 1812 jolted most Federalists. Convinced that Republicans would never take the step, they were unprepared for the news. It struck them, as Samuel Goodrich remembered, "like a thunderbolt."² The initial shock caused considerable confusion, especially among Federalists in the Middle and Southern States. Everywhere Republicans were claiming that with war declared all opposition must cease. Many Federalists were inclined to accept this dictum, especially since they had taken a similar position during the French War of 1798. In New York City and Albany, they talked of pursuing a policy of benevolent neutrality, of not obstructing war measures.³ Elsewhere in the Middle and South Atlantic States they gave more positive pledges of support. Most agreed with Georgia Federalist Felix H. Gilbert that even though the declaration of war was an "astounding act of Madness," everyone ought to "rally round the Standard" and contribute to the nation's success.⁴ As the Charleston *Courier* put it, offensive war was ill-advised, but since the die was cast, it was the duty of everyone "to join the standard of our Country, to rally around the Rulers of the Nation, and

The South in the New Nation, 1789-1819 ([Baton Rouge]: Louisiana State Univ. Press, 1961), pp. 406-11; L. Marx Renzulli Jr., *Maryland: The Federalist Years* (Rutherford: Fairleigh Dickinson Univ. Press, 1972), pp. 269-71, 295-96; Marshall Smelser, *The Democratic Republic, 1801-1815* (New York: Harper and Row, 1968), pp. 287-97.

For exceptions to this pattern, see S. E. Morison, *Harrison Gray Otis, 1765-1848: The Urbane Federalist* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1969), pp. 325-26; Sarah M. Lemmon, *Frustrated Patriots: North Carolina and the War of 1812* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1973), pp. 162-86.

² Samuel G. Goodrich, *Recollections of a Lifetime*, 2 vols. (New York and Auburn: Miller, Orton and Mulligan, 1856), I, 439. See also Richard Sedgwick to Henry D. Sedgwick, 20 June 1812, in H. D. Sedgwick Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.; Henry Lee to Patrick T. Jackson, 30 Jan. 1813, in Kenneth W. Porter, ed., *The Jacksons and the Lees: Two Generations of Massachusetts Merchants, 1765-1844*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Harvard Univ. Press, 1937), 2, 1076.

³ Theodore Sedgwick Jr. to Henry D. Sedgwick, 30 June 1812, in H. D. Sedgwick Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass.

⁴ Felix H. Gilbert to Sarah Hillhouse, 20 June 1812, in Alexander-Hillhouse Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C.

to use every means which we possess to aid in bringing [the war] to a speedy and honorable conclusion.”⁵

Federalists in New England, however, took a different view. They could not brook supporting the administration or remaining neutral, believing that the best way to bring the war to a speedy end was to oppose it. They were willing to defend their homes against invasion, and to support the navy and other forms of maritime defense. But in all other respects they were determined to oppose the war. Hence from the beginning, they wrote, spoke, and preached against it, discouraged efforts to raise men or money, and in general threw the weight of their authority on the side of peace.⁶

Resolved to make their own opposition felt, New England Federalists were disturbed by the posture of their friends to the south and west. The doctrine of non-opposition was considered “heresy” in New England, Harrison Gray Otis of Massachusetts reminded a friend in South Carolina. The declaration of war was like any other law: “It must be obey[e]d but its mischief may be and ought to be freely discuss[e]d and all due means taken to procure its repeal.”⁷ The strictures of Otis, re-enforced by the words and deeds of other New Englanders, did much to encourage Federalist opposition elsewhere. The decision of the New England governors to withhold their militia from national service reportedly “enlivened the drooping spirits of the federalists in New York,” and probably had the same effect in other states as well.⁸ The Baltimore riots also had an impact.

⁵ *Charleston Courier*, 25 June 1812. For similar sentiments, see oration of William Winder, 4 July 1812, in *Wilmington American Watchman*, 15 July 1812; B. D. Rounsaville to Citizens of Rowan County (N.C.), 1 July 1812, in Raleigh, *Minerva*, 10 July 1812; Resolutions of Fayetteville (N.C.) Town Meeting, 27 June 1812, in *Charleston Courier*, 10 July 1812; Address of Isaac Auld, cited in *Charleston Courier*, 21 July 1812; *Baltimore Federal Gazette*, reprinted in *Chillicothe Supporter*, 11 July 1812; *Philadelphia Freeman's Journal*, reprinted in *Wilmington American Watchman*, 1 July 1812; *Philadelphia United States Gazette*, 23-29 June 1812.

⁶ See William Gribbin, *The Churches Militant: The War of 1812 and American Religion* (New Haven: Yale Univ. Press, 1973), pp. 24-34; Address of Mass. House, 25 June 1812, in *Boston Gazette*, 29 June 1812; Resolutions of Boston Town Meeting, 15 July 1812, in *Boston New-England Palladium*, 17 July 1812; Address of Middlesex County (Mass.) Convention, 10 Aug. 1812, in *Providence Gazette*, 22 Aug. 1812; *Boston Columbian Centinel*, 11 July 1812; *Boston New-England Palladium*, 9-26 June 1812; *Hartford Connecticut Courant*, 7 July 1812; *Hartford Connecticut Mirror*, 17 Aug. 1812; Petition of Bridgeport (Conn.), 28 Jan. 1814, in Thompson R. Harlow, et al., eds., *John Cotton Smith Papers*, 7 vols. (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1948-67), 2, 168-69.

