

Country Ideology, Republicanism, and Libertarianism: The Thought of John Taylor of Caroline

by Joseph R. Stromberg
Fort Myers, Florida

I. Introduction: The Relevance of John Taylor

John Taylor of Caroline occupies a major place in the history of Anglo-American political thought. Charles Beard considered him "the philosopher and statesman of agrarianism" and "the most systematic thinker" of the Jeffersonian Republican party. Indeed, it was Beard's writing on Taylor a half-century ago that did so much to revive interest in this Virginia polemicist. Eugene T. Mudge, who wrote the standard work on Taylor's philosophy, reckoned that Taylor's chief importance lay in his role as "prophet" of sectional struggle, and even civil war between North and South. English legal historian M. J. C. Vile sees Taylor as "in some ways the most impressive political theorist that America has produced." Avery Craven calls him "the most profound and the most persistent champion of individual and local democracy in [his] period." More recently, William Appleman Williams, who once dismissed Taylor as a narrow "physiocrat," now believes that Taylor "made the best case against empire as a way of life"; coming from Williams, this is high praise indeed.¹

In addition to John Taylor's immediate importance in his own time and place, there is growing evidence that Taylor played a worthy part in sustaining, elaborating and handing down a characteristic Anglo-American ideology of political opposition which persisted from the 1640's into the 1820's, if not all the way to 1865. From the differing interpretations put forward by J. G. A. Pocock, Bernard Bailyn, Caroline Robbins, Norman Risjord, Isaac Kramnick, John Murrin, Rowland Berthoff, Forrest McDonald, Pauline Maier, Gordon Wood, Christopher Hill, C. B. Macpherson, Eric Foner, Robert Shalhope, Murray Rothbard, William Appleman Williams, William Marina, and others, an *ad hoc* revisionist synthesis has begun to emerge: this view stresses the continuity and unity of a style of

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political thought and action variously called Country ideology, radical whiggism, and libertarian republicanism.² With the existence of such a tradition established and its content outlined, we may go on to the question of John Taylor's standing in such a Country, true whiggish, liberal, and republican heritage. In what ways did Taylor's views on such matters as federalism, separation of powers, the right of secession, *laissez faire* economics, government debt, paper money, and slavery continue, or creatively modify and modernize, the inherited worldview of English-speaking oppositions? It is to such problems we may turn following a brief summary of Taylor's life and career and a preliminary treatment of the opposition tradition.

John Taylor's Career

John Taylor (1753–1824), the ablest thinker of the Jeffersonian Republican party, met the requirements for an Old Dominion planter-statesman. Born to a distinguished family, he attended William and Mary College, set up a law practice, served as a major in the Continental Army, and became a successful planter, owning several plantations and 150 slaves. Although he preferred the quiet life of a country gentleman and devoted much time and energy to agricultural “reform,” i.e. technical improvement, Taylor entered politics to defend his vision of a free, republican society. Never a professional politician, he served in the Virginia legislature in 1779–81, 1783–85, and 1796–1800, and was appointed to fill out unexpired terms in the U.S. Senate in 1793–94, 1803, and 1822–24.³

John Taylor's Writings

As one who always set himself against centralized, consolidated government of the Union, Taylor took an “antifederalist” position during the debate over ratification of the U. S. Constitution. In a real sense, most of his political writing represents the attempt to interpret antifederalist principles back into the Constitution once it became the law of the land. With one notable exception, Taylor's works reflected the political battles of the day. His earliest books attacked the Federalist funding system; Taylor's later works included reasoned polemics against the centralizing doctrines and decisions of the Marshall Court. Taylor's magnum opus, *An Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States* (Fredericksburg, Va., 1814), which he took twenty years completing, was a delayed reply to John Adams' *A Defence of the Constitution of Government of the United States* (1787–88). Another work, *Arator*, was a compilation of a series of newspaper articles Taylor wrote on agricultural and political topics.⁴ Lance Banning writes that in all this “John Taylor was an American Bolingbroke, speaking for an American ‘Country’ party.”⁵ Accordingly, a look at the ideology of the Country party is in order.