⁷ Otis to John Rutledge Jr., 31 July 1812, in *Rutledge Papers*, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N.C.

⁸ Theodore Sedgwick Sr. to Henry D. Sedgwick, 9 July 1812, in H. D. Sedgwick Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass. See also *Philadelphia United States*

The destruction of the office of the Baltimore *Federal Republican*, and the bloody assault on those who sought to defend it, shocked and frightened Federalists everywhere. Was this, they wondered, the beginning of a reign of terror? Was the war being fought for freedom of the seas, as Republicans claimed, or was the real object an end to freedom of the press?⁹

As the summer of 1812 wore on, Federalists in the Middle and Southern States grew steadily more disillusioned with the conflict, and ever more responsive to New England's chord. Some Federalists in these areas publicly avowed a change of heart without disguising the source of their inspiration. The Charleston *Courier*, for example, which in June had pleaded with everyone to support the war, in early August noted the growing ascendancy of the peace party and called on all Americans to work for its success. Five days later the paper praised as "excellent" a piece it reprinted from the Windsor (Vermont) *Washingtonian* advising Federalists of their right to oppose the war as long as they obeyed the laws and the Constitution.¹⁰ Other Federalists to the south and west made no such public declaration. They simply stopped talking about supporting the war, and no longer hesitated to attack the administration and its policies, or to work for a change of leaders. In short, they remained Federalists and, once they understood New England's position and appreciated the logic behind it, they toed the party line.

II

In Congress, most Federalists had enlisted under the New England banner even before war was declared, and they showed no sign of wavering after the decision was made.¹¹ The party voted unanimously against the declaration of war and most of the war legislation taken up during the remain-

Gazette, 29 June 1812; Resolutions of Md. House, 24 Dec. 1812, in *Niles' Register*, 2 Jan. 1813, p. 273. For an analysis of the militia problem, see D. R. Hickey, "New England's Defense Problem and the Genesis of the Hartford Convention," *New England Quarterly*, 50 (1977), 587-604.

⁹ See D. R. Hickey, "The Darker Side of Democracy: The Baltimore Riots of 1812," *Maryland Historian*, 7 (Fall, 1976), 1-19.

¹⁰ *Charleston Courier*, 5 and 10 Aug. 1812.

¹¹ For identification of the Federalists in the war Congresses, see D. R. Hickey, "The Federalists and the War of 1812," Ph.D. dissertation (University of Illinois, 1972), Appendix A. In the Twelfth Congress (1811-1813), there were 36 Federalists in the House (19 from New England, 6 from the Middle States, and 11 from the South), and 6 in the Senate (4 from New England and 2 from the South). In the Thirteenth Congress (1813-1815), there were 64-68 Federalists in the House (30-31 from New England, 20-23 from the Middle States, and 14 from the South), and 8-10 in the Senate (4-6 from New England, 1 from the Middle States, and 3 from the South). The number of Federalists fluctuated in the Thirteenth Congress because of resignations and contested elections.

der of the session. In the three sessions that followed, from late 1812 to early 1814, Federalists continued to vote as a bloc on all war measures. In each area of legislation, the party's cohesion was consistently high (see table on p. 28). Their position was not simply one of mindless opposition, however, for while Federalists opposed all military measures (affecting the army, volunteers, or militia), and all financial and trade limitation proposals, they supported maritime defense.

They opposed all military measures, mainly because the troops were being raised for service in Canada. Josiah Quincy called the invasion of Canada "cruel, wanton, senseless, and wicked," and most other Federalists agreed.¹² The Canadians had done no injury to the United States, and Federalists believed they deserved none in return. "Canada has issued no Orders in Council which obstruct our commerce to any part of the world," said Samuel Taggart of Massachusetts. "She has not impressed our seamen, taken our ships, confiscated our property, nor in any other respect treated us ill. All the crime alleged against Canada or the Canadians, is that, without any act of their own, they are connected with, and under the protection of a nation which has injured us on the ocean."¹³

Federalists considered the invasion not only unjust but also unwise. As the Maryland House of Delegates put it, the conquest of Canada would be "worse than a doubtful boon."¹⁴ Federalists were convinced that Great Britain would never surrender her maritime rights to regain the province, and that annexation was fraught with danger. Drawing on the arguments of Montesquieu, they claimed the addition of such a vast expanse of territory would render the United States too large, and thereby threaten the American form of government, American civil liberties, and the Union itself. Incorporating Canada into the Union, said John Lowell Jr. of Massachusetts, would "enfeeble" the United States by increasing "the jarring materials" that composed the country and were "already too discordant for our peace or safety."¹⁵

Federalist agreement on military measures, as the table indicates, was

¹² Speech of Josiah Quincy, in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 545.

¹³ Speech of Samuel Taggart, in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 1 Sess., p. 1640. For similar sentiments, see speeches, *ibid.*, 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 512-14 (Elijah Brigham); 13 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 1818 (Artemas Ward). Also Gribbin, *Churches Militant*, p. 28.

¹⁴ Memorial of Md. House, [Jan. 1814], in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 1207.

¹⁵ A New-England Farmer [John Lowell Jr.], *Mr. Madison's War* (Boston: Russell and Cutler, 1812), p. 41. See also Memorial of Mass. House, [Spring 1812], in *Niles' Register*, 20 June 1812, p. 259; speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 512-14 (Elijah Brigham), 516-18 (Henry M. Ridgely), 537-38 (Lyman Law), 646 (Benjamin Tallmadge), 653-56 (Laban Wheaton), 692-93 (Daniel Sheffey); 13 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1286-87 (Timothy Pitkin), 1453-54 (Joseph Pearson), 1516-19 (Z. R. Shipherd), 1569-70 (William Gaston).

FEDERALIST COHESION LEVELS ON WAR MEASURES IN CONGRESS
1 JUNE 1812-13 FEB. 1815

<i>Congress & Session</i>	<i>Type of Legislation</i>	House		Senate	
		<i>No. of Roll Call Votes Taken</i>	<i>Cohesion Index * %</i>	<i>No. of Roll Call Votes Taken</i>	<i>Cohesion Index * %</i>
12C 1S (1 June 1812- 6 July 1812)	Declaration of War	15	99.2	18	100.0
	Military Measures **	8	100.0	5	78.9
	Privateering	—	—	1	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	11	90.8	1	100.0
	Loans & Treas. Notes	4	100.0	2	100.0
	Tax Proposals	5	94.8	5	93.1
	Totals	43	96.5	32	96.5
12C 2S (2 Nov. 1812- 3 Mar. 1813)	Military Measures **	12	94.2	21	85.6
	Naval Measures	8	90.6	5	100.0
	Privateering	3	97.6	1	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	23	98.2	1	100.0
	Loans & Treas. Notes	8	99.2	9	93.3
	Tax Proposals	4	83.2	—	—
Totals	58	95.6	37	89.7	
13C 1S (24 May 1813- 2 Aug. 1813)	Privateering	3	99.2	5	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	7	98.8	10	96.3
	Tax Proposals	36	93.3	25	85.1
	Totals	46	94.3	40	89.7
13C 2S (6 Dec. 1813- 18 Apr. 1814)	Military Measures **	11	97.8	16	82.8
	Naval Measures	3	90.3	2	84.6
	Privateering	1	97.9	1	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	36	97.4	27	95.5
	Loans & Treas. Notes	5	95.0	2	90.0
	Tax Proposals	2	81.8	—	—
	National Bank	1	70.9	—	—
Totals	59	95.9	48	91.0	
13C 3S (19 Sept. 1814- 13 Feb. 1815)	Military Measures **	24	98.4	13	95.3
	Naval Measures	—	—	3	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	6	99.6	8	100.0
	Loans & Treas. Notes	3	90.6	1	88.9
	Tax Proposals	34	84.1	21	87.3
	National Bank	32	95.7	24	97.7
Totals	99	92.7	70	94.6	
All Sessions	Declaration of War	15	99.2	18	100.0
	Military Measures **	55	97.7	55	87.2
	Naval Measures	11	90.5	10	96.0
	Privateering	7	98.4	8	100.0
	Trade Restrictions	83	97.3	47	96.6
	Loans & Treas. Notes	20	96.2	14	93.1
	Tax Proposals	81	88.8	51	86.6
	National Bank	33	94.9	24	97.7
	Totals	305	94.4	227	92.5

fairly high. In the first four sessions of the war, their cohesion on this legislation ranged between 94.2 and 100 per cent in the House, and 78.9 and 85.6 per cent in the Senate. The range was lower in the Senate because Federalists there sometimes differed over amendments or issues only marginally related to the war. On proposals to raise troops, however, there was little disagreement in either house.

Just as they opposed Republican measures to raise troops, so too did Federalists resist efforts to raise money, whether by imposing taxes, or by authorizing loans or the issue of treasury notes. They objected to such legislation because it was designed to support the Canadian venture and for other reasons as well. At the beginning of the war, Republicans had doubled the tariff and tonnage duties but had postponed a plan for internal taxes. Federalists argued that the complete program was necessary to maintain public credit, and to force the backcountry (which consumed few imported goods) to pay its share of taxes. Any new taxes, however, were likely to be unpopular, and Federalists had no intention of supporting them. For the sake of consistency and political expediency, they voted against all taxation just as they opposed other measures designed to further the war in Canada.¹⁶

As the table shows, Federalist agreement on financial measures in the first four war sessions was generally high. On loan and treasury note proposals, their cohesion was always over 95 per cent in the House and over 90 per cent in the Senate. On tax measures, the range was somewhat lower: between 81.8 and 94.8 per cent in the House, and 85.1 and 93.1 per cent in the Senate. But the disagreement here was over amendments and tactics, and not over the tax bills proper. When these bills were put to a final vote, Federalist opposition in both houses was close to 100 per cent.

Federalist opposition extended not only to men and money bills but to commercial restrictions as well. American economic sanctions of one sort

¹⁶ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 1517-18 (Abijah Bigelow), 1522-24 (Harmanus Bleecker), 1526-27 (Elijah Brigham); 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 873-78 (Bigelow), 895-902 (Thomas R. Gold), 902-07 (Timothy Pitkin); 13 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 381 (Z. R. Shipherd), 405-09 (Brigham), 458-62 (A. C. Hanson); 13 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 1274 (Bigelow), 1290-98 (Pitkin), 1298-1311 (Daniel Sheffey), 1371-79 (Hanson), 1447-53 (Joseph Pearson), 1504-07 (Shipherd), 1732-33 (Timothy Pickering).

* This figure shows the unity of the party. It is arrived at by dividing the party majority on roll call votes by the party's total vote, and then converting the result to a percentage. If, for example, on three roll call votes, Federalists voted 44-6, 45-5, and 46-4, then the cohesion index would be 135/150 or 90%.