II. Civic Humanism, Lockean Liberalism, and Radical Whiggism in Opposition Thought

J. G. A. Pocock believes that an English adaptation of the "civic humanism" of the Italian Renaissance was the essence of opposition thought: Country ideology. In his celebrated *Oceana* (1656) James Harrington applied civic humanism, as expounded by Niccolo Machiavelli, to the English crisis of the 1640's. Positing a reciprocal causal relation between power and property, Harrington held that England was growing closer to an ideal commonwealth. Such a republic secures stability and liberty by combining monarchy, aristocracy and republican government; it rests on a broad distribution of landed property. The independent proprietor of small or middling fortune, able to bear arms on his own account, was the bulwark of the state against "corruption" (i.e., changes that brought on tyranny, oligarchy, or democracy). Harrington's successors, the neo-Harringtonians, claimed that England's "ancient constitution" had approximated this ideal state. They saw themselves as heroically fighting Court policies that fostered unfree government.⁶

With Harrington's ideas "stood on their head," civic humanism became the common currency of critics of the post-1688 Whig Oligarchy— from the socially reactionary Tory Bolingbroke to Radical Whig commonwealthmen like Trenchard and Gordon. To the Country thinkers of left and right (as Pocock calls them), the Financial Revolution of the late-seventeenth century was especially dangerous. Invention of the national debt made possible payment of a standing army with which the Court could alter the political fabric, levy higher taxes, and establish absolute monarchy. The eighteenth-century opposition portrayed themselves as the virtuous citizens fighting a corrupt Court party of privileged monopoly capitalists, stockjobbers, pensioners, placemen, and the standing army. It is no wonder that Pocock writes of "a major movement of Country ideas into the radical-democratic tradition."⁷

Within the ranks of the Country ideologists there were two major groups. On the one hand, Bolingbroke and his friends combined attacks on pro-monopoly Court policies with more broadly anticommmercial themes growing out of rural nostalgia.⁸ At the same time, a radical bourgeois opposition was emerging, which was anti-Court, anti-privilege, anti-monopoly, but pro-commercial. Since both groups used Country language and had the same enemies, historians often lump them together as "agrarians" opposing "capitalist" development (much as they do in U.S. historiography). This agrarianism by association is fundamentally misleading. The bourgeois radicals like Trenchard and Gordon, while speaking out of Country rhetoric (including Bolingbroke's works), also utilized the revolutionary liberal writings of John Locke, part of the Leveller tradition, and the emerging ideas of economic liberalism.⁹ As Isaac Kramnick writes:

One can be both a bourgeois radical and a thinker concerned with themes important to the civic humanist tradition. A new language of public discourse can be acquired alongside continued use of older words and concepts.¹⁰

Thus the True Whigs fused several compatible ideologies into a coherent libertarian and republican *Weltanschauung* which, when removed across an ocean, helped guide and inform the revolution of the American Country against the English Court.

III. Republican Revolution against the Empire

The American version of opposition ideology, as it grew out of the quarrel with the *imperium* and the internal American debates over independence, radicalized the elements already mentioned. From Locke and his interpreters came notions of individual self-ownership, inalienable rights, natural law, and the right of revolution. At the same time, the American revolutionary Whigs, like the commonwealthmen who taught them, appealed to the historical "rights of Englishmen" (freedoms supposedly dating from Anglo-Saxon times). To round out their worldview, they drew on republican (civic humanist) notions and the Country *vs.* Court theory of history. These ideas, pushed to their logical limit in the Revolution, made up what Bernard Bailyn calls the "transforming ideology" of the Revolution.¹¹ Despite Bailyn's own severance of ideas from material issues, it is clear that the revolutionary ideology fit well with the concrete political, social and economic goals of the men in the revolutionary coalition. This seems especially true where feudal leftovers such as entail, primogeniture, quitrents, established church, mercantilist restrictions and even pockets of manorialism required a frontal assault by bourgeois ideas and revolutionary political action.¹²

Radical Whigs on both sides of the Atlantic believed that power is inherently expansionist and that only eternal popular vigilance could safeguard liberty. British imperial policies after 1763 trenched on American interests and rights (as they saw it), and seemed to prove that the Court intended to use a standing army and new taxes to overthrow liberty. The Country theme of virtuous¹³ freeholders took on added importance in revolutionary theory and practice. Broad ownership of land and firearms reflected the reality of the ideal, as did the significant role of the militia in winning the war.¹⁴ (The militia loomed large in republican thought as the viable alternative to standing armies.)

During the Revolution the themes of Country *vs.* Court and Liberty *vs.* Power ran together completely. Americans took "a negative view of government" and saw "the rulers and the ruled" as antagonistic forces.¹⁵ This was especially the view of the left wing of the Revolution as against more conservative Whigs whose goal was an American form of mercantilism.