** That is, legislation affecting the army, volunteers, or militia.

Source: *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 1 Sess., through 13 Cong., 3 Sess. (Vols 23-28). Figures under each class of legislation are based on *all* recorded votes, *i.e.* those on amendments and procedures as well as on bills and resolutions.

or another had been on the statute books since 1806, and Federalists had hoped that the system would be scrapped with the declaration of war. But Republicans had refused to repeal the non-importation law, the latest of the restrictive measures; and over the next two years Congress took up a host of other proposals for embargoing trade, limiting exports or imports, and preventing intercourse with the enemy. Federalists opposed limitations on trade, as they always had, because they thought these measures injured America more than England, worked a hardship on merchants and farmers alike, destroyed government revenue and encouraged smuggling, and gave public officials excessive powers to probe into private life.¹⁷ As the table shows, Federalist agreement on trade restrictions was consistently high throughout the first two years of the war. Their cohesion was usually over 95 per cent in both houses of Congress, and often it was closer to 100 per cent.

Although Federalists opposed the war party's troop, tax, and trade program, they took a more co-operative position on maritime defense. They opposed privateering, believing that in an unjust war it was little better than piracy, and against this species of warfare their level of agreement was invariably over 97 per cent. The navy and coastal fortifications, on the other hand, had their full support. Federalists never wavered in their support of maritime defense, in peace or in war. Always the maritime party, they had tried in early 1812 to limit the war to a defensive maritime contest in the tradition of 1798.¹⁸ Although disappointed in this hope, they continued to support maritime defense in the interest of protecting commerce and their constituents on the seaboard.¹⁹ There were no roll call votes on coastal fortifications during the war. These bills simply went through uncontested with full Federalist support. On naval measures, however, there were numerous votes. In this area of legislation, Federalist cohesion was usually over 90 per cent, and on the question of fleet expansion (which separated the staunch navalists from the timid), it was actually close to 100 per cent.

Federalists, in sum, voted *en bloc* on all war measures during the first two years of the war, opposing military, financial, and trade limitation

¹⁷ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 381-93 (Josiah Quincy), 1134-42, 1157-63 (T. P. Grosvenor); 13 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 554-61 (Jeremiah Mason), 602-11 (Christopher Gore), 937-38, 2020 (Cyrus King), 1135-37 (William Gaston), 1137-39 (Grosvenor), 1965-73 (Daniel Webster), 2034-42 (Richard Stockton), 2042-46 (Timothy Pitkin).

¹⁸ See D. R. Hickey, "The Federalists and the Coming of the War, 1811-1812," *Indiana Magazine of History*, forthcoming.

¹⁹ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 12 Cong., 1 Sess., pp. 131-47 (James Lloyd), 895-99 (Lyman Law), 933-38 (Thomas R. Gold), 949-68 (Josiah Quincy); 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 170 (Quincy), 414-17 (Gold), 866-69 (James Milnor).

proposals while supporting maritime defense. In each session, the cohesion they achieved on war legislation was high. The average over all four sessions was 95.6 per cent in the House, and 91.7 per cent in the Senate. Such disagreements as occurred were usually over minor issues: votes on amendments or tactical procedures, or on issues not directly related to the war. On the main issues, Federalists from the Middle and Southern States almost always voted with New England.

III

Such accord was possible as long as the nature of the war remained clear. Although unwilling to support an "offensive" war against Canada, all Federalists agreed on the propriety of supporting defensive measures. "Let it not be said," Morris Miller of New York told the Republicans in Congress, "that we refuse you the means of defence. For that we always have been – we still are – ready to open the treasure of the nation. We will give you millions for defence; but not a cent for the conquest of Canada – not the ninety-ninth part of a cent for the extermination of its inhabitants."²⁰

Just how fine the line between offensive and defensive warfare could be, Federalists discovered in the latter half of 1814. With the arrival of news in June that Napoleon had been driven from Europe, the United States found itself alone in the field against England. While Britain was bringing her military and naval might to bear – dispatching thousands of Peninsular veterans and scores of ships-of-the-line to the New World – America's own war-making capacity appeared to be declining. The failure of the administration's loan in the late summer, coupled with the suspension of specie payments among banks in the Middle and Southern states, threw the nation's finances into chaos. Unable to transfer funds across country or to meet its growing bills, the administration had no choice but to rely on treasury notes that declined rapidly in value.

The nation's deteriorating military situation forced Federalists to ask themselves whether the war had changed in character and thus merited their support. When in September 1814, Congress convened for its fifth and last session during the war, a cleavage was evident in Federalist ranks. At a caucus of House and Senate Federalists held on 8 October, suggestions that the party support men and money bills won the endorsement of Federalists from the Middle and Southern states but not of New Eng-

²⁰ Speech of Morris Miller, in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 2 Sess., p. 958. See also speeches and proposals for defensive warfare, *ibid.*, 12 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 170, 560 (Josiah Quincy); 13 Cong., 2 Sess., pp. 939 (Daniel Sheffey), 941, 951 (Daniel Webster), 1054–56, 1545 (William Gaston), 1364 (John Culpepper).

landers. In the hope of working out a common policy, the caucus appointed a committee of seven, instructing it to study the matter and issue a report. On the panel were four Federalists from the middle and southern states – Rufus King and Thomas J. Oakley of New York, Richard Stockton of New Jersey, and Joseph Pearson of North Carolina – and three from New England – Timothy Pickering and Christopher Gore of Massachusetts, and David Daggett of Connecticut. The committee met and, over the objections of the New England members, recommended cautious support for the war.²¹

Just as the committee was drawing up its report, news of diplomatic developments in Europe threatened to drive a wedge still further into Federalist ranks. In a deft move to bolster support for the war, President James Madison in mid-October submitted documents to Congress showing the state of the peace negotiations at Ghent. These revealed that while America had dropped her own demands, Great Britain would not restore peace without certain concessions. Confident of victory, England demanded the establishment of a permanent Indian reservation in the Northwest Territory, cessions of land in northern Maine and Minnesota, American demilitarization of the lakes, and the surrender of fishing privileges in British North American waters.²²

These terms need not have surprised anyone, since they had been anticipated by articles in the American press picked up from English and Canadian sources.²³ But as Madison had anticipated, the disclosure had an explosive effect. Alexander Contee Hanson, the fiery Maryland editor who had been beaten and tortured by a pro-war mob in 1812, rose in Congress to condemn the terms, pledging his support for “the most vigorous system of honorable war, with the hope of bringing the enemy to a sense of justice.”²⁴ Other Federalists from outside New England joined in the cry, calling the terms “arrogant,” “inadmissible,” “humiliating,” and “disgraceful.” Most agreed with the *Alexandria Gazette* that whatever the

²¹ A. C. Hanson to Robert Goodloe Harper, 29 Sept. and 9 Oct. 1814, in Harper-Pennington Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.; Memorandum of Rufus King [Oct. 1814], in Charles R. King, *The Life and Correspondence of Rufus King*, 6 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam’s Sons, 1894–1900), 5, 422–24; Timothy Pickering to Gouverneur Morris, 21 Oct. 1814, in Pickering Papers (microfilm), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass., reel 15. The Pickering letter can also be found in Henry Cabot Lodge, *Life and Letters of George Cabot*, 2nd ed. (Boston: Little, Brown, 1878), p. 536, although the date is erroneously given as 29 Oct.

²² See *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, 3, 695–710.

²³ See *New London Connecticut Gazette*, 17 Aug. and 7 Sept. 1814; *Portland Eastern Argus*, 18 Aug. 1814; *Boston Gazette*, 1 Sept. 1814; *New York Evening Post*, 23 Sept. 1814.

²⁴ Speech of A. C. Hanson, in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 381–82.

war's origins, it had "from the arrogance of the enemy, become a war of necessity."²⁵

New England Federalists, by contrast, responded to the terms with much greater equanimity. Astonished more by the reaction of their friends to the south and west than by the terms themselves, most New Englanders believed the proposals offered a reasonable basis for negotiation.²⁶ The *Boston Gazette* said that, having declared war and failed, the nation must now pay the price.²⁷ This was a common view in New England. Harrison Gray Otis claimed that 90 per cent of the people in Massachusetts preferred "treating on the proposed basis *at least*, to the continuance of the war one day." Although his estimate ignored the state's Republican population, it was a good indication of Federalist thinking.²⁸

New Englanders had little trouble accepting the proposal for an Indian barrier, not only because of their traditional anti-western and anti-expansionist bias, but also because of their sympathy for the native and his plight. Historians have paid little attention to Federalist views on the Indian and thus have failed to appreciate how significantly they differed from those held by Republicans. Most Republicans attributed the nation's recurring border wars to British intrigue or Indian savagery. New England Federalists, on the other hand, put the blame on the white man for coveting the Indian's land.²⁹ "The spirit of cupidity," said the Massa-

²⁵ *Alexandria Gazette*, 15 Oct. 1814. See also speech of Thomas J. Oakley, in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 382-83; Charles Cotesworth Pinckney to F. D. Petit de Villers, 31 Oct. 1814, in Pinckney Papers, Duke University Library, Durham, N. C.; Robert Goodloe Harper to William Sullivan, 2 Nov. 1814, in Harper-Pennington Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.; John Jay to Timothy Pickering, 1 Nov. 1814, in Henry P. Johnston, ed., *The Correspondence and Public Papers of John Jay*, 4 vols. (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1890-93), 4, 378-79; William Polk to Gov. William Hawkins, 17 Oct. 1814, in *Raleigh Minerva*, 21 Oct. 1814; Resolutions of N. Y. Legislature, cited in *Georgetown Federal Republican*, 31 Oct. 1814; *New York Evening Post*, 12 Oct. 1814; *Georgetown Federal Republican*, 11 Oct. 1814; *Raleigh Minerva*, 21 Oct. 1814; *Philadelphia United States Gazette*, 14 Oct. 1814.

²⁶ Hanson's reaction in particular caused a sensation in New England. See Caleb Strong to Timothy Pickering, 17 Oct. 1814, in Henry Adams, ed., *Documents Relating to New-England Federalism, 1800-1815* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1877), p. 398.

²⁷ *Boston Gazette*, 7 Nov. 1814.