IV. Confederation, Re-Confederation, and Faction

Within a few years of the victory of the revolutionists, a group of conservative Whigs drew up a new Constitution to cure the supposed "imbecilities" of the Articles of Confederation. Written in the language of federalism, the new charter nonetheless created a true central government with an executive power capable of building up an American mercantilist political economy.¹⁶ The ratification debate unleashed familiar themes as the misnamed "Anti-federalists" attacked the Constitution as a betrayal of the Revolution. Simultaneously, the misnamed "Federalists" (actually nationalists) used republican concepts to assimilate popular sovereignty to the proposed new government.¹⁷

The centralizers carried the day and, retaining the name of Federalists, governed until 1800. Their former opponents gradually organized under the name of Republicans. Thus the Republican (or Democratic-Republican) Party continued Antifederalism, which in turn came out of the Radical Whiggism of the left wing of the revolutionary coalition.¹⁸ Once in power, the Federalists soon found their mercantilist policies—the National Bank, excises, redemption of wartime certificates, standing army, and tariffs—assailed by the Republicans in traditional Country terms. The parallels seemed exact. John Taylor of Caroline did more than his part to apply the analyses of Bolingbroke and the Radical Whigs to the issues of United States politics.¹⁹

V. The Political Sociology of John Taylor

John Taylor has been styled an agrarian philosopher, an agrarian liberal, a democrat, and a partisan of states rights. William A. Williams sees him as a physiocrat who sought to realize a Southern feudal utopia by means of *laissez faire* economics.²⁰ While these labels contribute to understanding Taylor, none adequately describes him. Taylor loved the land, but was no mere agrarian; he was an extreme libertarian, but condoned Negro slavery; he was a friend of the free market, but an enemy of subsidized capital. Yet taken as a whole, his political thought was reasonably coherent and consistent.

Taylor took solid liberal ground in holding that men were a mixture of good and evil. Self-interest was the only real constant in human action.²¹ Hence theories founded on the premise that human nature required vigorous, authoritarian government to restrain it, were false. As Taylor caustically wrote in his *Inquiry*:

To keep this devil [man] in order, hierarchy contends that he ought to be cheated by superstition; monarchy that he ought to be pilfered by privilege; and parties of interest, that he is fair game for all fraudulent laws. And forsooth, because man is man.²²

Indeed, while other thinkers, from Thomas Jefferson to Federalist John

Adams, agonized over the need for a virtuous citizenry, Taylor took the view that "the principles of a society may be virtuous, though the individuals composing it are vicious."²³ In other words, *the right institutional framework* decided whether or not the polity created opportunities for vicious men to do harm or rendered their vices nugatory. Here Taylor, rather suprisingly for an alleged agrarian or Catonist, modernizes the republican paradigm in a way that puts him in the company of such liberal modernists as Paine, Godwin and Shelley.

In dealing with government Taylor broke away not only from Adams' concern with "numerical analysis" and social balance (i.e., of monarchy, aristocracy, and republic), but also from concern for balance in the federal government (as delineated, for example, in *The Federalist*). Taylor's key idea was to divide power up so many ways, federally and departmentally, that no set of officials possessed enough of it to overawe the rest of the government or the people. The purpose of government, after all, was to protect individual men in their lives, liberty, and justly acquired property. Government rested on the "natural, individual right of self government," not on social contract.²⁴ Sovereignty was the result of men's living together in a community, and this sovereignty could organize the protection of the individual. True to his antifederalist origins, Taylor located sovereignty in the people as states, not in a people of the United States in the aggregate.²⁵ To Taylor, the state governments were as nearly perfect as they needed to be; he was far more concerned with the problem of dividing and taming power through federalism.

It was the purpose of "political law," as Taylor referred to constitutional law, to establish structural, procedural and substantive restraints on power. Summarizing his theory, Taylor wrote: "Our policy divides power, and unites the nation in one interest; Mr. Adams's divides a nation into several interests and unites power."²⁶ In seeking to divide power so thoroughly as to dispense with its "balancing," Taylor escaped the confines of republican dogma and advanced into *laissez faire* liberalism. The established "checks and balances" theory, especially as expounded by James Madison, owed much to Montesquieu, who himself learned it from that Country stalwart Viscount Bolingbroke.²⁷ Hence in rejecting that formula, Taylor proved himself very much a revisionist republican willing to break new ground in order to achieve the goals of republicanism. Examination of his views on "political law" will shed light on both *how* and *why* structural guarantees would obviate "faction" (a dread nemesis of republican societies).

To the generation of the Founders, the U.S. Constitution was *sui generis*, combining the advantages of a Confederation with those of a true national state. During the ratification debates Madison and Hamilton wrote of dual sovereignty vested in both state and general governments. Hamilton, the arch-nationalist, called the new government "a Confederate Republic" and "an assemblage of societies." Such a Union secured strength in foreign

affairs while preserving local self-government. Madison himself conceded that ratification was "the act of the people, as forming so many independent States, not as forming one aggregate nation."²⁸ Such arguments spoke to those who feared monarchical consolidation.