²⁸ Otis to Robert Goodloe Harper, 27 Oct. 1814, in Morison, *Otis*, 2, 181. See also Pickering to Strong, 12 Oct. 1814, Strong to Pickering, 17 Oct. 1814, and John Lowell Jr. to Pickering 19 Oct. 1814, in Adams, *New-England Federalism*, pp. 395-400; Pickering to Gouverneur Morris, 21 Oct. 1814, in Lodge, *Cabot*, pp. 536-37; Samuel Taggart to John Taylor, 2 Nov. 1814, in Mary R. Reynolds, ed., "Letters of Samuel Taggart, Representative in Congress, 1803-1814," *Proceedings of the American Antiquarian Society*, 33 (1923), 430-31; Porter, *Jacksons and Lees*, 2, 1122; *Boston New-England Palladium*, 18 and 28 Oct. 1814; *Boston Columbian Centinel*, 19 and 26 Oct. 1814; Keene *Newhampshire Sentinel*, 22 Oct. 1814.

²⁹ See Taggart to Taylor, 5 June 1812, in Reynolds, "Letters of Taggart," pp. 403-04; Picker-

chusetts Senate in 1814, "has extended its grasp to the 'rightful possessions of the indian tribes,' and a cruel war of extermination, at which humanity revolts, has been prosecuted against them."³⁰ Sharing Caleb Strong's belief that American Indian policy had been "extremely unjustifiable and inhuman," most New Englanders considered it entirely proper to give the natives a permanent reservation that would not be subject to encroachments from whites.³¹ Such a barrier, the Boston *Centinel* said, would benefit the white man as well as the Indian because it would prevent future wars and "check the immeasurable extension of territory, which has always proved the ruin of empires and states."³²

New England Federalists considered the other terms reasonable too. They regarded the demilitarization of the lakes as sensible, but thought it should be mutual. Nor did they see any cause for alarm over the territorial demands in the wilderness regions of northern Maine and Minnesota. Samuel Taggart called northern Maine (which was then part of Massachusetts) "a cold barren inhospitable region probably not worth one cent per 100 acres." Since it was Republican territory anyway, few Federalists in southern New England would grieve over its loss. They only hoped that it could be exchanged for a renewal of fishing privileges in British waters. If this could be managed, said Taggart, "it would be a good bargain for Massachusetts."³³

IV

With the publication of the peace terms, then, the division in the party seemed complete: while Federalists from the middle and southern States lined up on the side of the war, their colleagues in New England remained in opposition. But appearances proved deceptive, for no sooner had they

ing to Rufus King, 4 Mar. 1804, Pickering to Strong, 12 Oct. 1814, Strong to Pickering, 17 Oct. 1814, in Adams *New-England Federalism*, pp. 352, 394-96, 399; Proclamation of Gov. Caleb Strong, 26 June 1812, and Address of Mass. Senate, 8 June 1814, in *Niles' Register*, 1 Aug. 1812, p. 355, and 25 June 1814, p. 274; Hartford *Connecticut Courant*, 15 June 1813 and 21 June 1814; Boston *Daily Advertiser*, reprinted in Philadelphia *United States Gazette*, 29 Oct. 1814. New England Federalists who had moved to the West held similar views. See Rufus Putnam to Pickering, 16 June 1813, in Pickering Papers (microfilm), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Mass., reel 30; Manasseh Cutler to Ephraim Cutler, 23 Mar. 1813, in William and Julia Cutler, *Life, Journals, and Correspondence of Rev. Manasseh Cutler*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: R. Clarke, 1888), 2, 318.

³⁰ Address of Mass. Senate, 8 June 1814, in *Niles' Register*, 25 June 1814, p. 274.

³¹ Strong to Pickering, 17 Oct. 1814, in Adams, *New-England Federalism*, p. 399.

³² Boston *Columbian Centinel*, 19 Oct. 1814.

³³ Taggart to Taylor, 2 Nov. 1814, in Reynolds, "Letters of Taggart," p. 431. In February of 1815, shortly before peace was restored, Massachusetts officials considered adopting a legislative resolution indicating the state's willingness to give up part of Maine. See Christopher Gore to Rufus King, 11 Apr. 1815, in King, *King*, 5, 476-77.

committed themselves than some papers to the south and west began to echo New England's cry that the terms were not so bad after all.³⁴ This marked the beginning of a larger shift in these states, one that carried most Federalists back into the anti-war camp. In part, this was due to New England's influence, which, as always, was a potent force in shaping Federalist opinion. But other factors also played a role: the administration's war strategy and politics, and the arrival of favorable diplomatic news from Europe.

The administration's strategic planning bothered Federalists because it continued to focus on Canada. Even though America was on the defensive, Secretary of War James Monroe still talked of taking the war to the enemy.³⁵ Federalists were no more willing to support a Canadian venture in 1814 than earlier in the war, and Monroe's plans made them wonder if the character of the contest had really changed.³⁶ They were also angered by the Secretary's scheme for raising a new army by conscripting militia and enlisting minors without the consent of their elders. They regarded the conscription plan as "a palpable and flagrant violation of the Constitution" – a French innovation calculated to destroy the militia and undermine state authority.³⁷ The minor enlistment proposal was considered no less repugnant as a threat to filial ties and a nullification of state law and contract law. This proposal, according to Thomas P. Grosvenor of New York, would gain no more than a thousand recruits and yet would result in "jeopardizing the good order of the community, violating contracts, disturbing the sacred rights of natural affection, and all the felicities of domestic life."³⁸

³⁴ See New York *Evening Post*, 13 Oct. 1814; Philadelphia *United States Gazette*, 27–28 Oct. 1814, and articles reprinted from Boston *Daily Advertiser in Gazette*, 25–31 Oct. 1814; Georgetown *Federal Republican*, reprinted in Charleston *Courier*, 1 Nov. 1814.

³⁵ See Monroe to William Branch Giles, 17 Oct. 1814, in *American State Papers: Military Affairs*, 1, 515.

³⁶ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 76 (David Daggett), 90–91 (Jeremiah Mason), 151 (Christopher Gore), 442 (Cyrus King), 687–88, 791 (Morris Miller), 739, 742 (T. P. Grosvenor), 821 (Z. R. Shipherd), 907–08 (Artemas Ward), 940–44 (Lyman Law), 964–69 (Elijah Brigham). Also New York *Evening Post*, 4–5 Nov. 1814; Alexandria *Gazette*, 17 Dec. 1814; Baltimore *Federal Gazette*, reprinted in Pittsburgh *Gazette*, 21 Jan. 1815.

³⁷ Quoted words from speech of Robert Goldsborough, in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 104. See also speeches, *ibid.*, pp. 70–77 (David Daggett), 77–91 (Jeremiah Mason), 95–102 (Christopher Gore), 775–99 (Morris Miller), 819–30 (Z. R. Shipherd), 830–33 (Jonathan O. Moseley), 834–50 (Richard Stockton), 850–60 (Daniel Sheffey), 904–21 (Artemas Ward), 922–28 (William Gaston). Also Federalist press, Oct.–Dec. 1814.

³⁸ Speech of T. P. Grosvenor, in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., p. 733. See also speeches, *ibid.*, pp. 720–32 (Cyrus King), 744–49 (Morris Miller). Also Federalist press, Oct.–Dec. 1814.

Disturbed by the administration's military planning, Federalists were also irritated by its political exclusiveness. There was a good deal of talk – even among New Englanders – about the possibility of Federalists joining the cabinet, but nothing came of it.³⁹ Early in the session a group of Republican Senators had urged the President to take members of the opposition into his cabinet, but Madison had refused.⁴⁰ Two months later, when Federalists tried to install Rufus King as president *pro tempore* of the Senate, they were again thwarted. With the President suffering from poor health and the vice-presidency vacant, Republicans were unwilling to put a Federalist next in the line of succession. Annoyed by this rebuff, Federalists murmured that Republicans had no interest in conciliation and could not be trusted.⁴¹

Exasperated by the administration's war planning and politics, and inspired by New England's example, Federalists in the Middle and Southern States were already deserting the war movement when a new set of British terms was submitted to Congress on 1 December. These showed that Great Britain was willing to restore peace on the basis of *uti possidetis*, meaning that each side would retain whatever territory it held.⁴² If the terms were acceded to, title to a few minor forts would change hands and eastern Maine would pass to Britain. This was a settlement that Federalists everywhere could have lived with, and doubtless many Republicans too. Fearing the impact the dispatches might have on the war spirit, Republican Congressmen at first tried to suppress them. And when they were published, the semi-official Washington *National Intelligencer* professed to believe that the prospects for peace were still "very faint."⁴³ No one was fooled, least of all the Federalists, most of whom thought peace was near.⁴⁴ Heartened by the news and anxious for peace, they dis-

³⁹ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 440 (Thomas Bayly), 472 (Z. R. Shipherd), 948 (Lyman Law). Also Boston *Columbian Centinel*, 31 Aug. 1814; Boston *New-England Palladium*, 2, 6, 9 Sept. 1814; Boston *Gazette*, 5 Sept. 1814; Portsmouth *Oracle*, reprinted in *Chillicothe Supporter*, 19 Nov. 1814; Baltimore *Federal Gazette*, reprinted in *Pittsburgh Gazette*, 21 Jan. 1815; George Hay to James Monroe, 27 Nov. 1814, in Monroe Papers (microfilm), Library of Congress, Washington, D. C., reel 5.

⁴⁰ A. C. Hanson to R. G. Harper, 9 Oct. 1814, in Harper-Pennington Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, Md.

⁴¹ *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 110–11; Charles J. Ingersoll, *History of the Second War Between the United States of America and Great Britain*, 2 vols. (Philadelphia: Lippincott, Grambo, 1853), 2, 292–93.

⁴² See *American State Papers: Foreign Relations*, 3, 710–26.

⁴³ Washington *National Intelligencer*, 2 Dec. 1814. The attempt to suppress the documents, unmentioned in the *Annals*, was observed and recorded by a correspondent for the Boston *New-England Palladium*. See issue of 9 Dec. 1814.

⁴⁴ See Ebenezer Stott to Duncan Cameron, 12 Dec. 1814, in Cameron Papers, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina Library, Chapel Hill, N. C.; Boston *New-*

continued what little support they were still giving to the war. "The war-pitch," said Republican Congressman Charles J. Ingersoll, "fell as much at Washington as it did in London. The salutary apprehension of October turned to hopeful confidence in December. The nerve of opposition was strung afresh."⁴⁵

Thus by December of 1814, the division that had shown up in the Federalist party two months earlier had largely disappeared. Judging from the party's behavior in Congress, this division apparently did not go very deep anyway, and may have been more a matter of rhetoric than reality. Federalists refused to support the Republicans' troop and trade program in this session and, as the table shows, their cohesion on these measures was over 95 per cent in both houses.⁴⁶ The only issue that generated any real difference of opinion was financial policy. Although Federalists voted as a bloc on the various proposals for a national bank (achieving a cohesion of more than 95 per cent), there was an undercurrent of disagreement over the propriety of establishing such an institution when financial conditions were so chaotic.⁴⁷ Over tax policy, Federalist opinion varied somewhat more. While a group of Federalists from the Middle States was willing to vote for all the administration's tax bills, a group from New England would support none. Hence in this area of legislation, the party's cohesion fell to 84.1 per cent in the House and 87.3 per cent in the Senate.⁴⁸ Even with these differences, however, Federalists maintained their usual high level of agreement for the session as a whole. In the House, their cohesion was 92.7 per cent – down only a few points from the average over earlier sessions; and in the Senate, it was 94.6 per cent, which was actually higher than the average for the previous sessions.