Classical republican writers like Montesquieu had denied the possibility of stable republican government for a large country. To meet this objection, naturally brought up by the Antifederalists, Madison inverted the argument in the famous "Federalist No. 10," asserting that "extend[ing] the sphere" would actually solve the problem of "faction"—i.e., the attempt of narrow interest groups to control government to their own advantage. In describing faction Madison stayed close to Harrington, but his solution—an extended Union to dilute and alleviate faction—was, as William A. Williams observes, an exercise in American mercantilism. By tying republican liberty to territorial expansion Madison long anticipated Turner's frontier thesis and read the logic of empire into the Constitution (ignoring the Radical Whig belief that empire necessarily undermines liberty). In sum, Madison saw the Union as "a feudal system of republics" with power distributed between states and central government as in a medieval hierarchy.²⁹

Taylor denied that popular character by itself could produce faction (or Harringtonian class struggle). As McConnell notes, rather than arrange a Constitution to mitigate "the effects of factionalism," Taylor sought "to remove [its] causes."³⁰ Class struggle was ever the effect of unjust legislation, especially mercantilist economic interference. Hence, as McConnell writes, for Taylor the obvious answer was:

Remove the legal base from under the stock jobbers, the banks, the paper money party, the tariff-supported manufacturers, and so on; destroy the system of patronage by which the executive has corrupted the legislature; bring down the usurped authority of the Supreme Court.³¹

This radical analysis and program echoed the social welfare conclusions of the English and French liberal economists. They had judged that government was unproductive and must be kept to a minimum; the unregulated market could better provide for society's needs. In the absence of state intervention to create monopoly and privilege, class conflict would be minimal. Hence, Taylor reasoned, his program of divided power, substantive limits, and strict construction of the Constitution to secure them, would circumvent faction by ending its institutional causes in special legislation. With the causes of faction stifled at the outset, the well-ordered republic need not expand geographically in order to dilute faction. Instead, a policy of empire subverted liberty by necessitating aggressive war, standing armies, national debt, and high taxes—the whole panoply of antirepublican Court policies. Mercantilism and empire were two sides of the same coin.³²

Competing Pieces of Government

Unlike the Federalists, Taylor, who was somewhat uncomfortable with the concept of sovereignty,³³ maintained the antifederalist position that ultimate sovereignty resides in the people of the several states. Reasoning from this premise, he maintained that the states by a compact among themselves had merely delegated portions of their sovereign power to a general government (itself not sovereign). *In extremis*, the natural right of self-defense permitted state interposition (nullification) to oppose federal usurpations. As a last resort, secession from a Union voluntarily entered was both a constitutional and revolutionary remedy. Taylor's role in pushing for Virginia's secession at the time of the Alien and Sedition Acts, and his role in the Republican response—the Kentucky and Virginia Resolutions—show how seriously he took the reserved rights of these primary political communities.³⁴

For Taylor, the Constitution, strictly construed, set up a far-reaching division of governmental powers. He supposed the states to possess full concurrent jurisdiction with the federal government. This commitment to concurrent jurisdiction as an essential feature of federalism explains Taylor's vehement denunciations of the Supreme Court; hence his strenuous attack on John Marshall's decision denying Maryland the right to tax the National Bank (*McCulloch vs. Maryland*, 1819).

Taylor denied that a Supreme Court decision set a binding precedent at all, even for the state courts. Supreme Court decisions applied at most between the parties to the particular case. Taylor admitted that differing constructions of the same constitutional provisions would be possible, but found that eventuality better than letting the Supreme Court set precedents with finality. He opposed the whole notion of judicial review. The Supreme Court's "usurpation" of the final say on matters of constitutional law would, if it succeeded, effectively transfer sovereignty to the general government.

In the same way, Taylor thought each coordinate branch of the general government had an equal right of interpreting the Constitution within its sphere of action. As if viewing a model of celestial mechanics, Taylor envisioned the frictionless orbit of the several departments in their particular spheres, seldom clashing—if only because none had sufficient force to overwhelm the others. Mudge terms it "a *laissez faire* notion applied to the elements of government," and M. J. C. Vile writes of a "fantastic picture of a fragmented governmental system" which had the "virtue [of] consistency." William Grampp calls it "the most extreme extension made in America of the idea of a minimum state."³⁵ Certainly Taylor's philosophy showed many advances over the simple English republicanism of yore, which knew no federalism, no written constitution, no concentric spheres of action, and no nullification and secession.

Market vs. Force: Libertarian Class Analysis

Given Taylor's *anarchisant* constitutionalism, it is not remarkable that a

thinker so stubbornly consistent spent much of his time as an outsider. In setting forth his political analyses, Taylor kept the Country and republican framework, but added much that was modern and original. Given security in their rights and property, men will live in peace, said Taylor. Let government create privileged, artificial forms of wealth, and class struggle must ensue.

Like his radical bourgeois counterparts in England, Taylor simply would not concede that great extremes of wealth and poverty were natural outcomes of differences in talent; on the contrary, they were invariably the result of extra-economic coercion and deceit.³⁶ Indeed, in his treatment of wealth and power, Taylor, the successful Southern planter, perhaps resembled no other Anglo-American *laissez faire* liberal so much as Thomas Paine, epitome of the self-taught petty bourgeois radicals. With the painful and obvious exception of Negro slavery, which Paine denounced and Taylor despaired of changing, the two men developed the Country and republican heritage along remarkably parallel lines.³⁷

In words reminiscent of Harrington, Taylor wrote that "enormous political power invariably accumulates enormous wealth, and enormous wealth invariably accumulates enormous political power."³⁸ From the overall tendency of Taylor's thinking it is clear that he viewed coercive political power as the prior element in this seemingly circular relationship. Once, priestcraft and feudal lords robbed the ordinary man of the fruits of his labor. More recently, government finance—national debt, paper money, and stockjobbing—had created a "paper aristocracy," a class of "paper feudalists" who robbed agriculture and labor by manipulating the circulating medium. Taylor was well aware of the parallels between Walpole's and Hamilton's financial systems. His Country attack on Court finance underscored the purely parasitic character of such government-sponsored capital; subsidized capital at best transferred real wealth to its holders from the economically productive, while at worst it cemented an aggressive alliance of artificial capitalists and corrupt courtiers (officials).³⁹

Further, increased taxation became necessary to pay the expenses of the public debt, which drained additional real wealth away from productive uses. Public credit made possible the standing army, that instrument of constitutional subversion and imperialist war. England, Taylor continually noted, had already followed this road to ruin, and America was on the same path, under Federalists and Republicans alike.⁴⁰

For Taylor, the American Bolingbroke, the moral was clear: an aroused citizenry must take effective political action to uproot the new class of subsidized capitalists or suffer the fate of England with its Whig Oligarchy, class conflict, economic fluctuations, high taxation, standing army, inflation, war, and the ruin of the productive classes. In addition, the mercantilism of London and Washington caused men to confound artificial, politically-created property with the justly acquired property earned in the marketplace, leading some radicals to mistakenly oppose all property.⁴¹

Now it seems perfectly clear that Taylor was sincere when he championed "labor" and "agriculture" and denounced the paper feudalists (leaving aside the important matter of slavery). It is unhistorical to take him as using "labor" in some later sense, and then tax him for hypocrisy. Instead, Taylor was applying a libertarian class analysis based on the contrast between those whose property was the creature of political force and fraud and those who earned their property through productive work on the free market (whether as farmers, entrepreneurs, tradesmen, or laborers). In a world where entire interests and classes lived off their relations with the state, such an analysis was an important moral and sociological tool in the hands of *laissez faire* liberal thinkers.⁴²

VI. Conclusion: Radical Despite Himself

John Taylor of Caroline showed a deep grasp of the internal logic and consistencies of opposition ideology. His theoretical innovations were attempts at working out a program that would bring republican policy to its highest possible perfection. He had little room for the self-deceptions and evasions characteristic of Jefferson and other Republican activists; nor was he prepared to adopt the far different, "practical" American mercantilist outlook of Republicans like Madison. (Madison, indeed, was closer to the Federalists than to the radical wing of his own party.) Along with John Randolph of Roanoke and a few others, Taylor opposed Madison's War of 1812—his own party's war—precisely because it was a war for empire. The war strengthened the standing army, "discredited" the militia (by showing it was good for local defense but not for invading Canada), led to rechartering the National Bank, economic controls, new taxes, and other consequences abhorrent to Republican ideologues like Taylor.

Taylor's radical approach to republicanism brought his positions into line with the most advanced *laissez faire* liberal thought of his time. As a Southerner and an American, he worked at length on problems of constitutional order which were not as urgent in Britain and France. Finding federal institutions "on hand," Taylor sought to use them as a major bulwark of Country vs. Court. His antifederalist reading of the Constitution was a major part of his legacy.