The figures at the bottom of the table show Federalist cohesion levels on all war legislation across the five sessions of Congress. The cohesion achieved on each type of legislation was high, usually over 90 per cent, and more often than not over 95 per cent. On all war measures it was

England Palladium, 9 Dec. 1814; *New York Evening Post*, 5, 7, 8 Dec. 1814; *Trenton Federalist*, 5 Dec. 1814; *Philadelphia United States Gazette*, 13 Dec. 1814, and 6 Jan. 1815; *Georgetown Federal Republican*, 2 Dec. 1814; *Alexandria Gazette*, 3 Dec. 1814; *Baltimore Federal Gazette*, reprinted in *Charleston Courier*, 20 Dec. 1814.

⁴⁵ Ingersoll, *History*, 2, 282.

⁴⁶ Federalists allowed a state army bill to go through uncontested, but this was consistent with their policy of supporting local defense.

⁴⁷ See speeches in *Annals of Congress*, 13 Cong., 3 Sess., pp. 208–14 (Rufus King), 564–65, 568–81, 987–88 (William Gaston), 626–28 (Elijah Brigham), 642–43, 1011–12, 1014–23 (Daniel Webster), 656–65 (A. C. Hanson), 665–85 (T. P. Grosvenor), 686–88 (Morris Miller).

⁴⁸ See tables in Hickey, "The Federalists and the War of 1812," pp. 186–87. On all the tax bills combined, New England Federalists voted 24–156, Middle State Federalists 45–51 and Southern Federalists 20–39.

94.4 per cent in the House, and 92.5 per cent in the Senate. This agreement was remarkable, and it both reflected and sustained a larger unity attained by the party during the war. In an analysis of all roll call votes in the House of Representatives during Madison's presidency, Harry Fritz has calculated that Federalists achieved a higher degree of cohesion in the war sessions than in any other between 1809 and 1817.⁴⁹ Fritz's study does not extend to the Senate, but it is evident that Federalists in that chamber acted with exceptional harmony during the war too. In both houses of Congress, Federalists probably achieved their highest degree of unity since 1801 – perhaps the highest in the party's history.

V

New England could never claim more than 53 per cent of the party's membership in the House during the war, and never more than 67 per cent in the Senate. Hence the high degree of voting cohesion achieved by Federalists demonstrates her success in forging a united front against the war. Clearly, the traditional picture of the party disintegrating during the war is in error. New England's sectionalism – the threats of nullification and secession, and the Hartford Convention – may have caused anxiety among Federalists elsewhere, but it did not alienate them. New England's national policy, which she consistently pursued throughout the war, was to withhold all support except for defensive measures, and in general other Federalists followed her lead. The Federalist response to the war, in other words, was characterized less by diversity than by uniformity, and this unity was achieved largely under New England's leadership and maintained on New England's terms.

How was New England able to maintain such a firm hold on the party even in time of war? It was as natural for New England to lead the Federalists, as it was natural for Massachusetts to lead New England. The situation was roughly parallel to the relationship between Virginia and the South. And just as Virginia could find sympathetic Republicans in all parts of the Union, Massachusetts could find like-minded Federalists in all sections too. This was chiefly because the policies of the New England Federalists made good sense nationally, as well as regionally, and thus appealed to people in all parts of the country.

⁴⁹ Harry Fritz, "The Collapse of Party: President, Congress, and the Decline of Party Action, 1807-1817," Ph.D. dissertation (Washington University, 1971), p. 258. This study is a broadly-based examination of party behavior in the Age of Jefferson. Fritz does not distinguish between war measures and other legislation, and his list of Federalists differs from mine. Even so, his quantitative work is sparkling, and his figures show House Federalists acting with consistently greater cohesion than Republicans throughout the period of his study.

Why did the Federalist party collapse so soon after attaining such a high degree of unity? The party's chief appeal in the Age of Jefferson was that it offered an alternative to Republican foreign policy, an alternative grounded on peace and free trade with Great Britain instead of commercial sanctions and war. When the wars in Europe and America came to an end, the Federalist party lost its main reason for existence. The European situation, so favorable to America during Jefferson's first administration, was again favorable after the Treaty of Ghent, and thus removed the need for an opposition. Moreover, the Federalist party emerged from the war on the wrong side of an American myth. By any reasonable criterion, Republican foreign policy had ended in failure, just as the Federalists had always said it would. The diplomatic goals set in 1806 and renewed in 1812 were uniformly abandoned at Ghent. Yet by the rapid process of myth-making at which Americans seem to excel, the defeat was converted into a spectacular triumph. In the wake of the belated victory at New Orleans, Federalists were remembered as traitors rather than as prophets. Hence, even though men like John Marshall and Daniel Webster remained active in public life to carry elements of the Federalist tradition into the future, the party itself ceased to function as a national organization and gradually disappeared.