Certainly his greatest deviation from liberalism came, as with other Southern libertarians, over Negro slavery. As a wealthy planter Taylor was deeply involved in that system of labor; as a spokesman for Virginia and the South, he could not escape the dilemma of how to deal with an illiberal cancer so important in the marketplace of republican America. Unlike Jefferson, whose evasions and fruitless deliberations have fascinated historians, Taylor confronted slavery head on. He said it was wrong, but not susceptible of short-run amelioration, given the danger of slave revolt and general slaughter of the whites. In the distant future, he wrote,

If England and America would erect and foster a settlement of free negroes in some fertile part of Africa, it would soon subsist by its own energies. Slavery might then be gradually re-exported, and philanthropy gratified by a slow reanimation of the virtue, religion and liberty of the negroes, instead of being again afflicted with the effects of her own rash attempts suddenly to change human nature.⁴³

Unfortunately, this left him with no interim choice—if indeed he sought one—but to defend slavery as it was, especially once he concluded that the Federalists and their successors intended to use the slavery question as a means of lessening Southern power in the Union. In addition, Taylor's espousal of eventual colonization of emancipated Negroes back to Africa shows that he, like all white American statesmen of his day, intended America to be a white man's country.

The position of extreme libertarians who were slaveholders was paradoxical to be sure. The civic humanist ideal of the agrarian proprietor with his retinue of servants on the land persisted in the South because it corresponded to social reality. This led to a gradual "recountification" of republican thought in the South: a counter-tendency to Taylor's excursions into full *laissez faire* liberalism. Even in Taylor's writings an agrarian subtheme often appears, but unlike Jefferson, he never asked to be "on the footing of China."⁴⁴

In championing *laissez faire* liberalism and in marrying that liberalism to an antifederalist constitutionalism, John Taylor modified and creatively applied republicanism—the inherited style and ideology of the Anglo-American opposition—to the public questions of his time. In adhering firmly to his course he set a standard by which to measure his fellow Republicans. His full system, including his "interim" defense of slavery, helped set the course of his successors. Richard Latner writes that "differently perceived, the ideology of the Revolution helped mold the disputants' understanding of events and course of action" in the Nullification crisis of 1832–33. Some might even consider the War of 1861–65 as the last pitched battle between Court and Country. If Country ideology and English republicanism long persisted in American life, John Taylor of Caroline must take his due measure of the credit or blame.^{45,46}

NOTES

1. Charles A. Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy* (1915; New York: The Free Press, 1965), p. 322; Eugene T. Mudge, *The Social Philosophy of John Taylor of Caroline* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), p. 4; M. J. C. Vile, *Constitutionalism and the Separation of Powers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967), p. 167; Avery Craven, "John Taylor and Southern Agriculture," *Journal of Southern History* 4, no. 2 (May 1938):143; William Appleman Williams, *The Contours of American History* (Chicago: Quadrangle, 1966), pp. 151–54; and *idem*, *Empire as a Way of Life* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980), p. 49.

2. The works of these authors will be cited as necessary in the discussion. For good introductions to Country ideology and radical whiggism, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967); J. G. A. Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies in the Eighteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 22, no. 4 (October 1965):549-83; and Robert Shalhope, "Toward a Republican Synthesis: The Emergence of an Understanding of Republicanism in American Historiography," *ibid.*, 3rd ser. 29, no. 1 (January 1972): 49-80.
3. For a useful summary of Taylor's life and writings, see M. E. Bradford, "A Virginia Cato: John Taylor of Caroline and the Agrarian Republic," introductory essay, in John Taylor, *Arator*, ed. Bradford (Indianapolis, Ind.: Liberty Classics, 1977), pp. 11-46.
4. For a good bibliography of Taylor's writings, see Mudge, *Social Philosophy of John Taylor*, pp. 209-15.
5. Lance Banning, *The Jeffersonian Persuasion: Evolution of a Party Ideology* (Ithaca, N.Y.: Cornell University Press, 1978), pp. 200-201.
6. On all these points, see Pocock, *The Ancient Constitution and the Feudal Law* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957). "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies"; and *The Machiavellian Moment* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975), *passim*.
7. Pocock, "Machiavelli, Harrington, and English Political Ideologies," p. 582.
8. See Isaac Kramnick, *Bolingbroke and His Circle* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1968), *passim*.
9. Caroline Robbins, *The Eighteenth Century Commonwealthmen* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959) is still the major study of the Radical Whigs.
10. Kramnick, "English Middle Class Radicalism in the Eighteenth Century," *Literature of Liberty* 3, no. 2 (Summer 1980):32-33.
11. On Lockeanism, see C. B. Macpherson, *The Political Theory of Possessive Individualism* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1962); and John Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: New American Library, 1965), esp. Laslett's brilliant introduction. On the American revolutionary synthesis, see Bernard Bailyn, "Lines of Force in Recent Writings on the American Revolution" (paper read at the 34th International Congress of Historical Sciences, August 1975); *idem*, *Ideological Origins*; Shalhope, "Towards a Republican Synthesis"; H. Trevor Colbourn, *The Lamp of Experience* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1965); Staughton Lynd, *Intellectual Origins of American Radicalism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1969); Forrest McDonald, "A Founding Father's Library," *Literature of Liberty* 1, no. 1 (January-March 1978):4-15; Murray N. Rothbard, "Modern Historians Confront the American Revolution," *ibid.*, pp. 16-41; and Pauline Maier, *From Resistance to Revolution* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1972).
12. Concerning the interplay of ideas and material interest in the Revolution, see William Marina, "Militia, Standing Armies, and the Second Amendment," *Law & Liberty* 2, no. 4 (Spring 1976):1-4; *idem*, "Revolution and Social Change: The American Revolution as a People's War," *Literature of Liberty* 1, no. 2 (April-June 1978):5-39; Rowland Berthoff and John M. Murrin, "Feudalism, Communalism, and the Yeoman Freeholder," in S. G. Kurtz and J. H. Hutson, eds., *Essays on the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1973):256-88; and Robert Nisbet, *The Social Impact of the Revolution* (Washington, DC: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1974). Each emphasizes the neglected antifeudal side of the Revolution.
13. In civic humanism and republicanism, "virtue," much like the Italian *virtù* or the Roman *virtus*, referred to a full set of manly—even Spartan—attributes of character.
14. Cf. Marina, "Revolution and Social Change," pp. 21-27.
15. Shalhope, "Towards a Republican Synthesis," pp. 64-65.
16. For discussion of James Madison, "father of the Constitution," as a mercantilist thinker, and on the Constitution as "a feudal and mercantilist instrument of government," see Williams, *Contours of American History*, pp. 157-62.
17. On the Federalist/Antifederalist debate, see Gordon Wood, *Creation of the American Republic, 1776-1787* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1969), chap. 13, "The Federalist Persuasion," pp. 519-64. The conservative Federalists sought to

- "retard the thrust of the Revolution with the rhetoric of the Revolution," thereby inventing "a distinctly American political theory but only at the cost of eventually impoverishing later American political thought" (p. 562).
18. On the overlapping of Antifederalists and Republicans, see Jackson Turner Main, *The Anti-Federalists* (Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), p. 281; and Beard, *Economic Origins of Jeffersonian Democracy, passim*. Similarly, former Tory areas tended to become Federalist strongholds (Marina, "Revolution and Social Change," p. 35).
 19. See Banning, *Jeffersonian Persuasion*, for a study organized around the concept of Country ideology.
 20. See again the citations in note 1. Williams' use of "feudal" makes it equivalent to "Country" in this context.
 21. Mudge, *Social Philosophy of John Taylor*, pp. 10-12.
 22. Quoted in Grant McConnell, "John Taylor and the Democratic Tradition," *Western Political Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (March 1951):23.
 23. Quoted in Wood, *Creation of the American Republic*, p. 591.
 24. Mudge, *Social Philosophy of John Taylor*, p. 57. By denying conventional social contract theory, Taylor avoided the implication that people *surrender* any part of their natural rights by a compact among themselves or with their institutions. If anything, this makes Taylor's position more radical than Locke's and brings it closer to Paine's.
 25. For support for Taylor's position on state sovereignty, see Merrill Jensen, *The Articles of Confederation* (Madison, Wisc.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1966), pp. 161-76; and Claude H. Van Tyne, "Sovereignty in the American Revolution," *American Historical Review* 12, no. 3 (April 1907):529-45.
 26. Quoted in McConnell, "John Taylor and the Democratic Tradition," p. 29.
 27. See Bailyn, *Ideological Origins*, pp. 71-72.
 28. Alexander Hamilton, John Jay, and James Madison, *The Federalist*, with introduction by E. M. Earle (New York: The Modern Library, 1937), No. 9, pp. 50-53, and No. 39, pp. 246-47. The terms were Montesquieu's—but not the conclusions.
 29. Williams, *Contours of American History*, p. 160; and Hamilton, Jay, and Madison, *Federalist*, No. 10, pp. 53-62.
 30. McConnell, "John Taylor and the Democratic Tradition," p. 27.
 31. *Ibid.*
 32. Cf. Bradford, "A Virginia Cato," pp. 26-27.
 33. Bradford writes, "For Taylor, only God could be sovereign" (*ibid.*, p. 24). Taylor wanted to avoid the Old World monarchist implications of the notion of sovereignty.
 34. On Taylor's readiness to secede, see Norman K. Risjord, *The Old Republicans* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1965), pp. 14-15. Taylor worked in the Virginia assembly for passage of the Virginia Resolutions. Cf. Bradford, "A Virginia Cato," p. 23.
 35. Mudge, *Social Philosophy of John Taylor*, p. 93; Vile, *Constitutionalism*, p. 172; and William Grampp, "John Taylor: Economist of Southern Agrarianism," *Southern Economic Journal* 11, no. 3 (January 1945):257. For more on division of power in Taylor, see Mudge, *Social Philosophy of John Taylor*, pp. 27-144.
 36. Beard, *Economic Origins*, pp. 323-25.
 37. On Paine, see the excellent study by Eric Foner, *Tom Paine and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), which brings out the *laissez faire* liberal dimension of Paine's ideas.
 38. Quoted in McConnell, "John Taylor and the Democratic Tradition," p. 24.
 39. Beard, *Economic Origins*, pp. 325-38; and John Taylor, *An Inquiry into the Principles and Policy of the Government of the United States*, ed. Loren Baritz (New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1969), esp. pp. 221, 223-24, 230, and 251. Cf. Karl Marx: "public debt becomes one of the most powerful levers of primitive accumulation" (*Capital* [New York: International Publishers, 1967], 1:754-57). Marx cites Bolingbroke's works as evidence of opposition to government finance.
 40. Beard, *Economic Origins*, pp. 335, 342-46.
 41. Cf. Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Political Writings*, ed. Roland A. Duerksen (New York: Meredith Corporation, 1970), pp. 138-43, on the two kinds of property.
 42. There is a striking resemblance between Taylor's sociology and the theories of the French

radical bourgeois *industrialiste* school, which included J.-B. Say, Charles Comte, Charles Dunoyer, and Augustin Thierry. There was in "industrialism" the same distinction between true and false property and between productive and parasitic social classes—according to their relation to state power—that we find in Taylor. There is the same readiness to reduce government's role to as little as humanly possible; the same attribution of class conflict to false "feudal" property created by political means.

Jefferson and Taylor were both conversant with the *laissez faire* liberal writings of such French economists as Say and Destutt de Tracy. How much Taylor's theories were simply logical conclusions from similar premises and how much French liberals may have influenced him are unresolved questions. On the "industrialist" school, see Leonard P. Liggio, "Charles Dunoyer and French Classical Liberalism," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1, no. 3 (Summer 1977):153–78. Liggio believes that the class analysis basic to "industrialism," revised by Saint-Simon and Auguste Comte, was taken up by Marx and other socialists, as well as by Herbert Spencer. Marx's historical writings, esp. *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte*, seem to confirm this notion. Cf. Ralph Raico, "Classical Liberal Exploitation Theory: A Comment on Professor Liggio's Paper," *Journal of Libertarian Studies* 1, no. 3 (Summer 1977):179–83.

43. Taylor, *Arator*, p. 125. For more on Taylor's approach to slavery, see *ibid.*, No. 14, pp. 119–25, and No. 28, pp. 176–81; Keith M. Bailor, "John Taylor of Caroline: Continuity, Change, and Discontinuity in Virginia's Sentiments toward Slavery, 1790–1820," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 75, no. 3 (July 1967):290–304; Robert McColley, *Slavery and Jeffersonian Virginia* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1973); and Duncan J. MacLeod, *Slavery, Race and the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1974), pp. 89–94.
44. For Jefferson's comment about China, see William Grampp, "A Re-examination of Jeffersonian Economics," *Southern Economic Journal* 12, no. 3 (January 1946):269. For more on the paradoxical way that Black slavery reinforced the libertarianism of Southern whites, see Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1975).
45. Richard B. Latner, "The Nullification Crisis and Republican Subversion," *Journal of Southern History* 43, no. 1 (February 1977):37. For a suggestive discussion which sees the South as the Country vs. the Yankee Court, see John M. Murrin, "The Great Inversion, Or Court versus Country," in J. G. A. Pocock, ed., *Three British Revolutions: 1641, 1688, 1776* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), pp. 368–453.
46. For a thorough study of Taylor's career and ideas which utilizes the concepts of Country ideology and revolutionary republicanism, see Robert E. Shalhope, *John Taylor of Caroline: Pastoral Republican* (Columbia, S.C.: University of South Carolina Press, 1980). I received my copy of Shalhope's *tour de force* only after drafting the present essay, and while nothing in the book constrains me to modify the interpretation of Taylor put forward here, it seems only fair to say that Prof. Shalhope's work ought, and probably will, become the standard work on Taylor for many years to come.